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Joan Beifuss- Testing 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4. (Tape Break

Joan Beifuss- This is Joan Beifuss we are interviewing Gerald Fanion of the human relations...

Gerald Fanion- Tennessee council on human relations.

Joan Beifuss- Very good thank you, at his office at 280 Hernando, the minimum salaries building next to Clayborne Temple. Interviewing Gerry with me is Walter Evans. Ok we are on, Gerry first tell us about were you born in Memphis tell us a little bit about yourself first.

Gerald Fanion- Yes I was been in Memphis all of my life, as a matter of fact I live very much in a 5 or 6 miles radius of one spot. Well see building 4<sup>th</sup> I had to live 5 miles one way or the other. I went to school in this particular area at Leaf School Elementary. My early education in the city of Memphis and all of my public education has been in the Memphis public school system and then I went to college at Lemoyne. I married very young right out of high school and then I went on into college and my wife was at the time at Tennessee state and in 1949 I am father of 5 children and I have a daughter now who is a sophomore at Tennessee state and I university of Nashville Tennessee and one that will be going off to college this year I hope. I have primarily well I have worked here all of my life I guess it is needless to say, in the postal department. I have moonlighted a great deal through public schools and college and a great deal of my marriage life up to several years ago.

Joan Beifuss- Gerry what kind of jobs did you have during high school and going to high school?

=I began as a bus boy many years ago when men for short were doing real work too. I might mention a lot of us, a lot of Memphians young fellows now some of them are executives. For instance Harold Wheelan, Arthur Horne we all worked together, (muffled) Nelson, young, these are people whom you might know I think Walter might know. (muffled) Toller who is in the nfl he is the only negro official in the nfl.

Walter Evans- What high school did you attend Gerry.

Gerald Fanion- Booker T Washington high school, my wife and I both attended Booker T Washington.

Walter Evans- What were some of the things that you can remember relative to your growing up in that area and going to school, such as condition and relationships.

Gerald Fanion- Conditions, I always, I have lived my family was very well, and my father's educational background wasn't very high and neither was my mother but they were always decent people and always recognized at an early age as being family, my mother and father not having excessive money, barely enough to by on at some points. So this I never made any gripes about it but I was fortunate enough to

get a job early so I made tips and I was most fortunate than a lot of kids because I would have money daily by working at night and I recognize a lot of inferior school conditions when I went to school called Virginia, I don't think they have it here any more. We used to walk through stockyards over on Kansas uphill's, I remember it raining, very vividly remember these raining mornings and I don't suppose I had adequate clothes during this time and I used to have a black rubberized rain coat and it was just short enough to, long enough to, well it was long enough to go past my short pants but not quit...it would hit me on the back of my legs and that long walk up Kansas over to Crump boulevard it was a highway then, I should never forget those cold days my shoes would be full of water and if we walked through the stock yards, we used to could take a short cut through the stock yards what it was in between my school and my home there was a white community, so every day when you went through, you could take this shortcut through the stock yard but you had to run home because the white boys would run you home. We, it was very unique we had a few large negro boys I remember one named Grimes, and (muffled). If you could catch them they were real big boys, if you could catch then we could make it on through the stockyard but if your teacher kept you in for a few hours and you missed the game you know if you went through with the big game you are safe if you was kept in and hard to take this short cut back through the stock yards man you just had to sail a kite because they would bring you on back home. I have to say school was a long distance and there was many fallacies I found about he schools, but of course like many other schools, it was possibly better than a lot of others that was here. It was isolated off the river, very low income area, so at this time there wasn't a lot of concern about total education in the you had to, it was vitally important that you had some parents who would make you pick up a book at night. I know this was the difference if you wasn't just self motivated.

Walter Evans- Where did you live at this time?

Gerald Fanion- I lived on Trigg, West Trigg and Louisiana I believe it was. Now this must have been around 38, and then we moved into the public housing which is the foot homes and this is when I went top Leaf school and it was much better. It really improved my living conditions, my total outlook I guess on life. The houses were, you didn't have these cold mornings, the clothes were warm. When I was on Trigg you would have greats and this type of thing, it was totally substandard and when we moved into home houses were very warm and comfortable and you didn't worry about making fires and that sort of thing. Because my parents were always very kind to me, this is I guess what you really can appreciate you know, if it hadn't been any....

Walter Evans- Yeah excuse me what was the educational background of your parents?

Gerald Fanion- I don't know I think my mother might have gone to about 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade and my father I can imagine was much less, probably 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Joan Beifuss- What was his job here?

Gerald Fanion- He worked at that time for a place called U.S. Bedding company as a matter of fact it is at 1040 Florida. And he is still there right now. It was a bedding company like Sealy they make Sealy mattresses, this is Joe Haas, is that right?

Walter Evans- I think something like that.

Gerald Fanion- Yeah, and something very significant happened during this time. This was the early days of unions in the 40's let's say and you have taken this with the problems we have had in 68 that stems around unions you can just imagine how unpopular union was in the early 40's. I very vividly remember my father coming home and talking to my mother on one or two occasions there were talking about they were going to have a union and there was always this thing of well you better not get involved in this, this thing of fear you know. But he was pretty much determined to get involved in the union he thought it was a good thing for him and he thought it would bring him job security and I was too young to have any influence and make any decisions. So years passed and he started doing the meetings and then he got elected as treasurer and another office he held but it was an executive office in the local union they had. And the man, there were negroes in the plant I sensed from his conversation who thought it would be more popular not to be in the union and you would be in the good graces of the man. The reason I said that I felt the story was very, had some significant meanings and value behind it. This plant eventually closed up, closed down and some of the hats went to Texas and this place over here on riverside.

Walter Evans- Located now?

Gerald Fanion- National roads there are all cousins sort of relatives, but the plant closed up and the one man that is working at this building right now is my father and I felt, I remember, I realized they closed up oh 15 years ago I guess. But I realized this what must have grown out of my father getting involved early with the union, this was completely contrary to the policies of the plant and to the community in particular negro going to get in the union and they had problems with communist infiltration and this sort of thing. And but what I realized after the plant closed and the one man they kept was my father that he must have gained some stature or some respect from the establishment.

Walter Evans- During this time did your mother work?

Gerald Fanion- No my mother has never worked. During our poorest days I didn't know what could have helped me I guess a job but she has never worked.

Walter Evans- And your family is how many?

Gerald Fanion- Actually just one.

Walter Evans- You are the only one?

Gerald Fanion- Yeah, this was another thing that I have never, I don't want to take up too much of your time telling my life, but a significant thing I thought happened was I had 5 children married very young and when I as I told you started working at the hotel all the money that I made primarily was mine. We used to take football trips and I was able to buy clothes and being of one child you pretty well had it, it was wasn't as rough as several other people you know and then I was able to work but then I immediately got married, immediately got married and I had to start sharing my money with a wife and then one child, two child, three, and it never bothered me not once you know, we say well maybe you will be a little selfish and I guess, maybe I am selfish on some things you know my wife says sometimes. You know we have had arguments. We used to have this one car problem you know and the man always wants the car regardless he always thinks its his car you know, but we don't have that problem now however as far as sharing what I had I never had problems on this.

Walter Evans- Gerry as much as you can recall during this time what was your impressions if you can recall them relative to Memphis at t his particular time, during your early period growing up.

