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(Discussion off the record)

CHAIRMAN LILLEY: Chief Madden, Captain Harrington, Mr. Breslin, we thank you for coming down. You have been very helpful to us.

(Witnessed excused.)

E. WELLINGTON BUTTS, II

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

EXAMINATION BY MR. JAFFE

Q Reverend, I wondered if you could give us your present position, your residence and how long you have lived in Englewood. you could I am the pastor of the Bethany Presbyterian Church. I live at 309 Englewood Avenue. I have been in Englewood three years.

Q And where did you live before that?
A St. Louis, Missouri.

Q Did you come to be pastor of the church?

A That is correct.

Q I wonder if you could very briefly sketch your educational background for us.

A Elementary school, high school, college, seminary, A.B., B.D.

1 Thanksgiving **JUDGE WACHENFELD:** How big is your church,
2 been involved? Reverend?

3 **THE WITNESS:** Two hundred forty-six
4 members. I know two hundred of them.

5 **By Mr. Jaffe:** Now, which obviously brings you
6 into question? Where is it located?

7 **A:** At Palisade Avenue and William.

8 **Q:** What ward is that? and most specifically?

9 **A:** Fourth.

10 **Q:** Is it primarily a Negro church, an integrated
11 church?

12 **A:** It is an all-Negro church, all black.

13 **Q:** And I understand that you are closely allied
14 with the Englewood Ministerial Alliance. I wonder if
15 you could tell us about that.

16 **A:** The Englewood Ministerial Association consists
17 of all the clergy in Englewood -- Protestant, Catholic,
18 Jewish and Orthodox. I am a member, as all or most of
19 the clergy in town are. Anything specific about it you
20 wanted to know?

21 **Q:** No. I just wanted to know what its function
22 was.

23 **A:** Generally it is for our own fellowship in coming
24 together. It is not a council of churches. It is simply
25 a ministerial association, and we sponsor a few things --

1 Thanksgiving service and this kind of thing, and have
2 been involved in issues in the city. We help put in a
3 chapel at the hospital, this kind of thing.

4 from Q I wonder if, based upon your experience in the
5 community and your position, which obviously brings you
6 into contact with many of the people in the community,
7 particularly in the Fourth Ward, you would give us the
8 benefit of some of your views and most specifically I
9 wonder if you would like to discuss with us what you
10 think are the causes of the civil disorder that occurred
11 in Englewood in the summer of 1967.

12 specific incidents.

13 A Yes. That I am aware of.

14 Q We have heard of some. I would like to the reason
15 why we would like your views as to what you think triggered
16 this thing.

17 A In terms of long range I think the thing about
18 Englewood is that some people don't realize, and it took me
19 about a year to learn this, about a year and a half, that
20 Englewood is several communities. Before I came there, and
21 I came there to interview, some people told me that this is
22 a typical suburban community. They are a typical suburban
23 town and you will be serving a suburb with typical suburban
24 problems." I wasn't too particular about coming to a
25 suburb because of my own background, which had been in the

1 A Well, specific or exact causes for it I don't know
2 because I heard few rumors of the happening beforehand. My
3 source of information that there was going to be a riot was
4 from the Mayor who had this source of information and
5 knowing the date and even the time of it. So exactly what
6 precipitated it I couldn't say. I only gathered from what
7 people were saying, that is, if you are asking me about a
8 specific incident as the cab driver in Newark and this kind
9 of thing that led up to it, I have no knowledge of this
10 kind of thing. ~~some things like the Urban League, I said~~
11 Q I think that is significant, that there is no
12 specific incident. ~~I never asked these questions out~~
13 A but That I am aware of, and a half is all of a sudden
14 Q ed. We have heard of none. I think this is the reason
15 why we would like your views as to what you think triggered
16 this thing. ~~maybe works in New York and he comes to~~
17 A In terms of long range I think one thing about Englewood
18 Englewood is that some people don't realize, and it took me
19 about a year to learn this, about a year and a half, that
20 Englewood is several communities. Before I came there, and
21 I came there to interview, some people told me that this is
22 a typical suburban community. "We are a typical suburban
23 town and you will be serving a church with typical suburban
24 problems." I wasn't too particular about coming to a
25 suburb because of my own background, which had been in the

