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Rev. Braxton Bryant, Dir. Tenn. Council on Human Relations, June 1968

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Tom Beckner- This is Tom, Tom Beckner and I am with Joan Beifuss at the (muffled) Peabody room with Mr. Braxton Bryant. Today is June the 25th 1968, this is tape 1.

Braxton Bryant- Once you get in Memphis it is pretty hard to get out but it is this all of its days. (Tape Break)

Braxton Bryant- If the Tennessee council the presence of its director....(Tape break)

Braxton Bryant- Unique contribution to make, it was....(Tape Break)

Braxton Bryant- First we had a board action that committed the staff implementation that would carry directly to the (muffled) without even strings attached. I never had to worry about anyone saying you are going not far and we had this. The faculty managed to set priority the council had set last October. Then that the first priorities of the Tennessee council of human relations would be to identify with the poor, the minority, and the alienated. Saying and doing with them today with justice, decency and dignity demand (muffled). Now when Lobe was elected.

Joan Beifuss- Ok now hold a minute first of all I would like for you to explain what the Tennessee council does and where your finances come from.

Braxton Bryant- Alright, the Tennessee council on human relations is a private non-profit, non-secretarian, private cooperation chartered by the state of Tennessee in 1954 to do educational and service work in the area of human relations. We are out about 2,000 members across the states and we have got 17 active chapters. An Active is when you have dual membership anyone that is a member, people join the Tennessee council on human relations and if we have a enough members we organize them into a chapter. But until they are both locally a member of their local chapter and a member of the Tennessee council. The council is the base, we have people that are members of the council at large in the state and not attached to any local organization. Now then we get our financing from dues and contributions from members within the state. Other interested people which only make up a 4th of our financing. The greater part of it comes from the Marshal Field Foundation in New York City. And the Ford foundation through the southern regional council.

Joan Beifuss- Well that was what I was going to ask about.

Braxton Bryant- We are a part, we are history, we count the southern regional council our parent organization.

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled)

Braxton Bryant- Some of it does, the Ford Foundation money goes to the southern regional council and comes through the southern regional council and to us, but the field foundation money, we get field foundation money in two ways. We share with all other councils, we share in the foundation, the field foundation. The money that

the field foundation contributes to the Southern Regional Council and then we get our (muffled). But we also get money, for instance this year we are getting \$40,000 direct from the (muffled) foundation. We will only get 4 or 5 of it through the Southern Regional Council. So....

Joan Beifuss- Is that up this year?

Braxton Bryant- No, well it is up this year, last year we got about 21....

Joan Beifuss- Is that because (muffled)...

Braxton Bryant- Part of it was because of our relationship in the Memphis strike and the larger contribution they made, actually they just doubled what they had been giving then directly.

Joan Beifuss- Well but then for instance the report that came out of the Southern Regional Council on (muffled) what came from your office?

Braxton Bryant- The Southern Regional Council was here at my invitation and the, if they did a good job one of our gripes we have had some territory disputes and philosophical disputes with the southern region council because we in the field are more an activist group and they are a research group and a parent organization, they carry on, the council is just one of their activities. But one of the things and I think they made a mistake on this I think that for instance we were called, well first I invited (muffled). All the contacts I had and built up the council had. We turned those over and opened the doors for Ed to come in and that made it possible for him to get into places and to get information that we had coming in directly. For instance I was the only white person other than Malcolm Blackburn, that set through most of the strategy sessions that was planned during the strike.

Joan Beifuss- I know let me ask one other thing before we have to get done to the strike. How long have you been....my first are there (Mufklfed0 in Alabama human relations council?

Braxton Bryant- There are human relations councils in all the old confederate states with the exception of Texas.

Joan Beifuss- Ok now....

Braxton Bryant- Texas they have never had one, it is too large I mean they have been poorly funded, they had another organization...

Joan Beifuss- Now is it specifically then aimed at the old confederate states?

Braxton Bryant- At the old confederate states, the Southern Regional Council was organized in 1944.

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled).

Braxton Bryant- No, the Southern Regional Council was an outgrowth of the old interracial fellowship that was organized in 1919. And it further went along and spurred along about blacks and whites in the old Confederacy mostly trying to start communication and bishop (muffled), Ralph McGill on the white side and some of the (muffled) and negro leadership brought in the group after when the beginning of the close of world war II thinking that the service men coming back, they have been fighting for freedom and they are going to come back and they are coming back into segregated south we better open up these areas of communication.

Joan Beifuss- Now when did you come into the Tennessee council?

Braxton Bryant- I came in to the Tennessee council, I was hired in November of 64, they came asked me in December.

Joan Beifuss- And what had you done before that?

Braxton Bryant- I had for 25 years been (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Where?

Braxton Bryant- IN Arkansas and most of it in Dallas Texas. I am a native of Arkansas, Texarkana, outside of Texarkana in a rural area south Arkansas. Born to Dotty (Muffled) in Miller County. We were sharecroppers on a mill, and we owned a little farm but we moved away from it because my father would usually buy a rent a farm near a big fat (muffled) and we lived in the place ten or twelve's years and we never did buy a place after we left but we were really active in the farm. There was 13 in the family.

Joan Beifuss- 13 children?

Braxton Bryant- 13 children in the family, I was the youngest of 5 boys and was between 8 girls, 4 girls older, 4 girls younger. Most of my family still believes in segregation. And rather than for a county judge a couple 3 years ago and with the only segregation (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Do you have a good relationship with...

Braxton Bryant- I have good relationships with my family. They naturally it is very strange in this area but we had a very close family. We were a very poor family but I just tell people I was born rich because I stayed at home and I had a father that was hard working and (muffled) but I never can remember being hungry, it never entered my mind that there food to eat. It never entered my mind that I wouldn't have a good clean bed to sleep in. Never entered my mind that my mother didn't love me or that my father and mother was not permanent and so they gave us this type and my dad was a very industrious with 13 kids and a bunch of (muffled) I don't know how you survive. He wouldn't take any kind of welfare and things of that type.

Tom Beckner- There wasn't much available back then either?

Braxton Bryant- Well you could go get commodities during the depression, you could go get commodities. I remember going to school on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. And then sitting out and sawing wood on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays and all of the (muffled) selling his stack of wood 4 foot high and 8 feet long (muffled). Selling this for 50 cents. So but I started preaching when I was 16 years old in the Methodist church and took a full time pastor when I was 17. I was invited to be the guest platform speaker for Vista works in Tennessee, the men in Gatlinburg for us in a retreat. (Muffled) My first charge was in a mountain (muffled) in the Ozark mountains, (muffled) . I was pastor of 5 churches and 3 preaching places, three area schools where the congregation met.

Joan Beifuss- At age 17?

Braxton Bryant- At age 17. The reason I didn't have a (muffled) I only paid 96 dollars the year before in debt.

