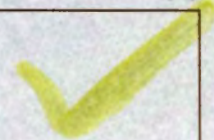


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MEETING OF THE FLORIDA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO THE
U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

March 24, 1993

City Council Chambers
175 Fifth Street North
Second Floor
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

REPORTED BY:
Edie Paradine



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Estaback

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Rabbi Solomon Agin

Ms. June Littler

Mr. Ernest McDuffie

Dr. Kenneth Clarkston

Mr. Bob Knight

Mr. Bobby Doctor

Dr. Brad Brown

Mr. Robert Brake

Mr. Nap Ford

Mr. Bob Ingram

Mr. Albert Nelson

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P R O C E E D I N G S :

1
2 MR. DOCTOR: After talking with our staff here,
3 I see some of the individuals that we had scheduled
4 preconditionally are not here, and realize there have
5 been some disruptions of individual schedules, since
6 we did shift the date. So at this point I think we
7 will give people another five to ten minutes to arrive
8 before we begin.

9 And while we continue to hold the floor of our
10 own committee open for, you know, discussions of
11 issues that people feel that they ought to raise.

12 That's it.

13 MR. KNIGHT: And if -- some of you are
14 participants, some of you aren't. We do have a sign-
15 in sheet. We don't need participants to sign in.
16 Those who are just visitors or at the table, we ask
17 that you please just sign in and name your organization,
18 and if the president could certainly put down -- sign
19 in, please. And we do have some agendas on the table
20 to follow with the meeting.

21 Could we also, for the benefit of the court
22 reporter -- do you have the names? Speakers, when
23 you come up, give the name for the benefit of the
24 court reporter to record you.

25 MR. BROWN: Okay. Before we start, I just wanted

1 to mention one issue, on behalf of the efforts the
2 Florida Committee has made with regard to obtaining a
3 sense of justice for our Haitian refugees. I appreciate
4 that your efforts will be in terms of including that
5 as one of the key issues in the Commission's letter
6 to the President.

7 We have had two relatively recent events in
8 Miami which I think were significant in terms of
9 community. One was a major demonstration led by
10 African-American ministers, predominantly in the --
11 downtown, which is probably the midday week demonstration,
12 and indicated that with very significant solidarity
13 between the Haitian community and the African-American
14 community in Miami, which had made people try to
15 pry against each other.

16 And that was followed up on the weekend by a
17 major march led by -- Jesse Jackson came down, Dick
18 Gregory. And we walked along. And I think we had about
19 four miles of hiking on that march, but it was the
20 largest demonstration march that Miami's seen in years.

21 And it was interesting that not too long after
22 that, Bob Graham came out with this very strong letter
23 of issuing a deadline to -- urging Clinton to issue
24 a deadline to the present government in -- of Haiti.

25 We do have a new INS Director, and I've had the

1 opportunity to meet with him. And at least in some
2 way things have changed significantly from an INS
3 Director that would refuse to talk to the Director
4 of the Haitian Refugee Center and President of NAACP,
5 even when they were accompanied by a Congresswoman.
6 We now have somebody who is welcoming community dialogue
7 and discussion on issues. And that's -- hopefully
8 we will see a -- see a change.

9 MR. DOCTOR: Mr. Chairman, let me also add to
10 that, if I may. And not only did we send the letter
11 to the President, but we've asked for a meeting with
12 the President to talk about that particular issue,
13 and a number of other issues, that have to do with
14 civil rights in America.

15 And most recently we also sent a letter to the
16 new Attorney General's Office. Obviously many of you
17 in this room today are very, very familiar with the
18 new Attorney General. I've had the opportunity to
19 work with her myself, very recently, and in past years.
20 And we look forward to working with her again.

21 We just recently sent a letter to her on behalf
22 of the Commission, expressing some concern about what's
23 going on down in Mississippi. You may well have heard
24 about the so-called suicide hangings that are occurring
25 in this particular state with a great deal of frequency,

1 and under some very dubious circumstances, I might
2 add, in some instances.

3 Anyway, so we anticipate meeting sometime very
4 soon with Ms. Reno.

5 At some point in the not too distant future, we
6 also anticipate meeting with the President on the
7 Haitian situation and the Mississippi situation, along
8 with a number of other situations that have to do with
9 civil rights in America, certainly will be on the table
10 for discussion.

11 MR. BROWN: If there are no other -- unless we
12 see some other urgent comments on this Committee,
13 I would like to move into our open meeting.

14 I want to welcome our -- both our invited speakers
15 and also those of you who have come as guests to hear
16 and listen today. We appreciate your coming and your
17 efforts being here.

18 This meeting today is one in a series in which
19 this Committee has been examining the issues of
20 increasing racial and ethnic tensions throughout
21 Florida. We have been in Miami. We have been in
22 Gainesville. We have been in Jacksonville. And we
23 are planning to hold a statewide focused hearing in
24 Tallahassee, at the present time, in the end of June.
25 And at that point we will be putting together a

1 conditional report and a discussion of our findings.

2 This State-directed project is in support of
3 the national project of the Commission on Racial and
4 Ethnic Tension in the United States. So it coincides
5 with the series of hearings that the Commission itself
6 has been holding. Washington, Chicago, L.A. is coming
7 up this spring, probably Mississippi, and then next
8 year here in -- in Miami.

9 So with that introduction, I would like to move
10 into our -- as for our people we've asked to present
11 material and information to us.

12 I'd like to call first Mr. Sevell C. Brown, from
13 the Southern Christian Leadership here in St. Petersburg.

14 Mr. Brown, are you -- there you are. I saw you
15 come in. Mr. Brown, we do have a court reporter
16 recording this information here, so what is coming
17 down will all be recorded on the record, for us
18 putting together our report.

19 MR. INGRAM: Mr. Chairman, I have a question.

20 MR. BROWN: Yes.

21 MR. INGRAM: Are we talking about the Southern
22 Christian Leadership Council, or shouldn't it be
23 Conference, SCLC?

24 MR. KNIGHT: It should be Conference. Typograph-
25 ical error. As one who worked for that organization,

1 I can assure you --

2 SEVELL BROWN: Leaders, President Brown, I come
3 before you at this particular time in terms of what
4 we feel in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference
5 should be -- (inaudible).

6 (Thereupon, the court reporter asked the speaker
7 to please speak up.)

8 SEVELL BROWN: Essentially our presence here
9 today is directly with regard to what we feel in terms
10 of the community-based organizations within this
11 community to be sentiments permeating of racism.

12 And in the context of recent events, in our last thirty
13 years, we feel that the exacerbation of racism has
14 reached unprecedented heights within the St. Petersburg
15 ~~property area and the Tampa Bay area.~~ *[proper]* And I say this
16 to you in no uncertain terms, and I bring you proof
17 of that fact.

18 And I want to know if it's -- if it's appropriate
19 at this time that I can play into the record, that
20 would give evidence to what we want to make our case
21 on here before you today. Is that proper?

22 MR. DOCTOR: What's the length of it?

23 SEVELL BROWN: We have maybe about three minutes.
24 At any rate, I want you to understand that the Southern
25 Christian Leadership Conference, some twenty-two

1 months ago, proceeded in holding national hearings
 2 in this ~~county~~ ^[hearings] One of the cities we held was here
 3 in St. Petersburg, Florida, with regards to police,
 4 I think, brutality -- police brutality and whatnot.

5 As a result of those hearings, it was finally
 6 documented for the first time in this city, those
 7 cases that basically, overwhelmingly gave evidence
 8 of the fact that we had ~~that~~ ^[alleged brutality] going on in the police
 9 department here in St. Petersburg, Florida. With
 10 all due respect to those in authority at that time,
 11 these were denied, nondenial, denial, whatever the
 12 case may be. We had council members who were invited
 13 in this city to come and hear these people from the
 14 city, black and white, give evidence to the fact.

15 And council members did not come.

16 Only until -- there was maybe one council member
 17 did show up, Councilmen Fillyau (phonetic) -- but
 18 until Dr. Lowry himself came to St. Petersburg,
 19 basically to appeal for a civilian review board and
 20 to appeal to ^[you] ~~to~~ ^v ~~copa~~-sensitivity training, we were being
 21 stonewalled. All those in this community who spoke
 22 out to the belief that this did occur, and was on
 23 an ongoing worse case scenario in the city that was
 24 making itself manifest, they then was subject to
 25 scrutiny by the powers-to-be in City Hall.

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1 They found themselves on blacklists in terms
2 of your ability to sit on certain commissions and
3 sit on certain advisory boards. Myself, even to
4 receive council agenda, in terms of what to expect
5 before council, completely cut off. These things
6 are more -- occur.

7 And essentially, we met in Ernest Curtsinger,
8 someone did not -- who did not bring it here, but
9 essentially someone who, the elements of racism could
10 identify with as a leader. Being the new Chief of
11 Police brought in and blessed, he then became the
12 rallying cry of the polarization -- for the polariza-
13 tion for those elements in this community that finally
14 found themselves a leader to exacerbate the levels
15 of racism from occurring at heights.

16 At this particular time he was joined by a
17 Coalition of a Neighborhood Association called C.O.N.A.,
18 basically representing the white leader association
19 for the city. And its counterpart was F.I.C.O., the
20 Federation Intercity Community Organization that
21 represents the black neighborhood associations of
22 the city.

23 Strangely enough, C.O.N.A. and F.I.C.O. joined
24 hands to take all the downtown vested interest candi-
25 dates out of City Hall. But when it came to this

1 Chief of Police, they split and turned against us
2 and said no, leave that alone. And essentially we
3 had the Police Benevolent Association forming an ugly
4 alliance with C.O.N.A., the white neighborhood associ-
5 ation.

6 And then a radio station, WFLA in Tampa, Florida,
7 interfered with the process of business in St.
8 Petersburg by now becoming the advocate of the Chief
9 of Police. Every civil rights leader, every human
10 rights leader that raised their head in the same
11 decency and the same spirit of Martin Luther King,
12 to speak out against what we feel to be injustices
13 being committed on a daily basis, that radio station
14 would then attack, attack and try to weather, weather
15 down anybody that raised his voice against this Chief
16 of Police, or his policies, which we felt unjust and
17 something that was turning back the clock in this
18 city.

19 Essentially I gave you evidence of the fact that
20 the voice you're about to hear is Mark Larson, one
21 of the radio talk show hosts that called my house
22 drunk, threatening me in terms of what he would do
23 to assassinate my character on his radio show, with
24 the blessings of his owner, Gabe Hobbs, and the rest
25 of those that are associated with WFLA.

1 (Inaudible) This is Mark Larson's voice, talk
2 show host.

3 (Thereupon, Mr. Sevell Brown played his cassette
4 tape.)

5 WFLA 970 AM Talk Radio, Mark Larson, 9 a.m. to
6 12. Please listen because I've been calling you and
7 asking you to do an investigation at Picnic Island
8 and College Hill. No investigation. I am going to
9 tear your butt tomorrow, okay. You and NAACP are
10 going to be all over the news tomorrow. Believe what
11 I'm telling you. Just listen to 970 FLA AM, Mark
12 Larson Show. Listen for it. You will be surprised.

13 By the way, the six boys in Brooksville, big
14 miscarriage of justice. They should all be --
15 (inaudible) -- sheriff, every damn one. (Inaudible)

16 SEVELL BROWN: And this second call, you can tell
17 he was drunk.

18 (Thereupon, Mr. Sevell Brown played his cassette
19 tape.)

20 It's me again. (Inaudible) Why don't you call
21 in tomorrow to the radio program. The number is 990-
22 WFLA. 990-9352. 990-9352, 9 to 12, Mark Larson. Call
23 in. Let's talk on the radio.

24 (Thereupon, Mr. Sevell Brown stopped his cassette
25 tape.)

1 SEVELL BROWN: These are the calls that resulted
2 from that phone call.

3 (Thereupon, Mr. Sevell Brown played his cassette
4 tape.)

5 I really got to go. (Inaudible) Thanks for
6 calling. Jay, thanks a lot. (Inaudible) St. Pete.
7 (Inaudible) Mr. Brown, I hope you're listening to
8 WFLA tonight because, let me tell you, the truth has
9 finally come out. You are what they are talking about,
10 and everybody who knows you, you're nothing but a
11 troublemaker -- (inaudible) -- stop it and just get
12 out of town because you're not doing a bit of good
13 around here. No one likes you and you're not worth
14 the ground that you walk on. Bye. (Inaudible) --
15 clean up your own back yard instead of taking --
16 (inaudible) -- out, maybe it will do you some good.
17 Maybe you understand what's going on. You got a big
18 mess in your neighborhood, and you continue to pick
19 out a man that's one of the top Chiefs in the United
20 States.

21 All y'all wind up just like the Klan, you want
22 to get your face on TV. Y'all better start picking
23 up your own neighborhoods and cleaning up your own
24 and leave other people that are working alone. The
25 only thing Sevell Brown is, is a poverty pimp. That's

1 all he is, man. I don't want to get racial or nothing
2 like that, but you're disgusting, Brown.

3 (Thereupon, Mr. Sevell Brown stopped his cassette
4 tape.)

5 SEVELL BROWN: This goes on to nigger, death
6 threats, and whatnot in terms of -- actually this
7 talk show host was prominent in Tampa Bay, actually
8 locking our answer machine into his program where
9 we are made to listen to all the threats and encourage-
10 ment of racial remarks and statements, intimidating
11 statements, that very -- that are very life-threatening.

12 This is the first time it's been heard by anyone,
13 outside of those within the Board. Now, I say that --

14 MR. BROWN: Let me ask you real quick, would
15 it be possible for you to make copies of those?

16 Because it was probably very -- almost impossible
17 for the court reporter to try and take that down.

18 SEVELL BROWN: Yeah, but I just wanted that to
19 be heard for the record. And it goes on, it gets
20 worse and worse. But at any rate, this particular
21 radio station, you can see what the hidden agenda
22 was.

23 Now, anyone in the civil rights community, anyone
24 that had made it possible for St. Petersburg to
25 accomplish the gains and human rights and civil rights

1 for the last thirty years, they were determined to
2 beat them into the ground, silence them through the
3 airwaves, through intimidations and methods, basically
4 that revert back to days of old doing Jim Crow and
5 radical reconstruction.

6 But this time it was being done by intelligent
7 beings that were masking and cloaking under the
8 auspices of being a talk show host that said, we're
9 in the business of entertainment. This is not news,
10 this is entertainment. And I think the proof here
11 is that this goes beyond entertainment when you start
12 using telephones, using telephone lines to basically
13 subjugate those who would stand on the opposite side
14 of you in terms of the process of demarketization
15 and exercise their first amendment right to say this
16 is injustice and we think it is and as we perceive
17 it, yet that was not given us, in this particular
18 case.

19 And that particular radio station took the point,
20 became the advocate for the Chief of Police, and every-
21 body else was beat to the ground and their reputations
22 were tarnished if they said anything at all.

23 Beyond that, our concern with regards to the
24 problem they had and the problem that we had here
25 in the city with the police department and his ability

1 to acquiesce power in the community through the
2 Neighborhood -- the Neighborhood Crime Watch Units.
3 Our concern was this and simply this: Is that this
4 city is not ready for the policing style that is
5 familiarized with LA, that you may be familiarized
6 as carried on in the city of Los Angeles.

7 Our concern was we don't want the style, we don't
8 want everything that comes along with it, and we're
9 asking you in no uncertain terms, work with us in
10 terms of what you can put into -- into the city to
11 make sure that we can go forward progressively and
12 do the things that we ought to do to make sure that
13 St. Petersburg is one of the next great cities in
14 this country.

15 To the contrary, we now have a new Chief of
16 Police, but before he came on line and before he was
17 hired, we are here because there was someone that
18 came into the city, and for 19 months he refused to
19 listen to his bosses, he refused to listen to the
20 City Council members, he refused to listen to the
21 community, he refused to listen to even his highest-
22 ranking African-American officers. And in no uncertain
23 terms he'd rebut them and he'd come in saying, I'm
24 for affirmative action, yet his first promotions were
25 five white lieutenants, and the next week seven white

1 sergeants, until the community protested to get his
2 area, and still he moved reluctantly to do that.

3 Beyond that, he attacks civilian review boards.
4 Beyond that, he attacked any experts in the country,
5 denounced and declared openly before the public, that
6 there were no experts on civilian review boards in
7 America.

8 And then all of you know -- excuse me, Charles
9 Overtree, Director of the Criminal Institute of
10 Justice at Harvard University, he then came before
11 the Biracial Committee at the very last and declared
12 that -- that his resources had said that Charles
13 Overtree was a fictitious character and did not exist.
14 And if he was anything while he was at Harvard, he
15 was an art instructor.

16 We're talking about people who were public
17 officials, they're appointed, that are coming out
18 in public, making bold statements contrary to any
19 facts at all. And yet, he is not being held account-
20 able for it.

21 And he goes on, and this thing gets worse and
22 worse in terms of affecting adversely blacks in St.
23 Petersburg.

24 Policies that we would like to see as a result
25 of you coming here, lifted by the present Police Chief,

1 and the present administration, not with a strong
2 mayor form of government, as of last night there is.
3 There was paranoia because of policies that the former
4 Chief of Police handed down. He did not want blacks
5 supervising blacks because there was a possibility
6 of collusion in terms of them being blacks, covering
7 for other blacks, in terms of them doing something
8 wrong or contrary to policy.

9 Nobody ever said in the last thirty years about
10 whites supervising whites, yet blacks are paranoid
11 in the police department because they cannot come
12 together and be seen together, collaborating together
13 or working as colleagues together, simply because
14 they got a Chief of Police that objects to the fact,
15 that is paranoid about blacks working together in
16 a collaborative way, without there being some hidden
17 agenda or some secret conspiracy to get rid of him.

18 Beyond that, all white teams sent out across
19 the country to review community-based policing, but
20 he finds nothing wrong with excluding females and
21 excluding African-Americans, because as far as he's
22 concerned, everybody is going to see the same thing
23 anyway and one be just as good as another.

24 No matter what we do or what we say in this city,
25 in terms of dealing with certain departments, seemingly

1 we meet him, and we meet him with this unholy alliance
2 with people sitting on City Council that have been
3 voted into office in an at-large system that we had
4 nothing -- that we had really no power over them
5 because we don't have single-member districts in this
6 city in terms of determining what type of blacks do
7 we want from our own districts.

8 We have to be compromising enough to depend on
9 those outside our district to vote what type of quality
10 of African-Americans will sit on the seats where you're
11 sitting now and serve on City Council.

12 So, therefore, many times our council members
13 are compromised and are handicapped in terms of
14 speaking out and dealing with these things that are
15 coming -- coming forward in the city at the council
16 level in these hallowed chambers. And we basically
17 are stripped of any power except through these council
18 members. And we cannot really have them feel free to
19 voice their opinions with regards to our sentiments.
20 Then we really don't have anybody speaking for us,
21 and the only thing we can turn to, or the only
22 institute we can turn to, we need the federal govern-
23 ment and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to
24 basically listen to our plea and our cries to help
25 in some way turn this whole process around.

1 One of the major things that we most certainly
2 are concerned about in this city is the practice of
3 antiquated, antebellum plantation politics; whereas
4 when we come before council, before council members
5 in this city, we can have a solidified group of African-
6 Americans come in here and address the issues of our
7 community sincerely and honestly, and research our
8 facts.

9 But because of one African-American out of thirty-
10 five that came down, sitting in the room, wouldn't
11 agree with the other thirty-five, then we get a lesson
12 from City Council members, white, that you need to
13 go back and get yourselves together and come back
14 in some sense of unanimity because you're making your
15 community look bad because you have -- you have
16 dissentation.

17 Yet, we can have 200 whites come down to City
18 Council, not one of them agree with each other on
19 nothing, not one thing. Yet, every council member
20 up there finds merit in what anyone has to say, and
21 nobody ever gives them the lesson that they got to go
22 back home, get themselves together, and then come back
23 and have some sense of unanimity. This is ridiculous.

24 Then, on top of that, we have this variable from
25 this antiquated, antebellum plantation politics. And

1 as a student of Afro-American history, and as an
2 instructor who fought at Clarktown University with
3 regards to Afro-American studies, I find it repre-
4 hensible in 1993 for civic leaders who by happenstance,
5 none are minorities, to be saying that we still got
6 to have one black leader. We still got to have one
7 black person that we can centralize everything through
8 in this city. We still got to find that one that will
9 not rock the boat, that will add those things that
10 are congruent with the way we feel, in the back room.

11 So if somebody else walks up here and says some-
12 thing contrary, that will rock the boat or cause
13 somebody to fringe or whatever the case may be, then
14 he is livid by those in the press by the criticism
15 for those in public office. And they say that's just
16 a splinter group, that's just somebody has no following.

17 Every year we do the National Martin Luther King
18 Parade Fest that you all see in this city. We've had
19 as many as 90,000 to 100,000 people show up for that
20 national celebration, which is the second largest in
21 the country. They got SCLC shirts, Martin Luther King,
22 all that, all down the aisles.

23 And then we have responsible City Council members
24 that say, you come in here criticizing the chief but
25 you have nobody, no following, you have no support in

1 the community. They just left the parade, walking
2 in it, and saw 90,000 people out on the parade route.
3 But, because you cannot agree with what is being said
4 by administration, or what is being said by the status
5 quo, and you want to represent the sentiments of your
6 community, as a community-based organization, you
7 become an aberration and you become somebody that
8 cannot be talked to, even to the extent that we've
9 had Chief of Police in this city, if not Curtsinger,
10 his prior, give the issue -- issue the order that
11 no officer is allowed to talk to SCLC and be seen
12 with SCLC, talking with them, or their attorney, Kathryn
13 Lancaster. That's an official directive that comes
14 down.

15 We have black officers of high ranking, PhD,
16 majors, assistant chiefs, they were afraid to even
17 be seen talking with me, coming out of a cafeteria,
18 because they might get in trouble with certain City
19 Council members, or might find themselves victimized
20 and stereotyped because of the paranoia of a Chief
21 of Police, and who he has pulled together, in terms
22 of his high-ranking infrastructure.

23 And I think it's a sad day that we are still
24 here in 1993, in this city -- and there are other
25 cities like this one. We know we're no different

1 than other ones, but it's a sad situation when we still
2 have civic leadership in the white community trying
3 to find one black woman or one black man that's going
4 to represent all blacks in the city.

5 And I think -- and I think the message here today
6 to this particular commission is that we want this
7 city to know that it is high time that they understand
8 that the African-Americans have matured to the extent
9 that we are diversified enough to agree to disagree
10 just like other people, of other backgrounds, and other
11 ethnic derivations.

12 And so essentially these are the things that we're
13 facing here, these are the things that disturb us.

14 And it goes to the heart of this. And essentially
15 everything that we fight, everything that we're stone-
16 walled against in this city that leads to the
17 exacerbation of racism to unprecedented heights is
18 a direct result of that seeming cloak and protective
19 buffer that is placed on our one position, Chief of
20 Police.

21 And then the practice of this planation politics
22 that do not allow African-Americans basically to be
23 human beings. And I say to you, as I say to many
24 of my students in my classes, that the whole civil
25 rights movement by Martin King was no more or no less

1 than the right to be human without requiring me to
2 be white. That was the whole message in the civil
3 rights movement of the decisive decade of the sixties.

4 Yet, here in St. Petersburg, Florida, we find
5 ourselves being required to be human with the stipula-
6 tion that you got to think white, perceive it white,
7 and come from that orientation. And we say we just
8 cannot live with ourselves and do it that way.

9 But we hope that there's somebody out there at
10 the level of the Justice Department and the Civil
11 Rights Commission that can listen to us and help make
12 some changes in the city whereby we don't have to
13 go on any further in terms of this continuum, worse
14 case scenario, be people and Council members, every
15 time we come downtown and raise a point, declaring
16 that oh, there's a snake under any rock. Most of
17 the rocks that we turned over, we have found snakes.

