

SS117.mp3

Bill Thomas- Tape 3 with Calvin Taylor. Alright and so that did Ron make some sort of report Calvin?

Calvin Taylor- No a report wasn't necessary all Ron had to do was to come back and tell us what happened if he did agree. In other words like I told you we took the offensive. We got there after all the small talk had gone down and we were ready to get down to business. Laid our cards on the table first with the trump card laying, with the trump card really being the fact that violence could occur if we were not marshals you see.

Bill Thomas- Yeah.

Calvin Taylor- We didn't say that, we didn't have to say that it was sort of understood. King respected the thought and he played according to plan he really did and so we didn't even have to use the trump card and we assured him we would do this. And then he felt since we were already a, you know we had gone into our organization and all this stuff he knew that we were together. This would be a fine group of people for SCLC to start off with.

Bill Thomas- I think incidentally one of the reasons why we get that statement of intent on the organization a lot of how people would be rather astonished at how productive that can be. But I am sure they would think, that is what this...

Calvin Taylor- You see people don't realize this. And although we get busted for stupid charges and I get on us about doing that everybody is sincere in their actions. I mean okay now you take it Cab is up for avoiding the draft, he didn't report for induction. Ain't no way he is about to get 5 years. He is got no money, he is linked with the invaders, white people would be glad to get him of the scene. John got busted not on a frame up but it was a trumped up deal because he did have the gloves in his house but they weren't using them at the time.

Bill Thomas- (muffled)

Calvin Taylor- Yeah from Ballard and all this.

Bill Thomas- I remember that little story.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah let me go into that. So the next day Dr. King was assassinated.

Bill Thomas- Where were you?

Calvin Taylor- Were was I?

Bill Thomas- Do you remember?

Calvin Taylor- I remember just like it was now. Standing at the teletype machines a the 3rd floor of the commercial appeal the Memphis publishing company building, the Commercial Appeal floor. I was standing in front of the tri-state's teletype

machine talking to Rotten Widdick, who was a copy boy who had just gotten the job. And we were just going over how the city was all uptight and things were at the breaking point and we had just remarked to each other that if something happened to Dr. King man the city would blow up just like that. And that was about 6:00. At 6:04 you could hear it as clear as day it was like the police intercom came on its own. Dr. King has been shot on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel. Everybody was screaming and hollering is he dead and policemen on the radio and reporters at the thing. And...

Bill Thomas- I had just left prior to that.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah. And that was when I actually started working.

Bill Thomas- Really?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah I had gone in to office about a week before and got up there and the editor had taken me into the office and asked me if I was interested. Because several of the catholic boys were just tired of doing catholic boy chores they thought they could print a little bit to get a little bit of practice and he asked me if I was a little bit interested because I was the spokesmen for the group. He asked me if I was interested in being a reporter, and I said yeah. He says ok then we will start you on some intern program and when that happened some thing out of reporters because it was getting late into the night and everyone was getting off early because the curfew was imposed and the only people that were working late were the ones that had to work late. He asked me if I was ready to start. I don't know if I said yeah, or no, I was just I just started. That was when I hit the streets. You know you couldn't believe it, you couldn't really believe it. You heard about this chase going from one end of town to the other, the thing that black people don't believe to this day, that is why they blame, that is why they say that the Memphis police department had something to do with it. And that is why I think, as I told you we get hung up on personalities, black people in this city will never get along with white people until they find out what white people in this city were responsible for that man's death outside of Lobe. I mean Lobe is responsible just on general principles. And Henry Lobe that is enough not to mention why other things he could be responsible. But anyway my job was to hit the streets that night and find out what my boys was doing, where was the violence going to take place. It didn't take me long to find out, I knew where they were. I won't say where they were but I went there to the place and my boys were sitting. I say my boys, but I mean my brothers were just sitting there, they had heard it and they didn't believe it and they were stunned. Just to show you that my brothers aren't stupid people although we get busted for stupid charges sometimes to show you that we are really thinking at the time that people were gathering it was being announced on the radio for all black people to meet at Mason Temple to say a prayer. Everyone headed to Mason Temple and that is exactly where my brothers went and just as Rodney and I had remarked to each other that the city was going to blow., there was an old lady she was a s crippled as any duck, she was ready to go out and fight. She said the lord had deserted us. That is the end of it., Everybody hope that any back man ever had of attaining any sort of

