Anne Trotter- Memphis State oral history office. Project Memphis garbage strike. Tonight Thelma, we are interviewing Jared Blanchard from the city council. The interviewers are Carolyn Yellin, Anne Trotter, Tom Beckner. (Tape Break)

Carolyn Yellin- I will start the questioning Mr. Blanchard by, I don’t mean that to sound so forbidding the questioning. But we would like to know a little bit about your background, where you were raised what your education, where you went to school, were you had your major schooling. What brought you to this point in your life in fact.

Jared Blanchard- I was born in the year 1918 in a small town in Northwest Missouri’s Chillicothe, it is called. Population then and now about 7,300. It was known as the home of culture. (muffled) We had a very small Jewish population, quite small negro population and a substantial catholic population. The catholic’s all played good football and they beat us protestants pretty good so I was always afraid of catholic’s until I got to Memphis. Had some friends here in Memphis and got the shock of my life when I found out they were catholic’s and got to thinking about this thing. Went through the Missouri public school system through 9 grades and then made the switch to Central high here in 1932. Made the switch as the whole class of 1935 entered over there so there was no problem coming in at midterm of even junior year or senior year. My poor brother came in as a senior at Central and was a lost ball in the high weeds over there he never had a chance. In the spring of senior year, one of my teachers asked me where I was going to college and I told him, well perhaps I should tell you I participated in athletics at Central, played football and basketball and was on the track team.

Anne Trotter- Were you known as Doc Blanchard in those days?

Jared Blanchard- No that was an air force manufacturing thing. Some wonderful stories about that if you have 4 hours.

Anne Trotter- Well if you have 4 hours we certainly do.

Jared Blanchard- Its not relevant. Anyways I was going up to the university of Missouri I hoped on an athletic scholarship. My brother had finished one year and then dropped out and worked a year here and he was about to go back to his enter his second year. My Latin teacher and my speech teacher suggest I apply to Yale college. I told them I thought they were crazy, but they weren’t because the principal at Central was a great Yale enthusiast and he managed to get me a scholarship. I spent 4 great years in Newhaven and then went back to Missouri again thinking I would practice law with my brother who was going to practice in southwestern Missouri. I attended the law school a couple years and then the draft caught me in 1941. Of course at Yale I was generally associated with people of other races. I recall in the graduate school there were a few negroes and a lot of Indians and of course Europeans but that is fashionable. In my class one or two negroes.
Carolyn Yellin- May I interrupt a minute to ask if as you think back now does this seem more significant in your life than it did at the time this exposure to these people who were from different backgrounds. Or did you give it considerable thought at the time?

Jared Blanchard- At the time it was apparent to several of us from outside of the New England knot where Yale then got most of its people, now it does not. We had been subjected to a truly remarkable gathering of souls. That is one of the great things about these Ivy league classes. Cy Vance, Bill Bundy, Bob Tad, Governor let’s see, New Hampshire, Governor of Pennsylvania, Scranton.

Carolyn Yellin- Where these all from Yale?

Jared Blanchard- All classmates of mine.

Carolyn Yellin- Classmates.

Jared Blanchard- Yes Maam. I knew George Bundy, perhaps, well George is brilliant and a class behind us. I taught with George Bundy I am one of the only ones in the world.

Carolyn Yellin- What did you teach him?

Jared Blanchard- AN office can't (muffled).

(Laughs)

Anne Trotter- That we could have another 4 hours of tape on.

Jared Blanchard- Fortunately I don’t remember anything about it and I am sure he doesn’t either, but Bill and I roomed together at Fort. Mammoth for about 8 months after we were commissioned and that was a great experience. There are two negros in the OCS class by the way. I had no doubt that the major factor number 1 was my mother and my father because I never heard them say an unkind word, although we were practically run out of this little town in Missouri when the bank went broke. Dad was the vice president and he was accused of stealing all the money caused the bank to break in 1931 and a lot of people believed this. He spent an awful lot of time for the next 18 years paying off some debt he had incurred because of double indemement of stock. This has caused us to take a very dim view of that town.

Anne Trotter- I wonder how many other bank presidents did that went broke in 1931.

Jared Blanchard- It wasn’t long. I am sure that all these attitudes are very basic, they start at home. Then you either develop them or you don’t and we just didn’t dislike people, black, white, yellow, Jew. And I learned to like cabbage you see. So I never really had any problems. With a great broad base...

Anne Trotter- Would you tell...
Jared Blanchard- Which is Yale’s you really get something.

Anne Trotter- Would you tell the story about the enlisted man that hit you.

Jared Blanchard- The enlisted man who hit me?

