

SS229.mp3

David Yellin- This is tape number 2 January 30th 1970 with Mr. T.O. Jones, Joan Beifuss and David Yellin at the retail clerks meeting room.

Joan Beifuss- Mr. Jones could you tell us what mayor Lobe himself did for the men in the department at the time he was commissioner of public works?

T.O. Jones- During the time that mayor Lobe was commissioner of public works he did many good things for the men. The men really had no security, as to jobs, vacation and what not, he was the first commissioner to bring vacations to them and he was also the first commissioner to allow them sick time when the men was actually sick. And he could bring in a statement and it would be paid for and he instituted these things within the department.

David Yellin- This is between 56 and 60?

T.O. Jones- Yes this is the time he was commissioner of public works.

David Yellin- So at that time we did make some advances.

T.O. Jones- Yes during that time this is the advances that he made and he caused many things to be corrected in the department because he would come down and he would talk to the men and he wouldn't allow the foremen's to say I will take care of the situation and things like that he would hear from the men. In other words he had direct contact with the men.

Joan Beifuss- In other words he actually went down..

T.O. Jones- He actually went to the installation and talked to the men.

David Yellin- So when he says now that he is a garbage man and he knows all about it that he went and mingled.

T.O. Jones- This is the truth.

David Yellin- And that also that it is not all fancy when he feels that he did make improvements.

T.O. Jones- He did, he did make improvements yes.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) are we talking just about sanitation workers or are we talking about the whole public works...

T.O. Jones- We are talking about the whole public works department which considered of sewer and drainage and asphalt street repair and all, a lot of people is confused about this thing they say the garbage strike but it was not a garbage strike it was a public works department strike and this is the essence of the entire department.

David Yellin- As a matter of fact that is subsequent, that brings us to a question about the actual 68 but even before that perhaps, you recall between 66 and 68 and now we are talking about February 1st of 68 and so on. What was your job, what were some of the conditions, some of the experiences you had in relation to your job after 66?

T.O. Jones- Well I continued to work after 66 as president of a local and business agent you might say of the men and also as organizer for the international union. During this time I was the only person in contact with the public works employees. I was the only person that they really called on you know and we would meet sometimes twice a week, to hear their complaints and they would raise questions, and we would go into it and find out how we could deal with it. I spent many nights and days getting myself together on how I could help to alleviate some of the situations over there.

David Yellin- And your relationship officially was still with Mr. Sisson as commissioner.

T.O. Jones- As long as he was commissioner yes.

Joan Beifuss- Pete Brown after the injunction was served or the threatened injunction of 66 did Pete Brown then go back out of Memphis or did he stay around?

T.O. Jones- He was in and out of Memphis yes. He would stay and he would leave, eh would spend a week or two weeks in here.

Joan Beifuss- Was he a white man or a black man?

T.O. Jones- He was a negro.

David Yellin- Yeah how about an attorney with the injunction who supplied the attorney at that time?

T.O. Jones- The international union supplied the attorney.

David Yellin- Can you think of who it was?

T.O. Jones- I can't think of his name he is in the commercial tower building.

David Yellin- It is not Mr. Sabella who is...no it is somebody before him.

T.O. Jones- No.

David Yellin- Yes. I suppose we should remember his name too but....I think Mr. Sabella told us t one time but I can't recall.

T.O. Jones- Paul, Howard Paul. I still got it.

David Yellin- You still got it Howard Paul.

T.O. Jones- Name was Howard Paul, attorney Howard Paul.

David Yellin- Now it was, he was a choice of the international?

T.O. Jones- Well I don't know how this come about exactly but I would say at that time yes.

David Yellin- The reason I ask is that why didn't he or someone after the injunction was made in 66 try to take some action to rescind the injunction?

T.O. Jones- Well I stated that the international never intended for anything to happen here and I still state that. The international union itself felt that this was going to be a hard spot to organize I guess.

Joan Beifuss- In other words they felt they couldn't win here.

T.O. Jones- They felt that they couldn't win and they didn't want to tie up a lot of money over here but attorney Paul was the attorney that we used.

David Yellin- Did you use him thereafter in 66 and if you did why did you use him? Why did you call on him?

T.O. Jones- He was a employed for the union by the international union I had no other choice.

David Yellin- I mean what situations arose that you had to call on him?

T.O. Jones- Well we went to him for advisement and you know research.

David Yellin- He was on a permanent retainer?

T.O. Jones- I don't know exactly how this worked I wouldn't want to say about that.

David Yellin- So they didn't tell you not to call on him because...

T.O. Jones- No I had constant contact with him I was able to call him and ask him if I wanted to do something's how to go about it and what the law was on it and different things.

Joan Beifuss- Ok between 66 and 68, just kind of went along? With no crises?

T.O. Jones- We went along and we tried to get the city to recognize the union and it would not recognize the union and in 1968 a decision was made.

Joan Beifuss- Were your people card carrying members in 67?

T.O. Jones- Yes, yeah.

David Yellin- Was much of your time taken up trying to collect dues?

T.O. Jones- Full time.

Joan Beifuss- What kind of dues were you collecting from them at that time?

T.O. Jones- \$4 per month. You just couldn't get it, couldn't get it. Some pay days maybe you catch 25 fellows and another pay day maybe you catch 10 in those situations.

David Yellin- Did you at any time well when I say explain to the international, they knew it, this was a problem?

T.O. Jones- They knew it.

David Yellin- They knew it.

T.O. Jones- Recommendation were being made on how to collect dues.

David Yellin- And what kind of recommendations were they?

T.O. Jones- Well Mr. Brown recommended once to get a card table set up in each area before work time or either after work time.

David Yellin- (Muffled)

T.O. Jones- No within the grounds it was agreed to, but we never did do it.

David Yellin- It was agreed to by whom, by the city?

T.O. Jones- By the commissioner. But we never did do it.

David Yellin- Why didn't you do it?

T.O. Jones- We, myself personally I felt that this was going to get us in trouble if we were beginning to collect money on the grounds that way and we had men, stewards on the grounds so why did they have to do that. You got to go in each union and sit there or go each morning, this creates a problem, this creates a problem.

David Yellin- In other words you felt or would you say this, I don't mean to put words in your mouth that the men, the sanitation workers all through didn't felt he necessity to pay their monthly...

T.O. Jones- A man would have felt freer coming to the hall or giving a steward his money than he would just sitting out here in the area. Everybody knows who is paying then and they just weren't going got respond to that.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah.

T.O. Jones- They wouldn't respond to it.

T.O. Jones- They wouldn't respond to it because they didn't want to be associated with the union?

T.O. Jones- No it is not that they want to be associated with the union but they didn't want the boss to know they were walking up tot he is table and cranking out \$4.

David Yellin- Why is that?

T.O. Jones- Fright, fear.

Joan Beifuss- Did they have to pay an initiation fee to join the union?

T.O. Jones- No.

Joan Beifuss- Just \$4.

David Yellin- Again, why fear?

