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MR. LOFTON: No questions.

CHAIRMAN LILLEY: Thank you very much.

(Witness excused)

Whereupon,

JOHN A. THOMAS

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

EXAMINATION

By Mr. Fortunato:

Q And your address, please?

A 14 Leslie Street, Newark, New Jersey.

Q How long have you resided at that address?

A I would say approximately eleven years.

Q How long have you resided in Newark?

A Except for four years in Cranford, New Jersey and approximately two and a half years in the military service, all of my life. I am forty years of age.

Q What did your military service consist of?

A United States Army, first the Army Specialized Training Program at Howard University and from there I was shipped to the U.S. Army Infantry Division.

Q What period of time?

A World War II. I am a disabled veteran of World War II, a Wednesday, was the Smith rubber-duck business, July

Q What is your occupation?

I was the partner of the Smith rubber-duck business, and that in

1 A Well, you will probably classify me now as a
2 Title I project coordinator at Central High School.
3 Previously I was a teacher of history and teacher-counselor
4 in the City of Newark.

5 Q What does your present occupation entail?

6 A Title I is an aspect of the Elementary and Secondary
7 Education Act of 1965 in which the federal government
8 distributes money in areas that are classified as
9 culturally deprived. This money is utilized for in-school
10 performances, additional textbooks county equipment and
11 also special teachers in terms of reading, et cetera.

12 Q I take it you were in Newark at the time of the
13 riot in July.

14 A I certainly was.

15 Q And do you have an incident which happened to you
16 to relate to us? That is relating at this very moment in

17 the city. A Very definitely.

18 Q Can you tell us about that incident, and be as
19 precise as you can as to the date and the time when it
20 occurred.

21 A Well, you say be specific in terms of date and
22 time? Yes. Make no mistake about it, and I will say this

23 Q Could I orient you a little bit? July 12, which
24 was a Wednesday, was the Smith cabdriver incident. July

25 13 was the gathering at the Fourth Precinct, and that in

1 effect was the start of the disorder. Friday was July 14
2 and Saturday was July 15.

3 A Then the date would be July 14, Friday.

4 Q Can you tell us what time of day?

5 A However, may I preface my remarks a little bit?

6 Q Surely.

7 A I am here because of a friend of mine, and that is
8 the gentleman sitting over there, Mr. Copeland, whom I have
9 known a long time, played ball with him, et cetera, because
10 I have confidence in Mr. Copeland. I have been reading
11 and listening to many things involving the so called riot,
12 which I wouldn't call it, a riot, because it was not a
13 race riot, gentlemen, at all. But I want to say this to
14 you: I was late this morning. The reason I was late was
15 because I was downtown on Broad Street witnessing part of
16 a social upheaval that is existing at this very moment in
17 the City of Newark. I don't know whether you are aware
18 of this or not, but there is a large picket line in front
19 of City Hall today involving the students at Barringer
20 High School, and contrary to what you read in the
21 newspapers and what our good mayor says, this is a racial
22 situation. Make no mistake about it, and I will say this
23 under oath without fear of contradiction and will say it
24 again.

25 You see, we are not facing facts. Right now in my

1 community, the Newark community is seething in my
2 estimation. One of the reasons why, I suppose -- if you
3 tell me there is no such thing as police brutality, then
4 I must call you an out and out fabricator, liar, whatever
5 terms you want to use, because I personally know that this
6 is true. I grew up under it in the City of Newark; I was
7 a victim of it, and the black community feels this way.

8 I might also add this point because I have been giving
9 speeches in suburban communities. I gave one last week
10 in Montclair, the previous week in Livingston, and I am
11 going to West Essex in the future because there are certain
12 people who are concerned about what is going on in the
13 City of Newark because contrary to where they live, many
14 of them work in the Newark community. They have
15 investments in the Newark community, and what happens in
16 Montclair and Newark is part and parcel of the same
17 situation in my estimation.

