

Transcripts – Day 7

Day 7 – Tuesday, 24 November 1964

CHAIRMAN: We will continue the hearings this morning. Unfortunately, Mr. Sugrim Singh is still ill.

SHEPHERD: Sir, I would like to refer to yesterday's press release which I obtained. I would also like to refer once again to the present premises. It has only one passageway, with the back entrance to the road closed, and everybody uses the said front entrance to pass in and out.

CHAIRMAN: Please, Mr. Shepherd, I would ask you rather not say anything about the present premises. You could have mentioned about this since Monday and this question would have been given full consideration, but as it stands now, please do not mention any thing about the locality, because this question was already settled.

SHEPHERD: With respect, sir, I must refer to the Town Hall which is closed and which has been made available to another unofficial inquiry commission.

CHAIRMAN: This building has been given to us by His Excellency the Governor, and I think that we all should appreciate this.

SHEPHERD: I would refer, sir, to the question: what steps have been taken with respect to the publication in yesterday's paper. This is a release from the Premier's office itself, an excerpt of which I read yesterday and which appeared in Sunday's *Chronicle*. I now have the actual release obtained from the Government Information Service and which I submit now.

CHAIRMAN: We are very glad that you have drawn our attention to this publication and we will take the necessary steps to see that this type of thing does not occur.

SHEPHERD: As you wish, sir.

CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shepherd, we are not in possession of the statement made by Major Langham and I understand that he is the witness that is supposed to be here today.

SHEPHERD: I am not in possession of the statement, but they have instructed me only an hour ago and I have been informed that it has been put in the post and it should have been delivered early this morning. I am sorry it has been delayed.

CHAIRMAN: It has been advertised in the newspapers that statements were to be submitted, and up to now we cannot get this statement. The army has complied; we know that it has been made available, and yet they will keep it. We have no statement even from the police and volunteer force. We would like to once again state that our procedure is very clear, and that all statements should be submitted to the counsel, and the counsel would then call the witness, after which the witness would be examined by interested parties and be re-examined by the commission.

SHEPHERD: I haven't even a copy, which I could provide now. I am sorry this has happened. It might be appropriate for the counsel to take the Commanding Officer first, and the officers second.

CHAIRMAN: That is for the British Army?

SHEPHERD: I am speaking of the Volunteer Force.

CHAIRMAN: We are trying to facilitate Major Langham by having him heard first seeing that he is coming all the way from Mackenzie, and we would have put ourselves out a little bit to have him here, but we have not got his statement here up to day.

SHEPHERD: As counsel, sir, I have not interfered with these statements. This has been entirely in the hand of others, and I have not even a copy which I can show you at this moment. I could only suggest that I would pass on a message to the proper quarters and Major Langham's evidence would come in due course to facilitate his return to Demba, where his services are always been required fully. I'll see that a message is sent to the Commanding Officer and the statement will be here within an hour.

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CHAIRMAN: We need our first witness for today, and that is Mr. Toolsie Persaud.

MR. TOOLSIE PERSAUD is sworn in and he states as follows.

CHAIRMAN: Where do you live?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: 15 Lamaha and New Garden Streets.

CHAIRMAN: And your occupation?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Company director of Messrs. Toolsie Persaud Ltd.

CHAIRMAN: Now, your business includes dealing with lumber?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: You have a grant at Christianburg?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I have a timber depot at Christianburg.

CHAIRMAN: You usually visit the depot at Christianburg?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: When you visit the depot, where do you stay?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: We have a road that extends to Rockstone, and I would normally stay at Rockstone; that is our central point where the logs would go though from the forest to Christianburg.

CHAIRMAN: That will be the Essequibo River?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes, 21 miles west of Christianburg.

CHAIRMAN: I want you to cast your mind back to the 23rd May or round about 21st to 22nd. Can you remember if you paid a visit around that time to Christianburg? What date was it?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: It was a Saturday 23rd May.

CHAIRMAN: You went to your timber depot? At what time did you reach there?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I was there most of the afternoon, from midday until evening.

CHAIRMAN: You returned, or where were you?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I was there mostly to supervise the discharge of a very expensive machine.

CHAIRMAN: Now after you finished supervising it did you go to the Wismar area.

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes. It was about 9 o'clock after completion when my superintendent and other workmen wanted some meals and a place to overnight in order for some of them to join the ferry next morning to Georgetown. I went to make arrangement for them.

CHAIRMAN: Where did you go?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I do not know the place, but I was told that it was owned by a gentleman named Lam.