18 And we say to you today that essentially the
19 community between the neighborhood association with
20 the African-American community, between those civic
21 organizations, sororities and fraternities, civil rights
22 organizations, we simply think that there is no cause
23 for the levels of racism to exacerbate to the unprece-
24 dented heights that they did.

25 And more than anything else, we hope that you

1 take a careful look at the use of the airwaves by
2 certain radio stations, to make people into hate
3 mongering, to using the airwaves to stir up and --
4 stir up and pertetuate confrontations between people
5 of different ethnic backgrounds, and racism.

6 And then they say, well, we can't get in trouble
7 with the FCC because we're not doing news, this is
8 entertainment. And I don't think it's entertainment
9 when blacks have to find themselves directly across
10 from whites. And everybody wants to go at each other's
11 throats because of things -- just matters of disagree-
12 ment. And I don't think it has to be reduced to their
13 level, yet.

14 We have no power over radio stations like WFLA.
15 Somebody else does, we don't. And we think that their
16 tapes need to be subpoenaed. And I understand the
17 Commission has the power to subpoena.

18 If you would just listen to the dogma, listen
19 to the poison that is being spewed out there in the
20 name of entertainment, you would very easily be able
21 to deduce that there's nothing about what we hear and
22 what we're subjugated to, across this side of the bay,
23 coming from that side, that has anything whatsoever
24 to do with entertainment, but only to do with beating
25 the free wheel of people that bled profusely and fought

1 too long, to make sure that they had the same inalien-
2 able rights as any other ethnic group or race or gender
3 in this country of America, which we hold dear --
4 dearer than anyone else.

5 At this particular time, there's something that
6 we also would like for you to also focus in on, if
7 you would; the use of the wiretap by the police depart-
8 ment, to stay ten steps ahead of the African-American
9 leadership.

10 It came to surface during the course of this
11 campaign, and the whole scenario with Curtsinger.
12 And there was a ruling by the Florida Division of Law
13 Enforcement. And the ruling basically said that at
14 a certain point the Chief of Police went beyond his
15 boundaries where he did not have to go, because he
16 was looking for something else in terms of trying to
17 identify what officers in the police department were
18 actually anti him or in conspiracy to get rid of him.

19 But they do use what he deemed to be a legitimate
20 excuse officially, to wiretap a lieutenant that became
21 a major, and then tried to gather beyond that. Once
22 it was proven that there was nothing going on and
23 the allegations were unfounded, they kept a tap on
24 to basically try to make a case against McRae, against
25 Chief Goliath Davis, against Cedric Gordon, against

1 Al White, against all the high-ranking officers in
2 the city.

3 And I think that's something that ought to be
4 looked into by this Commission in terms of how wiretaps
5 are being used in this city.

6 It only came out and we only know about Cedric
7 Gordon, because that's what hit the papers, and that's
8 what came out and that's what surfaced. God knows
9 who else in this city may be unfortunate enough to
10 have their phones wiretapped in terms of somebody
11 having the need to be ten step ahead of them to know
12 who is talking to who and where we're going in a sense
13 of direction, with regard to matters and issues in
14 this city.

15 And I think very serious about that because it
16 just doesn't make sense that at this day and time we
17 would have to endure that type of situation in St.
18 Petersburg, Florida.

19 Furthermore, the graffiti, the ability of the
20 latitude for officers in this police department to
21 be able to get away with talking about killing Chiefs
22 of Police. And you got the graffiti on the wall.
23 And I've already submitted the package, I think, in
24 advance, that has this documentation in it, where the
25 investigation was done.

1 But you have the graffiti on the walls in a
2 secured area of the police department, where police
3 officers are taking up the ham for Curtsinger, and
4 then they're giving out all niggers must die. They
5 have a black female major in sexual positions who --
6 her name, and everybody knows, it's Major World, and
7 all type of innuendo and all type of nonsensical, far-
8 left things are being said and written there.

9 Yet, yet, all this perpetuates and exacerbates
10 racism inside the police department. But when we find
11 the officer that is responsible, it's a slap on the
12 wrist. He's still on the force. The same officer
13 that did all the graffiti and whatnot, we still have
14 to face him somewhere in the police department, where
15 he may sometime have to interface with a minority.
16 His attitude and disposition has not changed.

17 We have legislated and come down after we caught
18 him to redefine what his behavior should be and what
19 should not be tolerated, but his attitude and disposi-
20 tion has not changed. And when he can get away with
21 it, he'll do it again.

22 But why do we have to deal with that here, when
23 something as simple as a psychological tool or instru-
24 ment can be used in the screening of applicants in
25 the academy? I don't believe we have it. And I think

1 the Commission ought to look into that area, where
2 the City of St. Pete Police Department, at the academy
3 level, needs to add written psychological profiles in
4 terms of these people coming out of high school, wher-
5 ever they -- whatever their background may be and the
6 level of education be, that wants to become police
7 officers.

8 I don't know what I'm getting out of Pinellas
9 Park where we're experiencing problems with riots with
10 our kids. I don't know what I'm getting out of Kenneth
11 City where at Dixie Hollins High School, riots was
12 the order of the day, and citizens from Kenneth City
13 would line up across the street with trucks, with their
14 guns and whatnot.

15 And I'm saying to you that that area where the
16 profiles need to be looked at would go a long way,
17 and us screening out and alleviating those types of
18 mind set that we release on the street with a badge and
19 a gun that are dealing with people that are being
20 beaten, that are being intimidated, and that basically
21 have said in the survey that was conducted by the
22 police department. And you -- I think you have a copy
23 of that survey, and I have it with me, in terms of
24 the article itself, it came out where the officers
25 of the police department, white, overwhelmingly said

1 and came out with their own internal document, that
2 we prefer not to work on the south side of St. Peters-
3 burg, and racial remarks and slurs were made to that
4 effect, at that particular time. And that article
5 will be given to you.

6 It's their own testimony, it's their own instru-
7 ment that came public after a corps investigated.
8 That demonstrates that that was a problem. Yet, the
9 Chief of Police and others, Chief of Police did not
10 feel the need to copa-sensitivity training.

11 MR. BROWN: You know, you've given us some really
12 'dramatic' testimony today. And I know you've submitted
13 some other written material, and we certainly would
14 be pleased to get any additional written material,
15 but we do have a number of other people.

16 And so if I could ask you to try to wrap it up,
17 I would appreciate it.

18 SEVELL BROWN: And so essentially, in no uncertain
19 terms, we think enough is enough -- (inaudible) --
20 the only people we have recourse now to turn to are
21 those at the federal level in terms of making sure
22 something is done about this particular situation,
23 and all the variables that are on our menu that need
24 to be changed so we can have something palatable that
25 we can eat and digest in this city.

1 All is not wrong, but all is not well. And we
2 ask you to come, Doctor -- Mr. Doctor, and your other
3 colleagues, on those areas where there's wounds. We
4 ask you to deal with it where the wounds may now be,
5 but if it's a headwound, please examine the headwound.
6 If it's a legwound, please examine there.

7 So we just welcome your presence and we welcome
8 you in the future in terms of making sure that you
9 can thoroughly ascertain and evaluate all the variables
10 that are coming to bat here, to make our situation
11 what it is so it can become what it ought to be.

12 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. We have a few
13 questions.

14 RABBI AGIN: Mr. Brown, you threw out many issues
15 and it's hard to focus on all of the issues that you
16 brought about. I just wanted to focus on just two
17 questions.

18 Can you tell me the date when that radio announcer
19 or radio talk show host called you?

20 SEVELL BROWN: Yes, we have that documented, also.

21 RABBI AGIN: All right. Fine. You have it
22 documented.

23 SEVELL BROWN: Right.

24 RABBI AGIN: Did you take the liberty of
25 contacting the FCC and filing a formal complaint?

1 SEVELL BROWN: At that particular time when we
2 called the FCC to make inquiry about the possibility
3 of -- well, we wanted to find out the time table for
4 them to get their license. Then we wanted to find
5 out about the possibility of us being able to file a
6 complaint with regard to what was going on with us.
7 And essentially I was told by those that I made contact
8 with that basically there was nothing that they could
9 do.

10 RABBI AGIN: You sent a formal letter?

11 SEVELL BROWN: No, no, no, we called in advance.

12 RABBI AGIN: But you did not make a formal
13 complaint by mail; did you?

14 SEVELL BROWN: Not a formal complaint. After
15 they told us, when we made the initial phone call and
16 talking to four different people, four different
17 departments, that that was --

18 RABBI AGIN: I would have filed a formal complaint
19 in writing, and then we'd have further documentation
20 that they're not doing their job. Because I personally
21 feel it was a violation there. But the only way you
22 can substantiate anything is having some documentation.

23 MR. FORD: Mr. Chairman -- the Chief that you
24 reference here, is he still the sitting Chief?

25 SEVELL BROWN: No, he just ran for mayor and lost.

1 MR. FORD: So you no longer have that particular
2 Chief?

3 SEVELL BROWN: No, we don't have him, but we have
4 the element that he left there, and his coalition.

5 MR. BRAKE: Excuse me, Mr. Brown. I'm a lawyer,
6 and what you said about wiretapping interested me,
7 because I know there are both state and federal
8 statutes against wiretapping, except in certain,
9 limited circumstances with the court's approval. And
10 I know that there are both civil and criminal remedies,
11 because I've been involved in cases like that.

12 Did your organization or any of the individuals
13 involved, were the subject of the wiretap, make any
14 comments to the State's Attorney's Office or the U.S.
15 Attorney's Office, or consult a lawyer with regard
16 to civil action?

17 SEVELL BROWN: They consulted lawyers, I under-
18 stand. They dealt with Internal Affairs. And after
19 it was found out and discovered that was the case,
20 Internal Affairs gave their report, a summary of it.

21 And beyond that, the FDLE was called in to also
22 do their investigation of it, by Mac Vines, who came
23 in as an interim chief who is over the Criminal Justice
24 Institute out there.

25 And so the finding of the FDLE was that initially

1 in terms of the Chief of Police wanting to find out
2 the information, specifically in the narrow confines
3 of whether there was something he was doing to threaten
4 his wife, that once they found out that that was not
5 the case, in the first week and the second week, then
6 the tap should have been taken off. But they left
7 it there to find out other things beyond that.

8 And when -- the case was that it was unfounded,
9 her allegations. And so essentially FDLE said that
10 there was another agenda involved by the Chief of
11 Police, and that was to gather additional information
12 beyond the original scope of what he requested.

13 MR. BRAKE: Mac Vines did this. Has any action
14 been taken with regard to that by the State's Attorney's
15 Office or the --

16 SEVELL BROWN: At this particular point, no legal
17 action, I don't believe, has been taken by Major Gordon.

18 MR. FORD: Mr. Brown, I'm interested in the City
19 Council's role with this. I'm on the Orlando City
20 Council. And my view of this is that my job as a
21 council member is as a policymaker. And so I don't
22 delve into the day-to-day operations of any department
23 unless policy is being violated.

24 I can't imagine that St. Petersburg would have
25 policy in place that would allow police chiefs to

1 decorate people because of ethnicity or gender. So
2 if these allegations that you are stating are true
3 or not, and I have no reason to believe they're not,
4 it means that this Chief of Police was violating
5 policies, he was carrying on in ways that I'm sure
6 that's not ordained by ordinance.

7 Now, are you saying that you or some of your
8 cohorts would come in and complain to this City Council
9 about his behavior, and that he would be supported
10 by the Council, by folks of the Council?

11 SEVELL BROWN: Yes, and specifically Council
12 Member Connie Cone, who took the point for him, and
13 as far as we're concerned, lives in his office.

14 But the bottom line was, he didn't have power
15 in a vacuum of himself, by himself. He had a coalition
16 or he was talking with somebody he identified last
17 week on television, I think it was on, because it --
18 44, one of those stations, he identified who were the
19 four council members that called him daily, that kept
20 him abreast, and informed and whatnot, in terms of
21 him coming with whatever strategy he did come with.

22 MR. FORD: That's really sad because in these
23 matters the tone comes from the top. And if you have
24 a City Council condoning that, it's a wonder you have
25 not had more problems than you've had. It's a wonder

1 you haven't had street action here. But that's really
2 sad.

3 SEVELL BROWN: That's why we -- we move that at
4 every level, in terms of to circumvent and prevent
5 street action, our only -- our only concern is this,
6 is that if you provide any community with an outlet
7 in terms of a process to deal with the concern, then
8 that community does not have to turn to outrage.

9 And so, therefore, if we have problems and we
10 have concerns regarding a Chief who has his own
11 machinery built, and he wants to run the city from
12 the police department, instead of being run from these
13 council chambers. And essentially that's why we have
14 people like -- of the level and the magnitude of a
15 Charles Overtree to come in and moderate, who is a
16 moderator for CBS, NBC, and ABC.

17 But then when we ask the City Manager's Office
18 and ask City Council members, Chief Curtsinger is
19 employed by you, would you please have him at the town
20 meeting so he can meet the community and defend his
21 actions on civilian review boards or whatever the case
22 may be. And he won't come.

23 When Dr. Lowry came here and came before the
24 council, he wouldn't come. When Overtree came, he
25 flew out of town. So basically I got a man that has

1 an M.O. that anytime he's -- have to face the music,
2 he leaves town.

3 MR. FORD: Thank you very much.

4 MR. DOCTOR: One quick question, Mr. Chairman.
5 Just one quick question and one quick answer, if I
6 may.

7 Mr. Brown, obviously you've had an election here
8 in this city which was concluded last night. Given
9 that election, do you see any possibilities that the
10 issue of race and ethnic tensions in the City of St.
11 Petersburg will be addressed in a positive and forth-
12 right manner?

13 SEVELL BROWN: The sentiments are this, is that
14 we're estatic and elated at the fact that the incumbent
15 mayor won. However, the mere fact that he only won
16 by 1,400 votes scares us to death. When we can now
17 look and see in a contested election that 49 percent
18 of the vote went to a man that only arrived here
19 twenty-two months ago, that nobody really knew, but
20 he became a polarization focal point for people who
21 basically were certain -- of a certain orientation,
22 and seemingly were holding on to the vestiges of old,
23 it scares us to think that 49 percent of the voting
24 population, of those who voted last night, voted for
25 him.

1 So in a sense, it's almost like there was a
2 victory for him, even though it was a literal victory
3 for the city, because the incumbent mayor won.

4 So what we will try to do, as we've always done,
5 is take each negative experience and transform it into
6 a positive consequence and embrace any and everyone
7 in terms of moving forward together, progressively,
8 in a sense of unanimity. And that's the way we hope
9 it will go.

10 And we just hope that those who lost -- witnessed
11 the election and lost it in terms of the literal
12 outcome of achieving victory, will now drop the mantel
13 in terms of that, and go on and let this city pull
14 together and heal, and the wounds could be covered in
15 terms of us peacefully coinciding with and inter-
16 relating with each other in a sense of harmony.

17 And that's where we are and that's where the
18 community intends on going.

19 And no violence broke out in the past. And we
20 are intent that we would make sure that there is not
21 the propensity for violence in the future by continu-
22 ally providing a way for the citizens of the city to
23 vent their frustrations and their concerns and their
24 outrage because you here -- not so much the -- because
25 you here today in the immediate aftermath of the

1 election, is going to make everybody else feel good
2 in that 51 percent, because somebody else is looking,
3 and there are some other eyes from up above looking
4 down.

5 And we just feel that because that's the case,
6 that we know that people will be even more willing
7 to move forward together in that sense of unanimity.
8 I thank you.

9 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much.

10 MR. FORD: Mr. Chairman, just for the information
11 of our Committee members, what exacerbated this problem
12 was that St. Petersburg -- and correct me if I'm wrong
13 -- had a City Manager and ceremonial type of Mayor.
14 So the Mayor had no authority to dismiss the Police
15 Chief. Eventually the City Manager fired this man.

16 And that was a problem, not only with his firing,
17 it just so happened that the City Manager was a black
18 male. And I think that's what rallied a lot of people
19 to this Chief's side, even after his behavior was just
20 totally out of -- out of line with what a police
21 chief's behavior should be.

22 I heard the gentleman say after the election
23 yesterday, they're giving us a strong mayor. I don't
24 know if they've changed the format, but that's what
25 happened. The City Manager --

1 SEVELL BROWN: It has changed it. And just to
2 let you know how deep this is, and I think it goes
3 back to what Mr. Doctor just asked and your comments.

4 Mr. Chairman, for years the African-American
5 community has lobbied for a strong mayor form of
6 government, for years. But all of a sudden, when we
7 had to face the reality that they were changing the
8 city charter to accommodate Curtsinger running for
9 mayor, former chief, and then he wanted to modify the
10 city charter to a strong mayor at this time, when they
11 treated the city charter like it was the Ten Command-
12 ments. When Dr. Lowry came here and they said, in
13 no way will we touch the city charter. It was unanimous.
14 No way would we touch the city charter. It's the Ten
15 Commandments for the Civilian Review Board to give
16 it power, subpoena power.

17 But the time Curtsinger got fired, the city charter
18 lost its sanctity, all its hardness. And so the bottom
19 line was they wanted to change this charter just so
20 this man could be a strong mayor, fire everybody at
21 will in every department, put his people in the office,
22 even the chief that he would designate.

23 And because of that, the African-American community
24 led a campaign to say just vote no, don't vote for
25 anything -- to be safe, we don't want anybody confused

1 about what to vote for, even though this goes against
2 our grain. We got to vote down strong mayor form of
3 government, so just vote no. We done fought for years.

4 And Bobby Doctor knows me, and asked when he came
5 the first time, we need single-member districts. Do
6 you know we had to say vote no against single-member
7 districts because we don't want people confused about
8 those issues on the -- items on the referendums. And
9 so therefore we have African-Americans going against
10 the very thing they fought for for the last fifteen
11 years, just to make sure he didn't get elected and
12 that he did not become a strong mayor.

13 And therefore, now we've sacrificed single-member
14 districts and we sacrificed what we used to have where
15 we were making the gains on the city manager form of
16 government by happenstance that had some black
17 visibility there. And that's the irreconcilable,
18 ironic situation that we find ourselves in. And we
19 shouldn't have to find ourselves in that situation.

20 So, therefore, when we once again go back to the
21 Justice Department as we did on the June the 2nd,
22 asking them to sue this city for single-member
23 districts, and the School Board and the County Commis-
24 sion. And because there was no democrat in office,
25 Reno was not appointed at the time. And they couldn't

1 move, they said they couldn't move. And so, therefore,
2 we could get no outside assistance to that end.

3 And I'm hoping now, as they promised me, they
4 can take a relook at it and help us salvage the damage
5 we did to ourselves yesterday, by voting to have single-
6 member districts so they can bring it back and bring
7 it back and put it on the agenda and make the move
8 themselves so we can have what we want.

9 MR. INGRAM: Mr. Chairman, can I just ask Mr.
10 Brown a question that should take about fifteen seconds
11 to answer?

12 MR. BROWN: We've had several other people that
13 want to ask questions. And I think we've really got
14 to move on. And what we're not going to do -- we're
15 going to lose, we're going to have our own members
16 going to be leaving and we'll end up with, as I
17 experienced sometime with maybe myself and one other
18 left for the people who stay to the end. So I think
19 we do really need to move on.

20 I also had several people before that wanted to
21 ask questions. And again, I appreciate it very much.
22 It was a very startling testimony in a number of these
23 areas that you presented here today.

24 SEVELL BROWN: Thank you.

25 MR. BROWN: I'd like to ask Reverend Cate to come

1 forward. Reverend --

2 REV. CATE: Chairman and members of the committee,
3 thank you for letting us appear. I won't take forty-
4 five minutes, just forty. They asked us to do ten, but
5 those of us here who know Sevell, he is not in any
6 profession of preaching, but he likes to do it a little
7 bit.

8 Let me give you some background of my position.
9 It does not say on the sheet, but yes, I am a pastor
10 of the Palm Bay Christian Church. I am a -- also two
11 years ago I retired, a twenty-year member of that seat
12 right there, so I have been through the process.

13 I now chair the Round Table Housing for the
14 Housing Process of the City. And I chair the Reconcil-
15 iation Committee, which was a committee made up of
16 all of the various segments that we've already heard,
17 and anything about, from Sevell Brown, including Police
18 Benevolent and all the factions appointed by the City
19 Manager and the Mayor, last year, when we first got
20 in our crisis of the Police Chief.

21 That Committee is still meeting and is still in
22 the process of dealing with some things. I jotted
23 down some things that I wasn't going to deal with at
24 first, but I'm going to deal with them first, and then
25 get back, if you will, simply because it's still fresh

1 in our minds, some of the things that Mr. Brown has
2 said.

3 One of the most critical things I think he said
4 was that at the conclusion, conclusion, conclusion --
5 he concluded three times as far as sermons go -- when
6 he said all is not wrong, but all is not well. And
7 that is -- that is very accurate. All is not well
8 is St. Petersburg, but all is not wrong at the same
9 time. And I think that's probably the case in any
10 city that you are dealing with.

11 Let me touch on just a few of the things he said,
12 and then I'll get off of it, because there is a counter-
13 balance to this thing. It is well known among the
14 leadership, council and other members of this community,
15 that there is no single black voice in our community,
16 not since the days of Pastor Ian Davis, back in the
17 late sixties and early seventies. We did have a black
18 leader who spoke and the community responded accord-
19 ingly. Since his death, that has not been the case.

20 And there is no one that I know of that is so
21 naive to think, or even practice, that there would
22 be one leader. Unfortunately, oftentimes, while Mr.
23 Brown is not heard before the council, and I have sat
24 there, it is because he comes in with one agenda and
25 the black leadership that we are acquainted with.

1 And I will tell you, primarily it is the black pastors
2 of this community telling us something else. And often-
3 times his approach gets turned aside and he gets very
4 angry at that process. It's not always a matter that
5 no one ever listens.

6 Not very -- let me add to yesterday's vote, I
7 am delighted that it came out the way it did. I wish
8 it had come out much stronger in favor of the present
9 mayor. Not every vote was racial, not everyone who
10 voted for Curtsinger, because some of them are in my
11 congregation. Not everyone who voted for Curtsinger
12 voted on the basis of race.

13 You've got to always understand that there are
14 exceptions. Despite my distrust and dislike and fear
15 of what was happening in splitting our committee over
16 the Curtsinger issue, the gentleman is very charismatic,
17 has a way of attracting votes to what he's saying.
18 And people listen to those kind of people sometimes.

19 And when they're saying, I am not a racist, and
20 he probably doesn't think he is, they follow that.

21 So you can't simply say that there are 35,000 people
22 in the community of St. Petersburg that are racists.
23 It is not so. That vote did not mean that at all.

24 The strong mayor, for years, that Mr. Brown has
25 emphasized to you is not necessarily the case; thus,

1 the NAACP would not have joined the clergy -- both
2 clergy associations and several other units to urge
3 the city to vote for the council management form of
4 government. That statement was a little exaggerated.

5 So anyway, let me tell you that my involvement
6 in the whole process of the community began in 1968
7 in a garbage strike that became a racial issue. And
8 unfortunately I've been around the community long
9 enough to see the deja vu, and was not pleased with it.

10 I and many other leaders in the community, for
11 many years, thought that racial harmony existed in
12 our community. We were naive enough, I guess, to
13 believe that, particularly for some of us who had a
14 strong relationship with -- pastors in relationship
15 to one another, and we discovered over last year's
16 Police Chief situation, when the community did find
17 itself divided, that all was not well as we had led
18 ourselves to pretend. There are many things that are
19 occurring to try to deal with that.

