

SS138.mp3

W. B. Ingram- Today is Saturday September the..(tape break) 1968 we are here at Memphis state university at the invitation of he

Bill Thomas- Memphis search for meaning.

W. B. Ingram- The Memphis search for meaning committee here with Bill Thomas and Mr. Tom Beckner associated with the Memphis state university. This is W.B. Ingram. I have been requested to be here as a former mayor of the city of Memphis and an observer of the events here in the city of Memphis and the recent past and those which led up to it immediately before that which resulted in the distressing culmination of events which caused Dr. Martin Luther King to lose his life and caused the city of Memphis a great deal of other distress and concerned. It has been agreed here with the Memphis, what is this committee?

Bill Thomas- Search for meaning....

W. B. Ingram- Search for meaning committee that this interview is being given as a confidential interview between Mr. Thomas and Mr. Beckner and the Memphis search for meaning committee and myself and that no part of this recording of this tape or discussion is to be used without the prior consent of William B. Ingram Jr. and, or his dearly authorized representatives for the purpose of discussion or publication or any other way distrusting this information to any source what so ever. This is the condition which we agreed we would sit down and discuss these matters and this tape by Memphis state (tape break) And it is being recorded on the Memphis search for meeting recording equipment, Sony equipment and the (muffled) William B Ingram Junior.

(Tape Break)

William B. Ingram Jr. and Mr. Thomas here and Mr. Beckner representing the Memphis search for meaning committee and any other organization which they may be cooperating with for the purpose of preserving information concerning this particular matter. And that I want Bill for it to be understood that I understand that you all may ask for a subsequent release for the information pertaining to my particular opinion about it and that I specifically observe the right before any such information is released and as a condition to the release of any such information that I be presented with the information that is intended to be released and that I alone will be the person alone to determine what part or portions of the this particular interview will be released for publication. Now is that agreeable?

Bill Thomas- That's fine.

Tom Beckner- Yes,

Bill Thomas- Now that is the only basis on which we can work...

(Tape break)

Bill Thomas- Well you have done most of our preliminary work for us. Bill what we normally do on these things because it is recorded in, 100 years from now or something somebody maybe listening. If you could sort of give us a brief, of your background and how you arrived to the point of mayor prior to the point of time we are talking about it would be helpful. Alright Bill at present I am 47 years old. I was born in Hollandale Mississippi in 1921 and my family moved to Tennessee, they had been previously Tennesseans. My father was employed by a lumber company in Hollandale at the time I was born and they returned to Tennessee and where we more or less lived in and around Memphis most of my life. (muffled)

Bill Thomas- Yeah we are doing fine needle wise.

W. B. Ingram- My mother of course was in Brownsville Tennessee and I would say that I grew up you might say considering Memphis to be my home. I went through the 6th grade at Rozelle school at which time the depression came along and my father found it necessary to move and we moved from there to Brownsville Tennessee. I went through the rest of grade school at Brownsville and part of the way through high school before we moved to Chicago Illinois where we lived at Oak Park Illinois. From there we moved back to Brownsville and then to Nashville Tennessee where I finished high school at West End High School. Went to work for the American national bank in Nashville where I worked. Suppose for about a year and my father came to Memphis and moved the family to Memphis so that was about, I hadn't reached 21 years of age at that time and I wanted to go in to the air force but my mother would not sign the release for me to fly and would not give her consent because she had lost a brother in world war 1 and it affected the family quite a bit. She just wouldn't give her consent, she said if I went I had to go my own prolation after I got to be a lawful age. So when I reached, I moved back to Memphis with them and was employed by the contractor that built the Memphis general depot. And I worked there until I was able to, of lawful age to join the united states army air corps is was at that time. And was called up in February of 1943. I went through the, I was assigned to the class of 43J. And uniquely enough we went, we were inducted at Nashville. Went down to Montgomery Alabama for pre flight (muffled) rather some cadet training. Then they sent us over to Cape Girardeau Missouri for our primary training and then from there we went to Walnut Ridge Arkansas for basic training and then to (muffled) Alabama for the final stages of the cadet instruction and there I was commissioned to Second Lieutenant in the united states army air corps. Subsequently I was assigned to, as a fighter pilot flying P-47's and was sent overseas and stationed at Ipswich England in the 356...

Bill Thomas- P-47 was a hit airplane incidentally.