equality and justice it was shattered. And like Hatcher said last night he will never get another black man to believe that white people won't do right, not as long as you live. So this is to say that my boys were thinking. They got up on stage and took the microphone from the ministers, H.L. Starks was there trying to lead them in prayer and people were saying let's go do this and let's go do that. John took the mic and he told them he and Cabbage don't do it. Cabbage was the main one who didn't want to do it. Just respect the man enough to not go out and do it tonight, wait until he is buried. Don't do it today, he said that's all the policemen, don't you know they are out there waiting for you, ready for you? Because the national guard was in town. Don't you know if you go running down Main St. unorganized you will all be blown to bits in a....it would have been a waste, it was just an emotional thing. But my boys although they were emotionally upset they were taken. No don't do that, that is just what the honkeys want us to do. Act like a bunch of wild Indians so they can wipe us out like they did the Indians don't do it. And ladies were asking what do we do where do we go from here what do we do now? And John told them that, John didn't pray in no how, he said just go home and when we call you be ready. Naw what is it? Plan your work, work your plan. That was when we adopted that motto and changed the whole thing around. And everyone went home and that's when John they went home and until this day they haven't done anything.

Bill Thomas- There was quite a lot of activity that night?

Calvin Taylor- Oh yeah, looting, now this is when I say now, Coby had come back to town but he hadn't been in the thick of things you know he hadn't been in with us since the....I hadn't talked to him in quite a while. That was when his boys working on the old plan we had adopted took out the Williams store and when they started shooting at policemen and that is when some of the people that we weren't able to get to control started burning and looting and it is to be expected we expected it but we...

Bill Thomas- In fact most of it was in north Memphis?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah most of it was in north Memphis you see, our people we had them pretty much under control in south Memphis, some of them were going out and doing this but not on as large of a scale as they were doing out in North Memphis where Coby had been working. Because Coby and his boys were ready to make the town smoke. No one was actually thinking about it you know they expected some rioting and some looting but what they didn't want was what the people really wanted to do which was to go down to city hall and bring it down marble slab by marble slab Lobe and all with it and hope that all the white people would come there so they could go too. They just didn't want to do it and we didn't do it. We had made a promise to Dr. King that march would be successful that if that march was ever held it was 10 years from today every one of you black SOB's better do right. And no kidding, that was what they was saying. And so I mean you know what happened after that everybody quieted down and nothing happened. The funeral and all...

Bill Thomas- The memorial march was a very peaceful...

Calvin Taylor- Yeah the memorial march and we held our stand on the memorial march because the commercial appeal did the thing 5 men on Main. And they told me to go out and interview a militant as him what were his thoughts on this day I went out and talked to Tim Fagerson. I mean I knew him I picked him because one of those. I just said ok, he hadn't been used for anything, didn't really anybody really know him so we decided John you are the man of the day you make the limelight. Cameramen taking pictures of him and making him real big you know. I talked to him and I asked him and I let him answer his own questions because he was going to answer them the way I was thinking anyways I knew that we thought you know. So he would much rather be out raising hell, burning the city down because he had never felt that nonviolence was the way that white people only respect or people pay attention to when they are losing things out of their pocket. He said it was bad but it was the way it had to be done but he had made a commitment to Dr. King and he wasn't about to break it under any circumstances.

Bill Thomas- So...

Calvin Taylor- He objected to one thing and that is the fact that the national guardsmen were lining the streets with bayonets. He said that was wrong because Dr. King was a peaceful man and that was disrespectful for their to be bayonets with the national guardsmen lining the streets with bayonets and even at that he didn't want to do anything.

Bill Thomas- One of the really extraordinary things that people don't understand I guess you know the whole country was blowing up city after city and Memphis was the quietest place in town.

Bill Thomas- Really was.

Calvin Taylor- The only reason it was quiet was because we were actually trying to control it.

Bill Thomas- Atlanta was quiet too.

Calvin Taylor- Atlanta was quiet.

Bill Thomas- But I think that was because (muffled).

Calvin Taylor- (Muffled) those people knew him better than anybody.

Bill Thomas- Yeah I was amazed down there, well I stepped out I left here Friday and you know the atmosphere was still tense here but in Atlanta it was just sad. Just really sad.