Gerald Fanion- Well strangely enough I realized that I was in a segregated society. I realized I was expected to not to want to have the desire, I say I wasn't expected, from the white community, from some of the white people I knew to want possibly the same things on an equal basis and possibly to live. I saw a man driving down Vance with a car and...yes. (Tape Break) That I was, I recognized the condition in school and I got on busses I had to go to the back. I walked down Main St. having money in my pocket if I was hungry a lot of places I couldn't go in to eat. But it was inside myself, on the inside of me I knew that I wanted the same things as I got older or even right then. I wanted to go in Goldsmith's to some teenage activity when I walked down through the boy's department I used to buy my clothes you know in the boy's department and I see white kids in the back and I was going back to stiffen the young boy scouts even at that age. And as I said I worked as a bus boy and I would actually hear conversations you know about that my nigger, or my nigger maid. All these had a great bearing on my thoughts and it sort of educated me more than many possible kids that would have stayed at home you know, stayed on his kind of town because I was out at night at 14 years old, I was working big parties you know and I learned it schooled me at a very young age to start to analyzing people in the minds you know as such you know. As I have said in one or two of my talks I think this has had, well white people primarily use this for as a motive to say in particular during the early days of civil rights see, now I know what to, I know what those boys are doing down in Alabama talking about Martin Luther, Evers, some of these people some early pioneers in the civil rights fields, now they not doing what...(Tape break) You know I just here people and a lot of whites say I know you all are not doing what you want to do. Even when I was waiting tables this was later you know. So many times why get in the controversy with a man who is going to pay part of your wages you know. So rather than to comment I have always been more militant than to agree with them, I just get busy and move on you know.

If it was going to be the difference you know, it was senseless to challenge at a particular I was in a seritude position I had on a white coat and tie, so why challenge your customer why try to change his mind when he has been so orientated he is living the life of racism and it is senseless to try and do this. It is senseless to try to do this but I learned this is part of my schooling and I have always wanted, desired to be wanted to do something about it to bring about a change. I guess this is why I work in these hours now in the community relations with the Memphis branch of NAACP, Tennessee council of human relations whatever the organization will bring about human justice you know and as I said I learned alt of things I remember very clearly coming form the Peabody hotel at night, very young and this used to be a two way street not just a one way you know. I be walking back up Hernando right past Culpeppers going home and sometime be 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning we had to clean up you know. I was always, well I don't want to say I was bright but I talked well with people you know. And consequently I made a lot of money and so the police you to pass by and again this is analyzing and again this is half of many of the white people have never realized we have had always had to out think our white counterpart. The maid had to outthink you, your waiter had to out think you and so many instances and even still in the police department. The police would start up said, say boy where you going. I said, well I am going home. They say, where do you live, I say oh I live up in the foot homes. He said, where you been this time of night? It is possibly 2:30 3:00. I said, well been at Peabody, I work up there , I go to school in the daytime and work there. Make any money? I said oh I made a little bit did pretty good. How much money you make? I made \$1.75. He said you doing alright. I said you going by the foot homes, he said we will drop you off. He put me in the car and dropped me right off but what he didn't know sometime I would have 15, 16 20 dollars in my pocket, you see what I am talking about? You see this go4es back to, I say this to show you what has happened in so many instances. On many occasions I have heard white people in restaurants discussing matters that I don't know I ordinarily wouldn't discuss if I was a racist, if I was anti-white but back in these days I don't think they considered you as knowing, as even being concerned really. So I realized much of the racism that exists in this community because if you totally just don't believe that I could fly over these trees or maybe by some magic I could do this, this is hard to change, this is the way much of the white community has been just didn't realize that black people had the same desires to want to be a part of the society.

Walter Evans- Most of them talk freely around you?

Gerald Fanion- Oh certainly, certainly.

Walter Evans- About this.

Gerald Fanion- About anything, not only about not just dealing with race problems but just dealing with personal things you know. This is why you are grapevine, so many things, I have heard the most prominent man, political man in this town, political man a top elected official. I called his name right here in our town. I heard his brother and his mother and his brother's wife discussed it openly. I said these

are some things that you and your wife possibly wouldn't discuss some of your internal family affairs out open but would admit to me and I could be totally wrong that I was so far out of the picture that I was totally unaware of what the conversation was all about. Now I may not be making myself clear because in so many instances I have heard white people do this and this was just the one indication that, I guess of course now I found that many much of the white community is becoming more aware, I mean the racists they are, I am not talking about the people who have had this bias attitude, but they are becoming more aware. You don't get the same boy, and you know this these bad statements, even your little department stores. You know a few years ago you could go into the store and they say you just wait a minute, a lot of things like this but now they have become, started to recognizing and realizing that not only you dollar must be respected but you must be respected. I think it is coming (muffled) I hear yes sir and no sir to me, just as I have had to displease courtesies when I was rendering services and I had no objections to it. And I don't think it was not excessively when I say no sir, yes sir but just as a common courtesy I would say it to you. I think in turn points you know particularly if there is formality dues I think this is something we just part of etiquette. So I do see a change in the community but I have recognized many of the problems at a very early, it stimulated me to buy a car when I couldn't afford one, I couldn't afford one in my early marriage and I didn't buy a car to be a hot rodder or to be you know fancy I bought it out of pure protest from right here. 4<sup>th</sup> and Vance catching the bus going downtown. And when I got on the bus it was not myself, I always have had an attitude I can pretty well survive. There was just one more chance to Gerald Fanion. But I have always been disturbed by my other friends, I said this in the early days of negro policemen whom I played football with and had very close relationships and they were criticized for abusing other negros on many occasions. They said well you don't you can't truthfully say that we ever did anything to you. Is aid this is not my concern, if you did something to the man down the street I am worried about his other little fellow that has to walk up Hernando street that is 8, 12, 14 if he is going to be abused. The same thing happened when I bought the car., it wasn't so much that I was concerned that I had it. I had to get on the bus, and come from East Memphis and go into town. And it is just about full to get down here all the way out (muffled) and I had to squeeze past some people who didn't want me close tot hem anyway and go all the way tot eh back of the bus you see.

Walter Evans- To stand?

Gerald Fanion- To stand. And I saw a lot of, I made it fine did quite well. I am very polite and knew what it would take to minimize that situation. What bothered was seeing women and other people who I didn't think was could cope with these situations. I see one seat and one man or maybe one guy who obviously didn't care about his fellow man more than likely white will sit on a long seat. I see old or young colored one who was possibly going around through town out through Jackson Ave. with a brown bag in her hand to possibly a maid and see her standing I just couldn't take it. This was, out of protest I bought a car because I had to get away from it. On

many instances I was paying car notes when I really should have been, I needed possibly some money for some other stuff. So I recognize the whole community and I have been able to look at it from, have a very positive, I have had a positive attitude I have been able to understand my white counterpart. You know so I understand the fallacies in the black community, the separatism and this type of thing.

Walter Evans- You was a pretty good athlete weren't you?