20 I do not think in our community that it's hatred,
21 I do not think it's racial hatred. There are always
22 exceptions, obviously, in a group. I do not think
23 that everyone in our community sings like the Smothers
24 Brothers, the Poles hate the Germans, the Germans hate
25 the Dutch, and I don't like everybody very much. I

1 don't think everybody believes that.

2 But that racial harmony does exist, and anyone
3 who tries to hide that will very quickly find out that
4 they have their heads in the sand.

5 You asked the question, what's being done about
6 it. There are some things that have been being done,
7 and they will continue to be done. I've already been
8 in conversations yesterday and today, where do we go
9 from here? How do we put Humpty Dumpty back together?
10 And I guess I've inherited that job, whether I wanted
11 it or not, as Chair of the Reconciliation Committee.

12 Reconciliation, you are familiar with the word.
13 If you want the most basic definition, it is bringing
14 that which is in discord back into harmony. That's
15 the task of the Reconciliation Committee. We will
16 be doing everything that we can to bring that which
17 is in discord back into harmony. Hopefully that is
18 one of the objectives that can be accomplished by your
19 very existence here in our city.

20 Cultural diversity groups are underway, have been
21 underway. You will hear from several people on your
22 list that are on the Reconciliation Committee; you
23 will hear from Roy Kaplan, of the NAACP -- I'm sorry,
24 the National Council for Christians and Jews, who is
25 teaching some of those courses.

1 We have had twenty-four clergy, already, go
2 through that diversity training. Many of the
3 businesses have been doing it. We wanted to know how
4 to get it out of the business community and get it
5 into the community itself. We have begun with pastors,
6 because there's so many organized churches, you have
7 a place to begin. Since those twenty-four pastors,
8 we now have approximately thirty other pastors, black
9 and white, who have already signed up that their church
10 will begin this process.

11 It will be a two-night process, and it will only
12 be one from each church, and will continue until that
13 number is exhausted in each one of those churches.

14 That is one of the processes in the light, is cultural
15 diversity within the community itself.

16 So things are -- things are taking place. We
17 hope that out of that -- and we realize that that is
18 not something that will occur between now and May or
19 between now and May of 1995, it will be a continuous
20 thing, it will take a number of years, but we feel
21 the cultural diversity courses are the beginning of
22 the process and the answer where people begin to learn
23 about people. That's where the problem lies.

24 We don't know one another. We fooled ourselves
25 into thinking we do. We don't understand one another's

1 culture. When one says something the other doesn't
2 understand, it takes offense and vice versa.

3 I've already learned a lot out of the cultural
4 diversity courses, and the other pastors that shared
5 in that have, and now we're going to our parishioners.

6 St. Petersburg is known as the City of Churches.
7 There are 364, if I recall. We have more than service
8 stations. And we're going to be using that as a plat-
9 form to get along. So things are happening. We think
10 yesterday was a turnaround. A lot of strife in the
11 last several months, waiting for this decision to be
12 made. It's over now. Our council can get on with
13 it. We have two strong black members on our council,
14 Mr. Fillyau, and Dr. Welsh is coming back. And I
15 served with him for eight years. And if they come
16 any better, I don't know who they are.

17 The council members that I know that are there,
18 and the ones that are elected -- one of them is right
19 behind me, Dr. Cole -- will do everything in their
20 power, I know, to bring this community to form peace
21 and harmony, and if you will, back to the title that
22 I chair, to reconciliation.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. I would like
25 to ask one question. There was some mention by

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1 Mr. Brown of efforts to strengthen a police civilian
2 review component, and giving it subpoena power. I
3 gathered from his discussion that those efforts had
4 failed. Do you expect that that kind of effort might
5 succeed now; is that the kind of thing that would go --
6 that your Reconciliation Committee might address as
7 part of --

8 REV. CATE: I certainly think we can address it,
9 Mr. Chairman. I think the person that can give you
10 a better answer is standing right behind me, Don McRae,
11 because he can answer that better in terms of the Civil
12 Review Committee than I ever could. He may not want
13 to be on your record. I don't know. Don?

14 MR. BROWN: I was really looking at it more from
15 the standpoint of --

16 REV. CATE: From the Reconciliation Committee?

17 MR. BROWN: That's right, in terms of things that
18 were actually more concrete steps that would address
19 some of the issues, and maybe a greater willingness
20 of this city to look at that now, than before.

21 MR. McRAE: First of all, I'm Don McRae. I'm
22 the Assistant City Manager. And I think the question
23 goes more to whether it's allowable under state law,
24 and talks about policemen's Bill of Rights, and whether
25 you can then subpoena police officers to testify before

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1 a body of that sort. It's been tried in other com-
2 munities and I don't think it's been universally
3 acceptable, but that's where our training is.

4 SEVELL BROWN: I just might say that the subpoena
5 power and my investigation of it in such conditions,
6 is often less effective against police in any case
7 than it is in getting the reluctant witnesses that
8 can be -- who are not police, to come in and give the
9 kind of evidence that might show that things occurred,
10 that whether or not necessarily found in the official
11 investigation. And so I would hope that you would
12 continue to research that area and work towards that
13 kind of an end.

14 MR. McRAE: I think in fairness -- I think it
15 needs to be said that the model that we have in place,
16 while it reviews cases after it has been through the
17 process, we think it brings with it a certain amount
18 of power that's associated with outside agencies having
19 to be a structured review and report to the Mayor and
20 the City Council on their -- on their thinking about
21 the fairness or appropriateness or thoroughness of
22 the investigation.

23 And it's our belief that that kind of scrutiny
24 will -- will motivate the people who are involved in
25 the process to do a better job, because we televised

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1 the review efforts complete and let the public know
2 what's going on with it and all those kinds of things.

3 MR. BROWN: Okay. Thank you. We have some other
4 hands that have questions.

5 MR. FORD: No, I don't have a question. I just
6 want to say, we have a police review board in Orlando
7 that was formed a few months back. And the issue of
8 subpoena power is kind of a gray area because our city
9 attorney told us that we could not issue -- we could
10 not empower -- the City Council could not empower a
11 citizens board with subpoena powers because that would
12 have to come from the Circuit Court. But I recall
13 in the seventies, Ed Nelson had a board that had
14 subpoena powers. And so that needs to be researched.

15 The other thing is that our review board does
16 not have to wait until the internal investigation is
17 over. They can start that investigation as soon as
18 a complaint is made, independent of the internal
19 investigation. And that seems to have given them a
20 little more credibility with citizens.

21 The other thing I would like to say is an editorial
22 comment to Reverend Cate. I would respectfully take
23 issue with the statement that at one time you felt
24 that you had one black leader in this city that you
25 could depend on to give you what the black community

1 felt about any issues. He spoke and the community
2 responded. That's a dangerous trap to fall into to
3 think that you will find one black person in any town
4 who speaks, and then all the rest of the black people
5 will respond.

6 Black communities are not monolithic structures,
7 they're diversity of opinions, across the board, as
8 there is in any other community. I knew Reverend Davis,
9 and I go back to the forties interacting with this
10 city as a high school football player; in the sixties
11 as a coach, coaching against Gibbs.

12 And you may have had someone who had enough
13 respect, that the majority of the people would respond
14 to them, based on a track record. But no community
15 has anybody who speaks for all -- who speaks for all
16 the white people? Ronald Reagan was President for
17 eight years, and he didn't speak for all white
18 Americans. Bush was President for four years and he
19 didn't speak for all white Americans. Clinton is now
20 President. He's not going to speak for all white
21 Americans. It just does not exist.

22 And what happens here, we fall into the trap,
23 especially dealing with the issue of black/white, that
24 if one black person, such as Sevell, comes and brings
25 a message, and then the ministers tell you something

1 different, what you find yourself doing is listening
2 to the person who has the message that you want to
3 hear, and condemning the matter of the other message.
4 And there's a danger in that.

5 What you have to ask is, what are they talking
6 about here? If it's delivery of city services, access
7 to anything the city has, is there a double standard?
8 If you then can determine that there is a double
9 standard, you don't really need to listen to either
10 one of them, or you can listen to both of them, correct
11 the double standard. If there is no double standard,
12 then what either one of them is saying is moot.

13 But it's a kind of dangerous trap to say that
14 there's one person I can pick up the phone and call
15 and say, what is the black community thinking? But
16 there is no such monolithic monster in the black com-
17 munity anywhere. And I do not --

18 REV. CATE: Let me add, I believe that you turned
19 off when I mentioned Ian Davis, and didn't listen to
20 the rest of what I said. Because I said that is not
21 the case in the community. We're very well aware,
22 any political leader, any leader in this community,
23 and you're going to hear from a number of them, are
24 not that naive to think that they call any one person.

25 I'm saying that in the late sixties, at the time

1 of that strike, when I first came into the community,
2 there was one individual. I went before a group of
3 twenty-five or thirty black leaders to discuss my first
4 time to run for council. And it was a big argument,
5 who knew what, should we support him, blah, blah, blah.

6 And Dr. Davis walked in, listened for ten minutes,
7 calmly said I think we should support this young man --
8 because I was then -- walked out the door, and everyone
9 else filed up and said give me your papers. And that
10 was it.

11 MR. FORD: But that wasn't everybody in the black
12 community. That was twenty-five or thirty --

13 REV. CATE: No, sir, that was in late sixties.
14 And it was almost every leader in the black community.

15 MR. BROWN; Do we have any other questions over
16 here?

17 REV. CATE: But it's not that way. And I don't
18 think -- I'm trying to tell you that I don't think
19 anybody believes that, or if they do, they just flat
20 have their head in the sand.

21 MR. NELSON: I'm going to ask about the --
22 (inaudible) -- just in the process of researching the
23 Civilian Review Boards when I go look at other cities,
24 to see what they have done, and try to compare it, I
25 think a review board panel is imperative of St. Petersburg.

1 I don't know of St. Pete, but in other cities where
2 you have the same problem --

3 (Thereupon, the court reporter asked the members
4 to please speak up.)

5 MR. BROWN: My point of raising the question was,
6 I think he said they're doing it. But more to question
7 is one look at the area of reconciliation. We heard
8 earlier there was a strong request from the -- from
9 the SCLC and other groups for a strengthened police
10 review board. And I was wondering with a group such
11 as the Reconciliation Committee was saying, maybe this
12 is the kind of issue we could garner ourselves around
13 that would aid towards reconciliation in the community.

14 REV. CATE: And the Civil Review Board itself,
15 Mr. Chairman, is a youngster. I think it's less than
16 two years old. So even without subpoena power, it's
17 brand new in terms of the scheme of things.

18 MR. BROWN: Yes.

19 MR. INGRAM: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask Rev.
20 Cate: Reverend, what's happening to the young people
21 of this community? What are they doing? What's the
22 status of the employment situation here? Is what I
23 saw as I entered this institution -- or this building,
24 is that indicative of what's happening, the polariza-
25 tion between young whites and young blacks? Because

1 no matter how sad this situation becomes, if it ever
2 gets to be a street problem, nobody sitting in this
3 room is going to be involved in that aspect of it.
4 It's going to be those young people that's downstairs
5 versus the young people across the street or across
6 the way.

7 So in part of your reconciliation and part of
8 what this community is trying to do, what is it doing
9 for its youth? What employment opportunities -- what
10 is it doing?

11 REV. CATE: Well, first, let me answer, you asked
12 that first and you came to another one. Let me come
13 to the middle one. I cannot answer for the -- I think
14 they call them skinhead groups who are downstairs.
15 I've never seen that group before. And I don't know
16 that they've ever been at City Hall. You always have
17 to remember that there are groups there that will take
18 advantage of viewer calling for the press, and I was
19 curious that they came.

20 And I thought, what does their issue got to do
21 with this issue? So I think it speaks for itself.
22 I think if you gave me the opportunity and there was
23 a day, and the school would allow it, and we called
24 for a rallying of racial harmony of our young people
25 to come before City Hall, you wouldn't be able to find

1 the streets out there. I believe that sincerely.
2 What's being done for the jobs, since last summer --
3 and this is one of the ten targets the Reconciliation
4 Committee had. One was to come before the City Council
5 and ask for a quarter of a million dollars more than
6 we were getting from the federal process for summer
7 jobs. And that was voted immediately unanimously,
8 it wasn't even blinked upon. And that money was
9 immediately put into the cycle under -- Jim, where
10 are you -- right here, Jim Yates immediately jumped
11 into that process and got that summer job program going.
12 And it is my understanding that that will continue
13 for this summer.

14 We felt that one of the things that was causing
15 crisis with our young people is, with anybody -- in
16 fact, we jump from the federal sixteen-year-old up
17 to twenty-one or twenty-two or twenty-three-year-olds,
18 because when you're out of a job, you're out of a job
19 and things get tough. And sometimes you get in trouble.
20 So that's not a magic wand, that's not a panacea, that's
21 one of the answers to the things that we're concerned
22 about with the youth. And much extra dollars have
23 been placed into that matter.

24 MR. INGRAM: Let me just -- may I, Mr. Chairman?

25 MR. BROWN: Okay.

1 MR. INGRAM: I understood, I think, the comments
2 about the skinheads. And I don't want to make them
3 an issue. But they are certainly a group of young
4 people that exist in this community, wherever they
5 come from. They come from somewhere --

6 REV. CATE: I would like to know where they came
7 from. Maybe they are from the community, but maybe
8 they're not.

9 MR. INGRAM: Maybe that's who -- my friend's point,
10 that nobody speaks for everybody.

11 REV. CATE: That's right.

12 MR. INGRAM: You know, but I'm just suggesting
13 that a lot of effort, a lot of concentration go into
14 trying to make sure that you don't leave your youth
15 standing nor stranded by the wayside as you attempt
16 to address the problem of racial equality in this
17 community. They are an integral part of the healing
18 process. So I encourage and urge you, whatever it
19 has to be. And you are not necessarily confined to
20 those in the school system.

21 REV. CATE: I hear your message and I appreciate it.

22 MR. BROWN: We do have a better representation
23 on our own committee, but somehow we have a dispropor-
24 tionate attendance between the genders today.

25 At this time I want to change our agenda slightly.

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1 I want to apologize to Mr. Donaldson and Attorney
2 Durden, at this point, but we do have the -- Mayor
3 Fischer, newly elected -- reelected Mayor, and who
4 has just come in on the original time scheduled. And
5 so I would like to deviate and ask if he would please
6 come forward and make a statement at this time. And
7 then we'll go back.

8 Congratulations.

Mayor
9 MR. FISCHER: Thank you very much. I just told
10 somebody before, but I think it's been about maybe
11 14 hours since the election, and I slept four or five
12 of those, so I haven't had a lot of time to sink in.

13 I thank you all very much for taking the time out to
14 come to our city, and I would like to address some
15 of the things that you've seen and some of the things
16 that we're doing.

17 We've got some great neighborhood planning
18 programs. I don't know whether you've heard about
19 those or not, but it's very important to us that we
20 uplift our neighborhoods that when you go by and see
21 the windows that have been boarded up and the deteri-
22 oration, the neighborhood loses hope and loses pride.

23 And we're attacking that in a number of ways.
24 We want to uplift and bring back the pride to the neigh-
25 borhoods. So we adopted neighborhood plans. And we

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1 have three plans, basically, on the north side of
2 Central that are being implemented right now, and they
3 stretch, really, all the way from the water, all the
4 way out to about 34th Street. And then we have three
5 plans in the planning stage right now on the south
6 side of Central that I think will have an impact.

7 And what we do with these plans are, we make a
8 geographical boundary or target area, which can be
9 quite large, but enough so the people living there
10 can identify with their area and have pride in it;
11 be it northeast or -- (inaudible) -- and we've
12 organized it because if the neighbors don't buy into
13 the program, it's not going to work. So we organized
14 neighborhood associations which is very important.

15 And then we identify the area -- I'm just going
16 to take Bartlet Park, just for fun. And as you drive
17 into the area, the residents can say, this is where
18 we live. And then you have a sign saying like Bartlet
19 Park, so they can identify with their neighborhood.
20 That would start to give them some pride.

21 Then we attacked the deteriorating housing situa-
22 tion. And we are launching what I think is an
23 astounding, affordable housing program. We've been
24 limping along, using about two and a half million
25 dollars of funds every year to try to just keep abreast

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1 with deterioration of housing. Those people would
2 have code violations, they will be eligible for loans
3 and grants or what have you, to help keep the houses
4 together. But that's almost matched our demolition
5 rate, about 400 houses a year.

Committee Redevelopment Act

6 And with the new CRA Act, now the banks are going
7 to be participating in a good way. I've been over
8 to the Tampa side and talked to all the major banks,
9 which are a lot of our regional headquarters now, plus
10 our local banks here, and they have bought into our
11 program, which we call WIN.

12 And that's to improve the neighborhoods, working
13 to improve neighborhoods. And we're going to have
14 over twenty million dollars this -- next year into
15 this program, and we will jump from 300 units to about
16 2,000 units. And for the first time this will catch
17 a whole group of individuals that really have families,
18 they've got jobs, and can't get the bank loans. And
19 they'll have an opportunity to buy the existing houses
20 or build a new house.

21 And actually, that would benefit the whole city,
22 but the target areas that I've described, those in
23 deterioration, would -- actually will have a bank
24 assigned to that area. There will be a banker there,
25 there will be a real estate broker there, there will

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1 be a city -- someone from our Housing -- you know,
2 Housing Department will be there. And then we'll have
3 neighborhood representatives.

4 And they will be the monitoring committee to make
5 sure the people know where to get the loans. We'll
6 have a one-stop shopping center at a WIN desk, and
7 they will be told how to go and get the loans. And
8 that will be an attack on the deteriorating housing
9 there.

10 When you attack the housing -- and we will
11 emphasize safety and community-based policing in those
12 areas. And then we will emphasize amenities; like
13 if you come into the neighborhood, it looks bad through
14 the years. We will have landscaping going into the
15 neighborhood where we can lift it up. And this is
16 going to benefit everybody, not just the people living
17 in that neighborhood, but people around that neighbor-
18 hood will say, hey, they're looking pretty good, and
19 we want to keep our neighborhood good, too. So we
20 have tremendous emphasis and hopes for these neighbor-
21 hood plans, and we've got the funding to do it. So
22 that's one thing that we're doing with the neighbor-
23 hoods.

24 The other thing that you may have heard described
25 was the work that we did last summer with our Summer

1 Youth Job Program where when we heard that federal
2 funds were going to be available, almost double what
3 they were the year before, the City Council also put
4 a quarter of a million dollars into the program.

5 And we lifted our participation in that Summer
6 Youth Program from 400 to 1,200 overnight. And we
7 had the funds to do that. But if you remember, maybe
8 reading in some of the national news media, some of
9 the cities couldn't apply the funds because they didn't
10 have the network to get the jobs.

11 And our corporations stepped forward. And so
12 all the young people that applied for these jobs, and
13 we had probably about 2,200 applications that we were
14 able to take about 1,200, as I said. They actually
15 had jobs. The corporations jumped in there and got
16 the jobs.

17 So we employed all those that were accepted through
18 the applications. And not many cities could make that
19 statement. So -- and we did it in like two weeks,
20 and that's why a lot of the cities couldn't do it,
21 because -- (inaudible) -- but we had a Pinellas Industry
22 Council that helped our professionals in doing this,
23 and they were able to expand our efforts, and we
24 contracted with them. So that program was a great
25 success for just being launched in two weeks.

1 What I want to do with the program even more than
2 just giving a young person a job for the summer, and
3 they got paid, but what I want to do is design a
4 program that not only can they have a job and not only
5 can they get paid, but as they came into the program,
6 they may not have worked before, and they may not know
7 how to approach an employer. They may not know how
8 to dress to approach an employer. They may not know
9 how to work for a supervisor, whatever their communi-
10 cative skills, whatever that might be.

11 So I said, let's get a course for these young
12 people. And they have to go through this course as
13 part of being accepted into the program. And the
14 course is going to make them a better, a more employ-
15 able person after our program than they were when they
16 went in.

17 And a lot of young people actually did get hired
18 from the program, they went into the corporations
19 they were working with. Not nearly enough. Of course,
20 most of them went back to school. But I want them,
21 when they come out of our program, when they get out
22 of high school, they have had a real work experience
23 and they have learned something about maybe how
24 corporations work and how school meshes in to advance
25 in a corporation and that type of thing in our Summer

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1 Youth Program.

2 So these are some of the things that we're doing
3 that I think are a lot different than we did a year
4 ago, and making that type of progress. So I think
5 we're on our way in this city, in a big healing. And
6 I think the city is going to come together. We've
7 had a tremendous participation in this election in
8 our African-American communities, brought leaders out
9 that -- and people worked together that maybe haven't
10 worked together in a lot of years.

11 And I think they felt that they could get things
12 done, and how to do it. And they got to know each
13 other as much as I got to know people on this campaign.
14 I think it was a great uplifting in a lot of areas,
15 so I'm very encouraged.

16 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. We do need to
17 let the court reporter change her paper.

18 Okay. Our question is down on this end.

19 RABBI AGIN: Your descriptions, I think, sound
20 like a wonderful program. But I don't really see a
21 big link between the program and improving racial and
22 ethnic tensions. And that's what I'm --

23 MR. FISCHER: Which program?

24 RABBI AGIN: The neighborhood -- making neighbor-
25 hoods look nicer. And --

1 MR. FISCHER: More livable, really more livable.

2 RABBI AGIN: Really more livable.

3 MR. FISCHER: Well, I think there's frustrations
4 when you go into a neighborhood that's not safe,
5 there's no pride, and I don't feel that -- something
6 is missing in your city that other neighborhoods have
7 that you don't have. And all of a sudden we go in
8 with a program to change that style and have that
9 mentality of not getting a share, no, I think that
10 does relieve tension because it shows major efforts
11 are being made in different neighborhoods that maybe
12 look like they haven't gotten their fair share. And
13 I think that relieves tension.

14 MR. McDUFFIE: Mayor, these programs, do you
15 receive Community Block Grant money for those programs?

16 MR. FISCHER: Yes, we do.

17 MR. McDUFFIE: With those programs, by receiving
18 Community Block Grant money, we should have an affirma-
19 tive action plan in place. Is the city working on
20 an affirmative action plan in order to bring black
21 contractors and minority contractors together?

22 MR. FISCHER: Yes. When I took office, the black
23 business enterprises' participation in city construction
24 work was less than two percent, it was like 1.9 percent.
25 And we set a goal of eight percent. And we exceeded

1 that goal. We went flying right through it. And
2 last year we did ten percent. So -- you know, we're
3 going to keep going.

4 But we had dramatic improvement and a different
5 attitude, and it really went fine.

6 MR. McDUFFIE: Okay. When you receive those
7 funds, the reason I'm concerned about it is because
8 we have been fighting this same problem in Jacksonville.
9 And I'm a contractor in the state of Florida.

10 When you receive these funds, you have a section
11 in this packet called Section 3. Section 3 tells
12 you what you're supposed to do. And before a con-
13 tractor gets a project, you're supposed to have an
14 affirmative action telling what he's doing to bring
15 small businesses in.

16 Also when you get these funds from the Private
17 Industry Council, we're looking at trying to use these
18 funds for an apprenticeship program because in the
19 last twenty years, since 1972, the State of Florida
20 haven't trained apprentices. And the problem we have
21 is the State of Florida receiving a lot of money,
22 and they're not training apprentices.

23 And therefore, when you get all these millions
24 of dollars for your summer program, but after the
25 summer goes, these kids are not being properly trained.

1 And that's the problem. Because when we find out
2 throughout the state, most of our craftsmen in the
3 black community is over 50 years old, and the problem
4 is as long as you take the contractor's test in the
5 state of Florida, you got to go through a four-year
6 apprenticeship program or you have to have a degree
7 in construction management or something like that.

