

# Rhodes College Digital Archives - DLynx

## Memorial March Discussion, 1969

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\*Not necessarily what is the date, April 29<sup>th</sup> 1969 and we are in the Barth house, reverend Ted Hoovers office and there are by quick count 11 of us here to recount our experiences of the memorial march on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1969 in Memphis and Carolyn since you called this meeting you can start it.

^Well in our large collection of tapes we have one made by, which included many members of this group here tonight who marched in the marches last year. Either the first march led by Martin Luther King that broke into violence on March 28<sup>th</sup> 1968 or the Memphis memorial march of April 8<sup>th</sup> 1968, the Monday after Dr. King had been assassinated. We exchanged our feelings and our impressions at that time and we thought that would be good idea to get a group of people which includes all of us here are members of co-operators, or workers for the Memphis search for meaning committee and in this case we have several family members young people, namely a couple of Yellin's and a couple of Hoovers who also went with us on the march this year, which was not the case last year. Tom Yellin went on the march last year and he went again this year. Maybe we should just go around and just introduce who we are at this point and then just launch into...our feelings about everything in general. We are now a year later into this project and I think the march this year was a turning, or a marking point for us to stop to think how do we feel and how did we feel then and how do we feel now about....and in particular to compare the atmosphere and the feeling and the incidents that occurred during this march with the ones of last year.

\*Fine. So to give an idea of how we are situated, I will start and let's see if Ted who is sitting at the deck were 12:00 I would be at 3:00, there seems to be some distance separating us, a desk and a bookcase. And I am David Yellin.

@And to follow my father's example I would be at about 4:00 and I am Doug Yellin.

^And this is Carolyn Yellin again.

#Joan Beifuss.

\$John Beifuss.

%Pat Swank.

&Jenka Hoover.

>Mike Hoover.

(muffled)

<Ted Hoover.

\*We seemed to miss someone who is a dropout.

^I think Virginia who was not able to go on the march this year and who is sitting in between the two young Hoovers over there. 10:00 high. And you certainly were involved last year and I ma sure that you aren't going to be able to resist throwing in an opinion or two as this discussion goes on.

\*It is much easier on that doesn't have anything to go on. Jenka were you on last year, were you on the march last year?

&No.

\*Did you want to go to this one?

&Yes I wanted to go other one too.

\*What happened why didn't you go, don't disclose family secrets.

&Somebody, several people intervened.

\*You stayed home to stay with a sick grandfather.

&I guess so.

\*I see. Well what did you feel, do you remember what you felt why did you want to go last year, why did you feel you wanted to go or had to go, this is in 1968? DO you recall?

&Well I had a lot of admiration for Dr. Martin Luther King and I got kind of tired of people saying that just he black people went don to the marches and the black people were causing all the trouble down at the marches and I wanted to see what was happening.

\*What people say that?

&I go to an all girls school, St. Mary's.

#What grade are you?

&I am a sophomore.

^And you were at St. Mary's last year?

&Yes.

^I think we should interrupt here to say one other committee member just arrived and will be on the taping she is sitting at about 11:00 we are saying making Ted Hoover 12:00. Jerry Beyer say hi Jerry.

=Hi.

^hi there.

\*Jerry is from the south.

^And before we go on I want to just say for the record there is one other young Yellin here, Emily Anne Yellin who hasn't said anything and she wanted to go to this year's march but someone intervened namely parents because Emily is only 7 years old now and she didn't, she is the only member...

\*She is 7 ½.

^7 ½.

\*I suppose too for the record Jenka how old are you?

&15.

\*So the older boys would now. What did you think of the march?

&This year?

\*Yes.

&I had never seen so many people before in my life. Lots of people there and it was real quiet I thought there would be a lot of yelling and screaming but people seemed very calm, I wasn't.

\*What you were nervous?

&I was scared to death.

\*What were you scared about?

&I don't know I was afraid that someone was sitting up on the roof and was going to sniper me.

\*Oh you were afraid for yourself or just generally for other people, did you feel that they might snipe at you? Do you recall?

&In the beginning it didn't affect me the first few minutes I was just kind of awed by all these people stretching all the way from the beginning of practically of Main St. all the way practically to City Hall.

\*Doug do you have any thoughts about that were you?

@The march, I was amazed by the quietness, and by the scared, the only time I got scared of sniping was when Ted Kennedy showed up and as I noticed almost everyone in the crowd, well not everyone but many people in the crowd kept looking around and the main reason was there were I would say over 5 or 10,000 windows that could be used if you wanted that purpose. And Ted Kennedy was just sitting there.

\*Surrounding the plaza.

