

*The Wismar Commission Report*

**Day 5 – Friday, 20 November 1964**

CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, sorry to say that Mr. Sugrim Singh is very ill as he is suffering from serious over-strain, but the inquiry continues.

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CARTER: May I request this morning that we have Dr. Roza and I hope his evidence would be taken so that he can travel back to Mackenzie this afternoon.

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***DR. C.F. ROZA is sworn in and he states as follows:***

CHAIRMAN: You are a medical practitioner attached to the Mackenzie Hospital?

ROZA: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: You were in attendance at the hospital on the 25th day of May, 1964?

ROZA: I was. On that day there were several persons admitted from the Wismar and Christianburg area.

CHAIRMAN: As a result, can you say how many persons suffered injuries?

ROZA: Yes. On that day I treated 33 persons who were admitted to the hospital.

CHAIRMAN: You have a record of the injuries of the persons that were injured? Can this record be made available to the Commission?

ROZA: I could. I have to make another copy.

CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen you can have a look.

ROZA: Actually there were admissions before the 25th May. On the 22nd May some were admitted. This is recorded.

CHAIRMAN: Can you say what happened on the 22nd, 24th and 25th May?

ROZA: On the 22nd three persons were admitted; on the 23rd no one went in; on the 24th two persons were admitted; and on the 25th the bulk went in. On the 26th, three persons were admitted; on the 27th one person was admitted. These were all that were admitted.

CHAIRMAN: Gentleman, have a look at this document. [*Document tendered and admitted without objection and marked "Exhibit G".*] Doctor, do you have any record of the injuries suffered on the 6th and 7th day of July, 1964?

ROZA: I was not in the colony at that time. There was another doctor in charge of the hospital at that time.

CHAIRMAN: There is another document here narrating the incidents from July 6th. I do not know if Mr. Shepherd would have any objection to this document. Any objection, Mr. Shepherd?

MR. SHEPHERD: No sir.

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GILBERT GARNUM: Would this be a proper time to inform the Commission that I am appearing for the Army as indicated to the secretary to the Commission, and Mr. Shepherd has made an appearance for me. It seems unlikely that any evidence affecting my client will be laid for some days yet, so in the circumstances I will ask the Commission to excuse me. I shall return later, some time next week, as the proceedings require. If you will excuse me now I will be most grateful.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Farnum.

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### ***Transcripts – Day 5***

SHEPHERD: No objections at all.

CHAIRMAN: Any objections, Mr. Carter?

CARTER: I have no objections.

CHAIRMAN: You are excused, Mr. Farnum. We have to have time to read this statement. It is a rather lengthy one. Can you say if it contains any other statement concerning the people who were treated at the hospital, say after the “Sun Chapman” incident?

ROZA: I was not in British Guiana at the time.

CHAIRMAN: The first incident?

ROZA: It was on May 25th. On May 25th there were people treated and sent away in addition to the 33 admitted on the 25th.

CHAIRMAN: How many?

ROZA: It was very difficult to get the exact number, but at the hospital itself we estimated it was 15, but the St. John’s Brigade worked in two areas, both at Mackenzie and Wismar.

CHAIRMAN: And how many at the First Aid Centre at Mackenzie?

ROZA: The one at Wismar did not function until Tuesday 26th, because we had no building there, so we utilised the Wismar police station. We had to wait until 6 o’clock on Tuesday morning when the Wismar First Aid Centre got underway.

CHAIRMAN: So only 15 people were actually treated and sent away from the hospital? Would like copies of both documents to be tendered?

ROZA: Yes. I haven’t got a copy for myself.

CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Shepherd?

SHEPHERD: There are just a few questions to make you position clearer. At the hospital you are the only doctor?

MR. ROZA: I am not the only one.

SHEPHERD: You are the one in charge of the hospital, and you had other doctors to help you?

ROZA: Yes. Two other doctors.

SHEPHERD: I suppose you worked 24 hours a day on the 25th of May?

ROZA: Just about.

SHEPHERD: And all your hospital facilities were made available for the evacuees from Christianburg? And on the 24th and 26th of May did you treat any of the evacuees – badly injured people? And I suppose the continuous flow out to the hospital of injured people was great. And “Exhibit G” is a casualty list applying to the 25th and 26th of May only?

ROZA: It dates back to the 22nd.

SHEPHERD: It dates back to the 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 26th, and 27th, but it refers only to those admitted and kept in the hospital, not to those who may have been treated and discharged.

ROZA: That’s correct.

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SHEPHERD: You, Doctor, lived on the Mackenzie side of the river in staff quarters, and your hospital facilities are there primarily for Company employees who need treatment, and their relatives?

ROZA: Primarily it is used as a public hospital.

SHEPHERD: As far as I can judge, as a doctor and a resident of Mackenzie city, was the situation about normal in the Wismar community before the 24th?

ROZA: Well, I would say there was tension.

SHEPHERD: Was the whole area gripped by this tension?

ROZA: Just at Wismar.

SHEPHERD: However, looking upon your point of view, until the 22nd May it did not affect your work?

ROZA: A bit.

SHEPHERD: During this weekend of 24th and 25th May you had occasion to talk to and, no doubt, examine some of these casualties? Did you personally treat some of these casualties?

ROZA: Most of them.

SHEPHERD: You treated most of them yourself?

ROZA: Some of them were women, about 35, and about four of them were suffering from concussion and were heavily raped.

SHEPHERD: Were they treated and sent home after their injuries?

ROZA: Within hours.

SHEPHERD: Did any of those women at any time complain personally to you about the police or volunteers?

ROZA: Never. Not one of them.

SHEPHERD: Did you mention in your verbal statement about the work of the St. John's Ambulance?

ROZA: Yes.

SHEPHERD: Would you explain how its forces were dispersed through this period from 26th May up to the 6th July. The reason for that is that you realized the situation was tense and treatment would be required for a number of casualties coming in. You requested your forces to stand by at the clinic. The Mackenzie clinic is on the right bank of the river?

ROZA: Yes. Nearest to Wismar.

SHEPHERD: What is the name of your officer who organised the clinic at Wismar?

ROZA: Albert McCrae.

SHEPHERD: Would you have now how many casualties you have treated?

ROZA: I have not a record of the number treated at the time here with me, but I have a record of the number treated on the Mackenzie side by the St. John's Ambulance Brigade.

SHEPHERD: How many approximately were treated on the Wismar side?

ROZA: About 18. I went over there to carry food and refreshments.

SHEPHERD: I cannot recollect having seen any station at Wismar. Would you explain how the establishment at Wismar was built?

ROZA: I would rather say it was even feet by eight and the floor was naturally earth; and when it was clear I went to the police to ask them if I could the station. The police agreed.

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SHEPHERD: Now, this lengthy report which is not your report but that of Dr. Davies Webb. By that time you had left the country.

ROZA: I left British Guiana on the 20th June.

SHEPHERD: About a month after these terrible affairs. You had left the country on the 20th June. You have read this report by Dr. Davies. Was he also a medical doctor?

ROZA: He is also a doctor.

SHEPHERD: You have read this report?

ROZA: I have.

SHEPHERD: This has been admitted quite rightly and no objections have been taken. I notice there have been one or two expressions of opinion by Dr. Davies. We hope one of matters of opinion to which he had referred may have also come to your notice. He referred to some incident as a reprisal?