8 And our problem is throughout the state of
9 Florida. And we addressed the Governor, that these
10 Community Block Grant funds are that the police
11 department -- have proper police department, they
12 need to follow this same affirmative action plan,
13 because for over twenty years the people have been
14 receiving these Community Block Grant funds and have
15 been doing what they want to do.

16 So hopefully you will look at your laws when
17 you get your package for these Community Block Grant
18 funds and realize that they already have an affirma-
19 tive action plan in the package. It's Section 3.

20 And we're trying to bring that back now, and
21 not just in local affirmative action, but to set aside
22 plans for ten percent. But these particular dollars
23 is to grant small businesses, all small businesses,
24 doing things from highways to selling toothpicks.
25 And also twenty-two percent of minorities taking

1 training. Our problem is we can't get our black kids
2 properly trained, therefore, that's why our jails
3 in the state of Florida is so high. And we have a
4 serious problem with these people.

5 The different cities telling us they're putting
6 trees in and things, and yet we're not training people
7 properly, and we're getting the funds to do it.

8 MR. FISCHER: That's a good point about the
9 apprentice program that I'm not that familiar with.
10 And certainly I will look into that, because that
11 is important. But I did want to -- I think you did
12 say that -- when I said our black business enterprise
13 participation in the city contact is much greater
14 than just the two and a half million dollars in Block
15 Grants. But we did fifteen million dollars worth
16 of construction last year, so ten percent meant that
17 they had a piece of a million and a half of construc-
18 tion projects, which is a lot bigger than just our
19 Block Grant Program.

20 MR. INGRAM: Mr. Mayor, congratulations on your
21 reelection.

22 But let me just share -- don't think that the
23 planting of a tree or the planting of a garden will
24 be the answer to the problem. To revitalize a com-
25 munity, it means that you've got to go in and work

1 with the people, and you've got to get the people
2 involved in the process. You'll plant the tree today
3 and tomorrow it will be destroyed. And the concept
4 will be that African-Americans will not take care
5 of value. And that's not true. But if I don't know,
6 then I cannot expect and should not be expected to
7 know.

8 So in your process, understand that there has
9 to be a holistic approach, that there is no one single
10 answer or no one single method in trying to revitalize
11 or make a neighborhood beautiful. You've got to help
12 the people feel beautiful about themselves, which
13 will be the major ingredient. That's part one.

14 Part two is, as you talk about entry-level jobs,
15 and as you talk about moving young people into
16 beginner jobs, I hope it's more than a red cap on
17 their head and a broomstick with a nail in it and
18 they're walking around the community, picking up
19 paper. But that it has a -- that the entry-level
20 jobs are jobs that have meaning to them.

21 And also remember that the C, D, and E student
22 needs more help, or as much help as the A/B student.
23 If you're going to go in and you're going to talk
24 about how to get the job, the A/B student will have an
25 idea, but you've got to also reach down and get that

1 student who is not as swift, who is not as academ-
2 ically sound. He may be punching in school, but he
3 may be more successful in life.

4 And I'm really talking about those at-risk kids,
5 those kids who may be more prone to the illicit side
6 of life, because it is that group of kids, it is that
7 element that has to be reached if we're going to save
8 our communities and if we're going to make our
9 communities whole, we have got to deal with helping
10 these young people see another way to life. So I
11 wish you well on your new projects.

12 MR. FISCHER: Thank you very much.

13 MR. FORD: Yes. I, too, would like to congratu-
14 late you on your reelection. Since I'm an elected
15 official, I know how it feels to win when you're in
16 a tough race like that.

17 What I would like to give you input on is to
18 the issue of single-district voting. As part of the
19 reconciliation, Reverend Cate, I would hope that --
20 that the people, black and white, in this team effort,
21 would see the value of single-district voting. We
22 have single-district voting in Orlando, and it has
23 been very good for us in the sense that -- you know,
24 it's easy to understand.

25 People move into neighborhoods together that

1 are usually based on some kind of cultural commonality;
2 maybe ethnic, maybe racial, or what have you. And
3 there's nothing wrong with that as long as people
4 of other groups are not kept out because of the group
5 to which they belong.

6 But what it does is to give people the feeling
7 of really sincere representation, because they have
8 chosen those who most directly affect and represent
9 them.

10 And in the very first election, we had single-
11 district, and people trying to cop out and say, oh,
12 that will bring war politics like they had in the
13 big city. It's not true. The safeguards are built in.

14 There are six people from six districts on our
15 council. I represent District 5. There's nothing
16 I could put forth that would be peachy keen for
17 District 5 and bad for all the rest. It would be
18 voted down, six to one. You have built-in safeguards.

19 But in that first election we had three females
20 elected and two blacks -- okay, two females and two
21 blacks, and a hispanic person. Now, that's a micro-
22 cosm of what we are ethnically in Orlando, almost,
23 and for the first time in a long time, people felt
24 they were really represented, even when they didn't
25 get everything they wanted.

1 I would urge you to really work hard toward that.
2 It works. It does not promote war politics. It
3 brings about a degree of representation where people
4 really feel good about who represents them because
5 they know someone else did not choose them. And it
6 has worked well for us.

7 The other thing I would say to you, getting back
8 on what you said about working with people, one of
9 the things we're doing in a very blighted area, which
10 is a vestige of very strict and severe de jour
11 segregation. We went to the people, we had community
12 meetings in the community and we said to the people,
13 these are the resources that we have and these are
14 the resources that we have access to. How can we
15 use these resources to help you improve your community?

16 And we had a small questionnaire, what do you
17 see is the number one -- list the three major problems
18 in your immediate community in order or priority.
19 And they list things like drugs, they list things
20 like economic developments. So we know what they
21 need, based on their perception, as opposed to going
22 in and saying, we're going to do this and make your
23 community better.

24 And I'm not saying that you did that. I'm just
25 saying what works for us is to ask input from the

1 people and then put the resources together to improve
2 the community.

3 Now, it's not a quick fix. It's going to take
4 several years to repair what took a hundred or so
5 years to be done. But when you work with people in
6 that fashion, and they see the commitment, that eases
7 some of the tension because they feel they are in
8 the loop, they are making decisions about their own
9 lives, and it just works all the way around. It's
10 called the politics of inclusion.

11 And you may as well get ready for it because
12 change is going to come. The one constant about
13 human interaction is change. When I was a teen-ager,
14 as long ago as that was, in Orlando, Florida, they
15 used to advertise the elections as the white man's
16 democratic primary -- women didn't vote, of whatever
17 race -- as the white man's democratic primary.

18 For twelve years I have sat as a representative
19 of the district that I grew up in. Now, that's not
20 a personal triumph for me, that is an indication of
21 the state of flux that this country and these states
22 and these cities are going to be in for a long time
23 to come. None of us are going to evaporate.

24 When I was a kid growing up, people would say,
25 well, if they don't like it, let them go back to

1 Africa. And my answer to that is I cannot go back
2 to where I ain't never been in the first place.

3 I readily acknowledge that Africa is my
4 ancestral home, but I ain't by no means homesick
5 at this point in time. I ain't going nowhere. I'm
6 an American citizen, born and raised here, so let's
7 deal, let's deal. If there's a decision that you
8 have to make that affects only you and your children,
9 you make it. If there's a decision to be made that
10 affects your children and my children, me and you,
11 let's make it together.

12 What reasonable person can say that that's an
13 unreasonable request. It works. I would recommend
14 you to explore it.

15 MR. FISCHER: Well, I tell you, when we explored
16 it, it was about fourteen hours ago, we voted it down,
17 but it was maybe a misnomer because I know in African-
18 American communities they decided to go against all
19 the amendments, not take any chances, and they knew
20 that was there. (Inaudible) -- so we'll probably bring
21 it back at a less confusing time. It was wild last
22 night.

23 MR. KNIGHT: Mr. Chairman -- yes, I would like,
24 Mr. Mayor, to add my voice to that chorus of
25 commendation. You certainly ought to be commended.

1 I think the citizens of this city ought to be
2 commended. And I say that in a very sincere and
3 honest manner.

4 Mr. Ford touched on something that I was going
5 to touch on. Years ago, I think it was, in the civil
6 rights movement, we used to hear this particular
7 phrase: The illusion of inclusion versus inclusion.
8 And I think there is a very significant difference.

9 When I started coming to St. Pete a short while
10 ago, involved with this particular effort, it was
11 clear to me that there were a lot of people in this
12 town who were operating on the assumption that
13 minorities in this community were included in what
14 was going on. I think it is very, very clear to me
15 that they didn't feel that they were being included.
16 And so for a lot of people, that may well have been
17 the illusion of inclusion of minority communities
18 and the political socioeconomic process in this town,
19 but nothing could be further from the truth.

20 I am so pleased and so happy to have you stand
21 there and say what you just said and to have the
22 others stand there, including the Reverend, and say
23 what they have said up to this point.

24 I'm not suggesting now that this city still does
25 not have problems, but it is very, very clear to me

1 that there is a recognition that you have these
2 problems and you're setting forth certain kinds of
3 mechanisms to deal with the problems. You will be
4 commended for that. You will be commended for that.
5 The only thing I will say to you is that this com-
6 munity, and certainly the Commission on Civil Rights,
7 is going to continue to help you in that process,
8 to be a partner, so to speak, in that process.

9 But again, I want to take this opportunity and
10 not only commend you, but all the citizens at this
11 particular time, for having the vision and the forth-
12 rightness and sensitivity to do what they did on
13 yesterday. I think this city is going to benefit
14 from that and I'm very pleased to be here today.

15 MR. FISCHER: Thank you very much.

16 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. We very much
17 appreciate your coming forward today, and also
18 appreciate, as I said earlier, that you were able
19 to come.

20 MR. FISCHER: Thank you. And I know you were
21 supposed to come yesterday -- (inaudible). Thanks
22 a lot.

23 MR. BROWN: I'd like to ask Ms. Alvelita Donaldson
24 of the National People's Democratic Uhuru Movement
25 next, please.

1 MS. DONALDSON: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, thank
2 you for inviting me to speak here today. My name
3 is Alvelita Donaldson. I am the local Branch President
4 of the National People's Democratic Uhuru Movement,
5 which is a Swahili word which means freedom. And
6 I greet you Uhuru.

7 I came here today, and I hope that I can come
8 here and give you an honest and objective perspective
9 with regards to race relations in the city of St.
10 Petersburg.

11 Coming here, I don't believe that race relations
12 in St. Petersburg differ much from what is happening
13 on a national scale. This is a microcosm of what
14 happened in Los Angeles following the beating of
15 Rodney King.

16 It is a microcosm of what happened in Miami
17 following the killing of the two motorists by the
18 Miami Police Department. It is only a small thing
19 and I think we have to begin to address it very
20 honestly.

21 And in St. Petersburg, I'm known as the person
22 who is from the left and who is most radical. And
23 while Mr. Cate did not represent any leadership other
24 than the honorable Dr. Ian Davis from the period of
25 the 1960s and early 70s, there were other leaders.

1 And I think that I have to say that because the
2 organization that I represent, the founder of that
3 organization was one such person who had his own
4 constituency. He headed an organization called Joe-
5 Moe (phonetic) the Hunter, a militant organization.

6 In coming here, you might have noticed a blank
7 space on the wall outside the halls of City Hall where
8 a mural used to exist. There's a mural by the same
9 artist on the site now. And because he drew this
10 racist mural depicting African-American people here
11 in the city of St. Petersburg as minstrels entertain-
12 ing white people on the beaches here, he spent several
13 months, over a year, inside the Florida State Prison
14 System. His name was Joe Waller. And he was well
15 known through out the south. And he now heads the --
16 he's chairman of the African Socialist Party and
17 founded the organization that I head locally here,
18 the National People's Democratic Uhuru Movement.

19 We are a nationally-based organization, head-
20 quarters in Chicago, Illinois.

21 Now, we move on this assertion, and with regards
22 to race relations in St. Pete and how they tie into
23 the national situation.

24 First of all, we believe that there is -- it
25 is not a coincidence that the situation in St. Pete,

1 as in communities like ours around the country are,
2 where we have a high rise of racial tension happening.

3 I believe that it comes about as a result of one,
4 it is reviving itself because this is not the first
5 time that we've seen it. And we've beared the brunt
6 of what we call white nationalist violence.

7 And I say that because in the city of St.
8 Petersburg, we've seen it here, in this most recent
9 controversial period since the coming of the new
10 Police Chief, Ernest Curtsinger here.

11 St. Petersburg had problems before Mr. Curtsinger
12 came here. He was the manifestation of what already
13 existed here. The problem here is not that white
14 people are racists, the problem here is that black
15 people have no power. We have absolutely no power.
16 We're not in control of our own lives, other people
17 who are often hostile, whether they're doing it
18 willingly or unwillingly, whether they're conscious
19 or unconscious of it.

20 We're not -- the problem isn't that they're
21 racist, it is that because of whatever these attitudes
22 or perceptions that there are, this whole notion of
23 superiority of one race of people, or nationality
24 of people over another, is that because of it, we
25 are the recipients of the substandard of living

1 conditions that exist here in the city of St. Peters-
2 burg, as it does in the community like ours throughout
3 the country. That the economic situation can be
4 related to employment, that we make only 57 cents
5 or perhaps 60 cents of the dollar made by the average
6 white person, that the unemployment statistics, not
7 only among black youth, but among black people exist-
8 ing, are comparative to what the national statistics
9 are. And these are the things that are a part of
10 the primary problem.

11 We can have elected officials -- and I think
12 some people spoke very well about the single-member
13 districting, where we would at least be able to vote
14 in the person that we see as a community to represent
15 our community and the interests of our community.

16 Sometime that might -- one day that might happen.
17 But again, and I think somebody said that, too, even
18 that person, if that person thinks that he is not
19 going to be well perceived by the white majority,
20 then he may very well not honestly represent our
21 interests.

22 I represent not just black people, but do try
23 to represent black people overally, but more
24 importantly, a segment of the community who has been
25 defined by the media, sometimes through our so-called

1 black leaders, and I'm talking about the majority
2 of our people who have been defined as this permanent
3 black underclass, unredeemable. We have become
4 synonymous with the word crime. When you say that,
5 it means drugs. When you say drugs you mean black.

6 And so that it has become an undeclared war on
7 the black community, which I defined as a kind of
8 resurgency that comes in many phases. That is one
9 aspect of it, the so-called war on drugs which is
10 an undeclared war on the black community.

11 Mr. Curtsinger came here, and I saw him
12 immediately, before it was -- before his history of
13 brutality under his leadership in the Dogman Raids
14 of Los Angeles, before we had that information. He
15 came here with the history -- I think his resume
16 declared some of his merits as being an expert in
17 putting down subversive organizations. And my organ-
18 ization that I represent is one of those organizations
19 perceived as a subversive organization, which has
20 been under surveillance by the St. Petersburg Police
21 Department since and beyond its inception, before
22 it became the organized group that it is now, and
23 remains under surveillance, as other organizations.

24 We understood the period of the sixties, which
25 had the U.S. Government under the leadership of FBI

1 Director J. Edgar Hoover, which used the Counter-
2 intelligence Program. We all know it as the Conetel
3 (phonetic) Program, where it used certain devices
4 to divide and conquer those types of tactics which
5 was responsible, I believe, for the death of certain
6 of our leaders, as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King,
7 who saw certain people as having the ability, perhaps,
8 to rise up this great messiah and perhaps deliver
9 the people, who saw and looked at, and perhaps we
10 have not arrived at that period now, that there some
11 day might, because of the socioeconomic disparity
12 of the poverty and the misery and the powerlessness
13 that the black community exists in, that one day there
14 might be what would give the perception of being a
15 race war.

16 But where people -- it is not a race war. It
17 is where black people, who stand up and rise up to
18 say that we are sick and tired of bearing the brunt
19 of it -- now, what, they're calling the economic
20 crisis inside this country, where white people
21 perceive their problems to be because of social
22 programs that are brought into the black community
23 to do something about because of the problem that
24 exists there, to upgrade our community to do something
25 about it.

1 Jobs -- to do something about the area of mis-
2 education and follow education in our school system.
3 They perceive us as the problem. Why they can't enjoy
4 the standard of life that they're used to.

5 But we don't have to look just at the Mr.
6 Curtsingers coming to St. Petersburg, because before
7 Mr. Curtsinger ever came here, our neighborhoods
8 looked the way they look now. Under every mayor
9 that's ever been here, our communities have not
10 revolved to be on the same level of other communities
11 inside this city.

12 So it didn't just happen. He was something that
13 drove it to the surface, pushed things to the surface.

14 I hear Mr. Fischer talk about the wonderful things
15 that he's done for the city of St. Petersburg. But
16 we see no concrete evidence of any improvements inside
17 the black community, not under Mr. Curtsinger, not
18 under Mr. Fischer, not under Mayor Cole, Mayor Freeman,
19 not under any of them. So conditions have not changed.

20 And so there were people who were greatly
21 disturbed and upset because I said that there was
22 undemocratic process. And I meant this electoral
23 process where we had two choices of two different
24 factions of the white community vying for a liberal
25 section, a conservative section of the community.

1 And where we had nobody who actually represented
2 the interest of the black community, I said it was
3 an undemocratic process. And I continue to say that
4 it was an undemocratic process, that we had nobody
5 representing us, there was no one who actually
6 represented our interests. And the problem was that
7 it disturbed the equilibrium and it disburbed the
8 status quo when we talk about the vote, because the
9 vote is something that we fought a bloody and long
10 battle to enjoy. But it is our vote. And no one
11 has the right to tell us how to use that vote.

12 If we're talking about single-member districts,
13 yes. My thing is to rally everybody I know to vote.
14 But if you're going to impose an undemocratic process
15 and more oppression on us, then I say no to the vote.
16 And that is our vote, not to participate in this
17 particular process. And so that was my reasoning
18 for doing that.

19 We believe that there is violence brewing inside
20 this community. And that is not being incited by
21 the African community. I think conditions will breed
22 that kind of thing, that we will have rebellions,
23 uprisings, if you please, inside the community if
24 conditions do not change.

25 And whether or not Mr. Curtsinger comes in today

1 or another situation or individuals come and opposes
2 the type of direct threat to the livelihood, to the
3 ability for the black community to exist, it depends.
4 It does not have to be an individual. It can be
5 attacking circumstance. Because we did see a
6 tumultuous period, a very violent period in the
7 history of this city.

8 And whether or not Mr. Cate has a very short --
9 short memory, there was violence in here. And this
10 city can be pushed to that extent.

11 And I believe that this gentleman was rightly --
12 right in acknowledging that it is young people who
13 will be the people who will affect whatever happens
14 in this city and this city's future. And we can talk
15 about summer jobs and temporary jobs as a temporary
16 measure to calm things out every time Curtinsger comes
17 or a new issue arises or new controversy arises.
18 But unless we begin to deal with the primary problems
19 that affect black people for the long haul, then
20 nothing has changed, no matter who the mayor is, no
21 matter whether he's a mild-mannered, nice-speaking
22 guy like Mr. Fischer, or the brutish kind of thug
23 that Mr. Curtsinger is, it won't matter, because it
24 is going to -- the proof is going to be in the pudding
25 when we see conditions change, when we see black

1 people in power, then we're going to know, this city
2 is racially divided. And we can try to sugarcoat
3 it, make it seem any way that we will. It is divided
4 inside the school system, and it will remain there.

5 And you're right, sometimes people of different
6 backgrounds, nationalities, cultures, like to live
7 amongst each other. And there's nothing, absolutely
8 nothing wrong with that. And that's not to say that
9 we should stop anyone from having the ability to enjoy
10 that neighborhood or that community, to infringe on
11 anybody else's right. But we've seen it. And there
12 are people here for fear of they want to continue
13 to cover over these very, very important issues inside
14 our community.

15 And I talked about drugs and this war on drugs,
16 this war that's being ranged under the guise of a
17 war on drugs, against the black community. This so-
18 called -- this portion of our community which has
19 been deemed unredeemable, these people who are so
20 feared among -- inside this city, these people who
21 are on drugs, sell the drugs, on welfare, looking
22 for jobs, a lot of them are going to stop looking
23 for jobs. Those are the people who must be careful
24 to watch, because you will have theft, you will have
25 drugs. And drugs are not coincidentally dropped in

1 our community.

2 It's no coincidence that there are communities
3 like ours around the country. And I say that's a
4 part of a conspiracy, that it's no accident. Because
5 we don't control any drugs.

6 And in the absence of putting any viable, economic
7 infrastructure or creating jobs or other institutions
8 that the community controls, that drugs have been
9 put there as an illegal economy, which has us filling
10 up the jails in Pinellas County, throughout the state
11 and throughout the country.

12 And as a matter of fact, according to the
13 statistics, there are over a half a million black
14 people landing in this country's jails right now,
15 even more than what existed inside South Africa, which
16 we all hold up as this very terrible place. And it
17 is. It's government. And I'm saying that nothing
18 less is happening right here in this country.

19 We like to hide and pretend that these things
20 are not existing, but they are existing. And in St.
21 Petersburg, it's a very political city. Young people
22 in St. Petersburg are not being political or apathetic
23 about conditions. And there will be an incident,
24 and I cannot predict that date or a time, but surely
25 it will come unless this community, the black community

1 is empowered and begun to organize ourselves and take
2 it on ourselves. We've left our lives in the hands
3 of the people who are hostile towards us, and some-
4 times it comes in subtle ways. It's overt, sometimes
5 it's covert.

6 But we're saying, that we must empower ourselves.
7 And I believe that some of the steps were mentioned
8 here. I think that we're on the way to a strong mayor
9 form of government. I believe it's going to help
10 us in the long haul, and I think the single-member
11 districts is going to help us.

12 When I talk about -- I ran for City Council here
13 in 1985. And a part of my platform called for a
14 Citizens Review Committee. But it didn't call for
15 a mealy-mouthed, toothless committee. It called for
16 people who are being themselves affected by instances
17 of police brutality and other areas of police
18 improprieties against the black community, to put
19 teeth in it, but at least the police department has
20 to be accountable and responsible and accessible to
21 the community that it polices. And that is one of
22 the things that I thought, more than the subpoena
23 power.

24 Hearing what is going to sensitize -- you can
25 talk sensitivity, because racism is an idea that white

1 people have in their heads about us. And we may never
2 change that. But we certainly can change how that
3 affects our day-to-day life. And so they think that
4 their jobs and their livelihood is tied to how they
5 treat black people inside this community. I think
6 that's going to sensitize them. So, you know, these
7 are the things.

8 I think Mr. Brown raised a very legitimate kind
9 of a thing because there was somebody on the police
10 department who wrote that they wanted to kill niggers
11 in St. Petersburg. And they made a threat on Goliath
12 Davis's life. And that man was given less than a
13 pat on the hand, because he still works.

14 So that makes us know that our lives aren't worth
15 anything, and that any rights that we have, no white
16 person is bound to respect them, or if they do, the
17 right person bidding, who was in power -- and it's
18 a question of power that we're talking about. And
19 so that we know that Mr. Curtsinger lost the election
20 by a very narrow margin, but we know that the police
21 department and through its Police Benevolent Associa-
22 tion, who endorsed him, can boost this police
23 department that recruited for him or wore pins saying
24 Bring Back Curt. These people still exist.

25 And the Internal Affairs Department, on the

1 streets of St. Petersburg, in this so-called community
2 policing program that's going on inside this community,
3 which is another undemocratic process, and there's
4 nothing less than marshal law. It's called corps-
5 active policing, and it is going to be something that
6 you can take me at my word or not, because it will.
7 Because these things I say will fulfill themselves,
8 because you cannot take a sector of the black community
9 and then deem it the high-crime area.

