

Transcript: Charles Boyd, Willie Carghill, Winston Thomas Interview

Interviewee: Charles Boyd, Willie Carghill, Winston Thomas
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Interviewer: Kim Hill
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START OF CD

CB: Ready?

KH: I think we're ready. I'm just going to try it out to see how well it's recording.

CB: Testing one, two, three. Testing one, two, three.

WT: Testing one, two, three. Testing one, two, three. Say something, Willie.

WC: Oh, I'm here.

An Institute Staff Member: Hello there.

CB: Hi, how are you?

Staff Member: I'm sorry to interrupt.

WT: It's all right.

WC: Testing.

KH: All right.

WC: Did it say something?

KH: Yes, sir. I think it's working all right. Great. This is June 19, 2007, and I'm Kim Hill. I'm here at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute doing a Southern Oral History Program interview. Could each of you say your names, please?

CB: I'm Charles O. Boyd.

WC: I'm Willie L. Carghill.

WT: Winston Wyndale Thomas.

KH: And we're going to be talking about labor unions in Birmingham history.

CB: Labor unions?

KH: Yes, sir.

CB: All right. You want to start it out, Willie? About the union, when we first got the union and got in there and everything?

WC: Oh, me. I'm going to try. I mean, I—. [Laughter] Anyway, I came to the city in 1966. March, to be exactly. But when I got here, we didn't have no union, but we was also—didn't have nothing.

CB: Except work

WC: [Laughs] We did work. So came along that we got together as employees that were being mistreated. Then we had some kind of way to help. I'm going to use—.

CB: Form a union?

WC: Well, yeah, but not in the beginning. Just got together to see what we could do.

CB: Oh, yeah, and going to the city hall.

WC: And we were meeting in local places, hotels and whatever that we rented rooms—.

CB: Churches.

WC: Churches, and stuff like that nature. But we know we needed somebody to talk for us and do for us, because they wouldn't listen to us for nothing. We were being mistreated every kind of way that you can even think of the name, such as work the devil out of us. Couldn't say something about the work. Paid it when they got ready. And when I say 'paid it when they got ready,' like time of day. They last until three o'clock, they may pay us at four. They keep us sitting around a lot waiting until

the time come they decide to get up to give you your paycheck for working that week. So we know we needed something, so we had meetings talking about getting the union, forming a union. But then we figured out we couldn't form no union because we was nobody, and when I say nobody, you know what I mean. We weren't no -- so we started talking to some of the white peoples, and they had one idea for a union and we had another idea for the union, because wasn't none of those peoples being mistreated. We couldn't even take tests for jobs. We couldn't do nothing because we didn't have no officials. Many times we went to the city official what was working us, superintendents and --

WC: Yeah, and—.

WT: Black just couldn't --

WC: They just—. People were coming off the street getting a job, sixteen and seventeen. Had us doing the work for them.

CB: And we had to call them "mister."

WC: Yeah, we had to call them "mister" or either we wouldn't be there. They used to get paid for a job that going to college, and we was older people with children in our homes, and we had to still "mister" them. So we know we needed some kind of form of help, so we thought about the union.

KH: Where were you working then, when you first came here?

WC: Oh, in Ensley.

WT: Ensley -- Pepperwood.

WC: Yeah.

WT: 1954.

CB: That was district two, wasn't it?

WT: Yeah, district two. You ain't helped a whole lot with that because like they didn't even find a uniform or nothing for us. They didn't even get our gloves. We didn't have no insurance. I know when my kid was born, I had to get my own insurance. And you know, you had to pay that

money up front to get your child out of the hospital. So I had to borrow some of the money, and I got called all kind of names because I wanted to borrow two hundred dollars from the credit union. The man got on the phone and says he needed to have an end payment and that he need some money. I had to sit there and take it from one of the superintendents. He looked at me and I looked at him, and I said, "I have to take all of that for to get two hundred dollars," because we didn't have insurance. No gloves, no uniform, you had to bring your own clothes. They didn't provide anything.

Other words, they'll hire you that day, and they'll write you up. When they hired me in '63, they just told me to get on that truck and they wrote me up in the next two days. They ain't asked my name, just told me to get on that truck, say, "You brought your own? We'll write you up Friday." And that's how they were hiring folks. If they ain't need you, they'll fire you and hire you back in the next two weeks. That's how they did it; in other words, they'd use you. When you do something wrong, they'll send you home. You show up the next morning, they'll hire you back. It just using us.

KH: So no labor contracts.

WT: Wasn't—no, no. Wasn't no union, nothing telling you that they can keep you. Like I said, they'll hire you, and then you come back next two weeks and get your job back. And then if a truck driver say you are fired, that mean you are fired. Ain't no sense in going to a white man at that time, because you go to him, he say, "What did that truck driver said? He said you were fired." And right now we truck drivers, we can't fire anybody. But back in them days, whatever a white truck driver said, then you were fired. Ain't no sense in going to the office. Unless you was the number one "n," they called it, he might stick up for you. But if that truck driver, he wasn't nothing but a boy his self—. Wasn't nothing the superintendent or the field supervisor, the public works supervisor—. Wasn't no sense in telling him. He said, "You didn't do what the truck driver said. I'm firing you." That wasn't the rule, but that's how the rule go when you was black. You didn't have no say about anything. And you know when it rained, you just had to find your way to get up in the hopper of the truck to keep the

rain off, because you didn't have a rain suit. Finally started giving us some rain suits, then finally—

WC: What the police had wore.

WT: Huh?

WC: They gave us rain suits what the police had returned to get new rain suits. They kept a big box of rain suit where they done got and brought them over there for us. That how come we getting the rain suits.

CB: Try all them on till you find one that fit you.

WC: Right.

WT: You didn't have anything. You didn't have uniforms. Then when they finally got uniforms, they got some prison jackets you wear now, some orange jackets you know they done used at the jail for the sake of saving bucks. So the union help us by getting insurance. We had two or three kinds since we been here. One time I had my own insurance, and then after I started getting insurance, after black labor started getting insurance, at that time the white police and fire [employees] want to come aboard with us so they can get a benefit with the insurance and the sick days and holidays and all of that, too. That's the reason they wanted to get on board to help us there. We didn't have nothing. We didn't have insurance. Like I said, we didn't have uniforms. We didn't have nothing going our way. We didn't have anything. And like I say, you had nothing to back you up.

But the union did pay it all. We went on strike right here two times. Two or three times we closed Birmingham down. That's when the white and the blacks police, they didn't strike with us, but they come out and support us. They give us money and bought us food, and a lot of stuff, too, they bought for us. But they couldn't strike because it would benefit them. But they always had rights, but they want good insurance like Blue Cross/Blue Shield, like we did. So finally they come on board and help, and later on—. You take right now. Ain't but ten percent white here. We took over being truck drivers, driving trucks and being foremens. Right now, I bet you ain't but ten percent white people

work for the street department because you got white—black directors they refuse to work for. A lot of them try to stay there, but they couldn't put up with it because we were black and they just left. "I don't want to work for no black."

CB: They still one-sided with the ones was there. They still branch off to they self. They work together and—.

WT: They don't cooperate. They still be in their corner together. It's like at school. You might be integrated, but the white be over there and the black kids be over here. So it's still having problems. Race always going—. Reason them that stay there is because people got to work. The white got to work. They can say, "Well, you can go there. We still not doing—. We got a 'n' boss, but we still don't have to associate with them because we can leave and go back to Cumberland County, which a hundred miles from here and up there in the county, back up there, but we just go there and be off by ourself. We don't have to be with them." And that's what it used to be. We got an office right now. They can go there next door playing the guitar, you know, music. It ain't no blacks over there. All white. Got bluegrass, music all day long, but you'll never see no blacks over there. They eat lunch together, so race'll still be here.

I don't care how much you integrate, but we don't have to go to the back door and the hole no more. We got more right to be in our truck. They didn't want us in the truck. Really, when you be in a city car, they want you in the back seat. If a white person got in a cab, that's how you did. I don't care. If it was freezing or cold, the other one, they won't let the third one come up there with the second. One was enough in that cab, I don't care how bad it was. You had to sit back in what you call the hopper and keep from getting wet because you couldn't—.

CB: Because if they pull up to a cafe and go in to eat breakfast and it's raining out there, you'd have to stand in the rain if you didn't have no way to get out of the rain and crawl up under the truck. You know, when they didn't want you, "Don't sit in my cab in my truck. I don't want y'all 'n's' in my

truck." So we all got together and went up to the city hall, and we talked to the mayor about it. At the time, it was Mayor George Siebels [in office 1967-1975], and he wanted to know where we worked at. And we told him. He said, "Well, I'll be there Monday morning when y'all get there."

So I talked to him up there, and I told him I wanted to buy a truck, one of those garbage trucks. He didn't know what I was talking about, and he kept on and he questioned me about what I meant about buying one of the trucks. I said, "Well, those white guys got some trucks and they drive their trucks down there." And I said, "I want to buy one of them so I have my truck." "But those trucks belong to the citizens. That's tax money that buy those trucks." I said, "Well, they say they truck belong to them." I said, "I want to buy me one of them." So he said, "Well, I'm going to come out there Monday morning," and that's another way we got things started. I talked to him about that, so he said, "Them trucks do not belong to nobody." He came out there that Monday, met us out there. He was there before we got to work, walking around there out there on the porch.

KH: When was that? When you went to see the mayor?

CB: Yeah, yeah.

KH: What year was that, do you remember?

WT: It was about '67 because—

CB: It was '68.

WT: See, the mayor integrate our place. The mayor integrate us and told them let six people drive, the black drivers, have six policemen, you have six drivers. I think I was one of them guys, you know, to carry the garbage truck out, and we had one of the drivers down there kicked a man. He knocked him down. You know, one of them brothers. He kick at the mayor, and the mayor put that right on him. You know them brothers, them Mitten boys.

WC: Yeah.

CB: Oh, Robert Mitten?

WT: Robert Mitten. Kicked him. Said, "Ain't no nigger, ain't no 'n' going to drive my truck," and swung at him down at the city council meeting. And when he swung at him, then he knew he was prize fighter. He put them in the street and let them knock them down, and that's when the police grabbed him. He wasn't scared of them. Just because he said he want six black to drive them garbage trucks. They're like we're driving a rocket or something going to the moon. [Laughter] It wasn't nothing but a garbage truck. And then call up and you can hear them, and the morning we were getting ready to go out, you can hear them in the back room tell them he got a nigger taking the truck out tomorrow.

CB: "They're going to have all our jobs. We ain't going to have no jobs."

WT: Yeah, you can hear him calling you. You on the other side, which he the man what got to show you. He wouldn't tell you nothing. He'd just sit up there and look at you. He wouldn't even tell you what gear to put it in. What he just said to let a non-Negro. And my brother-in-law went over here and the truck got away from him and like to turn the truck over. You think the man still ain't tell him what to do.

KH: You had to train yourselves.

WT: You have to train yourself. I had a—.

CB: We really knew everything about the trucks and things anyway, because we working on them, and sometimes they hire one and we had to learn him how to drive it.

WT: Right.

CB: Yeah, they didn't know how to drive.

WT: Because, see, if you know something, you back it out the stall for him. If he like you, he might let you back it out the stall for him and warm it up in the morning for him. We really didn't know, but very few—you had a couple few people for you. Like Mr. Walken, he would slip and do things for you. He'll get them off your back. He won't let them bother you. He know what to do. He

said, "Look-a-here, y'all like this because y'all don't like black. I love black. I be around them all the time." He would slip and show you how to pass your test, and give you the book and pass the test. If he were for you, he for you. They would call him all kind of names.

CB: Nigger lover.

WT: Nigger lover, because he was always helping. When they first part of integration passed, Mr. Walken met with us in our meetings. Said, "Look-a-here, race is no more. Black folk ain't going back. They ain't going back. They're fixing to get in. They won't be behind the truck. They going to be driving the truck. They going to be working in the office." Yeah, we have come a long way, but race is still there. Like I can carry my car home now, my city vehicle home. I can do what I want. I remember they ain't want me in the front seat of it go to the doctor. But now I drive them, been driving them for the last thirty years. We came a long way, and I know over there back in that day, they'd even close the bathroom up, and the white folks still didn't want us in their bathroom at the south side. You know what, so the federal jury in Washington, DC, said, "I'll fix them. I'll tear the white man white bathroom up and leave the blacks' open." That's the reason that bathroom in the south side like that now. They took all the commode out the white bathroom, said, "Now where y'all going now?" They ain't had no other choice. Take the big old beautiful ones, them pretty bathroom. They had—.

CB: Showers.