Calvin Taylor- I couldn't blame them. (muffled) because for me it meant that we didn't have any choice now, We used to have a choice we could wait for Dr, King to carry out his program and if it didn't work we could use ours. But now it is as if

white people didn't want any other program but ours. And we had accepted the fact and see this is one thing that white people in this community don't understand. They are always asking why, how do you think you can win, you can't win? We don't expect to win. We don't really expect to win we don't even have the slightest hope for winning, like I said for the number one reason being that we know we won't get enough people out there with fire power to handle the situation. All we want to do is create enough chaos and destruction that white people cannot make progress. That is the only thing that we want to do. We really aren't for killing and like I said we had no intentions of burning down Memphis, we got to live here. We aren't for killing other people because it is a life man, you don't waste a cat unless it actually absolutely necessary. You may inflict all kinds of bodily harm on him and you may scare him to death. And basically our bag is one thing, it is a mind thing. You get inside a man's mind you can wreck him and this is the one thing that we always said, don't let no honkey in your head. Just don't let him in your head man because if you let him in your head you have let him into self and self is gone then. Ain't nothing you can do see. But now the physical violence that could take place that worries people se and we use that as a threat and I am not saying that we won't kill somebody or aren't capable of killing somebody because immediately after Dr. King was buried a little violence did flare in the city and I can tell you a man who did fire at the policemen and would like to blow their brains out. It was the fact that the car was moving and the cat just wasn't a good shot. The policemen would have been dead with a bullet in his head. And police weren't lying when they were saying they were being sniped at ion areas they didn't even think about. They were being sniped at. I guess one of our brothers came back and told us I am the one who did it I had to do it. To avenge the death and all those kind of things. But anyway after that we kind of quieted down, everybody quieted down and we got ready for the peaceful march and we had a peaceful demonstration and then it was back to the old drawing board to map out new plans, now SCLC was getting ready to move on to the poor people's campaign and at the time we had been given the responsibility of acting as security guard for, well not at the time but just before the campaign was to go to Washington we had been given the responsibility of heading the mule train.

Bill Thomas- I didn't know that.

Calvin Taylor- And handling security arrangements in Washington, simply because we did handle the peaceful demonstration and they felt that we were now a nationwide, widely known group now. SO they felt if they had us there it would help keep things quiet and so we went they went to Washington, We sent one dude on the mules train to head it up with a couple of fellows. And we sent two cats to Washington to help the security forces there and to watch over everything. With sweet Willy Wine...

Bill Thomas- Somebody mentioned Sweet Willy...

Calvin Taylor- Yeah Sweet Willy.

Bill Thomas- And what is his last name?

Calvin Taylor- Washington, I think his name is Lance Washington, they call him Sweet Willy Wine. He is a veteran with one arm, he lost one arm in combat. I think it is in combat you better check on that I am not sure it may not even be combat. But we did we sent him to watch over everything and see that nothing went wrong. And this is when all this mess started yesterday at this convention. Well while in Washington you know we got to be pretty famous because we had the Blackstone range causing trouble. Wait just a second excuse me. (Tape Break)

Bill Thomas- Yeah somebody had mentioned Sweet Willy to me the other day.

Calvin Taylor- You could talk to Sweet Willy he would talk to you yeah he would love to talk. In fact....

Bill Thomas- (muffled).

Calvin Taylor- Yeah I will find out what he is, if you are going to let me use this tape to tape some of his conversations. If he thought he was going to heard somewhere yell or holler (muffled). But we didn't do anything after that. We went to Washington and the poor people's campaign was held and we did our commitments to SCLC and to Dr. King and Dr. Abernathy and everyone and came on home. Well Sweet Willy didn't come straight home he stopped in Baltimore, no Washington. He stayed I Washington I am sorry, he stayed in Washington and talked with Stokely. Stokely and then had began this thing up and around Boston about the black untied front, it was a new way. So See Willy came back to town and brought the black untied front plans to Memphis. Just about two weeks ago.

Bill Thomas- Is that the new thing now?

Calvin Taylor- That is the new thing now. And it is kind of wonderful because now the black untied front is going to do what our organization ahs always done but that the leadership here in the city hasn't done and that is get the leader or the head man of each group, political civic organization any kind of group. Man if you got a yard cleaning job group of people, get that cat to and let them all be a member of this so called black united front. Then the black untied front will elect one man. Be it a councilmen, be it a black power militant, be it a lawnmower...

Bill Thomas- Sharpener.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah anything. He will be the guy that will speak for the entire community. He will be the spokesmen for the black untied front. And there won't be 50 million different organizations. So when Sweet Willy got back to town about 2 weeks ago he brought the plans back to Cab he brought them home to John and everybody. And it was kind of wonderful because as I was saying a few minutes ago Cabbage had to go, is about to be busted for draft dodging. John was picked up on a narcotics deal. Charles Balard and them and Verdell Brooks who is G, who I have talked about earlier and Herrington who is Izzy I talked about who was with us when we went to see Dr. King. They were all picked up on disorderly conduct charges.

Bill Thomas- Which covers a multitude of sins.

