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Interviewee: Hooks, Henry

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RONALD BAYOR: Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Sorry,
here.

HENRY HOOKS: I don't think I'm going to say anything
derogatory to myself.

BAYOR: I don't -- well, I don't care.

HOOKS: No, I was just kidding.

BAYOR: I think I told you I spoke to [Billy McKinney?]
already, so...

HOOKS: Hm?

BAYOR: I spoke to Billy McKinney already, once --

HOOKS: I got your letter that same day.

BAYOR: You did?

HOOKS: Yeah, my mayor, these folks here, and I like my check.

BAYOR: You didn't say that -- say that --

HOOKS: Well, you can get it, the last Tuesday in the month.

And last time, it was five days coming, I believe ran on
out there to see if they'd made a mistake, or we have a lot
of new carriers around here. No, he got it, but five days
later, it's coming. I look for the stamp on the letter, on

the envelope, it was dated like the month went out on the 30th, [00:01:00] it was dated on the 29th, cast on the 29th. So, it was just laying up there in the post office.

BAYOR: That happens.

HOOKS: Yeah.

BAYOR: Well, let me ask you first, I was curious about how well the black neighborhoods were, at least before and after integration of the force? In other words, were the black police more effective than the white police in patrolling the black neighborhoods?

HOOKS: Well, I think they were, for the simple reason the black police would know -- they knew more about what was going on than the white policemen. And even if the white policemen knew what was going on, they didn't do that much about it. And what I mean by that, you know, if they knew somebody was selling a little whiskey or something like that, they'd just let them get by, get a little piece of that week or month or something like that. You know, same way with numbers and things. See, we knew all the places -- most of the fellows [00:02:00] that got on the police force, they knew because we didn't work anything but predominantly black neighborhoods, yet. And we knew just about where everything was going on, and back in those days, 1948, just about every other house, I would say -- I

might be exaggerating, but -- we sat on the corner looking for shops, you know, about \$0.25 shops, then, you know, corn liquor. In fact, I was about to -- the only vice we had was corn liquor and numbers, was as well, and as far as weapons, you'd catch a guy occasionally with a switchblade knife, and that was about it.

BAYOR: Did you find the -- the white police were less concerned about black crime than, let's say, didn't care?

HOOKS: Well, I don't think they were much as concerned about it as the black [00:03:00] people were, yeah. And... I know they didn't -- because things that we were doing, like making arrests in houses where people were violating the law, got them selling whiskey and the like, numbers and things, and it was something new to the -- of course, when we start locking them up about it, because these types of things had never happened before. Now, I'm not saying that all white policemen were like that, but I'd say the majority of them working in black neighborhoods were like that, yeah.

BAYOR: How about police brutality? The white police beating up on blacks?

HOOKS: Oh, there was a lot of that going on.

BAYOR: Did that get any less with the black police around? I mean, did the whites watch -- the white cops watch

themselves a little more with the black police around now?

[00:04:00]

HOOKS: Well, see, we were walking the beats, yeah, in the black neighborhood. And the only thing the white policemen were doing was riding on the wheels, you know, cars.

BAYOR: They only rode, never walked?

HOOKS: No, not in no -- if they walked, they could go maybe downtown or something like that, but they didn't walk no neighborhood section or nothing. In fact, we -- they put up boxes on posts on every beat that we would work because we had only -- the communication we had was leapfrog, at that time, was using telephones, the box, which we had to report once an hour. And if you didn't report within that hour, they would send somebody out, send a car, beat car or something out here, if they could find you, because they'd figure something might be wrong with you. Didn't have [00:05:00] walkie-talkies or anything. And... They -- when we were put on the beats and things, well, and the white people would handle the calls because they had access to radio yet. But like, if a call would come about something happening somewhere, they would get the calls. But we would have things that was going on where we were walking that we could see, like.

BAYOR: But in terms of the [Billing-McKay?] system, they got the white cops driving up on the sidewalk, trying to run blacks down, and beating them up?

HOOKS: Well, I heard of some of this, but that was awfully settled type of things happened, but it never happened with me, my partner, where I was walking [00:06:00] but I know one thing they -- like, if they -- if we were standing on the corner, for instance, just patrolling like and we was having a stop down on the corner, and they'd pull up, traffic light'd catch them there, and they had to stop. But instead of looking over and saying hello or something like that, they only just would be to the left, you know, like we don't want to talk to them, and we don't see them, yeah. And they didn't particular want us. In fact, [Jenkins?] said from we were sworn in, March 8, 1940, down at the police station, he said that -- the white policemen said that they were making -- he and the mail were making the largest, biggest mistake you could ever made by (inaudible). Jenkins says, [00:07:00] yeah, and said, "What you fellows got to do is go out there and do a good job and show them you can handle it, you can do it." And... Hartsfield was just -- William B. Hartsfield was the mayor, and he said that, you know, which Jackie Robinson had just joined the Brooklyn Dodgers, he had --

said this is another Jackie Robinson case, and therefore, going to be a lot of harassment from white police, as well as some of your own colored, you know, which is [right?].

BAYOR: Yeah, that's what I wanted to ask you, too.

HOOKS: And --

BAYOR: Did the white cops back you up on an emergency, if you were...

HOOKS: Well, yes, they did, if we had reason to call for some help or something like that, but you could tell [00:08:00] by the response time that they wasn't in no hurry to get there. But you know --

BAYOR: They slowed down, huh?

HOOKS: Yeah.

BAYOR: How about you mentioned -- I saw an article in *The Constitution* a few years ago to (inaudible).

HOOKS: That what?

BAYOR: That you spoke to one of the reporters in *The Constitution* a few years ago? There was an article --

HOOKS: Well, I, when I retired, there was a whole lot of came out and did -- talked with me, you know? I think I got the biggest write-up of all.

