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MR. WILBANKS: Thank you. 944

MR. MCKAY: Mr. James, you have been very helpful.

You are entitled under our provision and our rules to make a statement of your own if you wish at this time. Is there something you wish to say?

THE WITNESS: Not really. I think my testimony has covered it and there will be others who have a broader knowledge of the whole situation than I.

MR. MCKAY: Thank you very much for being with us.

(Witness excused).

MR. LIMAN: Our next witness is Jose "G.I." Paris. If we do not finish with him today, we will make arrangements for him to come back to conclude his testimony and he will be questioned by Mr. Sackett, Robert Sackett, my able assistant and deputy counsel.

J O S E P A R I S, called as a witness, being first duly sworn by Mr. McKay, was examined and testified as follows:

THE WITNESS: My word is my bond.

MR. MCKAY: Thank you.

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Q Mr. Paris, we have a usual question and answer situation. However, you are also permitted to make a statement in addition to any answers you may give to the questions that I ask you or that the Commission members ask you.

A Before I begin, I would like to say, sir, I don't see my people from the community or any of the people from the community participating or having a voice in this investigation here.

I would like somebody here who will tell me why the people from the community, South Brooklyn, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens are not participating because the majority of all of us that come out of these institutions, you know, penal institutions, what we call concentration camps, our people return to these communities.

Q Thank you.

Mr. Paris, would you state your name for the record.

A My name is Jose G.I. Paris. I have been in Attica and I was back up there as an observer and representing the Young Lords party with Fi Ortiz.

Q Who invited, who contacted you, Mr. Paris, to go up to Attica?

A Arthur E. Eve's secretary.

1 Q When did you get to Attica?

2 A I got to Attica September 19th, in nighttime
3 around nine to ten o'clock and I have to wait, I had
4 to wait there for around one or two o'clock until I was
5 able to have entrance to ge inside.

6 Q You mean two o'clock in the morning or in the
7 afternoon?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Was this now Saturday morning, in other words,
10 a.m.?

11 A Yes. When I did get into the institution, some
12 of the people that were already called inside, they
13 already went to D-block, you know, and they were coming
14 out.

15 Q In other words, the observers that had already
16 gotten there?

17 A Yes.

18 Q And by the way, Mr. Paris, had you been an inmate
19 at Attica previously?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And when did you get out of Attica?

22 A I got out of Attica May 20, 1971.

23 Q How did you learn, aside from the fact that
24 Assemblyman Eve contacted you, how did it come about
25 that your name, you know, was mentioned in the first place?

1 A Well, I be incarcerated from

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2 Greenhaven, shipped form Greenhaven to Attica, we have
3 been demanding for Puerto Rican history and trying to
4 abolish the atrocities and mistreatment in the hoses
5 and the keeplocks that are perpetrated upon us for
6 speaking up and for not letting ourselves, you know,
7 be vegetables or be dehumanized by the institution
8 administration.

9 Q Did the inmates in D-yard actually request
10 that you come, did they communicate that to the observers
11 that had already gotten there?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Did you go up in the Administration Building
14 when you got finally inside?

15 A Yes, I went upstairs and I met some of the
16 people that was invited by Rockefeller and by the people.

17 Q Was there a discussion with respect to the de-
18 mands?

19 A Yes. There was a discussion. As a matter
20 of fact, I have the 30 demans in front of me that Brothers
21 gave to the observer committee and in one way or another
22 finally accumulated them. And end up 28 and for every-
23 body's information, they were watered down.

24 Q You mean to say that the demands that the inmates
25 had given to the observers to negotiate with the

1 administration, after the negotiation

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2 with Oswald and others, you mean to say the demands
3 were not the same ones?

4 A Except they weren't word by word or the same
5 expression or the same meaning, the way we looked
6 at it, some of it was watered down. I was one that
7 was against it.

8 Q How did you feel, the fact that the negotiators
9 as a team had, you know, negotiated with Commissioner
10 Oswald, how did you feel about that fact, that they
11 were as you put it, watered down?