W. B. Ingram- It was the hottest at that time. And it is still one of the hottest, it can take a beating like none of the rest of them can. I was shot down over Antworth Belgium returning from an escort mission. I was captured by the Germans and was held a prisoner of war for some 13 months.

Bill Thomas- What war was this?

W. B. Ingram- The camp was at Saigon Germany, ultimately where we wound up but we got quite a tour over Germany. Being capture in Antworth Belgium, held in jail there for awhile and then transferred over to the St. Giles prison in Brussels Germany. Then from there we were shipped at sort of a collecting point I suppose and they shipped us from there down the Rhine river by train to Frankfurt Germany. And that was a more of a processing and interrogation center. They operate remarkably like the Americans do, they have a lot of red tape...

Bill Thomas- everything is difficult.

W. B. Ingram- Yes they had an amazing system of intelligence because on many of the fellows that were there they had collected news items and had developed a pretty good background file on them and could tell them a lot more than they ever dreamed the Germans would know.

Tom Beckner- You mean the agents here?

W. B. Ingram- Yes. And they had a background file on these various pilots. They knew where their home was, what they had done, if there was anything of any news had been published in the paper about their activities they followed (muffled).

Tom Beckner- Name, rank and serial number was a little bit revealing.

W. B. Ingram- Name, rank and serial number was all they needed. Some of these fellows told me that they actually knew what squadron they were assigned to and after that 30 minutes of interrogation they wouldn't tell them anything they would say well don't worry we know where you came from and they would tell the their squadron and their assignment, what flight they were assigned to what their position was, on these bomb crews and all that sort of thing.

Bill Thomas- A little shattering.

W. B. Ingram- So the fact that we were sent over to Saigon Germany and then of course we stayed over there for several months. I suppose that we stayed there the longer part of it, internment or imprisonment or whatever you want to call it. But the rations broke through the east over there and tore, this was after of course the invasion and after the winter of 45 and when the freeze came they just drove their tanks right across the river you see. They held the river and it was, we saw a lot of evacuees that were passing on down the roads by the camps. Anyway they moved this prison camp from there back to Nuremburg inwardly. We stayed there for a couple months and then they began to move all their prisoners down to Mussenburg where they had ultimately about a 100,000 prisoners and that is where Patton came through and opened the gates and liberated everybody. And they brought us back and that I have...we went through a processing center and we were waiting to be shipped out to the Pacific for further duty when the word came that they had dropped the bomb on Hiroshima on August 14th. The war was over and of course at

that time I came back home and enrolled at Southwestern for my pre-law work and after getting the necessary credits there I went to Southern Lore university where I got my law degree. At (muffled) in 1950 in March. Get my license in March and finally graduated in June of 1950 and I went tot work for the Light, Gas and Water division as a lawyer and their legal department there. I stayed there until 1956 when I went into practice by myself and in 1957 the 3rd division of the city court of Memphis was created and I ran for nomination by the Memphis bar association for appointment to that position. I was appointed on October 3rd 1957 and ran for election in 1959 was elected in 1959. With I suppose the highest vote at least so I have been told of any judge candidate at that time. Which is over 78,000 votes. In 1963 I was encouraged by my friends to run for mayor and having of course then thrown with the city charter as city judge and the questions of city law the construction of the city charter and all of that sort of thing I felt that I could be of service in that capacity and so I ran for election. I was elected on November the what was the date? The 2nd I believe of that year. 1963. And then took office on January the 1st of 1964 and served as mayor until December 31st of 67.

Bill Thomas- Ok fine good.

W. B. Ingram- So that gives you some background and I think I am fairly well oriented to Memphis and the current problems that they have had as they have progressively developed.

Bill Thomas- If we can go back just a little ways, one of the interesting things I think probably about your term as judge, you sort of gained a reputation...(Tape break) And what I think probably is sort of commonly known as generally a police court of being heavily on the side of the citizen and sort of anti-police. There was a little bit...