WT: Showers. I mean, they had better stuff than we did. So he took it out, said now y'all got to use this, stop, drive around, wherever you going. And he knocked a hole in the wall. Said, "Now you'll walk in." You done had to go in now. They made—like that wall right there? Knock holes in the wall.

CB: Opened it up, yeah.

WT: First time you could voluntarily go in there, but they were still being racist toward you, so you put it so you walk where you want to go. Then you had to go use the black if you want to use it.

KH: So they had always had separate black and white bathrooms?

WT: Oh, yeah, they had us come to the back.

CB: They had "white" on it. They had "colored" and "white" on the water fountains.

WT: Before we had the union, we had to stand in line. We'd get our check and come to a window and march out the other door.

CB: Yeah.

WT: You couldn't come in the building. They had a little hole back there for you. That's how far you had to come. But when you wanted to come in the big office, you had to come get your check at that window and march right back out the other door and go back on your side. You better not be round there on their side. They'll think you're crazy. They probably will call the police back in that time. They're going to put you in jail if you had went back there, call you a smart nigger. In jail. You couldn't do nothing. We always had the back. Any time they build a place for you, it was at the back. You didn't get to come in the front for nothing. They didn't want you *in* the front. You *wasn't* coming in the front. You just had to sit to the back. Like I said, sometime you have a driver let two people get in with them, but most of them would tell you, "I don't want but one nigger up here. I don't want the second one up there." But some of them would. If it bad enough, they might let two get up there.

KH: Before there was a union, how many black employees were there?

WT: Oh, everything around the garbage was black.

KH: OK.

CB: Working behind the truck.

WT: That's all far we can do. All the black driver had was me driving the truck. I was running behind the garbage truck, and I had an operation and I had the only truck you had classified out of about four hundred trucks. Only one had classifed was a dead dog truck, and the white man didn't want that job. An incinerator truck. Them the only two truck that black could drive, something they didn't

want, and then when they classified it and then find out that it was classified, they made it a labor. And so I was on in '67 when they classified it with me and a guy called Trent Nixon. We was on there, and they classified it. They classified it themselves.

CB: And Robert Brown.

WT: And after that all white, everybody else wanted a piece of it.

CB: Did Robert Brown drive it, too?

WT: Robert Brown drive it before I did.

CB: OK.

WT: Robert Brown was classified, and they got mad and broke it down by seesawing back and forward when they started raising hell to unclassify. So Robert just got, you know, to stop, you know, to change job, because that's the only job he can do. That's the only job they would let us do. I said I'm going to stick on there. Didn't pay at all because when I did got classified off that dead dog truck, then I got the chance to go to the back hoe and go to the landfill and learn how to drive heavy equipment. Then heavy equipment paid off, because I finally passed the test and I was working for Willie Carghill. Me and Willie working together, and then I came[up in the ranks.] It paid off. See, you take right now. Willie Carghill has been my boss, I've been Willie's boss, he's been my boss; we always worked together. And I never wanted to take a supervisor's job until I had Mr. Broad come forward. He said, "I don't care about that reading and writing and stuff. I want somebody make me come back." Somebody done told him that I'd make my friend come back. Me and Skinner got into it, and not with Willie. I said, "Skinner, bring my truck back." And some kind of way, Willie Carghill said this man here get the job done. I said, "I do not want to be a supervisor." He said, "We got to have black supervisors. Getting four blacks and four white, and you need to be one because you don't play. You want them folks to come back from the landfill." And Broad said, "Well, if you can't read and write, I'll hire you a damn secretary. I want you to be," and I took that job. So right now I'm proud that I took it, because I

thought I couldn't be a supervisor. I had some of my own. He's a foreman. All of us got to be a foreman. He hard-headed, but he a foreman, and this is perfect work for him for twenty-something years, thirty years. And then I'm a field supervisor, so the 1960s paid off for us. We got something out of labor. Even though the labor supervisor say we ran all the white away, but we still carry on with our black.

And like I said, race'll beat you, but you still got a right to go in any building you want to, any bathroom you wanted to. You can drive any city vehicle you want to. But still, race going to be there. When you see them, if you got white over there and you see when they eating lunch, they're going to get over there together. Sometimes I'm glad, because I don't talk about Alabama no way. Alabama Football, that's all they know. So we do know more to talk about with each other. We hold different conversations than they do. And I don't say nothing, but Lord, you come back and treat me like a man, I don't care what you—. I told them, "Y'all fixin' to go to the cross now? Y'all going to burn us up tonight, y'all going out there. Y'all getting together on us tonight." [Ku Klux Klan reference]

But they don't get together on you now. They're getting together with power. Them few we got in that still using power without—. No, they still using power on niggers. They ain't using the pin, hitting and kicking you with chains, and beating you up and putting you in jail for nothing. They just do it now with power. They get in with power, say 'I want him to do that, I want him to do that.' And I tell them direct, sometimes you have to let that white boy know that you—. They think they going to run you, you still got to let them know you going to get them off you, because they think they supposed to have their way. You got, like I heard one directly say "I ain't going nowhere, because I'm white and I'm the only backbone of all you got." That what I heard one of them said, but he stayed here so long. and then Jerry had to go. And they stopped, and then James still was a black supervisor at that time. He heard Jerry say that. He stopped him from—.

CB: He's a director.

WT: —being a director.

CB: He was a director.

WT: Told them to sit there and spit in a can all day. You don't tell none of my people what to do, because you feel that—. See, he was up with a bunch of racist stuff, and he had did him wrong and they called him the “n” word. He figured if he stayed, he could just—other words, let the white do what they used to do back in the 1960s. And James Stewart told him, “You can stay here until you retire. You can stay here fifteen years, spitting in a can.”

CB: He told him that he can stay there till you retired, but he stayed in that office. He didn't have no voice.

WT: Yeah, right, stay in your office. He had no say-so. The only thing he had a say-so, all them cars and garbage, used trucks and stuff like that, that what he was over. All that equipment what they need, because he hadn't said they would. You know, 'I'm going to speak up for you. I ain't going to let these niggers run over you.' Now he heard that. He stopped the black—. The black man stopped him from being over them. But like I say, the union help us—. To get back to the union, it has helped a whole lot, because like I say, we wouldn't have all these raises, we wouldn't have no uniform, we wouldn't have had no Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the help, whatever they had. It helped us a whole lot, because they wasn't paying us—. Like I said, we didn't have a uniform or glove or nothing. Now we get everything now except underwear. They bought Charles that cap he got on there. [Laughter]

WC: A belt.

WT: And a belt. The only thing you don't get now is underwear, so that union—. Mr. Carghill is the president of the union. He know that he helped, and I want to give him credit for standing up there on TV every day talking about what they going to do. [Laughter] Every evening, we rocked this city. We let them know that we closing down, and them two weeks are just like a month. Willie closed it down so much that the government came from Montgomery, came over here and negotiate and said

'please, y'all, settle that strike.' Went ahead with us and got us what we need. And we got all these benefits.

KH: How long did each of you work before the union started?

CB: I started in '63, December 12th, and we got the union in '67, wasn't it? '67?

WC: '68.

WT: About '67 or '68.

CB: Now we got it started then.

WT: Yeah, she talking about '64. Now they had a union came in before me and Charles came out that all black got the union. They sent them all—fired every one of them.

KH: Oh.

WT: And they hired the white boys behind the garage truck, but that ain't worked long --

KH: Because they refused—.

WT: Come back and got the monkeys.

CB: They couldn't do it.

WT: Come back and got us, because we worked better than they did. They fired them. Yeah, they did, but that was before '63. That happened in '60, I believe.

CB: That was '59.

WT: '59.

KH: OK.

CB: '59 or '60, yeah.

WT: But our union been effect ever since because—. We had a guy come in. He was smart enough, said we can't do it with black only. We got to put white in there, too.

CB: Ledger Diamond.

WT: So we had a couple of white supervisors on the picket line getting high, drunk with us and

they were behind us. They won't let no black get no union in. They didn't want to say black have credit for no union, didn't want no Negro tell them what to do in this city. James Pierce was smart enough to come and get all the drivers and everybody and put in there which driver was white at that time. So that's why we got a union. We wouldn't have got it like that but for the white drivers coming in.

CB: When James came up, he came up later, didn't he? Collins was over here before he was, wasn't he? The dude what drove the garbage truck over there on the south side, big fellow. What his name? Jim something, Jimmy. What his name was?

WT: Jimmy Cole.

CB: Cole, yeah, he was.

WT: Jimmy Cole wasn't over no union.

CB: Yeah, he was.

WC: Yes, he was.

CB: He was the first one.

WC: Let me tell you. Jimmy Cole was kind of running the union with white people.

WT: Yeah. Right, right.

WC: Then we sat down and talked with Jimmy and told him there wasn't no use talking about Ledger Diamond coming in here. And he had told me, said, "Don't you let no white folks come in here and get no union without putting y'all in it, because I'm not going to stand for it." Then I went talking to them, told them we just ain't going to agree to y'all having a union without us in it. They said, "Well, we ain't got no money. The bank didn't have enough money." They were charging but five dollars to get in the union, so I told him, I said, "Well, look, if that's what it takes, we can get five dollars." It wasn't no big thing. So they were scared that we were going to take over the union. We did in the long run. It took some years, though, but I didn't figure that. They would sit here saying they getting a

union for raises. We were going to get one for treatment, and they were going to get one just to be able to get better raises and stuff like that. I was looking at it like we need better treatment from y'all, not only from the people, but y'all the ones mistreating us. So we started from there, but we kept meeting until we got together. When they went to the meeting one night at the F.O.P. [Fraternity of Police] Lodge, they had said they were going to go out and get the union without us. Ledger Diamond came in and said, "Well, I'm not going to let y'all get a union with white folk. We need a union for employees, so that mean all of us can get in. So then we started out --

WT: Who said that?

WC: Ledger Diamond.

CB: Ledger Diamond.

WT: Said he wanted all of us in it?

WC: Yeah, he wanted all—.

WT: I remember that when he had that meeting.

WC: Yeah, and so that how come they couldn't get it. They were trying to get it by themselves. They had already start on it like six, seven months down the road, where all of them would pay five dollars. Well, when I found out they were paying five dollars, then we were talking about—. And they always thought we weren't able to pay our share, but we agreed we'll pay the share. So then when they had that meeting and they wanted to still get it, but Ledger Diamond said that he wasn't going to let them get in there being a one-sided union, just for white. So then when they knowed that they couldn't get it without us, then they wanted to talk better to us because to try to make sure that we agree with things from their point of view. But like I say, we still had Ledger Diamond still here and little meeting and big meeting and whatever, and he the one got it spearheaded to know that they got to get everybody. They couldn't just get white union; we couldn't get a black union. We need a together union, so—.

WT: There were no split unions because, you know you got to go to the man together and the council together, present your case, not by no race. All of us got to be in this. Like Willie got the insurance, the police had to step up and said we're with y'all. And then one year, they did strike for a couple days. Then they started waking up. That when the government had to respond, when the firemen and the police took a couple of days off, they move in here then. That made all of us got what we want, and we been having raises every year. Maybe one cent's a raise.

CB: Two, three—.

WT: Three cent. And we start getting better stuff. Like I said, they buy us everything now.

WC: So we got together and started running for offices in the union, which we started out at and a lot of people like me and other blacks, they voted for me, and I become the president of the union. Then we got, you know, secretary, shop stewards --

CB: Shop stewards.

WC: Shop stewards and everything else at the time. But I know my point of view was for the whole thing was for the people, because we was being—. Like I said, our last day, it may have been twenty-five, thirty year, we were going home without nothing. Couple dozen doughnuts. They'll throw them on the table, open the coffee machine; they'll just say this his last day. Go in there and work yourself down, we'll eat doughnuts and go home [laughs].

WT: Willie was so strong, they made him a supervisor, and when they made him a supervisor, they told him, "You got to get the hell out of that union now." He was so tough on them.

WC: But I stayed in the union four years after they told me I had to get out. [Laughter]

WT: He still stayed in there, then they had to threaten him, because he was down to the city hall when they got black mayor [Mayor Richard Arrington]. Wherever he was, he was down there helping people. He was helping some people—that director, you know, like I understood, when our black director, he was in on a lot of it, he helped him with black mayor—.

CB: The mayor was working at city hall at the time.

WC: Yeah, he was working at the city hall.

WT: Yeah, so he working with them and like I said, they just told you you *got* to get out that—. They had to threaten him that he needed to get out that union, because he knew he was—. They figured that he was supervising the people, then going down there fighting for them, so he couldn't be both and fair, yeah. I believe Willie stayed in there forever. He just ain't wanting to tell. I believe he would have stayed there forever.