12 A Well, as a matter of fact, you see, the people
13 that were invited or more or less to, what the Brothers
14 wanted to relate back to the administration, to Oswald
15 and the rest of the administration, the people and the
16 Brothers, they didn't have no voice.

17 Q I don't understand quite what you mean, Mr.
18 Paris.

19 A What I mean by voice, able to relate or talk
20 or speak to Mr. Russell Oswald or the rest of the people
21 of the administration or Mancusi. Only state officials.
22 All selected state officials were able to converse with
23 Mr. Oswald.

24 Q I see. Did anybody that came with you up to
25 Attica ever get a chance to see Oswald?

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A We saw him in the room and the only time we saw him, we were very up tight and very subjective because the Brothers didn't really accept it or didn't want to go for the farce of the demands of the way he was telling us the story.

Q Did you feel, Mr. Paris, that through the negotiations that any concessions at all should have been given, that the demands made by the inmates, was there any possibility that they might not be the exact ones that they wanted but that a settlement could be reached without the entire inmate demands as they put them?

A Well, after the lie about Officer Quincy, the most priority of everything was total amnesty, because if you look at it, if you walk through D-block or through the block, nobody can't go out through a window. You got bars.

Q Do you think that amnesty was the key issue during these negotiations?

A Well, they going to try to charge everybody with conspiracy and murder. You understand? The demands for everybody to get these demands, you know, to get one to 30 or one to 28, the ones that Oswald agreed, you still have to comply with total amnesty.

As a matter of fact, just off the record, Mr.

2 State Correctional Facility as the new name they have
3 there, they have not complied yet with any of the
4 demands they agreed to of the 28 demands.

5 Q In other words, the ones that Oswald finally--

6 A Agreed to.

7 Q You say that none of them have been--

8 A They haven't been put into effect yet, imple-
9 mented or put into effect.

10 Q This is totally aside from the amnesty ques-
11 tion, of course?

12 A Yes.

13 Q How did you view the 28 demands themselves,
14 aside from amnesty, how did you view--was this a genuine
15 attempt for reform?

16 A I would say an attempt, yes. The thing is
17 that we would have to go through the pipeline of
18 bureaucracy, going to Albany and people would try to
19 play, what I call it monkey politician of playing hop-
20 scotch with people's lives.

21 People trying to get something through that
22 effect us, you know, we have to--you tell us that we
23 have to reform and we going to have to get rehabilitated.
24 You understand? I haven't received no rehabilitation.

25 Q How did you view your own role as a negotiator

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up there?

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A My own role up there, as I went up there, one, I felt at home up there because I know everybody. Also I went there for the Brothers to see what's happening up there and at the same time the Brothers say I could speak for them, right on with it.

Q Was there any unity among the observers as to how they should proceed with the negotiations?

A Well, no, there was a lot of confusion up there.

Q Mr. Paris, the previous witness, District Attorney James, do you recall the letter that he wrote with respect to the request that had been made by certain of the observers to grant amnesty, do you recall that letter?

A Yes, I do.

Q And what was your own view about that?

A My own view is this, like my brother said yesterday also, that you could change the D.A. If he don't prosecute, somebody else will. And that was just a way of trying to pacify the Brothers that gave these observers that maybe had good intention, of misleading them.

Q Do you feel that the letter should have been brought into the yard to show the inmates?

A The letter was brought to the yard.

2 a correct way of proceeding?

3 A Well, the thing--

4 Q As part of a package in other words, here is
5 this letter and here are the other 28 demands.

6 A Showing what the observer committee was
7 doing, you had to present things to the Brothers because
8 we can't think for the Brothers or speak for them or say
9 what they want.

10 They speak for themselves and all we could do is
11 relate it back to the people.

12 Q Do you feel that the observers should have
13 made any concessions to the demands of the inmates?

14 A Well, the observers' committee should have led
15 more strongly in the demands, understanding the circum-
16 stances.

17 I arrived in Attica because all conditions
18 are the same in every penal institution in the State of
19 New York. But the only thing different is that have
20 a different locality and different geographical places.