Joan Beifuss- Right.

Braxton Bryant- I was wanting to do something in the summer, I didn't have not get on down to preach and I had to get started now. Presiding (muffled) he said my parents left me and you can work with the young people. Well I went up there and preached straight from the bible and I think that year the Little Rock conference journal shows that I baptized 96 people and took them on confession of faith and I don't know how many Baptists we stole. And man they just didn't want you to go home, so I have been away from home, I have had a pastorate all the way since I finished the 10th grade and missed a year, flunked a year.

Joan Beifuss- You didn't go back to college?

Braxton Bryant- Never went home anymore. I finished high school and married my childhood sweetheart. Had two children before we started in college. I had gone two years of college and had three children by the time they did away with the (muffled) classification in the draft and I was 4D of course as an ecumenists. But when my men left (muffled) I wanted to be with the men. I waived my 4D classification and went into the navy in 1944.

Tom Beckner- (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- No, I only had two years in college I couldn't really qualify. But then I had so much about, oh I had been preaching then 6 or 7 years and they offered to waiver that but I wanted no sir, I wanted no uniform I have always been anti-structure, they are separated from the men, I want to be where the men are. I went in as a seaman and became a radar man and served on the USS (muffled).

Tom Beckner- (Muffled) radar man weren't you?

Braxton Bryant- (muffled) The destroyer was armed with this new radar they brought this extended tracking from about 50 miles out to about 105. So they took

the mid section torpedoes off and put a tripod mast on it, They ought to have had these on the carriers, on the battle wagons, but they couldn't afford to take him out of service to put this new gear on them so they put them on upper destroyers and then put a fighter from the director on the destroyer and then set us out in front 50 miles and the other cover we had was two squadron of planes flying over us with a fighter director and if a kamikaze comes in and you see we were planning for the invasion of France. Then what we did the fighter director, directed the squadron over us to take out and if they missed him we got the others from playing the second battle (muffled). I had very mixed feelings about (muffled) I mean the dropping the bombs. I think it is a terrible thing America did but hadn't realized had many of our ships were going down.

Tom Beckner- You were on one.

Braxton Bryant- I was on one so, but anyway I came back and then I took my degree, undergraduate degree from Henderson State Teacher's college in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. I stayed out of school, pastored a little church all the time, I was leading the school pasturing all this time. And taught school in (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Holy cow.

Braxton Bryant- And preached at 5 churches in rural areas, but I needed that education I had to get a (muffled) in theology. So the most money I ever made in my life must have been in 1947 or 48 when I was getting \$3,000 for preaching and \$3,200 for teaching and coaching and I made \$6,200 dollars and I resided had a wife and 4 children and (muffled) paid \$1,500 a year and went not Bells Sector for \$1,500 in order to be close enough to go to southern Methodist university (muffled) while I was there pursuing theology. And commuted in by the way I was on GI by the way I did have GI. My GI ran out in the first year I had used to up going through college and finishing up college and got a year GI. So I got that and was principal in coaching the boys basketball and then went back for the other two years (Muffled). And always was controversial as a minister, never had to leave a church in my life. Always never had any problem staying at a church, but was very outspoken and very blunt and abrasive.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) in rural churches?

Braxton Bryant- No, my pastorate I would assigned to Dunkinville which is a little town of oh I guess 1,600 when I went there. I fly to Dallas and (muffled) but I stayed there 4 years from 52 to 56 then moved to the large Methodist church and membership jumped I think from about 160 or 70 to 600 large (muffled). I never got a raise, the church I was never appointed to a larger church and I never asked it. But I would take one and (muffled) and I moved from Dunkinville, because the preacher had to leave (muffled) memorial and he could come to Dunkinville. I could go to wait at memorial, so I went to wait at memorial and James was there. An old town in North Texas there, right on the Oklahoma border. By the way (muffled) . I know a lot others listen, I laughed, man when he (muffled) and had them out there so (muffled)

and around. Listen I was there 2 years and then came back to Dallas (muffled) churches about 11. I was a pastor there 3 years and then resigned there to (muffled) in 1962. I ran for United States Congress, I lost it actually we had a coalition that (muffled) but I picked up some downtown business reppure and for instance the supreme court justice Tom Clark's brother, Bob Clark, an outstanding lawyer there and the head of the labor council which (muffled). And I lost it by 267 votes out of 100,000.

Tom Beckner- Good night.

Joan Beifuss- Who did you run against?

Braxton Bryant- I ran against the state legislature, I lost the democratic nomination but I know (muffled) it scared the structure and so then they threw Cabolt for mayor Dallas and I ran again in 64. Cabolt took some of my support. But we had a good race he beat me about 3:2 I guess. (Muffled) and then I combined with him and we both together (muffled). And then I came here in 64.

Joan Beifuss- Hold a minute were you still preaching..

Braxton Bryant- I resigned my church, I resigned my church while I, and went with New York licensing and made my living most of the time selling insurance.

Joan Beifuss- you were in Dallas when (muffled)?

Braxton Bryant- For 8 years I was chairmen of what we call the democratic (muffled). With the coalition between labor, liberal and (muffled). And I was heading the grassroots.

Joan Beifuss- What for? For heaven's sakes?

Braxton Bryant- Well you see in Dallas it was awful, you don't want to be called a liberal. And they had people who were in support of the democrats in the primary and a republican in the general election. SO the largest were those that believed you ought to be loyal to the democratic party. Who says you ought not vote for someone the nominee unless you intend supporting him. So, came here then, Will Campbell was head of the committee of southern churches in Nashville and a member of a council.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- Yes he is (muffled). We office together, (muffled). But Will's brother in law is a minister in the North sector conference and a close friend of mine. While I was campaigning for one of the offices Will was visiting his brother in law and (muffled) rather odd here was a minister in a conservative town and he had gotten his strongest support standing for, at my last I was (muffled). The civil rights bill was (muffled). And we put on a pretty good fight there and so after the passage of the civil rights bill, before the civil rights bill passed the council was pretty much

much (muffled) and doing all the things you could. You see the civil rights bill, all of us had never gotten over to (muffled). Because what the civil rights bill did...

Tom Beckner- Was this the first tone now?

Braxton Bryant- The 64 civil rights bill.

Tom Beckner- 64 , yes.

Braxton Bryant- The civil rights bill. By just a stroke of the pen of the president of the United States in signing the bill, it literally changed the law from the one on the outside to the one on the inside to bar the door. True in employment, true in education, housing, true in public accommodations, all of this. So we had always been with the one on the outside but the law was with the one on the inside. And so we had this (muffled) of a thing, law abiding citizens and yet agitating for changes and not being able, once though we got into the saddle in the council it was time to surface it. Now one of the things that I have had to do, we have been very strong on making some strong stands on implementation of the full civil rights bill in local state and federal agencies. And the confrontation has to take place and were we made news in Tennessee, and then the times when you have to become a great,...