WC: It was a long time. "But you can't be—you can't do this." But they didn't know I had the power of the good Lord, and when you got that, you don't have to worry about nothing else. I said—.

WT: God give him to me. He helped organize as far as I'm concerned. He helped organize our side because we follow him to the white, and then the white and the black got together and did it.

KH: Was it unusual for the laborers' union to be for black and white workers at that time?

WC: No, that way it should have been in the beginning. It shouldn't have been a one-sided union. They shouldn't have had it, and we shouldn't have got it in there. We all was workers, and you remember all workers should be on the same level. Now when I was president, I used to express that to the white member. It was hard for me to sit here and help you because you white, and help this man because he black. Unions should be like for everybody.

CB: Like church.

WC: Right. Number one, because then when you say the union, you already driving trucks. This man can't drive one. He can't take your job. I've learned in life, you only can do your job. I can't do your job for you. You don't come today and I got to do what I'm doing, the job what I'm going to be here for that day. You still got your job to do. But they usually said sometime, "Well, I ain't going to let nobody else do your job. You ain't got to let nobody else do your job. Just don't do it and I do it, you know, when you get around to it."

And they always trying to use these cheap words on you and stuff like that, but you know, I always thought one thing: all of us together, regardless of the past. You can be this or that, but we all be together, because I know, like I said, we needed insurance for our family, we need to buy bread for our family. And they had told me one time when I went to a meeting at the city hall, they told me, said, "We got about ten or twelve black supervisors now." I trying to figure that out because I'm saying to myself "Who's been promoted to supervisor and I don't know about it? And they black and I thought I knowed everything." I said, "We ain't got no black truck drivers, we ain't got no black labor supervisors, we ain't got no black heavy equipment operator." He said, "Yes, it is, in the book." So I said, "Well, I need to see that." So the next day, brought the book with the name is white folks, but they had in the big book they were black.

KH: Oh.

WT: Oh, well! I didn't know that.

WC: I said, "No." I said, "Uh-uh. These people white."

WT: They were smart, weren't they? Using white names.

WC: And then he said, the mayor said, "Well, we going to get them up there tomorrow," all these white folks. And they had six of them that off the bat that I know they name and who they was, and they had them all come to the meeting. When we all got around the meeting, we were looking, and when the mayor came in the room, they were saying something like "I thought I told you (this is the mayor), where the folks at that we got as truck drivers?" I said, "There they is over there." I said, "They white like I said they was white." He said, "They is?" I say, "Yeah." And then Gordon Graham used to be one of the people they brought in here to knock people off, you know, whatever, he thought he was smart enough to make you think something else. [walkie-talkie beeping]

WT: [Talking on a walkie-talkie] Tell them I'm in a meeting.

WC: But like I told them, ain't no way in hell—excuse my description, but ain't no way in hell

they going to turn black overnight [laughs]. So I'll be working to come to the meeting tomorrow. So when they showed up, they were white. We know Thomas was one of them. You remember what used to work the camera truck?

WT: Yeah.

WC: Yeah, Thomas was one of them was supposed to have been black. His job was black. The mayor said, "Do y'all know y'all black?" [Laughter] He said, "I ain't black, I ain't black." He say, "In this book here, y'all black employee," he said, because he named all of them. He said, "This man black."

WT: Never seen them until now.

WC: Uh-uh. [Mayor Richard] Arrington. He said, "All y'all working for the city, y'all black folk. Y'all ain't white. I'm going to have to go tell the man to treat y'all like y'all black." Everybody wanted to be considered a white man, but they didn't know it, either. They didn't know they were black. They thought they were white [laughs].

KH: That was just management, right?

WC: Yeah, the management the one was doing that. Wasn't none of them, because they really didn't know it. They were shocked when they knowed they were black.

WT: Well, they told to hire some black, but they didn't hire black. They done got some white names they put up there, say these black. Then when the mayor say, "You already got black supervisors."

WC: We didn't have names, and when they first said it, it shocked me. I was kind of figuring, who was black? I'm the union president. I go through the city hall every day trying to find out this or find out that, and check with the employees trying to find out what was going on because I know many days we were mistreated, so I ain't had to worry about whether we were being mistreated. I knowed that, but I didn't know we were working with black folks for white folk saying they were white. But I

said—. And anyway, when they finally got there, the mayor told them, said, "I want these names off the book, and I want to get some black employee hired here right away."

WT: It seem like they should have been able to put them in jail for false information.

WC: Yeah, they should have got them, but they didn't and so—. But they corrected it. But I remember on this man right here [Winston Thomas] when I was an "n"—well, I was still a colored man—but he was working and they were trying to give his job to a white boy. I said, "Uh-unh." He said, "I don't want to be one." I said, "Nah, I want you to be one. Take the job." He said, "But I don't—I'm enjoying doing this here." I said, "No—."

WT: I didn't want it.

WC: "—you going to take it, because I'm going to make sure you get it." So he said OK. So I went to the city hall. I named the four black that I want to see on the truck. So now they been here so long, they said, "Well, the president—he'll know who to get it." But the district superintendent, all of them are white. "Well, we don't want these folks. We don't want these folks." I said, "Well, the man y'all don't want no more is me, and everybody else out here so white I got to give it to him." I said, "You're going to the south side, and you're going to be every ride bridge supervisor." And he know how to do the job. He was just being black, scared to go take that opportunity. He'd been there nineteen, twenty years.

WT: Oh, yeah.

WC: But he also had a good job the last ten, twelve years.

WT: But you know, I didn't want to be in there because back in that time, you know, you were going through so much trouble, like some of your own friends didn't want to do what you said. But when I got through, they love to do what I say. I wrote up two or three of them, they hugged my neck. Your own black had gotten used to a white telling them what to do, and it was hard to be like that. I was hard to be like that. Like Willie Carghill, I do what he said. Sometimes I get tired, he wouldn't let

us go to lunch. I be mad, but I do what he said. [Laughter] But he'll come back and feed us. He get some good out of the deal, because he going to buy us lunch. He had some good by it; he just wanted to go on and get through what he was doing. But he make me mad when he worked me through lunch. But I know that was hard. I had a Mr. Skinner come and tell me—. He's a supervisor that retired. He said, "These guys, you know, I'm riding around behind the truck with them. It's kind of hard. They don't want to follow orders because they're used to a white man tell them what they're going to do. I had to take two or three to the office. You know, you're going to do what I said."

WC: Yeah.

WT: And Skinner myself then when he -- I came to the office. I said, "Skinner, if you're not going to do what—." And I say, he had a temper. We became friends. I said, "Skinner, I'm not going to do you. I know you're a friend of mine. That's why you don't want to do what I say. But I say come back from the landfill, I expect you to talk to him." He got mad for a while, and one day he came up and got back, he said—. We became friends, we eat lunch together. He just said, "That's all. I didn't want—. You just do like the white man do, take order from me. I don't care nothing about what you do, as long as you do your job, and what you do when you get off." And then we came friends, ride together every day. We rode together so long, until they separate us, send him to north Birmingham to keep us from being together.

But we had some difference. Your own black was the worst part in the world. I had a white guy said, "I ain't going to let that nigger tell me what to do. Gary Brown. He said, "I ain't going to let no nigger—" I said, "What did you say?" He apologized—excuse me—he apologized, said I'm sorry. "You didn't know I was behind you." I ain't going to let no nigger tell me what to do. And I had one of them, his dad was a night supervisor. He say, "Yeah, I'm going to tell my dad. I ain't letting no nigger tell me what to do." The guy that was working at night driving a cherry picker.

WC: I know Skinner.

WT: Driving a cherry picker out there at Eastwood mall. I said, "Your daddy, bring him down." I said, "Bring him down here."

CB: Who do you mean? Woods?

WT: I said, "Bring him—"

WC: No. South side.

WT: South side every night. But then later on, I told him, "Come on. Bring him on down here." I say, "Your daddy ain't nothing. I'll tell him ain't nothing." When I saw him, I say, "Your son told me that you wasn't nothing. I know you wasn't nothing because he working night shift. He wasn't none of my boss. I say, "You ain't nothing." He told me, "I don't know why that boy called my name." I say, "Because he used to calling your name and running over us. You're not going to run over me." I said, "Now anybody, like I told him, anybody can be a nigger. I said, "Your mama might be a lowdown nigger. She might be lowdown."

CB: He's on a garbage truck now.

WC: Yeah.

WT: I said, "That can be a nigger," and I said, "I believe your daddy one, because you calling me one." He said, "You calling me one?" I said, "No, 'nigger' be a lowdown dirty word. That's the reason you call me one, because you been around your nigger mommy and nigger daddy all your life." And I sure tell you, if Gary see me now, he hug me. I say, "Anybody a nigger. Y'all got in the dictionary talking about some black, but 'nigger' can go for a lowdown dirty person. Lowdown. It could mean evil ways for calling me that, but he never called me that anymore. He worked for me twenty years. Every time he see me—

He didn't know I was standing behind him, but you know if they're standing around saying that, you know they been saying that when they get home. And I can just see them at home: let me see what my nigger boy wanted. They used to it. But I just sitting in the car, when I been out to the club when I

was young. I said, "Yeah, man, we go see that peckerwood." Say we called each other names when we be around black, you know. When we get up there and find a white man, "How you doing, Mr. Shaw?" Just got through talking we go see what this cracker want now. [Laughter] We called names. You know out there drinking, got to get up there and see what that old cracker want, that peckerwood. We call racist names, but as long as a person—. I didn't care what, as long as you didn't call me that.

WC: You take it anyway.

WT: He can tell you I wasn't scared of them. I told—. One day he said, "Well, I'll fire you next time you talking about jumping over --" I said, "I'll put my knife on it and if he making the machines turn over, the cherry picker going around when he cut the switch off, I jumped down, told him "Don't you *ever* do that again. I'll pull your head off." He went and told Smith. Willie said I was crazy. He said, "The first thing, don't you know how to fight against a white superintendent? Did you know I could fire you for jumping down on that picker out there?" I said, "That man like to kill me. You do what you got to do." Willie say, "You crazy." I said, "No, I ain't crazy." Willie didn't want the management to fire me. I said, "I ain't crazy. If he try and cut that switch off again, trying to kill me, I do the same thing to Smith." I said, "That man just did that for to kind of hurt me. I do the same."

But Willie just told me to go ahead on out the office because it was white against white. But that man—. That thing went over, like to turn over on top of me, and I jumped on it. I said, "Don't you ever do—." And I told him, I said, "You didn't do that because I was black. You already done told Skinner that you weren't going to show a black man how to operate that big picker. You just a racist." But you know what? Later on, you done pray about things, just leave it in the hands the Lord. That guy got so he would carry us to a all-white play. Well, we was the only black sitting up there. Every morning, he would carry us some lunch; he would take us to his house. It got better. He started carrying lunch to us every morning. "I ain't racist." I say, "You a racist dog. If I cuss him out, he stopped that. You know, you scared some --"

WC: Yeah, right.

WT: In an all-white river. We're the only spooks sitting up there now with about three hundred white folk—.

WC: But that was his boss. I went out there with him a lot of times.

WT: And he got better, but they didn't want to tell what they do.

KH: Are these just special cases, or are relationships between black and white employees getting better over the years?

WC: Lot better relationship, but they would just hateful anyway. We had to change it and so forth. I seen one white supervisor one time that he had a black guy come in the office in there, and told them his wife had a baby and he needed to get off. Well, so he couldn't get off. You know, "she going to have the baby whether you get ther or not, so you going to stay here."

KH: Wow.

WC: And it weren't a month later there was a white guy come in there and told them his dog had some puppies and he need to go home. Do you know he let him off to go see about some puppies for his dog? And I was like it ain't been a month ago this guy wanted to get out to go see about his baby. Now he let them think that he thinks more of them dogs than he thought of us. And you know, when our wife was sick or something or whatever. But they couldn't ever get me for being off because I work the whole part of the year on all bad days and for all the year.

WT: Well let me tell you about right now.

WC: I came to work every day. Worked on the garbage truck for now about eight years and ain't miss a day. You don't remember me missing a day. Worked every day.

CB: Neither one of them missed a day.

WC: Right.

WT: But you know that bad that you can't—that they tell you when your wife having a baby. I

pull something like that with my men now, they'll send me away in here. I told a guy—. He said he went to the doctor. I was just playing with him. I said, "You bring the doctor with you." He called upstairs, my boss jumped all on me, he said the man say he's sick. Don't ever make a man come in sick. I was playing with the dude. He was a black guy director told me don't ever make a man come in sick. I said I'm playing with—. "I don't care how sick he is. Bring the doctor with you." And he came in for real, told me he wanted to let me know. But that man can't see his wife have a baby, you know that was racist.

WC: Yeah.

