

Join the Student Sit-Ins

Act One Transcript

Video online at: <http://americanhistory.si.edu/freedomandjustice/A1.asx>

Codes:

A = Actor (Samuel P. Leonard)

P = Participant

“ “ =interrupting, pause

[] = not speaker's words

A = I'm gonna sit at the welcome table, I'm gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days, Hallelujah. I'm gonna sit at the welcome table, I'm gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days, one of these days. I'm gonna eat at the Woolworth Lunch Counter; I'm gonna eat at that lunch counter one of these days, Hallelujah. I'm gonna eat at the Woolworth Lunch Counter; I'm gonna eat at that lunch counter one of these days, one of these days. I'm gonna get my civil rights, hmmm. I'm gonna get my civil rights one of these days, Hallelujah. I'm gonna to get my civil rights. I'm gonna get my civil rights one of these days.

Make America great! Desegregate! Make America great! Desegregate! Make America great! Desegregate! Make America great!

P = Desegregate!

A = Make America great!

P = Desegregate!

A = Make America great!

P = Desegregate!

A = Make America great!

P = Desegregate!

A= Give yourselves a hand, give yourselves a hand.

I am so glad to see all of you here today. You are exactly what we need you are what we need to keep this movement going. My name is Samuel P. Leonard and I'm a student right here in Greensboro at North Carolina A&T. When I heard that my classmates had started at that Woolworth's I was shocked, I was shocked and surprised and frightened and invigorated. And I went up to people and I said did you really do that, is this really true what I'm seeing on the television and hearing on the radio, what I read in the newspaper this morning. I knew I wanted to be a part of this movement, but I couldn't help but wonder, am I strong enough? Well, then I finally decided to join my friends in protesting. Now my first sit-in I walked in that store not knowing whether I would walk back out, but when I did I felt powerful. I can't even tell you how good it felt when I left that place. I had my "to the mountain top experience." So I'm here today to help prepare you all to join us so you can feel what I felt that first day. Now you know I heard we were going to get a lot of new soldiers for this army we are creating, but I had no idea I'd have this many new recruits. I've got my work cut out for me in getting you all trained. But I'm not complaining at all, you all are important each and every one of you is essential if we are going to be successful. So are you all ready for your first sit in?

P = We're ready, yeah.

A = How about it? You ready to go?

P = Yes.

A = No. No you're not ready yet. Look, you can't just walk in here and sit down and order lunch and expect to change anything. You've got to be prepared. You've got to be motivated. And you've got to be trained. So that's what we are going to do today. We are going to get you all ready to stand up by sitting down. We are going to get you prepared to be as active and strong and powerful as you've ever been and probably ever will be all by being passive and nonviolent.