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Interviewee: Jenkins, Herbert

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HERBERT JENKINS: I'm hearing. I don't have any trouble hearing, I can hear sound, but the apparatus that makes me distinguish one sound from another is confused. I can't distinguish one word -- one sound from another; they all sound alike. I hear you talking, but I don't understand what you're saying, it's very con-- if I hadn't lost my hearing I'd still be working for somebody, but --

RONALD BAYOR: Sure.

JENKINS: I'm not, so.

BAYOR: Well I'll try and talk, you know, as clearly as I can.

I was first interested in the preparations made for the hiring of the police in 1948.

JENKINS: Preparations made for what?

BAYOR: For the hiring of the police, of the black police in 1948. I was curious particularly how Hartsfield prepared the white community for the black policemen.

JENKINS: Well we didn't -- that came about -- there really never was [00:01:00] that much planning; it's something they kind of stumbled over. The first place, I was

assigned to city hall as an aide and a chauffeur to Mayor Key, way back there, before Hartsfield. Well on one occasion, I remember quite well, I made a reference in some of these books I wrote --

BAYOR: I saw that.

JENKINS: -- *Forty Years on the Force*. But one day at lunch, Mayor Key told me to be in the office at 2:30, hich was a common thing that happened often. But on this particular time, there was -- at two o'clock, there was a committee of 12 citizens come in to see the mayor. And all of them were black; there was [00:02:00] only one white man in the crowd, and all the rest of them were black. But they'd come in to see the mayor, and what they wanted was, they had requested -- they requested the mayor to employ Negro police. And he told them at the time that their request was reasonable, but it couldn't be done at that time. Before it could be done, we first got to educate the black people, as well as the white people, to that point, and then we can do it. You go back, and I'll have to educate the white people, and you work on the black people, and when the time comes, you can come back and I'll appoint them. When they left, he wanted me to hear that conversation, because they was the people that, they would be working on it all this period of time, and (inaudible).

And he told me eventually [00:03:00] it would happen. And I ought to be prepared, I ought to start studying the problem then, and be prepared when the time comes, be prepared to (inaudible) it was going to be highly controversial, and I ought to work on it. Well, it was a pretty ridiculous statement at the time, to think that the mayor of Atlanta was advocating the employment of black police, but it was true. But Key said at the time, (inaudible) when they'll have to do that. And you'll have an opportunity to get -- have the advantage on most people in the police department. You'll start studying it. Well I did, when I went to (inaudible). I went to New York and Chicago with Mr. Key. And I always would go down to the police department, [00:04:00] and talk to the chief, and especially ask him about how many Negro police he had, and how he used them, and then I started telling the situation. Well, 15 years later, when the time come, Hartsfield had already defeated Key, and was the mayor, and he wanted to put -- he was ready to put -- he was [the one that?] really put them on.

BAYOR: He wasn't ready at first though? He wasn't ready to do it right when he was elected?

JENKINS: He wasn't what?

BAYOR: He wasn't ready to put black police on right when  
Hartsfield was elected, right? When he came into office?

JENKINS: When Hartsfield was elected?

BAYOR: Yeah.

JENKINS: Oh no.

BAYOR: Yeah, later on, right.

JENKINS: It was -- Key never was ready for it. The day that I  
was in the office, he told me he was getting to be an old  
man, and he would never live to see Negro police in  
Atlanta, but someday, they would have them. And I ought to  
be [00:05:00] prepared (inaudible) some leadership, was  
where that came about.

BAYOR: Did Key ever do anything at all to prepare the white  
community?

JENKINS: Nothing except Mr. Key had a good understanding of the  
problem. And he was very closely associated with most  
Negro politicians. He got that support before anybody else  
did. But there was a reason for that, they had a recall  
election, they tried to recall Mayor Key. But -- and there  
wasn't many Negroes could vote, but those that had bothered  
to register could vote, and those who was registered could  
vote, but there wasn't many of them registered, [00:06:00]  
because they couldn't vote in the white primary. But the  
recall was a general election, and they could vote in the

general election. So therefore, they voted for the first time on an election where it really counted, and that put them very close to him. He attended a lot of their meetings, and I know one of my jobs was driving him around, was keep up with the schedule, see where he was supposed to be, see that he was there. I know, I can remember one time on a Saturday, I said this must be a mistake, I noticed a book here for you to be at the Baptist church on Richard Street, noontime Sunday. [00:07:00] I says that's a Negro church. He says, "I know. Dr. Carter, the preacher that day, he was a Negro preacher, he's been there 50 years, they're celebrating his anniversary, and I'm going out there to help him celebrate it." And they, that was the reason that we were going. So that was one of the first times that I knew about his connection. But I remember going out there that day, I had never met, or didn't know, any educated blacks. Of course there's lots of them, but I never had any occasion to meet them until I was there. And when we got out to the church, they carried him on down and put him up on the pulpit, well as we went in the back door, I sat down in the first bench on the back, in the back of the church, [00:08:00] and sat there. But I heard some of the most elaborate speeches that day, when they were introducing Mr. Key, and talking about Mr. Key, from an