Calvin Taylor- Which now means that man like dig it they got all of us they think. The program is dead now we don't have not worry about the black power boys now they are dead. But it seems like every time something happen something happens just in the nick of time to bring it all back together again. Like we were falling apart before the sanitation strike and there it was again in the sanitation strike. So =Sweet Willy came to town and after Charles and them were dismissed from the neighborhood organizing project and they hadn't heard their hearing yet you know but they once again were working and money was coming in and we were, the program was about to keep rolling on, didn't know where it was going but it was about to keep going, but Sweet Willy came into town two weeks ago and called a meeting of every dude in town that was somebody that led some groups sitting out on the grapevine for everybody to be at this next meeting. And as you know Memphis has a million organizations.

Bill Thomas- Oh yeah.

Calvin Taylor- The black knights, they got Kennedy City Club, they got this and all sorts of groups had formed since then. And when Sweet Willy got to town and called a meeting that meant that Coby had to bring his contingent out of north Memphis over and fears to bring his contingent out of Hyde park and Chelsea and over. And Cab and all together from south Memphis, everybody coming together again. You know all the violent elements and all the peaceful elements, the invitation was extended to everyone. No Honkeys. No white people could come but all the black could come. And they went through it again. This is what has got to be done now, we have got to have a black united front. We have got to have an overall organization that speaks for every organization that represents every facet of the community of the black community in Memphis. And this is what we want to do and this is what the whole plan is now, it is still in organizational stages. I mean black organizing project perhaps is the most influential because we have had people serving on everything. And so we kind of we have been in just about all segments of it. But we aren't around we only have one spokesmen now.

Bill Thomas- Is that Cabbage?

Calvin Taylor- We only have one spokesmen now, and like I was telling you about Ron, it looks as if it will have to be his responsibility because I have got outside personal responsibilities so I will remain in my position. Sort of man behind the man writer, or whatever. Like I said it depends on what Ivy does, whether or not he will be our spokesmen at the black united front. Now Sweet Willy Wine is one of our men and a the time he is doing all the talking. But there has been no agreement that he will be the man. In fact Sweet Willy told them the other day at the meeting that if you don't want me up here now tell me to get down and put somebody else up here. We are going to get this thing together, black people have got to get together. We got to be on the case. So we let Sweet Willy do all the talking because he talked with Stokely and he has got the plans, the foundations for the black united front uptight

and we are just sort of leaning about it. The black knights said they are representative over, everyone that wanted a representative to go talk.

Bill Thomas- But the black knights they are new?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah the black knights are new. And highly organized also. And they are possibly well they are, they are persons who hold jobs who have formed an organization which pays dues which aids to get someone out of jail if someone goes which does this or does that and they also aid the community like the other day rather. Last week a couple days ago they went and got a lady a home to live in because she had ten children and she was getting kicked out of her house. On Monday, they went and found a lady a home. They bought her a month's supplies of groceries. These kind of people doing nice things. But they are very violent, they are very militant. They were given the responsibility of protecting Dr. Abernathy when he came to this convention. They were given this responsibility see because they are the kind of new group. We have been playing dead so long it looks like we are dead now but we still represent the threat because you were at the meeting when we came in.

Bill Thomas- Yeah.

Calvin Taylor- You could feel it. Judge Hook started right in. Let's all act like Christians now we don't want no trouble tonight and then Lawson started in on us.

Bill Thomas- Lawson got pretty tough.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah he got tough because Lawson still does not respect the fact that we can create enough havoc that he can't make any progress. He still feels, he told me this morning when he went to see Mrs. King. We went to see Mrs. King this morning. Let those kids boys, let the black power boys go on and do what they want to do and we are still do what we are responsible for doing. He still thinks that it won't hurt anyone. He said he told Dr. Abernathy yesterday when we started, when John and him came to see him and started this business all over again, he says don't pay any attention to them they aren't doing anything but talking. But Abernathy is no clown. I think he sort of understands, I think he is like Dr. King, that he understands that we can create enough trouble that nobody else can make any progress. And not that we were coming down last night blowing everybody up and all this stuff because that wasn't the plan. As I was saying though Sweet Willy has brought this black united front here and it looks as if we need a new thing now. Like I said everybody got together from all over the city. Councilmen Patterson, Judge Hooks, the leaders of COME and the women and all the other groups are listening to this plan and thinking about it. Now we are thinking very seriously of not having a black power militant be the spokesmen but rather having someone like Councilmen Patterson be the spokespersons. There is a lot of respect among our groups for Councilmen Patterson.