T.O. Jones- Alright, this union had not been recognized to the extent to where as that we had this authority. Now this would have really just been a bullying thing tat you were doing and I never wanted to do that.

David Yellin- Ah.

T.O. Jones- Because now if it was done I wouldn't have assigned someone else to do it, I would do it myself. If anyone was going to be run off I want it to be me to run off. So here I am I have a table and here 25 fellows come in which possibly 5 of them are good supporters> They are not going to walk up tot hat table in that area.

David Yellin- And show that they are good supporters because they may get fired again.

T.O. Jones- Yeah that's right, they are not going to do it because the fear was still there sure.

David Yellin- And it was fear with the foremen there.

T.O. Jones- Yeah I discussed it with several of the men and they just didn't think it was a good idea. And this was....

David Yellin- Now how about he other 20 men who weren't...any fear of them?

T.O. Jones- No what they would do is, they would criticize and from this you could get something started.

Joan Beifuss- By the end of 68 by 67, the election of 67 when Ingram was defeated by Lobe, did the union take any part in that, did you work for Ingram at that point?

T.O. Jones- No, we were working for none of the candidate.

David Yellin- Well he was..

T.O. Jones- (Muffled) Sheriff Morris that was the man I was working for.

Joan Beifuss- You worked for Morris?

David Yellin- But in the run off?

T.O. Jones- In the run off we were working on not really working you know.

David Yellin- You went fishing?

T.O. Jones- I don't believe in going fishing now I am going to vote now I tell you I don't care who is running. You can be anti-everything I don't care I am going to vote for one of the two.

David Yellin- Alright are we ready to begin now?

Joan Beifuss- Well I just wanted to ask one more thing you didn't think Willis would be of any help to you then?

T.O. Jones- What you mean?

Joan Beifuss- Had Willis become mayor you didn't think that his attitude toward unionism would be better?

T.O. Jones- IF Mr. Willis had come to be mayor it is the same thing as anyone else the power structure that he would have had to deal with and it depends on how that power structure wanted to react.

David Yellin- Yeah but had he become mayor there would have been a power structure that nobody had thought of and that would have been those who created him mayor.

T.O. Jones- Regardless of who is mayor here, there are some controlling factors in the city of Memphis in patrols. Let's don't forget that.

David Yellin- Now who are they?

T.O. Jones- I wouldn't care to name them.

David Yellin- Why?

T.O. Jones- There are people in the city who don't care who is elected and they got control here, your chamber of commerce and now your different societies and organizations. They are controllers of the city of Memphis let's don't fool our self.

David Yellin- Well if they are controllers, why, I mean this I kind of take issue with, why don't you care to name them? I mean what do you have to fear?

T.O. Jones- Well at a later date I have got to still possibly deal with these same people.

David Yellin- Yeah butt hey are not going to her this.

T.O. Jones- Well this is possibly true but I am not going to name them either.

Joan Beifuss- That's alright, but you are talking about the downtown association, the chamber of commerce.

T.O. Jones- Sure you see the position I am in right now with all the hassle that is going with this situation, (muffled), if I go to calling names and then I go to these people for help, and they say you have exposed me I can't help you no further.

Joan Beifuss- Ok, they want out of the union?

T.O. Jones- They want out of state county. And they got their reasons too.

Joan Beifuss- Ok so now then in 68 or when Lobe comes into office at he beginning of 68 do you have any idea how many card carrying members you had?

T.O. Jones- No I don't really, for the year 68 we really couldn't say because this was a short, about 45 days before the strike.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah. Or how many you had in 67?

T.O. Jones- Oh I would say roughly...

Joan Beifuss- I mean I realize there were a lot more suffices than there were...

T.O. Jones- 150 or 200 or something like that.

Joan Beifuss- Ok. So then what made you go out on strike then?

T.O. Jones- In 1968 we attempted to meet with the mayor after he was in office and the mayor said no. I attempted to meet with the director of public works which had been appointed by the mayor, Mr. Blackburn, they said no.

David Yellin- Why did you want to meet with them, just to get together?

T.O. Jones- Well yeah, the thing about it is this, the mayor knew that I was a threat of a union when he was elected. Blackburn knew when he was appointed there was a threat of a union. If they would have acted in good faith we could have avoided a lot of things that happened let's face it, this is a fact. There is no nothing to be ashamed of, the things that happened in Memphis was a disgrace. Not only against only blacks but whites also because the same thing they did after the death of Martin Luther King they could have done before. The law was the same they did not change the law, not one bit.

David Yellin- Now do you feel that when you suggested or requested a meeting with the mayor and with Mr. Blackburn that they refuse don't he grounds that they didn't even want to begin to recognize that you were...

T.O. Jones- They would meet, they would meet but they would just not recognize the union. I don't know the exact date that the men were killed on the truck but the

same day those men were killed on that truck P.J. Champa who is the director of organization, or who was the director of organization at that time for AFSME. He and I met with director Blackburn on that same day.

David Yellin- That same day.

T.O. Jones- The same day.

Joan Beifuss- Did you know that the men had been killed when you met with them?

T.O. Jones- I am coming to that. We met in Mr. Blackburn's office and there was a dialogue created. That was to be followed through. So Champa and myself went to the airport and we stayed at the airport because he had a late flight. He was getting back to Baltimore or Washington or one I am not sure which one. But anyway it was after work hours that he got his flight and as you recall on that day it rained something terrible hard and that afternoon after he had gotten his plane I was on my way home from the airport. And one of the men who were working under the direction of Mr. Blackburn was in one of the city cars going to the Democrat Rd. installation which leads from the airport. And I followed him in, he was driving so fast and everything, so I wanted to know what was wrong. He said you haven't heard? I said no, heard what? He told me these two men were killed in this packer. Now this had been something that we had been complaining about.

David Yellin- That very day?

T.O. Jones- No the men had been complaining about it and the men had been complaining about it to me in the meeting and it had been reported to the city that this packer it had started before they went out on the route and it run all day and all this kind of stuff see. So these were the kind of things we were faced with you see. But we were in a meeting Champa and myself that afternoon with Blackburn and we really didn't get anything out. The dialogue was set, but the dialogue never did fall to....

David Yellin- Was that the meeting that a letter was suggested that somebody send to somebody, do you recall that?

T.O. Jones- This is true.

David Yellin- Yeah can you tell us about that?

T.O. Jones- The information that you got is right,.

T.O. Jones- A letter (muffled) back to the director.

David Yellin- From Mr. Champa?

T.O. Jones- Yeah. I don't think we would have gotten any action from it.

David Yellin- He never sent it?

T.O. Jones- No. Not to my knowledge.

Joan Beifuss- Why was Champa in at that time, was this just kind of a routine thing to just go see Blackburn?

T.O. Jones- Well the situation was that we were trying to, we were trying to come to an agreement with the city that they would recognize the union. And the position was that we would meet. I set up the meeting and director Blackburn agreed to meet.

Joan Beifuss- Had Champa ever met him before?

