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Bill Thomas- This is tape 2, tape 2 of Calvin Taylor. And now we were at the election, Mr. Willis had lost.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and like I said we hadn't gone out into the black communities, into the middle class black communities and worked you see. So these people they just beat us, they just beat us. Lobe's political know how paid off and Ingram lost.

Bill Thomas- I would assume that Ingram was splitting the black community vote at that time.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah so what happened though after the election you caught black people saying things, this is when we started getting some backlash. We caught people saying things like I the first place Willis took the money to run, he didn't care anything about us he wanted the money. It is kind of bad that when a black man gets a few dollars in his pocket he becomes the one that nobody likes anymore because to be one of us you got to poor like the rest of us. So he took the money and they knew for a fact that Memphis just wasn't ready for a black mayor as far as they were concerned. Now we didn't know we didn't, we had the kind of feeling that Hatcher had last night. Memphis may not be ready for a black mayor but ready or not here we come. This is the philosophy that Willis had that all of his backers had, that we had. That we were going to make it be a black mayor whether the white people liked it or not. We didn't realize that the black people in the community weren't ready for a black mayor that is what it amounted to, they were just not ready for a black mayor. Number one reason that they just deeply and sincerely felt that Memphis was not ready for a black mayor that they would never have a black mayor it his decade anyway. Added to that Willis did the rumor was out that Willis took the money which was a lie.

Bill Thomas- Made the paper?

Calvin Taylor- Yes made the paper and so they didn't like it that was a personality thing, plus the fact that Willis was somebody he had some money he had made it on his won to the house of representatives and become a leader you know and the people didn't like it. Older people who really have hang ups on personalities who believe in the bible and all of this, we were getting backlash from everybody. If you people hadn't run Ingram would have won and like that we would have had us a mayor. In other words black people in this city were not ready for a black mayor but ready for a white mayor liberal and as far as we are concerned there is no such thing as a white mayor liberal or a white liberal anyway. A cat cannot be liberal and the reason we say that a cat cannot be liberal is because he is useless if he is liberal his society doesn't accept him the white society won't have him and there is not a damn thing he can do for us because we are getting tired of all this help from the outside, we believe in self help. We don't want white people sitting there and saying ok let me show you how to do this. We don't need that. We would rather fall down 50 million times and have it learned and have done it ourself than have someone show

us the way. So if we aren't going to let you show us the way and your people aren't going to let you be influential anymore because as far as they are concerned you have become a nigger lover than as far as we are concerned we have no sue for you. You ain't got no use for yourself you ought to go home and go to bed as far as we are concerned.

Bill Thomas- Were ineffectual?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah. So we you know liberals don't mean anything they are nobodies they are non-entities as far as we concerned. And that is just our opinion of them now, so anyway we were getting all this backlash people saying we ran...

Bill Thomas- After the tape let me point out something to you.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah, we ran into all this kind of talk about we would have had this mayor if you people hadn't run Willis. Willis wasn't no good anyway all he wanted was the money. This sort of stuff, there was no way we could combat it. Willis was a little hurt because he kind of figured that the people were ready,. Black people were about to get together and really upset the south you know and he was somewhat bitter because Willis didn't have to run for mayor. He could have sat there right in the house of representatives and continued a good sleep of work and he would have been in there now. But it is just that old thing man black people you get to going and doing some thing and black people just cannot understand it they will just not see it at all. Well when that happened our organization was getting backlash and then the riff came within the organization. The black organizing project split. The split came about now you asked me a few moments ago where we were getting the money we were operating from and I told you we were chipping it in?

Bill Thomas- Yeah.

Calvin Taylor- Ok, Coby had his college savings saved up to go to school for one year because he felt this was very important he was using his college money for transportation and buying the things that we needed and the scholarship I don't know what happened to it, it just wasn't there anymore. Now it wasn't grade wise that it wasn't there I don't know maybe his character was becoming reputable or something, but anyway when we started working for Willis it was an understanding that the money Coby had put in to keep up going and the money that everyone else had chipped in to keep everything else going would be returned to those persons. There was no account kept of whether or not you, I mean like we gave out (muffled) to go downtown and see somebody. Or \$2 if you needed a notepad or wanted to buy lunch or something. There was no thing kept, whatever Coby was missing from his education particularly, we were particularly interested in his, not the fact because I had a job I was going to pay for mine I was saving for mine and doling in money too and it didn't really amount to that much but whatever Coby lost he was to get back because Willis had been signed onto his campaign and we were to get paid what campaign workers would be paid and although what the campaign workers were to be paid was not enough to pay, to make up the remainder of Coby's education

money the members of the group would give it to him so he could get to school. Ok. When Willis lost and we were getting all t his backlash we started having petty arguments among each other about this and about that. It didn't make sense the whole argument of the location came up again and that is how it got started. Someone brought up the fact that ok we have to go too far man to get out to Coby's, let's cease it Coby ain't doing nothing anyway but making speeches to the white folk and we were getting into the bag now that we going to cease making speeches and go on to step 2 of the program. Coby was making the speeches and he was getting a few white people to donate money to the cause and he wasn't keeping it in his pocket he was giving it to the cause and we were going to have this money we were going to replace his education money and all.

Bill Thomas- Also if he had spent his education money in the cause.

Calvin Taylor- That is what I am saying it seemed the only right thing to do brothers you know we are brothers. Well they started this business about location, Willis lost and got bitter and made his statements on the thing and we got back lash from him. He said now people were trying to say I was in cahoots with the black power boys. Well to save political face he had to deny all this. Because you can't take an extremist stand in politics so he had to deny all this plus the fact that he hadn't made any speeches against Lobe was further indictment against him. It was just a bad political move on our part. He cut us loose, the city cut us loose, the community cut us loose. Because now people that we had assured people that we could win, we lost and man you just don't lose with black people.

Bill Thomas- They remember.

Calvin Taylor- You see black people are too frustrated that is what they have been living on al there time, hope, that maybe this will be the day you know when I get to heaven all god's children have shoes and then to have it slammed in your face and then have a man you voted for start talking about you. It was bad, it was one of them bad things, it was bad all the way around. It was no way about it and then we started this petty old arguement⁴ about the daggone headquarters came up again, it is too far to go out to Coby's we aren't going, Coby ain't doing nothing but making speeches to the white folk. We got Cabbage, John these people now you understand that here reputations had built up and they really were the leaders because Coby and I were unattached so to speak. I had things I was doing and Coby had things he as doing, all of this for the goo d of the cause but all of it being kind of shuffled around in the revamping of the organization we were having because we were getting ready to go through this other phase. Alright., when the argument came up about the headquarters place the bulk of the people who were Cabbage and on Cabbage's and John's side they went that way. They voted headquarters be moved to South Memphis where the people were any way and where most of the administrative assistants were and things are going alright. Coby I kind of took it a wee bit personal that they would do this to them.

Bill Thomas- After he had put I so much.

Calvin Taylor- After he had done so much. So he became a little bit bitter and they asked that they give him his education money. And then when he asked him for the education money they said well Coby you didn't do no work. He said regardless of whether I did the work I want my money that you promised to give back to me. They said Coby we got things to be doing man, you know you we will give it to you, that is the first thing they said is we will give it you, wait awhile. Coby waited awhile, as he waited the re-organizing was steadily taking place in the south and Coby was steadily being outed so to speak. They were on speaking terms and all this kind of stuff but you could tell there was a problem there. Coby took it up with several people outside of the thing the NAACP and several other persons who were actually aiding us in our endeavors but were doing it on a sort of quiet level you see.

Bill Thomas- Unofficially.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah so after they got headquarters moved people just quit going out Coby's way and because we were going into this other phase they wanted all speech making to stop. Coby didn't know that he wanted the speech making to stop, Coby said he had no way to get to South Memphis now, to attend a meeting every night or every other night. He said it wasn't feasible and said he could meet but one day of the week you know and let that be it. Cabbage and them said ok and we set up a meeting for one day a week you know but all at the same time there are little caucuses being held every day as to what would be done because all the people were concentrated in one area now. Coby was still doing his thing out there I mean his people actually set out a grocery store on the corner of Brown and Springdale, (Muffled) it is all bricked up now it got rebuilt. But it was Coby's boys that knocked it out, bombed it out left it laying flat, that shattered the cops that kept up the work that kept up the business.