18 Getting back to a point, because having taught in the
19 city for 17 years and grown up in the town and even though
20 I am a school teacher, I myself have even developed
21 certain attitudes because I attended Rutgers University
22 and I am a graduate in Political Science at Columbia
23 University, and I was sitting safely with the so called
24 middle class philosophy until recently. But now I am even
25 thinking differently. For example, in the rebellion, riot,

1 holocaust, whatever you want to call it, members of the
2 black community were persecuted and prosecuted for many
3 of the things that they did that were wrong, no question
4 about that in my mind. But they are saying, and I say
5 this to you, nowhere do you see anyone of these uniformed
6 criminals being prosecuted for things that were done. So,
7 consequently, they have no faith in the administration.
8 They have no faith in the authority.

9 Incidentally, I might add, Governor, that was reflected
10 Tuesday at the last election because if you analyze what
11 occurred, and this was good for the Republicans I might
12 add, the black community didn't come out to vote like it
13 usually does. They are so motivated to vote democratic
14 that they wouldn't come out and vote Republican, so they
15 stayed home. This, of course, was to their benefit; you
16 know what occurred.

17 This is all part of a feeling on the part of individuals
18 in Newark who do not trust even boards like this that are
19 honestly trying to do a job. They have no faith. This is
20 based upon experience.

21 From my own personal situation, which is what you
22 wanted me to lead up to, on Friday morning, which again
23 would be what, the 16th?

24 Q The 14th.

25 A I was travelling south on Bergen Street taking my

1 cousin-in-law, my wife's cousin, home, an ex-Marine who
2 works for Fedders who lives in the neighborhood of Bergen
3 Street and Custer Avenue. As we were commencing south on
4 Bergen Street they were stopping automobiles at the
5 intersection of Bergen Street and Custer Avenue, but it
6 was kind of peculiar because the automobiles that were
7 driven by whites they permitted to continue south beyond
8 Custer Avenue. The automobiles that were driven by blacks
9 were stopped, and mine was one of them.

10 My automobile is well known in the Newark community
11 by the Newark Policemen because I grew up with many of
12 them. It is a honey golden Thunderbird. You don't see
13 too many of them in Newark, and the fellows know my
14 automobile. I am talking about the Newark Police. They
15 also know me because I was a candidate for councilman-at-
16 large in the city in the last municipal election, and I
17 got around town a little bit. I was unsuccessful, however.
18 I didn't have a lot of elements behind me that others did
19 that were elected.

20 Also I had on my automobile a deputy sheriff's decal
21 and in my pocket I had my little deputy sheriff's badge,
22 my credentials and so forth, but that didn't mean a thing
23 because when I got to the intersection of Bergen and Custer
24 several State troopers -- and, incidentally, the last time
25 I talked about this to some people in this building they

1 asked me did I know what a State trooper was and I was kind
2 of insulted because I am a history teacher.

3 Several of them grabbed each side of the automobile
4 and dragged both of us out of the automobile and when I
5 say dragged, I mean this. They slapped us against the car;
6 they had us place our hands like this (indicating upward).
7 One of the State troopers with a rifle butt spread my legs
8 even further than I did when he told me to spread my legs.
9 Then they proceeded to search me, to search my cousin-in-law,
10 to search the automobile. They found nothing.

11 After that they commenced to hit both of us with the
12 butts of their carbines or rifles. We both went to the
13 ground. In the process of this they were using derogatory
14 terms in terms of race. Then they told us to get up, "You
15 black so and so's and get back where you came from." I
16 couldn't even take my cousin home. He had to stay with me
17 because he couldn't go behind them. I was more fortunate
18 than he was because as they started to hit us after this
19 searching situation someone, and I am well known in that
20 area of Newark because I grew up there, said, "Watch out,
21 J.T." That is what they call me, my older friends. And I
22 bent my head. So I was hit approximately here (indicating
23 shoulder region), but my cousin was hit flush in the face.
24 So when we returned to my home I was in a terrible state
25 emotionally, more so than physically incidentally, while

1 my wife was -- she is a registered nurse and also a teacher
2 -- treating my cousin with first aid I was calling everybody
3 I knew, I called the Police Department, I called the
4 local newspapers, I called anyone I thought because I
5 wanted them to know what was happening to me as an
6 individual and in the streets of Newark.

7 What I can tell you in my estimation that these State
8 policemen either panicked or are just vicious bigots, no
9 question about that in my mind.