BAYOR: Well, I saw it.

HOOKS: Being one of the first blacks and one of the first to retire, you know?

BAYOR: One of the things you said a few years ago was that "We'd be trying to cross Decatur Street and the white police would try to run us over." Do you remember that?

HOOKS: Well, if I said that, I don't remember any trying to run me over, but [Lyons?] and [Dixon?], Dixon is deceased now, but Lyle, he's retired, he used to be a (inaudible), they were walking the (inaudible) street, and [00:09:00] they was -- they said that some officers tried to run them down.

BAYOR: Really?

HOOKS: Yeah. But not to my knowing, and if I did, I was in error about it, or you was -- whoever wrote that up, by saying that they tried to run me down, there.

BAYOR: But you heard about them trying to do that to Lyons and the other fellow?

HOOKS: Dixon, yes. I (inaudible) saw Dixon.

BAYOR: How about in court? Do they back -- did the white police back you up in court cases at all?

HOOKS: No, white policemen, for quite a few years, like, when we first were sworn in and started policemen, after our eight weeks' training -- you had to go to school for eight weeks for training, then go to the primary -- when the first eight weeks was up, we [00:10:00] got on the --

started policing, we were at the Y that year, which I guess you know that, yeah?

BAYOR: [Warren Propter?]

HOOKS: They wasn't well as chief, my chief may have been thinking it was a good idea, with the animosity between the white policemen and the black, for us to have roll call in the police department. So, we -- Warren Propter donated the basement of the YWCA at 22 [Poplar Street?] for us to use, which we only used it, like, we went to work at six o'clock in the afternoon, which was a hell of an hour to go to work.

BAYOR: That was the black watch, right? You had a
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

HOOKS: Six p.m., that's what they called it, 6:00 p.m., why, and got off at 2:00 a.m. in the morning, where we would go to the Y before going to work, to put on uniforms, for we wasn't allowed to wear our uniforms off-duty. [00:11:00] Then, when we got off, we had to go back and change uniforms.

BAYOR: At the Poplar Street Y?

HOOKS: Right. And that went on for, like, well, that was changed when Ivan Allen got to be the mayor, OK?

BAYOR: Why? Why did he change it?

HOOKS: Well, I guess he just felt like it was time, you know?

In fact, that ain't the only thing he changed. We wasn't allowed to arrest white people. We -- if a white person came on our beat and was violating the law, raising hell, or drunk, or whatever, our instruction was -- which we did -- we would apprehend him, tell him he's under arrest, and go to the box, or telephone, wherever, if we wasn't close to the box or didn't have one box on no beat we worked, don't care how long it was, [00:12:00] and tell the operator to send a white car, least of with to -- where we were, we had a white female or a white male, to be arrested. Well, he would come and write the ticket up. We weren't allowed to write the ticket up. He would write the ticket up on the person for whatever they were being charged with.

BAYOR: When the white cops came with the wagon, how cooperative were they?

HOOKS: No, he'd come with a car.

BAYOR: OK.

HOOKS: Yeah. Well, they weren't all that cooperative, but if we said this person has did so-and-so and so-and-so, we had no alternative but to write it up. He might not like it, but he wrote it up, you understand? And he didn't go to

court. We couldn't write the ticket and make the arrest, but we had to go to court.

BAYOR: You had to go to court?

HOOKS: And prosecute.

BAYOR: OK, in court, [00:13:00] when there was something, a situation with a white cop to back you up on a story, did they do that? Because you mentioned something in that same piece a few years ago, that you'd see them giggling when you were trying to get support.

HOOKS: Well, yeah, they'd do all that when they'd call case for us, and we'd be trying a case, they'd be back there, laughing and going on, you know, because they figured we didn't know how to do these things, didn't know what we were doing. I mean, they were -- they wasn't all that nice. They wasn't glad to see us. But to get to my point, more like I said, six or seven years, without (inaudible). I might be in error about how many years it was, but I don't really remember, but there was quite some time working at the -- out of the Y. Finally, the mayor decided -- well, not the mayor, but Hartsfield, not Allen, but Hartsfield -- decided [00:14:00] to move us to the police department, 175 [Pace Street?], in the basement down there. So, they even built a shower and all that, so they had to make arrangements for us, facilities for us.

BAYOR: The whole segregated (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

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HOOKS: Right, right, for each black policeman, see? And when nightly, we wouldn't be involved with the white policemen at that particular time because they worked three shifts: 7:00 to 3:00, 3:00 to 11:00, 11:00 to 7:00. Now, we went on at 6:00, so now, the evening white policemen would have been on three hours when we went on.

BAYOR: I see.

HOOKS: So, been on two hours.

BAYOR: You had a special watch, then, I guess?

HOOKS: Six p.m. watch, that's what we were called, 6:00 to 2:00. So, we wasn't involved [00:15:00] with them in any kind of way, you know, as far as having roll call together. But...

BAYOR: How did the black police feel about all the restrictions? Not wearing uniforms home, not arresting whites, not patrolling white neighborhoods?

HOOKS: How did who feel?

BAYOR: How did the black police feel about all these restrictions?

HOOKS: Well, naturally, they didn't like it. In fact, they, you know, were trying to do something about it, and I guess that result with them -- the black leaders, [Warren

Cochran?] and [Scott Dallowood?], and [Boulder?] and a lot of others, they were what you would call, so-called "black leaders," at that time. And you know, whatever was done, it was done with a little pressure put on them. They didn't just volunteer, or even though Allen changed the precinct and changed the rest in the back, I mean, just like people.

BAYOR: You complained to [00:16:00] Scott and Boulder and they would put pressure on Allen, I guess?