Joan Beifuss- Mmmhmm.

Braxton Bryant- And (muffled) with Mayor Ingram with the poverty program you see and (muffled). But we don't get, it is not news when you sit down and make gains through an orderly thing, we talked to the everyone we have an abrasive thing, there are ten that we talked to and have been able to make some of this but you have to serve it, people have got to know who you are. For instance right now one of the things that makes my work easy I can go anywhere in the state of Tennessee in the black community and to some extents the poor ones many white or black. Once you ever make your stand and they know you are for real I don't know what their system of communication is but I get letters from all over the state and (muffled) and they accept it immediately as real and no problem whatsoever being a soul brother.

Tom Beckner- You think a lot of this communication is in the form of the churches?

Braxton Bryant- No, as far as what we are in is very simple it is not (muffled). Blacks, we like to use black of course and we taught one way, I will be your friend but you understand why I can't take your stand publicly and then you go in and you talk to the white. Well we talk to both black and white but sooner or later in any community you are going to have the black and the white come together and there is going to be a confrontation. And when the black here that we did here with Mayor Lobe and we brought them they were to set up a meeting between the mayor and the black community. They knew I had been talking to Lobe and they knew I had set up some other meetings with Holloman, with the black leadership but they never really know you see. I am saying they knew it because I (muffled), well some of them did. But when they hear what you said to them and what you said out here to the

strikers at the union hall and then a direct confrontation within present with Lobe and then they hear you say the same thing in front of the (muffled) and they know then that whatever it would cut they know you are willing to risk whether you will be bale to be open again and to be faithful to what you said.

Joan Beifuss- Let me ask you one thing. Do black people around the state know about what happened in Memphis?

Braxton Bryant- No, no. no.

Joan Beifuss- What has been your assessment of Memphis let's say a year ago at this time.

Braxton Bryant- You know CBS, we were down at the city hall one day and I was to meet with Pryor. They were having a closed session and I talked with Downing, and was leaving and (muffled) was out there and they said will you give a little comment on tape. And they taped quite a bit and I gave that to them. They didn't play the story and this was five weeks before the death of Martin King. They played it the night before Martin King and all people think that this was made on the night of Martin Luther King. Because what happened and what you were saying 5 weeks before. It was set into this slot and most people thought it was taken after. Memphis had taken a lot of pride in itself, it was paternalistic. They had made some games, but it was racist to the core. Paternalism, some games, a little bit in the schools, had one negro elected a the time, should have had more than that, we had one negro elected to the state legislature. One or two on the council, three on the council, one on the county squire you see, one judge. But tokenism and never were they the problem. I would face the reality of the frustrations that there really was in the black community. I think it was a town where politicians like Ingram had plagued havoc. The negro community had not passed out of the old southern tradition and a lot of them didn't want to. Yet, a lot of negro ministers who still were getting their payoffs from the white politician. That is a harsh word and I mean it though just that way. For years ministers (muffled). White politicians come outright and bribe, and sometimes they do but the most part it was ministers. If you really get support, you would be surprised you need a roof for you church, I think he made a 500 dollar contribution, didn't check too much whether the ministers turned it in or not. They got a tax deduction and therefore it was a political contribution and they got a tax deduction from it too. You see this type of thing, Ingram did this with the black community.

Joan Beifuss- Had that been done from the time of Crump?

Braxton Bryant- From Crump on, from Crump on yeah. And therefore any time and I will tell you another thing, there is evidence. Anytime these people like Jim Lawson that would really stand up and tell it like it is. You had plenty of negroes that would discredit him and plenty of white would point to a fellow that now this is a good reasonable negro. Therefore the whites have always added their (muffled) to keep up the negro community fragment. And therefore with the parties simply (muffled).

The platform that we came in on, Dr. Williams (muffled) And then had such remorse you remember he went back to the school and became an Episcopal priest and is now. But he is president of the associated university for the study of nuclear science (muffled). And as a pastor, through the Episcopal church Lobe had him converted to the Episcopal church and they invented some institute over the years. He when Lobe was mayor before, Lobe took in one of his(muffled) and developed this fascinating friendship. They had little in common in ideology political and social, but they did meet on the grounds of the Episcopal church. His wife (muffled). Lobe when he was elected mayor I never met him.

Joan Beifuss- About this time or the last one?

Braxton Bryant- The last time, when Lobe was elected mayor last fall, but Pollard talked to me and said I want you to get acquainted with Lobe and you have to (muffled) and I believe you can talk with him. Her is real straight forward and he is bony and gutty and backboned and all of this and use you straight language. And the of course he talked with Lobe and he said I want you to meet Braxton Bryant. I think if you understand what premise he is going to speak and we (muffled). I came to Memphis in November and called Lobe, and he said come on over (muffled). There were a lot of people there because I got there about 10:00 or 10:15 he (muffled) a lot of people waiting. And Moon he ordered (muffled). And the basis of our conversation was that first he told e exactly where he stood politically economically, this that and the other. But he said I want to be fair to the black community,. Now his understanding of fairness sand mine didn't gel. But we accepted that and I said well we would like to work with structures if we can work on our terms and that is that you don't have to take anything, we are going to tell it like it is and if you want my opinion I will tell you (muffled) and we are going to get in some fights but it doesn't have to be personal. But anyway that we can help you communicate with the black community are positive things that you want to do we will help you communicate you see, and we will be happy to do anything we can do to help communicate positive things to the black community. Well the first thing Lobe wanted me to do was to set up a big meeting with all the negro community. You are out in left field, I am a white guy. I am not the guy for that.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

Braxton Bryant- He wanted to tell them, he wanted to tell them brother he wanted to be the mayor of all the folk.

Joan Beifuss- Did he have any kind of idea that (muffled) positive program?

Braxton Bryant- Oh he was building jobs, we are going to open up this thing and he wanted them to know they were going to have a fair shake and we are going to offer (muffled) we need your help and we want to make it part of the community, and some of it was I left with real positive feeling. By the way I didn't bring the letters but I will bring you some copies of the exchange of letters that Lobe and I had over this meeting and what we looked forward to working together.

Joan Beifuss- Let me ask you some thing else, had you not met Lobe before then?

Braxton Bryant- No never met him.

Joan Beifuss- Well now what was your impression of him?

Braxton Bryant- I had heard all this of, I had heard all the stories of his being very racist and closing the swimming pools and remember the questions of just why he did resign, how much he was involved in this business and how much would he get to be mayor, and do some of the things that is in the civil rights agreement was demanding to be done all the time. But that he did seem to be an honest guy, person. I heard that, a very likeable guy.

Joan Beifuss- Did you find any segregationist in him?