Bill Thomas- Patterson is about the only acceptable one?

Calvin Taylor- Yeah he is more representative of anything we stand for. Fred Davis is fine but Fred Davis just ain't got the brains as far as we concerned. I mean we don't mean that he doesn't have the brains but you know he just doesn't have that personality that commands or demands that kind of attention that this program needs to be given. We think Patterson is the man who can get it done because we know he has plenty of backing and we think that oh there are other people in contention for it but these people have yet to come and make their stand as to whether they will be with the group or without the group you see once again we took the offensive. When Sweet Willy came back to town we came in with a report o the newspaper that this group was being formed and these people have agreed to be on it and we named them Patterson, Councilmen, this group that group. And none of those groups had agreed but all of those groups were responsible for reacting to the issue of the whole thing was that we now were going to have a coalition of all the groups and that one spokesmen would be elected and he would speak for the entire community. He would say what the community felt because he would have all ideas from different factions you see. Now it was up to these people to say whether or not they were participating in that or not and if they said they weren't participating they were count foolish. You see and if they say they were participating then they had to talk to us. So there you go again there is our plan again always be on the offensive. So anyway, after you know this is still in the making but now, as of yesterday John you know they got to thinking. You know they got to thinking or they got to reflecting on it things that had gone down in the past and it seems that yesterday decided to go and ask SCLC to make good on the commitments that Dr. King had made during his stay here before he was assassinated. Dr. Abernathy didn't have time to talk so he sent Andrew Young and Jose Williams in to do the talking for SCLC. Andy Young is a great guy business man, but he can be emotionally upset. You noticed the other day during all of the talk of the lady from Selma, Andy Young was the only cat in the building crying.

Bill Thomas- Yes I did notice that.,

Calvin Taylor- He was the only cat in the building crying. I mean he is very sensitive, very intelligent, but very sensitive. So when they went to him yesterday they simply asked them to do this. There name had not been cleared yet for being responsible for Dr. King's death and the good they did in Washington had not been brought before the people of Memphis and they only wanted that to be done and to know if not Abernathy would make good the commitments that Dr. King had been made. In other words we sent out another frontal attack because we have got to get the black united front going. So Sweet Willy was given a job to take care of that too and when they met with Andy Young yesterday, Young got a little bit upset because we had the nerve to come to him and ask him to make good on the commitments and he didn't see how we could make good on the commitments because Andy holds a personal thing against the people of Memphis, the black people of Memphis. He said yesterday and this is quotes, "the niggers in this town got Dr., King killed."

Bill Thomas- Incidentally if you got an extra one of those things I would like to have one.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah I will get you one. He didn't really mean the black brother in this town got him killed. It just means with all the black people in this town I wasn't there for some protection. Why weren't you people together enough for him to handle the situation. He didn't mean that they were behind him dying because he was all behind the sanitation strike and all this. But he just wasn't listening to what he was saying, he was a little bit emotionally upset. And when he said that Sweet Willy jumped up and said well if you feel this way then why are you people back here holding the convention you know why are you back here in the city of Memphis because we are still going on with our program of trying to organize people of trying not get the black people together you know and we got this black united front now. In all the old heads are back. There is not going to be, we hope there aren't going to be any divisions for some time to come. And Sweet Willy as he said today they were insulted. We left, because all they had gone to do was to ask them if they would do that and they had approached the earlier in the week and asked them if they would clear their names because the invaders they picked up a rough name and they didn't want to keep it because it just wasn't helping their cause anymore.

Bill Thomas- Yeah.

Calvin Taylor- Ok, they were refused. They came to the banquet and asked at the banquet that anybody that was on the staff cleared their names of all that and somebody you know put in a good word for the invaders. Because they had done a wonderful job. They refused again and yesterday, well today is really the last day of the convention, but yesterday was really the last day of the convention because all they did today was to leave town. So yesterday it was do or die all over again. Either have your names cleared now or never be anybody in this city. So they went again and they asked and as I said Andy got upset and said some things that he didn't really mean and Sweet Willy got upset. And when they left Sweet Willy then came back and printed a sheet about what Andy had said and accused him of saying this and accused SCLC of living in pits hotel with the white women in Washington while the poor people's actually slept in the mud and the rain. Sweet Willy said that the poor people were dissatisfied with this. Accused SCLC of not making good on the commitments of Dr. King before his assassination and of not even coming back to talk to them and sort of iron out of the things that had gone down and get an understanding now that there has been leadership changes would there be policy changes. SCLC hadn't approached them since then and you know we waited until this day to finally go to them and finally put the issue before them. As I say we were thrown out just before the mass rally and we left and we printed our sheet and that was our strategy was to take the offensive again. We got there early enough so that when people started arriving we could pass this sheet out. Expose on SCLC, on Andrew Young, he talked about the niggers calling the people of Memphis niggers after the people of Memphis had tried to do so much you see. So you know it is another frontal attack. It is the way we work and as you saw Andrew young got up