Bill Thomas- Did Cabbage know about this?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah Cabbage and them on the other side of town doing the same thing and are still doing it today. You read about all these fires on Parkway...

Bill Thomas- No, I remember Coby was still going good.

Calvin Taylor- That is what I am saying but that Coby was going on his own now and in a sense it was rather bad because it was not in keeping with the new policy being formed. And because Coby was, I was telling him but Coby as I say he was taking it sort of as a personal thing. I was telling him one brother to another, dig it baby one of us got to stay in cahoots with these folk. So I was going to be liaison. I took it upon my own alright I am going to stick with Cabbage then now because I live in south Memphis anyway I will see about it and I will let you know about it. Well pretty soon they started linking me with Coby, you are Coby's friend. Coby ain't doing nothing for us you better tell him to quit making all those speeches or else we are going to have to waste him. I said don't you all I am just trying to get them to remember that Coby is the actual man that put this thing on its feet to start with, Well that didn't work, Coby didn't get his money to go to school and they kicked him out, they just

told him Coby look you didn't do anything because during the campaign Coby couldn't do that much work anyway because he was going to summer school. They said alright Coby man you didn't do any work you don't get no money man I am just sorry you just lost it. They had become organized and unified enough now to actually come get down to business and say we ain't giving it to you. Coby didn't put up no argument he said that is ok if that is the way you want it to be then that is the way you want it to be.

Bill Thomas- That is kind of too bad.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and he wanted to keep on working for the movement. Well they said Coby if you are going to keep on working of the movement you got to come in and listen now. You know, no longer do you make the speeches man you speak when we say speak and Coby didn't like it. He told me he didn't see why, I said if you don't see why then go and don't let us see you no more around here and you better quit making speeches because you are messing us up now and if you don't you know like I said they said they were going to waste him ad kept telling me to talk to him. I kept trying another friend of mine who works in the civil rights commission office who was a good friend of Coby's who understands....you know doctor you probably talked to him.

Bill Thomas- Bobby?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and we always, we kept telling John and Cabbage look man it is a brother you don't leave a brother out in the cold especially a brother that has worked as hard as Coby worked, you don't do that to a brother. But they couldn't see that he had done that much. Cabbage had his degree and everybody else had dropped out of school, they just weren't interested in education they just dropped altogether. Well there it was black organizing project split, no togetherness any more. John and Cabbage and them went on to work on phase 2 which meant they would steadily handle now more active demonstrations and (muffled). And just to really give them what they needed for more active demonstrations was that sanitation strike.

Bill Thomas- So the organization Calvin had split just prior to the strike.

Calvin Taylor- Just prior to the strike right after Willis had lost and everybody we started feeling backlash and all that crap and they kicked the men out. They didn't kick me out they kept me around they knew that they needed me, I still worked at the paper. So they didn't need to kick Calvin out and that is why I am still around today. I am very quiet, very observant so I don't worry about it. I know they are going to come to me sooner or later Calvin can you do this for us and that is why I am still in. Well that is dismal because Coby is back in now and I will tell you how he got there. But anyway...

Bill Thomas- Ok the sanitation strike.

Calvin Taylor- Ok phase 2 was coming up demonstrations man, and a few threats now we got to put some of that stuff into action and to make matters really beautiful, to sanitation men strike. Black people didn't like Lobe no how they took it as a personal...(Tape Break)

Calvin Taylor- So anyway black people didn't like Lobe they sort of took it as a personal attack on them that Lobe wouldn't want to pay these people higher wages and offer them some benefits. Cabbage and John took it and said ok here we go, we now got us something to be demonstrating for because to start with we were going to start in on a general thing police brutality. But the garbage sector strike was there so let's use it. Willis and all of us sort of kept out of it.

Bill Thomas- Really?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah they didn't get into it political careers I guess, Willis was still hung up over losing the mayor's election sitting back and saying now I told you so you didn't vote for me and you got that segregationist and now look what you got on your hands. So we started demonstrating on behalf of the sanitation workers and assaying we weren't going back to work and to help them out a little bit we would bomb a place here and there or blow a sanitation truck or something you know, anything just to keep the men behind themselves. About this time the ministers interceded and the NAACP which had lost to the Shelby county democratic club in leadership and Shelby county democratic club in turn just after the election had lost their leadership. The ministers had formed an alliance and had several persons from both political factions working for them. And now we had new black leaders in the city head by Jim Lawson and Kyles, and H. Ralph Jackson, and all of these people.

Bill Thomas- How did the, Calvin how did the fellows feel about Lawson by this time?

Calvin Taylor- About Lawson? Well I mean the fellows felt about Lawson like as if he was just another black brother who had his thing to do we understood it and respected it but if he ever got in the way he could go to just like everybody else he wasn't really one of us. You know that was the way they felt. But now Lawson had gotten together with the ministers and promised the ministers, I mean promised the sanitation workers that if you don't go back to work we will pay everything that has to be paid and Lobe got tough where his ultimatum about don't come back to work you lost your job.

Bill Thomas- Right.

Calvin Taylor- Sanitation workers jumped up and hollered we quit. There was all kinds of legal hassle over whether or no they quit, fired, thrown out or whatever, were they on legal strike illegal strike. You can read all about that but the point is that black people had one more time to come out on top, to really beat the white man..

Bill Thomas- they had one more chance.

Calvin Taylor- They had one more chance, and now it was really now or never really do or die. I think it is the most beautiful time I have ever seen black people really united. God almighty man black people all over the city there wasn't nothing going on but the sanitation strike, They didn't care if you were a black power militant if you were an uncle tom, if you were behind the sanitation strike you were a brother. Come on into the house, really if you think...

Bill Thomas- So everybody sort of buried the hatchet during this time.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and here it was get Lobe and take the white community with him, get every last one of them. And I mean we don't need to lie about it they didn't give a doggone about what white person it was if it was a white person out there marching with us everyday but they all of a sudden slowed up and said look maybe we need to slow down. Take him out because he ain't with us all the way. You are either with us all the way or not with us at all, none of this other crap. We had quite a few white people with us all the way it was kind of surprised by it. So when Lawson and then formed the little minister's alliance and started getting the NAACP and all these other people to dole out money to help the sanitation strike workers to remain on strike to keep the issue out in front, we were right there working, We went to Lawson and we told him who we were., We had split into two groups, Coby came in with a group out of north Memphis that did more than what Cabbage, what Cab's group did. Cab came in with a group from south Memphis and Coby's group that wanted to lay down in front of trucks man. Back in the old days of SNICK.

Bill Thomas- Well the were quite a number of even black and white students from Southwester.

Calvin Taylor- Southwestern that is Coby, Coby had brought them in. And Coby, you see Coby had never felt that we should keep white people out of it. Coby and I sort of thought alike and if you going down and if you tell me anything about (muffled) philosophies. Now if you want to go into a philosophy thing that I had, that I have rather that Coby has and how we sort of think then you can understand how we really cannot and do not hate all white people but how John and Cab do but nit is just a difference of philosophies, but I won't go into that. We could talk about that for awhile. But anyway, Coby went to Lawson whom he knew well and told him ok I got my people here man I am ready to go whenever you say go and Lawson was grateful. The NAACP brought in their people and there isn't nothing like black ministers they will bring you to church man and you can set 9it up on any corner 20,000 people any day you want it. They can do it, I don't know how they do it but they do it. So it was just they all got together, Cab and them came in and they decided they were going to work too all for the sanitation strike. Cab then brought in the 3rd element. This was phase 2, of the black organizing project. First we organized and let people know we were here and try to work with them. Then we use the invader the arm, the militant arm to make people just a wee bit afraid so that we can push things. Let it be known right now that the invaders ain't never in their life thought about burning down the city of Memphis. They said it could be done but

why burn it down? We got to live here. They don't need to burn it down but to keep people hopping keep them afraid and slowly...

