

Riot Participant

Interviewer: Robert Bechtel
Kennethe King

Males: Voice I-2-3

Female Voice

TAPED INTERVIEW

R.B. Okay, lets talk, who wants to say anyhting

1 What do you want to know

2 I don't think they should have no curfew on the weekends, I don't think thats right

1 I don't think they should have no curfew period.

3 You don't go nowhere no way, what you talking about

R.B. Well, I'll tell you what I want to know, I want to know if any of you took part
in the business at Central - were any of you down at City Hall.

1 Yeah, I was down at Central

R.B. I'd like to hear about it

1 Tell him what happened, you were down there when I was. I told it before

No, I want you to tell him

1 Okay, I'll tell him. Is it alright if I say something? I mean, I thought the button
had to be on or something

R.B. No, It's okay, you don't even have to talk into it, I'll pick you up from across
the room

3 So you won't get hurt, huh?

1 Well- last Tuesday, I was in school - like all good little boys should be

R.B. Which School

1 Paseo High. And everybody was running around talking about they was going to turn
school out and stuff

2 Tell him why, why were they going to turn school out

1 You know why

2 They don't know why. The kids in Kansas didn't go to school and Missouri did

1 After school was turned out they was supposed to march down to the Board of
Education - and - about what time was that

2 About 10:30

1 About 10:30 or 11:00, the people from Central swooped down to the school - and
they collided with the people from Paseo- and all of them just went out at one time
and they all met out in the front

2 Tell what happened at the school

1 We ramsacked the cafeteria and broke out a couple of windows on the first floor-
no - a whole lot of windows on the first floor and then after that - everybody
went out in front and they jumped on this white girl, and then, after this- every-
body loaded up in cars and stuff and went on down to the City Hall. I was riding
down the freeway in the car and all of a sudden I saw all these people coming at
me. They was piled up on the freeway and so we turned the car around and followed
them downtown. We were supposed to be marching down to the Board of Education, but
they went on past the Board of Education - they was trying to hit them stores.

2 They was trying to get a Easter outfit, then the man who was leading them, he
started talking about going to City Hall and talk- so, they had a bunch of speakers
up at City Hall and stuff - so they went back up there and they talked for about
an hour and a half

R.B. About anything

1 Yeah, the man was talking about what had happened for the last two days and --

2 They should have been talking about what happened for the last 4 or 5 years

1 You know, going on about the schools and then he said something about getting the
mayor out of his office and the police chief and the superintendant of schools.

And then, everybody went on over to the Police Station

R.B. Why

1 I don't know, I don't know why they went over to the Police Station. I guess they was going to get the Police Chief and mess him up. I know the mayor said, he didn't know who shot the tear gas downtown, and he know it wasn't nobody but the police shot that tear gas. I started to wait on him and get him. I did --

I think you're right, I think the police had something to do with starting this riot.
2 I think they was throwing tear gas unnecessarily. Like when at Holy Name, they told all the Negroes to get together - you know - we were supposed to be having a dance and the cops threw tear gas through the windows for no reason at all

1 Yeah, that was unnecessary

R.B. Did they break the windows

3 Yeah, they threw it though the windows

R.B. Right through the windows

3 Right through the windows

R.B. Nobody opened dorrs or anything

1 No - they don't open no doors- just threw it though the windows. You know the police don't open no doors, they kick them in

R.B. And so, what about City Hall when they threw the tear gas/ Were you there

1 I was there

2 When they threw the gas at me, I was just stepping off the bus getting off downtown I just stepped off the bus and BOOM

They tried to shoot me in the face with one of them, and I ran down the street

R.B. Did they shoot you in the face with mace or with tear gas

1 Tear gas

R.B. And then what happened

1 I ran down the street - the police told us to go this way- alright, we went this way- and someone else told us to go back that way and so we kept going round in circles.

1 And when we went down one way, we told the man that they had just sent up down there and he still told us to go back the other way and they was all acting like they wanted to jump on us with some sticks and billy clubs and stuff and if I'd had a pistol- they would all have been dead , I would have shot one of them and one of them would have shot me

R.B. Then what happened

1 Well, we went on back up that way and we found another way to go and we came on back home

2 I think I was still down there , I was walking around

1 No, you wasn't, you were walking home

R.B. Did you see anybody throw a pop bottle down there

1 I didn't see nobody throw no pop bottle down there

I was standing there and I had just about got to the front of the crowd when they started throwing tear gas for no reason at all. Yeah, they just started throwing tear gas for no reason at all. Yeah, they just started shooting tear gas for no reason at all

2 I think Chief Kelly should be put out of office also, because he tells the police to shoot on sight and all that kind of stuff and shoot to kill. You can be walking up the street after the curfew and they don't know whether you're trying to make it home or not, see, they don't know where you been

