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David Yellin- This is February 11th we are in the offices of the Memphis search for meaning committee with Mr. Everett Cook.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No Everett W.

David Yellin- Excuse me. Mr. Everett W. Cook at 6:35 am, Joan Beifuss with David Yellin. Now Mr. Cook we are ready. Now what we do want to talk about are the events as best as you can remember them, and while we are on tape even though we usually do this off tape you are free to make any condition you want about anything you say here. We have something that is required for you to sign by the oral history before we put this in the archives of history but if you want to put an restrictions on this in any way you are free to do it.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No I don't want to put any restrictions on it I just want to begin where you want me to begin.

David Yellin- Right. Ok. I think we can probably at least start chronologically if you could before that just give a little of your background where you were born...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well, I was born here in Memphis in 1922 which makes me older than I should be and...

David Yellin- Or younger than you ought to be for what you have done.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- And I lived here all my life except for school and college and the war.

David Yellin- Where did you go to college?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I went to Yale. I have been here ever since.

David Yellin- How come you went to Yale? Was their family?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well no I went to Hodgkin's up in Connecticut and that was sort of a natural in those days.

David Yellin- Alright how come you went to Hodgkin's?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Because an Olympic champion swimmer named Howard Willy, who was persuaded my father to send me there. He was, he still lives here.

David Yellin- Were you a swimmer?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No, but my father was and you used to swim in the old Doc Hottum river races if you remember your history of Memphis.

Joan Beifuss- Don't.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- We have a very famous river races in Memphis. There were a number of people back in before World War II that used to swim in these 5 and 7 mile river races.

David Yellin- Mississippi river?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Mississippi river races run by Doc Hottum.

David Yellin- The river was clean enough then to swim?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I doubt it. I don't think the river has ever been clean, but they survived.

David Yellin- 5 to 7 miles?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I think that is right if my memory was correct.

Joan Beifuss- From where?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- They used to swim right by downtown Memphis.

David Yellin- I'll be darned.

Joan Beifuss- How long had your family been in Memphis?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- My grandparents on my mother's side came here, they were in the lumber business. Came here from Chattanooga in about the turn of the century. My grandfather came from Indianapolis Indiana on my father's side in 1892.

David Yellin- Did he come by racing car?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I don't know how he came. I think he came with a pack on his back as far as I could tell.

David Yellin- Are you comfortable in that seat?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Very fine.

Joan Beifuss- Was your family involved politically at all with Mr. Crump?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Never. No. They were friends but never in any political way.

David Yellin- Now who started the cotton business?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- My father did. He started working for Mr. Willey, the Willey's father who was a swimmer in Marianna Arkansas. That was in the days when you rode a horse to buy cotton.

David Yellin- Now is that Willey, W-I-L-L-E-Y.

W-I-L-L-E-Y, it was the old Newburger cotton company which is no longer in the cotton business, which was a new Orleans firm.

David Yellin- Now and your father was a cotton distributor?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- He was a cotton buyer in those days.

Joan Beifuss- Is that what a cotton factor is?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No a cotton factor lends money to farmers and then sells the cotton. There are only one or two left, the banks have taken over the function of the factor.

Joan Beifuss- Then so what exists now, the cotton company?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Our cotton company, we are merchants. We are cotton and grain merchants. We buy cotton all over the world and sell it all over the world, and grain the same way basically. We supply what economists call place and time utility if you are an economist.

Joan Beifuss- What kind of grain?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Soy beans, corn, wheat, oats.

Joan Beifuss- Then you are not just a southern man.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No not at all.

David Yellin- And do you buy cotton elsewhere?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- We have operations all up and down central and south America and from coast to coast in this country. Europe, Japan, Hong Kong.

David Yellin- Did you get into the cotton business after college?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah, after I got out of the army.

David Yellin- What did you study in college?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I studied international relations under a man named Arnold Wulpers who just died about two weeks ago a matter of fact.

David Yellin- Did you study that because you knew you were going to be in an international business?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No first I wanted to go into the state department and then I wanted to be a lawyer. I didn't do either one.

David Yellin- Why is there any reason?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I ran out of money and my father would said I had enough education and I needed to go to work.

Joan Beifuss- Did you marry a Memphis girl?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I married a Memphis girl. She came from Kentucky originally. I took a cut in salary to come to work. I made more money in the army than I did the first 3 years I was working for my father.

David Yellin- Well that figures.

Joan Beifuss- Where were you in the army?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I was in the air force. I was a pilot.

David Yellin- Where were you stationed?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I was in Africa, Sicily Italy, England, and over in France.

David Yellin- When did you pick up flying?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Courtesy of the army.