ROZA: Yes, he did.

SHEPHERD: When did you return to British Guiana? You went on the 20th June?

ROZA: I returned on the 29th July.

SHEPHERD: Would you be able to assist the tribunal and to say whether you agree with Dr. Davies? Well are you in a position to agree or disagree?

ROZA: Well, I don't know if it is the reprisal that has been suggested.

SHEPHERD: Another matter of opinion to which I think might have been drawn to your attention – as I am still holding on for Mr. Farnum – reference to the British forces. Were the British forces on duty when you returned?

ROZA: Yes, they were.

SHEPHERD: And, of course, they had assumed duty on the night of Tuesday 26th May?

ROZA: No. They were there on Monday 25th.

SHEPHERD: Do you agree with what doctor has said that the British troops did much to allay apprehension?

ROZA: Yes, I do.

SHEPHERD: And that the presence of British troops did much to keep the situation under control?

ROZA: True.

SHEPHERD: Could you say how many people died as a result of the disturbances?

ROZA: There were a total of five deaths. Two persons died in hospital and three others were brought to the hospital dead.

SHEPHERD: Were they all adults?

ROZA: All adults.

SHEPHERD: Were there any women among them?

ROZA: No, there were no women and no children.

SHEPHERD: So there were no women and no children?

ROZA: No women and no children.

SHEPHERD: Were any children injured? Can you assume that a child was beaten or cut or something like that? Did you see that child?

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ROZA: Well, there were two children of the age of 12 who had minor bruises and punctured wounds about the legs. The one child I referred to of the age of 12 was admitted on the night of the 22nd and she had pellets in her legs. One boy had face injuries and scalp wounds caused by a fall.

SHEPHERD: It seemed more to you like a fall?

ROZA: Yes. And, there was another boy of the age of 14, and he had bruises on the face just as if he had fallen on the ground.

SHEPHERD: Did he tell you that he had been beaten?

ROZA: No. Well, the parent could not be found. They did not tell me that they had been beaten. And perhaps to answer this further, we had two evacuations – two centres for refugees from Wismar. One was at the Trade School and the other at the Sports Club. Among the crowd were several children – infants, and so on, that night. I made rounds to both centres along with a nurse, and there wasn't any evidence of any child injured. There were a number of minor scratches and so on. The Army medical orderly rendered some assistance with some mercurochrome. There was no evidence of any children being beaten. No report was made of them.

SHEPHERD: Mrs. Mohamed said that her baby had been squeezed and badly injured. Did you receive a report about this?

ROZA: No, none at all.

SHEPHERD: Were you wearing your medical uniform?

ROZA: Yes, all the time.

CARTER: Do you think people know you well?

ROZA: Yes.

CARTER: You were there 11 to 14 years, so you were well known as a doctor.

ROZA: Yes.

CARTER: So that in making an assessment, do you think that children there were not beaten?

ROZA: No.

CARTER: Now I am finding some difficulty in framing this question as to its meaning. I shall use the precise words. There were four cases of rape. Was there any evidence of external objects being used?

ROZA: There were four cases. There were young girls ten to sixteen years old bleeding rather profusely. A girl was extremely shocked, while some just collapsed; but if you meant about external insertion, I will say no.

CARTER: There were so many rumours. Do you have any evidence of the introduction of inanimate objects in this way?

ROZA: No. Actually when the admissions were made I did not see or hear immediately. I cannot swear personally as to any inanimate object being used.

CARTER: Now, with regard to St. John's Brigade, how strong was this force? Was it roughly how many – ten or fifteen – that night?

ROZA: I would say about eighteen to twenty four.

CARTER: What were the racial origins of those people? Were all Africans?

ROZA: Yes, they were all Africans.

CARTER: This man McCrae? Is he an African?

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ROZA: Yes.

CARTER: And he phoned you that he was arranging this clinic at Wismar?

ROZA: He rang me that the situation at Wismar was very tense, so I gave permission to go ahead.

CARTER: Did you see fire at Wismar?

ROZA: I saw a man running up the hill on that side of Wismar, then later I saw fire. I rang notifying the setting up of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade at Wismar. The Volunteer Force in charge assumed control, and the military was going around looking for evacuees and carrying them to the police station. There they were served drinks and beds prepared for them to rest on, and things like that.

CARTER: All of these persons were employees of the Demerara Bauxite Company?

ROZA: The majority were girls who were not working. They were relatives of the employees.

MOOTOO: Dr. Roza, among the people who died at the hospital, was there an eighteen-year old boy by the name of Richard Khan?

ROZA: Yes. He was among the first casualties. I went and received him myself.

MOOTOO: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Dr. Roza.

**MR. ARTHUR BELGRAVE is sworn in and he states as follows:**

CHAIRMAN: What is your occupation?

BELGRAVE: Assistant secretary of the British Guiana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

CHAIRMAN: Does the Company insure people's lives and houses?

BELGRAVE: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Do you have a record at the Company as to the number of houses and people's lives insured on the 25th May from the Wismar-Mackenzie area?

BELGRAVE: No. All I have here is the list of the buildings that were insured and destroyed by the disturbances.

CHAIRMAN: Could you say how it is set out.

BELGRAVE: Not specifically set out, but I could give you the total amount,

CHAIRMAN: What would you say the amounts of the claims were?

BELGRAVE: As a result of the disturbances we have claims totalling \$335,933.

CHAIRMAN: Do you have the figures on the value of the buildings?

Yes. Buildings \$253,393; stocks \$78,000, machinery \$600; furniture and other household items \$3,940. That makes a total of \$335,933. There were no life claims as a result of the disturbances.

CHAIRMAN: Could you say whether in general the insurance for buildings and stock approximated to the market value?

BELGRAVE: The only answer I can give to you is that at the time the policy was taken out the value was there.

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MACDONALD: You checked very carefully when the policy was taken out?

BELGRAVE: Yes.

MACDONALD: Did the insurance include riot?

BELGRAVE: The insurance did not include riot.

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DRAYTON: Has any of it been paid?

BELGRAVE: No.

DRAYTON: Would it have been usual for people to take out less insurance than the value of their property?

BELGRAVE: Unfortunately, they do, particularly with a concrete structure.

DRAYTON: So far as you know as regards the properties insured with your company, you would be in a position to ask for the value that they were insured for at that time by representatives of your company?

BELGRAVE: That is the policy of my company. We advise them to insure to the value of their property; for example a man may have a property insured for \$2,500 – only the amount being owed on it, say the mortgage. If a property is insured you may not have the actual worth.

DRAYTON: It would be assumed the actual value as compared with what they were insured for would have some relation and that you would be in a position to state the market value.

BELGRAVE: No, not necessarily.

DRAYTON: But at the time of the insurance they must have been seen by the representative of the company of yours. Your policy for this matter is the same?

BELGRAVE: They are advised to insure by the company to the full value but that advice has not been taken.

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CHAIRMAN: But if a property is not insured, would you be able to say how much you think the property is actually worth?

BELGRAVE: No.

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MOOTOO: What percentage of houses in Wismar do you think was destroyed?

BELGRAVE: I cannot answer that.

MOOTOO: But most of these business places we insured?

BELGRAVE: I would not say so.

MOOTOO: Private homes?

BELGRAVE: Yes, private homes.