Bill Thomas- Wondering.

Calvin Taylor- Slowly as wondering yeah they will relinquish things as they go on contrary to what white people think that they are going to run out on the streets and run rampid. So anyways the strike was there and we were all there and we were all working again. Lobe was making his little ultimatum everyday and we were doing our thing everyday you know and the confrontation just kept up day after day.

(Tape Break)

Bill Thomas- What we might do Calvin is go ahead unless you can think of, well as I take it the black organizing project was just at that point just apart of the whole movement to support the strikers and this sort of thing. Well then did, well I tell you I know that the youth at some point came in and was Hal Middlebrooke working with them.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah Middlebrooke was working for. You see now the way it was the minister's alliance included several ministers it included reverend Middlebrooke and H. Ralph Jackson. Now these people kind of worked out of the AME building the AME minimum salary building over on Hernando next o Clayborne Temple and this was where they were having the meetings every night, Clayborne Temple they were having the meetings every night at Clayborne Temple to map strategy and al of this. Well as the sanitation strike went on and began to prolong and looked as if it would never get settled black organizing project got together again all over and started a new.

Bill Thomas- As a unit in itself?

Calvin Taylor- Yes, but Coby still wasn't in at this time the man was still out though.

Bill Thomas- Well while the meetings what did the, did the black organizing project, did this group were they meeting right along with COME, this is the ministers group, or were they meeting separately or how does that work?

Calvin Taylor- I am trying to get it exactly right. COME was made up of several organizations around the city church and social organizations, civic organizations that were supporting the strike. And because at this point threats were being made on Lobe's life and there was some violence in the city, well it is not violence compared to what was going on elsewhere but there was things like rock throwing (muffled), things such as that and the city was you know real tense. So to keep this down reverend Lawson and H. Ralph Jackson and the rest of them had formed the minister's alliance felt that it would be good to have some so called militants or black power boys as they call us sit in on the committee on the general board of directors on COME.

Bill Thomas- SO there would be some communication involved?

Calvin Taylor- Yes some communications you know and it would (muffled_ some kind of togetherness, these were strategy sessions and Cabbage was elected our man to sit in on the board in other words he was president of policy making session. And he would relate to us what went down at the policy making session and what his strategy was at that point you know.

Bill Thomas- And did they have areas of responsibility?

Calvin Taylor- No there were no areas of responsibility, you mentioned a moment ago about Harold Middlebrooke. Now Middlebrooke is a young minister, very young and he is capable of handling youngsters. Students you see. And there were quite a number in other words the strategy had taken on a picket form there were going to be every day demonstrations you know from one end of Main to marches and all this sort of stuff. SO when the strategy took on the picket form Middlebrooke is the one in charge of the youngsters who were on the picket lines who really made up most of the picket lines, sanitation workers. The workers and their wives and the youngsters really made up the picket lines that is why Lawson and the rest of them simply mapped out strategy for the next day or whatever you see. Such as that all night vigil they were going to have at city hall and all this kind of stuff you know. But we really weren't part of the picketing and we really didn't participate in the picketing, The feeling among us was you know the strike had gone on so long that it was now time to cease this business about picketing. It wasn't really doing very much and to maybe have some boycott or point to another thing in the strike. So they decided to boycott. The boycott I guess worked pretty good, buying stopped and all this kind of business. Cabbage was still sitting in on these strategy sessions and helping form the strategy. Now Cabbage related to us that he was being somewhat left out of the strategy, he wasn't picketing, the boycott was fine with him because this hurt the white man in his pocket and this is what we felt would be more of a blow to them than anything.

Bill Thomas- Well did Cabbage have some ideas in what he thought the ministers weren't receptive too?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah, now Cabbage as I say you see the threat element the fear. I mean white people in the city were afraid. There had been a march and there accused the garbage sanitation workers of trying to overturn a police car and tension was quite high and people had sat in on the city council and refused to leave and everybody got arrested for the people I mean more than for the people.

Bill Thomas- Yeah it was a 170 or something like that.

Calvin Taylor- And you arrest them and put them all in jail you see. And tension was high people thought that something was going to go wrong. Now Dr. King was in outlying areas and Lawson and them were thinking of asking Dr. King to participate in the march. To use Memphis as a focal point for unionizing laborers in the south which would have meant tremendous income to low income people if they had

unions or were members of unions because then union wages and union, well you know how union can make you lose some money man, So they were just thrashing the idea around and this kept us pretty much out of everything except for the fact that we were just participating in the demonstrations and still representing a threat that Lawson would need to sort of make the white man afraid.

Bill Thomas- Kept things sort of in balance.

Calvin Taylor- That was primarily our function and we didn't do very much as far as what we had to say about the sanitation strike we just sort of rallied behind Lawson and his bunch. They got lucky and had Dr. King come to town for a march but it was set up all wrong. We had been trying to talk to reverend Lawson and to tell them you know that if Dr. King comes to town it would be bad because Memphis was not ready for the march.

Bill Thomas- And why did you think that?

Calvin Taylor- Lawson and them were trying to amass something like 20,000 people to march down Main St. That is fine if you are going to have a march but the tension in the city was such that to have 20,000 people march down Main St. all one policemen had to do was look the wrong way and the place would have blown up, people would have started rioting. We felt this way, we didn't think it was time for Dr. King to come to town because we don't think we held out long enough with threats as to what could happen to the city if the garbage strike was not settled.

Bill Thomas- So I don't know of course with what happened when Dr. King came into town, made a speech and then let's see sometime during that evening decided to come back and lead a mass march and then of course everybody knew he was coming back. Now were there some plans to get the youth out for this march what happened to that?

Calvin Taylor- No our strategy was, now we weren't even I mean people won't believe it but the day of the march Cabbage was laying there some 50 miles outside the city, John was at his crib at the newly formed headquarters well with Izzy and G and everybody else doing nothing. All we had was 2 observers down there and I wasn't working that day but I went down just to observe because I really didn't want to participate. This is the way this sort of happened. Lawson and them, they were having trouble convincing King that he should come to the city to lead this march, so they made the whole thing sort of easy for him. They made it appear that all Dr. King had to do is come to the city get in front of the march and walk down Main St. but really it wasn't that way you see. Because prior to all of that we had began stepping up threats, stepping up all activity as far as demonstrations were concerned and Lawson and them were about to not listen to us again as they usually do when something like this happens. They simply ignore the lack power boys by simply saying they can't do that much and whatever they can do let them go on and do it and we will do what we are going to do.

Bill Thomas- But Lawson did think that it was a good idea to have Cabbage in...

Calvin Taylor- On the strategy sessions, this was an attempt to control him but once they found out they couldn't, well the reason they couldn't control Cabbage is because they wouldn't let him have very much to say, and Cabbage represented a large bit of a grassroots people. And John represented all the students in the city in high schools you see. Students were hung up on Stokely Carmichaels and all this kind of stuff, black group revolutionists. They knew they were going to get their names in the paper and on CBS you know sort of like holiday to them. But Lawson and them refused to admit that we were a definite..

Bill Thomas- Element.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah (muffled) I mean you know, very close to the point of explosion. Now..

Bill Thomas- Did somebody tell him?

Calvin Taylor- Yes Lawson knew this but Lawson just overlooked it, he just felt that they really can't do that much so we just won't fool with them. And he led Dr. King to believe he and his staff led Dr. King to believe that there were no black power people in the city who could disrupt his march.

Bill Thomas- Why do you think he did that?

Calvin Taylor- I don't know now, I don't want to seem vindictive. I don't know if the man really wanted Dr. King to come that much here and really make it a national, because it really had become a national issue it was something almost 50 days of a garbage strike. It was definitely a national issue, Dr. King was talking about at the time about labor in the south and all this kind of....and he just felt it was a good thing and it was a good place for him to get a start in Memphis Tennessee. So he invited King and as I understand it King refused to come the first time. He didn't refuse, he just wanted in the schedule so he had to decline. But I think he said that if it was still going on that he would come. Now I am not sure about all of that these are some of the things that I sort of gathered from what Lawson said. So anyway the day that he came to lead the march eh arrived in town the day, did he arrive in town the day before?

