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IN THE MATTER OF A HEARING BEFORE

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U.S. CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION and  
TENNESSEE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

---

BE IT REMEMBERED that the above-captioned  
cause came on for public hearing on this, the 26th  
day of June, 1992, before the above Commissions,  
when and where the following proceedings were had,  
to wit:

**ORIGINAL**

DANIEL, DILLINGER, DOMINSKI,  
RICHBERGER, WEATHERFORD & PARKER  
COURT REPORTERS  
Suite 2200, One Commerce Square  
Memphis, Tennessee 38103  
(901) 529-1999

1 MR. GRAY: We want to express our  
2 thanks to you for coming and participating in this  
3 open hearing, and I am going to ask that the  
4 members of the panel will introduce themselves. I  
5 will make a statement, and Bobby Doctor who is the  
6 Regional Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil  
7 Rights will make a statement. And then we will  
8 begin from my left and your right.

9 Doctor Moore, will you start the  
10 introductions, please.

11 HARRY MOORE: I'm Harry Moore,  
12 Director of the National Council of Christians and  
13 Jews locally and a member of the Tennessee Human  
14 Rights Commission.

15 MR. SAWYER: I'm John F. Sawyer from  
16 Nashville. I am a member of the Civil Rights  
17 Committee for the State of Tennessee.

18 JOCELYN WURZBURG: I'm Jocelyn  
19 Wurzburg, an attorney here in Memphis and a member  
20 of the State Advisory Committee, the U.S.  
21 Commission on Civil Rights and a former  
22 commissioner on the Tennessee Commission for Human  
23 Rights.

24 BOBBY DOCTOR: Ms. Wurzburg should  
25 also indicate that she is the acting chairman of

1 the Tennessee Advisory Committee to the U.S.  
2 Commission.

3 I'm Bobby Doctor. As has been indicated,  
4 I am the Regional Director of the Southern Regional  
5 Office of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

6 LEO GRAY: I'm Leo Gray, Chairman of  
7 the Tennessee Human Rights Commission.

8 CHARLES STERNS: Charles Sterns,  
9 private investigator in Chattanooga, Tennessee,  
10 also commissioner on the Tennessee Human Rights  
11 Commission.

12 RICHARD BOOTH: I'm Richard Booth, an  
13 attorney here in Memphis, and I'm with the  
14 Tennessee Human Rights Commission.

15 LEO GRAY: I want to read an opening  
16 statement. This is an open hearing. I declare  
17 that this is an open hearing, and it is being held  
18 in accordance to the Sunshine Rules of the State of  
19 Tennessee.

20 This meeting has been publicized. The  
21 City of Memphis and Shelby County have been invited  
22 to participate. The purpose of this hearing is to  
23 hear personal and organizational experiences that  
24 reveal the tenor of racial relations, police and  
25 community relations, human needs in terms of

1 negligence in this metropolitan area.

2 This panel is composed of members of the  
3 U.S. Human Rights Commission and the Tennessee  
4 Human Rights Commission. This hearing must fit  
5 within the five-hour frame given us because this  
6 chamber must be cleared by 1:30.

7 Each person who has requested to appear  
8 before this panel will be given five minutes  
9 initially. After each presentation there will be a  
10 question and answer period for clarification. If  
11 there is time remaining after all presenters have  
12 made their formal presentation additional  
13 opportunity will be provided to those who wish to  
14 add to their statements.

15 A formal report on this proceeding will  
16 be made public at a later day. It will be used to  
17 address the issues that you raised in your  
18 presentations. Your cooperation with this format  
19 will be greatly appreciated.

20 I believe it was Doctor King who said,  
21 "civil unrest, rioting and luting are the voices  
22 of the unheard." This panel has come to Memphis,  
23 Tennessee to hear the cries of the human needs in  
24 this metropolitan area.

25 I ask now of our general counsel

1 attorney, Charles Akers of the Tennessee Human  
2 Rights Commission by what authority do we hold this  
3 hearing.

4 CHARLES AKERS: Thank you. The  
5 Tennessee Human Rights Commission is participating  
6 in this public hearing under the authority of  
7 Tennessee Code Annotated Section 4-21-101, "to seek  
8 to secure the state against domestic strife and  
9 unrest and to preserve health, safety and general  
10 welfare and to further the rights, opportunities  
11 and privileges of individuals within the state."  
12 And under Section 4-21-202, "to cooperate with  
13 civic and religious organizations and federal  
14 agencies to develop leadership and activity in the  
15 interest of equal treatment of all individuals."

16 LEO GRAY: Thank you, sir. I want to  
17 also introduce Doctor Warren Moore, our Executive  
18 Director of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission.  
19 Doctor Moore, would you stand? Thank you very  
20 much.

21 Now, we will hear a statement from Bobby  
22 Doctor who is the Regional Director of the U.S.  
23 Commission on Civil Rights.

24 BOBBY DOCTOR: Thank you, Mr.  
25 Chairman. Before I begin my comments I would like

1 to take this opportunity to introduce a member of  
2 my staff, Robert Knight -- Bob Knight to my left  
3 here.

4 I think it should be noted that in  
5 February of 1991, in recognition of what we at that  
6 particular time thought to be some apparent  
7 increases in racial tensions in the country the  
8 Commission met in Richmond, Virginia in a retreat.  
9 That retreat involved the Commission of themselves  
10 and members of our executive staff.

11 Out of that retreat the Commission  
12 decided to adopt a national project designed to  
13 evaluate racial tensions in America. We sent  
14 letters to the President, the Leadership of the  
15 Congress and all 50 governors around the country  
16 indicating our concern and indicating what we  
17 thought to be a very serious problem developing.  
18 And, of course, the letter was designed primarily  
19 to get the attention of the folks that I have  
20 pointed out to try to get their cooperation in  
21 terms of dealing with what we recognized at that  
22 particular time was a very serious problem on the  
23 horizon.

24 Interestingly enough, we had a response  
25 from the President. We didn't get many responses

1 from the Leadership of the Congress and heard from  
2 only two governors from around the country. One  
3 governor indicated that he would without question  
4 be very glad to cooperate with the Commission in  
5 reviewing this critical issue, and another governor  
6 suggested that we not come his way.

7           Interestingly enough, about a year and a  
8 half later Los Angeles erupted, and a number of  
9 other cities around the country erupted. And  
10 clearly you know the rest of the story.

11           I think it's very clear that we do have a  
12 problem associated with racial tensions in  
13 America. There are a number of advisory committees  
14 here in the southern region who have adopted what  
15 we call state projects designed to look at racial  
16 tensions. And certainly amongst those states is  
17 the State of Tennessee and, of course, the Advisory  
18 Committee of the State of Tennessee. The states  
19 that have adopted projects in this region designed  
20 to look at racial tensions are North Carolina,  
21 South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee obviously and  
22 Kentucky.

23           It is our considered opinion that we must  
24 at this particular time in our history begin to  
25 devote a considerable amount of time in terms of

1 developing approaches and procedures and efforts  
2 designed to improve race relations to improve  
3 racial tensions. And, of course, this particular  
4 meeting is one effort in that direction. It is a  
5 part of a state effort as I've indicated by the  
6 Tennessee Advisory Committee and the Commission on  
7 Civil Rights. I'm sure we will be getting together  
8 with the Tennessee Human Relations Commission to  
9 also look at this particular question in other  
10 communities around the state.

11 We have already been to Nashville. We  
12 are scheduled to go to Knoxville and Chattanooga.  
13 And, of course, it is our considered opinion,  
14 again, that this particular issue at this point in  
15 our history is one of the most crucial.

16 And it is with that thought in mind that  
17 we're here today to conduct this hearing.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 LEO GRAY: Thank you. We would like  
20 to recognize Eric Taylor who is a member of the  
21 Tennessee Human Rights Commission who also shared  
22 with the committee to make this hearing in Memphis  
23 possible.

24 ERIC TAYLOR: Thank you very much, Mr.  
25 Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to be here



1 and to work on this important task.

2 As you know, we started sometime ago -- I  
3 guess almost nine months ago now putting together  
4 this hearing process. And I'm not sure whether or  
5 not we discussed all of the elements of this  
6 particular hearing, but as I recall, we were  
7 concerned about a number of issues. Those issues  
8 have to do with particularly community and police  
9 relations, I believe, and also had to do with the  
10 level of tension that exists in this city and in  
11 this area of west Tennessee as well as have to do  
12 with the level of discrimination in a different  
13 light than the kind of overt discrimination that we  
14 have seen in the past.

15 We thought it was most important that we  
16 have this particular hearing to determine the level  
17 of discrimination and racism and other pressing  
18 forms of life that exist so that we could make some  
19 adequate judgment about these conditions and also  
20 make some recommendations to the governor and the  
21 legislature about these particular issues.

22 I'm delighted to be here. I will work  
23 hard and try to do what I can to improve the  
24 problems that are being presented to us today. And  
25 I'm just thankful for the opportunity.

1                   LEO GRAY: Thank you. Our first  
2 presenter is Doctor Harry Moore who is a member of  
3 the Human Rights Commission for the State of  
4 Tennessee and also the Director of the National  
5 Council of Christians and Jews.

6                   Harry, you can present here or from THE  
7 podium whichever one you want to.

8                   HARRY MOORE: I'll just present from  
9 here. It's going to take me probably more than  
10 five minutes to read the statement that I put  
11 together. And I want to warn you that this  
12 statement is an attempt to trace the history of  
13 racism in pretty big leaps and jumps from the  
14 beginning of Memphis in the early 19th century to  
15 the present. It spans 173 years. And there is no  
16 way I can give a history of all of that in a very  
17 few minutes. What I want you to be aware of,  
18 however, is that Memphis did not get the way they  
19 did by accident. That's the premise on which my  
20 remarks are based.

21                   A philosopher once said that those who do  
22 not know their history are doomed to repeat it.  
23 Memphis has a rich and varied history, but its  
24 citizens, by and large, do not know it very well;  
25 for over and over, Memphis repeats a legacy and

1 pattern of classism and racism which has dogged its  
2 steps since the day of its birth. In ever new  
3 configurations but always with the same devastating  
4 results, white hatred of African Americans runs  
5 through Memphis history like the controlling  
6 element in a great drama, which, of course, it is.

7 Some of the moments in this history that  
8 shaped our present are worthy of special note:

9 1. Memphis was founded in 1819 by three  
10 greedy and sometimes unscrupulous land speculators:  
11 Andrew Jackson and James Winchester, generals in  
12 the War of 1812, and John Overton, retired Chief  
13 Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court. The land  
14 on which Memphis was built was snatched from the  
15 Chickasaw Indians who gave up claim to any of their  
16 remaining land in Tennessee and Kentucky in 1818.  
17 There was greed and opportunism in  
18 the "entrepreneurial" spirit of Memphis' founders,  
19 and these traits have never ceased to control the  
20 thought and behavior of Memphis' ruling class.

21 2. The spring after Memphis received its  
22 charter in 1826, Major Marcus B. Winchester, son of  
23 the general and compatriot of his and Jackson's in  
24 the War of 1812, was elected as Memphis' first  
25 mayor. Major Winchester, a man of an unusually

1 humane and thoughtful disposition towards African  
2 Americans, married a mulatto woman from New  
3 Orleans. The "good people" of Memphis by their  
4 incessant gossip and snobbery drove Winchester from  
5 office and to excessive drinking. They almost  
6 destroyed him and his wife and children.

7           3. One of the two most influential  
8 citizens in Memphis history was the Civil War  
9 General, Nathan Bedford Forrest. He made a fortune  
10 trading slaves. His prowess as a military genius  
11 won him praise as "the best soldier on either side  
12 of the battle" from Robert E. Lee. Forrest was  
13 cruel and overbearing both to his white wife and  
14 black mistress as well as being cruel and mean on  
15 the battlefield. He presided over the lynching of  
16 three black men at Jackson, Tennessee and proceeded  
17 to massacre hundreds of black Union troops at Fort  
18 Pillow. The slaughter was especially brutal.  
19 Blacks were butchered, their bodies nailed to logs  
20 and burned, and they were treated with consummate  
21 disrespect.

22           Forrest's other claim to fame was his  
23 election as the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux  
24 Klan. During the Reconstruction period, the Ku  
25 Klux Klan roamed the South pillaging, looting,

1 murdering, raping and burning helpless black  
2 people. Forrest commanded more people as Grand  
3 Wizard than he did as a general in the Civil War.

4           4. The Memphis Race Riot of 1866 was  
5 probably planned by the city's property owners. It  
6 accomplished two of their goals: 1) to frighten  
7 blacks to flee to the countryside as a means of  
8 easing the social and economic pressure on the  
9 city; and 2) to blame the riot on the Irish police  
10 and the Irish who served in city government. A  
11 white mob destroyed 91 homes, 12 schools, and 4  
12 churches, killed 46 blacks, wounded 75 more, raped  
13 5 black women, and robbed 100. The mob was whipped  
14 into a frenzy by John Creighton, judge of the city  
15 recorder's court, who called upon the mob to "kill  
16 the last damned one of the nigger race." Two  
17 whites also died in the riot.

18           5. Five Yellow Fever Epidemics struck  
19 Memphis, the worst in 1878. There were 17,600  
20 cases of the fever with 5,150 deaths. The city  
21 became bankrupt and lost its charter, and its  
22 populace was further decimated by people who fled.  
23 Blacks who were immune to the mosquito bite due to  
24 their African origin saved the day and nursed the  
25 white people back to health. They could have taken

1 over the city but declined the opportunity. By  
2 1900, blacks comprised 43 percent of the city's  
3 population, but racism and classism still held  
4 sway. Though blacks were angels of mercy during  
5 the epidemic, and though Robert B. Church, Memphis'  
6 first black millionaire, gave the first \$1,000 to  
7 restore the City's charter (1893), blacks were  
8 still treated as unwanted outsiders. Among other  
9 things, they were not welcomed in the city's  
10 parks. This spurred the creation of Church Park  
11 on Beale Street through Mr. Church's generosity.

12 6. In 1892, a feud was started by a  
13 white grocer in South Memphis with a black grocer.  
14 Three blacks were arrested and put in jail and  
15 later marched out of jail and shot. Nothing was  
16 done to punish those responsible, and the  
17 Appeal-Avalanche, the great grandfather of the  
18 Commercial Appeal, defended the practice of  
19 lynching blacks. Ida B. Wells took up the issue in  
20 her newspaper and was driven from the city because  
21 of her strong protest. She had to flee or be  
22 lynched herself.

23 7. The other of Memphis' two most  
24 influential citizens was E.H. "Boss" Crump who was  
25 the city's political dictator from 1909 until his

1 death in 1954. Crump controlled city, county, and  
2 state elections -- i.e., governors, senators, and  
3 congressman -- by buying black votes with revenues  
4 he received from such rackets as gambling,  
5 bootlegging, and prostitution. He crushed and ran  
6 political opponents out of town, strong-armed and  
7 beat reporters who dared to write about his fraud,  
8 and pressured businessmen in the city to buy  
9 insurance from him. He also controlled and  
10 brainwashed most of Memphis blacks. They were  
11 cowed into submission, too fearful to revolt.

12           8. Of course, the year of Crump's death  
13 was the year of the Brown versus Board of Education  
14 decision and the beginning of the civil rights era.  
15 Public accommodations opened to blacks. School  
16 integration was on the horizon, and in 1964, a  
17 civil rights bill became law. Memphis struggled to  
18 move forward against a popular tide of white  
19 racism, the organized White Citizens Council, and  
20 white liberals who were segregationists by day and  
21 integrationists behind closed doors at night. The  
22 white liberals never got beyond paternalism and  
23 tokenism in race relations and never aligned  
24 themselves with the cause of liberty and justice  
25 for all. The civil rights movement slowed with

1 Doctor King's death in Memphis on April 4, 1968 and  
2 came to a screeching halt and began backing up with  
3 Ronald Reagan's election in 1980. It has gotten  
4 worse under George Bush.

5 9. Since King's death, Memphis' schools  
6 have desegregated triggering white flight and the  
7 creation of an all white private school system.  
8 The city's public schools have only approximated  
9 integration. A stronger black middle class has  
10 emerged although white's still control the  
11 community's institutions. Some inroads have been  
12 made by blacks in politics with a black congressman  
13 and a black mayor and in education with a black  
14 school superintendent. Public accommodations are  
15 open to blacks though most of them cannot afford to  
16 take advantage of them. Whites speak of progress  
17 by saying that blacks can eat at the Peabody, for  
18 example. Most blacks, however, due to Memphis  
19 economics cannot afford it.

20 10. In 1991, Doctor W.W. Herenton's  
21 election as mayor, with almost no white help or  
22 support, gave hope to many blacks who had almost  
23 lost hope. It was also a source of encouragement to  
24 whites who have worked for liberty and justice for  
25 all but who had also almost lost hope.



1            Racism has fashioned and shaped Memphis'  
2 history at every step it has taken and every stage  
3 it has reached in the past, and it promises to  
4 continue to do so in the present and on into the  
5 future unless significant changes in attitude and  
6 behavior are made.

7            LEO GRAY: Thank you, Doctor Moore.  
8 Any questions or comments from the panel?

9            Since there are no questions we submit  
10 that to this hearing.

11            Is Chaplain Novella Arnold-Smith  
12 present? Ms. Mary Ellen Baker? Mr. William H.  
13 Parrish? Susan Cossar?

14            SUSAN COSSAR: Good morning. To those  
15 of you who don't live in Memphis, welcome to  
16 Memphis. I was told by Daniel Porter of the Human  
17 Rights Commission about this meeting, and he  
18 invited me to speak to you about the rights of  
19 handicapped children.

20            According to the Federal law 94-132  
21 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, they are  
22 supposed to protect the handicapped children in the  
23 schools, but in every case when there is a very  
24 high intellect of a child that is disabled it  
25 doesn't protect them.

1           My daughter is ten years old and has a  
2   mentality of a seventh grade child. She doesn't  
3   have any rights. She has been denied services from  
4   special ed here in Memphis because she is not  
5   mentally disabled. They say she doesn't fall under  
6   any category.

7           There are at least two to three disabled  
8   children to every disabled adult. One child is  
9   born every hour of the 24 hours in a day with spina  
10   bifida. This doesn't include the ones who are  
11   disabled from muscular dystrophy, car accidents or  
12   alcohol. It doesn't include those defects.

13           Disabled adults are treated like third  
14   class citizens. As a result, our children are  
15   treated like fourth class citizens.

16           When my ten year old daughter wants to go  
17   to the store with me and go shopping for her new  
18   clothes because she has a seventh grade mentality  
19   there are not facilities for her to try on  
20   clothes. I can go in a dressing room and try on a  
21   dress or a pair of pants. Krystal can't because  
22   she can't get her wheelchair in there. In order  
23   for her to try on clothes, we have to do it out in  
24   public. We have to close the whole dressing room  
25   down, and sometimes they don't have doors. There

1 are only certain stores here in Memphis that we can  
2 shop in for her to try on clothes. She wants to be  
3 as normal as any other child.

4 The ADA law that is effective July 26,  
5 1992 for Disabled Americans, will this be made to  
6 protect our children that are disabled? And that's  
7 what I'm asking y'all.

8 This is a picture of my daughter.

9 LEO GRAY: Is there a question for the  
10 panel?

11 SUSAN COSSAR: This is my daughter.

12 As you can see, she looks just as normal as you and  
13 I do. It is very rare for children that are  
14 disabled to have a full mentality level.

15 When Krystal was born we were told she  
16 would be mentally retarded that she would be like  
17 an infant all her life. We were told to let her  
18 die because she wouldn't have a rate. She wouldn't  
19 have a classification. She wasn't worth living.

20 You have more and more parents like me  
21 that are fighting the doctors keeping their  
22 children alive and keeping their children at home  
23 and keeping them out in the public, and we're  
24 asking for protection because there is no  
25 protection for these children.

1 Thank you.

2 LEO GRAY: Are there any questions of  
3 Ms. Cossar? Any comments? Brother Taylor.

4 ERIC TAYLOR: Yes, I would like to  
5 know what steps that you have taken to file this  
6 particular complaint that you have given us today  
7 prior to coming to this Human Rights Commission.

8 SUSAN COSSAR: Excuse me?

9 ERIC TAYLOR: What steps have you  
10 taken to file your complaint with other agencies or  
11 organizations prior to coming to this Commission?

12 SUSAN COSSAR: I have talked to the  
13 Tennessee Human Rights Commission. I have talked  
14 to the EEOC. I have talked to each group for  
15 Citizens With Handicaps. I have sent a letter to  
16 Congressman Harold Ford. I have talked to the City  
17 Council. I have talked to the school board, and no  
18 one helps me except for other concerned parents  
19 here and there that give me moral support or a  
20 speaking support. But there is no one.

21 When I asked I was told she is not  
22 mentally retarded. We can't get social security  
23 income because they say my husband and I make too  
24 much money. It takes everything we make to buy  
25 diapers, catheterization equipment, Betadine, baby

1 soap, enema bags for this child. We cannot  
2 received SSI because we make too much money.

3 ERIC TAYLOR: Did you not receive any  
4 written responses?

5 SUSAN COSSAR: No, sir, I have not  
6 received any written responses. It took five years  
7 just to get Kingsbury Elementary partially  
8 assessable for disabled people. It's got two  
9 wings. Both wings are two stories. They are going  
10 to put in an elevator which was promised two years  
11 ago for just one side. What about the other side?  
12 The other side is not going to be assessable.

13 There are parents of children that are  
14 disabled. If their children are in school they  
15 can't enjoy teacher parent night at school without  
16 the teacher coming down. They'll fix it for the  
17 adults, but the children they won't.

18 ERIC TAYLOR: Did you contact the  
19 Board of Education?

20 SUSAN COSSAR: Yes, sir.

21 ERIC TAYLOR: What was their  
22 response?

23 SUSAN COSSAR: Krystal is not mentally  
24 retarded.

25 ERIC TAYLOR: Does that require you to

1 be mentally retarded or mildly mentally retarded  
2 for special education?

3 SUSAN COSSAR: According to what I was  
4 told, there was no classification for Krystal. She  
5 was not mentally retarded.

6 ERIC TAYLOR: Did you contact the  
7 Department of Education for the state?

8 SUSAN COSSAR: In Atlanta?

9 ERIC TAYLOR: Washington, D.C.

10 SUSAN COSSAR: No, sir, I have not. I  
11 am trying to go the proper steps and go the ladder  
12 is what I was trying to do. And I contacted Harold  
13 Ford. And Daniel Porter when he called me from  
14 what I understood he had a copy of the letter that  
15 I had wrote to Harold Ford. That's why he  
16 contacted me to bring it before y'all.

17 ERIC TAYLOR: Did you ask the  
18 congressman to contact the Department of  
19 Education?

20 SUSAN COSSAR: Did you receive a copy  
21 of my letter?

22 ERIC TAYLOR: I got a copy.

23 SUSAN COSSAR: I just asked for his  
24 assistance in helping me get this rectified. The  
25 Memphis City Schools, they don't care about our

1 children, or they don't care about the federal  
2 funding. They are doing only the minimum. This is  
3 what I was quoted, we are doing only the minimum  
4 that we have to according to ADA. It is a  
5 two-story building. We're doing only the minimum.

6 And my child will be in the fifth grade  
7 next year. I have to start now fighting with the  
8 Memphis City Schools to get the optional program in  
9 junior high and high school. They don't have  
10 optional programs here in Memphis. Everything  
11 is --

12 ERIC TAYLOR: Would you recite that  
13 law again?

14 SUSAN COSSAR: Give me just a moment.  
15 Let me get it out of my book. I don't have a copy  
16 of the full law. All I have is what each --

17 ERIC TAYLOR: I just need the actual  
18 number.

19 SUSAN COSSAR: The actual law is  
20 public law 94-142.

21 ERIC TAYLOR: 94-142.

22 SUSAN COSSAR: It's 20 United States  
23 Code SS 2401. This is education for all  
24 handicapped children which was enacted in 1975.  
25 And then you got section 502. It's 29 United

1 States Code SS 794, I believe, for Civil Rights Act  
2 for Handicapped Persons. There is laws made, but  
3 they're not following through. That's the problem.

4 ERIC TAYLOR: Ms. Cossar -- is that  
5 right, Cossar?

6 SUSAN COSSAR: It's Cossar.

7 ERIC TAYLOR: Let me ask the chairman  
8 of this Commission to send a letter to Congressman  
9 Harold Ford and ask that he contact the Department  
10 of Education and have them to investigate whether  
11 or not we are trying to enact public law 94-142 on  
12 your behalf.

13 And, Mr. Chairman, I move that we do that  
14 immediately.

15 LEO GRAY: I'll accept it -- unless  
16 there is opposition I will accept that and ask the  
17 staff to prepare that letter on behalf of Ms.  
18 Cossar.

19 SUSAN COSSAR: Could I have a copy of  
20 that letter?

21 LEO GRAY: Yes, leave your address  
22 with attorney Charles Akers.

23 SUSAN COSSAR: Yes, sir, I will.

24 Thank you very much for letting me  
25 speak.





1 those are classified as special education multiple  
2 handicapped. In my letter that you received a copy  
3 of when we have a fire drill at least 50 percent of  
4 those children "burn to death" because we can't get  
5 them out of the building.