HOOKS: Well, they knew what was going on, yeah. They kept up with -- They knew about what was going on as much as we did, yeah. So, then time came after, I've said, like, well, we got our first vehicles -- we didn't get for two -- and they were vehicles like every year, you get new vehicles, you know? The police probably buy new vehicles. Well, what they did was, like, take two of the year, going out vehicles, and give to us, you know, to ride in, and they had one car follow, Car 13, in [Boulevard?], the whole Boulevard. You know, [buzz all around in the southeast section, and one car [00:17:00] worked the west side, Car 21.

BAYOR: They'd just do patrols on foot, or they'd just --

HOOKS: Well, they didn't have but two cars and they had -- well, at that time, when we got cars, I guess we had more

policemen, because they added, like, three, then two, and, you know, on and on like that.

BAYOR: They had someone [posted on the cars?], then?

HOOKS: Well, we were on foot beats for, well, I'd say something like 15 or 20 years, like [Hunter Street?], Auburn Avenue, Decatur Street, McDaniel Street, Fraser Street, Kennedy Street, Forrest Avenue, Butler Street.

BAYOR: It sounds like cops were in the cars, though?

HOOKS: Yeah.

BAYOR: So, they got the old cars that --

HOOKS: Well, that happened for maybe like a year or two, you know. Then, after we'd integrated, [00:18:00] we were just, as far as getting things, just like the white cops were.

BAYOR: In other words, when you put another station --

HOOKS: Yeah. And we started having roll call where the -- where we were having roll call, where the white policemen would have the roll call, but we were having it at different times.

BAYOR: Did you start patrolling white neighborhoods at all?

HOOKS: Well, now... I don't remember how soon, but I'm imagining, and I'm almost sure, that when we started arresting white people, that's when we started patrolling

white neighborhoods. Or if we -- well, I'm sure we did. It all coincided together, you know what I mean?

BAYOR: Was there any reaction from the whites when you began arresting whites and patrolling white neighborhoods?

HOOKS: Believe it or not, even when we weren't allowed to arrest white people and occasionally came [00:19:00] and occasionally would come, that you would lock a drunk up -- mostly it's always just a drunk, someone around in the black neighborhood and he done got lost, or went to a black neighborhood to buy some shots and drink too much. But, like, if you locked up the black man, sometimes you'd have resistance from him, your own color, whereas in talking with -- a lot of times, we'd just be talking about things that happened. I don't remember any policemen saying that they had -- if they had to occasionally make an arrest on a white person that it was the resentment or it was the resistance. They were -- they respected us better than the black folks did.

BAYOR: How did the black community regard the black police?
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

HOOKS: Well, a lot of them business people, they didn't want us around, but we had a good sergeant. He was promoted [00:20:00] to sergeant to take the black policemen over because my understanding, it wasn't -- when they asked

around about getting one, we didn't have black policemen, who wanted to be their superior officer, you know, there wasn't too many volunteers and all that. So, [B-Roll Brooks?], [Earl B. Brooks?], everybody called him B-Roll, he volunteered, which he was a nice fellow. And I think he was proud of the black community. He didn't show any prejudice at all, as far as I was concerned, and I don't think nobody else. And I give you some examples of it, too. He... What was my -- what was your question? I've forgotten my thought.

BAYOR: My original question was what -- of the black community, did --

HOOKS: Oh, yeah. So, we [00:21:00] went in several places. When I say "we," I mean myself and I guess some of the rest of them did too, and we would get the [Wood?] calls. Back in those days, we called the [Wood Laws?], a person give a policeman information, he was a pimp. Now, I think they call it informer, if they have it, you know? They kind of dress it up. But you know, like, you're walking the beat, a certain guy liked to talk to the policeman, and maybe you might do him a little favor, too, you know? If you have a reason to arrest him, [there ain't nothing bad?], and he'd give you names.

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

HOOKS: Yeah. Looking here, "Oh, you know so-and-so runs the place up there, runs that beer parlor up there, so-and-so?" "Yeah, I know where it is." "When it's early, ain't no black police coming [00:22:00] in his place and making no arrest, and search around, and lock up no drunks and things like that," you know? So, our instruction was, like, when we got that kind of information from somebody, don't go in there on our own, you give them a call. Talking about Brooks, now, my superior officer, Sergeant Brooks. And he'd go in there, I'd go in one or two occasions where we had to call him about a thing like that, and he'd say, "What is this I hear that you walk in?" "How are you doing now, Sergeant Brooks?" Oh, that's -- he'd [last see him?], you know, think this is nice. If the police were called, a visit, "What is this I hear about ain't no black police coming in here and lock up nobody?" (laughter) He said, "What are you doing over there? What's that drunk doing over there in here? Get him all -- lock him up, get him out of here," things like that. [00:23:00] So, you'd go - - actually, it all led up that we had as much writing as anybody else, the white police and everything. And I remember, my partner and myself -- not Billy McKinney but [Robert McGibbons?], yeah, he's one of the first -- we were walking McDaniel Street, and I think it was on a Friday

night or a Saturday night, but when we got to our beat and started the [White Horse?] beat, we walked down to McDaniel, way down across the railroad tracks, and there were some brothers, some guys there, I don't know, [shearing, whatever you call them?] (inaudible). And there actually was a business around Atlanta beer parlors and things, understand they were supposed -- political-wise, you know, to [00:24:00] different ones like Mayor or whatever, running for some office, and we had been going in there, you know, looking around, see if any disorder was going on, or drunks, or whatever, and we was locking them up because they said, you're not allowed to be drunk, you know, in a public place, and we would lock them up. Well, now, this is a good example of what I was saying a while ago: white police go in there and they would get them some cigarettes or whatever, you know, on the house, and they would be paying no attention to the drunken things on in there. What we were doing, we were police.

BAYOR: Oh, the whites didn't care that much about what the blacks did?