CHAIRMAN: You went to a hotel?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes, I was informed that this gentleman carries on a hotel, and a restaurant.

CHAIRMAN: When did you get there?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: We got there around 9 o'clock. One of our men and an Indian chap got burnt with acid on the road, just in front of this restaurant.

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CHAIRMAN: And he went in with you all to Mr. Lam?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes. While he was outside he got burnt.

CHAIRMAN: After you went inside what happened?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: We saw a lot of people in there. There were about five or six chaps inside.

CHAIRMAN: Were they hostile?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: The chap who got burnt, we arranged for his transportation to the hospital, and immediately after that some fifteen or twenty chaps came in the restaurant using threatening languages to myself and the other workers.

CHAIRMAN: What happened?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: The crowd started to increase, and in a short while, they started to stone the place.

CHAIRMAN: What was their temperament?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: They were hostile. While I was in there some of the chaps took out knives and toy guns and started to attack. I don't know what happened to my men, but I escaped through the back and found shelter somewhere else.

CHAIRMAN: Where?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Christianburg.

CHAIRMAN: Did you suffer any injuries?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

CHAIRMAN: What was the atmosphere like when you went up?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I noticed no tension but my foreman had told me there was going to be trouble.

CHAIRMAN: Did you tell anyone?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I didn't tell any one what had happened. My foreman had said things would be happening.

CHAIRMAN: When he said things would be happening did you feel it was any particular group of people?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes, but myself and my men thought it wouldn't be safe to stay there.

CHAIRMAN: Did you feel it was becoming dangerous for Indians?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: Did you make any complaints?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

CHAIRMAN: Why? You had to come back through the alley way and buildings were burning, and yet you made no complaint to the police?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I got down in the morning about midday, but discovered the situation to be normal.

CHAIRMAN: Did you think it best as manager of a very big firm not to complain to the police at all?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

CHAIRMAN: Did you suffer any losses on your property during that period?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: At Christianburg. It was around 25th July, on a Saturday evening. One Mr. Barton told me that our installation tank had lost 2,000 gallons of duty-free gasoline and my watch-house was burnt.

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CHAIRMAN: What amount would you put your loss at?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: About \$1,000.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you say your foreman gave you this information?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What is the name of your foreman?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Mr. Durante.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Of what extraction is he?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: African.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you arrive at Wismar did you notice anything?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Nothing at all.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Was there any tension in the area? Did you at any time feel any tension?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You say you left on Sunday.

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes. Sunday morning.

PRATAP N. SINGH: How did you get down?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: By launch.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What time did you leave Wismar?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Seven o'clock.

PRATAP N. SINGH: At the time when you left Wismar did you notice anything?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes, places burning.

PRATAP N. SINGH: About how many?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: On Friday there was a fire.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Where?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I couldn't tell exactly where; that was Friday 22nd.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you notice any other fire?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you make any inquiry then?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did your information reveal the source of the fire?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Well, it was clear. I was told that people's places were being burnt.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You were told that people's places were being burnt while you were at the restaurant. You also said that there were five other workers besides the superintendent. How many were Indians?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: How many were Indians? There were three Indians.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Who were they?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: They were crane operators.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You said that they took out knives. What kind of knives were they?

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TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I can't say, but they were eight to ten inches long.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Besides yourself, what other people were there? Were there any other Indians?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You said that these men appeared as if they were going to attack you. Is that true?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you know the names of them?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No, but I think I could remember the leader.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you think you would be able to recognise him?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes, because he did a great deal of talking.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What was he talking about?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: He said that he would finish every Indian he saw. Perhaps he had been drinking.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What impression you got when you heard the words used by this man?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I cannot say exactly. I figured that he had been referring to the disturbances in the country.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You said that you were in no way assaulted.

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No, I was not; but one of my employees was burnt.

PRATAP N. SINGH: At that time while at the restaurant, did you have a word with Mr. Butters?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What was his employment?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: He was one of my mechanical superintendents.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Now, was Mr. Butters assaulted?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I cannot say.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did he not report to you?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Well, he told me the next day that he had a bit of a scuffle with the men.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did he say why?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No, he gave no reason.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you ever hear him say that it was in the interest of your protection that he was assaulted.

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No, I have not heard him said it.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Thank you.

DRAYTON: When did you leave Georgetown for Christianburg?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I left on Friday morning by plane.

DRAYTON: You spent all day at Christianburg?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes.

DRAYTON: Did you hear of the disturbances in the area on Friday night?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

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DRAYTON: No? What is the name of the labourer burnt with acid?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Deodat Narine.