R.B. What happened after that mess downtown? That still leaves you down there

They were milling around and then how did that whole thing come out

1 Well, after - all that everybody got riled

I don't think any of this would have happened if they hadn't

2 So, then everybody all went in different directions and started kicking windows in right downtown

1 Yeah, right downtown, down on 12th, 18th and even 31st Street

Krigel Diamond Shop

31st and Indiana all down Prospect

R.B. On their way home, then, from there

1 Yeah, on their way home, they just

2 They was so mad, they just wanted to forget - so they went and broke in
some liquor stores

R.B. Then what happened after that

Did they float on home or what

1 No, they didn't float home, they started thinking about what they was
going to do, because in the be- gin - everything was all uncalled for. I
felt like if the police hadn't never thrown any tear gas and stuff- there
wouldn't have been no riot - these places wouldn't have been burned down
and there wouldn't have been no looting or nothing. The police started it
and all we're doing is just returning for what they did to us. All that
tear gas bombing. Just like one night, we were just coming home and they
stopped us and come telling us we'r better get our asses off the streets
and we'd better go home, and go to sleep and better not get back up and all
that kind of stuff

And just like the man, we just told the man up there that the police at
the other corner had just sent us down there, and every time we would go
back one way they would send us the other way- we went up and down three
times and he said, well, go on around the corner- and we kept saying that
the man around the corner was going to send us back there and they was
acting like they wanted to punch us in the face or something or come around
there and attack or something

R.B. He acted real tough

1 Yeah, see- they're gonna keep acting tough as long as they got their badge
and their billy club and their gas and everything

2 Some of the police is alright, some is my friends

1 Yeah, someof them is alright, but some of them think

2 Them are the old policemen, though - you know --

3 Yeah, one of them loaned me a dime one day, I ain't lying

1 I think it's the whole attitude of the policemen altogether. Just
like when you're riding down the street and the policemen make the colored
people get out of the car and make them lay their face down in the street

3 Thats Bullshit

2 Yeah, and then one of them kicked him in the back, - yeah, kicked him in
the back and knocked him down

1 I think Negroes ought to get the same treatment these white people get
when they go downtown - they don't beat on white people like that. They
take a Nigger down there and beat the hell out of him and then they come
back looking like who did it and what for - and you send a white man down-
town, and he comes back looking the same way

3 Yeah, these cops are prejudiced anyway

1 And I'm going to tell you another thing- just like on 50th and 60th out there

2 Shooting colored people in the head

3 Yeah, they sure are, they are shooting out there - how come they ain't put
no curfew on them

1 They turn out the lights down there, they put the curfew on us - but they
ain't got no curfew on them. Thats the only thing we can do to make them
mad - and thats to start more stuff

Last night - like last night - they put a gun in your face and say, get on
where you're going - now, that don't even make sense. We was just riding down
street and a friend of mine almost got shot in the back- the bullet was just
sticking through the seat. They was trying to shoot the headlights out- one
of the back lights or something like that

R.B. That was when, last Friday or Saturday
1 Last Wednesday. And I seen three or four boys get picked up for nothing - doing nothing at all

R.B. Just to clean off the streets
1 Just to clean off the streets, and it wasn't for no curfew or nothing

R.B. Any of you guys get picked up
2 I'f we'd got picked up - we'd still be down there
3 They only way to get out of there would be to blow your way out of there or kill yourself

1 I don't think nothing should have happened, all uncalled for from the very beginning

R.B. Well, what happened that night
2 Thats when all the hell broke out, that was when they started breaking all the windows and everything. I wouldn't have broke out no windows or anything, you know, I wouldn't see no point to all that. They were acting crazy, tackling these places. Everybody couldn't go to the same place. If there hadn't been no school, all these people couldn't have met. They went down there and tried to talk, they really tried to talk and the mayor and all, they must didn't want to listen, they were throwing tear gas on people and stuff. The mayor ain't gonna listen to us until some shit happen - other than that, he's going to stay locked up in his office

1 I'm gonne tell you whats gonna happen to them --
2 When you're down at City Hall and he gets on the elevator, he tell you when you come up on the elevator, if it's any niggers on that elevator he's gonna tell you to go on down, let them off and then make a special trip back up to get him, he don't want nobody on there with him.

1 I'm gonna tell you like tit is. They gonna keep on and those people are gonna get mad, they gonna get to the place

1

where they are being treated so bad that they don't care no more, like me, I don't care if the man shoot me, let him shoot me and go on and out me in my box and throw me in the dirt, in the ground. I don't care but all of it will be uncalled for. Thats true, people are going to get to the place where they don't care anymore and then they are gonna start burning up everything and then when a person is treated so bad for so long and then they just can't stand it nomore, and thats where it's gonna end up.