Anne Trotter- I got it from Downing Prior.

Jared Blanchard- I would have to kind of run that by me once, how did this happen?

Anne Trotter- We were...(Tape Break)

Jared Blanchard- Hardwig Pures Posert, in reappoint Coff first he said a second among other things, whether the chaplaincy at this time should embody an activist concept of the role of the church in society. There was differences in emphasis but to the majority there was no doubt that if the church and if religion were to be important to undergraduates and to the students generally it had to be actively involved and in current and social issues. So they appointed Bill Coff naturally. I just think Yale is great.

Anne Trotter- This is this month’s copy of the alumni magazine?

Jared Blanchard- Of the alumni magazine yeah. There were two negros in class in officer candidate school, and they were real fine fellows. I remember one was name Camel and I don’t remember a thing about he other except that he was a short stout man. Neither one lasted more than 3 weeks. They were great soldiers and terrible students. The same problem we had in Jeter today in Shelby County, and Hamilton, Manassas, and Burkman and all the other negro schools.

Anne Trotter- With the ROTC?

Jared Blanchard- Well no I mean they just don’t prepare them, they don’t prepare them. We have a guy up there now from one of the negro schools and his first two years at Yale are devoted exclusively to keeping his nose out of the water, just barely alive. He had an illness in the second year of seven weeks of course hurt. So we keep him in. The third year he does so well he is one of 16 kids selected as a scholar of the house senior year and this is 16 out of 1,050. He is one of them. And he nearly breaks out, just had trouble staying in. That was a great influence and there can be no doubt about the Yale class of 1939, and all of those achievements keep pushing it and pushing it. Yale has a great sense of decency. Very very little (muffled) persona around that campus. And then of late I have been reminded that they lynched the negro in the late 20’s in northwest Missouri. The newspapers carried the account of it, and we could damn near smell that thing 75 miles away. They reached into a jail, lynch mob, and got him out of jail.

Anne Trotter- How old were you at the time?
Jared Blanchard: I was 10 or 1..

Anne Trotter: I was going to say you weren’t even in your teens?

Jared Blanchard: Very (muffled) Bit we knew about it. Then a remarkable thing happened in 1941 I was a second year law student and a brilliant woman about 26, 27, her name was Lucille Blewford. She wanted to enter the journalism school at university of Missouri which was pretty eminent then. Which it is still good but in those days they always said Columbia was second, university of Missouri was first. Particularly if you were from Missouri.

Anne Trotter: Well we at Northwestern said Northwestern was first.

Jared Blanchard: Excuse me maam. Well anyway you have a great one and the graduate school of journalism is quite good also and Mrs. Blewford wanted to attend. She had been out of college and she had been reporting for one of the Kansas City papers if I recall it. Of course the registrar denied her admission because she was black. I pointed out to her that 30 miles away in Jeff City was a separate but equal Lincoln Journalism school facility, separate but equal. I was living with a preacher, lived with him 3 years. Great man. He and I made most of those trials. Man in Houston was chief council of NAACP. He conducted the trial from beginning to end, great man, brilliant, solid, good sense, had everything about 6 feet 5. Now he must have played tackle. Well Mr. Houston was great and Mr. Blewford was great. She knew more about the university of Missouri journalism school than the registrar did by far. She told him how many books they had in the library, who the (muffled) professors were. She was just great. I thought she dominated the trial. After it was all over the jury found that the library in Lincoln in Jeff City was equal too the library at the university of Missouri Columbia. That is like comparing the library of, it would be a junior high school, with the Library of Congress. But our courts all the ay through and you couldn’t overturn that jury verdict there was no way.

Anne Trotter: A jury of her peers?

Jared Blanchard: That is right well they were all white. They held the faculty at Lincoln to be equal to the faculty at Columbia and all this was really a beautiful piece of some superb hypocrisy. And it was very obvious. But there was one other thing that happened there.

Anne Trotter: And that troubled you at the time?

Jared Blanchard: You bet it troubled me.

Tom Beckner: What role did the minister play in this?

