

SS070.mp3

Tom Beckner- Alrighty this is August 5th and we are in the home of Lewis Berry, interviewers are Bill Thomas and Tom Beckner, not let's see if we have anything on tape. What we do on this sort of thing really ask you for a little background so we will know who you are and who we are talking to. This incident, tapes like this we will go into the history library and we become part of a (muffled) which will be listened to by historians a hundred years from now, something like this. So in order to help them and us and everything to know just who it is we are talking to if you could tell us how old you are, where you were born and what you do now, this sort of thing just to start off.

Lewis Berry- My name is Lewis A. Berry Jr. I am 18 years old and I was born in Sho Mississippi in 1949.

Tom Beckner- Shelby Mississippi?

Lewis Berry- Sho, Mississippi.

Tom Beckner- Oh Shiloh?

Bill Thomas- Sho.

Tom Beckner- Sho I see.

Lewis Berry- I am an employee at (muffled) manufacturing.

Tom Beckner- And what do you do there?

Lewis Berry- I am well now, since the change in the (muffled) I put the plugs in the motor. (Muffled). I went to Booker T. Washington.

Tom Beckner- Right and did you graduate from high school there?

Lewis Berry- Yes.

Bill Thomas- When did you finish?

Lewis Berry- This year.

Bill Thomas- This year. And now you are working where?

Lewis Berry- Assembly manufacturing in Flint Michigan.

Bill Thomas- And are you commuting back and forth.

Lewis Berry- Well I am just down...

Bill Thomas- For a visit..

Lewis Berry- Yes I am using it as a vacation really it is a 3 week changeover to get our machines back in and removed a few, changed around some stuff.

Tom Beckner- They get the new cars out now?

Lewis Berry- No se where I work at they are just putting the motors off we just do the motors. It is a very nice job, easy. At home the only people I got is my mother and my sisters.

Bill Thomas- Right and how many in your family?

Lewis Berry- There are 6 of us, 3 boys and 3 girls and my daddy and my mother don't live together.

Tom Beckner- I see. Alrighty, well then you were going to Booker T when everything started. I wasn't sure whether maybe you lived in Flint and come back just briefly during the Larry Payne thing but since you were here and were a student in Booker T maybe you could tell us when did the school, the students become aware with things and were they concerned?

Lewis Berry- At the school, you know see it (muffled) about this riot thing, I was surprised myself, most of the students in Washington they didn't let it affect them like regular school. Some kids make the way it's a riot we must do our mix up, but kids most of my friends.

Tom Beckner- I am sorry must do what?

Lewis Berry- Mess up...all this confusion...

Bill Thomas- Join in.

Lewis Berry- They decided to do stuff with kids I associate with and my friends. They didn't take this as take advantage of the situation. We decided like it never happened we just went on and do our part in school because we got to get out you know. All that confusion can't get out and all this, we didn't let us affect in no way.

Tom Beckner- I see and so let's go tot eh day then, to the day of that march that Dr. King led and out of Hamilton was some...

Lewis Berry- Confusion...

Tom Beckner- Right was there any difficulty at Booker T during that day...did you go to..

Lewis Berry- I did not go to school on March 28th, no I didn't go that day.

Tom Beckner- I see, what did you do that day?

Lewis Berry- That day I stayed at home with my nephew, see at the time my sister (muffled) but she was expecting a baby then and my mother she went to the march but I stayed at home..

Tom Beckner- To watch the youngsters

Lewis Berry- To watch the youngsters, she told me when she gets back I will go down there and march you know. She came back and she told me all this confusion down there people getting hit and looting going on. Somebody (muffled) getting hurt any people are getting hurt. At that particular time police came around here, around this area and...

Tom Beckner- How did you feel about that?

Lewis Berry- About when she told me about all this looting and going on?

Tom Beckner- Yes.

Lewis Berry- Well I feel like you know (muffled) Little kids were getting hit, unnecessary, babies, you know. I was glad that I didn't go.

Tom Beckner- Were you. Ok and so she, did she have nay difficulty in the march?

Lewis Berry- No she didn't get stuck or anything. I had my sisters and my brothers they went down there and my uncle, and I didn't want them to get hurt you know.

Tom Beckner- Right.

Lewis Berry- I was glad they didn't because she came back and told me all that happened. She used the expression that it was real bad, real bad. People looting and I mean you know I didn't know it was going top be like that during the march see.

Tom Beckner- I know I think many people didn't.