Bill Thomas- No, he arrived late that morning remember they held the march up.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah waiting for him but he had been in town previous.

Bill Thomas- So he came in town I guess first just to appear at that mass rally.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah.

Bill Thomas- make a speech and then sometime at that point I will have a work stoppage and come back and lead a mass march and then they set the date for Thursday I forget the date now but that was the snow storm.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah the snow storm.

Bill Thomas- Which was snowed out and then they reset it and that was another Thursday the March 28thg but as I understand it the march was supposed to start at 10....

Calvin Taylor- 10 in the morning.

Bill Thomas- But he was late and it was held up for quite a long time. Tell me this Calvin I don't know at any of the high schools was there any organization there to get them out.

Calvin Taylor- To get he students out to march?

Bill Thomas- Yes.

Calvin Taylor- Well now let me say this. Now Dr. King had asked on the day of the march that there be a general stoppage of black people all over the city of everything. Black teachers don't go to school and teach class, domestic ladies or black maids don't go out tot eh home sin east Memphis, students don't go to school, everyone just do not go to work everyone come down here and march in other words we will hold this city at a stand still.

Bill Thomas- Right, right.

Calvin Taylor- Ok and as I said Lawson had led him to believe that there were no black power elements at all involved in the issue that there were some wild kids there but no black power people. King I guess believed it because he showed up to the march. Now all that morning before the march it is kind of funny but people were restless. The mood just wasn't right, we knew it wasn't right because tensions in the city were just too high, black people weren't about to have anything other than full 100% cooperation from Lobe and that was what they wanted at any and all costs. And there was several as you say there were several youngsters in high school who had been led to believe that this could be the day that we could really turn this city out. Other places were having riots and 20,000 people marching we could really handle it. But no way in the world it could be done. And so the talk began to go around about this. About knocking out so and so or getting that dude or getting this whitey. People were drinking early that morning. People were drinking anything they could get their hands on, several persons were behind the minimum salary building and Centenary, not Centenary but Clayborne Temple you know drinking wine and just really, it was sort of like a festive holiday but just a wee bit different. And they were all really ready for some riots.

Bill Thomas- Then there was an incident out at...

Calvin Taylor- Hamilton High school yeah. This is where it started. Now Lawson and them had ministers go out and ask kids not to go to school and come and participate in the march.

Bill Thomas- So this was the COME organization set up this.

Calvin Taylor- And they were sending people out to get them and all of a sudden students at Hamilton decided we are leaving, we are going down to the march,. Several of the teachers decided that they weren't going. Which brought on friction you see and then one or two of our people were in these schools along with everyone else you know telling these students that they were black and if they had any soul they would be out there at that march regardless of who was principal or what was coming off. In other words the strategy is if only 5 of us leave but if all of us leave there ain't nothing they can do. And so we were trying to get them out and some teachers really didn't want them to go and there was some friction about that. When we came in the building, well not we but some of our people came in the building one of the instructors tried to put us out and the fellows got kind of rowdy and they had to call the police. Well that was the wrong thing to do anytime a policeman shows up in the black community now...

Bill Thomas- (Muffled).

Calvin Taylor- Yeah here they are man they got no business down here to start with. So they began, a bus pulled up at the bus stop and by this time students had began milling around front they were just getting up and walking out of class and getting ready to leave and the police had come over to check into the disturbance of outsiders being in the building and when the bus pulled up people at Hamilton just started breaking the bus.

Bill Thomas- It was a city bus?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah city bus. One young lady got hit in the head by a flying bottle they don't know who threw it or who did it but a big gash over her head and that was when the rumor started that the cops had killed somebody over at Hamilton.

Bill Thomas- There was a girl that was taken to the hospital.

Calvin Taylor- This is the girl only she got hit in the head and she got good. Now some people say that the brick hit the bus and bounced off and hit her in the head. I mean it was a pretty terrible gash but someone just started circulating the rumor that the policemen had killed a girl. Then that was when Lawson and them authorized Cabs to go and pick up the people we will pay you, if you just go and pick them up we will pay you for picking them up. And that was when all students all over the city started leaving and coming down to the march.

Bill Thomas- What did Lawson do at that point?

Calvin Taylor- He didn't do anything, he was still getting the march organized. If you have 20,000 people you have to get them lined up you have to give them instructions on what to do.

Bill Thomas- But why did he authorize the (Muffled).

Calvin Taylor- Why did he authorize the (muffled)? To go get the students.

Bill Thomas- I see.

Calvin Taylor- Because the students were leaving and they weren't getting there fast enough I guess so he was going to get the cabs to go get them. There was also trouble with cars students trying, attempted to leave and teachers didn't want them to go and same thing again, they left. They started doing this everywhere students starting leaving and coming downtown. Well with the rumor going of the girl being killed by the policemen now that is terrible. Black people, now that hurts we have got to do something about this, we cannot take this any longer, I mean all the time the atmosphere was becoming restless and more restless. Our observers could tell that something was going to go today and these cats that were drunk really started of and with the crowd being a spontaneous crowd and the emotions being what they were with the rumors circulating that this is the day to get the whitey that the cops just killed a girl. What could you expect? So when Dr. King arrived everyone massed around him just ran around the man like..

Bill Thomas- They always do.

Calvin Taylor- The great celebrity (muffled). Get up and get an autograph or something I don't know. He asked Lawson, he says Lawson and I...well I will tell it after this. But anyways he asked Lawson to, if it was ok to have the march with the mood being what it was. In other words he could see that it wasn't right, the mood wasn't right people were too restless and the very next day when we had the meeting with him he said they trampled all over my feet you know and these people just weren't organized they weren't ready for a march. They were ready to march but you know not in an orderly peaceful fashion. He immediately recognized it and he had some thoughts of calling it off. But that Lawson kept reassuring him that it would go off. So after getting everyone organized and all that they started the march.

Bill Thomas- Now did you go down, you went down as an observer did you?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah.

Bill Thomas- And where did you go to the church?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah I went to the Clayborne Temple and I was standing outside watching everybody. You know just looking at everything and seeing how it was going and listening to people, and people were walking around and like I said this is the day to get whitey this is going to be our day.

Bill Thomas- (muffled)

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and after a few drinks it didn't take very long to get it done.

Bill Thomas- Let's see we will get them on tape, hey come in here.

Calvin Taylor- Margarite, Margarite. That is my wife I am going to have to kill her one of these days. Margarite we would appreciate it if you would be quiet.

Bill Thomas- So, did you see the trouble break out that day.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah I was trying to get to that. Ok. Let me get back to it. I hope I have set up the atmosphere as one of being restless and people were ready to do this and now you have got a crowd of people that is restless you don't start moving. Because if they start moving they gain a little freedom and it is sort of like a snowball it keeps coming and coming until it reaches a breaking point. They were singing they were shouting you know everybody was here, everybody was there.

Bill Thomas- There were some tough signs too.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah I am a man.

Bill Thomas- Tough signs towards Lobe, SOB...

Calvin Taylor- Oh yeah this will be Lobe's black day and all this sort of stuff. And even the signs were an indication that things were not right to have Dr. King lead this demonstration. So they started moving along you know we had something like 20,000 people or more. Now I am going by the paper estimates which were what in that range 16,000 or 20,000.

Bill Thomas- Yeah they are always estimating low.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah that is what I am saying we got more than 20,000 students in high school.