@Yes, and you get nervous, after two brothers had been shot and Martin Luther King has been shot you get nervous.

\*Well I guess two of them were shot from a window.

#How old are you Doug?

@12.

>I was scared that somebody was going to disrupt the march and give the march a bad name more than anything else because an argument I had with my geography teacher. Well she says that there was going to be a riot most certainly because when you get that many people of the negro race together you are bound to have something to happen. And that the...

^And did you argue with her?

>Yes.

^In class?

>Yes.

^What did you say?

>Well I told her that the, it wasn't necessarily negroes that ever had disruptions, it was like in the American Revolution we had a lot of pretty nasty mobs there too and it wasn't all, it wasn't the well, I had about 3 or 4 other....

\*Examples and you can't think of them now.

>Yeah.

^Did anybody else argue on your side or did the whole class get into it then?

>Well no the whole class never gets into arguments we have about 6 people in the two front rows of the class.

(Muffled)

\*Don't be so practical.

^Now what school is this you attend?

>East.

^At East High, and Jenka you attend?

&St. Mary's.

^St. Mary's school for girls. And Doug?

@White Station.

^White Station right.

\*What happened as a result of your discussion with the teacher.

>Well it ended with the bell ringing and we never got a chance to finish it.

\*Was it ever brought up again?

>No.

^Did she know you marched then, did she know you attended the march?

>Not until the end of the period and she hasn't said anything after about it.

^Did people at your school know you attended?

&Yes.

^Did you talk about it with them Jenka?

&Well I came back and I was all amazed and aghast about everything and I just couldn't resist talking about it but the person was really the funniest I told him about it and I went up to debate and I just mentioned it and they said what was a girl like you doing in a place like that?

\*That is the second oldest remark in the world.

&I know.

\*Oh no. So what did you tell them?

&I said, oh I just said what I told them before.

\*What do you think their attitude was, why did they say this? Were they perplexed where they annoyed, disturbed angry? What do you think their attitude was about you for going?

&Well people have an opinion that when you go to a march you want to get a new color TV set or something like that in the first place. I think that is probably one of their first reactions that you just want to go down there to make trouble. And I seemed probably pretty conservative to most people and shocked them out of their minds by casually mentioning something like that in their little sheltered....

<You were the only person from your school that went?

&I think so.

^How about you Doug did anyone else go from?

@Well I have seen, or know at least 4 or 5 and mainly they know me either by my other brother's name, well the thing about it is I told my, 3 of my teachers and about

4 or 5 students. The reason I didn't tell the rest was mainly because when, the other teachers also, I have a few teachers that I feel that if they learned that you know I wouldn't have fared that well and mainly because one of my teacher's that I know of voted for Wallis in the last....but she is the most open minded teacher I have.

(Muffled)

@She is my geography teacher, we bring up subjects in there and we debate it and she always listens and calls on other people. But that is good because she doesn't, she doesn't stop them like a few ROTC people from our school that have been reported to by my older brother, well not my older brother but my brother. And then when they have, she also teaches world history, I have her for world history and one of my brothers friends, his name is Frank Foreman always gets in arguments with her.

\*This same teacher?

@And then she always, I asked her if she knew Frank Foreman and she said yes, he is a nice boy and she really thinks well of him.

^So she really is open minded. How about...

\*Who did the others vote for?

@I would hate to ask.

\*You started to say you didn't tell the others but I don't know if you finished your exclamation.

^Well how about the other students why did you tell...

@In the south as you should know it is prejudiced it really is. And then I heard a comment over there justice, and it really is since I am in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade here I wouldn't have much of a chance really and probably might be wondering what I am saying but there are some 12<sup>th</sup> graders that are fairly conservative. Or 10<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> or anything you want to say. And since I am, not fairly large I feel I have a very bad disadvantage there and I don't feel like sitting around..

\*You mean you think they will beat you up?

@Not that, yes that, but also on other things...

^Do you feel that if you had even mentioned going to the march that they would have been so upset?

@Not upset, just you know gosh....

^(muffled).

\*Do you feel the same way Michael at East?

>Well yes because at East there are fairly prejudiced about negroes and they harass people who at any time seem that they think of negroes as equals and they think this is very bad and it shouldn't be done. And this gives an excuse to harass you and have your books thrown down the stairs or trip you in the hall as you come by.

\*Are you speaking from personal experience.

>Yes sir.

&I think that is a rather strong statement myself, say you just have to run around with your mouth shut. I think people kind of admire you, I don't know I think lots of people would really like to do something like that but they were afraid of what other people think about them.