6           Since we first filed these letters with  
7 Congressman Ford's office a capital improvement  
8 committee has suggested several improvements to our  
9 school that are what they call the bare minimum to  
10 meet ADA standards. They're not letting us know  
11 who sets these minimum standards. Classroom doors  
12 were not included that would let the children exit  
13 to the outside without going down the hallway.  
14 Trying to get 16 children in wheelchairs out in  
15 time for a fire drill is impossible unless there is  
16 an outside exit in each room.

17           There is no specialized playground  
18 equipment for these children. There is no  
19 concession made for their special equipment in the  
20 classroom. We need doors widened. We need toilets  
21 lowered. We need water fountains especially  
22 equipped for these children.

23           There is another child in our school  
24 named Cathy who has to bring a cup with her every  
25 day because she has to get water from the water

1 fountain with a cup. She can't get over to reach  
2 the water fountain.

3 Some of these children require lifting.  
4 They all require changing. We need showers and  
5 special bathrooms. There is an endless list of  
6 things that these children require.

7 I'm blessed with children that are  
8 normal, I suppose, who don't need these special  
9 requirements, but to see the other children  
10 struggle the way they do makes me ill.

11 I know these laws have been passed, but  
12 they don't have any teeth because apparently the  
13 funds are not available to do this. We were  
14 promised this elevator last fall. They decided to  
15 delay it to the summer, and then it was tabled once  
16 again. Only after federal intervention with  
17 Congressman Ford was anything done.

18 These children are special. These  
19 children work harder than anybody in the world to  
20 get what they have. They deserve every break they  
21 can get. They're only asking for the way to make a  
22 normal life for themselves.

23 Thank you.

24 LEO GRAY: Any questions of Ms.  
25 Griffith?

1                   ERIC TAYLOR: Yes. I have a copy of  
2 your letter to Congressman Ford. Let me ask you,  
3 have you seen the plan that has been developed for  
4 the schools --

5                   JO GRIFFITH: Yes, sir, I have.

6                   ERIC TAYLOR: -- to comply with the  
7 ADA requirements?

8                   JO GRIFFITH: Yes, sir, I have seen  
9 it, and the outside exits were not on that plan.

10                  ERIC TAYLOR: I beg your pardon?

11                  JO GRIFFITH: The outside exits for  
12 the classroom -- the ramps and doors leading to the  
13 outside for each of these classrooms are not in the  
14 plan.

15                  ERIC TAYLOR: They're not in the  
16 plan?

17                  JO GRIFFITH: No, sir.

18                  ERIC TAYLOR: Is that in violation of  
19 the ADA regulations?

20                  JO GRIFFITH: As far as I know, yes,  
21 sir. And that is another problem. I don't have  
22 any way of proving what minimums are. Until you  
23 have spent six months to a year in a wheelchair  
24 you're not capable of saying what's minimum.

25                  ERIC TAYLOR: They specified what the

1 ADA specifications are; did they not?

2 JO GRIFFITH: As far as I know they  
3 specified some minimums, but are they adequate?  
4 I'm not in a wheelchair. I can't answer that.

5 ERIC TAYLOR: But there is a plan?  
6 There is a plan following a particular time frame?

7 JO GRIFFITH: The improvements they  
8 decided will be implemented before school starts in  
9 the fall. They have not begun those plans.

10 ERIC TAYLOR: Well, if they have not  
11 met those particular requirements I would suggest  
12 that you submit a plan requiring that they meet the  
13 regulations as set by the ADA regulations.

14 JO GRIFFITH: Thank you.

15 BOBBY DOCTOR: Ms. Griffith, have you  
16 filed any complaints with federal agencies  
17 regarding your complaint?

18 JO GRIFFITH: No, sir, not yet. We're  
19 not exactly sure how to proceed, but we are  
20 proceeding.

21 BOBBY DOCTOR: Spell out the concerns  
22 that you have advised here today on paper and send  
23 them to that same address, and we will respond.

24 JO GRIFFITH: I would like to include  
25 that we're not just concerned about one child or

1 one elementary school.

2 BOBBY DOCTOR: I understand that.

3 LEO GRAY: Thank you for coming before  
4 us.

5 Aron Wooten? Mr. Wooten?

6 ARON WOOTEN: Good morning. My name  
7 is Aron Wooten. I have been brutalized by the  
8 Memphis Police Department. Three police officers  
9 broke in my house and jumped on me. And I am  
10 mentally disabled from it, and I have been on  
11 medication from it. The doctor said I will  
12 probably be on medication for the rest of my life.  
13 And I'm unable to work. And I want to work, but I  
14 cannot lift up anything heavy. And that's just  
15 about all I have to say.

16 LEO GRAY: Any questions for Mr.  
17 Wooten?

18 BOBBY DOCTOR: I have some, Mr.  
19 Chairman.

20 Mr. Wooten, when did this incident  
21 occur?

22 ARON WOOTEN: It happened in '74.

23 BOBBY DOCTOR: I beg your pardon?

24 ARON WOOTEN: 1974.

25 BOBBY DOCTOR: 1974?

1 ARON WOOTEN: Yes, sir.

2 BOBBY DOCTOR: Did you file a  
3 complaint or initiate any civil --

4 ARON WOOTEN: I talked to a lawyer,  
5 and he told me there was no way to beat the  
6 system. And I have forgot all about it.

7 LEO GRAY: Whoever it was that told  
8 you that misinformed you. But the point is have  
9 you appealed to Congressman Ford's office in terms  
10 of assistance?

11 ARON WOOTEN: I called there, and they  
12 told me to write them a letter. You know, I was in  
13 the process of writing the letter. After I heard  
14 about this meeting I haven't finished the letter  
15 yet, but I will continue working on it. I forget  
16 things. I'm kind of absent minded.

17 LEO GRAY: Is there someone to make  
18 sure that you follow through in terms of listening  
19 to your complaint and then trying to receive social  
20 security?

21 ARON WOOTEN: I receive social  
22 security disability.

23 LEO GRAY: If you will, give your  
24 phone number to Charles Akers, counsel, and we'll  
25 see what we can do with your situation.

1                   ARON WOOTEN: Yes, sir. You want a  
2 phone number?

3                   LEO GRAY: Yes.

4                   ARON WOOTEN: Give it to him?

5                   LEO GRAY: He'll take it. Thank you  
6 very much.

7                   Michael J. Smith? Mr. Smith.

8                   MICHAEL SMITH: Good morning. My name  
9 is Michael J. Smith. I live at 983 New York. I've  
10 been a minister of William Temple Church of God in  
11 Christ since 1983.

12                   I had an incident that happened to me on  
13 Saturday. I was over at my sister's house -- I was  
14 recommended by Doctor Muhammad to come and tell you  
15 this incident that happened to me Saturday. I was  
16 over at my sister's house to install a hot water  
17 heater. And while being over there about 20  
18 minutes I heard a knock at the back door. And I  
19 went to the front door to see what was happening.  
20 Standing to the side the police put a gun to my  
21 head and told me to lay down on the floor.

22                   After laying on the floor I told him I  
23 said, sir, I'm over at my sister's house. I'm over  
24 here to install a hot water heater. He told me to  
25 shut up. Then he said, this is your sister's



1 house. He said, where is your wallet at. I said  
2 it's on the table. He said, well, where are the  
3 keys to the house. I said they're on the table  
4 too. He said, boy, don't get smart with me. I'll  
5 lock you up.

6 Then he went and got the keys and came  
7 back out and told me, which key fit the door. I  
8 said, I don't know which key fit the door because  
9 this is not my house. It's my sister's house. I  
10 have to ramble through them. He said, I told you,  
11 boy, don't get smart with me. And he told another  
12 officer -- they had about seven or eight cars out  
13 there. He told another officer lock -- he said,  
14 put the handcuffs on him and get him out of here.

15 And after that, you know, he put me in  
16 the car and everything. And the officer went back  
17 to the other officer. He came back and told me,  
18 sir, I'm going to have to lock you up. He said,  
19 I'm going to have to. It's company policy. I'm  
20 sorry. I got to do what the lieutenant tell me. I  
21 got to lock you up. Whenever we put handcuffs on  
22 you you got to be locked up. I said, what have I  
23 done. I said what's the charge. He said  
24 disorderly conduct.

25 So then I went on down to the police

1 station and everything, you know, and the officer,  
2 again -- the one that was arresting me -- said,  
3 sir, I'm sorry. Nothing I can do, but I got to do  
4 what the lieutenant tell me.

5 I really feel this lieutenant was very  
6 unprofessional in what he did. After he checked  
7 and found out it was out my sister's house he said,  
8 you know -- my mother called and asked him why was  
9 I arrested. He told my mother that when you got  
10 your head in the line of fire you best be calm.  
11 That's what he told my mother -- the  
12 officer -- the lieutenant that was over the  
13 arresting and everything. He told her that. So I  
14 feel that he was very unprofessional in what he did  
15 and how he handled the situation.

16 I haven't really talked to any other  
17 sources. I talked to Doctor Muhammad. He has a  
18 talk show on the radio, Memphis on the Move. And  
19 he recommended that I come up here. I haven't went  
20 any further than this yet, but I feel that  
21 something needs to be done in this situation.

22 LEO GRAY: Thank you. Any comments or  
23 questions of Mr. Smith?

24 HARRY MOORE: This happened last  
25 Saturday?

1 MICHAEL SMITH: This Saturday.

2 HARRY MOORE: Which was June 20th?

3 MICHAEL SMITH: June 20th.

4 LEO GRAY: Any comments to Mr. Smith?

5 Commissioner Guess has arrived.

6 Commission Guess is also a former member of the

7 U.S. Civil Rights Commission and the City of

8 Memphis Human Rights Commission.

9 FRANCIS GUESS: Thank you. I  
10 apologize for my tardiness. The weather delayed us  
11 in Nashville.

12 Reverend Smith, were the officers who  
13 came to your sister's home black or white?

14 MICHAEL SMITH: Black.

15 FRANCIS GUESS: Do you feel the  
16 treatment you received was a result of your being  
17 black, or was it in the administration of justice?  
18 I'm trying to --

19 MICHAEL SMITH: I believe he would  
20 have handled it different if I had -- I didn't have  
21 minister's clothes on. I feel I wasn't -- I think  
22 he would have handled it different if I wasn't  
23 black. I'm big. I didn't have no minister clothes  
24 on. I'm big. I think he would have handled it  
25 differently if I wasn't black. I really do.

1                   FRANCIS GUESS: In your opinion, do  
2 the black police officers in the city of Memphis  
3 tend to discriminate against black people in the  
4 administration of justice?

5                   MICHAEL SMITH: I've had it happen a  
6 lot of times. I believe it does.

7                   FRANCIS GUESS: Because they're black,  
8 right?

9                   MICHAEL SMITH: I don't know what kind  
10 of chip they have on their shoulder, but they do  
11 treat us a whole lot worse.

12                   FRANCIS GUESS: Thank you, Mr.  
13 Chairman.

14                   LEO GRAY: Thank you very much.

15                   Mr. William H. Parrish, Executive  
16 Director of the Southwest Shelby Council of Civic  
17 Clubs, Incorporated. Mr. Parrish.

18                   WILLIAM PARRISH: Good morning to  
19 everybody. I would like to apologize for not being  
20 here when I was first called. I had to wait for my  
21 bus this morning.

22                   You're going to hear a lot today I'm sure  
23 about civil rights, but I'm here to talk about  
24 social rights and economic rights.

25                   We've had a problem here. We've been

1 before this council two or three times. And we  
2 have a problem going on for eight years.

3 They're spending the taxpayers' money,  
4 that is, our money in Southwest Shelby, and we're  
5 not getting any benefits whatsoever. So I brought  
6 along a clip -- a tape, a short tape. It's just  
7 about a minute long.

8 Is there any way I could show this to let  
9 you know exactly what I'm saying, what I'm talking  
10 about?

11 LEO GRAY: How does that look,  
12 Warren?

13 Mr. Parrish, if you will, hold your  
14 presentation while we see if we can do that. Mr.  
15 Moore will see if we can accommodate the showing of  
16 that tape, and we'll call you back if you will  
17 accept that.

18 WILLIAM PARRISH: Thank you, Mr.  
19 Chairman.

20 LEO GRAY: Thank you so very much.  
21 Mrs. Lozora Jones? Mrs. Essie Stewart? Mrs.  
22 Delores Bradley? Ms. Fran Echols? Mr. Mzee  
23 Ajanaku? Ms. Verlene Mayo?

24 VERLENE MAYO: Good morning. My name  
25 is Verlene Mayo. I live at 736 (inaudible

1 response) Apartment D, Memphis, Tennessee. My zip  
2 code is 38107.

3 I didn't bring a prepared speech, but  
4 there is some things I'd like for this Commission  
5 to take down and research and get back with me. I  
6 don't know exactly all the places that I need to  
7 send this information, but I'm reasonably sure that  
8 we have these two commissions here together, Human  
9 Rights and Civil Rights, and so some way I know  
10 that you will find a way to handle these things.

11 I'm a public housing resident. And I  
12 guess every conceivable right, be it social, civil  
13 economic or what have you being people the least  
14 prepared to speak for themselves makes it much  
15 harder than it does for any other population in  
16 this country. And I know you gentlemen who sit in  
17 the positions that you are sitting in are  
18 even -- some of you I know have lost touch, and I  
19 can see how you can do that because you are not  
20 living in the conditions of the people who live in  
21 public housing on a day-to-day basis. You have  
22 jobs and you have information, and you know how  
23 somewhat to solve some of your problems.

24 However, the job that you have not done  
25 is taking an active role in educating the masses of

1 people so they can speak for themselves because  
2 they're just not enough of you to go around to take  
3 care of these day-to-day problems. And any of  
4 these problems with people from this rung of the  
5 ladder will have to be empowered. And to empower  
6 them they have to be educated.

7 I heard the question asked of this  
8 gentleman who spoke before me whether or not the  
9 officers were black or white. Well, it didn't  
10 matter what color they were because they were  
11 educated in a system. And they have the same  
12 mentality of their white counterparts so their  
13 quest should also be stricken. It's the oppressive  
14 system that you have to do something about, and  
15 that's our educational system.

16 I am here because I want you to first  
17 research -- ones of the main things is poor people  
18 who get SSI and Social Security. If you live in  
19 public housing and you get a lump sum of that  
20 money, of course, you pay 30 percent of your rent.  
21 And depending on how the law interprets it but you  
22 have \$5,000, \$2,000, \$19,000, what have you they go  
23 back and charge you retrorent on money that you did  
24 not have. And they want 30 percent of that. I  
25 believe if you can retain investigation there won't

1 be enough people who have jobs because they will be  
2 in jail.

3           The other thing is it's almost impossible  
4 to get anything done. Every facet of our lives  
5 have been emulated with drugs -- drugs. And so you  
6 have 95 percent of those households are women. And  
7 there is a spirit that's going on in this city, and  
8 nobody really cares because they think the way to  
9 get ahead is to organize and overregulate the  
10 poor. And it's a means of economics. And so our  
11 conditions are worse now than they have ever been.

12           I believe the newspaper said why we  
13 didn't have riots in Memphis is because of the  
14 leadership. That is not why we didn't have riots  
15 in Memphis because we had good leadership. Our  
16 people were just too oppressed to rise up. And  
17 we're just sitting on a powder keg waiting to blow  
18 up, and no one seems to really care. And those  
19 person, Leo, like you and Doctor Moore and Eric  
20 Taylor and Doctor Muhammad who speak for the people  
21 and who have some conscience of what is going on in  
22 the community, once they stand up because they  
23 speak for the poor they are slapped back down. And  
24 many of these people have forgotten from which they  
25 cometh.



1           You should know by the crowd you have  
2 here today that we are in bad shape. Of all the  
3 people who have all of the oppressive conditions in  
4 this city it is sad and should say to you something  
5 is wrong by the mere fact that they didn't show  
6 their faces.

7           Now, I'm saying that there should be a  
8 changing of the guards. There should be a changing  
9 of the guards, and you have been educated in the  
10 best institutions and by your involvement and your  
11 research. You have taken report after report, and  
12 nothing ever changes. So it seems that it doesn't  
13 really matter that we come before you and pour out  
14 our hearts because nothing ever really happens.  
15 There are the knowers, and there are the non  
16 knowers. And the non knowers will always be in  
17 charge because they have not reflected the history  
18 of this country and our oppressive conditions. And  
19 solutions that you bring are always ignored.

20           Where do we go from here, anarchy? Do we  
21 take up arms? Do we shoot down the leaderships  
22 like they do in foreign countries? Is that the  
23 next step? Are the people who say they love and  
24 care about this country -- by their actions, there  
25 is nothing to reflect they know, and there nothing

1 to reflect that they care because by the mere fact  
2 of our conditions being what they are we cannot be  
3 responsible.

4           When I listen to the radio and the TV the  
5 leadership blames the oppressed for the problems.  
6 We wouldn't have these problems if we weren't  
7 having so many illegitimate babies. We wouldn't  
8 have these problems if we weren't killing each  
9 other. We wouldn't have these problems in the  
10 schools if you would read to your children and take  
11 control. Everybody that is here knows that's a  
12 lie. Every time we try to take control of our own  
13 children we are shot down. We are shot down. And  
14 some of the leadership is too helpless to do  
15 anything about it. I believe there is a conspiracy  
16 going on in this country, and it's the classes  
17 against the masses or the illusion of  
18 classes -- the illusion of being included.

19           Now, in this country, we have to change  
20 our attitudes. And I suggest that now you take me  
21 very seriously because we have more than 30,000  
22 oppressed residents in public housing. And they  
23 are sitting around bombed out of their minds. And  
24 the ones that aren't bombed out of their minds with  
25 drugs have other outside influences who wants to

1 control and to continue to control the political  
2 climate.

3 So what do they do? They go in and out  
4 with no concern about the health care or the  
5 education of our children. And in addition to not  
6 being educated, their health is not being taken  
7 care of. And we are endangered species. And so  
8 women have no one at home because their children  
9 have no fathers.

10 And I suggest today, Leo, that you take  
11 me seriously in talking to those HUD people today  
12 about the drug problems in public housing, or  
13 someone else will take care of it for them.

14 LEO GRAY: Thank you. Ms. Mayo, thank  
15 you for coming before us.

16 Are there any questions of Ms. Mayo?

17 JOCELYN WURZBURG: Ms. Mayo, thank you  
18 for coming today. Our paths have crossed many  
19 times, and it's nice to see you again.

20 It is an old and very mean trick to  
21 constantly blame the victim for the problems that  
22 are out there. And I appreciate your articulating  
23 this so well, and I wanted to tell you that the  
24 residents of public housing are very fortunate  
25 indeed to have an articulate spokesperson for the

1 cause.

2 I was curious to know if you have  
3 concluded any opinions on some of the new ideas to  
4 enable public housing residents to have ownership  
5 in their quarters. Do you have an opinion about  
6 that at this time?

7 VERLENE MAYO: My opinion is that it's  
8 a good opinion, and it sounds good on paper and it  
9 sounds good when people talk about it. Getting it  
10 implemented is the problem. We have people who  
11 work. And sometimes they see some of the stuff  
12 that is going on, but there is no way to follow  
13 through to see what can be done to empower our  
14 people so that we can take up those problems and go  
15 through that process to get those things done.

16 Basically, the people working with the  
17 housing authority are so threatened by the tenants  
18 and thinking that they will take their jobs until  
19 they cannot be comforted. I guess it's because  
20 they have not been properly trained either. I  
21 don't know if we should blame them. But they are  
22 just there getting a salary. And I'm not sure if  
23 they know how to work with poor people because of  
24 their own fears and insecurities for their own  
25 jobs.

1                   HARRY MOORE: I would like to say is  
2 there a member of the press present? Thank you  
3 very much.

4                   I just want to footnote what I heard Ms.  
5 Mayo state the fact that the press is here though  
6 represented -- terribly under represented, and I  
7 would submit to you that this is a footnote to your  
8 statement of the crying out of the victims in our  
9 city being ignored. That's exactly right.

10                   VERLENE MAYO: That's what I'm saying.

11                   LEO GRAY: That's why we're having  
12 this hearing.

13                   VERLENE MAYO: Yes, sir.

14                   FRANCIS GUESS: Ms. Mayo, I've been  
15 with this a long time, and in that process of  
16 looking at what we do and making our recommendation  
17 after we have presented this to citizens, people  
18 will always try to undermine what we do. And the  
19 purpose for that question is so that we can go in  
20 and cite specific examples. It's not based on  
21 because the officer was black or white. It is so  
22 we will know if that happens then we will be  
23 prepared.

24                   And let me also footnote that I firmly  
25 adhere to the idea that because one is black does

1 not mean one is exempt from discriminating against  
2 our people. I fully accept that notion as was  
3 pointed out by the last presenter. I respond that  
4 my intent was genuine, and I needed to know about  
5 this type of thing so we won't be surprised. And  
6 that was the basis for making our recommendation.

7 LEO GRAY: Bobby Doctor?

8 BOBBY DOCTOR: Yes, Ms. Mayo, as one  
9 who spent the first half of his life living in a  
10 public housing project I certainly appreciate some  
11 of the comments you had to make.

12 I guess a question that I would like to  
13 present to you has to do with the involvement of  
14 people in public housing projects. Are there  
15 tenants associations in each of these projects?

16 VERLENE MAYO: There are tenants  
17 associations in each development. What has  
18 happened, they are basically handpicked people  
19 backing the administration who --

20 BOBBY DOCTOR: So the tenants don't  
21 come together?

22 VERLENE MAYO: The tenants don't come  
23 together. There is little substance when they do  
24 come together. And I'm not sure that they are the  
25 blame for that either because every tenant who can

1 articulate and do some things and begin to think on  
2 their own a little bit and organize themselves to  
3 empower themselves, they're always the villain.  
4 And they spread viscous rumors about them. They  
5 check into their past records, and that is the kind  
6 of people that we have.

7           And many politicians don't want to  
8 represent a lot of people who live -- if they have  
9 four or five public housing developments in their  
10 districts because they feel like those people  
11 cannot come together and speak for themselves, and  
12 they would be a liability to them rather than  
13 assets. And so I think the theory is that these  
14 people if they were organized and could ever come  
15 to any power they could be a power force to be  
16 reckoned with.

17           BOBBY DOCTOR: Indeed they could be.  
18 I think you have already answered my next  
19 question. And that was going to be if they have  
20 organized in each development or in each project  
21 have they organized on a city-wide basis?

22           VERLENE MAYO: We have a city-wide non  
23 functioning residents council. What we are about  
24 to bring about is having an understanding with the  
25 housing authority so they can have fair elections

1 and so people can articulate our conditions and can  
2 represent our fight pretty well. We don't have a  
3 lot of those people who can do that, and certainly  
4 we don't have the administration what can or wants  
5 to do that.

6 BOBBY DOCTOR: Ms. Mayo, we would like  
7 to communicate with you further from Atlanta  
8 regarding some of what we have discussed here this  
9 morning. What I'm going to do is have one of our  
10 staff people get your address, and we will be in  
11 touch with you.

12 VERLENE MAYO: Thank you very much.

13 RICHARD BOOTH: I wanted to thank you  
14 for making the presentation. I happen to agree  
15 with you that solutions from the top down often are  
16 least effective. I wanted to give you an  
17 opportunity to make at this time some suggested  
18 solutions on how you think various problems could  
19 be resolved if you have any solutions.

20 VERLENE MAYO: I think how this group  
21 as it relates to our situation is to meet with a  
22 group of public housing tenants who have the  
23 goodwill of the tenants in mind and help to  
24 organize our resources so that we can have power.  
25 Because as you know, there is no honor for a man in



1 his own country. That's what you could do. We  
2 could sit down and have some hearings and hear from  
3 some tenants and organize that from some tenants so  
4 you would know.

5 The reason I said that many of you might  
6 not be in touch is because I live in public  
7 housing, but I had insurance with Blue Cross Blue  
8 Shield. And when my husband got sick I had no  
9 insurance. And, of course, I had to try to get on  
10 Medicaid to go to the doctor.

11 Well, 25 years ago when I was using the  
12 public facilities going to the doctor when I went  
13 back into that situation I had got comfortable  
14 going to the best doctors and having the best tests  
15 anywhere in town. So when I had to go back to The  
16 Med it took me back a piece.

17 I'm saying this to you folk so you would  
18 know that sometimes you get away from that because  
19 you're not directly in that situation. You're not  
20 in the situation where you have to go and break up  
21 fights. You're not in a situation where someone is  
22 put out, and they got to stay in your house. My  
23 house is called the runaway house. You are not in  
24 the situation where there is no food and you have  
25 to share your food and you have to go next door and

1 organize some other people to help feed the  
2 family. And someone dies and they have no  
3 insurance, and you got to beg.

4 And so you're away from those kinds of  
5 things, and you're never compensated because you  
6 don't work. And these things you do, it ain't  
7 nothing. It's just what you do, and that's what  
8 you are supposed to do so you really have no  
9 value. You need to get you a job. And so you do  
10 that because you know it's necessary, but it's  
11 never any compensation. And nobody ever says thank  
12 you.

