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William Lucy, AFSCME Headquarter's Staff, 1968

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David Yellin- This is tape 2, tape 2 with Mr. William Lucy November 1st 1968. Now we want to be sure we didn't lose the last part of it I did ask you was that the morning that Mr. Champa called mayor Lobe a liar.

William Lucy- Right because as I pointed out before he had so called gentlemen's agreement he had promised not to expose the nature of the meeting that took place and we had done the same.

David Yellin- With the four of you?

William Lucy- Right, and yet he took advantage of the fact that we had said nothing and made it public himself. And we felt that this was a breach of confidence and faith. We didn't feel there was anything backdoorish or underhanded as far as municipal government is concerned it was just a method of trying to solve a problem that obviously couldn't be solved with the personalities involved. I think we became somewhat upset by the fact that the mayor was addressing us as if we are criminals or something and yet to not understand the fact that the employees had taken a course of action that they felt perfectly legal in taking. And we had tried to explain our concept anyhow of the legal right of the employees to withhold their services to protest, to demonstrate and everything else and we simply didn't share his views that there was anything illegal about the work stoppage.

Joan Beifuss- Well then did the end of this day did negotiations then broke off between you and the mayor?

William Lucy- Yeah.

Joan Beifuss- Now did Jerry Worth come in, it seems to me with Champa and Lobe having a kind of personality clash that Champa was not going to be terribly useful in dealing with the mayor subsequent to this time is that why Mr. Worth came in to kind of replace Mr. Champa?

William Lucy- No not to replace him so much as that we by this point in time drawn the conclusion that there was a possibility that the mayor's prestige and status what have you and how we assessed him as an individual, was simply saying that if he was going to sit down and try to work this thing out with somebody he would want to sit down with whoever was at the top, you know as oppose to a staff employee. It was wasn't a question of ability of Mr. Champa or a question of personality we were just trying to afford him whatever we thought that he wanted to sit down and deal on the thing and it was on that basis that we called the president and you have to understand that our president is not the typical president of an international labor organization. He is involved all up and down the lines in the affairs of the union. And so he saw it as just a thing he had to carve out some time and do.

Joan Beifuss- Did you think that Lobe had any kind of reaction to (muffled).

William Lucy- I think that he did. We had several well many heated confrontations because the mayor likes to talk in riddles and throw out slogans and great generalities that have nothing to do with the subject at hand, and we had a lot of points where I would almost require you to stick to the subject and he requested he stick to the subject and then we were quite prepared as far as our arguments were concerned and we made our points and he made several rather major blunders in the position that he took in his attempt to defend it. I think he became somewhat upset because on many occasions people would expose his position for what it was.

David Yellin- Can you recall an incident or two?

William Lucy- Well he takes great pleasure in saying that people support my position which may be true and he always has a stack of letters on any given issue where people support his view.

David Yellin- We smile only because we have been subject to the same thing, so I understand what you are saying.

William Lucy- I believe and I am not sure at what point it takes place, we were talking about the question of the credit union being a vehicle and we put this out so early in the game as a means of resolving his problem of the city not being involved in the deduction of union dues, we suggested that the credit union do it. In as much as it is not a city function he took the position that the credit union was there to serve all the employees. This was one of the confrontations we had because all the employees do belong to the credit union so therefore it doesn't serve them all, it only serves those who are members and it operates under an employee board of directors. Well at that point he reaches down and he grabs this big handful of letters and he says he are all the people who say they are against the union and this dues check off thing, I should not allow. He kept waving them around and the TV cameras are grinding away. It was about that point that I think I walked before his desk and I just can't believe that you show me one letter just one out of that big pile you have from any individual who says they are opposed to these people having check off. And he says well all these people, never mind all of them just show me one that says they are opposed to check off since you say this is the main hang up. Well he gave us two or three other slogans and some other generalities, and said don't forget to show us the letter. He never did, he stuck them back in his drawer and he was quite upset. Well the point was he was attempting to convince the news media that the public was behind him which they may well have been but the point was he had no basis for denying the employee who requests individually requested on a written authorization the deduction of his union dues. Because the city was deducting 6 or 7 other items from the payroll and this was no different from any of the others, beside the fact that we got engaged in some real discussion about patriotism and I couldn't for the life of me see how that related to dues check off.

David Yellin- you patriotism yourself?

Joan Beifuss- Whose patriotism?

William Lucy- Yeah first as we drew the analogy that the individual has to request the city to deduct anything from his salary and the city has a war bond project this type of thing, so we simply drew the parallel that you allow them to request the payroll deduction for savings bonds and in my personal view not that savings bonds aren't important but the question of letting the city to do that is no more critical there than it is here, because of individual interested that are involved. Well he says that he personally can't see the relationship of the analogy and he wants us to know that he will support our boys in Vietnam at any time, I am not sure what that had to do with anything.

Joan Beifuss- What kind of response, if you are a union negotiator what kind of response do you make to a statement like that?

William Lucy- I usually tell him that has nothing to do with the war in Vietnam, it has nothing to do with any war, It is just he basis of the issue that you are allow it to be done under the guise of patriotism and this (muffled)n that you consider unionism unpatriotic.

David Yellin- Now do you feel in all of this we can really run this to the ground and I am sure you don't want to. About, I think you have expressed the mayor's attitude and this is very important but also again to maybe get into a little depth as to the reason why. Did you feel at any time it was because of his inexperience...