T.O. Jones- Huh?

Joan Beifuss- Had Champa ever been to Memphis before?

T.O. Jones- Not to my knowledge.

David Yellin- Now did you request him to come?

T.O. Jones- Yes, I requested through the international union that Jerry would send someone in just as you are saying.

Joan Beifuss- During all this period where you going to Washington periodically to confer with Worth or anything?

T.O. Jones- No I never been to Washington until after all the...

Joan Beifuss- Had you met Worth before this time?

T.O. Jones- No, just talked to Him on the phone.

David Yellin- Now in your meeting with Mr. Blackburn, is that when he agreed to set up a set of rules or regulations or?

T.O. Jones- A letter, a change of letter was to come, and our letter from the international union was to come first, and to get this dialogue going what you are speaking about that would have had to have been in a chain of letters first and some mechanics worked out. What you are saying and the information you got is perfectly true but it was never done. The city had no intentions of doing any business, I will be frank with you. Because if they had them, they seen the problems, maybe Mr. Blackburn wasn't familiar with the public works department. I grant him that he wasn't familiar with the problems, but he had seen enough of what was going on with any human thought.

David Yellin- Well he had only been in office two or three weeks.

T.O. Jones- This is true. This is true that he had just been there since the first of the year.

David Yellin- This is about January 17th or something like that.

T.O. Jones- Yeah about January 17th or something like that. But you see these things had happened, they didn't happen just on a spur of the moment.

David Yellin- Right.

T.O. Jones- They happened because there had been a continuous problem, no progress had been made. And these people knew, these people knew that when they come into office they were faced with this problem and they made no efforts what so ever to alleviate them. The mayor the director, neither one.

David Yellin- Now what was Mr. Blackburn's attitude when you and Mr. Champa talked to him?

T.O. Jones- Well his attitude was just the same as the past had been, full of conversation.

David Yellin- Conversation about what?

T.O. Jones- He didn't seem that he wanted to bring about a labor relations coalition that would be something we could deal with.

Joan Beifuss- Mr. Jones when you say the packer, there had been complaints about the packer, were there general complaints about the packer as such or was this one specific truck that was known to...

T.O. Jones- The safety of the equipment, something was always reported to me. The safety of the equipment was something that would come up in the meetings because when we would have the meetings I would ask the men about it. What about the conditions of the truck he was driving if anybody had any reports or anything like this? And then in turn I would make report to Mr. Cole just before he went out and he would try to correct this things. Now on this particular situation this is what they call a wing and barrel packer. It had been reported to us that thing had been started before and would continue to run, I had went out and went and seen it.

Joan Beifuss- You saw it before this time?

T.O. Jones- Yeah I went out to the yard where they go out from and this truck would be running.

Joan Beifuss- And they couldn't turn it off?

T.O. Jones- You see this is a second loader, this was a second loader. You see the motor of the truck was actually pulling the loads and then the motor here was the one that was for the force for the packer, and this was the one that the complaints was about. That they would start this thing up before they go out in the morning and they would bring gas out to the route for it so it would continue to run. Faulty equipment that is all.

Joan Beifuss- They couldn't turn it off once it is started?

T.O. Jones- Well to turn it off they had to boost it off to start it again. I think it would have been cheaper to boost the thing off and you would possible have two men living today.

David Yellin- Yeah well obviously.

Joan Beifuss- Did you know personally the men?

T.O. Jones- I personally knew them, they were members. Both of them.

Joan Beifuss- So when that happened then did you go back to Blackburn?

T.O. Jones- The next morning if I am not mistaken I think this happened on Thursday or Friday but anyway I did touch base with him and we discussed this.

Joan Beifuss- What did he say then?

T.O. Jones- Her was sorry it happened and they were going to correct it.

David Yellin- What were they going to do about the men and compensation?

T.O. Jones- There was no insurance so I was told. These men who had life insurance to be carried by the men, I think it is \$2 a month or something. But anyway neither of them had it. Now what happened in regards to compensation I don't know. I don't even know where their widows are.

Joan Beifuss- The city ultimately paid something but I can't remember what?

David Yellin- It was some \$500 awarded to each of the families subsequently.

T.O. Jones- You heard more, you heard something different than what I heard. I don't know and that is why I won't comment on it.

Joan Beifuss- As a matter of fact I saw the mother of one of them that was killed in June.

T.O. Jones- Mrs. Walker?

Joan Beifuss- I can't remember we took a...

David Yellin- (Muffled)

Joan Beifuss- Was it (muffled)? She was on television, they filmed her on television camera filmed her but (muffled).

David Yellin- And subsequent to that became the rainy day situation right?

T.O. Jones- Yeah.

David Yellin- Which came right hard upon this and we pretty well covered that didn't we? I think.

Joan Beifuss- There is one thing I would still like to get clear though on that rainy day situation when the men were sent home...

T.O. Jones- You want to know what led up to the work stoppage is that what you want to know?

David Yellin- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- We pretty much have that covered though but there is one thing I am confused about it...

T.O. Jones- Don't you want to hear my side of it? You just heard somebody else's because I haven't told you my side.

Joan Beifuss- Ok go ahead.

David Yellin- Yeah.

T.O. Jones- You are going to give me fair play please.

David Yellin- What we meant was that I think we have it in the transcription but as well as..

T.O. Jones- That's right we didn't see what was in it, we should have looked at it, but you can balance it against this ok. What I would like to say is to the rainy day of 1968, there had been several bad days in 1968 and all of sudden some superintendent makes up his mind that he was going to send some 22 men home. And the men rented this because they had worked in worse weather that same month than it was on that particular day. So naturally they got in touch with me and I went out and we fog Mr. Blackburn out and we discussed this situation. Mr. Blackburn words to me was that he was going to take care of it. My recommendation was that these men be paid for 4 hours.

Joan Beifuss- Now you met Mr. Black burn down where?

T.O. Jones- To the seer and drainage department on High St. My recommendation was that these men be paid for 4 hours because they reported to work and they were there to work and they were willing to work. Now these men were screened out, who they wanted to sent home and these men were sent home. He told me he would take care of it. We had to wait until the payday in February to see what would actually happen.

David Yellin- And you are paid every two weeks so you have to....yeah.

T.O. Jones- They are paid every two weeks, city employees. So when the checks come down I had all the men's names and I asked the steward in that area to check

and see if they got paid for the 4 hours and they did not, they got paid for 2 hours. So we went back to him and we discussed it with him, and this was...

David Yellin- Mr. Blackburn?

T.O. Jones- Yeah and he said that was the best that he could do. This was not justice and this was not a justified thing and we felt that this stuff had to stop somewhere because in these situations if you continue to let the boss do these things he is going to continue to do them. Now this particular day that these men were sent home it wasn't too bad for them to work. As I stated they had been working in worse weather than that.

David Yellin- What kind of workers were they, just to get again to be sure.

T.O. Jones- They were people that worked in the sewer and drainage department.

David Yellin- Yes. They weren't the sanitation workers.

