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David Yellin- This is tape 2 July 8<sup>th</sup> with reverend James Lawson, Joan Beifuss and David Yellin, Tape 2. (Tape Break)

David Yellin- We were talking about the Hamilton High thing.

Joan Beifuss- What I was trying to get was what affect the Hamilton high rumors that came down there had on the people that gathered to march.

James Lawson- Well I don't really think that had that much actual affect frankly and of course that is my own personal judgment.

Joan Beifuss- When I got there the first thing I heard was....

James Lawson- Let me give you my own explanation of what happened that Thursday, it is not an explanation that very many people have seen or are aware of. Some people are aware of it however, that after the hysteria, this moment passes and there has been some since that time some digging in and we do have some understanding of what took place. We made a basic mistake in our, in the march in two ways I would say. One was that not having had that big of a march, we did not work hard enough on disciplining and training our marshals. Because in the face of for example the sidewalks our marshals were very hesitant about what to do. Whereas, there should have been no hesitation at that point and maybe that is because we didn't foresee the milling on the sidewalks as possible but nonetheless I think it indicates a weakness in our own train. That was one of the keys because we should have very clearly those of us who were the chief marshals had to keep prompting and supervising the marshals at every point. Which we should not have had to do which I think indicates...

David Yellin- You had to do it out loud.

James Lawson- Yes we had to keep doing it out loud. Marshals get the sidewalks clear and this kind of thing, we should never have done this.

David Yellin- Is that because it sets up a reaction among the people?

James Lawson- Yeah that's right. They should have known that was a part of the responsibility, I am sure this was said in the training sessions but it was just something the marshals I think maybe they anticipated an easier time of it because their experience was limited and because of all of our marches have been so well controlled and what not you see. So perhaps they therefore, expected less difficulty and in fact they didn't take things seriously. In any case it was very apparent to me that we had become very weak and this was apparent at the beginning to me. That our marshal training was inadequate. Another major mistake that we made was that we had made posters with sticks, on sticks. And now we tried to correct that incidentally because we saw some people taking the poster off of the stick and waving the stick around. So then when we saw this we began to collect the sticks

and put them away. And we had marshals collect bundles of these prepared sticks that people had taken off and the marshals would take them and take them into the church, into the building. So we saw that and we began to collect them as fast as we could. We began to see that this could be a problem for us. But that was a mistake because it did get to the groups that wanted to use them and gave them something to use. I don't think that would have stopped the incident because the initial breaking began in other ways and they didn't use sticks that I could see at least. Now the, we did have not so much based upon Hamilton, but based upon what later happened we had two or three incidents of rabble rousing. For example a couple of marshals came up to me at one point and said look there is a man down here at the corner of Hernando and (muffled) and he is telling the people this is what we ought to do. And he said he is standing on the shoulders of people and calling people to kind of, I don't remember if he said he was actually calling people to busting windows. Well when we heard this Ralph Jackson and I and one or two others moved down there immediately and we saw this going on so we stopped the man and we tried to say to the surrounding crowd that look, this is a nonviolent march and you have sheets of paper that give you certain instructions and we want you to follow those and if you cannot then we urge you to go on home, don't stay here.

David Yellin- Could you identify these people?

James Lawson- We identified them later.

David Yellin- Could you know identify them?

James Lawson- Oh yes, sure that particular man yes.

David Yellin- What was his persuasion?

James Lawson- Well this was very difficult to find out, because I have talked to him a couple of times since then and we should say he is a well known man around town.

David Yellin- How old?

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled).

James Lawson- Probably 27. Someone probably in his 20's or 30's at his most. Well in what circles? Well in circles that might understand a slight playboy, combination playboy crook. One kind of another, what he was about that day we are not sure except we tried some reconstruction. He has come to mass meetings since then and he has indicated some friendship for a number of us since then.

Joan Beifuss- Jim can we clear the invaders on that?

Are you talking...

James Lawson- No these were not invaders.

Joan Beifuss- These were not invaders ok fine.

David Yellin- He was not a member of any organized group.

James Lawson- These were not invaders.

David Yellin- Yeah he was a solo...

James Lawson- Yeah and the fact is the invaders were no where to be seen at this time.

David Yellin- Alright at this time....

James Lawson- Not to be seen.

David Yellin- (Muffled)

Joan Beifuss- What do you know about the meeting at Clayborne Temple then, that the kids, before the march started.

James Lawson- I don't remember that. Now you have to understand now certain kinds of folk in this business tell some real lies. For example before Dr. King and Charles Cabbage and others said well were, we took responsibility for it and said we were angry because Lawson and the preachers kept us out. But that in it self was a direct lie. They had promised a certain number of marshals for the march they were invited to serve on the strategy committee. They were talked to almost every day and they were encouraged to participate in the movement.

David Yellin- This is up until the 28<sup>th</sup>?

James Lawson- Oh of course I personally as chairmen of he strategy committee, told the strategy committee this is an element of young people that we should try to involve.

David Yellin- Now you are talking about the invaders.

James Lawson- This is right, during the midst of the first and second day that we started the daily marches I encouraged the ministers to put their hands in their pockets and come out with money, cash, and give it to Charles Cabbage and for the invaders for the rent on their building and this kind of stuff. Ralph Jackson and one or two of us. This was just out and out you know align....

Joan Beifuss- I am trying to think who told us about nit, must have been a white minister, stepped into Clayborne temple right before the march and there was some kind of meeting going on there, young people and he was told to get out because he was white and a minister then went up and talked to the young people and told them they could not put anyone out of the church. But I have never been quite clear in my mind of whether this was where the invaders were prior to the march.

James Lawson- Well I don't really remember so I hesitate to say. I don't know who was in the church at that moment.

David Yellin- TO get back to this fellow that you talked about, what was his reasoning as far as you can make it?

James Lawson- Well this is going ahead, but say the next day or so after we did this and we got a lot of pictures of people in that day. We did some talking and investigating and looking at these pictures. For one thing in a number of these pictures are people in the march and people who were in the sidewalk. We found a number of pictures of guys who were fairly well known as small time shoplifters and thieves in the Beale Street area. And some of these are identifiable. In doing some investigating, on doing some talking to various people, it became clear that this main strategy was planned essentially by these kinds of persons and not but the invaders or anyone else. That whatever talking they did that day in their initially helping to get windows busted they had certain plans to replenish their stocks. Because what they said very frankly was that the economic boycott was depriving them of their livelihood that it was taking their wood from them because there was no one downtown town therefore there could be no stealing downtown. And they saw the march as an opportunity to steal again.

Joan Beifuss- Are you saying that a group, are you implying that a group of them got together and decided (muffled).

James Lawson- This is the way that one person that worked on this said that it happened. And he put his report together from a number of people that were working in the streets.

David Yellin- Would that be (muffled) group?

James Lawson- I wouldn't say this is a formal clan but we do know for example that there was systematic looting of stores and that automobiles did pull up to certain store on Beale Street and take out everything in the windows very quickly. I mean this did happen in those early moments.

Joan Beifuss- Automobiles off the street?

James Lawson- Yes that is right, trunks and back seats got filled up with stuff real fast.

David Yellin- So the contention would be that this was for looting rather than for....

James Lawson- Yeah so there is no ideological issue.

David Yellin- By the same token I might say that I did hear somebody say the same thing except they went into the ideological thing saying these were the real deprived and the unrepresented you know the whinos and the....

Joan Beifuss- That it wasn't the invaders that were left out of this.

James Lawson- well butt hey, what I would say though is that they did not, they used the march as a cover. Now there was no ideological problem here. Now the fact

t hat they had been maybe deprived or maybe depressed or what not, some of them at least were making their livelihood from looting and stealing. And this is the reality. Whatever ideological case you want to make out of that seems to me is your you know.

David Yellin- Would this be what you got from this fellow?

James Lawson- Yes and I don't want to divulge how we did this because that might create some problems for us in the future but we had people on the streets working on this particularly after we saw many of the photographs and particularly after those photographs were identified for us I mean people were identified as being so and so and so and so and so and so. As soon as that became clear then we did put people into the streets to begin to make inquiries and get some conversations going and begin to try to put some things together.

David Yellin- Were you ever able to pinpoint who threw the first rock?

James Lawson- No. No. I can say where I heard the first windows busting. This was on Beale Street. I heard the first windows busting actually somewhere between 2<sup>nd</sup> street and Main Street.

Joan Beifuss- Where were you....

James Lawson- I was in front of the march.

Joan Beifuss- You were out in front?

James Lawson- Oh yes I was out in front of the march.

Joan Beifuss- Ok who else was out ahead?

James Lawson- Oh, well Chief Lux of course I mentioned already and of course the first line of people were there, Dr. King, Bishop Julian Smith, L.R. Donson, T.L. Roe. Ralph Jackson was a marshal and (muffled).

David Yellin- Ralph Abernathy, there was a picture.

James Lawson- Ralph Abernathy yeah.

David Yellin- Now if, can we go back to where you left off when Dr. King joined?

James Lawson- Right, well....

David Yellin- You say a group moved in behind that...

James Lawson- Yes right and it was also clear that we had just hundreds of people from Linden to Beale Street. In the street on the sidewalk everywhere. Some of us who were in the front who were marshals tried to clear the way, I remember for example saying the three girls you know Dr. King is behind you and you are up in front of him. And they said oh he is.

Joan Beifuss- You mean they had surged in front of the march?

James Lawson- No they were already there you see, no they were there before we got there.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah right.