10 You can go on from there, Mr. Fortunato.

11 Q Can you tell us what time of evening this was?

12 A I would say approximately nine-thirty. And even
13 if it was later, even if it was beyond the curfew situation,
14 all right, you are arrested. You don't beat the individual.
15 You arrest him for being out there breaking the law, but
16 you don't beat him.

17 Q Did anybody tell you it was beyond the curfew?

18 A No, sir, absolutely not. It was not beyond the
19 curfew, first of all. They didn't ask me, "Can I see your
20 driver's license?", this kind of thing that an ordinary
21 police officer would do -- driver's license, registration.
22 None of that, none of that.

23 Q Are there Newark motorcycle police who also have
24 stripes down their pants?

25 A Sir, let me tell you something; I know what State

1 policemen look like. I know their uniform. I also know
2 about 75 percent of the motorcycle policemen in the City of
3 Newark personally, having taught many of them who are white
4 and having played ball and gone to school and socialized
5 with those who are black. I will tell you these were not
6 Newark Policemen, motorcycle policemen, because they would
7 have known me, incidentally, personally.

8 Q Did you or your friend receive medical treatment
9 other than what you have described?

10 A Other than the first aid situation?

11 Q Yes.

12 A No, I didn't go to a doctor. I was more emotionally
13 upset than I was physically hurt. This is a fact.

14 MR. FORTUNATO: Do any of the Commission have
15 questions?

16 THE WITNESS: If not, I have one.

17 MR. FORTUNATO: I didn't mean to indicate we
18 had no other questions to ask you.

19 MR. GIBBINS: Were the crowds in the street in
20 the area where you were stopped?

21 THE WITNESS: On this night not too many
22 people at that particular point. There were people
23 out there, and naturally, but this was the night
24 after the looting. The looting took place on a
25 Thursday night primarily.

1 MR. GIBBONS: Was this a fixed checkpoint
2 were you stopped?

3 THE WITNESS: Pardon.

4 MR. GIBBONS: Was this a fixed checkpoint
5 where you were stopped?

6 THE WITNESS: Explain fixed checkpoint.

7 MR. GIBBONS: Did it appear to be there were
8 policemen regularly stationed there stopping cars?

9 THE WITNESS: No. This is Bergen and Custer.
10 This is an area where they don't even have a light
11 there.

12 MR. GIBBONS: You were aware that the State
13 police and the National Guard had set up a
14 perimeter around the area of the disturbance and
15 had some checkpoints?

16 THE WITNESS: In other words, what you are
17 saying is was I going outside of the perimeter so
18 to speak?

19 MR. GIBBONS: Yes.

20 THE WITNESS: I was taking my cousin to his
21 home. Follow me?

22 MR. GIBBONS: Do you know whether or not this
23 was one of the checkpoints in the perimeter that
24 they had established?

25 THE WITNESS: I wouldn't know that because

1 we weren't given any specific details newspaper-wise
2 or otherwise as to what were specific checkpoints
3 in the City of Newark.

4 MR. LOFTON: I think what Mr. Gibbons is
5 getting at is whether or not at the point where
6 driving

7 you were stopped there were the police barricade
8 kind of things that were put up to block the
9 streets such as they did on certain corners of
10 Newark, whether or not one of these things was set
11 up at the place where you were stopped.

12 THE WITNESS: I would say yes, but the point
13 of the matter is this: If you are coming down
14 Bergen Street, you can't see that at Watson Avenue.
15 It is a long block, especially if you are going to
16 turn at Custer Avenue. At Watson you can't see.

17 MR. LOFTON: I don't think Mr. Gibbons was
18 implying because it may have been a checkpoint
19 that what you say happened to you was justified.

20 THE WITNESS: Sir, even if it was a checkpoint,
21 had they stopped me and said, "License, et cetera,
22 where are you going?" I could easily have explained
23 to them that I am going to a place beyond this
24 This is checkpoint where an individual lives.

25 MR. GIBBONS: And even if they had said, "No,
26 we have orders to turn everybody back," they didn't

1 early to have to do what they did.