T.O. Jones- No they were public works employees and sewer and drainage and this is where they worked at. Now if the men of the garbage collecting division had been sent home I could kind of see it. Because garbage freezes in cans with no tops and water is there. And it won't come out a man have to turn it up and beat on the can. Sometime they have to get a stick and pry it out because it was frozen. This situation was in the sewer and drainage department and this is where we disagreed at. Because he ignored the recommendation and I felt that he didn't work in good faith on the situation. The men also felt the same way. So I left it to them for decision and I made recommendation to what I thought should happen.

David Yellin- And what were he recommendations?

T.O. Jones- My recommendations was that we would go on and we would work and we would see what happened. This was after the men were suspended to see whether they were going to be paid.

David Yellin- They were suspended for what reason?

T.O. Jones- They were, what happened was this, the men were sent home and this is the same thing as a suspension as far as I am concerned. They were sent home because of inclement weather (muffled). But there was no inclement weather so this serves as a day of suspension.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah ok.

David Yellin- But they did get paid for two hours?

T.O. Jones- They got paid for two hours.

Joan Beifuss- Is that what is called show up...

T.O. Jones- I recommended 4 hours.

Joan Beifuss- Show up time? 2 hours is that called show up time?

T.O. Jones- Well this is that time what they would give and it was all left to really, they had no mechanics in that situation if the superintendent wanted to give it, he would give it, if he didn't he didn't. In this situation the director kind of put his foot down you know.

Joan Beifuss- Now none of the, there was 22 men and that was the full crew there? Were any men used at all?

T.O. Jones- No, no, that wasn't a full crew these men were just screened out.

David Yellin- So some were used.

Joan Beifuss- Some were used?

T.O. Jones- Some were used right, this is the difference in it see,.

David Yellin- Was there any pattern to who was used and who wasn't?

T.O. Jones- Yeah there was a pattern.

Joan Beifuss- What was the pattern?

T.O. Jones- The pattern in my sight was that if the man would have possibly been what they call a trouble maker, they sent him home.

David Yellin- And what would you define as a troublemaker?

T.O. Jones- Well any fellow who believed in the union or supported ht union, not al of them were strong supporters but they weed them out...

David Yellin- And some of it was personal relationship for the superintendent?

T.O. Jones- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- Ok now Mr. Jones now as the strike progressed that incident kept being referred to as a racial incident, that who were sent home was the black workers. It wasn't that though it was the union?

T.O. Jones- We never had one white man, two white men who actually had membership in the local 1733 from the time it was chartered. And therefore, it was a racial thing because we didn't have one white man from that installation. No whites were sent home period.

Joan Beifuss- No whites, about how many whites, can you give me any kind of how many blacks and whites would be working?

T.O. Jones- I would say in that area they had 50 whites and approximately 150 blacks.

Joan Beifuss- Alright now would most of the whites be a higher job category?

T.O. Jones- The were truck drivers at that time they had few negro truck drivers but mostly white drivers remained and some of the negro truck drivers were sent home so that is the discriminatory fact right that.

David Yellin- Ok so that you made a recommendation to go on working?

T.O. Jones- Yes.

David Yellin- And then what happened?

T.O. Jones- I made a recommendation that they go on and work because the men really wanted to drop it right there after they couldn't get the concession about it, so they went on and they worked until payday. And then when they got paid, I think it was on that Friday we met that Sunday. We did discuss this with Mr. Blackburn before. About the time, I got a committee of the men and carried them up, I wouldn't go up by myself to discuss this issue.

David Yellin- You weren't to Mr. Blackburn and discussed they weren't being paid that is what you..

T.O. Jones- They weren't paid.

David Yellin- For the two hours.

T.O. Jones- Yeah they weren't paid for the two hours I recommended just for the two hours (muffled). In other words they claimed this to be a department policy.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah.

T.O. Jones- And it always had policy they could do what they want to do and if they don't, they don't.

David Yellin- So on the Friday that the checks came and you saw they weren't paid you took a committee and went to Mr. Blackburn and lodged a complaint.

T.O. Jones- Right.

David Yellin- Ok now what happened?

T.O. Jones- He said he couldn't do anything about it.

David Yellin- Right and then what happened you went back to the men?

T.O. Jones- I went back tot eh men and reported to the membership what the story was and we met on Sunday night and we formed a committee of 14 men and myself and we went up and met with Mr. Blackburn and with Mr. Styles.

David Yellin- At Mr. Blackburn's office?

T.O. Jones- Right.

David Yellin- We are now at February 11th?

T.O. Jones- Yes. February the 12th no.

David Yellin- February the 12th is the next day the Monday.

T.O. Jones- Oh we met on a Sunday night.

David Yellin- The 11th.

T.O. Jones- Right.

David Yellin- So in other words the business of the paycheck and Mr. Blackburn saying definitely that was it they weren't paid they knew they weren't it wasn't a delay that they would get paid next time.

T.O. Jones- No he didn't say they would get paid next time.

David Yellin- That they weren't going to get paid, so now we are up to Sunday and you called a meeting of the membership.

Joan Beifuss- Where was this?

T.O. Jones- 136 ½ South (muffled) St.

David Yellin- Now did nonmembers come?

T.O. Jones- Sure, you always have non-members, you have non-members attend the meeting now and you can't turn them away.

David Yellin- So how many were there?

T.O. Jones- At the meeting on Sunday night?

David Yellin- Yes sir.

T.O. Jones- Approximately 900.

Joan Beifuss- So then you left that meeting with a committed to go to Blackburn's office?

T.O. Jones- Right.

Joan Beifuss- Did you try to...

T.O. Jones- The men waited for our return.

Joan Beifuss- Do you have any idea how long?

T.O. Jones- It was past 11:00 when we left Blackburn's office.

Joan Beifuss- Did you try to get Lobe to this meeting?

T.O. Jones- We did try to get him, I think if I am not mistaken I think we asked for him to intervene into this thing but he wouldn't. I am not too positive about that because it is kind of...

David Yellin- Was there any talk of a strike? Even before the payroll or payday?

T.O. Jones- No.

David Yellin- Was there any talk that if they didn't get paid there might be a strike.

T.O. Jones- I don't know what they told you but I am saying no.

David Yellin- No no I am not, nobody told us anything.

T.O. Jones- No plans and no preparations had been made.

David Yellin- Now then can you tell us what you did on Sunday when you left because this has gone into sort of the legend the myth that meeting with Blackburn going back to the hall can you tell your own version?

T.O. Jones- A committee was designated by the membership to go with me up to director Blackburn's office. We went to director Blackburn's office and we discussed the situation with in regards to the pay and we discussed the situation in regards to the other conditions of employment in the public works department and as a employees. Director Blackburn had no, nothing to offer us and he really didn't show us that he wanted to be cooperative about anything. So...

David Yellin- Now did he do it on his own or did he say that the mayor wouldn't let him or did he say..

T.O. Jones- He said that the mayor wouldn't let him do it, this was his statement.