educated Negro, they were my first experience with hearing educated Negroes. And well, that was really the start of the employment of the Negro police. I didn't have anything to do with putting them on. Mayor Hartsfield actually put them on. But he had (inaudible), an alderman, Huey introduced the resolution authorizing the city to employ eight Negro police. It was the first action taken, and again, (inaudible) Huey [00:09:00] was the alderman that introduced this, he authorized it. But the old (inaudible) referred it to the police committee for a public hearing, and they wouldn't act on it until the chief of police put his recommendation on that. I had to put my recommendation on there before they'd sign it. Well, before they would vote on it. Well as a result of the -- by the time it got to me, I was ready to sign it. And it worked pretty good. We had -- it created some real problems, but it didn't create as many problems as some of the other changes in the law, and integration law.

BAYOR: Let me get back to -- Mayor Key then didn't really do anything for the blacks at all?

JENKINS: Mayor Key didn't what?

BAYOR: Didn't do anything for the blacks? [00:10:00]

JENKINS: He didn't do anything, except he had a thorough understanding, and he believed in it. If he'd had an

opportunity, he would have. But he didn't take the bull by the horns and do it, and that's what he would have had to have done. And he didn't -- he wasn't ready to do that. He didn't do that. Then Hartsfield did it later.

BAYOR: Yeah. How did Hartsfield prepare the whites for acceptance of the blacks?

JENKINS: How did he -- well --

BAYOR: Prepare the white community. The white community for black police?

JENKINS: Well, it was pretty well divided. You take the businesspeople in Atlanta, they didn't make much noise about it, but generally, they favored integration to an extent. [00:11:00] See, the worst thing that could happen to a business was a demonstration or a riot. Therefore, businesspeople was opposed to those things, demonstrations and riots. Therefore, they favored integration. Not as integration, but to prevent interference with their business.

BAYOR: Right.

JENKINS: And as people like Mayor Hartsfield depended on businesspeople, there was -- I remember in those, one of those books, it must have been *Forty Years on the Force*, I think I named about a dozen businesspeople.

BAYOR: I saw that, yeah.

JENKINS: Well if you noticed a name, Mr. Woodrow, [00:12:00] I named Mr. Rich, I named all the prominent businesspeople that Hartsfield reported to. He'd report to them, and they would support Hartsfield in his activities in supporting the Negroes. And in the end, (inaudible). I don't know whether he'd been elected or whether he was just getting ready to run, but he was still -- took the leadership, in establishing, for instance, even having the -- settling the restaurant dispute, that's what the strike was, that's what the demonstration was. And then, [00:13:00] then (inaudible) took the lead in helping them resolve the businesspeople and the blacks, helping them meet and resolve those problems. In fact, they didn't integrate the restaurants until after the school had been integrated, they tied that all together, [Ivan?] had a very important part in that. Even more so than Hartsfield did. Hartsfield advocated, and he'd get somebody else to do it, but he'd never get on the firing lines himself, he would avoid it most of the time. And they used to say Hartsfield (inaudible) Negro, he just wants to give them enough to keep them satisfied. And that seems to be the way he handled it was that seemed to be a good way for him to handle it, [00:14:00] it served his purpose.

BAYOR: Back in the time of Mayor Key, the -- all these white business leaders, Rich and the other ones, didn't care how the Negroes were treated in the city?

JENKINS: Well so far as I know, so far as I remember, there was no white people advocating integration at that time. If there were I don't remember, because it didn't come to Mr. Key's attention any time it -- the subject came up, it would come to his attention, Mr. Key was in favor, because I remember he had his family, had family friends that was Catholic, for instance. There was a strong resentment [00:15:00] against the Catholics, the Klan was very active, and that was an important part of the Klan's -- but Mr. Key would always take an open stand, if these Catholic people, or Jewish people, anybody that there was discrimination against, he would always take their side. And as I recall, there wasn't many blacks being advocated at that time, there was a lot of other, because it was more common to be against Catholics than it was blacks at that time. But Mr. Key was very liberal-minded, and didn't mind saying so, and had that record, and stood on it.

BAYOR: When you were at the meetings with [00:16:00] blacks before integration, before the blacks came into the police department, what type of things were discussed?

JENKINS: What was that?

BAYOR: At the meetings, you said in your books that you attended meetings with black leaders before the police department was desegregated.

JENKINS: Yeah.

BAYOR: What type of things were discussed before the black police were brought on the force? Between you and the black community?