2 THE WITNESS: Right.

3 By Mr. Fortunato:

4 Q You observed other cars with white individuals
5 driving proceeding without any difficulty?

6 A They went through.

7 CHAIRMAN LILLEY: Any other questions?

8 By Mr. Fortunato:

9 Q What does the red tie portray?

10 A Something I am extremely proud of. If you look
11 at the tie, you will see there is an emblem there and if
12 you have lived in the black community in this area you
13 wouldn't have to ask the question. The emblem which I
14 myself designed is part and parcel of a program of pride
15 that I have been working on in the Newark community. It is
16 called the Crispus Attucks Day Celebration, and you will
17 see 1770 on it because Crispus Attucks was the first
18 American to give his life for the cause of liberty. If you
19 are from the Boston area you know all about this because
20 there is a large statue of the Boston Massacre and his name
21 is at the top of it. He is buried in the burial grounds
22 along with three other men that died with him on that day.
23 This is a part of a pride element that I have been trying
24 to work on, along with a lot of fine people both black and
25 white, in the Newark community because although we came here

1 early historically, because of sociological conditions I
2 would say we are about fifty years behind other ethnic
3 groups. But these other ethnic groups also sought pride
4 when they came over here from various European nations.
5 This is why you have a Saint Patrick's Day parade and a
6 Columbus Day parade and a Pulaski Day parade and a De Kalb
7 Day parade.

8 It all started, and this was in the Newark News, from
9 my classroom situation where I was talking about celebration,
10 and one of the youngsters said to me, "But we don't have
11 any day." Seriously. That thing it struck me and so three
12 years ago I started working on that day. Last year -- it
13 would be three years come March -- we had our first
14 Crispus Attucks Day parade in the City of Newark.

15 There is another story I can tell you about problems,
16 but that is a completely different situation. This is part
17 of a pride situation, very much so. I certainly can't be
18 considered to be in the category of a radical when we are
19 trying to honor an Afro-American who was a hero in the
20 history of his nation. But what we are trying to do is
21 give pride to the Black youth so they can stand up.

22 MR. DRISCOLL: It is a great idea.

23 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Governor.

24 MR. LOFTON: John, are you implying that you
25 have felt that there are certain elements in Newark

1 who consider the thrust of the Crispus Attucks Day
2 parade to be radical in nature?

3 THE WITNESS: Well, I don't know whether they
4 consider it to be radical, but when I started out
5 they didn't want it to be a success. There were
6 also members of the black community who didn't
7 want it to be a success.

8 I might add they weren't the Willie Wrights
9 and they weren't the people whom you might call
10 militant. These people were in the establishment.
11 Follow me?

12 MR. DRISCOLL: Probably because they didn't
13 think of it themselves.

14 THE WITNESS: Now can I get to my question?

15 By Mr. Fortunato: a lot of people jump my wire.

16 Q We have time for your question. I just wanted to
17 ask you a few of my own. But we can take up your question
18 right now.

19 A I want to know what is going to be done with all
20 of this effort, all your time, all the state's money,
21 et cetera. What is going to be done with this?

22 CHAIRMAN LILLEY: I guess I should answer that,
23 Mr. Thomas. Our job is to try to find, if we can,
24 what the root causes are of these difficulties and
25 recommend action that might change it. We have

1 been at it long and hard three or four meetings
2 a week with lots of staff work, and we will be at
3 it for a while longer. When that time is finished
4 we will make recommendations to the Governor. He
5 has said that he will consider them and take
6 whatever action seems most fruitful with them.
7 We are covering an awful lot of ground in our
8 transcripts. They will go into the archives for
9 scholars in the future, whoever wishes to study
10 these things and to look at them. In a nutshell
11 that is what we are doing.

12 I can't, I am sure with your sophistication
13 in this area you realize that the answers, if they
14 are there, are very complex. They are not the
15 obvious ones that a lot of people jump up with.
16 At this stage we are right in the middle of it,
17 and I can't speak for the other commissioners but
18 I think they are about in my position, trying to make
19 up their minds from the evidence we are hearing
20 from every quarter and some very fine staff work is
21 going on.

22 So wish us luck.
23 THE WITNESS: You'll need it. Of course,
24 when you say you are going to turn it over to the
25 Governor, I am going to be honest with you. I have

1 some suspicious because I think some of the
 2 Governor's actions during the rioting situation
 3 were contributory factors to the continuation of
 4 other things that went on in the streets of Newark.
 5 That is just like investigating police brutality
 6 and then turning it over to Dominick Spina for him
 7 to clear the situation up. I mean this sincerely,
 8 I really do.