!That is where I think that you think you are the only person at your school.

&I saw, I really didn't see anybody else, girls my age, I saw boys from CBHS and...

@You were in a certain area.

&That is true and when I was in the (muffled) before I saw girls from other schools.

^And you mean white girls, people that you knew or you just saw girls your own age?

&Well there was just a 100 girls at 10 and 11 and 12<sup>th</sup> grade at my school. There was one girl from Africa that wanted to go and she was out of town.

\*She was a white girl?

&Yes.

\*From South Africa?

&No from Kenya.

\*Well of course neither Mike or Doug was at the same school last year, and you were at?

@Well last year we were in the same school but not I in the same school we are in this year, but last year we were out of town, well we were in town the Friday that he was shot.

\*Oh that's right.

@And we were planning on going to Kentucky Lake. I have an incident I would like to report at Kentucky Lake.

\*Alright put your gun away and report it.

@Well, we went up there and as you know President Johnson declared I think Sunday and Monday the day of mourning either one.

^This was following the assassination of Martin Luther King here in Memphis.

@So we were on this government property, it is where schools come up and they have cabins and a place there.

#This was your school that went?

@Well just the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

^It is the annual 6<sup>th</sup> grade trip from the Memphis state university. The campus school does this.

#Did you go out there Mike?

>Yes, I went up there it is all the schools all over Tennessee.

@Well anywhere you can go, you can reserve it. Well we were up there and as you know, well you don't know but teachers in Memphis aren't too liberal and so we have one male teacher Mr. Smith and two female teachers, Mrs. Peterson and Mrs. Tatum. Now the Mrs. Peters was fairly quiet that is her, that is how she was and Mrs. Tatum was naturally this might as well put it, blah blah blah. And Mr. Smith was real nice, nice. He would never say anything he would just say (muffled) and avoid stuff that is what I found out. And well we were out there and our principle GG Woody was fairly liberal and I don't have a feeling that he was conservative, conservative. But I went in there on the Monday and he was talking about the flag and the day before I had asked Mrs. Tatum why the flag was not lowered and she said well...

^To half mast.

@And she said well you can only do that for prisoners. That is what she was saying and she got the thing out and said only if the president or an ex-president dies or the president now in office declares a day of mourning the flag goes to half mast.

^What was it she found this in Doug?

@In the encyclopedia I don't know. And Mr. Woody said.....Now this was just between the teachers well I was in there to get a drink of water and I just heard near the end of it when she was reading and since the president did issue a day of mourning and the flags were lowered at (muffled) offices, but just recently ex-president Eisenhower died and president Nixon ordered a day of morning and I didn't see one flag above half mast.

\*So then what you are saying was that the flags were not lowered to half mast at this place.

^And it was government property, it was TBA property.

\*And did you say anything to Mrs. Tatum.

@Yes I said something afterward.

\*Did you Michael?

>Yes, we made the mistake of consulting her.

@That was a mistake.

>Yeah and she said that she would, she didn't want to catch us keeping the flag at half mast.

\*You consulted her to do it? You asked her permission to do it?

>Yes, I was on one of the flag raising, guard, color guard or whatever they called it and she denied permission to do it.

\*That is a good military term.

^Did she, was there any mention of Dr, Martin Luther King in the discussion do you recall Mike?

>No, she didn't give us a reason why she just said no.

^Did you ever talk about this with Mr. Woody?

>One does not.

^One does not ok.

\*Does anybody have any other questions? Well one thing if we can get back to t his last march. Did you ever become unfrightened?

&Yes I did, after the march started I wasn't afraid.

\*After you started walking with the crowd and it was kind of a peaceful atmosphere and there were lots of people out taking pictures and taking notes and making tape recordings of people's feet thumping on the ground and various other things. And I don't know I think if people really thought that there was going to be trouble I don't think there would be that many amateur photographers and I don't think the businesses would have stayed open downtown. So I figured there was nothing to worry about.

\*What do you think of the march as a method of demonstration now that you have been in one? Is it something you would do again?

&I think it really has more meaning for the person themselves than it does for other people because I have talked to numerous people...

\*What do you mean the person, the participant? The one who is on the march?

&No the people that I talked with and marched with all they had to say well every time they have a march they always tear some thing down some place. I suppose it means something to some people but it doesn't mean anything to people who don't like marches in the first place.

\*Do you like marches?

&I liked it.

\*This is the first one you have ever been on.

&Yes.

\*What do you think of it as a method of demonstration do you think it was a good demonstration for its purpose to memorialize the events here?

&It depends on who you are trying to....

\*I am asking you what do you think.

&If what it demonstrated to me?