William Lucy- I think so...

David Yellin- And the whole concept of unionism went against his grain.

William Lucy- The concept of unionism without question went against his grain. And let me draw an example of what he said, and this was during the mediation sessions that were set up by Rabbi Wax. When we were pointing out the fact that the nature of public service had changed and there is a greater desire for organization, governments are recognizing this and we pointed out that the federal government recognized the need for a statement of relationship between the employers and this is the basis for the executive order 10988 put into effect by president Kennedy. He said that he didn't care what the memoir of teachers in Washington did he wanted us to know that the same situation was not going to exist in Memphis too. So you see it was a just a complete detachment from the issue. He went on and let me make this one point, and great length to point out that the city had operated for years with the relationship with unions and had no trouble and didn't get involved and the union didn't get involved in the city affairs and the city didn't get involved in the union affairs. He was talking about the craft unions which I am sure a number of the city employees belong to carpenters, pipe fitters and this type thing. But he didn't appear to understand what was taking place. You see the craft unions get together and they establish a rate for a particular job. With the private employers and they in turn send the rate over to the city, they don't come over and bargain with them they just tell them what it is going to be, The city doesn't get involved in the negotiations on wage rates and secondly the city cannot hire because of the manner in which the

craft unions operate they have a high and hall policy. In order for an electrician to go to this job he has got to come to the house first. So the city has nothing to say about it other than we need "x" number of men.

David Yellin- So he said he has always dealt with unions?

William Lucy- Yah, but the had never bargained with them because they don't have to bargain, the number of employees that work for the city for instance in a carpenter's union or pipefitters is minimal compared to those who work in the private sector here and when the union's get together at the expiration of their contract they negotiate a new wage rate then they send the rate over to the city.

David Yellin- You mean the city hires contractors who in turns hires the people.

William Lucy- Right, or you may have some actually on city pay roll.

David Yellin- But are they members of the union.

William Lucy- Yeah,

David Yellin- But the city automatically recognizes that union.

William Lucy- Yeah.

Joan Beifuss- Does it have some kind of a written?

William Lucy- The contract is not with the city because of the nature of the work. For instance the building trades may have an agreement with the associated general contractors. Well that is the guidelines for the wages, the benefits, everything else for all their members.

David Yellin- Before we get away from it I am very curious, after this first, this meeting which we will call your private meeting the 4 of you. Which took place in the anti room of the mayor's office and when he came in and was upset by the representation of his representatives. Was Mr. Giannatti surprised?

William Lucy- Yeah he appeared to be surprised.

David Yellin- But he soon caught on because he later supported the mayor all the way down the line.

William Lucy- He appeared to be a little surprised because he didn't feel that, as I assessed what he had to say he didn't feel that the city had given away anything, they had only established some procedures which they could live with.,

David Yellin- Now at any time and I am trying to get back this meeting with the 4 of you which could have been an exceedingly critical point and could have solved the whole thing and of course what we have found and just a little aside and I think already the two or three incidents that you have described. At any time at all of these places a little turn of events would have solved the whole thing.

William Lucy- We have often said the situation was solved in the first week. If you take a look at what the eventual settlement was aside from the money question involved all the issues were resolved. For instance as a matter of law the city cannot prevent the credit union from deducting the dues of the memberships. Now bear in mind the credit union we were talking about is owned and operated by the sanitation employees. The executive board of the credit union are the members of the sanitation department. They could have met at any time and voted that the credit union would deduct the dues, but what the mayor did was this. Because the, some person in his office serves as a executive secretary or director of the credit union he would not allow them to meet.

David Yellin- One of the attorneys.

William Lucy- I am not sure he is an attorney. One of the man in the controller's office or something but he would not allow the executive board to meet to act on the question of deducting dues and see he was directly infringing on the rights of employees and influencing an organization that has no direct relationship with the city.

David Yellin- Well I was going to say something that may change, well not change the subject but I think something that is very significant for the record because the mayor has stated, and several people have corroborated his statement that Mr. Worth said to him you give me this dues check off and you can write your own ticket and I am now paraphrasing. All I care about is to get the dues check off and you can do anything else you want.

William Lucy- That is absolutely untrue. Let me say for this reason. The mayor made such an issue over the carpet bagger type thing that all we were interested in were the dues that would come out of here. You have to understand that our organization because, not because of but as a matter of fact the dues structure so that the international union receives one dollar per member out of whatever the dues are and we don't, we have no control over what the employees or the members make their dues structure. In the constitution dies structure of 3 dollars. The employees can vote anything they want.

David Yellin- 2 dollars a year?

William Lucy- A month, per month. Of which the international office receives one dollar for service fee and total membership and all other services we provide. He made such an issue of it except the president said to settle this question we want no per capita out of Memphis Tennessee. What we will do whatever, if you allow this to take place, whatever would go to the international union we would send it to Memphis or leave it here for a charitable program or whatever to make sure this is done the mayor can either sit on a board or appoint someone to sit on the board. We would have one minister or clergy person and one from the negro community and they can administer the program and do whatever they wanted to with the funds. That was (muffled) and it was made crystal clear that this was not a membership

drive effort and we didn't even know what was going to come out of it but we said that is what you can do with the money that would come to the international union. Of course it was branded as a PR stunt and this type of thing but to this day we have not received one dollar per capita tax from the sanitation strike nor do we intend to.

Joan Beifuss- For how long?