MOOTOO: Is it customary for people to insure their jewellery?

BELGRAVE: I would say no. Some persons do not like to insure jewellery but there are others who like to insure jewellery. There are other companies. We do not do it.

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CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You can be relieved.

BELGRAVE: Thank you.

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**[At this stage, the witness, having left, is recalled after some delay.]**

CHAIRMAN: Sorry we had to send for you, but the Commissioners feel that they would like to have a statement on the individual houses that were destroyed – the amount insured for and the market value at time of insurance.

BELGRAVE: I was just wondering whether would it be alright for me to give a statement in regard by individuals as this might be regarded as be not in order for us. If I can omit names I can give some amounts, perhaps.

CHAIRMAN: Supply the names to the Commission. Thank you.

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**MR. TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD is sworn in and he states as follows:**

CHAIRMAN: You are business man?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I was, sir.

CHAIRMAN: Where do you live now?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I live at Lot 61, Public Road, Kitty.

CHAIRMAN: What work do you do now?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: No work at all, sir.

CHAIRMAN: You are not working? You used to be a businessman?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: And you lived at 145 Silvertown, Wismar, with your family – your wife and five children, a grand child and an adopted son?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: Now, you owned a two-storey concrete and wooden building?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: What business was it?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: It was a spirit shop, grocery, and drug store.

CHAIRMAN: You lived in the upper flat?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir. The business premises were in the lower flat.

CHAIRMAN: You had the business in the lower flat?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: You owned any other property?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir. One at Lot 14, Silver City, Wismar.

CHAIRMAN: You owned a two storey wooden building? That was tenanted?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir. A barber shop is carried on there; also what I call a cook shop.

CHAIRMAN: You had a restaurant?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes, something like that.

CHAIRMAN: So you rented it out? Now, on Monday 25th May you got up about what o'clock?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: We usually awake about 5.30 a.m. to get ready for business at 7.00 a.m.



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CHAIRMAN: And what happened at Wismar?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: We opened business as usual that morning but as it got a little late the place began to get crowded. And there were fires all around, and we heard explosions.

CHAIRMAN: This started about what time?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Well, it was going on during the night. I could have seen smoke and fire all around.

CHAIRMAN: You slept all right that night?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes, I slept all right.

CHAIRMAN: You had no trouble?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: You did not keep watch or anything on the premises?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: No, I did not keep watch.

CHAIRMAN: You felt safe the night before?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: You said you heard explosions about what time?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Well, the explosions during the night and day as I said. They continued during the night.

CHAIRMAN: You said you slept, and you had no cause to keep watch and the explosions were going on throughout to night? You also saw people moving about?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: Did you do or say anything?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Well, around 9 or 10 we closed the shop.

CHAIRMAN: Why did you close the shop?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Because we were afraid.

CHAIRMAN: And was your family at home?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes, they were upstairs.

CHAIRMAN: And anything happened?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes, later in the day.

CHAIRMAN: How late?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: It was about four or five o'clock in the afternoon.

CHAIRMAN: What happened?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: We saw people walking with looted goods. Then we noticed about three or four hundred people away from my house.

CHAIRMAN: How far away they were from your house?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: That was about 50 rods from my home.

CHAIRMAN: What happened next?

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TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: There were three Volunteer soldiers in front of my place. They gave me hope that they might be able to prevent people from coming to us.

CHAIRMAN: You felt that they might prevent the crowd coming to you. What happened next?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I heard from one of the volunteers firing a gun.

CHAIRMAN: You heard a report from someone firing a gun?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: What happened next?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: After that, the crowd began to come my way.

CHAIRMAN: The crowd continued in your direction?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes, they were coming in my direction.

CHAIRMAN: What happened next?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: The volunteers disappeared.

CHAIRMAN: What do you mean they disappeared? They went away?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes. They disappeared. I didn't see then any more. One fellow said, "Man you give us what we want and we will not trouble you." So, I asked what he wanted, and he said he wanted \$500. I told him, I haven't got any money.

CHAIRMAN: Did you recognise anybody in that crowd?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes. I know some of them as I saw them.

CHAIRMAN: Were they strangers to Wismar area, or people you know by name or face?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Some I know by face, and some by name.

CHAIRMAN: Do you remember the names?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: A few of them, sir.

CHAIRMAN: What are their names?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Their names were Patrick Long, his wife and there was a fellow by the name of Cheddie.

CHAIRMAN: Anybody else?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: No sir, but I saw a fellow by the name of German. I also saw Devon and Caesar.

CHAIRMAN: Were there women in the crowd?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: No.

CHAIRMAN: Whom did you see?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I saw a man by the name of Banga Mary. I then heard noise like some one breaking a show case.

CHAIRMAN: What happened then?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: During that period they came by my shop and started to break my window. Then they came in and demanded money from us.

CHAIRMAN: What you did?

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TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: They threatened us. Then suddenly another person came into the house with a cutlass. They took articles from the house as much as they could get. They took away things like clock, cameras, money and jewels.

CHAIRMAN: How much money?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: About \$350. They stripped my wife and children of their jewels, such as bangles, wrist watches, and so on.

CHAIRMAN: They took it from their purses and person?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: What happened next?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: The crowd went away. Then a man came in and said, "If you give me five dollars I will leave you." I then gave him all I had, that is, a twenty dollars note. Then I began to smell funny things. I saw smoke and I told my wife and family about it, and as my wife looked around. The man said we would be roasted in here, because the smoke was coming through the windows. I then told my wife and children let us escape, so we ran at the back step of the building. There I saw a fellow with a liquid in a bottle which was transparent. The man pelted the bottle of liquid which was broken, and a fire started. The crowd down stairs told us that if we go and hide ourselves in that toilet they would not burn the house, they would out the fire. I then ran in my neighbour's toilet.

CHAIRMAN: Who was your neighbour?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Mr. Clark. After running and hiding in that toilet, I did not see my children, so I came out and observed my daughter and my daughter-in-law were missing. My eldest son, my other son and my adopted son went in search of them.

CHAIRMAN: What are their names?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Their names are Kawal Prashad, Balmacoon Prashad and Kenneth Ramchand.

CHAIRMAN: Your sons went in search of the girls. That means your daughter, your daughter-in-law, and also your other children. How old are they?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: My daughter is 21, my daughter-in-law also 21, and other children 12 to 14.

CHAIRMAN: You said that you escaped from the toilet and went in the back street in search of your family?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Then what happened?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I told the boys that I was going to Silver City house where I would spend the night.

CHAIRMAN: You said you escaped from the latrine. Where did you go?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I went to the back street. Then I said that I would go to Silver City where I have another property, but when I reached the premises I found that the building was on fire. I went to the Wismar police station and made a report to Mr. Hobbs.

CHAIRMAN: Did you make a statement?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes. He referred me to an Indian police constable who took a statement from me.

CHAIRMAN: What time was it?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: It was about dusk.

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CHAIRMAN: What happened then?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I saw a few of my children at the police station.

CHAIRMAN: What did you do?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: We were transferred to the Demba Trade School.

CHAIRMAN: Did you see your girls?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I did not see my girls, my daughter-in-law and my eldest son.

CHAIRMAN: Did you go to the Demba Trade School?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I first went to the Casualty, and then to the Demba Trade School.