W. B. Ingram- I think this is a political situation Bill. I think it has to be looked at in the light of the political environment of which we all lived at the time and as you well remember the city of Memphis very well belonged to Mr. Crump until his death in 1954 and after that time of course the consensus then has been more or less a scramble for political supremacy on the part of a number of factions and groups. Commissioner Armor had been appointed or brought up through the ranks by Ed Crump, was appointed chief of police and was appointed police commissioner and had been on, in office as police commissioner for I think he was appointed in 1950, and it was 1957 when I went into office, I think it was 1959 or 60 when some of these things developed or perhaps maybe sooner than that. I make reference to that because I think it is well to remember how thoroughly that Mr. Crump controlled the officials of city government including the city courts. And the city courts were really nothing more than a rubber stamp for the action of the police and it was commonly accepted as the thing to do to back the police up in whatever they undertook to present for whatever purpose they brought it there see. Now as long as Mr. Crump was there I say this in his defense I don't think there ever used or abused the city court to the extent that they began to do it after he left. Armor was daring to build a political empire in which he could eventually become mayor and take control. I think that many people will probably give you that opinion. And of

course any challenge to his police authority through the courts or otherwise by political effort or through the action of the city judge in requiring the police to follow the law. That is all I did in any case. I took the position that the city court was a court of law just like any other court was and the city was the complaining party and had the burden of proof in every case in which they came before the city judge and it was up to the police when they brought a case before the city judge to prove it and it wasn't the duty of the judge to supply any defect in the evidence or in the law. So that the police department could convict the person that was accused and was there to be sent to jail and made to pay a fine. And of course this I think was a little shocking to them in that it was certainly not what they expected of a city judge. They expected the city judge to accept the officer's testimony at face value without any question. Well the law provides that everybody's testimony is to be accepted without question and merely because a man is accused doesn't mean that he is a liar and neither does it mean because an officer is there that he was lying. But in examining some of the evidence in these cases I did find that the evidence they presented was not sufficient to sustain a conviction and to require that I order that the person committed to jail until he pay a fine. So in an effort to intimidate me of course Mr. Armor used his influence with the newspapers which was considerable. He had taken a position that he was an untouchable like Mr. Hoover thinks he is and therefore nobody could reach him and he could level any blast that he wanted to against the city judge and anybody else and he fairly well did it. I was the only that had ever stood up to him or stood up to the newspapers under such situation.

Bill Thomas- Well I think...

W. B. Ingram- And I think they resented it. If they had really realized just how they probably couldn't have possibly analyzed the thing and sat down and thought about it what they were insisting be done by a city judge they were just infuriated that anybody would stand up to him and call their hands.

Bill Thomas- I think probably where this begins to fly sort of directly is I am not sure and I help to ask you a leading questions but I don't know how to get into it. One of the things in going through all this is really the strong feeling that the little man and the negro we found had toward you especially as compared to Mr. Lobe and one of the explanations that somebody made to us and I guess this is the question is that one reason why you were so popular with the negro and with the downtrodden group and what not was because of an image in which you are willing to stand between him and especially the police department which is a rather bad symbol to them. Does this seem anywhere right to you? What I am trying to get at is does this have anything to do with your popularity?

W. B. Ingram- Isn't that human nature now? If you are defenseless against somebody who has the uniform on, who has the pistol and the nightstick, and the black jack, they are at the scene to break down your door and to ransack your house and to even plant evidence on you if he is inclined to do that and you are only defense against that sort of thing is somebody in a judicial profession on the bench

up there who will not tolerate that sort of thing., Now wouldn't you if you were confronted with that situation look tot hat person on the bench?

Bill Thomas- Yeah.

W. B. Ingram- It would, your only defense and protection was a neighbor, you would look to him wouldn't you. The same thing I think is true and this is not a reflection on me. But it is certainly I think and it should have been analyzed a long time before it was. It was an indication of deficiency in the police methods that were employed. They were and I think this is true across the country. And has been true.

Bill Thomas- You think a similar situation exists?

W. B. Ingram- I don't have any doubt about it. I think that it is not peculiar to Memphis. If you go back and look at it., I don't know whether anybody has thought about it, but you know I think it leads back to the time of the prohibition era when and this applies all across the country. When the because of the inability of the law enforcing agencies not only of the united states, but of state and local governments to enforce the prohibition laws because people were just not paying attention to them. They would find loop holes they would even flagrantly abuse them you see. It was a law which was imposed upon the people, in a, as a result of a desire to correct something that was bad, no question about that. I don't question the motives of the people that got that law imposed but it was so rigid and attempting to abolish something that is able to question about alcohol being something that is a real social and economic problem for the people of our country. But in order to try to eliminate it or eradicate it they felt that they could pass a law to eliminate it. There are some things you just can't pass a law that will...