David Yellin- Oh I see. And just to get that part of it now you remained in the reserve or national guard?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I was in the reserve for about 5 years, and then I quit.

David Yellin- Well aren't you an officer or weren't you...you were an officer in the air force.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Right.

David Yellin- And you aren't anymore.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No not anymore.

Joan Beifuss- What officer were you?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I was a major.

David Yellin- And you still fly?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- Do you fly to South America? Do you do your own pilot?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No, no. When we go that far we take a 707.

Joan Beifuss- How about children, do you have any children?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I have 3 children, 19, 17, and 14. Two boys and a girl.

David Yellin- Hodgkin's and Yale?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- One of them went to Hodgkin's and now they are going to Sewanee and one of them is at Woodbury Forest. One of them is a little girl is still here at home.

David Yellin- This is just a little thing that might be interesting, you from the south and you went certainly north right into the heart of the northeast. Do you think this is a good idea?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah I think it is a wonderful idea and I don't think anybody ought to stay at home. He ought to get out if you can. I think it broadens you, gives you a little different perspective if you go to school in Memphis for awhile and then you go somewhere else for a while.

David Yellin- I think this might be important to what we are trying to get at to the fact that Memphis sometimes has been accused of being insulated...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Provincial.

David Yellin- Well almost every place is provincial and I don't know of a more provincial place in the world than New York in its own way but I think the vitality in Memphis, the new has come from people such as yourself. Plus and present company excluded, people have come in, do you agree with that?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I don't think there is any question about it, I think one of the real great things of course is this university which I think is having a greater impact as far as upgrading it's intellectual window if you will and anything that has happened. Southwestern was a magnificent school too but it didn't have the size to have the impact that Memphis state had, nor the resources that had been provided to Memphis state.

Joan Beifuss- it is kind of good to hear you say that because...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- You know I made a speech one time to the alumni of Memphis state after I read the, I read the catalogue of Memphis state and this was about 15 years ago and they never invited me back because if you looked at the classes they offered and the teacher load by looking at the names of who was teaching these course and how many course they taught, and the emphasis at that time on physical education, there was just no quality at that time, really they were just struggling in the beginning. I think that this was in the days of Jack Smith and Sunny Humphries had just taken over I believe, I think the progress that has been made in the last 15 years, unbelievable.

David Yellin- And we have both been here, Joan's husband teaches also and 5 years and has just been phenomenal.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well you know there are about 3 groups around town that contribute money to supplement salaries here at Memphis state. I guess you know that. But salaries for certain people are supplemented, professors and teachers and things like this which enables...if you get one good man as head of the department and you pay him the competitive price and create an atmosphere where he can work you attract a lot of other people.

David Yellin- Yes.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- So this is the theory of it and it seems to be working.

Joan Beifuss- Oh yeah that department chairmen thing is a very important...

David Yellin- Well and this is interesting too and I think it is germane that by the same token the fear of "outside agitators", who is an outside agitator and who is an outside inspirator.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well I don't know. I went to the first communist cell meeting at Yale university. When I was there in 1941.

David Yellin- With William Buckley of course.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah William Buckley, well he was behind me but his brother Jim was in my class, the one who ran for congress and was defeated here last...

David Yellin- Oh yes.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- November. But the communists, kids have got to be exposed to all kinds of ideas and some turn out to be idiots and some turn out to be reasonable and some make it and some don't. That is the most important thing to make it possible for people not to make it as much as it is for people to make it.

David Yellin- Of course you sound, you have a fresh sound in this city. Not many people would say this. I mean fresh in the best sense.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well it is so early (muffled)

David Yellin- This is fine we have a good background if we can get down to your participation. We have heard and through talking to many many people your name came up several times. If you could recall some of the meetings you went to the unannounced ones primarily.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well I really would like, I think the first thing you have got to understand and perhaps your other research will enable you to understand some of the other key players like Worth and Champa and Epps and Jones and the Rabbi...

David Yellin- Rabbi Wax?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Wax and Dean Demic. If you can understand some of these people from your research well then I am not so sure how many people understand

Lobe. He is a very, very really I think very susceptible to understanding. He is a classic example of a Christian ethic in a Calvinist philosophy. He believes you should get up early in the morning, work, stick to your last, do what is right, and go home and go to bed and do the same thing day in and day out that is just the way he believes. He is extremely honest. For example, when you take a stamp that belongs to the university and put it on one of your private letters or I take one from the office from the company and put it on my private letters we are stealing. But it is not a theft of any consequence and it really doesn't make any difference. Lobe is the kind of guy that buys his own stamps and put it on his own letters at city hall because he doesn't want to steal. This is the extent to which he lives his philosophy. He is really absolutely as a result of this, he was absolutely honest there was no question about it and I think it creates in him a certain rigidity. He is not a racist. He has probably done more for people that he won't let anybody talk about or know about. 99% of the bleeding hearts if you will, that wear their actions on their sleeve. He is tough, he is tough minded, and he believes in certain things and nobody is going to run him off of it. It is just that simple. So that is the way he is.