CHAIRMAN: Did you spend the night there?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir, and then I joined the boat from Mackenzie to Georgetown, where I saw my two girls on stretchers and my other children were in the boat.

CHAIRMAN: What about your son?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: He had bumps, bruises, but he could have walked.

CHAIRMAN: What was your loss?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: At that time the shock had me, and I told the police that I lost around \$98,000 to \$100,000.

CHAIRMAN: Did you give any statement to the police at Brickdam police station?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes. I gave the statement.

CHAIRMAN: Was it on the 27th day of May?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes sir. It was on Wednesday the 27th day of May.

SHEPHERD: How many volunteers did you see when your house was on fire?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Three.

SHEPHERD: You heard them open fire on the crowd?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: One shot in the air.

SHEPHERD: Then you didn't see them again after that?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: No.

SHEPHERD: I have no instructions about this evidence, and I shall however cross-examine the witness again. No instructions have been received in relation to this evidence and, as mentioned before, the absence of this statement from the witness would add to the delay.

CHAIRMAN: I understand that the witness has already given a statement to the police.

SHEPHERD: If I can have his statement, I could have saved all of this. So far as I am able, I would proceed examining the witness and finish with him. I am going to ask for the recall of this witness. Up to now, I would require the recall of two; he will be the third. From my point of view, I shall call back Shirley Mohamed and Mrs Gopie to the stand because they gave come startling statements about the police.

CHAIRMAN: You have the statement from this witness. He gave you since the 5th June, 1964.

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SHEPHERD: About the volunteers, I have seen the statement from the police. Now did you recognise any of the people in front of your shop?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I spoke to one Patrick Long, Compton Long, H. Vanderstoop, and George Dunlap.

SHEPHERD: Did you see Dunlap?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: No, I did not see Dunlap.

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CHAIRMAN: You saw him and you mentioned this to the police. The police took your statement.

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SHEPHERD: And isn't it a fact that these men are charged by the police and are awaiting trial.

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I have seen a few of them.

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CHAIRMAN: This report of the gun? Now, you did not see anyone firing a gun?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I heard the report and when I turned I saw smoke from the muzzle of the gun.

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MOOTOO: Was your relationship with your neighbours good?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Very nice.

MOOTOO: Did you have any enemies?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Not that I know of.

MOOTOO: Did the amount you stated include what you owed the merchants?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: Yes.

—

CHAIRMAN: How much would you say you owed?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: With the bank, I have \$3,000 overdraft.

CHAIRMAN: Are they any merchandise for which payment has to be made?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I don't believe I owe more than \$7,000.

—

DRAYTON: You said that you heard explosions on the Sunday night. How early was it? Nine o'clock or ten?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: We never checked on the time.

DRAYTON: The explosion was before you went to bed, right through the night?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: During sleep I heard an explosion, but in the morning there were explosions all the time.

DRAYTON: During sleep you heard an explosion and jumped up? Secondly, was it only your wife and yourself who were hiding in the latrine?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: My wife and I alone.

DRAYTON: What happened to your children after you came out of hiding?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: I looked for them.

DRAYTON: You looked where?

**Transcripts – Day 5**

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: In the back street.

DRAYTON: Where did you intend to go?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: We were hustling to catch Silver City.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Prashad, I may have to call you back to give further evidence. You live at 61 Public Road, Kitty. We will get in touch with you.

—  
SHEPHERD: Do you know any names of the volunteers?

TRIBHAWAN PRASHAD: No sir. I do not know the names.

SHEPHERD: Thank you.

—  
**MR. JAFFAR ALI KHAN is sworn in and he states as follows:**

CHAIRMAN: Where do you live?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Lot 5 Ruimveldt Riverview.

CHAIRMAN: What work are you doing?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I am a barber.

CHAIRMAN: You used to live at lot 14 Silver City, Wismar, and what work did you do there?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I had a restaurant at Lot 14 Silver City, Wismar, and a boarding house.

CHAIRMAN: You were also a barber? Now in the month of May this year, about the 23rd which was a Saturday, what happened?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I went to Soo Tang's rumshop about 7.30 in the night. I saw Robert Jordan with a group of men and women, about fifty to sixty, telling them if they were not seeing or reading the newspapers. "On the West Coast and East Coast the Indians were killing out the Negroes. What are you Negroes doing here? Try and do the same thing. Do you see what the Indians are doing to the Negroes? Burn the houses and kill them if possible. You have sufficient lawyers to defend you. Are you not seeing that the lawyers are defending all the cases?"

CHAIRMAN: Now, what happened on Sunday 24th?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I went home on Sunday 24th. About 6.30 in the morning I opened my restaurant and I was ordered by a group of men and women to close the restaurant. I closed it because I was afraid. After I closed the restaurant I went to the barber shop at Mr Lalta Paul's building. They ordered me there again to close the shop. I closed and I went home at Lot 14 – the address of the same restaurant – to keep indoors for the whole day – myself, my wife and children.

CHAIRMAN: Why did you keep indoors?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I was ordered by the men and women not to open because they said they were going to burn down the place. The next day on the 25th, about four o'clock in the afternoon I saw they were looting the second lot from me, and some of the boys ran to me and said to remove quickly, or they would beat me.

CHAIRMAN: Who told you to remove? Were they Indian?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No, they were not Indians. I had to get my wife and children to the police station.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know the place?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: It was a Negro's place, but an Indian man was working there.

### ***The Wismar Commission Report***

CHAIRMAN: Was that building burnt?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No.

CHAIRMAN: You say you went home, and yourself and your family went to the police station? Your wife had eight children? How far were you from the police station?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: 50 rods.

CHAIRMAN: On your way to the police station did anything occur?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: A Negro fellow ran behind my wife and told her to take off her bangles or he would stab her in her back, I had a cutlass in my hand, and I asked him if he put the bangle on them, and after he saw the cutlass he jumped across Mr Paul's place and ran away.

CHAIRMAN: You got to the police station during the day. Did you request the police to assist you?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: When I went to the police station I went to Superintendent Hobbs and asked him for a police to follow me home to get some jewels that were under my mattress, and a machine. If I could even get that out I would be grateful, but I was not assisted with that.

CHAIRMAN: You got to the police station at what time?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: About 4.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN: How long did you stay there?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Until 8 o'clock in the night.

CHAIRMAN: How many people were in the police compound?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: About 1,000 people.

CHAIRMAN: How much would you say you lost?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: About \$10,000.

CHAIRMAN: That includes this barbershop and the restaurant, which was rented from Prashad. Are you indebted?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No I am not indebted.

CHAIRMAN: Was the insurance paid? You are, I believe, insured?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Yes, I am insured for \$5,000.

CHAIRMAN: You didn't receive any payment there?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No.

CHAIRMAN: The next morning you joined the boat.

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Yes. On Tuesday morning to come to Georgetown.

SHEPHERD: Now Mr Khan, you heard Mr. Robert Jordan talking to this crowd. Were there any members of the Police Force at the time?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No sir.

SHEPHERD: Were you alone when you heard Mr Jordan addressing the crowd, or were you with any friend?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No other friend.

### *Transcripts – Day 5*

SHEPHERD: What did you do? Did you go to any of the friends who are Indians who have businesses or others who are just living at Wismar to report what you heard?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I talked to Mr. Paul and his son. I spoke to them about what Mr. Jordan was saying.