Bill Thomas- That will illegalize it.

W. B. Ingram- That will eliminate it your see. I think a lot of people have attempted to put to much reliance on somebody going to congress, or somebody going to the legislatures or somebody at city hall passing a law making something unlawful so they can just forget about it. There has got to be something more done other than just passing a law that says you have got to do this or you can't do that. I think it goes back tot eh prohibition era and when you think about the flagrant violations and the corruption that developed while the prohibition law was in effect and even after it was repealed it got the gangs running at large throughout the country, the back runners they had. So many other things. The public was almost at the point that they were now because they were demanding that the law enforcement agencies do something about it. They more or less gave them a free hand without realizing what the consequences could be. The newspapers were on the police commissioners and get a conviction any way they could you see. They didn't bother about search warrants. I bet you J. Edgar Hoover doesn't even know what the search warrant law is. Of course he took attitude of establishing these things as right and just. The other agencies followed his precedent.

Bill Thomas- (Muffled).

W. B. Ingram- That's right your people begin to just accept these things as the Lord sayeth. And then of course your law enforcing agencies the officers that came up in these agencies that are trained in these particular procedures and they didn't bother about search warrants they didn't know what search warrants and all was, they didn't know what the law of arrest was. If somebody tell them to go get John Smith they would go get him. Bring him up there.

Tom Beckner- During this greater time too didn't you have a great deal, or a great lack of justice on the part of the establishment or the rich, or the fluent versus the little man and those that didn't have a lot of things.

W. B. Ingram- They had all of the whiskey that they wanted...

Bill Thomas- Still do by the drink.

W. B. Ingram- Still do see. There is a different standard of law enforcement applied to those people than there were to the poor people. I think that is one of the big problems today you don't have any equality in law enforcement.

Bill Thomas- Since you (muffled) since you were so close tot hat and saw the police...

W. B. Ingram- But to get back tot hat point, everything for which I was taken to task if anybody wants to take the trouble to go back and read the newspapers that were complaining about it and raised such a fuss, there was a practice where the local police would go out and arrest citizens, hold them and put them on what they called a 338 docket for investigation. They had no warrant, they had no search warrant, all that they had was that somebody told the officer to go get that man or woman and bring him in for investigation. And they just went and got them and put him in there, he was shut off from the world, in comunicado with no recourse at all to the advice of a lawyer, to the right to use a telephone, or to let his people know where he was. I could find but I made a thorough search of the law in Tennessee and every other instance I could find and I could find absolutely no authority whatever that would justify the Memphis police department arresting somebody and holding them for 3 days or any length of time for that matter incommunicado. Or investigation. If they caught somebody I the act of doing something they had authority to make an arrest. If somebody made an complaint and accused somebody, swore out a warrant they had authority to make arrest. If somebody gave information which you would justify asking for a search warrant to confirm the suspicions if somebody was violating the law they could get the search warrant make the search get the evidence and then go make the arrest. They did none of this. I had instances where they asked me for search warrants and they were issued and they were never returned to me. Now the law in the state requires that the officer to whom the warrant is issued after making the search must return the warrant and the evidence to the judge who issued the warrant within 5 days of its issuance and if he does not do that the search is invalid, the search warrant is invalid and any evidence they found cannot not be admitted.

Bill Thomas- Why would they do that?

W. B. Ingram- They just were not going to have a judge tell them that they had to follow the law, they were going to run it like Mr. Armor said to run it. And Mr. Armor thought he was Mr. Crump. And that he could run it like he wanted to. Now I could not in good conscious do what they were indirectly demanding I do. Under threat, all kinds of threats you never realized in some of these people now are beginning to experience some of the things that happened to me for almost 6 years as judge. These telephone calls, these threats, the intimidations that they put on your family, the members of your family and everything.

Bill Thomas- You had to experience this?

W. B. Ingram- Yeah the whole time. Getting back to the search warrant. You see what they would do with the search warrants, I finally got after chief McDonald and made him run down some warrants that I had issued after they didn't bring them back within the required time. And after about two weeks of me getting after McDonald he finally found those search warrants. They had been issued to some officers to go make a search of some premises in North Memphis and the search warrants were found in the possession of some other officers in a squad car in south Memphis. And what they were doing and what they had been accused of, actually the law requires them to leave a copy of the search warrant in the possession of the person whose premises are being searched. And they were just showing it to them, we have a search warrant and then go make a search. No telling how many places that they had searched illegally under pretext of having a valid search warrant issued by me.

