

Atlanta Student Movement Project
Dr. Lonnie King Class Lecture
2017
Transcribed by Jeanne Law Bohannon

KING: I played fullback and ended up being a linebacker. I was a linebacker on the left side. Yeah. Because I didn't want to play on the right side. I played on the left side as a, as a linebacker. So, I played fullback, halfback, and linebacker. Yeah, I was mean, brother. One thing about athletics, at least from my perspective, it's a very good thing for young people to play athletics because you learn teamwork you learn disappointment, highs and lows, all that. All those things are good to get exposed to when you're young because I think it makes you, in my opinion, a better citizen later on. Those guys and those ladies who just bookworm all the time - they are brilliant people, make all As, but they are somewhat not as balanced as young ladies and young men who become more athletically inclined.

I was glad to see Title IX passed because I remember my daughter, she and I used to play basketball together when she was young. She was very good, but she couldn't play after she got to high school because that's how it was at that time. Yeah. But anyway, my little son was pretty good. I was just thinking yesterday, I guess it was, because he called me from up in Kentucky. I was thinking about it when he was five years old. I used to take my five-year-old and my ten-year-old to play three-person basketball with the folks in the neighborhood. And so, when we went on and played one day at the school yard, no, a pickup game, three apiece. So, these three guys, teenagers, said, "Well, I play you." I said, "Fine." And so, "Where's the little runt going play?" I said, "He'll be all right." That's my five-year-old.

So, my daughter and I could shoot. So, they had us covered. It was a sixteen-point game. And so, I said, "Kim," I said, "They don't know whether Chip can shoot." I said, "So we're going to play this, you and me," I said, "But when we get down to twelve or whatever," I said, "We're going to flip that ball to Chip." And so, we flipped the ball to Chip when we moved out to about ten I guess, and he hit nothing but net. But they, but they thought it was luck. So, we were playing again. We, we flipped the ball to Chip. He hit net. They said, "Hit that little! He going to shoot us out." He was five. Five. Yeah. Well, but it helps, but I bought him a basketball court, or should I say basket, and put it in the back yard. So they played all the time. Anyway, I'm very happy to be here. I don't know how we're going to start this. I'm sure you're going to be the, I'm going to let you be the moderator. Tell me, tell me, what am I supposed to do?

BOHANNON: Well, so this summer, you know, I convinced you. And this is the thing, Dr. King - and we talked about this already you guys - he is the leader of the Atlanta

Student Movement and he is an innate leader. And as a leader, the type of leader is, he pushes everyone else forward ahead of him, but he is one, he is really serious about getting all the stories, all the surviving alums, told at the expense of his own. And so this summer I convinced him to let our class and let our documentary focus on, on some of his, like his top five life experiences that he wants for sure to be documented in the oral histories and also, for work in the production in the documentaries. So, you all have researched his Wikipedia page, several videos of speeches that he's given. And you all have developed questions. We, we worked on our interviewing techniques, and so what I'd like to do is turn things over to you all as student researchers. Okay? So just introduce yourself, and we'll start the conversation going, and it'll stay really organic, and just jump in when you've got a question or a thought, and we'll go from there. Are we good with that? Great. Candace, would you like to start?

CANDACE: Of course. I'm Candace. I'm an English major.

KING: Where you're from?

CANDACE: Originally? New York.

KING: Which part of New York?

CANDACE: Well, I was born in Manhattan.

KING: In Manhattan, okay.

CANDACE: Well, my family lives in Portland.

KING: But you decided to come to Kennesaw?

CANDACE: Yes.

KING: Fantastic, okay. Welcome south.

CANDACE: Thank you.

BOHANNON: Candace was in the military, as well.

KING: I got you. Are you in the what, navy, army?

CANDACE: Navy.

KING: Navy? What's your biller?

CANDACE: No, not anymore. Well, I went in straight out of high school.

KING: I know. But what was your biller?

CANDACE: [Inaudible]

KING: What kind?

CANDACE: [Inaudible]

KING: Oh yeah. Yeah, I was a dispersing clerk. Yeah, yeah. Ask me a question about the navy because I'm sure it's a lot different when you went in and then when I was in.

CANDACE: Yeah, I've heard.

KING: I'm ready.

BOHANNON: Ready? You have a question?

CANDACE: Oh, yeah, I have to think about it. So how, how was it back then? How was boot camp for you? Was it at Great Lakes?

KING: It was at Great Lakes. Was that where you were?

CANDACE: Yes.

KING: Oh, okay. Well, yes, we have. I went in 1954. The time I guess when your grandparents were around. And there were about 75 people in my boot camp. The navy was, had less African Americans than anybody at that time. Might still be the case. I don't know. But I decided to go to the navy because my mother was killing herself trying to send me to Morehouse. As I reflect back on that time, I'm just so amazed at the sacrifices that mothers make even before you were born, until that, and then after you come, you still their baby. So I went to Morehouse on a partial scholarship when I went over there. I should have had a full scholarship, but that, that was a little hassle at the school, and I was successful in beating a person for president of the Student Government Association that the chief counselor didn't like. She didn't, she didn't want me to win the campaign and I, I wanted out. And you may have heard of Vernon Jordan. Vernon Jordan and I ran against one another for president of the SGA and I beat him ten to one.

Well, she really got upset about that because she was a friend of his mother. So Morehouse sends five full scholarships over there. So I should've gotten one of them because of my GPA. Plus I was a leader. By the time my homeroom teacher, Dr. Beavers, heard about what was going on behind the scene, he called me to the front and said, "Have they offered you a scholarship from Morehouse yet?" I says, "No." He said, "Come on." He took me down to Miss Flossy Jones's office, and he said, "Ms. Jones, how many more of those scholarships for Morehouse do you have?" "Well they all gone except for a half scholarship." And so, he said some unkind things to her. But they gave me a half scholarship. My mother made up the difference. As we were getting ready for my second year, after the first semester, you know, when people start working hard, and my mother was making \$5 a day in coffee. So she took a job at the American Red Cross down on Spring Street. So she'd leave home in the mornings at about 5:00. She worked at the, for Ms. Elizabeth Mitchell at her house as a maid until about 4:30. She then had to ride the bus to get downtown to the American Red Cross by six, and then would get off at 10. We didn't have a car, so she rode the bus again. So she was killing herself. She got sick, and I knew what was happening. She knew she wasn't getting any sleep.

Now I had been a person who had told the guys on the corner that I hung out with from time to time because a lot of them were being drafted, and I said, "Well, let me tell you when, when, when they come to draft me, that'd be two people missing. The Guy who's looking for me and I will cause I, I'm not going to go and die with all the segregation and discrimination that's going on. There's something wrong with this picture. But when your mother gets sick, you begin to reexamine. So I told her, "Mama, I think I need to go into the military, you know, if I intend to finish college. I say, "Because at the rate we're going, you won't even be around to see me finish. I, you, you killing yourself." I said, "I know, I know you love me, but we need to do something."

She said, "Well, you might not make it back." I said, "That's the chance I'm going to make." I said, "I tell you what I'm going to do, Mama. I'm going to go to the library and I'm going to look up the casualty rates so I can figure out which one of these branches of service would give me the best chance of getting back to go to college." I knew the army was out because that was a high casualty rate. The marines, they were out, so I went to the library down on Auburn Avenue and asked the librarian to help me. So she brought back the casualties, the stuff on four services and the Air Force Academy – not the air force, it was the coast guard, coast guard. So make a long story short: the best chance to come back alive without being killed in action was with the air force, but they wanted four years.

The next one was the navy. Had very few people get killed in the navy. And so and they have something called the Kiddie Cruise. Did they have when you were

in there? The Kiddie Cruise is one where you go in the day before you're 21 and you get out just before you - no 18, you get out just before you're 21. So it was a three-year enlistment. I said that's for me, has a low casualty rate. Three-year commitment. And so I went in. When I got the Great Lakes, you know you take an aptitude test. So I was picked as the educational petty officer, which I'm sure you know about that, and my job was to teach reading, writing and arithmetic to other 70-something guys who were there. That also meant that I didn't have as much of a load as other people because my job was to make sure I could teach those young folks.

