Thomas Oliver Jones, Head of Memphis Local AFSCME, 1968

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Anne Trotter- Memphis garbage strike. Interview today with T.O. Jones, May 9th 1968 interviewers Anne Trotter, Jack Curly. Mr. Jones is the head of the Memphis sanitation workers union.

Jack Curly- You got feedback the first time. This is Memphis state university.

Anne Trotter- I already did it. Mr. Jones will you start off by giving us a brief biography of yourself here, where you were born and when and how you became head of the union.

Thomas Oliver Jones- My name is Thomas Oliver Jones, I was born in Memphis Tennessee Shelby county. (muffled) I was educated in public school in the city of Memphis, I am a veteran of the U.S. Navy, I have had many jobs, I have been in many different fields of employment as during the time of the war I worked in the naval ship yards as a rigger and I returned to Memphis. And I went into the common labor field you might say and on about the 5th of December 1959 I was hired by the city of Memphis and I worked there until on about June the 27th 1963 when the men of the public works sector for the second time began to try to unionize. Now you might be able to recall over here that they attempted inn 60 and for some reason it didn't materialize. There were some people that were fired and never got their jobs back. In 1963 this driver was put on and some 3rd degree persons were fired and had a conference with the commissioner who was commissioner of public works at that time was William, Will Ferring. And we did come to an agreement to where the people would go back to work. Most of the men who desired to go back to work went back to work and we had some of them down in the union hall (muffled). They would discharge us at this junction in 63' and say our work was unsatisfactory. This was not a true thing they were discharging us for union activity. I thought was fired and we had several meetings and I sort of become the spokesperson of the men and I have begun to try to make contacts in the community with ministers and whatever person I possibly could. We had faster sets, we were able to get some mechanics on and get these people return to work and this was going to be part of the project at that time. After that we began to fund the coalition where we would cal the men and we would discuss the problem with them and being a former employee I can tell you that things were really rough with the men, of the public works department, especially in the garbage department. And this was the section where I was working. And we began to put things together with other labor leaders in the city and the retail clerks are a local 1529, they gave us a place to meet, they gave us a little office space in their hall and now I knew from advance, and this is really were we got our start from. They opened their doors to us.

Anne Trotter- How come they did that?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well this is the point of it, all of them labor unions should be sympathetic to unorganized persons, and when people show the fact that t hey do want to be organized someone should take some interest in them. When it comes to

a junction where there is a jurisdiction which this was not their jurisdiction, they were not trying to organize these people and put them into the retail clerks, they were trying to help these people get organized because they had seen aloof what the conditions were and these kind of things is what the public didn't know and there are still things that the public doesn't know about this job.

Anne Trotter- That is what we are going for.

Jack Curly- That's what we are going for.

Thomas Oliver Jones- And somewhere there had to be an exposure date and these things had to be brought out to the public. Now many things have been brought out up to this day but there is still work to do in the public employees field. And as you know at this time we are over there in the city hospital, we are over in the board of education. These people have problems same as the public works department had. And what you had with the public sector is this, management always says you are welcome to come in and discuss your problems. But the question when this person leaves or when these persons leave, is what is going to be done. Now the discussion problem is good but now what is the afterwards going to be? Are we going get something done, this is the question. So back to 1963 we told them for quite sometime and we tried to organize independently on about the 1st of January of 64' when the new administration came which was proposed by the mayor and the commissioner Winningham. Thomas P's assistant had become commissioner of public works and we did approach him about an independent operation. We found the IWA which the charter is issued by the Memphis federation state county. (Muffled) IWA own the charter, this is anything worth association. And we were not able to get the type of recognition that an association or a union could get. Well we were able to make some inroads through him but it wasn't real clear because it was to the point where they were proclaiming the legalities of it, whether it was legal to do this or it was legal to do that. You will find in the public field with the public employee, most every state or city that you go into when you begin talking about organizing the people they come up with the legal aspects of it and this is what really hurts us we get tied down with legal minds you know, and legal minds are saying this, code says this, city code says that then they will refer you back to cases.

