

Interview with **Orval Faubus**

1979

Camera Rolls: 25-26

Sound Rolls: 1-2

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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*.

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[sound roll 1]

[wild audio]

INTERVIEWER: IF I, IF I, IF I ASK YOU STRAIGHT ON, GOVERNOR, HOW DO YOU REALLY FEEL ABOUT RACE, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL ME?

Faubus: [pause] I'll tell you what I've always said and always will. From the time that I was a young man very idealistic. None of us chooses our race or the circumstances of our birth and every individual—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: GOVERNOR FAUBUS INTERVIEW SOUND ROLL ONE. THAT'S GOOD.

Faubus: And that has to be earned by the individual. But everyone—

INTERVIEWER: I KNOW YOU ARE, I KNOW YOU ARE, BUT LOOK AT ME. TRY TO READ IT, JUST LIKE, YOU KNOW, YOU'RE SAYING SOMETHING, OK? WHEN I WAS WITH THE—WHEN I WAS THE—

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[cut]

INTERVIEWER: —A GOVERNOR OF, OF ARKANSAS IN THOSE TIMES HERE'S THE WAY IT WAS. OK? JUST DO IT. OK? TRY.

[slate]

INTERVIEWER: GO AHEAD.

Faubus: Shall I call you by name?

INTERVIEWER: NO. DON'T—FORGET ABOUT ME. JUST KIND OF LOOK AT ME, BUT FORGET ABOUT ME LIKE THIS. OK? GO AHEAD.

Faubus: Well, I don't think anyone can fully understand the complexities of the situation that existed in Arkansas and many places in the nation at the time of the episode we're discussing. But I can say that at the beginning of the Little Rock crisis in Arkansas in 1957, I was on excellent terms with all citizens of the state. And my relations with black citizens were especially good for a number of reasons. For example, I had placed leading black citizens on the Democratic State Central Committee. The policy making body of the Democratic Party in Arkansas for the first time in the modern history of the state. I had served as Governor while all the institutions of higher learning were being integrated. And more public schools than in eleven other states combined with a comparable problem at that time.

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INTERVIEWER: GOVERNOR, COULD I ASK YOU THIS. WHY, THEN, DID YOU GET IN AMERICA, YOU KNOW, THE, THE, THE FEELING THAT YOU WERE THE, THE SYMBOL OF, OF ALL THE, THE THINGS THAT WERE WRONG WITH SEGREGATION IN AMERICA. WHY?

Faubus: Well, that developed as the situation went on and perhaps this will give you some explanation. But, but to continue on back to a theme, my staff meetings were integrated and this was, you know, somewhat unprecedented in Arkansas at that time. And then we were in the process of equalizing salaries of blacks and whites in state government which hadn't been done and in the public schools throughout the state. And I was known as the most understanding man in the history of the state in relation to programs—

INTERVIEWER: GOVERNOR.

Faubus: —that benefited the poor people.

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INTERVIEWER: RIGHT. YOU WERE KNOWN THAT WAY UNTIL THE INTEGRATION OF LITTLE ROCK HIGH SCHOOL BEGAN AND, THEN, OF COURSE, YOU TOOK ON ANOTHER ROLE. NOW THE PEOPLE, THE BLACK PEOPLE, WHO HAD ELECTED YOU FELT THAT THEY HAD BEEN BETRAYED BECAUSE THEY FELT THAT YOU WERE JUST, YOU KNOW, YOU OPERATED AGAINST THEM.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

Faubus: Well, I thinking you're, you're making a statement that perhaps is extreme because many, many of the black people didn't feel that way. And they understood when I explained to them that my objective in the Little Rock crisis was to prevent violence and death in the disorders that became imminent. Now it would take too long to go into the reasons for all of this and the proof that I had, but I can give you one example.

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[wild audio]

Faubus: There would have been small, well-organized groups there that morning that school opened, armed to the teeth with repeating rifles and other firearms—

INTERVIEWER: HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS?