And that went well and I got a chance to meet a lot of people I never would have met otherwise. But I must say, I must tell you how bad racism is, how much it works on your mind. When I found out that I was to have 70, 74 people, I think it was, there were three African Americans in my boot camp company. That first night I had never slept with a white person in the room before. And I was wondering whether or not these guys, most of them were from the south, just like me, are they going to gang up on me and try to kill me tonight? That was the kind of psychological thing that was going on. So I said, I hate to do this, but I went out and I found me a broomstick and I chopped it off and put it under my pillow so that if they came to hurt me, I would at least get one or two before they killed me.

Of course that was wow. But that was what was in my mind at 18. Well, I taught the young folks how to read and write some of them during that period of time. But I had another thing going for me, and I was a champion table tennis player. And I don't know whether they had it when you were in there, but every Saturday there was a tournament and I won, so I was there 11 weeks, and I won 11 tournaments. Well the prize was two cartons of cigarettes. I didn't smoke. So what happened is that my entire company would come to watch me win and then they knew I was going to give him the cigarettes. They didn't have to buy any because they, "Oh, Lonnie is going to do it for us on Saturday." So that was my indoctrination into the navy.

And I ran into rank discrimination when I was in the navy. Not in boot camp, so much as, as when I got to my ship. When I got to the ship, the USS Oriskany. CVA thirty-four out. First of all, we were supposed to catch it in on Alameda, California. When we got there, there were about 30 of us together. And because I had this high score, I was in charge of everybody and their records. We missed them in Alameda, then we ran to San Diego. Missed them in San Diego, see all this modern stuff that, you know, it wasn't there then. So I finally caught him in Long Beach, California. So I salute the officer of the day. That's the person who was on the up on the, the officer of the day is a person that's in charge on a particular day. Saluted that person and gave him the, I guess you would say, personnel folders.

They put us in the X1 division. I'm sure you had that right? Indoctrination division for two weeks. At the end of my two, at the end of two weeks, they then guide us in the room and they gave us all a billet. Billet means job, folks, if you haven't been in. So I was the only black person. The other 29 folks were white. They got personnel men, air control men for all the good jobs. I was put into the deck force. Paint, chipping, chipping, paint. Now my mother had complained. And when we first, when she first signed from me that if you, if you put my son in as a seagoing busboy, I'm going to revoke my signature. And that's in my personnel folder where my mother said, "No, you can't do that. He can wait on white people here in Atlanta. We don't need to send him out to sea to do all this stuff." Well they didn't, they didn't, they didn't put me in that, in that force. They put me in the deck force chipping paint. Well the other guy guiding him was, he had the lowest SAT score, or lowest GCT score. But I knew them all because I had all the records. Mine was the highest. His was the lowest. But we both got sent to the deck force chipping paint.

So that wasn't good enough. I guess I was down there for about three months. And then they told me that they had another job for me. And I said, what is it? They wanted me to clean up the head. Now you know what the head is. You all don't, that's the restroom. Okay. For 200 men. I said, Okay. I went on there and I started.

It was mind blowing to come in and see all how messed up, how messed up that place was. I remembered something Dr. Benjamin E Mays, my President of Morehouse, said when I was a freshman over there. Yeah, that was freshman year. He said, "Lonnie, a Morehouse man strives to be the best in a particular field." He said that if you are a doctor, be the best doctor. If you're a lawyer, be the best lawyer. He went on down the line and then he said, "If it falls your fate to be a ditch digger, be the best ditch digger God ever made." I said, well, this will not ditch digging, but at least it's in the same category. So I decided to be the best restroom cleaner ever known. So I went out and I got brass polished, I got paint, all that stuff. And I and I and I cleaned it up.

It was sparkling. Everybody was talking about on the ship. Folks are coming from other places to use our restroom. Ladies, pardon me for being sexist, but you may know more about cleaning up than most men do, so you know that once you get a house clean, you don't have to kill yourself if every day, you just have to keep it going. So I went down and got books to read. So I would clean up the restroom after the men would go out to work, it would take me about 30 minutes and then I didn't have to do anything else until the afternoon. So I read books, all kinds of books. Well, after doing this for about three or four months, all of a sudden I was called in by my non commission officer who was in charge. He said, "Someone has taken your job." I said, Okay. Third Class Petty Officer and he was five, I was 83. He had put in a, Chet, he put in a request to bump me out

of that job because I turned it into a gravy job. So they bumped me up, put me back in the deck force. I said, Jesus.

I went back down, chipping paint. So I looked in the plan of the day, one day. "Plan of the day," folks, is a schedule of events for a particular day. And that was an announcement for a dispersing clerk, [named] Striker. Dispersing clerks are those folks who count the money and keep track of the money and hold onto the money and decide on for the night, you can get it, get paid and advanced pay and all that kind of stuff. So I went down to apply, and JC Claren, who was in charge, was very candid. He said, "We don't want any negroes down here." He said, "All of my folks are from the south, and none of us want any negroes down here." I said, "Well my folks pay taxes just like your folks. Why is it that I, if I have the aptitude, why can't I do this?"

So they put me out. I went to see Commander Koch, from the same town as the Koch Brothers who financed all this right-wing stuff – well he's one of their relatives. I went to see him, and all he said to me was, "Well, they didn't do that. Did they?" I said, "Yes they did." He had nothing else to say, so I got up and I left, went back to the deck force because he'd taken me out and put me back in the deck force. And, eureka - something said, "Well, why don't ask Lieutenant JG Horn from Louisiana? What does he think?" I didn't expect much to be honest with you because he was a southerner, but I was shocked when I told him that I wanted to apply for that job or what had happened to me. He said, "Mr. King." First white man ever call me Mr. was Lieutenant Horn. He said, "Come with me."

He took me down there to the dispersing office and he asked Claren. He said, "Mr. King has told me his side of the story and you give me your side as to why you turned him down." And the man was carrying on. He said, "Well, we don't want him to negroes down here." So Lieutenant JG Horn says, "Stop right there. If his name is not on the plan of the day tomorrow morning, I'm going to get your commission. Come on, Mr. King, let's go." Next day, my name is in the plan of the day and I went down to this office. About 12 people were in the office. Nobody would speak to me. I had to find a chair. It, it was silent treatment.

So I guess after about two weeks of the silent treatment a guy named Walter Wolf from Seattle, Washington came over to me and he said, "You know, we really shouldn't do you like this."

He said, "I went to this dispersing clerk school and I'll help you." He said, "Do you see all those books up there?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "You got to read all those books. He said, "Are you willing to do that?" And I said, "Sure, I'll do it." He said I also had to type 30 words a minute, "Can you type?" I says, "No, but I'll learn how to do it." So he started teaching me. Oh, must've been late August, late July of 1954. I just asked a couple of weeks ago, a guy named John Bloom

from Tampa, Arizona decided that he'd help. So between those two guys - both of whom were white - I read all those things and learned how to type and what have you. So they took, we took the exam, third-class exam in, must have been September, late September and there were maybe five of us in the room who took the exam. I was the only one who passed. So all of a sudden now the black guy that they didn't want it in there just a few months earlier is now one of the leadership and has to make a decision on their grades and the whole bit. Everybody's attitude changed once I got some power.

Moral of the story is, is that I have, I guess I was born looking up at the bottom, not only on the bottom but looking up at the bottom, the bottom because up there. But I can't blame my mother or my step-father because they were, they were in a system that was designed to keep you at the bottom, and therefore all they could really do in my opinion, was trying to instill into, into their progeny or into their children that you got to get you some education, you got to push, nobody's going to give you a darn thing. You have to work for it, you have to sacrifice for it. Work two jobs if you have to, but you will never change this system without getting some education and also having some fortitude and stick-to-it-iveness. I went around a long way to give you that response.

Is that your only question about the navy?

CANDACE: I mean, pretty much. It just took me off-guard. I mean, I didn't know.

KING: Well, you and I have an affinity because we've been there. What was it? What was the name of your ship?

CANDACE: Kitty Hawk.

KING: Kitty Hawk? Oh, I was on the USS Oriskany 84. The Kitty Hawk was the, was the successor to the Oriskany – an aircraft carrier. Yeah, in fact, I remember we had to put a flight deck on while I was there. Yeah, no. Yeah, yeah. Assembling experience. Did you have any more questions? Okay, who else? Yes, sir.

JOHN: I'm John.

KING: Where are you from, John? Where are you from?

JOHN: Louisiana.

KING: Which town?

JOHN: Ruston. Between Monroe and Shreveport.

KING: I pass by it, but I didn't stop.