Jared Blanchard: He and I were trying to determine later on who dominated the trial. I insisted that Houston did because lawyers are my here and after I finished he just tore me to pieces, he said Blewford dominated the trial. She knew more about
the university of Missouri than anyone in the whole room. And what is best she had the best mind in the room. Then he documented all that for me in great length. We had two evenings but the legal Cu Da Gras, I can’t remember this trustee name. He lived in Kansas City and he was a Harvard man, let’s say 08 law school something like that. Trustee version is a lawyer and a good lawyer, very successful. One of the things they were having him prove, just couldn’t let this woman in because it would water down the quality of this great white class in Columbia Missouri. He made quite a to do about this, and after all this was tremendous, Houston was a great lawyer. I never heard Thurgood Marshal in action but Houston was something else. He stood up all 6 feet 5 of this courtly human being and said, now Mr. Trustee, called him of course by his name. What law school did you attend. Then he built it up which was great. Harvard 08 Law. Any of your classmates in the court room with you? Well at this point you see it is very obvious what is coming. You don’t know exactly what the twist is but you can feel it now. And it got real quiet on that witness stand and finally this voice said yes. Mr. Houston said, well can you identify your classmate, and he said yes. Well then it got real quiet and there is a long pause and a small you. Then the court room got real quiet because it is about to come. And he said well now Mr. Trustee did my presence at your class in 08 Law, water down the quality of that great Harvard law class. The man never answered the question, he didn’t need to, there was no answer he could get. Well you really get sick of whites when you act like the whites acted in that case. My preacher and I got sick of the whole thing. He had me teaching Sunday school about that time.

Anne Trotter- Where did the trial take place?

Jared Blanchard- Columbia Missouri. USA. This, Anne, you should know. This was in a county, Boone County Missouri that is as Delta as Quitman county Mississippi. It is the darndest thing you have ever saw.

Anne Trotter- Because it was settled from the south?

Jared Blanchard- I think so but I really don’t know why is that all I know is it was deep south north of the Missouri river and it was deep south, really amazing.

Anne Trotter- That’s interesting because actually I was in Northwestern in journalism school during some of those years and there was a man in graduate school from Lincoln university in Jefferson City Missouri who would come to Northwestern to get journalism training because he was not admitted to University of Missouri journalism school. I have been sitting here listening with fascination to this story. He had to come to Northwestern.

Jared Blanchard- Why of course.

Anne Trotter- I supposed that perhaps he felt that since he was going to have to pay tuition and so forth. I don’t know what his reasons were but he was the most able man, he was an older man in fact who probably, I think he was teaching something and he took a year and came to Northwestern for journalism,
Jared Blanchard- I really don’t remember how old she was it sort of runs in my mind actually that she was about 30. It doesn’t make any difference because the principle is the same whether you 10 or 20 or 100. She was denied the opportunity for a good education. We denied it of her and our courts sustained it all the way up and down the line. It is just as bad Emmet Tills murderers going unconvicted. And of course we soldiered with him over there in North...

Anne Trotter- Were you all a integrated unit to North (Berma)?

Jared Blanchard- No.

Carolyn Yellin- Now what branch of service were you, what branch of the army?

Jared Blanchard- I was drafted into the united states signal corps. When the war broke out and Pearl Harbor they hit by then applied, I was no longer a one year wonder, and I applied to Officer Candidate School and was commissioned in the signal corps in 42’. Went overseas in May of 43’ mother’s day of 1943 a good day to leave.

Anne Trotter- Sad day to leave.

Jared Blanchard- Served on the Berma Road on an administrative capacity. We built the road and the airfields and all that.

Carolyn Yellin- Just like John Reid.

Jared Blanchard- Precisely. But curiously, of course when you seen the British (muffled) leagues you knew you were looking at a black man, there was never any doubt about that. But a lot of the Chinese if you could have just done something about the eyes there was no way you could tell them from the black men. They were just as black, a lot of them. We saw jack prisoners who looked just as black as many of these people you see down Main St. today. They weigh the eyes and you can’t tell the difference. We have kicked two or three American officers out of our club because they were black because we were segregated, but we let all those British negro officers from South Africa come in because they were British. And the Indians, a lot of them are as black as the Ace of spades and we let all of them in.

Carolyn Yellin- This troubled you at the time?

Jared Blanchard- Of course it troubles you.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you discuss this with people at that time, did you take stands on it?

Jared Blanchard- No never. This was the army and the thing was at war and this was no time for a social conscience except that you cannot help but note these things and can’t help but wonder what is going on. This man is blacker than that man and that man can’t come in because he is one of our blacks and this guy can come in because he is an Indian. An injun.
Anne Trotter- (muffled)

Jared Blanchard- I have a Gerka knife back here, brought it with me. It is a great weapon, delightful. And they are great people, great people. Our security finally in Mlanow, Berma was Italian Gerka rangers. God they were great people. They killed those Chinese every night. (Laughs)

Jared Blanchard- Just kind of mocking them. Lying around the next morning, looters. Gerkas never worried about that, stay out of my warehouse. That was an incident though, real funny, I almost forgot about that, Anderson hit me in Bombay.

