

11 Whereupon,

12 COURTNEY A. WEEKS, JR.,

13 called as a witness, first duly sworn, testified as follows:

14 EXAMINATION

15 By Mr. Fortunato:

16 Q Your home address?

17 A 351 Springfield Avenue, Newark.

18 Q Your business address?

19 A Same.

20 Q What is your business?

21 A Courtney's Very Bright One-hour Cleaners.

22 Q How long have you operated that business at
23 that address?

24 A Three weeks.

25 Q Where was your business address at the time
of the disorder in July?

A 352 Springfield Avenue.

Q Why are you no longer in business at that
address?

A I had anticipated moving. Are you speaking in
reference to the riot?

Q That is correct.

A (Continuing) -- before the riot, and I got my
SBA loan and moved.

Q But you didn't move because of the riot?

11 A No. The riot had nothing to do with the moving.

22 Q Do you have any incidents to tell us concerning
33 the riot and any damage to your place of business?

44 A Yes. I put it all in the statements. I haven't
55 had a chance to reread my statement to refresh my mind,
66 but as far as I can remember back --

7 Q How did you come to give this statement?

8 A They told us to go down to Mr. Oliver Lofton's
9 office at 124 Branford Place.

10 Q Who told you this?

11 A One of the committeemen who came through the
12 riot area, whoever was supposed to come by checking to
13 find out what was wrong or what damages were done.

14 Q Did you call anybody and tell them to come?

15 A No. We didn't know who to call.

16 Q Did you report the incident to any law enforce-
17 ment officials?

18 A Like the police?

19 Q Yes.

20 A The police is the one who did it. How are you
21 going to report it to them?

22 Q How do you know the police did it?

23 A How did I know the police did it?

24 Q Yes.

25 A To be exact, not the State Troopers but the

1 National Guard -- I usually stay open late Saturday night.
2 We open to nine or nine-thirty on Saturday nights. They
3 told me to leave early that night, told me to close up
4 early because there may be a lot of snipers around and
5 "we don't want to see anybody get shot innocently," so I
6 did leave early.

7 MR. MEYNER: Who said this?

8 THE WITNESS: The National Guard. So I
9 left early. About three or four o'clock that
10 morning Mr. Sessoms called me and told me they
11 were really shooting up everything. "They were
12 shooting up your place and broke it up and
13 everything." I was going down, but when I
14 found out it was the law doing it I decided
15 there wasn't no win there; I can't go down there
16 and raise no Cain. If it was shot up, it just
17 stay shot up.

18 MR. MEYNER: When did Mr. Sessoms tell
19 you that?

20 THE WITNESS: Early that morning, Sunday
21 morning.

22 MR. MEYNER: Sunday, 4 a.m.?

23 THE WITNESS: Yes.

24 MR. MEYNER: Where did you see Mr. Sessoms
25 at that time?

1 on the front. THE WITNESS: Well, I didn't do nothing.
 2 did not want I just said the heck with it. I did manage to
 3 I arrived get through after being searched three or four

4 A times. I did manage to get to the store to

5 Q see what damages were really done. That is

6 A when I went over to his store and he told me

7 Q all about it. Monday morning or that was Monday

8 morning?

MR. MEYNER: When you went over to Mr.

9 A Sessoms' store was his store damaged?

10 because I remember THE WITNESS: You can say that again.

11 because it They threw pool balls through his store.

12 been Sunday morning MR. MEYNER: This was Sunday morning?

13 memory serves me THE WITNESS: The next morning.

14 went in the By Mr. Fortunato: been Sunday morning, but I

15 don't Q want what morning is the next morning? What I am

16 saying A Sat I can't remember the exact date. If my memory

17 serves me, it was Saturday night this happened. It was

18 Sunday morning that this happened.

19 Q If you would like, I will read that paragraph
 20 of your statement: "I was told on Saturday night, July 15,
 21 1967, by one of my neighbors, Jake Sessoms, that the State
 22 Troopers first and then later the National Guard were
 23 shooting at the stores. I did not want to come to my
 24 store because I was told the National Guard and the State
 25 Police were shooting at all stores that had 'Soul' written

1 on the front. My store had 'Soul' written on it, and I
2 did not want to take a chance on being shot. My wife and
3 I arrived at 352 Springfield Avenue at ten-thirty."