\*Yeah.

& I thought it was cooperation.

^You are saying you don't, you aren't sure whether it changed anyone's mind who was not...

&Not anyone who was that far over on the edge of the bench anyway.

@But I think it reassured the people that were in it.

\*Michael how about you?

>Well yeah.

\*Yeah what.

>I agree.

\*Would you go again tomorrow or the next day?

>Yes.

\*For a cause that you thought, that you believed in?

>Well yes, I wouldn't go marching for something that I don't believe in.

\*And do you agree with your sister not because she is your sister but that it didn't have much affect on other people just on those who were in the march?

>I agree with her and if I was just doing it with my sister I disagree with her.

\*Yes that is understandable.

&I think that 10,000 people means something, that it shows people that Martin Luther King isn't forgotten, that they believe in something that there are some people in the world that care about what is going to happen tomorrow.

\*And are you dismayed about the fact that you are only one of hundred, or what do you think about tier peers in relation to this?

&I have kind of a little philosophy that you shouldn't criticize people for what they do or what they don't do so, I don't know I think some people maybe in two or three years or maybe when they are, when they don't feel as much affected by their parents and feel a little bit freer they probably would have done it. I was talking to somebody yesterday about it and she said all they want to do is make trouble, make trouble. And I couldn't, I tried to talk her out of it but I wasn't very successful.

^Did you tell her that you had been on the march, or do you find it sometimes more effective not to mention that you yourself had been on the march?

&I ma sure this lady knows that I have, that I had been on the march in the first place. I didn't mention it to her that time but I know her daughter, and her daughter just thought I was somebody weird because I went on the march.

\*So what you are saying is that there are some, no numbers, or your percentage in this group at this school, who really might have gone if A, it were more stylish to go and B, if there parents had not objected.

&I think style issues. I go to a school that is very much affected by, I think 90% of the people wear one brand of clothes and this type of thing. So that has a great deal to do with it.

\*So it is the thing to do. In Memphis at that school it is the thing not to do to get involved and this kind of thing.

&If you want to join the young republicans that is ok.

\*Did they have any marches?

&No they have parties.

\*Now you are making it enticing.

&I am trying to join but I have to wrangle an invitation to it the young republican party.

\*Michael do you find you are lonely in your thinking over at East High?

>No.

\*You have that front row and those 6 in that geography class.

>Yes we have apolitical debate over the issues every day at lunch.

\*Oh not as part of your class this is part of lunch.

@Lunchtime debate, a couple of our friends.

\*Well that keeps you in shape doesn't it?

>It is kind of fun.

@Especially if you (muffled)

&Yeah.

\*Well I think you guys can join in.

@I was marching with a nun and some people might now I was(muffled) and the study that, the persons I am understudying for I was marching with him Marty Riggs and we were marching with a nun and there were about 3 or 4 nuns right around us and we were marching along and we all started singing we shall overcome because behind us we began several lay people there were, the group right behind us. Because we knew that the tail end of us, the church were we went to and we had a group there. But then when we went into the square and we were sitting down and the violence broke out on Main St. I was standing down and I saw everybody stand up and there was this little flower thing and it had side s where you could sit and I saw everybody get up from there so I got up and sat down because I wondered what it was but I got up there so I could sit down. Then everybody was sitting down again and then all of a sudden a can of tear gas and mace was dropped and it got all off and you know right then what got me was I was thinking about the police, because I had seen cars drive by, special forces cars that had these mace things in the back and these high pressure hoses and these guns with bayonets and double barreled shotguns and that sort of got me. Then I read in the paper that they don't know if it was a policemen, but I read that one of the policemen took his handkerchief wrapped it around and carried the thing off.

\*When the gas bomb, I think it turned out to be a tear gas bomb exploded were you frightened?

@Well not really the only thing frightening was because everyone was running. I know that it went off to just stand there not to panic. So I just sat there and everyone ran away, not everyone, but they ran away from where it was. I was just sitting there and the main thing that happened was I covered my face and then I put my sunglasses on and then the girl next to me started crying and so I gave her my sunglasses, but I wasn't affected by the tear gas.

\*I noticed you kind of shuddered when you thought about the tear gas Jenka where were you? Did you throw it?

&I was on the other...I was back further and I could see people running you know and I have heard about people being crushed and all this in mobs and crowds and I thought. So daddy goes I am going to go see where it is happening. Then he said you all children stay by the flower pot.

\*He loves flowers.

&But that (muffled) lasted for about 2 minutes people running like this and they kept saying sit down, sit down.

@(muffled) you really got organized then.

\*Did your eyes start to tear?