David Yellin- Did he indicate that he might have been willing to do it?

T.O. Jones- No to me.

David Yellin- Now just again the men who went with you the 14, the group of 14 were they mainly stewards?

T.O. Jones- They were stewards and rank and file members.

David Yellin- Ok then what happened at that time?

T.O. Jones- We discussed it with director Blackburn and left he would not offer us anything.

David Yellin- Did you invite him to come to the meeting and talk to the men?

T.O. Jones- Invite him too? I don't recall whether I did or not, I might have it is possible. I am thinking that it might have been but he just wouldn't come down.

David Yellin- Why did you want him to come talk to the men if you...

T.O. Jones- Well there is, there is always, you can get a line of communication and sometimes a man working a position, or a person working a position of organizer does not have to be effective to management, but the persons who work for them could be more effective, than I was. This was my opinion.

David Yellin- Well then when he refused or whatever what then happened?

T.O. Jones- Well naturally I was thinking was then that he had no intentions of doing any business.

Joan Beifuss- Did you think he had actually any power to do anything if he wanted to?

T.O. Jones- I think that director Blackburn had more power than he really (muffled) I really do. Because I think...

David Yellin- Do you think he knew it?

T.O. Jones- I don't know whether he did or not, I don't know whether he knew it or not but feel like this, I feel like him being the director and seeing the problem was about to arise, and him being a man who had been in a position of management personally before in the laundry situation could see that something was beginning to mushroom that he wasn't going to be able to control. And I feel that, I feel that if he had put his foot down and taken the choice and did some thing about this issue he would have saved the mayor and he would have saved himself.

David Yellin- Now what do you think he should have done?

T.O. Jones- I think he should have paid those men...

David Yellin- That would have alleviated the whole..

Joan Beifuss- Would that actually satisfied it at that point?

T.O. Jones- At that point that would have satisfied that particular issue and this would have made us have faith in him as wanting to do something.

Joan Beifuss- Something further.

T.O. Jones- Yes, you see he made many promises but he never delivered.

David Yellin- SO it was 22 men, about \$2.50 a piece.

T.O. Jones- \$2 a piece. Yeah well we are talking about...

David Yellin- That is \$44.

T.O. Jones- We are talking about ours, we are talking about 4 hours well they got paid for 2 hours. Well we said at that time that those men were making a \$1.85 an

hour so we just round figures we are talking about \$2 per man so now we are talking about \$44 more.

David Yellin- So that what it would have cost the Indians to buy the island of Manhattan.

T.O. Jones- There you go see we could have spent 44 dollars and we probably could have had peace and we probably could have worked out something.

David Yellin- That would have been the start of going the other way instead of...

T.O. Jones- The way we did go I mean \$44 against the tax payers money ok. So we take \$44 of the taxpayers money and we just give it to thee fellows that is what I am saying, now we talking about a round book of \$88. Alright we lost more than that in revenue. See. So what did we do we didn't gain and the city didn't gain either.

David Yellin- Yeah was anybody else there with Mr. Blackburn?

T.O. Jones- Yeah. Mr. Styles, his assistant.

David Yellin- But did Mr. Blackburn carry most of the conversation?

T.O. Jones- Both of them talked, both of them talked, I wouldn't say...

David Yellin- Do you remember as we say what your thrust was? What did you want him to do, on what basis?

T.O. Jones- I wanted a commitment from him that he would pay these men and I wanted a commitment from him that he would do, he would improve his department.

Joan Beifuss- Was there any question at that time about union recognition again/

T.O. Jones- No not to my knowledge I don't recall that.

Joan Beifuss- Well then that was, the big story about that was the jail clothes that you were taking your jail clothes.

T.O. Jones- This is true, alright we are talking about the jail situation and we know that if we got an injunction pending since 1966 and I knew I was the officer of the union and I knew that I was one that was held responsible so what am I going to do now I am going to tell this man I am going to take 14 people up here and I am going to have 900 waiting and when they go back they are going to make a decision and then I am going to skip town, I am not going to do that.

David Yellin- Now wait a minute they were going to make a decision to strike?

T.O. Jones- The decision was made by the men when we reported back to them because before we left they said point blank. If he gives us nothing and we give him nothing.

David Yellin- And what does that mean?

T.O. Jones- It means that they weren't going to work no further.

David Yellin- They were going to strike?

T.O. Jones- That's right. They were going to withhold the services. We didn't strike we withheld our services.

David Yellin- Ok.

T.O. Jones- I don't know why everyone wants to say this is a strike. The public works employees did not strike they withheld their services from the city of Memphis,

Joan Beifuss- What is the difference?

T.O. Jones- There is a difference to this, when you withhold your services you just don't work, when you strike you go out and canvass things like that.

Joan Beifuss- Would there be a possibility that if you withheld your services that it wouldn't come under the Alcoa, is there a legal?

David Yellin- No there is not.

T.O. Jones- You see the labor language we use many things.

David Yellin- You knew then in other words when you went to see Mr. Blackburn and there was no satisfaction you could not go back to the men and say you know look we didn't get anywhere but give me tomorrow or something, you knew that in a sense that was the deadline.

T.O. Jones- I knew that was out.

David Yellin- How did you know this? Who told you this?

T.O. Jones- How did I know it? I been dealing with these men since 1963 ad I just about can get an audience of them now when it comes to labor situation, I got the sense of the men that these men were not have gone if I would have asked them to and I did ask them to and they told me no.

David Yellin- You mean you asked them not to withhold their services?

T.O. Jones- I asked them not to withhold their services and they told me no.

David Yellin- Why did you ask them not to withhold their services.

T.O. Jones- Well I was in no position to tell them to withhold our services. We as a union representatives are not in any position to tell people to strike or to withhold their services.

David Yellin- Isn't that your job?

T.O. Jones- Our job is to organize the unorganized.

David Yellin- And then once they are organized you represent them.

David Yellin- We don't call strikes, and the people themselves that are dissatisfied workers is the one that have to make that decision of what they must do.

Joan Beifuss- So when you went back to this meeting of 900 men, was there...

T.O. Jones- It had dwindled down from 900.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah by 11:00 yeah.

T.O. Jones- But many of them had told fellows you call me and let me know what he story is and all that.

Joan Beifuss- Was there a lot of discussion when you went back?

T.O. Jones- When I went back yes, there was a lot of discussion and a lot of questions were asked you know and naturally the men said they were just tired of being used as they were and they were really concerned about where they were going from there.

Joan Beifuss- Well now at this time, did, was it on anyone's mind that this strike would last maybe more than a couple of days. Was everyone assuming that it would may last a couple of days and it would be taken care of?

T.O. Jones- Well I felt that the strike wouldn't last as long as it did, I said days but I didn't feel it would last as long as it did.

David Yellin- Did you feel that it was necessary for you as an officer of the local and a representative of the international to consult the international on this or did you feel that was within your jurisdiction.

T.O. Jones- I am going to be real honest with you and if this is repeated history I hope somebody understand it. I was not going to notify the international union because the international union wasn't going to do but one ting.