Jack Curly- You are talking about laws instead of people.

Thomas Oliver Jones- In other words that was it they were talking about laws and most of these laws were (muffled) laws because they are so far back, and we are not living in that time now. Say for instance we are not living in the time of 1941 now. We living in a time of 1968 which is different atmosphere altogether and there are several things that were involved in this. The working conditions when I first got here were poor, and a man didn't really have but one thing and that was this. He went to work and he went home. If he showed up the next morning the foremen desired to fire him he could fire him without recourse.

Anne Trotter- No job security.

Thomas Oliver Jones- No job security what so ever the only recourse he had was where that he was possibly renting from someone or knew someone that could get the management in and talk for his job. Without investigation, no investigation, no question asked if the man was discharged.]

Jack Curly- In other words even after 63' you weren't able to set up any definite grievance procedure?

Thomas Oliver Jones- We had coming up to some grievance steps that could, it was in 1966.

Jack Curly- Was that under Sissom too?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Yeah.

Anne Trotter- Did the foremen ever shake the men down?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well this is something we have not been able to pinpoint, and Sandy we know that ex-foremen was taking stuff from that man. We can't say it but this is something that has been reported to us and something that has been said. It appears to me that it could have been or it could have not been.

Jack Curly- In other words there was nothing to prevent it from happening because there was no grievance procedure.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Right.

Anne Trotter- Particularly if you can just say well you don't have a job anymore.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well I have heard, it has been reported to us that on different occasions men would have to pay to the driver of the trucks and the foremen would get a kick back each pay day.

Jack Curly- To drive the truck?

Thomas Oliver Jones- This is true.

Anne Trotter- Sure.

Thomas Oliver Jones- I wouldn't doubt it one bit you know. We have people out there now who since we have gotten into this real union security where we are talking about seniority. And we going now to begin laying out the floor mats, and some of these people who have been with the city 17 years to 25 years who should have had some of these jobs and should have had some of these jobs, here comes Joe off the street a salesmen (muffled) likes him and he gives him his job you know, this particular job. We have several areas men who are holding jobs as truck drivers that in my opinion the seniority is not there, and I am going to get into that good seniority flaws of the agreement.

Anne Trotter- Why did you all decide to strike in February? It looked like everything had been bad for so long was it just that one last straw.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well I would like to go back on this. What we have had from the city here has mostly been promises and each administration when it changes it has different ways to deal with its employees. This is what the men are saying that they wanted some dialogue in black and white, that they knew what their responsibility and duty was, but they wanted something that said management had responsibility too and both would come to grip on that and they also said they wanted a 3rd party that would be able to go in and talk for them. Why did you think it would be after a man had worked 8 hours on the garbage truck and he has a grievance, he has to go up to the mayor's office and he hadn't had a chance to change clothes, he hadn't had a chance to properly clothe himself, he just only got one day to do it and this was on Thursday when the mayor has open house. Now here he is he has to get in line and he has got to wait to se the mayor. He has got a problem, he goes in and he discuss it with the mayor and the mayor tells him I will take care of this for you. This gripe or this grievance continue on linger on, linger on. It steady builds up. The foremen is still possibly doing the same thing as he was doing the first day, no relief for the man. We were not able to get the proper things that the men needed by going to the bargaining table and sitting down with them and telling them now is the time and these are what these men are asking for. Now in 1966 there was an agreement put together which was a memorandum of understanding. It was not signed but it was put into effect, the mechanics were used. It was helpful, very helpful. The commissioner of public works, he had directors and he had them understand…

Jack Curly- This is?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Sissom.

Anne Trotter- Sissom yeah.