Lewis Berry- Like I say you know when a person sees they can take a (muffled). In that march it wasn't meant for violence anyway, looting and all that. I think people brought it on themselves, all this confused me about getting hit and the way I see it if a person is standing in line, (muffled). That is how I feel about it, it don't take (muffled). I say there weren't acting on an intelligent part because if they was then there wouldn't be all this confusion about this. Martin Luther King, Larry Payne, because I say it is a bad thing and it happened in Memphis and where I live now in Flint , they got a wrong idea about Memphis. They think Memphis is an awful place because Martin Luther King got killed here.

Tom Beckner- So they think Memphis is really bad...

Lewis Berry- Because anytime I listen to them about Memphis. I say Memphis is not a bad place because accidents happen there and different things happen there I said don't put it on Memphis itself, because half that stuff (muffled) it is something that has happened that has happened. All of them, they enjoy an opinion about what they

read in the paper and what they hear on TV and they just say to their self that Memphis is not a nice place. I mean I keep arguing with myself, they aren't nice.

Tom Beckner- You are outnumbered in Flint Michigan. So your mother got home, about what time did she get back from the march do you remember?

Lewis Berry- Well, interestingly, I know it was before 1:00 because they didn't get close.

Tom Beckner- Let me ask you one thing and it is I think know the answer and it is a stupid question but I want to hear what you get to say? Why did she march? Why would you have gone back here for the trouble and...

Lewis Berry- Why did she march? My opinion on why I would march? Because marching, in this case since we are marching for civil rights. Without garbage people you really don't have no fight, you really don't have a reason to march everybody want to stay at home, neighbors are wasting their time talking about having to march and everybody stay at home. See he had gone by himself marching, that was what he needed backbone.

Tom Beckner- He needed support and backing, I see.

Lewis Berry- That is the reason why I would march.

Tom Beckner- I see fine, I just wanted to hear what you would say. Ok she got home do you remember about what time it was.

Lewis Berry- Like I say in between about, before 1:00 I know about that time.

Tom Beckner- What happened then?

Lewis Berry- Well I asked her about it for about 20 minutes after she got home. I went downstairs to hang clothes out and I hang clothes out directly on the side of this building here..

Tom Beckner- Behind...

Lewis Berry- Behind this building here. This policemen came swerving around here in they cars and stuff and...

Tom Beckner- Now were there a lot of policemen Lewis?

Lewis Berry- Well that particularly time it was 1 and he attracted my attention because he stopped on the brakes real hard and he went up on the rider's side...

Tom Beckner- on the what?

Lewis Berry- On the riders side not the driving side. He jump out and start running, naturally I look and I start watching.

Tom Beckner- Did he have a shotgun with him?

Lewis Berry- Yeah he had a shotgun at his hip and he was running with it, a little short guy. I stopped what I was doing and I looked and I saw him running down the sidewalk and to the back of a building and that was when I saw Larry Payne at the boiler door.

Tom Beckner- Now you were still at the clothesline were you?

Lewis Berry- Like I say I was hanging clothes out then I was coming right here (muffled)

Tom Beckner- I see you were on your way back...

Lewis Berry- I was on my way back home you see.

Tom Beckner- So you never had the feeling there that he may have been running towards you?

Lewis Berry- No. Because like I say he was running down the sidewalk. You had to look you know he was running and I was looking back.

Tom Beckner- And you did see Larry Payne?

Lewis Berry- Yeah I did see Larry Payne.

Tom Beckner- Now where was he?

Lewis Berry- He was in the door of the boiler room.

Tom Beckner- And there are steps going down.

Lewis Berry- Yeah there are steps going down to the boiler room.

Tom Beckner- Were you up on, were you on the ground or was you upstairs?

Lewis Berry- When all this happened I was on the ground.

Tom Beckner- But you could see them both?

Lewis Berry- Yeah I could see them both.

Tom Beckner- And what was Larry Payne doing?

Lewis Berry- Larry Payne was doing, the police showed up Larry Payne was putting his hands up slow like this.

Tom Beckner- When you turned and saw him?

Lewis Berry- When I turned and saw him. Then next thing you know I saw the policemen run up and put his gun, so close to him he started walking towards him.

Tom Beckner- He stopped running and started walking.

Bill Thomas- Where was the, how did he have the shotgun?

Lewis Berry- He had a shotgun it was still on the hip and then when he started walking towards him he just you know, just like that he lifted up.