Faubus: —determined to halt by extreme means, if necessary, the entry of the black students into the school. Now, one group, and I have personal knowledge of this and I can even name some of the individuals, unloaded their weapons at a town a short distance east of Little Rock when they learned that the National Guard had been placed on duty. Now if the guard had not been placed these determined, armed men would have been there and the well-directed volley from such a well-armed group long skilled in the use of firearms, could have left many dead and wounded people. Now, I was not nearly as concerned, which was all in the press, about the protestations of the Mothers League or the speeches of the segregationist leaders as with the intentions of these small well-armed groups who didn't proclaim their intentions publicly and kept them well concealed.

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[cut]

Faubus: And, and I might add that these were the main concern of Superintendent Virgil Blossom, you know—

INTERVIEWER: RIGHT.

Faubus: —who was known as the author of the Blossom plan and, and the author of the integration program.

INTERVIEWER: BUT THE POINT IS, DID YOU REALLY WANT INTEGRATION THEN OR NOT?

Faubus: It didn't particularly matter to me. I permitted it.

INTERVIEWER: DID, DID YOU CARE? DID YOU WANT TO SEE THE SCHOOLS INTEGRATED?

Faubus: I didn't want to see them integrated or I didn't want to see them kept segregated.

INTERVIEWER: WHY NOT, WHY DIDN'T YOU WANT TO SEE THEM INTEGRATED?

Faubus: That's not in the province of the duties of the Governor of the state. Each school district is an entity all its own, governed by a Board of Directors, selected by the people and if we're to have any democracy in this country, then the people must have some say in their own affairs.

INTERVIEWER: FINE, BUT GOVERNOR, LOOK—

Faubus: And the argument it was not that there would be segregation or integration, but how is it to be brought about? How were the means? How to settle down these extremists and how to gain acceptance.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT EXTREMISTS? WHAT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY EXTREMISTS?

Faubus: Well there was some extremists on both sides. There were those who were determined that it would go, no matter what, even if it destroyed the public school system even if it resulted in death and—but on the other hand, were the extremists who were determined that it would never happen. You know, that throughout the South at that time, throughout the South, state after state passed the resolutions of interposition—

INTERVIEWER: RIGHT.

Faubus: Passed, here in Texas, passed measures providing for the abolition of the schools—

INTERVIEWER: INTERPOSITION, YES.

Faubus: If, if integration was ordered.

00:06:48:00

INTERVIEWER: BUT, GOVERNOR, COULD I ASK YOU THIS? WHAT IN YOUR HEART DID YOU THINK ABOUT INTEGRATION?

Faubus: I hope that it would proceed peacefully, because I didn't see anyway to turn back from the Supreme Court decision—

INTERVIEWER: DID YOU WANT TO SEE—

Faubus: And in the face of the fact that all the other, the majority of the states in the Union had already done this on a local basis, on a state-wide basis.

INTERVIEWER: DID YOU WANT TO SEE, IN LITTLE ROCK, BLACK PEOPLE AND WHITE PEOPLE GOING TO TOGETHER IN SCHOOLS?

Faubus: Well they were going together in my, in my—

INTERVIEWER: DID YOU WANT TO WANT—

Faubus: Administration and my—

INTERVIEWER: DID YOU WANT—

Faubus: —my son, my son was attending an integrated college at the time.

INTERVIEWER: DID YOU WANT TO SEE IT?

Faubus: I didn't particularly want to see it. I didn't particularly not want to see it. There are certain things that where the people have some say and, and it's not for one man, who's set up at the top, to say you shall do this or you shall do that. If you do then we gotta Ayatollah Khomeini—

INTERVIEWER: I SEE, I SEE.

Faubus: Or you got a dictatorship.

00:07:42:00

INTERVIEWER: IN OTHER WORDS YOU FELT THAT BECAUSE YOU WERE THE GOVERNOR OF THE WHOLE STATE THAT YOU WERE RESPONSIVE TO THE WHOLE STATE?

Faubus: Right. [pause] And, of course, you know what the public sentiment in the whole state was at that time, as it was in many other regions.

INTERVIEWER: BUT DO YOU THINK, DO YOU THINK, AS A WHITE MAN, THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE WANTED TO HAVE INTEGRATION? DON'T YOU THINK, DO YOU THINK THAT, THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE HELPED INTEGRATION?