JENKINS: Well, what kind of things were discussed at the meetings? Well Roy Wilkins was a former resident of Atlanta. He later lived in New York or somewhere. His father was killed (inaudible). And he was secretary to the NAACP. [00:17:00] So he was always running the leadership where the blacks were meeting, and the NAACP was trying to develop reasons and ways to develop it. Roy Wilkins was one of the leaders that was always there. And I developed a very good relationship with Roy Wilkins. And Thurgood Marshall was the NAACP's lawyer; I developed a very good relationship with both of them. And they were most helpful to me, they both made some pretty nice statements about me to the NAACP, and to the IECP. I remember [00:18:00] Thurgood Marshall once told the International Association of Chief of Police in New York, they was meeting, we was having a meeting there, and Thurgood Marshall told them that they didn't have any police brutality in Atlanta, for

the simple reason you had a chief of police in Atlanta that wouldn't tolerate it. He told the IECP that, well there was some truth in it, but it wasn't quite as strong as he made it. But it was most helpful that Thurgood Marshall was saying nice things about me.

BAYOR: Sure. And this is back in the '40s? The 1940s? Or -  
-

JENKINS: Oh yeah. That was -- yeah, that was in -- I was elected president of IECP in '65, I guess. [00:19:00] It was in -- probably in the '50s.

BAYOR: Did the black leaders give suggestions on how to bring blacks into the policemen?

JENKINS: The black leadership?

BAYOR: Give any suggestions to you about how to bring blacks into the police department?

JENKINS: Oh yeah, I had a good relationship, there was two people. Dr. Boulder, Bill Boulder's still preaching. Preaching here and now, and Dr. -- [the dead man's father?], Martin Luther King Sr.

BAYOR: Right.

JENKINS: He was -- those two was two that I could always depend on, [00:20:00] I could go see them, or I could call them, and they'd come see me. And we could talk about anything,

and they'd try to help me find the answer to it. The --  
they were most helpful.

BAYOR: Did they agree to the restrictions on the black  
police?

JENKINS: Oh yeah.

BAYOR: They did? Not arresting whites, things like that?

JENKINS: Oh yeah.

BAYOR: They agreed to that?

JENKINS: They were so -- the Negro police did to themselves.

They was very much for it. At that time, that helped the  
black police more than anybody else. The black police was  
having a hard time, they was having a difficult, enforcing  
the law, and what this created was somebody to create a  
situation just to get them involved. And they didn't  
[00:21:00] -- they didn't want to get involved. Because  
they couldn't win if they -- if they got involved. So it  
was designed to help them, and they realized that it helped  
them.

BAYOR: When were the restrictions taken away? When could  
they arrest whites, when could they go to a white police  
station, when were all those things done away with?

JENKINS: When did we remove that?

BAYOR: Yeah, yeah.

JENKINS: I don't know, but there's an old -- see at the time, Jimmy Venable and his organization, and the Klan, came before the police committee, (inaudible) the blacks was insisting that the restrictions be removed. And the police committee was having a hearing [00:22:00] on it. And Jimmy Venable and his Klan members were there to be heard, and they had statements to make, and participated. And as a matter of fact, they persuaded Gilliam, who was chairman of the police committee at that time, that they wouldn't change it today, but before we do change it, we'll let y'all be heard again. Then after that went on for some discussion, then I got with Henry Adams, and when we put the restrictions in originally, the (inaudible) board didn't vote on it. [00:23:00] Well, they did vote on it too, they put it in the restrictions, but then the Ku Klux Klan's lawyer immediately appealed that to the Georgia Supreme Court, and the Georgia court heard it, and the court ruled in that case that the wisdom of the decision of the chief of police in the performance of his lawful duty was not a matter for judicial review. They wanted to (inaudible) that's not true, though. I mean, the courts had a right to review anything. But the court itself said it didn't. So they ruled in favor of the city, and that was it. So then when this came up, and they was trying to

repeal it, and I was advocating to repeal it, [00:24:00] it was (inaudible) -- it got to the point that, and I'd already been told that if it goes to the Supreme Court, they won't back it. So I talked to [Bowden?], and I said (inaudible) to Bowden, that the Georgia Superior Court approved this, and (inaudible) Bowden told me that I didn't have to have a legal opinion on it, I could just write an order repealing it, because it was my regulations that I had put in, and I could take them out without a court ruling. And it would stand up, the courts would support [00:25:00] it. So I issued an order there one day, the restrictions imposed on the Negro police previously are hereby removed, period. And then he ruled that that was the law, it no longer applied.

BAYOR: What was the reaction from the white community?

JENKINS: What was -- well, the reaction was from -- Gilliam was real upset, because he had promised them he would give them a hearing. And here I had repealed it without a hearing. Didn't need to have a hearing on it. (coughs) So some of them was disturbed about it, and some of them was upset. But generally, it was generally accepted. I mean, it seemed [00:26:00] to me at the time, and it seems now, that those that knew enough about the law and understood the law, that if the courts ever acted on it, they couldn't

support that, they would have to throw it out. And those of us that knew that knew it was going to be thrown out, wasn't disturbed because we thought it was going to be thrown out anyway.