William Lucy- Well as we said for the length of the contract whatever it is and whenever it expires.

David Yellin- Well what has happened to the money?

William Lucy- It comes back to Memphis and it goes into community programs and projects.

David Yellin- Did he ever appoint the committee?

William Lucy- No the mayor would have no part of it.

David Yellin- Who administers that?

William Lucy- Right now I believe that community on the move for equality.

David Yellin- The COME organization yeah.

Joan Beifuss- Let me ask something do you feel mayor Lobe by the statements he made saying the first three days of the strike had by that time boxed himself in so he couldn't get himself out.

William Lucy- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- That publicly he had taken a stance and probably couldn't change without losing face in the community.

William Lucy- Right this was the whole thing it was a battle for the preservation of image.

David Yellin- That is what you meant earlier when you said this.

William Lucy- He felt that he could not give in to these people and still maintain his prestige and image as mayor of the city and he saw the whole thing in the context of giving in. As a matter of fact some point later, and this is, I don't know I am not sure which week, we had just about reached a method of solving this thing which as I understand had been agreed to by him, and which had certainly been agreed to by us. And the only thing that was left to do was to set the stage for a meeting and get the whole thing behind us and it would be over. As I am told some headline writer for one of the newspapers in putting the story together said mayor compromises or something to that effect and the mayor apparently went through the ceiling. It wasn't anything that the thing the thing was going to be settled, he had personally

put in the position where it was said he compromised not even recognizing the fact that the union had compromised and...

David Yellin- By the same token again this explanation when he walked into the meeting of you 4 and found out that you were ready to come to an agreement. In his mind he wanted the agreement to come based on his (muffled) or protestation, or recommendation to the workers who would capitulate or acquiesce as a result of his beneficence. I mean why would he not want to settle it? Do you think it is that dues check off as much as the other thing the image.

William Lucy- I think it was the image thing you see this was that meeting was in the first week and he was not convinced that this plantation psychology would get the employees back to work and I think he was furious because in my opinion he had no intention of anything coming out of that meeting it was just a facade. Let me give you an example of what I mean, on a Thursday I believe he holds open house and makes a great thing out of it. Anybody who wants to can come down and get there problems worked on. And we tried to point out to him the fact that these types of employers are not going to come down to his office with a problem because it will be the last time they do it. We had a membership meeting set for that Thursday at noon and he kept making a big thing about any man you want to bring down to talk to me I will talk to him and so we went out to Firestone hall and that was I believe that was the first march. The men marched all the way from Firestone Hall out on Firestone Rd. to city hall. To see him. Mr. Champa and myself we went up to the office and told them that he had put out the invitation and the men were here to see him so either in a great gusto bring them in. We kept telling him we can't bring the number that we have got into the office. Then he took a look out the window and all the men were out there. So he said well we will take them over to south hall and I will just address them and we will get the whole thing over with, We kept telling him that the men are not in a frame of mind where you can convince them just with your speaking tongue to get them to go back to work. Well he thought he was going to do it and although he probably believes to this day that we rigged the thing to make him look bad it wasn't. We just knew what the attitude of the men were and we knew what he was going to say. So we took all the men over to the south hall and we set up some rules for operation which definitely got broken but the idea was for him to speak to them and they booed him off the stage because he was giving them this thing for years and years I have taken care of you and your daddy's taken care of you and many of you men are good friends of mine and you all know how I have treated you and this type of thing and the men where just not in the frame of mind to listen to that type of presentation.

Joan Beifuss- Where you on the stage with him?

William Lucy- Yes. As a matter of fact we got into a little bit of a jostling match maybe because I misinterpreted what the rules were I wasn't sure, but the understanding was that Mr. Champa would introduce and speak and then why out was one the pother side and then the other side but anyhow we got out of order some kind of way or the mayor wanted the opportunity to rebut something that was

said and we wound up at the microphone at the same time and the newspapers made a big to do about it but it didn't amount to an ill of beans really.

Joan Beifuss- now let me go back again to the Rabbi Wax and those negotiations. That was the first night at St. Mary's cathedral is when you were sitting on either side of the table and not speaking directly to each other. What was your thought of that?

William Lucy- We thought it was the most ridiculous thing we had ever seen.

Joan Beifuss- But then when Worth came in he did talk to Worth?

William Lucy- Let me see if I can recall exactly how. I don't believe during that particular meeting that they did...well I take that back they did, is the thing.

Joan Beifuss- Worth came in about 11:00 that night I think.

William Lucy- Yeah, as the meeting went on and on it became more and more ridiculous for one side to say something to the front of the table and then the other side of table respond to this side and this kind of thing. They basically did get down to responding when a statement was made but not talking to each other but looking that way and talking over here.

Joan Beifuss- Of course you can't speak for Mr. Worth but when he met the mayor first under those circumstances what was his?

William Lucy- The same, ridiculous. Didn't make sense at all.

Joan Beifuss- I don't want to dwell on that we have part of that meeting on tape as a matter of fact. But then subsequent to that you had much more involvement in the black community.

William Lucy- Right what I think was the real catalyst to the involvement of everyone was the council meeting I believe it was Tuesday, I am not sure about the day, either a Monday or Tuesday.

David Yellin- They meet on a Tuesday.

William Lucy- Why there was a sub-committee meeting prior to the council meeting.

David Yellin- Yeah that is the Thursday.