10 If everybody knows that 80 percent of all drugs,
11 use, and sales happen in the white community, and
12 yet you focus this large district of the black
13 community to say that this is where we want to put
14 community policing, because of the outcries of people
15 like those who supported Mr. Curtsinger, who carry
16 caskets depicting the death of black people in the
17 image of Mr. McRae, but depicting the death of black
18 people down the streets of St. Petersburg -- on Central
19 Avenue in St. Petersburg, yes, we're very angry, we're
20 angry and anger won't go away.

21 We'll be watching Mr. Fischer, those newly-elected
22 officials, those people who are incumbents now, we'll
23 be watching the city administration to see what is
24 going to be the future. We're seeing that we must
25 have jobs, no only for our youth, but all of us must

1 have jobs.

2 I've been blackballed. I may never work again,
3 and I really don't care, if that's the way it has
4 to be. And I see that the future of the black people
5 means more to me than anything. Threats on my life,
6 and I've had those, through this police department,
7 none of that, none of it matters. Because I hope
8 that my death, if it comes, won't be in vain. If
9 I never work again, that my people some day will have
10 all the rights enjoyed by others in the city and
11 throughout this country. Thank you.

12 MR. BROWN: Thank you very, very much.

13 MR. INGRAM: I apologize for being the adolescent
14 on this committee and the one that's most vocal, but
15 let me -- I hear something in this lady's voice and --
16 as I've heard in all that have come forth, and it
17 says that we're dealing with a community that's in
18 serious trouble.

19 However, let me just share with you a feeling
20 that I feel very strongly about; and that is that
21 the African-American community cannot look to anyone
22 to save it but itself. We have to be responsible
23 for our own destiny. And we've got to understand
24 that whatever happens in a negative fashion will
25 impact upon us, worse than anyone else.

1 So as we go about trying to deal with the problems
2 and the issues and the hurt that I hear you talk about,
3 as we talk about the problem of illicit activities
4 in our community, we, too, must confront those who
5 are causing the pain and the hurt. That is, we must
6 come to the realization and understanding, as painful
7 as it is, that black on black crime is a serious
8 problem in our society.

9 And it becomes incumbent upon us, as community
10 advocates, as community leaders, to combat that head on.

11 And in doing so, then we pool forces and command
12 and demand that the city fathers hear our struggle,
13 not our cry, but our struggle for upward mobility,
14 that we do not believe that the problem lies in some-
15 body else, but the problem lies -- the solution lies
16 within us to solve the problem.

17 So I say to you, I hear you, but Mayor Fischer
18 is just Mayor of this city. And while he can create
19 and cause some dramatic changes in this community,
20 it still becomes incumbent upon our community to come
21 together and understand where we're going. This
22 commission cannot save St. Petersburg. Mr. Doctor
23 can hear, we can hear, we can recommend, we can report,
24 but the salvation comes in the political strength
25 and in the economic strength that you share here in

1 this community amongst yourselves.

2 So I encourage you to examine the entire process.
3 But don't spend a whole lot of time looking for some-
4 body else.

5 MS. DONALDSON: I'm not going to spend one moment
6 looking for somebody else. I believe that. And you
7 spoke about black and white crime. And I believe
8 that one of the things is that whole notion takes
9 us off track sometimes because we have a problem worse
10 than black and white crime. We don't even have the
11 right to begin to deal with those problems in our
12 own community. We don't even have the right to deal
13 with that.

14 And it's not that -- people don't sell drugs
15 because they like to shoot at each other, have
16 destruction and that, go to jail, and in court. They
17 don't do that for any reason in the absence of any
18 kind of --

19 MR. INGRAM: But hear me beyond that.

20 MS. DONALDSON: I'm saying that we have to pull
21 together to be really -- (inaudible) -- to begin to
22 do something about doing something about the social
23 ills that cause those things that cause the so-called
24 black on black.

25 MR. INGRAM: But hear me beyond -- hear me beyond

1 the fact -- I -- I thoroughly agree with you. I
2 thoroughly agree with you. And I think that we can
3 talk about sometime that illicit and illicit sub-
4 stances, it becomes another method of employment for
5 many in the African-American community because there
6 is no employment from other arena.

7 However, however real that may be, Burger King
8 still becomes important. And many times we, along
9 with Madison Avenue, have our kids thinking that the
10 \$90 Nikes are better than the \$20 Converse. And
11 that's all I'm saying.

12 I'm saying that I hear you loud and clear. But
13 I'm saying that we have a responsibility -- see, ain't
14 nobody in the business to make Bob Ingram know better
15 than Bob Ingram is.

16 Now, once I understand where I am and where I
17 fit in the equation, then I can deal with the overall
18 equation. So then I don't want to give them the false
19 illusion that it's all right today. You know, it's
20 not all right.

21 MS. DONALDSON: It's never going to be all right.

22 MR. INGRAM: It's never going to be all right.

23 But on the other hand, we've been running the race,
24 we've been 300 yards, 500 yards, 1,000 yards behind
25 for so long, that don't give up the race now. Let's

1 keep our eyes on the prize. And that's what I'm
2 suggesting.

3 MR. BROWN: Yes.

4 MR. McDUFFIE: (Inaudible) -- talking about jobs.
5 And as a business person -- (inaudible) -- I understand
6 the problem. We have a lot of money coming in the
7 state of Florida, which is Community Block Grant money.
8 And I asked the mayor, and he said that he's --
9 (inaudible) -- four or five million dollars, something
10 like that.

11 And I live in Jacksonville, so I heard --
12 (inaudible). Your organization, have you ever looked
13 at the HUD regulation, 24 -- you want to write this
14 down -- Section 109. It starts with Regulation 57,
15 part 507. You need to get that regulation and read
16 it. And you can see what you can do with all this
17 Community Block Grant money coming in the city. And
18 you can make sure that they have a true affirmative
19 action plan.

20 If they don't do what they're supposed to do,
21 you file that complaint. And with that, you don't
22 have to keep begging, you can ask the regulation people
23 that enforce the law, the Justice Department, do some-
24 thing for you if you're black or not. Because I
25 understand your problem.

1 MS. DONALDSON: I want to thank you. I have
2 a couple of packets I'd just like to leave with the
3 chairman. And then -- I'm not able to make copies,
4 but I will leave all this information with you.

5 MR. KNIGHT: I appreciate that.

6 MR. DOCTOR: Before you leave, I'm an old
7 acquaintance of his, and is -- is he all right?

8 MS. DONALDSON: Oh, yes, he's getting ready --
9 as a matter of fact, he's going to run for national
10 office, so he's going to be in St. Petersburg very
11 shortly. We're trying to get some building renovations
12 done to growth that we brought here. And the African
13 People's Socialist Party National Headquarters is
14 going to be here.

15 As a matter of fact, he's on a European tour
16 now, and shortly following that, he'll be moving back
17 to St. Petersburg. He's been gone for a long time.

18 MR. INGRAM: Are you a nonprofit organization?

19 MS. DONALDSON: Well, we're trying to -- as a
20 matter of fact, I should be doing that now. I'm
21 researching for our national organization, the non-
22 profit status. And one of the things that we lack
23 is the skills -- we're really working class, and a
24 lot of us don't have the education requirements, you
25 know, we're not --

1 MR. INGRAM: Do you have a Legal Aid Society
2 here?

3 MS. DONALDSON: Yes.

4 MR. INGRAM: See, Legal Aid should be able to
5 help you. If Legal Aid is not able to help you, call
6 the Bar Association.

7 MS. DONALDSON: Okay.

8 MR. INGRAM: And they should be able to give
9 you some assistance in helping you put your 501(C)(3)
10 papers together.

11 MS. DONALDSON: I heard that before.

12 MR. INGRAM: Aside from that, whenever you become
13 the nonprofit entity, now you go back to the sheriff,
14 to the chief of police, and you say to him that listen,
15 we're a 501(C)(3) nonprofit agency, and we want to
16 renovate this particular building that we have, and
17 we know that you have men in jail who must do community
18 service time. So then they can do the community
19 service time for us.

20 So now we go into the jail and we bring those
21 out who committed the crimes and come and help rebuild
22 the community.

23 See, I built a drug program that's one of the
24 most effective in this state. I house twenty-six
25 men. It's a residential program. When I started

1 off, we didn't have a dime. And we renovated a
2 facility that was about to be demolished. But you
3 got to depend on --

4 MS. DONALDSON: I know a lot of that, you know,
5 it's just a matter of, you know, the skills and the
6 resources to make some of these things happen. When
7 just getting gas money -- when gas -- getting gas
8 money to get here becomes a problem, you got problems.

9 MR. BROWN: Don't leave, don't leave yet.

10 MR. BRAKE: I got a real short question. You
11 mentioned that you thought that the war on drugs was
12 a war on blacks and that 80 percent of the drug use
13 is in the white community.

14 MS. DONALDSON: Yes.

15 MR. BRAKE: And I am familiar with the latter
16 because I am very close to a young lawyer who was
17 disbarred a week ago today by the Florida Supreme
18 Court for what happened while he was using drugs.

19 I would like to know, does your organization
20 have any specific program or proposal with regard
21 to drug abuse; and if so, what is it? And do you
22 have any --

23 MS. DONALDSON: Not so much for drug abuse.

24 I have a proposal -- one of the things that I'm trying
25 to deal with, because I believe that when we started

1 talking about infringements on protective rights,
2 then we have to do that.

3 I came up with a proposal called Community Control
4 of the Police, which is similar to the proposal that
5 SCLC came up with in terms of a citizens review
6 committee.

7 I'm dealing right now -- one of the other things
8 that I built, that we have action now, is an education
9 committee to begin to deal with some of the problems
10 that are confronting our children in this city. There
11 are lots of programs. Having them on the ground is
12 the other -- is another thing. You know, we have
13 the ideas, we have the programs, but we haven't been
14 able to implement the programs. And that's what we're
15 trying to do.

16 I participated in drug programs during the sixties
17 as a -- I was a nurse. And so we did drug rehab
18 programs then and I participated in those in trying
19 to get some of the very young men and women who --
20 you know, on the drugs, trying to get them off drugs
21 and begin to participate in an organized resistance
22 movement.

23 MR. BROWN: I want to thank you very much.

24 MS. DONALDSON: Thank you very much.

25 MR. BROWN: You're very moving in your statements.

1 And I'm sure that Mr. Pinata (phonetic), in his grave,
2 is proud of your use of the word that he made famous
3 throughout the world.

4 I would like to ask Attorney Gregory Durden,
5 from the Chief of Civil Rights Office -- from the
6 Attorney General's Office in Florida.

7 MR. DURDEN: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members,
8 my name is Greg Durden. I'm an attorney and I'm Chief
9 of Civil Rights for Florida at the Attorney General's
10 Office.

11 (Thereupon, the court reporter asked the speaker
12 to please speak up.)

13 I'm not going to sit here and tell you that --

14 (Thereupon, a member of the press started asking
15 the court reporter questions.)

16 I've been on board ^{the Florida Attorney General's Office} for several months now. And
17 the Attorney General's Office, unlike the federal
18 component of it, is primarily civil in nature. It
19 does not have any powers to it. I don't know much
20 about St. Petersburg, but I want to give you the
21 benefit of my knowledge about the state.

22 We got a lot of problems, I see, and one of the
23 main ones seem to be that there is a lot of ignorance
24 around. We seem to be losing the battle to ignorance.
25 When a white person believes that he doesn't have

1 a job because of some black person, when that black
2 person himself is out of work, we're losing the battle
3 to ignorance. That's pervasive. You throw on top
4 of that that 25 percent of all the kids in Florida
5 drop out by the tenth grade, when you throw on top
6 of that that the ones who do graduate cannot function,
7 cannot write a check, cannot fill out an application
8 for a job.

9 We're losing the battle to ignorance. When you
10 throw on top of that, hard economic times -- when
11 you have those hard economic times, you get more
12 discrimination, you get spin-off discrimination like
13 the skinheads here. When you have a discriminatory
14 activity, you get spin-offs, as well.

15 And when you have that associated with an act
16 that's normally more violent, it's the balance,
17 together with the rest of the things, that supposes --
18 the makings together for a bomb.

19 What we saw in L.A. was the -- and it's wide-
20 spread -- is that we're willing now, anymore, to
21 accept violence as a reasonable way to resolve a
22 problem. And everybody is doing it. These kids out
23 here aren't afraid. Yesterday in Tallahassee, a kid
24 who was nine years old, took a 22-caliber pistol to
25 school with him because somebody called him on the

1 phone and threatened him the day before.

2 We have the calm to believe that violence can
3 resolve the problem. What we need to do is have a
4 coming together, because the problem is bigger than
5 this commission, it's bigger than all civil rights
6 in St. Petersburg. We need to bring together all
7 those resources that are out there to work on this
8 common problem. This common problem.

9 Now, as I travel here today, I see there are
10 a lot of good people around there. We need to bring
11 those good people back into the fold. We need to
12 let those people know there's a place to come to and
13 a place to talk. Those good people will carry us
14 through.

15 So I'm here, partially to tell you that we are
16 in existence. I'm here to help you, to work with
17 you. There have been, for too long, a division between
18 the federal government and the state government.
19 We need to bring those resources and people together.
20 I'm not here to give you any specifics on what's
21 happening in St. Petersburg, but I'll tell you, I'm
22 here and willing to give assistance.

23 In terms of Lozano (phonetic), I have worked
24 with the Community Relations Board in Tallahassee.
25 I've worked with Community Relations on such areas

1 as Council -- (inaudible) -- Board in Miami, also
2 now, Metropolitan Miami Action Program. And what
3 we're seeing is that -- is that there's a certain
4 level of hopelessness and frustration in the poor
5 neighborhoods and even amongst the people who are
6 African-American intelligent, they are unable to
7 communicate with other people.

8 We need to bring all elements together. So --
9 and they're, for example, is trying to bring diversity
10 training into the high school, to start there, not
11 just on the police department.

12 So if I can help any of you, in terms of what's
13 going on in the state, what people are looking into,
14 please feel free to call me. My number is -- I am
15 in Hollywood, Florida. I drove here straight from
16 there this morning. I am sleepy. I've had nothing
17 to eat at all, so if I sound irritable, I am. But
18 area code 305-985-4445.

19 We need to work together. For too long we tried
20 to do it all by ourselves. We need to piggyback off
21 each other's resources and make this thing happen.
22 Thank you very much.

23 MR. BROWN: Okay. Thank you very much for coming.
24 I think it's probably about the fifth meeting that
25 you and I have been together. So I appreciate your

1 coming up here. And if you're that hungry, there's
2 a county building across the street. There's a little
3 snack bar on the first floor, where these Cokes came
4 from.

5 I would like to ask -- I do appreciate you coming
6 and I appreciate the visibility that you've been
7 trying to make your office available to people.

8 One area that I was wondering about in terms
9 of the coverage of your office, we've had a lot of
10 concern raised here about police review boards and
11 so forth. But is this -- would your office be able
12 to become directly involved? Is there any considera-
13 tion being given at the state level, for example,
14 a special prosecution -- prosecutor authority in
15 police cases so that perhaps the group looking at
16 excessive use of force should not be necessarily the
17 same group that has to work day to day with the police
18 department and policies?

19 MR. DURDEN: Well, no. See, the difference is
20 that with the Florida Attorney General's Office, it's
21 civil. There's not a criminal component provided
22 by the office.

23 For example, they -- the prosecutor for a civil
24 rights violation, we don't have it in Florida, that
25 power is reserved with the office of the statewide

1 prosecutor or its the local State Attorney's.

2 Now, in terms of use of force and things like
3 that, there are a variety of movements going on right
4 now. And we know that their requirement is so many
5 hours are -- have been given to police training in
6 areas of sensitivity. We are looking into other
7 avenues.

8 Now, in terms of the group in Miami, and how
9 we can get that nonviolent approach to police arrests
10 incorporated inside of the training, what we're trying
11 to do is take a concept that's working in Miami, for
12 example, and take that concept and trying to take
13 it on a state level and make a training program.
14 So we're trying to implement from that kind of passage.

15 We're also trying to encourage police departments
16 to consider -- and there's a big fight about this
17 in terms of citizen review boards, and that's what --
18 but we're trying to get them to consider the concept
19 of it. And what we're seeing is that the police
20 department has not been working with community, and
21 has a built-in distrust. There are some legal break-
22 downs -- (inaudible) -- in different kind of ways.

23 MR. NELSON: Mr. Durden, what do you charge with
24 -- your office -- specifically it says here your
25 office is office of civil rights for the state of

1 Florida?

2 MR. DURDEN: Yes.

3 MR. NELSON: What's your charge for the --

4 MR. DURDEN: It will take me an hour to explain
5 it to you.

6 MR. NELSON: Don't take an hour. See if you
7 can do it in two or three minutes.

8 MR. DURDEN: This office is a little bit differ-
9 ent from other offices nationwide. It is driven by a
10 particular statute that defines, to a certain extent,
11 its responsibilities. It talks about rights secured
12 by the state commission and by state statutes, and
13 talks about a violation of those rights by force is --
14 (inaudible), which is the deterrent component and
15 all.

16 Now, there are other regulations that would be
17 applied that don't sit inside of those two statutes.
18 The Attorney General's Office has certain powers that
19 we can utilize in certain situations. So that's just
20 a short answer to your question.

21 But primarily the office is targeted to deal
22 with, for violent types of invasions of civil rights
23 from a civil capacity.

24 MR. NELSON: Your office is involved with the
25 employment of housing

1 MR. DURDEN: We have some responsibility that
2 comes out of the certain statutes, which I'm going
3 to get into -- (inaudible) -- but in terms of 760.11,
4 it allows us about charges for -- (inaudible) --

5 (Thereupon, the court reporter asked the speaker
6 to please speak up.)

7 MR. DURDEN: Yes, I'm sorry. We're likely to
8 see certain housing types of management litigant.
9 So if there -- if you walk through various statutes
10 and see how certain passwords have been given.

11 For example, since the state of Florida, for
12 example, the trial being moved to Orlando, Florida.
13 If Orlando needed assistance from the Civil Rights
14 Division of the State Attorney General's Office --
15 (inaudible) -- let me put that in context for you.

16 Actually, it's a long legal question to answer
17 for you. Let me first -- can I explain the problems
18 for you, okay, and tell you how we interfaced? In
19 a certain sense of the word, the Attorney General's
20 Office represents the state in criminal appellate
21 matters, okay.

22 For example, a person gets arrested, charged,
23 he goes to jail. His case is appealed, and many case
24 agents will handle that appeal. Okay. It is conceiv-
25 able that the Attorney General's Office, in the Lozano

1 matter, could have worked on the appellate appeal
2 in terms of the transfer itself. We, in fact, did
3 work in conjunction with Miami in terms of the
4 appellate case on Lozano.

5 In terms of whether it's moved, it's not a matter
6 of our office making that determination, because
7 ordinarily what happens when the appellate court rules
8 that one site is not the place for the trial, the
9 appellate court makes the decision of where to try
10 the case at. See what I'm saying?

11 So it's not something that we can jump in and
12 say, oh, no, you got to take it here, because it's
13 something that's reserved for the appellate court.

14 Does that answer your question?

15 MR. NELSON; I wasn't suggesting that. I was
16 suggesting that I think when you made the statement
17 that the office of Civil Rights Division wants to
18 assist at this commission -- (inaudible) --

19 (Thereupon, the court reporter asked the speaker
20 to please speak up.)

21 -- I say -- I appreciate that, because the
22 possibility of state and federal government working
23 together any time is amenable, so I don't think it
24 happened before. But I'm simply suggesting that --
25 I'm just asking the question, when you make the offer

1 that what can your office do, I mean, to assist this
2 commission -- and for example, I'm saying if the
3 Lozano trial is moved to Orlando, and you represent
4 the Attorney General's Office, I know that you're
5 not in the process of -- you don't have the decision
6 to move the trial. The judge makes that decision.
7 But what could your office do to, for example, assist
8 a community who might have racial turmoil inside it?
9 What could your office do to assist in that?

10 MR. DURDEN: Yes, okay. What we can do is we
11 have to educate people. For example, what I'm doing
12 in Miami is, we're having a program with the high
13 school students there to explain to them what a trial
14 is all about and how it works.

15 For example, a student or a person who is not
16 an attorney may see a side of our conference, and
17 they think money is changing hands, they may think
18 that illusion is taking place, so our idea is to go
19 into the school system and explain to them what a
20 trial is all about; see what I'm saying?

21 We need to address those kinds of concerns.
22 So that's what I'm doing in Miami with respect to
23 the Lozano. We're trying to do it in Tallahassee,
24 as well. And I also assisted you in Orlando.

25 MR. FORD: Assuming there's a disturbance stemming

1 from a verdict in that trial, your office would play
2 no role in that?

3 MR. DURDEN: I don't -- no, not necessarily.
4 What we try to do is that -- in Tallahassee, for
5 example, we try to go in and assist the city of
6 Tallahassee. I didn't want to go in and try to tell
7 Tallahassee my plans. My whole idea was to go in
8 and say to Tallahassee, this is what's going on in
9 Miami.

10 And Miami has a good program. And we addressed
11 some critical issues. This is what's going on in
12 Los Angeles. And it's to try and provide assistance
13 to the city to see the various types of things that
14 can be done, so in an assisted role.

15 MR. BROWN: Okay. Any other questions? Yes?

16 RABBI AGIN: In summary, then, you're more
17 involved with education?

18 MR. DURDEN: There are different components to
19 it. You know, you're not going to be able to litigate
20 your way out of civil rights in Florida. You can't
21 do that. So part of the whole plan is to be preventa-
22 tive in nature and try to stop the policeman from
23 hitting a guy across the head -- (inaudible) -- so
24 that's the nature of it.

25 MR. BROWN: Okay. Any other comments? All right.

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NOTION CONTENT

1 Thank you very much. I appreciate your coming.

2 I'd like to ask Sister Margaret Freeman.

3 (Thereupon, a short break was taken.)

4 MR. BROWN: We are ready to proceed.

5 SISTER FREEMAN: I am Sister Margaret Freeman.

6 My home address is -- you want my address? You have
7 my address and telephone number. I think I'll intro-
8 duce myself by telling you not who I am but who I
9 used to was, and then move into the present.

10 I worked with the St. Petersburg Free Clinic

11 here in St. Petersburg for almost seventeen years.

12 And the -- (inaudible) -- of the St. Petersburg Free
13 Clinic was to do those things in the community that

[social]

14 nobody else was doing, not to duplicate services,

15 et cetera.

16 And needless to say, there was never any short-

17 age of need, there was never any shortage of clients,

18 and a marvelous operation, which at the present time --

19 we've had a couple of others which we spun off, but

20 at the present time now, has seven active programs;

21 that's food, medical, housing for the homeless, all --

22 you run the gamut.

23 At the present time, we're very much concerned

24 in an elderly care clinic on 32nd Avenue South. And

25 due to all of that contact I, of course, have become

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1 increasingly involved in many of the social problems.

2 And the one which I'm particularly concerned
3 about is the relations of people within the community,
4 and very much of that on an ecumenical basis with the
5 church population as well as the cross-cultural
6 necessities. I'm absolutely convinced that there
7 are -- there is one problem in our society, and that
8 is community. It's not a black problem. It's not
9 a white problem. It's our problem.

10 And I think what I would like to stress more
11 than anything else, not the negatives of what we haven't
12 done, but perhaps some of the positives which are now
13 going on and what we can do in the future. There can
14 be no question that much of the difficulties within
15 the African-American community is due to the terrible
16 abuses of the past, due to the lack of economic
17 possibilities and socioeconomic conditions, the almost
18 automatic barrier that is there and which is very
19 hard to control. C / / /

20 I would like to say a couple of things that have
21 happened to me personally, recently, just to illustrate
22 that.

23 One case, a child in a private school wrote a
24 note to another child which is picked up by a teacher,
25 which said we do not want any niggers in our school.