9 CHAIRMAN LILLEY: We questioned the Governor
 10 is going along with other witnesses.
 11 By Mr. Fortunato:

12 Q You indicated to me Montclair and Newark were in
 13 some way related in terms of what is going on. Can you be
 14 more specific on that in that I don't know whether I quoted
 15 that you were exactly right.

16 A I could have said Newark, New Jersey and Newark,
 17 Texas or Newark, Ohio because what occurs in the City of
 18 Newark is an American problem. Do you follow me?

19 Q I am trying to follow you. You did happen to say
 20 Montclair.

21 MR. DRISCOLL: What he said, was, if I remember
 22 correctly, he had spoken at Montclair and he was
 23 going to speak in a third community. It is like
 24 saying if you have a fire in one end of the canoe
 25 can you sit in the other end of the canoe and not

1 be concerned.

2 By Mr. Fortunato:

3 Q I take it that was the thrust, then, that these
4 other towns should be concerned as Newark?

5 A They have to be if the problem is going to be
6 solved. We can't just solve it in Newark because it
7 involves attitudes, you see, attitudes on the part of the
8 black community and attitudes on the part of the white
9 community. If we don't change attitudes, then this problem
10 is going to get worse. There is no doubt in my mind about
11 that.

12 MR. GIBBONS: Your field is education. As
13 you know, the recent election there was something
14 made of a comment by Dr. Harburger about some
15 Federation of Teachers, seemed to want to face the
16 possible changes in school lines. Would you care
17 to give us your views on that subject?

18 THE WITNESS: If you are referring to
19 expanding school districts such as they are
20 attempting to over there in New York and in Long
21 Island --

22 MR. GIBBONS: A law suit by the NAACP.

23 THE WITNESS: (Continuing) -- this, of course,
24 THE WITNESS: You know, first of all, I think
25 would be an experimental situation, number one.
But even busing my youngsters to Montclair or to
Glen Ridge I don't think is going to solve the

1 problem. The problem must be solved in my mind
2 via attitude, via psychological situations more so
3 than anything else, because I believe that we can
4 have a fine education of black youngsters in the
5 City of Newark if the attitude of the administra-
6 tion is a certain way, if they are willing to do
7 certain things. I have said this previously.

8 We have an organization that was formed called
9 the Organization of Negro Educators which now
10 consists of approximately 300 Negro teachers in
11 the City of Newark who are saying just what I
12 said, and they were forced to band together
13 because neither the NTA, Newark Teachers Association,
14 nor the MNU, which is an affiliate of the American
15 Federation of Teachers, seemed to want to face the
16 problem. It is like trying to give aspirin to
17 somebody who has cancer.

18 MR. GIBBONS: Do you think that there is any
19 real hope for improvement of attitudes generally
20 without some arrangements such as Dr. Harburger
21 suggested whereby white youngsters and Negro
22 youngsters will grow up in the same schools?

23 THE WITNESS: You know, first of all, I think
24 maybe you have to educate some of my good colleagues
25 who are teaching these black youngsters. You can't

1 very well relate, and notice I don't use the term
2 "Negro" and I want to qualify that for you by the
3 way, because that is becoming passe. It really is.
4 The acceptable terms today are Afro-American,
5 American of African descent, because every other
6 ethnic group that has a heritage beyond the shores
7 of this nation is classified with a land, a people
8 and culture -- Italian-American, Irish-American,
9 et cetera. But when you get to the bottom of the
10 barrel, then you say Negro. That, of course, is
11 a term that only classifies you in terms of color.
12 It doesn't give you a liaison with any of the
13 people in the culture.

14 The term Black today -- there are many people
15 who shudder when the term Black is used. They
16 don't shudder when the term white is used. We all
17 know no one has pigmentation that is the color of
18 white, nor does anyone have pigmentation the color
19 of black. But historically along with Anglo-Saxon
20 protestantism that was taught to us ^{the} term white was
21 purity, goodness and even such a derogatory thing
22 as a lie. It was pretty good if it was a white lie.
23 This is true. On the other hand, black, that is
24 the negative thing. Blackheartedness and in
25 vaudeville the villain always had the black cloak.

