

What a Weekend!!!

It all started with a march on Memphis led by Dr. Martin L. King Thursday March 28, 1968, approximately 11: a.m. I did not participate in the march but from an interview with Mrs. J. J. Johns of 980 Getaway, I learned of sum of the horrible incidents that she was an eyewitness to that day. I also interviewed others for events of that day. I was an eyewitness to uses of police brutality. Throughout the rest of the weekend Mrs. Johns was a traffic director until March 28, 1968 when she was so scared on the job that she went home and phoned in to resign. After resigning she went to the Clayborn Temple where thousands of people were waiting to march on Memphis for the sanitation workers and other things that the Negro people of Memphis want. As stated by Mrs. Johns "The march started out to be a very peaceful act, I was just about in the middle of the long procession. We had reached Beale and Second when we were told to turn back. Naturally, we wanted to know why but we could hear screams from up ahead and windows breaking. I saw the fellows breaking the windows of Pape's and taking clothing out. These did not at all look like school boys, but like thugs? We were pushed back in such a

hurry and people were running and screaming so, that I was pushed into a cafe. Looking out for 2 or 3 minutes I saw policemen swinging long clubs and spraying tear gas, and we closed the door. Later a man opened the door to look out, a policeman's club hit him in the back of the head and burst his head. Blood shot in all directions; the police kept swinging and never looked back. They were hitting old and young, innocent and guilty, using profanity to their utmost to women, children or anyone else, they didn't care. When we finally got out of the cafe, the man who was hit was telling the police what happened, and one said, "Go swear out a warrant against the whole damn police station," and they all laughed. Tear gas on Beale street was like a cloud of smoke. I made my way home in a flash and I hope I never live through anything like this again.

Mr. John's daughter, Jane, age 17, was lost from her mother during the confusion. She was told to go back to the church. She told me, "He went back to the church and it was filled with tear gas. I couldn't stay there. Somehow I made my way through the crowd and came home."

Mr. John Dol, age 21, of 376 Run Fast St. said, "at Vance and Butler the fellows were attacking the police, naturally they fought back. In most instances the police were taking advantage of people because they thought they were marshers. They were making people get inside off of their own porches and using profanity in all instances."

I saw a group of young men passing through the park with pants which I know cost \$30 a pair and each one had several pairs. One boy had one shoe and I asked where they had come from. He said, "they were looting on Beale St. When I asked why, he told me "It's not that I need these things; it's just that I get a good feeling taking something from the White man, I mean any white man, which I feel has taken from my race. See this one shoe; he's lost something, and I've gained it, one shoe."

Thursday ended with a curfew for the weekend from 7:00 p.m. until 5:00 a.m., set by the "great" Mayor Loeb, who started the whole mess. All types of law enforcement agencies were called into the city. Violation of the curfew was supposedly punishable by arrest; but, from many reports and from what I saw, Morris' boys, these Southern, rednecked white helmeted, cowardly semi-klanmen, honkies which we call State Troopers asked no questions but severely beat anyone they saw on the streets.

Twenty-year-old Harry of 790 More
 was getting out approximately 7:30 a.m.
 Friday when he saw the State Troopers surround
 a young man who was on his way home from
 work, hem him up against a wall and
 him. They asked no questions but afterwards told
 him, "Sit on home you black nigger."
 in the Le Moyne Gardens.

Friday night, while sitting on the porch of
 1090 Mississippi Blvd. watching the
 to the night, I saw a man who was driving a
 black car in front of a long line of State Troopers.
 The Trooper pulled up beside the car and yelled,
 "pull over nigger." The man pulled over in
 front of Vick's Grocery on the opposite side of the
 street. All the Trooper's cars stopped and they all
 got out so did the man get out of his car. A police
 man started hitting him with his club, the man
 stepped back and what did he do? They
 "hit in on his head like a piece of watermelon."
 I said, "hit him down town." "hit him"

Later on Friday night a man was
 in front of the house next door to me
 friend. The Troopers happened to be on duty
 about this time and stopped. They hit; but sprayed
 tear gas all in the car and then asked
 she was doing. The Trooper asked the man
 questions, another Trooper came to the side
 and slapped a friend who was the face. I told
 him to go get his friend and get the hell out of

from there. They waited until they did, then left.

Saturday, while driving around the city, I saw national guards in green uniforms with bayonets on their guns, guarding streets and business places.

Everything was quiet Sunday Monday morning at approximately 9:15 a.m. I entered Jimmie Chu's grocery at the corner of Walker and Neptune with a friend. The windows were boarded, there was no glass, and no customers other than my friend and I. Jimmie and his wife looked angry but he faked a smile anyway. Then he said, "This is bad. These people wrong. Shouldn't do this to all people; if mad at some, go to some, not to all."

Yes, this has been a weekend to remember and I mean, "What a weekend!!!"