SHEPHERD: So that when the attack come on the 25th you were not completely taken by surprise?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: According to how I heard it, I didn't expect what would happen.

SHEPHERD: Before Mr Jordan's meeting with this crowd, had there been any similar statements made in public at Wismar?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I cannot remember. This was the only time. I heard several times about this but I did not hear it with my ears. This was the first time I heard it.

MACDONALD: Mr. Khan, you said you saw Mr. Jordan standing in front of a shop. Was he right on the water-side?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Yes sir.

MACDONALD: Well, we have seen public meetings organised by political parties. Was it set up in this way? Was Mr. Jordan standing on something addressing the people?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No sir. There were 50 to 60 people standing around Mr. Jordan. He was in the middle of the crowd and speaking to the people, and he was not speaking easy.

MACDONALD: Did you see any other Indian around?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No other Indian was there.

MOOTOO: Did they object to you listening to the talk?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No.

MOOTOO: Did they see you?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Everybody was watching me.

MOOTOO: Who is Soo Tang?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: A Chinese man.

MOOTOO: Was Mr. Soo Tang there?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Well, he was in the shop.

MOOTOO: Did you recognise anybody in the crowd?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Well, I recognised everybody.

MOOTOO: They did not object to you listening and so it was not a secret meeting?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: No, it was not a secret meeting.

MOOTOO: He was not giving instructions?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I was at the back and I walked around the rum shop.

MOOTOO: Did they see you?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I cannot say if they saw me.

MOOTOO: How long do you know Mr. Jordan?

JAFFAR ALI KHAN: I worked for Mr. Jordan.



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CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jordan is the elected member for the Wismar area in the Legislative assembly?  
JAFFAR ALI KHAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Khan.

—

***MR. WALTER NARAINÉ is sworn in and he states as follows:***

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Walter Naraine, where are you living?

NARAINÉ: I live at Plantation Enmore.

CHAIRMAN: What work are you doing?

NARAINÉ: Nothing, I am unemployed.

CHAIRMAN: You use to live where? Before you went to Enmore?

NARAINÉ: I used to live at 248 Silver Town, Wismar, and I use to work at Demba as a bulldozer operator. I worked among all the boys in the mine. I use to hear one or two of them talk threateningly. A few days after people came to my place up the river.

CHAIRMAN: You had another place?

NARAINÉ: No sir. Some of them told me that we would have to run to their place up the river for rescue. Threats were made by the workers to me. I told them if they want to beat me they could beat me.

CHAIRMAN: Anything happened before Friday?

NARAINÉ: Friday afternoon when I came home from work I met my wife sick, so I had to go to the drugstore to see a doctor. The doctor said that I must bring her to him, but the condition of the area prevented me.

CHAIRMAN: You said that you went for a dispenser?

NARAINÉ: Yes sir, and he told me to bring my wife; he wanted to see her. The place was rather disturbed and several persons were running and making threatening remarks.

CHAIRMAN: You said you saw Jordan and you heard him say something. It was about what time?

NARAINÉ: It was about 4.30.

CHAIRMAN: Where was he?

NARAINÉ: He was at Wismar Road walking. I saw him just past the market by the boat landing.

CHAIRMAN: The boat landing is about how far from the market?

NARAINÉ: About 25 rods.

CHAIRMAN: And what you did?

NARAINÉ: By hearing and seeing those things I did not carry her to the hospital, but I went and bought some tablets from the drugstore and I gave them to her.

CHAIRMAN: Did she feel any relief after taking those tablets?

NARAINÉ: No. I sent to call a man by the name of Napoleon. Then I took her across to Mackenzie Hospital.

CHAIRMAN: About what o'clock?

NARAINÉ: About 5 to 6 o'clock. I went home and my wife and children kept watching all night.

### ***Transcripts – Day 5***

CHAIRMAN: How many children?

NARAINÉ: I have seven children.

CHAIRMAN: And that house was your own?

NARAINÉ: Yes sir. About 10 o'clock as I was watching my home I heard the explosion of a bomb by the riverside and then in my home.

CHAIRMAN: Was anybody injured?

NARAINÉ: Nobody was injured, but a portion of the house was scorched. Shortly after, two policemen came to my home and asked me if the bomb had exploded in my home, and I said yes. They then took the bomb and carried it to the station. Then a boy came. He was a Negro boy wearing black clothes. I turned on my light. The boy, after seeing this, went away. A few minutes later I saw Mr. Hobbs and four other policemen. They came and spoke with me. I asked them if they were going to leave me alone, but they said that there were no policemen available because they were all on duty. He asked me if I had a gun. I told him no and I asked him if I could have one from him and the reply was no.

CHAIRMAN: That was on Friday.

NARAINÉ: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: What happened on Saturday? Did you go back to work?

NARAINÉ: No. I stayed at home.

CHAIRMAN: Nothing happened to you?

NARAINÉ: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: What happened on Sunday?

NARAINÉ: On Sunday I saw a fire and I heard explosion of bombs. I saw volunteers and other men with black clothes going up the hill, and a few minutes later I saw fire.

CHAIRMAN: On Saturday and Sunday night anything happened to you?

NARAINÉ: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: What happened on Monday?

NARAINÉ: Monday morning?

CHAIRMAN: Yes about 6.00 to 7.00.

NARAINÉ: The fire started, in the morning. Two of my girls went to school at Mackenzie and there the people started to beat. My wife was in hospital receiving treatment then I saw fire and I sent my boy about 8.00 a.m. to buy chick feed. He was warned by another friend that people were beating in the streets.

CHAIRMAN: Can you say what you saw?

NARAINÉ: Yes. I saw two people and I don't know them or do I know the persons who were beaten. All I know is that the victims were Indians. They then went to Mr. Lalta Persaud's store and started to loot and burn the building. The women were crying and pointing down the hill.

CHAIRMAN: How many people did you see?

NARAINÉ: I saw about thirty people.

CHAIRMAN: Did you recognise any of them?

NARAINÉ: Yes. There was Bob, Lloyd and Johnson, and they told me that I must not worry – they would not burn my place. They then removed to Mr. Lalta Paul's son-in-law and started to burn his house. My wife was crying and moving from place to place in the house. I then asked an African girl if she can keep

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my two daughters, and she refused to do so, because she was afraid that she too will be burnt and beaten if she helped an Indian.

CHAIRMAN: What happened then?

NARAINÉ: I asked a neighbour three houses from where I was living to keep my sixteen year old daughter, and she did so until next morning. About 7.00 in the morning the crowd came to my house but they did not find anyone. I hid my wife and six children in the bathroom, and I hid myself under some plantain bushes and there I watched.

CHAIRMAN: What happened?

NARAINÉ: I saw about twenty people. They surrounded my house. One Mr. Thomas said the lights are out and they are looting and burning. I hid myself and said nothing. They set fire to my house three times and upon the fourth time they got gasoline which I had hidden for my motor cycle.

CHAIRMAN: About how much gasoline? About how many pints?

NARAINÉ: About a gallon and a half.

CHAIRMAN: And you saw them use this to light your house afire.

NARAINÉ: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Who did you see when your house was burning?

NARAINÉ: I saw one Lloyd Hope, Bob and Harris around my house.

CHAIRMAN: What happened then? You remained with your family?

NARAINÉ: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Did you see any police about the area? Did you hear a gun shot?