James Lawson- You see they were already there the sidewalks and I said they were already filled all along this way. So as I said I remember talking to a couple of the girls and I said you know that King isn't in front of you, you are in front of him and you are supposed to be in the back if you were in the march. But you have been waiting up here obviously and you are out here in the middle of the street, so I said you are really helping the march to not move on properly. Well they acted surprised as if they didn't know he was, the march hadn't come that far and I got them to go off onto the sidewalk and we were going to go down, but I am saying that the sidewalk and streets were filled with people. We tried to move on as best we could.

David Yellin- Why do you think it was full of people, did they come to watch, to see Dr. King?

James Lawson- Well some came to watch there is no doubt about that, and were in a sense maybe pushed along. But Holloman himself told me that they had their eyes on groups of young people, men, chiefly on Beale Street and Main Street before the march even got started. Which incidentally you know causes me personally some real problems about the efficiency of the police because if the police saw, of he said they had their eyes already on some fellows on the sidewalks before we even got there, why didn't the police infiltrate those groups and find out what was going on?

Joan Beifuss- Jim did Holloman hold the police, the police were held back weren't they? Were there police on Beale Street?

James Lawson- No there were not.

Joan Beifuss- There were no police on Hernando?

James Lawson- No.

Joan Beifuss- There were police evidenced anywhere>?

James Lawson- No.

David Yellin- Who would he mean?

Joan Beifuss- Whose idea?

James Lawson- I don't know whose idea that was, it wasn't as such ours?

Joan Beifuss- It wasn't yours in that it would lessen friction not to have them?

James Lawson- On the daily marchers they always had a policemen, they always had some policemen walk along with us. But they usually had policemen patrolling those streets pretty careful too.

Joan Beifuss- There were policemen at the corners though?

James Lawson- No there were no policemen at the corners as far as I know, I don't remember. Of course, I can't be a good observer because I was more concerned with getting the march started properly and moving on, so I couldn't be really concerned about what was too far away.

Joan Beifuss- What about the criticism Jim that a lot of people stood (muffled) a long time before the march started what should have been the march should have moved out and let King join up at City hall if he got there that late.

James Lawson- Well you know that is always hindsight. Obviously when you are going to have a march with thousands of people, you may have some difficulties in the setoff exactly in time, particularly if the chief person that is coming, comes in late. And, I don't think that we can, you know I don't think if that had been his intention or our intention, that is another thing if he had come to the city hall ok. But that would not have prevented from taking place what took place. That is the first thing and the second thing was that the intention of the march itself was for him to come and lead it, so in a way we had to wait until he kind of got there. I was uptight as anyone about him getting there so late. But (muffled). Certainly going to try and follow the plan.

David Yellin- Can I....you say a group moved in, who are the group? Are they identifiable?

James Lawson- They were essentially a group of young men, I would not say high school age some were older than that, and her again you can see these pictures, they are in these pictures.

David Yellin- Yes.

James Lawson- Now to my knowledge I did not see them leave the street.

David Yellin- During the march.

James Lawson- During the march, they followed the march all the way up.

David Yellin- And why would they be there?

James Lawson- Well I suspect that I, my own thinking about that particular group was that this was a group of guys who decided they were going to be close to the leader and they just burst ahead of everyone and saw to it that they got there in that (muffled). The pictures indicate they are still there.

David Yellin- The pictures also indicate a certain apprehension and of course you can't always tell in a picture you could catch them midway between a smile and a frown but a certain apprehension certainly on Dr. King's face. There was a certain tension as if these people behind might be saying something to him. Have you ever heard anything about that?

James Lawson- No, he made no comments about that as I can recall about that, that day or the next day. About any comments they made to him. As I was going to say my own understanding of those guys was that they wanted to get close to him and they did so. And in this sort of a sense they ignored all discipline or instructions from anyone about it. Just as this is where they were going to be and this is where they got. As I say I do not see them in any case anticipate or participate in any of the rowdyism that did begin later on.

Joan Beifuss- Ok now when you hear the first window break that was in back of you?

James Lawson- That was in back of me yes and of course that, even then you see the sidewalks were filled with people. And obviously these elements who were on the sidewalks, were on the sidewalks deliberately now. They were not there intending to, you know not there accidentally. Then it was so crowded they were there because they had purposes in mind. Of course, we had people in front of us on the sidewalks. And in fact it is somewhere in here, that I sent a couple of marshals from the front and I said go down along the side and see if you can help to get those folks off the sidewalks and see if you can keep them from windows. I think this is somewhere back before I heard the first window break maybe. But then I began to hear the windows break and then I asked chief Holloman to get me a bullhorn which he did right away.

Joan Beifuss- Well now were you still...

David Yellin- Chief Lux.

James Lawson- Chief Lux right.

Joan Beifuss- You were still on Beale?

James Lawson- We were on Beale still because about the time just before we got to Main St. the officer brought me a bull horn.

David Yellin- One little thing, that, when you said Holloman told you later that they had their eyes on certain groups...

James Lawson- Right.

David Yellin- Who?

James Lawson- Well on the sidewalks and on Main St.

David Yellin- No, who would have been his men, where were they?



James Lawson- I am not sure but apparently they were on the side streets somewhere around Pontotoc and what would be the next street?

David Yellin- Coming towards this way?

James Lawson- No, coming towards Union. Yes Union. They were grouped apparently on the sides of Pontotoc, Goldsmith's, Main St., Pontotoc and Main and Union apparently.

David Yellin- Now would these be plainclothes?

James Lawson- No they were apparently...I did not see where they were actually grouped frankly. Because I was still very much involved with trying to see if we could get this element on the sidewalk either off or under control.

David Yellin- no I mean where do you think Holloman's men were who observed the groups?

James Lawson- Oh they were on Main St. somewhere apparently.

David Yellin- And who were they, plain clothes men?

James Lawson- No they were probably uniformed men, because he had a whole contingency of men up there. Because you see when these windows began, then I observed a failing of policemen that formed across the street. Somewhere around Pontotoc or beyond. I made the decision to stop the march, shortly after we passed McCall on Main. Because I got the bullhorn, I tried to tell the elements on the sidewalk they were not in the march. And that they were, I don't know all I said to them over the bull horn but I tried to stop them from going up the street because they were by that time busting windows up the street. They were ahead of me.

David Yellin- you saw this?

James Lawson- I saw this you see.

Joan Beifuss- They were ahead of you then. (muffled)

James Lawson- Well chiefly I saw it on the West side of the street. I did not see it as much on the other side of the street. In fact, it was really chiefly limited to the west side at that time.

David Yellin- That is on your left?

James Lawson- Going Main St towards city hall it would have been on my right. Not west side, east side of the street, it was chiefly on the east side of the street. Because among other things there were more clothing stores there.

David Yellin- (Muffled)

James Lawson- Yeah that is right there was more clothing stores along that way, there used to be several stores there that year.

Joan Beifuss- Well now, am I getting the picture then, coming down south on Main St. are the police, a group of police moving south?

James Lawson- I don't remember when they came across the street and where they formed. By the time I stopped the march, by the time I told the front marshals to hold it. I saw in front of me, policemen across the street. But my chief concern at that moment wasn't the police, my chief concern was to get those who were in the street marching turned back towards the church and to move away.

David Yellin- Now this was your single decision?

James Lawson- Yes this was my single decision.

David Yellin- You consulted nobody?

James Lawson- I consulted nobody no. I went immediately and told my....after I got the first line stopped in the street and told them to turn and face the march and I told other marchers there to stop with the bull horn, I then went directly to Dr. King and to Ralph, and Henry Starks was there and James Smith rather and I said to them look I want you to take Dr. King down the hall and out of the way. Martin balked and I said directly to Ralph then, I said, something about I agree I understand Ralph Martin not wanting to but I said, I want him too. I think he should go on and Henry Starks I remember backed me up immediately and the net result was that a handful of people surrounded Abernathy and King and they moved down McCall towards Front Street and out of the way. Then I went back and told the front line of marchers, marshals that I am going to move down the street, the middle of the street and tell everyone to stop, to turn around and to march back to the church and I want you to move slowly and encouraging everyone to move on back. So then I proceeded to take with the bullhorn and move down the middle of the street and top essentially say this is reverend Lawson speaking, I want everyone who is in the march and with the march in the movement to turn around and go back to the church.

Joan Beifuss- Jim as you started back down Beal are windows still breaking along the sides?

James Lawson- Well I don't really know because I am not really listening to that now I am really concentrating on getting the march going.

David Yellin- What was your strategy for doing this?

James Lawson- Well....

David Yellin- I am not questioning?

James Lawson- Yeah right well it was just simple, it seemed to me that, that with these guys doing this work they were one, thereby jeopardizing the safety of the marchers. Because in the march you had women children families, everything else. They were not people that could run from the police and if we kept moving and they kept doing this then the police were going to have to take harsh action. And that in turn would...

David Yellin- I see, so the battleground seemed to be ahead of you.

James Lawson- That is right at that time.

David Yellin- But you didn't know what was happening behind you.

James Lawson- Right I don't know yet what was happening behind me. But of course windows had busted behind me at that time, of course down Beale Street we heard those as we were moving up. And as we moved back fellows were still busting the windows and grabbing what they could grab along the way. But I kept moving back and getting people to turn around the march effectively responded to this, except those people engaged in the busting of windows.

David Yellin- Including this line of young people who were behind Dr. King?

James Lawson- Oh yes, right the people in the street in the march essentially followed our instructions without hesitation. And I watched this myself all the way back down to, I stopped walking at the corner of Beale and Hernando and I stood at that intersection in the middle of the street, then with the bullhorn continuing to tell people to move on back, urge them to go to the church and for some of them to go on home. Saying the march was over and doing ideological things talking about the fact that some people aren't knowing any better used the march as a cover and they were cowards because if they were not cowards they would not hide behind children and women, things like this.

