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Report on Loeb Thursday's Disturbances

On last Thursday, March 28, 1968, the city of Memphis was rocked by an outburst of violence. This was the first time that the city had experienced such a thing and it will probably experience that much more violence if it does not act in good faith toward the striking workers.

To get down to the problem at hand I interviewed two people, who participated in last Thursday's march, which was led by Dr. Martin Luther King.

The first person I interviewed was a young man. His name was James Thunder, not his real name, but I will call him that now. James is 22 yrs. Old, he participated in the march on last Thursday and this is his account of what happened.

On Thursday, March 28, 1968, I participated in the march led by Dr.

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Martin Luther King. I like all the rest were marching had my placard and was really looking forward to enjoying the march. As I rounded the corner of Beale and Main, I heard something which sounded like glass being broken. I turned around and saw people scattering all over the place, some were dodging bricks and bottles, others were looking for a place to hide. By now the police had arrived on the scene, telling everyone to turn around and head back to the church, the policemen began beating on them and pushing them. Sometimes as many as 2 or 3 policemen would attack one person at a time. One lady was knocked down and beaten about the head until the blood started pouring from her head. I made it back to the church and was sitting down. All of a sudden tear gas started coming into the church. I knew then that it was time for me to leave.

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Mr. Thunder's statement ended right there and it was apparent that the policemen did not use good judgment in handling the situation.

The next person I interviewed was a young lady whose name I do not care to mention. I will call her Geraldine Riley. Miss Riley is 17 yrs. Old, and she also participated in the march last Thursday.

She told me that, the march started off peacefully until she saw some boys throw rocks and bottles into windows. Fortunately for her she had not got exactly on Main Street. She and some friends of hers, ran into a nearby home. She told me that as she looked out the window of the home, she could see the policemen beating people needlessly. Anyone that they happened to run upon, got his with the policemen's

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sticks, or they had mace sprayed into their face and then they were beaten.

From these two eyewitnesses accounts by these two people, I can conclude that it was an error on both parts.

The young people who started the disturbance by breaking out the windows ruined what was to be a perfect march.

The policemen did not use good judgment in handling the situation and virtually they have set the people that participated last Thursday in the march, against them.

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