13 LEO GRAY: May I request of you to  
14 submit to these two commissions some of those  
15 things you're saying, and I'm sure there will be  
16 even more when you sit down and think about it and  
17 look at this project. If you will, present to us  
18 some of those plans, and I commit to you today that  
19 we will hold a hearing with the Memphis area  
20 residents. And we will hear your concerns.

21 And I will say this for the record, I  
22 appreciate your coming before us. If Mississippi  
23 is better because Harry Lou Haymer is there,  
24 Memphis is a whole lot better because you're here.  
25 And, again, I appreciate your coming.

1 Thank you so much.

2 I'd going to ask now that Minister  
3 Karim-Talib Muhammad come who is the editor of the  
4 Independent News who has come to us despite this  
5 being his sabbath.

6 Minister Muhammad, will you come.

7 KARIM-TALIB MUHAMMAD: Thank you very  
8 much.

9 Mr. Chairman, let us begin by thanking  
10 the Tennessee Advisory Commission and the U.S.  
11 Commission on Civil Rights for convening this  
12 particular hearing this morning. Both should be  
13 commended for this particular gathering.

14 We believe that Doctor Martin Luther  
15 King, Junior was correct in his claim that  
16 injustice anywhere is an injustice everywhere or  
17 something to that effect. It has also been said  
18 that civil rights will become a reality only with  
19 public and private actions at all levels of  
20 society.

21 Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I am  
22 Doctor Karim-Talib Muhammad, LLD, a 55 year old  
23 African male descendent of the people who were  
24 kidnapped from our native home and our native  
25 people, robbed of the knowledge of self religion,

1 of God, of language, culture and the mores of  
2 African people. I'm a native of Africa born here  
3 in the city of Memphis on December 16, 1936.

4 Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, my  
5 father had the opportunity to go under the  
6 Mississippi River and build the bridge, that Crump  
7 bridge that comes from Arkansas to Tennessee. My  
8 father also is the builder that 100 North Main  
9 building and the airport authority you have out  
10 there, and yet as a citizen of this city I'm  
11 constantly being discredited even by members of  
12 this august body. I respect this body and would  
13 pray that this body would take what we're talking  
14 about here very seriously.

15 We rise this morning, Mr. Chairman,  
16 ladies and gentlemen, to loan our voice to a  
17 growing number of others who have the vision to  
18 look beyond the vapors of the white power structure  
19 and see the need for reform in the city of  
20 Memphis. We know that a hearing of this nature is  
21 sincere and because we respect the efforts, Mr.  
22 Chairman, we will dispose of many trivial details.

23 We heard a question come up about whether  
24 or not the tenants should own public housing. I  
25 too am a product of LeMoyne Garden. I lived in

1 LeMoyne Garden and Foote Homes. No tenants should  
2 be attempting to buy a house in that area that is  
3 congested where the people next door can understand  
4 and see everything that you are doing in your  
5 house. No tenants should be even advised whether  
6 it be by the President of the United States or the  
7 secretary of HUD or any member of this august body,  
8 no one should be advised to want to live in that  
9 kind of condition.

10 I submit to you that Dixie Homes is  
11 probably the oldest housing community in this  
12 country built by WPA, and I submit to you that is  
13 not the condition that African people should have  
14 to live in no condition or whites as far as that  
15 matter. That exacerbates the problem. When you  
16 put that many people together in that condensed  
17 area you are making problems, and that's why you  
18 have killings going on in public housing that you  
19 don't have in some other areas because people are  
20 right back to back. And people are frustrated, and  
21 the friends are the closest things to them. And  
22 that's who they kill. So no, no matter who says.  
23 And I submit to you that you can do nothing to help  
24 African people by asking them to buy housing and  
25 own public housing under the present condition.

1 Tear them up.

2 I submit to you that there is a stock of  
3 housing in the city of Memphis that is owned by the  
4 department of HUD. Those housing -- as an old  
5 house commissioner myself and a planning  
6 commissioner myself I can say to you that those  
7 houses could be donated to the city at \$1, and  
8 those houses you could take the people out of Dixie  
9 Homes. Those are scattered sites. You could take  
10 those people and fit them into those scattered  
11 sites. And then you could create jobs for the  
12 youth who are on the streets and the adults who are  
13 on the streets by renovating those houses. And  
14 then get the youth and the adults to tear down  
15 Dixie Homes and use those bricks that were made and  
16 built during the war. And bricks were real good  
17 back then.

18 I'm a brick layer and an electrician and  
19 a pilot and have some knowledge about what's going  
20 on in this country. We could utilize all of those  
21 bricks and all of those appliances and turn around  
22 and build single family homes in the area where  
23 Dixie Homes is presently and then move the people  
24 out of Foote Homes and do the same thing there and  
25 put them in that area and then tear down Foote

1 Homes.

2           It would be a big project, maybe 20  
3 years. But you could get rid of some of the  
4 problems and maybe that would be a good thing for,  
5 you know, to look at if you wanted to see some way  
6 to get tenants involved. I think it would be a  
7 great employment opportunity as well.

8           Let me move on because I know there are  
9 others who have to speak. I appreciate the  
10 opportunity to speak. Today is my sabbath.  
11 Everyday is my sabbath. This is the day that we  
12 have congregational, and I have to preach a  
13 sermon. I am a minister, Reverend Gray.

14           Let me say that we are submitting to the  
15 Commission for the record a partial list of cases  
16 that we have personally initiated pro se in the  
17 courts and cases that are pending litigation.

18           Now, I would like to further say, Mr.  
19 Chairman, that these names and cases, a partial  
20 list of 90 cases, is no indication that this is in  
21 no way scratching the surface of any of the  
22 problems that we have here in the city of Memphis.  
23 These cases, however, are cases that have validity  
24 to them. We feel were violations of the United  
25 States Constitution, 13th, 14th and 15th amendments

1 have been violated in this city.

2 Specifically, Mr. Chairman, we'd like to  
3 insert into the record of this hearing as a concern  
4 and as a consciously concerned citizen resident of  
5 Memphis that Memphis, unless the present trend of  
6 racism is curtailed this city is headed for  
7 something that none of us want to live to  
8 see -- none of us.

9 I was in Detroit when it exploded. I can  
10 tell you -- and some of you went to California and  
11 saw what went on out there, and I assure you that  
12 the conditions in Memphis far exceeds -- far, far,  
13 exceeds the conditions that were prevailing out in  
14 California.

15 What we have in Memphis is  
16 institutionalized racism. And I heard the  
17 commissioner responding, and I knew why he was  
18 asking the young man about the color of the  
19 officer. In this city, racism has taken on a  
20 nature of white supremacy that is in the minds of  
21 black people now. And the white power structure is  
22 too intelligent to reach out and do things now that  
23 are blatant, but they have imps. They have Tom's  
24 and Aunt Jemima's to do their bidding for them.  
25 They have black people sitting in public



1 offices -- public places where we pay taxes for  
2 discriminating against black people. So that when  
3 you go and make the complaint they say to us that  
4 this is not discrimination because it's a black  
5 discriminating against a black so the laws don't  
6 cover that. That's how they have been able to  
7 protect by putting people over positions of  
8 authority and operating from a second level of  
9 operation in this city.

10 Now, I'm going to close out with this  
11 because I want to say a couple of things that I  
12 think that we need to understand if we are sincere,  
13 and I know we are, about what is going on in  
14 Memphis and to save the city. This city is a  
15 powder keg. Make no mistake about it. Some people  
16 won't tell you that. And most of leaders that are  
17 benefitting from the division in this city most of  
18 those leaders are not going to tell you that we are  
19 sitting on a powder keg. They're going to tell you  
20 that things are getting better because we have a  
21 black mayor now. And we have a black police  
22 director. And we have a black this or a black  
23 that, but that doesn't change things.

24 I ask you to get the Dilemma of Black  
25 Politics, a report on harassment of black elected

1 officials. This is a Washington, D.C. document. I  
2 ask you if you would get a copy of this, and it  
3 will give you some idea of what's going on in the  
4 black communities throughout America much less in  
5 this southern region or in the city of Memphis.

6 In addition, anybody -- you Reverend  
7 Gray, Mr. Eric Taylor, I'm speaking of anytime you  
8 stand up and try to do something in this community  
9 that will help people you're going to be targeted,  
10 and you know that. Some of you up here know that,  
11 and most of us out here know that. And I'm a  
12 victim of that.

13 And, therefore, if you look in the paper  
14 this morning there is a little piece about this  
15 meeting. If you got ready to come in downstairs to  
16 park downstairs, they refused to allow you to even  
17 come in here and park in visitors' parking  
18 downstairs in City Hall. Right here. Right here  
19 in this building.

20 If you go around and find out why this  
21 thing was not promoted, why wasn't it talked  
22 about? Where is the NAACP? Is the NAACP  
23 represented here? Why not?

24 And I'm raising it here so you can  
25 understand what is going on in here. This is a

1 farce in this town, and some of us are tired of  
2 watching ourselves being sold out by the leadership  
3 of this town.

4 I don't care if it kills me, I'm going to  
5 tell the truth about what's going on. I don't care  
6 who doesn't like it. I say that this one  
7 day -- half day I wish to God that this hearing  
8 could be continued, and it could be publicized.

9 People, you don't have any idea. I sit  
10 up on a radio show for two hours a day, and I  
11 listen to people complaining. I listen in my  
12 office all day long. And I listen to people  
13 complaining all day long about racism, about the  
14 residue of slavery in this town. And I say that  
15 unless you and we and all of us collectively get  
16 together and open up this city, this city is going  
17 to blow sky high. I'm telling you that as a  
18 private citizen. I'm telling you that as someone  
19 that is concerned. I don't have to tell you. I  
20 could go on and keep my mouth closed, but I'm  
21 saying to you that you don't know what you're  
22 looking at in Memphis. And I'm saying to you that  
23 I have children, and I have a life to live and I  
24 fear for those children. I fear for my children  
25 when they go off to school.

1           They have schools here that you have to  
2 send your child from the north end -- from the  
3 extreme south end of the city to go all the way to  
4 the extreme north end of the city just to get in  
5 ROTC or just to get into a class. If you have to  
6 go to that class you can live at State Line, and  
7 you have to go all the way out to Raleigh-Egypt to  
8 go to school.

9           There was a child in here that complained  
10 about that, and I know it's the truth because my  
11 son -- I had to get up every morning at 5:00 in the  
12 morning and put him on the street bus to get him  
13 out there to the place. And do you know they  
14 suspended him for not having a shot record in his  
15 records when all of our other children didn't have  
16 their shot records.

17           I wish I could talk about my personal  
18 problems with you, but that would take too long. I  
19 would suggest and submit to you that, please, in  
20 the name of God, don't play this one lightly. And  
21 I think that you need to get back to the NAACP and  
22 all of the people down here who are supposed to be  
23 taking care of the business.

24           I have most of those cases that people  
25 bring to me from the NAACP. And this is how I know

1 that we're not getting the proper service from  
2 anybody in this town, and unless we do something  
3 about it now and expose that we're going to have a  
4 bad thing on our hands.

5 LEO GRAY: I've listened several times  
6 to your talk show, and you alluded to the Urban  
7 Agenda. Do you have privy to that document, or is  
8 there a document spelling out what the Urban Agenda  
9 is?

10 KARIM-TALIB MUHAMMAD: I will tell you  
11 this, that we have developed in the city, some of  
12 us have been working diligently to develop an  
13 agenda for this city as far as African people are  
14 concerned. I do believe that the mayor, however,  
15 has an agenda that he has set forth, and I have  
16 seen a part of that agenda in the newspapers as a  
17 matter of fact that he has exposed some outlined  
18 peripherals of that agenda. There are areas of  
19 housing that is included. Fact of the matter, I'm  
20 told today, and I hope I'm not jumping the gun that  
21 there will be a press conference today in this  
22 building at 10:30 that he will talk about the black  
23 on black killing. I don't know if that's something  
24 you're including yourself or not.

25 LEO GRAY: I think if we could look

1 at -- this commission, this panel and this body  
2 could look at the Urban Agenda and embrace that or  
3 embrace parts of that I see that as a part of the  
4 solutions you're talking about or efforts to reach  
5 a solution.

6                   KARIM-TALIB MUHAMMAD: I submitted,  
7 Mr. Chairman, to the legislative body, Ms. Deberry  
8 and the legislators up there, as well as to the  
9 mayor and the county government a proposal which  
10 was called Retooling. And we submitted that. We  
11 get no response. We submitted to the housing  
12 authority a proposal that would teach cultural  
13 development so blacks can do something and have  
14 some self esteem. Nobody takes those proposals.

15                   I will leave you with this thought. I  
16 had a man to tell a man on my show, Memphis on the  
17 Air, that he didn't find anything that we were  
18 talking about personally on the show that was bad.  
19 It was just that it was coming from me. And  
20 because it was coming from me and I happen to be a  
21 Muslim then it's no good. It's not acceptable. We  
22 have a tendency to, you know, ostracize people in  
23 our own race.

24                   LEO GRAY: Let me ask you to do this.  
25 Submit to this body some of those plans that you

1 have submitted to other bodies, Minister --

2 KARIM-TALIB MUHAMMAD: Let me tell  
3 you, I don't go under the title of minister.  
4 Minister is a title that is through the nation of  
5 Islam. I'm not a member of the nation of Islam.  
6 My title is doctor, and I wish you would refer to  
7 me as that. I wanted to make that clear because  
8 minister is not a title that is inside of Islam  
9 around the world.

10 LEO GRAY: I appreciate that. I  
11 respect it. Thank you very much.

12 BOBBY DOCTOR: One other comment  
13 before Doctor Muhammad leaves. I would like to  
14 make a comment.

15 I was invited to take part in a radio  
16 talk show for WLOK, and he went through a great  
17 deal of effort to advertise the fact on that radio  
18 station that this meeting was going to take place  
19 this morning. As a member of the press, he went  
20 over what I thought to let the citizens of this  
21 city know that the meeting was taking place this  
22 morning. I certainly would like to thank him for  
23 that.

24 While I am here I would also like to  
25 address a former colleague of mine. I haven't seen

1 him in quite some years. I think that is  
2 John Spence -- Mr. and Mr. John Spence. It's  
3 certainly a privilege and pleasure to see you once  
4 again. I haven't seen John since the late 1960's,  
5 but it's nice to have you here as well.

6 HARRY MOORE: I want to make one  
7 comment to Doctor Muhammad. I could not possibly  
8 have agreed with you more that the religious  
9 prejudice which exist in our city which discounts  
10 you because you are a member of the Islamic  
11 community -- we're the losers who refuse to listen  
12 to you and can't get by the fact that you see  
13 things a little bit differently because of your  
14 faith but that you're totally invested in and a  
15 part of this community. I want you to know that  
16 there are people who understand and who sympathize  
17 with where you are coming from.

18 KARIM-TALIB MUHAMMAD: Thank you,  
19 Doctor Moore. Let me say to you in response that  
20 in my opinion -- in my humble opinion, it is the  
21 church -- it is religion in this city that is  
22 creating the division and, therefore, many of the  
23 problems that we have. Each little group and  
24 pocket of persons and people have their little  
25 tribal things going on, and that's why we can't



1 come together. We're all in this together. And  
2 it's not Islam against Christianity. You see, it's  
3 Christianity against Christianity. It's Baptist  
4 against Methodist. And Catholic against those. So  
5 religion, in my opinion, and politics, in my  
6 opinion, is the biggest dividers in this city. And  
7 if we don't talk about unifying this city, you can  
8 keep on talking about human rights and civil rights  
9 and nothing is going to happen.

10 Thank you very kindly.

11 LEO GRAY: Doctor Muhammad, there is  
12 another question.

13 JOCELYN WURZBURG: I would like to say  
14 that I concur with your remarks, Doctor Muhammad,  
15 about the role that our religious communities have  
16 not played in solving these problems.

17 I said a moment ago in response to Ms.  
18 Mayo that a cruel trick is to blame the victim for  
19 the problems. A second cruel trick is not to even  
20 ask or not to even honor an individual's man or  
21 womanhood by asking an opinion about solving the  
22 problems.

23 I'm watching with great curiosity this  
24 all of a sudden panacea coming around called  
25 enterprise zones, and yet I don't see anybody

1 asking the folks who are directly involved, say,  
2 out in California or even back in earlier days  
3 throughout the country what is their opinion of  
4 such a thing. I thank you for yours regarding  
5 ownership of the public property. I think your  
6 points are valid, but the greater question is why  
7 not bring the people into the forum, to the table  
8 who knows best what could be possible solutions to  
9 the problems than the victims of those problems.  
10 So I thank you for your opinion about that.

11 KARAM-TALIB MUHAMMAD: I'll leave you  
12 with the response as well. If you think that is  
13 the 30,000 people who live in public housing, you  
14 have to say that somebody kept that group of people  
15 from being here. It is a conspiracy. We heard it  
16 before, and it is a conspiracy. And you need to  
17 look into that.

18 LEO GRAY: Thank you very much.

19 Reverend Samuel Cobb of the operation  
20 PUSH. Brother Cobb, will you come.

21 SAMUEL COBB: Mr. Chairman, I  
22 appreciate you calling on me, but I just wanted to  
23 sit in since so many of you are former colleagues.  
24 I used to sit where you are now sitting. But I  
25 know that across the years the relationship between

1 the Civil Rights Advisory Committee and the  
2 Tennessee Interrelation Committee has been very  
3 close.

4 I served for a number of years as  
5 chairman of the Advisory Committee for Tennessee,  
6 and I knew I would get to see some of my friends.  
7 And I really wanted the people to speak today  
8 rather than spend -- I want to listen because I'm  
9 talking all the time. And I will yield my time  
10 unless there is something specifically you wanted  
11 to ask me to the people who have come.

12 LEO GRAY: Thank you. I asked you to  
13 come the other day because I know of your history  
14 of involvement. I wanted you to speak on behalf of  
15 operation PUSH. But, again, I respect your  
16 position to yield to the citizens to speak. And  
17 anything that you have to suggest to the panel be  
18 sure to get it to us. We will be asking you for  
19 that.

20 BOBBY DOCTOR: What I want to say is  
21 that as a former colleague and old friend of mine I  
22 would like to indicate that not only did Reverend  
23 Cobb serve as chairman of the Tennessee Advisory  
24 Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
25 but very effectively served as chairman of the U.S.

1 Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil  
2 Rights.

3 As a matter of fact, perhaps the most  
4 effective report that has ever been done by the  
5 Advisory Committee here in the state of Tennessee  
6 was done under his leadership, and that dealt with  
7 the criticism of police here in the city of Memphis  
8 back in the late '70's or early '80's, as I  
9 recall. And it truly was, I think, a very, very,  
10 good report that ended up very positively  
11 impounding on conditions in this city. I just  
12 wanted to point that out before you left.

13 SAMUEL COBB: We pulled that report up  
14 just last month with the case that we're shooting  
15 over in Dixie Homes, and we have looked at it. It  
16 is so strange how much of the report is applicable  
17 to what's happening today.

18 But I want to commend the committee for  
19 having the hearing. It's really necessary, and  
20 sometimes because the people are so close to what's  
21 happening to them they don't really see the need to  
22 go through the process. It is beneficial what  
23 you're doing, and I want to commend you and say  
24 keep it up.

25 HARRY MOORE: Reverend Cobb, I would

1 like -- I mean, I'm putting you on the spot, and  
2 I'll very readily let you off the hook. I wonder  
3 if you could comment for the benefit of my  
4 Tennessee Human Rights Commission colleagues who  
5 are not from this city and for others who are not  
6 from this city a little bit about the volatility,  
7 if you will, of our city in the area of black and  
8 white and so forth. You may not want to do that,  
9 but if you would I think it would be very good.

10 SAMUEL COBB: It's real. The people  
11 who have come before tell you about it. I look at  
12 it from, I guess, a different advantage point  
13 working the last 35 years. I could not continue to  
14 work if I did not believe that we hadn't made  
15 progress.

16 We have made progress. And I couldn't  
17 continue to go if I didn't think we had. But with  
18 the progress we have made, there have been  
19 decisions made over the last twelve years that have  
20 really set us back. And it's just so strange to me  
21 that we have to go over the same ground again.  
22 Things that I thought we could pick up the phone  
23 and get done we have to demonstrate for now. I  
24 don't want to keep doing that. Once we get into  
25 the system there are methods put in place that keep

1 us from really sharing in the power.

2           The thing that is happening in City  
3 Council right now with Memphis being majority  
4 black -- African American, the Council did not want  
5 to divide up correctly. Over 20 years ago we had  
6 13 council persons, three blacks and ten whites.  
7 Even after we are the majority, now we are going to  
8 have to go through court and all of that when they  
9 know the right thing to do.

10           Just as an example of having to go over  
11 that ground again, twenty years later, we still  
12 cannot come to a decision on how to divide up this  
13 council so that it reflects the population.

14           I think that's the start. I mean, we  
15 thought we made progress, and somebody comes in and  
16 said -- well, what they said in essence was, we  
17 can't get used to being the minority.

18           Well, I mean, when Mayor Herenton was  
19 elected one of the things I kept saying -- somebody  
20 said I ought to put it to music -- I told my white  
21 friends I said, don't panic. The pyramid is not  
22 going to fall. The Mississippi is not going to dry  
23 up, and Graceland is going to still be there. In  
24 other words, we have got to work together. We  
25 are. But we have to go through all of this to get

1 as one example the Council, the head the leadership  
2 of our city, to do what's fair and what's right.

3 How can you have a Council represented of  
4 the city when you have the -- the thing that has  
5 killed us over the year is "call role." We come  
6 down here and make all these speeches for three  
7 minutes. Somebody says take my three, Reverend  
8 Cobb, and somebody else says take mine. I take  
9 their three. They listen respectfully, and when  
10 they get through they say call role. And call the  
11 roll has killed us for 25 years. It's 13 to 3.

12 If you would just check the number of  
13 votes that have taken place in this chamber  
14 regarding the well-being of this community and see  
15 how many times all the people we elected at large  
16 with our votes -- it's always been black against  
17 white ten to three. And when I challenged them  
18 they say, oh, no, we don't do that. We check the  
19 record.

20 And so we have made progress, and there  
21 is a lot of unrest. You can't have a number of  
22 people out of work, young men standing around.  
23 Even though we have jobs we make 57 percent less  
24 than the white males. You know all those figures  
25 right down the list. The number who are in jail 20

1 to 25 or under probation or whatever.

2 But the volatility of Memphis is real.  
3 It could blow up. It really can because of just  
4 the fact that racism is very much alive. You have  
5 been here. The neglect of the Reagan Bush years  
6 will be with us another hundred years I'm afraid.  
7 But it's as real in Memphis as it is in other  
8 cities -- very real.

9 LEO GRAY: Thank you, Reverend Cobb,  
10 for coming and sharing with us.

11 Ms. Mary Taylor?

12 MARY TAYLOR: My name is Mary Taylor.  
13 I'm the director or SMACC located at 1249 Cannon  
14 Street, Memphis 38106. And I would like a copy of  
15 the proceedings that's going on here today.

16 Also, I'm here to discuss opinions.  
17 Everything that has come before the Commission is  
18 about the projects. I'm very much aware about  
19 needs and the services of the projects. I'm very  
20 much aware of the plight in the projects, but my  
21 issue and my concern is not the projects.

22 We have a population of 30,000 residents  
23 within the housing authority. We have a population  
24 of the City of Memphis of 660,000 or more. We have  
25 a population of 300,000 thousand residents below



1 the poverty level in the city of Memphis. Three  
2 hundred plus thousand minus 30,000 leaves you  
3 270,000 plus citizens within the city of Memphis  
4 that is suffering.

5 Now, you tell me what is priority. We  
6 have a population of 270,000 citizens of Memphis  
7 that do not have the resource of the project. When  
8 I say resource if a person loses their job, they  
9 lose their home. They lose their job and can't get  
10 a job to work they can't pay rent so they are  
11 evicted. They cannot run to the projects because  
12 there is no room at the inn. That's what's going  
13 on.

14 What is happening is that the public  
15 housing sells the property to the private  
16 developers to where the neighbors do not want the  
17 less fortunate and undesirable in their community  
18 because it would bring their property value down.  
19 That's what we're dealing with here.

20 Don't come to this city telling me that  
21 you are going to deal with the projects. When  
22 their income falls, their rent is zero. When their  
23 income fall, they don't pay utilities.

24 You still have 270,000 people outside of  
25 the project with no place to go. They pile them on

1 top of one another living in there. Three and four  
2 families living together. Yes, there is a riot  
3 within the homes. Yes, there is a riot going on  
4 within the family structure. Yes, there is a riot  
5 going on.

6           You cannot begin to describe to me this  
7 world when I have to work for nothing so I can say  
8 that I am somebody, and I'm not going to be  
9 intimidated because you don't want to pay me a  
10 salary to do what I do best and that is to make my  
11 people feel like they are somebody and to make a  
12 difference in this community and in this country is  
13 to take that short walk to the voting pole. That's  
14 all we got to do. And once the people know that  
15 they got that kind of power that they can make a  
16 change in this country and as well as within this  
17 city as well as within their immediate backyard  
18 then you would see changes, but until you stop  
19 trying to go there with a baby bottle teaching them  
20 this is how to suck the bottle and how to burp to  
21 get the gas up then you won't see nothing.