HOOKS: No, so when we walked in, my God, where we started to walk in, one of the brothers -- and three or four brothers of them -- met us at the door and said, "What y'all want?" And, well, probably [00:25:00] said, "Oh, you're [going to

see?], we don't particularly want anything; we come in here to check your place out." Well, there were things going around in here, we can handle it, and if we don't call you all, don't come in here. So, McKinney -- McGibbons, we was kind of fired up back in, you know, started raising hell, or giving them obstinate, or probably lock them up. And so, I go, "OK, Mack." I said, "Let's go," so we'd go in and play, and we went to the bar all operating. The telephone operators have caught whatever, tried to (inaudible). We needed to check that place, though. We went about it maybe a block or two from where this place was, and when he got there, he'd request [drummer?]. [00:26:00] We told him what had happened, he said, "Get in." (laughter) They -- "We're going in," he said, "And let me do the talking." OK. So, we got on there and got off, went in, he said, "What is this I hear about these black police can't come in here until you call them, and you don't call them, they can't come in here?" They started to say something, he said, "Well, let me tell you one thing," said, "that city business license you got up there on the wall," said, "that authorize the policemen, white or black, to come in here and make arrests, do anything they want to do, as far as upholding the law." He said, "You don't want them in here, then you take that sign [00:27:00] -- that license down and

go out of business, and I'll make sure they won't come in here." And he said, "By the way, what is he doing over there in that booth? What is all these drunks doing?" Said, "Let's get them all out of here and lock them up," and everything. So, as a result of that, we went in there at random, and where we wanted to. In fact, we kind of laid on them a little bit, see, after that. Just to see if they were going to say anything else, but they turned out to be our best friends. We'd go in -- "Hey! Come on in, have a Coke or whatever."

BAYOR: But the white cops --

HOOKS: "What kind of cigarettes you smoking," or something like that. And not like down there, where we were, we were like -- that's a good six blocks from where our telephone was on the post, there. And if we made an arrest down there, which we made quite a few down in [00:28:00] McDaniel neighborhood, or we raid one down the street, or up the street, maybe within a block, yeah. We walked down there and we had a situation where we just -- not going to Windsor, do like that, they're going back in their private phones, tell the operator to send a wagon to [Bayer?] and McDaniel for (laughter)...

BAYOR: But the white cops never bothered with that sort of stuff at all? Even if it came into (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

HOOKS: Well, now, I don't be in the place when the white police come in there, I mean, and like I said, if we were working the beat, we handled all that on our beat. Well, it's obvious to me because I had -- black people had been telling me that we're doing something the white policemen didn't never do, see what I mean? So, as to where -- regards to whether they did or not, it's the law.

BAYOR: Right, right.

HOOKS: And we are doing what we're supposed to do. We are upholding the law. Now, yeah, "These damn black police [00:29:00] and they come in here and just going to doing things no other police did!" See what I mean?

BAYOR: Was the general black community, though, pretty favorable to you, like...

HOOKS: Say that again.

BAYOR: Well, the basic -- was most of the black community pretty supportive of you?

HOOKS: Well, I'm giving you an example of how it was when we first started, but after that, I mean, white and blacks, everybody was out friends then, see what I mean?

BAYOR: I mean, but, you know, the blacks didn't feel they'd beat up by you, and maybe they might be beat up by the whites?

HOOKS: Well, yeah, I believe they did. They knew -- they found out that we's the police just like they could.

BAYOR: Yeah, you were (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

HOOKS: That we were police, we could lock them up. You see, when we attempt to arresting whites, I mean, a black guy, we had to put up with black, "What you locking me up for?" "Well, you're drunk," or, "You did so-and-so," or you done any damn thing wrong. "Well, we [00:30:00] all -- y'all niggers have nothing [up your coat?], you got your power to lock folks up, you all just -- you all have a (inaudible)," things like that, you know? And we'd put them in the wagons, they were, OK, I mean, put him in the car, they -- we got cars, then -- or you don't have a car, you're walking the beat. "What's your name?" To complete a wagon ticket, which you had to write down -- you could write the charge and all that and sign the ticket, but you had to sign the ticket, your name and your partner's name at the bottom, well he was a cop. It said, "Prisoner's name, address, and age." "What's your name?" "You know every goddamn thing ever, you ought to know that, too," you know, and things like that. Well, we had some fun in the --

well, I'd have to [ask?] myself, too. They'd say, "You know, we was all over you," you know, and when we got through, [00:31:00] "Now, what's your name?" "My name is so-and-so, and so-and-so," see? So, we had to gain respect, so to speak, out of some of them. Then we had some that were just as nice as they could be. In fact, I locked up people for drunks, and fellows for drunks, and maybe a day or two later or something, I'd be walking the beat and they'd come around and, "Sergeants" -- I mean, "Officers, I want to shake your hand." We said, "What's wrong, man?" Said, "You did me a favor last night," or the night before last, "Like what?" "You don't remember locking me up?" I said, "Yeah, I remember locking you up there, but..." "You did me a favor because if I stayed out here, I probably got robbed and beat up or killed or something like that," see what I mean?

BAYOR: Yeah, I see what you mean. So, you had people that resented you and people that thought you were doing a good job. And I believe we had more people that thought we were doing a good job, after we had been there a while, but I think it was more or less the majority of the people [00:32:00] that thought we was doing a good job because when we'd be walking, like, we'd come home in the afternoon, walking down, where people sitting on the porch,

you know, in the summertime. "Hey! Glad to see y'all, they been raising hell out here," you know? And all that. But a lot of the policemen were white people, till after we got to be where we were speaking to them and they were friends with us, and all that. We wouldn't [mess?] in the north side, wherever my partner was, and we were walking the beat and they were sitting there in front of a beer parlor. And we got to talking. Said, "Yeah," I said, we were talking wherever he was, a while ago, says, and he asks us, "What time is it?" We told him five minutes till -- well, at that time, we'd get -- going to work at post. Five minutes before, he said, "Let me go, it's time for them black police to come on." So, that goes to show you that [00:33:00] there was -- we have a fear, we put a little fear in them, you know? Because, see, the white police, they're going to do them, or let them talk with them, and talk a whole lot of junk, and we'd go there, and we were busy, yeah.