last night, a copy was given to them and we figured that Abernathy come in first, people were expecting trouble. And it would have been foolish for us to make trouble because we knew that the black stone rangers were in town. And the black stone rangers have a personal vendetta against us on account of we got them out of the city, the resurrection city. We also know the black knights who are on our side really would remain neutral but would protect Dr. Abernathy to the point of you know not letting us touch him but not really doing anything to stop us. And we knew that the black cop standing up there going to mow us down if we try anything. We also knew that Andrew Hatcher, I mean Richard. I don't know why I call him Andrew, yeah Richard Hatcher had 6 policemen of his own in the city and they are dangerous I understand they say they are handpicked. Sharp shooters, karate experts and all this. We got the word you know long before we got into the city and wasn't anyway we could have won a physical confrontation. So we said ok let's map, we got our strategy. We passed this sheet out so everybody can see it and everybody will at least be who puts this thing out are these people praising you know. They would at least be talking about it. And it would look kind of funny if Abernathy and them didn't come up with something, you know they have to say something about he literature that is being passed out. They would have too. And if they denied anything then we were ready to start in our section you know hollering contest. That is all we weren't going to get out of our seats we weren't going to try and rush down there. We are just going to sit back and holler no or no or boo or something. So after Abernathy made his entrance and it was planned that we wait outside and make our entrance and after he got in and sat down and everything was going along wonderful it got a little bit quiet you saw us make our grand entrance, timed it. Black nationals flag flying.

Bill Thomas- Yeah is that was that is? That is the black nationals flag?

Calvin Taylor- That is the black nationals flag.

Bill Thomas- And what is that a black and red flag.

Calvin Taylor- It is a black and red flag with a reap of gold leaves and a knife made out of gold leaves.

Bill Thomas- And what does that stand for?

Calvin Taylor- Well it is just a symbolic flag, I don't even know who picked it or what was done about any of this, it is jus the flags we got. We do know that, at least I do know somebody else could tell you more about it than I could. But it is the flag that kind of flew at assemblies when Malcolm X was talking and kind of Malcolm make sit next to being the number one leader for us now. We have a lot of respect for this nonviolence stuff because we know what it has achieved. We don't sell it short, we just like to be around to enhance it's capabilities that is all. To let white people know you have two ways now pick one. That's our purpose, I don't know what other militants purpose are around the country. And so we made our little grand entry and marched all the way around the room. Marched all the way up by Dr. Abernathy

and all the way up behind him and took a seat where everybody could see us and displayed our flag. You had to look at the flag you didn't look at the people with it you know. And you had to wonder about the flag so that was the strategy and just as we entered as I said Ben Hooks started saying that we didn't want any trouble here tonight we are all met in a Christian manner and we are all Christians so let's act in a Christian manner. We aren't fools we couldn't have be a the black knights and the black stone rangers and the Memphis police department plus Hatcher's boys. We couldn't have done it we knew it. We were just hoping that they would do, you know, we were just hoping they would try to get some defense going for us. So we took our seats and they started talking about raising money and Lawson got up and he wanted to know who printed this sheet, if the people would put their names on it and be responsible for what they say. Nice psychology but it let us know also that they had seen the sheet and they were concerned about it, concerned enough to even indict us before we had even opened our mouths on one effect and that was good enough for us.

Bill Thomas- And to make an issue of it in front of the meeting.

Calvin Taylor- And to make an issue of it in front of the meeting in front of everyone. Without us having said a word. And Andy Young had seen the thing and he saw where it said niggers in this town, and saw we accused him of that. And when he got up he said I must apologize, to some of my brothers. It is funny but it seems that you hurt the people that you love and he says I truly love these people namely the invaders. I must apologize to them because the charges they are accusing me of are quite accurate. Now he said that not us. He apologized and he did say that the invaders were not responsible for the death of Dr. King. That the invaders had acted very responsibly in fact had brought the most and the best and the well organized group to the poor people's caravan. To the poor people's campaign in Washington, resurrection city. And did a marvelous job of policing. In other words we got what we wanted, we got our name cleared and Dr. Abernathy in turn got up and Andy Young went on to say that it seems SCLC was guilty because SCLC had neglected these people and these were nothing but young black people really in training to be leaders and that it was SCLC fault that they hadn't taken us in and tried to give us some guidance and training. It seems this is the natural thing that happens, when you kick someone out they automatically go against you, so after making that speech Abernathy got up and said that all the commitments, well he said that the invaders can rest assured that all the promises made by Dr. King before his assassination and SCLC would be fulfilled by Ralph David Abernathy. And that you know if we go up together certainly we must go down together. And that was enough for us, we hadn't said one word we just took the offensive and after that I went and talked to Sweet Willy and I said well what do we got to say now Sweet Willy. He goes, it just shows that black people can work together and on the same case and he retracted the charges. And we are going to go from there. So everything is set SCLC is going to form its new office here. Now there are some things I could go into now that could pose problems and if you wanted to know about them....

