

SS057.mp3

David Yellin- This is side two of Mr. Cook, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1969, side 2.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I read the terms and conditions of the group putting Lawson, I must say Lawson agreed to this subject to talking to his people, but he thought, he was pretty sure he could sell it to his people. The would agree to a referendum so long as Lobe would give his word and sit on his hands and wouldn't try to mount a campaign against it. That was the basis of the thing, and when we left why that was the agreement.

David Yellin- In other words Mr. Lobe was willing to even change his mind about the check off if the people voted for it.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- If the people voted for it he was perfectly willing to do it. Lobe was willing to have a vote, a referendum and Lawson would accept it provided he could sell it to his people. He said I have got to talk to my other people but I think I can sell it and I can agree to it provided Lobe will sit on his hands and won't mount a campaign against it and enflame people again of august. Everybody was accusing everybody of enflaming the other side at that time.

David Yellin- Now how would they be assured that Mr. Lobe would not enflame it, just his word?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Just his word yeah, this is one thing that everybody understood that once Lobe gave his word there was not much question of him backing down on it.

David Yellin- Yeah that is very great.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- This is not universally accepted I don't think that Lobe keeps his word, but among people I think Lawson would say, I would be surprised if Lawson would say for example, Lobe once he gave him his word wouldn't live up to it.

Carolyn Yellin- Of all things that people say about Lobe I don't think I have ever heard anyone say...

David Yellin- Well Mr. Worth said that too.

Carolyn Yellin- I don't think anyone ever doubted that.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well anyway that is about it really, except for the aftermath, the morning of the assassination I spent all day in Lobe's office including the march by the preachers.

Carolyn Yellin- Were you in the office when the preachers...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I was there from 6:00 in the morning to 11:00 at night.

David Yellin- Now why were you there that day?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Because he asked me to come.

David Yellin- You mean the next day.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- That was Friday the 5<sup>th</sup>.

David Yellin- Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> oh yes of course.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I must say that I have never seen pressure exerted on a human being as was on him. He had 2 hours of sleep or think an hour, no I tell you what a policemen told me that Suelay, there are two policemen, inspector Suelay who is now retired and a fellow named McCarver who is a Lieutenant. He was up all Thursday night and I think he went home and took a shower and I think the only time he laid down was in the back of a squad car going home and coming back and he went to bed around 11:00 and he was pretty groggy and punchy by 11:00 that night. I never seen pressure exerted on anybody as severe as, it is almost impossible to describe probably the worst of all was Rabbi Wax.

David Yellin- Can you explain that, you say the pressure, would you care to go into a description of the...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well the first thing of course was against the background of extremely tense emotional, really explosive conditions and the riots that went on all night and the looting and the lawlessness. It was purely an emotional outlet. The threats,. The belief immediately that this had been done by right wing reactionary. This was immediately jumped to this conclusion just as they did in the Kennedy assassination. The thought that there was police collusion this was one of the rumors that was going around. So against this background you had guards all around the city hall and locked doors and guns you know. The first element I would say that appeared with the moons and some of the hippy types and longhairs and long side burns. That is a compensation I guess, it is forgivable in your case.

David Yellin- That one was going a different direction.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- That's right, but and...a rather disruptable bunch of people, dirty and...

Carolyn Yellin- I am sorry they came to the city hall?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- OH yeah they came and they...

Carolyn Yellin- Before the ministers came?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah and they had a sit down in Lobe's waiting room. Moon and a whole bunch...

Carolyn Yellin- I thought that was after the ministers came.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well you may be right.

David Yellin- I think Dick Moon did state after.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- But they were there outside the door and the...

David Yellin- But why did he let them in?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- It was Lobe's theory he would see everybody and talk to everybody...

David Yellin- Even then?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Even then yes sir. And anybody that wanted to come in and see him even that day he let them in.

Carolyn Yellin- I think they came in with the if I am not mistaken Dick Moon came in with the ministers and stayed when the ministers left.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well that could be but I have forgotten exactly but he had a whole cortège of, a whole little army, Moon's army. She is a nut, and so is Moon. Had a bunch of kids with him you know, about 15. That was one group. Rabbi Wax lead by Dean Demmic carrying the cross and Dean Demic in full ecclesiastical attire.