David Yellin- What was your feeling about all this?

James Lawson- Well I really, I really wasn't uptight or anything like that about it, I watched some of the guys bust the window behind me at a liquor store and start looting it. But even at this moment my primary [preoccupation was not so much with what they were doing as to make certain that we got our folk who were in the march for real back down and out. So I essentially stayed there until my first marshals got to me. The first marshals got to me and then we proceeded to go on back together back to the church. And then when we got to the church of course the two or three times I went up and down that street though trying to exalt some of the folks who were throwing stones at the time at police and what not to get out.

David Yellin- Were these mostly young people?

James Lawson- These are chiefly men, chiefly male, under 30 I suspect mostly and the police of course were now following this element because that element in a way

separated our first rank of marshals, Ralph Jackson, J.W. Williams who was magnificent, and a number of others you know. By this time the group that was there to do the damage, to dot he junk were busting windows and looting and throwing stuff at the police. They were actually between then what was our first rank of preachers who were marshals and what not and the police.

David Yellin- How were the police proceeding?

James Lawson- Here again I didn't really watch this process you see, because again I was trying to keep my eyes on those folks who stayed in the street. The police were essentially just coming down the street in a kind of Phalanx.

David Yellin- Not running but walking?

James Lawson- No I think they were walking for the most part, now some of the other people would have to talk about this, maybe some of those that stayed there and were involved in that. Because I didn't really observe them that carefully. I could smell tear gas by this time I could hear the shots of the tear gas guns, I could hear windows breaking, I could see shouts I saw a couple of skirmishes between young cats for example once when I was at the intersection they chased the policemen up the street on 3<sup>rd</sup> avenue. He came down on a motorcycle for some reason, where he was he looked out of place, but they thought of attacking him and chased him up the street. I saw that forma block away.

David Yellin- You saw J.W> Williams was magnificent what did he do?

James Lawson- well he was one of the ministers who was in that front rank, and he essentially you know, he is tall elderly man very distinguished looking and he was essentially one of the men who stood there and directed our folk to come on back down but calmly and with great dignity helped us to effect that turn around and to in self stand there right were the danger was in a way if the police had started firing at least. Between that group and our folk.

David Yellin- Did that ever enter your mind that the police might?

James Lawson- Yeah sure, it definitely did. Especially when I saw this group attack this policemen up the street and across, and looting. Enough had gone on (muffled) by that time with the looting and what not to think the police were capable of doing anything.

David Yellin- Is there anything you can tell us about Martin Luther King going up McCall, he got a car, why was the car there and whose was it and so on.

James Lawson- They hailed a car did they not? They hailed a pick up truck ort a car or something, there was no car there, I think they hailed the car or truck.

David Yellin- They walked down McCall and got into a car?

Joan Beifuss- On Front street.

James Lawson- Yeah they stopped the car.

David Yellin- They stopped the car.

James Lawson- Yeah, there was no car there, they stopped a car. At least that is what they called Henry Starks told me they hailed someone. Vaguely recall initially they hailed a pick up truck and he stopped the car or something but Henry Starks should know that more specifically because he went out with them. Anyway, they did get someone to drive them to Holiday Inn.

David Yellin- The Rivermont.

James Lawson- The Rivermont.

David Yellin- Alright now...

Joan Beifuss- Jim was Dorothy in the march?

James Lawson- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- Were the children?

James Lawson- Yes, John was there too. They were more at the end of the march and they were with Bill Greenspun and someone else. They said they went into St. Patrick's when the march was turned around. I did not see them (muffled) they came down kind of later. Because I was concerned about where they were for a time too. But after we got back and the church was filled, then some cats were using the church as a cover and were throwing bottles at police from the church. And the police of course were still trying to disperse them with essentially tear gas. But they called Holloman and we got him on the phone and I talked with him about our getting these folks out of the way.

David Yellin- Where were you then?

James Lawson- I think I called him from the minimum salary building. In fact I know I did.

Joan Beifuss- Now Jim were they throwing out from inside the church or coming out from around back?

James Lawson- No I didn't really see any throwing from inside the church, what they would do is throw from the front of the church or the side of the church and then they would charge in either the front door or the side door. And to the police that might of course looked like they might have been throwing form the inside. But that couldn't be done that easily even by a good athlete., You would have to have a little bit clearer vision than that and what not and the doors would have to be wide open. But what I saw was they were using the church as a cover, they would throw and then charge back and venture out to the street. Throw and then charge to the side door, that is the kind of thing I saw.

David Yellin- Now you called Holloman?

James Lawson- I called Holloman on the phone and he said something about I am glad you were there because you got the march to go back or something like that.

David Yellin- Was he at headquarters?

James Lawson- Yes I guess so.

Joan Beifuss- What were you asking him to do?

James Lawson- We were saying to him we have a place full of women and children essentially and we want to get them home. And we would like not for their to be gas used on us. His response was no gas will be used the police are under orders, of course it was used. And he said we won't use any gas but I suggest that you keep them there and keep them cool. He said of course some people are throwing stuff from the church and I said, well we will try to see what we can do to try and stop them from using the church as a cover. I said I think what they are doing is they are, these guys who think they are tough are throwing and they are running back. And I said I am not sure what we can do about stopping them but we will do what we can. I said in any case the people at the church (muffled). They will try to do what we want them to do.

David Yellin- Now could it be that these people who are now throwing. They are not necessarily the same element that were looting?

James Lawson- No.

David Yellin- Now these are just...

James Lawson- Some of these are teenagers who are stimulated, and some of them are teenagers from the Beale Street area who are stimulated too. Because that area does have a fair number of young cats who operate that way and from their training and discipline they see throwing a stone as an effective way of resistance. Maybe not as ideological as that but never the less that is the element we had to control again and again. I mean just like the black Monday movement. That again was the group that gave us trouble.

Joan Beifuss- How about inside Clayborne Temple, were women and children panicking?

James Lawson- No, no they were calm there were speeches going on, there was singing and various leaders who were talking to the people about the thing and I went back a couple of times and reported to them because I also went up the street to Vance and to check on my, to in fact essentially check on my wife because she was parking the car there at a funeral home there to make sure they got back there ok.

David Yellin- Were you ever...

James Lawson- I tried to dissuade a group of guys from busting into a liquor store on the corner of Vance and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. But they said he has got a shotgun and he is pointing at me and they insisted and kept on despite my efforts to stop them. Till eventually some of their stones began to bust up the windows.

David Yellin- Now who were they talking about?

James Lawson- The proprietor of the man, they said he has a shotgun and he has threatened us or something like that.

David Yellin- Were you ever concerned for your own personal safety in all this?

James Lawson- Well, perhaps I am not sure, initially, my major concern was the march itself and then for a time I was interested in seeing if we could slow down or stop what we saw going on, and then for a major part of the time we were concerned with getting the people that were there to go on home. And get them out safely. I thought of possibilities that this would be a good time for certain enemies to try to do me in and some people came up to me and said I shouldn't be on the street, but...

Joan Beifuss- You primarily stayed on the street rather than...

James Lawson- Oh yeah right at least hose first, the first minutes after most of our folks got back to the building I moved around Vance, Hernando and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. I dropped into the funeral home and checked on them. By that time my wife and son had come back to the funeral home and gone home so I then went back out and again tried to stop some of the kids from across the street from the public housing unit from throwing stones. They attacked a bus driver there on the street on Vance and I got to him and helped him to the funeral home.

David Yellin- How did you do that, I mean what did you do did you stop the kids?

James Lawson- I just went out and got him while they were throwing stones at him.

David Yellin- You went and got in the bus?

James Lawson- Yeah right he jumped out of the bus and started running and they started chasing him as I recall and this just comes back to me I forgotten about that.

Joan Beifuss- Was he a white driver?

James Lawson- He was a white driver. I had forgotten how, what happened were there....I just went and grabbed him and pulled him in and stopped them.

David Yellin- Well how did he know you weren't part of the gang that was going to jump him.

James Lawson- I guess most of the time I was telling them not to do it because he knew.

Joan Beifuss- Where was this?

James Lawson- This was at Hernando...no this was at Vance and just a little bit past 4<sup>th</sup> and I can't remember now how that happened. Whether this man was a bus driver, you know which was the bus was going. It seems to me he was bus driver though?

Joan Beifuss- The bus was there?

James Lawson- And whether that bus was that, was going towards town or coming away from town...

David Yellin- Was this a mail truck (muffled).

James Lawson- Yeah I think it was, it seems like there was two people. I was thinking as I recall there was two folks and you see when I first finally left the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Vance, and went and walked down the few steps to the funeral home which is on the north side of the street to check on my family, I left a group of guys who were hiding, using the building as a shelter to throw stones.

David Yellin- Did they know you?

James Lawson- No, I didn't know them. I tried to stop them from eluding and throwing stones and what not. I left a group of guys there who were (muffled) and they were determined to bust up this liquor store. And I got a few of them to leave and they went across the street into the public housing unit. And then from there some of them were throwing stones all the way across the street at the liquor store at the grocery store at the corner of Hernando, or 4<sup>th</sup> and Vance.

David Yellin- Both owned by white people?

James Lawson- Yes I am sure. Must have been.

Joan Beifuss- David Caywood gave us a beautiful description about you defending a liquor store but he placed it before the march started, was he?

David Yellin- No that was Blanchard?

Joan Beifuss- Was it Blanchard? I thought it was Caywood.

James Lawson- Well that was another incident. That was beforehand we got word that these guys were threatening or something a liquor store.

Joan Beifuss- That was before the march went down.