Braxton Bryant- Yes, no I didn't find any segregationist in him. He seemed to accept, he seemed to accept that this was facts and it is not what I want but I am a law abiding citizen (muffled). I found him totally inadequate in his understanding of what the real implementation was of the civil rights law. He was taken to face and tokenism and I was taking it of course to be quite different. But we established this repoire after he became mayor.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) were you involved at all in the (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- No, we do not and I can say this unequivocally. First I do not deal in politics. I would say I was more interested in (muffled). But I have seen the (muffled) and the reason, let me say the reason. One is my weakness I think is politics and I think you could get involved right quick. Get more time and I feel like, basically form a strategy standpoint, now we do all the voter registration and I do believe in political participation, very strongly, I think you have got to. But what need s to be done today, it takes 51% or 50% plus one vote to get elected. And you just can't go to bed with anybody politically and get that much votes. If the council is going to be relevant, is going to be, it has got to be free. And it must not have political ties and there is another thing, the poor, the minority and the alienated have been sold out over and over, there must be integrity with consistency that is if some thing comes up we don't just cease to work on it because of one of our friends. We were never told anything in front of a friend to make it difficult to him that is friendly to a human decency or a human dignant position. But right on the other hand if we are working in some problems and here is election comes up before we will move out and break our integrity with the poor, and with the blacks you see we are going to, we will just have to keep on. And if it causes any trouble that is jut too bad, you just can't pull this thing and work this thing like an accordion if you want consistency and persistency and expect the people to be ok (muffled). Now this is personal, it is also that the council...and then of course form a standpoint we are not a political, we are in fact an example organization and therefore, only (muffled) that they get away and so are churches and I know a lot of them. We could do a lot more and be free and not be in danger tax wise, but we do not endorse, we do not...I just don't (muffled) so we weren't involved in anything.

Joan Beifuss- I take it you hard to (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- You bet your life, you bet your life. Now then the, so I refused to call the meeting and to get the (muffled). I said man (muffled) the word is negro, you can say nigra the first time and you are trying to be polite and I said Henry the first, by the time the first meeting got over he was very comfortable (muffled). I said my god man I hope you can say all the right things and you are already (muffled). I said you can talk to men and say you boys and you are (muffled). You can talk about we are going to, I tell you what we are going to do we are going to be fair but I will tell you we are going to have law and order in this town I will throw everybody in jail, that means you see one thing to you. It means police harassment for black people.

Joan Beifuss- Did Lobe at that point have any feelings about the fact that this had gotten (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- He said I didn't get nay and that is not going to make any difference to me I am going to be the mayor of all the people. I mean he understood there were black folks in a rage and Ingram had made a pull for it and he didn't seem to be fair about it. (Muffled).

Tom Beckner- I think he really expected to get...

Braxton Bryant- I don't think he would have expected it. Now then I came again in January and we got letters on this and I had a long visit with the mayor in his office, after he had been in office and in our conversation I said, as far as you talking about (muffled). I said to me for some time the number one topic, for some time in my own mind (muffled) not too much from community to community. In my mind when I think of the police system, I usually think of it as (muffled). One third has given up and just bad, we will go along...or even if the coming professional or which are becoming like the latter 3rd are leaving and the latter 3rd is nothing more than racists and thugs and (muffled) and people who are bullies who want to wear guns and ought to be (muffled). I say that and out of the sky this has been from (muffled) across the south in rural areas and all of this. What I have seen and I have never been arrested and I don't know why, I have never been hit by police, I have been gassed a few times. And was taught tot honor the police and to support your local police and to have great faith in them as a boy scout. Now Lobe, this shook Lobe. And we, I gave him illustration after illustration and was talking about them, so he began to tell me about Holloman, what kind of man. He got so enthused about it that he turned on his intercom and got Frank Holloman, he has an intercom for him over at the police. And said Frank you won't believe who is here in my office. He said, Braxton Bryant he is this hell raiser you have heard a lot about him from the Tennessee council on human relations, but I am going to tell you something I did him like I did you before I appointed you. I checked him out and he is alright and he is saying a hell of a lot of stuff that I don't like but I think you ought to hear him. He has convinced me, I am convinced he is here at least he knows something of what he is talking about. It has to do with police and I want to send him over and to talk with you and you can talk (muffled). I am at the mayor's office to Frank Holloman's desk

(muffled). I went over and Frank and I, he was a Methodist too and we reminisced and we got off pretty good and then we got down and Frank told me, Frank Holloman, that he was worth, that the mayor thought that they had contact with the black community but he knew they didn't. That they were talking to pawns and that quite frankly I don't know the black community.

Joan Beifuss- (Muffled) who he was talking to at that time?

Braxton Bryant- Lee, they were talking to, let's see (muffled), they were talking to, of course they had Horton and they had Horton was the best one they had. They had, some preachers and (muffled) mostly. Political sell outs mostly.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- And so I told him, well Frank I can help you here, and he said, I am not the spokesmen for the black community but I think I know it as well as any probably white person would (muffled). But I would say if I started to pick out a man that had integrity, that had brilliant, that has the discipline of mind, that has courage and would not sell out that I would talk to Jim Lawson. He said, my god that (muffled) I have never met the man, I have been in one meeting with him and everything I know about the man I don't like. Well I said Frank two things, first you reveal how little you do know about him and how much you misinterpreted what you do know. He said that he just couldn't imagine talking to Jim Lawson, I said (muffled). But we went ahead and talked and we talked about this thing and of course my position was (muffled). The higher up ones, I don't talk to him anymore about police brutality, he asked. We just start on that and they know I know, and I know they know. And so our (muffled) we try to appeal to the pride of professionalism. When are you going to level with the community. Why in the hell do you make us fight the police department. Why do we have to bring in all of these charges and knowing that we are going to bring....we trusted the (muffled). First it is not all your fault, we need far better recruiting programs you see to get the kind of men that needs to be on the force in the first place. We need far better training facilities, we need better salaries to build a morale that you can have a professional like that. But we are not going to be able to get the money to do it, unless you folk, the only ones are going to believe the true state, if we can make the public believe the true state of the police department is (muffled) itself. And we believe if you would come clean and tell the community the real tragedy and the real, what you know you are sad, lay it out and then give some of us the (muffled) and said they are leveling now let's support the professional part of this and let's get to the bottom and reorganize this whole system and make a real police that protects people. Not their images but protects the public and offers to give all the things that a policemen ought to do other than just a cop beating the hell out of somebody. But we went into a lot of this and then (muffled). Frank Holloman said do you think you could get Jim Lawson to meet with me, I said certainly, I am having lunch with him at 2:00 he is the new president of our council, all you have got to do is pick up the phone and call him., He said I would like you to tell him about this conversation we had. And even what I said but my mind is open and so I had lunch with Jim at 2:00 and told him,

and this was on a best I can remember a Thursday. I said I think he will call you this afternoon, not today but tomorrow. He didn't call that afternoon and he didn't call the next day. He was so scared, I have never seen a guy, now can you imagine a man being this scared, what you can of Jim Lawson. Jim the next week went to the Cincinnati conference on black power and the preachers you know that met in Cincinnati and they had their first organizational meeting. And Frank tried to call him and he was out, but he wouldn't leave his name. The next week...