WT: Right now you can't stop nobody from being—. You try that now. You probably get a whupping and sued.

WC: Yeah. I remember an incident that happened that shouldn't have been happening. But you know, like I said, I remember one time a white man came in. We were all working in that day. He said, You might as well go on to south side today. We had been working in east Birmingham. The guy come in there and did his head like that [moved his head to the side, gesturing for them to follow]. I said [in a whisper], "Don't nobody move. Don't move. Stay here." Don't move, talking anyway. And I know he'd been doing that. He was doing it every morning. Yeager. Y'all know Yeager. And every morning, he'll come in that door and he'll say [gestures with his head] for me and three men to get up and come on. I said [in a whisper], "Don't nobody move. Stay still and don't move. Stay still." And they didn't move.

KH: He just refused to talk to people.

WC: Yeah, and so he went back in there and told the boss man, the big man. Nick Daniel was the big man then. Say, "I told them I wanted them to come on and went to the truck. I ain't seen Dan." He said, "Go in there and tell them again." So he came in there again, did like that. I say [in a whisper], "Don't move. Don't move. Please stay still." They didn't move again. Three minutes later,

Nick Daniel came in there. He said, "Didn't y'all boys—tell y'all to grab—tell y'all to come on?" I said, "He never said a word. He came in that door and did this here, like he been doing every morning, but we tired of it. They got name. Call them."

Nick Daniel told Yeager, "Come back in my office." And I said, "I'm invited in there, too, ain't I?" He said, "Yeah, you come, too." When we got in there, he told Yeager, he said, "Did you call them by name, or did you wave your head?" "I did like Willie said. Told me I been doing that every morning." And I said, "And we tired of it." "Well, what you got to do with it?" I said, "Those people you talking to, you need to be calling name when you come in, because they come do you like that, you ain't going to move. You want people to call you by your name. They call you Yeager." He said, "No, they going to call me Mr. Yeager." I said, "Well, call me Willie. You the driver, but you going to call me by that name and tell them you ready to go." Nick Daniel said, "Yeah, you right." "You mean I got to do what this nigger tell me to do?" He said, "That's employee." He was hating it, but he started calling names.

WT: Nigger was a nigger man. He made that man call you by his name because he loved to say it.

CB: I wasn't—. Yeah, I was there. I—.

WC: OK, then. But anyway, because you used to meet us on the truck [laughs]

WC: Yeah, but anyway, they had to start calling names. So one day I had get to be a truck driver, they had came in there and told me, said, "Willie, you don't get off the ladder in time." I said, "What you mean I don't?" Because they had heard me every morning, sort of hang around, slow around, and do everything. Say, "Well, you don't leave in time. We need you to get off the lot at six o'clock." I said, "Well, I had to get water, I had to get my tools on the truck, and all this kind of stuff." He said, "Well, you get them people in here like the rest of the folk." Because I know a lot of folk come in here before time to go and get they water and stuff. I used to do it, but then I got tired of doing

it. And I said I ain't going to be in no big hurry, because I really wanted to stay and hear what was going on and see what was going on. And they figured that out, so they were going to get me out of the line. I said, "Well, look, either y'all going to pay somebody to put my water on the truck and my tools on the truck—." He said, "We ain't got to pay nobody. You going to come in here tell—." I told them I started to work at six o'clock, not fifteen to six. At six o'clock. I'm not going to let any of them move.

So since they was at me that day in the office, I went out there in person and made a speech. "I don't want to see nobody—." I had about nine or ten people. "I don't want to see nobody move to put no water on the truck and no tools." You know, somebody is always going to run and then tell the man. So he come out there. I never stopped talking. I said, "Look, I don't want nobody to go to work at six o'clock. When we started paying y'all at six, y'all don't move till six, put water on there." He told me, he said, "You don't have that water at six o'clock, we going to write you up." I said, "You might as well get your pencil started right now because if I see any one of y'all act like you're going to get some water before six o'clock, I'm writing you up, send you to the man." And I said, "I want y'all to come to work, sit right here on this porch, every one of y'all. When I come out that door, I'm going to sit down.

Six o'clock, I went in there and said, "Mr. Abney, I want my keys. It's time for me to go to work. Two minutes," I said and looked at the clock. "It's two minutes to six right now." And I always got to work in time. I ain't never been a late person no way. I said, "I want to get the keys to the truck. You know, y'all keep my keys, so I—." He said, "You supposed to get these keys at six-thirty." I said, "I go to work at six o'clock." I said, "One minute. See, now you're being late. Throwing me late by not giving me my keys so I can go get the truck so the folks can put the water on the truck." He finally gave my keys. They said something, but I ain't never hear so I kept walking. I went out and got the truck, and when I pulled back up by the thing, they were telling my men, "You get down there and find that truck." I said, "Y'all don't work for him. Y'all work for me. When he want y'all to do something, I want you to relate to me what they do. Other, they really ain't got to do it until you tell me and I tell

him. And I told you yesterday I wasn't going to move until six o'clock."

I said, "The only reason I'm five minutes to six getting around here now—" Because Willie pulled around here at six o'clock. I said, "But you didn't give me my keys in time. If you had gave me the keys, I would have been back. Now you done throw me late. You going to write yourself up now for throwing me late?" But anyway, they came around, so the big man come out there and said, "Leave Willie alone. He is right that we don't go, because he told me that we got to pay him for letting them folks put that water on their truck and the tools on their truck." But then they left that alone, so they went to picking on something else, like lunch time. Yeah, they come out there and my men had stopped five minutes to twelve. I got to say, "Well, I told them to stop to go get the water ready for other folks to stop and take the thing." It always one thing left, but I was up to the challenge, so it didn't ever worry me.

I stayed up and ready, went to work every day, stayed there with it. Time passed, everybody else getting off at three, and I don't get off at four-thirty because I wasn't never in no hurry. Didn't have nothing to do, so I was always sitting there, whatever. Then I was a union man, too—I was the union president—so you know I know they were going to be at me for that, but I didn't ever leave no doors for them to close. But it was always something. My main thing was being a union president to help us, because we really didn't have no help for none of us, and all the old men mistreated, including me, too. But just like I said, I was up to the test, help of the good Lord, because I always said all strength come through the Lord, so I was OK.

And I sit there and had the job to the best of my ability. They had told me and that white guy one time they were going to write up half and half. And then come telling me, say "We divided it this corner here and this half, from here—" They had me from my hand to him. He had that little distance right there and told me that half. I said, "Well, if it half, give me this side over here and give him that side. Since y'all done picked the half, let me pick the side. If I can pick the side and y'all can have the

half, whatever you want to do, because I'm going to do it fair." I said, "While you roll, we're going to be here is half of that and half over here. But if y'all want to put it right here, fine. Just give me the half over there." They know that white boy couldn't handle it. That's the one they wanted to be take his job, when I know he didn't know what he was doing no way, and the boss didn't either. So they said, "Well, we'll think about it." But they were thinking about it, and of course it was "That Negro want this half over here, we ain't going to give him that half. Leave it to me." But it was the right thing for him, because he didn't want to go all over these hills over here, which I didn't care about going hills, just make it halfway right that you—.

CB: Divide it up equal.

KH: Right. It was all about making the appearance that the white employee was going to do as much as you did.

WC: Yeah.

CB: Who was that? Johnny Shull?

WC: Uh-unh, uh-unh.

CB: What his name? Johnny, had a little kid eat every day, had that little green truck, that pick-up truck ride it with him every day? Johnny—.

WT: Johnny Pearson.

WC: Yeah, James Pierce.

KH: James Pierce.

WC: And I had one of his white partner, which he was a good friend. He was working for me, and he had called me a nigger. I took him in to the man, and then so I said, "He refused to do well. But you know what, Mr. Smith? I don't want him back. I want him to get where he want to get. He want to work for James Pierce." I say, "Let him work. Let the other man get in the other side." I said, "Let him work with James Pierce. Just give me anybody. I ain't worried about who." I said, "Just to get rid

of him for being stubborn, don't want to do, may cause me another problem in the long run, go over here." So he said, "You willing to swap?" I said, "Take it."

WT: Who—?

WC: The one what jumped over in the creek this time, you know.

WT: Tommy.

WC: Yeah. Tommy Browder.

WT: Tommy Browder, you know, the one used to drink a lot. Oh yeah. Tommy's brother.

CB: I know who you're talking about.

WC: Danny, yeah. He stayed with him about maybe a month and got drunk, and they caught him out there drinking.

KH: They fired him?

WC: Yeah.

WT: Tommy called you the "n" word?

WC: Um-hmm.

WT: He probably drunk.

WC: Yeah, I know he was drunk. I know he was drunk.

WT: That's all he do, hang around black folks.

WC: But I didn't go in there and tell him he was drunk.

WT: That's all he do, hang around black folk, but he'll let you know all of them are sad. All he ever did was hang around black people.

WC: But I thought he wasn't going to say whatever. He said, "You mean to tell me I got to listen to this nigger?" That what he said, and we worked in the office together. I just looked at him. He said, "Yeah, you got to listen to him. He's boss." Then so he say, "Well, I sure don't want to work with him." I said, "Well, that's fine. I don't want you working for me. Well, don't forget what he said,

forget what he's doing, just get rid of him. If he wants to go to somebody else, give it to him.

WT: [Talking on walkie-talkie in background]

WC: I ain't got no problem. But it wasn't long after that before he, like I say. He jumped over in the creek one time and got in trouble, and I had to hit him after he had left me, because they were letting them off too early. But it didn't really worry me. All I was concerned with is the employee being treated better and fair.

KH: I was wondering how much of a time commitment was it for you to be the president of the union?

WC: I was so glad, so happy, so amazed to be able to have some kind of authority that says do this or don't do this or do over here. I also ran the union, too. I nearly run the city, I run the union, too. But like I said—.

KH: How much time outside of work do you think that took? You didn't even notice?

WC: Didn't notice. I was so glad to be in a situation to help us that it was—.

WT: He did a good job. He was the best president that he helped a lot of us. Because I know he helped me. I done thirty years. I been in this city forty-four years or Sunday forty-four. Been there forty-four [years] Sunday. If it wasn't for Willie, I wouldn't want to supervise nobody but myself and my wife and my children. But when I got to do it, I love it. And I came out one of the best ones, didn't want it. I ain't bragging on myself, but a lot of guys like to work for me because I'm fair. A lot of them like to work for me because I was fair. They be telling me now—I ain't over nobody now—"I wish you'd come back." I said, "No, you want me to go home. I ain't coming back."

WC: [Laughs] Yeah.

WT: Not going to give me a heart attack. But I'm just fair with people. And I tell them, "Let me run it." When I had a white supervisor, "Let me run it. I know our people." They be telling me they can't go pay no light bill. I say, "If I let three of y'all off to pay his gas bill, I ain't got nobody drive

them trucks." Yeah, I let them have an hour to do it. One day the man said, "Just handle it the way you want to," and I ain't never show it no more. If somebody come out in a truck, I say, "Let me take you out at lunch time, and I'll drive you around to pay your gas bill." That makes a lot of sense. That would be better than taking the day off, you know, for to pay the bill. Sometimes before we pull the switch on them things while you're at work.. I just tell them, I said, "I'll make arrangements. Come on in here and I'll drive you around and do it right quick. And anybody says something to you, "You can't tell them folks to do that," I say, "Yeah, I can. You must going to drive one, and I'm going to drive the other one." I mean, because the trucks got to go out if the director have to drive it, that's right. That garbage has got to be pulled. And the manager ain't going to drive now, so it got to be done. And the chief of staff, he said, "Why didn't they let you have your own department?" My brother was the first black supervisor, and he didn't do nothing. He didn't do nothing but chase folks all day, run behind them in the street all day. I did it.

So they come pick me, said, "You need to go to Ensley because you doing your brother-in-law work." I say, "You wrong. Send my brother-in-law to Ensley." And then one man said, "You're right. Everybody going to pick at him because we can't fire him." I couldn't work for my brother-in-law; I understood that, but I was doing all the work for him. I had to get all the peoples out on the forty-five, send the crew out there. I had to go check the route, put people in the hospital when they got hurt. I had to do everything, and he wasn't doing anything. I said, "I don't know why y'all picking at me for." And all of them agreed, they got a letter, and they sent a letter signed, say why a man got to get punished for doing a good job? I got some of the letter to my brother. Say he like to cried reading the letters. He said, "Because people thought a lot of you, why you had to pay the price because you did a good job. Get the one didn't do it and—." Told that white guy was behind him, "Go down there and tell him you're sorry." And I ain't know that cluck had did it when he walk in. I ain't know he was the one that did it. He said, "I have something to tell you." He spit in the can again. "I'm the one behind

you working for your brother-in-law." He said, "I apologize. You stay."