Bill Thomas- They were sort of using a John Doe warrant.

W. B. Ingram- Certainly. Here is another thing, they were under the practice of making an arrest and holding a person up there indefinitely under a threatened breach of the peace. There is no such violation of the law, that is not a crime. If the peace is being threatened the breach of the peace is being threatened by a person in the presence of an officer he can make an arrest to prevent the breach of the peace or to stop it if it is going on, or if it has not yet occurred but is impending he can make an arrest to prevent the breach of peace from occurring. In other words a person has, it appears that two people are about to engage in a brawl. He can obviously see that they are both infuriated at each other and if somebody doesn't stand in to quell the situation that they might involve themselves and bystanders as well. An officer in that situation can arrest them both, and take them to jail if necessary in order to prevent the breach of the peace. But they were going out there and arresting people for threatening the breach to the peace buying them over to the state when there is no such crime. Either in the common law or the statutory law. They were not of course they didn't let them out on bond under such circumstances because there weren't any such crime. They would just a farce and people were being held in jail. They would not let them use the telephone to call their people until after they had been convicted and sent over to the county jail. I found instances then that where police officers who were going off duty, be of duty for two days and then be back on duty. Would go out and arrest somebody bring them in put them in hold for investigation and then come back when they got off

when they got back on work on their regular time and go back by the desk sergeant and tell them to let them go. Now that person had been in jail for 3 days without being tried without even being accused of anything without having an opportunity to defend himself. His people would not even know where he was and this was just a tragic thing. And if it had continued we would have had terrible trouble.

Bill Thomas- Were negroes the main victims?

W. B. Ingram- They were the main targets yes negroes and poor white people who were not able to defend themselves Now the, I in the course of my conduct of the court I established a set of rules that a court is entitled to and has the power to establish a set of rules by which require people who are in court to conduct themselves and who are going to bring process before the court to conduct themselves and to abide by certain rules. I established this several rules way before the supreme court required anybody to, required any law enforcing agency. My rules required that they, and this can be backed up by the law of the state of Tennessee and the state of Tennessee supreme court decisions. Prohibiting anybody held incommunicado. And requiring the police to allow them to use the telephone and of course that made a big headline and the police they were not going to permit that sort of thing. We had to go through a series of requirements there were the people would be entitled to have a hearing and to be advised of the accusations made against them and to be advised of the constitutional rights, that they had the right to have a lawyer, and they had the right to subpoena witnesses to come before a judge for a hearing, All of this is written in the law and the supreme court in announcing its decisions in the Miranda case and the Escobedo case was not making any new law at all it is what has been the law all along but has been ignored by the law enforcing agencies and the courts. For what I think has probably been an accumulation of pressures demanding law enforcement regardless of the circumstances without concern for the justice involved and if our country persists in that sort of thing they are going to bring us to the brink of a violent revolution.

Bill Thomas- Well this can be unjust and without justice.

W. B. Ingram- This is what has happened in every nation in history that has had a violent explosive revolution is that the, those in power and the possession of authority have abused it and have oppressed the people for whose protection the laws have been provided really. And it is a sad thing that more people don't understand that. I don't know how you are going to get the message over anyway. I think that these, my experience with and of course getting back to something mention made about Mr. Lobe. <Mr. Lobe was elected mayor in 1959 and took office in 1960. And during that time the city of Memphis had considerable racial tension and trouble.

Bill Thomas- This was the period of the sit-ins.

W. B. Ingram- A lot of people fail to remember that, they had sit-ins, they closed the swimming pools, there was a tremendous amount of tension. I can remember when

Armor had the police standing around the police station with billy clubs and everything else as if they were going to take over the police station.

Bill Thomas- During this period?

W. B. Ingram- Why certainly. And there wasn't anything like any evidence of the violent reactions that have been manifested here in the past couple of years that existed then. But Lobe was, and Lobe tolerated all that sort of thing., lobe was afraid of Armor really. I don't know why but I think Lobe was afraid that, afraid of Armor for some reason.

Bill Thomas- At that time the commissioner, I would assume the long time commissioner like Mr. Armor probably had as much power did he not as a new mayor under that system?

W. B. Ingram- Well I doubt it. I think at that time Lobe had come in and if he had used the influence that he was capable of exercising that he could have...

