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Eddie Jenkins, Memphis State University BSA, 1969

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Joan Beifuss- This is tape 3 Eddie Jenkins, Joan Beifuss and Walter Wade interviewing January 7th 1969.

Eddie Jenkins- Actually what had happened was that we had a, we had a, this was after I talked to Lobe they decided to have a march one Friday and this was the (muffled) of the liberal club, some in Memphis from the liberal club who had tried to form the student alliance and get it off the ground.

Joan Beifuss- Was the liberal club going to march with you?

Eddie Jenkins- Yes, in fact, they planned the whole thing, they were the ones that went through the whole thing, and the whole thing they prepared the signs and you know all that stuff. They were the ones that did that. And so they said well gee whiz look we are going to march in support of the garbage strike. Why don't you, you are black students and you are organizing and so on. You already organized in fact and if you work for the good of black students and the black community why don't you all march with us? And so some of us had already talked of it, they were talking to some of the others you know and so we said yes, this is a good thing. I had already been trying not get them to say look man we have got to come out and do something on campus and they said well we don't want to rock the boat because we are trying to get a charter...

Walter Wade- I remember you telling me that.

Joan Beifuss- Oh you weren't chartered yet?

Walter Wade- You said you felt if the black students association did anything as a group that the administration would probably be right on you.

Eddie Jenkins- Yes. Yes.

Walter Wade- Because of course the administration basically is conservative and therefore it hangs with the white establishment which more or less was following Henry in you know...I remember you telling me that.

Eddie Jenkins- And then too we didn't want to go through this hang up of not actually being an organization and being penalized for sponsoring some sort of an activity on campus without being recognized by the university you see.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah right.

Eddie Jenkins- And so this was one of the things that we were afraid of. So we said well look we won't march with you, we can't march with you as an organization we can't afford to march with you as an organization. So anybody that wants to march march. So we marched and I was all for it you know I grabbed my sign, give me a sign man, And we went out and we marched. I guess it was about at one time maybe

up to 75 of us and you know they dropped off and picked up dropped off and picked up.

Joan Beifuss- Now Ron where did you march around the...

Eddie Jenkins- Oh we left the old student center and we marched over to Patterson and went down to Walker and back down Walker past the Biology building and back up around the administration building over back around to the patio. And then I became the accidental speaker because I volunteered to tell them what happened when I went down. See what happened I went down to talk to Lobe you know I got the letter.

Joan Beifuss- Oh you made an appointment and went down and talked to him?

Eddie Jenkins- Well I went Thursday, open house (muffled) well I had to go downtown so I said well I am here I might as well go on up and see the mayor. I had already told the students that I was going to see the mayor and they said you know, what are you going to see the mayor for? I said look man I am sick of reading these lies in the paper I want to get the thing straight off, see he is going to lie too. I said look we know certain things, we know certain situations are like this and certain situations are like that but I wanted Ron to go down there, I wanted to go down there as a group the black student association to go down and talk to him. Because we were looking for some point to rally the students together and we were looking for some points to relate to the students and relate to the black community and you know get ourselves felt at that point. So what we did, they say, Ron was he was all wrapped up in student teaching and all that stuff so he did, I think (muffled) so he didn't do it. He said the best thing I can do is participate in COME what they doing down there. So I went down and talked to him I went to his office and we went through basically the same thing. He had his henchmen sitting there and every time that I would ask a question that he was too dumb to answer one of hem would jump up. Giannatti was sitting over there you know and I think...

Walter Wade- Oh you mean Giannatti would prevent him from answering your questions?

Eddie Jenkins- Giannatti answered you know before he.. he would say uh and boom somebody was there saying something and they had the reporter there to say, well you know Mr. Jenkins I can take anything you say down and print it in the paper you know. Of course I looked through all the papers.

Walter Wade- You never found it.

Eddie Jenkins- No because it was one question I really wanted to see if it would come out because I really went down there to ask him, if I thought that the relationship of the city to the employees was the same of basically that of any company or firm. That basically as far as the employee, employer relationship was concerned was basically the same, because what do they do, they work for wages just the same as anybody. Oh no no no. Giannatti jumped right in no no no. Because and he said

something and then Lobe took up where he left off, let me see what they call it. What they call it, it is not municipal it is something else. When you serve a public servant like the cops.

Joan Beifuss- Public employee?

Walter Wade- Well municipal employer or whatever.

Eddie Jenkins- Anyway what it all amounted to was that it wasn't the same that some with the welfare the people and so and so on and so on blah blah blah.

Joan Beifuss- Was the mayor cordial to you?

Eddie Jenkins- Oh yes.

Joan Beifuss- Did he seem glad you had come?

Eddie Jenkins- Well I don't think he was particularly glad that I came, but I don't think that any of them were particularly glad that I had come.

Joan Beifuss- Were a lot of other people waiting to see him also? That could hear this conversation?

Eddie Jenkins- Not a lot of other people, there were other people. You see his office is big enough where he can put them back and you can talk to him in low tones you know you have to really raise your voice.