1 and black mustache and so forth.

2 MR. GIBBONS: Our boys even wear the black
3 hats.

4 THE WITNESS: You hit it right on the head.

5 With the social change that is going on in this

6 country the term "black:" is actually a term of

7 defiance, the people who accept this term saying,

8 "Yes, I want to be proud to be called black because

9 I want to be called black the same as you want to

10 be called white." That is why I have to qualify

11 this.

12 MR. DRISCOLL: May I ask a question along the

13 line of education? Would I be correct in thinking

14 that you place a first priority on the quality of

15 the education rather than necessarily the mixture

16 of the races?

17 THE WITNESS: Yes, I do. That's what the

18 Organization of Negro Educators is preaching, the

19 quality of education. I will show you a point.

20 You can take the South where you have a segregated

21 situation on the college level, for example, where

22 there is quality education in an all-black school

23 and there is no doubt about that in my mind,

24 incidentally. So if we have the kind of attitudes

25 and the kind of individuals involved who don't try

1 is the to teach a middle class philosophy, a middle class
 2 situation white philosophy through a low class black youngster,
 3 the black and I say low class -- probably the better term
 4 than they would be the culturally deprived or economically
 5 deprived youngster or, some other term, but they
 6 television can't relate -- this is the problem over at
 7 of an Barringer, friends.

8 MR. DRISCOLL: What was that?

9 THE WITNESS: This is the problem at Barringer,
 10 one of the major problems there.

11 By Mr. Fortunato:

12 Q I think this is still in the same train of your
 13 question, Governor. You indicated the Newark riot was, as
 14 I had termed it, not a race riot, but the Barringer incident
 15 that is going on is. I think maybe if you could explain
 16 that you would be answering both questions.

17 A First of all, in the Newark "riot" situation
 18 black people were not running around attacking white people.
 19 They were running around looting and robbing, no doubt about
 20 that in my mind. Of the large number of people that were
 21 killed or hurt in the situation we know that most of them
 22 were black. No question about that. It wasn't a Central
 23 Warden running over to the North Warden attacking him.

24 However, in the Barringer situation they don't want to
 25 face it. The black community knows, and when they read it

1 in the newspaper the mayor says this is not a racial
2 situation where in the cafeteria the whites line up and
3 the black line up and they are throwing chairs and punches.
4 When they read this, "Yes, again." You can't trust the
5 press. You can't trust television either because I was on
6 television, but it was an edited situation. They only show-
7 ed me coming out of my home with my wife and child going to
8 church and a little bit of the minister's speech, but the
9 main part of the whole situation when I came back to my
10 house and Mr. Mort Bean interviewed me and my wife over a
11 half hour, none of that appeared on television because I
12 don't think I gave him the answers they were expecting from
13 a typical middle class Negro in the Newark community
14 because none of it appeared.

15 My wife was very angry because she spent half the
16 night cleaning up the house because CBS was coming to our
17 house the next day. None of this appeared on television.

18 MR. DRISCOLL: I have had that experience
19 also.

20 THE WITNESS: You know what I am talking about.

21 MR. LOFTON: I know in terms of all of the
22 kinds of involvements you are in in Newark as it
23 relates to the Crispus Attucks parade and the
24 year around planning that goes into that and from
25 your tenure in Newark and knowledge about the

1 various elements in the community, including being
2 personally acquainted with members of the Police
3 Department and various personalities in the
4 Newark community, both white and black that I
5 would ask: Could you give us any kind of an
6 assessment in your mind of what the attitudes
7 now are in Newark subsequent to the recent civil
8 disorders insofar as it relates to race relations
9 in the city?

10 Secondly, if you can think of any kind of
11 things that could be done immediately or what you
12 would suggest that might be done immediately to
13 attempt to alleviate whatever tensions there are
14 if you think they still exist.

15 THE WITNESS: Number one, we need a civilian
16 review board in my estimation because I think the
17 black community would then begin to feel that the
18 administration is showing some kind of faith.

19 Then you hear them talk about well, in
20 Detroit, for example, they did at least arrest two
21 policemen involved in the violence, but in Newark
22 they did nothing. They are just using the term
23 "whitewash" in the situation.