Joan Beifuss- Do you have any idea where all that communist stuff about Lawson came out? Where it came from? Because it was circulating during the election and what...

Braxton Bryant- It was circulated by this right wing group, what is the name of it?

Tom Beckner- (Muffled) on communism...

Joan Beifuss- Oh the Birch Group.

Braxton Bryant- The Birch group here they circulated on Jim and I both, they, in fact they say I have got to see Downing Pryor. They have gone before the city council and given them stuff, a whole list of stuff.

Joan Beifuss- Who is that the Birch group?

Braxton Bryant- The birch Group, I know the man's name and I have got all of it...

Joan Beifuss- (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- No, they wouldn't do that (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- Well that was what I wondered because over and over again, well not over and over again...

Braxton Bryant- The news they had it but they won't print it you see.

Joan Beifuss- But there seems to be all these people that just accepted it, nobody made anything...

Braxton Bryant- Oh yeah for instance do you know what inspector Wallis police (muffled). Wallis is a night so he is in charge of all the police in (muffled). And he drives by and of course I was here about nearly 12 weeks and I rode with him alto of nights. And we became good friends. And that was when we had the big snow, 18 inches of snow. All the labor people we ate together (muffled). It was about 2:00 in the morning and we all headed over to a little pantry kind of place. And so, we had gone to (muffled). So I we started back and Wallis was parked out there and they didn't know that I (muffled). I threw that snowball (muffled) right in front of him you know, They just knew the whole bunch and of course when I did I just hollered and laughed and Wallis began laughing you know and I said you boys better go ahead I have an apology to make here, though I thought (muffled)

Joan Beifuss- (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- Oh it was after what was a long call when in Champa, Lucie and Champa, Champa, Lucie, and Epps, oh there are two or three others, but listen Champa was climbing the wall backwards. I mean I didn't just talk with (muffled) I whammed that windshield and it just spattered every which way. So but in the last night many thinks communism about al this stuff. Wallis does you see, that all of this (muffled) and then just be surprised, I said my god Wallis scares the hell out of me when people like you talk like that.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- We are talking about this, they implied and said what they told me. I said when Frank gets up and I said my god, I said let me tell you. This young guy (muffled) was running for vice president at the time. You know nominated the other day you might have seen where they had (muffled) the head of the youth communist union. Well he made a speech at Vanderbilt last year and I was at New York at the time and he came by the office to see me. And my secretary (muffled) . I was in the march of freedom foundation office (muffled). I said tell him to come in. He said (muffled) I don't care, tell him that I am in New York and I will be back tomorrow I would love to talk to him. Well he came back the next day and I told me, somebody asked me what I thought of him and I said if I had the money I would make a contribution to him, because I think that is (muffled) to keep him there. if that is all they have to offer for the use of America, man listen we....but I said he did say one thing that made sense. I was talking and I (muffled). And with subverting (muffled) my god I agree there are a thousand and one things wrong with the (muffled). But it was to discipline one's self and to give one up to freedom to self determination to an ideology. (Muffled). He said and I said with all of our fault I think there is just too much freedom flowing inside. I don't have a chance. And then he said this. He said well you are right in a way but then we got chance and our big chance is if America will just try to pull (muffled). And do what you ought to, and man (muffled) all we want America to do time from time is what America says it will do. This is a good position to take, this is the America that I want to see, not what we have been but what we have said we have been and what we say we ought to be that would be great. But he said all we have got to do is you can start working on a slum or you ca start some good race program to alleviate some of the terrible conditions and then you can start a project somewhere. All we got to do is send one of our people around and make one speech and endorse it and you will have 15 congressman standing on the floor blasting us not because it is not American, but to the congressman if we can do this we can (muffled). SO I was telling them this (muffled). But so, well then of course with this background that gave us a good entrée to Frank Holloman, and a goo entrée to the mayor. And it was on this basis that when I came back that the mayor I think (muffled) called me and started (muffled) about council membership. He said Braxton I want you to (muffled) to get into this thing because somebody needs to get some communication.

Tom Beckner- Where you there at the beginning of the strike?

Braxton Bryant- I guess the strike, this was the day after, this was the day after Champa had blasted away at the mayor.

Joan Beifuss- The mayor.

Braxton Bryant- Yeah, and it was on this thing that (muffled) called. So I came in and (muffled) the whole thing and went home a couple of times.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) Did you know Jesse Epps before this?

Braxton Bryant- No I didn't know any of the labor people before. Didn't know Jerry Worth, didn't know Lucie, didn't know Epps, didn't know Champa, didn't know any of them.

Joan Beifuss- (muffled)

Braxton Bryant- Oh yes and what I did was one of the first things that we were able to do was we had a meeting with our local human relations council and endorsed the objective (muffled). I also met with the mayor and talked to him a long time.

Joan Beifuss- Was that the first week?

Braxton Bryant- The first week. After, the first week after (muffled).

Joan Beifuss- After he had already been painted into a corner..

Braxton Bryant- He had pretty much painted himself into a corner. Then, (muffled)....(Tape break)

Braxton Bryant- Now as far as the strike is concerned I thin there are several areas that you may be interested in one is, some of the negotiations that actually took place, the meetings that were held, the meetings for instance between Holloman and the black leadership that took place in my room the night after we were all maced, after the 1st. This was the 1st meeting that Holloman had. I called Holloman and told him what had happened that afternoon and asked him to come to my room 560 and he came and we met with Jim Turner, I mean Jesse Turner, Lawson, Jacque Wilmoore, Harold Middlebrooke, Gerald Fanion, Ralph Jackson, I believe that was the group. This was a very important meeting. Then there was a meeting, I did arrange a meeting between the mayor and the black ministers. A meeting between the...the confrontation we had at the minimum salary building. And then the most of the, some of the best labor that I did, Dave Caywood when the strike was nearly settled, when they had the meting out in Lemoyne. This was in, I could go back to the file soft the paper, it was on Friday afternoon, I was fixing to go to Nashville and Dave Caywood asked me he said Braxton can you get a statement from Labor on what is the least they would accept.

Joan Beifuss- Are you talking about, is this the week about February, the last week in February?

Braxton Bryant- Yes. Something when they had the word, compromise in the headline...

Joan Beifuss- Right leading up to that.

Tom Beckner- That was the 27th I believe is when that came out in the paper.