Walter Wade- But the other people are actually waiting in the same room?

Eddie Jenkins- Well some of the open house things.

Walter Wade- I have never been up there.

Eddie Jenkins- Well that was, and this was sort of funny to me too there was a group from Memphis state out there, they had the angel flights down there, I don't know if they were going to dance for him or what. But they had, they were going to present him some kind of an award that day and here I was from Memphis state the smart nigger down there at the same time.

Joan Beifuss- When I saw the mayor I went with a group, when you got to see him personally do you get stuck sitting on that chair in front of his desk or do you get to go up and sit kind of next to him.

Eddie Jenkins- Oh no, the guy with the gun sits next to him. That was who sat next to him the day I was there. I sat on the chair and it is very uncomfortable.

Joan Beifuss- on the couch?

Eddie Jenkins- It is real plush and soft and all this business and you sit down there and your back goes way down the chair and your legs almost stick up like this and I

was almost thinking well Mr. Mayor he was turned around in his chair from his throne talking to me. And the reporter was writing and the whole bit. I had to sit out of the office until some little old ladies or something came out (muffled). Anyway, we talked and to me I really didn't get anything out of it because he didn't say anything. He talked but he really never answered any of my questions.

Walter Wade- well you simply found out first hand what was revealed throughout the whole thing and that was his mind was completely closed to any ideas but his own position and he has....

Joan Beifuss- Would you try to be objective in the thing.

Walter Wade- And that he had of course his attorney flanking him to step in, in case he happened to say anything that he wouldn't want for the record.

Eddie Jenkins- And this is what he did he said, he said I am not an attorney, Mr. Giannatti here, I asked him something and I can't remember what it was and he said Mr. Giannatti here can tell you isn't that right Frank and Giannatti started rattling off but gee whiz, this is the thing that got me, what did they do take a high school, I mean they had been calling me a little plough boy and all this bit. I mean he look like a plough boy when you look at him, when you look at his dress, his attire he look like a plough boy too. He was sweating you know his shirt all hanging out and belly hanging out and collar open. He doesn't look like the neat clean men and all this bit, not even the comfortable man. He just look like a sloppy Joe.

Walter Wade- I think he thinks that he will always be in his shirt sleeves gives him the common touch.

Eddie Jenkins- The homeboy image. Well you know he doesn't have to do that because I got the impression that he was real common right there that he almost came out of the ghetto, really, seriously. I mean from his, I don't know the whole bit but this is what was quite ironic to me here we are this is a man that is the head of 500,000 people and he can't even, he hollers that he is not a lawyer, he is not even educated in all the statutes of law. He has to have an attorney to explain this time and this made me realize to me that his lack of potential to a certain extent. I thought he was pretty dumb, I think he is a good politician but a pretty dumb guy in a sense. What little respect I might have had for him, for his intelligence, was, he snuffed it right there.

Joan Beifuss- So did you go back to the black students and report that you had been down there?

Eddie Jenkins- Yes after the march I started telling them about what happened and so on and so on and so white kids you know, some of the white people started getting, I don't if they got scared or if they said well it looks better for you out there today. And so some of the white students said go on Eddie, keep talking keep talking you know. They said you know we are getting some people coming around keep talking. So then I started getting questions from the crowd.

Joan Beifuss- Was this any old building?

Eddie Jenkins- Out on the patio. Then I started getting questions from the crowds and the crowd started saying why this and why this, why do you have this sign over there that says think black. I remember particularly this one guys says why do you have that sign over there, if this is a problem of us all you know why do you segregate. Why do you have this sign over here think black. What is a white boy standing there with a sign that says think black. I said because the problem is black. You have basically 1,300 workers down there who are predominantly black. These people come from the black community and the black community is the poverty stricken area. The entire black community is the poverty stricken area. This is the ghetto, this is where your problems are and how are you going to solve your problems, you have to think about your problems first to solve them and if you problem is black how are you going to solve that problem without thinking black. You have to think black to think about, and so from that we had other people and we had some sort of dialogue at that time but I think the crowd got as big as....some of the people who were marching left and went to class and I think it got as big as maybe oh let me see how many people. As big as maybe 200 people standing around.

Joan Beifuss- Was it primarily a friendly crowd?

Eddie Jenkins- No. And apathetic purely objective crowd.

Walter Wade- But was it hostile?

Eddie Jenkins- No, they weren't hostile they were just there looking you know and really...

Walter Wade- (muffled) I would almost rather have a hostile crowd than a bunch of people that are apathetic.

Eddie Jenkins- At that point I got the impression look at this nigger out here clowning, I really did this was the impression that I got you know. Say well I guess another nigger out here clowning, here I am preaching about something that people are ready to die for and to them I am another nigger out here clowning. I said well anyway I will just clown on and plead our cause. So we went to that thing and then they say you did a good job that time Ed so we ought to have another march, so we planned a big one this time. A lot of people said why didn't you let us know so you could get in on the march, we wanted to march. People started the rest of the week asking questions beginning of next week, I think this was on Thursday we marched. And then next week people were asking questions why didn't you let us know so we could march they just heard about it. We didn't get any coverage at all in the papers.

