

C.D. – 1

The Longest Hate Week in Memphis

It all happened one March 28 day in which I will never forget and eyewitnesses on the scene of the violence that broke out on Beale Street Thursday afternoon told me:

The marchers assembled at Clayborn Temple. I figure there was close to 3,000 people there consisting of teenagers, striking sanitation workers, businessman and people from all walks of life. The crowd was filled with great enthusiasm as chatter and laughter swept through the air. People from all parts of Memphis came to participate in this historic march. For it was remarked that this was the first big thing that the Negroes in Memphis has [sic] ever staged and enough Negroes came out to participate and support it.

The marchers left Clayborn Temple at exactly 11:30 or maybe a little before 12:00 noon. The marchers were very orderly or rather conducted themselves in a suitable manner upon entering Beale Street.

86

C.D. – 2

We were swamped with policemen upon hitting Beale Street, they were stained all around with Billy clubs that are now much larger than the old ones. Some policemen even had mace already holding it in they're [sic] hands as though the violence had already begun. Really to be frank the policemen wanted something to get started by the way in which they were swaying their clubs to and fro. Some of the policemen were (illegible) at the marchers who passed by with signs reading "Down With Loeb" trying to excite portions of the marchers to get an outbreak.

Then all of the sudden like out of nowhere a policeman dashed from his point out into the crowd to billy club a youngster for no apparent reason. This incident took place I'd say in the middle of Beale Street. After the policemen charged in on the youth several other youth's team up to help the defenseless youth. Then the next thing happen fighting and

87

C.D. – 3

smashing of windows commenced. Policemen already with mace in their hands begun spraying and squirting anyone they could get. The street by this time was blocked off and no one could neither leave or enter Beale Street during this free for all. The reason why I say "free for all" is because that's exactly what it (illegible) even though if you hadn't broken a window as as such if the policemen caught you they would gang up on you and Billy club you good and I do mean good. Blood began flowing down the faces of men both black and white boys it was a sight to see. The policemen really got mad or hot when they saw some of their own fellow policemen faces streaming with blood. Then the policemen ran out in

the streets beating marchers as though they were in (illegible) it was at this time I made my exit at the nearest alley.

88

C.D. – 4

My own personal opinion concerning the riot is that from what I have observed during the past week the city, Loeb, Police department, and especially the newspaper over-emphasized the march they themselves put tension in the air along with the vandalism that has been going on this past week. By bringing in the National Guard for them to do simply nothing but hide in jeeps, and trucks on a (illegible) of the city. And to lie under (illegible) with policemen. This commenced on March 28 on (illegible) at about 2:00 in the afternoon. The city has lost, more money since the strike's been on the cost of those National Guards alone amounted to \$14,000 the damaged [sic] on Beale Street even though covered by insured [sic] amounted to \$400,000.

89

C.D. – 5

Then there is the cost of the extra policemen that trails the sanitation trucks everyday. Yes I say the city has lost it's reputation as being the (illegible) and cleanest city it is now known widely of its front it has been displaying to the country. Memphis is not no better than Watts, Harlem, or any of the other nationally known ghettos.

90