1 urban pastorate. I know in these days of specialization
2 even in seminaries we specialize, and my training had been
3 toward the inner city ministry, which is where I had been
4 in Chicago and in St. Louis. But there were those at this
5 church who said, "We are a suburban church facing inner
6 city problems, so please come." I said I would come
7 knowing this would be for a short while because I was
8 really anxious to get back to the city.
9 I came to this typical suburban town, and I was sur-
10 prised when I saw things like an Urban League. I said:
11 why in a suburb? when I heard talk of urban renewal, this,
12 too, seemed strange. I never asked these questions out
13 loud, but after about a year and a half it all of a sudden
14 occurred to me of the different cities that exist within
15 the three or four miles, namely, you have the typical sub-
16 urbanite who maybe works in New York and he comes to
17 Englewood and this is where he sleeps and this is where his
18 home is. But then you have the vast number of people who
19 were brought there as servants, brought there during the
20 war as workers. Many of them live on the hill as we call it.
21 Then their employers either bought them houses in the Fourth
22 Ward or made land available there with the city paying
23 little attention to these black people living down there and
24 so forth.
25 Maybe Then after a number of years all of a sudden this

1 becomes a whole ward of people. Other professional people
2 start to move into the same area. So you have this whole
3 mass going on here. So you have the one set of people who
4 are living as typical suburbanites. You have another set
5 of people within the Fourth Ward living as typical sub-
6 urbanites, black people, professionals, doctors, and then
7 you have the vast numbers of maids and servants, which is
8 something that takes a little understanding, especially in
9 a very middle-class bent, something out of which I myself
10 also came. Although it might not be known, but even being
11 black I had never known a servant personally as a friend,
12 and all of a sudden I find myself pastoring people who are
13 maids, chauffeurs, butlers. I begin to notice that people
14 who are maids, chauffeurs and butlers socialize with doctors,
15 architects and other professionals. This was somewhat sur-
16 prising. ~~grad up, living as servants of sons and daughters~~
17 of ~~so~~ The social pathways in Englewood within the Fourth
18 Ward are very thin because people have been molded there
19 together because twenty-twenty five years ago a doctor moves
20 in. If he wants to socialize, he has no one else to ~~that~~
21 socialize with except his next-door neighbor who happens to
22 be a maid. Here are two communities living right there. On
23 the hill you have another community. If you live in a
24 suburb and work somewhere else, to you it is a suburb.
25 Maybe in South Carolina or Alabama or where you come from it

1 is home, so you care about it in a way slightly different
2 from the guy who is gone eight or ten hours a day, if you
3 stay there. You have this element of people who are living
4 there and staying there fifteen, twenty, thirty years. Some
5 people have been there fifty years or more. They live in
6 certain kinds of conditions.

7 There is a woman in our congregation who lived right
8 in the riot area or in the disturbance area. I was out
9 there looking up in the dictionary the word "disturbance"
10 and "riot" and I am trying to find the difference. Anyway,
11 a woman who lives in the disturbance area, I go to her house
12 and take her communion. When I go into the kitchen to
13 wash the glass, I can see outside but there is no window
14 there, just a hole in the wall. Multiply this by other
15 people living in conditions where the city has permitted
16 this to grow up, living as servants or sons and daughters
17 of servants with little or nothing being done about the
18 zoning.

19 On Humphrey Street there is a house sitting right on
20 the sidewalk, no frontage. I am sure there is a code that
21 says there must be X feet of frontage. But there is
22 absolutely none. So you have children. Where are they
23 going to play?

24 JUDGE WACHENFELD: Prior usage takes prec-
25 edence over the ordinance.

1 this, I will THE WITNESS: Prior usage takes precedence
2 meeting over an ordinance, but I wonder how many of these
3 was going things are built after an ordinance and get a
4 it takes variance, or what is done about something that is
5 begin talk there when we go around tearing up this and that.
6 concern be what I am trying to say is I am talking about
7 little son people living in certain kinds of conditions where
8 on. There they feel something has them down.

9 I was went? In a normal American middle class recourse
10 where I we either go to a board or we go to court or we
11 goes to go somewhere and we try to do something about this.

12 Hall, I will Some people in Englewood do this, but I am talking
13 about the various communities that live there where
14 Q people just find little hope in something that has
15 we call been suppressing them ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty,
16 of thing, fifty years and suppressed their fathers before
17 group of them. Englewood is no different from any other
18 character place. People say, "I have had enough." So they
19 was a small revolt. This kind of thing takes place.