R.B.

Do you remember anything in your own life - any real point where somebody treated you that way

1

Yeah

R.B.

Tell me about it

1

I remember a boy named Raymond used to treat me that way, but he don't treat me like that no more, I hit him in the head with a stick- I tried to kill him

We got to school one day and we had a bunch of stuff going on in school

R.B.

That was after that date

1

Yeah, you paid so much for lunch and you wasn't getting that much- anyway, this upset the students very much and so after schhol- two boys were fighting in back of the school and - skip that part . The principal and the vice- principal heard about this so they had police all around the school and after school there were two boys outside fighting and somebody broke it up and this friend and me were watching and he came walking down the street- and he was a student up there and this policeman stopped him and asked him his name and he told him he didn't want to see him up there anymore and he was a student . He had to go back to school and so this relations representative by the name of Dwight

R.B. How did he get in on that - somebody call him or what

1 He's Human Relations

Female He's a coach

1 He ain't no coach no more

Female He was a coach last year

1 Maybe last year but he ain't no coach no more - and so this man, Dwight he gets with the police and says everybody go on, move on down the street, quietly move on down the street and so the crowd was moving slowly and it upset Mr. Dwight very much and so he came down there and started shoving people and then that upset the students and so - well it didn't make any difference how slowly the students were moving as long as they were moving- and he came down there and putting his hands on everybody and stuff

Outside the school and he's gonna push somebody - inside would be better And he came down there putting his hands on everybody and they told him to go on - to go ahead on and then we got down to Swope Parkway and Woodland and he goes across the street and tells one police over there that this boy has a gun and so the police runs over there and tells the boy to go on home and so this boy walks away slowly and so they picked him up and they manhandled him and kind of balled him up and bumped his head on the car when they threw him in

2 He was already handcuffed

1 And they sprayed the gas in his face - just to see his eyes water or something

R.B. Who was this

1 Lewis Greer

Riot Participant

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R.B.

Well, I mean, I don't want to know his name just, is he a friend of yours?

1st

Yeah - So This upset, this really got the students upset, seeing how they manhandled that boy, you know

R.B.

In front of everybody, They did this right in front of everybody, with the whole crowd there?

1st

Right there in the whole crowd

R.B.

Do you think they were trying to make everybody realize that that was some kind of lesson or something?

2nd

Just trying to show everybody that they were tough

1st

First they got a real little boy, in the eighth grade for throwing a rock, Just like, I remember a time if you were walking down the street, you'd get picked up for nothing, for no reason at and take you down to the line up and try to stick a case on you. I've been down there about 15 time, 15 times for no reason at all. And I remember one policeman told us to get off the street, he didn't want to catch us on Prospect no more, if I see you out on Prospect again, you three, I'll make a charge and put on you, we can always find a charge and put on you

R.B.

Where do they usually pick you up, on Prospect or where?

2nd

They pick you up anyplace. I was standing in front of my house, and they tried to throw a burglary charge on me, lucky I was at home that night

R.B.

Is there no place they patrol all the time?

1st

They patrol everywhere, they can still pick you up and take you down for nothing

R.B.

Well, what did you guys do after they beat up on that guy

1st

Well, it upset everybody and all and thats what got everybody to hollering and calling them out of their names and stuff. And I think --

2nd One girl fainted out in the street and they were going to take her to jail. Just for fainting in the street.

1st After they got all 14 of us in the wagon they started shooting in the holes

R.B. What school was that?

2nd Paseo

1st They sprayed the mace in the back, through the holes and got him right in the face

2nd I was covered up, too

1st Right in the eyes right in the face

2nd Then, the cops put this other boy in the wagon, they took 5 of them

He said, he wasn't going and he wasn't

1st He went anyway, though

R.B. What happened afterwards

1st They took us to jail

R.B. They took all of you to jail?

1st Yeah

R.B. How many did they pick up that time

1st Thirteen

R.B. Thirteen What did they do there?

1st They charged us with creating a public disturbance and that's about it

2nd Causing a riot

R.B. And then what happened? Did you have a trial or did they fine you or what?

1st We went to the court the next day as adults and those are juveniles right there (I guess pointing to others in the room)

2nd We stayed home

1st And they had a continuance and we 9 just 4 of us were adults) and we- I was the last one to get out, I had to get bond to get out and they continued the trial 2 weeks and we went back, we got fined 25.00 for

creating a public disturbance

R.B. How did you pay that fine, did you have to pay that out of your own pocket or Did you lose any work at that time

1st. I did, I lost a job

R.B. You lost your job, What did he do fire you?