JOHN: I'm a communications major. I just thought of this question: did playing sports give you any skills to lead the Atlanta Student Movement?

KING: Hm. Well, I think the only thing I can pick from that and was that I learned teamwork. Blocking and tackling, and you're counting on this guy to knock that guy down so I could run home by team work. That I did learn in the, in football or in sports. I learned that. That later helped me put together a team. We could not have won the struggles that we were battling in without having a team. And what I think I learned was that you need different talent on a team if you're trying to go forward in an objective. You've got to have a good quarterback. You've got to have good linemen who can block and tackle. You have to have good ends who can catch the ball. But there's a division of labor that you learn in the military and that you learn playing athletics. If you're a halfback, you have got to, you have got to count on somebody blocking, somebody there for you to run that touchdown. So you learn. Though, I kind of meshed what I learned in the military with what I also learned in playing football. I think you're right on point.

BOHANNON: What did your mom tell you about using football to get folks in the movement?

KING: Well, when I called the first meeting in February of 1960 in Sale Hall Annex over at Morehouse, about 23 people came to that meeting. Most of the folks who were there were my teammates from the football team. All men. So I called my mother who was my major advisor and I said, "Mama." I had told her about the meeting already, I called her to tell her how it went. I said, "Mama, not a single lady showed up." I said, "You know, we need some ladies." So she said, "Well, go over to Spelman and you get some ladies, just go over to Spelman and ask the ladies to join you." I said, "Mama, they don't. Those girls don't know me." I didn't have a girlfriend at Spelman, so I didn't go over there that often. She said, "But they know you. I said, "Why you say that? She said, "Don't you run those plays on Saturdays?" I said, "Yeah." She said, "They know you. Trust me. They know you, just go over there."

So, sure enough, she was right. I got a telephone call – it's amazing how things happen. I got a telephone call from Dr. Manley, who was the president of Spelman at the time, asked me to come over to Sisters Chapel at Spelman to have a debate with Roy Wilkins who had the NAACP nationally. Going to debate Roy Wilkins? Anyway, I accepted it and went over there and the chapel was packed with the Spelman ladies, Dr. Wilkins knocked it out the park. Traced the history of the NAACP and civil rights in America and how it was fought by the NAACP from 1909. And his argument was, "You need to go back to class and let us do this, and when you finished school, take our place and keep it going."

So when he sat down, they gave him a standing ovation. I felt like I was this lamb going to the slaughter. So Dr. Manly, the president of Spelman, "Mr. King's your time." Well, I had learned when I took my debating course that if you feel you've been out-classed by your opponent, find a way to agree with their, your opponent on most of the things that you can agree on. But then search for something that you can switch on to make your argument. So, I basically made Mr. Wilkins's same argument that he made, but the few different words but praising the NAACP for standing since 1909. But then I made a turn that I said, "Mr. Wilkins," and I'm paraphrasing now, "Wars are fought primarily by young people, and we need to recognize that if we continued doing it your way, we'd be a, a hundred years or more just trying to get rights one at a time, and then every 10 to 15 years we've got another one." I went on to talk about how I thought we were ready for leadership. And the point I made to him was since 1619, we've been asking for freedom. It has not come. So, now is time for us to demand it. And if it means putting our bodies in the movement, we're going to do that. And when I sat down, those girls went wild. They went wild. Dr. Rogan just looked at me and saluted, and saluted me. And he and I were friends until he passed all because of that one incident.

Okay. Don't be shy. Yes.

JORDAN: My name is Jordan.

KING: Where are you from, Jordan?

JORDAN: Stone Mountain. I'm an English major.

KING: Hold on. Were you born in Stone Mountain?

JORDAN: I was born in Atlanta, around the Atlanta area.

KING: Do you know the history of Stone Mountain and the Klan and all that stuff?

JORDAN: A little bit.

KING: 1915?

JORDAN: No.

KING: Okay. I'll find a way to talk about it.

JORDAN: My question to you is how... being college students in 1960, how did being college students or how did the idea of college students sitting at the Rich's affect the outcome of the movement instead of, say, the NAACP?

KING: That's a good question. As background, Atlanta, Georgia has always been viewed as a major city in the south. Even when it was a small town that you, you still had transportation coming through here. Delta Airlines is just the latest reincarnation of Atlanta's historic role in terms of transportation. It was railroads, I guess really stagecoaches. Stagecoaches and then railroads. And now, of course, airplanes.

Ask me that question again because there's something I want to make sure that I get in. So let me hear you again.

JORDAN: Ah, so how did, how did the idea of students sitting in at Rich's...?

KING: I gotcha. I gotcha. Because I want to make sure that I cover some of this stuff here. Because Atlanta was a unique place, the white abolitionists in the north chose Atlanta as an ideal place to provide a college education, privately funded by people from the east. There was a battle going on after slavery over whether or not the white south was going to educate the newly freed slaves. And I guess you would say the compromise was that we will give them education up to the fourth grade all over the south. And in Atlanta, they decided to give it to give them an education up to the seventh grade. Again, because the influence of some of the folks in the north, so people like Rockefeller and some others decided that they would fund these historical black colleges in Atlanta.

So, they funded Spelman, Morehouse, Clark, the church came into fund Clark, Methodist Church. Morris Brown was funded by the black Methodists. That's the only one that the black Methodists ever funded in Georgia at least. And in order to get a master's degree, a lot of folks went to these agricultural and mechanical schools around the south. Because they finally did, did in fact start allowing people to move beyond the minimum grades. And in order to get a master's degree, if you were in the south, really up until most recently, the sixties, I guess. That doesn't mean that people didn't go outside to go to school, Princeton and Yale and places. But that was one, maybe two, no more than 10 to 15 people. So the bulk of people who tried to get an get an advanced degree beyond college, beyond the state schools that they finally setup which were agricultural and mechanical schools, by the way, they had to come to Atlanta and a lot of those people who came to Atlanta did not go back home. They stayed here. Well, you had some of the best minds - black and white, black and white – who were teaching that these private black colleges. There's just a litany of brilliant people who wrote all kinds of books while they were here. That some of them are still being used today.

So we ended up in a situation here where in you got an educated elite, and by elite I mean they had a college degree or master's degree. Not the masses, but about 10 percent. Those persons laid the foundation for the NAACP, for moving higher education, no, moving K-12 beyond the fourth grade or the eighth grade

to high school. Started here in Atlanta, started with David T Howard high schools, with the junior high school. Booker T Washington, a senior high school, came out of that same movement. So you had a, some folks here who knew the value of education. And so, as the people came in from the country to get education in Atlanta, they stay. So therefore, they formed the underbelly of the civil rights movement that was yet to come. It wasn't necessarily, it was them and maybe if some of them had died, some of their progeny were still around. Okay. Did I leave out anything?

JORDAN: I guess because of that. How did that affect... I think you actually really answered it. I have to think about this.

KING: Let me add to that I think. Because I think this goes back to one reason why I'm here.

My mother left me because my Granddad had took me when I was two and a half years old down in Arlington, Georgia. My mother had an acrimonious divorce from my father. My grandfather divorced them by saying, 'This is over, and I'm going to take, I'm going to keep this boy until I die. Here's \$5, go to Atlanta and get you a job. But I'm going to keep him until I die.'" Well, during that time, if dad said it, you did it, I don't get how you were. So, my mother came here and I came when my, when my granddad had died.

Now let me give you an unsolicited response to something. Whatever I've been able to do in my lifetime, and I've done a few things, I really have to pin it on my granddaddy and my mother. Someone in education in America once said that what you put on a child's slate between the first and six years of age will go with them for the rest of their lives. I think it was John Locke who said that what you do between the birth and 12 years of age will follow them. Well, whatever, whichever one of those is accurate or that you want to follow, children do what they have been taught to do. And if you have not taught them, then they won't do it. And we see so many people today who you can put on the news at 6:30 and see all these young tufts being shot and chased what have you. Somewhere along the line, this teaching got thrown off into the wastebasket or somewhere, and so these children are raising themselves, and if you're raising yourself as a child, you're raising a fool because you haven't had the opportunity to learn how to live in this society.

Now I'm not telling you that the society is perfect because it is not. But you'll go a whole lot further if you learn the rules of society. I don't mean the racist rules. I'm just talking about how you move forward, how you help your children, how you help your family, how you help your community. Those kinds of things are missing, I promise you, in almost every last one of those kids that we see at 6:30 on the news, and then when you'd go and check their parents out, they missed it

for whatever their reasons and their grandparents and their great grandparents missed it and other great greats were in slavery. So young folks, as you go forward, try to look at this racial question in America in some kind of a holistic way that it just didn't begin yesterday. It's been around a long, long time.