Faubus: Well a lot of the press used to come around to me and say why don't you go out and tell the people this is all right and tell them to do it? Well, they would have just thrown me

out.

INTERVIEWER: YEAH. IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT DID, WHAT DID YOU FEEL IN YOUR HEART, THOUGH?

Faubus: Well, I don't think that's any of your business or anyone else.

INTERVIEWER: [laughs]

Faubus: If I don't want to say so. This is, this is not a—

INTERVIEWER: WOULD YOU SAY SO?

Faubus: No. This is not a personal thing. This is dealing with a situation and with facts and with an historical event.

INTERVIEWER: YEAH, BUT—

Faubus: And I don't care about getting into the other.

INTERVIEWER: BUT JUST MAN TO MAN, GOVERNOR, I'M JUST CURIOUS ABOUT WHAT YOU REALLY FELT AT THAT TIME IN YOUR HEART.

Faubus: Well, you just have to remain curious.

INTERVIEWER: WON'T YOU TELL ME?

Faubus: No.

INTERVIEWER: AW COME ON. COME ON NOW. YOU ARE THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF—

Faubus: I hope that whatever would be done would be accomplished peacefully—

INTERVIEWER: NO—

Faubus: —without any deaths and without any injuries.

00:09:03:00

INTERVIEWER: WELL, WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE SEEN BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN GO TO, GO TO SCHOOL TOGETHER OR NOT?

Faubus: I've already said that I would not answer that question at the time. I was a Governor of the whole state and responsive to the—all the people of the state and my duty was to enforce the laws and see that peace and good order prevailed. That was my responsibility.

INTERVIEWER: OK. BUT, YOU KNOW, I'M GONNA ASK YOU RIGHT NOW, MAN TO MAN, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHITE AND BLACK CHILDREN GOING TOGETHER TO SCHOOL? DO YOU THINK IT'S GOOD? SHOULD THEY HAVE GONE TO SCHOOL TOGETHER?

Faubus: I'm not objecting to it. It's accomplished now. It's happening throughout the nation.

INTERVIEWER: WHY, WHY—

Faubus: There are still difficulties...

INTERVIEWER: WHY WON'T YOU SAY YES?

Faubus: What if I should say no?

INTERVIEWER: OK. IF YOU SAY NO, WHY SHOULDN'T BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL TOGETHER?

Faubus: Well I, I won't say no, of course.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT IT? BE A MAN, JUST TELL ME, YOU KNOW, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN GOING—IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH, WITH THEM GOING TO SCHOOL TOGETHER?

Faubus: I hope not. I think only time and events of the nation will prove. If the nation survives, if everything improves, if quality of education improves, if human relations improve, that'll prove it's good. If they deteriorate and it goes the other way then there are those who will say that that proves it bad.

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INTERVIEWER: SO YOU STILL THINK—

Faubus: It's not, it's not a question—

INTERVIEWER: SO YOU STILL THINK REALLY THAT MAYBE—

Faubus: Now you're, you're, you're trying to impose your personal opinion on someone else. Now, other people have a right to their personal opinions—

INTERVIEWER: I'M SORRY.

Faubus: —just as well as you do.

INTERVIEWER: GOVERNOR, IF I'VE DONE THAT, I'M SORRY, AND I DON'T MEAN TO DO THAT—

Faubus: Well that's what you're doing.

INTERVIEWER: AND I'M SORRY IF I'VE DONE THAT. BUT—

Faubus: Well, that's very evident.

INTERVIEWER: WELL, ACCUSE ME FOR IT.

Faubus: [laughs]

INTERVIEWER: BUT DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT, THAT FOR SOME REASON THAT BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN SHOULDN'T GO TO SCHOOL TOGETHER?

Faubus: No, I haven't said that. I never have said that.

INTERVIEWER: WELL WHAT, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

Faubus: I hope it proves to be all right

INTERVIEWER: WELL, DO YOU THINK IT'S GONNA PROVE ALL RIGHT OR WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Faubus: Only time will tell.

00:10:58:00

INTERVIEWER: WHY DO YOU THINK, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MAYBE TIME WILL TELL THAT BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN SHOULDN'T GO TO SCHOOL TOGETHER?