1st Ummhumm, the man told me if I didn't call in don't come in and I didn't have a chance to call in cause I was in jail, so I might as well not come in cause the man had already told me if I didn't call in don't come in. And I went and applied for 4 or 5 other jobs, maybe 6 or 7, got applications in in every place in Kansas City and still ain't got no job

K.K. What about the jobs you can get here in the summertime , you know

2nd I can't get none

1st I need a job now, that was summertime, I need a job now

2nd The only place you can go is the Job Corps

1st I 'm gonna tell you like it is, I been out to Boonville,, I had me a good job working down to the Federal Building, alright, everything was lovely, so, I went to jail, I lost my job so I' didn't have me no job and I went to Youth Opportunity Center and went to Job Corps, Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, Squirt, I went everyplace, couldn't get me no job, I been out 6 months and my parole officer jumped all down my back and he -- I ain't going back for no parole violation cause I ain't got no job. They gonna send me back for murder or something, not for no parole violation, I tried to get me a job, I tried, I said, I'm out here every day, every day, I leave my house and try to find me a job, now it ain't no use me trying to look for none, I done been everyplace here, Look in the papaers and everything, can't find no job

R.B. You figure you got nothing to lose now, huh?

1st I ain't got nothing to lose, can't find no job, only thing they can do is send me back

R.B. What about these curfews and everything
1st Thats where it's gonna start more stuff
R.B. Start it over again huh ?
1st Yeah, look here, them white people out there, there ain't putting no curfew on them
2nd It ain't too many cops out there
1st Naw, there ain't too many cops out south
3rd If they there they ain't gonna do nothing
R.B. How about Saturday, the days after that incident down at City Hall?
Did you guys just lie around or did you go out and bust windows or what?
2nd No, we stayed home and listened to our radio
1st Now, you know we didn't
3rd I ain't gonna lie, I did, everybody else was going why should I be different?
1st I ain't gonna tell no lie, I went and kicked in windows
3rd I tore my arm up
R.B. How did you get that, did you
3rd I broke a window
R.B. Did it go through, did you shove your arm in or were you crawling through
3rd Crawling through
1st I went and got me a couple of cases of whiskey--
2nd Down on 15th Street, I ain't gonna name it
R.B. No, I don't want any names , don't tell me any names
3rd I got me 4 hams
in other cities
R.B. How do you feel about; I mean about the loot, the guys use it as a sort of badge, how do you feel about it, do you sell it or do you want to keep it or what?
1st It depends on what you get
2nd If you get cigarettes and you don't smoke or you get liquor and you don't

2nd drink, If you get them TV 's

1st I went up onto a store up on, naw, I ain't gonna say what store it was
I went to a store and this man's son waved a knife at me, did like
this here

K.K. How old was he?

1st He was kinda old

R.B. Twenty - fifteen?

1st He was about 17 or 18

R.B. Was he white

1st Yeah, he was white, so that night - his windows got broke out and then the
next day, I went back up there and pulled a pistol and took me a case of
whiskey. One of my partners got caught, I ran with my case of whiskey in
my hand

R.B. What happened to him?

1st He's in jail, down in the jail now

R.B. Have you heard anything, he's not allowed to call out or anything?

1st Nope- The boy threatned him, the boy told this boy, I'm gonna kill you
the boy started laughing and went in the back of the store

R.B. Is this the boy that waved the knife

1st Naw, He was shot in the face. Roosevelt didn't do nothing that night,
Roosevelt went on home
But that night he went on home, he stayed there all night he went back there
the next day cause , you know, it's a neighborhood store, he went back up
there and the man, the boy started some more stuff, so Roosevelt just
pulled his pistol out, the boy ran somplace, the next thing I knew, looked
out and the boy was gone up the street in the car, so the boy just
took the man's whiskey and stuff

3rd It's some store owners you really hate, but you can't do nothing until something like this break out- When it do break out and you break out a window, everybody else be there and trying to get something out of the window

R.B. Well, what about some of the store owners, what kind of things do they do that get on you

2nd Aw, just like, you go to the store and if you stay there too long, Hurry up, boy, Hurry up, git and grab on you and What you got in your pocket, what you got in your pocket

1st Act like you got some beer or something

3rd You got cup cakes, or potato chips and all that old ignorant stuff

R.B. You mean, they treat you like you're already criminals

3rd Yeah, they grab you -- like you stole some cupcakes, who wants any cupcakes

2nd You go in the stores and they say, watch him, watch him, as soon as you come through the door

1st I get to cussing and everything, they make me mad

3rd They be looking at you to see if anything is sticking out or anything or if you come in there with a sack they'll put staples in it so that you can't put nothing in the sack or something like that

Do they ever try to search you when you leave or anything like that?

