## RAISING

TALKING WITH THOSE !%¢###!!?"!\*\*! UNION GUYS

AN INTERVIEW WITH D. SMITH AND PHIL BOHLANDER, SANITATION WORKERS

INTERVIEWER: When did the divisions between you, Alvin and Murial on one side, and Don, Marnie and Butch on the other, begin? Was the division there from the beginning, or what?

D. SMITH: It was probably about half-way from my point of view. . because a lot of heavy allegations were made early in the investigation... 'Purdy (sanitation superintendent) has to go, he's gonna have to be fired; Arnold Wiley (street department superintendent) he's just a complete failure, you know; if we can't get it straightened out, Buford Watson (city manager) will have to be fired." But, then when we started getting down to the point where we were gonna have to start writing a report and making some heavy recommendations then they started saying, 'Uh, well, maybe we can put them on a sixmonth probation or maybe we can give Watson a certain length of time to get these things changed."

I: Was that the initial disagreement?

D: Yeah, the whole way it was handled. Because their whole theory was that we weren't there to investigate management, we were there as a grievance committee. The investigation started in November and last May everybody in the city and the Commissioners and the Mayor and Buford knew we had safety problems. We started talking about safety in May--they should have started making corrections in June. They didn't have to have a special investigating committee to report that we need a safety program

I: So why didn't they investigate management?

D: Because they were scared. They're afraid to go against Buford, you know . . . I don't think they have any power .

I: The commissioners?

D: Yeah, I don't think they have the power everybody puts on them. Buford runs the whole show.

BOHLANDER: The reason we wanted an investigation of management was to show the City and Commission that all the things we had been saying since May

were charges that had been made continually since May and all we wanted to say was, "Alright, you're not going to give us recognition, but at least check out the stuff we've been saying and find out if what we've been saying is true." And what I think happened was that some of the people on the Commission turned it into a grievance hearing and that wasn't our intent.

I: Do you think Don Binns yells too much?

D: I think Don is a ball. He bounces both ways. I think that deep down in his heart, since he's worked hard all of his life, he sees that working men have to have rights. But at the same time I don't know what his plans are for his life, his political ambitions, or what his goals are. But how can you see the needs of somebody and then turn around and cut their throats. you know? We never asked for any money in eight months. We finally got into a money fight because of the changeover from the incentive system.

B: Yeah, I think that on the Commission there seems to be a tendency...well, not just on the Commission but among Lawrence leaders to not want anybody to rock the boat. And I think they feel we're rocking the boat. And I think sometimes you have to. I don't think the status quo is working in this case.

D: I think the Commissioners are all honest people, basically. But I think when it comes down to making a decision, an individual decision, they just can't do it. They ve got to always relate back to the power structure, the hidden structure, in Lawrence. The City Commissioners don't run Lawrence. The people don't even run Lawrence. So you get what they want to give you, even if you're right.

I: Let me get back to the investigating committee. How could you as a group of six people, all having heard the same witnesses, all having the same input, essentially, disagree so violently at the end that there had to be two different reports? At the last City Commission meeting was it Watson who hinted that the board was stacked in favor of labor?

D: Yeah, but how can you have a manager on a committee that is investigating management? That's like having Nixon on the Watergate thing, on a board that decides if he gets fired or not.

I: So do you think that the heart of the problem with the investigating committee was the fact that there were two city commissioners on it?

B: No, I don't think that's true.