4 A That is morning.

5 Q That is ten-thirty Sunday morning?

6 A Right.

7 Q Could this be Monday morning rather than Sunday
8 morning?

9 A No, no. That was definitely Sunday morning
10 because I remember when I came in -- I am pretty sure
11 because it seems to me -- I am pretty sure it must have
12 been Sunday morning. It happened Saturday night, if my
13 memory serves me correct, because that next day when I
14 went in there -- it must have been Sunday morning, but I
15 don't want to have it as an actual statement that I am
16 saying Saturday or Sunday because I don't really truly
17 remember. But you do know when I went in there what
18 happened.

19 thirty in the morning. MR. MEYNER: Don't you remember how the
20 riot started the first night when there was the
21 trouble outside the precinct station? Then it
22 was Thursday night when there was a good deal
23 of disturbance. It was Friday that the troopers
24 and the National Guard came in. That is
25 Friday. Then there is Saturday.

1 By Mr. THE WITNESS: Saturday night.

2 Q Are you MR. MEYNER: And you came in Sunday

3 A morning?

4 By Mr. THE WITNESS: Right.

5 Q Do you MR. MEYNER: When you came in was Mr.

6 A Sessions' place damaged, too?

7 Q What? THE WITNESS: Yes, definitely. Mr.

8 A Sessions' place was damaged. I had the word

9 "Soul Brother" on MR. MEYNER: Yours couldn't have been

10 the street, damaged Saturday and his Sunday?

11 nothing there but THE WITNESS: No. It all happened at the

12 as this same time all over the city, at the same time.

13 a Soul Boy, There wasn't no two separate nights or days.

14 other winds Clinton Avenue, Springfield Avenue, West Market

15 Street, all of it happened at a given time.

16 By Mr. Fortunato: Yes, the whole place was

17 Q What was that given time? was that up? Show

18 A I can estimate. I can say about two, three-

19 thirty in the morning. take a look at the bathroom. The

20 Q This was Saturday night, Sunday morning?

21 A Yes. is right behind it. You can see all the

22 holes. MR. LEUCHTER: And he can pinpoint it by

23 his business being open. He would not have been

24 open on Sunday. Normally he does not conduct

25 his store on a Sunday.

11 By Mr. Fortunato:

12 Q Are you normally open on Sunday?

13 A Yes.

14 By Mr. Jaffe:

15 Q Do you have anything written on your window?

16 A Yes.

17 Q What?

18 A On the store I was in then I had the word
19 "Soul Brother" and the store that I was renting across
20 the street, which was absolutely empty, there wasn't
21 nothing there but a soda machine. The vision was as clear
22 as this room here. I had "Soul" -- no, I had, "This is
23 a Soul Boy," jokingly on the window. That was on the
24 other window.

25 MR. GIBBONS: Was that damaged?

26 THE WITNESS: Yes, the whole place was
27 shot up. The empty store was shot up. There
28 wasn't a thing in the store. You go to my store
29 and it was now and go take a look at the bathroom. The
30 morning. I bathroom door was like this here and the outside
31 wasn't even door is right behind it. You can see all the
32 holes. The holes are still there.

33 MR. MEYNER: How many shots would you
34 estimate in the old store?

35 THE WITNESS: They aimed at each word of

1 the word "Soul," the "S," the "O," the "U," and
2 then their marksmanship got kind of bad because
3 they didn't quite hit the "L."

4 By Mr. Fortunato:

5 Q What precisely did Mr. Sessoms tell you when
6 he called you on the telephone, as best you can recollect?

7 A He told me that they were -- the State Troopers
8 and the National Guards were shooting up everything that
9 has got "Soul" on it up and down this avenue.

