

They said it would not and that it could not happen in Memphis—but it did happen. I was an eyewitness to the burning and looting that happened in my own neighborhood. I also interviewed two persons who were participants in the march that took place last Thursday, March 23, in support of the sanitation workers.

It was quiet, early Thursday morning, until a couple of neighbors came to ask me to go and pick up their children at school in my car. They heard that it was a riot there. That was not a rumor. When I arrived, parents were gathering there children as fast as they could. There were policemen at both ends of the building. They had captured a phalanx of youths, who were believed to have started the calamity. Later that afternoon, the principal of that school was beaten up.

When I arrived home, everything was tranquil, until I suddenly saw people running down the street. I stopped a young girl, and she told me that the "Invaders," a popular Black power organization in Memphis, were brickbating every bus and car or truck that passed them. But it was later learned that it was not the "Invaders" group, but a group of intoxicated thugs, who lived in our own neighborhood, "The T and F gang."

That afternoon, I saw a bevy of people gathered around the two neighborhood stores, both owned and operated by whites—one Jewish and the other Italian. I walked up the street to see what was happening. It just so happened that my neighbor across the street was in the store at the time. She said that the leader of the boys told the two grocers to close up. The Jewish grocer closed immediately, but the Italian grocer pointed his gun in the youths' face and told him that he was going to close when

he was "good and ready."

That evening, at about 3:00 p.m., both stores were in flames. The other store in the neighborhood, owned by a Chinese, Mr. Lung, was untouched. His store was closed that day with a sign in his window, "Gone to March." At 3:00 a.m. Friday morning, March 29, the hoodlums had come back to finish burning the Italian grocer's store. Also that morning, no one was allowed to enter or leave the area in which we live. All day Friday, there was a special helicopter circling our street.

On Saturday morning, March 30, looting began in both stores, where some of the food and articles were not touched by the flames. The police and national guards were called. The policemen were very rough. They struck innocent people, who had nothing to do with the looting. I was inarticulate, dumbfounded, while watching the policemen run down innocent people. Later that evening, things got quieter.

The two persons, whom I interviewed, agreed to the fact that the riot downtown, March 28, was started by a group of teenagers, who felt that they could no longer wait on Dr. Martin Luther King, who was late on arrival and leader of the march. When Dr. King did arrive, he had trouble trying to get to the front of the march. When he did reach the front of the march, he had trouble trying to control the marchers, being that they were unfortunately crowded and in order. How else would you expect of a crowd. The police then began to shoot the mace to control the marchers. When the mace was being shot, some of the windows began being shattered and broken.

Finally, I have concluded that the riot was not started by the teenagers or the marchers. It was begun by the police, who were so anxious in trying to control the marchers with their anger and fear, that they were unable to control themselves with

the race triggers at their fingertips.

DJ-3

My reaction to the whole situation is this: 1. I feel that it (the rioting and looting) was not in vain and that it did accomplish something, although I am a nonviolent person. 2. I feel that if Mr. Henry Loeb does not come to a complete agreement with the sanitation workers, that more rioting, burning and looting will develop.