NARAINÉ: Yes. But I did not come out or say anything.

CHAIRMAN: Did you see any British soldiers?

NARAINÉ: No.

CHAIRMAN: What happened next?

NARAINÉ: I asked Napoleon to help me with the fowls and I gave him some. I jumped on my push bike and went back to the station.

CHAIRMAN: About what time?

NARAINÉ: About 5.30 to 6.00 in the morning.

CHAIRMAN: You had police protection?

NARAINÉ: One volunteer and one police, Constable Lashley, took everything and put it into the jeep.

CHAIRMAN: You tried to catch the first boat to Georgetown?

NARAINÉ: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: About now much do you say the value of your house is?

NARAINÉ: About \$10,000. The only thing I owed for it is the \$59 on the machine.

SHEPHERD: When you were at home and you saw people being beaten, did you go to the police?

NARAINÉ: No. I could not come out.

SHEPHERD: Did you have any police protection?

### ***Transcripts – Day 5***

NARAINÉ: Yes.

SHEPHERD: You and your family went into the jeep?

NARAINÉ: Yes.

SHEPHERD: How many?

NARAINÉ: About 6 or 7 of us.

SHEPHERD: Then you took the first boat to Georgetown?

NARAINÉ: Yes.

SHEPHERD: Any injured?

NARAINÉ: No.

SHEPHERD: On Friday your place was burnt down. At no time did you or your wife receive any harm?

NARAINÉ: Not Friday; on Monday.

SHEPHERD: But at any time did you or your wife receive any harm?

NARAINÉ: No.

SHEPHERD: No other questions.

—

CARTER: Mr. Chairman, I do not have any questions to ask you, but I wish to refer to the number of things I have been hearing since this inquiry started. I want to ask you that the press be asked to cooperate in not publishing the names of those persons who rendered assistance to the victims. They may mention just persons rendering assistance and not even neighbours, as this will serve as a means of identification. I hope that there will not be a tragedy of this nature, but I think persons will not be too willing to give assistance in similar circumstances for fear of victimisation.

CHAIRMAN: It was worrying to the Commissioners since yesterday especially as photographers are concerned, and people giving their addresses, but we feel that the press will use their discretion in this matter, and we would ask them for the safety of these people, not to print their names and addresses. The secretary will make a request in the form of a letter to the press.

MR CARTER: Particularly to the persons who rendered assistance.

CHAIRMAN: Yes.

—

DRAYTON: You say you saw Mr. Jordan on Friday afternoon down by the riverside, and he was walking up and down?

NARAINÉ: And telling people what to do.

DRAYTON: Telling whom?

NARAINÉ: Telling everybody.

DRAYTON: How did you know he was telling everybody?

NARAINÉ: I stood up and listened as he was walking up and down and talking.

DRAYTON: And where were you? You were passing?

NARAINÉ: Yes, and I stopped.

DRAYTON: I am not clear, Mr. Naraine, and I must ask you to try and help to clear up this matter. What was Mr. Jordan doing by the riverside? Was he walking up and down?

NARAINÉ: He was walking and talking to the people.

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DRAYTON: How many were there?

NARAINÉ: About three, but he was not standing up one place; he was walking all the time.

DRAYTON: What did he say to those people?

NARAINÉ: He said we have a short time, and this thing has got to be done before Monday – burn beat, and loot.

DRAYTON: The second question, Mr. Naraine, concerns all those people all dressed in black clothing.

NARAINÉ: That was night not daytime.

—

SHEPHERD: That is the Saturday night?

NARAINÉ: Sunday night.

SHEPHERD: You said Saturday night in the course of your evidence. Was it Saturday night or Sunday night that you saw those people?

NARAINÉ: Saturday night.

—

CHAIRMAN: Answer the questions that are put to you. Listen carefully to the questions and answer the questions.

—

DRAYTON: It was on Saturday night that you saw how many people dressed in black? You say three?

NARAINÉ: Three.

DRAYTON: You said three, so there were three people down by the riverside to whom Mr. Jordan spoke and there were three people dressed in all black going up the hill?

NARAINÉ: Yes.

DRAYTON: What were they doing?

NARAINÉ: They were going up a hill dressed in all black. They were Africans but they might have been Indians too. They were all going up the hill.

DRAYTON: Did they have anything in their hands?

NARAINÉ: I saw they had something like a bottle. It was night.

—

MOOTOO: Your wife was very sick and you went home from work so that you would go to the dispenser, but in spite of that you had time to follow behind Mr. Jordan, after he started to lecture. You remember to this day exactly every word that he said?

NARAINÉ: But I said I was on my way to the dispenser.

MOOTOO: But this was before you went to the dispenser?

NARAINÉ: Yes.

MOOTOO: When did your wife come back from hospital?

NARAINÉ: She came back on Sunday.

MOOTOO: When did your two children go to school?

NARAINÉ: On Monday morning.

### ***Transcripts – Day 5***

MOOTOO: And you sent your boy to buy some chicken feed on Monday morning? How old is this boy?  
NARAINÉ: He is 15 years.

MOOTOO: Did he go to school?  
NARAINÉ: He did not go to school this Monday morning because it wasn't school time.

MOOTOO: Your daughters go to school at Mackenzie and where did your son go to school?  
NARAINÉ: At Wismar.

MOOTOO: When your house was burnt, you said you were hiding behind the banana trees. Your wife was in the bathroom and you thought it was very unsafe for you to come out and go to the police station and report the matter.  
NARAINÉ: Yes.

MOOTOO: When your house was burning while you were hiding, you came out and you thought there were still a few chickens alive. You sent your son to go and look for the man?  
NARAINÉ: Nobody was walking.

MOOTOO: And so you found it unsafe to come out. It was Tuesday morning when everything was quiet. Why did you send him? Was it so important to send your son to give the man the fowls? And did you give the man the fowls? Why did you give him? But why did you send for this man and why did you risk your son's life to go for this man? So you would rather help this man and risk your son's life?  
NARAINÉ: Well, I didn't study that.

MOOTOO: The whole place was wild and you thought it was quite in order to send your son to give this man a present. How far away was this man's house?  
NARAINÉ: Roughly about quarter of a mile.  
MOOTOO: No more questions.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Narainé.

#### ***MR. HACKIM KHAN is sworn and he states as follows:***

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hackim Khan, how old are you?  
HACKIM KHAN: I am 50 years of ago, and I live at 46 High Street.

CHAIRMAN: What work are you doing now?  
HACKIM KHAN: I am unemployed.

CHAIRMAN: You were a businessman, and you lived at 38 Silver Town, Wismar?  
HACKIM KHAN: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: You lived there up to Monday 25th May, 1964?  
HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Now, on Saturday 23rd May, around 4.00 to 5.00 p.m., where were you? Could you remember?  
HACKIM KHAN: I was on the road going home.

CHAIRMAN: The public road?

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HACKIM KHAN: The one leading to the riverside. I was going from east to west. I had to pass the electricity cooperative. While passing Mr. Jordan, was in front of me.

CHAIRMAN: You said you knew Mr. Jordan for several years?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. Going to the office, there he was on the road. There were a few Africans in and out of the office. The office is very small. Mr. Jordan said, "What are you people doing here? You don't see that the Indians are killing the Africans on the East Coast and West Coast, and you are not doing anything to stop this nonsense. You all have to get up and get, and do something to stop it." Then I went home and took up my telephone and told the sergeant at the Wismar police station "Like we are in for some trouble". And he said I must not be afraid, that he was going to send somebody to keep watch. He sent a fellow by the name of Bob. He is a volunteer soldier.