22           You know what's happening. Eighty  
23 percent of you all up there live in this  
24 community. You heard this stuff time and time  
25 again. I know for a fact. I was a welfare mother,

1 and I am still welfare eligible. And simply  
2 because I chose to fight back in the political  
3 arena where I know it makes a difference I get  
4 crossed over, looked over, stepped on by you,  
5 Reverend Gray -- by you.

6 I want to give you a perfect example. In  
7 1990, I filed to run for county mayor. Y'all  
8 looked at the board to see who all was running for  
9 county mayor. You go right back to the radio  
10 station 20 minutes later, and you say, I'm  
11 surprised there is nobody running for the county  
12 mayor. Reverend Gray, I am somebody. And I'm  
13 proud of that fact. I'm proud of that.

14 My own children turned their back because  
15 society said you cannot do that, Mamma. You don't  
16 have nothing. You embarrassing me. The people  
17 said yes. This is what's happening to our people.

18 Where is the media? I can't tell the  
19 Commercial Appeal from the Tri-State Defender. And  
20 it's a disgrace that our minds are being played  
21 upon by the community, Doctor Moore. Our  
22 intelligence, our minds is being played upon.

23 I was on welfare in '86 when I changed.  
24 I'm a former person who knew nothing about the  
25 political side. I never cast a vote until '86.

1 Knew nothing. All I knew is how to beat the system  
2 through the welfare means. Get what I can to deal  
3 within my household. Don't say nothing about your  
4 neighbors. Deal with yourself, and that's how I  
5 survived.

6 I know how to survive. Poor people know  
7 how to survive. I know how to survive. But when  
8 you come and you play on my intelligence to tell me  
9 how to count one plus one, are you going to tell me  
10 that orange is red? Then you doing some mean  
11 stuff. When you tell me that I can't feed my baby,  
12 when you tell me that I can't go to the bathroom  
13 then you doing some dirty stuff.

14 When you come under the name that you  
15 come under human rights under human dignity then  
16 you stepping on my turf, and I got a right to see  
17 everything you do and how you do it. And if you  
18 are coming in the name to address and help me and  
19 my problem I would like to be involved in the  
20 process of participating on how you deliver it. I  
21 don't need you to come and get my opinion on what  
22 to do. I want to be there when you deliver it.

23 LEO GRAY: Ms. Taylor, are there any  
24 specific recommendations you would like to make to  
25 this commission?

1                   MARY TAYLOR: Yes. Deal with the laws  
2 that is holding us back. Deal with the laws of the  
3 state of Tennessee. Continue to deal with the laws  
4 right now where if a person gets a parking  
5 ticket -- just a perfect example. My car didn't  
6 pass inspection. I get stopped by the police  
7 because my inspection sticker had expired. I had a  
8 ticket. I go to the court. When I go to the  
9 court, and I explain to them what happened they  
10 fine me \$21. I get a letter from the state saying  
11 they are going to revoke my license, and I got to  
12 pay additional \$65 and all this stuff.

13                   Now, you take my license away, that is  
14 the only thing people will accept. They won't look  
15 at your Social Security card. You can't get a job  
16 today without a driver's license. You can't write  
17 a check until you got a driver's license. They  
18 don't want to see a Master card. I want to see  
19 your driver's license. That's all.

20                   Yes, there is a conspiracy going on.  
21 Deal with the laws. Go to the books and find out  
22 what law in the book that is holding us back. What  
23 laws is holding a welfare mother with three  
24 children who gets \$170 a month, and rent is \$210.  
25 Deal with the laws that she has \$400 in food, but

1 yet she can't buy toilet paper.

2 LEO GRAY: Those are the specific  
3 kinds of recommendations that this panel can deal  
4 with.

5 MARY TAYLOR: Specific kinds of  
6 recommendations to hear or resources that can be  
7 different. Deal with those.

8 LEO GRAY: Ms. Taylor, that's why  
9 we're here.

10 You made a charge against me that I  
11 knowingly ignored you and this community, and want  
12 to further discuss that with you because I think  
13 that's a misunderstanding. You understand very  
14 well over the years I've been a part of the  
15 ministerial group and as an individual that has  
16 supported many of your projects.

17 I think we fail to benefit from this type  
18 of gathering when we make personal attacks. I  
19 think what we can do is come in here recognizing  
20 that your being here is a matter of input to this  
21 process, and you are being invited to be a part of  
22 that.

23 MARY TAYLOR: If you cannot deal with  
24 where is it at, I know where it's at. How are you  
25 going to deal with it as a whole? If you ignore me

1 at the beginning, how are you going to look at it?  
2 Only because his mouth is shut?

3 LEO GRAY: Ms. Taylor, we are not  
4 ignoring you. The very reason you're here is the  
5 point we're recognizing you and hearing you. And  
6 you have been before forums that I was a member of  
7 before, and we have not ignored you.

8 MARY TAYLOR: You're right. I've been  
9 before you before.

10 LEO GRAY: We have never ignored you.  
11 Let me ask you to do this, if you will submit in  
12 writing your ideas and or suggestions for the  
13 Commission we would surely appreciate it.

14 MARY TAYLOR: One other thing I would  
15 like the Commission to look at. Here we have  
16 housing. You understand where we have people with  
17 third level mentality with the type of jobs where  
18 they take people into their house to nurse and take  
19 care of. That's being done, and I am contacting  
20 those businesses which is about 20 something in  
21 this city alone.

22 We also have a problem with people with  
23 jobs that have been on the jobs more than ten years  
24 or more systematically eliminated and fired from  
25 those positions within the city of Memphis because

1 of workers' rights -- employer's right of policy  
2 where they hire at will and fire at will with no  
3 recourse. Employment is security. If you got a  
4 problem you go down there and apply for employment  
5 and work 20 years, and when you apply for  
6 unemployment they tell you nothing they can do.  
7 Only food stamps.

8 I would like also like to know what is  
9 the difference between the state of Tennessee? Why  
10 is they exempt from rules and regulations from the  
11 rest of the country? There are several states  
12 exempt from the same problems than the rest of the  
13 country. Yes, those type of laws do get to the  
14 masses in the community.

15 And, again, we have 30,000 -- I know you  
16 are looking at that buzzer. You have 30,000  
17 residents in public housing. You have 300,000 plus  
18 residents outside the public housing. The family  
19 home is about to explode, and nobody is addressing  
20 that.

21 The best way to look at citizens is to go  
22 to the census track. You will then find out  
23 exactly what I'm talking about. There is 21 census  
24 tracks within the city of Memphis and urban  
25 community. They need help bad. Look at that



1     statistic. Look at the housing make up. Look at  
2     the total houses that are being torn down with  
3     those census tracks in the last 15 years. Look at  
4     the census tracks there within the urban community  
5     and compare them to 10, 20 years ago, and you will  
6     find the answer within those census tracks. There  
7     are 21 census tracks in the urban community only  
8     three or four of them encompass public housing.

9                     LEO GRAY: Thank you very much, Ms.  
10    Taylor.

11                    Let me ask Ms. dyan french to come.

12                    dyan french: Good morning. You know,  
13    every morning I try to remember to thank God for  
14    the day. And I try to thank him for all the things  
15    that I have forgotten to thank him for before I  
16    wake up.

17                    Reverend Gray, I want to say something to  
18    the congregation. God bless you. We're here, and  
19    it's going to be all right. God said so.

20                    I want to talk about racism.  
21    R-A-C-I-S-M. I spelled that word once before here  
22    approximately four years ago. It made the news.  
23    It made the radio talk show. I didn't even know  
24    that until they made me aware of it. It made the  
25    printed media. And my statement was that our

1 children don't deserve it, and we won't tolerate  
2 it.

3 I'm a black, African American, colored,  
4 nigger, whatever color you want to call me mamma  
5 standing before you here today. We have neglected  
6 our children by allowing racism to continue to  
7 destroy them, and I brought some examples.

8 In my hand is from the Sunday newspaper,  
9 the Commercial Appeal an advertisement from, I  
10 think, Goldsmith's. Can you see this behind me?  
11 Do you see her navel? Do you see her vagina? This  
12 is a European female. This is what you have to  
13 send to my house that have African American boys in  
14 it to sell me what we commonly call drawers and  
15 T-shirts. And when my son looks at this filth on  
16 the street he goes to jail. I'd like for you to  
17 have it.

18 This is how they send me swimsuits to  
19 buy. This is not Play Boy. This is from like a  
20 Goldsmith's. I want you to see that. And when you  
21 pass this on by discrimination to my children you  
22 got African American girls playing shit like this.  
23 Excuse my language.

24 This is Michael Tyson one of the richest  
25 men in America of our color. I like the little

1 Kennedy boy. I don't have no problem with him, but  
2 nobody did this to him. This is what I'm talking  
3 about -- racism.

4 You call it a riot in Atlanta. I call it  
5 a revolution, and I'm a part of it. Hear that.  
6 That's not a threat. It's a promise.

7 I admire and respect many of you up  
8 there. But I don't think you even remember me  
9 because I'm not a native Memphian, but you see me  
10 all over America. And then after we go through  
11 that -- I want to you to have these.

12 Look at my little baby Tyson here. We  
13 don't dislike him. We are going to get you for  
14 it. I told this bitch here -- look at her -- this  
15 European female judge. She will not sit in  
16 judgment our children like that anymore. A  
17 European male in some part of America stewed,  
18 fried, filleted, baked and whatever else you can do  
19 to 15 human beings. But he was a European. Nobody  
20 thought that he was capable. Or was it because his  
21 victims were my babies?

22 All of them are my babies -- every last  
23 one of them. If you got some they're mine, and I  
24 want to know -- sister, I don't mean to attack you  
25 personally, but I want to know is it something

1 different y'all are doing to get y'all's babies?  
2 Your babies are running America. Mine don't even  
3 have the right to live a full life -- God given  
4 life.

5           You put on paper that he is going to go  
6 to jail for sure before he's a teenager now in  
7 1992. By the time he's 21 for sure he is either  
8 dead or in prison for life. I won't personally  
9 take that any longer. And I promise you, I stand  
10 here as a former head of NAACP chapter. As a child  
11 I was raised in the project in the city where we  
12 stood up for the mighty nine.

13           I stand here before you telling you I'm  
14 from rural Mississippi. My grandmother never went  
15 to nobody's school for no reason, and she was the  
16 best OB-GYN that ever hit the state of  
17 Mississippi. When we keep our babies home out of  
18 that mess you calling the school now you cannot pay  
19 for those Mercedes and live in east Memphis. Your  
20 check ain't going to be there.

21           And we are tired of that. You don't need  
22 to hear who is who and what's what here. Hear the  
23 heart of human beings at this point. God -- you  
24 don't have to trick him. Y'all turning a trick on  
25 God, and he don't like it. I hope you know that.

1 He don't like it.

2           Jesus must have been really a -- that's a  
3 word I'm going to use right now -- position in this  
4 world the way we treat people who have long hair  
5 and kind of hang out and don't fit it. We're  
6 around here talking about the education and the  
7 things and you go do this and get you a job, and  
8 it's going to be all right. You know, what school  
9 did Jesus go to? What school did he go to? How  
10 many degrees did he have?

11           You know what we're tired of? We are  
12 tired of overseers who is trading some of the all  
13 white. You know, white men, you ought to be upset  
14 because they done tricked y'all. They got you  
15 hanging out here by yourself. Your women are  
16 claiming to be minority. Ain't that a trip? Why  
17 would they want to be something of that nature?  
18 Are you misusing your women?

19           When we talking about rights and human  
20 rights and civil rights you always say they're  
21 violating the right of minorities and women. What  
22 does that mean? Because, see, I'm a woman, and I  
23 want to know what is different about me that I  
24 don't fit in a regular category of that knew nigger  
25 word minority.

1                   What is this game we are playing here? I  
2                   promise you -- let me tell you what you forgot.  
3                   You forgot that the babies out here that you're  
4                   messing over now are the babies of the baby boom of  
5                   the '60's. We didn't take it then. Do we have to  
6                   burn down America for you to understand that God  
7                   gave us the right to be human beings? Do we have  
8                   to go through that so you can, say, look at this?  
9                   And that's another thing, Brother. I  
10                  brought -- let me tell you what I brought, Reverend  
11                  Gray. I brought a document here, and you know  
12                  what's on it? That's it, look at the buzzer.

13                  How dare you all have the audacity to be  
14                  paid with my taxpayer dollars. You take my  
15                  taxpayer dollars and sit on the bell and have the  
16                  audacity to buzz black folk out of time. And you  
17                  want to know why we're out there doing what we're  
18                  doing? That's all you hear. You don't hear us in  
19                  these facilities. You don't even attempt to hear  
20                  us in these facilities.

21                  You know who these people are? I heard  
22                  the accommodation for you brother and for Mr. Moore  
23                  and whoever. I don't even know this sister's name  
24                  right up here with the white shirt with the blue on  
25                  it. God bless her for getting up in that rain this

1 morning whether or not she had a car because we  
2 didn't make no provisions for poor people to be  
3 here and getting up down here. We see y'all all  
4 the time down here, those of us who are foolish  
5 enough to come down here and play with you.

6 But I want to go back to my statement  
7 because right now as mamma let me tell you what you  
8 don't know about us. When you get through herding  
9 our babies down to 201 Poplar you know what it's  
10 going to take? Because our communication don't  
11 need no phone. When we tell our babies to get on  
12 up and come on out of there you're going to need  
13 Fort Knox, the National guard, the Marines. You're  
14 really going to need God. Because you know who a  
15 black baby is going to listen to? His  
16 mamma -- his mamma.

17 There ain't no gangs in L.A. That's who  
18 used to protect our neighborhood, boys on the  
19 corner. You couldn't come in our neighborhood  
20 unless you had the pass word.

21 You know, there was a cartoon that was  
22 run in the newspaper. There were some European men  
23 and some African American men, and the first  
24 caption said something transpired and the European  
25 man said they did it. Nothing else was needed to

1 be said. They just shot him. And the police went  
2 on down the street and saw boys on a basketball  
3 court playing basketball -- strong, healthy African  
4 American boys. They said, they look like who they  
5 said just did that so we need to shoot them so they  
6 don't go do that. And then they go on down a  
7 little further, and there is a nursery school.  
8 They said, they're going to grow up to be like them  
9 that was playing basketball like them who the  
10 Europeans say did something wrong so we need to  
11 shoot them now to make sure they don't get to that  
12 stage.

13           And then finally, the final caption there  
14 is an African American mother pregnant, and it says  
15 she is carrying that that was in that nursery, that  
16 was playing in that park, that the European said  
17 did that so we need to shoot her because she is the  
18 producer. And let me tell you it's happening in  
19 Memphis.

20           Why does The MED -- this is one for you.  
21 Why does The Med have the highest mortality rate  
22 among Medicare and Medicaid patients? I tell you  
23 why, and I wish he was here. And I hope somebody  
24 tell it to him. I was at The Med. They prioritize  
25 the doctors down there. When the European doctor



1 came in, and I didn't want chemotherapy because  
2 nothing that was wrong with me required  
3 chemotherapy he didn't come in the room no more. I  
4 went to another authority, and he came in to let me  
5 know he didn't like that I said that I had not seen  
6 my so called "doctor."

7 I've been homeless in Memphis. You're  
8 giving -- whoever is giving the money is giving it  
9 to the wrong people. Because I'm homeless, because  
10 I'm unemployed does not mean that I'm stupid?  
11 Somebody needs to understand that. I'm not  
12 stupid. I've done exactly what you have done.  
13 Believe it or not, I've not only dined in the White  
14 House -- I want you to catch this and hold on -- I  
15 smoked my joints in the White House and partied in  
16 the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue in  
17 Washington, D.C. with everybody else through Reagan  
18 and Bush. And let me tell you what, it's easy for  
19 black folks to get up there when they're in there  
20 because they all claim to be democrats so they were  
21 glad to have a few of us.

22 You have done what you have done, and  
23 we're tired of it. It's so full of the devil.  
24 It's so vicious and malicious. If you would just  
25 leave the people alone and let them be human

1 beings. One black boy is a threat. Two are  
2 criminals. Four are gangs. You know, it's just a  
3 preexisting label.

4 Memphis School System told me in 1989,  
5 that over 15,000 thousand children were arrested  
6 out of our schools, and they anticipate the number  
7 would double by the end of the school year. So  
8 that is '89, and this is '92. How many of our  
9 babies in Bellview Junior High School where a  
10 filthy slut got on the public media in this town  
11 and tried to totally destroy an African American  
12 man's career and admitted that she was a slut by  
13 having abortions and how she had been treated. And  
14 she had not been rewarded with a top position in  
15 the school system, and yet our babies go to jail  
16 everyday because the police aren't there to protect  
17 them. They'll take them down to Adams Street. And  
18 I have approached many bodies in this city, and  
19 nobody wants to hear it.

20 My God, the God I serve didn't make  
21 nobody no better than my babies. We have to deal  
22 with that. Stop turning this trick on God. You're  
23 playing cheap -- very cheap.

24 Why is it that we are going through  
25 this? We need to be about it. Understand that

1 we're not rioting. Black folks are not rioting.  
2 We're revolting. There is a big difference. The  
3 word game, the game that you play don't mean  
4 nothing because African American babies put ain't  
5 in the dictionary. You know what we're saying.

6 Tyson -- you keep adding fuel to this  
7 fire. I saw it in Memphis. You did it with Doctor  
8 Herenton here -- racism. You pick up babies like  
9 Mike Tyson and say -- my daughter, I would break  
10 her face and probably plan her funeral if she got  
11 up at one o'clock in the morning. Where is she  
12 going with short shorts on and then into a man's  
13 hotel? What is she going to do? What was there to  
14 sight see in a man's room? But then Americans are  
15 going to say that this brother is vicious. He is  
16 so vicious and malicious that you got to lock him  
17 down and not even give him the opportunity to prove  
18 himself innocent.

19 You're going to take a Caucasian female  
20 and put her in judgment of this man's future? And  
21 if this is the way European females are thinking  
22 about our boys and sitting in judgment then why  
23 does this picture appear?

24 This is Mr. Thomas and his  
25 wife -- Clarence Thomas. There is a trickery going

1 on here. You want to marry them. You want what  
2 they're able to provide, but you want to keep a  
3 limited number.

4 Some of us sisters -- and we already know  
5 we got to walk side by side. We got to match  
6 dollar for dollar. We got to match tear for tear.  
7 We got to match sweat for sweat with our men.  
8 We'll take those since you come and take the cream  
9 of the crop with your racist attitudes and  
10 mentality that you have.

11 What I want to say and I'll sit now,  
12 Reverend Gray, you're not tricking us. You're not  
13 tricking us whether we respond or not. Old folks  
14 told us not to respond to a lot of foolishness. So  
15 while you sit there using big words like apathy,  
16 lackadaisical, uneducated I want to tell you that  
17 you're wrong. And I'm going to repeat, my  
18 grandmother was the best OB-GYN that ever hit  
19 America. When she made 100 Nixon sent her a  
20 birthday card, and the babies she brought into the  
21 world numbered the hundreds. And she had a 100  
22 percent success rate. She didn't go to nobody's  
23 Americanized school. She brought that from home  
24 with her from the mother land. And when something  
25 was wrong with somebody in our community they went

1 to her. And when something was wrong with one of  
2 the Europeans and the Europeans who went to their  
3 schools didn't understand it they came and got  
4 her.

5 Stop tricking us. This isn't about no  
6 education. It's about God given rights. Why does  
7 it take a college degree to be unemployed and  
8 homeless?

9 You don't have no plans to do anything  
10 for the African Americans. I'm talking to you  
11 European men. Come on, we're going to spend some  
12 money on y'all for a minute. Y'all are always  
13 fixing black folks. We ain't broke. You can't  
14 break us. Y'all can't see that after 400 years,  
15 and we're still standing tall?

16 Let's fix the real problem, racism and  
17 racist. Does that mean we need to go get a  
18 psychologist or some psychologists? They can use  
19 their own team if they become effective. Let's  
20 deal with this on a real sense. You know what?  
21 Doctor King showed us how to protect our bodies  
22 from the abuse.

23 My little brothers in L.A. are 100,000  
24 strong, and they ain't going to take no more. And  
25 you know what, everyone of them got a mamma. And

1 we right there behind them so add another 100,000  
2 to that 100,000.

3 Understand, we're tired. You're going to  
4 make us violent people. Does that make you feel  
5 good to make us respond to your violence? You  
6 know, if I stand up here and call somebody a bitch  
7 you would call the police down here, but you call  
8 us poor and ignorant and uninformed and all those  
9 words sound like bitch to me.

10 You got the white sisters trying to tell  
11 us about the law, you know. The law says -- like  
12 for instance on Hunter. Let me give you this, and  
13 I'm going to sit down.

14 Any of you watch Hunter on television?  
15 Pay attention. The little series that begins every  
16 one of his programs every night, the first scene  
17 you see, people, is an African American man with  
18 his arm around a sister's neck with a gun to her  
19 head. And here is Hunter with the gun to shoot him  
20 down to protect who?

21 And the second scene, the only other  
22 scene in that scenario in the beginning of  
23 that -- this comes on every night for our babies to  
24 look at. Hunter has a brother up against the wall  
25 with a gun up against his neck.

1           European females are taking their clothes  
2 off 90 percent of the time they're on television.  
3 White men with guns and European females playing  
4 Superman and Superwoman on our people. You're  
5 telling our children by subliminal suggestion, and  
6 they see that on a daily basis in their lives. And  
7 they have a gun, and they treat the babies they got  
8 on trial here now for murder. And, of course, they  
9 have to be tried as adults.

10           That little white girl killed her mother  
11 in West Memphis, and I have yet to see her picture  
12 on television or in the media. That's racism.  
13 You're trying to make people afraid of my  
14 children. Well, let me tell you, add us to the  
15 list. Be afraid of me too.

16           LEO GRAY: Ms. french, I have a  
17 request of you.

18           dyan french: Yes, sir.

19           LEO GRAY: The allotment of five  
20 minutes was for the sake of hearing all who want to  
21 be heard, and if you would wait until the end of  
22 the hearing to make additional comments you would  
23 like to make we will welcome those at that time.

24           Let me express my appreciation to you for  
25 coming before the Commission and sharing with us

1 your concerns.

2 dyan french: Reverend Gray, I called  
3 a lot of people and told them about this meeting,  
4 and a lot of them couldn't come because of the  
5 storm last night. Power went off, and cars got  
6 flooded and things like that. I just want to say  
7 to you and to your brothers here and all of you  
8 sitting up here I think you're trying to present a  
9 fine gesture, but this is not the way. This is  
10 definitely not the way, and, yes, I will reserve my  
11 comments to the end. Leo Gray, Warren Moore, Harry  
12 Moore and all of the rest of you -- are you Bobby  
13 Doctor?

14 BOBBY DOCTOR: I am.

15 dyan french: I thought I knew you.  
16 You can't fix us. We ain't broke. Fix the  
17 racism. We can tell you how to fix the racism.  
18 You don't need this for us to tell you how. Go  
19 down -- you want to know what you can do about the  
20 jail population? Go down there and ask some of  
21 those sisters and brothers that's in there. You  
22 want to know what you can do about the public  
23 housing? Go talk to some of the people in the  
24 houses. Are you scared to go? I'll go with you.  
25 You want to know where the sisters and brothers are



1 that are out of work and unemployed? I'll tell you  
2 where they are at. I live by them. Let's do it  
3 the right way.

4 God bless you.

5 LEO GRAY: Thank you so much.

6 Earlier we attempted to hear Mr. Parrish,  
7 and he had a video presentation he wanted to make.  
8 Unfortunately, the provisions will only make it  
9 possible for either the panel to see it or the  
10 audience to see one at a time. What I suggest is  
11 that we allow the panel to see it, and then turn  
12 it, Mr. Parrish, and let the audience see. Can we  
13 see that now, and you can continue with your  
14 presentation that you started earlier.

15 WILLIAM PARRISH: Thank you, Mr.  
16 Chairman. Now, as I stated before, this is an  
17 eight-year project and more. As a matter of fact,  
18 it has gone through two administrations, and none  
19 of them seem to lend a helping hand. They always  
20 talked before then about the sky boxes and the  
21 stadiums and all of that, and they should be taking  
22 the tax money that they are going to do this with  
23 and provide the citizens some of these services.  
24 And what we really need to know is what can you do  
25 about the situation? That why we're in this

1 particular hearing. This is just a pet project of  
2 mine. But there are projects like this all over  
3 from Madison to the state line from Airways over to  
4 the river. That's my territory.

5 I didn't bring all of that here today,  
6 but this is something that we have been hounding  
7 and fighting for eight to ten years.

8 We got a new council. We got a new  
9 mayor. Well, we got an at-large councilman trying  
10 to give us some benefit of the doubt. But the only  
11 thing they tell us is that they're out of money.  
12 They want all these football stadiums and  
13 everything.

14 So if you can get that to operate to let  
15 the -- I certainly appreciate the opportunity to  
16 come before this Commission today.

17 As I said, there is a number from -- I  
18 mean a huge number from the state line of Tennessee  
19 and Mississippi up to Madison and from Airways over  
20 here to the Wolf River. And it's problem, problem,  
21 problem. Now is the time for us to get this new  
22 administration in here to help us out with it.