Joan Beifuss- And then the macing is on Friday.

David Yellin- Yeah that is the Thursday the 22nd of February.

William Lucy- We had met with the sub-committee of public works which is chaired by Mr. Davis I think and there had been some rubbing each other the wrong way so we just decided we were going to stay until we got some commitment out of them to take some course of action. Well with some discussions and some compromises on

both sides the sub-committee agreed to recommend to the full council that they adopt and implement certain agreements that were made. These agreements which would have terminated the strike in our opinion. And they agreed to do this at a council meeting being held I think it was the next day.

David Yellin- The next day.

William Lucy- And rather than hold the meeting in the council chambers they were going to hold it in south hall I think it was, not the auditorium. So we thought everyone was jubilant because we thought we finally gotten the thing to the point where we could get it resolved.

Joan Beifuss- Did you really think so?

William Lucy- Yeah we really thought so because we thought that the council taking the course of action would give the mayor the latitude that he needed to say that he didn't give in and so on and so forth. Well the council met for the specific purpose of dealing with that resolution by the public works committee and hearing in addition to what everyone else had to say, when they came they did not even take up the resolution of the public works sub-committee they had a resolution of their own which they promptly read and there was an immediate move to adjourn and it was passed. And they got up to leave. So by that time we didn't know what was going on we thought that there had been a complete double cross so to speak.

David Yellin- Where were you were you down at the hall?

William Lucy- I was there earlier but I had already gotten back down to the office after the meeting opened up we were operating the welfare office at that time and people were really upset then because of the way they had been treated. You know you had a lot nuisance a lot of community leaders, social club leaders, political club leaders, and hey had just been sort of slapped in the face. Well they decided that what they would do is go back to Mason Temple I think it was for a meeting to try and see exactly what this all meant. Well there was such a tremendous crowd that where were they going to walk in order to get all the people out of the auditorium and down as quick as possible. So the decision was made that they would walk in the street and this was a very strong decision that was made in regards to the traffic or any of this, this is where they are going to walk and this is going to present some problems. And the police said that they couldn't walk in the street and so on and so forth. So the president got a hold of whoever the police officer I charge was and asked him to get hold of Mr. Holloman I believe to see if we couldn't get permission to walk on a portion of the street, the west or east side I think. West or east I am not sure which but at least...

David Yellin- West.

William Lucy- One side of the street and that would allow traffic to move on the other areas and this agreement was reached and everyone was instructed as well as possible that was where we were going to walk.

David Yellin- 4 abreast.

William Lucy- 4 abreast or something like that.

David Yellin- Were you back there by then?

William Lucy- No I was at the office then. As the, I gather the march proceeded because of the size of the crowd and what have you the police, in cars and I suppose on motorcycles and what have you were stationed along the length of the march and simply patrolling the thing. As I am told the thing was quite long and the cars were beginning to move people over closer to the curb line and in this type thing kept going on and obviously tempers were kind of tight. It is said that the car ran over someone's foot and I have never noted for a fact that it did or it didn't it was also said that there was bunch of fellows that tried to turn over the police car, whether they did or didn't still is not as fast I am concerned that I tend to think that there was a lot of pushing and a lot of shoving but no real attempt to over turn a police car for this reason. The march was fully in the street, everyone was from city hall and then on some portion of this street when the real incident occurred. But rather than deal with whatever isolated incident took place there was an immediate up and down the line all the way along the length of it macing and clubbing and this type of thing where people who were not even involved, you know and it just doesn't reason right. I think the nerves of the police had become a little bit raw and they were getting a little bit worked up and they wanted to show a little bit of authority and a little bit of force. Whether or not they provoked the incident if it was an incident they took full advantage of it to clearly indicate to everyone what their authority was and this is what I think galvanized and crystallized the communities to such a major degree.

Joan Beifuss- Ok, did you feel that up until that point the union had almost complete control over what was happening in that community?

William Lucy- Oh yes.

Joan Beifuss- The NAACP was still but at this point wit the COME organization comes into being then the union only becomes a segment doe sit not of the COME organization?

William Lucy- Not the union as far as policy was concerned was always and will always be in control as far as its membership is concerned.

Joan Beifuss- The community support...

William Lucy- As far as our members are concerned we are the authority. The COME organization was sort of set up for this reason that people were really at that point and time wanted to do something, they were gung ho to do something, That we knew we could not involve them all under the union banner. We had our hands full just trying to administer the problems of the employees so we said maybe an umbrella organization through which all of these structured groups would be the

best thing, but representation from all of the groups that are involved and it just sort of sprung up.

Joan Beifuss- Then the union considered what was directing this then was the union plus the COME leaders?

William Lucy- The COME organization was simply a support group not a policy making group as far as the union was concerned.

Joan Beifuss- But at that point have you not at that point has the union not lost control of what was going to happen about the strike out in the community. At this point your marches...

William Lucy- no we never at any point during the sanitation strike lost control of it either the activities or anything else.

David Yellin- You were always part of the decision making or you were aware of what was happening?

William Lucy- Well we had the power to approve or veto any course of action that was going to be taken.

Joan Beifuss- Oh did you by the COME organization?

William Lucy- Yeah during that strike situation because bear in mind that the sanitation strikers were the only bodies available on a around the clock basis to undertake projects. But the community here didn't have any knowledge of background and what was taken place so they were almost relying on us as far as strategy was concerned. The major thing we provided were the facilities for mass meetings, speakers for meetings, fundraising. And assisted in developing the strategy and whatever.