BAYOR: You mentioned in the -- in one of your books that the white police backed up the black police when they were in trouble.

JENKINS: The white --

BAYOR: The white police helped the black police when they were -- when the black were in trouble.

JENKINS: (inaudible) that the white police --

BAYOR: The white police backed up the black police when the black police were in trouble. When they needed help.

JENKINS: Oh yeah.

BAYOR: And I wanted to know about that.

JENKINS: Well that was [00:27:00] one thing that disturbed me at the time. There was still a lot of people that opposed Negro police. Some on the police force. And I was afraid if it ever came to -- when they had an opportunity, that they would oppose it. But that time never developed. It was called to my attention that if it ever came to -- if any police officer ever had an opportunity and objected to it, it was never called to my attention, because I never called -- I never had a case called to my attention where a

policeman objected to a Negro police being a [00:28:00]  
Negro -- being a policeman. And (inaudible) in any way.  
When it got to the place to where anybody was fighting a  
policeman, physically fighting him, then another police was  
on the policeman's side, whether he was black or white. I  
mean, that problem never developed, as far as I was  
concerned.

BAYOR: Let me show you this, this is an article from the  
paper a few years ago. Just an article on the first black  
police.

JENKINS: (inaudible) first black cops faced uphill battle.

BAYOR: Yeah, let me -- I wanted to show you this. They  
interviewed a few of them. And a few of the black police  
mentioned, for example, [00:29:00] that, you know, here,  
the whites drove the wagons and were not cooperative. They  
would pull up on the other side of the street, if you had  
an unruly passenger, a prisoner, they would just sit there  
and not help you. Remember that at all?

JENKINS: That's McKinney.

BAYOR: Right.

JENKINS: Doing the talking.

BAYOR: Right.

JENKINS: Well McKinney was -- that's him right there.

BAYOR: That's -- yeah, McKinney's there.

JENKINS: He was at times, appeared to be a troublemaker himself. I don't recall [00:30:00] the -- any problem developing. He talks about where --

BAYOR: Here it is, down here.

JENKINS: Well James E. (inaudible) McKinney, he's still getting a lot of publicity now.

BAYOR: Right, right.

JENKINS: But we put -- he wasn't one of the originals, he was put on later.

BAYOR: He was number nine, I think.

JENKINS: With Brooks. [Bebo?] Brooks was the captain in charge of the Negro police, and we put McKinney on, and he hadn't been on very long, until Brooks told me one day, he said if you don't get rid of McKinney, he's going to cause us trouble. [00:31:00] The sooner you fire him, the better (inaudible). If you don't, he's going to cause us trouble.

BAYOR: He stayed on a long time. He stayed on the force for a long time, McKinney.

JENKINS: Not too long. He -- in fact, we did fire him, he was all sick. And we had a rash of demonstrations at city hall, and he went over there and carried his children to the demonstration, McKinney did, and as a result of being active when he was supposed to be off sick, as a result, we suspended him, and would have fired him, but he quit.

BAYOR: Here's a statement by Warren Cochran, (inaudible).

[00:32:00] He says we had all kinds of difficulty with -- oh. We had all kinds of difficulty with the white policemen trying to frame the blacks by claiming they were drunk when they weren't. Do you remember anything like that at all?

JENKINS: Well, as a rule, people that was looking for problems found them in things like that. But as a rule, well drinking and policemen [00:33:00] wasn't much of a problem. We were pretty strict with them, just as strict with them as we were the whites, we fired several for drinking. Some we later put back, like we did the whites, but that created some problem, a little minor problem, I never considered it a major problem.

BAYOR: Do you think some whites were trying to frame the blacks at all? Trying to get them off the force?

JENKINS: At times, there were. There's no question about it.

BAYOR: Yeah. So they did harass them sometimes? They did bother them sometimes, they did try to get rid of them.

JENKINS: Well, they were pretty -- those things worked themselves out pretty good, pretty quick. [00:34:00] The -- it would never have had to travel more than we anticipated. I recall discussing it with the police officers, the white police officers themselves, knew the

white troublemakers, and generally, a police officer that was on the ball knew what he was doing. He wouldn't get involved, he would know. He could spot them.

BAYOR: What did you do about the white troublemakers?

JENKINS: About the what?

BAYOR: What did you do as chief about the white troublemakers? Were they fired, were they reprimanded? The white troublemakers.

JENKINS: No, we did whatever we [00:35:00] had to do. But again, a white officer deliberately trying to cause trouble with the black police officers was easier to handle than ordinary cases.

BAYOR: How?