Jack Curly- He seems to have tried at least.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well I think his hang up on his was this that after he was elected something happened to him. In my opinion, I think that all of his intentions was to keep his commitment to his people, there was a slight commitment and I think he was intending to keep it but somewhere it got to him that he was unable to keep it. So this was just a problem we had and we had to face it. At no time can I say was he ready to sit down and out and out take care of this business. Now in one time he got to the point in 66' when he said he was and we had a man come inform Washington, Mr. Pete Brown, who at that time was working as administrative assistant to the president. When he got here for some reason Pete said that they had served noticed on him that if he did it..

Jack Curly- That if he organized.

Thomas Oliver Jones- If he signed this agreement they were going to get rid of him. He would be impeached but in a way we had tore up over this and the way I got into it was that I don't know, I just stayed with it. I made a commitment to the men, I committed myself that I would stay with them and I would attempt to deliver for them and thus far my commitment has been filled, I am very glad I am proud of it. Because it give them something basically to go on. They got something to say well if we are wrong let's go down to the table and discuss it. It is a very good thing, it is working excellent well. We had problems and in any firs agreement you are going to have problems because the foremen he doesn't want to adjust, the man he doesn't want to adjust, the union representative he doesn't want to adjust so we just have a thing going on here. But really and truthfully saying, in the public works department we are very proud that we are able, when I say we I mean the men and myself, to stay together and (muffled) I will be real honest with you I have had my troubles you know and I have had my ups and downs. And the way the American Federation of state county municipal employees got into it was that the executive secretary of the Memphis AF of LCIO councilmen were going into Washington in 1964 and I asked him to find someone that would be interested in Washington and he did, it was Bill Ross and Tom Morgan and Tom Morgan was working down there at the international office at that time as a field staff organizer. Jon Hale was out of Little Rock, we had a local over there out of Fayetteville Arkansas. They come in and we discussed it, the board that we had and the men on the board , myself. And they issued us a charter and this happened in October and we received a charter in November. And we had a charter dedication on the 13th of November.

Jack Curly- That is 67?

Anne Trotter- no 64.

Thomas Oliver Jones- No this is in 64. This union was nothing new to the present mayor nor the person here because the present mayor in 63 I went and talked to him in regards to the discharge of the people. And he told me that this was the commissioner's case and the commissioner had to handle it that each commissioner was responsible for his department. And this is where we had the hang-up on this because the mayor was powerless (muffled). But we were able to stay together, the men were very cooperative, they went through 65 days and it wasn't pleasant.

Anne Trotter- Did the other unions in town give much help?

Thomas Oliver Jones- We had several local unions in town to assist us and we had assistance all the way around. When this organization COME was made known and president Worth began to reach out for support we really got the national support and locally we got many supporters in the community itself, both white and negro support. It was something that really seemed to have shook this entire nation you know. I think it was helpful to other people, because I just imagine that people in other cities are having the same problem we had in Memphis as far as the public employees were concerned.

Jack Curly- Now there was quite a time lapse between the day that t he22 men were told to go home, that would have been January 31st right?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Yes.

Jack Curly- And when was it February 12th when the strike as finally called, you know we cannot get the full story on what happened in that period.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well what happened in this period referring back to January 31st. See me and Worth went on and did go ahead and talk to management in regards to it and I was told by director Blackburn that he was going to take care of the problem and I had no way of knowing how he was going to take care of it until the men received their checks which was only about the 7th of February.

Jack Curly- I see, so that accounts for that time.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Yeah so they when they received their checks I began to ask questions and inquire and they got 2 hours short time and I recommended because from inclimate weather during the month of January no persons had been sent home but these men would be paid for the day and I still think these men should be paid for the day because of this if you would like you could check the weather reports we had accidents so bad day before the 31st and no groups of persons were broke down and people were sent home. So why get to this junction, this had to happen.

Jack Curly- Was it just a mess up on somebody's part?