Bill Thomas- He could have runt he city.

W. B. Ingram- Yes he could have probably stepped into the place of Mr. Crump or the place of leadership but he didn't he was afraid of Armor. And of course there was a lot of political shenanigans going on, someone ran for election that year and I don't know who it was but they had a lot of signs being torn down and being hauled away found on the city dump, Armor and them never could find the culprits obviously.....

(Laughs)

W. B. Ingram- Banners flying across the street there say that the policemen and the night watchmen are supposed to be patrolling the city and never even saw any of htose things taken down? They cleaned them out there were all over the city, I think it was Judge Hoffman some of his banners and some of Lobe's were taken down.

Bill Thomas- Mr. Lobe at that time do you remember Bill did he have the reputation as a segregationist?

W. B. Ingram- No I don't think he did, I think he had a reputation and got considerable support for the negro community when he got elected.

Bill Thomas- I knew he did...

W. B. Ingram- They felt like that Lobe being a Jew was a member of a (muffled) race himself and that he would probably (Tape break) That being a member of a minority race himself that he would probably understand their problems. He campaigned in the neighborhoods and asked upon their votes and I think they were really depending on him to bring about some relief of the situation that they suffered under.

Bill Thomas- I think that basically what we have understood was that the critical situation that went into this just if you could tell us about that, it might be better because you speak well and I don't need to...

W. B. Ingram- Well I think there was a turn in the political situation. If you remember that Hollis was being elected and re-elected in Arkansas on a segregationist ticket.

Bill Thomas- Over and over again.

W. B. Ingram- Sometime, along about that time, Eisenhower brought the troops down to Little Rock and there was a considerable segregationist sentiment that developed here in Memphis and I could see it among the politicians in office, the mayor and the commissioners. I think they attempting to get the, to....

Bill Thomas- Go along with that sentiment?

W. B. Ingram- Try to find out or try to get in line with the prevailing winds of the times turned segregationists themselves. Jimmy Moore got elected and Jimmy of course although he has been able to manage very well to be friendly with the negro community is a very staunch segregationist and he was a violently opposed to them allowing them to use the pools and of course all of the parks were segregated.

Bill Thomas- The art museum.

Tom Beckner- Zoo.

W. B. Ingram- The art museum, the zoo, and these sort of things more or less fell under Moore's, hospitals you see and the different hospitals as a supplement to Gaston hospital so they could keep it as one as a primarily negro hospital. And of course Armor always had been he came up through the ranks. His primary job on the police department was arresting crap shooter and drunks most of whom were negroes. And he had a basically anti-negro orientation you see. And then of course Lobe just undertaking to jump onto something and seizing an opportunity and getting a reaction primarily from the people that presently support him. They developed this segregationist attitude and this is what brought about these sit-ins and various other things that happened with the negroes. I don't think they were trying to take over the city by any stretch of the imagination but they were manifesting their disapproval of the policies of the city. Of course I, I all fairness to the people who were there at the time they were coming into changing attitudes and changing times and to get people to be willing to be broad minded enough to accept negroes as citizens. On an equal basis. Of course you had the school integration suits and all that kind of thing and Willis and Sugarmon were representing the schools in the school integration suits and this was a sort of resistance toward just complete change. Probably this was like instead of putting the breaks on gradually or speeding up wide open, it was a change. Memphis had basically been segregationist before that as had all other southern cities been and I don't blame that on (muffled). The morays of the time more or less. But I think that these are conditions that were

developing in the city of Memphis and all (muffled) and as far as Armor's concerned I think he adjusted to it a lot better than I thought he would and gradually they began to realize that in order to maintain a balance that they had to do some of these things even though they didn't want to admit it. But I began to see evidence of change in the police department in their practices and in their methods of doing things.

Bill Thomas- This is why you were judge?

W. B. Ingram- Yes, yes, and before I left the bench they eliminated this 338 docket and they put into practice allowing the person who is under arrest to make telephone call and allowing the person who was, who wanted to have the opportunity to consult with a lawyer the opportunity to do that. Armor was enough of a politician to recognize and to be able to sense the need for changes after the pressures developed. I give him credit for that,

Bill Thomas- This was still quite early it he real civil rights struggle too.

