

Interview with **Robert Lucas**

Date: October 24, 1988

Interviewer: Judy Richardson

Camera Rolls: 2038-2041

Sound Rolls: 218-219

Team: B

Interview gathered as part of *Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads, 1965-mid 1980s*. Produced by Blackside, Inc. Housed at the Washington University Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection.

Preferred Citation

Interview with Robert Lucas, conducted by Blackside, Inc. on October 24, 1988 for *Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads, 1965-mid 1980s*. Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection.

Note: These transcripts contain material that did not appear in the final program. Only text appearing in ***bold italics*** was used in the final version of *Eyes on the Prize II*.

[camera roll #2038]

[sound roll #218]

00:00:19:00

Camera crew member #1:

Mark.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

00:00:22:00

Interviewer:

When the Chicago Freedom Movement invited Dr. King to Chicago, what were you expecting, and what did you find happening there?

00:00:31:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, really when the Chicago Freedom Movement invited Doc here in 1966, because of some of the achievements that SC, SCLC had accomplished, particularly in the South, we sorta naively felt that Doc King and SCLC had some sort of blueprint. And so I guess we thought that that blueprint for freedom could be super imposed upon the situation in Chicago. But I offer that was not the case, you know?

00:01:12:00

Interviewer:

And where did you find—I mean you talked about a meeting where you realized that was true.

00:01:18:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, we, actually at the invitation one night for Dr. King and SCLC in the latter part of 1965. So, Dr. King made his entrance to Chicago in January 1966. And sometime between the time of January '66 and the, and the first marches, we had a seminar that was conducted mainly by the SCLC staff. And a number of us that attended that seminar kept looking, and watching, and waiting for SCLC staff to present some sort of a blueprint. However that never really happened. But in spite of that, I think that we learned a great deal from Doc and SCLC at that conference, at that seminar.

00:02:12:00

Interviewer:

What do you think you learned?

00:02:15:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, one thing we learned, see, up to that point, me being a member of CORE, when we found some institution that was discriminating, etcetera, what we would do is, is, is, is have a meeting, and, and involve ourselves in a lot of rhetoric. And the next morning, you know, get some picket signs and march around this particular institution or store, whatever the case was at the time. But at least we learned from Dr. King and SCLC that one should have a program, you know, for, for freedom. In other words, if you're gonna protest, you know, for the schools against a school, the segregation then there should be sort of well thought out program. So, you can determine, you know, if, if you're achieving anything. So, we learned that from Dr. King and SCLC.

00:03:10:00

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm. SCLC had thought about using the Chicago movement as a kind of experiment in terms of whether or not nonviolence would work in the North. How did you feel about that?

00:03:22:00

Robert Lucas:

Oh, well, I, I didn't know that [laughs] they planned to use Chicago as an experiment. You know? Our thoughts were that somehow with SCLC and Dr. King coming here that there was gonna be, you know, some—not instant freedom, but, but at least some point in time, in five or six months. You know, there would be, you know, a, a, a great deal of freedom. And if they, if they had thought of using it as some sort of laboratory to test nonviolence in, in, in, in the North, I can't say whether they were very, very successful or not because I really don't think that SCLC in 1966, you know—

[rollout on camera roll]

[wild sound]

Robert Lucas:

—carried its, its, its program out to the fullest.

Interviewer:

Excuse me. Cut please.

Camera crew member #2:

[inaudible]

00:04:10:00

Interviewer:

OK. That's good. We just ran out. We're gonna change the—

[cut]

[camera roll #2039]

00:04:14:00

Camera crew member #1:

Mark.

Camera crew member #2:

Marker.

[slate]

00:04:18:00

Interviewer:

OK. SCLC thought that they were using Chicago as an experiment for the test of nonviolence in the North. How did you feel about that?

Robert Lucas:

Well, that's, that's the first I've heard that, that, that they thought that.

Interviewer:

I'm sorry. If you could maybe begin with something that includes using experiment.

00:04:38:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, the, the fact that the thinking, SCLC's thinking was that they would use Chicago as some sort of ex, experiment in terms of whether nonviolence would work in, in, in the North or not, I was not really aware of that. We were so caught up with the fact somehow SCLC was gonna bring some sort of not exactly instant freedom but at least bring some freedom to, to Chicago, maybe within a year or less that we never really, really, never really occurred to us really what kind of hidden agenda that they had, if you will.

00:05:20:00

Interviewer:

When you talked about Dr. King and SCLC, that one of the mistakes they made was the injunctions and obeying the injunctions. Can you talk about that?