BAYOR: Yeah, did you feel that a black person that did something would be -- would rather be arrested by a black cop than a white cop at all?

HOOKS: Well, now, I don't know that.

BAYOR: Because of how he'd be treated?

HOOKS: I don't know that, but I could imagine that... when we first went on, they probably would have been. Not that we were brutalizing them that much, but the resentment, like I said, was a certain element of them that just didn't want us to arrest them, see? Yeah.

BAYOR: How about the white cops that did bother you, the white cops that harassed you? Was there any effort made by Jenkins to transfer these people, fire them, reprimand them in some way?

HOOKS: Well, the harassment that was [00:34:00] being done, I don't guess he -- well, I don't remember any being changed on account of that. But, like, you know, they didn't... You could tell that they didn't want to communicate with us, or didn't want to talk with us, you know? And now, I remember, like, it was two detectives, they were noted for being bad detectives. I don't even remember now what division they were in, but must have been homicide or something, or robbery or something like that, but [Daniel McKinnon?] and myself were working Fraser Street. We were standing there in front of a restaurant -- of course, he sold beer and his [grapes?] and the whites' grapes. And, like, maybe this was on Friday, Saturday night, they drove up, stopped, [00:35:00] "Come over here." Well, [get caught?]. They had some pictures showed up, "Do you know

these niggers here?" I didn't say nothing, McKinnon didn't say nothing. We just walked. Turned around and walked on off, and they drove on off. I let them know we didn't like the word "nigger," see what I mean?

BAYOR: Right, right, right.

HOOKS: And this then happened, when they put us in the jail after about maybe 10, 12 years, 15, we started working the floor, where all black prisoner, because at that time, everything was integrated -- I mean, segregated, it was. And the fifth floor was for all black misdemeanors. Drunks and whatever, you know? And [00:36:00] so, there was a fellow called up there, called the office downstairs and they connected him with me, upstairs, on the fifth floor, the lieutenant on the floor did. And I said, "Fifth floor, Officer Hooks speaking." "This is Chief So-and-So, I'm in College Park, or, you got a nigger up there named So-and-So and So-and-So, and where So-and-So and So-and-So..." I'm listening, that's a good... I said, "Chief, is this nigger black or white?" He hung up on me. It was about five minutes later, the lieutenant come up there. The Lieu said, "What did you say?" He done called him back and told him, I guess. "What did you say to Chief So-and-So when he called up, [00:37:00] he asked me about if you had the fellow up here?" I told him what he said, and I said,

"When he got through, I asked him, was this nigger black or white?" And he just laughed, you know? (laughter) He laughed, he didn't say, "Well, you told him right," or what, but he laughed, you know? It's funny to him. Yeah, so we did -- you know, we didn't give in and we let them know that we was like running the ship, right? And when -- after we got cars, which when the policemen give a lookout, "Car so-and-so, you put a lookout on a nigger," well, when he said that, we started mashing the button on our radio, and that would drown him out, you know? He couldn't get his lookout like he should. [00:38:00] So, finally, of course, I get (inaudible) credit for a lot of things, we all got together at -- on the assistance of McKinney -- and we went -- the chief [barely breathed?], and we told him, said, "Now, you know, it's kind of hard to be riding in the car and the policemen give a lookout on a white male or white female and when he give a lookout, if the person is black, he says, 'Nigger with so-and-so and so-and-so,' and this and that kind of stuff." So, that was stopped.

Jenkins was stopped.

BAYOR: Jenkins stopped it?

HOOKS: Well, I don't know whether Jenkins stopped it or the mayor stopped it, but I'm almost inclined to believe Jenkins stopped it, see what I mean? We let them know

[00:39:00] that we didn't particularly like it. It's something else that was McKinnon's suggestion, like, well, when they would have a white female arrested somewhere on the beats and the car was called, "Oh, So-and-So, send me a wagon for a white female at such-and-such a place." Well, that meant nobody else rode in that wagon but that white female. If he had some prisoners in there, they had to move to the station. He went and unloaded and went down empty and didn't pick up nobody else. She occupied the whole wagon.

BAYOR: Why's that?

HOOKS: The white female. But if he had a black female, he just said, "Send me a wagon," put her in there with white drunks, black drunks, [00:40:00] everything else, so we went to the chief about that. That was stopped. You know, we had to work on it.

BAYOR: Jenkins was sort of agreeable to all this, then?

HOOKS: Well, like I said, we went to Jenkins about it. Now, it wasn't Jenkins stopped it, or he went to the mayor, and the mayor'd give an OK to stop it or not, I don't know.

BAYOR: Did you also go out to [Scott?] and [Borders?] and stuff, and those guys?

HOOKS: Well, not really.

BAYOR: But they must have heard it?

HOOKS: A lot of the time when we would be talking to them because, you know, it was common thing for them to be -- if you walked over there, you'd see them, see them, whether you did or not, you know, and you'd get to talking about police department, and you'd mention certain things about it. So... We didn't get everything we got just [00:41:00] by the tail. We had to let them know that we wasn't -- people aren't happy with it, see what I mean?

BAYOR: Yeah, sure. How about -- I'm sure very few blacks [voted?] at first, and there weren't really too many hired. By 1959, only 40 black police out of 650.

HOOKS: Well...

BAYOR: What was the problem there?