Tom Beckner- He lowered, he had it pointing in the air, and then he lowered it gradually.

Lewis Berry- He got close to Larry Payne and he slowed it up in Larry Payne and then he shot him.

Tom Beckner- Just like that? Where there any words did you hear them speak do you remember?

Lewis Berry- Well I saw Larry mocking and expressing like someone trying to beg for something.

Tom Beckner- Beg?

Lewis Berry- He didn't have no smile, he looked like he was serious about something and his lip was moving kind of fast. This policemen he walked up to him and he shot him, then when he shot him his friend was in the car, the policemen's car. He didn't jump out until after he shot him, he got halfway down by him and said, did you have to shoot him. He said you didn't have to shoot him.

Tom Beckner- I am sorry I didn't quite understand. After the shooting did the policemen that had the shotgun he called you say or the other policemen just get out when he heard the shot.

Lewis Berry- When the police shot at him he back off him and turn around. These other policemen in the car he jumped out and he ran about halfway (muffled) he said he didn't have to shoot him then the driver policemen run back to the car (muffled) After then the driver came back from the car, that's when the policemen on the motorcycles and things.

Tom Beckner- How long before they arrived?

Lewis Berry- After I see after this police told him he didn't have to shoot him he went back, I would say approximately about, it was seconds really because it was so fast.

Tom Beckner- And were there a lot of people out in the courtyard back there.

Lewis Berry- (Muffled) this is the short policemen he started swinging his gun around...

Tom Beckner- At the people?

Lewis Berry- At the people.

Bill Thomas- The one who shot Larry?

Lewis Berry- The one that shot Larry Payne of course the one the driver he didn't jump out and he didn't have no gun when he came out. He had a little vest on with (muffled).

Tom Beckner- Shades or?

Lewis Berry- I don't know, I don't remember his face, you know but I remember his height and weight.

Tom Beckner- Okay was he big or small or what?

Lewis Berry- He is about a little taller than I am little short guy.

Tom Beckner- I see. How about Larry Payne was he a large boy or a small boy.

Lewis Berry- It depends how you look at it. He was taller than I was.

Tom Beckner- And you are?

Lewis Berry- 5'2. Larry he was (muffled) weight, for a boy his age to be.

Tom Beckner- Did you know Larry before this at school or anything?

Lewis Berry- Larry he never went to school but I knew him because he live.

Tom Beckner- He went to roads?

Lewis Berry- He went to roads but he live up here a little bit with this father, his mother live down (muffled). You know I see him every once in awhile he would come up here to se his mother.

Tom Beckner- Ok.

Lewis Berry- We weren't associated, we weren't friends you know.

Tom Beckner- Alright now were there some other boys with Larry, did you see anybody else.

Lewis Berry- Well like I said I will tell you what I saw, like I said I saw Larry Payne by himself. Not anybody with him, I didn't see that because like I said I saw Larry at the doorway by himself.

Bill Thomas- Did you see him before he got to the doorway, did you see how he got..

Lewis Berry- Through the doorway, no. (muffled) I was hanging the clothes then that is when I see he police car.

Tom Beckner- You didn't see Larry until he was down already at the doorway.

Lewis Berry- At the doorway, see that is the only time I saw him, and I saw him in the door by himself.

Tom Beckner- Ok, and then now did Larry just fall right there, what can you describe that.

Lewis Berry- Well after he came by saw the door was halfway closed and the police shot him and his leg hit the dog and closed the door. So he was right there.

Tom Beckner- In other words not back through the door.

Lewis Berry- Back into the door. That blast knocked him back into the door. His hands were propped up like this see.

Tom Beckner- His hands were raised and resting on the back of his head?

Lewis Berry- On his head. The closer the police got to him he just did this here. I would too if they would have closed in on me, I wouldn't have defended I would have given up. See what they want.

Tom Beckner- When the other policemen came up tot eh other one and said you didn't have to shoot him, did they do anything else? Or what did they do then?

Lewis Berry- Well, like I said the one came up to him and said you didn't have not shoot him. Like it was talking after he got through saying it like he was saying something. He gave some kind of sign or something.

Tom Beckner- Like what?

Lewis Berry- Like a person in a gang (muffled) something with the thumbs down. I didn't know what it means?

Tom Beckner- You didn't know what it meant. Btu you did think it was some sort of sign between them?

Lewis Berry- Yes. Because he didn't go back, (muffled) they were conversing about something and he gave him the sign and he went back to the car.