00:05:29:00

Robert Lucas:

During the, the, the time of the, of, of, of the marches for open housing, when the marches initially started, we, we marched when we wanted to, as long as we wanted to, and, and with as many people as we could mobilize. But the marches were something that really caught Daley and the city off guard. And they didn't really know how to deal with them. So, and there was all kinds of complaints going into city hall, and, and, and other places for the marches to, to, to stop. Well, Daley really knew that he couldn't stop the marches because of the first amendment. So, what he did was he got an in, an injunction seeking to, you know, curb the marches. That is the, the injunction indicated that we couldn't march during rush hours, you know? And we could only have X number of people in the marches. Well, me being from the militant wing of, of the civil rights movement, I thought, we thought that it was really a test of, of wills. So, many of us felt and even feel today if Dr. King had really broke the injunction that we think that things would have happened much faster. That is we, we think that perhaps there would have been some open housing in Chicago, in as much as we were marching for. But in as much, in as much as he didn't break the injunction, you know, one would never know. But I just, I think that they should have broken the injunction.

00:07:26:00

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm. To go back to the nonviolence in the North, do you think that nonviolence as a philosophy could work in the North?

Robert Lucas:

Not, not really. Those of us—

Interviewer:

I'm sorry, if you could say nonviolence.

Robert Lucas:

Oh.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

00:07:40:00

Robert Lucas:

Nonviolence as a philosophical commitment I don't think could work in the North. Those of us that applied nonviolence, CORE, and SNCC, and other groups, we simply used it as a, as

a, as a tactic. Some people were, was philosophically committed to it, but we were not. In fact the only time that we used nonviolence was during the times of an actual demonstration or something of that nature.

00:08:11:00

Interviewer:

OK. In terms of Black support for Daley, people like Marciniak say, Well, folks say, you know, why would he—the point being that a lot of Black folks voted for, for Daley, so he must have been doing something right. What was your sense of, of Daley and why Black people kept supporting him?

00:08:27:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, I don't think it was so much of Richard Daley as a personality. We have to remember that Daley had a very strong machine. And what the machine consisted of was committeemen and precinct captains. And these committee men and, and, and precinct captains, they were rewarded. At least they thought they were well rewarded for turning out the, the, the vote for, for Daley. So, they used to employ such, such, such tactics as if you don't vote for the Democratic ticket, you're gonna be tossed off of the welfare roles. If you don't vote for the Democratic ticket, you're going to be put out of the, of the housing project. And then, too, as you know during that era, there was a lot of vote buying in Chicago. People just simply and literally sold their vote for almost nothing. And so that's why, and that's, that's why Daley had, had a lot of support. Then there were some Blacks that, that felt that, that Daley was a good mayor and should have been supported. You know?

00:09:43:00

Interviewer:

Mm-hmm. You know, in terms of the riots, Daley said that he thought the movement had caused the riot. And I'm wondering. You mentioned meeting at the Palmer House, and, and what you felt was the cause. Could you talk about that meeting and what you said?

00:09:55:00

Robert Lucas:

Yes, let, let me deal with the riots in Chicago in, in 1966. The, the, the, the riots were [door opens] supposedly caused—

Interviewer:

Can we cut please? OK.

[cut]

00:10:13:00

Camera crew member #1:

Mark.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

00:10:17:00

Interviewer:

OK, the—Daley said that the riots had been caused by the civil rights movement and by the freedom movements marching and stuff. What was your sense of the cause of the riots, and can you relate it to the Palmer House meeting?

00:10:29:00

Robert Lucas:

The riots in Chicago supposedly started because some young Black kids on the west side on a real hot day had turned on—

00:10:40:00

Interviewer:

Excuse me. Could you cut a second? We're gonna have somebody talking about the actual [inaudible]—

[cut]

00:10:46:00

Camera crew member #1:

Marker.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

Camera crew member #2:

[clears throat]

00:10:49:00

Interviewer:

There was a sense by Daley that he was trying to say that the movement had caused the riots. And I was wondering if you talk about that Palmer House meeting where you talked about what the, the underlying causes of the riots were.