And as we did make some changes, but I said to Dr. Bohannon, I think when I first met her a few times, I first met her and I said, you know, not necessarily to her, but she was there. What, you know, democracy does not work on cruise control. You know and we got the cruise control in the car, and we just kind of flip it on and hold onto the steering wheel because the car's going to drive itself. Democracy will not do that. At least not in America. You're going to have to engage and steer it and make sure sometimes you go fast, sometimes you go slow based on what's out there. And if we don't come to the point of recognizing that, you're going to be in bad shape.

[STUDENT]: Hi, I'm [STUDENT].

KING: Where are you from?

[STUDENT]: I'm from Savannah, Georgia.

KING: Oh, okay.

[STUDENT]: I have a question. I want to know what motivated you to keep on throughout your progress. I know you probably had some failed attempts. But what was it that made you not give up through those hard times?

KING: This sounds self-serving, but I did it because of you. I didn't even know you, didn't even know you were even around, the spirit I mean. You weren't even a twinkle in somebody's eye when was doing this. But I've always been kind of a student of history and when you read the history, when you read America's history unvarnished, you realize that permeated throughout the layers of America is absolute unvarnished racism based on color, not necessarily class, but based on color and you're not going to change that until people come together. White, black, blue, green, you name it. And say we're going to make America live up to its creed and you see millions of people now, what you didn't see 50 years ago, but millions of people are now saying, "Wait a minute. There's something wrong with this picture. We're not supposed to be that kind of country." This was supposed to be a different kind of country from the European countries in terms of people having opportunity, but you're not going to change that until you do something else, in my opinion. You've got to get the minorities that would include the Hispanics and the African Americans to exercise their voting rights that they don't exercise until you can get. Let me give you a little data here. In Georgia alone, there are over 500,000 African Americans who can

register, but who have not registered. There were 400 something thousand Hispanics. Same situation.

But you also have another thing going on here. Let me give you the last election in November. I had Eddie, person who is a computer guru out here, to put some data together for me. And I knew what the totals were, but I wanted him and the other students to see it and that these were the totals for the last presidential election in November in Georgia. Of course it showed that Trump had it by 28,000, whatever votes, the state, but over 50 some thousand African Americans who were registered did not vote. Had they voted, even at 80 percent, the election would have been different. That's true. That's true. All over the south. So the challenge I say to young people is that we've got to get the maximum number of people participating in the electoral process. That includes Asians, that includes Hispanics, that includes blacks, and that actually was poor whites too. Folk who are running America are only concerned about the one percent. Making the one percent richer. I don't know why these folks, they are already multi-millionaires. Why do they want to make more money at the expense of the masses?

It makes no sense to me. But they are very, very susceptible to propaganda, and especially in the south and the southwest, the Republican machine. And by the way, the Republican Party, I don't know, you all may know this because you educated people. The Republican Party was the party that led African Americans out of slavery. You all knew that, right? How many didn't know that? That's Okay. Let me just say that to you rather than have you put up your hands. The Republican Party led African Americans out of slavery. They did it. They paid a penalty because all the southerners were Democrats. Well, it's ironic now. The whole thing is switched. The Democrats in the south took over the Republican party in the south from the blacks who were there and then they made a coalition with the folks in the, in the southwest and the far west and in these small towns around Pennsylvania, Indiana, Wisconsin.

So they'd now, and they were employing what you see there were employing a tactic that was designed in 1791, the electoral college, but they could keep America's positions on the conservative side and they've spent hundreds of years trying to keep this thing going. And they can keep it going because a lot of folks had never heard of the electoral college. A lot of folks don't realize that their reason for being is tied up in their voting or not voting. And then it's amazing when you open up people's eyes and show them the connection between that participation in the political system and the impact of the non-participation. It's shocking to people. And when we talked to some, some college kids from the time before you on the phone with us, skype with us, they were shocked at the data that we, that, that Eddie brought in.

They couldn't believe it, but I knew this stuff already. But if I. But if I lecture to you and tell you about it, you don't get it as much as you get it if it's visually presented to you with the numbers, and then have a discussion. But when you look at what's happening in America, it's absolutely atrocious. So we've got to find a way to register the thousands and thousands of voters and turn the south from red to blue. And that doesn't mean that you're going to, nobody's going to die. It just means that we need to make real. We hold these truths to be self-evident, et cetera. It's not going to happen until you get the maximum number of people within this, under this umbrella to participate in the system. If you register, vote, vote, and you most of the time you're going to vote your personal interest and that that means someone who is who was enlightened. That's the person that will get the vote.

What we're having up here now in the sixth district. I don't know how that's going to go down, but it looks like it's got to be real tight, but I'm, but I'm pleased that in a Republican district, a Democrat can make a great race and he might even win. But what that's telling me though, there's an awful lot of white people up that have finally realized that they'd been pimped. It's as simple as that. They've been pimped by these politicians who bander and suddenly push the racial issue for personal gain. That's all it is, but all of a sudden now people are beginning to see it.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. For eight years. No, for seven years, the south railed against something called Obama care. "Oh, it's so bad. We have got to get rid of it." And people were joining. They were all over the country, all over the south, saying, "We have to do that." I'll never will forget that I saw an interview on one of the national news about 13, 14 months ago during the campaign. A reporter asked this woman, not in Georgia, but in Los Angeles, "What do you think of Obama Care?" This is the white woman. She says, "I hate it. It is terrible." And she was, she had an exposition that she gave. He said, "What do you think about the affordable care act. She said, "Oh, I liked that." He said, "It's one in the same." She says, "Oh." But she had been sold on opposing the healthcare that she said, when you change the name, that she said she was in favor on.

When the Republicans took over both houses and the presidency, one of the first thing they did was try to bring down Obamacare, but all of a sudden when people realize that 20-something million people, and they were probably included in that 20-something, are going to lose their healthcare. All of a sudden it was a whole different ball game. I mean, you all saw that. Now where do we go from here? You won't change some of these people on this side of the dirt, but what you can do is change that overt behavior. And you change the overt behavior by number one, trying to enlighten them, but at the same time use the tools that are available to make sure that every entity within the this

representative democracy gets a chance to participate. Now, if the folks who don't participate decide they want to join later on and register and vote and vote for these racist people, that's democracy. But it's funny when it's just a small segment or less than three fourths of the population as voting. The other one quarter is just sitting on the sidelines. Democracy will not work on the sideline. You got to, as I said early on, hold your hands on it, on the steering wheel. Apply the gas if necessary. Slow down if necessary. More questions.

Yes, sure.

[STUDENT]: So, it just seems that now as far as participation more so for the black community, it seems like it's harder than it used to be during your time. So I just wanted to know what were some things that you did to enable mass participation as far as things like Rich's, economic status, sit-ins, credit cards [shut down accounts campaign, Winter 1960] and stuff like that.

KING: Well, I don't really know the answer to that. I can give you my response. I don't know how religious you are, but after, after three hundred-something years, I think God instilled into a lot of people, there needs to be a change here and a lot of people took up the banner and brought about a change. Now the change that they brought about upset a lot of other people who didn't want to see the change, but America is a much better place for the change.

We had to have been... There's some invisible force, in my opinion, that inflicted, affected 70,000 college kids. I don't know whether you know how many college kids got involved, but from the time those four young boys sat down in Greensboro by July 30th, 70-plus thousand African American students and about another 5,000 white students were changing the south, really changing the south. But there weren't any laws on your side. It was civil disobedience. We went to jail. When we went to jail, we filled the jails and the people who were oppressing us, the police, didn't quite know how to deal with that because we were, we were well-dressed. Some of us, some of them sang – I can't sing - but some of those sang, and, and we [inaudible] our drive in an, in a universal humanity of man. And it was very difficult for people to battle what we were talking about because it was a battle of ideas - not with guns - but with ideas.

And we put our bodies in the movement, sometimes with great peril in order to bring about the change. At some point, maybe in the distant future, the contribution of these thousands of black kids and the 5,000 white kids who joined them may be adequately documented. But they were nameless, faceless people who were very unselfish and some, a few folks lost their lives. A lot of them lost their education, still impacted some of those folks today. But in every battle in every war, there are going to be some tragedies, some casualties, but in

order to have a better outcome at the end of the war, sometimes people have to be hurt.