Carolyn Yellin- This was the incident we were referring to?

Jared Blanchard- Oh it was no big deal he just, we all...I brought these kids over on a freighter. There was a doctor, we got lost. We are the only people that could have fought the whole war on a freighter, between Jersey City and Bombay. It was great. Except that there was no way to keep men happy and anyway.

Tom Beckner- Anderson was an enlisted man?

Jared Blanchard- He was an enlisted man. And we dropped the doctor, he went up into the Persian Gulf or something. We wound up in Bombay and we went out and got drunk one night. This was a mistake and I knew it at the time. Anderson got to worrying about is girl and things at home, and I was trying to cool him off and he hauled off an hit me and it hurt. That’s all there was to that. I shouldn’t have gotten into that.

Carolyn Yellin- Was he a tackle too? Had he been a tackle too?

Jared Blanchard- He was a big boy, big kid from up in North Dakota, South Dakota something like that. The next morning he didn’t know anything that had happened, this was no big deal at all.

Anne Trotter- How did you get into politics in Memphis?

Jared Blanchard- I don’t know.

Carolyn Yellin- Well I was just going to say but none the less you did not press charges when you were hit by an enlisted man...

Jared Blanchard- Of course not and you wouldn’t either.

Carolyn Yellin- Even though you were an officer and according to the strictest interpretation of Army rule an officer should not be hit by an enlisted man.

Jared Blanchard- I supposed than an enlisted man wouldn’t hit me too.

Carolyn Yellin- But under the circumstances...
Jared Blanchard- Oh the circumstances....But we had a curious thing happen. I had a squadron in the Korean war in the 5/16 (muffled) for about 7 or 8 months. And of course it was integrated but then everything, you see we were segregated in war too. I don't know about anybody else but we were, there were white officers running thee negro truck driving outfits and they were all black. Non-coms, everything but the officers. One or two negro officers, this was one of the occasion I mentioned earlier. Well this guy wanted into the pub one day and we had southern colonel no siree you would not get in. But in my outfit we never had any...we were kind of a hodge podge. There were no negros, totally segregated. But by 51', 52', and 53' of course things had changed and my supply squadron was integrated so we had a big deal, we were going to have a party in Memphis. We are out at the airport, been on active duty for two years in the Korean thing. So we leased a club on South 61, some one of these joints that had a juke box. We leased it, you know get them all out and let us in there, because we knew about the problem. We had been in there two hours when the sheriff of Shelby County came to the door and said we had to break it up because there were blacks and whites dancing together in there. This wasn’t so. They had their girls, I never saw a white and a black dancing together and it wouldn’t have mattered to me if they had but I was too far gone by then. The (muffled) keep them separated, and anyway you might integrate and then procreate and reproduce like they did in the Delta. So we watched this and it was real good party and ewe had to break it up. The sheriff said we had to break it up. I talked to him on the phone, that made me so mad I had to spit.

Carolyn Yellin- How long had you been back in Memphis then?

Jared Blanchard- Oh I came back after the war...

Carolyn Yellin- This is what we are getting back to.

Jared Blanchard- Born and reared here and she is from the university of Missouri, she went to Stevens two years and then graduated in Columbia and worked on a newspaper up there by the way, for a guy named Jake Hammill who was a (muffled). Came back and we were married in 47'. So this is now 1952, that is 5 year after I have been back home. That is about the end of the, of that business. I regularly, I go back to Newhaven regularly. Should have thought a lot more about a lot of different things. As for example probably one of my dear friends who was born a republican and a millionaire and Lobe is with dupont money. Finds no home in our party. He is a democrat today. The Bundy's are very interesting, Big George is a republican and Bill is a democrat. So each one of them finds a comfortable home somewhere.

Anne Trotter- George was willing to do graduate work at Harvard?

Jared Blanchard- I would rather prefer, well they both did actually.

Anne Trotter- He and my advisor from graduate school were in the same graduate class.
Jared Blanchard- Well he was Dean too you know. Well obviously got to bring a little culture enlightenment.

Carolyn Yellin- I agree. Coming from the home of culture.

Jared Blanchard- Oh they are great people. We get together every summer. Have quite an interesting time.

Carolyn Yellin- Are you going this summer?

Jared Blanchard- Yeah. Lord willing, no strikes.

Anne Trotter- You will have a great deal to tell them this summer, or they will have many questions to ask you this summer.

Jared Blanchard- Well I have spent, matter of fact when Dr. King was murdered three of us were having a great outing. This guy from Hartford was born near Little Rock and for 30 years I was trying to get him to come back and see North Arkansas, it is a beautiful part of the world. Well he came back he and his wife, we played golf in Houston, we were going fishing in North Arkansas, and then I mean it really went right through the roof and disrupted things.