10 Q Did he tell you how they knew they were the
11 State Troopers and the National Guard?

12 A He was right there. In fact, I called the
13 Fire Department myself, which is down on the corner,
14 because I happen to know a couple of the chiefs and people
15 in there. I do their work. I asked them what was going
16 on, but they gave me an altogether different story.
17 According to them if they got a chance they were going out
18 because they were supposed to be under seige themselves,
19 and it was amusing to me when I came down that Saturday
20 morning. I took one look at the Fire Department and there
21 wasn't even a dent, not a scratch on that Fire Department.
22 Yet they were under seige from snipers and the troopers
23 were shooting back and "Your store might be damaged, Mr.
24 Weeks; we don't know because the fire is so intense we
25 can't go out and check, but if you call back maybe we can

1 get you some information."

2 Q You made a comment that all the damage was done
3 at a certain time by law enforcement officials. How do
4 you know this?

5 A I guess you would call them rumors, but from
6 talking with other merchants. I am a member of the
7 Springfield Avenue Association and also vice president of
8 the Newark Business League. That put me in position to
9 talk with many of the merchants. Everyone of them hit
10 around the same time. They all give about the same time
11 for the actions. In fact, I guess you would constitute
12 it as rumor, but all the reporters -- there wasn't a
13 reporter on the street at that particular time. They were
14 all called down for some big, important phony announce-
15 ment. They was all called right down to the armory at
16 that particular time. So that we know this was not
17 something accidental. This was planned, prepared and
18 carried out.

19 MR. GIBBONS: Where did you hear that
20 rumor?

21 THE WITNESS: The exact source I couldn't
22 give at the moment. I don't remember. This
23 answers itself. Was there a picture or a
24 statement? I went on TV and I showed the
25 bullets on TV.

1 We had the meeting up at the bank and
 2 will start shopping on Springfield Avenue again,
 3 everything I said pertaining to the riot was
 4 and try to get along business. Being in business,
 5 taped and shown on TV except the part where I
 6 accused the State Troopers and the police of
 7 this act. That part, of course, was cut out.

8 Q Did you on television hear the comment about the
 9 There was no reports -- I didn't see anything
 10 press conference being called at two or three o'clock in
 11 the morning? Was that comment on the tape?
 12 A About all the reporters being off the street?
 13 MR. MEYNER: You made this statement on
 14 Sunday?

15 A No, I didn't make it that particular time.
 16 THE WITNESS: At this meeting? No.

17 Q Had you known about that when you went on
 18 MR. MEYNER: You said you made a tape for
 19 television? When did you find out about that?
 20 TV. When did you make that?

21 A I can't remember if that was before or after
 22 THE WITNESS: I think that was about a
 23 either. That is easy to check,
 24 week later. They had a meeting up at the State
 25 Q How would you check it?

26 A No. 1, if you check the newspapers for that
 27 particular day or the day after and see if there was any
 28 news there about the accusations concerning the shooting
 29 up of the stores.
 30 No. 2, the reporters that may have been on duty that
 31 day, were they all in the area of what I didn't check
 32 it.
 33 moment we have on Springfield Avenue the Spring-
 34 field Avenue area complaint bureau, which I
 35 MR. GIBBONS: You can't have any recall-
 36 night add we are doing a pretty good job of
 37 location of where you got that information?
 38 trying to rebuild the image so that the people
 39 THE WITNESS: I wish I could remember.

By Mr. Fortuato:
will start shopping on Springfield Avenue again,

Q It is not that you are reluctant to sell and try to get night business. Being in business,

A Now I think I know where I got that info. that is helpful to me.

believes I got it from Mr. Black.

By Mr. Jaffe:

Q Is this Al Black?

Q Did you on television make the comment about the

A Al Black.

press conference being called at two or three o'clock in

Q Chairman of the Commission on Civil Rights? the morning? Was that comment on the tape?

A Yes, I believe what came at the Governor's

A About all the reporters being off the street? hearing at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, I believe

Q Yes.

that is where I heard it. I am not positive. I wish

A No, I didn't make it that particular time.