And I felt good, because I didn't want to be in the job, but I know some of them guys I worked became like part of my family, I helped them so much. But don't get me wrong. Willie let them go for a while, but they push me, then I'm through with them. I'll give you a break, but I'm not going to keep on taking up for you. When I get tired, I'm going to let you know. I won't bear the white man picking up by anything. I talk to them. If they come in late, I say that's on me. If you come in again late, that's on me, but the next one going to be on me. That's the way it works. And the white'll work you, write you up every time you late, period. They won't even talk to you.

KH: Have you had trouble with other black employees not wanting to listen to you?

WT: All the time. All the time. In fact, the reason I'm sitting on the sidelines now, they run me away from there. Because black people can't understand that when you need help, I don't need help.

WC: But what Winston said about why he was supervisor or doing what he was doing, I was over the union, nobody never came to me and said these two people mistreat them. People used to complain to me for everything, every day, every night, at home, wherever. They called me so much, Willie do this here and do that here, and I'd look into the situation because I cared for so many that came to get me for different things. I had some ladies working for the city in Birmingham, and the white guy over them—. They went to the bathroom one time, he wrote them up because he said they stayed too long. He even went to the city hall and had a hearing, because he worked downtown and they didn't have it over at south side. They had it at the city hall, and that was Charlie here. He had four women; they went to the bathroom. The first thing, back in those days, black women or black men couldn't go to bathroom that white folk could. Anyway, they can go, so they had to go to the city hall to go to the bathroom. That was too far, so they stopped them, said they had to find a place closer, and there wasn't like a hotel downtown at the time they could go to. But you know, going in a room where black women working on the street, they didn't want to see all these people come in there to use the

bathroom. So I guess when they did get the bathroom—.

Like I told them, y'all used to going the bathroom—. What they do, drink a tomato juice and keep going, grape soda and keep going. We had to eat. We working. You ain't doing no work, so you really ain't got to eat. We out there working and these women sweeping these streets and sweeping these parking lots, they working four hours before lunch and four hours before dinner and yeah, they got to eat. So when they eat, they got to go to the bathroom. You just can't go use the bathroom in three minutes. I said, "They ain't built the same way y'all built, because y'all don't eat. Do you see a white boy, he be eating a lettuce dinner, or a tomato dinner, or a banana dinner. We eat beans, meat, whatever. Turned around and said, "Let them go. He right [laughs]."

CB: Sweet potatoes.

WC: Right, because we don't have the same bowel movement that they have because they don't eat nothing no way. They ain't working. Riding around. You can eat one piece of toast and ride around all day in a truck. The shovel is that big, the broom is that long and that big. You can't sweep with them brooms all day and don't eat, so even if you fix your lunch at home, you've got to prepare to go because you ain't going to get no half of a sandwich then. I said, "Y'all ever look at yourself eat? If I asked three of y'all right here now what y'all eat, it's going to be something like a lettuce dinner, or a salad, or one pack of the cookies with six cookies in there, with just some peanut butter in the middle, just a little of that. We don't eat that way." So they dropped the case and told me to go home. And then go back to work because that's all that was, because they didn't come back in ten minutes. It took them that long to walk to the place where you go to the bathroom at, because they ain't had a port-a-john right there. So that means you got to walk. Most big companies you see with a john, they have a port-a-john right there so you won't have to walk ten miles.

CB: Back then, they didn't have port-a-johns.

WC: Yeah, I know, but they still didn't have them, so they gave them time. I remember one

case that I looked at several times. It was a white man brought three garbage men to court out of north Birmingham, said he stole two batteries from out their yard. We had that union on the south side where we work at, and so we got in the hearing, the man said he got these people charged on stealing batteries because the man what the battery belonged to was there, too. And (64.25) we kept talking, kept talking, I said, "Where the batteries was in the yard?" So I thought in my mind they went in the yard to get the battery. So then one of the guys said, "Well, we picked up the trash—." Then I said, "Where y'all pick up the trash at?" "In the yard." I said, "Where about in the yard?" "Up near the house." I said, "Oh, you mean you don't carry your garbage out to the alley?" He said, "No, they been coming there for years, but they ain't never moved my battery." I said, "Well, maybe it was somebody different. You know, all the time be different people working on the truck."

And he said, the man's boy said, "Look, they been there so long, I thought they didn't want it. It been parked out by the garbage." He said, "I picked garbage up right where I got the batteries at." So then I said, "Well, oh, OK, then so it could have been garbage." He said, "Well, they know." I said, "How they know? You got a letter out there saying 'Don't mess with these batteries? Don't bother these batteries. Don't whatever.'" The man his self said—and that went on—he said, "You mean to tell me they come in your fence and get your garbage out there on the—? We got a request?" Because, you know, he's supposed to have a request to pick up your garbage because you're unable to take it out. "No request," he said, "but they just been getting it." I said, "Well, they ain't had no business in your yard, first thing. So they didn't have been in your yard, they never wouldn't have got the battery." So the boy said, "Well, you right. You right." So they had to drop the charges, and then the man started putting his garbage out. Should have been doing that all the time.

WT: Get some free service. The batteries probably wasn't no good.

WC: They wouldn't because the boy said they been there about a year or so. So I said, "Well, you know—."

CB: He just didn't want to see them make a dollar off of him.

WT: Tell them how he used to beat you up, man. To hear you talk, they used to put that bull whip on you.

WC: [Laughs] But I love to be in the union, because like I said, when I first talking about getting it, that was my purpose in getting the union anyway, to make sure that they get the—you know, so we can get treated better.

KH: What do you think have been the biggest successes?

WC: When I got them people in Washington make them tear them bathrooms down and make us stop going in the—and you know, saying we couldn't go in—.

CB: Take all them sign down like the "black and white."

WC: The black and white sign.

CB: The black waiting room and the black and white waiting room, and the black water fountain and the white water fountain. The water fountain is side by side.

WT: We cut a deal with them for about three thousand dollars a piece or four thousand dollars a piece, because we wasn't playing. Brother have got tired of being whipped up by the dogs and the hose pipe. We wasn't playing now.

WC: But I know one time the union people, you know, since I still was spearheading them people from Washington, DC, too, because I had talked with several times, and we were meeting again and they wouldn't meet with us at the hotel. But it was just like I was saying about the bathroom and things, they thought they owned everything, and they was always this and that and this. But the folk came because they was just me, him, him, and it was about seven of us. And they were going to give us like I'm going to say assuming I first heard something like fifteen thousand dollars apiece or twenty thousand dollars apiece, because I really didn't wait to see how much was going to be for sale. But then like I told them, it's more than us at this city being mistreated. I don't feel that it would be feasible

for me to sit here and take seventy thousand dollars, or this man take seventy thousand, when they had all these people sitting here being mistreated, because every black in the city was being mistreated. I know me and him ain't the only one who can't take tests because they said we had no efficiency rating. So where we get efficiency rating from? We working for you and we ain't got it, y'all have people on the street and telling me they can take this test, and then we come here and train them how to drive the truck, but we ain't got no efficiency rating. So that's when they went to talk to the personnel board to sue him.

CB: Came to work every day and weren't never laid off.

WC: Right.

WT: But couldn't get no efficiency rating when you couldn't be nothing but a laborer.

WC: Couldn't be nothing but a laborer.

WT: So how could you get someone to work yourself up being classified?

CB: Drive a truck, that's a white man's job.

WC: They had to stop behind people on the street, which I think they started back now. Ain't at the city no more, so it didn't worry me. But I remember a time when they were telling me they were hiring white people off the *street* and give them a job. But I been there three years and four years, and I still can't take no test. When you go down there, they can't take no test. But I talk so much, even doing it now, but I talked so much at the time when they were doing this here that we went down there to the city like I was telling him. I said, "They let me took the test." At first they wanted to know. He called Clarence Watkins. He called him up, said, "Now y'all better let him go on and take the test." So what I said then, "What y'all going to do, let me take the test and still fail me for not taking it, because I don't know all these answers here." I said, "But then y'all got a three-way question. Whatever I said, it may be wrong to you, and it may be right and I may even got the right answer. But I ain't going to know when you come back what answer *you* looking for, because ain't no right answer on the paper." The

man said , "Go on and take the test."

But I had went up there and put in an application, so the girl, one of us, came to the counter. They had one of us at the time when nine more of them. She come up there and told me, said, "Well, Mr. Carghill, we can't give you the test due to you been in jail." So but I also have talked with a lot of white folks that working for the city that were truck drivers, already had been in jail, and just like I went back and told them. The head man over to the county then was Pete Taylor, and I asked to speak to him. I said, "Well, how in the world that they telling me I can't take a test because I got a jail record, and you got people already working for you, for the city, got jail records? I can give you some names of some folk done already told me they got jail record, but they was in jail for whiskey. You know, the time they was whiskey-hauling. But they still got a jail record. I was a thief, stole a cake, but I still got a jail record. So we all got jail records, we go out to the facts, right?" I think I was like thirteen or fourteen years old, but I still had a jail record.

WT: That's sad.

KH: These people had been to jail in the time they'd been working.

WC: Yeah, uh-huh.

WT: That's what's awful.

WC: And I'm the only one or two to go before I was fifteen. So and I told him—. He said, "Well, I tell you what. We going to let you take a test." That's the one I told him, I said, "What they do, they let me take a test so I can pass by the law that you let me took it but I didn't pass?" He told me, "It ain't going to be like that. If you pass, we're going to tell you you passed." I said, "Well, that's fine." I went back—he told me to go back and ask for another application. So I went back. The girl came out there again and told me, "Well, you can't take the test. You got a jail record." "I don't want to talk to you. I want to talk to somebody else." So then the old white lady come out there, "Well, Mr. Carghill, she told you right." I said, "Well, I really don't need to talk to you neither. You telling me

something I already know. I don't need to hear it. Can I talk to anybody else?" She said, "Well, they going to tell you the same thing." I said, "Well, I need to talk with Pete Taylor." Pete came out there and he seen me. I been out there so much, he know me. He seen me, he told me, "Go on and get an application." He didn't even get over there. He told her, "Get him an application." [Laughter]

WT: He didn't want to talk to you.

WC: Yeah. So anyway, I got the application. I had to take the test. About a month or two later it came around. So they came back. Look, they said I made ninety-two. I really don't know what I made, but they said I made ninety-two. So I got that and I came out like—I think I was like ninety-two or ninety-three or seventy-five on the list. Well done. I said, "Well, good." I went to Clarence Watkins. I said, "Well, I know everybody down there." He said, "I called there and talked to Pete Taylor about you. We told him --" I said, "Look, I ain't going to get no job. I'm still seventy-fifth on the list." He said, "Well, don't worry about that. We got two lists. You might be closer. We got a county list and we got a city list." I said, "OK, then. Well, what happen with the city list?" He said, "I don't know, but I'll look up it. I'll tell you. I'll call you tomorrow." I was saying to myself, "What these white folk trying to do to me?"

KH: Nobody would give you a straight answer.

WC: And then he came back, came down there to the end of the lot. "Uh, Willie, you all right. You probably going to be one of our next truck drivers. You know, you number seven on the city list." I said, "Oh, y'all sure making it sound good to me. Well, I still ain't got that job." He said, "Don't worry, you going to get it. I'm going to see that you get that."

WT: Well, you know, he was a pretty good man. I got classified the same day he give you that job.

WC: Uh-huh [laughs].

WT: I had been partying. I was drunk. I had been partying. That man was all right with me.

WC: Yeah, he was.

WT: I had been partying. He said, "Where you been all day?"

WC: I don't think he was white, though, was he?

WT: When I got back to the party, you know I had been to work because it was already seven o'clock and I went somewhere and parked and slept all day Sunday. When I come through, he said, "Where you been? I moved my feet, and a bill fell out. First time I ever—. You know you supposed to be fired because I was still on trial. That was the first day. It started on Saturday, right? And the second day been Sunday that I been on my new job. I said, "Man, I was drunk and tired. And I barged through drunk. He said, "They going to roll you back to a laborer, but I appreciate you telling the truth. So you just tell me the truth—. I said, "Yeah, I ain't going to tell you a lie. I shouldn't have even came to work, but you ain't going to find anybody to work on Sunday for you. Everybody at church or doing their own thing. Not Sunday morning, you won't find nobody to work." And I didn't have no cause, so I said, "Well, I know I'm fired." And I called.