21 Q What happened on Saturday when you, you, Mr.
22 Paris, got into the yard?

23 A When I went down on Saturday, everybody went
24 downstairs, including Bobby Seale.

25 Q Had you spoken to Bobby Seale before you went

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down in the yard?

A Yes. We were talking--we discussed about what they were trying to get more or less to persuade the Brothers, to tell them to take this.

In other words, shove it down their throat.

Q Did you personally speak to him before he spoke to the other observers?

A We consulted among ourselves.

Q Did you give him your opinion as to what you thought about the demands?

A Yes, I did.

Q What did you tell him?

A Well, like things had been watered down and what was happening about persuading him or trying to use him, misuse him or the administration use him to try to relate this to the Brothers, in other words, tell the Brothers take this.

Q What was Mr. Seale's response?

A Mr. Seale's response was to tell everybody, even the observers that he was not going to be misused by the administration or anybody.

Q Did he tell that to the other observers?

A Right in the room, yes, sir.

Q So getting back now into D-yard on Saturday, what happened in they ard, you know, give us the highlights

16 of what happened on Saturday in the yard.

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2 A What happened Saturday, we went down and
3 introduced everybody, as they introduced everybody
4 everybody was not greeted with warm embrace. A lot
5 of people had been known from the past that had been,
6 in other words, crisscrossed a lot of the people from
7 before.

8 As the names were mentioned some were booed,
9 some would say right on and say yeah. Then they got
10 down to the nitty gritty of reading the demands that
11 were brought down to the Brothers.

12 Q Were the demands all read?

13 A Yes, they was.

14 Q What was the response?

15 A The response was negative response. Everybody
16 ain't going to jump right in the bag. First let's
17 analyze, first rap among each other first about these
18 demands here.

19 Q Was there a vote by the inmates at all on
20 whether to accept or reject the--

21 A Well, it was probably stated to everybody how they
22 felt about it but then also there was a chance to talk
23 among themselves again before we left.

24 Q In other words, that the observers would leave
25 and they would then decide what to do?

2 to talk it over first.

3 Q The next day on Sunday, did there come a time
4 when you went back into the yard?

5 A Yes, I did.

6 Q What was the feeling there, what was the
7 feeling there, what was the atmosphere?

8 A The atmosphere was, like I say was tense,
9 unity, everybody still sticking together but in
10 between this time from Saturday to Sunday, here is
11 where Oswald did his double-cross.

12 Q What do you mean?

13 A He tried to cross the observer committee and
14 tried to implement or trying to create something that
15 wasn't there. Trying to create to give him an
16 excuse to vamp into the D-yard and kill everybody in
17 there.

18 Q What led you to this belief, the fact that
19 they were going to be killed in the yard?

20 A We were talking with Brother Richard in A-
21 block.

22 Q I would ask you in the future not to mention
23 any names.

24 A Thank you.

25 I will. I was talking with one of the Brothers.

18 We were told to bring a few of the reporters, 956

2 some reporters, Spanish and black reporter. And
3 some more people back in the yard. Also we requested,
4 you know, for us to come back. While this process was
5 going on Oswald was doing his thing up there.

6 Q What do you mean?

7 A He was writing some kind of note that we
8 agreed to the--

9 Q You mean we, the observers?

10 A Yes, that we agreed to the demands and every-
11 thing. That he already--in other words, it was to his
12 liking.

13 Q In other words, the language to the effect,
14 and I read, "I urgently request you to release the
15 hostages unharmed now and to accept the recommendations
16 of the committee of outside observers, which recommenda-
17 tions were approved by me, and join with me in restoring
18 order to this institution."

19 Is that what you mean?

20 A Yes.

21 Q What was your reaction when you found out about
22 this letter?

23 A Well, as a matter of fact, nobody from the
24 observers' committee while they were going into A-block,
25 they didn't know anything about it. While the time

19 we were preparing ourselves to go down, 957

2 we couldn't go down any time we wanted. We had to
3 wait until he said when we could go down.