Gerald Fanion- Yeah well I did (muffled). Again now my high school education, even in 1968 I was fighting, I am trying to get them to build a pedestrian overpass at Booker T Washington right now. This same school my, well my mother didn't got there but it was built her year, a few years late for her but my aunt and her sister and many people my wife, my sister in law, my brother in law and many friends attended and this is a school that is built adjacent to a seven span railroad track. It has a feed mill just to on one side of it. It has a very undesirable odor, just to the side of the feed mill up until about 3 Or 4 years ago, a coal yard on the other side of the railroad track. Feed mill, coal yard, seven span railroad track. Just beyond the coal yard they had horse drawn carriages of coal, Broadway coal and ice company. They had music on the way to school everyday and you know the problem that you have with this. And just beyond this I s the sanitation department, now you see this is the type of... A railroad track, a feed mill with a bad odor, coal yard with mules going back and forth just 4 years ago a the most, 1964. And the sanitation department is still there that has bad odors from time to time. A big old building in the back of the they call the white elephant. I suggested that these politicians, I think Kirkendall went there and Lobe was there and they clamped their nose and came back out. They just boarded it up just a few days ago, just a few days ago. Less than a hundred yards on the same campus was a liquor store about less than 5 years ago, a liquor store. Yeah around the corner out of there (muffled) liquor store. This is the type of environment that my past schooling has been surrounded with and I am sure it would reflect on me right now, it has too. It has to reflect. A lot of my knowledge that I should have received in our school system there consequently I have done less school, probably better and we still have these problems in our school system today.

Walter Evans- How far, you finished Lemoyne didn't you?

Gerald Fanion- Yeah.

Walter Evans- And what was your first job after you finished Lemoyne?

Gerald Fanion- I went into the postal department.

Walter Evans- And you came directly from the postal department into this?

Gerald Fanion- No I went, I was contacted by a couple people, Maxine Smith of the NAACP, attorney Russell Shipman, and they had really been concerned about trying to get me out of the postal department because I had always been active and (muffled) and this type of thing and I had really gone beyond the boundary on so many activities but I had such strong feelings about them and realizing the time of

life that you have I just had you know I didn't let many of the crowds (muffled) I would just stand and wait. So they had hopes that even what the city they are talking about now they can set up a human relations council and this is something we talked about 4 or 5 years ago but they didn't. So we got the county to set up a department of community relations.

Joan Beifuss- Now who got the county to set it up Gerry?

Gerald Fanion- Well, there was several people working on this and several people I think discuss edit with the chamber of commission, Jack Ramsey now. Saying the need for recognizing the racial problems as they were that then there needed to be one man in this community one organization one official organization that was trying to amend the fence on racial turmoil that could very well his other parts of the country but not our community but many of use recognized that we have the climate for a complete breakdown in racial communications.

Walter Evans- Do you remember what date this was started in setting up this?

Gerald Fanion- Community relations? First of July 1967 is when I took office.

Joan Beifuss- Now you were the first person to hold the job?

Gerald Fanion- I was the first official person to hold any type of from city of county to hold the office of community relations.

Joan Beifuss- Gerry let me cut back just a minute, what was your job at the pos office.

Gerald Fanion- Oh a mail handler, a mail handler at the post office. And I also, as I said I was working as a waiter for a restaurant called Justine's here a gourmet type of restaurant. And there is something kind of interesting I thought about Justine's, a lot of my very close friends were there working. It is not the question you meet a lot of fine people coming into the restaurant on international levels. People who just travel and make good restaurants come through there and at the same time you have a very unique situation here you have had approximately 8 waiters who have master degrees. I imagine 5 or 6 are working there now, some a couple of principals that come from this restaurant and head of a federal housing who has a top job at federal housing also work there now. And up until I brought about a little protest there they were paying no salary nothing and I got, I learned, I got more motivation from this person Mrs. Smith, Justine, and her husband to really to really get involved, to really go and more into the work that I wanted to do dealing with people bringing about human justice. From them because of that attitude they were very hard people to work with. She expressed her dislike for negroes and Jews. I got a tremendous push from here, she would never know I don't guess she will ever know what stimulated me, well she always knew I had a strong protest, resentment rather for the type of things she would implement around the place. She said set Jews on one side of the restaurant even now.

Joan Beifuss- Oh really?

Gerald Fanion- Is Beifuss Jewish?

No, well it probably was at one point.

Gerald Fanion- Well she said put Jews on this side of the restaurant and said gentiles on the other side, She told the head waiters this.

Walter Evans- Have you worked there since the passing of the..

Gerald Fanion- Minimum wage?

Gerald Fanion- No the equal opportunities and accommodations?

Gerald Fanion- Oh no, well, oh yes.

Walter Evans- What is the attitude now, Jews in one place negroes in another?

Gerald Fanion- Well, she just killer, people actually clients I don't think a lot of them I don't think a lot of people if you are able to go into a restaurant I don't think they worry about whether you are negro or white now really I don't. I mean I am sure there are some but she was more worried than the people were. But she did a lot to stimulate me. For instance, Floyd McKisit who is very militant to the core. Someone during one of the big campaigns spat in his daughter's face which totally turned his concept you know it made him very bitter. I am saying many people have some backgrounds, Jesse Turner told me a story about on a train I think K. Pittman wrote a story about how they was going to put some child off the train down in Mississippi. You know you never know what motivates a man, I am just going to dedicate my life to try and bring about a change on these things.

Walter Evans- Mrs. Smith helped you?

Gerald Fanion- She helped me tremendously she helped me tremendously because she is a racist in every sense. And then she is a phony racist and I say this in true contest because she was ashamed of her mother and father and I think it is something that you never, well just like I said I think I am fortunate, very fortunate. And now this was something that negroes know, not a lot of white people. For instance when she would bring up they live up in the hills of Tennessee. She was tell us how she (muffled), you will hide so much and then eventually one day you will take some pride and you will tell. She was telling I used to make corn whiskey and drive a cow during the war and she is up in the society where everybody the fact that so many influential people, and fluent people come into her restaurant, and but we know her past and nothing to be ashamed if you make a success it is more glorified really. You know if you come from nothing to really a mountainous, to make some great accomplishments, but her sisters her family life, she bring them in one by one carefully and talk to them around us you know because she didn't want the white clientele, this is very important I guess family stature. It didn't mean to much to (muffled). But she has really played, and she was a very good business

woman I don't deny this, I don't take this away. She is a very hard business woman. But I do admire her accomplishments in business but I think the way I have seen her treat help was totally inhuman and I do have a strong resentment for this and one of these days when some of my real big friends and I get together we are going to go back into Justine's I know that is going to be...

Joan Beifuss- Gerry did you, when they were doing the sit-ins here about 1960-61 when the fairground was desegregated and when that push was on were you involved in that at all?

Gerald Fanion- Yes I was involved in the picketing you know and as a matter of fact the first city I wasn't one of the ones who was arrested but I was always right down there with them. I just you know never got arrested and I had this problem you see of again, it was wouldn't be hard to understand as working in the restaurant and I know Justine wouldn't tolerate that at all. You got one of those really troublemakers out here working in your restaurant. So I had to be very careful.

Walter Evans- And maintain your family statutes at the same time.