DRAYTON: You mentioned that while in the restaurant you saw men with knives, and in reply to Mr. Singh's question, you said they were eight to ten inches in length. Did they have guns?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes, but I think they were toy guns.

DRAYTON: Why?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: If they were real guns I think they might have made use of them.

DRAYTON: Not necessarily. Do you form the impression that they were six-shooters?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I can't say.

DRAYTON: Do you know a revolver?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes, I have seen one.

DRAYTON: Do you own a gun?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

DRAYTON: Do you think you could tell the difference between a toy gun and a real pistol?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No! There is very little difference.

DRAYTON: So you really cannot say if they were toy guns.

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I had the impression that if they were real guns they might have used them.

DRAYTON: There is one question that interests me. You say that when you reached Georgetown you told no one of what you had seen at Wismar. On reflection on the date and time would you say that you acted responsibly as a member of the community? Would you say that this was responsible action? You might have saved the community.

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I will say this, that on Sunday Mr. Carl Austin telephoned my home to say that I was missing. I had a long chat with him and I told him what had taken place in the area.

DRAYTON: What time on Sunday was this?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: It was about 2.00 p.m. I told him what took place there and that I travelled by launch to Georgetown. I had in fact told him what took place and my brief experience there, and that was all. I did not report it officially to the police station.

DRAYTON: You told Carl Austin about the situation up there and your experience? Did you tell anybody else? Did you discuss it with anybody else?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

DRAYTON: This last point. This duty free gasoline, what was it used for?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: For the trucks in the forest. It is also used for speed-boats.

DRAYTON: How far was it stored?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: It is immediately along the river bank at Christianburg.

DRAYTON: Thank you

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SHEPHERD: Now this question arises.

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CHAIRMAN: Mr. Shepherd if you would just allow the members to finish.

SHEPHERD: I am very sorry.

MOOTOO: You said you didn't recognise any of the people who attacked you at the restaurant. Did any other members of the party recognise anybody?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

MOOTOO: How long did your foreman work in this area?

WITNESS: About twenty years. But he himself did not recognise anybody. There was one person whom I can recognise if I see him. I was told afterwards that his name was Banga Mary.

MOOTOO: Was he the leader of the crowd?

WITNESS: Yes, I would say he was the leader of the crowd.

MOOTOO: What made you think he was the leader?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: He did all the talking and I consider his actions to be that of a leader.

MOOTOO: How was he armed?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I didn't see in all that confusion. I didn't take any notice.

MOOTOO: Did you recognise the person who threw acid on your workman?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

MOOTOO: The incident of the acid, was it reported to the police?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Yes.

MOOTOO: Do you know the name of the police officer?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: I can't remember his name at all.

MOOTOO: Thank you very much.

SHEPHERD: Did Carl Austin ring you up?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: He rang my home and I spoke to him.

SHEPHERD: Did he seem concerned about your safety?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: He rang and told me he got a report from Wismar that I was in the place where this trouble started, and that I was reported missing, and I spoke to him of the incident. I told him I wasn't there and told him of the incident and he seemed relieved. He rang up because he was trying to get my brother to inform him I was missing.

SHEPHERD: He was anxious to inform your family that he had heard of what took place on Saturday night. The police did make a report to him?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: Well, I don't know if a report was made.

SHEPHERD: You never reported the incident officially?

TOOLSIE PERSAUD: No.

SHEPHERD: No further questions. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Persaud. You may step down.

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SHEPHERD: I think sir, shortly after I spoke to you about the statements of Major Langham and other volunteers, they were delivered by a clerk from the solicitors who instruct me.

CHAIRMAN: I have received it. Call Mr. George Woolford.

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MR. GEORGE WOOLFORD is sworn in and he states as follows:

CHAIRMAN: What is your name?

WOOLFORD: My name is George Woolford.

CHAIRMAN: Where do you live?

WOOLFORD: I live at Lot 37 Buxton Village, East Coast Demerara.

CHAIRMAN: Speak up loudly. Everybody would like to hear you. What work do you do?

WOOLFORD: I am working with the People's Progressive Party.

CHAIRMAN: You work with the People's Progressive Party?

WOOLFORD: Yes sir. I do.

CHAIRMAN: Previously you lived at Wismar?

WOOLFORD: At Wismar.

CHAIRMAN: Say "Yes, sir," or "No, sir." What work were you doing there?

WOOLFORD: I was kiln operator at Demba.