20 total populati After it started I think the city did very

21 A little, if anything, in a positive way to try to
22 that. do something about meeting demands or meeting needs--

23 Q not so much demands because I don't think if I were

24 A sitting as a Mayor I would want to be driven in a
25 we say some corner and having it said, "If you don't give me

1 this, I will throw a fire bomb." However, in terms of well,
2 meeting real needs I think I read something about the Mayor
3 was going to see about forty jobs and this kind of thing.
4 It makes you wonder where was the concern before. As people
5 begin talking about what does rioting prove, where was the
6 concern before? Even during the affair I was aware of very
7 little sense of relationship or sensitivity to what was going
8 on. There are those of us who were out there every night.
9 I was mostly at the City Hall. I wasn't about to go out
10 where I might get hit or shot. I am quite chicken when it
11 comes to that kind of thing, so I was mostly in the City
12 Hall, I will admit.

13 By Mr. Jaffe: you in substance what you are saying

14 Q Do you think what occurred in Englewood, whether
15 we call it a riot or a disturbance, was a grass roots kind
16 of thing, or do you think this was something lead by a small
17 group of ringleaders, a criminal element? How do you
18 characterize it? We have heard testimony that basically it
19 was a small group of people, 150 or so, in terms of the
20 total population. inaction and bribery in this kind of thing

21 A when it started I think it was even smaller than
22 that. This is really an academic question. There is no

23 Q How do you characterize it? as I myself have not

24 A when you say grass roots, I think sometimes when
25 we say something is grass roots we mean it must come from a

1 majority of the city or at least a third of the city. Well,
2 of course, a third of the city was not out there doing that.
3 Of course not. But if it was 100 or 125 or how many of the
4 people you are talking about, it was grass roots for them.

5 Q That is the point. Are these 150 people expressing
6 in your opinion some social protest, or were they viewing
7 this as a means of getting something from a store? How do
8 you view it?

9 A I don't know if they thought of themselves as
10 representing other people or expressing a view or not. This,
11 I am sure, would have to come from them.

12 JUDGE WACHENFELD: But I take it from
13 listening to you in substance what you are saying
14 is the housing has been bad for a long time and
15 something should have been done about it.

16 THE WITNESS: Oh, yes, definitely. I also
17 might point out for the record that I think the
18 rioting and looting and burning and stealing are
19 immoral and illegal. However, I think suppression,
20 discrimination and trickery in this kind of thing
21 are also immoral, but unfortunately are not illegal.
22 This is really an academic question. There is an
23 ethical issue raised here that I myself have not
24 been able to resolve, nor have I heard anybody
25 resolve it for me, that as soon as someone throws

1 a brick in the window we know it is both immoral
2 and illegal and the person is obviously subject to
3 arrest. However, when you are sitting in the
4 black community and you see somebody suppress you,
5 you know it is immoral but it is not illegal and,
6 therefore, that person cannot be arrested. So we
7 arrest a person for one thing, but we don't arrest
8 a person for another thing. Maybe the answer is
9 in heaven, but I don't know. the black word.

10 It is just very difficult for me to condemn
11 somebody for one thing and then not condemn the
12 other. So I do not advocate or uphold violence
13 or rioting and looting and something that I doubt
14 myself I could ever do. I am too middle class in
15 my thinking and in my approach for this kind of
16 thing, but I can understand the guy who does.

17 of CH JUDGE WACHENFELD: what is the next cause in
18 your opinion other than the housing in this civil
19 disorder? but he still has dignity. some more of

20 (inaudible) THE WITNESS: We are speaking of a total
21 general attitude of lack of concern of the city
22 by the city administration for the black community
23 in the haphazard way in which we have been
24 answered. The city has said, "If people wanted
25 things, why didn't they come in?" People have

1 been yelling and screaming for years. The black
2 councilman has been sitting there for six years
3 talking about all kinds of things that we need
4 and want. This is always turned down. This is
5 simply political he is told, and all of a sudden
6 when people come up and say these same things that
7 Tibbs has been saying for six years, the man that
8 turns around and wants to do something about it
9 would be the councilman from the black ward.
10 People are talking about recreational faci-
11 lities, so the Mayor puts up a vest pocket park.
12 It is one block from the largest park in the city.
13 Within a little square area there are four benches,
14 and he does this without consulting the councilman
15 from that ward. He just puts the benches there.
16 This is in answer to recreational needs. This kind
17 of thing is insulting to somebody's dignity. A
18 person can be poor, he can be ignorant, he can be
19 suppressed but he still has dignity. When that is
20 insulted, one reacts.
21 Another incident, during the whole thing the
22 Mayor said something about his housing plan to a
23 group of people. He said, "The people in the
24 Fourth Ward want my housing plan" and they said,
25 "Nobody in the Fourth Ward wants that. Will you

