

(CONTINUATION of conversation with Mr. Carroll Barker, Feb. 15)
Tape 2

MR. WARREN: Let's go onnwith Memphis.

MR. BARBER: Well, I don't really know enough about it. I got stuck there in the snow, over Christmas, and I landed on one of these people and stayed there. I'd heard about it and I always wanted to go down there and see a little bit for myself. But the quality of life, you might say, is much more segregated there, than it is here. There are a few white liberals, they do have a struggling little chapter of the National Community Human Relations or the Tennessee Council on Human Relations, but I was very impressed, over and over again, with this.

MR. WARREN: Who this?

MR. BARKER: Vasco (?) Smith.

MR. WARREN:

MR. BARKER: Well, Willis started it. And Mabon Williams. He and Willis dreamt it up, and I got in on making a reservation at the Holiday Inn downtown for Smith, to make a test case, and I picked him up at the airport and we went there and he was refused, of course. Then the local Unitarian minister went in afterwards to verify the fact that they did indeed have rooms when they said they did not, and he, as Dr. Smith has said, any number of times, he said: "You know we just don't have people like you in Memphis."

MR. WARREN: Like the Unitarian minister?

MR. BARKER: And myself. I said, well, it does seem

strange to me because I'm sure we have a great many here in Nashville. I may be wrong, but I think we do." So that, as I say, the-- well, I can't think of a better term, but the quality of Negro life is much more segregated there on the middle-class level. Now of course, I don't suppose there would be too much difference on the lower-class level.

MR. WARREN: Did you see the editorial in the Press ~~Semi~~ Scimitar this week on the civil rights bill?

MR. BARKER: No.

MR. WARREN: Complete endorsement, a very positive endorsement, said that if the Senate doesn't pass it immediately, it will by a mandate of the people.

MR. BARKER: Well, that's stronger than the Tennessean has been. They had one but it was-- it wasn't the lead ~~xi~~ editorial and it wasn't that forthright.

MR. WARREN: This was forthright, there's no possible shadow of a doubt about this. There's no ifs, ands or buts, and it was prominently displayed.

MR. BARKER: Well, this was no longer what you said Everts had said, that most people commit themselves on that. Because both papers at the beginning were not very helpful at all.

MR. WARREN: What I've also heard said is that this may have some tie-in with the local political situation.

MR. BARKER: Well, they endorsed-- both papers endorsed Negro candidates and

MR. WARREN: Yes, it's always a ~~qui~~ question of juggling

jockeying

for position, with the Negro vote. I don't know how this is argued, because I don't know enough about the tie-in or not, but this is one of the suspicions in this, I've heard. That was editorial.

MR. BARKER: Well, Memphis politics is very devious, locally. I don't pretend to understand it but currently all kinds of things are happening in Tennessee now because of the Negro vote. That's apparently-- and almost everybody accepts the fact that if it had been withheld from Clement he would not have been governor, and ~~xxxx~~ if Rossbass has editorial ambitions, so he voted for the bill. Richard Fulton has been very ~~forthw~~ forthright all the way along in favor of civil rights legislation, and I hope it doesn't kill any

MR. WARREN: How old is he?

MR. BARKER: In his 30s, I think.

MR. WARREN: Well, he can plan for the future, then.

MR. BARKER: He has strong labor support and he has the "Tennessean" solidly behind him.

MR. WARREN: What line has the Banner taken on this?

MR. BARKER: Oh very vicious, and they lose no opportunity to discredit it or anybody that's for it, as often as they can.

MR. WARREN: That was the reason that I thought it was true, ~~in~~ it was true in the past; and I hadn't thought of it in the last--

MR. BARKER: They wrote all about Bayard Rustin's peccadilloes in The Banner, and The Gennessee just glided over things like that, you know.

MR. WARREN: What sort of peccadilloes?

MR. BARKER: Oh, he's-- has some kind of moral events in Pasadena. I'm not telling anything on the man; I've never met him, but I was-- it is documented, though, and The Banner went on and on about this during the March on Washington, and they've been-- they reluctantly accept changes once they're made here, but they always fight them, and The Tennessean exerts influence behind the scenes very often, very little. They don't editorialize very often.

MR. WARREN: But they have a behind-the-scenes influence in favor of quotes rational change?

MR. BARKER: Yes. Yes, an awful lot of things can go on now, with all that pass through Jack Siegenthaler's office. For instance, John Lewis-- have you interviewed him yet?

MR. WARREN: No, I have met him but I haven't talked with him. I met him

MR. BARKER: He'll be back here this week. He has some trial coming up again. I just heard he'll be back. He wanted a particular young businessman here, and if you ever had the time Inmanoti, it would be worthwhile interviewing him. So he tells Jack Siegenthaler that Inmanoti was outstanding of the Mayor's com-

mittee, and in a few days Inmanoti was accepted. Well, there may have been other people, ~~and~~ that wanted him on there. But in any case, I imagine Siegenthaler had something to do with it.

MR. WARREN: The original headquarters is down in Atlanta, isn't it?

MR. BARKER: Yes. He's president of SNCK now. You see he was ~~head~~ of the students here during the time most of the time I've been here, and was heavily involved from 1960 on right here.