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1 The teacher, picking it up, went -- confronted the
2 parents and said no small child gets that except at
3 home. And this is not acceptable. Will you please
4 do something about it.

5 The same incident happened again, and then there
6 was a real confrontation.

7 This is the kind of preparation for life that
8 has caused so much of the difficulties in our com-
9 munity, and one which I think we need to accept as
10 being true. We, as communities, do not trust each
11 other. Not too long -- and this is universal,
12 including me.

13 Not too long ago I was at the Free Clinic, and
14 I was driving out. I forgot to watch the time, by
15 the way, but nobody else has. I was driving out from
16 the free clinic which is over there, kind of isolated
17 in an area of transient housing and that kind of thing.
18 And I went out -- I was by myself and there was nobody
19 else around, anyplace, and I drove out. And I noted
20 that there was a car with some man sitting in the
21 car -- or was driving in the car, and my immediate
22 reaction was this (demonstrating), but then he was
23 a black man. And he followed me. So I got a little
24 bit tight.

25 Then, finally he caught up to me and it was a

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1 friend of mine who wanted to say hello, you know.

2 And I thought to myself, girl, come on, where are
3 you coming from?

4 This is part of that residue of resistance of
5 inbred fear, prejudice, bigotry, which we are all
6 affected with.

7 And what I would like to suggest is that there
8 are some very, very positive things going on in St.
9 Petersburg, regardless of that simmering of unhappiness
10 and of difficulties which are there and which we really
11 need to acknowledge as being there. We need to face
12 up to them. We need to say that we do not trust each
13 other, that we need to talk about it, we need to get
14 to the point where we can converse with each other,
15 where we can talk in terms of what are those problems
16 and what is their origin. You know, why am I afflicted
17 with this fear? For the same reason that everybody
18 else is afflicted with the fear, we're all afraid
19 of anything that's different. We just can't adorn
20 that easily, we have to come to know that it can be
21 changed.

22 Some of the things that are going on which I
23 think are very positive in this area and which I was
24 a part of in the last six months or year, has been
25 with -- due to some activities with the Clergy

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1 Association, which I have a very active part, and
2 with the Ministerial Alliance, which is the black
3 ministers association. We got together to try and
4 establish some kind of relationship, because the
5 Ministerial Alliance is here, the Clergy Association
6 is here, and ne'er the two shall meet.

7 And if we can't meet on God's turf, you know,
8 where on earth can we meet?

9 Anyway, after the initial meeting, which was
10 not a very comfortable affair for any of us, things
11 really moved in a much more comfortable kind of a
12 situation. And then not too much came of that. And
13 then the Mayor's Reconciliation Committee was formed,
14 because at that time there was a recognition of the
15 fact of the difficulties with the police department,
16 et cetera, that something needed to be done.

17 And the acting Chief of Police brought the
18 ministers into the situation. And so that happened,
19 and that was a good move. But it didn't get very
20 far. And the reason that it didn't get too far and
21 that -- although it is still in the process of having
22 made some contacts, is because of the beginning of
23 a very good operation in the community called Churches
24 United for Community Action, which is an organization
25 of all of the churches in the community, and of which

1 there are some thirty churches who are now involved.
2 A very large portion of those are the black churches
3 doing a tremendous job. And then a number of the
4 white churches, but not nearly enough of the white
5 churches are a part of that.

6 We had one large meeting and -- which was the
7 first large meeting, and there was more than 350 people
8 at that, with about half blacks and half whites.
9 And now that organization has been divided up into
10 task forces to examine what the problems of our
11 society are, what this community are, and what we
12 as groups together can do about that.

13 But the greatest thing that is happening, because
14 of this organization and this movement forward, is
15 that the individuals, individual people are talking
16 to each other, at extended visits, to find out who
17 we are, how do I -- how am I similar, what are my
18 likes, are they the same as your likes, what can we
19 do together to become -- to establish some kind of
20 bond of communication and mutual interest and get
21 to the point where we can actually work together.

22 And the principal problem of all of this is that
23 it is very difficult to get the -- what do I call
24 them -- mainline churches, the mainline churches
25 involved. And I think that what we really need to

1 do is to somehow work fiercely to bring this whole
2 community into an understanding of the tremendous
3 need in St. Petersburg.

4 There are a couple of other very good programs,
5 which you'll probably hear a little bit about later
6 on. I don't see Roy Kaplan here. He hasn't arrived
7 yet, but he's on the docket. He's the head of the
8 National Conference, which used to be the National
9 Conference of Christians and Jews. And they are doing
10 a great deal in the school system. And I think that
11 if enough of this kind of thing can happen so that
12 we can bring people together for mutual understanding,
13 a great deal of this difficulty will be laid to rest.

14 So I would beg that wherever possible, that you
15 do everything possible to aid and abet and assist
16 in some of the things that are going on in the non-
17 profit church sector, and particularly the church
18 sector, that something very positive in the way of
19 love and respect and communication can be the basis
20 for supplying the human needs of people -- of all
21 people, and as a result of that, a real basis for
22 love and understanding of every single solitary person.
23 Thank you.

24 Any questions?

25 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. I want to -- I

1 was particularly appreciative when you discussed the
2 experience that you felt when you got that little
3 knot in the pit of your stomach, and then began to
4 realize that. Because I think all too often we tend
5 to gloss over those. And if we don't address those --

6 SISTER FREEMAN: Exactly.

7 MR. BROWN: -- things that we have almost
8 absorbed with our mother's milk in this country, then
9 it's hard to get beyond them.

10 And it has been all too often my experience,
11 when we see the kind of ecumenical-type gatherings
12 that you described, they tend to be superficial, nobody
13 really gets down to addressing that kind of real feel-
14 ing can go out to people who then move forward. And
15 so I'm wondering if in the efforts you've had, if
16 you've found a willingness of these groups to get
17 beyond the superficial -- you know, we've got some
18 commonalities, it's nice to get together and to back
19 and address some of the real gut feelings and issues
20 that have to be addressed for us to move forward in
21 this area.

22 SISTER FREEMAN: Yes, definitely, there's a --
23 there's an existing process to make people comfortable
24 with each other, forming of task forces where people
25 are working on the same task forces, small communities,

1 et cetera. And then they will be working together
2 to establish some kind of interchange on a social
3 level.

4 One church, they have paired a white American
5 Baptist church with a black American Baptist church,
6 and so they have a woman's group which meets together.
7 So that kind of pairing.

8 And that is one of the things we hope to attain
9 as a result of this, and this probably could very
10 well be one of the results of the activities of the
11 whole group as it comes out.

12 May I elaborate on your -- on one other thing
13 that happened to me not too long ago.

14 I was talking to a very large group. There was,
15 I suppose, a thousand people. And among other things
16 that I said in my talk was that we really needed to
17 examine ourselves with regard to are we bigoted and
18 how much prejudice do we harbor as individuals. And
19 I was called down after that talk by two people from
20 that audience who objected to the strength of my
21 language.

22 MR. BROWN: But not from me.

23 MR. KNIGHT: Sister Margaret, say in the last
24 ten or fifteen years, could you give an assessment
25 of race relations in St. Petersburg? Would you say

1 they're better, worse, or about the same?

2 SISTER FREEMAN: I would say they're definitely
3 about the same. I don't think they have changed very
4 much. I think that same language of trust is there.
5 I do know that in my working there at the St. Petersburg
6 Free Clinic, and just with employees, you know, there's
7 always an initial -- an initial kind of uncomfortable-
8 ness on the part of anybody that comes to work there
9 because the major -- not all, I mean, about half --
10 many of the major supervisors, you know, are Afro-
11 Americans, but there is an initial uncomfortableness
12 kind of thing.

13 I never will forget one time when one of our
14 wonderful employees had been there about eleven years,
15 I guess, who had been working very hard, and worked
16 out at the site of one of the food bank distribution
17 points. And she came in one day and she was so pleased
18 with herself, it was absolutely -- she was a mess.
19 Oh, she was just a -- (inaudible). And she said some
20 women out there, some little lady like this had gotten
21 annoyed with her and taken a bag of flour and thrown
22 it flat and hit her full on. And so she was just
23 covered with white. And so she said -- she came in
24 and she said, at long last I've made it, I'm white
25 all over.

1 But when you get to the point where -- you know,
2 where there is this kind of exchange, then I would
3 say that something has been accomplished. And I think
4 that's the kind of openness I think that we -- we
5 absolutely have to establish.

6 MR. FORD: Do you have any feel for why it's
7 so difficult to get any of the mainline churches
8 involved? Are they giving you reasons or excuses?

9 SISTER FREEMAN: (Inaudible) -- I think the
10 principal problem is that we somehow had never gotten
11 to the point where we have convinced them that this
12 is our Christian duty, this is our Godly duty, you
13 know, that this is a part of who we say we are, as
14 God's people, that we are concerned for all people
15 and that -- that this separation exists, so why
16 change it?

17 MR. FORD: And lastly, how is this Free Clinic
18 funded?

19 SISTER FREEMAN: Well, with two exceptions,
20 recent exceptions, all donations.

21 MR. FORD: Okay.

22 SISTER FREEMAN: Nongovernmental. It's a non-
23 affiliated organization.

24 MR. FORD: You get pretty good support from the
25 corporate community?

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1 SISTER FREEMAN: No, not from the corporate com-
2 munity, very little from the corporate community.
3 St. Pete Times is one of the few large donors --
4 (inaudible).

5 MR. BROWN: All right. Thank you very much.

6 SISTER FREEMAN: Thank you.

7 MR. BROWN: I would like to ask Dr. Sandra Garcia.
8 We have Susanna Martin? Susanna Martin is represent-
9 ing Reverend Joseph Harvey. She's a member of Bethel
10 Metropolitan Baptist Church, and she's speaking for
11 her pastor today.

12 MS. MARTIN: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and
13 members of the committee. I just drove by the church
14 to pick up some paperwork and I was drafted, so this
15 is all off the cuff. I haven't had a whole lot of
16 time to prepare a formal speech, so I'm going to speak
17 to you from my heart.

18 I was taught that when you tell the truth, you
19 don't have to remember, and when you tell the truth,
20 you don't have to prepare. So I'm here.

21 I was raised in the southwest, in New Mexico,
22 where there are five different cultures. And if you
23 find yourself prejudice or racist in that type of
24 setting, you have too many people against you or to
25 be prejudiced against. So I learned not to be. That's

1 the easiest way to be.

2 My grandfather, who was Spanish-American, was
3 a great influence in my life. He taught me that
4 there's a great difference between ignorance and
5 stupidity. Ignorance means that you don't know, but
6 you're willing to learn. And stupidity means that
7 you know better, but you choose to do the wrong.
8 There is no shame in being ignorant, there's only
9 a shame in being stupid.

10 This past election was a good awakening for St.
11 Petersburg. I've lived here for eight years and I've
12 been a member of Bethel Metropolitan for seven and
13 a half of the eight years. Bethel Metropolitan Baptist
14 Church is a predominantly black church down in South
15 St. Pete. There are two nonblack members, which is
16 myself and another gentleman.

17 When I first came there, I was referred to as
18 the white lady for awhile. I -- there was the uneasi-
19 ness of me coming in and joining the church and all,
20 and a discomfort of blending in. And it's taken me
21 awhile, but I finally blended in, and now there is
22 no difference.

23 And when I'm telling you that I have witnessed
24 racism here in St. Petersburg, I have witnessed it
25 mostly from the white community against the black

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1 community. And I can tell you in all honesty, because
2 I lived both worlds. I work in a white environment
3 and I worship in a black environment. And I hear
4 the truest of hearts in both sides.

5 There's a very quiet kind of racism here in St.
6 Petersburg, and that is the most dangerous kind.
7 We need to -- this -- this election brought out a
8 lot of what was going on and a lot of the feelings,
9 and it brought out a lot of the -- it ended a lot
10 of the quietness. It allowed us to speak out and
11 know what was in our hearts.

12 Racism is an illness and in order to find a cure
13 for the illness, first we have to diagnose it. So
14 this is -- I hope this is what we're doing here.

15 And I hope that we can find solutions. And in order
16 to find solutions, we have to recognize each other
17 and look past the color and past the areas so that
18 we can go forward. We have to stop looking back and
19 we have to start from today and look forward.

20 There were some -- one of the candidates made
21 a statement that has stuck to my -- in my head this
22 whole time. The statement was made that the black
23 ministers were a bunch of do-nothings. This is when
24 they were trying to get everybody together to come
25 to -- to some of the situations that had been brought

1 out by, I believe, Officer Goliath Davis, and some
2 of the other black officers. And we were all trying
3 to get together. And a statement was made by one
4 of the candidates that the black ministers were a
5 bunch of do-nothings. That showed total ignorance
6 and stupidity because anybody that does not know what
7 the black minister is in the black community needs
8 to get in there and get to knowing what's going on.

9 I really admire Chief Stephens because the first
10 thing he came here, his wife isn't even here, one
11 of the first places he stopped was our church. And
12 he addressed our church. And he immediately gained
13 the respect of -- and the support of our church.

14 And the fact that Mr. Curtsinger got almost 50
15 percent of the vote is also very scary, because this
16 tells us something about St. Petersburg.

17 Someone that is openly saying the things that
18 Mr. Curtsinger said, and being accepted by 50 percent
19 of the community, we have to wake up and see what
20 really happened. And I'm hoping that we can get some-
21 thing started. Something good must come of this.
22 I propose that we form a multicultural group. There
23 is a lot of hispanics that have also come to some
24 of the meetings that we've had in our church. There's
25 a lot of Cubans that have come, also. It's not just

1 a black-and-white issue. People are not just black
2 and white. There's -- you know, there's different --
3 there's different shades of every color. We have
4 to come together as a people and form a multicultural
5 group so that we can get to know each other, so that
6 we can get to respect each other, and that we're not
7 afraid of the other -- of the other side.

8 And in doing this, I hope that the end result
9 of forming a multicultural group would be to educate
10 the ignorant and learn how to deal with the stupid,
11 because the stupid are always going to be there.
12 So we just have to learn how to deal with that. And
13 I thank you very much.

14 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. And we particu-
15 larly appreciate your coming on such short notice
16 and presenting such an eloquent statement.

17 Do we have any questions or comments?

18 MR. DOCTOR: Just a very quick one, Mr. Chairman.

19 Ms. Martin, you talked about the need to develop
20 a multicultural approach?

21 MS. MARTIN: Yes, sir.

22 MR. DOCTOR: Do you have any plans to institute
23 or instigate such an effort?

24 MS. MARTIN: I don't have any plans, but if we
25 get together, we can drum it up in ten minutes. I

1 mean, it doesn't take -- let's just say 7:00 Tuesday
2 evening, my house, your house, here at City Hall,
3 a church, anyplace. It doesn't -- see, this is the
4 thing that -- we plan it to death. Let's stop the
5 planning, let's just do it.

6 MR. DOCTOR: I would encourage you to do it,
7 since I don't live here and won't be able to partici-
8 pate, my regrets.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Sounds good.

10 MS. MARTIN: I'm willing -- I'm willing to get
11 started --

12 MR. DOCTOR: I think you ought to appoint your-
13 self as the instigator of that particular idea and
14 move forward with it.

15 MS. MARTIN: Well, thank you, I surely will.

16 MS. LITTLER: I'd like to say something. I
17 heard recently a reading on radio quoting Audrey Lord.
18 She's deceased now. She was a black poet. And what
19 she said was, there isn't anything two women can't
20 accomplish before lunch.

21 MS. MARTIN: But I was so very pleased now.
22 This past Saturday, I walked with the NAACP, passing
23 out literature, and telling people you must get out
24 and vote. And I was surprised at the amount of men
25 that showed up, too. So we're gaining. So I would --

1 like I say, if -- we have to stop talking about it
2 and start doing something about it.

3 MR. DOCTOR: I agree.

4 MS. MARTIN; So I would be more than happy to
5 start something up. Thank you.

6 MR. BROWN: And thank you very much.

7 MS. MARTIN: You are quite welcome.

8 MR. BROWN: I would like to ask Ms. Catherine
9 Heron, President of the Chamber of Commerce. Cathy,
10 it says in parentheses, so obviously you prefer to
11 be called Cathy. I know how you feel. My name is
12 Bradford, and I prefer Brad. I used to say that when
13 I was -- my mother used Bradford, I knew I was in
14 trouble.

15 MS. HERON: Yeah. That's right. (Inaudible)

16 Good afternoon, I'm very pleased to be able to
17 speak to you today. I'm here because I am the
18 President of the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of
19 Commerce. I am also Vice-President of Administration
20 for the St. Petersburg Times, who I will refer to
21 a couple of times as I talk to you today.

22 I also am currently serving on Reverend Cate's
23 Reconciliation Committee, and have previously served
24 on the Community Alliance in our town.

25 I'd like to first reference back to a phrase

1 that Sevell Brown used, all is not wrong but all is
 2 not well, and attribute it to the Chamber of Commerce-
 3 ness in me, or my large streak of eternal optimism
 4 or the fact that I'm a white woman and haven't been
 5 on the receiving end of this sort of hurtful racism.
 6 But I'm going to focus on that all is not wrong part,
 7 but ignore the all is not well part, as well.

8 The Times editorial today said, as a result of
 9 yesterday's election, that the worst is over. I don't
 10 think we can let this stop here, however, because
 11 we did have a victory yesterday. We need to take
 12 these last two years as warning and learn from it
 13 and use it and not allow ourselves to simply return
 14 to our segregated, satisfied lives, but rather force
 15 ourselves to face and discuss the issues of difference,
 16 of economic opportunity, of racism that these events
 17 have aired. A Times columnist said today in his
 18 column that St. Petersburg, in the last couple of
 19 years, had broken the tacit truth between black and
 20 white residents and redeclared the racial cold war.

21 I contend that the tacit truth resulted in
 22 repressed and obscured problems in a cupboard of
 23 silence, and politically correct avoidance of the
 24 topic. We do need the discussion and airing that
 25 this event has caused, of the various views, and not

1 tacit truth simply because we weathered this storm.

2 I also quote again from Elijah Cohen. "Black
3 and white people don't see the need anymore to pretend
4 they like and respect each other."

5 I contend that if we were only pretending, as
6 I believe we were, that no problems would be solved.
7 We need to stop pretending and air the reasons behind
8 our feelings of distrust. Perhaps the solution is
9 in seemingly simply yet structurally difficult areas
10 like merely being friends, dinner companions, or
11 tennis team partners with people who are unlike us.
12 Merely knowing others of another race as individuals
13 would continue to allow us all to tear down the very
14 powerful forces of stereotyping that we all possess.

15 But unfortunately the structure -- the structures
16 of our lives don't easily serve this simple need. We
17 live segregated in St. Petersburg. We worship segre-
18 gated. Many work segregated. And we die segregated.
19 The only hope in this chain of life institutions is
20 that our children have learned integrated, but even
21 this seems under attack, and it isn't supported in
22 the continuum of life, either before or after, with
23 our segregated ways.

24 I don't really blame anyone for all of this.

25 I think it's been mentioned already today, our

1 differences are glorious, but we find comfort in our
2 similarities.

3 And finally, the odds are against us, the mathe-
4 matical odds are against us. In our community there
5 are twenty African-American citizens for every one
6 hundred white citizens. There are only two Asian-
7 American citizens for every one hundred white citizens,
8 so the statistical chance, even in an integrated world,
9 of living, working, or dying next to a person of color
10 is lower for whites.

11 So what is good and positive about St. Petersburg
12 and about the recent events that we've been through?
13 And I believe there is much that is good about St.
14 Petersburg and positive about these painful events.
15 Let me give you some examples. And I think you've
16 heard some other examples today and you've inquired
17 about some of them, as well.

18 We did begin last year a summertime youth employ-
19 ment program. It was a partnership between
20 governmental funding and business funding that
21 resulted in, granted short-term jobs, for 250 children,
22 and I think it will be doubled this year. We do have,
23 despite the flaws of not having single-member
24 districts, a diversity council and diversity in the
25 senior management of our -- of our city government.

1 We have something that hasn't been mentioned here,
2 which I think is a good indicator of the goodness
3 of our community, called SPIFF, the St. Petersburg
4 International Folk Fair. That is an organization
5 that's been here for decades that rejoices and cele-
6brates the differences present in every type of
7 different culture, from the Polish immigrants in our
8 community to all sorts of different types of culturally
9 diverse people.

10 So we do have history, in some respects, of
11 appreciating those differences and celebrating them.

12 We do have the Community Alliance which was
13 created by the Chamber of Commerce about twenty-four
14 years ago. This is a group of individuals who meet
15 every other week, twenty-one whites and twenty-one
16 blacks, and they deal with, on a regular basis, all
17 of the major issues that they feel are important,
18 be it drugs in the workplace, be it education, be
19 it crime.

20 Last year during the issue regarding our chief
21 of police, they dealt head-on with that and came out
22 with a recommendation that he could no longer be here,
23 from their opinion.

24 So the town is -- has been working for years
25 and years on trying to assure that we are talking

1 to each other.

2 Why is the Chamber involved in this and has been
3 for so long? It seems self-evident. It is a business
4 issue if our town is tarnished with racism as we try
5 to attract businesses into our town. As we try to
6 attract a major league baseball franchise into our
7 town, we simply can't be tarnished with this flaw
8 in ourselves. And I think, as critically from a
9 business issue, if we are underutilizing a major
10 talent and resource in our community, then that's
11 not good for business, either, from an economic stand-
12 point.

13 I happen to believe that this event is positive
14 for us in the long run in that it is causing us to
15 face up to our problems and the tacit truth that we
16 had been eluding ourselves under.

17 The Reconciliation Committee, I believe, is a
18 positive aspect, as well, We also have a citizenry
19 here that cares deeply, that is involved, that makes
20 informed and thoughtful judgments. And I do appreciate
21 the comments earlier by a couple of you; I, too, am
22 very, very proud of each of us as citizens today,
23 based on yesterday's results.

24 We also have a couple of successfully integrated
25 neighborhoods, certainly not as many -- you can look

1 at a map and see it's still a very, very segregated
2 community from a housing standpoint, but I am proud
3 of the integrated neighborhoods that we do have.
4 We also have, and I think you've seen evidence of
5 it today, a politically astute, smart, caring and
6 involved African-American community. And just as
7 another point on the list of positives is that last
8 year the Chamber began supporting cultural diversity
9 seminars for the community at large.

10 And we've invited just about everything -- every
11 person that we can think of in our community who might
12 find some use of these. And this is a day-and-a-
13 half session when people of difference can get together
14 in a safe environment and air some of their mistrust
15 and some of their bigotry and try to face it and come
16 to terms with it. We also, lastly, have a school
17 system that encourages addressing these issues of
18 racism. I read in our paper recently that we have
19 schools who are now designating themselves racism-
20 free zones.

21 So just as we've begun to see some grass-roots
22 kind of efforts in drug-free, now we have young people
23 talking about the need to not be racist.

24 We have, also, diversity counsels, and if Roy
25 Kaplan comes, we'll be able to talk much more about

1 these positive efforts in our community -- in our
2 schools. We have diversity councils in a number of --
3 particularly in the high schools, again, multicultural
4 groups of young adults getting together to deal with
5 the issues of multiculturalism in their schools.

6 And we also have a lot of support from Camp
7 Anytown, which is again, a national conference program
8 to try to undo the harm that we've done to young
9 children by the time they're thirteen or fourteen
10 years old, in terms of instilling this hatred. In
11 Camp Anytown, we simply try to eradicate that.

12 What must we do to use this time in our history
13 to our advantage? Number one, I have heard a phrase
14 that you got to break down to break through. And
15 we need to use this near breakdown to break through.
16 We can't become complacent simply because we got
17 through yesterday. The worse will not be over if
18 we don't pay some attention to the issues that have
19 been raised here today. We must begin multicultural
20 discussion groups. The reconciliation group has begun
21 it, Sister Margaret spoke of the pairing of churches.