Joan Beifuss- How long had you known mayor Lobe?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well we were at a pop stand together selling Coca-Colas when we were 16 years old, 14 years old I guess. We roomed together at boy's camp and then He went to Brown and I went to Yale. Then the army came along, and I really did see much of him after we got out of the army until he was running the commission at that time. I would see him around town. I didn't support him the first time he ran and I did from there on and the last time he ran why, and this is at a time before where I was the treasurer of his campaign because he wanted some body to handle his money that they knew wouldn't divert any of it I guess, or wouldn't spend it in the wrong way, or create any problems with it.

Joan Beifuss- This has been the enigma all along really is Henry Lobe truly.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well it is really this simple.

Joan Beifuss- Well when he was a kid was it that simple?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yes when we had the pop stand...

David Yellin- You could leave him certainly.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah I could leave him and he wouldn't drink up the profits. He could never leave me.

Joan Beifuss- Well what made Henry Lobe that way that early. This seems to be..

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I really don't know why he became that way, his father, of course he comes from a long line of people in Memphis, I think he is 3rd generation. I think his grandfather started Lobe's Laundry, Of course his father was probably one

of the most delightful men that ever lived, Mr. William Lobe. He lived over behind Park View Hotel.

Joan Beifuss- Were you neighbors of theirs?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No we lived over on Central. Neither one were very good pop stand locations I must say. He was just always that way I don't know why. If I had to guess it was primarily because of his father. His father was probably one of the most popular men in Memphis. Extremely well liked, great depth of character.

David Yellin- Do you think there is a tendency in the son, Henry Lobe to live up to an image?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No I don't think so, really I think Lobe is his own man. I don't think he worries that much....

David Yellin- Was he always tall?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah.

David Yellin- I am glad you did mention it because quite truthfully we find that Henry Lobe played such an important part in this and he really is not doing himself the utmost justice.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well I don't think you will ever find Lobe trying to alibi anything or do himself. He is just going to do what he thinks is right, he doesn't give a damn whether you like it or not, as long as he can, as he says, look in the mirror the next morning, it doesn't bother him. He has been called all kinds of things. I think the only valid criticism you could make of Lobe is that he is in fact a little bit too rigid. He is not mean and he is not devious, he is anything but devious he is just the opposite. His motives are not unkind really. He is not trying to build a political machine, he is probably the worst politician I have seen. It's a wonder, he really, I think can be elected after an Ingram who, for example, to make the budget balance cut the allowance in the budget for gasoline for police patrol cars in half for the following year from the previous year. Well that is an impossibility, this is just an absolute idiocy. But if he can be elected on that background but given a good non-controversial reasonably competent calm administration with no Ingram type, I don't know how to say it.

David Yellin- Yeah say it politely.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- It is not, well given the Ingram type actions I think he is pretty much a shoe in. I don't think that if you had a Watkins-Overton back here in Memphis that Lobe could be...see we live in a, I think Memphis is a populous area. I think this is even more evident today than it was at the time of the garbage strike.

David Yellin- Mr. Lobe seems to me in your description and it has been most illuminating. Unlike most men I would say, or I think he is unusual in a way, he does have a frame of reference and you described it in the Calvinist Christian ethic.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I think he is the most classic example of a textbook example, he lives it. He doesn't just talk it or think it he lives it.

David Yellin- And everything he does comes out of and from that and that is hard to live by.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- His household budget is always balanced, everything is in order, everything is in place.

David Yellin- He answers all letters.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- He answers all letters.

David Yellin- Returns phone calls at 7:00 in the morning.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- When he tells you he is going to do something he makes a note so he can be damn sure he doesn't forget it and he does it. He has had one beer he won't drive an automobile. I locked the keys in my car last night and I said you have got to take me home, and he said I am sorry I have had a beer. He says you can have my car but I am not driving. I said, well how about letting Mary drive us home. He said nope, she has had a drink.

David Yellin- So what happened?

Joan Beifuss- You stayed the night.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I took the car.

Joan Beifuss- Do you want more coffee?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah I would love some.

Joan Beifuss- Dave do you want some?

David Yellin- No thanks.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Do you want to get on with the garbage strike?

David Yellin- Yes, well of course this is one of the clearest descriptions. I must tell you as a friend we could not go up to Henry Lobe and say any more than we did look. We are not trying to get anybody and we are trying to find out the facts and this is the record. No matter how we do it with a 150 interviews, we are going to end up with 200 plus what is in the newspapers. It is going to come out. So we wanted him so much to literally sit down and say...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well he won't do it. He would never be put in a position of defending himself. He is a little bit defensive about defending himself.