MR. WARREN: There's a section in Baldwin's last book to this effect, rough paraphrase: according to the best testimony, that of those in the embattled South, the southern mob does not represent the majority of whites.

. but will represent the white majority. But it will feel a moral backing. Does that make any sense to you?

MR. BARKER: I think it does. Because you-- this is almost a truism now, that where the people run the show, in whatever-- whoever they happen to be, wherever they happen to be in a community, say there will be no nonsense, there is no nonsense, by and large. Now Nashville's a little bit in between, so you can find good illustration of both there, which in a sense proves the point. In other words, there are times when the officialdom has been lax, there's trouble. When the officials have been forthright and says we're not going to have any trouble, there isn't any trouble. Now

the violence I mentioned, soon after I came here, the mayor had a tremendous number of problems. He was forced, with this white metropolitan government which he did not want, the police force was pretty demoralized apparently because of this, because they didn't want it either, he told them they didn't want it, and things like this were happening. Then of course other things entered in too, last spring-- well, things were almost more than anybody can handle, but we had just gone over the metropolitan government and nobody quite knew what was going to happen, you know. The mayor was uncertain how far his authority ran in some questions, and he had inherited this deplorable police department. They did, by and large, a pretty good job, but still there was not enough obvious open pressure by the leaders of the community; this was a disgrace to the city. The Tennessean didn't say enough. The Banner had headlines like "Police Quell Negro Attack," which was somebody wrestled with a policeman's billy club and that's a Negro attack. Well, the behavior was certainly not nonviolent in many cases, but total misrepresentation of the situation. If you come from-- if you read that happening in Cypress, you can imagine what kind of attack you would imagine it would be. And I think that by and large this is true; I saw this out West before I even came here. I was in Arizona when it got in under the wire. Arizona desegregated in 1951; they had a rather patchy kind of segregation, any-

way. It was obligatory in grade schools and permissive in high school, and the only communities where they had any trouble was in the communities where the mayor said, well, geez, I don't know; we're likely to have trouble over this. In communities where they said this is the way it's going to be, no trouble.

MR. WARREN: Some people, of course, are going to say, to this remark of Baldwin's that silence gives consent. The mob is actually acting out the will of the majority, which is silent because it doesn't have to speak

MR. BARKER: I think the mob thinks that. I think that's the important factor, that if the police get no instructions, they will (it has been said, too, in a southern community, they will assume an attack against custom, even when it's not against law, is an attack against authority, and they will behave accordingly. If they have been told otherwise, they will behave in a different fashion.

MR. WARREN: There's another interpretation, different from that one, that the mob doesn't represent the will of the majority, but the majority is so fragmented, so divided, it has no point or focus for a statement of feeling or a statement of values. Let's say you have 50, 60 per cent that against ~~int~~ the mob is doing what it stands for, if there's no point along there where you could have a strong statement or group action, they call it too much spread, in that majority. It's a negative majority; it's not a majority

for something, it's a majority against something. It has no point or focus.

MR. BARKER: Well, I think both have probably been true, I wouldn't attempt to say which is probably what you get, but I would certainly agree that the mob doesn't represent the majority of feeling; at least in the areas where I'm very familiar with it. It might very well, in some black belt county. But even there, I would have serious doubts. I'm not quite so sure in thinking over the quotation that I like the phrase "moral vacuum" very well, but at least I understand, I think what he's getting at. I'll go along with it.

MR. WARREN: I'm not sure I know precisely what he means; I have a general notion what he means.

MR. BARKER: So I'll just leave it at that. I can get moralistic about race relations all the time, even though I-- but I have learned it doesn't help very much. If, however, the people who pretend to be the guardians of the community's morals keep quiet (and this, of course, includes the church and even the administration), Americans expect their leaders to make more pronouncements as a part of political life. But this I will go along with completely. In other words, there's a moral vacuum in that sense that these people do not speak out.

MR. WARREN: in a survey of New Orleans, the advisory commission for civil rights, they said, wht I

read of the report, that not a single person of any significance as a community leader, uttered New crisis Orleans crises. Not one would show himself.

MR. BARKER: Well, New Orleans, I thought was so bad that I'm inclined to go along with Thurgood Marshall's charge that the school board picked those schools deliberately. That may be very unfair, but in other words, they picked the places where they thought they could get the most commotion. I say this seems very unfair, but considering the situation, it may very well be true.

MR. WARREN: It said New Orleans, though, that the first day or so there was no trouble at all; it was only after it was worked up the second day, that you got it wasn't spontaneous reaction, it was a devised reaction.

MR. BARKER: This is true, too, because the mobs just ~~ever~~ don't happen. You ~~would~~ could see it on a very minor scale here, there were always a few young ~~whored~~ what do they call 'em, hoodlums, a little bit unfortunate young white men wandering around downtown, probably they'd been downtown looking for a little mischief anyway, these old men on the sidewalks, egging them on and patting them on the back, figuratively or literally, and even then it took quite a lot to build up to action. You know these things don't happen; those women didn't all decide to go down there and scream out the same ~~time~~ damn thing at the same time. Somebody was behind it. Who, I don't know. Well, that of course is why it's so important in these cases, if people

✓ who should, speak out because that very often scares the people who are going to get the mob out, it makes them feel it's not going to be very well worthwhile venture.

END OF TAPE