&I had on sunglasses.

\*How about you Mike?

>I was miserable I couldn't see for while. It really scared me because I had seen on TV from the summer about what the riot police do as they...in Chicago and Newark and they just run into the crowds and I was afraid that was what the police were doing.

\*You mean you and Doug had the same reaction that what would follow this thing were policemen coming.

@I didn't feel that I thought that the police were going to come in and I had heard there was a disturbance up Main you know and you could see people running up there on Main St. and I thought uh oh. I was expecting to hear some shots and then as we were walking away from the march we walked by this store I think right in front of Loeinstein's and whatever it was and we were walking by and there were these teenagers out there, negro teenagers, and there were about 20 of them and we walked by and I will refer to something else later but we walked by and then we saw at 4, I saw 4 units of those three cars they had a sheriff and a lieutenant and one of those special services and three or four of those units went in front of that store where we were and I saw police come out with shotguns and there were two standing out in front and about 4 or 5 went in and it turns out the store was broken into...

\*Had been it wasn't....

@Had been. And then we were walking down and there was this girl, who was talking bad she was saying you know we don't care if you are white, marching won't help you we will get you. And if you want me to put it in exactly words I don't know if I should.

\*We are all old enough.

^You mean what this negro girl?

@I heard the girl say and what I think she said but what I think she said was well, I will just leave it at that.

#You might as well say it now.

(muffled)

^She used a bad word.

@Oh I wouldn't say one bad word.

^She used obscenities.

@Yes. Decency.

\*It shows he comes from a good family but I will talk to him later.

^But she was indicating hatred of white people you felt, how did that make you feel Doug?

@Well it...

^When you had just marched to show that you didn't hate black people.

@Well that isn't what I marched for.

\*Good boy.

@I marched for, because I marched for Martin Luther King and his dream. There is another thing about the march, I had always seen Ralph Abernathy and his speeches he would get up there and get real stern and the way these Memphis television shows would show it all they would do is real stern and I had never seen, when he got up there I mean I didn't, I really didn't like him before the march and then after the march I really liked him. I like him not as much as Martin Luther King but almost as much.

\*Why?

@Because of his charm and not only that because after and not only after the march but after I read in the paper about many things he has done, you know I, the papers I read in the New York times. You know I got my job, but I read in the New York Times about him going and just recently to North Carolina.

\*South Carolina Charleston.

@It turns out and then I read about him being Martin Luther King's under...you know the guy that gave it to Martin Luther King, I admire him now for what he has done.

\*Michael did you want to say something? Alright well maybe the rest of us, this has taken all our tape.

^The generation should ungap now.

\*Well I think this was excellent.

>One thing about Abernathy he can handle the crowd.

@No it was reverend Lawson.

\*It was Lawson that did that.

>That was Lawson?

@I thought that was the most beautiful part of the march because everybody started to sit down and started singing.

^You mean at the time of the...

@Of the tears gas. And then after everybody sat down I think it was better because you could see more. It was funny when anyone would stand up everybody would say sit down. And then...

^I still would like to ask before, I would like for you to just say, how did you feel when this, when you overheard this girl saying things that were obviously very hostile?

@Well I was thinking something has to be done and as I have heard form various sources that if there is a revolution the liberals are going to go first and first of all now I say well I am going to be conservative. But what I was thinking was that it has to be done and for my view which my be prejudiced, I thin the people that are causing it are the conservative ku klux klan, mayor Dahly and the conservative police.

\*You want to change mayor Dahly to something else?

@Well mayor Lobe and mayor Dahly. I will put mayor Lobe, mayor Dahly.

\*Now the something done or it means a little more explicit.

@Harassment I think, mostly by the police.

\*Oh.

@Because you know if you are walking down the street as I was, which I don't think I told my parents but from a girl in my room, not in my room but from in my class. Her cousin was walking down the street on Florida and it was about 4 months ago and this is Willy Taylor's sister, he is the star of our basketball team, or he was.

^A negro boy.

@And her cousin was walking down the street and he was walking with 4 or 5 other guys and he picked up a bottle and empty bottle and was just walking with it. And then the police come over and they see the bottle and they see what it was it was a coke bottle and one of the policemen did was he took the Taylor guy and hit him in the stomach with his billy club and threw him down and he said I never want to see you doing that again and then left. And you know that gets to me.

\*I find it kind of interesting is hardly the word but I find the instructor that the three of you mention that your greatest fear is of the police.

#Jenka didn't.

\*Or two of you.