David Yellin- And that would be what?

T.O. Jones- Tell those people to stay on their job and they are coming down to try to get a dialogue and the dialogue had not worked, it wasn't going to work.

Joan Beifuss- So that you were willing to notify the international afterward?

T.O. Jones- I didn't notify them period.

David Yellin- in other words Mr. Jones you were willing to put yourself on the line for this?

T.O. Jones- I was.

David Yellin- And obviously this is what has happened as a result of what you just told us right.

T.O. Jones- This is true.

David Yellin- And you made this decision.

T.O. Jones- I made this decision.

Joan Beifuss- Then by that time you were past discussing anything about whether a strike would be effective or withholding of services would be effective in the winter.

T.O. Jones- Really and truly we were not concerned about the weather we were concerned about the conditions of employment we were concerned about better benefits, we were concerned about improvement period. We were not concerned about the weather, whether it was winter summer, fall, or spring. We were saying that we were withholding our service simply because the city had not come to grip and had not made no kind of concession with the men or the employees.

David Yellin- They didn't think of the strategy of it they thought of the justice or injustice.

T.O. Jones- They thought of the justice and injustice right.

David Yellin- And they had reached the end of the line..

T.O. Jones- They had reached the end of the line as far as they were concerned.

David Yellin- Do you think the killing of the two men at that time was that ever mentioned.

T.O. Jones- This had a lot to do with it because a lot of men that worked in that particular area they felt it was a disgraceful sin that it shouldn't have intended to use that particular piece of equipment and I mean not only people that worked in that particular area but they wanted to bring in complaints about other trucks and other little things where brakes were failing and all of this. Truck was supposed to be fixed today and tomorrow you go out and push the brakes and it is the same situation.

David Yellin- Now can you remember, getting back to something what the situation was surrounding the decision to withhold services. Did you call for a motion did somebody call from the floor? Can you remember this, I am trying to recreate the scene.

T.O. Jones- What happened was when we returned back we called a meeting to order and one of the men of the committee made his report.

David Yellin- Do you remember who that was?

T.O. Jones- No I don't. After this report was made it was put before the membership what the decision would be. And the decision was made through a motion, it was seconded and everybody declared that this was it.

David Yellin- Did they shout or raise their hands?

T.O. Jones- Well let's just be real honest with it I have never worked in a group of men that were as eager as to get something for themselves as these men were. They had been waiting for the time when they could withhold services so they could improve their conditions and paycheck. They had been waiting for that. In 1966 they didn't get it, back in 1960 when somebody come in and started with them they didn't get it and you know it come to the point where they had followed and they had begun to trust someone and that someone was me. And I just could not, I could not tell those men anything but the way I seen it.

David Yellin- So that if anybody would have been there that night they would have seen that right there that night was a group of men that were willing to stay out 66 days and go through whatever.

T.O. Jones- Yes and I think, I don't think that there was no question about it that I think that anyone followed the strike, I think they can tell you that these men were anxious to get what they were looking for they were anxious to get a union, they wanted a union they were concerned about having a union and they were willing to stay out there another 65 days for it.

Joan Beifuss- Well they would have had to have been the very fact that they went out without any promise of money for support or anything.

T.O. Jones- Well we knew, it was discussed that bills were going to accumulate and notes weren't going to get paid and all of this and they said they were willing not take the chance, and they have always sent the sacrifice, and they were willing to sacrifice and they did sacrifice.

David Yellin- Even though let me put it this way and see if this is right. Even though they didn't discuss all these things in the meeting that night it had been discussed enough and it was in their minds and everybody knew it and it was implicit that it would be so.

T.O. Jones- True.

Joan Beifuss- Then did you stay up meeting all night part of you or did you go home to bed or what?

T.O. Jones- Well they went home and went to bed and some of them stayed with me. I have always had men that were close to me and what I call Lieutenants and they have myself went and drank coffee and discussed our involvement.

David Yellin- Excuse me one thing we have forgotten back in Mr. Blackburn's office did you put those clothes on?

T.O. Jones- I did.

David Yellin- Can you explain that please?

David Yellin- Naturally I was going to jail I thought and I did have some clothes with me and I did tell him this was going to be a decision that I knew I was going to be in contempt of court and I was there.

David Yellin- So what did you do.

T.O. Jones- I had some khakis and a jacket that I changed into.

David Yellin- Where?

T.O. Jones- Right there in his office.

David Yellin- You mean you took your shirt off?

T.O. Jones- This is true.

Joan Beifuss- What did he do when you did that?

T.O. Jones- Well he said this wasn't necessary nobody was going to have me arrested and he stayed to that I must confess because this is one commitment he made.

David Yellin- But you did a strip tease and then you put clothes on without any music you did that.

T.O. Jones- Without any music. I had music 8 or 9 hundred men that was enough music for me.

David Yellin- And then he, right you went back to the men you had your khakis on.

T.O. Jones- Really you know this sounds more like a comedian act.

David Yellin- No, no, no.

T.O. Jones- But it is a fact that they had this injunction pending against us and the city didn't do but one thing when they didn't react on the strength of that injunction. They showed us that the law was no good? It was phony. I mean I might be wrong for saying it and there might have been things they could have done but why didn't they do it, Now the same as they worked in good faith by not having someone arrested they could have worked in good faith and come to an agreement.

David Yellin- Did Mr. Blackburn ever say to you, remind you of the injunction or did you, you were the first one who brought it up?

T.O. Jones- I told him because I felt that I knew they had discussed it in their executive session.

David Yellin- Who discussed it?

T.O. Jones- I would say the mayor and...

David Yellin- How did you know that?

T.O. Jones- Well I just imagine they would, they should.

David Yellin- Well why would they have done it had there been no indication of a strike or a with holding of services.

T.O. Jones- I think they knew, I think they knew that it was building up that it was coming, I am a believer.

David Yellin- Yes, but why? Why do you thin, why do you say this?

_T.O. Jones- Well you catch, the situation had prolonged and prolonged and prolonged. Alright now let's say the mayor. The mayor was a mayor when this thing first started. Now over here in the center he see it hasn't let up and he was able to come back and get re-elected and I had many conferences with the mayor before he got one vote, many conferences. About which way we were going to go with this thing. He wouldn't commit himself.

Joan Beifuss- Before he got elected when?

T.O. Jones- In this last election. I met with him many times.

Joan Beifuss- With Lobe?

T.O. Jones- Yes out at his headquarters, I met with him and he wouldn't commit himself either way. He said he wasn't going to make no deal no kind of way. That is good, that is alright. Now this wasn't something that just struck the city of Memphis, like a cyclone or something, a hurricane.

David Yellin- You feel that they knew this was eminent.

T.O. Jones- They knew it was imminent.

David Yellin- Do you know of any time that they met, did any of your information come to you that the mayor met with his attorney or met with his advisors?

T.O. Jones- We knew there was some meetings going on and we knew that the subject, we knew that he possible union thing was discussed in meetings I will go that far to say.