1 come in the Fourth ward and say that?" "Yes, I
2 will come to the Fourth ward." He set a date to
3 come to the park within the Fourth ward to meet
4 people. The whole Fourth ward was excited about
5 this. He was to come August the second on a
6 Wednesday. The Fourth ward was excited. He is
7 due there at six o'clock. I get there at six.
8 A couple of hundred people are there. There is a
9 joke among our race of how we are known for being
10 late, but this thing was so important that here
11 are 200 people there. The Mayor gets there at
12 six, walks into the park where the TV cameras are.
13 The Mayor starts talking with the TV cameras
14 coming on at six o'clock. The TV cameras go off
15 at six-ten and by twelve after six the Mayor is
16 on his way out of that park very abruptly. I was
17 standing right there. He answered three questions.
18 Everybody had the impression we were going to come
19 there and sit and be there an hour or an hour and
20 a half. Here at last maybe we can accomplish
21 something. There was real hope.
22 this As he is leaving hundreds of people are still
23 coming thinking it hasn't started yet because
24 they assumed anything we do in the Fourth ward
25 is late so they figured they would get there at

1 six-thirty. But the Mayor is in the police car
2 and gone. This was an insult to the entire Fourth
3 Ward to say that, and especially to the people
4 that were standing there anxious to ask him
5 questions. He was gone.

6 This kind of thing is what I am trying to
7 say, sir, that people feel this. Their dignity
8 is shot down and kicked down. So what do you do?
9 Do you appeal to the city? You have appealed to
10 the city, and what does the city do? It turns its
11 back on you. It is not legal then to go out and
12 throw a bomb or throw some rocks in somebody's
13 building. It is not moral, but neither is what
14 the Mayor has done to you moral either, but he
15 can't be arrested for that.

16 The only answer that the people had was at
17 the polls and any analysis of the Englewood
18 election would have to show that, that people
19 throughout the city, and don't be fooled in
20 thinking that just the Fourth Ward put the Repub-
21 lican administration out. I am not trying to make
22 this political. If I were in another town, I
23 might be backing a Republican administration. I
24 back people and not parties. I am not a member of
25 a party. I speak of party identification because

1 you know, that is what it was. If any of you happen to be
2 Republicans, forgive me.
3 somebody had said: "The people throughout the city of Englewood
4 really had said, when they voted yes to the housing plan,
5 see all that "Yes, the plan sounds okay, but no, we don't want
6 people on your administration to do it."
7 police. I had also in the Fourth Ward we must remember
8 center on where the people who are affected most by this,
9 had been the people who are so moved around and shoved
10 were all around in this urban renewal overwhelmingly turned
11 it to see the housing issue down that was backed by the
12 Mayor. Many of the people didn't vote because
13 Englewood many of our folks in the Fourth Ward don't
14 understand what a referendum is and did not
15 to the understand about the questions on the ballot.
16 that. Many went in and voted for the candidates and
17 didn't bother to vote because they could not
18 there is understand or read the words in the referendum.
19 allowed By Mr. Jaffe: is, not only with zoning ordinances
20 and I wonder if you have an opinion as to why on that
21 particular Friday under those particular circumstances the
22 disturbance occurred. The housing issue had been in the
23 community for a long time. The other problems had been in
24 the community. The lack of communication had been in the
25 community. What is there about that particular Friday, if

1 you know, that caused this?

2 A That particular Friday I don't know, unless
3 somebody had thrown this out as a date, or the Mayor would
4 really know this better. If he liked that date, because he
5 set all the plans. All the police were brought in and
6 people maybe you hadn't thought about it see all these
7 police. I heard -- I didn't see -- there was even a heli-
8 copter over the Fourth ward that afternoon. So even if they
9 had been planning to do it another date, since the police
10 were all ready and everybody else was ready maybe they did
11 it to accommodate them.

12 Q Do you think there was a group of people in
13 Englewood who planned some kind of a disturbance?

14 A I don't know. I was called by the Mayor to come
15 to the meeting. I don't know. The Mayor would have to know
16 that. I wouldn't have the slightest idea.

17 Getting back to what we were talking about, conditions,
18 there is also something else about the Fourth ward being
19 allowed to grow up as it is, not only with zoning ordinances
20 and houses, but you take the matter of streets. I am sure
21 you perhaps heard this before of how when industry wants to
22 come in, it is put in the Fourth ward, how we have trucks in
23 the Fourth ward, and there is nothing inherent in black
24 people that says we want bumpy streets or we want messed up
25 streets and this kind of thing. But what do you do when a

1 truck is permitted to park in front of your house? If you
2 take a look at the report by the city on the condition of
3 the streets, you will find that most of the bad streets in
4 Englewood are in the Fourth Ward. However, whenever the
5 city is going to fix streets, they will fix about four in
6 each ward on an equal basis. This seems equal, but it is
7 not just. You should do it in proportion to try to get the
8 Fourth Ward up.

