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On the 21st of March, 1968, there occurred in Memphis a beginning of the end. The end of the bigotry, hatred and cruelty imposed upon us by “our great White Fathers.”

The chronic need to solve the deep rooted, deep seeded problems of deprivation, poverty, ignorance and of being locked out of the mainstream of the society of life had finally reached its peak. I don't know what isolated incident on this particular day, other than the opportunity and the need to destroy these things which seemed to have

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been destroying the Negro became very real.

The mass march which was to have been lead [sic] by the Rev. Martin Luther King suddenly erupted into the almost total destruction of Beale Street injury to many and death to one.

Suddenly, without any warning, teenagers began breaking windows and looting stores. These stores, which were owned by the white merchants, who for years had cheated our mothers and fathers. Then, without warning, the illustrious

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Police force of this city began to pounce upon innocent people who were in no way involved with the riot. They looked to me like little boys with new drum sticks, trying them out on the heads of their friends. They seemed to have forgotten that these were people and not the drums that they never had as children.

In the midst of all the caos [sic] and confusion, people “danced up and down” the street with bolts of material taken from Paul's

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Tailoring Shop. It was amusing for me to see young men running down alleys swapping pants and suit coats as they went. I saw a little boy run into a store grabbing everything he could get his hands on. He then ran into the streets yelling to his friends, “Come on everybody, it's free”! In spite of the confusion, Rev. James Lawson and other ministers tried in vain to maintain order. While doing so, they were unduly attacked with mace and clubbed by the policemen who had supposedly

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Been sent to protect the marchers and not to abuse them.

As policemen [illegible] battled it out on Beale Street, isolated incidents began to flare up all over town. It was amusing to see store owners run from behind their counters to paint "Soul Brothers" on their windows. I saw televisions and radios literally walking down the streets.

Those things that couldn't be carried were destroyed.

As I drove home, I saw people discussing the events of the day and I thought to myself, this nightmare has finally become reality. I wonder how and when it will end.

From Miss X's eye witness report, I do not feel that the incidents that occurred on last Thursday could have been avoided. These incidents were an outlet for the tensions and frustrations that had been building up in the Negro for many many years.

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