David Yellin- Now the mayor knew they were coming?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Oh yeah. W

David Yellin- What was his reaction?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- He said I will take them one at a time, one group at a time just as fast as I can get to them and he sat there and just listened to them. Of course I think that this was a, as far as Rabbi Wax was concerned I think he was completely irrational and emotional and completely off balance and I think he lost control of himself frankly. Dean Demic about the same. Moon the same (muffled) and was just unbelievable. There were a group of businessmen, maybe the downtown merchants and the chamber of commerce.

Carolyn Yellin- They were demanding that he settle?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yup, after this strike, or after the assassination they said the fats in the fire now...

David Yellin- This is on Friday also?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- This is also on Friday...

David Yellin- What was the mayor's reaction, the nitty gritty the conversation of few words...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- His reaction was just what you would expect it to be, he said we have a whole new ball game now we have got to settle. It's that simple. If that nut hadn't killed King he said we would have one game, but now that King has been assassinated the White House called and the attorney general called and what's his name?

David Yellin- Clark.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Clark...

David Yellin- You say the White House, did the president call or one of his aides?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- One of his aides, and Clark came down here you know. The pressure that was put on from every conceivable source.

David Yellin- Was the ball game metaphor yours or Mayor Lobe's?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I would say that that's mine, interpreting what he said, I don't know exactly what words he did use. I think that at the time he used any light phrase like comparing it to a baseball game because it was considerably more serious than that and I don't think anyone was so trivial...

Carolyn Yellin- Do you recall that day one of the other things that has been mentioned was when Dr. King's body had been taken to the airport there was no kind of city representation or no attempt by the city....

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- That was because of, that is not true in the first place. Because I know that I instructed captain Wood to be there, he was director at the airport. We offered to do everything that we could do and we offered city representation and the Mrs. King representatives didn't want us. It was by request not by design on our part and we were told no, they didn't want anybody out there, they would take care of it themselves. The press was highly restricted, they allowed one life representative to get on the plane, they allowed a time representative to get on the plane, a New York times representative to get on the plane and that was about it. They didn't let the local press or the press in general participate. I know at the airport we did everything we possibly could to expedite it and help them. But we were told that they didn't want anybody out there.

David Yellin- Was that when Mrs. King arrived?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- That's correct.

David Yellin- Oh so an offer was made...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- An offer was made and it was turned down.

David Yellin- Do you remember to whom? And you were doing this in your official position?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- No I was working at the airport and I told Bob Wood to get a hold of them and find out anything they wanted they could have. You might talk to Bob Wood but that particular incident out there they were pretty hard to handle. They had their own definite ideas about how they wanted it run and we ran it the way they wanted it run.

Carolyn Yellin- What held Henry Lobe together on Friday?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- As far as I am concerned just pure guys. I mean you just, it is just impossible to...here's a guy who hasn't been to bed you know he got up at 7:00 or 6:30 on Wednesday and he went to bed at 11:00 on Friday with the exception of laying down on the backseat of a squad car. How in the hell he hung on together I don't know, but he did. He didn't do anything really he just sat there and took the punishment that was heaped on him by Rabbi Wax, I mean I think you can feel in my tone and I don't deny it I have a great distaste and disrespect for this man. Because he is a highly educated intelligent fellow who is supposed to behave in a rational way, completely lost control of himself and the things that he said were absolutely unwarranted. So this was a typical of the things that were done all day long and Lobe just sat there and absorbed it.

David Yellin- Mr. Cook you can understand personally I don't like to butt into anybody's business but I am trying to ascertain what may be of interest many years from now. Is there anything in the relationship between Rabbi Wax and mayor Lobe have to do with the fact that mayor Lobe was once Jewish and this has nothing to do with anti Semitism, his former minister as it were.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well if it is then this is an intolerant man. If he objects to a free choice of religion than there is hate on the part of Wax because Lobe changed his religion and that is the inference of your remark and this is a background of this diatribe and I would say here is a liberal, illiberal...

David Yellin- I am not saying that there is...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I don't know I am not saying there is either I don't know, but I am saying that if that is the thesis than that may explain it...

Carolyn Yellin- I tend to discount that.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I would doubt it to frankly.

David Yellin- Alright because I think that there is important because if there is doubt that people who are close...

Carolyn Yellin- That was another thing that was said as a result...

David Yellin- See thee things are said and unless you put them to rest...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I don't know Rabbi Wax that very well, I have known him off and on for a long time, maybe 10 or 15 years ever since he has been here, I don't

know how long he has been here. But I don't, I have never heard that said by anybody that is responsible or by anybody that knows Rabbi Wax. I would doubt that to be true and I would think that would be completely out of character.