Shit yeah, they say, lets go in the back room what you got, I ask for an apology all the time, I make them apologize. We don't have to, we have

a right to search you and all that old stuff. And then, when something

like this breaks out we go up there and break out all the windows, especially

people that have stuff in the windows like Jack Witherspoon, tires, watches

and tricycles and stuff

K.K. Why don't you burn these places down after you get through looting them if

you feel this way about them

2nd Somebody already got them

1st Somebody beat us to it

3rd Yeah, by the time we get ready to do it, they already be on fire

R.B. What do you think the outcome will be

1st A whole lot of cops gonna be dead

2nd Whole lot of people gonna be dead too, but a whole lot of people will be out of business

1st The way I feel, now, see, We gonna all be forgotten, Go on and get me a job and treat me like I'm an ordinary person, don't treat me like I'm no dog you know, or nothing like this

3rd Yeah, it's gonna be forgotten right quick

K.K. Seem like when it's a riot, more Negroes die than anyone else, what do you think about that?

Well, it's all in the police report, they got more ammunition, it's more of them

3rd Give us some guns and machine guns, we'll kill

K.K. That's what I say, is everybody gonna get together and try to kill all the policemen or what?

1st I'm gonna tell, you, I'm gonna tell you, if they keep putting this curfew on us, they keep putting them in the street and dogging them all around That's what is going to happen

K.K. What?

1st Well, they gonna keep on and some of them might have a pistol on them, you know, you push this man, and he might turn around and blow your face out, that's what's gonna happen, he's gonna blow your face out, he don't care whether you kill him or not. After you dog a person so long, he don't care

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start to
R.B. Do you think that most of the people feel like they're dogged too much
3rd Yeah
1st Thats it, dogged too much
R.B. Now, last summer a lot of people said, they'll never have a riot in
Kansas City, they didn't think there would ever be one here, did you ever
hear that?
1st Yeah
R.B. Why do you think there was now?
1st Let me tell you there are so many people around here who try to get
them a job and can't get no job and then the ones that was working on a job,
you know, the man got to treating them all funny and everything, you
know
2nd Everytime they made a move, they was watching them and carrying on
Female You give a nigger a job, he's making a dollar, give a ^{WHITE} girl boy a job,
he's making a dollar and a quarter
That quarter is a lot
R.B. Do you think these efforts they made to get people jobs and everything
have failed
Female They didn't make no damn efforts
1st They didn't give nobody no jobs
Female You can go downtown to that youth opportunity place every damn week, you
know what they'll tell you, okay, I know one Monday I went down there
it was three white girls in front of me, every one of them got a job, working
in offices, my turn came around and they had the nerve to ask me, you like
to be a bus girl, waitress, or cook, a maid, I told them Fuck it, I don't
want your job
1st Tell it like it is, thats just like it is,

- 1st Like me, my parole officer came out to the house he took me down to Youth Opportunity, alright, the man gave me, he gave me an appointment to come back so my parole officer wouldn't be with me and I went back down there to see him and the man wouldn't say nothing to me-- He finally said, we ain't got nothing, Youth Opportunity now, they supposed to have a job for you
- R.B. So, they just aren't doing enough, not doing anything, not getting any jobs, not getting anything done
- 1st Now I think there wouldn't be so much robbing or anything like that going on in Kansas City if they, you know, just give somebody a chance, they won't give nobody a chance or nothing. A young man, walking down the street he don't have to be ready to knock somebody in the head or stealing, they going to take him down, you know, he got to be getting ready to knock somebody in the head just cause he's walking the street. Where else he gonna be at, he can't find no job, what else he gonna do, stay home all day?
- K.K. Okay, what about other institutions, like you say, they complain about jobs and police, what about the schools anything wrong with the schools?
- 3rd Did you ever eat in the cafeteria
- K.K. Yeah
- 2nd Didn't you go to Central didn't you, alright, then you know what it was like then, don't you
- 3rd You know every damn day you had them funky mashed potatoes and them green beans and that corn and then every other day you might have a change of meat
- 2nd Chicken, look like piss
- 3rd You get chicken , you get hamberger meat and fish every Friday. You remember when Central walked out of the cafeteria and wouldn't buy no shit, don't you You'd find roaches in your food, bugs and everything

3rd And they had all them signs up there in the cafeteria and everything saying they were protesting over the food and stuff

K.K. Well, how are you treated in school

3rd Just like all bastards, A white person can go up there and talk to the hall monitors, you know - you try to do it, you go to the office and stay there for hours and hours trying to get out of it.