23 LEO GRAY: Are you familiar with the  
24 Urban Agenda that's proposed by the new  
25 administration -- Doctor Herenton's

1 administration?

2 WILLIAM PARRISH: No, that's very  
3 interesting.

4 LEO GRAY: I raised the question  
5 earlier to Doctor Talib Muhammad. And, again, I  
6 said that may be something that we can embrace as  
7 part of this commission and as part of this hearing  
8 and be a part of if we had privy to that document.  
9 It is a document.

10 Then the problems alluded to earlier  
11 touched on housing as I see it, getting services  
12 with tax dollars and properly spending of those  
13 dollars to improve our community as I heard you  
14 earlier.

15 WILLIAM PARRISH: Right.

16 LEO GRAY: Is that what this video  
17 will document or show us?

18 WILLIAM PARRISH: This video has to do  
19 with flooding that we have in Cascade -- Magnolia.  
20 And we have been trying to get something done with  
21 that for, as I said, eight years plus.

22 We got a new councilman and everything.  
23 When she gets her feet wet -- we have been to a  
24 couple of the meetings, but it's impossible to get  
25 anything done. They know where the problem is,

1 too. The Mayor's Access Center down there knows  
2 where the problem is. They know about the concrete  
3 filling in the ditches. It just needs more sewers  
4 or adequate sewers.

5           It looks like we're not going to be able  
6 to --

7           LEO GRAY: Mr. Parrish, she is working  
8 diligently to get that started. Let's take about a  
9 five or ten minute break, and then we'll come  
10 back.

11           And let me say to the audience that it is  
12 worth your staying. We'll take about a ten-minute  
13 break and then come back.

14           (Brief recess.)

15           LEO GRAY: Let me say for the record,  
16 that the members of this panel in no way attempt to  
17 represent the establishment. Many of us are direct  
18 victims of racism and conspiracy and whatever else  
19 you want to name it. Many of us are here sitting  
20 hearing today as wounded healers. So I want you to  
21 understand that.

22           When we come under attack, we understand  
23 your frustrations. We submit ourselves to do that  
24 by coming here, and what we want to do is give you  
25 the forum to be heard.

1           I assure you that this is not just  
2 another hearing. I would not be a part of it if it  
3 was just another hearing. Bobby Doctor who is the  
4 Regional Director of the Civil Rights Commission  
5 tells us about how frustrated he is that he sees  
6 the needs and knows the problem and yet because of  
7 political powers to be that resources are limited,  
8 and yet that must not keep us from hoping and  
9 planning for the day when resources will be  
10 available.

11           I want to express appreciation to some of  
12 you who have not registered to speak before this  
13 panel, but have spoken to us on the side. Ms.  
14 Nellie Powell who is representing Senator Albert  
15 Gore's office said that it needs to take place all  
16 over, even the rural West Tennessee, to hear people  
17 who are frustrated and hurt and broken.

18           So I think those kinds of suggestions  
19 will be adhered to and followed upon, and I want  
20 you to know that.

21           Mr. Henry Parks will follow the  
22 presentation that's now in process.

23           Is it working now? Okay, we're going to  
24 continue with that.

25           Mr. Parrish, would you continue.

1                   WILLIAM PARRISH: Thank you, Mr.  
2 Chairman. I just want this to be shown. Pictures  
3 are worth a thousand words -- one picture is worth  
4 a thousand words. And this has been an ongoing  
5 struggle. As I said, we got a new mayor and a new  
6 councilman, but pretty soon they are going to be  
7 falling in if something don't come across.

8                   LEO GRAY: Is this about a minute?

9                   WILLIAM PARRISH: About a minute,  
10 yeah.

11                  LEO GRAY: We'll show it to the panel,  
12 and then we'll show it to the audience.

13                  (Video tape was shown.)

14                  WILLIAM PARRISH: I just want to say  
15 that southwest Memphis is getting shortchanged.  
16 They are taking in Millington up there and --

17                  LEO GRAY: Cordova.

18                  WILLIAM PARRISH: And they are talking  
19 about annexing Millington, and they have done all  
20 they can do out this way. They are still going up  
21 on our taxes, but we get no results.

22                  Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23                  LEO GRAY: The point I made, Mr.  
24 Parrish, is that the city has been moving in the  
25 east corridor in terms of annexation, and services

1 are immediately being provided. I share that with  
2 you. Foxtown for 20 something years remained part  
3 of the city without services towns. Overnight  
4 Cordova started to receive services.

5 So I think that's the kind of concern we  
6 can speak to the new administration on, and I  
7 believe that we'll get some results. And, again,  
8 this commission wants to stay in touch with you as  
9 you pursue some solutions to those problems.

10 WILLIAM PARRISH: Thank you, Mr.  
11 Chairman. I've got kind of a small group out  
12 there.

13 LEO GRAY: Could you have them to  
14 stand?

15 WILLIAM PARRISH: If don't mind,  
16 please stand.

17 LEO GRAY: Thank you for coming and  
18 sharing with us.

19 Mr. Henry Parks, please.

20 HENRY PARKS: Good afternoon. My name  
21 is Henry Parks, and I live at 3496 Steele. My zip  
22 code is 38117.

23 I work for the City of Memphis. I've  
24 been working for the City of Memphis for ten years  
25 and seven months. And about six or seven months

1 ago they placed me on sick leave. In other words,  
2 I didn't know a person could be placed on sick  
3 leave. I thought after working ten years and seven  
4 months sick leave was mine to request if I needed  
5 it. They placed me on sick leave. In other words,  
6 it wasn't being placed on sick leave. It was being  
7 fired in a nice, nasty way.

8 I wrote letters and got doctors'  
9 statements, and they would not even hear my  
10 doctors' statements and receive them. And they had  
11 me off of my job for five months. Then they said  
12 they would pay me for the five months. They did  
13 not pay me for the five months because I have  
14 documented proof that I did not receive the money.

15 And I wrote the mayor. I got no  
16 response -- a registered letter. I wrote Ms.  
17 Westelle Florez who is the personnel director, and  
18 I never got a response from her -- registered  
19 letter.

20 And Mr. Benny Lendermon, who is the  
21 director of Public Works, he tells me that they can  
22 just put me on sick leave and take my money which  
23 they haven't paid me, and the city is above the  
24 law. They can do like they want to do. So I want  
25 the City of Memphis investigated. I work at the



1 Waste for the Future Plant, and I would like for  
2 you to come out there and go through the place and  
3 check.

4 Whenever it comes to a black person we  
5 have to have training. But our place is just for  
6 people to come into the city, mostly white. They  
7 let people walk into our place and work six, seven  
8 months or a year, and they get promoted over us.

9 I have been working there for ten years  
10 and seven months and never a promotion. I have  
11 cards where they sent back my cards you are not  
12 selected.

13 I have been a mechanic for over 30  
14 years. I was Memphis' diesel mechanic. I have a  
15 perfect attendance where I worked for the City of  
16 Memphis. I have a ten-year pen and a five-year  
17 pen, and people can walk in on my job and make more  
18 money than me.

19 There is a program going on now where a  
20 prisoner can walk into the place and work and pay  
21 his fine at \$15 and \$16 an hour. And I don't make  
22 that much money, and I'm a public employee.

23 I think that this place needs to be  
24 investigated real bad.

25 LEO GRAY: This is the City Works?

1                   HENRY PARKS: I work for Macon Waste  
2 Water Treatment Plant, and it is affiliated with  
3 the City of Memphis. It is a department with the  
4 City of Memphis.

5                   LEO GRAY: Mr. Parks, how long has  
6 your complaint been going on?

7                   HENRY PARKS: My complaint has been  
8 going on ever since October the 7th.

9                   LEO GRAY: October 7. '91?

10                  HENRY PARKS: '91. They put me off  
11 October 7th, and I didn't go back to work until  
12 March 2nd. I wrote letters, doctors' statements  
13 and everything else. I sent the mayor a registered  
14 letter. I sent the Mayor's Action Center a  
15 registered letter. I sent Ms. Florez when she got  
16 her job a registered letter, and nobody gives me  
17 any kind of consideration even the EEOC and  
18 everybody. I had a lawyer. Everybody is afraid of  
19 the City of Memphis. The City of Memphis is above  
20 the law. So I want to know why the City of Memphis  
21 is above the law.

22                  LEO GRAY: Mr. Parks, are you a member  
23 of the employees' union?

24                  HENRY PARKS: Our union is 369 D. And  
25 I was a member of 369 D until about four or five

1 years ago. I would write them. I would call. I  
2 would go over. They never do anything. In other  
3 words, our union seems to be a part of the City of  
4 Memphis. Instead of representing us they represent  
5 the City of Memphis.

6 LEO GRAY: Any questions for  
7 clarification to Mr. Parks from the panel?

8 You said for five months they claimed  
9 they paid you?

10 HENRY PARKS: Yeah, they claim they  
11 paid me.

12 LEO GRAY: Do you have any  
13 verification of that?

14 HENRY PARKS: They brought false  
15 documentation which I did not sign. And I have a  
16 letter here from the personnel department telling  
17 me to come and pay my insurance because I was not  
18 on payroll, and then I also have documentation.

19 I have a card which is from the City of  
20 Memphis Credit Union, and I have payroll  
21 deductibles. And I had to go and pay my car note  
22 out of my pocket. Where is my money at? The  
23 credit union don't have it, and I have to pay my  
24 own insurance. I had to pay my own car note.  
25 Where is my money at? This is documentation that

1 they drew up, I did not sign this because I did  
2 not request it.

3 LEO GRAY: What is that?

4 HENRY PARKS: This is showing that I  
5 was off on sick leave from October until the last  
6 of April.

7 LEO GRAY: With pay?

8 HENRY PARKS: With pay. And I haven't  
9 received no pay. And I go to the payroll  
10 department and ask for my check stubs, and they  
11 wouldn't give me my check stubs. So how can I  
12 receive money when they don't have documents to  
13 prove that? And I have documents to prove that I  
14 didn't receive it.

15 LEO GRAY: Any further questions or  
16 comments?

17 Mr. Parks, I have your phone number and  
18 your address. I'll just refer this to some  
19 division of city government in terms of the new  
20 administration. And the reason I asked how long  
21 the complaint been going is to see whether or not  
22 the new administration had a chance to deal with  
23 it.

24 HENRY PARKS: They have had a chance.  
25 The new administration don't give you no kind of

1 consideration. I'd like to know if the new  
2 administration is a part of the City of Memphis,  
3 and I've been a citizen of the City of Memphis all  
4 my life. And they are getting paid with my money  
5 so why don't I have a chance to talk with them?

6 LEO GRAY: Mr. Parks, I assure you I  
7 will carry this to a division of the city  
8 government, and we will talk with them to make sure  
9 that you are heard.

10 HENRY PARKS: Thank you for your  
11 time.

12 LEO GRAY: Thank you very much.

13 Ms. Ida Guffin?

14 IDA GUFFIN: Mr. Chairman and the  
15 other member of the committee, I'm Ida Guffin. I  
16 had a son killed in 1977 by an off-duty police at  
17 the time that I didn't know, and I was tried for  
18 killing my son. And I don't think I got a fair  
19 trial. And I would like to reopen the case or have  
20 somebody to look into it.

21 LEO GRAY: Mr. Knight, will you get  
22 with Ms. Guffin and make sure she gets your  
23 number. The U.S. Civil Rights Commission can  
24 certainly assist you with that.

25 Any questions of Ms. Guffin from the

1 panel?

2 IDA GUFFIN: I got to live with this  
3 for the rest of my life, and, you know, that's  
4 hard. And I had other members of my family, and  
5 they are going through the same thing. I don't  
6 think it's right.

7 LEO GRAY: Ms. Guffin, are you  
8 receiving any kind of counseling at this point?

9 IDA GUFFIN: Well, the jury sent me to  
10 Mental Health, but, you know, that don't ever go  
11 away.

12 LEO GRAY: I know it doesn't, but the  
13 point is you can work through it with family  
14 counseling and working and talking it out. In the  
15 mean time, Mr. Knight will take your name and the  
16 necessary information to work on your case.

17 IDA GUFFIN: I appreciate it.

18 LEO GRAY: Ms. Guffin, how were you  
19 tried for the murder of your son?

20 IDA GUFFIN: Well, I don't know how I  
21 was tried, but that's the way I was tried.

22 CHARLES STEARNS: Were you present?

23 IDA GUFFIN: The police officer and  
24 his girlfriend was in my driveway, and I asked him  
25 to move. And then one word to another. And they

1 said my son had a gun, but he didn't have a gun.  
2 And it was just turned around. I don't know what  
3 happened. And I was the one put on trial.

4 LEO GRAY: When was this, Ms. Guffin?

5 IDA GUFFIN: It was in 1977. Michael  
6 Wayne Major, and I forget the lady's name right  
7 off.

8 CHARLES STEARNS: You were the  
9 defendant at the trial, correct?

10 IDA GUFFIN: I was supposed to be  
11 represented by Ule Adams.

12 CHARLES STEARNS: You were present  
13 during the trial?

14 IDA GUFFIN: Yes, I was. But they had  
15 Michael Wayne Major's trial before we got to  
16 trial. They told us we weren't supposed to be in  
17 court until a certain time, and when we got down  
18 there the trial already had been. And we had  
19 separate trials.

20 LEO GRAY: Okay.

21 IDA GUFFIN: And I would like for  
22 somebody to look into it.

23 LEO GRAY: Does Mr. Knight have the  
24 information, Ms. Guffin?

25 IDA GUFFIN: He doesn't have my

1 telephone number and my address. And Doctor  
2 Richmond is working with us, and that's why I'm  
3 here today.

4 LEO GRAY: Thank you. I have your  
5 address and phone number, and I will give this to  
6 Mr. Knight. Thank you for coming before us.

7 I would like to recognize Mr. Herman  
8 Ewing of the Memphis Urban League.

9 HERMAN EWING: Thank you, Mr.  
10 Chairman.

11 My name is Herman Ewing. I work for the  
12 Memphis Urban League, and I'm happy to respond to  
13 the invitation to the joint commissions of the U.S.  
14 Civil Rights Commission and the Tennessee Human  
15 Rights Commission to appear here and share  
16 testimony with you on the subjects outlined in the  
17 invitation. I have copies of the testimony here  
18 available for you. I don't have one for each  
19 member, but copies are available.

20 Mr. Moore, Mr. Doctor, and distinguished  
21 members of the joint commission, I am pleased to be  
22 here. On behalf of our chairman, William L.  
23 Taylor, our board and our membership, I am pleased  
24 to respond to this invitation to appear here today  
25 to share with you information we have gathered



1 about public policy and public attitudes on the  
2 issues of housing, police and community relations,  
3 race relations and homelessness.

4           There yet exist one issue in the Memphis  
5 metropolitan area which exacerbates each of the  
6 above named issues. That one issue is that of race  
7 which includes racism, the behavior of racists and  
8 a continuing lack of sensitivity to and respect for  
9 the ethnic differences which predominate this  
10 Memphis community and have done so for more than  
11 150 years. While in the recent past, black  
12 political majorities have accepted and embraced  
13 the white candidates for political office, no such  
14 majority has been manifested for by whites for the  
15 candidacy of African American candidates for  
16 political office.

17           This mentality carries over into the  
18 allocation of funds by governmental sources,  
19 legislative and executive, for especially high  
20 economic impact programs which have great potential  
21 to make dependent people independently productive.

22           Now, I would be remiss in the timing of  
23 this if I passed up this opportunity to cite one  
24 case that does relate to the Memphis Urban League,  
25 but it is symbolic of how it relates to a number of

1 institutions the League included. There are some  
2 five thousand requests for housing on the waiting  
3 list of the Memphis Housing Authority, at least  
4 5,000. I think it is more like 7,500. For the  
5 most part, these are requests from African American  
6 families. There exists no serious public  
7 discussion about providing housing stock to  
8 accommodate these needs. I say serious public  
9 discussion. Yet, the discussions about a new  
10 football stadium to pursue the quest for an NFL  
11 team to me has heavy racism implications in view of  
12 the aforementioned need. Please understand that  
13 this illustration is not a statement of opposition  
14 to the NFL coming to Memphis. Is it a statement  
15 about priorities which have racial implications  
16 making last things first.

17           The League operates the computer training  
18 center, and that's run for the benefit of the  
19 entire Memphis community. It has achieved records  
20 of unparalleled success in transforming public  
21 assistance recipients into independently productive  
22 citizens.

23           The League now faces a 75 percent  
24 reduction in support for an operation which has  
25 placed more than 86 percent of its graduates in

1 meaningful productive jobs. The tax benefit alone  
2 for this function to the City of Memphis directly  
3 from the 508 graduates is more than \$450,000  
4 annually or more than a \$5.9 million income now  
5 enjoyed by these graduates. The League finds it  
6 difficult in getting responses to its request of  
7 local government for \$119,000 to close a funding  
8 gap. Further, the net public benefit per capita  
9 for the average graduate is more than \$3,600 the  
10 first year of training and \$7,200 each succeeding  
11 year. This represents a difference between  
12 payments to recipients by government in the form of  
13 unemployment compensation, AFDC, food stamps,  
14 transportation allowances, baby-sitting allowances,  
15 and other forms of public support. The federal,  
16 state and local tax contribution of these graduates  
17 represents a difference between that support and  
18 the federal and state and local tax contribution of  
19 the graduates from their own independently earned  
20 income. The net difference between the two is  
21 derived in what we call the necessity public  
22 benefit.

23           The most recent census continues to show  
24 that African Americans continue to reflect a  
25 household income of less than 55 percent of that of

1 whites in this Memphis community. There seems to  
2 be no collective public policy or collective public  
3 will to change this outcome.

4 We have yet to see governmental  
5 legislative bodies submit to long-term funding and  
6 resources for closing the educational deficit of  
7 the African American children which predominate  
8 inner-city schools.

9 These are but a few of the public policy  
10 problems which cause a disparate effect in the  
11 quality of life for more than half of the people of  
12 this city who are African American.

13 Attached to this presentation to you is a  
14 speech made to the membership of the Memphis Urban  
15 League regarding the nature of our most serious  
16 problem in this society and two recommendations for  
17 remedy. You will find contained in that speech a  
18 reference to the fact that we have in the south  
19 large newspapers daily expressed in opposition to  
20 the 1991 Civil Rights Act as it was proposed and  
21 later became and was passed and put into  
22 operation. It was passed by the Congress and  
23 finally signed by the President in 1991. That  
24 local newspaper took the position of opposition to  
25 the passage of that act. It is interesting to note

1 that the editor of that newspaper decided that the  
2 editorial position of the newspaper would be in  
3 opposition to the act.

4 Now, here is where the arrogance comes  
5 in. Of the four senior black journalists that  
6 serve on the staff of that newspaper not one of  
7 them was consulted about that editorial opinion.  
8 That, in my opinion, predominates and identifies  
9 another stream of the decision making which I think  
10 is arrogant and insensitive and down right elite.  
11 And I think this is a major problem that continues  
12 to predominate.

13 Now, I don't say that to you to suggest  
14 that these commissions can legislate a change in  
15 that kind of behavior. I don't suggest that you  
16 can do this, but I do think that you can highlight  
17 such arrogance in the leaders and bring to the  
18 front, to the forum, to the public view these kinds  
19 of behavior. Such that those who made decisions in  
20 that way are embarrassed about those decisions at  
21 least.

22 Mr. Chairman, rather than to continue  
23 with a long stream of examples I think any time  
24 that you would want to give to further discussions  
25 would be best served by any questions that you

1 might have of me.

2 LEO GRAY: Mr. Ewing, we appreciate  
3 you coming and sharing with us from the Urban  
4 League.

5 You mentioned this newspaper.  
6 Specifically what paper is that?

7 HERMAN EWING: Mr. Chairman, what I'm  
8 trying to do --

9 LEO GRAY: I understand your  
10 diplomacy. Is it a local newspaper?

11 HERMAN EWING: It could be. It could  
12 be.

13 HARRY MOORE: Mr. Ewing? Right here.  
14 Harry Moore.

15 HERMAN EWING: Yes, sir.

16 HARRY MOORE: This same newspaper  
17 you're talking back in 1892 editorialized in favor  
18 of lynching black people. It editorialized in 1955  
19 by saying that the decision of Emit Teal was a  
20 white one because it would have been overthrown in  
21 any other court in the land. That's a bunch of a  
22 malarky especially if you know anything about the  
23 Emit Teal case.

24 I'm not at all surprised that this same  
25 newspaper you're talking about opposes editorially

1 the decision of the Congress to pass the Civil  
2 Rights Act bill in 1991.

3 That's part of our major problem in this  
4 city is that we do not have a free press. We have  
5 a press that is bound to yesterday.

6 HERMAN EWING: I'm not surprised  
7 either, but I think perhaps the most critical  
8 negative about that is that it was done in such an  
9 arrogant way that there was no -- in the mind of  
10 the decision maker there was no need to  
11 consult -- just consult with the black journalists  
12 on the staff.

13 LEO GRAY: Thank you for coming.

14 JOCELYN WURZBURG: Thank you.

15 I would like to thank Mr. Ewing for his  
16 attendance today and remind the audience and this  
17 Commission that he was former member of both of  
18 these institutions, the Tennessee Commission for  
19 Human Rights and the Civil Rights Commission at one  
20 time.

21 At a meeting last night, Mr. Ewing, there  
22 was some discussion about state funds for training  
23 being returned to the state every year because of  
24 some form of inactivity here on the local  
25 governmental level to make sure that some of this

1 money got into those non profit or otherwise  
2 institutions who were willing to train and both who  
3 needed it. I am wondering if that commissioner who  
4 spoke of it last night will reiterate further.

5                   LEO GRAY: I mentioned that,  
6 Commissioner Wurzburg. The point that we had in  
7 that meeting was for state representatives to share  
8 with us was that the City of Memphis was returning  
9 to the state government unused dollars for failure  
10 of implementing programs that brought about  
11 training for young people.

12                   HERMAN EWING: The information is  
13 correct, sir.

14                   LEO GRAY: It's correct?

15                   HERMAN EWING: Yes, sir.

16                   JOCELYN WURZBURG: Explain to me how  
17 that works. What's happening here?

18                   HERMAN EWING: I'm not that smart, Ms.  
19 Wurzburg. The ones who did that are a lot smarter  
20 than I. I don't know how that happened. Suffice  
21 it to say this. Okay, let's get into it.

22                   We have at the state level a set of  
23 bureaucrats who interpret and re-interpret federal  
24 regulations, and they interpret those regulations  
25 in Tennessee. And the re-interpretation calls for



1 even more complex combinations of performance  
2 requirements and monitoring requirements and  
3 instructory requirements so that by the time you  
4 get through going through all of those changes the  
5 period for the allocation for the money is over.

6 Now, you add to that a local staff that  
7 has a limited period of experience of implementing  
8 the entire program, and what you have got is a  
9 local group of people depending on the state people  
10 to tell them what to do. And the state people, in  
11 terms of telling them what to do, simply do  
12 whatever they think or feel is appropriate.

13 We have cases of information getting to  
14 the legislative body which is a private industry  
15 council. We even have even experienced a case  
16 where we have to interpret correctly the  
17 regulations to the oversight staff. We experienced  
18 that.

19 Now, I'm not trying to cause tension and  
20 friction between the staff of the League and the  
21 staff of the local operation, but I'm simply saying  
22 to you that the kinds of whatever called convoluted  
23 regulations which are difficult to interpret and  
24 even more difficult to implement.

25 I mean, for example, and this is

1 certainly an exaggeration. There is some money  
2 that cannot be spent except for somebody who has  
3 six fingers on their left hand. And, therefore, by  
4 the time you find somebody who fits that  
5 requirement the time is far spent, and the dollars  
6 are conserved.

7 I would think that we would be best  
8 served by developing a state plan that represents  
9 the needs of local communities and that local  
10 communities ought to develop the plan and develop  
11 some integrity assurances for their implementation  
12 of the plan and tell the state people to bug off.  
13 Now, that's the same thing that the state has said  
14 about the Fed's, but that's the kind of situation  
15 that we have.

16 LEO GRAY: The decision to turn money  
17 back to the state in addition to the convoluted  
18 regulations you mentioned, is that a decision made  
19 by city administration?

20 HERMAN EWING: It's not a decision.  
21 It's a consequence. It is an outcome of all of  
22 these other things. I don't think that anyone  
23 deliberately decided that we were going to turn  
24 this money back to the state. I mean, you know, I  
25 don't want to ascribe that result to the

1 decision-making process. It is just a consequence  
2 of the convolution.

3 LEO GRAY: What you're speaking of is  
4 just a lack of sophistication.

5 HERMAN EWING: And also some expertise  
6 in operating manpower appropriately.

7 LEO GRAY: That's what I'm saying.

8 HERMAN EWING: We're often told what  
9 we can't do rather than told how to do what we need  
10 to get done.

11 JOCELYN WURZBURG: My problem with  
12 what we heard last night is under some previous  
13 federal administrations years ago there was  
14 developed a program called CETA, Comprehensive  
15 Education and Training Association. And I am  
16 remembering that there was emergency legislation as  
17 a result of riots following the death of Doctor  
18 King in which Memphis -- and that was a lot of  
19 money back then -- was to receive \$6 million. And  
20 within 30 to 40 days there were programs developed  
21 emanating from the not-for-profit organizations  
22 here in our city who came up with the development  
23 and the fruition of putting training into place.