JENKINS: Because once you get to investigating this, and he knows what you're doing, and he knew what your investigation was bringing, he'd know he was in trouble. So he'd back off pretty quickly.

BAYOR: Did you bring investigations against people? Did you put pressure on the whites to back off?

JENKINS: Any place that we could. If we had an opportunity, we did. And in many cases, we did.

BAYOR: There was one other one I wanted to show you. This was a fellow [00:36:00] who became one of the first black detectives. And he said he came home one night, and found

a white lady on his front porch, and at that point, two white police drove up, asked him why he had this white woman on the porch, and then Bebo Brooks had told him that night, I don't know where it's coming from, but there's a hit on you, be careful. It sounds like the whites were out to get this black detective.

(pause)

JENKINS: Well, there was some [00:37:00] white people that were anti-Negro. And never could do anything about them. I mean, there were some people on the police force that was liberal with everything you want to do until you come to the race, and then they were anti-Negro. And there wasn't much you could do about it. But they were careful not to give you anything to where you could deal with them. It was -- we had things working on our side in most of those cases. Rather than have to act on it. McKinney was one that I remember that was really demonstrating, [00:38:00]

BAYOR: Well in terms of the whites, if they really did something outrageous, then you took action against them, is that it? If they really tried to get rid of the blacks, with something very obvious, then you would get an investigation, or put pressure on them, on the whites?

JENKINS: And then the other police, if the other police knew about it, they'd tell you.

BAYOR: Tell you?

JENKINS: The -- and they couldn't do much without the others knowing it, and then they would tell it, they would protect them then.

BAYOR: So they would tell you? They would tell the chief, right? They would tell you about what was going on?

JENKINS: Oh yeah.

BAYOR: And then what'd you do?

JENKINS: Well, it depended on what the circumstances were. If it was a clear-cut violation. The [00:39:00] police committee didn't want to try anybody for those things, they didn't -- they wanted to go out on themselves. But we had some good members of the police committee, most cases, Gilliam was a good member. (inaudible) and the other members of the committee would back you up in it.

BAYOR: So most of the time, nothing -- most of the time, nothing was done about the white police in these cases?

JENKINS: I'm just trying to think, I know I can't recall a case where [00:40:00] a white policeman was disciplined or punished for abusing or mistreating a black police. Most of it was conversational talk.

BAYOR: You would have a talk with them, what's that?

JENKINS: Pardon?

BAYOR: You would have a talk with the white policemen?

JENKINS: Always.

BAYOR: You would say lay off the blacks, let's say?

JENKINS: Oh yeah.

BAYOR: Yes. OK.

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

(break in audio)

BAYOR: Let me ask you this. When the black police came on the force, did you see any change in the black crime rate? Were the black police more effective in the black neighborhoods than the whites were?

JENKINS: The black policemen was what?

BAYOR: Were the more effective in the black communities than the whites were? In other words, did -- was there any effect on the black crime rate?

JENKINS: No, that was received [00:41:00] with mixed emotions. Basically, or generally, the blacks generally favored black police. But quite often, it didn't. Quite often, you'd have police officers, black police officers go [full bully?], and you'd have some problems there, but they usually worked out pretty good. Bebo was the white captain in charge of Negro detail. And Bebo was absolutely free from -- he had no prejudice against them, [00:42:00] and he'd get along with them pretty well. But it created -- there as always problems there.

BAYOR: But there was no change, no change in the crime rate in the black community? When the black police came on the force?

JENKINS: I don't think so. I don't recall.

BAYOR: How about treatment of blacks arrested?

JENKINS: What about what?

BAYOR: The treatment of blacks when they were arrested. Did you find that treatment of blacks improved when there were black police on the force? As opposed to just when there were whites on the force?

JENKINS: I didn't understand that, I didn't hear what you said.

BAYOR: I was trying to get at whether the treatment of blacks improved --

JENKINS: By black --

BAYOR: Well, did it improve after the blacks came onto the force? [00:43:00] You know, how did the white police react to the black community, and how did the black police react to the black community?

JENKINS: We didn't know it, (inaudible) it was a strange thing, most white police officers didn't like to police Negroes. And they were glad for Negro police to come in and police them. Which they wouldn't say so, and wouldn't take much action, but there was some grounds for improvement there. (coughs) But still, it was [00:44:00] -- the person that

was disliked, prejudiced against Negroes, wasn't much changing of them. He would go hold onto that.

BAYOR: So there was still a problem with police brutality, even after the blacks came on the force? Would you say?

JENKINS: Well I think to a certain degree it still is.

BAYOR: Yeah, yeah. So that -- so black police on the force didn't really change attitudes towards the black community?

JENKINS: That's hard to answer. [00:45:00] All of them don't think alike, you know.

BAYOR: Sure. Was there any difference in where station houses were located?

JENKINS: Pardon?

BAYOR: Were there police stations in the black community before there were black police?