Carolyn Yellin- Well now that pretty much brings us up to date on the lead in and should we move on to the strike itself and getting into the events that we really want to talk a little more about?

Jared Blanchard- Well I always wanted to get into politics and answer Anne’s question and I really love politics. The prospect of mixing it up. (Poltzerch?) was a most remarkable man. He was a safartic Jew, tell her there is no way she can pronounce that. And without any form of meanness, just one of the greatest guys I have ever seen. Well I...

Anne Trotter- I come work for you when you run for re-election.

Jared Blanchard- Don’t do that.

Anne Trotter- you aiming for mayor instead?

Jared Blanchard- Oh no no, thank you I am really happy, really happy. Always wanted to get into politics, just never could afford it, probably can’t afford it now but that is a little bit different. If you like competition, you like competition and you like politics. If you like people and you kind of like to work things around and get people to respond then I guess. I am beginning to like politics I have only been in it 4 months, how do you know after 4 months.

Carolyn Yellin- How did you come to the decision to run? Was it suggested by someone else that you run?
Jared Blanchard- Well Whit Brown and all the rest of these guys were selling this new form of government and they just kept saying over and over there are lots of people who made the commission form of government work and work well. But they wouldn’t involve themselves in it and it was felt that if you have this one guy who is the executor, the manager, he runs the show, the mayor. He is full time and then he has experts working for him. Then you got a council of 13 people on it who are part time folks not as involved, doesn’t take as much time. Perhaps could bring a little more talent than had brought to bear on the legislative functions of the commission. But the government ought to work out very effectively and I think it can and it ultimately will. The fact that it hasn’t yet, god you don’t get crises like this. Many people don’t get them in a lifetime, before we were eve well born even. Certainly called to act like heroes, and veterans and people will some wisdom and knowledge and they just couldn’t do it.(Poltzerch?) always said either like combat, he kept talking about touching people. He said, man I don’t like people to touch me and I don’t like touching. My son is a combat man and he is always giving me the shoulder and it is just about that simple. You like to rough it up, I think if you like people and you like to rough it up then politics is great.

Carolyn Yellin- And you found you like it?

Jared Blanchard- Oh I love it, I thoroughly enjoy it. The process I don’t understand but I think you can acquire a little understanding of this process and all of us need to do that.

Carolyn Yellin- How about the strike moving on right to the strike. Here you had been in the city council for only scarcely born as you say. Does this get to some of the events that you really had a few thoughts about that you really wanted to get into the record.

Jared Blanchard- Well nothing in particular, I am with you.

Carolyn Yellin- Alright then, what was your initial reaction to the news that the strike had been called?

Jared Blanchard- Surprised. We had been reading the paper just like you all had been reading the paper and you probably knew more I am sure you did, a lot more about the problem down here than we knew. To this day I don’t really know, I don’t really know. These negros are just incredible. I have tried and tried and tried to have them give me a listing, just a brief statement of their grievances. I haven’t gotten it yet.

Carolyn Yellin- Who have you asked?

Jared Blanchard- I would rather not say.

Carolyn Yellin- Oh okay.
Jared Blanchard- Because he is one of my, I love the guy. But I can't get it out of him. Supposed to have lunch with him the other day, he didn't show up for lunch.

Carolyn Yellin- You think this is playing it close to their vest or simply or...

Jared Blanchard- No I don't Mrs. Yellin, I think....I don't know, who am I to guess what is going on in their minds. But for sure they have been terribly busy and terribly occupied an they have good excuses for not doing the things that I want them to do. They don't think they are important. Any business they want done they get with it right now and they knock it out, and do A good job on it. They are suspicious of all whites and I am sure that is the way it is going to be for a long time. I could not and have not, for example, when you hear that they won't let them go to the bathroom down there, all day long! You go early in the morning and then you don't got he rest of the day because you are black. But they wouldn't say this.

Carolyn Yellin- Down where?

Jared Blanchard- The sanitation department. This is one of the rumors I have never been able to run down. And it may be good if you can handle it you see, but for a lot of human beings in the world they just can't handle it physically and this is a (muffled) thing. It either came from a guy who was being a horrible liar because he knew what the policies were or this is true.

Carolyn Yellin- Have you checked this, as a city councilmen, have you asked someone in the sanitation department?