You know what he told me? He said, "I like you." I said, "Why?" He said, "You told the truth," and he didn't give me but a week off. Now I was already on trial, and now drunk out there on the job? But if he like you, he like you. He said, "Don't say nothing about it." I earned this, he said, "because you made good on that test." Same test you talking about, Willie, when they hired the first black truck driver for the city. I said, "Now the Lord want me to do right for the rest of my life, I got away with that." Lord had to be behind me, because you can do anything wrong on that year trial. You can just not come to work on time, they can just roll you back [on the promotion scale]. And I got that charge against me, but he said, "You one nigger told the truth. You ain't lied. You just told the truth." And that helped me.

KH: What year was that when they hired the first black truck drivers?

WT: That was '67, I think.

KH: OK.

WT: What it was, Willie, '67 or '68?

WC: '67, '68, somewhere around in there.

KH: Just about the same time you were starting the union.

WT: Yeah. '69. Somewhere like that.

KH: OK.

CB: I got here in '72, so y'all were two or three years above me.

WC: OK.

WT: When I was driving the garbage truck, you know I was driving on them routes because I was on the A routes out there. People come to the door just looking there like they were seeing a monkey driving a garbage truck because—.

CB: There were white folks living over there.

WT: No, that was Collegeville. They was so glad they was -- Cameron drove one, Cleo drove one, and they were just glad to have us because all drivers in the trucks that were running was white, and they felt so good we got a black guy in there. And the same with the Birmingham police when they hired them six, people just standing around. They weren't arresting nobody, they just glad to see some of us in uniform because we got beat all our life for that. That same neighborhood, I used to be set-out man, he was a set-out man, and I'd be early in the morning and had to set the cans out and come back in the evening and set them back. When I get through, I hear a little boy say, "Mama, here come that nigger." You know, we had to be called names. Some of them will make the children shut up, and some of them just say, "Here come that nigger, Mama." They didn't care. They thought that was what supposed to be said. I didn't say nothing.

CB: That's what they mamma and daddy say.

WT: I just sitting there. I said, "You said a bad word." He said, "That nigger said I'm saying a

bad word." I stopped and then the man told me not to say nothing to him. But you know, we had one guy come out there I know it wasn't no good sending him. They had a guy named Fisher, and I don't think y'all remember. Y'all out of north Birmingham. He from up north. He grabbed one of those white boys and whupped him good for calling him a Negro. Now before they even saw it, they come to the house to arrest him and to find him that night, and made like he did something and told him to run. The bullet went through the side and came out the other side. Said they probably would have did me the same way. They called, say they had told the wife that what you get by whupping a white boy for calling you a nigger. Came to the house that Friday night.

KH: Oh, they shot him at his own house.

WT: Yeah, they shot him. They tried to shoot him and kill him. What they do, they tell you you got to just run, nigger. Either way he could, they were going to shoot him.

WC: Yeah.

KH: Did any of you ever get beat up by the police?

WC: No, I haven't.

WT: No, he [Willie Carghill] was a yes-sir man. He know how to pull that cap off before he got there. [Laughter]

WC: Go ahead now.

WT: He had that scratch. Did they call you—.

CB: I was more rugged than they was. I didn't have any trouble out of them too much.

WT: One thing about Willie Carghill and men like that. They call us crazy niggers, won't nothing bother us. I know they call me the crazy. Don't pay that nigger any—. They say he crazy. When you talk back and just do your job and talk back to them, they don't do nothing but call you the crazy nigger. But I don't pay it no attention. I said, "Man, you ain't nothing. I don't know why you so worried." I'll be outspoken and tell them, but I do my job. They won't do nothing but call you a crazy

one or a nigger. If I figure they done me wrong, I say, "Man, you ain't did that white boy like that."
"Oh, man, go on." They let you go because they know you do your job. And that's what Charles did. Charles was a good worker, and he just went on and did his job. They had a man there what wouldn't mind calling you—. Nick Daniel, he wouldn't mind saying "Why is this nigger here this morning?" He just call you the "n" word straight up and didn't think nothing of it, but he didn't want anybody to mess with them. He called them word, but wasn't anybody going to mess with you. Wasn't none of them drivers—. If he like you, he won't let them drivers pick at, would he, Willie?

WC: Uh-uhn.

WT: But that's how racist he was. Now he won't let anybody pick at you. If he liked you, wasn't nobody going to pick at you. But he—.

WC: But him. [Laughter]

WT: But him. See, one morning he come telling me, said, "Yeah, one time I was going down the street before I became a supervisor, and a nigger had a baby in a buggy. And the nigger almost put her in the hopper." I said, "Man, that ain't funny." He didn't like me because I told him. I didn't know if I ever told y'all that or not. That boy throwed the baby—.

WC: He didn't like you because you smart. [Laughter]

WT: I say, "That ain't funny. That's a black baby you put in that hopper. You know you be wanting to bus lines, and the baby, had the baby wrap him up in coal, and the boy wanted to dump it in the garbage, didn't know the baby's in there. Talking about he had a nigger baby. I said, "You sick. You guys are sick." I told his brother, I said, he had a good head, it was different as day and night for him. He would not call you names, and good people done that. And I had a guy call me smart head when I went to take the test. He said, "Come here. They'll kill me if they see me do this. This the test right here." Slipped the test to me, saw it wasn't nothing in there but a rip-off, but he had to slip to give it to me because that let him know a lot of white folks know the test when he went down there. He

said, "This the answer." I didn't even get that because he might be the one setting me up with it. I got my own answer from my head. I went to the library and got the answer for some of that stuff, because he might told them I had that in the list and that.

But he know that's where they arrest a lot of people, because the fire department now got a list that so many firemen took that test already had the answers. So that stuff been going on, but some of them was trying to help you. Ray was a old white man, real Christian person, and he called me. I said, "Ray, what I did?" Ray, he wrote me up for something, and he slipped me the answer in the books right there, said, "I want you to be able to drive." But they couldn't let nobody know they helping you. Because they would have fired him.

WC: That's who helped me when I first got set up as supervisor. I took his job when he was leaving. He's the person trained me for a month.

WT: Murray Hill.

WC: Murray Hill. And he told me, said, "Willie, let me explain something to you. Stay off the radio. Don't talk unless you necessarily had to." He said, "But also let me tell you, you got to watch out for folks in this job. Try to have your own job. Don't let nobody help you with it, because what they will do is put all the blame on you." Said, "You don't think you should do it, don't do it. He said, don't do what nobody else tell you to do, because I survived in this job by listen to the man what I replaced. I want you to survive in this job. Listen to me." He said, "Don't even talk to your superintendent unless he had to talk to you. Don't go asking is it all right to do this or all right to do that. You the supervisor, do what you want to do. Just be careful in doing it."

WT: But he'll call you.

WC: Yeah. So he said, "As long as you do that, you'll be all right. Don't ever talk to any other supervisor about your job. Just do it, and that the way it go." So I said, "Well, OK." And that's what I did, and they be asking you, because I know when I first—. The first money I made, they used to ask

me, my boss did, "What you did yesterday?" I said, "Just did the job." I did like somebody else said. As long as they don't know—. They get something on you, they know it, they'll blame it on you later. So just don't never know something. I was already crazy enough anyway not to know nothing no how. But I took his advice, stayed off that radio and whatever. But they used to try to get me, the boss man and everybody, because I used to be there. Murray Hill was an overtime supervisor. So that mean I took that, and they didn't like that because I making more money than they were making because I was the overtime supervisor. They were trying take everything. So and so, you couldn't do this, "n," or you did that. They used to tell us all the time when you got a truck out there on the route, stay out there with it. But they wanted to count my two hours because I was making overtime here and two hours there that they thought was too much.

One time the superintendent had called me on a call he had, but they had, but he found out about it and I didn't know—. Anyway, where we get the water from, what that over there? Lake Purdy. I didn't know where Lake Purdy was at, so they had called Moncrief and he told them, said, "Let me tell you. Who over there with you?" I said, "James somebody—." What that boy's name, go with that tree truck over there? James somebody, but anyway, he said, "Let me speak to him." He told him, said, "Look, don't let Willie be over that job, because he stay out too long making too many hours. You going to be over the job." And he said, "That's the supervisor," because I'm listening to them talk. He said, "I don't care." And he took the phone away from his ear, so he must have said something like "what?" And then he said, "Well, I'll think about that, sure will. We'll be right on back."

He hung the phone up and said, "Now do he think I'm a fool, Willie?" [Laughter] I said, "What that?" He said, "He told me to be in charge of you, and you the supervisor. But I'm going to tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to be in charge of you. Look, when we get this car, you carry your butt home, get in the bed, and I'll handle everything else." I got paid for the whole night. I mean the whole night. The next two or three days, he said, "I told the man we stayed out all night because the

tree was big and we had two or three of them." I said, "What he said?" "He ain't said nothing."

WT: Willie so bad. He's a strong union man. When he got accepted the same day I did on the big machines, and we got accepted the same day. And they said, "I don't care what you do, Willie drive for you. He can't operate nothing." I say, "He getting that pay." He said, "I just don't want that Negro to operate nothing. Let him get the pay. He better not operate nothing." He did it for two years, and they didn't want him to operate. That's how bad they didn't like him. They pay him they pay. Oh, he getting the two hundred dollars more for the month, but they wouldn't let him operate. They say, "Put him on the ground." They didn't know the man could operate. What I do, I work till they leave, and then I work till they get halfway gone, and then I let Willie get up there and learn anyway. That's how lowdown they was.

KH: Why wouldn't they want you operating?

WT: They just lowdown. They didn't want him to learn. They want to pay him, but they didn't want Willie to learn nothing because Willie was a union man and always down at the city hall. He had them down there every other month, especially when they got Mayor Arrington in there. He had somebody to talk to then.

WC: Yeah, they said I was on TV more than the mayor was, more than the president was.

WT: He didn't go in the back door. When Vann and Siebels were there, they had to go in the side door, but when he got his brother down there, he would step right in. And Ed Tate, "Man, you better do what Willie said, because he carrying it to the city hall." He went down there till he got what he want." You had to be equal with Willie. They got the four white and four black to get that job, the job I was doing right now. He just wanted fairness.

WC: Yeah, I didn't try to leave nobody out, the white or the black. I was like --

WT: He didn't say I want all black to be this because we got a black mayor. He just say get four/four. He just was fair.

WC: That was fair.

WT: He wasn't for kind of all for us. He just for right.

KH: Mr. Boyd, were you involved in any strikes with the union?

CB: Yeah, yeah.

KH: Can you tell me about that some?

CB: Well, we—. I'm trying to get the year together. What year was that when we first—? Was it '75?

WC: Yeah, wasn't it '75?

WT: Yeah, '75.

CB: We struck in Ensley—well, all over the whole city for the garbage, and we pulled that one off and it lasted for about—I guess about three days, right?

WC: One last about thirty.

CB: Yeah, well, the first one last thirty days. I was trying to get them—.

WC: I think one was in '75 and then '77.

WT: I think the thirty days was ended by the governor.

WC: Yeah, that was in '75 there.

CB: Yeah, that was the first one here.

WT: That was the last bad one we had.

CB: I was around for both of the strikes, but—.

WT: It last about thirty days.

CB: Yeah—.

WT: Because we got what we want, uniform.

CB: Yeah, we got everything. Got the uniform, gloves and jobs, and everything after that.

Yeah, I was involved in both of the strikes. Didn't nobody get hurt. Nobody get put in jail.

KH: Good.

WT: Did you went with the picket line, too?

CB: Yeah, I went at Ensley, and y'all was on the south side.

WT: Yeah, I was in the south side of the landfill. I was somewhere else, too, though.

WC: Yeah.

KH: Did the city ever threaten to replace you when you were striking?

CB: Nah, they never said anything. If they did, they never said nothing to me about it. Really, we didn't have any problems with them.

WT: The reason they replaced them when the white guys were on board, they weren't going to do that no way. They done did that in the sixty-four hour time period in '59, because they didn't want the blacks to have power.

WC: It was all black.

KH: Right.

WT: They didn't want blacks tell them what to do. And Bull come here with them dogs that time. He's about as sick as -- "we not going to let that little nigger run our city."

CB: Only problem we had was we had a lot of people who were scared to assign the cars when we first got started. Yeah, and after we got past that, we was all right.

WT: It was one man—. I was downtown. He say, "I'm in the union now," and they were marching for the civil rights. He said, "I'm in the union." And he act a fool and they asked him, "Are you for these folks?" He said, "Yeah, these children out here not going back. They going to get the civil rights. They going to get integration, and they ain't scared. I'm for them." And the next day, he was fired. He would clean up downtown and act a fool, got on the news station. They called him up and say, "You looking for a job." But I think in some of the years back, he sued the city, because you didn't have no rights when he said that. But his cousin tell me he got some good money back. He

would drive what you call the "white wing" downtown to clean the streets. And just tell the truth, but these kids wasn't scared like we was. We was always talking about don't slip from school. Well, it paid off playing hooky from school that day.