24 Now, if that could be done in 30 to 40  
25 days back in 19 what -- '69, '68 and every bit of

1 that money got disseminated wisely and performed  
2 wisely, I don't see what is happening today. And  
3 it just alludes me how that could be.

4           And let me state that today I haven't  
5 made a whole lot of contribution to this meeting,  
6 but I have noted two previous cruelties. Number  
7 one, blaming the victim for the problem. Number  
8 two, not even asking the victim their opinion in  
9 solving the problem which denigrates their person.  
10 And number three, is that some people develop  
11 programs that are obviously programed to fail. And  
12 that is a cruel host, and if it's not programmed to  
13 succeed don't even raise our hopes and expectations  
14 up for it.

15           HERMAN EWING: Ms. Wurzburg, your  
16 point is well taken. Let me say that there is the  
17 bureaucratic mentality on the state level in some  
18 departments -- not all but some of the tenured  
19 long-term bureaucrats, the ones that have been  
20 there longer than the politicians will be, they  
21 have some traditional attitudes that reflect that  
22 no matter what you say we're going to do it this  
23 way. And those get -- plus at the risk of being  
24 considered an elitist myself, they are not the most  
25 innovated minds that we have in this state. And

1 they are comfortable with status quo and doing  
2 business as usual in the good-old-boy network and  
3 all of those things.

4 We are involved in negotiation of a  
5 contract now where we are running into those kinds  
6 of problems with a state bureaucracy. I'm simply  
7 saying that until those kind of things are  
8 changed -- a change in personnel, a change in  
9 attitude, a change in the prospective in terms of  
10 the way things are conducted -- until changes occur  
11 there, we will continue to be doing these kinds of  
12 things that we're doing.

13 Now, what the people here hopefully will  
14 tell you is that they have been cut from \$2.5  
15 million three or four years ago down to \$900,000  
16 now. And they will tell you that that's the reason  
17 for the 75 percent cut in funds allocated to the  
18 League. I would say not so. There is not another  
19 training operation that can share with you the  
20 numbers that we just shared in terms of tax  
21 consequences for the city, \$5 million of annual  
22 income among the graduates and \$450,000 a year in  
23 taxes directly to the city. There is not another  
24 institution that can share that kind of output in  
25 those terms.

1           So, again, we have a legislative body  
2 making its decision on the theory that we're going  
3 to try to give everybody some money rather than  
4 looking and focusing on what excellence is. Well,  
5 if we're not excellent, if we're the fourth best  
6 then we're the fourth best. It would seem that the  
7 priority ought to be to fund that which is  
8 excellent which is doing the good job and is  
9 strong. And this is not, as I said, from the idea  
10 that you all should spread some money around some  
11 for you and some for you and some for you. That's  
12 the other part of the story.

13           Now, I would say that you should  
14 understand that the staff and the private industry  
15 council are really very much like governmental  
16 legislative people. In terms of setting priorities  
17 and standards, not so. We have budgeting process  
18 going on here right now in this city. Is it based  
19 on priorities and standards? No. That's not the  
20 way to make effective decision for the future  
21 health and growth of this community.

22           LEO GRAY: Thank you, Mr. Ewing.

23           BOBBY DOCTOR: Mr. Ewing, before you  
24 leave I'd like to ask you a question if I may.  
25 Clearly this particular hearing is designed to

1 evaluate and measure racial tensions in this  
2 community.

3 HERMAN EWING: Yes, sir.

4 BOBBY DOCTOR: I'd like to ask in your  
5 opinion are racial tensions in the city of Memphis,  
6 Tennessee on the increase?

7 HERMAN EWING: I think that where  
8 there is a real clash between cultures -- see, some  
9 people would say no, but I would say to you that  
10 when people in one part of the city say no taxes  
11 for those -- no new taxes for those people down  
12 there -- that is in quotes "those people down  
13 there" -- that that is a reflection of racial  
14 tension. I would suggest to you that when we  
15 decide to give priority to -- I know I'm going to  
16 step on somebody's toes, but I have got to do it.  
17 When we decide to give priority to the arts and to  
18 the zoo as opposed to closing the deficit  
19 educationally for inner city kids I say to you  
20 that's racial tension.

21 In my opinion, yes, tensions are very,  
22 very, clearly polarized. The polarity is there.  
23 But the fact about it is except for the courageous  
24 few people who are sitting behind me now, people  
25 are not going to come down here and tap their hands

1 on this table in front of the City Council.  
2 They're not going to come down and attempt to  
3 protest. They're just delaying the process that  
4 they feel shut out of. And they are certainly not  
5 going to do that.

6 The measurement of that has to be and the  
7 provocative language of those who would hold to the  
8 status quo by one means or another versus those who  
9 clearly need and understand the need for change.

10 We have had some changes to occur here.  
11 The fact that we have some semblance of peace and  
12 reasonable living standards and the values restored  
13 to Hurt Village is certainly one indication of  
14 change. It is symbolic. It has to spread to  
15 others. But by the same token, to do that cost  
16 money. It has been a neglected item. There are  
17 matters that have been neglected, and we have to  
18 correct that.

19 What we have here is a disregard and a  
20 disrespect for the positions advocated by black  
21 leadership. Let us not be fooled by the fact that  
22 we have a mayor who is black -- African American if  
23 you please. Excuse me, I'm not much on what you  
24 call me unless it's rich. Yes, we have an African  
25 American mayor. And we have an almost majority of



1 members of Council who are African Americans. I  
2 say, yes, to you that we have substantial  
3 tensions.

4 LEO GRAY: Thank you, Mr. Ewing.

5 I want to ask the staff to check with the  
6 administration to see whomever is responsible for  
7 the negotiation to take place in this room at 1:00  
8 to see if it is at all possible for them to move  
9 that negotiation section somewhere else. We still  
10 have a lot of people who want to be heard, and this  
11 Commission wants to hear those people.

12 And, Warren, will you look into that for  
13 us to see if it is all possible that negotiation  
14 can be held somewhere else?

15 Ms. Mary Ellen Baker?

16 MARY ELLEN BAKER: Thank you, Mr.  
17 Chairman. I was late for a good reason. I have a  
18 mother who is 92, and I had to go get her out of  
19 the bed. So I'm pleased to be here.

20 LEO GRAY: That's a good reason for  
21 being late. I want you to know that.

22 MARY ELLEN BAKER: I don't really know  
23 how to address you, but I think you need to know a  
24 little about me before I start asking you to do  
25 something for me. I am a product from Louisiana

1 and Mississippi. My grandparents are from France  
2 and Africa.

3 Growing up I often asked myself why was I  
4 black when my skin wasn't black. I looked at my  
5 mother, and she was black. I looked at my  
6 grandmother who had hair down to her ankles, and I  
7 said who am I. I did find out. I was placed in  
8 America, and I am pleased to be here. American has  
9 been everything to me.

10 First of all, the thing that I have seen  
11 in this city in Shelby County and the building of  
12 the city and the moving of the city, I was often  
13 asked of myself as a taxpayer why can't we get  
14 anything done where I live on Trigg Avenue. I live  
15 in a new house -- 45 years old. We built  
16 it -- struggled. I live there. The Stone's are  
17 still where they are. We have had everybody that  
18 was somebody in Memphis, Tennessee. Whenever you  
19 want something good you got to leave the  
20 neighborhood.

21 I am there to produce the very best that  
22 I can. Being a past PTA president and raising six  
23 children to come out with good jobs I feel other  
24 people can do that.

25 I talk to the young people, and they tell

1 me the things that I used to hear from my  
2 children. I now have ten grandchildren. I have  
3 one that will graduate in a few weeks from White  
4 Station.

5 We teach in our household that you are a  
6 human being. We teach in our household nobody is  
7 better than anybody else if he does not have  
8 conduct. Recommendation goes ahead. I don't care  
9 if you live on the moon. Conduct good will put you  
10 where you need to be with everybody and  
11 everything. You will fail if you're a liar. You  
12 will fail if you steal. And to be retired from an  
13 insurance company, they gave me that little pension  
14 check, but I sure did take it. I would like to  
15 tell you with the money that I got they tell me now  
16 this is not for us. It was for you. I was one of  
17 the six to pass the ROTC. I'm a person that don't  
18 like to speak. I like to sit and listen to see  
19 what you're doing and if I can, do better.

20 I wanted to be different, and I am.  
21 Because truth will put you in a place where you  
22 need to be. I was recommended by my company, by  
23 training other whites to go into the black areas  
24 because they were afraid to go. I live out there.  
25 I am a widower of 36 years, 6 months, 10 days and 7

1 hours with the man I loved, the man I married, and  
2 the man that I miss as my husband. I married him  
3 in my mother's house after he came home from  
4 service.

5 But I would like to tell you today that  
6 we need help where we live. I am president of the  
7 Southwest Civic Club. What can I do for my  
8 community to get the people to come out and see our  
9 streets? If it had not been for the Mayor's Action  
10 Program tired of putting our area down where I live  
11 and everything. I didn't move. I'm still there.  
12 I have never been a runner, and I don't intent to  
13 be. If there is something that I can do for my  
14 community without my headlights shining at my  
15 house -- I help with the runaways. I have done  
16 that. I don't care about that. I want to help the  
17 young people. My children and your children and  
18 your children's children. And if I can't do that  
19 with the help of you and the other people that  
20 intends to treat me as a human being not as an  
21 individual just human don't turn the page from my  
22 grandson or my son.

23 I know what it is you're talking about.  
24 I remember well. But who can tell me what we are  
25 going to do. That is good. That is history. You

1 one day will be history also. And my history for  
2 me is to help individuals. And this is something  
3 that goes along in our community among the blacks  
4 and white. Where do you live? You live in the  
5 ghetto. Well, I'm not a ghetto person. I do live  
6 in the ghetto. I consider my house as good as  
7 anyone else's house. We built it. We did best we  
8 could. He worked two and three jobs. He was an  
9 accountant. People say you don't make any more  
10 than me. My children were stuck there. And they  
11 are now in Colorado and Las Vegas, and they work.

12 We want the youth in our community to  
13 have the same atmosphere that other children have.  
14 But they have not had it. When I drive in an area  
15 and see some little children and I ask them why  
16 they are standing on the corner they say they don't  
17 have anything else to do. Why don't they have  
18 something else to do? Because nobody cares. I  
19 cannot do it alone because the other people have  
20 sold their home, and they have moved out.

21 The rental agencies rent to anybody. And  
22 we are getting all of the leftovers from the  
23 project. We are getting leftovers from every dirty  
24 thing that comes down in our area. We can only get  
25 our councilman there one time. He will not come.

1 Thank God he did come one time this year.

2 We need to know in our neighborhood and  
3 all the other ghetto neighborhoods as you call  
4 them. I guess because they're running out of  
5 houses. You can't have a house without money. You  
6 cannot have money without a job. I would like to  
7 know if there is ever going to be any money  
8 allotted in our area where we can build homes,  
9 build community areas in that section of the city  
10 where we have the younger people because they are  
11 dying from drugs. They're dying from lack of human  
12 care. People care about the beauty. They care  
13 about who is doing something. They are copy cats  
14 of our day. I always learned that a copy cat never  
15 got anywhere. You got to know for yourself.

16 If it's possible will you send us the  
17 information to the Southwest Civic Club, addressed  
18 to Mary Baker at 142 East Trigg at 38106 where we  
19 in our area can help the young people.

20 And I would like to tell you people, you  
21 may not believe it, but if you don't do good to the  
22 young people and for their future I don't know  
23 where we will go. You need not think you're going  
24 to live forever because you're not. There is no  
25 way to hide the truth. So you know from the

1 ministers and the people who hold positions if you  
2 fail us and they fail the young people you have  
3 failed. Your history may be good for some people,  
4 but it will not be good to the human race.

5 I want to thank you for taking me, and I  
6 want you to please consider that we want everything  
7 every other neighborhood gets -- even a brick  
8 fence. We want it all. And we're asking for the  
9 top line. Thank you.

10 LEO GRAY: Thank you, Ms. Baker. Any  
11 questions of Ms. Baker?

12 You said it all. We appreciate you  
13 coming in. You will hear from you.

14 I'm going to ask Ms. Joan Nelson to come  
15 and then Ms. Maxine Smith from the NAACP will  
16 follow her.

17 JOAN NELSON: Good morning or good  
18 afternoon to you all. I am honored to be before  
19 you and to have you in our city.

20 I agree with your conclusion that Memphis  
21 is one of the most racist cities in the United  
22 States, and I appreciate your coming in to hear  
23 what we who live and work here in Memphis have to  
24 say. But I come to tell you that Memphis is the  
25 most racist city in the United States. And it

1 always has been. There is proof, and in the few  
2 minutes you have allowed me I will try to offer you  
3 this evidence.

4 It also stands that the African people  
5 are the most oppressed of any in the United  
6 States. Looking at the history of Memphis as I  
7 have been privileged to do in the nine years or so  
8 that I have associated as part owner of Heritage  
9 Tours, Incorporated, we have researched much of  
10 this city's history, the history of African people  
11 who were brought here some 430 odd years ago to  
12 this country. Coming into Memphis around while the  
13 native Americans were here when we were here also  
14 but then being brought here as slaves into this  
15 area Memphis being first settled by the Winchesters  
16 and Overtons and Andrew Jackson that became  
17 president of the United States. Memphis was a key  
18 area being situated on the banks of the Mississippi  
19 River. Named, of course, for the ancient city of  
20 Memphis, Egypt on the Nile River.

21 From the very beginning, and not just in  
22 recent years because of Federal Express or the  
23 railroad system, is Memphis called the distribution  
24 center. It was known as that also because it  
25 distributed more slaves from this area. The river



1 access caused Memphis to be one of the greatest  
2 slave trading areas in the world as it was  
3 advertised by one of the foremost slave traders,  
4 William Bolton, from whom one of our well known  
5 high schools is named today.

6           Being brought into America and subjected  
7 to the dehumanization from the very beginning this  
8 caused not only physical slavery but a  
9 psychological slavery that is present to this very  
10 day. The fact also that when African people were  
11 blessed and fortune to become so called emancipated  
12 and were working towards our freedom setting up  
13 businesses, what was called the very first urban  
14 riots took place right in the United States took  
15 place here in Memphis one year after the  
16 Emancipation Proclamation was signed.

17           Tennessee was one of the last states to  
18 free its slaves along with Texas. Slaves in  
19 Tennessee were slaves two years even longer than  
20 other states. When that did happen and black  
21 people in this area started setting up their  
22 businesses this mass riot took place, and the daily  
23 newspaper, one of the ones that has been mentioned  
24 today -- it was then called the Daily Appeal,  
25 forerunner of the now Commercial Appeal -- stated

1 that the reason for the mass riot was the presence  
2 of blacks in this area. That is the only reason  
3 that was given for a massacre that lasted, the  
4 history says, for three days. The president of the  
5 United States had to declare martial law here in  
6 Memphis to stop the wholesale killing of black  
7 people.

8 We were progressing as people. Mr.  
9 Roberts R. Church, the first black millionaire in  
10 the United States, had his empire here in Memphis.  
11 He had the first black-owned bank.

12 Having actually saved Memphis from  
13 destruction during the yellow fever epidemics of  
14 the 1860's and 1870's, Memphis lost its charter and  
15 was reduced to a taxing district of the state of  
16 Tennessee. Having been saved by Mr. Church by him  
17 putting up the first money and also having been  
18 saved because most of the  
19 whites -- unfortunately, it was largely whites that  
20 were affected by this fever. There was something  
21 in our immune system from Africa that black people  
22 were immune. Consequently, it was blacks in the  
23 city who saved the few remaining whites, protected  
24 the city with black soldiers and guards, and the  
25 McClellan guards set up camp in Court Square, the

1 park downtown and acted to govern the citizens  
2 rationing food to citizens that were left and  
3 protecting the businesses of the whites that were  
4 left. Mr. Church provided the first  
5 money -- bought the first bond in order to save the  
6 city.

7           It has been blacks in this city who have  
8 protected, who have built, who have contributed  
9 all, and we still are. Yet, we are the most  
10 oppressed. The Ku Klux Klan during the days of  
11 slavery being founded in this city. A daily symbol  
12 of our oppression is the statute of General Nathan  
13 Bedford Forrest that stands on Union Avenue. The  
14 founder of the Ku Klux Klan the mind of the Klan  
15 being born here in Memphis, General Forrest stands  
16 as a testament to the daily oppression. Nowhere in  
17 the world would any people who respect themselves  
18 or who have been taught not to respect themselves  
19 would allow a statute of their great oppression.

20           Forrest had a breeding farm where he  
21 bred his own slaves. His slave market located  
22 at the corner of Third and Adams, one of largest  
23 slave traders in the world, led the massacre at  
24 Fort Pillow, Tennessee that slaughtered nearly 500  
25 black soldiers and their wives and children.

1           It is this mind that still exists here in  
2 Memphis today. When we look at the  
3 community -- the devastation of not only the  
4 physical structure of our community -- and I  
5 appreciate what Ms. Baker said. When you look at  
6 what has happened and the systemized and  
7 institutionalized racism and prejudice that exists  
8 in this city, it is a wonder that African people in  
9 this city have survived as long as we have.

10           There is not a willingness on the part of  
11 the status quo to make a change. Unless this  
12 happens, just like other communities this one too  
13 will self destruct. Unless something happens and  
14 unless it is taken seriously and unless it is made  
15 a priority in this city and others the only thing  
16 that can happen is for us to go deeper and deeper  
17 into destruction. No city can stand divided just  
18 as a house cannot stand divided.

19           The gap is there. The division will  
20 always be there until a willingness is developed.  
21 And we would like to ask you to work with us here  
22 in Memphis.

23           We appreciate your coming to listen to us  
24 today, but do not leave us like this. Work with us  
25 to make Memphis the city that it can be. If there

1 is just a willingness to make some necessary  
2 changes I wonder what it's like to look in the face  
3 of people that you know what is happening to them,  
4 and many of them don't know themselves.

5           The Memphis massacre that took place in  
6 1966 that devastated this community, thousands of  
7 blacks left running for the country. Ida B. Wells  
8 who published her newspaper on Beale Street wrote  
9 about the lynching of three businessmen. They were  
10 put in jail simply for trying to operate their  
11 businesses. They were shot to pieces. Both were  
12 mutilated, and their eyes were gouged out simply  
13 for trying to open a business in this so called  
14 free enterprise system.

15           This is the type of oppression that we  
16 suffer from and always have. We ask your help and  
17 your consideration and willingness in presenting  
18 this information to you, and I appreciate your  
19 time.

20           LEO GRAY: Thank you, Ms. Nelson. Any  
21 questions or comments?

22           HARRY MOORE: I would appreciate for  
23 the benefit of my friends on this panel who are not  
24 from Memphis -- you alluded to your business,  
25 Heritage Tours. Would you take a couple of

1 minutes. This is one of the best kept secrets in  
2 Memphis unfortunately. Maybe that's not the best  
3 way to say it, but anyway, everybody in this city  
4 needs to take your tour and learn from you. And I  
5 would like for you to take a minute or two and  
6 explain to the rest of the group what you do.

7 JOAN NELSON: I would be glad to,  
8 Doctor Moore.

9 I'm co-owner along with my sister, Elaine  
10 Turner, of Heritage Tours, Incorporated. We  
11 started about almost nine years ago here in Memphis  
12 as the first black-owned tour company in the state  
13 of Tennessee and, of course, the only black-owned  
14 tour company that focuses on the history of  
15 Memphis.

16 Our particular focus is the history of  
17 African people in Memphis particularly in this  
18 state and in the United States. It is a unique  
19 history, and we have been very fortunate and  
20 blessed to find a lot of information about this  
21 city that can help it to heal itself. There are  
22 reasons why Memphis is the way it is as with  
23 anything.

24 And I might add that before my sister and  
25 I started Heritage Tours I was a social worker and

1 job counselor for the City of Memphis in public  
2 housing projects. I have worked in most of the  
3 public housing projects in the city. And,  
4 Commissioner Wurzburg, I can appreciate your  
5 mentioning the CETA program because it was during  
6 that period that I worked as a job counselor for  
7 the CETA program. That actually is why I started  
8 Heritage Tours. I was laid off from the city  
9 during the budget cuts of the Reagan years. And  
10 that program -- the social programs and human  
11 services programs were cut from the city, and now I  
12 think there's very little of the social programs or  
13 training in CETA that exists.

14 Memphis has a history like none other.  
15 As I mentioned, the oppression has been greater  
16 because more has happened to the black people here  
17 in Memphis than any other city and of a wide range  
18 or a broad range of effect.

19 The assassination of Doctor King in  
20 Memphis, of course, is one that no other people  
21 suffered and did not take as personally as we did  
22 and still do because that murder has not been  
23 solved. We know that here in Memphis he was  
24 murdered right before our eyes.

25 Psychological oppression is what we're

1 suffering from now. Anytime the people are  
2 dehumanized and nothing is done to correct that,  
3 then it's natural and unless something is done to  
4 help and to certainly not to hinder.

5           As I said, Robert R. Church had an empire  
6 here in Memphis, and as a sociologist to some  
7 extent I have to look at the why's of these things  
8 and what happened. If we see the conditions of our  
9 people here in Memphis the necessary question that  
10 we need to ask is has it always been this way, and  
11 if not, what happened. The only way you can find  
12 that out is to know the history, and that's what we  
13 try to find and just have been able to put a few  
14 things together as far as the history. We have to  
15 go back to know what happened.

16           If you're sick and cannot get well you  
17 have to go back and see what some of the symptoms  
18 are -- what caused that. And this is a sick city.  
19 Is very, very sick as far as black people are  
20 concerned.

21           The Memphis massacre had just a  
22 devastating effect on the black community. So  
23 people who stayed here and did not run away had to  
24 take a cowardice type of approach because of so  
25 much oppression.



1           The Ku Klux Klan being founded here in  
2 Memphis the mind of the Klan every year on July  
3 15th -- that is the birth date of General Nathan  
4 Bedford Forrest -- there are 300 or 400 of the very  
5 prominent citizens who pay tribute to General  
6 Nathan Bedford Forrest each and every year with a  
7 prayer service and placing a memorial wreath at his  
8 grave site. This goes on right to this day. So  
9 we're looking at the mind set. If people do not  
10 want to change they will not.

11           LEO GRAY: Ms. Nelson, thank you. As  
12 you started to leave Bobby Doctor said excellent,  
13 and I will echo that. Thank you very much.

14           I'm going to ask Maxine Smith to come.

15           JOCELYN WURZBURG: While Ms. Smith is  
16 coming to the microphone I would like to state that  
17 it has been a secret to some, but Ms. Nelson and  
18 her sister, Ms. Turner, as is our next speaker, Ms.  
19 Smith, have all been honored as women of  
20 achievement here in Memphis, and we're very proud  
21 of them.

22           I would also like to say that a little  
23 bit ago somebody asked, and I think in somewhat of  
24 a disparaging tone of voice, where is the NAACP.  
25 Well, I started to say that I'm a member of the

1 NAACP. In fact, it took me a long time to pay it  
2 off, but I'm a golden heritage member of the  
3 NAACP. But I didn't say that because I knew that  
4 the NAACP would be here. And the reason I knew it  
5 is because the Memphis branch of the NAACP has  
6 always been here.

7 Thank you, Ms. Smith.

8 MAXINE SMITH: Thank you so much, Ms.  
9 Wurzburg, and Chairman Gray and to all of you.  
10 It's been a long time of getting together. I want  
11 to commend you on your stick-to-it-ive-ness. Bobby  
12 Doctor, so glad to have you back in Memphis.

13 To all of you on the distinguished panel  
14 from the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights and our  
15 Tennessee Commission on Human Rights, I don't want  
16 to be repetitive. And I know a lot of people  
17 around and understand some are bound to have told  
18 you the status of things in Memphis. And just to  
19 answer that question, I've been at City Hall since  
20 9:00 this morning at the call of the mayor who is  
21 announcing programs to address some of these  
22 critical problems that face us as a city and as  
23 people.

24 I want to commend Joan Nelson. Joan was  
25 one of the little bity children in the movement

1 back in the 1960's. The whole family was  
2 committed. They were there. There were at least  
3 nine children with the support of a mother and  
4 father. When we would get one or two of them out  
5 they would throw them back in, and this type of  
6 life-long involvement perhaps gives her the level  
7 of understanding of history that she obviously  
8 has. And I'm so proud, Joan, for what you and  
9 Elaine are doing in this community. That type of  
10 involvement, I think, gives us the understanding of  
11 the problem. We as a people don't hold to our  
12 history as we should. We let it get away from us.

13 In just the few minutes when I looked at  
14 the areas we were addressing, housing, employment,  
15 education, health care, but they're still bad.  
16 They're still bad.

17 As has been indicated, I'm president of  
18 the Board of Education of the Memphis City  
19 Schools. We look at 104,000 student body that's  
20 over 60 percent poor, and while race has little or  
21 nothing to do with learning economics it certainly  
22 plays a great part. We are living in a system that  
23 has been neglected by all of the funding bodies and  
24 by the attitude of the community in general. And  
25 as long as our children suffer the violence of the

1     depravations of decent housing, health care,  
2     adequate food, poverty, all of that, we are going  
3     to have a problem with the test scores.