David Yellin- Right.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- But I think that his help to the handicap for example, he is one of the magnificent you know.

David Yellin- I remember Joe Riggs saying he was involved...

Joan Beifuss- I have got to have some sugar Joan. Do you have any sugar?

Joan Beifuss- What's that?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Coffee mate.

Joan Beifuss- What did the sugar look like.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Here is one copy that. They come in little bags But he is basically a kind, decent, but tough fellow. He is an activist rather than a student. I don't think he reads books, but that is not his nature. I do think he has matured tremendously since he was first mayor and he takes an awful lot of advice, he listens to an awful lot of people now before he does anything. But at the same time if the advice is contrary to what his philosophy tells him he is just absolutely unbudgable. If 15 of his closest friends said well I think we ought to steal an automobile for instance, to take a silly example. He would stand up against all 15 of them and say no. This is what I mean to illustrate by violating his philosophy.

David Yellin- I think this is all going to fit in later because obviously his friends and you were involved with him. Just one other statement that I think would help. I will make this as a statement not as an accusation. It seems that not too much of Brown university rubbed off on Henry Lobe.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well perhaps you know Brown better than I do.

David Yellin- Well I don't know Brown.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I don't either.

David Yellin- What I meant...

Joan Beifuss- I know Brown.

David Yellin- In fact, one of my closest friends for many years was at brown but I don't know Brown that well. I guess what I meant was his sympathy understanding of the northeast. I don't know he probably came back and he might be described as more midsouth or more Memphis than if he hadn't gone away. I don't know if this makes sense or not/

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well I don't know that it does really make sense. Because when I think about the contribution of the northeast to this country I am not so sure since 1860, what that contribution is. For example, the civil war riots. If the Northeast had there way particularly in New York City, there would be no union today. I think some of the things that happening to day where the practical side of life has been distilled out and all they have is pure intelligence which is of only partial value.

David Yellin- I don't mean this, and we are not going to fight the war again.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I don't want to fight the war again either, I am making a case which is just the opposite, just for the sake of discussion because of the fact that somebody went to Brown, I mean so he went to Brown.

David Yellin- Yeah he went to Brown in the northeast where unions were involved and so on and I mean, I think this is (muffled) again. I just wondered, this has existed in a certain part of our country. I meant it in that direction rather than any other. Now I am just saying, this has been said.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well I don't think he is anti-union because I think that he was one of the ones that worked out the union, unwritten union policy that certainly helped to further it that has existed around here for years. For example, at the airport we have union painters, and we operate and are bound by the union contract, which is published in a little book, and which is negotiated between the general contractors and the painters union.

David Yellin- Those are not city employees?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yes those are city employees.

David Yellin- But they are painters?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- They are city employees on the payroll. We pay in all of the fields, carpenters, painters, electricians, the city of Memphis and have for years have paid the union scale and observed the union rules.

Joan Beifuss- Isn't that the deal where...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- But we never had a signed contract.

Joan Beifuss- But isn't that the deal also where the contractor works out the deal with the union..

Mr. Everett W. Cook- And the city follows....

Joan Beifuss- Works with the contractor.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No, no. You see in the building trade a master contract is negotiated with the associated general contractors. Their office building is right on here on the corner of campus. And that master contract between the various painters, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, and so forth, That is published in a book because there are a group of individual contractors which negotiate for everybody. And then these contractors are furnished with a book that is published by the union, I don't know who pays for it really, but they are available and it has the wage scale and terms and conditions of work and we have in the city for years have followed this book in those unionized employees. We have two painters out by the airport and we live by that book and the union president has been out to the airport and

had lunch with us 2 or 3 times since I have been chairmen of the airport commission. This is true not only there but everywhere and those are the instructions that we have. And this is the background of the theory that you have a contract with the union, but you don't sign it, you live by it.

David Yellin- This is a good place now we have got all the background I think if we can go into your first participation, when you were notified, we are talking now about the sanitation strike.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I was, there is a group that meets with Lobe or has been meeting and I haven't been in some time because I have been busy on other things, and seem to have a conflict all the time. Every Wednesday morning for breakfast the strike came up and Lobe announced what he was going to do and I would say at that point that everyone was generally in agreement. I wasn't particularly involved at this point except really as a participant, I mean an observer.

Joan Beifuss- Who would be in the Wednesday morning group?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Oh like Walter Armstrong, John Highschool, Tom Todd, Frank Gianatti, Jimmy Manire, Myron Hallie.