2nd You might get suspended

3rd You know yourself at Central Dr . Griffin is prejudiced, he don't like no Negroes and you know it, Marty don't like them either

Female Mr. Thomas don't care too much for them either

2nd No, he tried to frame me

3rd Cause Mr. Thomas ain't doing nothing but sucking asses at Central

1st They put me out of school so many times, I just said forget it

K.K. Is there anybody you can identify with over there, I mean is there anybody you look up to

3rd Yeah, I look up to one person at Central and that's Mr. Polson, the counsellor, I dig the hell out of that man --

Female I look up to a lot of people at school

3rd He's a white man

Female I look up to Coach Dwhite at Paseo

3rd Coach who ? --

Female Coach Dwight

3rd Shoot - Shoot

I'll kill that man if I ever see him on the street

Female I feel like when I was going to school last year, he sent white and colored down to the office, he didn't care, white or colored

3rd Manual is about the best school you can go to and stay out of trouble

Female Mr. Dwight sent white or colored. When Brenda was going there, he's take anybody he saw in the hall down.

3rd He never did take me down, though

Female He never did take me neither, he caught me in the hall lots of times without no pass

3rd Dwight is alright with me, he'd always set me down in a corner and talk to me, and tell me to go on to class and he'd better not catch me out in the hall again. I'd be out there in the next 5 minutes and he'd just send me on back to class . I could say I was with him . Dwight was alright with me, I didn't have anything against him

Female He'd give me a pass to go

2nd If I ever catch him on the street --- Van Fleet , too

3rd Mr. VanFleet and Mr. Wilkins, I don't give a damn about them

2nd He pulled a gun on me one time, cause I wouldn't tell him my name

R.B. He pulled a gun on you?

2nd Yeah, he had a gun in his pocket, kept on playing with it

R. B. He carries a gun?

Female He got a right to carry a gun

1st He's sort of like a detective up to the school

Female Thats right

R.B. Ahh Ahh

1st He ain't got no right to pull it on nobody

Female I ain't never seen him pull it on nobody, myself

When we was going to school up there, Coach Dwight was nice

1st Those people change

Female I know a whole lot of Negroes he gave chances and a whole lots of stuff

1st He must have had a gun in his pocket

Female No, he didn't have no gun

1st How do you know, you don't know what he had

He had a gun in his pocket

Female When I was going to school, I'm not talking about when you was going to school

1st Yeah, thats my point, I'm going to tell it like it is .That fellow just wanted
wants to get a good job, or a better job than what he had, make more
money, money gonna change everything, a person gonna change

3rd Thats right

Female Coach Dwight was making quite a bit of money last year

3rd He ain't learned a damn thing

R.B. You think hyou learn anything in school worth knowing at all?

2nd I didn't, thats why I don't go

K.K. What about people that come down here after the riots start, like Curtis
McClinton and all these people?

3rd They ain't trying to do nothing

2nd I don't think they doing Shit

Female I do

3rd I don't , I think Curtis McClinton and all them, those are the niggers
that are way up on top, just like Bruce Watkins and all them

Female Thats true too, but they started from the bottom just like anybody else,
and worked up, thats for anybody, white or colored, you have to start from
the bottom and work up

K.K. You feel like you got an equal chance of working yourself up?

1st Nope , How you gonna work yourself up -

Female Not until thie stuff blows over, nobody ain't gonna work theirself up

1st How you gonna do it if you can't even get a job, let alone try to go to
got to school someplace, it ain't even safe out here. They gonna keep on
doing this as long as they getting treated like - can't got to a party in
peace

2nd Yeah, they got a whole lot of police out there

Female Before this stuff got started it was bad

R.B. Do you think there are more down on the Negro man than there are on the Negro women?

3rd Repeat that

R.B. Do you think that the white community are more down on the Negro man than they are on the Negro woman, in other words you give the Negro woman more opportunities or less

3rd They give them about the same

1st About the same

Female Un unn, cause it's easier for a colored man to find a job than it is for a woman

3rd Shit

1st Naw, it's not either, not now, it's not easier for nobody to find a job

2nd For a white man it is

3rd We know that , man

R.B. You don't see any difference?

1st I don't see no difference at all

Female This is what they tell a colored girl, you go down to the Youth Opportunity Center. Well, they sit up there and play with your card for awhile, then they'll say, well, I'll go see what I've got, then they'll go back there and play through the files, you know, picking out the worse jobs they got in that damn file, then they'll bring them back and if you don't want them, then they'll say, I'm sorry, you come back next week and we'll see what we can do for you Because we just don't have any jobs for women right now. The jobs we have are for men