JENKINS: No, the Butler Street YMCA, on Butler Street, gave us two rooms that we used as police headquarters. In fact, and that was to protect themselves. The black police didn't wear their uniforms home to [00:46:00] start with. They'd go to the police station and change in, put on the uniform, and go to work. Come back, and pull them off, and leave them there. Because of several reasons, if they got on the streetcar to go home across town, somebody wanting to cause trouble could very easily cause trouble. Could demand they do certain things, and they just wanted to

avoid that, and they didn't want to wear the uniform except when they was on duty. And they didn't until long at last, they'd go to the police station and change uniforms. Put on the uniform and go to work. Come back, and pull it off, then go home without it.

BAYOR: Was there -- were there white police stations

[00:47:00] in the black neighborhoods?

(break in audio)

JENKINS: At the time, the black headquarters was at Butler Street YMCA, on Butler Street. That was the black headquarters for the black police. And then when we moved the black police downtown to police headquarters, in the basement of the building, it stayed the same way. They changed uniforms there.

BAYOR: In the basement?

JENKINS: And then later, they started wearing it home, they wear them home now, I guess. I don't know.

BAYOR: Yeah. But in terms of, not the headquarters, but station houses, were there -- I mean there were a lot of station houses around the city, police stations.

JENKINS: There are now, but there wasn't then.

BAYOR: Or there wasn't that before?

JENKINS: There weren't then.

BAYOR: OK. Did the white police patrol the [00:48:00] black neighborhoods before there were black police?

JENKINS: Oh yeah. (inaudible) all the black police was on foot patrol originally. There wasn't any black police in patrol cars.

BAYOR: Right. Why's that?

JENKINS: All we'd get them was get those on foot. Then later, when we started putting them in patrol cars, then they started answering calls (inaudible) patrol cars.

BAYOR: Oh, so -- oh, they weren't answering calls when they were on -- they weren't answering calls when they were on foot? They were just walking around, I guess?

JENKINS: They were just walking and working a foot beat.

BAYOR: Did white police walk around black neighborhoods also?

JENKINS: Oh yeah.

BAYOR: Yeah.

JENKINS: The -- well originally, all police was either on foot beat, [00:49:00] or riding horses. And then they was riding automobiles, and motorcycles. But there have always been foot police.

BAYOR: OK. And did the police give as much attention to the black neighborhoods as to the white neighborhoods? Where did they usually patrol more?

JENKINS: Well, a patrolman on foot patrol has a very small area. He doesn't have a very -- more than two or three blocks, he'll have to stay within that two or three blocks as long as they're on foot patrol, whether he's black or white.

BAYOR: Yeah. But the white police, they did pay attention to the black neighborhoods? They did patrol there and deal with crime in those areas?

JENKINS: And all the patrol cars were [00:50:00] -- covered large areas. All the large areas were covered by patrol car.

BAYOR: Black and white neighborhoods?

JENKINS: Black and white.

BAYOR: Right.

JENKINS: Yeah. Oh yeah.

BAYOR: Yeah, OK. I was also curious about promotions. The promotions of the police. How quickly, how slowly were the black police promoted once they were on the force?

JENKINS: We got pretty quick. I guess -- well, once you started promoting black police, then it didn't matter how long, how quick or how long it took from the time he was put on the force until [00:51:00] he was promoted. You didn't promote him until he had been trained and had the

experience. Go through that, and that usually takes six -- about six months.

BAYOR: Were they promoted any differently than the whites at all?

JENKINS: Any what?

BAYOR: Any differently than the whites?

JENKINS: No, basically it was the same I think.

BAYOR: I have a -- I came across a statement in the newspapers from a black man by the names of Yeats, do you remember the name at all?

JENKINS: Black people doing what?

BAYOR: A black man by the name of Yeats. Yeats? A black man by the name of Yeats, I think it was Yeats and Milton Drug Stores, do you remember them at all?

JENKINS: No. Black men were doing what?

BAYOR: He was a black man who said -- this was 1960, he said that no black had been promoted in 10 years. This was 1960. [00:52:00]

JENKINS: Well blacks had been on the force 10 years, nobody had been promoted?

BAYOR: Yeah. Is that true, not true, what?

JENKINS: That may be true.

BAYOR: OK. Why is that?

JENKINS: Because we wasn't considering -- we was considering employing black police. That was a law we had before. And we did that. And once that was accomplished, then our mission was completed. We weren't committed to promote them. We never agreed to promote them, or they weren't considered. But when they'd been there long enough, and you had them long enough to be promoted, then we started promoting them.

BAYOR: OK. How about hiring? [00:53:00] Nineteen fifty-nine, there were only 40 blacks out of 650 police. Was there any effort to increase the number of blacks on the force more than that?