Braxton Bryant- Well it was the Friday before this.

Joan Beifuss- Yeah right.

Braxton Bryant- And I told Dave I will try and Jerry Worth had gone to Washington that week again. So I started working with Lucie and Epps and Champa. Trying to get them to putdown what they would accept because John Spence and Price, Dr. Price.

Joan Beifuss- Oh Hollis Price.

Braxton Bryant- Hollis Price, had gotten a meeting set up at Hollis' office on Sunday afternoon. You all know about this?

Joan Beifuss- No.

Braxton Bryant- Before the meeting took place, I told them I wouldn't attend the meeting because I was going back to Nashville but it was between Downing Pryor and two or three other councilmen and Hollis Price and Jim Lawson, Dave Caywood, I am not sure that Cook was in on this or Lucius Birch but they were background people. So what they wanted to do was to get a statement that both the black leadership of the ministers would agree with, some of the labor people that he labor first would give the statement that this is what we have accepted and they would take it and try to work out something with Downing Pryor and members of the council. I worked all day Saturday and couldn't get them to put anything down.

Joan Beifuss- This is the labor people you are talking about?

Braxton Bryant- Yes. They were afraid that with Jerry gone and they were very elusive but we talked this thing and we were in bull sessions in rooms like this eating together, all during the night and I had heard their positions over and over and total I was just one in the group and I sat in with the mayor and the leadership of the council. On the morning before Martin was killed the next day in a closed meeting on that and I, it is unbelievable that you could sit, be with the labor folk and the black and the strategy session and then go down and sit in with the mayor and Downing Pryor in the group in pre-council session. But this happened on Wednesday before Martin was killed on Thursday.

Joan Beifuss- Wait a minute.

Braxton Bryant- All I am doing here is illustrating that we were being able to move in (muffled).

Tom Beckner- Let me check something real quick. (Tape Break).

Braxton Bryant- Now we had people who I am sure was far...I was not influential I was as for council but who had a lot more to do on both sides but no one, now Dave Caywood through me could contact him on the black community that he couldn't contact. And Dave was far back in the structures with Price and with Cook and with Lucius Birch, far more than I ever had any contact with him or in certainly Dave had contact with the mayor, but anyway finally at breakfast on Sunday morning, now leading up to this meeting with Pryor.

Joan Beifuss- This is back in February.

Braxton Bryant- Hollis Price's office. I finally ask Epps and Champa I said let me write down this thing or write down some things that I believe you all will accept. And don't you say a damn word unless you disagree and I won't write anything that you disagree with and of course I just wrote down very simple and it was the solution that was offered 5 or 6 weeks before and he finally accepted nearly without a change. Now they hammered it out that afternoon and Downing accepted it.

Joan Beifuss- Who were the other council people do you know?

Braxton Bryant- Oh I don't remember but that is...

Joan Beifuss- Were you there?

Braxton Bryant- No I didn't go, I thought that since I had been on this....I was tired, I didn't see where I could contribute anything. And so they came out of the meeting and were really happy. Now what they were going to do, Lucius Birch and what is Cook's name? Ted?

Tom Beckner- Ned.

Braxton Bryant- Ned Cook, they were going to take this thing and start working on the mayor that night. So but they had to get Jerry's ok on it You see all they knew is this is what I thought. Dave told them from very reliable sources close in the labor movement, he didn't tell them it was even mine, but it was my understanding. Well but they had now before they could go to the mayor, get confirmation from Jerry. Jerry came in and Downing called him told him he would like to talk to him. Jerry said I will talk to you folks all I want to. And refused to meet with Jerry. With Downing Pryor and Dave Caywood to go over the statement that the group had approved. Well Dave called me and Downing and man they were really in the air. They said he won't meet with us. And can you help us, do you think that you can get Jerry Worth to meet with us. I said I don't know but I will try and so Jerry had moved up on a suite on to the 6th floor. So I picked up the phone and called Jerry, I said Jerry I know that Downing and Dave's called you. I know a lot has gone into this and I don't know, damnit you know better than I know whether, I don't blame you, for not wanting to talk to anybody the way this thing has worked out. But let me say this we are trying to work, in what we are doing it would be helpful to us even if you

gave them a courtesy office. He said, no I walked down to his room, I was in his room. He said are you fixing to have a meeting with (muffled). Well he Braxton I will tell you what you tell them to come on over. And you tell them the only damned reason I am meeting is because you asked me to. That I want that thoroughly understood and he was really teed off, he had been to Washington and had come back pretty re-charged and so they came down, Downing and Dave came to my room and about the time that Jerry was supposed to come he called and he said folks had left and we got a lot more room up here in the suite why don't you all come on down. We did. And at 11:00 or 12:00 that night Downing Pryor, Dave Caywood and T.O. Jones and Jerry Worth and myself sat there and most of Downing and Jerry had worked this thing out to an acceptable (muffled). They called a typist and got it typed up and Dave carried this and gave it to Ned Cook and Lucius Birch. Now I don't know how much they worked on, they got the mayor out of bed and he was (muffled) he met them spotted out at the clubs, club Leo or whatever it was that summer. But anyway so they worked on him awhile and then everybody went on to get some sleep and started again at breakfast the next morning and about 2 or 3:00 Monday afternoon the mayor caved. But now how are you going to do it without losing face, so the commercial appeal writers called him and he was to write the story.

Joan Beifuss- He was called in? By whom?

Braxton Bryant- Yes he was given...I don't know they would just give him the story. Joe Sweat I believe was...

Tom Beckner- Was he the writer?

Braxton Bryant- I believe Joe Sweat was the writer I am not sure. He was either called in or was given the story. The story in all probability was lead to Joe but he knew it was unofficial leak. He wrote the thing up a beautiful story, and it was everybody given a little but it was a great thing and make him a hero and what it was doing was the mayor caved in (muffled). Now then even though he was saying that oh he went back and just ignored the fact that the labor had ever offered to take the credit union around and this was a compromise, they were making which was a proposal which the mayor had rejected and they just ignored a lot of stuff and just made some of it as if it was new and counted it compromise but with the headline writer got ah old of it. He saw, he just read the story that they didn't cue him in and he saw what had happened and so when he read the story he said mayor considering compromise. And when brother when the word compromise him the street, the John Birchers and the mayor and of course didn't have much when the mayor saw compromise in the headline this made him go back on his word and all of that. If they had said union considering compromise, the thing would have been settled. Now Northcutt was the one who, now this is we are a long time to come, Northcutt that is the editorial writers the blond editorial writer, he is the one that writes most of the editorials most of them on the editorial page of the Commercial Appeal. Northcutt is his name, and he I the one that gave me a lot of the inside of what they found about he headline writer. So I thought this was quite a tragic thing

because when the (muffled) the Commercial Appeal that date and the final settlement you will find it is hardly a changing of a dot or a t. Now another thing let me...(Tape Break)

Joan Beifuss- Do you have any idea what the mayor's reaction was to Downing Pryor? Kind of messing around in this situation.

