

abusive, insulting language and brutality by
 Policemen, and looting by teenagers ran rampant
 in the city of Memphis on March 28, 1968.

Sometime between 11:30 A.M. and 12:30 P.M.
 a Negro protest march was proceeding up
 Beale street to Main street when teenagers
 and young adults started breaking windows. The
 marchers were instructed by Mr. Jesse Turner,
 President of the Memphis of the N.A.A.C.P. to
 turn around and march back to the Church
 on Hermans street because of the rioting and
 looting. I turned to march back to the
 church, but seeing the long line of people
 behind me and hearing the breaking of
 windows and with sticks and rocks flying
 through the air, I decided to break from
 the crowd and go up McCall street. I was
 with my friends and I crossed Main street and
 started up McCall where we were confronted
 by police officers and told to "get on back
 down there gals". We tried to explain to the
 officers that we wanted no part of the
 violence that was going on down on Main
 street.

could see sticks and rocks flying through the air. At this time the police officers ran pass us toward the crowd and we turned and ran to a priest who was standing by a car across the street, who escorted us to Front Street.

In interviews with several people who remained with the marchers, I was able to secure the following account of what happened:

Mr. James Jones stated that he was standing by his place of business on Beale Street after the street was practically cleared when a policeman told him to "get your damn black ass off the street". When he replied to the officer that his abusive language was not necessary, he was knocked to the ground by this officer and joined by three more officers who beat him.

While riding in an ambulance behind the march was Dr. W. E. Smith who stated that he observed a young man who took a stick and broke the window in a liquor store.

He and other teenagers started taking liquor from the store across the street he saw the police beating a man who was standing in front of his store. He beat the man off pushing him back into his store finally falling on his back on the floor, while young adults were running in and out of the store with merchandise.

The destructive action and the looting that took place on that Thursday cannot be condoned by any law abiding citizen. The question remaining, is why did it happen? The news media would lead one to believe that Dr. King and the other leaders of the march were responsible, saying that they deserted the march. This statement is untrue. Dr. King and the other ministers were never actively leading the march. Teenagers were running along the sidewalk and in front of the leaders. Dr. King and the ministers did what any law abiding citizen would have done when violence erupted. The answer to why this riot occurred, I think, can be found in the denial of basic working request of the sanitation workers.

The many underlying grievances in the Negro community and the general mistrust Negroes have for whites. All of these factors precipitated an atmosphere of tension which resulted in violence.

The abusive language and brutality of the policemen were uncalled for. I have concluded that the policemen for the most part are a group of racist and cowards. The insulting language used was not necessary and would not have been used on any other race. The brutality was never committed by one officer alone. It was always two or three in a group beating one unarmed person. I feel that if any one answer could be attributed as a cause of the riot, it would have to be the feeling of resentment and mistrust from both sides.