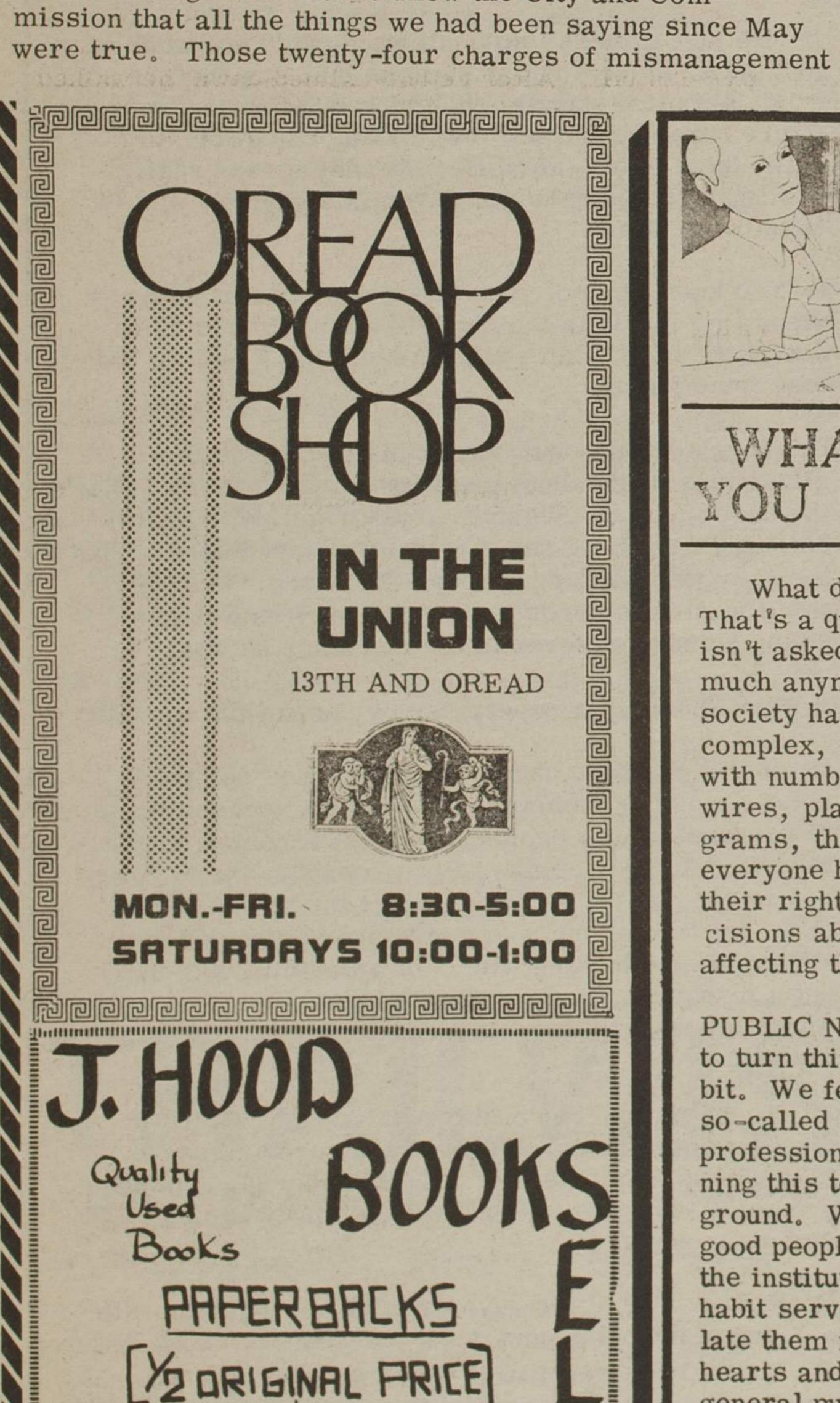
D: I don't think that's true.

I: What did you think of the presence of the Reverend on the side of the Commissioners?