James Lawson- That was on the corner of Linden and Hernando. That is right. It is still another incident, so I went over there and tried to get them out and got the man to lock up and put his keys up or something.



David Yellin- Jim just when you see this, when you see these guys throwing the stones or somebody jumping someone, what is your approach?

James Lawson- Well I simply try to talk with these young people in fact I did get some of them to stop throwing and to stop trying.

David Yellin- I mean how do you do that?

James Lawson- I don't remember what the approach was, I may have said I am reverend Lawson and you know I said this doesn't do us any good and I may have said something about we have a good movement and it will hold on. I may have been pragmatic and said you are not really, they have got more weapons than you have and better weapons.

David Yellin- Did anytime during this you have a feeling of what this might mean to the whole movement to the whole strike?

James Lawson- No. no because I had, I was, this didn't occur to me in part I guess because I had long since determined that violence with from the enemy or from the blacks would not be a reason to stop a movement,. I long since made that decision. The violence of society that was coming to a forefront was not the basis for stopping unless you have gained your goals.

David Yellin- Well reaction to it might be so strong that it would tend to stop it or at least tend to accelerate.

James Lawson- Well if enough of it occurred as in this case in the march enough of it occurred in my own mind for me to call the march off for that day. And I can conceived of a situation where so much occurred that I would just say that I would want to call the movement off for the time being.

Joan Beifuss- What did you say?

James Lawson- I said that I could conceive of the possibility that if enough of it occurred that for me to decide personally whether I could get this to happen for the group I don't know but for me to decide personally well it is not worth it, the movement cannot essentially accomplish its ends so let's stop. That is another possibility, or option that I thought about. But that wasn't the case here, this was only the case where temporary sporadic and in a sense somewhat minor violence broke out and it certainly could not be a reason for any case in thinking the movement to be jeopardized. The press jumped on this immediately and said it shows that nonviolence is a farce and that you can no longer have a nonviolent movement and so on.

Joan Beifuss- Jim had you ever been in a march like this where it had been turned around before?

James Lawson- No. (muffled) and turned it around,

David Yellin- Would you say and say form your own description t hat the police in essence and general acted with some restraint?

James Lawson- Yes I think they acted in fact with, I think they acted with too much restraint. There was no reason for example in the world why they should not have been some policemen at Beale and at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, or Main and Beale.

Joan Beifuss- Then back again wasn't Holloman trying to keep..

James Lawson- The lack of presence but at the same time he could tell me they had certain groups under surveillance before we even reached main street then it seems to me they should have taken some responsibility for those groups.

David Yellin- Would you tend to indicate that this might be the strategy of give them enough rope...

James Lawson- And they will hang themselves. Well I don't know if that was in Holloman's mind, I would say today it would be on Holloman's mind but at that time he was trying to act like he was concerned for justice and order.

David Yellin- This only who would know?

James Lawson- This is speculation.

David Yellin- At least there is certainly room for this to certainly be a possibility.

James Lawson- For now I hesitantly say yeah. But at that time I think I was definitely giving him a chance.

David Yellin- The son is father to the boy, no how could the father be son to the somebody to somebody.

Joan Beifuss- I was going to, we didn't stop at Clayborne Temple we went back to where we parked by the housing projects, and there were scattered policemen down there but they weren't doing anything at all they were just standing there and people were running by with clothe and stuff like that. The police could easily, I suppose they were too isolated to try and do anything about it.

David Yellin- You want to stop and rejuvenate your forces or? (muffled)

James Lawson- No I would rather go on and get as much of this done as we can.

David Yellin- Alright fine.

James Lawson- Do you still have tape?

David Yellin- Oh no yes we are doing well I just wondering about are you going to stay?

James Lawson- Well he has decided to sit for a while so we will go on for another 30 minutes maybe.

David Yellin- Why all, you asked me to remind you and I don't want to forget this, copy of Ralph Abernathy's speech who are we to contact on April 3<sup>rd</sup>? Remember?

James Lawson- Yeah I have already contacted him and he is trying to find it for me.

David Yellin- Ok.

Joan Beifuss- Well you asked me something that I have been meaning to ask you for a year or two. Totally off the subject, a year later the memorial march in 1969 did you ever find out who threw the tear gas canister in city hall?

James Lawson- No.

Joan Beifuss- Ok back to the....

David Yellin- Ok now, the 28<sup>th</sup> you are about mid afternoon.

James Lawson- \_Yeah I moved back and forth primarily around 4<sup>th</sup> Vance, Hernando, Pontotoc, into the church, into the minimum salary building and Hernando Street. Well initially I was trying to calm down that stone throwing which I saw and bottle throwing which I saw chiefly, as I recall after the time I gave that role up. Essentially went back and made certain about people leaving the church .

David Yellin- The stones weren't stored anywhere they were just picking them up around?

James Lawson- No they were just picking them up from the streets and throwing it. Let's see I was not in the church when the gas canisters were thrown. I heard sometime shortly about the, about the curfew being declared.

Joan Beifuss- Do you know about a man in a flat bed truck out in front of Clayborne Temple who had a bull horn or something and he was trying to get some kind of order. Somebody told us about an older man and whoever told us couldn't remember the man's name?

(muffled)

Joan Beifuss- Who is Joe Crittenden?

James Lawson- Well he was one of the good strong men around the community for community work and...

David Yellin- Whatever happened to your bullhorn?

James Lawson- I was trying to remember who I gave it to because somewhere along the line I gave it to someone else to use and I went around Vance I gave it to someone else to use.

Joan Beifuss- Did a number of leaders stay out on the street?

James Lawson- Yes oh yes. Yeah there were a number of people that kept circulating trying to operate.

Joan Beifuss- Ok how about ambulances coming into Clayborne Temple. There were some people hurt weren't there.

James Lawson- Now this I don't remember, I was trying to think a few minutes ago in fact who I saw hurt, I don't remember precisely because we, you know I simply cannot remember.

Joan Beifuss- Jim can you say definitively that tear gas was going into Clayborne Temple.

James Lawson- Oh of course sure and into the minimum salary building.

Joan Beifuss- I know in the minimum salary building, Into the vestibule at Clayborne or further in, into the sanctuary itself.

James Lawson- Well far enough in for, I don't remember seeing where, I don't remember seeing where the canisters hit in Clayborne Temple.

David Yellin- (muffled) by the police?

James Lawson- Yeah it was shot in by the police. I do know though that the place is filled with gas. And I was in the minimum salary building when it happened and in fact Jerry Blanchard and I together got on the phone to Holloman to tell him that tear gas was thrown in and he says (muffled) well tear gas is being used. And Blanchard has probably mentioned it to you.

David Yellin- Yeah and what was your reaction?

James Lawson- Well at this time (muffled). And that is the problem still you see. The work report and internal security squad's report is truth and brother Holloman doesn't know any other way of getting to truth except through those reports and that is his dilemma, that is no dilemma as this process and if that process produces truth then he is taking the obvious position of a man who has got a process that leads him to truth.

David Yellin- Sometime called self righteousness.

James Lawson- Well I mean I am saying thought that this is the inadequacy of his life as an administrator because any administrator who made your business, who is getting who is running into a lot of problems down the line is going to try to find some other way of getting to the reality of what is going on if for no other reason to check it. I mean because certainly a commissioner of fire and police certainly he doesn't want so many of his citizen's to be so disaffected by his work. I mean he must want to have good community relations hips. And you would think that he would see, and of course this indicates his inadequacy, his weakness. You would think he would see well look I, the thing is I have a problem, or we have a problem

and I have got to find some other way of checking on the way in which I perceive it. Or the reports that I get.

David Yellin- Now you have thought about this I am sure and as I recall you told us that previous to this there were times you had long talks into the night with him and so on is this not so or not too many?

James Lawson- Well during this period I had, I know I had a number of phone calls with him about different matters. I don't know if any of these lasted over 30 or 40 minutes and I would remember always the content of them when I ran into certain problems needed passes or what not I would call him direct and we would get on the phone and we would start talking about the events of the day and what not. I actually had some hope for him, I had a fair amount of hope for him in those first months of his time.

David Yellin- How would you assess, his situation in the overall? Because obviously his attitude affects the, if that is the word for it. I guess, had a great deal effect not only on what he did but the police but the mayor which in turn had an effect on other people and so on. Where would you go back if you gently and determinedly say well, let's look at it from his point of view, what happened, what made him come to wherever he has come to?

James Lawson- You see Holloman is like a lot of the rest of us. You know I am not saying that his reaction was vastly different from anyone else. You take for example the church in the ministry, clergymen, we clergymen could become very self righteous and defensive of our position. The united Methodist church for example, every year there was supposed to be an annual examination of the character of the men of the clothe.

David Yellin- By whom?

James Lawson- By themselves.

Joan Beifuss- By other men of the clothe.

James Lawson- Yeah. Well now you tell me the last time any ministers was tried for any immoral interpitude.

David Yellin- There was somebody in the last couple of years.

James Lawson- I mean tell me when the last time there was a Methodist church trial of a clergymen, whether for racism, alcoholism, or moral interpitude or anything eels you know. Because it is clergymen who try clergymen.

David Yellin- Are you saying that...

James Lawson- I am saying essentially you see that as long as you have a process where you know, a process where by police investigate police then obviously members if the union are going to protect themselves.

David Yellin- (muffled)

James Lawson- Sure I think what has happened is that essentially Holloman being exposed to the professional policemen in the city of Memphis had bought essentially of being that of protecting the professional officer. Even though the professional officer has those bad eggs in their midst that caused most of the difficulty.

Joan Beifuss- But in 1968 you (muffled).