Senator Paraskian's meeting that time. I am not positive

Q Had you know about that when you went on of it.

television? When did you find out about that?

MR. MEYER: How is your business now

A I can't remember if that was before or after compared to what it was?

either. That is easy to check.

THE WITNESS: Well, now I have, thanks

Q How would you check it?

to the SBA a loan, managed to acquire some good

A No. 1, if you check the newspapers for that good equipment, and in the three weeks I was particular day or the day after and see if there was any

been in business on Springfield Avenue, business news there about the accusations concerning the shooting

is better.
up of the stores.

MR. MEYER: What were your charges

No. 2, the reporters that may have been on duty that roughly?

day, were they all in the armory or not? I didn't check

THE WITNESS: The only problem is, I'm not it.

is arguing with the people about making up for

MR. GIBBONS: You don't have any recollection of where you got that information? their clothes. That is the only thing. The

clothes that were shot up. That's the only

THE WITNESS: I wish I could remember.

1 By Mr. Fortunato:

2 Q It is not that you are reluctant to tell us?

3 A Now I think I know where I got that from. I
4 believe I got it from Mr. Black.

5 Q Is this Al Black?

6 A Al Black.

7 Q Chairman of the Commission on Civil Rights?

8 A Yes. I believe that came at the Governor's
9 hearing at the Abyssinian Baptist Church. I believe
10 that is where I heard it. I am not positive. I think
11 Senator Parsekian's meeting that time. I am not positive
12 of it.

13 MR. MEYNER: How is your business now
14 compared to what it was?

15 THE WITNESS: Well, now I have, thanks
16 to the SBA a loan, managed to acquire late and
17 good equipment, and in the three weeks I have
18 been in business on Springfield Avenue, business
19 is better.

20 MR. MEYNER: What were your damages
21 roughly?

22 THE WITNESS: The only problem I'm having
23 is arguing with the people about paying up for
24 their clothes. That is the only thing. The
25 clothes that were shot up. When they shot

1 through the window, naturally a bullet traveled
2 through the shop and through the people's
3 clothes.

4 MR. MEYNER: But you gave them back their
5 clothes with the exception that they were
6 damaged, is that it?

7 THE WITNESS: Yes, those I managed to talk
8 out of trying to sue me. I am using the old
9 routine that sooner or later they are going to
10 pay off and when they pay off, I will pay you
11 off.

12 MR. MEYNER: How long did you say you
13 have been in business?

14 THE WITNESS: I have actually been in --
15 well, that is a good question really because --

16 MR. MEYNER: How long have you been in
17 business in Newark?

18 THE WITNESS: I would say about twelve,
19 fourteen years.

20 MR. MEYNER: What do you think caused
21 these riots?

22 THE WITNESS: Well, that's a -- not really
23 a difficult question to answer because frustration
24 can make you do a lot of things. I will put it
25 to you this way: If I need something bad and

1 beg you to help me and you don't, I am going to
2 get it. Wouldn't you? the papers, and she

3 had MR. MEYNER: You mean there wasn't enough
4 response to the needs or the pleas of these
5 people? is an idea.

6 THE WITNESS: I have worked constantly on
7 various organizations. I love civic work, so I
8 am deeply involved in it; not political, civic.
9 I don't like political, but I do like civic
10 with many organizations, and I know sometimes
11 you get down to the Complaint Bureau. To give
12 you an illustration, last week a woman came
13 down with a \$431.61 judgment against her. The
14 attorneys filed a lien, went to court and had
15 a judgment against her for stuff she bought.
16 When she brought the papers down and I looked
17 at them, even though what they say may be true,
18 maybe it was a deal where she was shacking and
19 left and she might have agreed when she was
20 going to buy the furniture with this fellow she
21 was with -- all that may be true, but that
22 wasn't the important thing. The important
23 thing is she hadn't signed a paper. She had
24 a little two-bit restaurant. They had slapped
25 her with this bill for this fellow's furniture

1 and was going to make her pay for it because the
2 judge had already signed the papers, and she
3 had it registered down at the city hall. Her
4 credit is ruined. She can't even buy supplies.
5 So that is an idea.