Bill Thomas- Oh I don't think so because most of this is in the future.

Calvin Taylor- But even though since it is in the future and people may hear this alter on it may be they can see how some of the, they will know how some of that stuff happened.

Bill Thomas- One thing I was wondering about Calvin and I let it slip by at the time that you touched on it and something reminded me of it later on. But at the church, the morning of the riot, the march that Dr. King led that broke into a riot and I forget who has said this, I really do, but I could find out. But somebody had said that morning when the marchers started forming outside the church that there was and I don't think I can name any militant or anything like that but in fact I think what they say to be accurate to be fair was that some youth, some youths were holding a meeting at Clayborne Temple before the march. Do you remember anything about that?

Calvin Taylor- Oh yeah. Well I guess I wasn't quite right against when I said that we didn't show up. Earlier that morning about 7 or 8:00 when people started arriving to form the march. I forgot all about it. How could I....

Bill Thomas- I don't even know what reminded me of it.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah, people were coming to march and some were gathering inside the temple. John the cat that stole all the cloth and several other brothers and myself came to discourage these people from marching. Because I don't know if we felt again like I told you before that this was not the day, we could see the restlessness the atmosphere, we could see the young brothers outside drinking the wine and getting all worked up over nothing,. This is going to be the day, this is Lobe's black day. Cursing policemen and policemen not saying anything you know. Defiance, arrogance, power, false power but power yet. And we just tried to discourage them because we had sent out our scouts, like I said we had observers everywhere. We had observed that over the entire city of Memphis there was not a policemen to be found I east Memphis and maybe rightly so or anywhere else. Every policemen was not downtown but on the outskirts of downtown as if to say let them have everything, let them do what they are going to do and then we come in and handle it. Our observers reported, we have got police radios we can hear policemen when they are moving.

Bill Thomas- Yeah there was just hardly any policemen...

Calvin Taylor- Yeah and that was what I was telling you there was about two or three cops on the corner here or there holding nothing but a little pistol and like I told you those cops weren't going to bother nobody. But the bulk of all the policemen were on the outskirts of downtown all up and down Riverside. All down Danny Thomas and down Poplar around the police building you know, these places. No where near where the marchers were gathering. They were really letting us have the day and John told them don't march. That is what these people want you to do. They want you to mess up Dr. King's march. They knew it would happen I guess and

we tried to stop it because it was wrong. The atmosphere was totally wrong. And that is what I was saying, Cab was about 50 miles out of town but that is what I meant when I said that John wasn't there because after he saw that he couldn't stop them he said ok let them have it man. But let's get out of here so we don't get the blame, but unfortunately we had our people down there, you know we wanted our representatives to be there from other areas and we had a catch all name and people wearing our jackets and all what could we do. We knew we were in a bind but we said well let's at least let's get the people that they can immediately pick out as invaders let's get them out of here. Because if we don't we are automatically going to get the blame. Because we knew it was coming off and you try to discourage it because this atmosphere wasn't right. Because we had noticed that the policemen had just cleared the area and seemed to be waiting for it to happen so they could close...and that is exactly what they did. I mean they came in from behind, they came in, I mean they came in from all sides. When the violence flared up Main St. was flooded with policemen in front. From the south they had us caught from behind. And they came in from the east and the west and they had the little group that was facing in that direction, they had us sealed off. There wasn't no place for black people to go. It was as if they said okay when it happens we just want to let this area right here go if it has to go. But don't let them get outside of these boundaries, that may have been their tactics for that day I don't know. But we immediately left, I mean John left, we left our observers down there because we had to know what was going to happen. I am not an easily recognizable member of the group I hold too legitimate of a position to be recognized and I have never, I have no police record and I have never been involved with anything but overtime parking tickets and speeding tickets. And like I say it is the principle the invader. Be someone that is legitimate. Because you see we don't want to wreck our lives, John has already wrecked his and Cab has wrecked his, Charles has....because if you are going to ever do anything people have to sacrifice. But now let it be known that these people did this willingly. They became these people because in the first place they had this leadership. These leadership qualities. They would have to assume, someone has to be sacrificed. And these people know. John knows that he can't get a job anywhere in the world after this is over. He knows that as far as he is concerned he is down the drain on his charge. But yet he is not giving up he is still fighting he is still going on. Cab will go to jail probably but he will still be going on and these people know this. But we have got people waiting there, like (muffled) who has a degree now in history. Who is ready, like Sweet Willy Wine. Who will probably become the next Cabbage, Like Charles Ballot who is just on disorderly conduct charges will probably become the next John Smith, Izzy and G. Coby is still here, wisdom we still got it the boys got it ain't no doubt about it. Because he got up at the meeting the other night and he brought it out and he said ii is time for us to cut this petty bickering out and quit getting picked up on stupid charges. I mean the only reason John is busted is because of a stupid charge. The police knew where to find us, they know what we are doing, it is just one of the things we have learned. But like I say, we would much rather have learned it than have someone show us the way. And I think that our program coming up now will be much more effective because we will know what we are doing and what will have to be done and maybe it was Coby got out, because we