22 We are also interested in pursuing a pairing
23 of neighborhood associations to have informal yet
24 guided conversations where people of difference can
25 explore the questions of curiosity they may have,

1 explore some of the feelings that Sister Margaret
2 talked about in terms of mistrust and where our
3 prejudices come from. So the Reconciliation Committee,
4 I believe, is moving down the road or trying to be
5 a catalyst for some of these one-on-one interactions,
6 which is where I believe the long-term solution to
7 this must come from.

8 Fourth, I think we need to commit to a lifelong
9 effort and be patient with ourselves. We all didn't
10 get this way overnight. We've been at this for decades
11 and centuries and I don't think we're going to look
12 up and measure our success in months and years, but
13 we really got to make a commitment.

14 I believe, as a community, after this period
15 of time, to say we are going to really work on this
16 as a community for a very long time. And we have
17 to avoid the tacit truth of political correctness.
18 We mustn't be rude or disrespectful, but we must
19 discuss the issue of race and not shove it under the
20 rug, or else we will be back here and you will be
21 back here with the same division, the same unresolved
22 issues either two years or ten years or twenty years
23 from now.

24 And lastly, I would like to see St. Petersburg
25 use this breakdown to jump way ahead in the race on

1 race. My dream is to see us create forums and solu-
2 tions and attitudes, eventually out of all of this,
3 that will make us a model in ten years of a culturally
4 appreciative city which rejoices and learns from and
5 serves its many wonderfully varied citizens. How
6 grand that would be and how worthwhile it would make
7 the pain of the latest events. Thank you.

8 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. I was interested
9 in your statement about integrated neighborhoods. I
10 used to live in one in Miami, and shortly after I
11 lived in -- (inaudible) -- informed that even the
12 County Planning Department had already put a --
13 (inaudible) -- because that's how they do it, actually.

14 And not only -- you know, so what you had was
15 an integrated neighborhood that, even though it did
16 not have excess white plague, had, if you will, the
17 normal movement out, but only one group moving in.
18 And so I now live in a predominantly black neighbor-
19 hood.

20 And I'm just wondering what is happening, if
21 anything, in the neighborhoods that you've mentioned,
22 to deal with the area that would perhaps ensure that
23 you would come back here and in a few years that
24 you're talking about -- (inaudible).

25 MS. HERON: My sense of it is that it is stable

1 in terms of the mix. I have not actually, however,
2 and I'm not sure that the paper has analyzed what
3 the evolution of the neighborhood has been. We don't
4 have a lot of vacant land here, so we indeed had a
5 lot of construction in new housing in the neighborhood
6 I'm speaking of. And I know white citizens who have
7 moved into those houses.

8 So my sense is it's stable. I don't know, really,
9 what the statistics over a long period of time say.

10 MR. BROWN: I would urge you, from a paper stand-
11 point, from a news standpoint, to watch very closely
12 the decision process in terms of zoning decisions,
13 in terms of all of the host of things that the city
14 does towards neighborhoods like that because it is
15 certainly my experience, once a neighborhood has been
16 targeted to change, then the treatment of those neigh-
17 borhoods by the administration gets hurt, as well.
18 And it might be something that you're concern of main-
19 taining that way is one of the areas that can serve
20 as a watchdog to make sure that the quality of services
21 and the quality of decisions that are being made are
22 maintained in that neighborhood.

23 Do you have another comment?

24 MR. FORD: The issue of single-district voting,
25 when Mr. Brown and whoever else was working with him

1 to seek that, did the Times take an editorial position
2 on the issue of single-district voting?

3 MS. HERON: Yes, we did, and we opposed it.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. HERON: I'm not on the editorial staff of
6 the paper. Let me clarify that. Let's clarify that.

7 MR. FORD: In reading the editorial, if you can
8 recall any of it, on what basic grounds did the paper
9 oppose it?

10 MS. HERON: My recollection is that it was on
11 the basis of the concept of a single member not being
12 representative of the whole. Less representative.

13 MR. FORD: Being representative of what?

14 MS. HERON: Of the whole city, because they were
15 elected.

16 MR. FORD: Well, of course they're not represent-
17 ative of the whole city; they're representative of
18 that district. And their job is to bring the needs
19 of their district to the needs of the city, overall,
20 and the built-in check and balance is that any one
21 member from any one district has only one vote. And
22 how many members are on your council?

23 MS. HERON: Nine, eight, as of --

24 MR. FORD: What I'm saying, you have a nine-
25 member structure; right?

1 MS. HERON: We did. It will be an eight-member
2 structure.

3 MR. FORD: Including the mayor?

4 MS. HERON: Eight members.

5 MR. FORD: The mayor will be the ninth member.

6 MS. HERON: No, it will be an eight-member
7 council.

8 MR. FORD: Will the mayor have a seat? He won't
9 have a vote?

10 MS. HERON: (Nodding head.)

11 MR. FORD: Well, you're going to have a lot
12 of tie votes.

13 MS. HERON: See, the construction of that
14 particular one had a few flaws, that being one of
15 them. It was put together hastily and it was approved
16 nonetheless. I think there's going to be some efforts
17 to deal with some of those structural flaws like an
18 even number of people on our council.

19 MR. FORD: Did the Chamber take a position?

20 MS. HERON: Yes, we did, we supported it.

21 MR. FORD: And you supported it?

22 MS. HERON: It did come out -- we had a committee
23 here called the Charter Review Committee that had
24 a huge number of public forums about what form of
25 government, what modifications needed to be made to

1 our Charter.

2 Although there was disagreement on that committee,
3 the end result of that community's work was to --
4 (inaudible) -- the single districts -- (inaudible).

5 MR. FORD: Let me say, as an elected official
6 on a single-district voting pattern in Orlando, I
7 would say to anyone concerned about the reconciliation,
8 that I would suggest to you that in -- you know, you're
9 talking about healing and reconciliation, that you
10 should support -- I don't want to be parochial in
11 telling you how to run your city -- but you should
12 support the concept of single-district voting because
13 for most people, perception is 90 percent of reality.
14 And I'm sure for the black people in this community,
15 no matter how strong the person is that's chosen,
16 whatever the perception is, that they didn't choose
17 who they wanted. The perception is that the white,
18 quote, unquote, establishment chose their representa-
19 tive. And if that is their feeling, if that is their
20 perception, that's what you ought to deal with.

21 And it comes off as paternalism and it comes
22 off as racism in the mind, in the perception of the
23 people that you want to reconcile with, not because
24 they're black, but because they're citizens of this
25 city.

1 And all of you have to live in this city together
2 and you want it as safe and as nice as you possibly
3 can get it. I can't tell you how important it is
4 if you give the people -- I don't like to use the
5 term give, because it's not really give -- but if
6 you structure a form of government where the people
7 feel truly represented, and even when they don't get
8 everything they want, they feel truly represented.
9 They know they're not going to get everything they
10 want, but the at-large voting robs them of the feeling
11 that they are truthfully represented -- I mean, elected
12 their representative.

13 And if the person -- it brings the person closer
14 to his or her constituents, and if they don't do a
15 good job of blending the needs of their districts
16 with the needs of the city overall, they won't be
17 reelected.

18 MS. HERON: I don't know that you're aware that
19 the system that we have and that we are now retaining
20 as a result of yesterday's vote, is that the -- through
21 the primary it comes from the district. So the two
22 candidates that are then voted on at large in the
23 final election in the primary, come from the district
24 and are only voted on by the district. So at least
25 the candidates emanate from the district.

1 Now, somebody has already pointed out that the
2 flaw is that there's still --

3 MR. FORD: If the final election, if everybody
4 votes on it, that's just an exercise in cosmetics.

5 MS. HERON: Well, we'll have a Charter Review
6 Committee in another ten years, I think, but certainly
7 we voted on that yesterday, and it was sixty something
8 to thirty, so it was -- it was a sense to retain it
9 the way it was. But I appreciate your comments.

10 MR. BROWN: Yes.

11 MR. BRAKE: I got two. I didn't mean to get
12 into the business of district elections, but since
13 you're from the newspaper, I can tell you how the
14 newspaper will change. It changed in Miami. In 1963,
15 the Chamber of Commerce in Miami, and the Miami Herald,
16 and then the Miami News, which was still publishing,
17 got together and formed a charter amendment to change
18 the method of electing commissioners in Dade County
19 to an at-large system. And I had been elected as
20 a district member, and I opposed the change at the
21 time for all of the reasons that have just been stated;
22 it deprives the minority of a voice in the community,
23 and then blaming it on the commission. And that is
24 at the commission level, that the community shall
25 come together.

1 And I said at the time that the day will come
2 when the Chambers of Commerce and the Miami Herald
3 will no longer be in the majority, and when that comes,
4 they'll support the district elections.

5 Now, that was before the Cubans came. And the
6 Cubans came and the Cubans are now 50 percent of Dade
7 County, and the Anglos are 35 percent, and the blacks
8 are the rest. So that the Anglos are no longer in
9 the majority.

10 And what did the Miami Herald do at the time
11 that they -- they supported the court case asking
12 for single-member districts. And what happened to
13 the group in northeast Dade County, the condos, who
14 in the past and in at-large elections had an undue
15 influence -- we just had an election last week for
16 the new commission. And they didn't come out to vote
17 any stronger than anybody else. And when they asked
18 these people up there why they didn't, they said it
19 wasn't fun anymore, they couldn't control the election.

20 Now, I've got another question for you. And
21 it is a question. And the question again goes back
22 to when I was on the Metro Commission in Dade County
23 in 1963. One-half of the people in Dade County had
24 not been there the ten years before. And this was
25 the population turnover of Dade County coming from

1 the north.

2 Now -- this is before the Cubans. Pinellas County
3 has the image, and St. Petersburg in particular, of
4 being the home of retirees from the north who would
5 come down and then live here a few years and then
6 -- well -- as a senior citizen, I'm looking forward
7 to -- anyway -- anyway, the problem in Dade County
8 at that time was, with all the people being new, they
9 were hesitant in spending money and organizing com-
10 munity programs that would benefit everyone, because
11 they didn't know if they were going to be there in
12 a few years.

13 My question to you would be, because of this --
14 and I may be wrong in the perception, but because
15 of the perception of St. Petersburg as being the
16 home of the elderly who are here only for a period
17 of time, does that hinder forming these organizations
18 or structures or integrating the community, or isn't
19 that perceived as a problem, or haven't you looked
20 into it?

21 MS. HERON: Well, to the contrary, I don't think
22 it -- I think it is potentially helpful because we
23 do have a particularly involved group, and my sense
24 is that some of the people who are retired are more
25 involved, they read the paper intently, they knew

1 about all these battle issues. So I don't think it's
2 for lack of involvement, but it's certainly from a
3 different point of view. So that gives us the
4 challenge of having to meld these different points
5 of view.

6 The no-new-taxes standpoint, I don't sense is
7 any greater here than it is anyplace in the United
8 States right now, so -- so I don't really view that
9 as a negative. It gives us another hurdle or two
10 because we do have that point of view to consider
11 in any solution that we come up with.

12 MR. FORD: One last comment. Ms. Heron, let
13 me tell you why I think this is so important. I can
14 tell you what single-district voting would do for
15 you because -- (inaudible). On our council there's
16 seven people. At one point, because of this kind
17 of election, we had two black males, two anglo males,
18 two anglo females, and a hispanic female. We now
19 have a female mayor elected at large. So people kind
20 of loosen up their -- their mentality when it comes
21 to voting, and they know that in the district they
22 vote only on their commissioner. They're comfortable
23 with that. And if that commissioner doesn't associate
24 well, then they'll replace him.

25 But for the first time in the history of our

1 city we have -- have -- they got elected overwhelm-
2 ingly. She had been on the council ten years. And
3 so I can tell you now that overall, the citizenry
4 feel better about their government than they ever
5 have because it's a microcosm of what we are
6 ethnically, and they see themselves interested at
7 the decision-making level.

8 And so if you want to create the politics of
9 inclusion, there is no better way to do it.

10 MS. HERON: Well, I think it was mentioned
11 earlier, our council of nine has two African-Americans
12 and two -- (inaudible).

13 MR. FORD: Except that they were elected by the
14 whole city. And I'm still telling you that I know
15 the black people in St. Pete at large, feel that some-
16 body else elected their representative.

17 MS. HERON: They do, that's correct.

18 MR. BROWN: I think we're going to have to move
19 on. Thank you very much.

20 Let me ask if Mr. Roy Kaplan is here.

21 Okay. James Simmons?

22 Darrel Stephens.

23 MR. STEPHENS: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members
24 of the Advisory Committee to the United States
25 Commission on Civil Rights, I want to thank you for

1 the opportunity to appear before your committee this
2 afternoon, not only because it's the opportunity for
3 me to make some remarks about this issue, but having
4 been here since the hearing ^{tricky meeting} started, it was also
5 another opportunity for me to learn about this com-
6 munity, since I am a new member of the community.

7 Your mission today and the past several months,
8 I believe, is critical to the future of our city,
9 the state of Florida, and to America, as well. The
10 issue of race and the ethnic tension is one that has
11 been of increasing concern to me as a police executive
12 over the past five to ten years. I'm the newly
13 appointed chief in the city of St. Petersburg. I
14 was appointed about December the 14th, 1992, and
15 assumed my responsibilities on a full-time basis on
16 January 25th, 1993.

17 Being new, I do not bring lengthy experience
18 of addressing these issues in the city of St.
19 Petersburg. I do bring the experience of working
20 on these issues in several communities as a police
21 chief, and my six and a half years as the executive
22 director of a group in Washington, D.C., called the
23 Police Executive Research Forum, that has focused
24 on these issues and others in an effort to improve
25 policing in America.

1 While I do not bring lengthy experience on these
2 issues in the city of St. Petersburg, being new to
3 the community does allow me to make some observations
4 about what I've seen on racial and ethnic tension,
5 through the eyes of a stranger that's trying very
6 hard to learn this community so that I might be an
7 effective police chief.

8 Here's what I've seen. My duties take me into
9 every part of this community. In most cases I find
10 myself in predominantly white or predominantly African-
11 American groups, unless it's a local government func-
12 tion where we do see diverse representation. I
13 recognize that this exists in other -- in various
14 degrees to other -- in other communities, but in my
15 experience it seems that to me, personally, it's a
16 little bit more pronounced than what I've seen in
17 other communities that I've lived and worked.

18 Two days following the primary election in the
19 city of St. Petersburg, the St. Petersburg Times put
20 a map in the newspaper that showed the voting patterns
21 of our citizens. The map clearly reflected a white/
22 black split in the votes, clear racial divisions along
23 voting lines. That made a big impression on me.

24 My experience, again, in other communities, as
25 I've looked as people debate hard issues about what

1 type of governments we should have, who should be
2 elected to represent us, both in single-member dis-
3 tricts and at large, I've not seen as a distinct
4 pattern of fear as what I saw in the map that day
5 in the newspaper.

6 As I've traveled around the city and spoken to
7 different people, I've been constantly asked about
8 what my views are on the racial tensions that exist
9 within our community. Most of the people I felt that
10 were asking the questions, sincerely felt that we
11 didn't have a problem as a community.

12 As I pointed out, some of the things that I've
13 just pointed out to you, I could almost see people
14 stopping, reflecting and thinking that -- about these
15 issues. As a result of me being a stranger and point-
16 ing some of those things out, I felt like people began
17 to notice things that were part of the landscape that
18 they had lived and worked with for many years. It
19 simply didn't occur to them prior to somebody pointing
20 it out, prior to these issues being such a point of
21 debate within our community.

22 What I see in the city of St. Petersburg is a
23 city that's much like others in America, a city where
24 many in the white community had felt that the problems
25 of racial and ethnic tension were solved in the 1960s

1 and the 1970s. As we all know, the problems haven't
2 been solved. In St. Petersburg, the issues that are
3 present in many other cities have come to the surface
4 around the police department and the firing of the
5 former chief. These issues have been kept at the
6 surface because of the debate over the form of govern-
7 ment and the debate over the choice for the mayor
8 of the city.

9 Although most of our citizens would not want
10 to replace the past two years, these events, in my
11 mind, present us with the opportunity to recognize
12 that we have a problem and the obligation to do the
13 hard work that's required, to use the diversity of
14 our community as the strength that it should be rather
15 than a source of tension.

16 I would like to speak briefly to the issues of
17 policing in St. Petersburg -- in the city of St. Peters-
18 burg. I found in our department that we do have racial
19 tension within our organization. I found in our
20 department that we have gender tension within our
21 organization. The racial tension has received most
22 of the press and most of the publicity and most of
23 the discussions that have taken place throughout the
24 broad community. The problem with gender tension
25 is equally important because it's part and parcel

1 of the same issues of people not being sensitive to
2 the needs of others and not being sensitive to the
3 different points of view that come as a result of
4 being in a different race or a different sex or a
5 different background because of that incident. We're
6 working on those problems very hard in our organiza-
7 tion, and making a sincere commitment to try to work
8 through the issues that we have in our organization,
9 in a way that we, as a police department, can make
10 diversity as a strength.

11 Several of the things that we're doing to try
12 to address those issues include that every employee
13 in our department is attending a cultural diversity
14 training that's being offered by the Criminal Justice
15 Institute at St. Petersburg Junior College. I want
16 to emphasize, every employee. That's all 726. And
17 most police departments, when you encounter those
18 issues and people decide that you have to go get
19 training to fix it, it's mostly just the police
20 officers that are made a part of that training. And
21 in our organization, like a lot of other police depart-
22 ments, we have about 35 to 40 percent of our employees
23 are not police officers, they are what we call
24 civilians. They are not sworn. They are as diverse,
25 they come from a wider range of backgrounds than certain

1 police officers do, and it's important that each and
2 every employee be a part of our effort to understand
3 the cultures and the ethnicities so that we can serve
4 our community better.

5 We've developed a policy on racial and sexual
6 harassment that I believe provides good, clear guidance
7 on our expectations to our employees and their
8 relationship with each other, and how they are to
9 serve the people in our community. I can't stress
10 how important it is that we have good, clear policy
11 guidance, and although many would assume that that
12 exists in most of our cities and most of our organiza-
13 tions, I don't think that's the case.

14 Many have rules that say thou shalt not, and
15 here's what's going to happen to you when you do,
16 but not a lot of people sit down and think through
17 these issues and try to provide some direction to
18 employees on -- on how to deal with these difficult
19 issues of learning to live and working together.
20 We're committed as an organization to maintaining
21 a diverse department at all levels of our department.
22 We've made good progress in the City of St. Petersburg
23 over the years in creating a diverse organization.
24 We have a number of things that we need to continue
25 to do.

1 Our representation of women at the upper levels
2 of the department is not where it should be. Our
3 representation of African-Americans and hispanics
4 and ^[A]asians in supervisory and middle-level management
5 of our department is not where it should be. We
6 continue to make that a priority and have made a
7 commitment to be as reflective as our community.

8 I'm making every effort as the police chief in
9 our department to be the right type of role model
10 to our employees, to set the tone, to set the example
11 on the kind of behavior that I would like to see our
12 employees engage in. And I think to an extent that
13 I can serve as a role model for our community, as
14 well, by being frank and open and honest on the issues
15 of racial and ethnic tension within our community.
16 We're working very hard as a department to expand
17 the community policing philosophy which carries with
18 it the basic principles and fundamental values that
19 the police department should work with the community,
20 in the identification of problems, the resolution
21 of solution, and as a team, to try to understand the
22 environment that exists there and develop approaches
23 and procedures and programs and initiative aimed at
24 trying to change the environment where crime, drug abuse,
25 violence exists.

1 We believe that the criminal justice system is
2 an important part of that response, but if we leave
3 dealing with crime and violence to the criminal justice
4 system and don't involve our community and our police
5 department and other parts of government in a coopera-
6 tive partnership, that we're never going to resolve
7 the issues that create new problems for so many of
8 us throughout America. As I said, I'm new to the
9 city and although I believe that we have problems,
10 the longer that I'm in this community, the more
11 optimistic that I am about the ability of our govern-
12 ment, business, religious and community leaders to
13 make every effort to come together to address the
14 problems that I think we really and truly recognize
15 that we have as a community.

16 If I may, I would like to make several recommend-
17 ations to the commission that I think affect us as
18 a community. But to your larger purpose of making
19 a contribution at the state and national level, I
20 think there's a couple points that I would like to
21 make and would urge you to give consideration to as
22 you prepare your report for the United States
23 Commission.

24 First I think it's of critical importance that
25 the Commission on Civil Rights continue to do, and

1 maybe even redouble their efforts through hearings,
2 reports, recommendations, to keep this issue of racial
3 and ethnic tension on the forefront of our minds and
4 action throughout America.

5 I think that one of the things that we lost
6 throughout the eighties was a sense that these problems
7 had been solved. And when we felt that the problems
8 had been solved, I think we lost some of the lessons
9 that we learned through the late sixties and early
10 seventies, where we worked through some very tough
11 issues. And I was a police officer during that time.
12 And we learned to work together.

13 And many of our communities that followed the
14 riots after Dr. King was killed, it followed the riots
15 and the unrest on our campuses, we learned some things
16 there.

17 And I think we've lost that through the eighties.
18 So I think it's important that you help do what you
19 can to keep this on the forefront.

20 Second, I really believe that the commission --
21 ~~and this may be something that's a little bit out~~
22 of your perview, but I don't believe it is -- should
23 recommend to the President, the creation of a national
24 commission on violence in America. I think this
25 problem is the source of much of the racial and ethnic

1 tension that we have in our communities throughout
2 America. I think until we learn to deal with the
3 violence that we have, until we understand it, until
4 we look for solutions that solve, more than building
5 prison beds, until we've looked to a comprehensive,
6 thoughtful approach to how young men grow up and end
7 up, you know, killing each other, that until we do
8 that, we're not going to solve the problem of racial
9 and ethnic tension, and we're going to continue to
10 lose a generation of people to violence and drug abuse.

11 Finally, the issue of civilian review boards
12 have been mentioned on several occasions this afternoon.
13 And I think it would be helpful if the Commission
14 on Civil Rights would support and encourage some real
15 research into the impact and the effects of civilian
16 review boards. There's been tremendous growth over
17 the past three of four years, as turning to this option
18 is a way of solving the problem of police officer
19 contact and behavior throughout America. Over the
20 past four or five years, we've seen, in the fifty
21 largest cities in America, a growth from fifteen to
22 thirty civilian review boards. Past couple of years
23 you can add three or four more to that. If you take
24 a close look at those boards, other than the name,
25 there's not hardly anything that is alike, when you

1 start looking at how they operate, look at their
2 procedures and their approaches to dealing with these
3 issues. They may very well be part of the solution
4 of controlling police officer behavior, but what
5 little inquiry has been done suggests that they're
6 not the panacea that everyone believes that they are,
7 and -- and I think in some respects gives our citizens
8 a sense of false hope and later frustration when a
9 mechanism that was designed to do something, doesn't
10 achieve that.

11 And I think it's critical that this issue be
12 examined, again, in a thoughtful way, that we remove
13 the emotion at the time that is associated with the
14 creation of those and reinvest the money and the effort
15 over a two or three or four-year period, take a good,
16 close, hard look at them and say -- ask the question,
17 do these mechanisms do what we want them to do? If
18 they don't control and have an influence on police
19 officer conduct and behavior that is such a major
20 concern to our city and our citizens, then we need
21 to back up and say what does, and how can we best
22 achieve that?

23 Thank you again for the opportunity to learn
24 this afternoon and for the opportunity to speak to
25 you.

1 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much, and particularly
2 appreciate the specific suggestions. And I think
3 the one about civilian review -- and I'm a very strong
4 supporter of that -- has a great deal of merit. Those
5 who look at it often look at Toronto as sort of an
6 example.