Joan Beifuss- Just kind of an unofficial cabinet?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Partly official too. Well partly. Harry Woodberry comes, Odell Horton used to come.

David Yellin- Just again for the record, where is it?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well usually at the admiral bimbo over on union, I mean the Howard Johnson over on Lamar. You know the Howard Johnson.

David Yellin- Oh yes the new one.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- The new Howard Johnson just this side of the expressway on Lamar.

David Yellin- The one time Hilton?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I guess so yeah. So I was really just an observer and I didn't think the thing was going to get very far.

David Yellin- Now this was February 14th then if the strike started on Monday the 12th.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah and it was out of the clear blue sky really because I would say that I think after all he had only been in office for two weeks.

David Yellin- There was no mention of it the Wednesday previous.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Absolutely no signs of this at al, I think it was precipitated or triggered by poor supervisory practices at the garbage department. Because I just don't see how it slept up on them but it did. My first active participation was about 1:00 in the morning when this thing escalated to a pretty good extent. David Caywood and Downing Prior called me and said we have a document here we have written and Worth has approved it, and we would like to bring it out to their house and I said fine where are you. They said they were at the corner of Poplar and Germantown rd. I said come on down. So they came on down to the house, and they had this document, which I still have.

David Yellin- You mean they called you from a phone booth?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- From a phone booth yeah. They had just left Worth. They said he will agree to this settlement. And they brought it down to my house and we stayed up until about 3:00 I guess talking the thing over and I said I will take it to Lobe in the morning. I took this document to Lobe and he re-worked it. I would say that in substance the two documents that developed were substantially the same. There was a difference in wording and a difference in emphasis between the two documents and there had been a nickel's difference in money.

Joan Beifuss- What did it call for, did it call for a written contract?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No it didn't call for a written contract as I remember. I will give you that document, those two documents and you can look at them but those are the two settlements, the two positions.

David Yellin- This was a letter that had come from Lobe or just a...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- This was just a draft of a document from Worth which he had approved according to what David Caywood and Downing Prior told me and then an edit of that document which had been approved by Lobe.

Joan Beifuss- Well let me cut in here because of course we have gotten conflicting reports really from the union and from other people we talked to. The charge has been made that Worth was originally willing to settle for absolutely nothing but a raise in wages and a grievance committee, that Worth at the beginning was not after the dues check off.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Oh no he was insisting on the dues check off from the very beginning through the credit union. This was a compromise he worked out and he insisted on this from the very beginning and if he hadn't of, I was going to say I have that original document in my office.

Joan Beifuss- That would be fine if we could borrow it and Xerox it.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I will give you a Xerox of it. I thin that the reason he insisted on the check off is that if he didn't have the check off he wouldn't have any union members and I don't think he could fund this operation down here without a due

check off, because we have unions and where we don't have a check off you drift down to 2 or 3 members you know.

David Yellin- Is there anything about that, Mr. Worth has been accused of that thing with kind of overtones that was all he was interested in because he wanted his union to grow.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I don't know I have not ever met Mr. Worth and I am going to come to Mr. Worth a little bit later.

David Yellin- Is that February 24th or somewhere around there or is that early? Was it after the macing?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I have forgotten but the date is on the document. Anyway Lobe edited this document and the differences were really not significant. I am sure if you read the two documents side by side you would say I don't see why the strike lasted. Of course when you get in the middle of one of these things and everyone gets a little enflamed and you start cutting the bologna pretty thin. The means something other than the. So anyway I took that document to Champa because Worth had left he had gone back to Washington, I think his wife was having a baby at that time or something like that. Champa and Epps were in the room. I showed them the document and we had a couple of drinks.

David Yellin- Was this at the hotel?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- The Peabody Hotel.

Joan Beifuss- This is in the morning?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No this was in the afternoon about 5:00 or 6:00. So I stayed up there and I think David Caywood went with me, and they said they was some difference in wording and they just wouldn't accept it. I said well you guys ought to really be a little, Lobe be a little less rigid and you be a little less rigid and get this thing worked out. And I said, otherwise you are going to burn the town down. Champa said yes, that is exactly what we are going to do until we get our way, and we are going to escalate this into a race issue if we have to win the strike period. I said, well that is a hell of thing to do come down and tear a town up, just over a few cents and a union check off and whatever the issues were at the time. I say I will give you these documents and you can tell very quickly where the differences are. Then he said well that may be but that's what we are going to do. I said, ok, if that's the way you feel and that's your position my instructions from Lobe are to tell you we are going to beat you. So I finished my drink and left. The next morning was Saturday if my memory is correct, may have been a week later. Went down to breakfast and I usually go to the Peabody Hotel for breakfast but I went over to the Pancake House and the only time I had ever seen Worth personally was that morning. He came in to breakfast and sat at the next table with some of his people. They discussed the strike and they discussed the point at which they were going to settle. They were willing to settle for a dime less than they got, as long as they got

the check off and as long as they got some recognition. They talked about the role of the preachers. I sat there and read the newspaper and listened to them and drank 8 cups of coffee. It was a very interesting conversation to over hear.