W. B. Ingram- Oh yeah.

Bill Thomas- Well then your campaign and tour as mayor, they had integrated the parks and the schools and this sort of thing but Bill did you see this or did you foresee this as a coming problem even at that time that early. Did Memphis seem to be a racially troubled town or going in that direction?

W. B. Ingram- I think so Bill of course I don't really claim to foresee all the events that followed. But I could see where that the continued abuse of the police power and the failure to follow the fundamental constitutional guarantees, if it continued would lead to a real bad situation. I think that Armor began to realize that too because as I say some changes were made. They weren't in the public press but changes were made. They don't want to give me credit for holding out against them I suppose but the changes were made. So I think that things have developed in Memphis, I don't know how you want to proceed here.

Bill Thomas- Well I think perhaps you had mentioned....yeah let's do it that way I think we are still a little bit on background and I believe that one of the things that probably does apply now or during the time that we are interested in but did happen earlier as background was the fact that still there were a the time you were mayor there were 40% negroes and you did receive good support in your election from them. We found out since from a great number that you still command an awful lot of respect from the negro sector here and I think we are trying to counter balance, counter balance this situation. How were you able to do that? And why was it I assume the second questions after that was why was it such a switch when the Lobe administration came in because obviously it was. So I think maybe the first question is how did you manage things so peacefully through the 4 years you were in when obviously it had been right on the brink of some real trouble.

W. B. Ingram- Well Bill I suppose the negro citizens as well as a lot of others related themselves to me in a similar situation. Here is a man trying to do what he believes is right. And the forces up there the powers that be, the ones that work behind the scene, the presidium you might say of the city of Memphis who nobody elects were forcing the elected officials to knuckle under and to conform to a policy which was abusive and repugnant to so many people.

Bill Thomas- You are talking about the high inner white circle now.

W. B. Ingram- That is correct and it still is there. It is just in that sense you don't have any elected officials who are really responsible to the people who elect them, they get elected by the elected who are some way persuaded to vote for these people but actually they are controlled behind the scenes from a group of people, or by a group of people who are not responsible to electorates at all. And who could care less what they think.

Bill Thomas- They are largely anonymous to the elctrad..

W. B. Ingram- That is exactly right. I say they are synonymous to the Brazilian and Russian because it is more or less an anonymous body which really makes the policy that is carried out by the people who are put out in the positions of authority.

Bill Thomas- Through pressure?

W. B. Ingram- That's right. And when you get government like that you don't have democratic government and that is what as soon as I was elected and took office these powers behind the scene continually abused me and they did everything they could to try to discredit me, yet they could find no law as which to base the position that they took and the only way that they could in any way thwart my efforts was through the exercise of their political influence on their other commissioners. The four commissioners, instead of letting the mayor and the commissioners endeavor to make their own decisions in accordance to their consciences and in accordance with what they believe to be the will of the people, these people behind the scenes dictated what they wanted the will of the people expressed by the 4 commissioners, they could never dictate to me and consequently it was a continuous battle and a continuous war on the mayor who was always supposed to be out of step with everybody.

Bill Thomas- I think we have run into this and this includes such things as the interracial council and this sort of thing which includes most of the supposedly high and influential white citizens in Memphis. One thing we, the question we still have been over a number of times was that this seemed to have worked in the past. All Memphis did on the surface have a reputation as being one of the better cities on the racial situation in the south which it was obviously a myth, but never the less it has had that reputation so there is some indication that this...

W. B. Ingram- Yeah but there was that underlying feeling of resentment and the looking for some way to release itself you see and those people that you say are the,

this intelligentsia or self proclaimed intellectuals if they had good sense they would have been able to sense it and realize what they were doing. They were not intellectuals at all it may have acquired some degrees, they may have set themselves up as intellectuals and by getting off together to....intellectualize or whatever you want to call it. But if they had really been intellectuals and had been capable of controlling their intellect and using it, they would have not let their own personal greed and personal lust for power and personal hatred for me because I represented somebody who wouldn't knuckle under to their particular dictates. They were not elected by the people but I was you see. They wanted, they were not so much concerned with peace and tranquility of the city of Memphis as they were making a reputation for themselves as intellectuals and trying to present to both the white community and the negro community as being, I guess suppose that they thought they were acquiring some particular status which was above and beyond the reach of the ordinary person you see. Which qualified them to be an intellectual which it justified then in looking down their noses and telling all the peons running around here including the peon that held the office of the mayor what to do. But they can...(tape End).