Bill Thomas- In fact I think the absentees that day were over 10,000. (Muffled)

Calvin Taylor- That is what I am saying I don't know if they all joined the march but even if half of them did we had more people than that. 20,000 people that I know of. Well anyways they started moving the people, the march got started. They were walking along and Dr. King and (muffled) all of them were behind him and in front of him you know sort of forming a circle of protection. He had interlocked the arms as he always did in every march anywhere. And the crowd just kept getting restless and restless it has taken us so long to get here it has taken us so long to get there. Excuse me a minute. (Tape Break) When the march got started the people, I have said it a thousand times, they were just becoming restless so that as it went along the younger people were in the back and the older people were in the front. Consequently there was no protection. Now you got two or three cops standing on the corner. What do 2 or 3 cops look like when they have thousands of people walking in front of them. Although they are holding guns there ain't no way they could win really. I mean these two or three here will suffer they will die if anything gets started, I don't care if they kill two because somebody is going to take their gun and blow their brains out so police were really reluctant to do anything. And as it went along you see, now when I say that we weren't there I mean that none of the leaders were there I told you Cabbage was about 50 miles out of town, John was laying low but there were several, kids have a tendency to anything is a fad with them. Invader jackets and this was one of the things that we really liked, it was

catchy. People who weren't even members of the invaders would put on a jacket and put invaders on it because it made them big, somebody important this is what the talk of the town was, the black power people are here the invaders and at this time we had gone into the other part of the organization and that was having all these local organizations establish on campuses. Like he said Coby brought in people from Southwestern we, Ron Ivy and Ed (muffled) had got together out at Memphis state with one of the black student associations. John was attending and the African American brotherhood and Fields was going to Lemoyne and picking up the NAACP members the younger members over there that hadn't had a chance to voice any opinion and so now they have a new group to work with you know and all these representatives were there but the people behind the people weren't there you see and I was there only as an observer I mean we have to have it written in our history books too the way it actually happened because I know somebody is going to mess it up and say that we went. So when the march got started and when all of the business happened you see just as the march rounded Main and got oh I guess...

Bill Thomas- Main and Beale.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah Main and Beale and all part of the, King and them were probably up near Goldsmith's. Perel and Loeinsteins anyways I know. The young men there the youngsters the Stokely Carmichaels who wanted their names in the paper the next day decided that this was the moment to make the trouble you see and they began breaking out windows and running.

Bill Thomas- Was this a spontaneous thing?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah it was spontaneous. I mean the crowd was restless to begin with, old people as well as young people and just because one little rumor got circulated at Hamilton, one little rumor got circulated in the demonstration. As the march processed the police had to go and ask, not go and ask but go and stop one young man from getting out of line. We were to line up 6 across the street from curb to curb with margins on the side. But one young man took it upon himself to walk on the sidewalk and the police wanted him to get down off the sidewalks. Well the minute they test him he started wrestling with him you see and then all of a sudden the rumors circulated that the cops had shot somebody up here on the front. Now they hadn't shot anyone someone had come along and taken one of the sticks that is holding the signs and broke a window and it may have sounded like a shot. Ok that is when the whole thing broke loose everybody started going wild breaking windows from Perel and Loeinsteins on back. Well immediately Dr. King was protected he was rushed to a car that was waiting. It wasn't waiting it was just someone's car, someone was parked and they asked him would he take Dr. King to the nearest hotel.

Bill Thomas- You didn't see King leave did you?

Calvin Taylor- No I didn't see him because I was still in the back where young kids were talking even more violent talk than what was taking place. In fact the march,

the march had marched from the temple on Hernando two blocks made a left turn on Beale walked a block or two blocks and was up on Main St. and made a right turn on Main and was headed north in the northerly on Main St. I was still back on Hernando when stuff broke out and what I relating to you is what one of the other observers up front said happened. Now he may be lying.

Bill Thomas- But you saw that (muffled) Commercial Appeal entitled chicken of a King?

Calvin Taylor- Oh yeah they called him chicken of a King because Lawson and them were looking out for the man's safety. I mean they had already said they could not lead a demonstration, a peaceful demonstration anyway and there had been several moves, legal technical court moves to get the march, stop the march. But it just wasn't they were just exceeded when he march got started. This was all white people wanted was for the march to erupt into something but now it was not our intention that the march erupt into anything however that we must take part of the blame simply because we represented the element that really did break it but these people were not controlled by us none of our people started it.

Bill Thomas- there was no (muffled).

Calvin Taylor- Many of our people may have participated and many of our people may have put it into other people's head. In fact it was in everyone's head to begin with especially after the rumors started that the girl had gotten shot. That this was the day, and even in the signs, we didn't print the signs, individuals printed their signs and the church, the church printed its own signs. Lobe let my people go and all this, al these things to suggest...

Bill Thomas- Blackburn was doing this, reverend Blackburn.

Calvin Taylor- Violence. These suggest violence. People were angry, people were emotionally upset. Some of the brothers were drunk, not even lying about it. And when things started happening everyone just joined in except for older people who couldn't run or who were too shocked to even know what was going on at the time and as I said I was standing back on Hernando still observing the younger people in the back, the younger people in the back were still talking about violence when actually taking place up front something like 4 or 8 blocks away. So...

Bill Thomas- So how did the...

Calvin Taylor- Well when the violence started the police immediately moved in shotguns and all at the ready you know and people started running. Reverend Lawson and them grabbed King and his staff and all and rushed him to a car had someone take them to the nearest hotel. The quickest way out of the mess now some people claim he could have gone down Union to hotel Peabody, how could he have gone down Union to hotel Peabody when they have 50 million cops standing there and he is going to go in a car? SO the only side street that he had in other words he couldn't go east. So the only way he could go is towards the river which was west

and the only thing on the river was the Holiday Rivermont and that is how they happened to end up at the Holiday Inn in Rivermont with Dr. King. So they got him out of there.

Bill Thomas- This is where the press criticized him for staying in a...

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and the press criticized him for staying in a 28 dollar a day room. So anyway the crowd began running back you know because the young man had broken the window and started circulating the rumors and all these people they just started running backwards rather than running forwards and knocking out windows because they were afraid the policemen might open fire on them and then that meant death but they knew that nothing that was behind them could go if they started a wave in the opposite direction and I think the police sort of felt like we will let him tear up everything in that direction anyway just don't let them come any more forward. So the wave just started coming back and everything from Perel and Loeinsteins back to Main and Beale and down Beale and back to Beale and Hernando, up Hernando and then Up on Beale up to 4th was taken. I mean they knocked out the windows they grabbed clothes. I mean I saw person, I am not going to call his name but the cat broke into Paul's tailoring shop, he walked out he had I guess maybe 15...

Bill Thomas- Suits?

Calvin Taylor- Not suits but those things that the cloth come out of of...

Bill Thomas- Oh bulks of..

Calvin Taylor- Yeah bulks of silk clothing, silk material yeah that is what it is. They broke into the (muffled) men's shop and they had pictures of that in the Commercial Appeal. They had cats jumping out the window carrying suits and shoes, and they cleaned everybody out along there. Pawn shops got smart they boarded their windows up that day, some of them you know. Little guy one guy the liquor store owner on the corner of Hernando and Beale, he was in bad shape because he had nerve to open up that day and then sell liquor that day too. Alright, they cleaned him out on the way back.

Bill Thomas- He hasn't ever reopened either has he.

Calvin Taylor- No he hasn't re opened. There were several persons who were telling the black people not to turn around to keep going, don't let them turn you around.

Bill Thomas- Even towards the end of the march.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah go all the way up to city hall and the youngsters who were in the back who did not get in on the breaking they started forwards to try to get in before everything was done. So you had people running in both directions and things being broken up two ways all the way around. All the police were doing was marching up the street and when it got on Beale the violence really got out of hand and they

started lobbing tear gas. And they tried to say, I even heard one policemen's radio saying talking about back them up to Hernando and don't let them out. This sort of stuff, so there it was Dr. King's...

Bill Thomas- What was going on where you were when the wave reached you?

Calvin Taylor- Oh well I had really, me and the other observer the cat that took the clothe, we had made it up to Beale and Main to see what was happening, because a the time we were standing back on Hernando looking at everybody else. And we were commenting to ourself, man these brothers going to tear this town down today man. And personally I had hoped that if they were going to tear it down they would wait at least until they got to Union so they could take in the First National Banka and take in King's (muffled) take in Carl's Shoe store, take in Goldsmith's, Shaneberg's you know, Gordon's Jewels, Perel and Loeinstein, you know pick something on Main.