CHAIRMAN: For how long?

WOOLFORD: For twenty-three years.

CHAIRMAN: Why did you leave Wismar?

WOOLFORD: Because my living quarters were burnt down.

CHAIRMAN: Oh, your living quarters were burnt down. Was it on the 27th May, 1964.

WOOLFORD: Yes.

CHAIRMAN: You are a member of the People's Progressive Party?

WOOLFORD: Yes.

WITNESS: You contested a seat at the Upper Demerara River?

WOOLFORD: Yes sir.

CHAIRMAN: What do you know happened before the 27th May this year?

WOOLFORD: Yes, before the 25th May, two weeks before, there were rumours of the PYO coming up to Wismar to poison the water.

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SHEPHERD: What was that?

CHAIRMAN: To poison the water.

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WOOLFORD: Several persons met me on the road and told me that they were rumours that the PYO were going to poison the water.

CHAIRMAN: What you told them?

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WOOLFORD: I said I did not have any knowledge of that.

CHAIRMAN: What then?

WOOLFORD: I took a bucket and went to draw some water, but my neighbours told me not to draw the water because it has been poisoned. .

CHAIRMAN: What you did?

WOOLFORD: I drew the water and later went to the police station and told Mr. Batterfield what happened, but he told me that was not true.

CHAIRMAN: Yes? When was this?

WOOLFORD: On Saturday night.

CHAIRMAN: This was on Saturday night?

WOOLFORD: Yes. On Sunday morning about 5 o'clock I heard a loud explosion.

CHAIRMAN: Can you remember where?

WOOLFORD: Yes. It was at Third Alley.

CHAIRMAN: When?

WOOLFORD: This was on the 24th May, 1964. .

CHAIRMAN: Yes?

WOOLFORD: When I heard the explosion, I went to a neighbour and we went outside to watch the place where we heard the explosion. One Hackett lived in the house.

CHAIRMAN: What happened?

WOOLFORD: Mr. Hackett was not at home. He was at a house where a child was dead, helping to make the coffin.

CHAIRMAN: Was he your friend?

WOOLFORD: Yes, he was. He came later to me and asked me to give him meals for the day and I gave him meals and the night myself and Hackett went to keep watch at Senator Ramjattan's house. We started to watch from about 6.30 p.m. until next morning.

CHAIRMAN: What time in the morning?

WOOLFORD: Until 5.30 in the morning. About seven o'clock that Sunday night, while we were watching, there was a big fire up D'Anjou hill. The house was owned by a man who works at the alumina plant, named Ragnauth. Immediately after that, we saw another fire up the hill. It was a fellow who claimed that he was in a latrine, when some boys went and saturated the latrine with gasoline and caught it afire. About nine o'clock that same Sunday night there was a loud explosion down south Wismar. Some boys in the theatre, after hearing the explosion, ran out and then about four o'clock that Sunday morning there was another loud explosion some where around Chomondely Hill. It was a shop owned by a girl named Doris. That was the last of the incidents which I know about.

CHAIRMAN: What time did you leave?

WOOLFORD: I left about six o'clock for work. I worked until three o'clock. When I came out from the compound I met six men and two women at the gate. They told me, "Woolford we came to tell you that you must not go over to Wismar because they were burning and looting, and the fellows who are doing the burning are strangers, and they may not know you". I said, "I am going." One of the two women said "Man, you are too strong headed." Eventually, I listened to them, and took their advice. I went and I stayed at Mackenzie at a sister of mine. The next morning which was Tuesday I went to work. I passed

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several crowds on the road, and they said to me, "Woolford you must stand clear; you are going to see what we are going to do with the Indians."

CHAIRMAN: This is the Tuesday morning?

WOOLFORD: Yes, I came back Tuesday morning at three o'clock from work. I drew my pay packet from the Royal Bank. I then met another crowd there. They said, "For your own safety keep at Mackenzie; do not go to Wismar." While I was going to my sister's residence on that day I saw a crowd of women by the Mackenzie primary school. They said to me, "Woolford, try and save yourself."

CHAIRMAN: You were warned to save yourself. As a result, what did you do? Did you leave Mackenzie? You did not go to Georgetown?

WOOLFORD: Well, not until the night.

CHAIRMAN: Nothing happened before you left by the boat for Georgetown?

WOOLFORD: No one threatened me, and no one beat me.

CHAIRMAN: Then the night you left by the R.H. Carr for Georgetown?

WOOLFORD: Before I left Wednesday I took up one of the company's telephones and dialled 555. That was about nine o'clock.