6 After I took the case and went to work on
7 it, now I got a letter from them and everything
8 is all right. She didn't have to pay the money.

9 Another illustration of what can frustrate
10 you, a man went out and bought a car, a cheap
11 car. A guy can't afford no decent car, a
12 \$100-car where the taxes came to \$103. He
13 tried it out in the lot, it worked beautifully.
14 He drove it out of the lot and got home with it.
15 That night the car fell apart. He called them
16 up and tried to give them the car back. No.
17 Saturday the car fell apart. Monday morning
18 bright and early he took the car back to the
19 people. They told him, "You bought this car
20 unconditionally so how can you expect, what do
21 you want out of me? You signed the paper. It
22 says unconditional as is. What do you want out
23 of me?"
24 He said, "Unconditional or no unconditional,
25 the car is no good. I can't drive it." So they

11 threw him out. He came down, made a complaint.
12 We called them up and let them know that the
13 packing of a motor with a heavy oil will make
14 any car sound good. "Now, legally there is
15 nothing we can do to you. You are legally
16 within your rights, but morally the Springfield
17 Avenue Merchants Association is going to see to
18 it that the Springfield Avenue News carries a
19 complete story on the episode, letting the
20 people in the ghetto know exactly how you
21 operate. If you think you are going to continue
22 pulling people out of the ghetto into buying
23 your cars, you are mistaken."

14 About an hour somebody from that office
15 called up, got the man's name and address. I
16 got in touch with him, he went up and got is
17 \$103 back.

18 I can go on and on with these type stories
19 of how people are being fleeced. We worked with
20 Mr. Krebs. You probably know Mr. Krebs.

21 MR. MEYNER: He has been helpful?

22 THE WITNESS: Definitely helpful, and he
23 has told us point blank anything we run across
24 that is illegal and we don't want to open up
25 on them, to let him know and he will go to

1 work on it. So this organization is trying to
2 do some good. We get a lot of lip service.
3 Everybody will promise you the Moon.

4 I have been to a lot of these investigating
5 committees and I have heard -- after I leave,
6 that is the last I hear. I don't even get a
7 card saying, "Thank you for coming." What the
8 people need is something. It is like these
9 government programs and with the anti-poverty
10 programs.

11 MR. MEYNER: How about the system of
12 relief and assistance?

13 THE WITNESS: Welfare? I don't under-
14 stand your question.

15 MR. MEYNER: Do you think that has been
16 helpful?

17 THE WITNESS: I am definitely anti-welfare.
18 The reason for that is I feel that welfare is
19 a noose around somebody's neck. There is no
20 opportunity for anyone in welfare to advance.
21 If you are on welfare, you have got to be a
22 criminal in order to stay straight. The money
23 you get is enough to exist on, and I know cases
24 which we won't go into where people sneak out
25 nights committing crimes, working to make that

1 extra money, so that they can get something
2 extra or decent. It is a homewrecker. It
3 encourages men to leave home.

4 If you have got four or five kids, it is
5 easier to run away and have the law looking for
6 you and dump them than to stay home and try to
7 work something out. I am not the least bit in
8 sympathy with the present system of welfare.
9 I am in favor of welfare when a man is hungry
10 and he needs help, but I don't cherish the
11 system they are now using.

12 MR. MEYNER: Is there any difficulty in
13 placing a numbers bet or a horse bet in that
14 section?

15 THE WITNESS: In my section? Very dif-
16 ficult, and if it wasn't difficult I would tell
17 you.

18 MR. LEUCHTER: You started to talk about
19 your reactions to the anti-poverty program.

20 THE WITNESS: Certain phases of the anti-
21 poverty program is wonderful. I worked like a
22 dog on the anti-poverty program. I wrote a
23 proposal up, had it set up, had it okayed,
24 went to Washington and it was okayed. Trenton
25 okayed it. The UCC, city hall okayed it. When

1 it got back to Newark and sent to Manpower, they
2 knocked it down.