00:11:00:00

Robert Lucas:

As a result of the 1966 riots in Chicago, the power structure got very nervous. As a matter of fact, they got so nervous they convened a meeting with the top Black civil rights and leadership in the city. And at that meeting, you had top business persons and top political officials including Richard J. Daley, and the top church people. And, and at the time, the people that convened the meeting were really looking for some way to, to stop the riots. So, you, you see the riots occurred on Roosevelt Road. And only about really a mile and a half from the downtown section. So, naturally the businessmen and the politicians were quite nervous because they felt that at any point, the riot was, the riot will spill over into the downtown area. So, they were very concerned. So, they were trying to solicit reasons or, or, or answers from, you know, from, from the Black leadership. And quite frankly, I don't know if the Black leadership was really naïve or was really dishonest, but I, I for one, when, when I got an opportunity, I got up and, and talked about the, the riots being because of the social economic conditions in the Black community.

00:12:40:00

Interviewer:

Cut for just a second. Thank you. That's what I'm getting to. What I need is, if you can talk—'cause you—

[cut]

00:12:45:00

Camera crew member #1:

Marker.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

00:12:47:00

Interviewer:

OK, if you could talk about that meeting and what it felt coming in and seeing all the powers, the, the power structure right before you.

00:12:56:00

Robert Lucas:

Mmm. When the, when the riots occurred, the, the power structure in Chicago got really nervous. In fact so, so nervous that they, they had a meeting where they asked all of the top civil rights leadership to attend. And so I had heard about the power structure for a number of years, and I, I never thought that I'd really get an opportunity to see it, at least all in one place. So, I walked into this room in the Palmer House, and there was the top political, political leadership. Daley with the Corroboration Council and all his commissioners, and the top business men, business men that were representative of the State Street Council. And also the top church leaders from, from the Protestant and the Catholic churches, etcetera, you know? It was a really awesome amount of power.

00:13:53:00

Interviewer:

And what did you do there? I mean what did you say to give them a sense of the causes of the riots?

00:13:57:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, I really—see, this power structure, they were not really looking for necessarily the cause of the riots. They, see, the riots were still going on at the time that this, this meeting occurred. They were, they were looking for some way to stop the riots. And I think that in, in

my humble opinion, that the Black leadership was, was, was either naïve or, or dishonest. When, when I got an opportunity to speak, I got up and said that I thought the riots were caused by the socioeconomic conditions in the Black community. Well, see, that wasn't really very widely received because one, I was really not that well accepted on the part of the traditional civil rights leadership 'cause I was a member of CORE, and CORE was a militant organization. And up, up to that point, we had many times taken exception to the established civil rights leadership in the city.

00:15:02:00

Interviewer:

And what did you say were the cause of the riots?

00:15:05:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, I thought that the cause of the riots were the lack of decent affordable housing, the lack of education, the lack of job opportunities, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera—

[rollout on camera roll]

[wild sound]

00:15:20:00

Interviewer:

Now after the riots, the city negotiates with the movement, and the movement accepts just some swimming pools. How did you feel about that kind of settlement for just swimming pool—

Camera crew member #1:

Rollout, Judy.

00:15:30:00

Interviewer:

OK. Sure. OK.

[cut]

[camera roll #2040]

00:15:36:00

Camera crew member #1:

Marker.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

00:15:43:00

Interviewer:

OK, after the riots, the, the city attempts to negotiate with the civil rights leadership with the Chicago Freedom Movement and gets basically, gives them free swimming pools. And I'm wondering if you thought they should have gotten more.

00:15:55:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, actually when the riots was, the riots was going on, the, the power structure in the city was sitting down with the civil rights leadership, trying to figure out a, a way to stop the riots. And as a matter of fact I don't know what they were willing to give up, but I think they were, they were willing to give up much more than, than, than we got I feel like. During the discussions about how to stop the riots, one very well prominent civil rights leader stood up and said, After all, you remember the riots started because you had Black youngsters seeking relief with water from a fire hydrant. And so obviously they need swimming pools. And can't you give us some swimming pools? And of course the power structure was delighted, you know, with that request because they didn't have to give anything up. And so they actually gave a portable swimming pools. They had to put portable swimming pools in many sections of, of the, of the city, in particular in, in, in, in the Black section. I believe at the time that the, the civil rights movement, the leadership, could have gotten much more than, than swimming pools. But see, apparently—

00:17:45:00

Camera crew member #1:

I'm sorry. Could you repeat that answer again, Mr. Lucas? I'm sorry. I was, I, I bobbled the camera.

00:17:49:00

Interviewer:

The, the civil rights movement could have gotten more.

00:17:52:00

Robert Lucas:

As far as I'm concerned, the, the civil rights leaders should have gotten much more than, than they did. But I guess being the first time in that kinda situation, they really didn't know what to ask for. So, they, they asked for swimming pools, and they, and they got swimming pools. And the, and the meeting was, was over.