Gerald Fanion- Yeah, that's right. And then you have many of my brothers and sisters who take great delight in going back and telling, and so informing on one another. So the word got back I even remember when the first integrated, or when the first negroes came in to the restaurant. I think I deliberately took off that night, I won't say I deliberately took off but I wasn't there and I didn't wait on them because I knew all these people who was coming in I think. Maxine Smith and her husband, Robert Lewis were the first two negro couples to go in there. We all knew them and were all friends and acquaintances. I know if we, I know I couldn't see my people come in there and not say something to them, however I don't mean to be over friendly with them by any means familiar with them but...I am saying this to point out the type of things you have to do when you live in a racist community to survive. So I just simply didn't work that night, I knew they were coming and I knew all about the plans, but she would use this to get back at me she would think I was behind the scene on many occasions so I never waited on any of the early negro guests that came into this restaurant. Because they I knew many of, some or two of my co-workers went back and said Gerry is on the board of NAACP.

Joan Beifuss- Was there any trouble when the first negro guests came in?

Gerald Fanion- No trouble at all, no trouble. Her husband is a Norman man, I don't want to take up all your tape talking but I can't realize the affects from Justine's because it has helped in such high stature in much of the community in the white community. The food is very good, very good quality. Food is very good and I dare say there is any food better in this part of the country than Justine's, this part of the say between here and Louisville or New Orleans, is better.

Joan Beifuss- You are making it so that we are feeling free to go into Justine's again.

Gerald Fanion- The food is very quality food. That is one thing.

Walter Evans- Gerry have you talked with her since this time?

Gerald Fanion- No I haven't talked.

Walter Evans- Have you talked with some of the fellows who still work there?

Gerald Fanion- Yes I talk with them frequently I see those fellows. I might say these guys they are particular and I think I know what I am talking about proud of me if there is any one group of people who have been proud of what I have been doing and what I think my accomplishments, it is the fellows at Justine's and I hear from too many sources that they talk about it, they discuss it they read about you know. Along with the post office you know, this sense of once belonging and this type of thing, the fellows are real great.

Walter Evans- I was wondering if talking to them recently does Mrs. Smith have the same attitude.

Gerald Fanion- I don't know now this is one thing that bothers me, I was out in front of Justine's a couple days ago trying to, I just called a lady here about some NAACP memberships and Mr. Smith her husband saw me out front. He came up tot me and shook my hand you know and told me he was proud of what I was trying to do and we needed a lot more people you know in the community like me and he really was happy to hear you know the things and the accomplishments I had made and many of my endeavors and knowing him he is very Cajun-like. He realized he has a very profitable business right in the middle of a low and black powerish community that is highly inflammable (muffled). I just say that jokedly but man he came out and he just shook me and gave me a very warm welcome. So all this has, I think has been more assets than liabilities. All these experiences.

Joan Beifuss- Well Gerry what was the idea of the county human relations department and what specifically were you supposed to do?

Gerald Fanion- The county community relations department, is this for publication...

Joan Beifuss- Unless you want to restrict it.

Gerald Fanion- Well no, the community relations department was set up to bring about a closer relationship between the government and the people, many people. And this is true they say that you don't know what agencies to go to for you know family service or taxes or plumbing, people I knew in boxtown just getting water out there. Between your community water all around, water into house, running into house facilities all around this one negro area but they still haven't got, the city says they, the county says they are waiting on the city to take it over and the city is waiting on the county to put it in but this is not the problem the problem is that nobody really cared enough to put it into the boxtown area. But my job was to meet with groups and to really just being about a better understanding. This is how I first interpreted my job and I had an office in 215 in the courthouse right next to the commissioner's office. But this you must recognize that community relations, human

relations, any of these positions now are controversial positions, they are not popular, maybe in the black community but in much in particular in the area that is geographically close to Mississippi and these rural areas as we are and then we are living as we had found out a large amount of racist community to a great sense. People say Lobe won't get elected next time, well I am not too sure about that it all depends on how much, how large of a percent of the racists we have in this community, he may be a hero you never know. You know Joan Beifuss wouldn't vote for him but you don't know you are in the minority. When you go to the ballot box, you understand what I am saying?

Joan Beifuss- Sure.

Walter Evans- Right.

Gerald Fanion- And so my job, so what I sought out to start to do was to get on nothing controversial issues. I got Ben Hooks last summer, I got about 100 business men together at city hall when Ingram was in the mayor then and I got Mrs. Neil Berson to commit herself to put an employment office in Lemoyne Gardens. It wouldn't do any good unless it was able to get jobs, this was my first act. So I called Russell Shipman and Russell called (muffled) and I talked to them and told them what I wanted because in so many of the low income areas people don't have money to go back and forth to the employment office and some of them you know it would be just great if you had one in a real low income area. So Mrs. Berson went along with it and so my next thing I had to do was try to get some people that would commit to jobs. Then I got a list of who's who in Memphis in thanks a large business men. So then I had to get someone to sort of tell it to them like it is some negro whom they would be accepted tot hem and sort of a voice from a negro and some negro who they would think a lot of. So my choice Immediately came to Ben Hooks and I called Ben and he said yeah, he had just gotten back form Detroit where they had a large riot. And you know he has a church in Detroit and he said ye so I talked to him and he had a big, we had 125 people up there of all.....Well this is coming into a political, a mayortorial conflict you know, so all the partitions are there and all the big business men were there. Ben made the talk and told them just what (muffled) is coming to really. You know they said oh well he didn't have to say it like that it isn't nothing that bad going on in this community. They really don't want to hear the truth when you tell it to them. But we did get the place put up in Lemoyne Gardens. This was one of my non-controversial endeavors. Then I went about to get a pedestrian overpass at this old inferior school I told you about called Booker T Washington, with the railroad tracks. Children were crawling up under the trains daily and this was just really inhuman you know. One just by faith because as I said probably wouldn't any kids getting run over because we had been trained to take that extra jump, no really this is part of our survival. I am probably over dramatize it, probably won't any negro children get run over in the next 20 years, you know.

Walter Evans- The possibility is still there.

Gerald Fanion- It still exists certainly it does. And this was one of my things I had tried to do and I working, we did a slums, I did a series on slums in Memphis and I started to begin to work very closely with Kay Pittman from the Precimeter because the county wasn't going to add to my staff, they had got them one black boy sitting up there. That would keep the heat off you a little bit. So then I Kay Pittman now began we sort of got together. We had a lot of the same interests in housing and unemployment and in welfare and the next thing we had all these noncontroversial now, I got a group of women together and we set out to set up emergency center, I asked them just to help get contributions form the community and to help these people sort of (muffled) you know, and this is another thing we done. And then this went on up through entities or something and immediately after the fist of the year I was called upon to help draw the summer program these many playgrounds you hear about, that has shelters. You hear all about he came here and stood at my door and I told him he got what Kay Pittman said if there is one man you will talk to me in the community about they had 15 or \$20,000 of cleanup fix up, they wanted to do something they didn't want to have no parade. They didn't want to have a parade because they figured there might be some trouble so they wanted to stay away from large crowds. So she said you go talk to Gerry Fanion he will probably know what to do. So he called me on the phone, he never could, this was right after the sanitation strike and I just didn't have time you know there was so many things going on and so I said listen if you got some money here is an idea and I told him this I am not trying to get any credit for it because it is perfectly fine with me if everything I say someone else can take it because it is just impossible for me to do all these things with living here in this community here it is not hard to pick out, I don't have to be (muffled) to pick out things I know needs changing. I know things that need some help on. So this is an illustration these many parks were one of my suggestions but this was going to be part of my summer program anyway, I am afraid to name other things because everybody I give an idea too I read about in the paper even from my closer friends,(muffled) I tried to get darth together and a day or two later I read that the NAACP was out at the board of education raising (muffled) about text books. But in the 1<sup>st</sup> of January I was called on to draw the summer program which never did materialize due to the sanitation, I just gave up everything before the strike started.