David Yellin- Were you reading the same...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I read the Orphan Annie 18 times and don't know what it said. Anyway, I sat there and listened to him and it was pretty obvious how you could settle this thing from listening to him, there was no question about it, about a dime less than they got as long as they got the check off through the credit union and some grievance procedure with emphasis on the language that union existed. This was very important, not a union recognition clause is such but the union existence recognition clause if you will. These were the minimum terms in which he said he would settle when he was talking to his people. Naturally I reported that back to Lobe and it was an accident really it wasn't by design I was just there having breakfast. I have never met Worth, I have never seen him again or before. I recognized him only because of his newspaper pictures.

David Yellin- Do you recall who was there? Was Jesse Epps there?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No Epps wasn't there, Champa was there and no Champa was not there, it was a man, no Champa wasn't there. It was a fellow, a gray haired man, a kind of a thin man, he has been a union man around town for years and there were four of them, and I think they were all except for this one man who lives in Memphis whose name I can't remember. They were all there, three of them from out of town and this one Memphian that if I saw him again, I see him occasionally and I recognize him but I don't know what his name is, can't think about what his name is.

Joan Beifuss- What were they saying about the preachers, you mentioned.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- They were just talking about how they were going to use the preachers and get them involved in this and if they had to they were perfectly willing to escalate it into a race issue using the preachers. Of course this is one of the, I would say one of the, I think that Rabbi Wax and Dean Demmic and Moon over here and the catholic sister, you know the one that kept the vigil all night.

Joan Beifuss- Sister Adrian Marie.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Sister Adrian Marie...are probably the biggest dupes in Memphis because they really didn't know what was going on and they emotionally identified with this thing and they are downtrodden and they let their jeans get away from them and they lost all sense of proportion, particularly Rabbi Wax. Moon is just about as unstable in my judgment. They really didn't know what they were doing and what they were talking about and wouldn't listen and completely intolerant really.

David Yellin- Now this conversation, again so what you are saying is very clear and that is that the, what Worth was saying not merely that the inertia or the inevitably

of what was happening he would let happen but he would do what he could to stimulate it.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- He and Champa both said that they would do what they had to win the strike and if they had to escalate it to a race situation and burnt he town down then that is too damn bad. They were perfectly willing to do this, and they were perfectly prepared to do it, and they were going to do it unless they got their settlement he way they wanted it. They were going to involve the preachers in it and get them all stirred up and get a cohesive group and go to town with it.

Joan Beifuss- Did you feel before if Worth had not been out of town at the beginning of the week...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No, it would have happened. I think it was pretty well planned and coordinated and worked out, and it would have happened here regardless whether Worth was here or out of town.

David Yellin- You mean they weren't really coming to settle in that sense?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Not unless they got through these certain minimum requirements. And those minimum requirements were union recognition, not in the true sense of the word, classical union recognition clause, but union existence clause. They are willing to accept the philosophy that the laws of the state of Tennessee you couldn't sign a union shop contract. But they certainly wanted recognition.

David Yellin- The spirit if not the letter.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Recognition of their existence. They wanted the check off through the credit union as a compromise, they would accept that. They were willing to settle for 10 cents less than they got, I think the settlement was a \$1.85. \$1.80 or a \$1.85 and they were willing to settle for either a \$1.70 or a \$1.75, this is what they wanted. And if they didn't get that they were willing to do, by their own statements by Champa and Epps to me in a subsequent meeting which I will tell you about later and by the conversation I over heard Worth having at the Pancake House. You know where the Pancake House is over in the downtown area, having breakfast with his three friends. The whole thing was pretty planned out of how they were going to get the preachers involved and have the meetings and play on the emotions of the people.

David Yellin- This was when the preachers already had been involved by themselves?

Joan Beifuss- This must have been after the macing incident on Main St.

David Yellin- Yes. It was the following week.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I would have to look and see when it was, I don't remember the exact chronology but yeah.

Joan Beifuss- So the preachers were already into the thing.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- The point I am trying to make is that they involved them. I don't think that the preachers would have gotten involved to the extent that they did if they hadn't been pushed.

David Yellin- And also allowed them to be involved.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- And I think that the union brought them in, I think this is their strategy to do this and they are absolutely coldblooded about what they would be willing to do and the limits to which they were willing to go. As I said David Caywood was there, with Epps and Champa and they made it crystal clear if they had to burn the whole town down to get their way, that was what they were going to do.