Jared Blanchard- No I steered clear of that because I, well let's be blunt about it. The other day I made a, had a real good chance to talk to some folks down in Whitehaven and I thought made a great Lobe speech. Of course what the paper prints is always a little different than what you say, particularly the context, shading and the way it comes out because it was a pro-Lobe speech. Poor guy had been beat to death. Well he called me up and chewed me out and Charlie Blackburn called me and chewed me out very good, because the way it came out in the paper I m really giving him hell. But it wasn't that way at all, but what impressed me about their two calls that neither of them yet understand that there are racial problems in the garbage department. These guys think they have been discriminated against because they are black and the hospital people down there right now, and Henry doesn't believe it. Charlie Blackburn doesn't believe it, now Odell Horton believes it. Because he knows.

Carolyn Yellin- We are speaking on Monday May 27th which is a day when 50 hospital workers are staging a sit-in and Mr. Blanchard has just come from city hall.

Jared Blanchard- There were 50 early this morning, this is a very involved problem but when I left there has been as many as 300 or 350 to demonstrate.

Carolyn Yellin- Are they hospital workers?
Jared Blanchard- Yes maam.

Carolyn Yellin- So and the point being what they think is now the important thing in this case not what we think it is but we must work from what they think is the way you see it.

Jared Blanchard- Absolutely, otherwise you will never see the problem, have no way to resolve the problem and this is where the mayor had so much trouble. He is looking at this thing from the top of a white shiny horse. He couldn’t get down there and look at this thing from a black man’s eyes. When finally in February this began to seep through my unconscious that was when the thing really began to shift in my view...

Carolyn Yellin- Could you give us a date, or could you speak of an incident when you were aware of this upwelling from the unconscious, an incident rather than a date?

Jared Blanchard- Well I don’t know if I can really because...

Anne Trotter- How about the (muffled).

Jared Blanchard- Oh I just got mad over that one. You mean the one Fred Davis held?

Anne Trotter- Yeah.

Jared Blanchard- Well you see up to this time and that was maybe the 18th of February or something around there.

Anne Trotter- 20th.

Jared Blanchard- Well you see we were sure that it was purely and simply a matter of labor management. We whites were sure of it, the blacks kept telling us and we wouldn’t believe them. wouldn’t listen to them. That day I saw the first maybe hour of it and I knew Fred was in for trouble because Fred has many great qualities but running a meeting, a nice meeting is not one of his strongpoints and a tough one, it is a physical impossibility. You just can’t do it. So we heard we threw old Daniel into the lion’s den and they chewed him up pretty good. This should never have occurred but it did.

Carolyn Yellin- You saw it happening right before your eyes.

Jared Blanchard- I saw what they did to him and I saw some of these black boys cutting on him. The maneuvering out front where I was sitting was visible. I knew exactly what they were doing they were calling up the shock troops and I saw them snapping their fingers to call up the shock troops and that kind of thing. I knew Fred was in for trouble and there wasn’t anything I could do about it. So it was sometime after that the shock began to wear off. That was a shocking meeting, a real shocking meeting. We had gone out the back door once.

Anne Trotter- (muffled)
Carolyn Yellin- That is not your style is it? To take off out the back door, sneak out the back door.

Jared Blanchard- What I am really driving at I guess, is that it never happened at any particular moment. You go out the back door once in the city hall and then the Friday after Fred’s meeting and in all our glory and I take every bit of full blame for this because I had one just one of the votes that said let’s do it this way. In retrospect god it was terrible. We decided we would have a meeting with him and I was telling him what our pronouncement would be so that they could do what they needed to do to oblige. We went on over there and we drag these three negros along with us. Went out the back door and (muffled) and cut off the power so that these men from the sanitation department had no juice on the PA system and I heard Jim Lawson. I lingered. The only good thing I can say about my conduct is I didn't want to go and would have stayed if I had been left to my own desires but I didn't really, I wasn't sure about some things. I lingered, and from the wings I heard Jim Lawson calling for get us some microphones. I think that it really is curious but the whole review started from then on. Because I was sick of me going out the backdoor and cutting off the power so these guys can’t even talk. And of course we rocked the first police car about an hour and half later. It went right from that frustration on down Main St. to the south and when I looked out the window at about whatever it was 3:30 or 4:00 man there they went those gold helmets trotting down that street, just like when the convoy down to Oxford in the Meredith problem. Either one was equally bad. From then on, I think one of the real manarchronisms of Henry Lobe’s tour of duty in 1960 was that he ran on a platform to eliminate fear. Fear that has been engendered in that office and in city hall and up and down Main St. and throughout the entire arms of this great city. Ingram could never match it and the mayor still (muffled). Man this is something, this is something. Somewhere along the line I remembered Gwynn Awsumb and Louie in particular saying I am not going out that backdoor again. I may not get out that front door but I am going to start out of it. Gwynn said it and for a woman to say it with 12 men around that is pretty good. That was the first time it had been said. And Louie said, me too and from then on we all went out the front door and we all got out.