24 MR. DRISCOLL: That is a dirty word.

25 THE WITNESS: Suppose I said quote,

1 We have got to start facing the fact. Again
2 what I am talking about in terms of education in
3 the city, we have to face the facts of quality
4 education if we are going to do the job right and
5 not busing our youngsters to Glen Ridge or any place
6 else. We have got to do the job right here in the
7 city.

8 We have a police-community relations agency
9 or something that functions in a token manner like
10 other agencies have functioned when they deal with
11 race relations in the City of Newark.

12 The black community I fell personally still
13 have no faith in our police department, none
14 whatsoever, because of many experiences and because
15 of what they hear. They know about police brutality.
16 They know it exists, and yet when Mr. Spina just
17 recently at the conference at Upsala said, "We
18 don't have any police brutality in Newark" -- when
19 they read that, what is their reaction? The same
20 thing, -- they have no faith. We have got to face
21 the facts.

22 MR. DRISCOLL: I didn't mean to interrupt
23 you, but now that I have I will ask you a
24 question. This reestablishment of faith isn't
25 going to come overnight, is it?

1 THE WITNESS: No, sir.

2 MR. DRISCOLL: On the other hand, something
3 must be done and done quickly to start. Do you
4 suggest that the establishment of the civilian
5 review board might be a start in that direction
6 that would kindle some confidence?

7 THE WITNESS: It will kindle some confidence
8 as far as the black community is concerned,
9 towards the establishment. It probably will never
10 solve the problem, but it will commence to change
11 the attitude on the part of the black community
12 Washington in the Department program maybe we might
13 so that at least they have some place they can go
14 to make a complaint, to voice an opinion, and so
15 forth.

16 MR. DRISCOLL: Do you have an opinion as to
17 whether or not the teachers in the schools that
18 are predominantly Afro-Americans are not as good
19 in some schools that may be predominantly white?

20 THE WITNESS: You are asking me to generalize,
21 there. Right now is a school of 2,000 students
22 aren't you?

23 MR. DRISCOLL: Yes.

24 THE WITNESS: Because there are some teachers
25 in my school at Central High, which is 99.5 or
99.6 percent black --

MR. DRISCOLL: There are always going to be

1 exceptions.

2 THE WITNESS: There are some good teachers
3 there and there are some teachers that need to be
4 teaching maybe in another community, and there are
5 some that shouldn't be teaching at all. We are on
6 the question of education. I think, however, that
7 many of them, or most of them are sincere in what
8 they are trying to do, but many of them don't know
9 how to do it.

10 MR. DRISCOLL: Would you suggest that just as
11 one of the better programs that has come out of
12 Washington is the Headstart program maybe we ought
13 to have a Headstart for teachers?

14 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir, no doubt about that
15 in my mind. There is no doubt about that in my
16 mind. That is a very excellent suggestion, really.
17 You have got to be able to relate to all youngsters.
18 For example, I taught at Barringer High School
19 myself. I was the first Afro-American to teach
20 there. Right now in a school of 2,600 individuals,
21 about 50 of whom are black or Spanish speaking,
22 there is one Afro-American male teacher there who
23 is leaving to go to a better position in the
24 community college. There is a lack of identity
25 there. I don't say it should be all black teachers

Neighborhood House. I asked one of the teachers,

1 teaching black children because I know some black
2 teachers that aren't any good. But whomever is
3 going to teach the youngsters should be able to
4 relate to them. That to me is so very basic and
5 key.

6 I suppose a Headstart for teachers might not
7 be a bad idea, really and truly. Mr. Copeland, who
8 has always taught, knows this to be a fact.

9 MR. DRISCOLL: I don't think you can generalize.
10 There are white teachers that are very bad, I know,
11 having served on a board of education, and there
12 are black teachers that are bad also; and there are
13 good ones in both categories. Unfortunately we
14 are handicapped in some respects by the very laws
15 that were put on the books to protect teachers.
16 Would you agree with that?

17 THE WITNESS: You mean the tenure system?

18 MR. DRISCOLL: Yes.

19 THE WITNESS: Many of them, once they get in
20 there, make that tenure, they are safe. They beat
21 the children out of the building, this sort of
22 thing. That's right.