Joan Beifuss- Well let me go back again because I don't quite understand this, it appears to me in looking very much from the outside, at the point where you get such intense community involvement as you had there then your settlement doesn't just affect your union members, then your settlement also has to be agreeable to the black community.

William Lucy- Oh there is no question about this and we pointed this out quite clearly. We at all times kept the membership aware as well as the community aware of what was taking place and that as a matter of fact everyday we reported on progress and what we thought it meant or didn't mean and that at anytime, always the situation at any time the membership can vote to terminate the thing, but we thought since the community had made such a tremendous and contribution of support to this thing they should be aware also and agreeable with. But my, by keeping them constantly aware what was taking place and by pointing out to them what we felt could be achieved and could not be achieved we didn't have a question of them vetoing a settlement of the strike because they were quite aware of the fact

that our concerns were primarily the welfare of the employees involved and whether they agree with it or not. If we reached a point where settling the issues were acceptable to the strikers than that was the termination of the strike.

David Yellin- Yeah are you getting at this same point, in other words I think what we are trying to delineate if possible. Did the necessities of the other involvements, with the other and the black community and the people involved become greater than the original thing than the union so that it was to the benefit of the black community that the strike not be settled unless certain other aspects of it were brought...

Joan Beifuss- An easier way to say it did it become rather than a union strike did it become a civil rights battle.

William Lucy- No I think it was a civil rights battle almost from the outset because of the nature of the recourse. The eventual settlement that we wound up with, for instance the only area that the community could even understand would be the question of the wage settlement. You know they can say it is too high or too low that type of thing. But as I pointed out we made every effort to have them fully understand where we were and what it meant.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah I understand that I was just trying to say that for instance before..

William Lucy- Well I think what you are asking that did the community have such a hold on the thing that the union could not settle the strike if the community did not want it settled.

David Yellin- That's right.

William Lucy- I thought I answered that by saying that our primary concern is the membership we represent.

David Yellin- In other wards you feel that at no time really was any settlement held up by the fact that you had so many supporters.

William Lucy- You know with friends like that you don't need enemies in that sense.

William Lucy- Never I think we would be less than honest if we did some thing like that because bear in mind that each day this thing went on there were a tremendous number of people making tremendous sacrifices and we could not under any circumstances play games with that kind of thing.

Joan Beifuss- I understand that also but for instance when we mention the hospital strike I know the hospital strike has stayed mostly a union matter, meaning the community has not mobilized in the hospital strike as it was in the sanitation strike.

William Lucy- For this reason we are quite aware the burden that was placed on this community a few months ago and we are almost damned if we do and damned if we don't as far as the community is concerned people ask why aren't you mobilizing the community. I tend to think there were enough people that remember the

circumstances of the last one that it doesn't take a great deal of effort to mobilize it but by the same token once you do that you set into effect a set of dynamics, not that they would effect our ability to settle the strike but it puts into motion a certain set of circumstances that we do not have control over and though we just can't say they would end when the strike ended.

Joan Beifuss- Well that is exactly what I am saying about the sanitation strike, did in fact a set of dynamics come into operation with the formation of the COME organization...

David Yellin- And subsequently Martin Luther King coming into it and so on...

Joan Beifuss- That were beyond the control of almost anyone by that time.

William Lucy- I am not sure how to place the question of control. See constantly we needed during the sanitation strike lots of movement among people. Lots of attention to the issues. See you had an issue there that affected everybody. Here you don't have an issue that affects everybody in the hospital strike.

Joan Beifuss- Well a hospital strike is a little more complex I think.

William Lucy- It is far more complex.

David Yellin- But I guess what you are saying and is that at anytime if the strike could have been settled you would have settled it...

William Lucy- Certainly.

David Yellin- And in fact if had been settled on April 2nd Martin Luther King probably would have gone home.

William Lucy- We would not have withheld a settlement for the sake of creating more pressure., you understand what I mean.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah no I really didn't mean that.

David Yellin- Well maybe sometimes the pressure was created so it withheld the strike settlement. We are exploring this that is all we sure aren't making accusations.

Joan Beifuss- I just wondered how you (muffled).

David Yellin- Well how do you not do it and put it in operation is the question. What do you not do. Now you are making a very decided choice not to do something because you have some understanding of what the possibilities are. You also in order to be frank I guess feel to that there would be reluctance on people to get involved because they too don't want these things to happen.

William Lucy- Yeah I think that is a fact and I think the, this situation could be more complex and more complicated to solve because of the time. We could probably

mobilize a tremendous number of people and possibly even more because of the time. We could probably rounds the concerns of people and the emotions of people more because of the timing and I am referring for instance now to the upcoming Ray trial. You know we could shift this as to the battle of attitudes and philosophies and we could touch many more people. But we have tried and tried desperately to be more responsive in this thing to what we know.

David Yellin- I am awfully glad you are saying it because if you do what you are doing by not doing it nobody gives you credit. But were you some, were you Macavellian in this, boy they would sure jump on you.