David Yellin- So would you say then that Mr. Blackburn was there and his hands were kind of tied would that be a fair approximation? Or unfair?

T.O. Jones- I still say as I stated his hands were tied to a pint but I think as being a man who had been in management where the people were working he could look at the atmosphere and tell what was there.

David Yellin- Now you understand we are not defending or offending anybody.

T.O. Jones- No no I know that you are not prodding I know.,

David Yellin- Do you think it might have been a kind of a, in your mind let's say and this is not a criticism but you had been dealing with mayor Lobe, Mr. Ferris and Mr. Sisson they were all commissioners and here was this guy in the same position as far as you were concerned but he was below a commissioner he was just, so he did not have the same maneuverability.

T.O. Jones- He did not have the maneuverability but I think he had foresight whereas he could see that something was going to come up on this city and something could be done about it and it was through his office that it could be done. Whether the mayor liked it or not, there was things that the mayor had not wanted to be passed down in the council but they passed because they felt it was the best interest of the community.

David Yellin- Can I ask you something? If Mr. Blackburn had said to you, well look I have (muffled)...

T.O. Jones- (Muffled)

David Yellin- Mr. Blackburn had said to you on Sunday night your committed and you I have now heard what you said, I am not in a position to do anything about this, let me go to the mayor and whomever the city council and the mayor and let me see what UI can do I will explain the situation and we can discuss it I will get back to you Tuesday morning what would the men....

T.O. Jones- The director of public works he wasn't concerned with doing that he wouldn't give us anything...

David Yellin- Well suppose he had?

T.O. Jones- Well if he would have given us in writing.

David Yellin- In writing and giving you what?

T.O. Jones- A letter of intent.

David Yellin- Just saying that he would consider it?

T.O. Jones- A letter of intent detailing what he was going to do.

David Yellin- Suppose he had given you a letter...

T.O. Jones- What his recommendation was going to be.

David Yellin- Well suppose he had just said I fully intend to recommend a further consideration or further investigation whatever the terms are would that have satisfied you?

T.O. Jones- We would have wanted it in a contest where the union would be recognized and also we wanted a and b paragraphed what his intent and purpose was then and we would have wanted to give him and exchange of letter what our intent and purpose would have been.

David Yellin- But you could have done all of that in a meeting with him?

T.O. Jones- If he would have agreed and we could have worked it out yes.

David Yellin- What I am trying to get at...

T.O. Jones- But this would have had to been at this point on that particular night would have had to have been done and the only thing was a settling point is if we had an exchange of letter and it would have had his signature on it.

David Yellin- But would it have been enough for him to say...

T.O. Jones- No is word wouldn't have been enough.

David Yellin- Enough for him to write that I intend to talk this over with the mayor.

T.O. Jones- No.

Joan Beifuss- you wanted a real commitment.

T.O. Jones- We wanted a commitment you see when you just get something like this is nothing at all.

David Yellin- but suppose he is not in a position to do this, let's assume?

T.O. Jones- The director of public works is in a position he was in a position at that time, it was just whether he wanted to take responsibility.

David Yellin- How do you know this though? Suppose the mayor had told him to do nothing?

T.O. Jones- The mayor is possibly told him to do nothing but the director of public works he must look at the broad scope of the public and he must look when something happen what effect it is going to have on the public. He must be able to tell the mayor without any questions or reservations what is coming then of the mayor's decision is that this must no be I think he should let the mayor be the one.

David Yellin- you see you have another situation here though, you have a mayor who purports to know more than his director of public works about the situation.

T.O. Jones- This is the problem, this is the problem, he knows more about it actually sure he does, let's face it from experience.

David Yellin- What I am getting at...

T.O. Jones- But when it come sot the real fact of about what is about to happen in the city he doesn't know.

David Yellin- But is there credence to the ought hat this guy was in a bind.

T.O. Jones- He was in a bind to a degree you see...

David Yellin- He had no authority to move anyway.

T.O. Jones- Let's recall commissioner Sisson, Commissioner Sisson could have broke from the bind he was supposedly been in he possibly would have been mayor one day if he had kept his commitment no question about that. The same thing about director Blackburn.

David Yellin- I am taking the case just to try to see how it holds up/

T.O. Jones- I understand.

David Yellin- I try to hold up because we know now a little bit more about he mayor and the climate that is what we are getting at. Here is a fellow who knows nothing about he job.

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled).

David Yellin- He is in it for a month.

T.O. Jones- He didn't know anything about his job.

David Yellin- He was a lumber man.

T.O. Jones- What I am saying is this what I am saying not we, but what I am saying this man knew when he took the oath of obligation and responsibility that was the threat of the union here and the mayor knew it when he took the oath of obligation ad responsibility.

David Yellin- But did he know the consequence.

T.O. Jones- But he didn't know what the consequences were going to be, neither of them and a lot of people in Memphis thought this would happen. You know you might not want to say it but you didn't think it would happen maybe if you were here. And other people didn't think it would happen because number one they felt that negros in this department had been treated the way they have been treated so long that they had not awakened to the fact..

David Yellin- See now we are getting a the fact of what we are trying to get at you see.

T.O. Jones- This is it they figured that the (muffled) ad these men wouldn't stand up for themselves, and this is the reason hwy and one of the reason why and not to cut you but this is one reason why they didn't drag the international into it this time

because if we brought the international into it this would have gave the two head authorities an opportunity to get t heir heads together against these men down there and this is unfair to these men.

David Yellin- In other wards, right so that the business as usual you knew or felt and the men sitting there in that hall knew it was no longer business as usual and what stunned Memphis, the mayor and all these people that these were not the men we knew yesterday.

T.O. Jones- That's right in other words they are saying these men are 1968 who are the same person on the job are not the men of 1958 that I begun with.

David Yellin- That I was benevolent too.

T.O. Jones- There minds have changed, they are wanting more now.

David Yellin- And they weren't aware of it. Now is it possible in Christian charity to say this was just ignorance of the situation?

T.O. Jones- By the head official?

David Yellin- Yeah.

T.O. Jones- Well I wouldn't say ignorance because I feel that there was...

David Yellin- I mean ignorance in a sense that they didn't know that this change?

T.O. Jones- I would not use the word ignorance I would say that they had no belief. They weren't ignorant to he facts of what was wrong, they weren't ignorant to that, it wasn't ignorance you couldn't call it ignorance but they had no belief that these men would stand up as they did.

David Yellin- Yeah well awareness, maybe ignorance maybe, you think of ignorance as a bad word I don't mean it that way you know.

David Yellin- Yeah well I understand you. You know that they were not aware that it was possible for these men to change.

T.O. Jones- I told you it is possible I will have to deal with these same people again and I don't want to be in a situation where they say you said that we were ignorant.

David Yellin- No I said it.

T.O. Jones- Well I am saying see if I repeat it.

David Yellin- I meant ignorance it he sense of not knowing, I don't mean in the this as....