Thomas Oliver Jones- I think it was just some supervisor that wanted to do the things that they have been doing and this is what he did he said well I am going to cut crews this morning. Then they cutting on these crews we have white drivers and one thing or another none of these were sent in, it seemed like the negro was the only one, discriminating there in this particular instance. We did talk on this, director Blackburn seeing he couldn't have come up and really and truly what the men had begun to say was this: We are tired of they will take care of us. We want something in writing we want something to be a little more concrete. So from this we begun to meet and we begun to discuss the problems. And we met on the night of the 11th which is on Sunday night and I had been into Mr. Blackburn's office on that Thursday and I asked for an appointment with him that Sunday night to discuss some things with him and we did go up and discuss them. His words to me was that we would have to see the mayor, I contacted the mayor on about February, January rather, the last part of January with regards to a conference he and P.J. Champa who is now field staff director of American Federation State and County Municipal employees and mayor's answer to me was that he had been over there and that this man was quite capable and he knew what to do. Therefore, I didn't see any reason to be going to the mayor with the problem's of the public works department.

Jack Curly- In other words both sides were just passing the ball back and forth.

Anne Trotter- You went to see Blackburn and Blackburn said go to se the mayor and the mayor says go to se Blackburn.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well we went up, I went up with a committee of 15 men or more and this is what he tells us that these things T.O. you are going to have to go to the mayor with. I said no, the mayor said that he had a man here and I feel you are the one we are to deal with, if any message is to go to the mayor of business I think he is the one that should have done it. Then the mayor would have said jointly I would have been willing to meet, but I was not able to get this kind of concession. The men had me to note before we left some 800 or more person were 136 and ½ south second street and we left at 8:05 pm on that Sunday night. That if things didn't improve, if somebody didn't come out there (muffled). This was labor as a strike, this was a case where the employee said they are going to withhold our services because of conditions.

Jack Curly- You mean really wasn't organized as a strike it was just a bunch of men who got sick and tired.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Sick and tired of being pushed around and this is where different people got the context of it wrong and they said I had promoted a strike here. I did not promote a strike. I went in and talked to director Blackburn and I asked him not to let this happen., I asked if he would send someone down or would he go down and talk to these men, he had the option of going and he simply refused to let our go and we told him what the consequence was, and at the junction you probably heard that I changed jail clothes and all this, this is true. We had an injunction laying from 1966, and I knew that was a violation of the injunction they would be looking for me because I was the officer in charge here. Why would I let them look for me if I know these people have made u their mind to withhold service. I couldn't go no further. So they change was made, it was made there in his office and I told them that they could get in touch with the authorities and I would wait because I wasn't going to go off and have them look for me. So we went back the committee and myself an we reported to the men and the men said this. No one is going to get any further, we want something that spells out something, and this is it. I did talk to them and I, they assured me this is what they wanted to do and they said yes. So at this point in the game we dispensed and went to our many different homes and the next morning some people went into the work areas but they did not go into work. Well some are back at 136 South 2nd street, to see our building and we began to have a series of meetings there. Some reporter from Memphis called Washington, called international headquarters, so he didn't come down. And he told them it was a strike in Memphis and he got Champa on the phone and Champa said he didn't know anything about it, which he didn't. I had not called international in because I figured the mayor and his colleagues would get wise and face up and sit down and begin to get some mechanics going. They had something there that they could have used which was this memorandum which had been put into affect.

Jack Curly- In 66.

Thomas Oliver Jones- and was being used as a vehicle.

Jack Curly- And you think the men would have been relatively satisfied?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well here is what the men wanted, the men wanted something they wanted it spelled out and they wanted the public to know that they had protection on the job. See this is the type of thing that we had here was this. If you knew a man, say for instance you were an insurance man and he was a good (muffle) and he would get into trouble you could possibly talk to management and help this man. This is not the way of life, you don't help people that way, by someone else have to come and tell you.

Jack Curly- That's right yeah. Paternalism.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Right, if this man has been on the job X amount of years, ok, he must have been a good man. And I guarantee you any man that works in that particular sector 30 days or more he is a good man because you have got, you have got all kinds of labor there and none of these person is classified. Very few. Now in your garbage collectors they are all just plain laborers. The truck drivers at one point they began to call them crew chiefs and this is something that I really want to get rid of because now what you are doing is they are discriminating against other drivers by saying this man is not a crew chief we don't have to pay him the $2.20.