Faubus: Depends on how—

INTERVIEWER: IS THERE SOME REASON—

Faubus: Well I, I just got through stating that if, if it improves human relations, if it improves the quality of education, if it makes for a more harmonious society, then everything will be well and good. But what you're forgetting is that these problems have existed since the dawn of mankind.

INTERVIEWER: I SEE. OK, OK.

Faubus: And no one individual, myself, I couldn't solve it by expressing a personal opinion. It would have no effect on it.

INTERVIEWER: I SEE.

Faubus: It's something bigger than you and bigger than me and it's to be determined by the human race itself.

INTERVIEWER: OK, OK—

Faubus: I hope it all turns, I hope it all turns out just fine.

INTERVIEWER: SO GOING BACK ALL THE WAY TO 1954 OR WHEN THE HECK IT WAS. YOU DON'T REALLY THINK THAT WHATEVER YOU DID MADE ANY DIFFERENCE, RIGHT?

Faubus: No.

00:11:54:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

INTERVIEWER: IN OTHER WORDS THAT THAT THE, THE SWEEP OF HISTORY WOULD HAVE JUST CARRIED US ON.

Faubus: Right.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: CUT. [pause] ROLL.

INTERVIEWER: YOU KNOW, I LIKE TALKING TO YOU. WOULD YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE?

Faubus: Let me get through it.

INTERVIEWER: YOU'RE A GOOD MAN. I, I LIKE TO TALK TO YOU.

Faubus: Well, thank you [laughs].

INTERVIEWER: YOU'RE, YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE.

00:12:56:00

[cut]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OH NO. SECOND SLATE.

[slate]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: WE'RE ROLLING.

INTERVIEWER: OK, GOVERNOR, WOULD YOU READ AND TRY TO, YOU KNOW—

Faubus: Now—

INTERVIEWER: —TRY TO ADDRESS IT TO THAT CAMERA NOT TO ME, OK.

Faubus: Now my second objective in the action which I took at Little Rock was to induce the federal authorities to enforce or help enforce or help prevent disorder which came from their own Court order instead of casually retiring from the scene and leaving the problems to the local and state officials. After all, it was their Court order, it was not a state Court order or not a state law, at that time it was in violation of the state constitution. Well, I succeeded in both objectives. I'm glad to be able to say that in the volatile situation that existed not a plate glass window was broken, no building was looted or burned and not a single life was lost. And that can't be said in hundreds of other American cities all across the nation. I was able to keep order and protect everyone. Although some of the means used were considered drastic and misinterpreted by the press and the critics. Now, after I was barred from the situation by a Federal Court order the federal authorities moved in to maintain order and affect integration at Central High School. That's all a matter of history. But with this action they were greatly displeased. And that's the main reason for their displeasure with me and their attempts to paint me as an extremist. This is the basis for a number of misinterpretations. For example, I never said I was a segregationist. I haven't said yet that I ever was.

INTERVIEWER: ARE YOU?

Faubus: Or am now or ever will be. My opponents in '56, '58 and '60 in the campaigns proclaimed themselves unyielding segregationists and challenged me to state my position. I refused. I said I was Governor of all the people to try to serve all of them of whatever viewpoint. I was accused of saying "never" to integration. This is untrue. At the very time all this was happening, my own son entered an integrated college in Arkansas—

INTERVIEWER: BUT DIDN'T YOU—

Faubus: —colleges which had been integrated in my administration for which I had been condemned.

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INTERVIEWER: GOVERNOR, CAN I, CAN I, CAN I BREAK IN? JUST ONE THING. BUT GOVERNOR, DIDN'T YOU AT THAT TIME INTERPOSE YOURSELF TO TRY TO STOP THE INTEGRATION OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN, IN LITTLE ROCK? ISN'T THAT TRUE?

Faubus: No, I said all the time—

INTERVIEWER: ALL ALONG?

Faubus: I said all the time it would be integrated, but there must be some time for tempers to cool and for intentions to die down and for people to realize that if this was going to be, it was going to be and that their extreme opposition efforts were futile. That was what I plead with to the President of the United States. He agreed with me. I sold my point to him. He even asked Attorney General Brownell to go to Little Rock and ask for it to be postponed—

INTERVIEWER: OK.