William Lucy- You see apparently (muffled) our thinking that when we say we want to sit down and resolve the problem maybe they think we are just giving them a line. We know for instance as far as the patients and the city hospital they are getting better treatment time now before the work stoppage that is a fact. Now the other hospitals who are taking on the emergency rooms they are running at you know full blast. Well if they just take a look at the records they would know that we have form 5 to 6hundered employees from each of those hospitals. And if we wanted to take a very cynical point of view we would just affect the operation of those hospital if we had the ability to save strike. You know we just, you know it wouldn't make sense to dot hat but if they view us as a very hard and cold and calculated organization we would simply do it and not eve worry about it.

David Yellin- May I ask you do you have the ability to say strike to those others?

William Lucy- No, you see our constitution doesn't allow the international to call a strike and it is specifically written it doesn't allow it to call off a strike, now that doesn't mean we can't influence it. But it would seem to me that our..

David Yellin- Who could call a strike the local?

William Lucy- The local people. Our (muffled)...

David Yellin- But your influence, you are using your influence to the local people not to call a strike, would you go on record saying that?

William Lucy- Certainly, yes a number of time.

Joan Beifuss- Ok then let me jump back again, sorry we are jumping like this and we will try to get to another couple key questions because it is getting don't want to hold you up to long, then throughout this whole period of March it appeared to someone...

David Yellin- That's the month of March?

Joan Beifuss- Yeah.

David Yellin- Not the verb march.

Joan Beifuss- The month of March it appeared everything was stale mated as far as negotiations went nothing really seemed to be breaking open negotiation wise.

David Yellin- Especially after the injunction of March 5th and 6th.

William Lucy- Yeah as I recall there were meetings taking place structure by this ministerial group.

Joan Beifuss- All kinds of secret...

William Lucy- Well there weren't so secret because the press was there.

Joan Beifuss- Well now there were some city council.

David Yellin- Yeah but we are talking about are two different things there are all kinds of meetings...

William Lucy- There were all kinds of meetings but the ones we were directly involved in were not secret meetings we met over at I forget maybe it was St. Mary's cathedral but then were another set of meetings held.

David Yellin- Well every night there was a meeting at Mason Temple.

William Lucy- I am not speaking of mass meeting I am speaking of negotiation meeting. I can't think of the name of the church I think it is on Union Ave. there just beyond the courthouse.

David Yellin- Oh.

William Lucy- Great big church right there on the corner.

Joan Beifuss- First Methodist church?

William Lucy- Maybe for all I know but anyway we met there oh for any number of days trying to get some issues resolved.

David Yellin- Episcopal?

William Lucy- I think it is the Episcopal yeah.

David Yellin- That is the Episcopal church where they met before they went out.

Joan Beifuss- St. Mary's.

David Yellin- Yeah.

Joan Beifuss- Well now did it appear to you strategy wise that there was any hope of getting any support for your position in the white community.

William Lucy- No no we didn't write off the white community we thought we had not had an opportunity to present our views. And the, we thought that was a

segment of the white community that would support the mayor simply because of the people involved and they would divide on a black white basis but if we felt that if people heard the issues and had an objective mind that we knew which way they felt that they would relate to it very strongly. We hadn't had the opportunity to get out in the community and try to, you know we didn't have interested people who would come by and say we have a group over here that would like to hear would you come over and talk to them.

David Yellin- Interested white people.

William Lucy- So what we thought we had to do first of all to maintain our position was to make sure that the black community understood the nature of the struggle and why we had to persevere whether they came with us or not, why we had to do what we are doing.

David Yellin- So what did you do in order to.

William Lucy- So we first worked with the black community and nightly we use to explain the issues to them and they chose naturally we call for support for marches and this kind of thing. Then we got the invitation through the Tennessee council on human relations to make some presentations in other areas of the community, for instance a first was made available to us through the facilities YMCA. A chamber of commerce business interest kind of a thing where the city made a terrible mistake. Instead of the mayor coming down to speak to the presidents of Firestone Rubber and had a nice (muffled) and president of U.P. Bank and one of the people who were involved because of the economics view that they wanted to hear. So I told them I would be glad to come, so I went over and the mayor refused to come but he sent over Gianatti who promptly I think insulted the intelligence of the people by not discussing or debating the issues involved he simply said there is opposition and that's that. And then as far as I was concerned we went into these things and gave the rationale of why the men were asking what they were and ideas and what have you and Mr. Gianatti went up to argue the point but failed to point out the bad faith that had been shown by the city and all the behind the scenes things that had been done and therefore I think they lost the support of these people in the sense of stunned support. Then we had the opportunity again to the council to go out on white station road...

Joan Beifuss- That is St. Louis Church.

William Lucy- Yeah we had another large meeting out there one night where we devoted about an hour to presentation and about 2 hours to question and answers and people found out that the union fellows didn't carry machine guns and this type of thing and there were legitimate problems that needed to be solved. Well the mayor came the next night.

Joan Beifuss- That was kind of an incredible both those meetings were kind of incredible we went to those and expected them to be about 95% pro-Lobe and they were not. Is that still your call.

David Yellin- Yeah I am expecting a call.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah it went over quite well there that night.

William Lucy- Yeah well see we have nothing to hide. The issues and the problems are there and the whole question that is at stake is whether or not the employees will be allowed to participate in this thing called collective bargaining. Whether or not they will be able to influence the policies of the city.

Joan Beifuss- Was one of the considerations in escalating and bringing in King and Barrett Ruston, was it to get national press coverage on the theory that national press coverage would put pressure on the city?