And he just saying they going to get it, because my wife got hit in the head with a Coca-Cola bottle. He asked her, "Ma'am, did it hurt you?" There were some good police and bad police. You said, "You know what? I don't care how many we beat out here, these Negroes not turn around. They going to be free." Most of the cops sit there, right across the street there. That little restaurant, that little cafe across the street over there. He said, "They going to get what they want." I said, "Man, you crazy. These folks ain't never going to get their way because the way they beating folks every week, hose and dogs." I thought it going to never be true. But he knowed what he was talking about, because them little kids is what? Six or seven years old, were *not* scared. I could sit in a hotel room and see them coming down Fifth Avenue from here headed that way, running from all the way from Smithfield, flying by, headed downtown to that park out there, right across the street there. And they was not scared.

But you got fired—. The man said, "What do you do when you get off the garbage truck?" I said, "What I do—." And he liked that, "get me a six pack and get high," get on away. He liked that. He loved to talk about it. But I coming straight down here to the civil rights meetings, but you couldn't tell him that. He asked what you do in the evening, talking about I said get high, getting drunk. They love to see black folks talk like that, beat your wife and go on with something like that. They like to hear stuff like that. But I get home and stay right across from come Thurgood Baptist Church, white folk looking at what happened after they meeting there. I go over there.

But you couldn't tell them, because they'll find some kind of way—. They'll be riding downtown and when somebody recognize you, they'll fire you. We came a long way. And for Willie Carghill, I don't see why he don't go back to the union since he retired from the city, but this man here

really helped me. He helped all of us. He spoke for all of us. These young folks getting these jobs right now, he opened the doors up for them. We hire twenty, thirty drivers every week. When one could be a driver, now we hire about thirty a year.

WC: Opened the city up for women to get a job. We didn't have no women working for us neither. I used to tackle that when I was at the city hall, and it started to happen. But they said they couldn't do that kind of work. I said, "But they could pitch in somehow. It always worked for us anybody could do, so they can pitch in." The only problem we had, when they went to hiring women, they were hiring white women, too, and then the white drivers would take them to the bathroom but wouldn't take our women to the bathroom. Some of our women so hard-headed, too. I look back now and say, "Well, they were right." They were right because I had fifty, so I had like nine women working for me and three men on the same truck.

I used to have a truck driver let me take them to the bathroom. My boss come in there and say, "Where they at?" I said, "Well, I sent them to the bathroom. But I save you time. I didn't send them one at a time. I sent all of them the same time so we won't be killing so much of the city time." He said, "Well, did I tell you to send them?" I said, "No, sir, you didn't, but they bowels told me they had to go, so I sent them." And he said, "Well, tomorrow, if I come out here and I'm coming about the same time, you're going to send them." I said, "Well, you can get your pencil ready, your paper ready, because when they ask me tomorrow, I'm going to let them go." So I got out that evening, went dead to the city hall, told them. They say, "You mean you got a supervisor won't let them go to the bathroom?" I said, "Unless they white. If that's the only time they can go they white, let them go." And so the next morning, we got there, because they had called every one of them down there. They said, "You done went to the city hall on us." I said, "I'm going next time, because what you're telling me was wrong. I don't feel that we need to do it."

Then two weeks later, one of the black women said, "Well, we can go. We killing time by

going to the bathroom. We can go out here and eat wood.” Because they had me cutting road signs, and I said, “It’s bad. We tried to help y’all out, and then you get this thrown in your face when you don’t need to go to the bathroom. Go where you be decent going to the bathroom.” And so she decided to go in the woods anyway, stayed too long, I go send one of the girls get her. “I told her, and she told me to tell you to come get her.” I said, “No, I don’t want to go get her. I just want you to tell her to come on.” Then I said, “Nah, let me just go on and get her back, because it always going to be a bad apple somewhere, crazy and ain’t got good sense.” And then she stayed so long, I said, “Come on, y’all go with me.” Went back there, “I want you to come back here by yourself. I had something for you.” “Nah, you ain’t had nothing for me but to get out here on this job, but I just left city hall two, three weeks ago with stuff like this, and this why, y’all, we can’t never get nowhere.”

But sooner or later, they moved me off the job because they said I was a unfit supervisor that didn’t know how to control the women from going to the bathroom. They told the truck driver, “Let them go in the woods,” and they wanted to go in the woods. But I went on and forgot about it. I said, “I ain’t fighting for something that going to get throwed back in my face that the women didn’t do this, didn’t do that.” So I let it went before I got in trouble myself trying to support them, but the white folk were going to the bathroom every day. And you know, white people can get away with something without opening their mouth, and we can get away with something, we have to tell everybody.

KH: I had never heard that that was an issue before, that they just wouldn’t let black women take bathroom breaks.

WC: They wouldn’t. And you got the folks—. I told one of the people, like I said, everything I thought was right, I did it anyway. And then know I was about to be got wrote up for it, but to keep things right for the women when they’re hardly eating. But the white women down there said, “That’s ridiculous.” I said, “No, it ain’t. You dealing with working in Ensley [laughs].

WT: [to KH] I know you’re fixing to end that, but you know, we were one at a time see can we

get black drivers, you know. And Moncrief, Neil McRae, they put in the papers, said niggers didn't have sense enough to drive a truck. And right now, about three hundred trucks drove by blacks. Said Negro had no sense

WC: Earl McRae?

WT: Yeah, that was his name. McRae said you know when you asked him, said we had didn't have sense enough to drive garbage truck, because you know they're hard to drive. And right now, they only have about five driver out of forty-two, five white drivers, but we couldn't drive in them years. So we had some that drive a truck eight a.m. That's all we did, drove a truck on the flat there in the farm. Charles has been driving all his life, I know I have, but we ain't had sense to drive it down he road. But right now, we probably got only about five white drivers, ain't it, that drive the garbage truck.

KH: It was just an excuse.

WT: Excuse, trying to make it look like you a dog. We ain't got sense to know better. [cell phone rings]

WC: My boss told me one time, "Willie, we'd knowed you had that much sense, we would have been fired you. You used to sit around here and act crazy. Well, you had more sense than we thought you got [laughs].

WT: [talking on cell phone]

WC: Yeah. They stopped me from going out with the crew, because one of the days—. I don't know when, because they had me on a shift driving garbage Monday and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesday, we had to do that work behind the lot cutting creek banks. They put me on creek bank. It was cold that morning, too. So there was about four guys, and all of them were white. They left three trucks—they drove a truck apiece—down there went to the coffee shop. Told them, I said, "I want y'all to be—." Were you there that day?

CB: Yeah, it was there. It was --

WC: "I want y'all to be down there and listen to me." I said, "We ain't going to go nowhere because they should have kept their asses in here with me, with us, there were about thirty of us." And there's four of them. They left, went to get the coffee and stuff. I said, "We the ones going to do the work, we the ones need the coffee. We the ones need to warm up." So I remember saying to y'all, "I can't do no good here." But at any rate, I started saying to them, I said, "When this truck came back, you going to hear them." You work for them so long, you know how they sound. "Here the truck come." I said, "Don't move. We ain't going to do nothing because if you step on a piece of glass, ain't nobody here that helped you. We get cut with these bush whackers, nobody here to carry to no doctor or nowhere. I'll handle this."

So when they got back, "How you been? Willie told us don't do nothing." They carried me to the superintendent. When I got in there, I said, "Look. The first thing went wrong this morning, it's cold. The first thing, you don't want your white folks to get freezed no way, because they going to get coffee, get something to eat. The first thing, we the one doing the work, so any eating need to be, we need to do. Any warming up need to be, we need to warm up." So what he told that man, said, "Naw. Just don't go back over there with Willie. Leave him here." So they start me to washing the cars on the lot every week. I couldn't go back with the crew because they said I talk too much and keep them from working [laughs].

So every Wednesday morning, I had to line the cars and wash the cars. So the man what got me this job washing—. I was a laborer at this time. The man what got me the job told me, said, "You just ain't going to do right to save your soul. From now on, you stay here and wash these cars for me." I said, "OK, I ain't got no problem washing cars." So every Wednesday, I wash cars. So when it got summer time, I still washing cars. One day I out there washing the cars, I took some motor oil I had put it on the car to shine, know it shine so good. I said it was time to put more on. They said, "Ooh, boy, you know these cars be shining when he get through with them." I just put motor oil on it, you

know. And when they got in the dust, all the dust stuck to the car [laughs]. They said, "He one smart man. He done figure how to clean our car." And they laugh at me, because they went to leave me a tip under the floorboard and told me how good a job.

He said, "They've got to find somewhere for you to work, or the people going to put you around people, you going to talk." You know, they kid me about knowing anything, they wouldn't put me there no, no. But everybody insist, don't let him talk to these folks because they said he can change folks [laughs]. But it was just being fair, being right to them. We shouldn't have been out there working in the cold when nobody there. They supposed to be our bosses. I look at it like this. The boss supposed to be there with you. If he go somewhere, tell me, "Yeah, I got to go somewhere, but I'll be back." And do it in a way now—. But they wait until that morning and go, "Ooh, cold. Y'all be cutting down there. By the time we be back, y'all going to be down there."

WT: You stopped, though, didn't you?

WC: Uh-huh. I said they're going to be saying they're leaving here?

WT: Couldn't leave nobody by themselves.

WC: Yeah. You know, you out there working.

WT: Yeah, they'll stop and leave you, go to lunch and leave you there. But while the truck gone, what if somebody get cut? He ain't had no cell phone or nothing. You might have hollered down the hill to tell somebody to come help somebody, but you ain't have no cell phone like you do now.

CB: Nine times out of ten you ain't going to be around nobody.

WT: You ain't going to be around nobody. If they leave from there, they have to leave a truck driver up there with them or the foreman. The foreman gone, you had to leave the truck driver. Willie had that done, but he didn't care where—. You know, you need somebody out there because you don't know when a man have a heart attack. Anything can go wrong.

KH: And I'm guessing if you did do something during an emergency, you'd get in trouble

anyway because you didn't ask the boss.

WC: Right. They needed to been there. I still say that today. They should had have four, should have got one of them there, somebody to get us to a doctor since that we operating that thing.

KH: Well, I just have two more questions for you. The first one is, I was wondering if you ever felt like your union work was also civil rights work.

WC: Say that again.

KH: When you were working for the union, did you feel like you were doing civil rights work, too?

WC: Yeah.

WT: Yeah, it was white and black before he come filing suits, before—.

WC: That really what it was. That really what it was, civil rights work, because we needed help. The civil rights wouldn't have came in there and got none of that done, because of the way it was being done, it wasn't nothing that they could have did unless the inside help.

WT: You had a black list over here. It was civil rights, but everybody knew it. They fixed it so you had a black list and white list. That's the way it was all black, A and B so they did have. See, that's the way I got my job is A, B. Because we'll be so far down the line, they never would call us in forty years, so they put the A and B lists. That helped make it equal, so the union it did do a lot.

WC: I also made the city one time get the laborers a better rate than they gave classified people, because the way it was done, labor was getting behind instead of coming ahead. Truck drivers, we got percentage rate all the time. That mean you making more, you get more. The less you make, the less you get. So over the years, they had got so far behind that the labor wasn't even enough to buy a loaf of bread with. So I was like we need to get our people—. I had talked with the mayor. We need to get our class employees a better rate than you give classified. Even now with the classified rate, I know my pay check was up there good. And now we sit down and talk for two weeks, how much we

going to get here.

So like I said, anything what they getting a two percent raise, so they came up with a sixty cent raise whatever year it was, because I didn't worry about the years or nothing. I just worry about the doing because I know we was getting so far behind as laborers. And I was talking about—I say we, us, black folks. I never did look out for self, what I did for myself. As long as I know that people were doing right, I was satisfied. And we got good raises. From then on, we went to get help when you, some of the, not across the board rate, but they get a percentage raise. You got to make a lot of money to get a percentage raise even to get something, because if you ain't making that much money now, getting a percentage rate, and I'm getting one and you get one, and we two staff members, think about it. That man down there ain't getting nothing. He getting a raise, but he really ain't getting nothing.

WT: Like I say, the union paying off for us because they announced it the other day. You know, like we got to be fair to all the employees when uniforms or a raise come up. Police and firemen wanted a union. He know we got a union, though. We can't overlook them laborers. They be going, too. Got to negotiate and get that four cent.

CB: Public works.

WT: Right, public works. So it wasn't for that union, he probably would have say, "Ain't thinking about them laborers." They weren't going to say that because the union was down there at the council meeting.