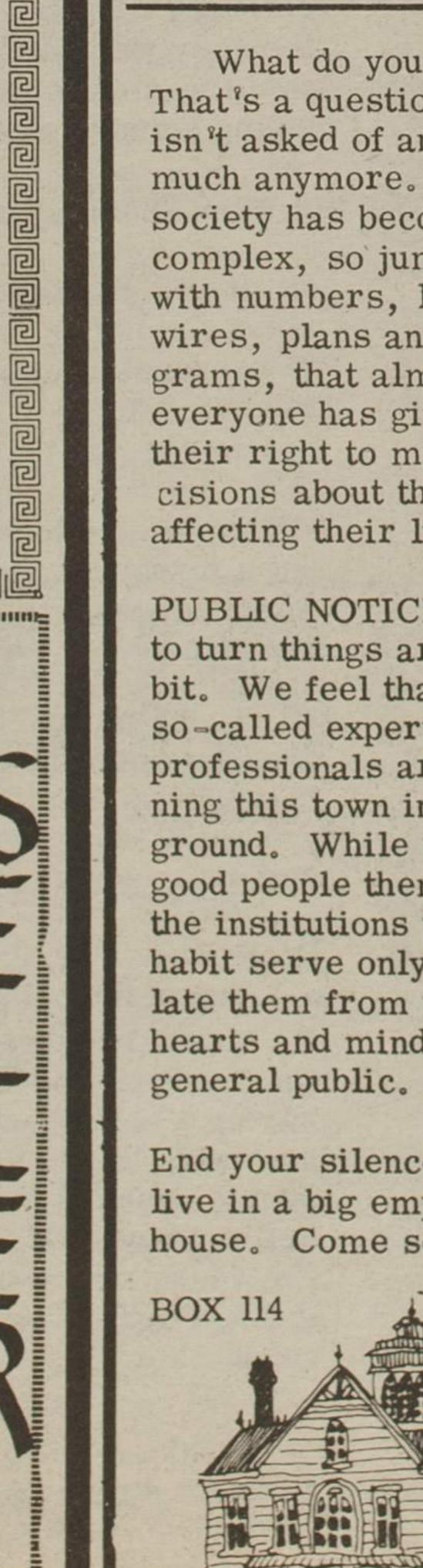
D: He shocked me. And I told him that to his face. I said, "Butch, you really disappoint me." But you know, I figure Butch is in the power structure too. You know, I kind of base my life on the truth. Everybody tells little white lies but when it comes down to dealing with people's lives and their futures I just can't lie about it. I'm not saying they lied, because I don't think they did lie, but I think when it comes down to who do you fight for . . . do you fight for thirty people or do you fight for one person you have to make a decision. And who's it left up to? I can't fire Don Purdy. Murial Paul can't fire Don Purdy. Reverend Henderson can't fire Don Purdy. Everything lies with the Commissioners. And then you go back to the same old thing, and that's the power structure. And that's why the two reports had to be, because they didn't want to bring the dirt out, because they were scared.

B: I think when Murial read her report, the feeling I got from Binns, Argersinger and Henderson wasn't that what Murial said was not true but that it appeared to them to be vindictive. I find it interesting that nobody yet has come out and said "We want to publicly discredit this report." They've all said, "We think we're in agreement we just think the second report goes into more detail than is good for the public."

D: If you remember when the investigating committee was formed, at the commission meeting Carl Mibeck stood up and said, 'Dammit I'm tired of these smartass remarks. I want facts, I want them presented here." And that's what we set our sights toward. That's what he wanted, specifics, and that's what we gave them. That's why I didn't sign the first report because it didn't make specific rec-



Sunday



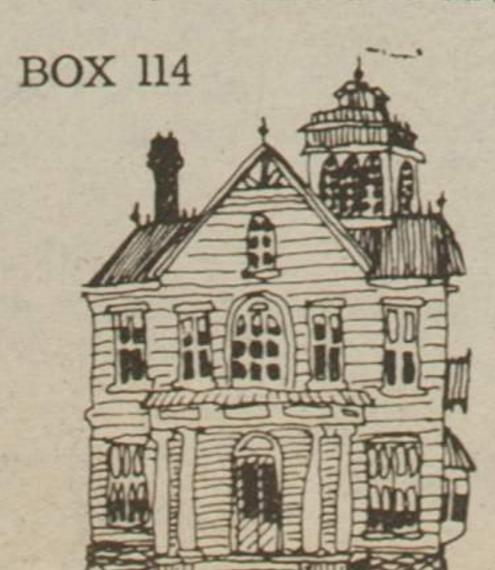


## OU THINK?

What do you think? That's a question that isn't asked of anyone much anymore. Our society has become so complex, so jumbled with numbers, letters, wires, plans and diagrams, that almost everyone has given up their right to make decisions about things affecting their lives.

PUBLIC NOTICE wants to turn things around a bit. We feel that the so-called experts and professionals are running this town into the ground. While they are good people themselves, the institutions they inhabit serve only to isolate them from the hearts and minds of the

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