Jack Curly- But his doing the same thing.

Anne Trotter- He is doing the same work.

Thomas Oliver Jones- He is doing the same job so now this is what discussion I have got to come up with director Blackburn and other representatives and myself. We are asking this word crew chief be excluded and all persons who drive a truck will be treated equally regardless of race creed or color. And we have been labored also at one point that we were discriminating against white. This is an open union and always has been an open union for any person that wants to come in and join and we have never turned a man away because of race or religion and we won't do it. It is impossible for you to say that you in this day and time are in this field and you are going to discriminate because as a negro I wouldn't have allowed them to do it to me. As a white it is not going to be permitted to be done to another man, so this is an instance of that particular part of it.

Anne Trotter- Mr. Jones may I ask you a personal question for a second. Did you get a lot of crank calls?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Yes we did. Champa got many nasty filthy letters and I got a lot of prank calls., they would call and get on the phone and they would say you SOB you (muffled). You infiltrating such and such a thing and we are going to get you and all that kind of thing you know. It was quite a thing but I never let it bother me, I always felt that I had a right to do the job that I was doing for the people and they had the right to ask for this particular thing and I still have some filth about it and I

realize that nay position I am in somebody is going to looks possibly at this type of thing I don't know.

Jack Curly- You have a family don't you?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Yes.

Jack Curly- This was a hardship on them?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Yes it was.

Anne Trotter- I know Mr. Patterson is my councilmen. And OI called one night to tell him how much I agreed with something he said at the meeting that day and the telephone people said his phone had been disconnected temporarily. So it must have really gotten rough.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well what happened probably he probably had it disconnected because I imagine Councilmen Patterson was getting threats also because of the standing thing you know. He really took a tremendous stand I and I think that personally they have a right when they are elected by the people and they see that the problem is there to speak for the people and this is all we asked the councilmen was to be men and women and help to correct this problem that we have in Memphis. This is hwy we had a change of form of government so that we can have a much more secured laws and this is what I was speaking about (muffled) talk that this antiquated laws are just not up to date you have be able to keep with the times.

Jack Curly- Were you surprised by some of the positions taken by a few of the white councilmen such as Jared Blanchard?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well yes I think ion my opinion is this that I felt that these persons who were elected would see and understand the problems of the community regardless as to whether they were black or white. And I felt that they would be willing to sit down and legibly talk and it would be helpful to the community. It seems that they were in a different stand altogether on this thing they were together sometimes in respect to some of it and on other things they were split on different things.

Anne Trotter- When did the ministers come in? How does that happen?

Thomas Oliver Jones- The ministers rally got into this on the 3rd or 4th day I guess, the second week. I don't recall exactly how it was but the ministers got in to it because we felt and we knew that the community leaders, regardless to whether they are ministers doctors or what not, could talk to the people and we could get some balance in power. But this was the reason why and everyone wanted to say that this had gone into a different direction when they got involved. Well this was not true. We had no intentions at no time to make this the type of thing that they

wanted to call it. We felt that all person's who were concerned about this should take a part if they so desired. That is the reason there was so many people involved.

Jack Curly- But the ministers never for instance had anything to say about your own union demands or anything of that sort?

Thomas Oliver Jones- The ministers would ask us, what were we asking for and they felt that what we were asking for was just, they felt this was justified. We had a ten point program and it was discussed with them and it was relayed to the public and all what we were asking for. Because the fact is this, you cannot proclaim that you are in the interest of the people and you want the public to support and assist you if you don't let the public know what you talking about, this is impossible.

Jack Curly- And the ministers were a good ay to do that.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Pardon.

Jack Curly- And the ministers were a good way to do that.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Sure, sure they had congregations whether it was 10 or 100 people, and they could discuss this and we went into many churches and we discussed it and we attended meetings you know.