T.O. Jones- I just thin they made bad judgment on the problems.

Joan Beifuss- I remember it being said at that time that a great many of the public works employees were older men they were not young.

T.O. Jones- A great many of the public works department does have elder men.

Joan Beifuss- Men with families and so...

T.O. Jones- You have got men with families and they have grandchildren and things like that, this is true.

Joan Beifuss- I think that is one of the things that surprised the city that the older men would...

David Yellin- I think right here we have a very kind of basic thing happening in what you are saying. That a world changed and some people involved in the world weren't aware of it and when they discovered it, it was a shock to them.

T.O. Jones- That's exactly what I mean.

David Yellin- And you know when people are shocked they are frightened and I am not trying to excuse.

T.O. Jones- This is true, this was thing that did shock Memphis, it did shock Memphis and it didn't take me by no surprise because I had been dealing with them.

David Yellin- Right you were living with it all the time.

T.O. Jones- In other words I am living with it all the time.

David Yellin- Plus the fact that you were always pointing in that direction.

Joan Beifuss- I wonder if the men themselves knew how far they had come in 5 years or 6 years you know.

T.O. Jones- The thing about it is like this, it is just like putting a baseball team together you know you have got to weed out...

David Yellin- A basketball team like last night Memphis state didn't know they were that good. I don't know that they are but they didn't know it.

T.O. Jones- They didn't really realize.

David Yellin- They didn't realize it and now they have won.

T.O. Jones- Well it is the same with these men they didn't realize they could do this.

David Yellin- Right.

T.O. Jones- But they were willing to sacrifice for it and I think it was a just situation and I felt hat...

David Yellin- I mean by the same token would you..

T.O. Jones- I think the benefits they have gotten out of this it really wasn't enough.

Joan Beifuss- You have a great admiration for those men didn't you.

T.O. Jones- I still have and I think they have one for me.

David Yellin- Now ok we are coming, we don't have too many minutes more on this tape Joan are there some questions here.

Joan Beifuss- There are some questions here, but I want to ask in the morning how did you get the word out to all the employees?

T.O. Jones- In regards to the work stoppage?

Joan Beifuss- Yes.

T.O. Jones- Well the men who were there at the hall when we returned I am pretty sure that they spread the word well.

Joan Beifuss- And did you have people that (muffled) in the morning telling them?

T.O. Jones- No.

David Yellin- Was there...

Joan Beifuss- Well did some of them come into work then and then go right back out again.

T.O. Jones- Some men did go to work and some found it other people weren't going and found out what was actually going they left.

Joan Beifuss- The foremen who were there did they know this was going to happen?

T.O. Jones- No. not unless someone called them that Sunday night and told them a decision had been made which I wouldn't say that there wasn't someone that didn't call them, I am sure somebody called somebody.

Joan Beifuss- Well then where did your men go in the morning when they didn't go to work did they go down to the union hall?

T.O. Jones- (Muffled) that is where ewe began meeting at.

David Yellin- Mr. Jones, Bayard Ruston came here, before he strike, the week before the strike was called.

T.O. Jones- Came in when?

David Yellin- Bayard Ruston, February 6th.

T.O. Jones- Yeah.

David Yellin- And he made a speech, do you recall he spoke about and you know he at that time and still is now he believes I trade union and he spoke about the negro and labor cooperation was there any connection really?

T.O. Jones- No sir.

David Yellin- Most people didn't hear him you think?

T.O. Jones- I am sure they didn't.

David Yellin- Were you part of the program?

T.O. Jones- No.

Joan Beifuss- You know that was one of the charges that was made early on too that Bayard Ruston had secretly come in and manipulated.

T.O. Jones- Well this is not true I would like to clarify the fact that Mr. Ruston has no connection with the 1733 what so ever, I never had a conversation by phone or a personal one period as of today.

David Yellin- So what you would say then that what he was saying was true and what you did only bore it out butt here was no direct connection.

T.O. Jones- I would like for this to make this historic event clear the things that went on in Memphis Tennessee no national figure had anything to do with it. I would also like to make it clear that things that went on in Memphis Tennessee no other labor union had anything to do with it. This was the doing of the men of the public works department themselves. We had no advisors come in on that night we had not contacted nobody on a committee and said what do you think we should do it has been charged that Leon Shephard that he was behind this, this is not true, The only thing Mr. Shephard has done is give us his support, he opened his building to us and he gave us a place to meet.

Joan Beifuss- Who is Leon Shephard?

T.O. Jones- He was the executive secretary and treasurer of his local 1529. And he stood in our corner when other people turned their backs on us and I am talking about black people. When they told us we should go back to work, ministers told us we should go back to work, we had one minister come and get on his knees to Leon and tell him to put us out.

David Yellin- But 68?

T.O. Jones- No this is back in 63, 1963.

David Yellin- When you first went.

T.O. Jones- The minister he come and got on his knees begging to put us out. Told him no I am not going to put them men out.

David Yellin- Did any of them come in 68 and beg you to go back to work any of the ministers?

T.O. Jones- No, mostly the support we had gotten Mr. (muffled) had come to be of in community involvement of the situation and we had beautiful response from the community both black and white who were concerned. A lot of people like to leave out things you know but I like to say for the side of the whites that we had wonderful cooperation and I tried to carry myself in a way where I would have that and not to be the strong in the position where I wanted to help the men but because of my leadership they wouldn't help them.

Joan Beifuss- Mr. Jones I want to go back tot hat morning again the strike started. Then how did Jerry Worth?

T.O. Jones- a newspaper called Washington...

Joan Beifuss- And then Wroth called you?

David Yellin- The local paper here?

T.O. Jones- Yeah, the newspaper here called Washington and Jerry told Champa to call me and Champa called me the director of organization.

Joan Beifuss- What did Champa say?

T.O. Jones- He got nasty dirty strike down there in Memphis. I said that is right. he called me in Bill Ross's office and he wanted to know what who was all about. I told him and he said we can get you some help in there.

David Yellin- Did he say anything against your calling your strike?

T.O. Jones- Well, no.

David Yellin- Let's put it (muffled) did he give you hell for doing it?

T.O. Jones- No, no, I never caught hell for it I knew it (muffled) I knew that.

David Yellin- Well how did you know that?

T.O. Jones- I worked for them long enough I think I know.

David Yellin- Yeah, which paper was it incidentally do you recall?

T.O. Jones- I don't know which one it was, but one of the reporters called...

David Yellin- Did he call that morning?

T.O. Jones- You see, this is the situation, he called before 1:00 our time, about 1:00 our time. What happened is this, newspapers and myself we just don't hit it. Like the situation that we got here now with the retail clerks I think the newspaper reporter wants to know anything he should contact Mr. Shephard. You see, I don't have anything to give them and this is something that really hurts you when you get into these newspapers and things you expose yourself and you said things that you don't realize things you have said.

David Yellin- You are not equating us with newspapers are you?

T.O. Jones- No.

David Yellin- Ok whatever...(Tape End)