CHAIRMAN: A volunteer soldier came to your premises?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. About seven o'clock, and he said he will keep watch. Another fellow by the name of Badon, a rural constable – both people came and assisted me.

CHAIRMAN: They kept watching the whole of the night?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Now what happened to you?

HACKIM KHAN: During Saturday night I saw a few fires around the hill top. That is at the back of my building.

CHAIRMAN: That is about how many miles.

HACKIM KHAN: It is about half to one mile.

CHAIRMAN: What about Sunday night?

HACKIM KHAN: Nothing sir, but about two or three times some Africans went around the building, and when the Volunteer Force came out they went away. I kept watching until 4 o'clock on Monday. I woke up about 9 o'clock and I saw fire. On the hill top I saw Volunteer Force, policemen and Negroes moving from house to house. The fire started to spread, and people running about. Many people came to my house; they were all East Indians and I advised them to the police station. I took up a phone and rang the police but I had no answer.

CHAIRMAN: Just one more question Mr. Hakim. You said you rang the station. Is there a switchboard operator who could put you on to the station?

HACKIM KHAN: No sir. No switch board operator. I could not get through to the police station by phone. I saw many people running from here to there. I tried to ring Mr. Langham, the security officer.

CHAIRMAN: About what o'clock?

HACKIM KHAN: It was about 10 o'clock.

CHAIRMAN: What happened next?

HACKIM KHAN: The secretary answered the phone, but I told him that I wanted to speak go Mr. Langham.

SHEPHERD: What Mr. Langham said to you?

HACKIM KHAN: He said that he could not come now. On Monday about twenty to twenty-five Negroes went into my place. Some of them I knew. They called for rum and beer and I served them. I asked them for the money. But they told me what I wanted with money; they will burn my rass down. My wife gave a man named Johnson two dollars to take my children across the river to Mr. Brown's house.

### ***Transcripts – Day 5***

CHAIRMAN: Did you recognise anyone in the crowd?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. I saw Mr. Badon, a rural constable.

CHAIRMAN: Was there any one else that you saw?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Who else did you see?

HACKIM KHAN: I saw Mr. Massey and one Shirley Martin.

CHAIRMAN: About how much money did you have in your store?

HACKIM KHAN: I had around \$920 in one pocket and \$600 in the other.

CHAIRMAN: What happened?

HACKIM KHAN: I went on the back step. I went into the engine room and hid the money there. I ran and went through Bissoon's yard and there, as I came through the gate, I saw two Negroes armed with greenheart wood and they threatened me. They told me that it is either money or life. I had about fifteen to sixteen dollars in my pocket. I took out half of the notes and gave the two men along with the bracelets that I had in my possession.

CHAIRMAN: Yourself and wife went to the station?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes, and there we met Mr. Hobbs and asked for police protection in order to go back and rescue some valuables.

CHAIRMAN: What happened?

HACKIM KHAN: He, Mr. Hobbs, told me that he was not concerned because the time has come for the Negroes to fight back seeing that the Indians were taking advantage of the Negroes on the West Coast.

CHAIRMAN: What happened then?

HACKIM KHAN: I met one Mr. Simon at the platform and told him the said story and he in turn told me the same thing that Mr. Hobbs said. My wife and I came downstairs and there we met Mr. Chalmers in his jeep. I again told my story to Mr. Chalmers. I offered him half of my money if he could take us to my hotel. He then took myself and wife to the hotel in the jeep. When we got there people were drinking and transporting goods. I knew some of them who were transporting goods.

CHAIRMAN: Transporting what?

HACKIM KHAN: Stocks of beer. We walked on the pavement and went in the yard.

CHAIRMAN: Which pavement?

HACKIM KHAN: My yard has a pavement.

CHAIRMAN: You saw people looting Edward Bissoon's store?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: What Mr. Chalmers did?

HACKIM KHAN: Mr. Chalmers took out his revolver and fired a shot in the air, and the people started to run.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chalmers fired a shot and the people started to disperse?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. Chalmers collected terylene shirts from Bissoon's store, some from the ground and some given by the boys. I just collected my money and went back to the station.

CHAIRMAN: You walked back to the station?



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HACKIM KHAN: Yes. I walked back.

CHAIRMAN: And did. Mr. Chalmers request anything?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. I took out my pocket and showed him I hadn't no money here with me. I had given it to my wife to keep.

CHAIRMAN: About how many people were at the station?

HACKIM KHAN: About 800. The station was very crowded.

CHAIRMAN: What time did you go across to Mackenzie?

HACKIM KHAN: About six to half past six,

CHAIRMAN: How long were you at Wismar?

HACKIM KHAN: Since 1948.

CHAIRMAN: You are the owner of the Hotel Deluxe?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Do you have another place?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Where?

HACKIM KHAN: 38, Silver Town, Wismar.

CHAIRMAN: The value of the building?

HACKIM KHAN: About one hundred thousand, including all the equipment in the house.

CHAIRMAN: Do you have any other properties?

HACKIM KHAN: Six other properties.

CHAIRMAN: Where is the other hotel?

HACKIM KHAN: 29, Silver City, Wismar.

CHAIRMAN: Value of it?

HACKIM KHAN: About \$10,000, and another at 56, Silver Town valued at \$6,000, and one at Silver Town at \$10,000.

CHAIRMAN: Were all these buildings destroyed?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes sir. I heard they were destroyed. I did not go back.

CHAIRMAN: Did this building carry insurance?

HACKIM KHAN: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: Since building, you had carried insurance on them?

HACKIM KHAN: I had the hotel insured for \$20,000.

CHAIRMAN: Had you any riot insurance?

HACKIM KHAN: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: How much would you say you have lost in property and everything?

HACKIM KHAN: About \$175,000.

CHAIRMAN: Are you indebted or so to any man?

### *Transcripts – Day 5*

HACKIM KHAN: No sir.

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SHEPHERD: I want to take you over some of your evidence so I could understand it. In the first place, after hearing what Mr. Jordon was saying, you telephoned Sergeant Chalmers and he said do not be afraid, and this was on Saturday night. A volunteer was sent to keep watch at your house on Saturday night.

HACKIM KHAN: One volunteer and a constable.

SHEPHERD: He was an ordinary constable. And then the following day was Sunday, and somebody was sent that day to watch your place?

HACKIM KHAN: The very person.

SHEPHERD: Was he also a supernumerary constable?

HACKIM KHAN: No. The same person came the next day.

SHEPHERD: Sunday night you had police protection. You watched your property. The policeman was dressed in khaki?

HACKIM KHAN: He was a regular visitor to the place.

SHEPHERD: You know him? When was it that you saw crowds moving from house to house and fires springing up? Was that on Saturday or Monday? You saw a volunteer or a policeman? How many?

HACKIM KHAN: A volunteer or a policeman. A few.

SHEPHERD: What were they doing?

HACKIM KHAN: The volunteers and the policemen were moving in the crowd. Volunteers, policemen and Negroes.

SHEPHERD: How far away was the crowd?

HACKIM KHAN: A good way. I did not take measurements of this place, so how can I tell you how far away.