@Well my brother's fear is when I see the show and I see some guys walking, maybe not walking but on the Chicago to use an example, you could see people just walking on the grass suddenly have policemen about 20 policemen go rushing by hit them down on the head, step on them and I wouldn't...that really got me.

\*Ok well one quick last round up do you notice any change from last year to this year Michael? And the attitude about say your white friends about this, what we might call, we could call the race problem?

>Well, change in some of them but for some of them it has gotten worse.

\*Change for better for some but ....

>For worse because they say oh no here he goes and he was not, Martin Luther King was a person who hated all the whites and was going to start a revolution to kill all the whites and now the negroes are making the god and that...

@What I think now has taken over, is the hippies. That is what the conservatives are now getting. Mostly what it is the kids are like hippie. Then they will be talking to somebody and say hey you want to hear a joke about a nigger.

\*Well do you think it is any improvement in the last year I Memphis?

@Well as I say the police...

^In the school?

@School, I was not in the school last year.

^Among kids your age.

@For some reason they are quieter, they haven't you know come out as much as I thought they would. I think that I found out that more people, after Bobby Kennedy for some reason I mean after Bobby Kennedy, I think more people liked bobby Kennedy than Martin Luther King and I thought that was, I almost knew that was

going to be but I think after Bobby Kennedy people maybe came to their senses about stuff.

\*Jenka how about you?

&I think the thing we are going to see more and more is that people are going to be less proud of being prejudiced and less proud of the fact that they have had a maid in our family for so many years you know how they all this kind of thing, we are going to see less and less of this. You can't in one year I don't think you can see that much change in one year. I say when I graduate from college I am sure I will be able to see something that has really changed.

\*Alright, Ted do you want to start about?

<Yeah, it was a pleasant day I think we ought to say this. The rain didn't materialize until after the speeches were over and it is not, I left a little bit early so I may have missed (muffled) But at least the rain, the march itself was pleasant. The, most of us gathered at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, in the court yard there and I think we kept expecting something to happen, but gradually we learned that nobody really knew exactly what was going on but little by little we finally got over and we were (muffled) and finally got in the line of march, It was interesting coming downtown because there had been a lot of flowering shrubs and the runabout and a very beautiful town, Memphis is as lovely that time of year as it ever is. Of course that area it is not very pretty. Actually our starting point was officially was Clayborne Temple and we finally got going and it started pretty much on time.

\*Around noon wasn't it as we recall?

<And as we were beginning to march the rumor came through the line that Teddy Kennedy was here, Teddy Kennedy was here but there was no confirmation of this and we made a little different line of march than we did last year when we went through a little more ghetto area which again I had never been on a couple of those streets and went by the Lorraine Motel, which I think is fair to say it is sort of a remnant of what would have been a glossy place for colored only in days of when segregation is more complete than it is now. And up on the Miranda they had the area glassed in where he had fallen and some flowers and a picture of him and there were several stops I think at that point but this wasn't clear when we got there. We did glance over to try and see where the shot had come from that killed him and then went on over up to Main crossing Beale and as we crossed Beale I remember the spot where there had been the mini riot, I think March 28<sup>th</sup> of last year and really the center of if you want to say of negro culture in this area. And some of these reminiscences, well the year before there had been much apprehension but also much sense of determination and I thought this year it was not nearly as intense and yet it was purposeful. The, I use the word monitor, monitor is along the kind that is not the right word, but..

\*Marshals.

<The marshals, again were not nearly as strict or stern or again as anxious as they had been before. It was a different atmosphere no doubt about this not a carnival atmosphere by a long shot but at least a freer and easier one. Again, I remember the year before as we marched every street corner there had been reserve men up.

\*National guard yeah.

<National guard and they had bayonets and rifles and so forth and policemen in groups and this time there was none of this kind of sense of hazard and indeed I was enormously aware of policemen until we got to the plaza itself and some one pointed out there was a policemen on top of the Crump building and some others around. And the beginning of the speeches was...well along Main St. we saw these stores closed in memory of Martin Luther King and some people were asking if they were really closed for this reason or not. We got to the plaza though it was, we got in there and I expect we were pretty close to the front of the line of the march. Two choirs from what is called predominantly negro colleges. They did some singing and this was pleasant and greeted old friends. Saw neighbors and chatted with them and saw some black students from Memphis State and talked with them and you know this sort of an atmosphere about the whole thing.

\*Were you interviewed on the way down?

<No but I was, I didn't manage to talk to Clark Portius who was down there I think talking to Charles Crump and I think Crump just walked across the street and all of a sudden I saw John T. Fisher, the Clark Portius was on the local paper.

^Was John T. Fisher marching?