Faubus: —for a time to give things a chance to cool off, but Brownell refused to do it. In fact he lied to the President in my presence about it.

00:15:53:00

INTERVIEWER: GOVERNOR, WHY DO YOU THINK THEN THAT MOST AMERICANS HAVE THIS CONCEPTION OF YOU AS BEING A-AGAINST INTEGRATION? WHY DO THEY THINK THAT YOU HELPED TO BLOCK INTEGRATION IN LITTLE ROCK?

Faubus: Well, at that time, there were no wars abroad, there was no depression or recession, there was nothing in the national or international news to take the spotlight, it just happened to be a good time to take some episode and promote it and blow it out of all proportions. I got to be—

INTERVIEWER: YOU THINK THIS WAS A MEDIA EXTRAVAGANZA?

Faubus: Yes, it was, because—

INTERVIEWER: BUT WHAT ABOUT—

Faubus: They proclaimed that there was violence and disorder when not a single scratch was put on anybody and there was no difficulty whatsoever.

INTERVIEWER: OK, NOW, GOVERNOR—

Faubus: This is, this is born out in the writings of—

INTERVIEWER: —NOW GOVERNOR, EXCUSE ME GOVERNOR, WE'RE GONNA SEE SOME FILM HERE ON THIS SHOW, RIGHT, OF THIS LITTLE GIRL, A BLACK GIRL, WHO COMES UP AND SHE TRIES TO GET INTO THE SCHOOL AND SHE IS PUT OUT AND, AND SHE'S THREATENED AND WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

Faubus: Let me ask you and all those who listen a question.

00:16:53:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Faubus: Would have rather seen her admitted that day and then killed or turned away as she was until the situation could cool off and all of this could be affected peaceably?

INTERVIEWER: THAT'S OK.

Faubus: That's the question to consider. That's the question that with which I was confronted—

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[cut]

INTERVIEWER: BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU STEP IN—WHY DIDN'T YOU STEP IN AND SAY THIS LITTLE GIRL IS GONNA GO TO SCHOOL THIS DAY.

Faubus: It was in violation of state law and of the state constitution.

INTERVIEWER: WOULDN'T YOU FEEL THE DEMAND—

Faubus: And the overwhelming public sentiment. I was serving the people of the state and if the legislature had come in session at the time they would have impeached me and thrown me out like that. That was the sentiment throughout the whole region. You have to take into consideration the, the whole complexities of the situation, at the time, you have to deal with the situation—

INTERVIEWER: I KNOW, BUT GOVERNOR, BUT GOVERNOR, LOOK—

Faubus: Now listen, you have to deal with the situation—

INTERVIEWER: WE'RE DEALING WITH, WE'RE DEALING WITH ONE LITTLE GIRL, RIGHT?

Faubus: You have to deal with the situation as it is and not as you would like it to be. Yes, it would have been very fine if everything had been peaceable and they could have gone ahead into the school—

INTERVIEWER: OK.

Faubus: —and there'd have been nothing happened.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

Faubus: As they did in other schools in the state which they hadn't in many other states at the time—

INTERVIEWER: BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT LITTLE GIRL? WHAT DID YOU— WHEN, WHEN YOU THAT NIGHT CAME BACK TO YOUR HOUSE AND YOU SAW THIS THING ON TELEVISION AND YOU SAW THIS LITTLE GIRL BEING JUST, DONE THIS, IN THE BAD WAY. WHAT DID YOU THINK? YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

Faubus: Well, in a lot of other places people were injured and killed. She didn't have a hand laid on her.

INTERVIEWER: WELL WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT IT THOUGH?

Faubus: She was protected. The guard gathered around her and ordered the people away and also the state police and her safety was assured. Now that was my concern.

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[cut]

[missing frames]

[wild audio]

Faubus: My concern was the safety of the people. My concern was not the integration or the segregation of the school at the time. My main concern was peace and order and to protect lives and property. Had you rather I had forsaken that?

INTERVIEWER: I—

Faubus: Had the general public, rather? Had Brownell or the others? Did they want integration to go forward with so many deaths? Or did they want it handled in such a way that it could be eventually affected peaceably, as it was.