Tom Beckner- And so did you stand where you were or were you scared?

Lewis Berry- Well see I was standing (muffled) naturally I got close to home.

Tom Beckner- Yeah.

Lewis Berry- Because (muffled).

Bill Thomas- I certainly see why.

Lewis Berry- I was standing, I wasn't too far from the police car and I was standing after everything when he run down there I was slowly coming towards home. I got between police car and (muffled).

Tom Beckner- Did you see any large crowd collect.

Lewis Berry- Oh yeah. You know after, like it say its kind of thing you would come over and see. When you see a police car everybody naturally want to run and see what s happening you know. This officer had a shotgun starts swinging it you know.

Tom Beckner- Swinging it around towards the crowd?

Lewis Berry- Yeah everybody get back get back.

Tom Beckner- What was the crowds reaction to that?

Lewis Berry- They got back. (muffled) Larry was very popular around there you know. Everybody know him.

Tom Beckner- He was a popular boy?

Lewis Berry- Yeah, (muffled) His mother came down.

Tom Beckner- Now did you see his mother come down?

Lewis Berry- His mother came down.

Tom Beckner- How long was that after?

Lewis Berry- It was a girl that got his mother.

Tom Beckner- Oh a girl?

Lewis Berry- Girl named Maye Francis.

Tom Beckner- Maye Francis.

Lewis Berry- Yes she lived in the same building his mother live at.

Tom Beckner- Is she a young girl?

Lewis Berry- She a young girl.

Tom Beckner- High school age or older?

Lewis Berry- Really I didn't know that much about Maye Francis (muffled).

Tom Beckner- But she obviously knew Larry and where his mother lived.

Lewis Berry- She went and got his mother.

Tom Beckner- Did you see them come back.

Lewis Berry- Yeah I saw them come back. After you know the mother (muffled) let me through, let me see him...at this time she was trying to get to him but he told her to get back and she didn't get back and he hit her with the butt of the gun.

Lewis Berry- He hit her with the butt of the gun? And this, was he still on the stairway at this time?

Lewis Berry- Larry?

Tom Beckner- Yes.

Lewis Berry- Larry was in front of the door, he was shot then.

Tom Beckner- So he was just below the stairs.

Lewis Berry- The door was closed.

Tom Beckner- Well there is the door and

Lewis Berry- Stairs out the door.

Tom Beckner- Oh I see.

Lewis Berry- It was like a closet or whatever when you open it up. It is little steps leading down and it had more steps you could step on.

Bill Thomas- The door was ground level?

Lewis Berry- Right, ground level.

Tom Beckner- Now the policemen with the shotgun hit her with the gun.

Lewis Berry- He butted her with the gun and she fainted.

Tom Beckner- Did she faint or did he knock her out by chance?

Lewis Berry- When I saw her she was laying down and everybody was carrying her. I took...

Tom Beckner- Could you tell that she had been hit was there a wound?

Lewis Berry- No.

Tom Beckner- Where did he hit her?

Lewis Berry- I don't know, (muffled) That is why people got around her, fainted. I took for granted that she fainted or that he knocked her out, I saw the gun by then. She could have slipped, I don't know.

Bill Thomas- What was the attitude of the crowd now during all of this?

Lewis Berry- The attitude of the crowd?

Bill Thomas- Where people getting excited?

Lewis Berry- People in this situation everyone knew Larry you see and they wanted to see was he still alive or dead and this policemen I guess he panicked himself and got all stood up and he thought everybody was trying to get him. He thought, I guess he had a wrong opinion and thought they were going to mess with him, but if a friend of yours, if a brother of yours you want to see what happened to him. Because he was well known.

Tom Beckner- What was the other policemen doing at this time?

Lewis Berry- (muffled)

Tom Beckner- No I mean the one was swinging the gun around and what was the other one doing?

Lewis Berry- The other one like I said after they conversed got together and did some talking he went to the car, and (muffled) he came back and he had to shoot him, because he had a huge knife and everything.

Tom Beckner- Now who said that?

Lewis Berry- The short one. The one who shot him.

Tom Beckner- The one who shot him said he had a huge knife.

Lewis Berry- That was when the rest of the police came.

Tom Beckner- Did you ever see the knife?

Lewis Berry- No didn't see it. I saw every move he made and he never picked anything up, all I saw was white palm that is it. But the police started saying, many other police came, other officers came around (muffled). He started he had to shoot him see.

Bill Thomas- But you never did see any knife?