Bill Thomas- So if the violence had been planned than this is probably...

Calvin Taylor- This is probably the way it would have happened they would have waited, the violence was not planned, some young punk decided this was h is day to make glory and I mean the crowd and as I say the crowd was restless and when one dude starts it doesn't take 15 minutes to hit everybody else.

Bill Thomas- Because the Main St. stores were virtually untouched.

Calvin Taylor- Virtually untouched and if had been the invaders, if we had done it if we had planned it you better believe there would have been more than breaking going on and sticks because the only weapons that were used were rocks found on the street and the sticks that the signs were nailed too and if anybody else comes up with something different than that they got to be lying. No shots were being fired except by police firing shotgun blasts. When the y backed the thing up to Hernando and Linden several brothers were in the houses throwing Coca-Cola bottles down on the street. A policeman ran up jumped out of his car grabbed his shotgun and a bottle landed in front of him and he pointed in that direction and all of a sudden one landed behind him and before he even looked at what he was firing at he just turned around and fired. He could have killed any number of little kids hanging out the window. On the count of a Coca-Cola bottle. The cops had the arsenal, what the devil did they need to be firing for, that didn't make sense. They had tear gas they had the thing broken up people were running. The only thing that was really happening was somebody was losing windows out they store and liquor stores were losing their liquor because were (muffled). No cars were even being overturned, did you see any cars break? And there were cars parked on the street. They were just hitting windows, nothing but plate glass windows. And throwing coca-cola bottles bricks and sticks and the police are firing shotguns and holding sub machine guns.

Bill Thomas- And there is a lot of gas.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah tear gas everywhere. They claim they weren't bombing the church, they were lobbing it in the church.

Bill Thomas- Did you stay?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah I had to stay then and the other observer with me went to make the report. As if the cat couldn't already hear it on the radio. I had decided then I better do my other official capacity and act as some sort of a newspaper kid or something with some legitimate business near where all the action was taking place.

Bill Thomas- Did you have many problems there?

Calvin Taylor- No, I had a press card and a notebook that I was taking notes in, so I just reversed the whole thing you know I am legitimate I no longer an observer I am just sort of writing for the paper. And not to make matters more beautiful I hooked up with Bob Williams, you know Bob Williams (muffled). They were done and I was walking along with them and police weren't bothering them and as soon as I joined them the police wanted to know what I was doing and Bobby and them even tried to explain to him that I was a newspaper reporter they were going to lie and say he was with us. They asked me...this stupid cop squirted this crap in my face (muffled) they squirted this in my face and smacked me in the head with a blackjack or something.

Bill Thomas- Really?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah knocked me down on the curb Bob Williams, they wanted to know why after all those hearings had started why I didn't have something to say about it. I wasn't interested because I knew what was going to happen next, I am not going to make a show out of one little thing like that when I can take 20 or so cats (muffled). Led a riot. So anyway, that was it the march was just one. The next day everyone started blaming the invaders because that was the catchy name down there and put it on them, they did it because people wearing invader jackets were running, they were throwing bricks, they were knocking out windows. So the next morning Dr. King talked to everyone concerned, talked to Lawson about it. He called us in...

Bill Thomas- Ok now how was that meeting arranged?

Calvin Taylor- How was that meeting arranged? Well we were getting the blame for everything and we were no where near the place, I mean you know, leaders no where near the place. Coby I imagine there was a riot going on because I think he was in New Orleans. And the next morning when we read the papers and the invaders were taking the blame for everything we decided we better straighten this out. We didn't want the blame for that. We didn't want the blame for an already tense situation that just happened to exploded. We couldn't have it so we decided

that we would request a meeting with Dr. King and he was ready to meet us. We knew where he was staying and we knew what it was all about.

Bill Thomas- He wanted...

Calvin Taylor- And he wanted to talk to us. So the next morning it was funny because I was supposed to be taking my wife to graduate from nursing school the first time. Anyway, I didn't do it because we were at this meeting I just forgot about it. We went up to the Holiday Inn Rivermont, I don't remember what room he was in.

Bill Thomas- Who went?

Calvin Taylor- Charles Herrington, myself and Cabbage, Charles Cabbage.

Bill Thomas- Now who is Charles Herrington?

Calvin Taylor- Izzy? Well Izzy is just one of the lieutenants John had picked up. And you see whenever, well he was a student at (muffled), and whenever we did anything we usually handpicked whoever was to go where you see. Charles (muffled) we had him take care of something else and decided that the 3 of us would just go. I had the car, I supplied the transportation plus I was needed anyway to do the (muffled) if it ever needed to be done. Izzy was just a lieutenant who happened to be with us and was good to have along.

Bill Thomas- And this was Friday morning after the mini riot.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah after the mini riot. So we went upstairs and the (muffled) was standing outside the building trying to get in. Dr. King wasn't seeing reporters at that point.

Bill Thomas- He was kind of surprised.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah he was kind of shocked when he saw me this little nice guy from the Commercial now. Walking up here with all this riff raff material.

Bill Thomas- Surprised when you walked into King's room.

Calvin Taylor- So I spoke to him and he asked me where were we going and I told him we were going to see Dr. King. He was rather curious as to how we were going to get in there. Then he immediately phoned and went and told the desk that 3 members of the invaders were visiting Dr. King. We knocked on the door Abernathy answered it. He was undressed, well he was dressed in his undershorts and he says....

Bill Thomas- Abernathy or King?

Calvin Taylor- NO Abernathy was, he asked to throw on his undershorts, and he said ok. Charles told him who we were and I ran to the door first so I knocked on it and Abernathy when he came to the door Cabbage walked up and told him who we were and what we were there for. And Abernathy said wait just a moment and he went

back and told Dr. King who we were and what we were doing. He came back and told us that Dr. King (Muffled) he would see us, he had wanted to see us. So we waited outside.

Bill Thomas- In the hall?

Calvin Taylor- In the hall yeah.

Bill Thomas- Do you remember about what time this was?

Calvin Taylor- No I don't remember what time it was early in the morning.

Bill Thomas- About 7?

Calvin Taylor- No it wasn't that early. It was about 9 or 10?

Bill Thomas- I remember there was a press conference after that.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah it was about, I guess it was about 10. So we waited in the hall and sort of looked at each other to see if minds were running on the same level and all you know and you really couldn't tell. (muffled) watched us very closely.

Bill Thomas- Did he take notes?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah he took notes, so finally Dr. Abernathy opened, I guess it took about 10 minutes, Abernathy opened the door. We went in and he asked us to have a seat and he came out and he was getting dressed and he said that Dr. King was taking a shower and he would be out shortly and in the mean time Dr. King had asked him to go into yesterday's actions. Sort of get to the bottom of things. We said ok. We sat down, Cabbage, Charles, Cab took a seat over by just opposite of Dr. Abernathy, Dr. Abernathy was sitting on the west wall and Cab was sitting on the east wall and Izzy took a seat just to the left of Cab and I took a seat close to the balcony because it was hot and I wanted some fresh air and they had the door open tot eh balcony. So I took the seat right there at the balcony and sort of looked out on the street we are about 8 flights up you know. Looked a the river.

Bill Thomas- Pleasant view.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah pleasant view, you know in a white room with blue furniture very cool. The walls weren't but the carpet was blue and the furniture was a soft color and you know very...

Bill Thomas- Elegant.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah. It was real nice, 3 or 4 bedrooms. And Abernathy started questioning us. He asked us, you know we started introducing our selves and we told him why we were there you know to explain our position on the riot.

Bill Thomas- Did you have any idea at that point that Abernathy thought...

Calvin Taylor- That we were responsible?

Bill Thomas- Yeah.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah. The reason we had an idea that he thought we were responsible is he said the invaders, he wanted to know why would the invaders do such a thing. And Cab immediately got mad because the man hadn't heard what we had to say and already was accusing us of having caused the riot. So Cab told him he was wrong that the invaders did not start the riot and Dr. Abernathy went into several other questions like why we hadn't tried to see Dr. King. We explained to him that we had tried to see Dr. King but Lawson and them wouldn't let us see Dr. King. Wouldn't give us an audience with him and there was no way we could do it. Well just about this time Dr. King came in he had just gotten out of the shower he had on awkward looking green sort of silk shiny suit. For a man, he had very soft looking skin. He wasn't black he was brown, I guess he was about my color, sort of yellowish looking or something. He was as dark as you would imagine.