9 Just Another thing, about a month or a month and a half ago
10 prior to the election the Republican city council passed a
11 couple of ordinances or laws saying no parking on certain
12 streets in the Fourth Ward and no overnight truck parking
13 anywhere in Englewood. Many of us in the Fourth Ward came
14 up to the mics at the city council meeting and congratulated
15 the city council for doing this, and said, "Thank you. We
16 appreciate this. We don't want these trucks in our Fourth
17 ward. Thank you." That was about a month and a half ago.
18 About a month ago I see a truck parking across the street
19 from my house. I said to my wife, "What is going on?" She
20 said, "That truck was parked all night." I called the
21 police department. They said, "We cannot do anything about
22 this law because the city council has not told us yet to
23 enforce it." sign, and there was a truck parked there. He
24 told They passed an ordinance for no parking on my street.
25 I went up and said thank you. I also said this is a through

1 street and people come through there real fast. "Will you
2 patrol it?" They said, "we will add night radar." That
3 means I have to slow down. There are no signs there yet.

4 and Throughout the First and Second wards, the hill, the
5 predominantly white district, on the smallest, insignificant
6 street you will see nice signs -- No Parking or Slow,
7 Children at Play, No Parking, Driveway. We have been
8 fighting this kind of thing in the Fourth ward, and it is
9 just very difficult to get it, and then we get it and
10 nobody bothers to tell the police department.

11 don' Q say what is the general state of police-community
12 relations in Englewood? Would you comment on that from
13 your viewpoint?

14 with A I don't know. I hear people saying now and then
15 about -- well, I won't use the term "brutality." Let's say
16 I hear people saying they feel Fourth warders are treated as
17 stepchildren sometimes, and this at the same time must be
18 balanced by prompt replies by the police also. I wouldn't
19 want to say there is a general feeling in the police
20 department to simply disregard the Fourth ward, but I have
21 heard many, many complaints. I know of a man who complained
22 about a truck being parked where he got a ticket. There was
23 a No Parking sign, and there was a truck parked there. He
24 told the police about it, and they wouldn't pay any attention.
25 So he made a picture of it and then they threw the ticket out.

1 Q Is there any feeling in the community on police
2 brutality? Is that an issue?

3 A I hear people saying they were just walking home
4 and police grabbed them. A woman said the police pushed
5 their boys up and said, "Get in the house." He said, "I
6 don't live there" and he said, "Get in anyway."

7 Q But there is no general real discontent in the com-
8 munity regarding the police?

9 A This I couldn't say. I don't know the whole com-
10 munity, but some people say this. Some people I talk with
11 don't say this. Being a clergyman I am somewhat immune to
12 these kind of things. Generally I wear a collar. Englewood
13 is small, and I would be immune to this. I would be treated
14 with all kindness, so I personally unfortunately would be
15 immune to it.

16 A CHAIRMAN LILLEY: How do you make out when in
17 the course of your duties you intercede with the
18 area, so police in behalf of someone?

19 A No. THE WITNESS: The few times I have had to
20 call the police for somebody I have never had any
21 difficulty. I said this would in some way be

22 balanced. There might be others who would have

23 more direct contact who would tell a different
24 story from my own.

25 CHAIRMAN LILLEY: Any other questions? Thank

1 In the way you very much, Reverend Butts. I wonder if I give
2 you an open-ended question, you would (Witness excused.)
3 why do you think Englewood . . . the disturbance which the
4 whereupon, it had and in the situation it had in, it is
5 kind of different. MICHAEL ROMEO

6 called as a witness, sworn, testified as follows:
7 rioting in Newark or the EXAMINATION

8 peculiar By Mr. Jaffe: he was, and in references in my
9 now: Q Mr. Romeo, I wonder if you could state for us your
10 position and where you live?

11 A I am an investigative reporter for The Record, and
12 I live in Bergenfield, New Jersey. My address is 148 South
13 Prospect Avenue, Bergenfield.

14 Q I understand that you have covered the Englewood
15 incident, disorder, riot, whatever you want to call it.

16 A I was there for the entire duration of the riot.

17 Q I understand one of your duties is the Englewood
18 area, so you are familiar with the problems in Englewood?

19 A No, that is not so. I know Englewood, but I am
20 not the regularly assigned reporter to Englewood.

21 Q But you are familiar with the situation here in
22 Englewood?

23 A Yes.

24 Q The Commission has been very interested in the
25 Englewood situation because it does seem so much different.