Lewis Berry- I didn't see any knife. If there ever was one I didn't see it. I didn't say he had it and I didn't say he didn't have it but I didn't see one.

Tom Beckner- The police claim that Larry had a television set or something?

Lewis Berry- I didn't see Larry enter the boiler room, and I didn't see him come out of the boiler room, but I saw him standing in the boiler room door. He could have went down there with something or he could have brought something back up. By the time I saw him he was standing still. He could have taken one I don't know because I didn't see that.

Tom Beckner- Did you see if the police went in to look and bring out anything?

Lewis Berry- The one who shot him, he went in (muffled).

Tom Beckner- He didn't go down there at all?

Lewis Berry- After he shot him I don't know if he went down there or not, then the rest of the police came out.

Bill Thomas- But you never saw them carry this supposed television out or anything like this?

Lewis Berry- No, I ain't seen no TV.

Tom Beckner- Ok, did an ambulance arrive shortly later or what happened?

Lewis Berry- Well after (muffled) The whole police force down here then the ambulance came.

Tom Beckner- Did it seem like a long time?

Lewis Berry- All these different peoples were getting the ambulance and all the policemen, it was like the whole force was down there before any help or aid was coming.

Bill Thomas- Was it a fire department ambulance that came?

Lewis Berry- I think so.

Tom Beckner- Did Larry's mother regain consciousness, wake up before they took him away or what?

Lewis Berry- I don't remember. But like I said when they were taking him, most of these girls were tore up.

Tom Beckner- The young girls.

Lewis Berry- Yeah, hollering. The young girls hollering you shot Larry, you kill him. All that.

Tom Beckner- They all knew Larry?

Lewis Berry- All of them knew Larry he was well known like I said he was popular down here, everybody knew him. He was friendly, you know he never had no nasty attitude. He was very gay.

Tom Beckner- Really it seemed to the people here...

Lewis Berry- That he got an injustice. Shot him because they don't know that he took it down there or not. They didn't see him take it down there, they don't know. If I was on the police force this is my opinion, if a guy is giving himself up, and that's all he is going to give himself up because he could be innocent. You are not guilty every time you get in trouble you see. He took his life, he took (muffled). He just took the boy life without unknowingly he need punishment that is how I see it.

Tom Beckner- After the shooting and the police were here was there....

Lewis Berry- Other accident happened?

Tom Beckner- Yes.

Lewis Berry- Yes another one happened too after that. After they took Larry away. Another tall heavy policemen had his coat on and he had a little brown stick out, night stick I think they call it. (muffled) Mr. Willy he lived in 4, he beat him. Mr. Willy he was coming, he is a mechanic and he works on cars and he was coming back here, he was in the parking lot going back and forth and he was working on his car. His car back there. His kids was outdoors and he tried to take his kids back home and this police assaulted him.

Tom Beckner- Assaulted him.

Lewis Berry- Yeah. Started pushing him and hitting him.

Tom Beckner- For what? Did you see this?

Lewis Berry- Yeah I saw it because it (muffled).

Tom Beckner- Well how did this happen you know, why did they do this?

Lewis Berry- They were talking about get back and get back and stuff and they are hitting him. This lady back there in the back she got hit and they pushed her against the brick wall and she got stitches in her head.

Tom Beckner- Now what did they hit Mr. Willy with?

Lewis Berry- The black thing.

Tom Beckner- A blackjack or one of the long rods?

Lewis Berry- The stick.

Tom Beckner- One of the long sticks.

Lewis Berry- Yes.

Bill Thomas- One of the real long ones or just a....

Lewis Berry- Well all of them were taking the long ones.

Bill Thomas- Riot sticks.

Tom Beckner- And did more than one do this?

Lewis Berry- I would say probably it was about 3.

Tom Beckner- And where do you know where they hit him on the shoulders or on the head?

Lewis Berry- I said they did so much to him he had stitches on his head.

Tom Beckner- So he did get hit. Did they take him away in an ambulance?

Lewis Berry- No they didn't take him away they took him in the police car.

Tom Beckner- They took him in the police car.

Lewis Berry- I took for granted they took him in the police car because he never came back around.]

Tom Beckner- Right I see, do you know what ambulance it was that came down for Larry?

Lewis Berry- No I cannot recall, but I know there was one. Might have been the city ambulance.

Tom Beckner- And then what happened to Larry's mother, did they let her go along or what?