CHAIRMAN: What is that number for?

WOOLFORD: That is when you want to call the police for the area.

CHAIRMAN: When did you leave for Georgetown? The Tuesday or the Wednesday?

WOOLFORD: Wednesday. I phoned the police and, fortunately, I was able to speak to Mr. Hobbs. I said I needed some protection to go to Wismar to get some of my belongings from my house. He said to me that there is no policeman now, and I can call back later. That was about the morning. I made another call about 11.15 that same day. He said that there is no police. I left and went to Demba office to draw my leave and pay money. Mr. Hobbs then came over to me and said, "I was just coming to look for you to tell you that we can offer you no protection." When I went to draw my leave and pay money, I saw the manager of Demba and told him my position. He told me not to terminate my service but as my leave is coming to take my time. I then came away that night by the R.H. Carr about 6.30.

CHAIRMAN: You returned to Mackenzie any time?

WOOLFORD: No.

CHAIRMAN: You did not go back since then? You did not go back in July.

WOOLFORD: No sir.

CHAIRMAN: You were not attacked and beaten in July?

WOOLFORD: Yes sir. That was in 1963.

CHAIRMAN: You heard explosions on Sunday; you saw fires during the Sunday morning. Did you make any efforts to contact the police?

WOOLFORD: No.

CHAIRMAN: Why?

WOOLFORD: The fire was not on us,

CHAIRMAN: In the meantime you were waiting for it to come on you? You could have been the representative of the area.

WOOLFORD: You see, sir, if we had gone to contact the police our house might have been burnt down too.

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SHEPHERD: The PYO is the People's Youth Organisation?
WOOLFORD: It is an arm of the People's Progressive Party.

SHEPHERD: Which arm?
WOOLFORD: It is a youth arm.

SHEPHERD: Is it a big organisation?
WITNESS: It has a few people well.

SHEPHERD: There were rumours that the PYO had come to Wismar to poison the water. Did you believe that rumour?
WOOLFORD: No.

SHEPHERD: Did other people believe the rumour?
WOOLFORD: Yes.

SHEPHERD: What is the PYO chiefly made up of?
WOOLFORD: A balance of East Indians and Africans.

SHEPHERD: They were many people who believed the rumour at Wismar.
WOOLFORD: Yes.

SHEPHERD: But I put it to you that many Africans believed the rumour because the PYO had been reported causing disturbances. You agree?
WOOLFORD: You see, sir, there are people in the area who are super-sensitive; when they want to do something, they got the people worked up.

SHEPHERD: How long had the PYO been a bogey?
WOOLFORD: I can't say how long.

SHEPHERD: When were you beaten?
WOOLFORD: In July 1963.

SHEPHERD: Are you a member of the PPP?
WOOLFORD: Yes, I am.

SHEPHERD: What work do you do?
WOOLFORD: Canvassing.

SHEPHERD: How long have you been employed by the PPP?
WOOLFORD: Since I came down in May.

SHEPHERD: In May you were told not to return to Wismar. Did you remain on the right bank of the river? Did you later go across to the left side?
WOOLFORD: If I had got the police protection I asked for I would have gone to Wismar.

SHEPHERD: Did you see strangers around when you were going to work on Monday morning, May 25th.
WOOLFORD: There were a lot on the road.

SHEPHERD: You left for work at 6 a.m. Describe them. How were they dressed?
WOOLFORD: Khaki pants and khaki shirt, white shirt and black pants.

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SHEPHERD: About how many groups?

WOOLFORD: Three or four.

SHEPHERD: About how old?

WOOLFORD: About twenty to twenty-five.

SHEPHERD: Were they marching like soldiers?

WOOLFORD: No.

SHEPHERD: Did you report this to the police?

WOOLFORD: No.

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CARTER: You said you were taking time off from the company? What do you mean by “taking time?”

WOOLFORD: I was advised by the manager to take the time that was due to me.

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PRATAP N. SINGH: You said on the 21st you were told to stay clear of Wismar. Who used these words: “Stand clear and you will see what we will do with the Indians.” Do you know their names?

WOOLFORD: Yes. Daphne Gittens, Pearlie Cooper, Jean and the men Stanley Hope and Walcott.

PRATAP N. SINGH: These people, where do they live?

WOOLFORD: They live at Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Do you know a man by the name of Banga Mary?

WOOLFORD: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you see him there?

WOOLFORD: Yes, he was up there.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Where and when did you see Banga Mary?