Braxton Bryant- Yeah, there was both in the mayor and Downing talked very frankly with me. Downing, his courage would rise and he was going to be a leader and he would go in that mayor's office and he would come out just a common councilman.

Tom Beckner- He never could really..

_Braxton Bryant- He never could break through, he never could break through.

Joan Beifuss- Did he ever tell you how the mayor accomplished this with him? Why was Lobe so intimidating to him?

Braxton Bryant- No. No.

Joan Beifuss- It would seem that at this point, there seems to have been kind of a break too at that point between Lobe and Downing Pryor and Lobe and (muffled).

Braxton Bryant- Ned Cook at times, Ned's position was hard to understand. Ned put a lot of pressure on the mayor and yet he would come up and give support to him in places where it didn't look like the, you would understand a cover up and all of this but it was difficult to understand Ned. There is a lot of frustration. The mayor was just going to be the mayor and brother he would take, oh I know what he would do. I know what he would do you, I know part of what he would do, I was in there when part of it took place. I heard some of the conversations between the mayor and Downing and had all access to both of them. He would just whip out all of those telegrams and all of the phone calls and all the mail and show how this community was behind him.

Joan Beifuss- He did that with Downing Pryor too?

Braxton Bryant- Oh yeah your damn right he would do it with anybody.

Tom Beckner- He did it to everybody he talked to.

Braxton Bryant- He did it with everybody he said well now let me tell you something, I am the mayor and this was an executive and if you think you fellows and if you don't think I have got this community behind me and man he would whip them out and I am telling you (muffled) I think Downing just could...and I think downing you can have a lot of sympathy for a human feeling, I don't, I think Downing, I don't have less feeling for Downing than I did but I think he showed in critical areas, he certainly did not provide leadership.

Joan Beifuss- Actually when you get through it this thing you have a lot of sympathy for everyone involved.

Braxton Bryant- Yes.

Joan Beifuss- How about the minister's negotiations that had been the week before, were you in on those at all?

Braxton Bryant- I had attended all the one session of this thing, all in the world and you need to get this, this predated me, and I after attending one session it was a stage show for the mayor. Well I would say the minister's prejudice in the mayor's position. The minister's were mostly anti-labor. This town is anti-labor. And the mayor could get away with murder. Wax's performance was pitiful in the minister's meetings, terrible.

Joan Beifuss- Did you go to the minister's meetings for this period, the ministerial association regular meetings?

Braxton Bryant- Yes, Wax's performance the day on Wednesday before King was assassinated on Thursday was terror. In fact (muffled) I think the most enriching experience in my life was a meeting between the black and the white ministers, on Wednesday before King was killed on Thursday over at the Episcopal cathedral over at St. Anne's.

Joan Beifuss- St. Mary's?

Braxton Bryant- St. Mary's. It was unbelievable, unbelievable. Ralph Jackson came in and the fact is went over there together. We sat down right at the back and Wax got up and opened the meeting and said I think we ought to limit this discussion to try to find out what the issues are and to listen. Ralph Jackson came unwound and this is in the St. Anne's Cathedral, the holy of holies for the Episcopalians, for Dean Demmick. Ralph jumped up and he said you tricked me, you tricked me, I thought a long laugh my white brother had decided to help their poor black brothers. You not only tricked me you (muffled) me and you didn't insult me by saying what we are going to discuss is what the issues are. Why he said help, all you white bastards have sat on your ass and not done a god damn thing, we have had 1,300 families starving that is the issue. And we raised \$50,000 and then you white son of a bitches call me over here and (muffled). This is minister to ministers...it was just he atmosphere you could just cut it.

Joan Beifuss- What was rabbi Wax's reaction?

Braxton Bryant- Lord mercy and he finally Ralph when he quit he said I am leaving, damn you and headed to the door. Some maybe Lightfoot and I reached up, by this time I had walked up to the side. (Muffled). Then who is the old retired Christians minister here, (muffled) what is his name for he is a retired old Christian minister, one of the old saints was here for years. He go up and said now my dear brethren, we have got to be Christian about this. If our negro brethren and when he did Zeke

Bell hit the ceiling. Zeke said you have insulted me, you are an old man and you ought to know better. And you have got an education and you can't say it is not because you know better and so I take it the word negro is not nigro it is negro can you say it? And oh this poor old man's chin just trembling and he said forgive me brethren I will never say it again, I didn't mean to. Now isn't this beautiful, this happened oh my god and then a few ministers got up and a few others got up and finally if you talk to Frank McRae.

Joan Beifuss- I have a letter off to Frank McRae now we hesitated on him because of his friendship with the mayor.

Braxton Bryant- Well you don't have to worry about that, nooooo. Did you know what Frank McRae proposed?

Joan Beifuss- He proposed marching that day?

Braxton Bryant- Frank McRae got up and said I have been a friend to the mayor and I play god for I eat lunch with him but I have never told the mayor how I really thought and how wrong I think he is. I have listened to his side but I plead guilty of not saying all so I propose that we get up and march to city hall, that we first we go tell the mayor what we think and second we do it in the language that our black brethren can understand the language of marching and listen it just caught on. I thought we were gone. I was shocked, surprised of course I know Frank and I like him very much and he vacillate he had really played the mayor and he was really getting some stuff off of his chest that he was, didn't want to jeopardize his good friendship with the mayor so...Now then there was a little discussion and some brother I wish I could remember who it was but it shows the church the best picture you can get of the church at its worst. Here is the, when I think of the high moments of the church and the low moments, they both came in the same meeting. One of the higher moments was just nearly with laying his ministry and laying everything else on the line was Frank McRae's proposal. Which I know Methodists and I know how radical that would have been for them. I know bishop Finger to and I know how hard it would be for bishop Finger too...

Joan Beifuss- Was he there at that meeting?

Braxton Bryant- No. Then to see a minister in this atmosphere and here is the church and this is as good a picture of what is wrong with the church. Now brethren I am for this, but there are some grave questions to consider here. Do you realize that the mayor's office is the highest office that we have in our power to confer upon one of our citizens and what we do to this office we do to ourselves. And I do not think it is proper or right, I am for marching, to go to the mayor's office without first calling and making an appointment. And did you know a lot of the other brethren had been looking for a hole to crawl in and this gave them a chance and then Rabbi Wax had to leave and go over into west Memphis or Marianna or Forrest City and talk to a bunch of Christians. And others had to go and begin to take off and then they decide to do it on Friday and they would get a bigger crowd.

Joan Beifuss- Who was the minister that...