William Lucy- No we though there was a need to mobilize people and if people were mobilized then the city would actually see the concern that was being held for the employees involved and if that concern was demonstrated then we could get back into an atmosphere of negotiations and settle the thing. Well it got beyond you know actually the macing, it got beyond the point of just pure and simple mobilization. And it was actually quite late before any people from outside became involved in it. As I recall Roy Wilkins and he and Barrett on the same night if I remember.

Joan Beifuss- The 15th I think.

William Lucy- Then Dr. King came and we hadn't had any mass marchers really until Dr. King came.

Joan Beifuss- Alright well let me go back again. The position of the black ministers in Memphis do you find this unique coming from say California?

William Lucy- In what sense do you mean position of?

Joan Beifuss- Well they seem to exert more power over people down here, I came here from Chicago and I can't imagine a coalition of black ministers being able to use as much power as they can with their people.

William Lucy- I think that is somewhat unique to the south in general. I think because I look at religion and maybe it has a stronger base in the south than it has versus California or New York or some of the other bigger cities.

David Yellin- It is the only place where they can come together.

William Lucy- I know you noticed, at least I noticed a substantial difference in the types of churches you have here as oppose as to what you would find here in Detroit or some of the other bigger cities where you have an awful lot of store front churches here you don't have an awful lot of store front churches, you have more permanent structures.

David Yellin- It is not only a religious experience it is a social experience, women come and spend all Sunday just sitting in church.

Joan Beifuss- And it was unable to be transported to the north evidently.

William Lucy- Well I think maybe the guideline may be in the south as far as the status of the minister and the institution that the church represents, it represents an area of freedom to speak. And one's individual views and I think it has been said many times and I think it is true that in contrast to the white clergy who is scared to death of the congregation the black minister because he serves the congregation he can say exactly what the feelings of the people are and not have a fear of getting attacked for his position on this issue and the other issue and I think it is an unbelievable situation where for instance in the case of Rabbi Wax when ultimately he came to the conclusion of what course of action he should take that he had to literally fight for his life within his own church and some of the other ministers that participated in that...

David Yellin- Some lost.

William Lucy- Some lost, well this is rather unbelievable. That the congregation can support 100% when you are saying deny someone some basic rights but will attack you when you say it is justified that you have these rights. That is kind of strange and I can't help but wonder about the so called bible belt and the particularly the white so called religious individual who can relate so strongly religion but be so blind to...

David Yellin- That is known as the American dilemma.

Joan Beifuss- No I think (muffled) Dr. King's assassination towards the white church, I think the white churches here will never be the same as they were before last February which is probably to the good you know all this ferment.

David Yellin- Well do we get any relation to the coming of Dr. King and this whole aspect of...

Joan Beifuss- Had you met Dr. King any place else, or had you worked with him ever?

William Lucy- Yes I had worked with him in several other areas, more his staff than him, I didn't mean to say directly with him. We had a situation in Chicago and all over the country where they had programs and we have attempted to relate to and even prior to becoming the U.S. Staff here I had worked with him in California on some of the projects they had going there.

Joan Beifuss- That is SCLC projects?

William Lucy- Yes.

David Yellin- What was your own personal point of view when Dr. King was coming in and all of this.

William Lucy- Well we thought it to be more a morale booster for the membership involved and the people in the community because we knew that he was quite busy and his tour to get the poor people's campaign off the ground. The question he had that he was so close, he was in March Mississippi somewhere. That we thought it would be good if we could just get him over for a night speaking. I think his views were that when he saw the people here and when he saw the movement that had been going on, I think they had been keeping track of represented a real live thing so to speak and I think he had always shared the views that along with whatever social change takes place there also has to be some economic change to go along with it and I think he said it very eloquently in one of his speeches that though it is good to achieve the right for instance to sit at the cafeteria counter if you can't buy anything wouldn't make anything substantial.

David Yellin- Right.

William Lucy- So he saw this whole movement I believe as a thing that just had to take place and it sort of went on the same lines as his philosophies and ideals went and therefore he felt he should become a part of it.

Joan Beifuss- Had you met with him personally before he came to run that march on the 28th?

William Lucy- No, no. We met let's see was the first or the second march now?

Joan Beifuss- The first.

David Yellin- Well he came the 18th to make a speech.

Joan Beifuss- And there was no march her said he would come back in and march and then it snowed on the day he came.

William Lucy- Well we met with him the day he came in and gave him as much background as we could.

David Yellin- That is the 28th.

Joan Beifuss- that is the first time.

William Lucy- On the situation.

David Yellin- On the 18th.

William Lucy- What had taken place, we didn't give him a whole lot of background as far as the community is concerned because this was a very brief thing and this is when the first march was announced and you know the snow came and then when he came back the second time and this was the march that was broken up we didn't, at least I didn't meet with him. I was in his presence but not meeting with him for the purpose of going over any program or what have you because you know his staff and our staff worked very closely together.

David Yellin- Who did you work with mainly?

William Lucy- As far as his staff was concerned? David Yellin- Yeah.

William Lucy- Andy Young, Jesse Jackson, James Bevel, Jose Williams, the people who normally travel with them...

Joan Beifuss- Were you in the march that was broken up that day.

William Lucy- Yeah.

Joan Beifuss- Did you go back to the temple?

William Lucy- Yeah.

William Lucy- Yeah.

David Yellin- Were you maced or anything?

William Lucy- No I wasn't maced during that march I was swung at a couple of times (muffled) we got about to Main and Beale although the chaos started before then, it was about that point that we just decided that the march just wasn't going to come off although some portions of it had turned on Main St. and were down maybe a half or two third of a block.