<I suspect he was but I didn't see him march. We had and I think perhaps this is what you are alluding too (muffled) my name did appear in the paper for being there and this is rather amusing because the roman Catholics turned out in tremendous force and there was a scattering of the chaplains around some of whom were gladly, butt here names didn't appear in the paper. And but it wasn't nearly as many clergy it seemed to me as it had been the year before and also I had the feeling that there were more "respectable" white people there and less "respectable" black people there. This was my feeling I don't know whether it was right or not of course it was about half the size. But there were some differences I am not able to pinpoint all this, but my name did appear in the paper and I got one anonymous letter which is out on the bulletin board if you want to see it. But the newspaper reporter phoned me and he simply identified me and then he made a mistake and called to apologize and I said no I was there, he kept insisting he was making a mistake and that he was going to retract it and I said no I was there I don't want to retract it. But it was this sort of a deal and the only other reaction, I think two other reactions. One was that when this glass broke and we could hear it and there was sot of chaos out in the streets among the marchers and we began to march backward and sort of some people moving around in the plaza and then the tear gas grenade was thrown. It was at this point a moment of panic and Jim Lawson got up and calmed us I thought very

nicely and very well and he kept saying we are, this is not us we are doing fine, somebody else, and the rumors went through that a policemen had been shot it later turned out he had been hit with something not shot. The speeches themselves as they began there was one speech the first one I remember hearing after Peter, Peter Paul and Mary did his thing and Bishop Durrick invoked the almighty. Then you had the....

\*Who else?

<Then you had I think Jackson speech and he said nothing had been done in the past year and there was a real look of dismay among the whites who were there and the negroes clapped their hands and then again this is over simplification of it but there was some real unhappiness at that stage of the game and then of course Abernathy got up and then Teddy Kennedy came in and it was just electric at that point. And this was a fascinating thing. The other thing I will comment on we did go back along Main St. The children because we had to go to the Baptist Hospital, so instead of staying with the line of march we went back along Main St. And the line of march was not to go back that way. We did check the windows that were broken and there were about 3 or 4 windows broken along Main St. and they were very carefully keeping people away from those places, we heard there had been looting in one place. But it was a very minor kind of damage well I later learned there had been a curfew announced later that night and the following night and I had a feeling that this was uncalled for, that perhaps indeed this was a punitive thing. I will add one more thing, I broke the curfew both nights and saw no police cars out in the East part of Memphis at all. So I did think perhaps the curfew was not intended for the white people. That is it.

\*Ted can we ask you to please read this?

<Oh this anonymous letter alright. Memphis Tennessee April 5 1969. The commercial appeal I see where you marched in the parade, the windows were broken and looters took over. I am sorry that you think this is the place for an Episcopal minister. I hate to think that one penny of my pledge goes to support Barthhouse. You and your extreme views will soon break up churches. I am about to leave the Episcopal with my family. Glad to see Demmick was nowhere. He is filthy enough to be a negro.

^For the record I think it is interesting to note that negro is spelled with a small n.

<That can stay off I think it has done its purpose out there.

\*Ok good well we will keep it.

^May we have this for our file, for our very interesting things file.

\*Dr. John Beifuss you weren't with us last year on the tape.

\$No.

\*Would you care to add any of your both reportorial and commentary?

\$Well pretty much my impressions were the same as Ted's. One thing that I think was striking that we haven't commented about was the intense silence during the block of the Lorraine Motel, during the march, now (muffled) and Keith Kennedy were in the back of the march apparently where the trouble broke out and they said when they went past there were a bunch of kids in with him who kept hooting all the way and this was sort of a tipoff for them that there might be trouble coming back there as there was later. You know, but in that early part it was solemn. And then when we were in the plaza in regards to the tear gas, I think I heard what I recognize now must have been breaking glass but I didn't recognize at the time. IU turned around to see what was happening sort of a buzz of bees which I guess were voices of people in some distress and from where I was you could not see, what I could see was a man on top of, the lower part of the Crump building or a smaller building right next to it. A policeman waving a helicopter down there and it was only after that most people began to become aware of the fact that something was happening. And it was still a good deal of confusion when that tear gas canister went off and as I mentioned earlier the thing that struck me as most dangerous was the fact that some people were beginning to run. I remember one woman for example with a small child zooming by saying lord they are going to do it again, referring I think to the police.

^A negro woman?

\$Yes. And the impressive thing again was the way in which Lawson took over so very very quickly, got the people sitting down and stopped that danger of a rush which I think was the chief danger at the time.

^Did you join in the singing of we shall overcome at that time?

\$Yeah.

^Were people all around you singing?