Braxton Bryant- That is what I said I wish I knew who it was, I didn't know the man it was a white man of course. So I have a feeling I have always felt in this that power charged me, if they had gone that afternoon and had been as close and talked to him as much as I had to Frank, I mean to Henry Lobe, I think it would have been like throwing a stick of dynamite in that office. I don't think with televisions glaring, I thin Lobe, OI don't know what he would do. But then I was with him of course when they marched on Friday. And the interesting thing is and I am sure you know this, that Wax was not to say anything on Friday. Wax had refused to march, Demmick had refused to march but brother they marched. Wax had still not planned to say anything when we left but it shows what happens to march, why marching has meant so much to so many people. Wax became a different Rabbi. I wouldn't say a different rabbi because I think he has always been a great man of integrity, but I think he had a lot of stuff that had calloused him over and sensitivity but some thing happened to him and who was the young man that was at Idlewild Presbyterian Church?

Tom Beckner- John Aldridge.

Braxton Bryant- John Aldridge read the statement you knew that. Did little or nothing and got on TV and then Rabbi Wax just offered this and as president, I never thought I ever heard a more eloquent statement that Wax made. Right out of the heart and off the top of what he felt.

Tom Beckner- It was called by one of the newspapers I think an impassioned plea.

Braxton Bryant- Yes. So, now those are some of the highlights that to me is pretty important. The meetings that the, meetings at the lodge hall, the finding of a policemen in their midst one day. Was a grave restraint.

Joan Beifuss- Tell about that?

Braxton Bryant- The mayor had police within civilian clothes and one of them even had his mace.

Tom Beckner- Oh no.

Braxton Bryant- And somebody recognized him out of the union people. And I am telling this, huh?

Joan Beifuss- From the stage did they recognize him?

Braxton Bryant- No out in the group. And then they of course it was brought to the stage and man this and that thing and a group of union men performed a protective custody around him and carried the policemen outside and told him to get the hell out. I thought, I thought this was one of the highlights of discipline and restraint of the union. To find a planted policemen with a gun and with a can of mace on him and then this. The crescendo I think of I am a man, I would say to the mayor, now

the other thing that I did with the mayor and if I use this one time I used it 20 times at least. I did it also before ht black ministers talking to them. I found I could say anything in this world that I wanted to, to the mayor and retain his principle provided I did some prerequisites. If you were fixing to dicker with Henry you had to start with Henry. Now Henry you know we differ. There are alto of things I admire about you, I admire your guts, I admire your frankness you see. I like, because you like to get things out in the open and you had to reassure him and I do believe you are honest. And I would say to him, my fear, I said Henry and I think you want to be fair. But the problem is that in order to be fair you have got to know al the facts and they have to be correctly interpreted. Now my fear is that you are going to close the case and make your judgment with only part of the facts and I don't care how honest you are, man you have to, no matter what the intent with a fragmented picture and not looking at the total picture or an overemphasis on one side, that is going to get you in trouble. And he had some fascination, not deeply, but religious life. And he, I guess I appealed to him because I was a minister and I would cuss with him and he wouldn't have to be an ordinary patsy of a preacher. He liked this. And it didn't seem to be that you were just, the words the curse words I would use would be natural or just added in sometimes. I said the best I can understand, I said Henry, the thing that just gets me is I don't see how in the hell you keep (muffled). 1,300 black sanitation workers Henry. Standing up out there you talk about guts, they are family and (muffled) and this is great. What he would tell me, Braxton, all I have got to give my kids is my name. MY old dad taught me to be honest and I have said I wouldn't do it and when I give you my word, it is my word I am not going to, I said I wouldn't recognize the union and I am not going to recognize the union, I am not going to do it, I am not going to give them a contract, and we are not going to give a dues check off I said we weren't and we are not going to do it. I said alright look at it this way. The new testament taught one time of a sower that went forth to sow and he sowed wheat and that night while he slept an enemy came and sowed weeds or tacks. And the tares and the wheat came up together. No the labors of the harvest said to the master of the harvest we will go in and pull up the weeds. But he said you can't do it because the roots have grown together and you can't pull up the weeds without destroying the tender wheat left. Now let's leave that alone and wait until the harvest. And then the master of the harvest will separate the wheat from the chaff. Now I said as fart as I am concerned the labor union is no enemy it is a blessing, but as far as you are concerned here in the midst, I said, the thing that you have got out there in those men and I ask them every time I talk to the men or not maybe he speaks to them today. I said the mayor still wonders do you want the union, somebody tell...I said Henry they take the roof off. I stop and ask do you really want a union or are these damn labor leaders tell you, you have get to have one. And they holler and man they want the union. Great spirited. Now I said I think you would have to be awful blind, you don't have to change your opinion of me. I don't believe you, you don't believe I am that dumb to believe they could, if the labor leaders are making them do it they are the happiest bunch of slaves I have ever seen in my life. So now then why can't you see Henry that these guts and this courage that these men, they are wanting to be men, they don't want you to do something for them, they want to do something for them

selves. (Muffled) the breakdown of the families, one of the tragedies of the black community, and the little kid there the papers are full of it and the television they are seeing them. Do you know what would happen if you recognized the union? In every one of those 1,300 homes there would be a man setting a the end of he table that night and he would be somebody that every little snotty nosed dirty kid may come out of a home with prides that is my dad, he is a sanitation worker. Now this is the stuff Henry that you have got to have to build homes. This is the stuff you turn on inside that makes a man obtain his house, this is the thing that makes him want a picture on the wall, this is the thing that wants a flower in the yard and to say I want my kids to go to college. Do you want that stuff is that the stuff you have got 1,300 of them and man they are yours. To take and have build, not peons but men. But you see, Henry I never knew your dad but damn your soul don't you set there and tell me you big bastard and this is what I said to him just this way. You big boney raw hide bastard don't look me in the eye and tell me you old dad ever told you to destroy the manhood and the guts, and the integrity and the courage and the will men down to peons. And that is what you are going to do when you try to take the union because when you take the union you humiliate (muffled). And do you know one day (muffled). He, I will never forget it, he said man you are showing me something, Do you think it work? And then someone broke in or by the time we got back... But (muffled) so I would say from the vantage point that I have, you know I hear people come through these things and say oh I am to blame and all this. I have never in my life at many times when I thought I couldn't have done a lot but with looking back I think if ever, well I was here day and night. That from what I had to use and the abilities that I had to use I do not know one thing that I would go back and change in trying to communicate between the black community and Henry Lobe. I am sure it can be done better but I am saying that hindsight has not brought anything more to me.

Joan Beifuss- Most take you ought to dinner.

Braxton Bryant- Huh?

Joan Beifuss- He would take you out for a quick sandwich before you go into your meeting.

Braxton Bryant- Yes I will be glad to do that.

(Tape End)