Joan Beifuss- Alright Gerry I am going to hold you before we get into the strike, last summer do you remember that weekend when the national guard encamped around the city and were you functioning during that weekend, what was the story on that?

Gerald Fanion- Oh yes, well largely rumors and it really somehow the community got all worked up there were a couple young people they had in town whom they had put all, they thought was going to burn down the whole big Memphis you know and the guy I guess they had a lot of fun. One of them called me today and they had closed down south Memphis, east Memphis, I had never seen a night like this. I had never seen a town become as tense.

Joan Beifuss- Well that was what I wondered what had..

Gerald Fanion- They had them making Molotov cocktails and..

Joan Beifuss- What were they doing exactly nothing?

Gerald Fanion- Nothing.

Walter Evans- Who really started this rumor do you know?

Gerald Fanion- No it just grew and we started it, all of us. Joan Beifuss Carl Walter, Emily and my wife calls it and really it is fantastic. They closed down stores downtown they closed down the court house, on it hadn't been a (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Did the city have no one, or the county have no one that could check rumors.

Gerald Fanion- There was some things I can't say on this but I know I was close to what was going on and it was something new to this community you know the militant you know but still it wasn't nearly as bad as they was you know. Man it was really awful.

Joan Beifuss- Well didn't you tell them it wasn't as bad as they thought it was?

Gerald Fanion- Well at the time I think it really that I, if policemen and your federal agencies and your sheriff's department tensed all up and you know there wasn't very much I could do I looked like a nutsack because it very well could something start. I tell you what it could have , by being the people who was supposed to be accused of it was probably too tense to do anything that night. You have to have something like what happened here, a situation where you know but that was, everybody was afraid, the police were afraid and I was afraid.

Walter Evans- This even got all the way to the government didn't it?

Gerald Fanion- Oh yeah, oh man yeah. The mayor.

Walter Evans- Just on a rumor.

Gerald Fanion- Nothing but a rumor, that was some, a group of young people who are assumingly militant and then apart from my stand and it was new to the community and it was new to the community but in spite or in view of what had happened in Detroit or Newark and it is understandable. I think in some cities now they have a rumor control.

Joan Beifuss- That was what I was going to ask you are they going to do that here?

Gerald Fanion- No I don't think, I haven't heard of anyone say (muffled) I haven't heard of anything but you know you must remember and if I was a real, if I had any ideas of doing anything to this town, if in party of anybody that wanted to do

anything I certainly would have thought somebody would have been whole lot of fire bombing during this 12 weeks of struggle, when we had these confrontations with the policemen and all this stuff and this type of thing so now I don't see anybody being you know oh you going to have a few people throwing some rocks.

Walter Evans- you are saying if it didn't happen then they should be relaxed now.

Gerald Fanion- That's right. That's right, now you are going to have some problems but it is going to come from, it is not going to come from, there is always an organized elements that move in on anything but I don't think there is no one master plan to do anything. There is no master plan. But if a young negro boy is shot down here on Orleans street then it might throw the community into chaos. I mean you know if he is shot and it just depends on a number of circumstances.

Walter Evans- Or incidents that might occur.

Gerald Fanion- Might occur that is right. Some store merchant would shoot a boy for stealing somebody's store then he you know you are going to be right back into something that will spread. That is the way, a good way for it to spread.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah but In was going to stay the city is till if some kind of incident occurs in the city it is still in no position to check it out if it is true or not we could still get a big rumor?

Gerald Fanion- Yeah, oh yeah, the city has no way of checking.

Joan Beifuss- When the county set up this community relations program the city still didn't consider setting up one themselves?

Gerald Fanion- no, they didn't what I was going to, they was an administration going out you must remember, and it wasn't a big push for it really. Now there is some talk in this administration, mayor council, government is talking about setting up, a human relations council, remind you but your first not requirement but one of the stipulations in it is to not question police activities and that is the greatest problem I got in the community.

Joan Beifuss- Sounds like what they are talking about is a human relations committee with no teeth in it really.

Gerald Fanion- Well it's going to belie, it is going to be sort of like as I get to later on about this community relation department I was trying to tell you about you know. I was telling you about the things that I had tried to do you know but I recognized possibly another of my requirements was possibly to set up right behind that desk and look at parties you know.

Walter Evans- Were you given any restrictions there at the time?

Gerald Fanion- No I wasn't given any restrictions...when?

Walter Evans- Either given or implied any relative to going into this job?

Gerald Fanion- No I wasn't, I was only given a desk a telephone and some stationary and some pencils really and a (muffled) and I eventually got a typewriter and so all you have known about, all the things you have read about me being able to try and do I think I have well..

Walter Evans- You have done this on your own.

Gerald Fanion- Oh yeah see, this was under no direction of anyone.

Joan Beifuss- did you report back to the County Commission?

Gerald Fanion- I gave them a semi annual report of my activities and my endeavors.

Walter Evans- What reaction did you receive form thee reports here?

Gerald Fanion- Oh I mean very favorable, all of the, all of my commendations, response from the commissioners, the 3 commissioners were very favorable. I think it was very pleased with me and because again as I said from this early education I received, I know how to pretty well get along from people and again as a case on say one or two things, I realized they didn't want to shake the boat you know.

Walter Evans- Gerry let me ask you this in relation to this. Did you give them a report to appease them or did you actually tell them everything you were involved in.

Gerald Fanion- Well I was pretty free to come and go as I chose and to just work in the area where I felt the work was needed and you couldn't want anything better than working agreement like this, it was the first time remind you that I had ever been able in all these years I said I sure would like to have me a job, where I would be the boss and go wherever I want and leave when I get ready you know and nobody says....this is the job I had there kind of. It is the strange thing about life. After I got tot his point the things that I really wanted to do I saw I was, it was more or less respected that I would be quiet. Like Vasco Smith says hell I don't understand how you can do it and most of you wear your hair long and you wear dark glasses, he was talking about when I was on the Tennessee council you see.

Walter Evans- I know.

Gerald Fanion- He was saying, I was asking Vasco, I said Vasco you think I ought to take it. I said do you think it will add to my latitude and what I can do. He said I don't see how you can do anymore you know.

Walter Evans- As many of the things as you were doing personally.

Gerald Fanion- Yeah, yeah, so but really one of the things that I realized on the shortcomings of this job was you were appointed by a man that had to be elected by much of the white community and what you did would reflect on him. During the

sanitation strike I knew that the union was going to walk out. They were down there in a meaningless meeting, the union and the negotiator Mr. Meyers you know.

Joan Beifuss- Frank Miles?