3 out, I had a Cleaners and Dyers school in mind.

4 The cleaning industry is in dire need of pressers,
5 spotters, counter girls. If someone in the
6 industry knows anyone to talk with concerning
7 this, you would understand what I mean, how
8 difficult it is to get a decent presser or
9 spotter today. But they knocked it down.

10 Today the problem is this: There isn't
11 enough coalition or working together between
12 the government and private industry to handle
13 the jobs. The CEP program which is across the
14 street from me, I have heard continual complaints
15 from people who attend schools, graduate, come
16 out feeling, "This is it. I have got it made."
17 I know one fellow I hounded to death, rode him
18 like a father rides a child, and then took him
19 up to Skill Bank and got into school. And
20 when he graduated as a welder, where did they
21 send him? Hillside Meadows, which makes a
22 racket out of this. He worked long enough and
23 when it is time to get in the union, all of a
24 sudden you ain't got no job and there you are,
25 right back out. There is not decent jobs for

11 the people to actually get the jobs. You can
12 put 100 pupils in school and then when you come
13 out, there are about 10 jobs.

14 This to me is the worse thing in the world
15 to tell a man to build up his hopes, get him
16 all prepared. He spends three or four months
17 fighting to get this education and then when
18 he comes back out he is right back where he was.

19 MR. MEYNER: There is a certain criminal
20 element in the community, people that steal and
21 who would enter a house at night?

22 THE WITNESS: Definitely.

23 MR. MEYNER: Do the police really check
24 this situation?

25 THE WITNESS: Yes. We had a condition
in our neighborhood of the junkies hanging out
on the corners. Along with the merchant on the
corner, the tavern owner, we worked with them
and we managed by raising enough hell downtown
to clean that corner up. That is pretty well
cleaned up, but that is just one corner. They
shift from one corner to another corner. I am
not anti-junkie. I am not against them anymore
than I am against anybody else. I am against
crime regardless of who commits it, but my

11 sentiments concerning the narcotics is probably
12 a little different than you would feel. I don't
13 condemn the narcotic, I condemn the system,
14 because this joker couldn't get higher and
15 couldn't get his dope if somebody wasn't paying
16 off somebody and dope wasn't allowed to come in.

17 The part that hurts me is the narcotic,
18 all he is doing is supporting the corrupt
19 system that permits this thing to go on.

20 MR. MEYNER: Is that not true with
21 respect to gambling, too?

22 THE WITNESS: Gambling, if you are talking
23 about guys having a little tong game --

24 MR. MEYNER: You mean the numbers aren't
25 played extensively?

26 THE WITNESS: Like it was when I was a
27 youngster. Years ago the numbers racket was a
28 big thing. Today it is no big thing.

29 MR. MEYNER: People are too smart, you
30 think?

31 THE WITNESS: I don't know if they are too
32 smart. It is just it don't excite nobody no
33 more. You try to get a book on the average
34 place now you ain't going to make nothing for
35 the risk you are taking. You are going to get a

1 dresses. buzzing. Who is going to help you? The police
2 ain't going to put up nothing unless you have
3 got a big book. They will let you rot in jail.

4 Q Anybody who carries a book up and down the
5 address? street today needs his head examined. There is
6 A really nothing behind it.

7 Q July CHAIRMAN LILLEY: Any other questions?

8 A Thank you very much for coming.

9 Q Did you operate a (Witness excused.)
10 one you are in now at some other address prior to July?

11 Whereupon, Yes.

12 Q Where? EDDIE HARDY

13 called as a witness, first duly sworn, testified as follows:

14 Q You moved EXAMINATION from East Orange to
15 Newark? By Mr. Fortunato:

16 Q Can you give us your home address?

17 A 570 Clinton Avenue.

18 Q In Newark? Better location in Newark.

19 A In Newark. any incidents to tell us as to

20 what happened during the Newark riot in

21 July? A That is the same.

22 Q And do you operate a business at that address?

23 evening? A That is correct.

24 Q Can you describe the business?

25 and what? A I have a ladies' fashion and wear shop, mostly