Now, let me just talk to you about the Rich's boycott for a moment. I'm not sure of how much you've read about this, but when we called that boycott, I announced it on the, in June 1960 when they arrested me and Dr. Zinn and his daughter, and took me to jail and let them go home. That was the beginning of the, of the drive for the boycott. Now, what was the thinking behind the boycott? My great professor in economics, my major was economics when I was in college, Dr. E. B. Williams, Dr. Williams taught me that if we ever want to get in and get our freedom as African Americans, we need to come together economically. He talked about the fast dime versus the slow dollar. His point was that 90-something percent of African Americans make the fast dime, make nickels and dimes now, but a few who are professional people make big money.

He said, "But if you could ever find a way to harness the energies and the resources, the money of the masses, you can change policy. You don't have to wait for laws. If you take the money out of these people's pocket, they will change that overt behavior. Now, they may not love you, but they will change their behavior." So, he did have me to go and do a market analysis to bring him a report back on the margin of profit for various industries, department stores, grocery stores, five and dime stores. So when it came to department stores, Rich's department store had a margin profit of between five and 10 percent.

Well, we were 33 percent of the population in Atlanta. Every home in Atlanta had Rich's charge card almost. They just send them to you and on top of that, Rich's was the first company in the south that I'm aware of to ever use creditor titles on African Americans' names. In other words, if you get, if you, if you're from Savannah, Georgia and you went to the major store in Savannah in the 1960s, your name was Lily May. Or John. Not Mrs. or Mr. if you were black. In Atlanta, Rich's started in the 40s addressing African Americans as Mr. They gave courtesy titles that they were giving to the same to whites. So to make a boycott work against what appears to be an enlightened department store when it comes to issues of courtesy, what have you. That was going to be difficult.

But I, I decided after having that course with Dr. E. B. Williams, that if we could find a way to get at least 25 or 30 percent of the African Americans to stop shopping at Rich's department store, we probably could bring them to their heels. We weren't going to win a lawsuit, so we might as well forget about that. If we, if we were going to win, it'd be 10, 15 years down the road. So I called this boycott in June and I ask the our Atlanta citizens to send me their charge cards. 254 of them did send me their charge cards, and I put them in the bank. Now, that was designed by me to see how, how deeply felt African Americans fighting for their freedom. If they were willing to risk their credit card in the hands of a

college student whom they did not know, that told me that we had already struck something then.

Moving forward on this point. I went out to look at the Rich's department store files at Emory University, and I found there were hundreds of other people who sent their cards back to Rich's, not to me, but to Rich's. The end result of that boycott, according to the Federal Reserve, during the Christmas holidays, it cost them \$20,000,000 in profits at Rich's. We don't know how much worse lost and all other places, but Rich's lost 20,000,000.

A man named Mr. Thomas Asher, who is the president of Rich's Foundation now, because Rich's is gone, but the foundation is still here with a lot of money. He and I spoke down at Georgia State about six, eight weeks ago. And when I got there he was finishing up his speech and he said something that was just astounding. He acknowledged I had just come in and he said, "I'm ready to talk about the impact of that boycott." And he said that the, he's the finance man. That's how he made his money, at Robinson Humphrey downtown Atlanta, a big stockbroker brokerage company. He said the impact of that \$20,000,000 in today's money is \$553,000,000. I was shocked. I was in it, but I was still shocked at how much money that was in today's dollars.

So the young folks who were working with me, we did a lot of stuff and nobody in Atlanta got killed. Now, ladies got cigarettes put out on that shoulders. I got acid on me and got beaten up and all that kind of stuff. But I'd say 99 percent of what we did in Atlanta, nobody was permanently maimed by and then nobody was killed. I think a lot of that was because of the attitude or the white community. The white community in Atlanta was just as racist as the white community in Mississippi. But the difference was that they, they, they, they didn't want to be viewed as a racist town that would throw these kids in jail and beat him up and shoot them and all that. That was not good for business. And so they didn't do it. It wasn't that they loved the kids. It's just that they weren't going to do that because that was going to hurt their bottom line image because they'd been trying to get capital to come into Atlanta ever since the days of Henry Grady back in the latter part of the previous century. So therefore they weren't going to run the risk of being a Birmingham later or Montgomery or some other place. So they wanted to be known as a place that had a peaceful transition to another level of involvement on the part of African Americans in the city of Atlanta. Did I answer your question?

While you have the floor, keep talking.

[STUDENT]: I just wanted to know like, you know how your movement started for the gentlemen in Greensboro, and do you know of some other movements that

came from what you started? As far as, you know, what you guys did as far as image and stuff, in Atlanta that responded to that?

KING: Well, first of all, nobody had challenged the city of Atlanta power structure until we did it. I mean directly. They'd gone to federal court and they'd win a case every 10 to 15 years. But the actual in your face, putting in jail, we're not, we want you to integrate this place or else we're going to shut it down by boycotts or what have you. That didn't happen until we did it in 1960. I'm not sure you've seen the appeal for human rights. Have they seen The Appeal for Human Rights?

BOHANNON: That's one of the documents [that changed the world].

KING: Yeah. The appeal for human rights came from, the idea of the appeal, came from Dr. Rufus Clement, president of Atlanta University. What they were trying to do was to dissuade us from following Greensboro. Now, they were concerned about whether or not they were going to lose their tax exempt status with this racist south that we were in, and so I could understand the president's taking kind of a cautious position,

But Dr. Clement, when he saw that we weren't going to back down, he then said, "Well, why don't you, why don't you write a manifesto articulating why you going to do what you say you're going to do?" And I accepted that challenge and I appointed Dr. Roslyn Pope, who later on became Dr. Pope. To radicals, she was known as a brilliant writer. And I appointed Julian Bond to do, to help her, Morris Dillard, Albert Brinson, and Charles Black. Well, the night before we had to turn it into the presidents for them to look at it, Roslyn called me and said, "Lonnie, nobody's been willing to help me." I say, "What?" She said, "No." I said, "Roslyn, write the damn thing. I have to keep organizing these people for the sit in next week." And so she wrote it. My understanding, Julian typed it, but she actually wrote it in Dr. Zinn's kitchen. That document has been copied all over the world.

And more specifically, to answer your question directly, I was looking at a replay of the Birmingham movement about a month or so ago, maybe six weeks ago, and as I looked at it, they were reading a manifesto, the students at Miles College. And it was basically a paraphrase of the appeal for human rights. I thought, wait a minute, they ought to give some attribution to the Atlanta folks for that, for copying their stuff. No, that didn't happen. And they were doing an economic boycott, which also followed where we had done, because we got success, you know.

And I finally got the question answered for me at the end of that documentary that was on the PBS. Dr. Rufus Pitts was in Atlanta when the movement was going on. He was the head of the Georgia Teachers Education Association, and so he literally took what he saw in Atlanta and took it and took it to Birmingham.

And so they ran a full page ad and they paraphrased all that we did but did not give Atlanta people any credit for anything, but they borrowed our whole hook, line and sinker. They took it. There's nothing wrong with that, but I think you ought to at least give some attribution to, to, to what Pope did and what some other people did. So I think I asked you a question. Didn't I? Okay. Any other questions? Yes sir. Well wait, wait, let me take him first. And then you. Because you've been, because you've asked one already.

TYLER: Yeah. I kind of got a follow-up. I'm Tyler. I'm an education major.

KING: Where are you from, Tyler?

TYLER: I'm from Marietta, been in this area my whole life. At what point in all of these sit-ins and boycotts and all that, did the light switch turned on for you and you said "This worked. All my jail time, and time, you know, boycotting." When did, when did it work? When, when did you realize that everything worked?

KING: On the first of February, 1961, I called for an extension of the boycott to go through Easter. Newspapers. It was run. Within two weeks I was tricked into a meeting at the Chamber of Commerce by a man named Jessie Hill who was working for Atlanta Life. He called me and said that, "Can you come to the Chamber of Commerce? There's a very important meeting today and we need you in the meeting." I said, "Well, what's the meeting about?" "Come on, come on." I said, "Okay." Well he'd been one of my advisors, so I took Herschelle with me to the meeting. When we got there, it was full of old line African American businessman and preachers. And the white power structure headed by the head of the Chamber of Commerce and Rich's, Mr., the chairman of the board was sitting across from me. Dick Rich didn't come because he and I fell out a few months earlier. But Frank Neely was there, he was the chairman.