Gerald Fanion- Frank Miles, and then the city people. The fellows say listen we are not getting anywhere now I this meeting so we just going to have to leave here, we are not going to stay another day. Because time was running against and I am going into the sanitation strike and maybe I shouldn't. I better not go into this now but I have to tell you this to tell you about the problem I had in this job and then the papers picked this up and when they walked out I was doing a lot of the PR work for the COME organization you know public relations, and but I didn't do it this day, somebody else I got one other fellow to call and say we are going to have a big press conference so then newspapers, this show you how white powers stick together. A television man told a newspaper man saying Fanion is running saying they are going to walk out and hour before they walk out so then the next morning it comes out in the paper, Gerald Fanion Jack Ramsey appointee says, call the television saying, now this was getting back at me, see you have gone to far. And all these guys I know really well you know from television I know them really well.

Walter Evans- It was put like this.

Gerald Fanion- Intentionally put like this, so I realized at this point Fanion you are going to have problems. I had made it with the political fore's you know the factions and the various camps, I did alright, But I didn't want to be in a position and knowing myself in the stages where I am that where I would be on the mercy of anybody you know and I (muffled). Then when, that was just one incident to sort of illustrate the problems of community relations. And we have now just about come up to the strike because in January as I was chose to, this would have to be appointed by the mayor and the county jointly for me to do this job on the summer program. I went to Washington that is where I got with Humphrey and me the vice president with Humphrey in Washington, he gave me a sort of a commendation for some of the work I was doing. I think it came through the Precimeter, Mr. Reed.

Joan Beifuss- Was that in January that you went to Washington?

Gerald Fanion- It was January the 30<sup>th</sup>. I was a youth opportunist, at this particular time when I was in Washington, president of council an youth opportunist is what it was.

Joan Beifuss- And you met vice president Humphrey.

Gerald Fanion- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- Was he in contact with you during the strike?

Gerald Fanion- No. Well indirectly, no he wasn't in contact with me no. He was in contact with some other people one other person I know who I am very close to.

Walter Evans- Before you leave that particular point Gerry was this written up in our local papers?

Gerald Fanion- Yes there was an article in the Precimeter.

Walter Evans- And what about from the Commercial?

Gerald Fanion- They didn't, I haven't had as good of a repoire with the Commercial.

Walter Evans- Was it mentioned at all in the Commercial?

Gerald Fanion- No it wasn't.

Walter Evans- And this is the only article that came from the Precimeter.

Joan Beifuss- Gerry can you tell me who vice president Humphrey was in contact with during the strike?

Gerald Fanion- Jesse Epps. Jesse is I think on the president advisory commission. President Johnson, he has just had as a matter of a fact ten days ago he went to see president Humphrey, and he was with him down at Oxford. Several people form the COME committee went up to see the vice president.

Joan Beifuss- Oh did they?

Gerald Fanion- Just about ten days ago.

Joan Beifuss- When?

Gerald Fanion- About two weeks ago to be exact.

Joan Beifuss- Oh not during the strike period.

Gerald Fanion- No since the strike, since the assassination.

Joan Beifuss- Can we go back to the beginning of the strike then, did you know what was happening with the sanitation workers before they actually walked out that Monday morning?

Gerald Fanion- No I didn't I had been in several meetings with T.O. Jones and sanitation workers and the one with Champa. I knew they were having problems as anybody in the business community knows for several years they have been having problems and it was news to me when they walked out. That particular day, that Monday I believe it was might have been on Monday not sure, Monday morning.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah Monday morning.

Gerald Fanion- At that point I didn't know they were going out that day. But I have been in several meetings with the sanitation workers.

Walter Evans- Prior to this?

Gerald Fanion- Yes. So you know I, no I didn't know as I mentioned to you a few minutes ago I did all the public relations work dealing with the newspapers from the very beginning, all of the press release came from you know from me.

Joan Beifuss- Now the COME press releases?

Gerald Fanion- All the COME press releases now I didn't write them but I made all the arrangements for the news.

Joan Beifuss- Did you set up press conferences?

Gerald Fanion- All the way through Dr. King's assassination. All the way. We started off with a couple of newspapers let's say and about 3 television stations and also radio.

Joan Beifuss- Well now was that officially coming out of your office at the county building?

Gerald Fanion- Oh no it was not.

Joan Beifuss- When exactly did you leave that county job what date?

Gerald Fanion- Oh about the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. But I felt this was community responsibility and I was really walking a tight rope being a county employee but I also recognized no other county or city employee or personnel really had enough backbones to take an issue on a moral question that was really tearing the community apart you know. Any one or two people could have done a lot to very obviously bring about a reasonable solution in this sanitation strike.

Joan Beifuss- Gerry how early in the strike did you realize it was going to start tearing the community apart?

Gerald Fanion- I realized it very early. Because of the immediate response that it received from the black community that was the hanging faction. Whether or not the community would rally behind the cause of the men whether or not they would see it as important enough. I knew that without a doubt that I had the other side of it I had not what I had but what the community had on the other side, that is what it would take to really bring chaos and that was our sin local officer of the mayor, mayor Lobe. I knew he had the attitude and the pardon the expression but bullheadedness to really hold firm on his statement about what he wasn't going to do. And it really surprised me in the end that he did.

Joan Beifuss- Did you know Lobe before he took office?

Gerald Fanion- Oh yes.

Joan Beifuss- Did you, were active in the campaign last fall.

Gerald Fanion- Yes I was very active. I was very active however and I might mention this, I think this is an interesting note, possibly the most interesting thing I have told you all day long. I voted for Lobe.

Joan Beifuss- Why?

Gerald Fanion- Well I am glad you asked me why to give me a chance to clarify.

Joan Beifuss- I knew you would say it anyway.

Gerald Fanion- Well I recognized once again I am not trying to speak a lot of wisdom. That what the negro community needed was sort of polarization unifying. We were terribly hopelessly splintered from the mayor's campaign from political factions. It had tore the black community it had destroyed it. Any responsible powers it had many people of many different opinions and there was a lot of bad feelings.

Joan Beifuss- Are you talking about the Willis Ingram that whole....

Gerald Fanion- The Willis-Ingram situation. So I realized that negros would not go the Willis thing you know. That what they would possibly, what they would need even if Ingram had been there 4 years we certainly wouldn't have had the possibility I don't know what we would have had, but we certainly would not have had the unification of negros that we have now. We have had, you wouldn't have got that from Ingram. So I realized that I don't want Bert Ferguson at WDIA to write my editorials or to name my leaders, I don't want him to name Hooks for my leaders I want this to be my, you know, I want this to be my choice. I think this should our choice you see. And Ingram was the type of individual who wanted to name negro leadership he wouldn't have no real strong and all the white power structures seemingly resent strong negro leadership. You are termed as agitators or communists or something but I am saying this is why I knew Ingram was bad for us, so I had after Willis lost a man who was qualified, I didn't worry about whether he speak to me I don't think he treat me in a better he threw the rest of the people out. I am not a house frequent house guest of his and I really have no personal ties with him but there is a lot of reasons why the negros give you I think they were only excuses why they didn't vote for him, one was mainly Lobe had paid him off, I didn't believe this he is too smart a politician for \$35,000, the stake is really much greater really for a man with his reputation the stake is greater \$35,000 is a lot of money, for him it is a whole lot, it is a lot for me but for a man that had political powers I mean he our political organization got 30, \$40,000 many times. I spent 10 or \$12,000 in two days doing the liquor referendum I think, I shouldn't be putting this on the tape but I am saying this is(muffled) negros have always sold out and this is a big word, negro community. So I voted for Lobe knowing his attitude. Knowing him being a racist and Dr. Martin Luther King said he would much rather fight with Bull Connor.