WOOLFORD: On the Thursday night before the disturbances.

PRATAP N, SINGH: That would be the 21st May, 1964. Where did you see him?

WOOLFORD: I saw him at Lee Ting’s shop.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Where?

WOOLFORD: At Lee Ting’s shop at Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You were about to say that he told you something. What did he tell you?

WOOLFORD: He told me nothing then, but about two weeks before, he told me that bad things involving the People’s Progressive Party would happen at Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Where were you at that time?

WOOLFORD: I was standing in front of Lee Ting’s shop at First Alley.

PRATAP N. SINGH: I suppose you went on to ask him what were the bad things that would have happened at Wismar.

WOOLFORD: No. I did not believe him because at that time things were very quiet. The only cause of worry was the lack of water.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you see him subsequently?

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WOOLFORD: Yes. On Thursday at Lee Ting's shop.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you speak with him?

WOOLFORD: Yes.

PRATAP N. SINGH: What was the nature of the conversation?

WOOLFORD: He said that members of the PPP were in danger and that I would see what would happen to me. I tried to continue on my way but he held on to my cycle and demanded that I pay attention to him. I later saw P.C. Brown and called him to my assistance. He is stationed at Mackenzie Police Station. P.C. Brown asked me what was the matter and I told him that Banga Mary was molesting me, Following my complaint, he gave Banga Mary a push and informed him that my political affiliations were strictly my concern. He added that if he was present when they are beating me they would have to beat him as well.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Save and except for the burning did you see anybody being beaten?

WOOLFORD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When you heard this explosion, did you see any policeman or volunteer around?

WOOLFORD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: You said that Hackett was not home because he was making a coffin for a little child that had died. Did you know how the child died?

WOOLFORD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: While you were going to your sister's home you said that a group of women warned you of your going to Wismar. Who were they?

WOOLFORD: They were residents of Mackenzie and Wismar.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Did you hear any mention of the Sealey's incident at Buxton?

WOOLFORD: No.

PRATAP N. SINGH: When did you hear of it?

WOOLFORD: I heard of it a few day's before the disturbances.

PRATAP N. SINGH: Thank you.

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DRAYTON: Mr. Woolford, on the Thursday before the Monday 25th, did you hear of any threats being made against the Indians of the Wismar Area?

WOOLFORD: Yes.

DRAYTON: What threats did you hear?

WOOLFORD: Well, they said that they would start beating the Indians. Banga Mary made such a statement personally to me.

DRAYTON: Apart from Banga Mary, was there any other stranger that visited the area and gave advice of coming events?

WOOLFORD: No.

DRAYTON: So you did not know of the visit of Robert Jordan?

WOOLFORD: Yes, I did know of the visit of Jordan, but I did not consider Robert Jordan as a stranger to Wismar since he has a house there.

DRAYTON: Did you hear of statements made by him the previous week?

WOOLFORD: Not personally. I heard rumours,

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DRAYTON: So you heard rumours. Did you hear that the PYO had poisoned the water and that this information had led to tension in the area?

WOOLFORD: Yes.

DRAYTON: Did you make a report to the General Secretary of your party, telling her of the rumours and of the tension in the area?

WOOLFORD: No.

DRAYTON: Did you not think that you should have reported the matter?

WOOLFORD: No, I did not think so.

DRAYTON: Are you not chairman of the party's group in that area?

WOOLFORD: Yes.

DRAYTON: Yet you did not think it was necessary to report.

WOOLFORD: No, I only report matters in relation to party matters.

DRAYTON: Now the whole of Monday and Tuesday you were at Mackenzie, did you hear of or see any of the victims that had been taken across the river?

WOOLFORD: No.

DRAYTON: Did you visit the schools where the refugees were stationed?

WOOLFORD: No.

DRAYTON: You at no time had anything to do with what would have been part of your constituency if you had won the seat in 1961.

WOOLFORD: I thought of going if I had the police protection.

DRAYTON: When you heard that big things were going to happen you didn't do anything about it. You didn't say anything to anyone?

WOOLFORD: No sir. That is a matter for the police.

DRAYTON: What was your address? Where did you live?

WITNESS: Wismar. Lot 14, Yaw's Yard.

MACDONALD: Now I wonder – you were a PPP candidate in 1961. Mr. Jordon was a PNC candidate. Was there any other candidate in that constituency?

WOOLFORD: Yes, a UF man named Thomas Aaron.

MACDONALD: Were they just three of you?

WOOLFORD: Three.

[About 20 typewritten pages of the transcript are missing at this point]