4             We just looked at test scores. They're  
5     so far below the norm of what they should be, and  
6     we're wrestling with the problem of new leadership  
7     in the school.

8             Fortunately, Memphis has moved ahead by  
9     the power primarily of the black people to go into  
10    another era. We have used our political progress  
11    wisely in the last few months, but the leadership  
12    in Memphis cannot begin to overcome all of the  
13    burdens of oppression that have sat for so long  
14    without the lives of government that you  
15    represent.

16            As I said, Mayor Herenton is at a meeting  
17    dealing with economic development for blacks, and  
18    you will see the announcement of a press conference  
19    dealing with black-on-black crime and the task  
20    force that he has appointed.

21            We are beginning to recognize, and we  
22    shouldn't have to, that some of these problems that  
23    black people don't solve won't get solved because a  
24    great community generally has been insensitive to  
25    these problems. In Memphis now we are the

1 majority, and we can do some of these things a  
2 little bit better on our own. But we need the  
3 forces of influence of our state and federal  
4 government.

5           One of the questions asked this morning  
6 was what is the budget for this task force for  
7 black-on-black crime. We don't got no budget. We  
8 have just got determination to do a job and stop  
9 our people from killing each other and from robbing  
10 each other which comes out of the despair that this  
11 evil community has thrust upon us.

12           Joan, stay fast. It is because of that  
13 mentality that kept us on the back of the bus that  
14 still controls this nation to a great extent. As  
15 long as we see Forrest on that horse over there in  
16 the center of our institution of great learning and  
17 we have fought it, and we are going to get it  
18 down. We are going to get that horse down from  
19 that Forest Park over there. These are symbols, my  
20 sisters and brothers, that involve us.

21           Now, I'm getting old and mellow, and I'm  
22 going to have a little optimism in the fact that  
23 black people have done some things for themselves.  
24 We have a black mayor. We have 6 members out of  
25 the 13 on the City Council. We got a majority of

1 the school board. And, of course, I would rather  
2 do it by coming together because it's right. We  
3 don't want to have to act like y'all used to act,  
4 Harry, and just vote because we're black and for no  
5 other reason. We can do it now. We can do it,  
6 whatever we have to.

7 We want this community through the  
8 leadership of our state, our nation and that which  
9 is developed in our city to really begin to move so  
10 that a big majority of poor people who live in a  
11 housing authority that is in shambles with a  
12 waiting list that is unlimited who are victims of  
13 crack and all sorts of crime, whose minds we have  
14 to develop when they get in the school system -- we  
15 want all of this community to come together so we  
16 can begin to solve these problems.

17 And we thank you, all of you, for  
18 remaining true to this task, and as I go on into  
19 the sunset riding that horse away to get that other  
20 horse down. Thank you.

21 LEO GRAY: Any questions or comments  
22 for Ms. Smith?

23 BOBBY DOCTOR: I'd like to say, if I  
24 may for a minute or so, there goes a lady that have  
25 I without question admired and respected over the

1 years. We have not always agreed on the approach,  
2 but we have always agreed on the need to be a  
3 better business and make the system work fairly and  
4 adequately. And I certainly appreciate her.

5           There is a gentleman who is also coming  
6 before us now that I also admire and appreciate.  
7 He is a young man who I had the occasion to relate  
8 to some many, many, years ago with the black  
9 organized project of the Invaders. And I'm very  
10 pleased to see him again. I understand a lot of  
11 fellows have fallen by the wayside, but he is  
12 obviously still on the case. I am very pleased to  
13 see him.

14           LEO GRAY: Go ahead.

15           OSAGYEFO SUHKARA ADBUL YAHWEH: Thank  
16 you very much. Thank you my brother, Brother  
17 Doctor and to the chairman.

18           First let me say for the record that my  
19 name is Minister Osagyefo Suhkara Abdul Yaheh. I  
20 am 54 years old, a father and grandfather and  
21 extended father and grandfather to many. I have a  
22 daughter who now is three years old and will be  
23 four in October, and all total I have about 18  
24 children biologically and thousands of extended  
25 children. I have 26 grandchildren and many

1 grandchildren extended. And it bothers me when I  
2 see the situation that we're in.

3 I was born in Memphis, Tennessee on  
4 August 19, 1938. I grew up in Memphis and attended  
5 school and college here and have experienced most  
6 things in life as an African American man that many  
7 would not experience and live in five life times  
8 and would not have survived had they experienced  
9 half of the things which in fact I have.

10 Now, I don't want you to interpret that  
11 to mean that I'm tough or bad or super human. But  
12 remember by the grace of God I survived, and as I  
13 stand before this body today I understand why he  
14 let me survive.

15 While in prison in the early '60's, I can  
16 recall reading a book entitled Universal  
17 Declaration of Human Rights. And being one who  
18 loved to read I would read this book over and over  
19 along with other books, but somehow this book  
20 caused a good feeling to flow through my body.  
21 Little did I know that this was the planting of the  
22 seeds of rehumanization.

23 The civil rights movement was sweeping  
24 the United States with Doctor King and others which  
25 inspired me to demand integration for the prison.



1 On the little farm we did have sit-ins to integrate  
2 the dining room. And months after my release from  
3 prison while living in Gallatin, Tennessee the  
4 rebellion broke out in Memphis, and I returned to  
5 Memphis just a few days before the assassination of  
6 Doctor King. And it was at that point that I  
7 became involved in the Civil Rights Movement. I  
8 joined an organization called the Invaders, and I  
9 helped organize the poor people's campaign for  
10 march to Washington D.C., and, of course, the rest  
11 of it is history. Later I was mobbed by some 900  
12 Europeans Americans in Forrest City, Arkansas  
13 during a campaign to better the conditions of  
14 African Americans in Arkansas.

15 In the early '70's, I began to notice the  
16 shortcomings of the Civil Rights Movement  
17 especially as it related to the freedom and  
18 liberation of African Americans, and my attention  
19 then turned towards human rights in the United  
20 Nations. I then assumed the position of High  
21 Commissioner for human rights for the African  
22 American nation and began reporting violations of  
23 human rights both physically and psychologically  
24 into the UN using the process of optimum protocol.  
25 I reported violations to the office of the

1 Secretary General, Mr. Kirt Walhound (spelled  
2 phonetically). Some of the cases were the Ben  
3 Schaer (spelled phonetically) cases and Republican  
4 New Africa. And I presented both of these cases to  
5 the UN personally.

6 I still say in 1992, as I said in July  
7 1976, that until an adult person is actively caring  
8 for himself and aiding in a process of human  
9 development that person cannot be considered well.  
10 To stop the process of human development is a  
11 violation of universal law as well as international  
12 law and must be brought before the world court  
13 because miticide which is a form of genocide is  
14 equally as cruel and the most inhuman form of  
15 genocide that can be perpetuated against mankind.

16 And looking at human rights you can ask  
17 the question what are human rights. For the sake  
18 of those who don't know, human rights are those  
19 conditions of life that allow us to fully develop  
20 and use our human qualities of intelligence and  
21 conscience to satisfy our spiritual needs. Human  
22 rights are based upon mankind's increasing demands  
23 for life in which his inherited dignity of each  
24 human being received respect and protection and  
25 ideas that reach beyond the comfort and the

1 convenience that science and technology can  
2 provide. Human rights are fundamental to our  
3 nature, and without them we cannot live as human  
4 beings.

5           Broadly speaking, two kinds of rights are  
6 recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human  
7 Rights. And there is a traditional kind, civil and  
8 political rights which gradually evolved over  
9 centuries during the long development of democracy  
10 and democratic societies. Then there are economic,  
11 social and cultural rights which started to be  
12 recognized most recently when people that possess  
13 certain political and civil rights would be  
14 valueless without the enjoyment of certain rights  
15 of economic, social and culture rights.

16           What are economic, social and culture  
17 rights? They include the right to work. Let me  
18 say that again. They include the right to work, to  
19 free choice of jobs, to just and favorable  
20 conditions of work and to have protection against  
21 unemployment. Every man and every woman should be  
22 entitled to the same pay if he or she does the  
23 work.

24           Let me move down a bit further. What is  
25 the right of self-determination? In our human

1 rights there is a right called the right of  
2 self-determination. And it is in these rights that  
3 I see the solutions of the problems confronting  
4 African American people. It is the right of all  
5 people to determine their political status, and  
6 pursue their economic, social and cultural  
7 development. That includes the right of people  
8 freely to dispose of their natural wealth and  
9 resources because it is a political and economic  
10 and social right and because it is important that  
11 the general assembly and right of  
12 self-determination be acknowledged as one of both  
13 colors.

14           On May 19th, I sent a letter or faxed a  
15 letter to the now president to the Secretary  
16 General of the United Nations, His Excellency  
17 Doctor Boutros-Boutros Ghali. And in that letter I  
18 said to him, we African American people find  
19 ourselves the victims of the most cruel form of  
20 genocide know to mankind. The record speaks for  
21 itself.

22           As a founding father, revolutionary  
23 student and teacher and lover of humanity, we are  
24 appealing to you to assist us in our struggle for  
25 human rights, independence and the right of

1 self-determination. We know as a people on the  
2 planet, we have a right to exercise those rights  
3 found within the United Nations Charter, United  
4 Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the 1975  
5 Helsinki accord. It is within these great  
6 documents we will charter our course to liberate  
7 ourselves from the degradation brought on through  
8 the processes of dehumanization and  
9 deculturalization of slavery.

10           It is impossible for us to sit back and  
11 listen to Mr. Bush speak loudly of human right  
12 violations of other nations and the people who  
13 provided their backs, sweat and blood giving over  
14 200 years of free labor human rights are violated.  
15 A man who participated in such behavior is the  
16 possessor of a schizophrenic personality which is  
17 the reflection of a schizophrenic nation and is  
18 very dangerous.

19           The actions of Mr. Bush and the United  
20 States government constitute a clear and present  
21 danger to all humanity. It must be noted that the  
22 history of the United States of North America is  
23 one of bloodshed, warmongering, domination and  
24 oppression. Beginning with the destruction and  
25 decimation of the Native American population, from

1 whom they stole this country, to the brutal and  
2 immortal enslavement and captivity of millions of  
3 African American men, women and children, the  
4 United States has been and is guilty of the most  
5 heinous acts of violence against humanity known to  
6 man, namely genocide.

7           We African American people who originated  
8 in Africa and now reside in America, speak out  
9 against genocide, slavery and oppression inflicted  
10 upon us by a racist United States governmental  
11 power structure. We offer to our downtrodden  
12 African American people a course of action, (based  
13 on the conscious cry and historical evolutionary  
14 process due to inhuman conditions), designed to  
15 conquer oppression, relieve suffering and convert  
16 meaningless struggle into meaningful action.

17           I am going to skip a few pages. I am  
18 going to submit this over to this body. Let me say  
19 this, in the information we sent we said that the  
20 history of the United States government, President,  
21 Congress, courts, educational and religious  
22 institutions is a history of repeated injuries and  
23 usurpations, all having condoned, sanctified and  
24 perpetuated dehumanizing conditions upon African  
25 American people for some 400 years. To prove this,

1 let facts be submitted to a candid world.

2 The United States Government and  
3 President has:

4 1. Refused to accept African American  
5 people as human beings.

6 2. Forced African Americans to become a  
7 lying, dishonest people just to obtain the basis of  
8 life, food, clothing and shelter.

9 3. Forced young African Americans to  
10 commit genocide against other nations simply  
11 because they believe they are right and to  
12 hopefully obtain money to raise themselves above  
13 their miserable conditions.

14 4. Forced African American women to  
15 desecrate their bodies for financial gain to  
16 provide for the well-being of their families and  
17 children.

18 5. Forced African Americans to hate and  
19 destroy one another to survive.

20 6. Miseducated our youth in colonized  
21 schools causing mental damage.

22 7. Killed and allowed the continual  
23 killing of members of the African American nation  
24 through psychological warfare, chemical warfare,  
25 unjust wars and police action.

1           8. Caused serious bodily and mental harm  
2 to members of the African American nation.

3           9. Deliberately inflicted on the African  
4 American people conditions of life calculated to  
5 bring about its physical destruction in whole or in  
6 part.

7           10. Imposed measures intended to prevent  
8 births within the African American nation be  
9 it -- what you call it when you kill the babies?  
10 You call it not birth control but -- abortion.

11           "As man perceives the extent of  
12 dehumanization, he asks himself if humanization is  
13 a viable possibility. Within history in concrete  
14 objective contexts, both humanization and  
15 dehumanization are possibilities for man as an  
16 uncompleted being conscious of his incompletions."  
17 This statement was wrote, of course, by Paulo  
18 Freire who in fact is with the United Nations.

19           "Never in history has violence -- we're  
20 talking about Los Angeles now, and we're talking  
21 about the possibility of here in Memphis. And  
22 we're talking about the possibility of every city  
23 in the United States. "Never in history has  
24 violence been initiated by the oppressed. How  
25 could they be the initiators, if they themselves



1 are the result of violence? How could they be the  
2 sponsors of something whose objective inauguration  
3 called forth their existence as oppressed? There  
4 would be no oppressed had there been no prior  
5 situation of violence to establish their  
6 subjugation. Violence is initiated by those who  
7 oppress, who exploited not by those who are  
8 oppressed, exploited and unrecognized."

9           The struggle to recover our humanity has  
10 been and is yet the struggle for every African  
11 American man, woman and child born in North  
12 America. The present domestic policy and  
13 socializational process has proven that it is in  
14 direct contradiction to the very nature of African  
15 American people.

16           Let me call these two things to your  
17 attention in closing. Number one, police killing.  
18 We can go back -- I can remember the Larry Paine  
19 situation. I can remember the situation when they  
20 said that this young brother stole a truck from his  
21 daddy, and it turned over and somehow killed  
22 himself. But yet we find out that the police beat  
23 him to death. All people who were around in the  
24 situation were police, but yet no one was found  
25 guilty.

1           Let's go to another situation that I had  
2 an opportunity to be in the environment not in the  
3 house but at the school when the whole situation  
4 begin to unfold. And let me tell you, it was one  
5 of the most diabolic means of genocide that I have  
6 ever seen perpetuated against a people who were, in  
7 fact, supposed to be citizens of the United  
8 States. These brothers, in fact, was laid down  
9 head foot, head foot. It reminded me when we were  
10 brought here on a slave ship so we could not  
11 communicate, and their brains were blown out based  
12 on the fact that they had submitted themselves.  
13 And it is not yet proven whether or not they killed  
14 the officers who, in fact, they said were killed.

15           There was another case recently where a  
16 two-year-old girl was killed who was supposed to be  
17 held hostage by her father. Shot in the head, and  
18 the bullet went through her head and killed her  
19 father as well. And going into and examining some  
20 of these places myself I went into the apartments  
21 down there at Dixie Homes, and let me tell you,  
22 there are some things that I wish this body would  
23 go and examine themselves. And I am saying to this  
24 body you need to do that. You need to subpoena the  
25 records of all police action that has been done in

1 this city.

2 Miticide is a form of education. It is  
3 obvious that we are not getting what is called  
4 education, but we are getting what is what called  
5 indoctrination. When you educate a people  
6 education is simply having the necessary  
7 information that can make a person be more  
8 profitable and productive in a society without  
9 violating or being violated in return.

10 The information goes into the ear hole.  
11 The mind interprets the information, and the body  
12 acts accordingly. When we put information into the  
13 ear hole, and the body comes out and begins to do  
14 the things it does in terms of feticide we know  
15 that miticide plus -- genocide plus miticide equals  
16 feticide. There is a formula. So when you produce  
17 a people who have been affected by genocide come in  
18 with miticide they do not know themselves. You  
19 steal their culture away from them. Then they will  
20 begin to kill themselves.

21 In terms of economics, anytime and the  
22 solution will not be found as the situation exist  
23 there. According to European capitalism, anytime  
24 ten percent of the people control 80 percent of the  
25 resources you are going to have the problem that

1 you got. Let's go back and get them again.  
2 Whoever is in control of the cheese is going to  
3 have the rats doing what they want them to do.

4 Let's go back to the prison situation as  
5 we deal with the prison. It is no accident that 90  
6 percent of the people in prison are young men  
7 between the ages of 18 and 24. That is no  
8 accident.

9 I checked and did some analyses and  
10 studies, and I did not find anything in our  
11 psychology, neither did I find anything from a  
12 genetic standpoint where because of our genes that  
13 we have this antisocial behavior. Nowhere do I  
14 find that especially from people who in fact is the  
15 fathers and mothers of mankind and the beginning of  
16 civilization. So what I'm saying to you is this,  
17 if we were this before we come to American, it does  
18 not happen.

19 I can take some very intelligent people,  
20 and we can go across the Mississippi River. And  
21 because we go across the water and go into West  
22 Memphis we would not change our behavior to the  
23 point where we would start killing each other. So  
24 there must be a process that went on to cause that  
25 behavior. Let's call that genocide. Let's call

1 that miticide so our behavior is known. We know  
2 what happened to us.

3 Let me say one other thing before I close  
4 that's dealing with this, child support. Right  
5 now, I did say to you that I'm a father that I have  
6 children. Do you realize -- and I am now 54 years  
7 old as if I don't know how to take care of my  
8 children. I can take care of my children better  
9 than anybody else on the planet earth. Number one,  
10 I love my children. I love them, and I know what  
11 is necessary for a human being to function and  
12 develop on the planet earth. I don't care if it is  
13 in Memphis, Tennessee. I don't care if it is back  
14 in the mother land. I don't care wherever it is.  
15 There are some basic things according to Maslow's  
16 hierarchy of needs that a human being must have in  
17 order to be a well-adjusted person.

18 I got to go to court on Monday and  
19 discuss with them about a child who, in fact, the  
20 mother who is my wife, based on my definition, says  
21 that she did not want to be on the welfare in terms  
22 of my child in the first place, and they said,  
23 well, you got to put my child on there anyway.  
24 They are forcing us to be put into a situation  
25 where they can manipulate and play games with our

1 children and dehumanize us as men in front of our  
2 women and in front of our children. That is  
3 genocide. That is miticide.

4 So in your study make sure that you say  
5 that we must eliminate what is known now as child  
6 support because the way it is done, it is done to  
7 dehumanize our people. It is done to bring down  
8 the family structure.

9 Let me say this in closing. What is  
10 happening at this point I do not have any faith in  
11 the American system. And it's nothing strange. If  
12 we look across the political horizon at this point  
13 after looking at Bush, you can tell why I have no  
14 faith in the political structure. If you look  
15 across the horizon you look at Clinton, you can  
16 tell by looking at slick Willie why I have no faith  
17 in the political structure. And then if you look  
18 at Perot why should I have any faith in a facet?  
19 Anytime you talk about taking a helicopter and  
20 going over people's houses and sending in troops,  
21 and you know that the very president -- the past  
22 president and the present president through the CIA  
23 have got the drugs because pictures have been taken  
24 with him and the dope pusher, Noriega, sitting up  
25 there in the first place. If you know this is

1 going on, don't do that. Don't play games with us  
2 that way. Since I do not have faith in the system  
3 there is something that said in my study, and I'm a  
4 good reader. It says when in the course of human  
5 events the government does not meet the needs of  
6 the people, you have a right to overthrow and  
7 establish your own government.

8 Let me say this, we're not talking about  
9 overthrowing anything. Don't need to overthrow.  
10 It would be stupid for me to talk about being the  
11 captain of the Titanic after it hit the iceberg.  
12 Why would I want to be a captain of a ship that is  
13 going down?

14 What am I saying is this, based on what  
15 is written as it relates to the Declaration of  
16 Independence I am saying we as a people have a  
17 right to determine our own destiny. In other  
18 words, we have a right to jump overboard and begin  
19 to swim. In other words, we have a right now to do  
20 for ourselves. We're saying now talking about  
21 human rights that please, let's talk about  
22 self-determination, being able to determine our own  
23 destiny because number one, we have not had a right  
24 to exercise democracy especially if democracy means  
25 freedom of choice because we did not choose to get

1 on the boat. We did not choose to get off the  
2 boat. And you have not asked us about anything as  
3 it relates to our life. All of our life has been  
4 determined by somebody else who surely does not  
5 have our interests at heart. I don't see anything  
6 down the horizon that says you're going to have it  
7 now. So we as a people have no other choice but to  
8 say, yes, we are going to determine our own  
9 destiny.

10 We can start here in Memphis since we  
11 already got a head start. We need to talk about  
12 territory. We need to talk about setting up our  
13 own government. Why it is that we have got to go  
14 around begging for jobs and you say that in order  
15 for you to be a man or be a woman, especially the  
16 African American man, I got to be able to have the  
17 car that looks a certain way. I got to have  
18 clothes that come from a certain store. I got to  
19 have a house in a particular community. But I  
20 don't have the resources because you're controlling  
21 it.

22 Ten percent of the population is  
23 controlling all of the wealth. And if you take the  
24 history they were thieves. They were murders.  
25 They were cutthroats. If they got their money



1 through robbing and stealing, then we got a right  
2 to go back to the mother land that is full of gold  
3 and silver and everything that belongs to us. And  
4 we can get it here if we can take care of  
5 ourselves.

6 Thank you very much.

7 LEO GRAY: Thank you. Thank you very  
8 much.

9 We have a problem. It's the panel's.  
10 It's not your problem. We have been given an  
11 extension on our time, but to make sure we record  
12 accurately the presentations that are made to us we  
13 have a court reporter. We also have the limited  
14 ability to sit and concentrate without lunch and  
15 that kind of thing. We have been given until 2:00,  
16 and I need to ask the panel what are your wishes in  
17 terms of time schedule and getting to the people  
18 who want to be heard? And I just need a feel of  
19 the panel of where we go from here.

20 JOCELYN WURZBURG: We have until 2:00  
21 did you say?

22 LEO GRAY: We have until 2:00.

23 JOCELYN WURZBURG: Why don't we take  
24 just a five-minute recess to get something to drink  
25 or to get some sugar in our system.

1 LEO GRAY: Do I hear a motion?

2 HARRY MOORE: So moved.

3 JOCELYN WURZBURG: I move we take just  
4 a five-minute recess and then continue. If we take  
5 a lunch break we will never get to hear our people,  
6 and we want to.

7 LEO GRAY: We'll take a five-minute  
8 break, and then we will come back.

9 (Short recess.)

10 LEO GRAY: We're going to proceed with  
11 our hearing. I need to apologize to Evan Burks. I  
12 got a note that he was here to speak, but I did not  
13 know that he was here representing SCLC. And the  
14 practice is that invited guests take priority in  
15 speaking. Let me ask you to come and present to us  
16 your presentation.

17 EVAN BURKS: Good afternoon. First  
18 and to the panel, I'm Evan Burks. I reside here in  
19 the city. I would like to speak about  
20 discrimination and racism.

21 As has been said before me, Memphis is  
22 the most racist city in America. I found this out  
23 when I moved back here in 1977. When I moved back  
24 to the city of Memphis and working here in the  
25 community I found something that is very bad out

1 here in east Memphis and Hampton. You have Tillman  
2 which is a very busy street that runs in the heart  
3 of this African American community. From Summer to  
4 Poplar there is no speed zone. Little African  
5 American children are being hit by cars. Old  
6 people are being hit who are trying to get to the  
7 stores. You drive three blocks, let's say, on the  
8 other side starting at Finland where Chickasaw  
9 Gardens is, and the Europeans live there. You got  
10 the speed zone there. You have police officers  
11 with speed traps. There is no one crossing the  
12 streets there.

13 That shows you how much value they put on  
14 the African American here in the city of Memphis.  
15 I value that. I went to the City Council and to  
16 the city officials and asked them to have a speed  
17 zone. They said, well, it's not enough traffic to  
18 post the speed zone.

19 The reason why is because the Europeans  
20 that come from out east, this is the route that  
21 they travel. So they let them drive as fast as  
22 they want to drive. I have seen this, and this is  
23 why I think the police department has no respect  
24 for the African American or the American people.

25 It's kind of hard to sit as an

1 intelligent individual and look at all the crime  
2 and the dope that's going on. However, I have a  
3 business, and I drive and see young brothers  
4 pushing dope all day long. The police will drive  
5 right by them and say nothing. You can call and  
6 tell them there are fellows out there selling  
7 dope. They say all right. They get to the corner  
8 and tell them to move on. That's it.

9           This is something that is killing and  
10 destroying our people. They are pushing dope on  
11 the corner. Something is wrong. They won't do  
12 anything about those things. Why, because it is an  
13 example of extermination of the African American  
14 people.

15           The brother didn't tell you about the  
16 killing out on Shannon. I have never read anywhere  
17 of the federal report that it was investigated, and  
18 I have never read a report for the City of  
19 Memphis. I never read anything about that. I  
20 haven't heard anything about it.

21           When we went and pulled the rug up off  
22 the floor where the body was found there were  
23 squares out of the floor which was evidence and the  
24 proof that these men had been shot with their heads  
25 together. A bullet penetrated through and into the

1 wood, and there were some fibers in the rug. Then  
2 what happened to all this evidence? Where is it  
3 at? Where is the report at? No one is concerned  
4 about that. And it is very shameful that we live  
5 in a country where it is said that everyone has  
6 equal rights. Our problem is no one is going to  
7 solve our problem. We the people must solve our  
8 problem.