need his voice, at the moment we don't have a voice. But now that Coby is back we have a voice. We can use my voice, yeah ok, what have you got just a voice. We have got to have someone that will draw a crowd. Like I say we always pick people for certain things and I guess I would probably be in Lawson's position I help them map out a lot of strategy. I mean I print the sheets that got passed out.

Bill Thomas- Oh really.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah you know it is just one of those things. I put the words down. You know the strategy, these people know. And I will never let it be said that I was the guy and I guarantee that nobody would say that I printed it. Because they don't want to know. You are just looking at a guy, I am in a position to help us. To help black people. And although I am telling you I mean I am just telling you because I don't think any harm can come from it.

Bill Thomas- No none.

Calvin Taylor- I don't feel any harm could come from it. If somebody got a hold it so what they wouldn't have anybody but me and the people I named.

Bill Thomas- Yeah well nobody will get a hold of it in the...

Calvin Taylor- So there is no fear of any of this but it is great we have these people coming back now. And plus we have got people from other areas now in the city, you know legitimate people. We are going to try and get Councilmen Patterson to be, I think he is going to be the spokesmen. We are going to try very much to get him to be the spokesmen. We have got the black knights, we have got the Kennedy City Club, we got the Shelby county democratic. We have got all these people now representing every faction and it is not just a militant group anymore it is a black united front speaking for the community. Not the one element of the community.

Bill Thomas- And that is the Carmichael idea?

Calvin Taylor- That is the Carmichael idea. That is one reason Carmichael is talking so much, people are saying that Carmichael is chicken. Look at him he got married (muffled) he knows what money is now, don't be fooled. Don't be fooled (muffled). It is one of the things the man learned when he went to North Vietnam (muffled) Cuba. You have got to shut up son and listen. You can't be blasting everybody all the time because when you are blasting people all the time they know where to find you. Nobody knows right now except for maybe the CIA and the FBI what Stokely Carmichael is doing but other people don't know and we have got to have people that are quiet that can keep the thing going. And that is why I say that I think the black united front will come off because we got these people now. I mean ok, the original people have been sacrificed they will go. And some more people will have to be sacrificed. But all the time we aren't doing like the NAACP, we aren't keeping the leadership and the old heads hoping that nothing happens to them we are giving it to each and every man that comes along. As a man comes along and the potential is seen he picks it up. We have got a guy now that probably like I said, I said G would

and Izzy would probably become the next lieutenants. There is a little cat right behind him Moree McKensey. Another cat named Larry Davis, they will probably become the G's and the Izzy's. You know and there is somebody right after them. And you train people. Moree has been given speaking engagements, people know him. Everybody breaks in a little bit different. John Ferguson we put him in the public the day after I did the write up on him, about a week really after I did the write up on him he was in jail.

Bill Thomas- I understand that you were talking to Maxine Smith and she said it seems like every time she sees John Ferguson coming she shudders because there is liable to be a policemen right behind him. Wacking him with a club or something.

Calvin Taylor- Yeah because I mean this is it.

Bill Thomas- He was a strange...

Calvin Taylor- I mean we have people training and people are just being trained. We have got 5 or 6 writers now and some of them are girls, so wherever I go there is somebody to do my job. But we try to keep the old heads running just as...(Tape End)