David Yellin- Were you here all during the strike, did you go home at all?

William Lucy- I think I went home once.

Joan Beifuss- Why don't you just move your family over here.

William Lucy- I thought about that.

David Yellin- And even now you are here?

Joan Beifuss- Had you ever been swung at before or anything like that?

William Lucy- No. We had confrontations with police before but not like Memphis police. It was a very strange kind of experience you know and I have been in large crowd situations before but we knew because we had a largely sort of disciplined our people as to what the march was all about and what we expected to take place and how we expected them to conduct themselves. And the strange thing about it is that the police and maybe I am shoving some blame but the police did not attempt to take on the people who were causing the problem. They took on where they could find people and it was quite obvious that there was women and children scattered throughout that crowd in addition we had our sanitation people along the outside edges of the crowd and we didn't anticipate the kids along the sidewalk busting windows either but I think there was a sort of tension existing because of what had happened earlier that morning and maybe there all common criminals out on the street too who were looking for an opportunity to grab off a little bit of loot but I

think had the police handled it differently and I am not sure how they could have handled it, you wouldn't have had the mass chaos and the ensuing things that took place that did happen. I think the Holloman completely lost control of the police force that day. They were doing things that were just unbelievable and we had, I just have a ton of photographs of things that were done that just goes beyond your imagination as to how a police force would conduct himself. I think anyone who watched the newscast that afternoon particularly the national news saw a number of incidents that just doesn't come close to anything they had seen before as far as the howling of a crowd or a crisis situation. But we knew from experience that what would happen. They fired tear gas into the church, they fired tear gas into the buildings.

Joan Beifuss- You saw them firing tear gas?

William Lucy- Oh yeah.

Joan Beifuss- Not into the lobby but actually into the..

William Lucy- In the church yeah. Yeah we got photographs, as a matter of fact I was on the 3rd floor window once we came back to the church and saw, I guess I saw 3 or 4 policemen come up to the doors, open the doors one guy I think fired into the church and then another guys goes in behind him, they were clubbing people in the church all over the place. And then we still we are (muffled) a history of the spot where they fired into the minimum salary building. I don't know if you ever have been there or not, have you seen that particular spot?

Joan Beifuss- Yup spot on the wall. Well now in view of the fact that the police were obviously not quite attuned to this march idea and the marchers could get out of control did you want Dr, King to come in a second time or would you have preferred that he not come.

William Lucy- No we felt that that he should come, because we didn't feel that the sanitation employees or their supporters had been involved in the looting or whatever so ewe felt no responsibility or obligation to the police department to call off the march.

Joan Beifuss- Whose responsibility would it have been to control the kids?

William Lucy- Those not directly involved in the marches it is the police's responsibility to control. Those in the march it is our responsibility. I think if you watch the marches since then we have had no difficulties what so ever.

David Yellin- The police were no where near the march.

William Lucy- You mean?

David Yellin- The first march.

Joan Beifuss- There were at intersections.

William Lucy- They were at intersections. Aside from the fact that they had tons of them.

David Yellin- I mean no where near I don't mean that I mean they weren't within the march they were by their own selection.

Joan Beifuss- Did you go over to Atlanta with Jesse Epps to talk to King?

William Lucy- No I didn't go to the executive staff meeting as far as the second march was concerned because King wasn't really reluctant to come back he knew that the problems it was going to create in terms of the schedule for the poor people's campaign, and he felt that in addition to himself laying these out to his executive staff it would be much more important that someone from the union as well as someone from the community went over and pointed out the parallel nature of both programs.

Joan Beifuss- Did you feel in view of the kind of beating nonviolence was taking in other parts of the country or the idea of nonviolence that King had to come back in here to kind of prove that nonviolence worked. Do you feel that entered into it at all?

William Lucy- I think to a degree, you see this was the problem I was pointing to. I don't think what took place in the first march challenged the concept of nonviolence because it was not a good mob that was violent. Those people who were in the march and who saw what took place and what started to take place and would start to take place and we knew for awhile that the people were coming off the sidewalk.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah right in overall nationwide publicity this did not come across I think.

William Lucy- That may be true and I think that raised the question in King's mind whether you could get the mass numbers of people together and provide the controls that were necessary. I personally think that maybe had we done a little more work and taken a few more precautions we wouldn't have had that difficulty in that first march.

Joan Beifuss- Were you aware that there was some kind of militant kids who were kind of on the fringes of..

William Lucy- Oh yeah.

Joan Beifuss- Was there any attempt by the union to get through them?

William Lucy- Yeah I think we have to recognize a person that had militant cares and we are talking about groups here but they are not thieves. They are not looters.

David Yellin- You brought up another point that they themselves militants that we have talked to or so called militants, the whinos and just another criminal element of which every community has unfortunately were involved in this and nobody had made an attempt in fact part of the invaders and the black students of Memphis is to

try to reach those very people that was part of the program but they never...I think we are coming to the end unfortunately and also..

Joan Beifuss- Can we get to the assassination do we have enough tape?

William Lucy- No, but we can turn it around.

Joan Beifuss- Five more minutes I just want to.

David Yellin- Is that alright.

William Lucy- Fine.

David Yellin- Your stamina is commendable. Let me see what I might do I might just turn it around. I think I will get another tape. (Tape End)