9 I'd like to know how many of these people  
10 here go to Chism's or Maxey or Jones Big Store.  
11 They don't. This is your problem. You don't do  
12 for yourself. How many will go to the car lot and  
13 demand the African brother do the selling him of  
14 that car? This is your problem. When you go to  
15 purchase that furniture how many of you ask for an  
16 African American salesman to wait on them?

17 The dope pushers have nowhere for them to  
18 go. They have to make a living. We said that we  
19 love ourselves. How can you say you love God if  
20 you don't love your own brother? We need to make a  
21 sacrifice for them and one for God.

22 You need to start going to furniture  
23 companies, appliance stores and the car lot when  
24 you walk up and demand that the brothers wait on  
25 you. If we don't -- money controls something.

1 Because all of you so far and all of your  
2 congressmen get there by having money. We need to  
3 do for ourselves.

4 Thank you for your time, and I hope you  
5 will take this like I said. And like the brother  
6 asked, get reports on the killing of the people  
7 here. This is something that the Commission should  
8 do. Get the police report on these things.

9 One more thing, you have two Europeans  
10 who shot two police officers in the head. When  
11 they went and captured them they wouldn't shoot  
12 them. Well, you hear that here is a man, African  
13 American cutting and harming himself, and they go  
14 kill him. That's Memphis. Because on the task  
15 force we don't have any brothers that's on it.  
16 Name one African American that is on the task  
17 squad. That needs to be investigated by this  
18 committee.

19 Thank you very much for your time.

20 LEO GRAY: Thank you, Mr. Burks. Any  
21 question for Mr. Burks?

22 Our next speaker will be Michael Carter.

23 MICHAEL CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I have  
24 a couple of points. I'm a former postal employee,  
25 and I have some things to share with you all if you

1 will look and investigate it.

2 Working in the postal service -- like I  
3 said, I used to work for them, and now I resigned.  
4 But prior to my resignation they wanted to  
5 terminate me, but I was able to resign.

6 The hiring practices is not fair for  
7 people because I don't believe that people should  
8 be hired because they are black or white. I'd say  
9 that people who are qualified to do a job should be  
10 hired. This is not done on the basis of your  
11 qualifications, but on the basis of your color.

12 Look at this here. I have highlighted a  
13 couple of things about the selection. They  
14 handpicked people. There is a lot of tension  
15 within the postal service, and I know it is just a  
16 matter of time before somebody gets killed because  
17 of the tension and the work ethics and the  
18 conditions there. And it's just not fair. I thank  
19 God that I was able resign before they terminated  
20 me.

21 And a couple of other things I wanted to  
22 show you. Going back to the reference to  
23 training. I was in maintenance. And I was  
24 qualified as a maintenance control clerk, but the  
25 supervisor he was where the mail processing out of

1 another division come occupy and operating and  
2 apply for a maintenance control office. I'm  
3 maintenance. My supervisor was going through the  
4 chain, but they took this white guy and gave him 48  
5 hours training. And here are the documents of my  
6 training record where I worked the night shift. I  
7 worked full eight hours, four hours training, three  
8 hours, spot training, and that wasn't fair. So if  
9 you would look at this.

10 They open up a register and, you know,  
11 they give people -- give the public false  
12 misrepresentation. We're going to my registration  
13 card. I was qualified for a mail clerk, and they  
14 told me they were going to do it internally.  
15 Thousands and thousands of people took the time to  
16 take this test, and they are not hiring from this  
17 register. And it's just sad. I mean, why fool the  
18 people continuing to talk about what we are hiring  
19 from the register, and they are not going to do  
20 anything.

21 And as I said, I did resign, and I spoke  
22 about reinstatement rights. The post office did  
23 not I talked to the Council and employment relation  
24 manager, Buck Middleson. Once an individual who  
25 has resigned from the postal service they will not



1 hire them back. My question is why. Where does  
2 the law say that you have to reinstatement rights?  
3 But here within the last five years, no  
4 one -- absolutely no one has been reinstated with  
5 the U.S. Postal Service.

6 LEO GRAY: You resigned?

7 MICHAEL CARTER: Yes.

8 LEO GRAY: Now, were you having any  
9 problems before that?

10 MICHAEL CARTER: I had some problems,  
11 and it was for my best interest to keep my status  
12 with the federal government to resign. But my  
13 point and issue, in June of last year, May or June,  
14 they put in the newspaper for people to come and  
15 take the test for markup clerk, and as of this date  
16 no one has been hired. I passed. Ain't no one  
17 going to be called. If it had not been for God and  
18 Jesus in my life I don't know what would have  
19 happened. Ain't nobody going to hire nobody at the  
20 post office. I hope that they are going to some  
21 day call me, and this piece of paper means  
22 absolutely nothing.

23 BOBBY DOCTOR: Mr. Carter, could you  
24 get with Bob Knight to my left here and share with  
25 him the details of your resignation and the details

1 leading up to your resignation so that we have a  
2 better understanding. I think we may want to do  
3 that probably.

4 MICHAEL CARTER: Also the lady who was  
5 talking about the disabled kids, I can sympathize.  
6 I have a 14 year old son, and it's so difficult in  
7 order to get any assistance from the city or any  
8 type or agency. You say they are not retarded and  
9 well, boom. And we got to go through a fight in  
10 order for him to go to Snowden Junior High School  
11 where the teachers are and everything and work with  
12 his condition.

13 They need some help. And I mean, you say  
14 there are laws, and that's nothing with that. It's  
15 by the grace of God that we hang on and do the  
16 thing that we ought to do in order to make ends  
17 meet. And they go put hope into their minds that  
18 someday it will be developed. I thank God my son  
19 is normal and not retarded.

20 LEO GRAY: Mr. Carter, accept the  
21 assistance of Mr. Knight, and also I'd like for you  
22 to register with Mr. Dan Porter. Where is Dan?  
23 Let Mr. Porter look at your complaint in terms of  
24 grievance procedures and what have you.

25 Thank you for coming and sharing with us.

1                   MICHAEL CARTER: Thank you.

2                   LEO GRAY: Mr. Winfred Starks?

3                   WINFREY STARKS: Mr. Chairman, members  
4 of the commission both state and federal, I've sat  
5 here and listened to -- first of all, I'd like to  
6 thank you for being here because it's a much needed  
7 thing that you do.

8                   We as citizens of Memphis and citizens of  
9 the United States we have come with the belief and  
10 we were born with the belief of the creed of the  
11 Constitution of the United States that we are  
12 accepted as being part of these United States. But  
13 as you have heard from our people speaking, we have  
14 been deceived. We have the disillusion of being  
15 included.

16                   We have racial tensions all across this  
17 nation. I thought about coming to you and getting  
18 your attention. Usually one would start speaking  
19 and give you a shocking thing such as my mother  
20 being beating and having brain damage to get your  
21 attention. As she lay in St. Joseph Hospital  
22 someone stole every ounce of furniture and stole  
23 out of the walls even the iron pipe. They even  
24 stole the piano that's like stealing an elephant,  
25 and no one sees it. When you call your Memphis

1 Police Department you get no response. Why is it  
2 that a 70 odd, almost 80 year old lady cannot  
3 receive police protection in our own city?

4 But better yet, let's go on. Let's look  
5 at our City Council here in the city of Memphis as  
6 I said and the capital improvement programs in  
7 which our federal funds are sent down from  
8 Washington in the line of our tax money. They are  
9 not going into the city. They're not going to be  
10 there. Everything goes to DeSoto County.  
11 Everything goes to Hickory Hill, Cordova,  
12 Germantown, Collierville, Millington, and then we  
13 say, well, why it is that our people are all of a  
14 sudden becoming frustrated? We as a people know  
15 that they are being oppressed, and they get into a  
16 state of depression and because of their  
17 depression, they in turn become frustrated because  
18 they read just as you read the Constitution of the  
19 United States.

20 I have a son sitting our there that is  
21 16, and one that is 22. One just graduated from  
22 college and wants to go to the Air Force Academy.  
23 What type of signals are we sending our children?  
24 What are we going to do? We tell our children,  
25 son, get an education. You'll become part of the

1 American dream. Son, you graduate from the Air  
2 Force Academy and go risk your life for men all  
3 over the world just as I did when I strapped on my  
4 little rifle, and I thought I was part of the  
5 United States walking into the rice fields of  
6 Vietnam. And then I have to walk two miles in the  
7 city of Memphis to find a job. What signals are we  
8 sending when we in turn say you are an American  
9 child, but yet you are not treated as a human  
10 being? What signals are you sending?

11 I didn't prepare any notes. I just sat  
12 here. I had no reason to come to the podium, but I  
13 felt that we as people were not being represented.  
14 I'm not saying that we are going to go and create a  
15 new nation. No, let's look at things the way they  
16 are.

17 The city of Memphis in your budget -- I  
18 sat in the conference where \$400 million in  
19 municipal bonds for projects were sold. They go  
20 into First Tennessee, a white bank. No African  
21 American participation. As a matter of fact, we  
22 paid \$223 million in taxes. No African American  
23 participation. We have deceived our people to  
24 believe that they are included in our governmental  
25 body, and they aren't.

1           Well, let's go on. We're looking at  
2 spending \$20,000 a year towards a child for support  
3 that we could spent \$1,700 to education where we  
4 spend \$20,000 to incarcerate.

5           They are insisting that we put a \$150  
6 million top on the stadium. If you dress out your  
7 teenagers as your cheerleaders and your football  
8 players but if they don't have shoulder pads and  
9 rear pads then you would be a very poor coach. Why  
10 it is that you want to in turn, stop your  
11 priorities. You have stopped being irrational and  
12 logical. You want to put a top on the stadium and  
13 \$150 million dollars with poor peoples tax money,  
14 and they walk around with no home.

15           One of the most disgusting things I've  
16 ever seen in my life was when I passed the  
17 Greyhound Bus Station at about 10:00 at night and  
18 saw a man laying in the doorway trying to get some  
19 heat from the grate of the sewage that's coming  
20 through the sewer line. That's when we turn our  
21 heads. We don't believe that. We don't want to  
22 see it. Where are we going? What signals are we  
23 sending?

24           Let me show you this. I'm just going to  
25 take a few minutes of your time -- just a few

1 minutes. The Rodney King incident. You've heard  
2 people speak of the thing, and my mother was  
3 beaten. How can you with your own eyes see these  
4 things and someone says, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Doctor,  
5 don't believe a thing that you see with your very  
6 own eyes?

7                   Gentlemen, I thank you for you time.

8                   LEO GRAY: Mr. Starks, you have a lot  
9 of good thoughts, and I'll ask you if you would  
10 prepare some of thoughts and submit to us as we  
11 consider making proposals and requirements to deal  
12 with some of the problems you mentioned.

13                   Ms. Mary Jackson is the next presenter.

14                   MARY JACKSON: Good afternoon. My  
15 name is Mary Jackson. I work for the City of  
16 Memphis in the Public Works Department. I have  
17 something to say you. I have been employed by the  
18 city government since April of 1979. I, Mary  
19 Jackson, am a black woman. I have not been given  
20 the opportunity to show the City of Memphis Public  
21 Works Department that I can be a productive worker,  
22 that I can be a competent secretary for the city  
23 government.

24                   I have worked for 13 plus years working  
25 as a clerk typist. In 1984, the City of Memphis

1 had this system called the merit system to give  
2 those employees that are not represented by the  
3 union a chance to prove that they can be  
4 productive. Since 1984, I have had a performance  
5 review to be average for every year.

6 The reason I brought my card is because I  
7 have a business called the Jackson Word Processing  
8 Service. I am the sole proprietor of this  
9 business. It is a computer service. The City of  
10 Memphis, my supervisor who is white has not given  
11 me the opportunity to prove that I can do work that  
12 is equivalent to any secretary that works in City  
13 Hall, and that's why I gave you my card.

14 I can type. I have had training in word  
15 processing, spread sheet, data base training that  
16 some of the secretaries have not had. But I have  
17 not been given the opportunity to show that I can  
18 do other work.

19 My supervisor who just happened to be  
20 white, and I beg your indulgence. I get emotional  
21 when I think about this. I just know what  
22 frustration really is. I don't know what Webster  
23 dictionary defines frustration as, but let me give  
24 you an example of confused mental anguish. And  
25 sometimes I think I'm going to have a mental



1 breakdown. This has happened to me. This is my  
2 story of what happened to me. And I am just about  
3 ashamed to tell you this has happened.

4 I worked there 13 plus years, but I have  
5 never had the opportunity to do the clerical work  
6 that my white counterparts have. Down in this  
7 particular area they call themselves secretaries,  
8 but we are called clerks. I am a typist considered  
9 as clerk C. I think that's what they call them.  
10 These clerks down in this office that happen to be  
11 white are friends of my supervisor. I'm not going  
12 to call any names, but they are given payroll.  
13 They're given permission to work on these  
14 electronic typewriters. I have hand-me-downs to  
15 work on. They get to use the computer. They get  
16 to use the best office equipment, and I don't have  
17 the opportunity to do that. I don't want to be  
18 repetitive, but I have to be to stress my point.

19 When time comes to bid for other jobs  
20 with the city government if you cannot do certain  
21 things when you go for an interview for another job  
22 within the city -- and I have been so many times I  
23 can't keep count in the 13 years I tried to get a  
24 promotion there. But the first thing they ask you  
25 is have you done payroll. My answer to that is

1 no. Have you worked on the computer? My answer to  
2 that question is no.

3 Since 1984, it seems this merit system  
4 was just set up for the supervisor to control my  
5 fate. It's good for some people that can show that  
6 they can do productive work, but since my  
7 supervisor and I don't get along and that was  
8 previously before this merit system came about, he  
9 has the authority to control my fate. Isn't that  
10 ironic? I can't get anywhere in the city  
11 government. That's my card up there.

12 In 1987, I bought a computer. I got two  
13 now. I have my own business. And I don't need the  
14 City of Memphis to give me a job anymore to give me  
15 what I've trying to get, a promotion, now because  
16 I'm going to leave. When my business picks up I'm  
17 leaving the city government.

18 I am frustrated. I want you to know  
19 that, and you will have to forgive me. I do get  
20 emotional. For 13 plus years working for the city  
21 government I haven't had a raise. I haven't had  
22 the opportunity to show that I can do work that the  
23 secretaries down in the City Hall and where I work  
24 now can do. And as I said, I can do that. I own  
25 this word processing service. And I am doing

1 that. I do have business, and I have clients. I  
2 have contracts. But the point is I'm trying -- my  
3 successor, whoever she is black or white that takes  
4 my place I want it to be better for that person.

5 BOBBY DOCTOR: May I interrupt you.  
6 Have you filed any complaints with the EEOC or with  
7 the State Commission?

8 MARY JACKSON: The EEOC is a joke. I  
9 have talked to a man over there, and I told him my  
10 complaint. And he said, why do you want to do  
11 something if you can get by with answering the  
12 telephone and not doing nothing. Why would you  
13 care. I mean, it's a joke.

14 I have a supervisor that he doesn't even  
15 talk to me day after day, week after week, but yet  
16 when times comes March through May of every year  
17 when the performance review for the merit system  
18 then he comes up to bring his paper to show me my  
19 rate is average. He says, you need to take  
20 secretarial training. You need to attend  
21 seminars. But I want you on this Commission to  
22 know that I attend more seminars than he does. He  
23 doesn't know or take the time to find out what I  
24 do. He doesn't know what I can do. Why? He  
25 hasn't taken the time to find out. He doesn't talk

1 to me. How does he know what I need to do? So  
2 once a year he'll come around and review me. And  
3 I'm telling you right now, I have endured stress,  
4 mental anguish and you name it, and I am presently  
5 under psychiatric care because of the stress.

6 MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Who are you  
7 talking about? Name your supervisor.

8 MARY JACKSON: My supervisor's name is  
9 Joe Taylor. Mr. Benny Lendermon is the Public  
10 Works Director. He lets my supervisor have his  
11 way. And the supervisor that's over him told me  
12 when I me appealed my case to him that he has the  
13 power if you don't like what he doing you'll have  
14 to leave or you have to take it.

15 LEO GRAY: What has happened since  
16 November 3rd?

17 MARY JACKSON: November 3rd of '91?

18 LEO GRAY: Yes, have you registered  
19 your complaint since the November 3rd election and  
20 new administration?

21 MARY JACKSON: I have sent some  
22 literature down to City Hall for the new  
23 administration to read. I have not heard from  
24 him. I have appealed my case to the director of  
25 personnel on May 20, 1992. She told me to come to

1 her office to talk to her. I talked to her. She  
2 said that she is going to talk to Mr. Benny  
3 Lendermon concerning my case. I have not heard  
4 from her.

5 LEO GRAY: Let me do this, I'll ask  
6 the staff of the Tennessee Civil Rights Commission  
7 to address a reminder to the personnel director for  
8 the City of Memphis.

9 MARY JACKSON: Ms. Westelle Florez  
10 said she would get back to me, but she has been  
11 schooled by the city on what to do.

12 LEO GRAY: Here's what I suggest. We  
13 will direct a letter from the Memphis office of the  
14 Human Rights Commission reminding them of your  
15 situation. It's totally unacceptable that the city  
16 employees be mistreated like this.

17 Check with Dan Porter and give him the  
18 information.

19 MARY JACKSON: To tell the truth, I've  
20 gotten to the point that I thought nothing could be  
21 done against the City of Memphis because it seems  
22 like to me they say, who can take me on. I'm just  
23 about embarrassed to say what has happened. I'm  
24 going to say, just remember this new administration  
25 he knows that in three and half years that if he

1 doesn't do what a certain section of men wants him  
2 to do that voted for him he knows that he will not  
3 be here in the new administration.

4 LEO GRAY: I beg to differ because he  
5 is not there because of them now. Let me suggest  
6 that you try to give the new administration a  
7 chance. That's all I can say. The commitment is  
8 there. It's a matter of making sure what is going  
9 on your in case.

10 MARY JACKSON: Okay, I appreciate you  
11 listening to me, and I thank you all. I would like  
12 to thank the administration that have heard my  
13 case. And I certainly appreciate the prayers that  
14 I was able to do this without crying. I thought I  
15 was going to.

16 LEO GRAY: Thank you very much. We  
17 have the time problem again because --

18 FRANCIS GUESS: Mr. Chairman, since  
19 Ms. Jackson has identified people within her  
20 office, we would state for the record that Section  
21 402 of our code clearly prohibits retaliation  
22 against my person in any manner. Anybody that  
23 gives testimony before this Commission cannot be  
24 retaliated against. We want to be sure that does  
25 not happen in this case.

1                   LEO GRAY: Very good. And the other  
2 part of asking whether or not you filed a complaint  
3 is that that same provision protects you once you  
4 file a complaint. Sister Jackson, we'll be in  
5 touch.

6                   I want to identify Dan Porter before we  
7 leave today.

8                   We once again have a time problem.  
9 We have about six or seven more speakers now. We  
10 have to be out of here by 2:00, and we do want to  
11 wrap this up.

12                  Now, our next two speakers if you will  
13 come and take about three minutes to get your  
14 matter before the Commission.

15                  Mr. Eugene Thomas and Mr. Lou Grams, will  
16 the two of you come and work with the three  
17 minutes.

18                  EUGENE THOMAS: In 1987, I went to  
19 Doctor Finley. Doctor Finley was with health  
20 family medicine in 1987, I was choosing him to be  
21 my doctor. (Inaudible response.) Now, I went by  
22 there one time, and they give me some pills. They  
23 fell on the floor, and he told me to pick up. I  
24 said no, I won't accept them. And I said what are  
25 they? I said I'm not going to accept them.

1           And so on June 3rd, another doctor there,  
2 he was waiting on me, and Doctor Finley was my  
3 doctor. Well, he examined me, and they told them I  
4 didn't except them. So he got through and examine,  
5 well, your Doctor Finland (Inaudible response.)  
6 That was June 3, 1987.

7           In 1989, Doctor Martin who was where I  
8 was. Doctor Finley came in afterward. He asked me  
9 the same questions, and I told him no. Finley  
10 comes and looks in there. So I said he was this  
11 doctor from which I read the information. I said  
12 (inaudible response) a lot of pills. The kind I  
13 took, what I took I knew they wasn't the same as  
14 before. They got the medical records. They put  
15 the names on it. But they don't keep up with the  
16 time so you never know.

17           LEO GRAY: Your problem is a medical  
18 problem malpractice concern that you're dealing  
19 with?

20           EUGENE THOMAS: Yeah, probably. And  
21 so the last doctor was in October the '89. And so  
22 in February 6th, I believe, I called. The phone  
23 rang, and the lady answered. Well, I waited about  
24 15 minutes. She came back  
25 and --



1                   LEO GRAY: Okay. For the sake of  
2 time, I am going to ask the staff members to meet  
3 with the remaining of our presenters. The people  
4 are here who gave us the extension on time.

5                   For the record, each of you come and just  
6 give us your concern for the record. The staff  
7 will have to complete your statement. But let's do  
8 that just to get your concern in the record.

9                   LEE BRANCH: My name is Lee Branch,  
10 and my concern is that I recognize that our people  
11 is being mistreated. My concern is the very fact  
12 every time it is our time to talk y'all already got  
13 to go. But let me say this, what I need to say you  
14 all need to hear. Part of Memphis' problem is the  
15 NAACP, and another part of Memphis is like the lady  
16 up here that said I'm a life member. Not only is  
17 she with the NAACP, the police department is a life  
18 member. Everybody we been fighting is all of a  
19 sudden a life-long member of the NAACP. I'm going  
20 to close now because you all want to get in the  
21 record what really ain't in the record.

22                   We got crooked judges. They took off the  
23 Ku Klux Klan robe, and now they are sitting in the  
24 courthouse. And if I had the time I'd call them by  
25 name, address and telephone.

1           Doctor Herenton -- true we have a black  
2 mayor. And I'm going to say you I've marched and  
3 demonstrated for 30 years. (Inaudible response.)  
4 All of a sudden we got an African mayor. That's  
5 the reason we cannot get anything done. The lady  
6 sitting up here and the rest gave him \$250,000.  
7 That's all.

8           LEO GRAY: Thank you.

9           LEE BRANCH: And just like the lady  
10 back there that's son was killed, do you know what  
11 the police did? They shot a man 19 times -- 19  
12 times. Now, you know what happened to him? They  
13 turned around and arrested a man, and the judge let  
14 him go.

15           They keep talking about education. We  
16 got a governor who don't have a high school  
17 education. That's the problem. We have a mayor,  
18 Bill Morris, that was a used car salesman. And  
19 Dick Hackett --

20           LEO GRAY: Thank you very much.  
21 Please state your name and your concern so we can  
22 leave for the group waiting.

23           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: My name is  
24 (Inaudible response). My concern is the  
25 discrimination. I've been on the job 12 and a half

1 years with no promotion, no consideration. I have  
2 been putting up with favoritism all this time. And  
3 the white man have put his people in the position,  
4 and he ignores what I needed or what I want.

5 LEO GRAY: Your concern is  
6 discrimination?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Exactly.

8 LEO GRAY: Thank you very much.

9 JOHN MAXWELL: My name is John  
10 Maxwell. I am a former employee of the Depot of  
11 Memphis. My concern is discrimination. I want  
12 this commission to know that the government program  
13 that we could (inaudible response) and this type of  
14 thing. After attending and doing well and being  
15 able to perform and going to -- this is the ways of  
16 terminated and saying that I had bad criminal  
17 records over falsifying documents of the government  
18 practice. But I stated in my application, all of  
19 the information that I knew, and to the best of my  
20 knowledge, everything was there. I want them to  
21 know that I had had a chance to talk to them. We  
22 have EEOC working on it.

23 LEO GRAY: Let me say me have no  
24 choice now but to ask you who are standing in line  
25 to write your name and your concern and give it to

1 the staff. We agreed as a responsible body that we  
2 would be out by 1:00, and we were given an  
3 extension. And, now, the commissioners have to  
4 leave because of that. Write down your name and  
5 put your concern in writing and give it to our  
6 staff for the record.

7 Thank you for coming. We agreed to have  
8 the chambers cleared by 1:30, and they gave us an  
9 hour extension. I don't want to abuse that.

10 I'm declaring that this hearing is now  
11 over.

12 (Hearing was concluded.)

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## 1 COURT REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 STATE OF TENNESSEE:

3 COUNTY OF SHELBY:

4 I, LISA D. GIBSON, Reporter and Notary  
5 Public, Shelby County, Tennessee, CERTIFY:6 1. The foregoing hearing was taken  
7 before me at the time and place stated in the  
8 foregoing styled cause with the appearances as  
9 noted;10 2. Being a Court Reporter, I then  
11 reported the hearing in Stenotype to the best of my  
12 skill and ability, and the foregoing pages contain  
13 a full, true and correct transcript of my said  
14 Stenotype notes then and there taken;15 3. I am not in the employ of and am not  
16 related to any of the parties or their counsel, and  
17 I have no interest in the matter involved.18 WITNESS MY SIGNATURE, this, the 24th day  
19 of July, 1992.

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LISA D. GIBSON  
Court Reporter and  
Notary Public \*\*\*

My commission expires:  
August 29, 1995