Bill Thomas- Caramel just about.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah something like that. I kind of noticed his hands, his hands looked very soft, his skin looked very soft. He had on his undershirt and when he saw that it was Cabbage, he couldn't believe it because he and Cab went to Moorehouse together.

Bill Thomas- Oh really?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and they immediately sat down and breakfast was already in and he asked did we want any orange juice or something to drink, we all introduced, you know introduced ourselves again. Abernathy told him what had gone down just before he came in and Dr. King wanted to go into it some more. We were out of cigarettes, they were out of cigarettes I don't smoke. Out of cigarettes as usually so they immediately started borrowing from Abernathy and I think they smoked half his pack before it was over. He just sort of laid them on the table and that was sort of the end of it. We had moved, everyone had moved around, sort of shifted around a little more so Dr. King could sit in and we could hear what was going on.

Bill Thomas- What was Dr. King's mood? Was he bitter?

Calvin Taylor- No he wasn't bitter and in fact because I say we are partly to blame I feel partly responsible for the mood he was in. You have heard of people talking of nonviolence but this man actually lived and believed in nonviolence. I guess that is one of the reasons he looked so soft to me. Because you talk about depressed, he looked as if he was about to cry every time you mentioned it. Not so much why would you have a riot with me leading it, but why would you resort to violence anyways, when you know that violence hasn't worked for white people, why would you do that. The man actually believed in that kind of philosophy. I can say that because I don't believe in that. And...

Bill Thomas- King is a very extraordinary man.,

Calvin Taylor- It was unbelievable at the depressed mood that he was in over the fact that there was a riot and that people could have been hurt, old people.

Bill Thomas- Is this what he talked about?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah, this is what he talked about. In fact, we didn't even get, we talked about the riot, who caused it. But he wanted to know why Cabbage wasn't in Baltimore,. Remember me talking about Baltimore.

Bill Thomas- That there was an assignment there.

Calvin Taylor- Cabbage told him that SCLC hadn't paid him and since they hadn't paid him he decided that he was going to work in Memphis. Dr. King couldn't believe that but a check did show that SCLC had not paid Cabbage and then Dr. King assured him he would get his money for the work that he had done.

Bill Thomas- Were there any hard feelings?

Calvin Taylor- No hard feelings in fact Dr. King and Cabbage kind of sat there and when King asked Cabbage he says Cabbage I don't understand why you wouldn't come and talk to me, why you wouldn't come and tell me because he says Jim, talking about Lawson, didn't tell me about the black power elements in the city, he led me to believe that there were none. And Cab says well then it was just a trap then Dr. King because we have been here we have been trying to talk to Lawson, he won't here us. Dr. King was very depressed when he heard this because he thought that all he felt that all elements of people, he mentioned the fact that when he was in California that he knew the black panthers and Stokely Carmichael. These people sat in with him before he held his demonstration out there. And he says that he asked them not to make violence, not to have any of that and if he had known that we were there that the element was there and was about to explode he never would have had the march, That is what I was going to tell you, he said when he arrived he could tell that something was wrong. The people were trampling over my feet, he said, they were just crowding around me, he says the atmosphere was just wrong.

Bill Thomas- This is when they brought him and out him in front of the microphone?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and put him in the front of the march and that is when he remarked to Abernathy, maybe we should call it off. But Lawson immediately assured him that it wasn't necessary.

Bill Thomas- But he was concerned at that time?

Calvin Taylor- He was concerned at that point about it. That is just to show you, the restlessness is what I am trying to tell you about.

Bill Thomas- Of course he was probably as sensitive tot hat type of action more than the average.

Calvin Taylor- I am sure he was more than the average man because I have never seen a man look like peace and that man look like peace. You know what I mean, I swear he did I was kind of shocked about that. But anyway, Cabbage explained to him that we had tried to see him. That we had tried to see him the night of the rally, the night he spoke at the rally. We came up and Lawson's people wouldn't let us get on stage. We sent him a note and evidently it did not get to him. And Dr. King was rather disheartened at the fact that he had not had the chance to talk to us before participating in that march. He said then, that he was going to speak to Jim about it. So then they started talking about, well you know he asked him Cab, just as one Moorehouse man to another Moorehouse man why didn't he come talk to me, relating back to the old college days. I mean we went to the same school you know. Some kind of loyalty somewhere but it wasn't Cabbage's fault it was Lawson's. It was the minister's alliance who thought that they had everything well at hand you see, because just because they could amass the numbers felt that everything was under control. But there is a difference in amassing a number and getting the crowd to march quietly and peacefully.

Bill Thomas- At that time do you know whether he had decided....

Calvin Taylor- To come back to Memphis?

Bill Thomas- Yeah.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah this is what we had to do. We were sitting there talking and after they went through this thing about Baltimore and about Cabbage's pay, Dr. King asked Cab, he said Cabbage, what can I do, or what must be done in order to have a peaceful march because you know I have got to lead one, there is no other way. And almost those exact words is what he said.

Bill Thomas- Reputation was on the line.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah his reputation was on the line and he knew it and he wasn't jiving about it.

Bill Thomas- So what did Cabbage tell him?

Calvin Taylor- Cabbage told him, that he didn't know what he had to do to lead it. If you are blaming us for it, we won't even participate in your next one and see what you get.,

Bill Thomas- Just sit it out.

Calvin Taylor- Dr. King wouldn't even mess up like we were totally (muffled) of everything and like I said we weren't told this. And so he decided...

Bill Thomas- Because of the spirit...

Calvin Taylor- Because of the spirit, I mean we had put it there but we hadn't started...

Bill Thomas- You didn't throw any rocks.

Calvin Taylor- No, stole a little but we didn't throw no rocks. After that, after they went through all that mess Cabbage told him about the work he was doing in Memphis. Trying to organize people at the grassroots level. Trying to work with Lawson on their program to organize people at the grassroots level. And you know the fact that they were having a hard time because we didn't have any money, everyone was paying out of their pocket and all of this kind of stuff. Well they talked on, the only thing that was resolved at that meeting was that Dr. King was to come back to Memphis and to lead a march and he would see to it that Lawson and them would work with us and that we would sit in and not just be a person sitting there but a person with a voice, at any and all strategy sessions from then on and he would try to get some financial and administrative assistance to help us in our program because he said our program was badly needed. Because we were working with the poor people, we were working with the people he wanted to take on that campaign and that is one of the things he asked us about were there persons in Memphis that would go. Cabbage assured him that we had ready, we didn't really have them ready but we had them in a mood that we could get them ready to go and as you heard Andy Young say last night, we brought one of the best organized, some of the best organized people up there to that poor people's campaign. So that was really all that was resolved that he must come back to Memphis and that we must have a peaceful march and that Cabbage and them would get financial and administrative assistance and it didn't matter really who was to blame although we had caused it, we had been tagged a the ones in the march. And I mean after going through all these other things smokes and talking about Moorehouse and all of those days and talking about what people did and what I did and all this sort of stuff. We sort of just sat around for awhile and then we just left. Dr. King said we are going to have a press conference now and I will talk to you later on this afternoon. Well he had to go out of the city.

Bill Thomas- When that meeting broke up, the feelings on both sides were good were they?

Calvin Taylor- The feelings were great. In fact, Cab remarked when we went out the door, now we will get some help we will get this program going because that man is goo to his word. He says I know Dr. King he asked me had you ever seen him before? Personally you know. He said you are looking at an extraordinary man. I have never seen Cabbage give any man I don't give a dog who he was any sort of respect except when he gave Dr. King respect.

Bill Thomas- (muffled) were you impressed?