Walter Wade- Downtown that was?

Eddie Jenkins- Tiger Rag. Nothing in the Tiger Rag. Oh yes well see this is the second one.

Walter Wade- This is the second one.

Eddie Jenkins- This is too big for no coverage at all. But then so we had planned another one and we planned it that Tuesday and it didn't go off that Tuesday so we said we will do it that Wednesday and they had been looking for me and finally got over and we made additional signs and so on and the liberal club they knew people on campus and they had gotten some of the faculty members and they knew faculty member friends who knew faculty members and they got other faculty members and so we went in and we planned, I told a lot of the black students we were going to have a march, be there, be there. And so we went about 12:00 and I had my ROTC suit and I had to go to ROTC. I went to ROTC that morning and they had to go on and pull my suit off, because I thought about marching with it on and they say no they will throw you out of the university if you do that. And by that time we had maybe 30 or 40 people, white people, standing around waiting to march. Faculty members and some students standing around waiting to march. So we said, I went in and I said black people we are going to have a march and (muffled) said the white students planned this too but this was the one that was sort of a coalition, but basically the white students planned that too, the liberal club. And so we said we are going to have a march and they were sitting there playing cards and eating and talking and listening to the radios and all this stuff. I say we are having a march in support of the garbage strikers. So by that time somebody had come in that morning and put out a little paper called the Apex and it was completely sympathetic to the east Memphis cause and said that the strikers should go off strike because they were endangering the health of the people in east Memphis, the good people in east Memphis who were working so hard. This is one of the two black people. Who were working so hard and had the nice homes and all of this stuff. In other words they really discredited the people in the ghetto who would really be hurt.

Walter Wade- They didn't count.

Eddie Jenkins- They weren't even considered. And you know they had the paper, oh man they had a great stack of these things it was one little one page publication, they had a great big stack of them. Just to show you,...

Joan Beifuss- Who put it out?

Eddie Jenkins- We don't know? We never found out. It might have been, I have my suspicions that I won't air but anyway the students began to react. This was a(muffled) we were supposed to have black pieces out, and we didn't put out black pieces this was a supplement that came out that day from the BSA. This is was our thing. They had this Apex was talking about how the garbage strikers should be ashamed for endangering the health of the students. One of the very people who in the beginning had been with, who had begun with the BSA and had been in one of the fall had been in one of the top positions in the BSA jumped up with a paper and said he was (muffled) at the mouth so he jumped up and said look man if you expect us to march behind something like this you are a so and so fool and blah blah blah. So I said what is of greater importance. He said some of the students picked up the

thing and they were running around circulating it and they were reading and so I told them I said if we don't get hung up by....I said isn't the issue greater than a piece of paper or greater than what they think. If we don't get hung up on what whitey thinks out there and all of this then we may as well, the garbage strikers may as well forget it and we may as well forget any struggle at all they may as well forget it over where if we are going to get hung up on stuff like this. I said I think we have an issue bigger than that. So the people they was still talking and eating and playing cards you know.

Walter Wade- It was like nothing was going on.

Eddie Jenkins- Yeah you know like I was standing up in the chair then. So I said well we got, some of them start getting up some few of them but we really didn't get anybody to actually move. By this time I got a little angry so I told them I said well I will tell you what if you want to sit here you house niggers sit here and be house niggers the rest of your lives you sit here and be house niggers. Because those yard niggers is tired and us yard niggers are going to get up and we are going to go out there and we are going to march. Now you got white folks waiting to march with you and you are not going to march out for yourself, I said you house niggers sit here and cards starting falling and hamburgers started begin gargled and some of them started to put them down and leaving. And people started picking up and taking books and putting books in briefcases and all this stuff. It took some effect, I had to get down and do like the white man get rough and so they, here it is the Apex. There it is, it says in all the history of the Americas social change has followed a set pattern in matters of labor management and union. The pattern starts with talks and pickets. When the men have refrained from the decision that tries to stifle the union the result is always been demonstration. If however these niggers fail to effect the desired change then it is a historically proven fact that violence follows. This is not to say that it need follow in this instance when arbitration would be such a simple matter. A garbage pile up is an odd punishment for the negros and other poor people of Memphis. They had lived with garbage all their lives and a little more here or there is not going to affect them one way or another. The people who are going to be affected are the east Memphians who are forced to live with the same stench and filth that the people in the slums have lived with for generations. It is about time to see how the other half live . If it comes down to an endurance test one can only guess the consequences. One need not speculate one of the results. East Memphis will suffer. And if demands are not met by 4:00 Friday the 9th of march 1968 concerned students and Memphians suggest taking this situation directly to east Memphis in the form of pickets at major east Memphis shopping centers. The following words are to be directed at mayor Lobe and the present administration. Get your eyes off the garbage chair long enough to take a look under your noses and see the problems and do something about them.

(Muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- They took it wrong you see.

Walter Wade- Who took it wrong?

Eddie Jenkins- The students took it wrong.