Joan Beifuss- I was going to say then you were kind of playing confrontation politics?

Gerald Fanion- Certainly and I never expected it to come that soon but I knew one thing it was going to solidify the negro community I knew it was going to do that because no negro liked, and it was very evident in the vote he got, 1% of the negro vote. Because I didn't have much choice I felt Ingram would lose due to racism in the community.

Walter Evans- Well this is good Gerry because this proves that Lobe got some negro votes.

Gerald Fanion- Yeah I know some he got my wife's vote and my father's vote.

Joan Beifuss- Well Gerry do you think well let's say T.O. Jones, people that were leading the union in January knew that this confrontation feeling existed?

Gerald Fanion- No, they, for instance I think T.O. Jones is (muffled) and I am sure after Morris what was the run off Lobe and Ingram, all this faction of Morris people went back to Ingram. Very few negroes....

Joan Beifuss- The thing I was trying to pin point was whether or not the strike starting the 1<sup>st</sup> of February was merely a union thing or if there was...

Gerald Fanion- I don't know what now, this is one thing I haven't discussed with Mr. Jones and I think he just realizes this was the beginning of the administration he had been through one or two administrations and if you are ever going to get anything done, now is the time to get the show on the road.

Gerald Fanion- Gerry was Mr. Jones really the force that brought this thing to head so early in Lobe's administration do you think?

Gerald Fanion- You know what I believe, and this is just really guessing, Mr. Jones did this primarily on his own. I don't know I am just guessing but I tell Jones jokingly I believe if the community hadn't rallied behind Jones the union might have fired him I don't know. You see what I am talking about but I am saying he was tired of it and I can understand that. I understand what he was doing, he said now here is a time for me to do something, these last cats that left said well we can't do anything about it but you have a new administration to take care of it. Well that is right lay it in their lap.

Walter Evans- Now right after they walked out from that time on you did meet with them?

Gerald Fanion- Yes. From that time on that happened on Monday and I read it, I didn't know about it that Monday until later in the day. That Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup> I met with them out at Firestone. I knew what this was going to be. 1,300 negroes together on anything so we start meeting with them. I saw the community split. I went and talked with Mr. Lobe and he pretty much had the same views that he expressed on TV and through the news medium. I knew he wasn't after he came, I initially came to him and said I would like to get him to sit down with the ministers and I think

maybe Baxton went to him and told him this also.

Joan Beifuss- Gerry is this before the first macing on Main St.?

Gerald Fanion- It must be afterwards, it was afterwards when things had gotten sort of..

Walter Evans- Can you start at the beginning of this strike and sort of bring it up to date and then we can go into the other things, just from the beginning of the strike.

Gerald Fanion- I started going to Firestone union hall and we called an emergency meeting after the first day of the strike, maybe the second day I went out to the union hall, third day might have been Wednesday when I got out there. And the union start to they couldn't a lot of people in the community thought well it wont last but three or four days and they will go on back to work. There hadn't been an organization formed at this particular time. Few partitions of local negro partitions started showing up on the scene out at the Firestone Hall and the Firestone community people themselves said they could use the hall as long as they where in the strike. The NAACP took a what the president called a special board meeting and we took a stand a resolution and decided we would support them. There was another organization, I can't say what the other organizations done but I know I see other local; negro partitions and city leaders who were showing up at one or two ministers at the very beginning and a couple of women, couple of ladies that typically went.

Joan Beifuss- Do you know who the ministers were back the very beginning?

Gerald Fanion- Reverend Ezekiel Bell was one and Elder Polly was one and...

Walter Evans- Can you name the ladies too?

Gerald Fanion- Mrs. Matthew is one, and Mrs. Crenshaw was one of the women who got there early and gave support. It was relatively funny at the beginning I talked about this the other night at some people's house that reverend Bell recognized, those of us who have been in civil rights fights realize that these things just don't happen in most instances you are black and you just happen to be deprived you just happen to be 13 hundred people who are at the bottom of the totem pole and you are at the lowest, very poorest employment benefits and your salary scale is the lowest and your procedures of grievances are nailed...we recognized that this just doesn't happen as the community says, you know when the community comes out and say this is not a racial thing this happen to be your job, there just happen to be 1,300 garbage men. I know but this is part of the racist system so people like Zeke Bell immediately got on the thing and started saying this is talking strong militant talk and it was some people in the union and a few negros said shhh put the finger to their mouth and said don't let him talk like this, this isn't our cause. This will stop al the white community from coming in and getting behind ours I mean giving the sanitation people support. But you know strangely enough a lot of until Dr. King was killed a lot of the white community didn't get on the band wagon anyway. But I am

saying that Zeke didn't have a popular stand at the union at first, everybody was talking about burning up the city at the end we will just tear down the court house you know. Everybody was talking, all of us laughed about it, some of our good white brothers and friends they was talking more militant than Zeke Bell at the end. I think Joan Beifuss would (muffled). This was the early days of the strike and there was an organization called concerned citizens that was taking in food and they was feeding over at Mason Temple. But the momentum of the strike sort of started to mushroom and more groups wanted to come in and more ministers became concerned and the problem wasn't getting better it was getting worse. The mayor had sort of bulleted his neck and there was a lot of hot words, there was a union man that came in and said some things that the white community said you should have said that or used that as one thing was wrong with the strike well I wouldn't tell the mayor to shut his big fat mouth but that leader was here there that wasn't solving the strike the fact was these men's were off and working and they wanted the right to be the right to record to organize and as I said the organization called the concerned citizen's by men that was really too small and this spectrum to handle the total ministers and laymen's and organizations that wanted to come into this picture and wanted to come into the fight, so then they re-organized and reverend Lawson and few of us was down in the room that night, a little dark room back over in Clayborne Temple./

Joan Beifuss- What night is that Jerry?

Gerald Fanion- Oh t his was a few days..

Joan Beifuss- Was this before the macing on Main Street?

Gerald Fanion- No it wasn't. The macing on Main Street happened about February the 22<sup>nd</sup> to be exact, so you only had, it happened within 10 days.

Joan Beifuss- After the strike.

Gerald Fanion- Yeah and after we organized COME after the macing we went to a council meeting Fred Davis called one on a Thursday, and all the men's went down there and it got out of hand.

Joan Beifuss- Were you there?

Gerald Fanion- Yeah, we had become most, I had become most disgusted with all three of my councilors not two of them all of them because they hadn't done anything. I still think they should have been out there marching all three of them I don't see any reason why three of them weren't out marching weren't out giving speeches to the rallies because all of them, most of them were primarily elected by black people and as any elected official we had most of them, you know we can't get a negro on the school board you know we tried to many times you know. This is not going to make a difference what your activities are anyway. So we were real critical of councilmen Fred Davis who I guess he decided he would do something so he had this meeting and it got out of hand. So then we went back, Louie Donelson Fred

Davis and Netters I guess this committee was named behind the stage, behind the council and had a meeting with Jones, Champa, this other fellow Lucie and they asked me to be on the committee of citizen participation. I think reverend Starks and reverend Lawson was back there and we was on the citizen's, I was just a liaison man and we met and they said we would have a meeting tomorrow. That was on a Thursday, you are right Thursday. So they said we will have a meeting tomorrow, at city hall, Donelson agreed to it, oh yes the committee of Donelson, Netters, and who was the other one I called.