3rd And then the boys go down there and they don't get no jobs either

2nd They tell them they ain't go no jobs only for women

Female I seen a lot of boys go down there and get good jobs

2nd I done seen a lot of white guys go down there and get all the good jobs

Female John Steel went down there and he got a damn good job

1st When was that

3rd I remember that

1st Don't you know I've been to that Youth Opportunity so many times

2nd They got good jobs

3rd That was last summer, wasn't it

Female Yeah, I was there when he got it

3rd A dollar sixty one an hour

Female I been there with a boy that they gave a job for 2 something an hour

1st I been down there about 12 times, and I got one job out of that

Thats right

Female They gave him a job over in North K. C. at a flour mill for 2 something an hour

1st He must have had some good grades

Female Like hell he did, he was about to fail

1st The thing I don't like about them, they have some good jobs, but they a thousand miles away

They offered me a job out on 103rd and Metcalf Road

Female He wasn't going to graduate and he knew it, so why didn't he try it

1st How you going to get there very day, you ain't got no car, you through

You got to have a car

3rd Yeah, for all the good jobs, yeah, they offer some good jobs but they a thousand miles away. They offered me a job = but it was in Shawnee Mission Kansas How am I gonna get over there

2nd Walk to work, walk

R.B. What kind of a job did they offer you in Shawnee Mission?

1st A job working in this man's office

R.B. Clerical work, bookeeping

Female Cleaning up

1st Naw, something like helping him with his work, I'm too smart to clean up
girl - whats wrong with you
What you talking about, I'm so smart I probably would have beat that man
out of his job, the one I was going to be working for

2nd I ain't going to lie, they can give me a job for nothing as long as
they treat me right, the white man treat me right. I'll work at a job
cleaning up as long as they treat me right

3rd The reason - well, I feel like the reason colored people aren't getting
any jobs right now is because when they get a good job, they don't know
how to act on it. I mean they go down there fucking around and you
can't keep no job if you don't go to work- I know for myself, I had a damn
good job from Youth Opportunity gave it to me and I wouldn't half go to
work, I'd got to work when I got ready and the man just told me, if you
can't come to work --

2nd You know they talking about this Civil Rights bill, How come we don't
have our rights

3rd We was supposed to have our rights way back in 1800, Them civil rights,
you know them IO they supposed to done gave us

1st Aw man, you talking about the IO commandments, whats wrong with you
Them damn housing projects, they ain't made no improvements on that

R.B., B. Well, why do you think you don't have your rights

3rd Why do y we think we don't have them

R.B. Yeah

3rd I'll tell you why, for one thing, say a white man says we'll let you
do this and do that, well a nigger gets tired of listening to what a

3rd white man says, you got to do this and you got to do that, hell, you get tired of taking orders all the damn time

1st You got to take orders, man

3rd I mean I know you got to but I'm talking about they ought to give a colored man some of them jobs them white men have got

K.K. What about the Negro policemen, do they treat you any different than the white ones?

2nd They treat you a 100 per cent different

3rd All they do is ride around, when they stop they want to ask you, whats your name, you know like that, it wouldn't be so funny cause if you knew all the policemen, you couldn't do nothing could you, or you wouldn't do nothing, you know

Female It's according to your attitude

You talking about police, and you think all this happened because of the riots- starting with the riots and all, but all this --

During the summer we was at this party and this friend of mine, it was 2 girls and 2 boys and we were coming home, and this friend of mine, Michael, he was driving a 67 LeMans and we had left the party about 9 o'clock - this was the 4th of July and so we had just pulled out you know, from parking and we had got to the corner, and so these 2 white cops they pulled out of this driveway, this parking lot and so they stopped us and told us to get out of the car and everything and they started searching the car and so, the back seat wouldn't come out cause thats the way it was made and so they was going to tear it out and everythign and tell him if he could't get it back, and so this boy, Michael asked them what was they searching for and he said he believed we had stolen liquor in the car, you know, so okay, they searched the car and everything and tried to get the seat out and then this white cop

Female started asking him why did he have a 67 LeMans and why didn't he get him a 58 or 59 or a Station wagon. In other words, the car was too good for him, you know because he was Negro, now, thats the same thing.

R.B. When did this happen?

Female This was the 4th of July , this past summer.

2nd Female Well, hell if you've got the money, buy what you want

Female Thats what I'm saying, you know

1st I'll bet you a hundred dollars, if they see me in the street with a Cadillac, I'd get stopped, You see me driving a Eldorado, I'd get stopped.

2nd They think you stole it or something

Female Talked like that car was too good, or something

2nd Female It's too many people whose mama got new cars

3rd Shit, they ain't stopped my daddy, yet, and he gets a new car every damn year

2nd Female You better not drive it

3rd Hell, they ain't never stopped me and I drive the hell out of my daddy's car, and I ain't got no license

Female They stopped me once when I had a car, a 64, and it was during Christmas time

3rd I don't think this riot started up at school though

R.B. What do you think it started over?