James Lawson- Sure, oh I am cordial to him now and he is to me.

David Yellin- Yeah, (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Cordial is the wrong word I can see that.

James Lawson- Yeah well of course I took a different turn towards him though when 40% speaks and that (muffled) police brutality which we had carefully checked out. He asked for equal time to reply and when he got on the stage and simply read from the John Birch green book or blue book or something. When a man stoops to that level in stead of dealing with the factual situation that has been presented it is obvious he doesn't have a case.

Joan Beifuss- He seemed to be pretty scared though from the beginning, the business about moving the council out by police protection very early on during the strike, he was extremely cautious.

James Lawson- Well as a police officer I understand, as a professional FBI man and all Holloman accepts the thesis of most police officers and professional military men, namely that you must have a quick decisive show of force. Meaning by that you get people there on the scene and make certain they have enough weapons and what not to do what they want to do. The show of force concept, and of course in such a concept, such a concept then does not bend to make you fairly good but it tends then to close down your frame of reference for observing human beings and history and events.

David Yellin- But would there be another element and would it be the fact that he was dealing with blacks and his own relationship? I mean..

James Lawson- Well he is paternalistic as hell and most white people, a fair number of white people at least in dealing with these situations become very hysterical and become very afraid. I mean Lobe with the guards continuing around his house and all of that junk.

Joan Beifuss- But it is Holloman's?

David Yellin- Who put the guards there Lobe didn't put the guards there?

Joan Beifuss- Lobe didn't want them?

James Lawson- You mean Lobe says he didn't want them? Oh I don't think so.

David Yellin- He had nothing to do with it according to the best information.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

James Lawson- Is that right?

Joan Beifuss- Holloman pushed those policemen in his office and I think it is true probably (muffled).

James Lawson- Is that right, well maybe so.

Joan Beifuss- What about just off the top of my head do you suppose when Holloman began, do you suppose your rumors about your communism were affecting Holloman, where as he might not be concerned to much as a black man but he would concerned about you if you were leading a communist conspiracy in Memphis.

James Lawson- Yeah but he knows better.

David Yellin- Does he?

James Lawson- Of course he does he is an FBI man he knows what the FBI has on me.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah but he is (muffled) Champa.

James Lawson- Of course in that case he is a racist. But he is an FBI man he has available FBI files he knows what those files say about me.

David Yellin- Yeah he obviously knows.

James Lawson- Yeah well sure, and he knows damn well that those files indicate there is no trace of my relationship to any kind of communist party in this country or any other country.

Joan Beifuss- Then you disregard that as any kind of motivation on Holloman?

James Lawson- No sure. Which means there fore he has got to be a racist. Or a fascist.

Joan Beifuss- Ok I will take either one.

James Lawson- I am saying you know he knows what is in the FBI files.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

David Yellin- Really and I don't certainly mean to put words in your mouth which I am not doing, but in really assessing this, it would seem that what as so much at the bottom of this is the instability that they can make any kind of rational judgment, or inability based on this thing that they themselves were not really conscious of so that they were dealing with something. This is why I wonder because when you get down to everything else maybe this is what it comes down to.

James Lawson- This may very well be. Of course you know it is, you know I do frankly wonder that how many of those guys if they were in some neighborhood this is one of the reason the police have to have their guns and they have to kill so many folks and they have to use force and provoke people into counter force so much. How many would get on the streets when young people are being rowdy without weapons and try to calm them down with so many less of them. When they are throwing stones at police and police are firing tear gas...

David Yellin- There is this other aspect of it that they represent law enforcement and any disrespect whatever you know, is disrespect to the flag. I can tell you to go to hello and I can stamp on your shirt but I can't tell the flag to, the police represent them and (muffled). I mean there is that aspect of it which you don't throw a stone at the policemen I guess their thought because you throw a stone, it is not like throwing a stone at you and me.

James Lawson- Yeah.

David Yellin- I don't know but well ok, let's move on if we can.

Joan Beifuss- Go back then to Clayborne Temple that afternoon.

James Lawson- Well, after I think most of the folk got pretty much out of Clayborne Temple and the minimum salary building I went home for a few moments before heading out to the Rivermont. While I was home a few moments...

David Yellin- How did you know Dr. King was at that rivermont?

James Lawson- Somewhere along the line I got the message and sent work I would be there before long, I don't know where I got this word from probably minimum salary building perhaps they called. And, any case I got this word from somewhere and I knew I was going to go over that way. While I was at home I even didn't get to make any phone calls because while I was at home I got at least 3 phone calls from people who saw the killing of Larry Payne which took place somewhere in that period. They told me about that shooting and that is how I learned about Larry Payne's death. I, so in any case I had to leave because the phone calls were coming in and I couldn't get any out so I went on then to the Rivermont. And went in immediately to where Martin was laying in the bed. In the VIP suite. Now he of course was placid but behind his calm he was upset. By this time, I noticed when I got there that Cabbage and one or two others had beaten me there. By this time he had apparently heard there story. But after we, you know there was some brief conversation and of course I made it clear from the very beginning that the next day we would be marching and we would be marching everyday after that.

Joan Beifuss- Did you talk to him privately or generally with a group of people?

James Lawson- Well just a handful I think Andy Young, I think Ralph Abernathy, Martin, and then unfortunately whoever was supposed to be on the door started



letting other people in and more people started to come in and so we had to stop analyzing and we had to sort of shift the tension to the immediate press conference.

David Yellin- What was his concern then even in the few moments you had to analyze.

James Lawson- Well as I recall his chief concern even then was you know, the march, the movement would have to go on and this was a real disaster. He was upset by it all.

Joan Beifuss- The Memphis movement had to go on?

James Lawson- Yeah, but you couldn't stop because of white violence, we didn't stop because of white violence so we can't stop because of our violence so we made that decision.

David Yellin- Did he blame you?

James Lawson- No. There was no..

David Yellin- Did you think Cabbage blamed you?

James Lawson- Yes I had gotten wind of sometime before then of what Cabbage and that group had been saying. And of course then I got more of it the next day, that night and the next day, I got more of what they had planned. Where of course they placed the blame very strongly on the preachers and I was mentioned specifically I understand and Ralph Jackson was mentioned specifically being those who kept them out. Of course, I think that King learned later that this was not true as did some of the other staff people.

Joan Beifuss- Someone said that the staff people were very angry about what happened in the march but that he himself was not but he was angry with the staff?

James Lawson- Well the staff was, let's see the staff was much more upset than Martin and of course it should also be said that a number of the staff people did not want King to come to Memphis at all. Now this was primarily because they were aiming at the poor people's campaign and his plans and they didn't like the idea of us changing his plans to do this you see, to come to Memphis. So of course the violence in that big march therefore, you see would further just tear them apart.,

David Yellin- I told you so sort of.

James Lawson- Yeah. So I mean yes they were much more upset about it than he was.

David Yellin- Was Andy Young?

James Lawson- Well, externally that day I didn't see Andy Young being much upset, Andy too also tends to be far cooler headed than some of the other staff people even

in the worst situations. So I didn't see Andy being physically shaken at this moment you know.

David Yellin- And the other people came in was that then the press conference?

James Lawson- Well we shifted then the discussion to what do we say at the press conference? And we essentially agreed that I would make the initial statement and then Dr. King would make a statement and that he would insist that we would have another march and that his staff would be in town helping us locally to work on it to make certain that the next march would be a nonviolent march and that it would not get disrupted by anyone.

Joan Beifuss- But isn't that essentially then he had to pull staff people off the poor people's campaign?

James Lawson- Yeah and then they had to put someone in here.

David Yellin- Who called the press conference.

James Lawson- Well of course the press found out very quickly that King had gone and in fact they had started circling this junk about him having run away from the march like a rabbit I think one report was.,

David Yellin- Yes local papers.

James Lawson- Local papers and what not and they had learned and found out where he was and they were there, they were gathering because I don't know...

David Yellin- You mean the press called the press conference.

James Lawson- Yeah so we didn't have to call we just said we would make a statement. You know when I got there I said that too probably some time later on. Do you want to hear essentially what I said at that moment?

David Yellin- Yes sir.

James Lawson- Well I said the march was moving well.

David Yellin- Excuse me, did you prepare this or is this what you remember?

James Lawson- I scribbled notes, I scribbled notes. I said the march was moving well, with over 20,000 people I said or more. Women and children wheelchairs, doctors and what not. And then minimum amount of looting began to break out and stone throwing and bottles. They were by persons not in the movement I said even then. They are not people who were legitimate then, for whatever reason they were not a part of the cause, the march. And I said essentially we surrounded King and forced him to leave the scene. As I recall I said he did not run, he did not want to go, but I insisted and we insisted. Then we began to turn the march around. That the march did not move back because of the police, it moved back because of the leadership in the community, in the movement. And I also said the violence would

not stop the movement and would not turn us around. I said the issue today in spite of the violence was the same, namely, the injustice heaped upon the workers and the injustice heaped upon black people. It was the issue last week, it was the issue yesterday I said, it was the issue today. Still, Dr. King had been involved....I said the violence was the violence of the young who had learned it from the society, our sick society which teaches hatred and violence and destruction. We do not condone it and we are still committed to nonviolence, we have warned and we have insisted to the community to try and tell the signs of these things could happen. (muffled). And I said we will not be (muffled) we will continue there will be a march tomorrow, we will continue to str4et non violent tactics, the boycott will go on the mass meetings will go on, the city must listen to the cry for justice and hope and so t hen I asked people of the movement to stay in and that we did not want the death of the innocent or the hurt of the innocent. Nor did we want to stoop to hatred and that the leadership would be meeting Saturday morning, Friday morning at 10 am to continue strategizing for the movement. So that is essentially the statement I made.