Lewis Berry- I don't know, I know when he started putting people aside the head, naturally you don't want your head whooped I came close to cover. After that I saw some brutalizing to Mr. Willy and that is the only time (muffled). I came to the house.

Tom Beckner- Mr. Willy would he have seen this or did he come up afterwards?

Lewis Berry- Well Mr. Willy like I said he was working on his car and I guess he was paying attention to all this confusions, because a man of his profession he might have decided to look at the policemen and his kids are out there and he is trying to get his kids back home.

Tom Beckner- How many children does he have do you know?

Lewis Berry- No. But I saw the kids that I saw he had about he was taking 2 back.

Tom Beckner- Were these little children or big children?

Lewis Berry- I would say there were about 6.

Tom Beckner- Did they see Mr. Willy get beat?

Lewis Berry- The kids?

Tom Beckner- Yeah.

Lewis Berry- I don't know, like I said I remember what Mr. Willy had on, he had a white shirt on. I think he got to brutalized it was all in front.

Tom Beckner- After they got through what?

Lewis Berry- Brutalizing him, beating him.

Tom Beckner- Oh brutalizing him beating him.

Lewis Berry- It was bloody. I don't remember what happened to his kids after that. Well before that he was going to take his kids back and this policemen told him to get back and he would know. He knew it was an accident with Larry Payne that they shot him. He was telling people to get back and stuff. After that people knew a hand couldn't do anything because everybody had a stick or a gun see. They started getting back.

Tom Beckner- Ok, did anything else happen at all during that day?

Lewis Berry- Yeah that day the police shot Larry some kids, some kids looking out windows and stuff. He (muffled) that gun could have gone off see.

Tom Beckner- He pointed the shotgun?

Lewis Berry- Same gun he shot Larry with.

Tom Beckner- Did he say anything to them or yell?

Lewis Berry- Like I said he would run to the window, and lips were moving because where I was standing for like I said I was back here, same thing here. I wasn't too far from it but I wasn't too close to him. I was far enough to see him and see his lips moving. After he did that, the other officers came. That is all I saw.

Tom Beckner- Was that a rather restless night here?

Lewis Berry- Yeah it was because everybody was on pins because see after that everybody (muffled) Everybody say to keep out of the way and to keep from getting hit and they stay in the house see. The teenagers around here they never stay in the house that much, I was surprised that they all stayed in the house that night.

Tom Beckner- When Larry Payne was taken away in the ambulance, did you know at that time that he was dead.

Lewis Berry- Well I am not going to say, close up like that with a shotgun there is no way you could live.

Tom Beckner- What I was wondering is how most of the people found out that he was indeed dead, or did they think he was when they took him away?

Lewis Berry- Well like I said all them, Larry started (muffled). When the police shot Larry smoke came out of his stomach.

Bill Thomas- Smoke came out of his stomach?

Tom Beckner- He was that close to him?

Lewis Berry- He was as close as I am to you, real close.

Bill Thomas- A foot or two.

Lewis Berry- The only thing that kept him from getting closer was the barrel of his gun.

Tom Beckner- He had the barrel of his gun..

Lewis Berry- He lifted up like you raise it up on a person and he shot him. Smoking Larry and (muffled) Larry fell down in smoke and then he said look smoke. Not too much but most (muffled).

Tom Beckner- So the gun was almost against the stomach when he fired.

Lewis Berry- It was body contact, the gun was touching his body.

Bill Thomas- Pushed right into his stomach.

Lewis Berry- Then he raised it up like you would be kind of fishing or something, and a fish is hard to catch here when he is on the line and it tightens back up.

Tom Beckner- Did you see the wound? You didn't get that close?

Lewis Berry- No I ain't get close.

Tom Beckner- Probably just as well.

Lewis Berry- See a thing like that happened and everybody shooting and going on if you are close to it you might get hit yourself.

Tom Beckner- Right.

Lewis Berry- And I didn't want tot get hit.

Tom Beckner- So now, did the police conduct some type of investigation shortly afterwards, did somebody come around asking questions to find out what happened?

Lewis Berry- Well I don't know because after all of that you know after all that shooting going on my uncle he came up and took us over his house. After all that he took us over his house because they might decide to come back in 3 or 4 hours or more.

Tom Beckner- Where does your uncle live.

Lewis Berry- He live (muffled).

Tom Beckner- Several blocks away?

Lewis Berry- Several blocks away.

Tom Beckner- Well were you contacted at any time afterwards by anybody to tell your story and what happened?