Calvin Taylor- It was unbelievable the man just looked like peace, he didn't raise his voice, Abernathy raised his voice, Cabbage raised his voice. Dr. King didn't raise his

voice and yet when he spoke Cabbage didn't have any comebacks for him. It was unbelievable, I have never seen Cabbage sitting in a situation where he couldn't say anything and he couldn't say a word. You could feel peace around that man. One of the few times in my life that I wasn't actually fighting something and I actually forgot about everything although we were sitting there talking about the previous days events, it was like as if it had never happened. Somebody had woke up and we were talking about somebody's dream. You know somebody had a nightmare and we were just sitting there talking about it and some psycho therapy session or something because Dr. King wasn't raising his voice, there was no shouting. The only time Cab shouted was when Abernathy accused the invaders of being responsible for it and Dr. King said well it doesn't matter who was responsible for it. He says that Lawson and them should have told us about it we should have sat down and talked before we had this march., When I come back to the city that is what we are going to do, sit down and talk.. He says that you fellows who have been out here working in this area you will be in on it. You will not be left out and that was all there was too it.

Bill Thomas- So the meeting that afternoon didn't come off?

Calvin Taylor- No the meeting that afternoon, he said he would talk to us later on that afternoon, but he had a press conference and for one reason or another he left town. Now he had told Cab, he says Cab I am going to go and talk to Jim now, it is funny he made the remark during a time that it was, he has the greatest respect for reverend Lawson, Jim. But he said that Lawson was the best theoretician that he had ever seen in his life. I have the utmost respect for Lawson, he is a personal friend of mine.

Bill Thomas- (muffled) theoretician of nonviolence?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah, but that he was no tactician. He just could not handle it. He said he knew it but this was one of the times that he was trusting.

Bill Thomas- I was wondering Calvin and maybe if you look at the old pictures taking during the old movement days. Lawson is always around Birmingham and Selma and Montgomery. I just wondered if anything happened between them ever.

Calvin Taylor- Nothing, if anything had happened Lawson wouldn't be in the position that he is in today. There was no rift between...

Bill Thomas- I really couldn't understand hwy Lawson had left and we talked to Lawson a little bit but not much really.

Calvin Taylor- Well I think one of the reasons that Lawson left is because the man, Dr. King was very dear to him. I am not saying that ignorance is an excuse but Lawson just did not know that the events that took place on the previous day could have taken place and were about to take place. And he was possibly just as much shocked as anyone else.

Bill Thomas- I am sure.

Calvin Taylor- Because although he felt that we were going to do something, he didn't feel it would be something like that. He felt it may have been a store being bombed somewhere, trouble being caused in some other area. But to make trouble here for this man? He didn't think that would be done. I swear the next morning when I personally met Dr. King, I felt a little bit ashamed because if you had known him beforehand there was no way in the world you could have made trouble. I was sure we got some of the worst people in this city for militants, troublemakers, for the hell of it. Cab is one of them and I am one of them. The kind of people that will start things when he be there sometimes. We are sincere in what we are doing but we are just troublemakers. I say worst because I actually feel that we are some of the worst. We aren't the people at there shouting at (muffled) we are people sitting at home planning things, making sure that what people are saying will be done. I felt a little bit ashamed because I knew for a fact that we were partly responsible for that riot and it wasn't no 2 or 3 days....and Cab tried to make us come off as all innocence but like I said Dr. King wasn't buying it and Cab didn't have the comebacks, the man couldn't have had no comebacks there were none to have. Because Dr. King never did once say that the invaders did it. He said Cab, who are these people the invaders. Cab explained to him our program and our part in the events on the previous day. And he accepted it not because Cab was telling the truth because simply that Cab was another black man and simply because Cab was a Moorehouse man also and that meant something. The man like I say he was just strange. Nobody can be as peaceful as that man was, I can't understand it. You just can't be that peaceful, I swear you can't I know. And that man was totally at peace. I really feel that. Izzy did not have one word to say that whole time, not one word.

Bill Thomas- Is he usually vocal?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah, I usually talk but I didn't have very much to say, I was too impressed with the man to talk. When Abernathy started there were several things I had to say to Abernathy you know. But it seemed when Dr. King came into the room it seemed like all of a sudden there was a really rush of wind and everything went out that was bad and peace and calm just settled over everything. I guess I stared at him for 15 minutes. Because I just couldn't believe it. The man looked, like I said he looked as soft as any...you couldn't bring yourself to harm the man and like I said Cab he didn't have any comebacks. I have never seen cab like that ever in my life. You could see him talking to a policemen and you will say be quiet because this guys is going to bust this guy's head soon. Cab knocked the hell out of him, it was his life it didn't make him any difference. But with this guy, violence was not the way that strong forceful approach you just didn't use it. If you used it you knew where you were going, no place and you could feel the frustration of it too. It was something else, it was something else.

Bill Thomas- Alright well then, Dr. King did send some of the staff back. Jim Orange was his job to...

Calvin Taylor- Yeah Orange's job was to deal and talk with us. Lawson was to be in at all those sessions you see. At that meeting like I said I told this revolutionists and

commitments that Dr. King made you see and so afterwards, after he left town, Cab kind of felt that the man kind of ran out on us because he didn't know why he had to leave because Dr. King was supposed to have called him later on that afternoon to tell him to meet, where they are going to hold the meeting. When he didn't do it Cab kind of felt like well he ran out on us. And that is when he started bringing up things about things in the past when he was working with SNICK. Dr. King would ask SNICK to do certain things and then would leave. And they were saying then that King wasn't a man of his word. And you saw that sheet last night, you see what they accuse SCLC of being you know not keeping their promises and this was the way CAB was beginning to feel, but it wasn't true. Dr. King had to leave the city and nobody...I don't know, Cab doesn't know why he had to but the man when he came back he didn't hesitate to call us, we didn't have to call him, he called us. I am here come show up right now we have things to discuss, things to talk about you see.

Bill Thomas- Right.

Calvin Taylor- I don't know, we talked. Ron Ivy told you the plan he laid before him. He had a strategy session that was run out of his (muffled). Ron was to handle that, he was to be the spokesmen for that. We picked different people to do different things.

Bill Thomas- And this was on April 3rd the Wednesday before the assassination. (muffled) quite a bit. Did you attend that meeting?

Calvin Taylor- I went but I had to leave.

Bill Thomas- At the Lorraine?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah, we all showed up down there but I had to leave, well we had things to do. We weren't the kind of people that were always trying to get in the limelight. I mean like I said we picked certain people to do certain things.

Bill Thomas- And this was Ivy's?

Calvin Taylor- This was Ivy's thing. And Ivy didn't need no support, if there is a brother the organization that needs support he doesn't handle anything he can't handle it. You mean several persons stayed with Ivy to back him up, to talk....it wasn't needed it wasn't necessary. And because of the things that I had to do and because of the things some other people had to do we were, we just left. Before we had even gone there just as we do anything anytime just this last night we hold a meeting and map out our plan and we always felt that it is good to be on the offensive side. Lay the first blow, make a cat have to get his tactics together. And have yours together when you get there. So we had the meeting and we knew what Ron Ivy was supposed to discuss and we knew what he wasn't supposed to deviate from. We knew what pattern he was supposed to fall into with his thoughts regardless of whatever someone else talked about you see. And everyone sticks pretty close to the plan so even if I wasn't there I can just about relate what happened just from knowing what Ivy was supposed to do and believing that Ivy

would do what he was supposed to do and as far as I am concerned and as far as we are concerned he did do that. So the agreement was that in return for a peaceful march and don't get me wrong. We didn't by any chance say that we would make his next march violent because if we had said that we would have been taking the blame or admitting that we caused the other one you see. We said to insure we will be the marshals this time, we will handle the situation. Don't hire any of these kids out of high school to do the job. Don't hire any of the sanitation workers to do the job, I mean there are enough of us and we know enough people to control to act as marshals and we promised him that we would act as marshals and he promised us financial and administrative assistance that we need to get the grassroots program that we had the black organizing project off the ground financially and administratively. Because as he had said SCLC was thinking of moving into Memphis and it would need a base to operate from. It would also need people to carry on the poor people's...(Tape End)