HOOKS: Well, things, they didn't -- it didn't come easy, now. Now, I don't know whether you talked to [Howard Borne?] none?

BAYOR: No.

HOOKS: Well, he was the first black policeman promoted to sergeant, but like, the first [eight?] people had been hired, like, I said, five or six years. I don't really remember when about came on. When he came on [00:42:00] the force, now, another thing I heard, [Borne?] waiting for a -- some chemical company, down on Central Avenue, off of the [Pier Street?], Central Avenue, and give me his ball

plan, with -- he contributed heavily to the mail raising and different things like that. So, [Ball?] got on the police force, and [Richie?] was there in those crew with the chief kind of liked him, or either he has been told what to do by the mayor, if he didn't get the beats and things like walking beats and things like we got, when they put cars out. Well, I'll tell you, when he came on, I don't remember now if they had cars or what, but [00:43:00] when the sergeant would make his assignment, Ball was always assigned to his car. If he's walking the beats, he'd know. And then, when the promotion -- well, it wasn't no promotion came up, it was like (inaudible) taking exam for promotion for from a sergeant on up, no. But back then, Chief Jenkins was it. He promoted, he fired, and did everything. So, things are different now because if he didn't like you or didn't like the way you were doing or how you were policing things, next thing you know, you'd just be gone.

BAYOR: Were you in trouble if you complained about how blacks were treated at all?

HOOKS: Well...

BAYOR: Was that -- he didn't like that either?

HOOKS: No, they -- who was treated?

BAYOR: About blacks, how the black police were treated
(overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

HOOKS: Only complaining we did, [00:44:00] we did our
complaining to Brooks, and I told you what kind of fellow
he was.

BAYOR: Yeah.

HOOKS: Whenever we got complaints, I mean, he'd write it
down. He'd deliver it, you know? He was -- ain't nothing
I can say about him. He showed that he was boss, but
number one, when he would [read papers open?]. He'd -- it
was a lot of nerve for him to do that, see what I mean,
knowing all the rest of the white people resented us. And
whenever we had problems, white or black, [you were all a
success?], if we were right, and most times, we were right.
I mean, whatever we went to him about.

BAYOR: I spoke to Jenkins and he said that, you know, he
hired eight black policemen, nobody told him to hire any
more and he wasn't going to do it. So, I don't --

HOOKS: Yeah. Well, that's all the -- I think was going to
hire at that time. And we were sworn in down there at Pace
Street, at the police department, Chief Jenkins swore us
in, it was on the 3rd of July, I remember, [00:45:00] it was
raining cats and dogs. And that's where we were sworn in
and raised our hands, took the oath, and he gave us our gun

and our badge. And then, for eight weeks after that, which we started, I think, that next Monday, that was our third night, we started that probably Monday, the ones who made our -- five days a week.

BAYOR: Did you find any changes when Mayor Jackson came in, when he appointed the black commissioner of public safety, Reginald Eaves? Did you see any change in the police department when you had a black mayor? Promotions or hiring?

HOOKS: Well, back in those days, you know, things were integrated and it was just black and just white, then, as far as any resentment, as far as the white policemen, I know it wasn't in there with the black community. Or, well, I wasn't able to tell, you know? [00:46:00]

BAYOR: Were there still issues of white police brutality, there were still questions of promotions of whites or promotions of blacks? I mean, was it any different?

HOOKS: When all this type of thing started out, I left it, you know?

BAYOR: You left the department in '77?

HOOKS: I left in '77, yeah. Yeah, it started happening because I'd read about it and see it in the paper, and in fact, every time it looks like they have a promotion cap and all that. And like I said, I didn't take no test or

nothing for my promotion. Inman promoted me to sergeant, yeah, and he also promoted Lyle and McKinnon. It just came out in the bulletin that you were promoted to sergeant.

BAYOR: No test, no --

HOOKS: No, they didn't have the test at that time.

BAYOR: So, you are on the force a long time before, I mean, Jenkins ever promoted you, right?

HOOKS: Well, Jenkins didn't promote me. Inman --

BAYOR: [00:47:00] Why not Jenkins? You were on so long.

HOOKS: [I went and stared?] through his office, and (inaudible). He was, when you go in to the office part there, he was always there, and you had to consult with him about what the agreement was up there. So, he said, "What you want, Hooks?" I said, "I'd like to speak with the chief." And he started to ask me what I want with him or whatever, you know, he busy, or whatever. Two doors open and he heard me and he opened his door and said, "Come on in, Hooks!" So, I walked in and, "Sit down!" I sat down. "What's on your mind?" I said, "Well, I'm trying to figure [00:48:00] how to say what I want to say." I said -- I knew I could say it, you know, but I wanted to say it in a kind of a nice-like way, you know? Yeah, after a [different amount of ways?], I said, "Chief, you know, I don't understand," I said, "I'm one of the black policemen,

first black policemen you hired, and as far as I know, there's no blemish or nothing on my record. I haven't... been reprimanded about anything." Well, my one thing they had against me, they said [I didn't lock up enough folks?]. (laughter) So, I said, "Now, you're the boss, you came here after I did, and you promoted to sergeant, and I've been here, [00:49:00] one of the first policemen, and every time there are promotions, it looks like my name won't come up." Well, what they were doing then, they would submit so many names to, I guess, what you would call a [former?] chiefs, or not chiefs, lieutenants or captains or whatever, and they would pick the ones out of the names they had for promotions. That's the way you got promoted then. So, he cut me off at that point, he said, "You wrong, that's why you're wrong. Your name has come up here four times when there's a promotion," he said, "but every time, they picked somebody else over you." Well, [how did that?] -- they picked somebody else over you.

BAYOR: Did the black police have a tough time getting promoted [00:50:00] in the line?