David Yellin- I think now you have sort of given us the major spots in which you were involved. Do you want to cut back to any?

Carolyn Yellin- I was going to say can we cut back to your reaction is the thing towards racial matter.

David Yellin- Back earlier.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well what started out to be a pure and simple economic strike, became a racial issue and that is just...I think it was done by design and I think it achieved, it is the design that achieved results excluding the King assassination which of course nobody anticipated and nobody wanted except the guy that did it or the people that did it maybe they wanted it but nobody anticipated anything like this. He was given of course, full police protection which he didn't accept. I mean inspector Smith was the fellow in charge of the detail and King wouldn't tell him where he was going what he was going to do what his timetable was, made it very difficult they had to chase him and made it very difficult for him to protect this man. So in part it has got to be the way King wanted to live apparently. He would rather have gone this way than lived behind a steel plate and you can't fault him for that of course. But the racial escalation up to the point of the King assassination had occurred I think beyond the expectations of those who were forementing it. And it had gone so far that absent the King assassination that I think a substantial percentage of the negro community was turning against the racial activity. It had just gotten out of hand and I think if you hadn't had the King assassination by the following week this thing would have simmered down and it pretty well would have collapsed. That is speculation because the King assassination did happen and when it did happen the issue had to be settled quickly and promptly and without any much regard to whatever anybody thought was the correct or incorrect settlement.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you have any thoughts yourself about King when you knew he was coming in? You were afraid this was going to...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah because everywhere King went there was always violence either concurrent with or after he left. He had a tremendous emotional appeal to people that are emotional.

David Yellin- Well even before then if I could because since you were privy to this overheard conversation about the union saying they would not hesitate to stimulate it and once...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- No this was not privy to (muffled), this was two conversations. One was Worth's and one was Champa and Jesse Epps direct remarks to me.

David Yellin- So when it happened you were aware that it was happening. Do you recall when you were first aware that indeed what they had said was being done or at least...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well I would say the clearest and best example of it was the first march down Main St. I can't remember, I mean the big one when they went to city hall.

David Yellin- The 22<sup>nd</sup> and then the 23<sup>rd</sup> when the macing occurred?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- When was the firs tone, when did they have the...

David Yellin- The macing was the 23<sup>rd</sup>...the 22<sup>nd</sup> was the first one in February.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Can't remember the chronology about when it was apparent that it was happening as against the place sat in the time frame against the conversation with Champa and Jesse Epps David Kaywood and I.

David Yellin- Well then perhaps this might follow it through. Was, did you and the mayor consider James Lawson the leader of at least the ministers involved from the negro community?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah we did but I don't think we were in retrospect, I don't think we were entirely accurate. I think he was probably the most arodite literate man in the negro community, there is no question about this fellows ability to talk and explain himself and express himself, he is highly intelligent and well educated. But we thought he was the leader, but I don't think there was any one leader in looking back and thinking about it that day that he, that Saturday that referendum thing was discussed he said he had to go back and discuss it with his people. I think at that point and time there was no leader as such, because if anybody got to far out in front I think they were afraid they would get cut off at the knees by the rest. And there was this jockeying for position in the negro community as to who would be the hero.

David Yellin- Were you aware of this then or is this in retrospect?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- This is in retrospect, we really thought at that time that Lawson was the man.

David Yellin- What was the feeling about Lawson did you feel that he was a dupe knowing what you knew?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- No I don't think Lawson has ever been a dupe. I think he is too smart and too tough and too intelligent. I think Lawson was pretty much caught up in events and he wanted to, I think he had a sincere desire to improve a lot on the negro community. I don't think he is a communist for example, people say...I don't personally think he is. I just think he is a tough rough, intelligent, capable, adversary if you will in any situation and I don't think he ever lost his head and I don't think he

was ever duped by anybody frankly. He knew exactly what he was doing and I think he played a major role in getting King to come up here.

David Yellin- Along about March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in fact I think the 7<sup>th</sup> exactly the city...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I am going to have to go in about 5 minutes because I have a 9:00 appointment.

