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Memphis Tennessee, March 28th, 1968

The trouble here could have been called a disturbance or wild and turbulent conduct. But it was termed a “risk” and “general guerilla warfare.” Were these terms justified? I can’t say (for I wasn’t there. Nevertheless here are to [sic] reports one gathered from our local news media the other is from an eye witness. Both we attempt to tell what happen here in Memphis on March 28th, 1968.

“Violence exploded in the streets of Memphis today. It was caused by a small member of Negro Youths who began tossing rocks through windows and break-

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ing the glass with clubs some would run into the store window grab merchandise and flee. Liquor stores were their favorite targets. The Memphis police department using nightsticks and mace quickly restored order. However, resistance was given in the (illegible) a flying brick and occasional gunfire.” “As (illegible) might falls on the city it finds it’s self [sic] with its first curfew in modern times. “

This is Ellis’s report as to what happened. “The crowd was tense but there was a cheerful atmosphere. To be honest everybody was more interested in the signs and hearing and seeing Doctor King then any thing [sic] else. There were a few shots of black power and I believe someone even jokingly mentioned a riot. None of this was really taking seriously by any of us.

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We were near (illegible) when the marchers in the front started to back (illegible) running. There was so much confusion and naturally I was only thinking of getting out of there. I heard class crumbling and people shouting. We took off for Front Street we went on down to Riverdale. It wasn’t easy getting through that mob. The police were hitting and spraying (with mace) everyone in reach. Well anyway I finally got back to the Temple. At first we got all kinds of reports. From which I (we, the ministers at the temple) could gather the trouble was started by some bystanders after they broke the glass windows the people began looting the stores.

What really happened? That (illegible)

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“modern day” curfew. Beale Street will go down in history for something more than jazz. 4000 National Guardsmen were called to the city. 150 fires were reported on that night. Bands [sic] were put on the sale of gasoline (in a can) ammunition and fire arms and alcoholic beverages. Memphis had no local bus service for approximately 12 hours. All of these were first in “Modern Way Memphis. It also provided a clearer view of the riot problem in Memphis and the “rebellious youth” of this city” 39