HOOKS: Well, the truth, it is -- this -- yeah. In fact, didn't nothing come here for a black policeman doing their -- during those days, you know, no. Unless you were a very likable person or you had some white person speaking for

you, like I believe that this boss man told, you know, I've contributed kind of heavy to politics, mayor's race and whatnot, so you take care of my nigger down here, see what I mean?

BAYOR: In other words, unless you -- unless it benefited somebody politically, the black police weren't going to get promoted so fast?

HOOKS: Well, it was a long time before there was a promotion, and when it was, you know, he was the one, and not... That I (inaudible).

BAYOR: He became a detective, too, is that right? No?

HOOKS: Yeah, he was [00:51:00] one of the first detectives. He was the first detective, he and Lyle. They were... (inaudible).

BAYOR: Did you find the black police resented the fact they weren't being promoted very much? Or the --

HOOKS: Well, at that time, you're missing what I'm saying, seems to me. They were being promoted just like they always were, but it was just one black police getting promoted. So, they couldn't accept one black police being promoted.

BAYOR: I mean, didn't you resent the fact that not a lot of black police were being promoted?

HOOKS: Well, we all did.

BAYOR: Yeah, that's what I mean.

HOOKS: But I thought you said the white policemen --

BAYOR: Oh, no, I know the whites -- yeah.

HOOKS: Yeah, we all did, and that's why I went up to his office to ask him, you know, about it, why they hadn't promoted no more policemen, and why I wasn't one of the ones [in the first place?].

BAYOR: Right, promote -- and they also didn't hire too many blacks [00:52:00] during that time.

HOOKS: No, they didn't for quite some time after they first started hiring policemen. And I think it was the understanding -- well, I know it was an understanding -- that the first eight, they hired on a trial basis. Right, and if they did all right, they would hire more. Now, just how soon after '48, some more retired, I'd say maybe like, I guess -- McKinney could have told you that.

BAYOR: Yeah, I think he did.

HOOKS: Like maybe five or six years after.

BAYOR: Yeah, but you know, but by 1959, this is 11 years later, there's still only 40 black police.

HOOKS: Yeah.

BAYOR: So, they weren't --

HOOKS: I lost track. In fact, I didn't grow up with -- you know, when I knew a thing, or another policeman was coming, or two or three more were coming, you know?

BAYOR: Yeah, but they didn't --

HOOKS: It wasn't no big [00:53:00] rush about hiring more policemen. But that's another thing, I guess, the white and black system got on about too, you know? Because they would talk with the mayor, you know, they had a meeting with the mayor about those types of things.

BAYOR: I also was wondering about the -- the black police during the civil rights protest in the '50s and '60s. Do you think having black police around when the civil rights protesters were being arrested, do you think that led to less brutality against the black protesters?

HOOKS: Well, they had [it pretty rough, see?]. And I was in the midst of all of them. And that's always [hard to tell about?], just the way it was, the black police --

BAYOR: Oh, you just used black police for them?

HOOKS: Just black police, well, [00:54:00] on the routes and then the black neighborhoods. Well, at that time, I'm sure they had quite a few black police then. They had one in Dixie Hills, and they had one on Capitol Avenue, and one on Boulevard -- Boulevard, now... We were at all hours, and at that time, like, Mayor Allen, when they had the one on

[Culvert Avenue?], we used black -- mayor, then, and he came down there and got up and talked in the car.

BAYOR: Oh, yeah, I remember that.

HOOKS: Mayor would talk to the people and that kind of, you know, quieted things down.

BAYOR: So, they used black police to calm down the neighborhood, too?

HOOKS: More, we were more or less blacks, there, yeah.

BAYOR: How about [00:55:00] for the protestors in front of Rich's or places like that, when they were arrested and put in jail?

HOOKS: Well, they had both black and white, I think.

BAYOR: OK, do you think it helped -- do you think it helped to cut down on the violence, the police brutality, to have black cops at the scene and in the jails?

HOOKS: Yeah.

BAYOR: Do you think with the more black civil rights protestors beat up --

HOOKS: Well, anywhere they had black policemen... arresting black folks, other than having white people arresting black folks, I've said what I'm -- (inaudible) -- yeah. Or like I said, at the last, as of a last resort, we would go to hours of brutality, so to speak, when they did -- [00:56:00] of course, they didn't hardly do those type of

things to white people like they did to us, or said those type of things, you know?

BAYOR: You mean whites, the white police?

HOOKS: The black people, when the white police arrested them, I don't imagine that the white police would drop off a black man and said, "What's your name, boy?" He would have said, "I ain't got no goddamn name," you know, things like that. So, a lot of it that we were confronted with was something that they brought on themselves, the way they acted when you worked, yeah. And I used to use this car to deal [with most of the stuff?], where I thought I was going to have (inaudible), and I looked. I'm a policeman, and you're violating the law. And if you want to be arrested peacefully, you can be arr-- I said, "Now, you want to give me some trouble," [00:57:00] because most time, we worked in pairs, when we first went on, I said, "Now, we're going to arrest you, and I want your name, your address, and your age to complete my wagon ticket. Now, you give me those three things, you won't have no trouble out of me. But now, if you want to be the police, then you're going to have some trouble out of me because they're paying me to police, and they ain't paying you to do nothing. And I got the badge, I got the uniform, I got the gun, I got the jurisdiction, I got everything. And I got -- Yeah." So,

another thing that I didn't -- every little thing a man would said, like if I asked for -- [00:58:00] when I put him under arrest, like, "What's your name," "I ain't got no..." I'd go, "OK. I've leveled with you, I've now -- I'm going to tell you one thing: a name got to go on this wagon ticket," and now I said, "You don't have no name, so I'm going to put the name down that I'm going to put down here. When you go in jail and they call somebody to come and get you out and they ask about you or somebody call down there and want to know if they got you in jail," I said, "This name I'm going to put on here ain't going to be your name. So, when they call for that person, your name, they're going to say, 'No, we don't have him in here.'" I said, "Now, that means you're going to be laying in jail without your name, with a false name. So, now," I would say, "You give me your right name [00:59:00] and then you probably could get out, and you got (inaudible)." I used the psychology on them, you know?