3rd I dont' think that was it because I feel like

Female One night I was coming from out south, and he said I ran a stop sign and I saw the policeman , and I goofed up, I was driving kinda bad, and I made a stop sign and I turned the corner

3rd She one of them running stop signs

Female And he was ridin all slow and pretty soon after he saw me go over the hill he came over the hill behing me, so he stopped me and said I ran a stop sign about 5 blocks away

Female

And so I said, man, look here if you gonna let me get 5 blocks away and then stop me, I could have had a chance to kill somebody coming across the street or something, I said, when you see somebody doing something wrong, you supposed to stop them right then and not let them go no farther. And he said, well, I just wanted to see what other kind of mistakes you were going to make and so I told him I don't know what you giving me this ticket for, I ain't gonna pay it no way. So, he said something about, I don't have anything to do with that, you take it up with the court and I said you the one that gave me the ticket, I'm going to take it up with you and so he sai, well, I'm not going to argue with you and I said, I'm not going to argue with you, just the simple reason is it's Christmas time and you want money and you think you supposed to stop everybody on the street, from 5 blocks away, I'm not going to pay no ticket and I wasn't going to pay it, my mother gave me the money and told me to go pay it, or I wouldn't have never paid it cause I wasn't never wrong. I stopped, and they wasn't supposed to let you go no 5 blocks, they supposed to stop you right on the spot Damn cops get a bonus everytime they stop somebody and give them a ticket.

2nd

Especially during Christmas

Female

They knew it was Xmas and they wanted to get all them presents, but like I told him he wasn't going to stop my Xmas, cause it was going to be a lot more

3rd

But see, I don't think that riot started because Missouri schools had to go , I don't think so

2nd

That was just an excuse for the shit to get started, that wasn't the reason

3rd

The niggers just wanted to do something here because they was doing it in Detroit and Chicago, That wasn't no damn reason, that was just an excuse.

They just been trying to get the shit started

2nd

They supposed to be about school, they supposed to march to the Board of Education, they didn't even go near the Board of Education, they went every place but the Board of Education when they went down there.

Riot Participant

- 28 -

2nd

Look at it like this --

If they had wanted to start a riot they would have started it a long time ago, if they wanted one , But that wasn't no excuse

2nd

What

3rd

Nothing , Go ahead

Female

Well, every body got their own reasons of why the stuff started-- since they started everybody, got into it. They trying to find out the real reason why, really and truly

3rd

Okay, everybody trying to say it started because of that school shit, okay, look at all the people that were down there and don't even go to school. Look at all them people off of 12th Street, 31st Street.

2nd

Well since yall started it they just joined in. Once something gets started you go on and get in it , too

Female

Just like if one of our friends are fighting, if somebody else gets in, you know we going to jump in - This is just the same thing

3rd

Like if a white man and a black man get into a fight in school, they always send the Black man home, and the white one stays in school

2nd

Thats another thing,,they saw all men were created equal, well let them be equal

R.B.

What do you think about this bussing, do you think they could break this up if they bussed everybody back and forth?

Take the Negro kids and bus them out to the white school

Female

No, no cause I feel like they not going to go, they ain't going to act right Why should we have to go way out there? they should build more schools here.

3rd

What do we pay all these damn bills, for? For schools to be built, what do they do, if a damn new school comes up, they let all these white kids come.

Female

We got to go all these damn schools, look at Manual

2nd

In the snow and stuff and all that to have class in the Vocational Bldg.

- Female And at theres a good hundred kids, maybe not that many, and we live next door to it.
- 3rd Look at Manual High, okay, they been talking about for years they was going to teat Manual down and rebuild it. Everytime they rebuild a new school, they send all these white kids to it , Manual ain't got theirs yet. Manual is the raggedist school in Kansas City, they ain't going to get no school.
- R.B. Somebody said something about, the negro kids won't act right, what do you mean by that?
- 3rd They ain't going to act right, I can see their point sometimes, because you put a whole bunch of Negroes in one school, that school is going to look like hell, give it two or three years
- 2nd They don't know how to appreciate nothing
- Female All of them don't know how to appreciate nothing
- 2nd Now you take some of these colored people, they got some bad pads, their houses are alright
- Female Thats not only in our race, you going to find that in all races, you going to find some good, you're going to find some bad
- 2nd True, true
- 3rd You take a whole bunch and put them in a high school, they'd go around up everything
- 2nd Look at the projects, look at the damm projects, they just build them
- 3rd Look at Parade Park, Parade Park ain't tore up
It's two years old and a whole lot of Negroes live there
- Female Look at the rent they paying, too, you pay that damm much rent, you wouldn't tear it down, either
- 2nd You talking about the rent, the rent ain't got nothing to do with it