00:18:15:00

Interviewer:

And talk about the summit as well in that same sense. Some people say, Well, we had to go to the summit with Daley because the movement was beginning to fail, and this was the best we could expect. What was your sense? And you mentioned racial polarization at that point, too. And before you talk, just get kinda—yeah, good. And if you could look at me.

00:18:36:00

Robert Lucas:

Yeah, there, there had been a, a number of marches, open housing marches in, in, in Chicago because you see, Chicago in 1966 was one of the most segregated cities in the country. And because of those marches in the White community, the, the racial polarization really increased. And, and, and, and also there was a, there was a great deal of tension. At, at one point you could almost really cut the tension, you know, with a knife if you like. And a lot of people were nervous and upset. *There were a lot of demand on the, on the, on the part of the citizens, particularly the White citizens, on Mayor Daley to stop the marches. There were some demands on the part of the Black leadership, to Martin Luther King to stop the marches. So, you see, see everybody wanted a way out. Both sides wanted, wanted a way out.* And so they had this so called summit meeting in, in, in the Palmer House, which was really the, the second one of, of, of that kind. The first one really didn't succeed. So, they had the second one in the Palmer House. And there was a so called Summit Agreement reached. And what the Summit Agreement said that there would be open housing in Chicago for Blacks. But really there was no way to enforce it. It was simply a piece of paper that was unenforceable if you like. So—

00:20:21:00

Interviewer:

Cut please. That's exactly what I, I need it a little bit clearer.

[cut]

[slate]

00:20:33:00

Interviewer:

Why do you think the, the folks, both Daley and the, the movement leadership agreed to have the summit?

00:20:39:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, at, at the time of the summit, there was a great deal of racial polarization in the city. There was a great deal of racial tensions. Now, this polarization and the tensions were not really caused by, by the marches. The, the polarization and the tension between the races, you know, had always been here. And so at the time of this second summit conference, the movement, the freedom movement, were doing—

00:21:24:00

Interviewer:

Cut please. I think we're gonna need not to hear—

[cut]

00:21:29:00

Camera crew member #1:

Mark.

[slate]

00:21:34:00

Interviewer:

OK, if you could talk about why you think the summit, kind of why did the movement and the city leaders decide to negotiate at that point.

00:21:44:00

Robert Lucas:

I think the reason for the summit was because that some people believed that the marches had produced a lot of polarization and, and tension in the city, which I don't believe was the case. The, the racial polarization and the tensions had always been here. But because of the marches, they perhaps hardened if you like. But as a matter of fact, at, at the time that the summit took place, ***there was a, a lot of fear in the White community and some parts of the Black community that there was going to be some sort of big racial explosion.*** And so that's really one of the reasons why both sides sat down at this conference table in, in the, in the Palmer House. And, and both sides knew that the, they were not getting anything from the summit. In fact, the, the so called Summit Agreement was not really worth the paper it was written on because it was, really had no teeth in it, and it was really un-enforceable. But in as much as both sides were looking for a way out, you know, it, it was accepted. You know?

00:23:19:00

Interviewer:

Cut please. I forgot what I was supposed to say. [laughs]

[cut]

00:23:23:00

Camera crew member #1:

Mark.

[slate]

00:23:27:00

Interviewer:

OK. If you can look at me and tell me why you decided to continue the Cicero March and about Dr. King's call to you before you went out on that march.

Robert Lucas:

Well, really there were two summit conferences.

Interviewer:

OK. If you can not mention the summit conferences.

Robert Lucas:

OK.

Interviewer:

But go right into the, the Cicero March.

00:23:55:00

Robert Lucas:

The reason why CORE decided to march to Cicero because we knew that Blacks got nothing out of the summit conference. So, by marching to Cicero, that was our statement to Blacks that nothing was gotten from the, from the summit conference. And as a matter of fact, the, *the day that the march took place, Dr. King called me at home, and he said to me, You know, Bob, we would like to save Cicero to use it, you know, later on for something. And that I wish that you, you know, wouldn't go. And I told Dr. King, I said, Well, Doc, that, you know, my conscience, you know, dictates to me that I must lead the march into Cicero.* Because as a matter of fact, see, SCLC had threatened to march into Cicero a number of times. And because of that, although Blacks do not live in Cicero, Blacks that worked in Cicero, people were beginning to beat 'em up simply because they thought that we were afraid to march in Cicero. So, that was kind of another reason why we marched. And I indicated all those things to, to Dr. King. And after he saw that I was determined to go—you know, Dr. King was a great guy. He said, Well, Bob, in as much as you're going then I wish you the best. So, he really in that sense endorsed the march.