So when we sat down, they wanted to talk, they wanted to talk about integrating the restaurants. And what they proposed was to integrate the restaurants downtown after the school's desegregated in the fall, which would have been four or five months, about five months later. And they also wanted me to accept their word that they were going to do it. I said, "Under no circumstances am I going to accept your word. If it's written and signed, then I still have to take it back to the group that I represent to have them ratify it." Martin King's daddy, Reverend King Sr., jumped up and said, "Boy, I'm tired of you. You're going to wreck this town. I baptized you." Which is true. He just berated me in front of all these people. But I had to be courteous and kind to him because he was my mama's pastor as well as mine. And if I'd of jumped on his behind, my mama would have disowned me. And so I just. So I was nonviolent. I took the abuse. But I wouldn't change.

Ironically, the person in that room that sided with me was Frank Neely, the guy from Rich's, who by the way had been hitting me with his cane. He was sitting directly across from me. He was. He was hitting me with his cane the entire meeting. I never understood that. I mean, maybe you all can tell me 50 years later, what the heck was that all about? The man kept hitting me with his cane. The entire meeting. The only thing he ever said was that I was right.

When Neely said that, they called for recess to I guess to get me straight, whatever. So Dr. Clement of AU came by and he said, "You're between a rock and a hard place. If you, if you agree to this, they're going to get you condemned. If you don't agree to it, you're going to still get condemned." He said, "They've got you in a box." So finally, after they went through all of that, Mr. John Calhoun, who was the head of the... no, he wasn't head then. He had been the head of the NAACP. He came to me and he said, "Lonnie, I was born in 1899 and I have been segregated all of my life. And for me to wait from March, like around the first of March to September is a short time. And since I've been one of your advisors, I advise you to go along with it."

I thought about it and I finally said, "Okay, I will do it on one condition. It has to be in writing. If we don't put it in writing, then there's no deal." So they put it in writing. They signed that they are that they're going to do it in September. So then I said, "Now, I have got to go back and sell it to the students." And that's when Neely agreed with me. And so I left the meeting. I went back, I called the secretary, I said, "Call the panel together and tell them that there's an emergency meeting. I need to come and talk to them about these negotiations that I've just left." When I got in the car, Ivan Allen had just held a press conference at the Chamber of Commerce. I guess the reporters were in the next room or whatever while we were there. And he began his press conference by saying that the "Nigra in the student leadership has agreed to end the boycott and the last counter will reopen tomorrow – segregated."

That went out like a bomb. I mean little bit like a bomb. And so by the time I had my meeting with the students, everybody was really upset about it because it looked like I had sold out. So, I had taken Herschelle Sullivan with me. So I resigned and I said, "Look, maybe you all need to take this so you can disavow this thing if I'm out of the way." Well, they wouldn't let me resign. They said "No, we're not going to get anybody else. We just going to fight this through." And so they wouldn't, they wouldn't accept my resignation. And I decided to stay.

Well, we had to call a mass meeting a few days later at church on Ashby Street [now Joseph Lowery]. Over 2,000 people were in that meeting raising holy heck over the agreement. About another thousand or so were outside, they had the string up lights, not only lights, but sound speakers out there. So, they wanted me to preside over the meeting, but Dr. Carl Holman said, "Hell no, you all

screwed this up, the black leadership, so y'all got to solve it." So I sat there and it was getting more and more unruly.

So I knew Dr. King Jr had been out of town speaking, but he was, but he was back that day. So I called him, and I said, "ML, I have got to have you come calm this crowd down. They're getting ready to tear up this town." He said, "I heard about it on the news, but LC..." They call me LC. He said, he said, "But I'm not doing well. I'm under the weather with a cold that I caught on this tour. I said, "But I need you here." And I think the key to it was when I said, "They just booed your daddy. And I think that's what got him. So he said, "Okay, I'll be there in a few minutes."

He lived on Sunset, so that was just a matter of coming around the corner. When he got there, he had tears in his eyes because he knew how they had treated his daddy. So I went and got Dr. King to take him and let him quiet this crowd down. Let him take the stand immediately. Put a pin right there. Daddy King, Martin's father, was a dictatorial kind of guy. "If I said it, you do it." He was talking to this mass of people out there and he was taking a very paternalistic, "I'm in charge of you," kind of attitude. And so the crowd was very unruly. They were very disrespectful to him.

So he got angry. He has a, he had a short temper. And so, he made the mistake of saying to this crowd, as they were booing him, "I've been a civil rights leader in Atlanta over 30 years." And before he could say anything else, a woman in the nursing uniform up back said, "And that's what's wrong." And when she said that, man, the place just erupted. In other words, you've been a part of the problem that we have. So he had to sit down. And that's when I called ML, asked him to come and quell the crowd.

People make you think that the greatest speech that he made was the one at the march on Washington. Nope, that's anticlimactical. The greatest speech was that night at Rush Memorial Church where he was speaking to uphold his daddy's honor, and to also save the agreement. He took that crowd up the hill, down the valley. It was a masterful, masterful speech that he made. But by the time he finished, everybody had calmed down. I mean, I literally saw the force for of what oratory can do to quell a crowd. And that guy did it. I have ever seen anybody who could do it like him.

Did I hit your points? Okay, now you wanted to ask me another point back there, sir?

[STUDENT]: Well, how did this movement affect your family? A lot?

KING: Well, my wife at the time was nervous because her parents were nervous. We hadn't been married that long and they were conservative people who thought that she was going to be without a husband soon, and they gave her hell because of what I was doing. She was not, even though they were giving her hell, she, she didn't – how should I put it? - she loved her parents, but I think she loved her husband, so she was kind of in like in the middle.

I was concerned about how my family was going to be treated. One night I was speaking somewhere out of town, and I learned when I came home - she didn't tell me when I was out of town - that two men had come to try to break into the apartment. And about 2:00 in the morning. So she grabbed our daughter, was young baby, and took her into the closet and hid among the clothes just in case they broke in, but we had a double bolt and lock. So they, they knocked and knocked and pushed and pushed, but they came up against the deadbolt. I guess they didn't want to break out the whole neighborhood out. So they left. That impacted on her and me.

Another time I was in Cleveland, Ohio and making a speech and four white men in a convertible were drinking beer, liquor or whatever downstairs. I lived in this garden type of apartment. I was on the second floor. There were about four units down there. And so what I did not know was that there were four Korean War veterans who were there and they'd already decided, and I didn't know it, that if anybody came to ambush me, they were going to shoot him.

So that night, as I understand it from, from Charles, they observed these four guys in this convertible drinking beer, whatever. So, on a pre-arrangement, three other guys plus Charles got their guns and they surrounded the car. And Charles said he told the guy who was in the driver's seat, "What are you boys doing here?" But now, that was deliberate to insult the guy. And they said, "Well, we were just waiting for that old boy upstairs to come home." And so at that point I understand that the guys clicked their guns on them and said, "If you don't leave here, we're going to kill you." And of course they got out of there and they never came back. So I never had to worry, I guess about being waited at my house like Medgar Evers was. They would have had their way with me. But these guys had decided that they were going to protect me. And they did. Now, although I was in Cleveland, they still did not know I was in Cleveland. And those folks who were down there waiting on me didn't know I was in Cleveland.

I know you have some questions folks. Yes. Oh, the lady who takes the pictures. Yes. Give me your name.

SAMIYAH: I am Samiyah.

KING: How do you spell that?

SAMIYAH: S-A-M-I-Y-A-H.

KING: What's your classification out here?

SAMIYAH: Class?

KING: Like what, what are you, freshman, sophomore, junior, senior year?

SAMIYAH: I am a senior.

KING: Okay, proceed.

SAMIYAH: My question for you is, given the state of things and being aware of what the consequences would be, what was the one thing that was the trigger for you that made you jump off the cliff and start this movement?

KING: The Greensboro, the Greensboro Four. When those young was sat down on the first of February, 1960. That was the catalyst. That was the enzyme. That's that I, that caused me to spring into action. When you, when you look at it in Retro Spec, all the stuff that I was going through in the navy where I was battered and discriminated in order to get, go, go forward. I learned that you could win the battle if you do your research and if you kick butt - legally. So I won every battle I ever had in the navy. So you know, you get a little sure of yourself when you go into battle and you always knock out the guy. You say, oh I'm all right. So I won the battles in the navy, and the navy was about as difficult as Atlanta was. And I knew that I was a little bit older than the other students, a little more mature and I had more experience at fighting racism. That's really all it was. I was a little older, more experienced, and I can't leave out the fact that I was well trained by my professors.