David Yellin- The city pressed the injunction against the union people and held them in contempt, were you involved in that in any way?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I was in the room when it was discussed and it was when Frank Gianatti took those cases to court, or just before he took them to court, Winetrodd was there and Gianatti, Armstrong, (muffled), Meneer, Myron Hallie. This was primarily a lawyers discussion at that time and the policy of trying to hold a line had pretty well been established by the mayor and this was question of how you implemented the policy. This was part of the act but it was primarily discussion among lawyers. Of course it was in an state of injunction about like the speed laws nobody pays attention to them...

David Yellin- Then this was to implement them and really put teeth in them in a sense of saying these men were in contempt of the injunction.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah that is right.

David Yellin- Was the mayor in favor of doing this or was h, did he take the advice of the lawyers?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I think he was in favor of doing it. I think the lawyers advised him and you established a policy and you already crossed that bridge, now what do you do to do it. Well you give police protection to the garbage trucks you control the marches, you cite them for contempt if they are in violation of the injunction which is already granted.

Carolyn Yellin- The decision to do that because what that decision did really was remove the effective union leadership to some extent and throw the leadership into the hands of the black community...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- It could have had that reaction, I don't know, it would be better I think to, that time we didn't have that much time with the negro community. If that was their reaction I think it is a better judgment.

David Yellin- It is retrospective.

Carolyn Yellin- It is retrospective judgment yeah.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- They can make a better judgment than I can, but we didn't see any signs of any abatement of union activity as a result of the injunction from where we sat at the time. That the leadership had been destroyed or...



Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Was the strategy you felt that if you did at least throttle the union maybe that would at least help.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- No it wasn't an aim to get at the union leadership it was just as such. It was just trying to control the situation and gosh the talks you know, conversations were going on all the time through this.

David Yellin- And you were involved in them weren't you? Did you set aside your business?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah I set aside my business and I was involved in them until finally I had been exhausted if you will by any possibility I had of doing anything had already been explored and there were two or three other people doing the same thing. David Kaywood was right in the middle of it, and another one right in the middle of it was Frank Miles towards the end there, he did the negotiating. Of course Jerry Blanchard. But Jerry Blanchard was, well he was talking to him. I am trying to think who else. Downing Prior had some involvement in it.

David Yellin- What I am trying to say, assessing your own or not assessing, what role did you think or were you aware you were playing? Were you there at the request of the mayor or...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah I was a messenger boy hat is all I was really between two sides trying to get some document that both of them would agree to and get their verbiage down. Do you remember that famous clause my mission is over and its failure was complete.

David Yellin- I have two questions, one can be quick and the other may take a little more, and I hope we don't press you too hard. The police protection situation, do you recall when that is first instituted.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Police protection for who?

David Yellin- For the mayor.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- The day after the strike, after the assassination.

David Yellin- Well didn't he have protection before?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I can't remember. I know darn good well after the assassination there was two men and a squad car and a dogman and two men sleeping on the couch inside.

Carolyn Yellin- at his home?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- At his home, yes. I don't know how his wife ever lived through it, I think she was cooking 25 meals a day.

David Yellin- For the dog too.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- For the dog and everyone else, you know Lobe was a great dog love so the dog had to be taken care of before anyone else. It was quite a group of people. How long he had protection before then, I really don't know. I just don't remember.

David Yellin- I recall after that macing situation.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Probably so I just don't remember.

Carolyn Yellin- Let me ask you something that is kind of more theoretical. By mid-March when contact between the white and black community was fairly well broken down. Did anyone think at that time that might perhaps be a more dangerous situation than the labor situation?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yes that was a definite, there was a great discussion about it one, in mid-march sometime along in there, one of the Wednesday morning breakfasts at the thing had escalated into a racial issue and ceased to be an economic issue. The discussion revolved around whether the thing would get out of hand and someone would get hurt or whether it could be brought back to an economic issue and whether we could get what was referred to at that meeting as the more responsible element of the negro community to put a damper on this thing and split the negro community into the strikers and the more responsible people and get it back on economic basis and I think there was a, at that point, a calculated decision was made or risk was taken, which in retrospect was wrong that in view of the King assassination that this could be done. As I say I almost succeeded.

David Yellin- Who were the reputable members of the negro community you tried to contact or thought you could?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Neders had made some noise about this and this Jonathan Rogers and there was quite a bit of scuddlebug in the negro community that the preachers, some of the more radical preachers. I forget this big fat fellows name who wear the medallion around his neck and has a big diamond ring?