SHEPHERD: About 50 rods?

HACKIM KHAN: They were some 50 rods, some 200 rods, some 300 rods.

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CHAIRMAN: There is a great difference between 50 rods and 200 rods. Answer Mr. Shepherd's question.

HACKIM KHAN: I can't say.

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SHEPHERD: Name any one volunteer or policeman you saw moving with the crowd?

HACKIM KHAN: I do not know the name, sir.

SHEPHERD: Did you at any time on the Saturday or Sunday see a volunteer or policeman beat anybody?

HACKIM KHAN: No. The people told me so.

SHEPHERD: Did you see any volunteer beat anyone, or any policeman beat anybody?

HACKIM KHAN: No. I only watched and ran.

SHEPHERD: Did you see any volunteer or police set fire to a house?

HACKIM KHAN: No sir.

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SHEPHERD: By the time you spoke to Superintendent Hobbs on Monday, things were out of control? There was confusion, fires, people running to and fro?

HACKIM KHAN: I was telephoning and not getting an answer.

SHEPHERD: I want to get at this point. Superintendent Hobbs said, "We cannot do anything; we are not protecting life and property." That was not true. He said, "We cannot protect Indian property."

HACKIM KHAN: He said life and property.

SHEPHERD: Now here I shall have to hold this matter between you and Sergeant Chalmers, and I shall have to be properly instructed. I'll reserve my examination until I am properly instructed.

CARTER: Your hotel isn't the one they call the "Ship"?

HACKIM KHAN: No, I do not know anything about that.

CARTER: Now, your hotel was well patronised by the workers of Mackenzie?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes sir.

CARTER: Were they mostly African workers?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. Because the population consists of mainly Africans.

CARTER: Was it exclusively African workers?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes sir.

CARTER: You stated that this business was operated from 1954. What business did you do before?

HACKIM KHAN: I did business on the road. Then I had business in the market selling groceries, provisions and so on.

CARTER: You told us that when these two men met you with this greenheart and they told you "money or life" you had some pay slips in your pocket.

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. I had three pay slips from men who were workers in Demba.

CARTER: Was it the Monday when these pay slips had been given to you?

HACKIM KHAN: The pay slips were given to me on Friday or Saturday.

CARTER: Tell me what happened. The men came to you with their pay slips. Is that right?

HACKIM KHAN: No. When they came I told them I haven't got money.

CARTER: Now, what commission do you charge for changing this?

HACKIM KHAN: I got no commission. I don't know what you are talking about.

CARTER: You take these pay slips to whom?

HACKIM KHAN: To the bank.

CARTER: Do you take a commission out of this?

HACKIM KHAN: No, I don't know anything about this.

CARTER: You take a small commission from this after you take them to the bank to collect the money?

HACKIM KHAN: No.

### ***Transcripts – Day 5***

DRAYTON: You had knowledge before you had the money that there was a possibility – a good possibility – of the hotel being attacked? And they threatened and said that they would burn down your place? Why did you choose to hide it rather than keep it on your person?

HACKIM KHAN: Well, I decided to hide the money in the engine room. In fact I felt like hiding it in the room.

DRAYTON: How long have you known Mr. Hobbs?

HACKIM KHAN: Well, since he was in the district.

DRAYTON: How many years?

HACKIM KHAN: Well, I did not make a check.

DRAYTON: You know Mr. Hobbs very well? Mr. Hobbs made this kind of remark to you before?

HACKIM KHAN: No.

DRAYTON: What was your relationship as a big businessman in the area? You must have had a close relationship? You knew all the policemen in the area? Did you get along well with them?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

DRAYTON: None of the policemen before this occasion said what Mr. Hobbs told you, and none of them made this kind of remark before, about being interested in protecting your property?

HACKIM KHAN: No. Mr. Hobbs did say “We are not protecting Indian life and property”, because they heard for a long time of the killing of Negroes on the East and West Coast.

DRAYTON: You are certain of this?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. I am certain of this.

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MACDONALD: You said you saw several people started running into your hotel telling you that they would beat you. Why did they come to your hotel?

HACKIM KHAN: Well, I cannot say why.

MACDONALD: They came to you for protection? Why did they come to your hotel just to report to you?

HACKIM KHAN: I cannot say.

MACDONALD: You told them that you could not do anything and you advised them to go to the police station.

HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

MACDONALD: Later on, 25 or 30 Black men and women came in and they called for drinks. Business is business, so you served them. You saw everything was alright?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes sir.

—

MOOTOO: You said on Monday you had \$600 in one of your pockets and \$900 in the other. This is a lot of money to be in one's pocket. Do you carry so much money with you?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes. Sometimes more.

MOOTOO: Why did you carry so much money?

HACKIM KHAN: Well, I have to keep my money to give my customers change.

MOOTOO: Did you know that on Sunday there would be any disturbances?

HACKIM KHAN: Yes.

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MOOTOO: Well, why did you carry o much money with you? Why you didn't put it in the bank?

HACKIM KHAN: I could not go to the bank on Sunday.

MOOTOO: Over the weekends you served as banker in Wismar? You charged a small fee?

HACKIM KHAN: I don't know about that.

MOOTOO: No more questions.

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CHAIRMAN: Thank you Mr. Khan.

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***MR. LALTA PERSAUD is sworn in and he states as follows:***

CHAIRMAN: You live at present at Lot 29 First Street, Alexander Village?

LALTA PERSAUD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: You used to live at Wismar Hill on the Demerara River.

LALTA PERSAUD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: You got a stall in the market of Wismar? What did you sell?

LALTA PERSAUD: Ground provisions.

CHAIRMAN: You had an accident on 12th May?

LALTA PERSAUD: Yes sir. On the 12th of May I was beaten by a gang of men about 12.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN: Where?

LALTA PERSAUD: While I was going home at Wismar Hill.

CHAIRMAN: About how many people in that crowd?

LALTA PERSAUD: About six to seven men.

CHAIRMAN: You know any one of them?

LALTA PERSAUD: I know one of them. He is Wade Evans, Bob's kid.

CHAIRMAN: What happened next? You got hit where?

LALTA PERSAUD: On my shoulder, my left hand, my back, my foot Kicks and cuffs about my head and back.

CHAIRMAN: As a result of that, what happened to you?

LALTA PERSAUD: I shouted for help. I was accompanied by my brother to the hospital. That was on the 13th of May. We went to the Georgetown Hospital.

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*[One typewritten page of the original transcript with about ten questions and answers is missing here.]*

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MOOTOO: Why did they beat you like that? You didn't interfere with anyone?

LALTA PERSAUD: One day I had a little talk with one Mr. Jones by name.

MOOTOO: What happened?

LALTA PERSAUD: My land is next to his, and one day I light fire some bushes to burn and the smoke caught his plantain suckers.

***Transcripts – Day 5***

MOOTOO: Is that all?

LALTA PERSAUD: Yes, that is all.

MOOTOO: Was this man Jones in the crowd?

LALTA PERSAUD: No, he was not there.

MOOTOO: Was any of his friends in the crowd?

LALTA PERSAUD: No, I did not see any of his friends. I do not know if he had any friend there. I do not know them.

MOOTOO: Is that true?

LALTA PERSAUD: That is true.

MOOTOO: That is all. Thank you.

[Adjournment]

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