Lewis Berry- Oh yeah I was contacted by several people. The city services...

Tom Beckner- The civil service.

Lewis Berry- The civil service and I went downtown....

Tom Beckner- Do you mean someone from the civil rights organization?

Lewis Berry- Yes.

Tom Beckner- Yes ok fine. And do you know who that was?

Lewis Berry- It was a lady.

Tom Beckner- Would it have been Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Vasco Smith?

Lewis Berry- She was a colored woman.

Tom Beckner- Then you went somewhere to talk with her did you?

Lewis Berry- First she came to my house I think that was the same week Larry was shot was a Sunday she came around and asked me about it then and that Saturday, (muffled) it was after she asked this newspaper reporter came. He saw my name in the paper. She came out and she asked me you know what I saw and I told my statement, and she asked me did anybody else know about it. I saw several people out there, (Muffled). Half of them got hell no we didn't see anything. They pretended to not see anything because they are going to get involved. They were like me out there looking see.

Tom Beckner- Yeah but they didn't want to.

Lewis Berry- No they didn't want to tell what they saw because they think (muffled).

Tom Beckner- It was later on, there was a civil rights commission hearing at which a number of retired cases and this sort of thing were presented. Were you called for this or did you ever make any statements to a hearing, at a hearing to a board or anything like this, or were you asked?

Lewis Berry- It wasn't exactly say that it was a hearing but it was a meeting of peoples you know people that saw it. They went up there and gave a statement and a few kids who weren't afraid to give a statement they went up there, all of us to give them what we saw.

Tom Beckner- And you went.

Lewis Berry- I went.

Tom Beckner- Did they call you and ask you, did you actually tell them, I will tell you why we are asking this, is what we heard was there were quite a number of people who saw this...

Lewis Berry- But none of them would say anything.

Tom Beckner- Right.

Lewis Berry- Yes it was like that because like I say I took this lady from the civil service department around to different people I know who saw this see. They all claimed that they got froze up, they didn't know anything and see anything. But they was talking amongst themselves about the accident but they weren't talking to no outsiders about it. Some how they couldn't do something good about it.

Tom Beckner- Do you think they were scared or didn't want to be involved?

Lewis Berry- Way I see it, not I don't want to be wrong, anytime some one is in trouble and you see they didn't get justice, I am going to speak up for him. It may be wrong but I am going to tell you what I saw about him. I think personally those who don't tell and they see it actually happen he ought to put himself in the place it could be him or somebody in they family right there. And somebody want they help see. I think they was wrong.

Tom Beckner- Ok. And you just went to the one hearing. There was also a grand jury investigation and they did not indict the policemen, they did not bring any charges against him. Were you asked to go to that hearing?

Lewis Berry- After this first one I would say I went to, I left because this had died down and there was no more talk about. At the time I went up North to get a job because I didn't know any more about it. I feel like if they want to get in touch with me they will call here and my mother will tell them, I would be glad and willing to come back down here and give them my statement. That was the only time once I went downtown this new building I forgot the name of it...

Tom Beckner- Court Building?

Lewis Berry- Court building, yeah.

Tom Beckner- You did go down there? And did you make a statement while you were there?

Lewis Berry- Yes. I made a statement.

Tom Beckner- Did they, well what was your impression of the people you were talking to?

Lewis Berry- About this same situation?

Tom Beckner- Yes.

Lewis Berry- To me now they were just doing they jobs, they were just doing they jobs. I guess in their business their profession they have to be concerned. Something happened so they have to be concerned about it.

Tom Beckner- Yeah but do you feel like they were sympathetic?

Lewis Berry- This man I am talking to I know he gave me the impression that he was, but I don't know.

Tom Beckner- I see. Did you go to Larry Payne's funeral.

Lewis Berry- I don't think I went. Because why I didn't go I don't like funerals.

Tom Beckner- You don't like funerals.

Lewis Berry- I never liked them.

Tom Beckner- Yeah I don't either.

Lewis Berry- I didn't go to (muffled) either.

Tom Beckner- Did a number of people from here go?

Lewis Berry- Oh yeah this a whole lot of people who saw and didn't tell.

Tom Beckner- I see.

Lewis Berry- It is kind of bad because the person lives in your neighborhood just got shot down and you supposed to be they friend and in time they need you, you ain't there. I think that I had, I will leave the earth if I was like that. The person I know was about to die and I know what happened to them and I wouldn't tell.