David Yellin- Harvey Jackson.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Jackson, yeah, this very explosive bombastic type man. As opposed to him you had a number of people who were trying to cool it down and these were the people that we were trying to reach and talk to.

David Yellin- Now the businessmen, where were they here?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well the businessmen were behind Lobe and I remember very well telling him that the businessman as a normal political judgment you can count on him until his profit column begins to hurt and then you got to watch him because he will turn on you. The first crack in that element was of course the downtown merchants Goldsmith's for example, I forget the fellows name who is the head of Goldsmith he has been transferred.

David Yellin- Yeah...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- He was absolutely in a box he was the one that urged the settlement at any price.

Carolyn Yellin- Had the boycott down town.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Oh yeah it cut him up.

David Yellin- Were you at the mayor's office on Saturday after the assassination, Saturday morning?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah.

David Yellin- When some people spoke and would you mind illuminating we have very inadequate information.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well tell me what you want to know?

David Yellin- Who was there and...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I was there all day Friday and I was there all day Saturday, but I don't remember anything distinctive about Saturday.

David Yellin- Allen Morgan for instance.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I do remember now, was that Saturday?

David Yellin- Yes.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well Allen Morgan called me and wanted to know if he could see the mayor. I said sure you can see the mayor. And he came down with the fellow from RCA, whose name I cannot remember, he is a very emotional fellow too.

David Yellin- And anyone else?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah there were 4 or 5 of them?

David Yellin- Dr. Humphries was there?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Sunny was there, the fellow from Goldsmith's was there. I am trying to remember now, I remember the meeting very well. They came in and they told Henry the strike had to be settled now that King had been assassinated in effect saying you have a whole new situation. The business community insist it be settled at once. That was the sum and substance of it, they may have dressed it up a little more than that and sugared it up a little more than that but that was what they were saying. Lobe's answer to that was I am perfectly aware that is the situation and we are going to settle it but not settle it and shoot with a scared stick and bend over and let them have the whole city and do something that is idiotic, we will proceed with the negotiations on a rational basis and that is what he did. He had Frank Miles

and Reynolds came down here. Jimmy Manire and Woodberry and I believe Tom Todd was one of the negotiators and Myron Hallie was one of them. I think that was the team of negotiators. I didn't participate in the negotiations, thank god.

Carolyn Yellin- When the Memphis cars thing came up that Sunday then at Crump Stadium, did the mayor send anyone as his representative for that.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well the mayor was going.

Carolyn Yellin- Yeah I remember on the radio.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Frank Holloman told him under no conditions could he go and I suggested that he don't go too. Because that would have been just a catalyst to cause all sorts of problems. I didn't go, I spent all day at the airport. If you remember we had planes coming in here all over the country for the Monday march and we had to get the FAA and we had to block off part of the airspace downtown. We were told that how many busses had been ordered and they had been told to go to the airport. Well you know where on the airport? And we had all these charter flights coming in and where do they go, you can't use an American Airlines gate at the airport because they are rented to American Airlines on an annual basis as a matter of fact the city doesn't even own the air stair those are supplied at 100,000 dollars a copy by the airline and they don't let anybody use their gates, they got insurance problems and all kind of liability problems, it is there property in effect. So we had to spot all these airplanes, I went out to the airport at 8:00 on Sunday and got home at 6:00 that night.

David Yellin- You have a soft job...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- It was the most disorganized thing, people just said well fly them into Memphis and land.

Carolyn Yellin- When they all left it was the same problem. Yeah well we had all kinds of cars out there and of course you know how people go the wrong place, get on the wrong bus, so we were running people around but we got them all in and out no problem.

Carolyn Yellin- Do you have any idea how many people came into Memphis?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I could count more or less there were about 15 charter flights running from (muffled) DCH carrying about 100 people a copy. I would say some 1,500 people came in at the airport. It was a real crowded situation.

David Yellin- I am wrestling between two questions so I will ask them both. One is that the establishment is such that every organization, every entity has an establishment. Memphis is supposed to have had when we first came here, had an establishment that met for lunch downtown and decided things. What is your comment on that, and if so what is your relationship with the establishment with mayor Lobe?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well I have been to a lot of lunches with the so-called establishment and I can't remember anything ever being decided. This is really overstated, because in the old days the establishment used to be at the chamber of commerce. I think one of the things that has held Memphis back frankly is not the existence of an establishment as such but the lack thereof. Nobody could ever agree in Memphis on anything and every time somebody had an idea it was assessed not on the basis of the idea but on the basis of who put it forward. The real thing to figure out if you thought you had a good idea is how to get it presented because if it had the right sponsorship you would get less opposition to it, but I never saw anybody have any kind of an idea around here that wasn't shot out of the saddle and I think this has changed to a large extent in the last 5 or 6 years. But I have never been to any meeting where there was any degree of agreement.