Walter Wade- The students who read it?

Eddie Jenkins- Yes, and you know, and what they did people ready what they want to read. They really....

Walter Wade- They thought that there was putting down all the people that live in slums saying they live in garbage all the time?

Eddie Jenkins- Well they lived in garbage all their lives, this was true in a little more hurt them.

Walter Wade- Well it implied that they were basically filthy dirty people who would rather live in garbage than not, and a little more garbage won't hurt them.

Eddie Jenkins- This is what the guy bread, he didn't bother reading any further he looked at me and he read that part of the thing and the students you know, no no no no no. So then I came over with the house nigger bit and so then they started getting up. So we went out and we marched. And this time when we marched I guess you can tell the in the papers I think we had maybe 100 people, I think during the march we got up to maybe 150 people at some time or another in the march, people were dropping out and picking up but we had a line this time. We really had a line. We marched around campus and I was in favor of really leaving the campus and they said no let's confine this to campus let's be sure we keep it on campus.

Joan Beifuss- did you have a crowd watching you?

Eddie Jenkins- No, really no. And you see one thing it had a whole lot of effect because of the administration, I think this helped the black student association get that charter because the administration didn't really know what was going on, they couldn't keep in touch with what was going on you see. By being in a sense it was planned but to the administration spontaneous. Well then you might have had they weren't prepared with any sort of security or anything you might, the situation might have gotten out of hand.

Joan Beifuss- Was Kathy Boyd moderating the black student center or did they even have a moderator?

Eddie Jenkins- No, no, we didn't even have a moderator at that time. So we moshed around we took the same route we took before of course this time we went directly across the street in front of the administration building and we went by the administration building purposely singing and we had the whole thing in that area of there is was just ringing. Behold we are going to tear your kingdom down and we were just saying low we gonna tear your kingdom down. And somebody would say something in between. Lord we are going to tear your kingdom down. And

somebody would come near and say something else and then it would go, Lord we going to tear your kingdom down. And then we had a we had Allen Winestock with his guitar. And he as playing his guitar plunk plunk plunk, not really playing the chords or anything just really strumming his guitar you know. I guess you call it halfway pscadelic. Clunk clunk clunk, and he would say garbage is piled up all up on the wall, clunk clunk clunk, we get garbage out in the halls, clunk clunk clunk, garbage is all over the street, clunk clunk clunk. I bet Henry Lobe thinks that sweet. He was making up his rhyme as he went along and he was doing a very good job of them and hollering and every time he sees something he says yeah and he coming clunk, clunk, clunk he doing his thing. And so we got back around and this time people started, we gathered and we were talking about the thing this time, and I started rapping and running down the thing. George was over here rapping and I was over here rapping you know and so we talked and some guys stepped out of the crowd you know how little glory seekers jump out and say something. He jumped out and said yeah man, ok yeah man, and we talked and by this time people were really started together and classes changed. And when classes changed people, some people never got to class they just stopped right there and of course people were permitted to leave classes to come out and actually see what was going on. They came out and we began some sort of dialogue because at one point it became tense. After I had spoken George, George, what is George's name? George, oh I can't think of it. I can't think go George's name right now.

Walter Wade- Who is he? Is he another Black Student Association?

Eddie Jenkins- No a white boy this guy. George Leyoni. George Leyoni. I said speak George you are as much in this thing as I am, you are the leader of the liberal club you are the recognized...(muffled) the middle east bigot was at that time was the administration leader, the establishment leader of the liberal club but George was the recognized leader by the members. So George got up ad George was speaking and George said something about where he lived because George was not from Memphis I think. And some white boy said what you mean boy I been living here in Memphis all my life. And you know how the term boy affects black people. And man it was, I guess it was about 50 black people standing over there together in our crowd and there were black people all around. You see all the black people just went to one side. Some were speckled in the crowd but basically on one side. And white students occupied the other 3 sides of the patio. And when they said boy the black students polarized, boy! I mean like the whole crowd, I mean everybody was just, and they started ya ya ya ya ya. So the white students wouldn't say anything so I said gee whiz I better do something quick because, is I said cool it cool it you know. Knock it off, so everybody shut up. So I turned around and I said you said boy, that was wrong, too long it has been boy. I said that is what is wrong with Henry Lobe downtown he is looking at his 1,300 boys out there that are asking for something that he don't think they ought to have, I said and you said boy, there ain't no boys out here , it's you the boy because you are standing back there. You don't have a viewpoint. I said boy in the first place, boys can't even get into Memphis state because I don't think boys stick to their points to where they can get in. So I

elaborated a little bit more on the boy situation and he sort of melted into the crowd real little back into the crowd. Of course people started asking questions and so on. So the dean said, Dean Parish, I didn't even know him at the time. I didn't know who he was he came out and said Eddie I am Dean Parish break it up as soon as you can and get them back inside because we don't want to have an incident out here and so and so. We talked a little more enjoyed and spoke some more and a guy almost blew the thing., The guy stepped back out of the crowd like a nut and said wait a minute let me cut it off because we don't want nothing to start happening out here man. Let me cut it off and George was speaking and the guys says well look. I will tell you what you can do you can stand out here and listen to this nut if you want. Now here is a guy, a white guy he is out here pleading our cause man and then the white students polarize. They were sure, some of them were sure of what he said. He said well I am going back into the student center and he turned around. And George was speaking and George stopped and he was just standing there and he just sort of wheeled around. I walked over to him and hastily under my breath apologized.