David Yellin- And...

James Lawson- Dr. King made a statement and I have forgotten the essence of it now. But he said he had not lost hope, that we would have to have a nonviolent march in Memphis. That we would have to show that it could, such a march could go on and that was a (muffled) and even a staff person that he would remain there himself but he would be back himself.

Joan Beifuss- He left a staff person, who did he leave?

James Lawson- Well I have forgotten now, it might have been what's his name?

David Yellin- Orange?

James Lawson- No.

Joan Beifuss- It doesn't matter some people came back in. Was this the first time where the kids in the background also?

James Lawson- Some of the invader kids I think were there but essentially Martin and I sat at the table and then some of the ministers stood behind us as I recall. Some staff and some of our people stood behind us.

Joan Beifuss- Well then did you stay with him, did you see him that night?

James Lawson- No, I did not see him that night. Later on I went, curfew was called and I was trying to think if that was night we had the meeting with Holloman and Lux? At first Methodist Church. Now you ought to check on that if you want to heart that piece of history. The minister at first Methodist would know about it I think he or I forgot who said that, has anyone mentioned that to you?

Joan Beifuss- No.

James Lawson- Maybe Frank McRae.

David Yellin- Yeah somebody was in town for the meeting.

James Lawson- Yeah.

David Yellin- Right? That is when a statement was written?

Joan Beifuss- No.

James Lawson- No.

David Yellin- Oh that is something else.

James Lawson- That was just a give and take.

David Yellin- Frank McRae.

James Lawson- It seems to me it might have been that night.

Joan Beifuss- Who is at First Methodist?

James Lawson- Roy Williams, Dr. Williams he might know, I have forgotten who set that up?

David Yellin- Well we have not talked to him.

James Lawson- I don't think I set it up., I helped to do it but I don't think I, if I initiated or....

David Yellin- Now was Frank McRae there?

James Lawson- Well, I have forgotten who all was there, I may have put it in my notes someplace.

David Yellin- Where are your notes?

James Lawson- Well I have some of them here but others in my (muffled)

Joan Beifuss- That is swell, Jim was it the same kind of session trying to go over what had happened and...

James Lawson- Well I have really forgotten what the basis of it. I think we were concerned about some of the brutality taking place. I know we were concerned about that some of the brutality.

Joan Beifuss- Would it have been that night because would there not...

James Lawson- It might have been that night.

Joan Beifuss- Sporadic looting going on.

James Lawson- \_Yes there was some stuff going on that night but it could have been that night and it could have been in the next 3 or 4 days though but I think it was in this period that we had that session. Because you know we got passes whenever we want them. Holloman wrote us passes.

David Yellin- Well what happened to Dr. King did he go back to Atlanta that night?

James Lawson- no the next day, he went the next day.

David Yellin- He went he next day.

Joan Beifuss- Did you see him did you talk to him, the next day then before?

James Lawson- No I did not as I recall, I am not for sure.

David Yellin- But the understanding was that he would be coming back and that it would be arranged by somebody.

James Lawson- Right and then we got on the phone as I recall several times and we set the march for the next Thursday, no next Friday, yeah next Friday.

David Yellin- The 5<sup>th</sup>.

Joan Beifuss- Why did you not talk to him?

James Lawson- Hmm?

Joan Beifuss- Why did you not talk to him that Thursday?

James Lawson- Well, I think you have to recognize that number one as chairmen of the strategy committee I was constantly pre-occupied with the decisions that had to be made that day, that night for the next day and for the next day and for the next day. You know, so I really had not spent a great amount of time in sessions with people other than the meetings, you know the constant daily meetings that took place until 2 or 3 in the morning, but those were meetings of strategy, you know meetings of planning and meetings to carry on the operation.

David Yellin- And this is where you made your decision?

James Lawson- This is where I had to stay most of the time and so that meant I did not have time to see and sit at great length of time with reporters, in fact if you will notice it is a very interesting thing to me, if you read reports of what was going on in Memphis almost in variably you will discover you will not find very much mention of me in them.

Joan Beifuss- We checked that out because we herd that was deliberate.

\_James Lawson- Yes for an example and this isn't new either the same thing is true of Birmingham, Nashville, I mean I can take you movement after movement.

David Yellin- Why is that?

James Lawson- The basic reason is because it is my style of operation, my style of operation is such that where for example the sanitation strike I am chairman of the business, if the movement says well you make this press conference and say this, ok well I will do it. But other wise I simply don't spend the time with the reporters because I don't have the time to. I conserve my energy for the movement and that is quite deliberate and of course some reporters take this personally, I realize that and after all, I cut my responsibility to a different element that is all.

David Yellin- Did we ever ask Jim about the black list? Of his name and so on, did we ever ask that because it seems to me, in other words we also have credited this to the fact that supposedly the papers were told not to mention his name.

Joan Beifuss- I discounted that after we Jim....

James Lawson- I don't really have any, but I think the truth of the matter is that I in all this period for example I don't know if I gave, had any kind of 30 minute or 40 minute talks with reporters, as I recall, the longest I gave to any reporter in that period was to Ray Sherman. The night of the assassination, or the night after.

David Yellin- While he was still WNPS.

James Lawson- Yeah there is a tape that he promised me which he ahs never given me, I don't know if you all know about it.

David Yellin- Well he told me about tapes and he said he sent them to UPI. For whom he was working and we wrote UPI and never got word, wrote them again and sent and made efforts now that may be it.

James Lawson- Is that right. I gave him a long tape which I count as a very important tape.

David Yellin- Well I am going to check him again.

James Lawson- I wanted a copy of it and that was the basis of our agreement that I would get a copy of that tape. Well he sent me some stuff when he went to WARC but it was not that tape it was about a 30 or 45 minute, it was done in the lobby of the Sheridan Peabody I came down one evening where I was talking to other people.

David Yellin- he told me he gave more reports than anybody, because he was the UPI guy but if they really do we have no way of knowing.

James Lawson- He probably does that is probably correct.

David Yellin- So the point is t hat he probably wouldn't keep it he would send it on and he was probably never table to get it back. Now I will just...

James Lawson- He had a tape of mine that I wanted so if you all get a hold of him, let me know please. But I mean this to me is rather interesting because I count it as

necessary for myself and this is why I operate the way I do but it means there is a certain amount of history the last 12 years that is very sketchy.

David Yellin- Yes, well that is what we are trying to do here. Therefore I would like to ask you something.

Joan Beifuss- Is that tape still running?

James Lawson- Yeah, I am sure. Now, to the best of my recollection what Dr. King said at the press conference was that he took some of the blame or whatever because nobody from his group was down here and they had never done this and from now on they would have somebody down here. Now the implication of course is that whoever was that was running it down here was in that sense responsible.

James Lawson- Yeah.

David Yellin- So, I would gather that if you heard him say that night, or that day by that afternoon that you would be aware of this implication, do you recall? Let's say again, you are a member of the cloth, examining a member of the cloth.

James Lawson- Of course he didn't have to do that I would personally take blame because in the city of Memphis I knew more about my situation than his staff did, and I should have not, I say this, I have said this, I said this to eh strategy people and I said this to them, I should not have accepted their analysis that if we get started and move on the thing will straighten out.

David Yellin- I see.

James Lawson- That wasn't the way I had functioned in the past.

David Yellin- But I think he made a solid statement that it was not planned to take of the difficulties that came up but he may be saying exactly, who could plan all the difficulties, you know the sticks...

James Lawson- You see of course my key point was and this was based upon, this is what then precisely all the other big marches did. From that time on you see we never took any chances. If you know from that time on we have never started until all sidewalks were cleared and at least two or three times when we have had large marches we put big trucks up in the street at the starting points and we have run everyone who is going to march through those trucks. Through that funnel. Or I mean we have never done this since then.

David Yellin- So it was kind of ironic, I don't think that is the word that you would have.

James Lawson- I would maintain myself you see, that I knew better with all those folks in the street.

David Yellin- When you saw it.

James Lawson- Yeah, until we got those folks off of the street out of that sidewalk, into the street where we wanted them my own thesis was that the march should not proceed.

David Yellin- How could you have done it with your marshals?

James Lawson- Yes.

David Yellin- If they were properly trained.

James Lawson- We could have insisted that the march would not go on, taking bullhorns up in front and try to line the people up and simply said we are going to cancel unless...Dr. King is here but I am not letting him join the march until we know that the sidewalks are clear and we will proceed in the street in the ranks that we have asked for.

David Yellin- Now can I jump ahead on the same...and again this is a question. Did you as a result say of this and let's say subsequently the assassination feel yourself any responsibility?

James Lawson- Well I think...

David Yellin- I realize what a question this is.

James Lawson- Yeah alright sure. Well I think primarily I felt responsibility for that march itself. If I have had places where I have had second thoughts and learned that would be at that point. It would not be after the point of the assassination.

David Yellin- Did you at the time of the assassination feel any responsibility maybe that is what I am asking.

James Lawson- No.

David Yellin- In your sense of grief was a sense of grief for the loss.

James Lawson- That's right, great loss but no sense of guilt over it and I have not had any since. And of course I suspect in part of it the simple fact that death is one of the realities that even number of us often face and Martin King more perhaps than anyone else and he expected to be killed at some time or another and this was something he said openly in staff meetings and the staff retreats and with personal friends. Though everyone said well now, you know don't prejudge and that kind of business we also recognized that there as too many enemies around that wanted to get him.

David Yellin- When people say this do they really mean it? Or is this kind of almost a defense mechanism to gather strength.