David Yellin- What would be your retrospective assessment now on the race relationship in Memphis.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Looking at it from a point of view from a business man and our main plant here we have 800 production people. We have a...

David Yellin- Now our plant is now the Bruce plant?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Yeah. We have an annual, monthly turnover of 8.6% per month, and we are short 15 to 30 men every day. I think, and our production costs in Memphis are...for instance in our cotton warehouses here in Memphis we have the lowest wage rate and the highest unit cost of production of any plant in the system. We are paying \$1.80 average here and we are paying 3.25 in California. The unit cost production is significantly lower in California than in Memphis. We have a 2.2% unemployment rate in December. I think that the problem is not one so much of race relations here as it is a motivational. There is a distinct lack of motivation.

David Yellin- You mean among the negroes?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Among the negroes.

Carolyn Yellin- Can you push that back (muffled).

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I don't know if you can or not in California the people we have working out there are mostly well it is a diverse mixture but mostly negroes and mexicans. Most of the negroes came from the south and I don't see any significant difference in their educational levels just from looking at it. I think the business man today would be and I am talking as of February 1969, would be an idiot to put a plant in Memphis because you can't get people to work, and I mean just bodies showing up on a continuous basis. I mean 8.6% turnover per month is over 100% per year with that costs to train somebody and you can't get someone to show up on a continual basis, you can get enough of them. You are short people every day. You have this rather vigorous union activity here, in the light gas water division and all that does is you are talking about money and cost of production and time consumed to get these issues settled rather than run your business and produce. We would, I

think this has been all escalated, this is an attitude of I have it coming and I don't have to work. I think that there is some degree of this in the community.

Carolyn Yellin- As a result of the...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I think as a result of the garbage strike, I think that is where it really started.

David Yellin- Was this true before?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- No I would turn over is much worse since the...Well at Bruce Mississippi for instance our turn over is 2.2% a month, smaller town. Memphis is far and away the worst of the...I think we have 12 plants scattered about the country 12 or 14 I would have to count them, from California to Michigan to New Orleans...

David Yellin- Something happened in Memphis then?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I believe so, yeah. I think the attitude changed and there is a lingering belligerency and a lack of willingness to submit to the discipline that is necessary for a democratic society. If you don't have discipline, why self-discipline you haven't got democracy it goes out the window and it really worries me a little bit whether this town and everybody says it is going to grow. I don't think it is going to grow.

Carolyn Yellin- I was going to say that I think this is very interesting because there has been other civil rights movements in other cities...

David Yellin- Much more violent, and much more...Detroit, Cleveland...

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I think a man would be a fool to put a plant in Detroit or Cleveland too. I think the place you are going to see growth in this country is in the small towns, the small units. Jackson, Tennessee...

David Yellin- Where will you get the people from the smaller towns?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Well it is amazing but there are a lot of them out there. You know they don't want to move and there is not a hell of a lot of industry in their town.

David Yellin- Farmers who are no longer farmers.

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- Farmers who are no longer farmers but they don't want to leave the land maybe they own a hundred acres they can farm it on the side. There are a lot of people like that around and that this is the reason you have seen so much building activity.

David Yellin- Are you going to pull the plant out of Memphis?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I am planning on it, yes.

David Yellin- Is there anything you think ought to be done let's say from a....

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- You can't get people. If you can't get people to work it costs like the devil. We love to run one of operations, two of our operations 3 shifts were sold through April.

David Yellin- Suppose you paid them 3 dollars and moved them from California?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- We would get the same work.

David Yellin- I just wondered if it was particular...

Carolyn Yellin- It looks like the community has a bigger problem than sending the chamber of commerce to New York....

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- No argument, I agree.

Carolyn Yellin- Is there anything that can be done?

Edward W. "Ned" Cook- I'm not in the establishment at the chamber...

Carolyn Yellin- You are going to be late for your appointment, thank you very much.  
(Tape End)