Carolyn Yellin- Without police escort?

Jared Blanchard- Without, and there again I didn't like all that police protection either because I didn't think these men were going to give us much trouble but the police were experts at it and I was just kind of a country lawyer and I didn’t know. But I didn't like it.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you make an attempt to learn from the men themselves what their grievances were? Did you feel the necessity when you speak of contact and this sort of thing, did you feel the necessity for direct communication with some of the sanitation workers?

Jared Blanchard- Not really, no not really.
Carolyn Yellin- I remember one of the points made in the paper was that Fred Davis, during that public works meeting wanted to hear from the workers themselves rather than the union people and there was an exchange saying they weren’t prepared to speak. As I recall none of them ever did speak?

Jared Blanchard- Well this was really what was cynical about this whole thing. Jesse Epps was standing up there at the podium, (muffled) Fred because Fred hadn’t given him adequate notice of the meetings. He said man if we had notice that you wanted people here to talk we would have had a few people here and they would have talked to you. And then he snapped his fingers. T.O. Jones popped up like a marionette and disappeared. Thirty minutes later they had 500 people in there because they didn’t have any notice you know, they didn’t know they were going to have that little old hearing down there. T.O. Jones can get up and get them there. I think Fred was sincere, honest and decent. There are many, many people around who don’t think that unions are the be all and end all of existence. Fred really wanted to know what the men thought. Figured this was a good way to find out, but he was doing battle with some professionals and they never would have let the men talk and nobody knows yet what the men really think. The preachers then took it over and I am not sure that they completely mirrored what the men want. But that is because I have a lot of this old plantation in me too. I think I could do pretty well by them if given a chance. So let them have their union. Well let’s mess it up because I am tired of you messing with me boy. And this is ok. But I didn’t really to answer your question, I didn’t feel any constraint to talk to the men, because we had failed in that effort with Fred and the men seemed remote. Anyway at that particular point I was mad.

Carolyn Yellin- And who were you mad?

Jared Blanchard- I was mad at Jesse Epps, I was mad at the union people. I was mad at the way that everybody on the other side was mistreating Fred Davis in particular. Because he was trying to do a piece of work and they wouldn’t let him. But that really only lasted one day because the next day was the Friday meeting in the auditorium where we cut off the power and really acted like blue-blooded heroes as we departed out the back door.

Carolyn Yellin- Were you angry then, or that wouldn’t describe...

Jared Blanchard- No.

Anne Trotter- Sick.

Jared Blanchard- Sick. Sick. Sick of me.

Tom Beckner- Did you react when Jim Lawson asked for the microphone?

Jared Blanchard- I sure did I tried to get him a microphone but....see the mayor has all the power and all the authority and I went up to his office and suggested that it wouldn’t hurt to turn on the power over there and by then they had started down
Main St. and it was too late. They were in a foul mood and I don’t blame them, I don’t blame them at all.

Carolyn Yellin- It is probably difficult to re-create these feelings and how are we doing on...

Anne Trotter- Fine.

Carolyn Yellin- Do we have a little more on this tape because...could you give a reading on your feelings as you think of them now of the progression of one feeling to another. This is truly a matter of tremendous interest. I think in that your course seemed to not follow the course of most of the other city councilmen. And the thing that caused you to take this course would be of great interest I think.

Jared Blanchard- Well there are a lot of things, first of all the oath of office is nothing or it is a something. When you take that oath to represent 600,000 citizens of the city you either believe it or you don’t. From time to time I would ask what I was doing for those 240,000 black citizens and the answer always came back not much.

Carolyn Yellin- Do you think Henry ever thought about this?

Jared Blanchard- No.

Carolyn Yellin- Do you think he has yet?

Jared Blanchard- No, he is still calling Gwynn and telling her what he owes his children.

Carolyn Yellin- His children?

Jared Blanchard- He owes his children some kind of a duty to be decent and consistent and this is a real thing for him. If it hadn’t been for Ned Cook I don’t know what would have happened to this city. I really don’t think Henry worries to much about him, it is a damn shame because he has got the makings of one of the really, well he has one or two shortcomings but he could be a great mayor. If he just listened to Cook he would be a great mayor.

Tom Beckner- He really listened to him.

Jared Blanchard- Well he used to listen to Downing some and to Ned Cook. I think he and Downing parted earlier than he and Ned.