00:25:46:00

Interviewer:

Was, was the Chicago campaign a success? 'Cause you mentioned that you thought they needed a way out. Do—

Camera crew member #1:

We're—

Interviewer:

I'm sorry.

Camera crew member #1:

—we're gonna roll out.

Interviewer:

OK.

Camera crew member #2:

[inaudible]

00:25:56:00

Interviewer:

Yeah, let's hold.

Camera crew member #1:

Let's change.

[cut]

[camera roll #2041]

00:26:01:00

Camera crew member #1:

Mark. Speed.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

00:26:04:00

Interviewer:

OK, if you can give me a sense of the Cicero march, particularly the thing, the story you told me about them wearing mitts so that they could catch the bricks in terms of self defense. And what, what happened with it? And just get comfortable first.

Robert Lucas:

Oh, fine.

Interviewer:

Yeah, that's fine. OK.

Robert Lucas:

OK.

Interviewer:

And you can smile.

Robert Lucas:

OK, OK.

Interviewer:

OK.

00:26:27:00

Robert Lucas:

When CORE first decided to march to Cicero, the thinking was on the part of some of the freedom movement leadership that the march was not goin' to be a success. As a matter of fact, that it was going to fail because we simply couldn't muster enough people, you know, for it to really make any kind of a difference. But see, they, they were really surprised because there were a lot of people in Chicago, a lot of people in the militant wing of the movement, that had really disagreed with SCLC to some extent. And that was really their opportunity to get back at SCLC. I mean, at the, in the moderates if you will. So, because of that, we were able to get about three hundred people to, to march into Cicero. That took place September 4th, 1966. And as we marched into the city, a number of the young people I noticed had baseball gloves as we started to—

00:27:40:00

Interviewer:

I'm sorry. If you could say, As we're marching, a number, a number of the young Black people, so they'll know—

Robert Lucas:

Right.

Interviewer:

OK.

00:27:45:00

Robert Lucas:

As, as, as, as we began to march into Cicero, I noticed a, a number of young Black people had baseball gloves. And I wondered, you know, really why they had the gloves. But after we got, you know, while inside of Cicero, I was able to see that the young Blacks were, were really catching the missiles, missiles that the White toughs were throwing at them and, and really returning, you know, those missiles and, and what have you. And that's what really prompted the *Chicago Tribune* to do a headline the following day, to label the march as the march that returned bricks.

00:28:24:00

Interviewer:

How did you feel about that?

Robert Lucas:

I really felt, you know, really good about it. And I, I felt—

Interviewer:

If you could say, I really felt good about the self defense, or however you wanna put it.

00:28:36:00

Robert Lucas:

Fine. OK. I really felt really good about the Blacks catching the missiles and, and, and throwing them back because it sort of indicated, you know, to the whole world that nonviolence had worked really in the South, but it wasn't about to really work in the North. So, so that, that's why I really thought, I mean, I, I really felt good about it. You know?

00:29:02:00

Interviewer:

And why did you think that was important for people to understand?

00:29:06:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, I, I think it was important for people to understand 'cause I think important, it was important people understand that Blacks were just not going to stand up and just take all kind of, after being denied all of the, all of the niceties of society if you will that they just weren't prepared to stand up and just be physically abused.

00:29:31:00

Interviewer:

Can you talk a little bit more about that? 'Cause I think that's interesting. What—can you talk about perhaps Malcolm's influence? You mentioned something about that, too.

00:29:39:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, I first noticed nationalism, Black Nationalism in the civil rights movement as early as '64. And I think it was primarily because—

Interviewer:

I'm sorry. Let me cut for a second. I need to ask that a different way.

[cut]

00:29:59:00

Camera crew member #1:

Marking.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

00:30:03:00

Interviewer:

If, if you could give me a sense of the Black, White split after Dr. King leaves. And you said there was a sense of control while he was still here. But after he left, some, what had always been here begins to come to, to forward. If you could talk about that.