Walter Wade- Now who was this guy, who was this guy that said this to George was this a white boy?

Eddie Jenkins- No.

Walter Wade- A negro?

Eddie Jenkins- This is a black student. He...

Walter Wade- He said you can stand out here and listen to this...

Eddie Jenkins- Listen to this nut if you want I am going on back into the student center and play cards and eat lunch and all this bit. So then white students polarize. And I knew this was oh man there is no way to wrong and really I think it hurt me worse than it hurt George because here he was out here pleading our cause and then a guy comes down on him like that and the black students really didn't accept it either. So I said, well I better make the best of the situation so I said yes he is a nut, because in this society in this situation, with things the way they are with people like you standing over there who see the wrongs and won't say anything he has to be a nut to step out and do what he knows is right. he has to be a nut to stand out here and say what he feels and say what he knows in his heart is right. What you know in your hearts is right. And so I don't think it relieved George.

Walter Wade- But it smoother over the...

Eddie Jenkins- It smoother over the crowd and I think they got a different picture and eventually it ended up with the people they established some dialogue between the people and people began to discuss it because we had little groups black and white.

Walter Wade- So this melted into a number of small individual groups...

Eddie Jenkins- Right that is eventually the way it looked.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah check and see what time it is?

Eddie Jenkins- You know and then when they had the coverage on the Tiger Rag just to show you how the racism and the conservatism was reflected they didn't even mention the issues I don't think. I think you can read that article and it might say one time, they don't even mention the issues.

Walter Wade- I have got to quit it is almost 10 after.

Eddie Jenkins- You know what they talk about here? (Tape Break)

Eddie Jenkins- They talk about communications and you know I can understand why communication was important at that time because up until that time they hadn't had, they had maybe some communications of when black people first came to Memphis state and when they first had to have demonstrations and they had problems. I think they had something about the thing up on Highland. But that was a black student administration communication and not black students communicating with the students because possibly both groups were both polarized in fact the black students were more, we were a greater minority at that time and so they had to be more polarized and this was their presence, the mere fact that they were being present was a radical thing. But then and I guess it was very significant to start out communication between the students. In other words it showed that for the first time not only had the administration recognized black students as being here or not the white students recognized them as being there and began to communicate with them as people and not merely see them as objects to be tolerated. Just stuff you hear that you ignore and you know they put out significance of this but then you have the main issues that were at hand. And the community, let's say the university and the community I think it should have had some role, it should have expressed some concern at the time and this was something that you didn't get from the community, the administration, not the administration but the university at large. Any sort of commitment to the issues. Any comment on the issues. In other words the university itself did not project any viewpoint on these issues and I think the Tiger Rag reflected that because they didn't project any viewpoints on the issues. There was issues and I guess the paper felt that it didn't have any, that it wasn't its job it didn't have any duty to project anything all the issues on the issues. Even though the issue was, the issue was discussed on campus and everyone was aware of it and it affected all of the students basically.

Joan Beifuss- You wanted the Tiger Rag to take a stand on the sanitation strike?

Eddie Jenkins- No not necessarily taken a stand but I think they could have very well to objectively, I think they could have objectively reported the thing. But here let's face it they weren't really objective, they were objective to a certain point but if you are going to look at it if you are going to look at what the whole thing is about, the seriousness of the thing, the very reason it came down and did, I think they could have been objective and they could have expressed our viewpoint. They could have

been objective and expressed the opposite view point but they didn't do either. They just said it was in support of the garbage strike I think and they went on off into the communication thing.

Joan Beifuss- Were you on campus the day that mayor Lobe came out to speak to some other group?

Eddie Jenkins- Well I was here but I was late. As a matter of fact when I saw the film I got a chance to see more than I actually saw because I went to class that day and I came to school late and in fact I came just in time for class and just about time they had the demonstration I was in class. And this is how I didn't get a chance to meet the great white father again.

Joan Beifuss- I am a little bit unclear about that, I just read it in a black thesis. Was there an actual march held at the time that Lobe was speaking?

Eddie Jenkins- Well yes what they did, I don't think that the administration meant for the black students to know that he was going to be on campus but worked leaked out that he was here you see and what they did they said oh Lobe is here. So they rounded up some student and got all the black students they could get there and they started a march. They grabbed the signs, I don't know where they had them at, they grabbed the signs and they took off marching you see and what they were going to do they were going to demonstrate around the administration building while he was here to let him know that all was not dead out here, and that people would not necessarily did not hold his sentiment with what was going on downtown.

Joan Beifuss- That television clip is kind of great.

Walter Wade- Yes it is very good.