INTERVIEWER: I SEE, I SEE.

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[cut]

INTERVIEWER: BUT WHAT ABOUT THAT GIRL? WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN, WHEN YOU CAME BACK TO YOUR HOUSE THAT NIGHT AND, AND, AND TURNED ON YOUR TV SET AND YOU SAW THAT GIRL. AND YOU, YOU MUST HAVE, THAT MUST HAVE HURT YOU, BECAUSE YOU ARE A MAN, RIGHT?

Faubus: Sure, I was—

INTERVIEWER: IT MUST HAVE HURT YOU TO SEE THAT GIRL.

Faubus: I was sorry, I was sorry, I was sorry that the students were subjected to this and thrown in as the pawns in the controversy between adults.

INTERVIEWER: I KNOW. BUT YOU KNOW MEN. WHEN WE COME RIGHT DOWN TO IT, DIDN'T YOU REALLY FEEL HURT THAT THIS GIRL, HAD TO BE—HAD TO GO THROUGH THIS KIND OF THING BECAUSE OF-WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

Faubus: I didn't like it. I didn't think-there was no good about it. In fact, as I've written in my book, there are people who said things that should have kept their mouths shut.

INTERVIEWER: FRIEND. [pause] SEE, YOU ARE THE KIND OF A MAN WHO, WHO JUST DOESN'T LIKE THIS KIND OF THING AND IT'S FAIRLY OBVIOUS.

Faubus: I went through World War II. I was with a combat division whose front line units turned over 400%. I'm not sure I could even count the number of dead people that I saw or the injured. And that has an effect on you. You don't like to see it in, in a situation that should be peaceable where this shouldn't happen.

INTERVIEWER: RIGHT.

Faubus: And I had a volatile, very serious situation to deal with at the time and I dealt with it the best I could.

INTERVIEWER: OK. THAT'S—THANK YOU VERY MUCH. GOVERNOR, I APPRECIATE YOUR TALKING. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. GOOD. OK.

[cut]

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INTERVIEWER: THANK YOU VERY MUCH. YOU KNOW YOU REALLY TALKED—

Faubus: You're trying to get something to sell like Mike Wallace.

INTERVIEWER: NO, NO. BUT YOU REALLY TALKED GOOD AND I APPRECIATE THAT. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU REALLY FELT AT THE TIME. YOU KNOW

WHETHER YOU FELT ONE WAY OR THE OTHER WAY, I DON'T CARE. YOU'RE A MAN.

Faubus: Now, do you want me to tell you personally?

INTERVIEWER: YUP.

Faubus: I wanted it to go peacefully and that hoped that it would never have occurred.

INTERVIEWER: DID YOU—WHAT, WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT BLACK AND WHITE?

Faubus: Well, I was reared in a region somewhat like New England. We had a feeling that black people had never really had as fair a shake as some of the rest of us. Although I was raised in a, a poverty stricken region. There were many blacks who had access to fine high schools, when I didn't have. You know, it's pretty hard. It's like in a war, how are you going to obtain equality of sacrifice between the troops? The rear echelon troops and the front line troops.

INTERVIEWER: YEAH, YEAH. I UNDERSTAND THAT OK, FINE.

Faubus: And all of this it's a complex.

INTERVIEWER: BUT, YOU KNOW, IT'S ALL—

Faubus: It's a human situation. You can't reduce it to simple terms. I don't care how anyone tries.

00:22:02:00

INTERVIEWER: I KNOW YOU CAN'T. I KNOW YOU CAN'T, BUT I KNOW THAT INSIDE THE SOUTH AND INSIDE THE NORTH THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE PREJUDICED, THE PEOPLE WHO RUN THINGS, IF YOU'RE THE GOVERNOR, YOU RUN THINGS, RIGHT? IF, IF GOVERNOR WALLACE RUNS THINGS IN, IN ALABAMA OR IF, IF GOVERNOR WHAT'S HIS NAME—

Faubus: No, that, that's an exaggerated statement. A president or a governor is circumscribed by many laws and regulations, bureaucratic red tape and—

INTERVIEWER: NO.