Carolyn Yellin- Does he listen to Jim Manire anymore?

Jared Blanchard- Oh yeah, sure. It wasn’t till he calls Manire who is the first team that you finally settle the damn thing. Oh yeah, this is the first team, this is the big red one Manire.
Carolyn Yellin- I knew Manire is instrumentally important but I didn’t realize he was really first team.

Jared Blanchard- Well they had Hallie and Gianatti, Todd.

Carolyn Yellin- Yeah Hallie and Todd don’t get too much done.

Jared Blanchard- There is not too much going on either. What this was the way Henry wanted it during that period of time, this is of course here and there but finally after Johnson sends the word down through Ellington I guess but I assume that somebody spoke and said tell those jerks down there to settle that two bit thing. He puts in the first team and it is Manire and Manire gets the thing worked out in something like 10 days or two weeks. He listens to Manire and Walter Armstrong and John Highschool. But he won’t listen to Prior, he never did listen to me. Never did. I offered to save his bacon one afternoon. But back to your question.

Carolyn Yellin- In what way? Or could you discuss that?

Jared Blanchard- Not sure if I could.

Carolyn Yellin- What was your offer one afternoon?

Jared Blanchard- We had just had some kind of meeting in connection with the strike. This is in March sometime. Everybody had gone except Henry and Tom and I. I had made my pitch to the council and failed. The pitch was equating human life. Because by this time, I don’t know what happened. I think more than any other single thing is you do think about the alternatives and the possibilities and you do wonder if those black guys are laying it on the line straight to you because they had been telling you, all three of them told us over and over Andover.

Carolyn Yellin- This being Neders, Patterson and Davis had all been telling you?

Jared Blanchard- All three of them and the vote had just been going 10-3, 10-3, on every issue that involved the strike you see it was just 10-3. Then I began to wonder if maybe they were right about it. So I made a pitch and it was a real sorry and badly done pitch. I am not grumbling or beating on my hairy chest it was just badly done. In which I just said is it worth a life. Is this check off they want worth a life because I have got a notion for this things over somebody is going to get killed and then we are going to have to say yes, denying them the check off was worth this human life. I for one just can’t say this. I think there are a lot of things in life that are worse than giving them that check off. I had been getting this from arch conservative republicans of all people. Businessmen who said oh the check off that is not so bad, if that is all you have to give them then give it to them. I had been getting this all around town Boone mass country club. Make this great plea out there you see and I failed. The council just looked at me, human life, we are not going to lose any human lives. So here is the 4th nigger on the council. And from then on I was just about in that shape. Couldn’t swing it. So about a week later we wrapped up this meeting and Tom and I were sitting there and I had a feeling...
Carolyn Yellin- Tom...

Jared Blanchard- Todd. That the mayor needed to be loosed. I don’t care what you call it, he was painted into a corner. He was hoist on his own (muffled) It doesn’t matter a bit of difference what you call it there he was he was hooked. And sooner or later he was going to have his throat cut and it was so plain. I said Henry if you would just let me do this thing, I believe I can do it,. It was about he 15th of March now. I said I am not telling you it will be easy with this council because they are hard headed but if you would just move your head or wink an eye or give us some kind of a sign so I can get with these people and say Henry is going to veto what we do and he is going to raise King, he had done it on the Montgomery case which was nutty we bailed him out of that blasted thing and did a beautiful piece of work, and he still chews us out about it.

Carolyn Yellin- This was the Joel Montgomery?

Jared Blanchard- No maam this was the a Memphis housing authority. You see this Ingram appointee was trying to hang Montgomery...

Carolyn Yellin- Ok Fine.

Jared Blanchard- That would have been a persecution if he would have pursued and we got him off of that. We stopped persecuting this man or whatever. He looked at me and he said I just don’t understand you. This thing is wrong and then he went on and wouldn’t turn me loose. Because he is not going to have that union and well that very day he said I beat the strike, we have won it and now all we have to do is win the peace.

Anne Trotter- How did he figure he had beaten the strike?

Jared Blanchard- Because garbage was being picked up in east Memphis. He wouldn’t ride up Tillman or Johnson Ave., Bing Hampton, Orange Mound and look at the chaos down there were it really mattered. We can sort of take care of ourselves out here.

Carolyn Yellin- Did you go into any of those sections and see the garbage?

Jared Blanchard- Sure yes maam.

Carolyn Yellin- Did any of the other councilmen that you know?

Jared Blanchard- Oh yeah I am sure they did.

Carolyn Yellin- And they were aware that this was piling up and...

Jared Blanchard- It was real bad. But you see this thing I worked on I had...(Tape End)