Okay. Anything else right now? Where are you from?

SAMIYAH: I was born in Pakistan, and I grew up in New York.

KING: Okay, okay. How do you like Mr. Trump? I think I know by the way you're laughing.

[STUDENT]: To follow up on what Samiyah was saying, you mentioned the catalyst for getting the movement started. Were there any childhood experiences that you had that made you really understand what was at stake?

KING: Well, yeah. First of all, segregation was ubiquitous. It existed everywhere in every aspect of life - buses, the trains, restaurants, housing patterns, everything was segregated - period - by race. Forgive me if I'm missing a point because I

want to be sure that I fully answer your question, and I'm missing one part of what you asked me. Fill in the blanks for me.

[STUDENT]: Was there an experience that you had in your childhood that really made you start to think – like when you found those flyers?

KING: Well, I think the thing that was, that I thought about was what happened to me when I was going to the YMCA when I came through with the white gas field – let me explain what that was. Down on Auburn Avenue at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Boulevard. You see the King nursing home or something now down there now that used to be the white motor company. White Motor Company was a trucking company, long distance trucking. And they had behind them all these trucks on that field out there. And we use, we used to walk through the field in as a short cut rather than to come all the way down Boulevard to Auburn Avenue. You're cut across the field. And so we all did that.

So I was playing table tennis at John Hope Elementary School one day and I was about 13 and as I was walking across the field, out comes this big dog barking and coming toward me. Like he was going to bite me. And so I kicked at the dog, but it didn't kick him because the dog, when I kicked, he jumped back. Well, this big guy, he must have been 6'2" or 3" whatever. He was a big dude. He was the owner of the dog. And so who told me, "Nigga, don't you kick my dog. Stand there." And so I stood there. During that time, folks, if a white person told you to stand still, you stood still because they might shoot you or whatever. So like the police tell you to stand still. So I stood still. The guy came over and he slapped me down because I kicked his dog, kicked at his dog. I didn't kick the dog. And so, I got up, he took the dog back inside and I went on down to the Butler Street YMCA to play table tennis.

I came back that night, after dark, and I brought a bucket of bricks with me, and I broke every window in that warehouse. Everyone window. It must not have had a burglar alarm because the alarm would have gone off. But I was so pissed. Because here's a situation where his dog was attacking me and he's going to slap me down, call me a bunch of names. That was too much. And so I came back and I broke all the windows in the place that night. The statute of limitations has passed. I don't worry about that, but I did it. Yeah. So I must've had this, whatever you call it, this desire to fight back from a very young age. Quiet Guy, but don't cross me too far because I will take you on.

[AUDIO SKIPS AHEAD]

KING: ...This degree, and if you can, get your PhD then you can be like Dr. Bohannon here.

BOHANNON: Dr. King is dissertating and Georgia State right now for another PhD.

KING: Okay. Yes sir.

WILLIAMS: All right. So my name is Aaron Williams.

KING: Where are you from, Mr. Williams?

WILLIAMS: I'm from Atlanta.

KING: Okay. Talk to me.

WILLIAMS: Well, my question is like, in your opinion, who was your greatest supporter during the movements?

KING: Good. Well, the greatest adult supporter was Mr. John Calhoun, who used to be the head of the NAACP. He had breakfast with me, the other corner of Auburn Avenue and Butler street, which is now Auburn Avenue and Jessie Hill. There was a little restaurant there that a man named BB Beamon used to own that's a second off the corner there. So we had breakfast down there two or three times a week.

The man was a master organizer, and he took me under his wing, to make sure that I knew the rudiments of organization. And he also was a part of the black power structure too. So he had, he was into, he was in with all these folks who made major decisions. So he was the number one person.

Next person that I would have to point out would be Dr. Samuel Williams, who was the head of the NAACP at that time. He's gone now, but he was a very strong supporter. I remember going to a black attorney when we first started the movement to get him to represent us and he wanted a \$3,000 retainer. I mean, can you imagine asking a college student for \$3,000 retainer? That was basically saying, "I don't want to represent your case." So I went to see Dr. Williams who headed the NAACP. He said, "Let me make a phone call." He called attorney Donald Hollowell, and Hollowell said, "I'll be glad to represent you." So we went to see Dr. Hollowell, and the rest is history. He and several other came together to perform, to become the legal for what we're trying to do. And they won a lot of court for cases for us also.

Yes.

[STUDENT]: So how did you organize the movement back then without the large amount of technology that we have today?

KING:

Well, that's a good point. We formed, I asked Julian because he was an excellent writer - that was what I wanted him to do was to write. So he became the editor. Julian Bond became the editor of a publication called The Student Movement In You. Have you seen any of those publications? And that was his job to write that for us. And we put out 20,000 copies of that document on every Sunday at the churches. Again, pushing the boycott, why there's a need for a boycott, so forth and so on. You have to educate the population to get them going in the direction that you want them to go in.

A man by the name of [inaudible] came by my office one day. I was down in Auburn Avenue. We must have been published in the in the Student Movement in You for about 6 to 8 issues. Mr. Hill came in and suggested that we start a newspaper called the Atlanta Inquirer because he, he owned the rights of the Atlanta Inquirer name from the state of Georgia. And he says, "If you're willing, if you get your folks to write it, I'll start the paper." He said, "Because what the world is doing is outrageous." So as of July 31, 1960, that was when the first issue was, was printed. And that paper became our voice. They put out, in the beginning of about 10,000 copies every, every weekend that it went to about 25 or 30,000 copies. That paper is still running as of this day. But it was the students who started that newspaper with Mr. Hill. It was his money and his paper, but he had no writers and so our job was to write, put it all together and he then got Mr. M Carl Holman, Department of English at Clark College, to become the editor.

So I think Dr. Holman came in around the middle of August to take over as the editor. He had gotten Bill Strong, who was the editor on that first issue, but he and Strong crossed one another, and since it was Mr. Hill's paper, Mr. Strong had to go and so they hired Dr. Holman to write for us as the editor. But you had Julian Bond working with Dr. Holman, you had John Gibson who was the crime reporter and Johnson who was a social reporter. Joy Thompson was the young people's reporter. She had a column called Jumping With Joy. She was going to high school, but she wrote it every week. So we covered, and we somebody else in there. I forgot who that was now. But that paper has stayed in business and Mr. Spiff died about a month or so ago after moving from being an advertising sales person to becoming a publisher a year later. He died, and we don't know what's going to happen with that paper. His son is now in charge, and they're still publishing. But my understanding is that is not on the ground as it was earlier.

Anything else?

BOHANNON: What about in terms of organizing? So, Candace, I know you asked this question the other day and we had this really neat discussion about it. How did you organize the sit ins without cell phones?

KING:

Well, we had three representatives. The committee on appeal for human rights was made up of 19 members. There were three from each one of the six schools plus the chairman. The responsibility of each committee member was to bring students from their respective schools to the demonstration. For instance, if you were going to Spelman and you were on the committee, you and the other two ladies that were working with you would take the policies that we had put in place. For example, if we said we're going to have a march on May 17th, 1960, which would commemorate the Brown decision, and we wanted thousands of students to get involved. Well, once we voted that in, then the representatives from the respective schools would then post it in their dormitories all over the place and then they were able to then recruit from the dorms and everywhere and all we had to do was tell them to meet us in front of the library. That's where we would assemble, in that major space out there. And thousands of people would show up. But because we had tentacles into all six schools and those folks did a heck of a job of. They went back to the dorms, for instance, and they'd hold meetings, just explaining to them what we're trying to do and why we are trying to do it.

And we also learned something else, too. One of the major successes of the movement was the fact that a lot of students were not from Atlanta. So therefore, the regular traditional ways of suppressing black opposition to segregation was not able to apply here because it's students from wherever, from all over the world, all over America. So you couldn't very well get on the phone and call your buddies and say "Fire Suzy Jones" because her child is picketing downtown if Suzy Jones is from Buffalo, New York or Los Angeles, California. How are you going to figure out how to get to those?