JENKINS: No. It was -- to start with, we -- (inaudible) Huey introduced the resolution authorizing the personnel department to certify eight members to be employed. And that's all the city was authorized to employ. They didn't authorize any more. The blacks was constantly agitating, wanting to add more. But I never gave it any support, and I don't know of any whites that did, they just let it drift.

BAYOR: Why's that?

JENKINS: Pardon?

BAYOR: Why didn't you give it more support?

JENKINS: No, [00:54:00] well personnel might have wanted to add some along, but we wasn't adding. And then the black leaders would call on me and insist that I demand the mayor and the board of aldermen add more policemen. And I said, we've got eight they've added. We'll add others in due time. But I never pushed that very much.

BAYOR: Why? Why, I mean you were afraid of resistance from the whites? What was the problem?

JENKINS: You mean a difference in the employing of white police and black police?

BAYOR: No, why weren't more white -- why weren't more black police put on the force?

JENKINS: Well the blacks (inaudible) all to be black.

[00:55:00] (inaudible) that. If he is real black, and he's supporting, and he's behind it, he would like for all police to be black, just like we used to insist they all be white.

BAYOR: Did you feel that more black police would cause more friction in the department?

JENKINS: It's possible they could. If it caused -- certainly it was causing some friction at the time we were putting them on. But if that's not even an issue. [00:56:00] Apparently, they will always have a percentage black. I think it'd be a mistake to have all black.

BAYOR: Well I don't think they were -- they weren't asking for all black, they were just asking for more black police. All they had was 40 out of 650.

JENKINS: Well they wasn't asking for all black, but they was asking for more.

BAYOR: Right.

JENKINS: But if they keep adding more, eventually it would be all of them.

BAYOR: So you didn't want too many more blacks [00:57:00] on the force? You just wanted to keep it at a small level, is that it?

JENKINS: Well that's a problem I never thought much about, I never had a situation where you had sideway, or employ black police or white police. We always employed white police until we changed the policy. And we were careful. You never want 100% black police force, I don't think. I don't know, they were -- I don't remember (inaudible). [00:58:00] Except as time was going by. The black leaders used to put all the pressure they could on me to increase the number.

BAYOR: You didn't want to increase the number though? You didn't want to increase the number? You wanted to keep it about --

JENKINS: No, I never saw any need for increasing the number.

BAYOR: OK. I was also curious about how racial issues have been a factor in law enforcement in the city? How much race has been an issue, in terms of the police department and law enforcement in the city?

JENKINS: For instance?

BAYOR: Well there's two separate police unions, for example, [00:59:00] there's the Fraternal Order of Police, and there's the Afro-American Patrolmen's League. The police seem to be split in terms of -- in organizations between black and white. And there's now a controversy over promotions in the police department that's still going on.

JENKINS: Well, after black police was employed, and they organized, it became a very clear-cut issue. There's no question, I think any time [01:00:00] an organization gets organized, it's for the simple purpose of promoting its membership. And if you didn't organize them to promote black leadership, or black membership, there wouldn't be any purpose in organizing them.

BAYOR: Did you feel there was a split in the police department between black and white? Did they get along very well?

JENKINS: I don't think there's any question of what goes on, that always comes up.

BAYOR: There was a split (inaudible)?

JENKINS: Not only amongst the members of the police department, but those people that's representing members of the police department. They represent the racial fiction more than anybody else.

BAYOR: So you feel the police department was sort of [01:01:00] split between whites and blacks?

JENKINS: Quite definitely.

BAYOR: And did they get along with each other that well otherwise?

JENKINS: Well there can be issues raised, and that's what -- the leaders raised those issues, those racial issues. Get them to go one way or the other.

BAYOR: Like what? Like what issue? Like what issue, for example? What issue would they raise?

JENKINS: Well, a lawyer representing Afro-Americans can raise the issue that you're promoting six lieutenants, and they're all white. (coughs) [01:02:00] They would insist that it be half and half. Which, that's not the issue in my opinion, that shouldn't be the issue. They shouldn't let him or anybody else make it the issue.

BAYOR: OK. I was also curious, during the integration period, during the sit-ins, during the period of the sit-ins. During the '60s? Did you meet with the black leaders during that time?

JENKINS: Oh yes.

BAYOR: And what sort of things did you discuss about the sit-ins?

JENKINS: Well, the highest value of the law is keeping the peace. I always insisted on that.

BAYOR: So trying to keep the demonstrations peaceful?

[01:03:00]

JENKINS: But the purpose for having a meeting, and an organization, and a demonstration, is to create a problem.

BAYOR: But nonetheless, you did meet with the black leaders to try and keep things peaceful, if you could.

JENKINS: Well, on many occasions. Again, Preacher [Walden?] and Preacher -- those two preachers, they were helpful in keeping the peace.

BAYOR: How about -- how did you use black police during the sit-ins? How were they used?

JENKINS: How did what?