Jack Curly- Is it possible that there is some relation ship between the newspapers in town and the fact that you had to use the ministers to get the word to the people. Is it possible the newspapers were not a useful way of getting the word to the people.

Thomas Oliver Jones- The point of newspaper reports is this, you can sit down and type out a news release and when you get it to the editor and make it to your home or out on the street it is just (muffled). So therefore my answer was this to that. We were not able to get our in time program over to the news meter.

Jack Curly- Were you ever visited by a news representative who really sat down and tried to find out what you wanted?

Thomas Oliver Jones- I don't talk to newspaper reporters. We don't have no good relationship and I tell you the reason why. I feel that the newspaper is a public service, same as these men that work, and I don't feel like they should slant the news. I feel that they should if the contents is there they should release it as contents are, that's my opinion.

Jack Curly- And have you had experience and you say you don't talk to reporters is that a recent policy or is it something that you have..

Thomas Oliver Jones- Proud I had this single opinion, reporters, I am just not really (muffled).

Jack Curly- Is that particularly just here in this town…

Thomas Oliver Jones- Anywhere, anywhere, I mean you got a problem with news reporters let's face it.

Jack Curly- They just don't try to get the facts.

Thomas Oliver Jones- You can give them the facts and they won't release the facts that is the answer. You can give it to them. And they won't release it. We can set down and begin form the beginning of this thing and say you are not doing (muffled) and briefly come up with it. And I would say that if a release was made it would be chopped so bad is that you wouldn't recognize it. The only thing that would happen is this, I would know what should have been in there but you would think this actually what I said.

Jack Curly- Yeah.

Anne Trotter- Yeah.

Thomas Oliver Jones- See the public is only going to go on one thing when they get a newspaper to read it and that is what is in there.

Jack Curly- That's right they somehow just accept that as right.

Thomas Oliver Jones- That's fact and when they begin forming committees and when they begin to come into you and asking them and they will come back with a news paper clipping, on such and such day, the newspaper stated this what about it. Well you say this is not true, well you are going to say the paper misquoted you? They are going to believe what the paper does that's all.

Jack Curly- Let's work on this a bit in this particular crisis in this whole period of the garbage strike we have been looking at this and we know of some cases where the newspapers did some distorting I wonder if you could fill us in on some cases you know where that there was distortion.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well really and truly I will be real frank with you I never really kept up.

Jack Curly- You hadn't been reading the newspaper.

Thomas Oliver Jones- No I hadn't really kept up with it because I knew it wouldn't really be a truthful thing.

Jack Curly- What about the Tri-State Defender and other..

Thomas Oliver Jones- Tri-State defender naturally they are going to give more true picture, let's face it. You and I know what she does true, than our two local papers would but now the fact of it is this is a once a week paper and that is only going to read certain sections white and negro. Reach all negro but a certain section of white. And this is where you got your hang up at it is a really hairy situation you know.

Jack Curly- Yeah, what about the boycott of the newspaper during this period do you know, could you give us any specifics about that how many dropped there?

Thomas Oliver Jones- No several times a person was killed for not taking the, the boycott of the paper was still on. The newspaper has made some changes you notice (muffled) out of commission.

Jack Curly- Yeah they finally got rid of him.

Thomas Oliver Jones- They finally removed it and I hear that t he commercial appeal is not slanting the news as bad as they had been, so I hear.

Anne Trotter- They are not they are making, they are even running articles side by side to give you two sides of an issue.

Jack Curly- Which is something had never done before, if nothing else comes out of this that is a healthy thing.

Thomas Oliver Jones- I think, I think another 6 months probably.

Anne Trotter- Mr. Jones when they sent, when the president sent Frank Reynolds down to mediate did he ever, did the president ever talk to you?

Anne Trotter- No.

Jack Curly- What did you think of Frank Reynolds?