Joan Beifuss- Were their marches weekly then out here or was there just a couple of them.

Eddie Jenkins- Well no, this was a....

Walter Wade- (Muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- That was the last one because I tell you I was in favor of keeping the thing up and in fact I even went to the newspapers. I got sanctioned from the day for security reasons. This time it is well planned and everything and this one would have been truly black inspired. Of course the one, I don't know about the one where they had confronted Henry Lobe. But this one would have been truly black inspired over at the plant and I think it would have been bigger than the one that did take place. There was plenty but I think a whole lot of things because we had more time, we had better coverage and so on and so on. And we would have been prepared to get all of, to get the newspapers, the radio stations, the TV stations, everything. Anybody that wanted to could actually cover it you see and this time I think if this

one had gone out we would have I think it might have shaken the whole east Memphis area, especially this area around Memphis state. What happened was the students some of them said no. If we have another march they are going to get used to that. It doesn't take mighty long to get used to nothing. What are they going to do, they are going to go out and say well the niggers marching again. We don't want it to get like that. So (muffled) said let's not have another march but they want to have another one here. You have already marched twice and any organization someone said well you are...anyway you got the floods, you are camera happy. You want to get out there...I said well look me you can take me and lock me up in the bathroom and go out and have a march what's important to me are the issues. Of course some people at that time here when you got an organization and especially a struggling organization there is usually some sort of power struggle going on within the organization and some of the people felt a that time and you know you out there and now you want to get further out there. They didn't really know instead of being out there I would have liked to get back really gotten back, because the thing became hectic and the way things were building up I began to get this sort of to feel that the possibility of even genocide even here in the city, this was to the extent of almost genocide and really I was afraid for a long time I was afraid.

Joan Beifuss- Had Dr. King come in the first time, he came in the 18th or 19th of march both at Mason temple and then left.

Eddie Jenkins- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- Had he come in the first you had called the march that (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- I don't....

Walter Wade- This is march the 8th that this is recorded so that was before his first visit.

Eddie Jenkins- This is before, this is before it had become..

Walter Wade- This is why it was still a stalemate I guess. A stalemate through up in March until the time he came.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah, well then broken down (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- Yes, this is what they did form then on by that time you see to me, I don't know about what some of the other people would say but to me this is where we established university wide communication with all black students here on campus. Because you see most students pick up the Tiger Rag, everybody reads, they look at it.

Walter Wade- In fact it helped that the black students association formed.

Eddie Jenkins- Yes. I mean you know...

Walter Wade- The white students realized you were here too.

Eddie Jenkins- Yes, this is...

Walter Wade- I remember that was when I realized that the organization was, I think I heard a word or two about it before that but this is when I realized (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Well then it got okayed by the administration with no problems?

Eddie Jenkins- Well yeah after that because this is what happened, was a dean they said they are trying to organize. One of the deans whose name I wont mention said, let them go on them niggers ain't going to get nothing together. Niggers ain't going to organize.

Walter Wade- I bet I know who that was.,

Eddie Jenkins- (muffled) well you know this is just hearsay I got this through the grapevine. But anyway he said them niggers aren't going to organize. I wont mention his name. (muffled).

Walter Wade- Ok so...

Joan Beifuss- Was it dean Parish (muffled) was he cooperative?

Eddie Jenkins- Oh yes he had been fairly cooperative you know.

Walter Wade- I heard somebody say that he actually told the black students to get organized so they would have a voice.

Eddie Jenkins- Yes.

Walter Wade- Is that right.

Eddie Jenkins- Well yeah, well...

Walter Wade- In other words he was as much encouraging you to organize as much as he is discouraging (muffled) is that right?

Eddie Jenkins- Well yeah.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- Yeah. And he was the one that went to reverend Moon and gave him his worked to help us out as much as possible.

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- Well a whole lot, I think it was (muffled-volume decreased). But anyway we had (muffled)

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- Well I don't know about some but personally I feel....(muffled)

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- Yes, yes yes.

Joan Beifuss- Who in the administration would you regard as a persona you could go to in the administration.

Eddie Jenkins- Well I tell you personally..

Joan Beifuss- (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- Personally I have a (muffled) It was always like we had a coordinate divisions it was almost like last year's (muffled) thing. Because Ron was respected and recognized, he was known to the administration and he was he elder student and he was...

Walter Wade- (muffled) with him and talk to him and let him talk to them.

Joan Beifuss- When a faculty moderator (muffled) does any organization pick the faculty member they want for their moderator?

Eddie Jenkins- It is voluntary.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) by the administration?

Eddie Jenkins- Well you see, some students I think (muffled) at that time and I think (muffled) got her to agree.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- (Muffled)

Walter Wade- (Muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- (Muffled)

Walter Wade- You have to have a faculty advisor.

Joan Beifuss- Ok when you going to the meetings at Mason Temple at all?

Eddie Jenkins- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- The night that (muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- Well yes but not the night the group s was going (muffled), like I said ministers were spending the time between the times they left (muffled) was down there marching and...