BAYOR: And it worked, yeah. Were the black police -- was the black community reacting pretty well to using black police during the civil rights struggles?

HOOKS: In civil rights?

BAYOR: Yeah, in the '60s.

HOOKS: Well, what do you mean by civil --

BAYOR: I mean, what was the reaction from the black community, using the black police during the protest, you know, arresting people and stuff? Were they resentful towards you?

HOOKS: Well, whenever there was a riot or something like that, it wasn't because of the black policemen, so I can't remember now and what it was about. In fact, I think on two occasions, because of something to the white people, [they'd tell you?], I mean --

BAYOR: I mean, were they (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

HOOKS: They wasn't resentful of us. Back about that time, it wasn't -- no. Now, [01:00:00] during the time when -- gell, not during the time, after the time when the -- after the -- Martin Luther King got killed, well, you know they were just rioting everywhere. Not only in Atlanta; all over the United States. And they had blacks and whites patrolling their neighborhood, 75, burning buildings and locking out (inaudible) and all that. But... They just had all the police was on that beat, and then they had certain policeman that would handle those types of things, you know? The SWAT squad and things like that. Well, as far as the picketing and all that, I don't think we went on -- in fact, I know we wasn't because it just took the time -- they only had the 6:00 p.m. watch, [01:01:00] and we

wasn't going to work when that was happening in the daytime.

BAYOR: OK, but during the '60s, it was still going on.

HOOKS: What I remember watching (inaudible).

BAYOR: You weren't involved in arresting any civil rights protestors?

HOOKS: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) time that I was involved, when they picketed -- what the heck's the name of that -- the -- it's right on the corner of the side and Luckie Street, across from the theatre, there. And all they were doing was just going around, you know, wrapping around, and that was a time that the black folks were walking around on one side, on one side of the street, and the Ku Klux Klan was walking on the other side of the street, there. That was the only time, when I was driving the wagon that time, and I was just sitting there in my wagon, you know, in case they had to arrest them, yeah. About the only time -- [01:02:00] that was at night, that I was involved in the so-called pickets.

BAYOR: The black police -- the black community wasn't angry at you, at black police arresting civil rights protestors?

HOOKS: Not that I know of.

BAYOR: OK, yeah.

HOOKS: Not that I know of.

BAYOR: Now, how about for the -- when the force became a little more integrated and the black police were sent to other precincts, other station houses?

HOOKS: Well, at that time, they didn't have one. They didn't have a precinct.

BAYOR: Oh, just one downtown station?

HOOKS: I don't know what year they started the precinct, but everybody, roll call was at 175 Pace Street, yeah.

BAYOR: OK. That's about what I wanted to know.

HOOKS: But after they got the precinct, because I worked zone three, which is [not far?], I worked zone five, downtown, [01:03:00] and I worked zone four, which is [Hampton Road?], southwest side. I never did work one and two, and they didn't have a five and six at that time, I think. Since then, they added one down here, (inaudible) zone six, that gave them [more jobs?]. And... They -- there was no resentment, as far as I was concerned, when you were sent to those precincts, see what I mean?

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

HOOKS: Now, I might not have been one of the first to get to break one of these precincts, which I'm sure I wasn't, but by the time I got there, there was a black and everybody was lovey-dovey.

BAYOR: So that when whites -- there was enough blacks there
in the riots?

HOOKS: Right, yeah. Everything was lovey-dovey.

BAYOR: OK!

HOOKS: My last [01:04:00] 12 years, I was inside. I was
doing administrative. I was in the jail, till they said
they needed all the policemen in the jail, which they had
about 100 or so, on all three shifts. And they turned it
over to Hudson, who's in charge of the jail now and the
stockade, [J. D. Hudson?]. And I left there and went
around (inaudible), and that's when I retired.

BAYOR: During the promotion controversy of the 1970s, did you
find a lot of friction between blacks and whites -- black
and white police over what was going on with promotions?
Because that really started in the '70s, really, in terms
of who was getting promoted.

HOOKS: Well, as far as I was concerned or as far as I know,
there wasn't. [01:05:00] As I say, all of that started,
like, whites were getting blacks getting promoted, and
blacks being resentful about that kind of promotion was,
like, I'm retired here, looking at it on TV or reading
about, even when Eaves was fired for saying he gave certain
people advanced notice about their promotion things, they
were taking exams, I wasn't even down there, yeah. But

before, as far as when I was there, as far as I know it, wasn't. And then, like I said, about the last 12 or 15 years, I wasn't out in the streets and I didn't have too much time for [that group?], the outside policemen, yeah, because I'd go to work and cross over the street there on [Burke Street?], go in, now, it was like about [01:06:00] on each shift, well, on my shift, there was -- Lieutenant [Frisk?], Sergeant [Jackson?], and myself. And there's about five patrols. Three -- Five policemen, rather, three superior officers and two patrols, you know, just uniform officers. And I think it was just about the same amount on all three shifts. So, they had [bigger?] to work with them now, which they have now. And as far as about the resentment of promotions and things, well, if -- even before I left, [01:07:00] if it was, I didn't know because I wasn't out there with them. And certainly, I don't know since all this rigmarole about promotions, you know, every time they throw up a promotion test, there's something wrong with it, and all that, and the FOP is against it, and the Afro Policemen League is against it, and all that, well, I read about this type of stuff.

BAYOR: Yeah, yeah. OK, well, thanks a lot.

HOOKS: Yeah...

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