So this whole reprisal kind of thing upon which the south had operated for centuries couldn't work. As you look at the movement and look at the number of people who went to jail, you will find out that I'd say no more than about 20 percent of the folks who went to jail were from Atlanta. About 80 percent were from other places and a lot of them never told their parents that they were doing it because they didn't want to go through all the hassles and so they just did it. They were grown by this time.

If we just relied on the Atlanta students alone, it wouldn't have worked because you had a system in place that would be oppressive if you "got out of your lane." And to be talking about going to integrate lunch counters and being able to try on clothes and dresses like anybody else in the public. That was a no-no during that time. And so if you try to push that, if you lived in Atlanta, then they will try to contact your parents and if you're still dependent upon your parents for some support, then that's another ballgame.

Let me give an illustration of what I'm talking about. The whites weren't involved necessarily, but there's a lady that you may meet later on. If not, you'll see on, on whatever Dr. Bohannon puts together. Her name is Eva Kendrick Wollert. She went to Clark College. She was one of the most loyal, committed supporters that we had. Her daddy ordered her to drop out of, out of the movement and they had a debate about it and but she wouldn't give in. He said, "Well, I'm not going to pay for your education. I sent you over there to get an education, not to go downtown and challenge segregation." So he withdrew his money. Well, he didn't put her out the house. She still had some place to live. She dropped out of school and was there every day, every day doing something in the movement. Well, if you take what her daddy did to her and magnify it on a broader universe in Atlanta, people who had Atlanta connections, you probably would've had a same kind of thing. The key to our success in my view in terms of numbers was the fact that the folks who participated were not from Atlanta. They were here to go to school.

Does that make sense to you all? If your name appeared in the newspaper as one of those arrested, you run the risk, if you lived in Atlanta and your folks lived in Atlanta, you're forced might get fired. If they could ever identify it. So the way you get around that is that you have people from Miami and California and other places. What can you do? It's too difficult to find a way to reprise, even if you could reprise, how can you do it if the person is in California? You may find the name out, but so what? You found the name, what can you really do? You can't really bring that pressure on those folks.

Okay. Anything else? Yes, ma'am.

[STUDENT]: How did the sit-ins themselves function? Well, what happened during them, how did they, was there like some kind of rotation between the students?

KING: Okay, good question. We outlined a battle plan. We're going to go to Woolworths, Kress, Rich's and Davidson's, which became Macy's, drug stores that were involved, WT Grant, all those little stores downtown. And once we targeted those places, we then apportioned who was going to be the lead person at that particular location and how many students did we need in order to fill that billet, wherever it is. And so we then were able to assemble the folks that we needed.

Now, how did it work? A transportation pool. A lot of cab drivers were willing to drive us to the respective places that we were going and pick us up. We also had Mr. Ira Jackson who owned a service station, gas service station, so he provided free the gas that we needed so the cars could go fill up at his service station. I'm sure they got a lot of tanks that were not used. But nevertheless, that's what happened.

So initially we would go in to sit down. After a while the merchants developed a close-up technique. Once we showed up, they would close down, no more food being served today. And so we'd go back to the campus, and then they'd reopen. So we said, uh-uh. So I asked the guys who were technicians who were in the movement, and said, "Can you all design a communication system?" So our guy named Ronald Yancy said, "Yeah, we can do that." I said, let's get us some two, three cars to carry people. We'll have the communications center in our headquarters here and when we do the sit ins, if they close, we'll leave, we'll leave a spotter there just standing around so that when they reopen their lunch counters, we would then tell people they reopened by radio, they reopened the lunch counter at such and such a place, and they send them right back. And so we did that all over town. They never knew how we knew to send somebody back. So finally, they just closed them all.

But the idea was to close them when we first showed up. Then time relieve, open them back up. Well we should, no, no, no, we're going to make you lose this money. And so that's when we put together this communication system with the young fellow named Yancy being the major person to make it happen. These are the folks who went on to Georgia Tech for instance, after they finished Morehouse to get some more advanced engineering degrees and all that kind of stuff. But so they were into this technical stuff and they knew how to do all of this. But yes, but we had a communication system which they never knew that we had.

BOHANNON: We have time for one more question. So, anyone who hasn't asked?

KING: How about you in the cap back there? Do you have anything to ask me? Yes, sir.

[STUDENT]: Can you tell us about the rough ride? What was going through your mind while you're going through that?

KING: When you say rough ride?

BOHANNON: By the police.

KING: Well, I never really had a rough ride, but I learned later that when, see, when the whites were with us, they used they, they put their whites in a white patty wagon and the blacks were in a black patty wagon. And I know that sounds crazy, but that's what was going on. So I learned later that some of the drivers of the paddy wagons when the whites were there, they wouldn't, they wouldn't, they would just speed up and then put on brakes, speed up, put on brakes. Was throwing these kids all over the place. I have not heard of anybody doing that to the black kids, but that's what they did to the white kids.

When you reflect back on some of this stuff, you began to realize how silly all that stuff really was, but that, that was a lot of crap that went on, that didn't get in the newspapers that happened. It's very difficult to tell you today how vicious the stuff was during that time. I mean, the most unimaginable thing you can think of. They did it. That's just the way it was. And I hate to say it to you, but we're not that far from that kind of stuff right now. Look at what happened to those all three foreign students, foreign people who got slashed up or killed out in Oregon just because of who they are, what they look like.

So we've come a long way from, and we would come a long way in the future, but we're still in the past in the minds of some people because they had been taught that crap from the time they were born.

America is at a crossroads, in my opinion. Donald Trump and his supporters are going to force America to really decide who are we really, and I must tell you that it's going to take a little while, but I think that the early votes are beginning to come in. Even on the Republican side, there are people who began to say that there's something wrong with this picture. So I would think that in a way, in a backhanded way, Trump is going to advance the cause of progress in America. That's not what he has in mind. All he has in mind is making money, folks. How can he make money? That's all it's about. But he's going to exploit the population that he can.

One reason he can exploit this population is that only 30 percent of Americans have college degrees. Are you aware of that? Which means that 70 percent don't have them, right? When you overlay that data on the south and the southwest, then that bumps up to about 85, almost 90 percent depending upon the neighborhood. There is a value in education. That's why you're here. When you read the great works, when you read the Platos, the Aristotles, when you read all these different things and different philosophies about life, it makes you a different kind of person. That doesn't mean that you necessarily become more liberal per se, but I think you become more perceptive. You become more accommodating to differences in people.

[STUDENT]: You're more open to new ideas?

KING: Yeah. And what we've got to do, in my opinion, is to do a better job of educating the African American community, some parts of the white community and Hispanic community, a better job of educating. And it's going to be a long distance thing because you got 100,000,000 dollars for instance, that goes in through the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC, designed to primarily build a conservative agenda in America.

\$100,000,000. You don't even have a million dollars in in any kind of movement to push forward the idea of let freedom ring. None of that. So, you've got a playing field that is unlevel where the money is on the side of the right wingers who want to take us back to something akin to slavery. That's what you have and the folks who are on the other side who are being oppressed, they don't have any support or if they do have, they haven't found a way to harness the support so they can begin to balance some of this other stuff that's going on. Slowly but surely if we don't watch out, you're going to let Donald Trump type people, and not just Donald Trump, make America second rate power.

And in one of the problems that I've found is that a lot of people really don't read. If you read anything at all, especially in economics, you would know that the Chinese led the world economic agenda until the 18th century. That was the Chinese. Once Nixon and others put together that détente kind of thing and restarted working with the Chinese, China is now number two. Moving to number one. They used to be way down as a result of the communist situation, but now they're number two, almost number one, I think, and I think when America looks like, "Oh my God, the Chinese have overtaken us." That's when they're going to begin to say, "Well, now wait a minute, are we going to keep doing this?" I mean, we actually shooting ourselves in the foot, but that's what's, that's what's been going on. Oh, I predict to you that if we don't watch ourselves, the Chinese will be number one again within the next five to seven years. And that's really going to be a traumatic shock to America.

Now the question in my is going to be: how many Americans that are willing to admit that it was just these conservative right wingers who want to get rid of healthcare, who are just all this crap that they talk about to hurt the little people. That's what's killing them. And the question's going to be: are we going to keep electing the same myopic people who don't care about anything but racism? And the other that they want to be, they don't want to be a part of. As I go through the twilight, twilight out my years, it's sad to see what I see going on in and see how people are being manipulated.