James Lawson- No I don't think so. This is a decision you have to make I mean after all you get, when you get enough calls threats of death and what not, you do have to make a decision.

David Yellin- Of course you are talking about yourself now.,

James Lawson- Yes I am talking about myself. Me too. I mean you do have to make a decision about it and so I don't think that you, I don't think that you play games about it otherwise you would find it very difficult to stay alive and keep working.

David Yellin- Keep your sanity.

James Lawson- Sure I think so.

David Yellin- Madam.

Joan Beifuss- I am still back on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

David Yellin- Yeah I am sorry.

Joan Beifuss- did it right away did the implications of what this was doing to the poor people's or what this was publicity wise, what it was going to do to the poor people's campaign this was certainly..

James Lawson- (Muffled), yeah this was said privately, this was said in the bedroom a couple of times, you know that martin one of the things he said there was that he could see a lot of our critics now, saying we can't have anymore nonviolent marches and that we couldn't come to Washington, in fact that was one of his main rationalizations about why we had to have a nonviolent march in Memphis because if we didn't have one then he would find it almost impossible to have one in Washington because of criticism and all would be so great. You can't make that thing work?

(Muffled)

James Lawson- Oh. So this was one of the things he did say and I think it was correct.

David Yellin- He did say that publicly as I recall.

James Lawson- Well I knew he said he recognized it excuse me in that room that day.

Joan Beifuss- Well when did he go back to Atlanta do you know?

James Lawson- The next day.

Joan Beifuss- Then somebody else told us that there was some pressure once he got back to Atlanta whether he would come back and that you and Jesse Epps were going over and Jesse went and you did not?

David Yellin- You can concentrate, consult your notes.

James Lawson- Well you see you know when King tells me I am going to do this, I don't question that.

David Yellin- And he told you the 28<sup>th</sup>.

James Lawson- Yeah he said he was coming back and we have got to do it I didn't question that I accepted that analysis and I agreed with that analysis.

Joan Beifuss- Well you know (muffled) 110 people (muffled).

James Lawson- Yeah you know I really just don't remember, there may have been a battle with some of his staff people and King saying we don't go back now that may have occurred that would not surprise me because as I say they were in basic conflict because they saw him participate in the Memphis scene and their participating in the Memphis scene taking away from that which they thought took priority. They didn't believe, you can't blame them for that.

David Yellin- Except that what you have said here is that Dr. King in any case, saw the Memphis situation as part of the thing.

James Lawson- Yes.

David Yellin- And yet they didn't.

James Lawson- Sure that is possible though. That is possible. I mean after all he was the man essentially who ignited the modern movement which meant therefore he was always, not always but I will say at least you have to recognize that he was the shaper of the minds of those behind him.

David Yellin- But in this case he seems to have shaped his mind and yet there was some doubt in their mind.

James Lawson- Well that wasn't too unusual. The thing I have to say is that you see is that SCLC is an organization. Your executive staff makes plans and the executive staff of any organization makes plans it does not like to get caught up in changing those plans and it therefore, finds it more difficult to see the relevancy of contingency changes.

David Yellin- So this may be a question of tactical?

James Lawson- Yeah I mean I don't see this as any kind of ideological kind of breach I think this is just one of the problems. I should say you see King's board was constantly behind him and they fought him vociferously on the Vietnam question, right straight through and one of the things I told him in the midst of that struggle was the fact that yeah but the critics are not the ones who become the symbol of the struggle or secondly the ones who have initiated the struggle or thirdly the ones

who have set the pace. You have done that. In time the rest of the folk will have to catch up.

David Yellin- And did they on that issue?

James Lawson- Oh sure, they came around and passed a very strong resolution against the Vietnam war.

David Yellin- While he was living?

James Lawson- Oh yes. Yeah while he was still alive but they fought (muffled) what I am saying to you is that King was used to people criticizing he moves.

Joan Beifuss- In fact he every seldom went into a campaign without a lot of..

James Lawson- Oh yes a fair amount, I mean after all this whole business of direct action is such a new process for people that obviously...

David Yellin- It would be kind of suspicious and most folks kind of blabbing of an organization that did go 100% on it.

James Lawson- Did not have tensions then and struggles and debates. Since everyone is experimenting and everyone is going together.

David Yellin- So that we can settle the dissension there was essentially one of tactics?

James Lawson- Well that is what I would say, it is one of priority.

David Yellin- Of his own movement at that time.

Joan Beifuss- Jim there was another thing, did you ever see a copy of a speech he made in Miami in the end of February at the SCLC leadership training?

James Lawson- I am not sure.

David Yellin- That is the one Billy Kyles...

Joan Beifuss- Billy Kyles gave us and it went about 20 pages but it appears to be in excellent summation of where it stood at the end of February. It is almost summing up of where he is at that point and it also giving a national bread basket convention in Chicago prior to that. Ok there as...

James Lawson- Why don't you get me a copy of that because I didn't get tot hat (muffled). I didn't send my own name I couldn't go.

Joan Beifuss- There was two speeches the one at the beginning was a very should I say seemed to be summing up the (muffled). There was another thing...

David Yellin- We will make a deal with you? Yeah well just a second....

James Lawson- You all are behind.

David Yellin- No your not.

James Lawson- Because I haven't got any transcripts of the other tapes.

(muffled)

Joan Beifuss- Listen this is the story of your life we got on transcript here.

David Yellin- But don't give us too much tension. Look those papers...

Joan Beifuss- Do you know how many pages it is running at this point?

David Yellin- Those papers we are not asking for them now...

Joan Beifuss- Yes we are we want to copy them.

David Yellin- Can you will them to the library.

Joan Beifuss- No can we copy them?

David Yellin- Can we copy them?

Joan Beifuss- Xerox.

James Lawson- I will let you know in a year's time. Because in a year's time I have got to pull them all together you see it is not complete, I have papers at home and papers tucked into files over here and over there and....When I have a chance to go through them and put them all together again.

Joan Beifuss- Listen we have taken Louie Donelson's correspondence file (muffled).

David Yellin- That's a bad deal.

James Lawson- I am assuming this.

Joan Beifuss- Hey Jim there were also stories we got back and god knows where from about Martin King that weekend in Atlanta the 29<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup> that he was terribly distraught and terribly disturbed and he went out by himself and...

David Yellin- Yeah that is what I am asking to a tree.

Joan Beifuss- The ultimate connotation that was put out I think was the Yosemite thing, (muffled).

James Lawson- I look at, I don't know about that, that is something one day I intend to investigate personally but I have not had a chance to inquire into it.

David Yellin- Alright, then what is the next contact you had with Dr. King when he came?

Joan Beifuss- Would you do something else for me, first thought the Larry Payne funeral?

James Lawson- What about it? Middlebrooke can do that better than I would be cause he did it. Well he can do it better than I could.

Joan Beifuss- I was just wondering about the idea of turning it into a movement funeral.

James Lawson- (muffled) to do it that way.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

James Lawson- That was a joint agreement a joint decision we all agreed upon.

Joan Beifuss- Ok then King that Sunday spoke at Riverside church...

David Yellin- In New York or wasn't it Washington?

Joan Beifuss- Washington, do we have a copy of that?

David Yellin- Yeah we have that. And he came in on Wednesday morning.

James Lawson- (muffled) came out against us, I forgot who I talked with in Atlanta, I think it was Andy. And I suggested that we (muffled) and he agreed. And then Max Lucas and Sugarmon cooperated of course and based upon all of our confrontation with the lawyer and all this decided that Andy and I would be the people who would be on the stand for the movement and him representing SCLC and Dr. King and myself representing the local element you know. I have forgotten when all these decisions were made but Mike Cody and Lucius Birch and...

David Yellin- Well when Dr. King came in did they come to your church? Where they came in and there was a meeting and the first time they met Lucius Birch and whomever it wasn't Mike Cody but it was Lucius and somebody else?

Joan Beifuss- Walker Bailey.

David Yellin- Yeah Walker Bailey. They went to the Lorraine for the first time that Dr. King and Lucius Birch met. And you were not at any of these meetings at hat time were you?

Joan Beifuss- He was at the one here weren't you?

James Lawson- I don't remember.

David Yellin- As I recall you, well I don't recall as fairly well that you were running a meeting and I thought it was here and that is where Dr. King came into town and came right here. Around noon or 12:30 or something like that.

James Lawson- Let's see now let me try to grapple that. We, if you are talking about the same meeting I am talking about...

David Yellin- That is April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Wednesday April 2<sup>nd</sup>. April 3<sup>rd</sup> excuse me.

James Lawson- April 3<sup>rd</sup>, about ministers that met here.

David Yellin- Yes.

James Lawson- I am not sure that I presided that meeting or if J.W. Williams or one of those men presided. It was here though in that hall up that end. And that is right King did come in and speak briefly at that meeting and met the men and urged of course their support and what not. Now where Birch was at that time I don't know, maybe they gathered here I don't know.

David Yellin- No they gathered at...

James Lawson- The Lorraine Hotel?

David Yellin- Yeah and then meanwhile at the same time the invaders were there waiting for Dr. King.

James Lawson- He iterated their story?

David Yellin- Yeah eh went from one meeting, they were waiting for him to finish the lawyers meeting and then he went down and had catfish or something.

Joan Beifuss- The, when SCLC came back in, when some of the staff people came in on Sunday or Monday was there a concentrated effort to work with the younger people?

James Lawson- Yes the staff people who came in did make a concentrated effort to work with the invaders and others.

David Yellin- (Muffled)

James Lawson- Well initially maybe yes and maybe no it was a matter of (muffled) I do know though that they caused, we felt they were buying a wrong line and eventually we told them in no uncertain terms.