Joan Beifuss- Fred Davis?

Gerald Fanion- Fred Davis, pastor came rumor that the wasn't on the sanitation committee, they had a committee and they voted that they should recognize the union. This was on the 21<sup>st</sup>, Thursday what you must recognize only 3 people on the committee and 2 of them are negros. So they go out and make this speech to the, to all the sanitation workers in the chamber. We have to, we the committee of the sanitation workers has decided that we would recognize the union and dues check off and so and so and everybody went up in loud applause which was very bad, you had 1,300 mens thinking, but they clarified it and they said but when you are dealing with a lot of people and a lot of confusion they don't understand it. He said also that we wanted to acknowledge that councilmen Donelson has voted a descending vote so that is just two to one you know out of 13 people so you know what this is going to do. So half the men start walking out you know that is the day they so you all can go home that is the day we brought bologna and lunch meat and put it down on the counter of the chambers, mustard and mayonnaise, pickles.

Walter Evans- on the tables.

Gerald Fanion- Yeah we tore down the dignity of the high officials but anyway this is enough of bad, bad. He said we will meet tomorrow we will call a joint meeting of the council men tomorrow sometime around 2:00 at city hall at the auditorium and we will all vote on this . And man I realized this was going to be bad because you had all this men who been off of work 10 days at this particular time who thought what it meant was that they had agreed to dues check off the council which was completely wrong. And I called, I made a long distance call to a fellow that next morning that Friday morning I was very upset about it and I went home that night because I knew what this was going to mean when we got over to the auditorium and the amphitheatre and I called a fellow at home and he wasn't at home his wife said he was in Langston New Jersey and he called right back. I said there is going to be some trouble here today. I said I know there is going go be trouble, this was on Friday morning I called and another fellow who I just talked to a couple minutes ago Cliff Tuck, I told Cliff and called commissioner Ramsey and told these three people.

Walter Evans- Who was this you called?

Gerald Fanion- I called commissioner Ramsey rather. Well I called, I tell you what, it was H.T. Lockett, he had told me Gerry now I know you will know there is going to

be trouble let me know. So I call his wife and she says he is at the governor's conference or something meeting in Atlanta city New Jersey I called him Friday morning. I called Mr. Ramsey and Is aid Mr. Ramsey there is going to be trouble and they hadn't seen him in 2 weeks so this was a good time for me to let him know, and no one had said there was going to be any trouble. No one had said there was going to be trouble. So sure enough we went to this meeting at the auditorium and (tape Break) And we went to the meeting and all the councilors were there and the men's, the sanitation men's hope was very high. Everybody was there all the local leadership was who had been in that fight with him. Evers, Zeke Bell, and Mrs. Crenshaw, Vasco Smith. At that particular time, that same day the Commercial Appeal came out with a very indicative editorial with a picture that looked very much form a profile of T.O. Jones sitting on a pile of garbage that says anarchy. And this was I think due to our stalemate at the city hall. I resented it I thought it was terrible that in all of this I got a paper that morning I wasn't sleeping much at this time and I got this paper early in the morning about 3:00. That was the first time I saw this and I knew, the reason I was sleeping that night and I will never forget this is because I knew what was going to happen the next day. When all these, the councilors get there and they vote these men down. They are going to say what happened you know you gave us your word that the committee had recommended to the council which didn't mean anything was only two negro councilmen making the recommendation which had been done before. Vasco at that particular meeting, well I think I am getting a little bit ahead of myself. They came in the council came in they came on the stage and they all sat down and they say here ye here ye the council is now open for business. And the business was whether the union would recognize the union and give them dues check off and they read what they would do everything but dues check off and union recognition. Then one of them said I move that we accept this resolution and its total contents and someone seconded it. And then Chandler says or something Mr. so and so I move that we adjourn these meeting just as fast. So you got all these men who left just the Thursday before just a few hours ago thinking we are going to have big meeting at the auditorium the councilors are going to recommend to the mayor that we recognized by union and this really was the height of frustration for these men, and they did they enjoined the meeting and all the council walked off and police are just all over stage you know and they disconnected the mic I think. And then we asked to turn the mic back on, so then Jones got up and he started talking. This is why they indicted him they say he made a statement about what he was going to do. I couldn't speak because I was still working for t he county. As community relation and Vasco brought the newspaper to this particular meeting you probably saw it in the paper and showed this picture of Jones, you know really it was an insult, at this particular time was in very poor taste of our newspaper the Commercial Appeal to do something like this. And I might say at this particular time, because I see the tape getting short.

Joan Beifuss- That's alright we have another tape.

Gerald Fanion- Yeah, but they contributed more to our problems and to the community problem than they helped. They really.

Walter Evans- Don't cut it short because we have another tape.

=Yeah ok.

Walter Evans- Just keep on talking.

Gerald Fanion- Yeah but so a lot of speeches are made and so we finally decided we were going to get in the middle of Main St. and walk to Mason Temple where we were going to hold a mass meeting that night.

Walter Evans- Gerry during this particular time did all the councilmen walk out including the negro councilmen?

Gerald Fanion- Oh yeah the negro councilmen. The negro councilmen would never really identified, this is truth, they never really identified with our problem, they made a few comments but I don't see why you wouldn't be out marching with the people. This is not in dignity of your position, its not like being a judge because you are trying to, I felt, that the people who had put them in office had problem and they should identify themselves more, nobody could have you expelled from the job as a councilmen because you were fighting for what your people thought. The people that put you in office, so why not get out there, why not march with them. Not a councilmen marched with us none of them.

Walter Evans- None of them stayed?

Gerald Fanion- No, none of the council stayed.

Walter Evans- This brief council meeting.

Gerald Fanion- Actually they adjourned the council meeting and they left in the police car also, I am assuming that they did. So then we took over stage and we started talking to the men and we decided we were going to walk down Main St. At this point there was a lot of feelings and emotions involved and after so much was said that we finally went out into the street.

Joan Beifuss- Gerry was that arranged with the police?

Gerald Fanion- Well no, we wasn't considering any arrangements. I am using we a lot not to say that they you know, I, but I was very much involved with them but I fell I can justify my position as community relations as trying to keep a lid on the situation and no leader of ours of COME, COME wasn't organized then but none of the leaders had implied we do anything like break out any windows or turn over any cars, I want this very clearly, I want you to understand this very clearly, we were just going to walk in protest down Main St. We felt there had been an injustice against us and as in protest we are going to show this, not on the curb as we had been walking but down the middle. So the street police they call (muffled) and they just blocked the street off.

Walter Evans- Before you go into this, this going don Main St. could we go back into what was the attitude of the police in this council meeting after the councilmen left?

Gerald Fanion- Well they stood under the directions of inspector Evans, Sam Evans I believe. They said we would have to leave the auditorium and but they didn't put any force because I guess they knew it was possibly ill advised because there really had been some trouble in there had they tried to make anybody leave out you know. But they stood on each end of the stage...(Tape End)