00:30:18:00

Robert Lucas:

After Dr. King left the city in August, late August of 1966 and really after, after having failed really in Chicago, we began to notice a, a, a wider split between the Blacks and the Whites in the civil rights movement. But as long as Dr. King was here, you know, that was sorta held at bay. But out of respect really for Dr. King. But after, after he left, it really began to manifest it, itself and really to the point where Blacks really literally asked Whites to leave the movement and to leave meetings, etcetera. But you see, that had really started back around 1964 because of the preachings of, of, of Malcolm X. And a lot of Blacks in the civil rights movement although did not become Muslims, but they really believed in Malcolm X. And so because of Malcolm's preaching in as much as some people already had, you know, those kind of in-inclinations, it, it, it really, it really manifested itself in, in, in a huge way if you like in the fall of '66, and '67, and '68 after Dr. King left the city.

00:31:54:00

Interviewer:

Can you talk about the role the Nation of Islam played in Chicago in terms of the Black community?

00:32:02:00

Robert Lucas:

Well, really I didn't really notice any role that the Nation of Islam played in, in Chicago other than the role that they, they had always played. I remember going with Floyd McKissick one time over to Elijah Muhammad's house where Floyd really made a strong pitch to Elijah Muhammad to join the civil rights movement. But he, he wished Floyd well, but he never did. So, as far as I could see in Chicago, they never really played any kind of role in the city. But however the, the paper at one point was used, the newspaper at one point was used under one of the editors to do a lot of civil rights coverage.

00:32:55:00

Interviewer:

OK, cut. OK. OK, I'm gonna ask you two more questions [inaudible]

[wild sound]

Robert Lucas:

—the high point and the low point or—

Interviewer:

No, just do the low point. That's fine.

Robert Lucas:

[inaudible]

Interviewer:

Well, I'm sorry [unintelligible]

Camera crew member #3:

Coming up as scene six.

00:33:07:00

Interviewer:

Hold tight first. OK, ready to roll.

Camera crew member #1:

Marker.

Camera crew member #2:

Marker.

[slate]

00:33:12:00

Interviewer:

Why was the Cicero March a high point for you?

Robert Lucas:

The Cicero point, March was—

Interviewer:

I'm sorry, just start over again. OK.

00:33:21:00

Robert Lucas:

Fine. The Cicero March was a high point to me for a couple of reasons. One, one was because a, a young Black had graduated from high school and been naïve about the, the racial hatred in Cicero, went into Cicero, and got his brains beaten out by some young White boys with a baseball bat. It was also a high point to me because some—

00:33:54:00

Interviewer:

I'm sorry, cut just a second.

[cut]

00:33:58:00

Camera crew member #1:

Mark.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

00:34:01:00

Interviewer:

Why was the Cicero March important? What had happened earlier?

00:34:05:00

Robert Lucas:

The, the [phone rings]

00:34:06:00

Interviewer:

Just cut please.

[cut]

00:34:08:00

Camera crew member #1:

Marker.

Camera crew member #2:

Mark.

[slate]

00:34:11:00

Interviewer:

Give me a sense of why the Cicero March was important. What had happened earlier that summer?

00:34:17:00

Robert Lucas:

The Cicero March was important for a couple of reasons. One, when we marched into Cicero, we were really commemorating the death of a young Black that had naively gone into Cicero earlier that summer and gotten his brains beat out with baseball bats by some young White toughs. And it was also important to me because of, of the fact that see, Dr. King and SCLC, the freedom movement, had refused to go to Cicero. So, therefore a lot of people inside of Cicero thought that we were afraid to come. And because of that, Blacks that worked in Cicero, had been working there for years, were literally dragged from their cars, and, and beaten up. And it's my understanding after the march, you know, that didn't occur anymore. If it did, it was really greatly reduced.

00:35:14:00

Interviewer:

All right. And the other part is you mentioned that you thought it was a mistake that they decided to abide by the injunction. Can you say, talk about that?

00:35:22:00

Robert Lucas:

Yes, yes, yes. I think that the injunction that Daley had the courts to impose upon the movement should have been broken. Because I believe if we had broken the injunction, if Dr. King had broke the injunction, it would have also broken the back of the regular Democratic machine, the regular Democratic organization. Because you see in Chicago, it was a regular Democratic organization that perpetuated the, the racial division in, in the city. And that was able to keep the schools segregated, and keep housing segregated, and so forth and so on. So, I think that, that had the injunction been broken, although there, there may have been some hostilities after that, but I think, I think we would have broken the back of, of racial segregation in the city of Chicago.

00:36:21:00

Interviewer:

Perfect. Cut please.

Camera crew member #1:

[inaudible]

Interviewer:

OK.

Camera crew member #1:

[inaudible] sun came out.

[cut]

[end of interview]

00:36:28:00

Copyright 2021 Washington University Libraries