Joan Beifuss- Eventually like when?

James Lawson- Maybe, well maybe when things calmed down and actually was over. And we told them a couple of times since then. You know that it was wrong that they made wrong assessments and consequently they only you know were treading water rather than working effectively for organizing purposes.

Joan Beifuss- Jim did you think, did you feel as if your authority or the authority of the strategy committee was being circumvented in any way by the SCLC?

James Lawson- Not particularly because it couldn't be done.

David Yellin- (Muffled) Do you have any remembrance that Dr. King on Wednesday when he was talking to the invaders, did indicate to them that he would get them money somehow?

James Lawson- No I don't have any recollection of that and I would kind of doubt that. He might have promised them to help them.

David Yellin- Yeah would you not say he said he would give them money.

James Lawson- Which in his mind would have been sincere and would have meant that I will let a staff person who is good at programming work with them and see in what way we can help them.

David Yellin- In fact he did exactly that.

James Lawson- I doubt seriously because he simply didn't operate in this way.

David Yellin- No I put it incorrectly, not promise...

James Lawson- I would count that, I would count all that whole picture that came up again then in August of the SCLC convention as the fantasy of the invaders and their inability to hear or perceive what is going on and what is involved, I would not take this seriously.

Joan Beifuss- Ok so that after he came in Wednesday, do you remember him Wednesday afternoon?

David Yellin- When did you see him next?

James Lawson- I am not sure. I vaguely recollect being at Lorraine for something, We were tightening up the march as I recall or getting ready for Thursday in the court, and I don't remember how I got to Clayborne Temple, somebody must have driven me over there for sure. I did get there before all the thunder and rain and I remember I participated in urging Ralph to get Martin to come on over. That it was worth his coming and I had forgotten what statement I made, but I made some statement that night. And I remember being very pleased, well in the church there was a kind of in the temple there was a wonderful kind of feeling, I can't remember the details it was much too mystical. On the one hand the thunder was going and the rain and the lightning but on the inside there was 3 or 43 thousand people who felt very much at home with each other and with the world, even though we were amidst a great struggle and tension, there was a great feeling of oneness and singularity of mind, a great enthusiastic spirit a great warmth. I remember sort of basking in that feeling, both at the platform and as I walked around having to talk with different people about different matters related to the struggle. And as I went out to help to get a couple of phone calls that came from the other place and as I listened to Ralph Abernathy's splendid introduction of King which I was really happy about, I was so glad that he made that kind of an introduction, I told him after

wards how great it was that he made that kind of an introduction at all. And as I listened to Martin and I had to go out and check with Baxton Bryant about something. So I walked off the platform and all the way around to the phone and came back and two or three other people tackled me about some matters and I sat in the steps there at that main entrance and listened to the last 15 or 20 minutes of his speech. And in all this period I was really kind of enamored by it all and I remember listening to him talk about the experience with the letter opener. And I said to myself I have never heard him do that in public in quite that way. At staff meetings we had talked about it on retreats but I had never really remember at least a mass meeting or a public meeting where he did it that way. I was interested in the way in which he was operating the way in which he was functioning. I didn't think anything, there was no premonitions about it though. Because this feeling of kinship and warmth and the struggle was all there during all of it and that was (muffled) sense of that night. I thought Martin's speech was long but I also thought at every point a remarkable kind and I used that word in my own mind as I sat on the steps thinking, kind of statement. I don't remember my own statement that night, I did make a statement, Well anyway that was the night, and as I recall I didn't have a car with me and someone, I think I went back to the minimum salary building that night for a meeting that night (muffled). I don't remember if I went back to Lorraine or the minimum salary building, or went home. In any case the next morning, of course many of these mornings I would wake up at what I expect would be 2 or 3 and then get up at 7 and we would have breakfast about 7:30 or 8:00 and many of these mornings there was a small group of us that would eat breakfast together at this Sheridan Peabody for looking at the day and checking on things that are supposed to go on since the last meeting. Many of those things we were in, we were in breakfast by 7:30 or 8 which were meetings. So the next morning as I recall I met with Jesse and Jack, excuse me, and then one or two others at the Peabody and they went directly from there to the...

David Yellin- This is Jesse Jackson?

James Lawson- Jesse Turner. We went from there immediately to the court. And go ahead.

David Yellin- The night before you mentioned, how did, when did it come about that somebody suggested that Dr. King be called to come to the meeting, was it before Ralph Abernathy spoke?

James Lawson- Yeah it was before his introduction?

David Yellin- How come? Did you say...

James Lawson- No, if he came, you see King had...King had told Ralph you know something I can't remember exactly but the implication was that, the night was so bad that people wouldn't come and for Ralph to take his place, but if Ralph thought that he should come over then call him and that he would come. Now somewhere along the line Ralph relayed this to one or two of us. And our suggestion was yes he



should come he has 3 or 4 thousand people here. (Muffled) seats 10,000. So Ralph made the decisions yes I will call him and he did so.

David Yellin- Saying in effect this is your kind of...

James Lawson- Yeah right and you should come on over. So he came on over.

David Yellin- How did he come, do you know how he came?

James Lawson- I don't know because I was already there. (muffled)

David Yellin- Did you see Dr. King again that day?

James Lawson- I don't think so.

Joan Beifuss- Something else about that speech, that I have been to the mountain passage of that speech.

James Lawson- The what?

Joan Beifuss- The passage of the speech about I have been to the mountaintop. Had we familiar, had you ever heard that used before? Because after he died of course everyone zeroed in on that speech and yet there seems to be quite a bit in that speech that occurs in other speeches and I just wondered if that was a.....

(Tape Break)

James Lawson- Where were we?

Joan Beifuss- I was asking if that mountain top speech was as great as everyone said it was or if it really was a rehash of a lot of things that had been said before and really took on (muffled) because....

James Lawson- (Muffled)

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

David Yellin- I think what you saying though is that the moment was there that you can't just capture by just listening to the speech.

James Lawson- This is correct.

David Yellin- This feeling that you described which we have not heard. In fact we herd another that it was sort of eerie that things were flapping and he seemed to be a little more nervous about the noises and apprehensive seemingly to almost (muffled).

James Lawson- I don't get that.

David Yellin- Well.

James Lawson- I mean you have to recognize you know that Martin King was in some respects I think the word you have to use for Martin is placid. In the midst of these things you see, in the midst of a lot of tension and what not you would never know that from the outside.

Joan Beifuss- Was it only on the outside he was talking?

James Lawson- Yeah sure.

David Yellin- I mean a man like that couldn't be placid inside?

James Lawson- Of course not, tensions and the antitheses were strongly marked. But on the outside you know.

David Yellin- In fact, this was the point that a few observers they had never seen him in essence physically out of control, not mentally.

James Lawson- I got no such indications of that.

David Yellin- This is what...

James Lawson- Maybe they are reading into it.

David Yellin- Could be.

James Lawson- I mean the kind of speech that he made was not the kind of speech that was fidgety, or expressed a great deal of nervous tension at all, as far as I know.

David Yellin- Yeah we have a television version of it.

James Lawson- Yeah I would (muffled) because unless King for example talked to you quite personally about for example the agony that was going on in him.

David Yellin- Now did he do this?

James Lawson- Yeah he did this to people sure.

David Yellin- What were, what was the agony, was it ever a personal agony?

James Lawson- Oh yes I mean for example I remember the last time we talked at great length about his personal life and he was over the anti-Vietnam criticism. Over the Vietnam criticism he was (muffled). One of his best friends they were tearing him apart with their agony, with their criticism of his position. No he said this is the worst thing I have ever had to withstand.

David Yellin- Was his disappointment (muffled) do you trust his judgment or he didn't trust their judgment, He was saddened by the fact that they didn't see what he saw?

James Lawson- No they were saying all kinds of things about him for example that he was destroying the civil right struggle. Some blacks, you know blacks were saying

this by the hundreds. That he had no business, that Vietnam was not related to the condition of the negro and he had no business mixing race with Vietnam. That he was going out of his field and all these kinds of things .

David Yellin- Now men like this made a decision such as this. You know when I make a decision that may come while I'm shaving or walking down the street and I don't really have to account for anybody essentially. Does he function that way, if he walks down the street or shaving and gets an idea did he talk it over?

James Lawson- Well this Vietnam decision was not a light decision. Actual facts of course you see the press picked it up late. I mean but he was making references to Vietnam and speaking against the war...

David Yellin- He won the Nobel prize.

James Lawson- I mean yeah of course and long before the time when he made this public statement at Riverside Church which is the one that you see sort of began the process and of course they point to that of course as his beginning disaffection but up to his time he had been urged by different people not to make that particular speech but in mass meetings where he was preaching all the time he was constantly talking against the Vietnam war. So I mean you know, I mean he talked over those decisions with a lot of people. He made the Riverside Speech against the advice of his board of directors. As an act of conscious that he could not deny.

Joan Beifuss- Jim when you say that say in 1964 and 654 his position on the Vietnam war was probably the same as yours?

James Lawson- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- Coming out of the same kind of theological?

James Lawson- Yes sure.

David Yellin- Of course this has now occurred to me what was his situation in regard to be called up. Had he been married and children or what? Why had he never been or was he a ministers or what?

James Lawson- No I don't know whether he took his ministerial deferment or whether (muffled) I never remembered?

David Yellin- Do you have anything else we have got?

James Lawson- Well you have painted a good picture of what went on in court the next day don't you?

Joan Beifuss- We have the transcript.

James Lawson- You have the transcript and I am ecstatic with that. And...

David Yellin- What do you think Joan, do you think you need another.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah I want the assassination and all that.

David Yellin- Now can you do that...(Tape End)