WC: Yeah, I wasn't going to let the city come in here and give a raise to police because they say they job dangerous. Our job as dangerous as they job is. You know, we got out there, be in the same work field and whatever. But now, I have been here a long time, and blacks done got ran over behind trucks and like toes messed up, hand cut off, so it's dangerous the same way the police is.

WT: Getting on their feet a hundred, three hundred times a day behind the truck you got to be on the alert at all times, because somebody can go by take you out in one second. Somebody could call

your name, you could step out there and get hit. It might be the last of you. They even said it dangerous.

CB: Yeah, it's way more dangerous than their job.

WC: Yeah, they came around this time talking about they need a fifteen percent raise, but I was setting at home looking at TV, saying to myself, "I need to be a union man, because I'll tell them we dangerous the same way the police is." They liable to get shot, killed, but you can get ran over the same way and lose your life or whatever. And then when you go to the grocery store—.

WT: A lot of them don't like city people [city employees].

WC: There some people got shot on the city truck one time when I was working.

WT: Yeah, I know one guy said "I don't like --" He said, "You ought to get the hell out the road?" Because he don't like city folks.

CB: You know that Reid boy, he got shot in the neck. He didn't know he was shot. Some children did it, you know.

WT: They don't like city people. You know, people just don't like you.

WC: And then when you leave the killing part, when they go to the store, they don't say, "Well, you work for the street and sanitation, your bread just cost a dollar." You work for the police department, since you got a raise, you pay two dollars. They don't say that. They charge the same price for everything that they charge everybody else. Ain't no different in the store. You can't got no discount card saying I work for the city of Birmingham, so this your card for you. So you can't present it to the doctor and the doctor say so and so, so and so. They don't look at that. They don't have that no way, but even if they had one, they not going to look at it. It'll be just like the woman what just died, sitting over there hollering and then dying, and they set right there and let her die.

KH: In the emergency room?

WC: Yeah.

KH: I read about that.

WC: And it's bad. They probably looked at her and said, "Well, we don't want to be waiting on her. She got a little different color to her." But the lady died.

CB: The color was green. Didn't have no insurance.

WC: Yeah. So just think about it. But they supposed to have a job. They supposed to be taking an oath for a job. This is my job to save folks, and you stand around there and let folks die and don't even try. You just as guilty as the man took the gun and said just shot her. Ain't no different in the guilt and you sitting there saying you ain't doing your job.

WT: We want Willie to come back, and he retired from the city, and work for us. We'd like for him to come back and work for the union some more so we get some more. But I'm leaving here. But I'll always be a union man.

KH: What else would you like for the union to accomplish in Birmingham?

WT: You know, well, they doing a good job. Sometime you just need to get better representatives in different places who you don't mind asking somebody, tell him to do something like Willie Carghill, go do something about it. You might have a few of them now that says something and they don't do it. They get up there and they let the man brainwash them. But Willie Carghill wasn't that kind of man. What he go in there for, that's what he go in there to work on. But majority of them these days, you know, they tell you they for you, and they get there, "Man, you shouldn't have *been* late," go along with the man. I figure they need better representatives.

WC: Well, in my mind, when you say union, regardless of the situation and how the outcome be, you should be on the box saying something about it. I remember hearing about six—maybe about a year ago or seven, eight months ago, that the union came around. They had these people on four day. They put them on five day right at the time gas gone up. Well, the city could have saved money by letting them stay on four day. The boss is on the south side, ain't got nothing to do with this, period.

But they follow all from the head folks from the city hall, put these folks on five days a week. And then they went on five days a week because they couldn't stand for them to be off work to say whatever, because the job they doing on Wednesday, they could have did it on Monday and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and still kept the trucks there to save money. But I don't think the union got involved any. They sitting in the back, but if I'd been the union man, I'd have been up there at city hall, not fighting them, because they just got jobs. Many people, they work, just like this man work and this man work.

CB: They looking for all they can get.

WC: Yeah. I would have been at the city hall—.

WT: You know, for years we been on four days now, about fifteen or twenty years. All they ever wanted, they changing now. I see what Willie talking about. Need somebody to go in there and tell four days, they been on four days—.

WC: City could have saved gas, could have saved trucks, because every day those trucks don't run, it's a savings to the city. So they went on five days a week. The city ain't cleaned up no better. People still complain, but they going to complain anyhow.

WT: They ain't doing but riding on Wednesday.

WC: To me, they don't go out and publicize enough what the city doing and what they ain't doing so the public will understand what kind of job these people's got. Because the city let the public call in there, "You missed my garbage." How in the hell you got four people driving the truck, going down this road right here, and your garbage sitting out there, but they going to miss your house? And they ain't doing no p.s. work that says look, when your garbage be missed, you must ain't got—. I got good employees sitting here working for this city. No. They know they got to go back if they catch it in time, so why you going back and get a can when you could have got it while you was there?

WT: You could have got it, get one can, and you could have got it then.

WC: Yeah, and could have got it when you's there.

CB: The thing is, you miss one, you miss them all. Because you remember one time we forgot about a street? [Laughter]

WC: Yeah, forgot it was there.

WT: Now when somebody telling me it's on the street—. I got a call like that. I agree with you. I say, "Lady, you didn't bring your garbage out." Sometimes I get them to tell the truth. I said, "Well, you had a good boyfriend and kept on and slept." They want you to come back and lie like that. Want you to come back and get that garbage. Just tell the truth. You overslept yourself.

WC: The city be—. You know, you look at it as your wife. Just tell the truth. You'll stand no better and the city make these folks say, "Look. I got good employee. I know they ain't missed no one garbage can. And if they did, I'm sorry, but look, now try to get it there on time." And I tell him they got to be more careful and look for your can, not to use another three gallons of gas to go back out there for sole purpose. I don't care whether you black or white, just when my truck run there, have your stuff out there so they can get it. We run at six o'clock. We open up at six o'clock to leave here. May not get to your house till nine o'clock, so you just setting your garbage out at nine o'clock, but that truck went to work at six o'clock. Now if they get to your house at eight o'clock and you ain't got your garbage out there, that's your fault because you should have put the garbage out at six o'clock. That what time we start. That what time I look for your garbage to go out there.

So then they won't have any problem, but the city sit here and take these problems the same way we used to have sewer calls. They used to pay people for sewer run in they house. County got it, county don't pay nobody for no sewer, but they all at the time called the county out there to get it now, because the city fathers, the big folks in the office, sit here and let this happen. Want to be a good person? If you call me, I'll go back and get it. It's just this stuff kind of run on through people we know. I can call the city, and I'll call the mayor and the mayor going to tell me to come get it, when the

mayor should take responsibility of his employee and said to his employee, well, this here and this here and that there. If the stuff follow him, it his fault. Well, we ain't going to get it till we run again. This ain't our last day of service Monday. We run again your way Thursday. He take out the trash Thursday it'll be sure to get it right then.

WT: But that's what I'm tell them. I tell them 'have a nice day.' Just put it back inside. I can't call nobody to go home; it costs too much money. And what would I look like calling a big old crew to come and get your garbage? Would you mind bringing it out there Monday, because you was not missed.

KH: It sounds like city government isn't doing as much to protect the workers.

CB: They never have. They take they word before they take ours.

WT: I had a different man tell me, "Hey, if they say they miss it, they miss it." One time, somebody had some wood set out there, you know, arguing and fussing out there. I said, "They might be telling a lie on your worker." "Well, they—. He must have cussed them. They wouldn't lie." I said, "Man, you sound crazy. These people cuss you first." But let him tell it, our man always wrong.

CB: He probably had that wood sitting in the back.

WC: And I think another thing wrong with the city—.

WT: They don't always tell the truth, but I know sometime it don't be their job. Folk just call him and make up things, and he believe. He believes what they said. The people are right that they have a break too long. They believe it.

CB: I'd like to see the worker rights law, the law changed in the state, because just like we pay our union dues, then you got five or six more, they don't pay union dues. They get the same benefit we get, you see. But they ain't paying that, and then they brag about it, but they play right behind us. They collect union dues every month out of our check. They don't want to pay union dues, "I ain't going to get in no union. It ain't going to do no good. The union ain't no good." See, they need to be made to

pay union dues just like us, but they say we can't do nothing about it because they got the right-to-work law.

WT: Well, what they do do, they got laws, though, you know. Some of them get in there, they join a day before they have the hearing. Then you all there. But you have to stay in there a year, though.

CB: Yeah, yeah, But they be a lot of folks get in trouble with me.

WT: "Where can I get some help?" I said, "Well, join that union." They done messed up with their job. At least got to stay in there another year or you can't get out till next July or whatever.

CB: But it shouldn't be like that.

WC: But going back to the union and the city, the mayor his self, for two times that I know of, gave raise. Nothing to the employee was doing the work. They gave it to the big bosses what oversee the work, and I think the union should have big responsibility to pay with that, because my workers need money, just like your director what give me my audit need money. You living in a two hundred thousand dollar house being the director, and you got this man living in a rented house for thirteen dollars a month, and I'm just using these figures, whatever. But how you come here and being the mayor and say, like I heard that he said, I don't know for sure that it's so.

KH: You're talking about the current mayor, Mayor [Bernard] Kincaid?

WC: Yeah, Mayor Kincaid. Yeah, and city director. They director, Steven Thatcher, going to sit here and say "Huh, I'll pay you thirteen thousand dollars to make sure -- that going back to the slavery times -- going to make sure I'm going to give you something so you can direct these folks to do a better job. But it came down to times, saying, "Well, let me give them some money. Let me cut you down to six dollars—I'm just using a figure now—and take these other six dollars what you got to help divide it between these here people across the board." A hundred dollar gift across the board that—. What I would have been talking about, and you sitting here saying I know you got a right to do what

you want to do with your money, but to make good working relationship with peoples would have been saying to me as mayor that you should think about all your employees, not just your employees right here. All these people your employees, so, you know, to kick you in the behind and tell you that this man here overseeing you what you doing a good job. I'm not trying to say Steven Thatcher isn't doing a good job.

But the mayor should have looked beyond that point to say that all these are my employees. That like me being a husband, got a wife and children, but I'm going to give my wife something every month and don't even think about my children. I should be a parent, a father, a figure for the whole family, not part of the family, because giving my wife money to buy her a new dress and got some other little girl that got to go without anything, to make her do this and feed them what she want to, I would have been saying, "Now wait a minute. All y'all, the wife and the children, are mine. I got to make sure all." Because this is the way it is, the same system, it's just father and mama and children. It's the mayor, Steven Thatcher, and the employee. So it's the same system, but we can't make him—well, we will try, in the union, we'll try to say the different. Sometime peoples will do better when they understand you. Most of them they will, and nobody tell them.

CB: Like I understand they get an eleven percent raise. They gave them eleven percent.

WC: Yeah.

CB: And then we get the four percent raise, they going to get the four percent, too?

WC: Get that, too.

CB: That make them fifteen and us four.

WT: I didn't understand, why a union—. I know you going to cut off, but like the union ought to be kind of help people, go around and trying to recruit more peoples, have a meeting with some of the employment and get more people in the union. Like I said, putting it all on one people, that'll make the union more stronger. I don't think they come around and even try to get anybody any more.

CB: Yeah, they do.

WC: Yeah, but see, stuff like my saying that, when people put forth something before they even read and the union ain't saying nothing, or your money and the union ain't saying nothing, that makes people like myself or him say, "Well, I don't want to pay my union dues neither." Well, maybe the union grow if the union doing something.

WT: I don't need no union. I'm the kind of person who says 'they don't care what I do,' and I don't care either, but I still support the union. I haven't needed it in the last twenty years, but I still pay the dues.

CB: I been in ever since we got it.

WT: He don't need it either, but we just do what we can to help organize.

WC: I'm a union man from my heart, my daddy was a coal miner, he was in the union, and I think this whole world need a union, because for the simple reason it can help you more so than just you sitting here saying 'raise.' It'll help you from being fired, it helps you from being when you want somebody to know something and you can't say it because you going to fire me, then my union man say it for me.

WT: Right. So we don't even never need it -- me and Charles and Willie, we didn't need to be in nothing because we just wouldn't let no foreman push us to the tee, but we stayed in anyway to help out some young peoples.

WC: I wouldn't mind going back to be a union leader, but you know, sometimes the peoples worry you so bad by not understanding. We need a slight course in understanding what your union can do for you and what they can't do for you and what it will do for you. You'll be needing all that, and you also need to know that your head man should stay and sit down because any time they want to dot an i that you think shouldn't be dotted, you can be there to say something about it. Not because you can do nothing about it. Because you can say something and it might do something for saying it.

KH: Well, thank you.

CB: OK. All right.

KH: Thank you very much.

CB: OK.

END OF TRANSCRIPTION