Joan Beifuss- You were not able to (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- No I was with them.

Joan Beifuss- But you didn't hear Dr. King on the first night he came in.

Eddie Jenkins- Well on the radio. (muffled) I think it was local. (muffled)

Joan Beifuss- Yeah, how about (muffled).

(muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- The first thing we were, you might say (muffled) And this is one thing that caused all the black people to be terrified no matter who they were. I think even the militants recognized he was black you see and they thought man NI want that technique is though but they all had hit the blackness. So everybody old people and young people (muffled) That he could be a unifying agent in the community., I mean we were just thrilled that he was coming because he had the ties and he actually (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- No, no we didn't (muffled) They were, they had the marshals and (muffled) We had already anticipated some (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- (muffled) the black student association.,

Joan Beifuss- Ok are the black student association in contact with the invaders group? Well I assume the invaders (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- Well yeah, yes, yes, we, we maintained...

Joan Beifuss- (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- Well at that time yes, I don't know about now but at that time we were in communications with the black organizing project which is made up of some of the invaders, some of he people for the black student association and (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Wasn't the black organizing project was the black student association (muffled) to the black organizing project.

Eddie Jenkins- Well it is kind of hard to say because like Ron Ivy (muffled) he had some position in the black organizing project and at that time he wasn't, people didn't really know it and people running around (muffled). Ron Ivy (muffled) one single handed figure that (muffled) You identify with the project (muffled). Of course this is one thing we did we did not, we have not so far we have not committed ourselves to any group or any situation off the campus..

Walter Wade- (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- I would advise that we identify under black and this is the only..

Walter Wade- But you aren't part of any (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- We don't commit ourselves. We maintain communications with the invader groups (muffled) black organizing project and (muffled)

Joan Beifuss- Then when the first march with Dr. King was to be (muffled) body of the march.

Eddie Jenkins- Yes in fact we did in fact we said we would lead and we met and we saw (muffled) and distributed the signs(muffled). We had a banner and prepared, we had our banner BSA, Memphis state university supports the garbage strike and we were marching behind the garbage striker and what we did we planned to actually bring up the rear of the march, you see so we had some guys in BSA who were marchers but what we planned to do was because we figured that if an organized body would bring up the rear of the march then we could...

Walter Wade- Helps with control.

Eddie Jenkins- Yeah the marshals all down the line then they wouldn't necessarily need marshals back here and we could better control the marchers, so we had control of what was going on in the back you see and instead of, you couldn't really get hanky panky from the back. But what happened was that even though we did bring up the rear of the march but people were constantly coming and they got behind us. There were some people behind us.

Joan Beifuss- How far did you get in to the march before it broke?

Eddie Jenkins- The (muffled) they got to 3rd and Beale then when we turned the corner and marched a block and by this time some of the ministers had come to the back coming back down the street saying turn around and go back. And one of the first things was that some of those people in the back wanted to know, well I have been waiting since 8:00 tomorrow and people didn't want to turn around and go back. They said what am I going back for? Trouble up there. Then reverend Lawson came down the street with the megaphone and all and people started turning around and going back you know, marching back. And some of them were still there in fact the BSA thought we stood there and watched the thing turn from let's say a (muffled) back into total disorder. And it came from Main St. It came from Main St. and it was because we were standing there and the people they were many people were just standing in the street come over here and they started (muffled). They were turning back because Jim Lawson was coming down the side, on the side he was coming down the side. And then we looked up the street and then we see it looked like (muffled) you watched the African pictures of jujus you know, (muffled) and you could almost hear the hum of the crowd and they turned around and they came back and they like...then all of a sudden fellows are running down the side and I guess some guy going down the side went like this.

Walter Wade- (Muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- And you could see it coming down the street and then (muffled) all riled up even down as far as 3rd and Beale. And you couldn't tell where, the only thing you knew, the only thing I recognized was the fact that I was afraid they were going to be falling in the street. Bricks were not falling in the street. You see the officers and all you could see was bricks in the air. You never saw a hand you never saw anything the only thing we remember seeing was this guy coming down the side like this you know he had a stick and he was coming down the side, it was about 3 or 4 guys behind him doing this you know. Yeah and he was hitting him and they were grabbing but you know you can never point out things, he threw a brick. I guess it was so many people then it was just mass confusion and they told people don't run don't run stop running and so I said well some of the guys said what are we going to do. So some of the guys said don't run let's try to stop people from running, so many people really the older people were rushing and young people running and so we don't them don't run. We were standing at the middle of 3rd, don't run, don't run. So the guy standing there with the (muffled) just looking. And for a while it seemed like they got out and then they started slowing down because all the activity because most of the stores were back down on the other side of 3rd and this is where most of the activity was. The people were slowing down at that point and so we thought well maybe, maybe we will get a chance to actually have a role in slowing the people down and you know getting the people back, organizing them and getting them back to the temple. But then by this time I guess the police had pandemonium or whatever you call it had really broke loose down there. and then they started mass service down the street.

Walter Wade- The people?