David Yellin- So when you reported this to mayor Lobe he reacted in a sort of classical kind of way, he says I will be god damned if they are going to do that. I must say I felt the same way I think the thing got out of hand. I remember we had a long discussion about whether we should, we knew the basis on which they would settle, and whether we should just go ahead and settle with them. At that time the hiring oh I guess they had 50% of the work force back. 40% I don't remember but somewhere in that area. But garbage was being picked up, it was in the winter and you don't have the severe problems that you have in summer with garbage. Everything, I say the town was pretty well united behind Lobe the majority of them. The abrasive activities of Champa and then the picnic lunch at city hall and all these things rather offended most of the people with the exception of the negro community. The negro clergy and minority of the white clergy, I would say that is it. That is all the support they had. There were certain jump ahead a minute. The Friday night, wasn't King assassinated on Friday night, or Thursday?

David Yellin- Thursday night.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Thursday. There were two or three groups that were working and were going to have a...thing was beginning to crack. We had Jim Neders, we had a preacher name Jonathan Rogers who has a church out here on Chelsea. Very very, I don't know whether you know him or not.

Joan Beifuss- He has a radio program.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Very, very fine individual and probably one of the, I would say one of the best true pure preachers. I don't think some of these other fellows are really preachers, I think they are like the missionaries in Hawaii and China. I think they are lining their pockets and I don't think they are really taking care of their flock the way a guy like Jonathan Rogers does. He is a very able and conscientious. They were going to have this meeting on Thursday and this was all arranged and worked out. I think that would have been the end of the strike, I think the union would have collapsed.

Joan Beifuss- Let me ask, if you knew that what Worth was demanding was the dues check off and a minimal raise and some kind of unwritten recognition of the union, why couldn't Lobe go with that really?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Because he didn't believe in the check off.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah it was really that.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- It was Worth's insistence on the check off if you have to narrow it down to one issue. There were two things that Lobe hung up on and one was money because you have to make a study of a budget to realize how bad of a situation this city was in financially after Ingram got through with it. He literally did cut the gasoline budget in half for those patrol cars in order to make the budget balance.

David Yellin- It was so early....

Mr. Everett W. Cook- So early in this thing, he didn't know where he stood or how much money he had. It was a new form of government. So money was one of them but I think we could have gotten to a \$1.70.

David Yellin- Because he did say at one time that it would be alright if it were later.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- That is right June 30th when he had a new budget coming up. Then the other hang up was on the check off. His theory is that people have a right not to belong to a union as much as they had a right to belong to a union and he didn't particularly object to the existence of the union as long as his people were not obligate to pay dues they had a free choice. Well then he taught of a union operation where they have got a union, there are damn few people that have got the courage to stand up to that...

Joan Beifuss- That is what I was going to say do you feel the pressure on the people who do not.

David Yellin- It wasn't the fact that it was explained you didn't have to pay it this way if you didn't want to. But that was sort of an academic deception.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- That fact that even today under this contract a man is free to join or not to join the free not to join is purely academic because they put the heat on them pretty good. So anyway, I remember when I went home Thursday night, we were having dinner over at my mother and father's I remember.

David Yellin- Now which Thursday is this?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- This was the Thursday of the assassination.

David Yellin- Ah April 4th.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I was 90% confident that the thing was practically over.

David Yellin- You had attended the meeting, which meeting there were several or there were supposed to have been several at the Peabody or at the Claridge?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I was in Lobe's office that day and that afternoon we had a run down on the whole thing, and I had just been out to see Rogers and I think I kind of talked to Jim Neders and the thing was the more conservative and responsible thing I think some of the negro community thought the thing was getting out of hand. It had gotten out of hand and that they were just ready to get this thing over with. The praying was scheduled for the following Sunday if you remember at the auditorium and the work force was up to I don't remember, but you can probably get the numbers. I think it was somewhere up around, over 50% efficient as far as collections are concerned and...

David Yellin- We don't want to lose that dinner you went to your parents.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Oh I went there to dinner and I was going to say I was on the way home and I felt pretty good about it because I felt the thing was practically over and that was the night of the assassination. I was sitting there reading the newspaper and my father said my god King has been shot.

Joan Beifuss- They had a television on?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah. So I said you must be kidding me. And it came over the air again and sure enough he had been. So I went into Lobe's house and got his wife and his children and took them out to my house and they spent the night but to give you an indication of the emotionalism that had been generated by this thing we had a washwoman who had been with us a number of years and she said I ain't going to make beds for mayor Lobe's wife and quit. We haven't seen her since but this was the extent to what this had gone, the way these emotions had been fired up. So she quit. Anyway the next morning, of course I was trapped by the curfew I was at home.