Tom Beckner- Ok. Do you remember just what Larry King was wearing that day, I am just looking for some details now.

Lewis Berry- Well (muffled) Larry Payne he had a yellow shirt on, (muffled).

Tom Beckner- Do you remember what color?

Lewis Berry- Baby yellow. It was a duck shirt.

Tom Beckner- A duck shirt with a...V front and back?

Lewis Berry- No, no, back is...

Tom Beckner- Do you know what a duck shirt is?

Bill Thomas- No.

Lewis Berry- If your shirt button straight down and it splits on the side and you put it in...

Bill Thomas- Where the front and back hangs down and you split the side.

Lewis Berry- He had some blue jeans on, Levi.

Tom Beckner- What about his shoes, tennis shoes, or just plain shoes?

Lewis Berry- I don't remember. I saw him earlier in the day, see I saw him going to the store, I went to the store before my mother went to the march (muffled).

Tom Beckner- Where was he then?

Lewis Berry- When I saw Larry?

Tom Beckner- Yeah.

Lewis Berry- He was, I was going to the store and he was coming by the store and I don't know if he was going in the store or not,

Tom Beckner- Did you talk to him then or anything.

Lewis Berry- I spoke to him.

Tom Beckner- Hi, as you passed.

Lewis Berry- Yeah that's it. Like I said we wasn't to close friends and we wasn't enemies we just had a mutual understanding that's all.

Tom Beckner- After Larry Payne was killed and you knew that this had happened did this change your feelings about what was going on any?

Lewis Berry- Change my feelings, no, it gave me a it will be with me forever because like I say everybody getting all screwed up about this one thing happening, (muffled) I kept my same opinion about everything but I disagree with this officer about shooting him, that is all I disagree with, but this riot and everything you know I didn't have too much to say about it because I didn't care for it and it changed my ideas about hating no one because nobody did it to me. People brought it on they own self, they ought to be hating themselves not people that was brutalizing them because they as doing they job.

Tom Beckner- Well how about the police, did it...

Lewis Berry- Do I think they were (muffled) of what they are doing?

Tom Beckner- Well after that how do you feel about the police now?

Lewis Berry- Well I feel the policemen, well like I said everybody was doing their job, they were doing their duty like a man would everyday. That man tried to...he may lose his job or something...he got to protect his job. Like I said I wasn't down in the riot or anything but everybody said the police were doing injustice. But anytime

you are breaking in and looting they are supposed to be there. I say I know like I said they are doing their job and I am doing mine.

Tom Beckner- Yeah but this seems to be going a little farther than the job to be shooting.

Lewis Berry- Now this incident where he shot Larry now, (Muffled) Because like I say if a person is giving up, I mean(muffled) to keep from killing him and he didn't have no reason to shoot him because he wasn't running.

Tom Beckner- He was coming towards him wasn't he?

Lewis Berry- No the policemen was coming towards Larry still, standing still, with him walking towards him closing the gap and Larry with his hands on his head. Now that policemen there I didn't care too much about him because he shot this boy. I don't know just about everyone wondered about this mistake. I say I don't hate the officers, I respect them, because they knew too. That is how I feel about him but this policemen here that shot Larry I can't see why he shot him, he didn't have no weapon when I saw him. I want to see his point or reason I don't see anything, because I didn't see anything to see a reason to shoot him.

Tom Beckner- Did you know that the grand jury did not indict the person, that no charges were brought against the policemen.

Lewis Berry- No I didn't know that because like I said I wasn't here to see, and when I came back I didn't ask any one about Larry Payne or did Larry Payne case come out or what, because everybody was like it was a hush hush case but I didn't bring it to anybody's attention because even the Mrs. I saw her downtown the other day and she had mentioned it to me and I didn't ask her about it because I didn't want her to tear up and I didn't say anything about it. I guess I took for granted that everybody was quiet.

Tom Beckner- Nobody was talking about it.,

Lewis Berry- I didn't want to talk about it and the bad one out of everybody else, I thought about it though.

Tom Beckner- Ok. Do you have any? What I would sort of like to do, are we interfering with your dinner?

Lewis Berry- No.

Tom Beckner- If you wouldn't mind I would sort of like to go out and if you can point out to us...

Lewis Berry- I will do that.

Tom Beckner- Also Mrs. Payne she still lives over here doesn't she?

Lewis Berry- Yeah she still lives over here.

Tom Beckner- Yeah if we could take a walk out there for just a minute. (Tape End)