Eddie Jenkins- The beginning the people in the beginning then they started this mass surge down the street and this prompted the people in the front to run off. So then that is when the BSA as a body broke, we broke at that point and began to (muffled) and some drove back and maybe some went up there to see what was going on and so on. But anyway, (muffled).

Walter Wade- So the thing sort of broke up at that point you all just kind of went your own ways.

Eddie Jenkins- Yeah and some of the BSA members went back to the temple but I knew what was going on. I got out. I got out of the area because I figured sooner or later they were going to have cops all over the area and they weren't going to be asking questions. So I got out before I got my head beat and 5 minutes after the whole thing broke out I was about a mile and half away watching TV waiting on news reports.

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled) we have been joined here by Eddie's wife Martha.

Martha- (Muffled)

Joan Beifuss- Ok how old is the baby?

Martha- 18 months.

Joan Beifuss- Did you know anyone who went back to the temple?

Eddie Jenkins- Why yes. Ron Ivy, he went back to the temple.

Joan Beifuss- Did he tell you that gas was thrown in there?

Eddie Jenkins- Yes he was there in fact he got pushed around a bit too. They were standing on the outside, he was one of the guys standing on the outside and the cops came up and started, I mean just came up and started you know, started poking heads and telling people to get back in. They were pushing them you know because I think he got pushed and consequently sticked. I know he got gassed in the temple and he said they were beating kids and everything. And this is what I got, he was there first hand you know.

Joan Beifuss- Eddie did you have any, when you realized the thing had broken apart can you recall your personal reaction to that when you suddenly thought there was not going to be any march?

Eddie Jenkins- Well it is kind of hard to say,. The first thing I realized, this is not what they call a riot, is what do you do when you have a situation like this.

Joan Beifuss- Had the black students had any kind of discussion of what would happen in case there was a riot?

Eddie Jenkins- I don't think anybody anticipated that.

Walter Wade- (muffled)

Eddie Jenkins- Nobody, I don't think, we didn't anticipate a riot, I think there were people, there were people there who some were there in the case disorder (muffled)breakers take advantage of the situation. But then you had, you had the high school students there and these guys, I think many of them were the sons and daughters of the garbage workers and given the chance to (muffled) a little bit and warm up a little how it is going to come out. At the slightest, you know, I think they had tendency to over react and we knew this was present, we knew this was present and we had said, we had made plans so that all of the people that were within our group we had our group situated so that men were to the outside. Especially the men with the signs and the sticks would be to the outside and the women would be to the inside so that if pandemonium did break loose and we were right in the middle of a situation that if we were attacked by the cops we could possibly defend the women and possibly defend ourselves and the kids against a brutal onslaught by the cops as an organized group which I think would have been more effective because in disorder the cops don't tend to be organized either and we were, we would have been an organized group. And then against the criminal element there would have been (muffled) to take advantage of the situation not caring about who they hurted or being black at all. You know and so we could, we know we already

had made plans if anything that could have (muffled) we would just back that segment of people and anybody else who wanted refuge up against the building and do nothing, and do nothing. If possible. As less as possible, in other words organized people standing still if they (muffled) to let it (muffled) and maintain some discipline, this is what we discussed and this was the plan that we come from. But it happened that it broke loose ahead of us, so that all we could do and we tried to make some attempt to control the crowd and there was..

Joan Beifuss- It came back on top of you.

Eddie Jenkins- Yes, so this was smother, so there was nothing we could do but turn and go back or do what I did go on and just get out of the area completely because I knew that there would be some....I knew that the cops were going to over react. In fact, we had anticipated the cops even if the march had gone peacefully and the people had done nothing we anticipated some sort of reaction from the cops, saying the cops were going to do something some where and really I don't think, as far as I was concerned I think we looked at it and I remember some of the attitudes of some people and they say that they had feel the cops had ever planned for that march to go off. And I didn't think so either in fact, I was even surprised that they were supposed to have been there to protect the store that they even came that far. But they didn't show up possibly at the temple. But the only cops that were there was directing traffic. There were plain newsmen but no cops and the cops were in the surrounding areas directing traffic. And when I got out after the thing had broke loose people were coming across the project many of the people who were looters, because many small kids were picking up stuff. They were coming from off the (muffled) and the cops were standing in the street laughing and talking. They would watch them come by, they were laughing and talking and they in full could have sent hat something was going on and they were standing there laughing and talking.

Walter Wade- They didn't do anything?

Eddie Jenkins- No they didn't do anything. Of course, I don't think it would have been wise in that situation to do anything,.

Joan Beifuss- Well if there weren't very many of them...

Eddie Jenkins- Because in a group of maybe three or four cops, spaced three or four blocks apart....

Walter Wade- (muffled).

Eddie Jenkins- The black (muffled) automatically would have identified him and they would have clobbered him. So maybe it was wise to do nothing. I thin it was wise to do nothing.

Joan Beifuss- Were you angry at all at the people that broke the march up?

Eddie Jenkins- Well yes, more for Dr. King's sake than for anything else, because he had, I think it might have injured.... (Tape End)