23 I had a situation yesterday. We were having
24 my Project Advisory Committee meeting at Friendly
25 Neighborhood House. I asked one of the teachers,

1 who is a college counsellor and who is very
2 important in the lives of my youngsters because
3 she is guiding them to college -- I said, "Are
4 you coming to the meeting?" She said, "Oh, no,
5 my husband will not permit me to come down into
6 that neighborhood at night."

7 This kind of thing. But she can come
8 down in the daytime to make the money. Yet in
9 that neighborhood we have an evening school of
10 more than 1,000 pupils of all races. We have
11 across the street the Newark College of Engineering,
12 which has a very large evening school program, and
13 across the street on the other side we have Newark
14 Rutgers which has a large evening school program,
15 but she can't come down in that neighborhood at
16 night. She is not the only one that said that,
17 incidentally.

18 MR. GIBBONS: That is one of the terrible
19 after effects of the past summer.

20 THE WITNESS: Sir, they were saying this
21 when I first started teaching at Central eleven
22 years ago.

23 MR. GIBBONS: They are saying it more now.

24 THE WITNESS: That is an excuse not to do a
25 job.

1 CHAIRMAN LILLEY: Any other questions,
2 gentlemen?

3 MR. LOFTON: John, if I might, would you give
4 us your impression in a capsule form in terms of
5 your knowledge of the vantage point of the Negro
6 educators as it relates to the educational structure?
7 I am not talking about the Newark teachers, but I
8 am talking about from the Board of Education through
9 the Superintendent of the Board of Education right
10 on through in terms of the kind of philosophy and
11 the direction of the educational system. Would
12 you consider that to be the proper direction?

13 THE WITNESS: First of all, when we had the
14 Parker-Callahan issue, which was the causal factor,
15 the Organization of Negro Educators -- and for some
16 of you who are not aware of it, we are going to
17 have a change in the secretary of the Board of
18 Education in the city. The present secretary was
19 going to retire but only if he could get an
20 additional salary for one more year. The mayor
21 was going to appoint Jim Callahan, a Councilman
22 of the City of Newark, to be the secretary of the
23 Board of Education. I know Jim Callahan personally.
24 I think he is a fine fellow, but the black
25 community suggested the name of Wilbur Parker, the

1 present Budget Director of the City of Newark, a
2 graduate of Cornell University, a local boy, and
3 that term is not too good -- a local individual,
4 a local man who had grown up in the City of Newark,
5 born here, an outstanding student, and an all-state
6 athlete from Southside High School, also with a
7 master's degree from Cornell. We were asking to
8 have this man appointed as Secretary of the Board
9 of Education as opposed to Mr. Callahan. The
10 mayor said no, told us openly in several conferences
11 and said he makes certain decisions. He appoints
12 the board. It is his board, et cetera. Politics
13 is involved. This is his statement: Politics is
14 involved in education, and so forth.

15 So if you are going to start at the top, number
16 one, you have got to cut that cord between politics
17 and the Board of Education. Otherwise, the
18 philosophy that seeps down from the Board to the
19 Superintendent, to the Assistant Superintendent,
20 the Advisor, down to the teachers, will not be
21 right. No question about that in my mind.

22 **CHAIRMAN LILLEY:** Thank you, Mr. Thomas. We
23 are going to break in a moment. We invite you to
24 have a cup of coffee out there.

25 **THE WITNESS:** It will be a pleasure.

(Witness excused)

(Whereupon, a short recess was taken.)

Whereupon, **DENNIS A. WESTBROOKS**

duly affirmed to tell the truth, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION

By Mr. Fortunato:

Q Your address?

A 60 Somerset Street, Apartment 3A, Newark, New Jersey.

Q How long have you resided in Newark?

A As of June 8, 1967.

Q And before that?

A I was in Chester, Pennsylvania, which is near Philadelphia.

Q Your occupation?

A Clergyman.

Q How long have you had that occupation?

A Well, as of June 8, 1967.

Q What were you doing in Philadelphia?

A In school.

Q Do you have an incident to relate to us as to what you observed during the riot in terms of law enforcement officials or officers?

A A couple, I guess, and particularly those which