Thomas Oliver Jones- I think he was a fair mediator.

Anne Trotter- What about was Miles fair?

Thomas Oliver Jones- Also.

Jack Curly- So that you feel that the federal government's part in the whole thing was honest and above board an healthy.

Thomas Oliver Jones- I do, I do, I do. You know let's face it there are hang-ups that you get with governmental agencies whereas you cant do with industries and this was the problem that Mr. Reynolds and Mr. Miles had and that is that they would know more about this particular sector than anyone else because they had been in this field of mediation quite some time and we know that there was certain things we couldn't do press-wise. This was just a thing..

Jack Curly- Part of bargaining.

Thomas Oliver Jones- That we set out across the table and we hammered it out and I think all persons who were at the table finally begun to realize that some thing had to give.

Jack Curly- When did you begin to feel that Henry Lobe was beginning to realize that he was going to have to change his position.

Thomas Oliver Jones- I think the mayor realized all the time that he was going to have to change his position after the 3rd week.

Jack Curly- After the 3rd week.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Yeah after the 3rd week if he didn't, I feel terribly disappointed.

Jack Curly- He just got himself out on a long political limb there.

Thomas Oliver Jones- At one junction of this game we marched from Firestone hall over to council chamber and it was such a large number of persons involved and other people you know that we had to go over to south hall of the auditorium and the mayor came over on this particular afternoon he wanted to tend to people who know how he is and the people just booed him right down. I think possibly then he began to realize that his truth was in an opposite direction (muffled). So this is about I would say the 3rd week, on the 3rd week things began to get serious.

Anne Trotter- Then why did he hold out so long?

Thomas Oliver Jones- No, nobody knows. I think the male just figured that this was a black operation and they were going to drive them back one way or another.

Jack Curly- I really think that he thought he could beat you.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Any public officials thinking they can beat you. They try to break you and they tried to break us here and they were on there way but what happened the muscles of the community and the muscles of the nation begin to get behind him. Then when the muscles, the president stepped in these people have a right you know and this is what helped to change the climate tremendously.

Jack Curly- I had some friends who decided to stop eating until the thing was ended, Dick Moon.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Was he your friend?

Jack Curly- Yeah and I was out there I shot a photo essay on the hunger strike and I noticed that we would watch Mr. Lobe and his group walk in and out and I was just wondering if there was any time in those last few days when you felt that there was a change in Lobe where he suddenly realized or you thought a point where he realized..

Thomas Oliver Jones- You want my personal opinion of the mayor? The mayor has still got the same ear that he had in the beginning but the mayor knew that the city was at a crisis, the mayor knew, that the nation was going through a crisis and this was a fact.

Jack Curly- Do that little hunger strike have any effect at all?

Thomas Oliver Jones- I would say yes, I would say yes. You know we can believe it or not regardless to how stubborn a person is I think that at any point of any being getting to the point they want kind of realize it is a different game. But when people start to get involved and they say they are not going to eat, we are not going to buy we are not going to do this stuff and so on and we are not going to work, it is something that should bound the management, I just believe that because you know you can say a three day work stoppage in Memphis would be a real disaster.

Jack Curly- It would cost some money.

Thomas Oliver Jones- At the times that we had the boycott on Main St. many thousands of dollars were lost there.

Jack Curly- How effective was that, that again didn't get into the newspaper.

Thomas Oliver Jones- What the boycott?

Jack Curly- Yes the boycott on Main St.

Thomas Oliver Jones- I think the boycott was very effective as a matter of fact..

Jack Curly- You think it was a key factor?

Thomas Oliver Jones- It was one of the key factors.

Jack Curly- Get those Main St. merchants back.

=I would imagine (muffled) we will never know they went in and closed doors and stuff.

Jack Curly- Well I think this has been a most helpful and most interesting interview.

Anne Trotter- Yes.

Thomas Oliver Jones- Well some other time it is possible we can sit down again and you can think of other questions you would like to ask…(Tape End)