BAYOR: How did you use black police during the sit-in demonstrations?

JENKINS: During the demonstrations?

BAYOR: Yeah. [01:04:00] Were the black police used?

JENKINS: Well I don't recall if there was policemen assigned there, whether he was black or white. His job is the same,

is to keep the peace. Again, the highest value of the law is keeping of the peace.

BAYOR: But the black police weren't used in any special way?

JENKINS: Black policemen did what?

BAYOR: The black police weren't used in any special way.

Used -- they weren't used in any special way during the sit-ins?

JENKINS: No, [01:05:00] a policeman is very much like his -- I know Brooks used to say, talking about Hooks, "Look at old Hooks, he acts like he's been on the police force 40 years. I mean, he fits in." And there was one named Jones, he would make more arrests than any other on the police force, black or white. But they just, he just active in enforcing the law.

BAYOR: There were no problems between white and black police during the demonstrations and sit-ins?

JENKINS: No. [01:06:00] (inaudible) in his group was the only one who created problems between the blacks and the whites.

BAYOR: OK. I understand.

JENKINS: You know, I had some good experiences (inaudible). I managed to persuade Tech to create their own police force.

BAYOR: Oh, I didn't know that.

JENKINS: I think Melvin Carpenter was the first chief of Tech, they'd hire police officers to be in charge of all of their police. And he had the problem to work out. [01:07:00]

BAYOR: When did the black watch end? When you had -- the black watch, that separate black watch, when did that end? When you had the blacks reporting at a different time?

JENKINS: Well, we didn't -- (inaudible) any blacks to start with. To start with, all the police at Tech was white.

BAYOR: Oh no, not at Tech. I mean in the city.

JENKINS: I don't know when they added black, I don't think they added black until -- I think I'd already gone before they ever added any blacks over there.

BAYOR: I mean not at Tech, I mean in Atlanta, in the city. In the city itself. You had blacks reporting at one time, you had the whites reporting at another time. Do you remember when that stopped? [01:08:00]

JENKINS: No, I'm talking about the Tech police reported to Tech itself. And the city wasn't involved in that. We didn't get involved in that, Tech employed their own police.

BAYOR: But I mean in the city. In the city, when you were chief of the Atlanta police, you had the blacks reporting at a different time than the whites at the beginning.

JENKINS: Well originally, they was all white, and then we added eight blacks, and added -- kept adding to them, increasing the number.

BAYOR: But they reported -- there was a black watch, wasn't there? They reported at a different time than the white police?

JENKINS: Oh yeah.

BAYOR: And OK, why did you have that?

JENKINS: Oh yeah, the [01:09:00] -- that's the reason we put a separate precinct, so they could report separately. The blacks and the whites reported separate, or worked different places. The blacks just worked in foot beats, that's all they worked at that time. And the whites was working both foot beat and patrol cars.

BAYOR: OK. And when did that stop? When did the blacks begin reporting at the same time as the whites?

JENKINS: Just before I left, around there.

BAYOR: About 1970 you think?

JENKINS: It must have been about -- I left in '72, it must have been I guess the early '70s.

BAYOR: And when did blacks begin patrolling white neighborhoods?

JENKINS: About [01:10:00] the same time.

BAYOR: Yeah. So in other words, they were allowed to arrest whites earlier, back in the '60s.

JENKINS: Well I remember, because we made it very clear that if a black police officer saw a white person that he thought ought to be arrested, he was to call police headquarters and report it there, and they'd send a patrol car. And then they'd work it out from there. And I remember two black detectives calling me at the police [01:11:00] station, and reporting to me that they had arrested -- they was at a hotel on Auburn Avenue, and the owner complained that there was two white whores working the hotel, and he asked them to check on them and (inaudible). And they checked on them, and they found them -- two black men in the room with them. [01:12:00] And they arrested all four of them. And they called me and asked me what was they supposed to do, call white detectives? I told them no, under the circumstances, just book all four of them in the jail, and appear in court and prosecute them. Because they was working at a black hotel, and found white people in there.

BAYOR: How were the black police treated in court?

JENKINS: Well, that depended on the case, it depended on the judge. I think basically, it depends on the judge, but it depends on the judge's attitude. I think he was [01:13:00]

fair and honest with them. If he wasn't, it would depend on the individual, it wouldn't be the -- but I never had any problems there, but I don't recall anybody ever complaining.

BAYOR: Did the white police back up the black police in court, if they had to testify?

JENKINS: Generally they would, there may be individual cases where they would disagree. Otherwise, it was basically, they would be -- basically they were fair. [01:14:00] And of course, the judge would be the one that had to make the difference in the courts. The police couldn't make any difference in the court.

BAYOR: Right.

JENKINS: Police might take it to court, but the judge had to pass on it.

BAYOR: Right, right. Well OK. I think that --

END OF AUDIO FILE