4 Q Did the inmates confront you with this letter
5 when you got down there on Sunday?

6 A Yes, we were confronted in A-block.

7 Q What was the result of the meeting in A-block
8 before you went into the yard with respect to the letter?

9 A We were asked, you know, like everybody can't
10 look everybody in the eye. Like, you know, you people
11 don't cross us, you trying to cross us, something like
12 that.

13 Q What was the atmosphere surrounding you in
14 the prison? In other words, I am talking about state
15 authorities.

16 A State authorities all had their guns around
17 A-block. They were ready, hopint something would happen.
18 We went all the way to D-block. Then among ourselves
19 we showed the contradiction and things that they were
20 trying to get to create among the observer committee
21 against the people in D-yard.

22 Q Did you ever speak in the yard?

23 A Yes.

24 Q What did you tell the inmates?

25 A We spoke about the condition and activity that

2 and the rest of Rockefeller's goon squad, what they were
3 doing up there.

4 Q Do you feel Rockefeller should have come to
5 Attica?

6 A If he would have came, he would have said
7 the same thing. We would hope to put a little sense
8 to him. Hoping--he got a plaque for humanitarian, you
9 understand that? Killing all the people up there,
10 killing all the rest of our brothers up there, he got
11 a humanitarian bag, you know, plaque for it.

12 Q Do you feel he should have granted amnesty?

13 A As a matter of fact, England gave amnesty to
14 the Palestinians. Nixon gave amnesty to Hoffa and
15 Calley for that Viet Nam thing in My Lai. Why we
16 couldn't get amnesty in Attica?

17 Q Now, what was the atmosphere among the observers
18 and the inmates when you were just about to leave the
19 yard on Sunday?

20 A We knew the vamp was coming. We knew that was
21 it. Among ourselves, among a lot of our brothers, we
22 knew each other a whole lot, we broke down because we
23 figured we wouldn't see each other any more.

24 We knew that night, or some other time the
25 vamp was coming because they had been bombing brothers

1 with gas all Saturday night after we
2 left the yard, Sunday, Sunday night they got bombarded
3 too. But they were already in the process of preparation
4 for the assault.

5 We knew something was coming down. That's
6 why a lot of the people from the observers' committee
7 and other people were doing desperate acts of trying
8 to get somebody, you know, to come down and stall so
9 we--which knew the vamp was coming, the assault was
10 coming down and the brothers knew it too. We all
11 knew some of us got to die down there, to get the message
12 across out here because a lot of you people right now
13 presently don't understand the conditions or if you do
14 you know that the conditions there that oppress us in our
15 community is the oppressor against the oppressed people.

16 Q When you went outside into the Administration
17 Building again, did you continue your negotiations?
18 Was there an attempt made to contact Oswald?

19 A There was an attempt. More or less an attempt
20 to try to reason, you know, more or less to try to get
21 to Rockefeller.

22 That was the most priority among a lot of the
23 observers, trying to get to Rockefeller. Some of us
24 stayed there all night until Monday. We were locked
25 in our room. We wasn't given no gas mask.

21 As a matter of fact, they were

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2 getting ready to smoke us too. They wanted to down
3 us. We wasn't worth two cents.

4 Q Mr. Paris, we are running out of time so I
5 think perhaps if we might continue some other time.

6 A Right on.

7 MR. MCKAY: Mr. Paris, thank you for
8 being here this afternoon. We will try to work
9 out another date for your convenience to join us
10 again so we can conclude your testimony. Thank
11 you very much.

12 The hearing will recess until tomorrow
13 morning at ten o'clock.

14 (Time noted: 3:55 p.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)
 : ss
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

I, LEON ZUCK, a Shorthand Reporter and
Notary Public within and for the State of New York,
do hereby certify:

That I reported the continued proceedings
in the within entitled matter (pages
and that the within transcript is a true record of
said proceedings.

I further certify that I am not related
to any of the parties to this action by blood or
marriage; and that I am in no way interested in the
outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand this 21 day of April 1972.



LEON ZUCK