7 And two years ago we had a major issue of
8 services, given the size and population occurring
9 in Toronto, and that's sort of the one that we were
10 looking at to follow as an ideal in terms of their
11 authority and power. So there is a lot of merit to
12 what you say there.

13 MR. STEPHENS: I've had some experience dealing
14 with Toronto, until recently, on that very issue, and
15 participated in reviewing drafts of reports on issues
16 that -- in the city. And you're right, it has
17 achieved what everyone hoped it would achieve.

18 MR. BROWN: You mentioned community policing.
19 And I was very interested to hear Mr. Brown earlier
20 talk about community policing and identifying it
21 almost, if you will, as community control kind of
22 policing. And I had always identified it with -- well,
23 Commissioner Brown, formerly of New York and Houston,
24 and people like this, who have pushed community
25 policing as a way to really interact and be involved

1 with the neighborhood.

2 You mentioned that you're moving forward, but
3 what are you doing to try to, if you will, move the
4 community policing from the concept of community
5 control to the kind of community policing that
6 indicates -- the former Commissioner of New York was --
7 (inaudible) -- a proponent of?

8 MR. STEPHENS: I actually would disagree with
9 Mr. Brown's perception, that it's a form of community
10 control.

11 Some communities around the country had relabeled
12 old things and old activities and called them community
13 policing, and the perception might emanate from a
14 relabeling of things that have been around a long
15 time, as the problem of community policing is pretty
16 much the same old thing. I think that the idea of
17 community policing has been advanced by Lee Brown
18 and many others around the community, is the recogni-
19 tion that the police, through the sixties and
20 seventies, in our efforts to become more efficient
21 and our efforts to manage increasing workloads, most
22 guys think we've basically isolated ourselves from
23 the communities that we serve. We've relied exclusively
24 on the criminal justice system as being the solution
25 to deal with the problem of crime and violence and

1 drug abuse.

2 Community policing, the way that I believe it
3 ought to be practiced, and I believe Lee Brown would
4 say as well, if he was here, that community policing
5 is a vehicle and a mechanism for the police to
6 reintroduce themselves to the people that they served,
7 to work in a collaborative way with identification --
8 for the identification of the problems that create
9 the crime environment that the people live in, and
10 to work through those in a cooperative way, and even
11 implement solutions together.

12 So it provides an opportunity for the community
13 members not to be just victims, witnesses or taxpayers.
14 They're collaborators with the police and other aspects
15 of government in working through those problems.
16 Because if you don't have that, if you rely exclusively
17 on the criminal justice system, which I think we've
18 done for the past thirty years, what we end up doing
19 is being a mechanism that simply feeds the criminal
20 justice system.

21 And that's what the police have become over the
22 last thirty years, something that feeds from the
23 criminal justice system as opposed to serving the
24 community.

25 So in my mind, community policing means opening

1 the doors up, being more collaborative, and providing
2 the community much more of an opportunity to work
3 with the police in a cooperative effort to solve
4 problems, not a euphemism for control.

5 MR. BROWN: Thank you. Questions or comments?

6 MR. FORD: Chief, I'm very impressed with your
7 remarks and I sincerely hope that you get the coopera-
8 tion of the top management in trying to bring about
9 whatever changes need to be brought about in that
10 department for the better.

11 And with that in mind, I would like to ask you,
12 you know, the tone in these things, like in anything
13 else, it comes from the top. And many times if the
14 behavior of Curtsinger was what people said it was,
15 people who get to the top in management are the
16 officers who concur with that type of action and
17 behavior. And they are often left when the chief
18 is changed.

19 And a lot of times they try to put up roadblocks
20 to reform. If you run into that kind of thing, do
21 you have a general idea in mind how you plan to combat
22 resistance to what you just talked about implementing?

23 MR. STEPHENS: Yes, sir, I do. I think you're
24 absolutely right. The tone, particularly the police
25 department, I think it goes in other organizations,

1 as to how we're going to relate to the community and
2 how we're going to relate to each other, and our
3 approach to our obligations and responsibilities of
4 police officers is set from the police chief.

5 As I've looked at our department and have tried
6 to understand some of the things that have occurred
7 in our department over the past couple of years, I
8 think there's a -- you can probably write several
9 books about what's happened, but a lot of what happened,
10 I think comes from the tone it set.

11 And people, if they're in an organization and
12 they're looking way up at the top of that organization,
13 and even people at the top of the organization, they're
14 going to respond, at least to a degree, to what they
15 believe the expectations of the police chief are going
16 to be.

17 My expectations are -- I think it's been made
18 very clear to people at the top of our organization.
19 I've been in place about three months, and I can't
20 say that we've been totally focused on our work yet
21 because of all of the things that have been going
22 on in our community, but -- but my experience so far
23 has been a staff of people across the board who have
24 been very responsive to those expectations, and who
25 have opened up and have talked about some of the

1 things that have occurred, and the mistakes on issues,
2 and I feel that I'm going to judge their performance,
3 their contribution based on -- on -- from January
4 25th, 1992. And people, if they respond and go in
5 the direction that we think is important for our
6 community, then I welcome that and I consider that
7 a success. And I believe that that's how we're going
8 to actually make the changes that we need to make.
9 People who don't, then it's my obligation to do what-
10 ever I can to remove them from their positions of
11 responsibility in the department. And I believe that
12 the authority has been given to me to do that.

13 MR. BROWN: Well, thank you very much, and I
14 am very impressed that you've sat here all day long.

15 MR. YATES: I have about thirty seconds, and
16 I guarantee I'm going to get you out on time. But
17 there are a few things that I feel I must say. I
18 think a man has to be exonerated in this whole process,
19 and I have to say a few things.

20 Mr. Chairman, thank you for -- and your committee --
21 for coming to St. Petersburg. As I've sat through
22 the day and listened to comments from you and from
23 the speakers, I believe you've already started a
24 process, not that we didn't have some things going,
25 but I think you've greatly assisted us in cranking

1 up and getting moving. This eloquent speaker that
2 wasn't prepared from Reverend Harvey's place probably
3 said some of the most important things that I've heard.
4 So I thank you for coming and permitting me to give
5 special appreciation for my good friends and colleagues,
6 and Honorable Nap Ford, and Albert Nelson from Orlando.

7 Let me say that we're happy to -- that the
8 elections came out the way they did yesterday. No,
9 let me say that we're happy, happy that the elections
10 came out the way they did.

11 And I could go on, because we feel that -- that
12 strong about it.

13 Even though we did -- we won by a very small
14 margin, we feel that that is enough to now regroup
15 and go from here together, to pull this community
16 back together and go forward. We have some excellent
17 people to do that, Bob Gilder, Reverend Cate, who
18 you heard today, Sister Margaret and several speakers
19 before me.

20 We're poised, I believe, to pick up the pieces
21 and move forward.

22 Mr. Chairman, I'm Jim Yates, Director of the
23 Human Relations Department of the City of St. Petersburg.
24 My office is responsible for -- mainly for enforcing
25 the City's human rights ordinances.

1 Is there racial tensions in St. Petersburg?

2 Of course there are. Racial tension is present in
3 most communities that I've been in. And I've been
4 in a lot with Al Nelson.

5 Racial tension really comes in a lot of forms.
6 It comes in a lot of sizes. It appears in a lot of
7 ways. Sometimes it is explosive and sometimes it
8 is almost unnoticed.

9 In St. Petersburg, I believe we have a good
10 mixture of the two. The elements that would tend
11 to bring on racial tension, I'm directly -- I work
12 directly with every day; elements such as employment
13 discrimination, housing discrimination, public
14 accommodations discrimination, lending discrimination.
15 Those -- these are some of the elements that continue
16 to be present in St. Petersburg.

17 My office handles three to four hundred of such
18 cases annually, and the trend is not downward, it's
19 upward. The -- as long as we continue to be passive
20 in guaranteeing equal rights to all citizens, regard-
21 less of race, then we're going to continue to have
22 racial tension. We must deal with the elements that
23 causes racial tension.

24 There is racial tension in St. Petersburg that's
25 almost invisible to the -- to an outsider. In the

1 recent election process, especially the mayorial
2 election, I've never seen an election in this city
3 that was so one-sided as -- relating to the black
4 community. It is almost inconceivable to me that
5 in some of the -- of the predominantly black precincts
6 that Mr. Curtsinger would get less than fifty votes
7 out of that whole group of precincts. I've never
8 seen anything so -- so pervasive in one way. These
9 are the things that attempt to bring on other -- some
10 other racial tensions.

11 That particular act did bring on racial tension
12 because the black community could not understand why
13 such a large segment of the white community in St.
14 Petersburg would support a man which the black
15 community had totally rejected, and for legitimate
16 reasons. It was felt strongly by the black community
17 that Mr. Curtsinger could not represent the black
18 community fairly, even among the city employees, my
19 friends, black and white.

20 I didn't feel -- I didn't feel to freely discuss
21 this election as I've been able to do in the past.
22 I was afraid that, in talking to some of my white
23 employee -- friends, that I would find that they would
24 be for Curtsinger, and I didn't want to find out.
25 That is the type of racial tension that this thing

1 has brought on.

2 There is other racial tensions that might be
3 more explosive than that. When a black person finally
4 works hard and does what is told of him or her, works
5 their way to the top, in top managerial positions
6 and then when they finally get there, they find the
7 results have changed, they do not have the freedom
8 to exercise the authority that they thought they had.
9 The standards, the authority has been switched. And
10 I want to give you a good example. And this is what
11 I was talking about exoneration.

12 A black city manager fired a white police chief.
13 The black manager had everything going for him, every-
14 thing on his side. He had the legal authority to
15 do what he did. He had the reason, good reason to
16 do what he did. The city charter gave him exclusive
17 responsibility for what he did. Precedence had
18 already been set. And what I'm speaking of there
19 is, other city managers have been fired -- or police
20 chiefs have been fired with no fanfare. He worked
21 tirelessly to correct the weaknesses of this chief.
22 His elected officials supported what he did. He was
23 not -- he did not make a reckless decision, he tried
24 very hard to correct the problem.

25 And probably more important than anything else,

1 he was respected by black and white citizens alike
2 in this community. But when the chief was fired,
3 I've never seen such a reaction to almost anything
4 in government as what I saw the day the chief was
5 terminated.

6 A very large segment of the white community
7 literally stormed City Hall to protest the chief's
8 firing. The firing of that chief brought the most
9 explosive racial tensions that I've seen in St.
10 Petersburg in recent times.

11 The only difference that the black community,
12 especially, and I've talked with several people, the
13 only difference in the firing of this person and
14 police chiefs in the past was that this time the man
15 was black who fired him.

16 There's no way to -- there's no other reason
17 that I can find from people that I've talked to, other
18 than -- and I've searched for reasons, but that's
19 the only reason that I can come up with. And that
20 is the only reason that my colleagues that I've talked
21 to can come up with.

22 So racial tension will remain in this community,
23 and -- as it is all over communities, until people
24 feel that equality is a reality. You just cannot
25 fool people anymore today, you have to make them feel

1 that equality is a reality.

2 But I believe, as I said in the beginning, that
3 we have enough mandates that we can go forward together
4 and rebuild and pull people closer and move on from
5 the almost great loss that we had yesterday.

6 But we're willing and we're able and we're going
7 to do it. Thank you.

8 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much. Do you have
9 any questions?

10 MR. McDUFFIE: Yes. What is the date of Mr.
11 Curtsinger's dismissal?

12 MR. YATES: I'm not sure of the date. It was
13 in February.

14 MR. McDUFFIE: A year ago? '92?

15 MR. YATES: February of '92. The press, I think,
16 would have that.

17 MR. BROWN: Anyone else?

18 MR. INGRAM: What happened to the new city
19 manager -- to the city manager they fired -- the
20 chief?

21 MR. YATES: The city manager was interim city
22 manager, but we did hire a permanent city manager.
23 He reverted back to his job as assistant city manager.

24 MR. BROWN: Any other questions?

25 Thank you very much. We do have three people

1 that asked to speak. I don't know if they're still
2 here. I would like to ask them, if we could, just
3 make a brief statement. One was Ray Arseno? (Inaudible)
4 Winnie Foster.

5 Please try to make a brief statement.

6 MS. FOSTER: Okay. All right. I appreciate
7 that.

8 And as I mentioned to some of you earlier, I
9 think this is one of the best public hearings that
10 I've ever been to. My name is Winnie Foster. I'm
11 Vice-Chair of the Democratic Party in Pinellas County,
12 and a member of the Board of American Civil Liberties
13 Union in Pinellas County.

14 I have been active in political campaigns here
15 for twenty years. My very first one was in the
16 electing of the first black judge in Pinellas County
17 in 1971.

18 Lots of changes in our community in that time,
19 lots of connections have been made, and I think we're
20 standing on a bridge to the future.

21 I, too, have learned a great deal from what I've
22 heard here today and will definitely look to cooperate
23 with Susanna and Jim Yates, and all of the other people
24 in the community to do some of the things that we
25 need to do.

1 We had problems with -- one of the things that
2 hasn't been mentioned today is problems with jails.
3 We get complaints constantly with treatment in the
4 jail. I know that's -- you know, that's an aspect
5 that needs to be gone into, and I won't dwell on that,
6 but I just -- put a peg in that, please.

7 Another one of the things -- civil rights that
8 I think has not been paid attention to in our com-
9 munity is the implementation of the American Disability
10 Act. I think that we have problems in the way our
11 public policy treats persons with mental illness.
12 We also have problems with the way we treat the
13 homeless, people who are alcholics. We spend an
14 inordinate amount of police time with revolving doors
15 on domestic violence and alcohol-related and drug
16 problems. There are community solutions to all these
17 things, and I think that we have plenty of creative
18 thinkers in this community, and hopefully you can
19 help lead us to creative thinkers from other communities
20 who also have solutions.

21 And I appreciate your bringing us some of that.
22 And I hope that we can continue the process of sharing.
23 I think that's really the basic thing I would ask
24 of you today.

25 I think there's a new feeling in our country,

1 I feel. One of the reasons I like this meeting is
2 you all are really listening. You remind me of
3 Hillary and Bill Clinton. There's a new feeling in
4 the country. This is a building time. Let's take
5 advantage of it. Thank you for being here.

6 MR. BROWN: Don't run. I have a comment and
7 a question. Since you mentioned Hillary and Bill
8 Clinton, I don't know if you were here earlier when
9 Mr. Doctor referred to this as not only --

10 MR. DOCTOR: (Inaudible)

11 MR. BROWN: -- but the acting staff director
12 for the commission. And that's why he has to catch
13 a flight back to Washington. We appreciate him taking
14 his time. But we are very much, in this committee,
15 anxious that act^s be made permanent.

16 He is in contentions for being a permanent staff
17 director. And I would be very happy to give you a
18 copy of his vitae before we leave today.

19 MS. FOSTER: Please, please.

20 MR. BROWN: And second, could you tell me what
21 kind of -- (inaudible) representation from the African-
22 American community have on the Democratic Executive
23 Committee.

24 MS. FOSTER: Yes, we have good, yet-to-be-better
25 representation. I don't know -- one of our new --

1 we've just had an election with new officers. I am
2 part of a new face on the democratic party in Pinellas
3 County. We are addressing now, issues -- since
4 December, we are really addressing issues. Our new
5 campaign chair is Mrs. Iris Wilson, who is the
6 President of the Florida Democratic Black Caucus,
7 but a very experienced campaigner in Pinellas County.
8 So we have a lot of African-Americans on the DEC,
9 but we need more. We also need Asians and Hispanics
10 and others.

11 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much.

12 We need your name. I know we've got people that
13 are leaving. Please be very brief. And we are
14 running out on our contract with our stenographer,
15 but I would like to give you the opportunity to make
16 a statement.

17 MS. KORMAN: One situation I cannot quite under-
18 stand is a church or churches. Once I understand
19 the teaching, learning and knowing of love and good,
20 and not only of the Bible and the words, and before
21 each person to -- (inaudible) -- churches and was
22 written in the newspaper this past several months,
23 and particularly the past week.

24 But recently I've been reading of what is
25 expressed as the opposite of how a large amount of

1 people -- how the people feel and the hate seems to
2 be -- the point brought out. And -- but I'm thankful
3 a lot of -- for all those attending did not accept
4 what seems to be more pushing and -- (inaudible) --
5 expressively of the individuals.

6 The main thing was that what they were doing
7 was telling people -- from what I'm reading in the
8 newspaper, is telling people don't vote for this one
9 because of this and because of these facts that we're
10 black and they're white and this and that and every-
11 thing else. And it was causing a lot of trouble.
12 It was causing a lot of the problems in the city,
13 and this I did not understand because it was mainly
14 regarding the politicians and the politics of the
15 Americans themselves.

16 To me, I thought that -- (inaudible) -- purpose
17 of the Bible and all. And so when they turned it
18 into other than that, then there's a big question
19 to me as what is it there for?

20 Equal rights is what I believe in the past, the
21 present and the future. I have known in Washington,
22 D.C., from childhood, living in the southwest section,
23 selling the Sunday newspapers in both southeast and
24 southwest sections, and those that knew Washington
25 would know what I'm talking about. And going to

1 schools with all the equal rights. And there was
2 no problem about that.

3 And coming down to Florida, on my father's
4 disability retirement as a policeman, and we were
5 in the areas of Ozona, Dunedin, Safety Harbor, and
6 Clearwater, and St. Petersburg. Some of the time
7 we're separated -- some of the time was the separation
8 of the races, but after World War II and around World
9 War II, it was back together again, and variety is
10 placed here and there.

11 I worked years later in St. Petersburg at Mound
12 Park Hospital and Bayfront Hospital as a cashier/
13 switchboard operator, and a minute clerk on different
14 shifts. All employment of equal rights and earning
15 a living in separate areas.

16 Before World War II, it was changed. And all
17 colors and all were mixed all over. They brought
18 over the city, the county and the state. And I later
19 worked again in Washington, D.C., after that, at D.C.
20 General Hospital, an equal rights expressed --
21 (inaudible) -- for the federal and the D.C. government.
22 It worked well.

23 And for federal and D.C. government, there was
24 no problem. And the race was no problem at the time
25 that I was there.

1 Mercy Hospital in St. Petersburg was separate,
2 but it is now gone and all -- (inaudible) -- regardless
3 of the color of skin, be able to attend the same
4 hospital, and also anywhere that I have known of equal
5 rights. And they've done this in the -- I worked
6 for the V.A. and Don Cesar at Pass-a-Grille, there
7 was equal rights down there. It did not make any
8 difference what color you were.

9 I would like to ask why, about each and every
10 request from a black group that comes through, the
11 city, county, finance, grants, funds and et cetera,
12 that the word, black, is added and has to be included
13 in the name of the group or organization, because
14 that means to me that white, yellow, red, or Indians
15 or others are not welcome or eligible to attend.
16 Why does the word black have to be enclosed in the
17 title of the group or organization? If ad valorem
18 taxes are paid, why are the colors of the skin --
19 it shouldn't make any difference. I just don't under-
20 stand. Because to me, that word black means that
21 you're not eligible to go down there or you don't
22 qualify or you're not black, so therefore you're not
23 welcome to come down, is what I feel.

24 And I feel that word, when it comes to finance
25 money from the city or the county or the federal or

1 whatever, then it shouldn't be included.

2 City Council has good voting and good black and
3 white council members and vice mayors, because of
4 the qualifications, and it didn't make any difference
5 what color. Dr. David Welch, to me, did an excellent
6 coverage of council committees years ago, PSTA, bus
7 system, had a lot to do with the bus -- keeping fares
8 lower and budgeting down. And the good councilman
9 worked in the past and now -- and now will be in the
10 future, because he just got elected back again. And
11 several of them did not mention this.

12 Councilman Fillyau and Councilman Shorter, both
13 show their belief on equal rights. And Dr. Welch
14 showed it as well, as a -- (inaudible) -- to all others
15 you do not see the word white organizations or other
16 colors. Let's keep the word black out of all public,
17 financial or any public money attached, and it's
18 eligible for all who qualify. And equal rights and
19 services were wanted and as needed by all. Pinellas
20 County and St. Petersburg get along very well together,
21 and I would like to see all get equal rights back
22 to citizens of the city, in the county, and state
23 and national has for years, but recently changed.
24 And we want and need the equal rights strong again.

25 And I for one feel that with some of the rulings

1 of the words used in the various areas and businesses,
2 that our equal rights will come back. Equal rights
3 should be for all in the city, whether it's -- I mean,
4 whether south or north of St. Petersburg, or east
5 or west of St. Petersburg, and -- but it should be
6 throughout the whole area. And believe me, most of
7 it seems to be from the south side instead of up to
8 -- through the area, even though we have folks all
9 over.

10 One thing I would like to ask, in reference to
11 race, when it comes to Negro as college scholarships,
12 and some people resent the word Negro being used in
13 any way, black is, for the last few years, and is
14 colored, is a NAACP. If they don't like that word,
15 why don't they change it and make American, African-
16 American. Why is the African on there when they're
17 American and the American is one of the outstanding
18 things that -- (inaudible) -- America. Several of
19 the black folk have asked me to -- any time I got
20 to ask that question, please ask it because they say
21 they're from islands and all and they're going --
22 been here for almost 200 or more years, and they can't
23 see why they want to put down where they were born
24 or with their family from umpteen years ago, a couple
25 hundred years ago.

1 And regarding the citizens all over the city,
2 completely changing the spaces are open for those
3 who wanted to move. And there was and is employment
4 in a lot of spaces for those who want to work. And
5 publicity has shown, if the housing and the work has
6 changed, and a large amount of the black -- (inaudible)
7 -- stay in one area and stay separate from the whites,
8 even though there is space all over the city, and
9 an area for all members of the families and the single
10 people. And there is housing and work.

11 The members of my family attended integrated
12 schools on 16th Street South and Gibbs High School,
13 and my son in Washington, D.C., and Maryland, and
14 graduated from integrated schools up there, so I'm
15 well acquainted with it. And I've been nine years
16 on the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council Area Agency
17 of Aging. And believe me, we come quite in contact
18 with everyone. And it did not make any difference
19 what color you were.

20 The Committee is for all races. But it's predom-
21 inantly white because we cannot get the blacks, they
22 just don't want to volunteer and go out and do some-
23 thing, volunteer work that you would have to go around
24 in the areas. Because I know that several that I
25 am on, the MPO Citizens Advisory, which is planning

1 and so forth, the PSTA, which is the Citizens Advisory,
2 it's just transportation, you just cannot get people
3 to come out there who are other than white. And we'd
4 like very much to have everyone come, but volunteers
5 just do not want to take the time to do it. And that's
6 it. Thank you.

7 MR. BROWN: All right. Thank you for your state-
8 ment. And we appreciate your concern of trying to
9 make equality available for everyone. I hope you
10 will work to continue to get more volunteer represent-
11 ation on those planning committees.

12 MS. KORMAN: Well, I hope we get some, too,
13 because they advertise for them but we can't even
14 get an answer to it.

15 (THEREUPON, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED.)

1 STATE OF FLORIDA)

2 COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

3 I, Edie Paradine, Notary Public, State of Florida
 4 at large, do hereby certify that I was present at the
 5 foregoing committee meeting held March 24, 1993, at City
 6 Council Chambers, 175 Fifth Street North, Second Floor,
 7 St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida, that I reported
 8 in shorthand the statements made, and that the foregoing
 9 pages, numbered 1 through 183, inclusive, constitute a
 10 true and correct transcription of my said shorthand report.

11 WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL this 7th day of May,
 12 1993, at St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida.

13
 14 Edie Paradine

15 Court Reporter
 16 Notary Public, State of Florida at
 17 large.
 18 My commission expires: 9/8/95