David Yellin- May I we are coming sort of the end of this tape and we have another one to do very quickly. I would love not to miss this opportunity. When you heard of the assassination you went to mayor Lobe's house.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- And got his wife and his children.

David Yellin- Did you call them?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I had my wife call them and tell them I was on my way.

David Yellin- And how long did it take you?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- 10 minutes, 15 minutes.

David Yellin- And just again you did it for her safety obviously.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Yeah you didn't know what was going to happen.

Joan Beifuss- Was Mrs. Lobe frightened?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No she wasn't frightened, she didn't want to go. I said hell get the kids and let's go we are not taking any chances. I got home and I talked to Lobe on the phone I said I have got your family out here so you can relax. I don't think that any, or there were all kinds of threats of people calling me telling me they were going to shoot me, maybe 3 or 4 or 5 would be outside.

Joan Beifuss- That night?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No, in the next week.

David Yellin- Was it ever published that Mrs. Lobe and the children...

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No it wasn't in the paper as far as I know it wasn't. I think it was mainly because of my association but Lobe got I don't know how many threats. Of course most of them were crackpots, I don't think they ever meant it. Anyway I think the most, I want to go back to one other meeting. We almost had this thing settled twice. The first time was this document and several revisions of it, and we were honest to goodness a 32nd of an inch from getting it settled on the basis of this exchange of documents. The second time it was almost settled was a meeting in Louie Donelson's office and Jerry Blanchard was there. Frank Miles was there. Jesse Turner, Lucius Birch, David Caywood. Marvin Rattner I think that is his name, I think he was there, or someone from his firm was there I know.

David Yellin- Manire, was James Manire there?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No he wasn't there. What is that lawyer's name, negro lawyer who is very prominent?

Joan Beifuss- Walter Bailey? Bailey?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- No.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Sugarman I had known a long time and he was there. Lawson was there. This was that famous compromise that was going to be worked out. And it was agreed to. Lawson said I want to go try and sell it I think I can do it. I said fine and I gave him my telephone number, I am going home you can call me and the mayor will accept this. I think this one blew because the Precimeter printed it. We walked out of that meeting it was on the front page of the paper. And this was nothing more or less than journalistic competition. The Precimeter, it was on a Saturday, and the Precimeter was so afraid that the Commercial Appeal was going to get the story before them they couldn't keep their mouth shut. If that story hadn't been printed I feel damn sure that the strike would have been over that day.

David Yellin- Did anyone ask them not to?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I have no idea about that, but I don't know how they got the story or who told them but when we walked out of that meeting there was the early edition of the paper and I was walking with Sugarman, and he said well that is the end of this. This just cuts the ground out from under Lawson. So, but the frame of

mind at that time was very bad. I remember Jesse Turner saying , look we are a 3rd of the population we want a 3rd of the land a 3rd of the money, whatever percentage he used maybe it was 40% I don't know. We want 40% of the money, 40% of the land, 40% of the jobs. I remember Lucius Birch said you will have to put a bullet in me to get that done. He said, unless you are worthy of it you are not going to get 40% of anything you will get what you are entitled to on a fair and equitable basis, and it got pretty hot. But anyway this whole thing finally simmered down and we reached this understanding and I really, until we walked out of the meeting and there it was in the Precimeter, I would say probably the greatest, probably was an accident, probably wasn't though through, probably done in a hurry at the paper. But the result of it was that it blew that settlement right out of the water.

David Yellin- But when did you hear that it blew it or you all assumed it?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well we assumed it and well Sugarman said, he knew more than I did about how the reaction would be in the negro community. When we walked out and saw it, well that is the end of that you can just forget it. Well I went home and waited for Lawson's call and he never did call. The next day one of the guys at the meeting called and said well that newspaper story blew that one out of the tub. I said, that is what Russell Sugarman said as we were walking down the street. I said, so that was.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- I was under the impression that mayor Lobe didn't want the idea of compromise?

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Well he was willing, he sent us to the meeting. I am groping for the exact terms and conditions of that compromise which I really can't remember. But it was a story that appeared that Saturday.

David Yellin- We have it here.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- You have that story. Lobe had agreed to that settlement and had sent me to the meeting with the instructions that if it could be settled on that basis he would accept it and that was the basis on which I went. That was why I was invited and that was the settlement and that was agreed to and Lawson said he accepted it and all the other people in the room said that was fine. You can double check this because Donelson, Blanchard, Frank Miles, Jesse Turner, Lucius Birch, David Caywood.

David Yellin- Russell Sugarman.

Mr. Everett W. Cook- Russell Sugarman. (Tape Ends)