\$Yes and we all sat or as nearly as we could sit because we took up more room on the ground than we did standing and there just wasn't that much room there. Yeah everybody was as far as I could tell was singing or at least mouthing the...

\*Pat where were you when the bomb went off?

%I was right in the middle of it just about smack...

\$You were right next to me.

%Well yea we were, I was right near the Beifuss' and Mitch and Walter and Jerry who were all pretty well in the center of everything and this was my first experience at a march and also in the large crowd situation other than at football games and large crowds had always been among my favorite things in the world. The reason for going to football games and the reason for going to the fair and things like this. At

the time when the tear gas bomb exploded, up until this point fear had been the furthest thing from my mind, I owe this to complete naïve quality about myself, it just never occurs to me ever that anything bad is going to happen. And having left my three children at home with a girl who had never kept them before in a neighborhood where we had been for 5 days you know and here I just was happy as a lark and with the...ignorance is bliss. When the tear bomb exploded this was the first time that I was really so completely aware of how absolutely bumper to bumper we were in this crowd and I didn't panic you know because there was no room to panic. I just stood. But the funniest, most peculiar, funny, peculiar thought that came to my mind as I was standing there was I remember seeing the movie the Pawn Broker about when the Jews were herded into trains to go to refugee camps and how they were in this same type of situation and if someone fell, be it a child or an adult, if someone fell to the floor, there was no way of getting them up they were just lost to be trampled and I thought this, I don't know it was probably fear for myself but I didn't think of it in these terms, I didn't think oh no that I will be trampled that this picture flashed through my mind of losing, of lives being lost. In this type of situation.

#Was that you that put the coat over the little boy?

%Well this was what distracted me, you know I was for a little while panic could have taken over I suppose I never know what real panic so I really don't know who close I was to it but things started happening all around me to distract me. You know a little boy, a little negro boy who was with his mother right behind me started crying and he was just about my little boys age and of course it wouldn't have mattered how old he was but this I guess, I remember this and turned around and put my rain coat over him and there was 6 of us huddled around t his little boy all patting him with the rain coat.

\*Not over him but around him or over him?

%Well like a tent over h is head to keep the gas over him and to keep him from seeing whatever panic might take place, I don't know I just thought this somehow this was something the child should not have to see and the poor thing I am sure he was smothering after a few minutes because the mother says can we get this off so we took it off.

#How old was he?

%7, 8, 9 something like that.

#The age of your little boy.

%About the age of my oldest son. Then too right behind me on my left there was a negro woman maybe 60 years old who was evidently suffering from arthritis and she had a very difficult time throughout the standing and she could barely get down and get back up. When all this happened she grabbed a hold of my shoulder and gripped my shoulder like it were a life preserver and she was a drowning person

and held on to my shoulder throughout the entire thing and as soon as I moved from the little boy I put my hand over her hand and we stood that way long after the panic had ended and this was, that was a joyful experience for me I felt good about that.

\*What made you go to the march?

%A personal need to say something. To convince myself that I really felt this way and also to convince people who might, my friends, my husband, my family, who might know that I was there that this was a positive action that I had actually done something instead of blab blab which I am really good at.

\*Well to do a positive thing...

%TO take a positive stand about something that I believed in.

\*And what is that as best as you can articulate.

%Dr. Martin Luther King. As being one of the finest human beings that has ever lived.

\*When did you discover that?

%That he was this? Well it was a slow discovering over the past 3 or 4 years. I always of course he has been widely panned you know and my circle of friends and my family had been among you know the big panners and it never quite rang true, I have never been a wild-eyed liberal until the past year, but none of this ever rang true to me, I thought what this man is saying is really just an expansion or more of what Jesus Christ said so there is no doubt how you felt about Jesus Christ what difference is there really in this man as far as what he is saying, And it didn't make any sense to me and then after he was killed, I realized that I felt a personal sense of loss and I felt that here it was almost like a crucifixion in my own time.

\*Did you feel the march was satisfying to you?

%It was to me personally. Yes I suppose because of the motives that I had for going. ^but you hadn't gone last year?

%I did not go last year.

^Did you want to go last year?

%Yes I wanted to go last year but this all of this business of course came right after the sanitation strike instances for which I took some fairly well publicized stands, I was at the mayor's office one day and my name was in the newspaper and my husband and I were charter members of Save our City and all of this was in the newspaper and we were most heavily harassed by members of my husband's profession and we are not quite financially solid to the point where...

\*What is the profession.

%He is in the fire insurance business.

\*Fire insurance.

%Not self employed. Right. And we were not financially solid to the point where I could be...(Tape End)