Faubus: He doesn't have his say many, many times at all.

INTERVIEWER: NO. BUT YOU CAN, YOU CAN MAKE THINGS, YOU CAN MAKE THINGS HAPPEN INSIDE YOUR STATE TO A DEGREE—

Faubus: Well, there—

INTERVIEWER: TO A DEGREE. RIGHT? CAN'T YA [sic]?

Faubus: There, there was a reason in Central High School which made it different from all the others.

00:23:01:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Faubus: Those who promoted the plan had visions of becoming overnight heroes, headliners, for solving a problem that has been difficult a solution throughout the history of mankind.

INTERVIEWER: WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY THAT?

Faubus: And they had some—they had invited the press in, you know, to see this great success story and they were gonna be heroes throughout the country. And when they started proclaiming that it was gonna be the pilot project for all of Arkansas and all of the South than those in opposition became interested.

INTERVIEWER: I UNDERSTAND.

Faubus: And so they started—

INTERVIEWER: BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU MAKE YOUR STAND—

Faubus: And they started, they started building up a focal point of contest. And this I explained to the President and he understood it very well, because he was a military man, you see.

INTERVIEWER: SURE.

Faubus: And he could see how, how this all came to a point around Central High School, whereas it didn't occur at the other schools throughout the state.

INTERVIEWER: RIGHT.

Faubus: Now, if—

INTERVIEWER: I UNDERSTAND.

Faubus: If these people, who promoted the plan, had said to—now, this doesn't concern the rest of you people, this is just the local Little Rock situation. We're trying to handle our

situation the best we can. Then they wouldn't have become interested. You wouldn't have had these caravans coming in from all over the state of which, of which Virgil Blossom well knew and which he told me.

00:24:13:00

INTERVIEWER: YEAH, BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU, BY THE WAY, SEE YOU—I THINK THAT YOU HAD A CHANCE TO BECOME A GREAT MAN IN AMERICA. WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE THAT CHANCE?

Faubus: I had a chance to be thrown out of office.

INTERVIEWER: WELL WHAT.

Faubus: [laughs]

INTERVIEWER: ACCUSE [sic] ME.

Faubus: Well, you are just as wrong about that as you can be.

INTERVIEWER: REALLY?

Faubus: Yes, the sentiment. The sentiment was 85% to 95%—

INTERVIEWER: I KNOW, BUT I'M SAYING. I KNOW. I'M SAYING—THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING. I'M SAYING IS—

Faubus: And you would have—

INTERVIEWER: WOULDN'T IT, WOULDN'T IT—

Faubus: And you would have had, as Governor of the state, the most rabid segregationist that could have been found.

INTERVIEWER: I'M SAYING TO YOU, AS A GOVERNOR—

Faubus: I was a hero. I saved lives.

INTERVIEWER: YOU COULD HAVE BEEN A HERO. A BIG HERO, IF YOU HAD TAKEN A STAND. WHY DIDN'T YOU DO IT?

Faubus: I did.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: THE GALLUP POLL—

Faubus: I did. I did. And, you know what the Gallup Poll showed at the end of the next year?

This nationwide.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: WELL WHAT?

Faubus: I was among the ten most admired men in the world.

INTERVIEWER: [pause] WELL, I DIDN'T ADMIRE YOU TOO MUCH [laughs].

00:25:27:00

Faubus: No, I can tell you're prejudiced.

INTERVIEWER: I'M A PREJUDICED SON OF A BITCH.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK. LET'S WRAP UP.

Faubus: Which every man, every man is entitled to his prejudices and his opinions—

INTERVIEWER: I LIKE YOU.

Faubus: Well, thank you, Paul.

INTERVIEWER: BUT, YOU KNOW, I WISH YOU WERE A LITTLE BIT TOUGHER. I JUST REALLY DO WISH YOU WERE TOUGHER. BACK THEN.

Faubus: Well, I never was really tough in a way.

INTERVIEWER: I KNOW.

Faubus: I was firm, but not tough.

INTERVIEWER: IF YOU THINK OF ALL THE BLACK PEOPLE WHO HAD IT SO HARD—

Faubus: Listen, there are a lot of them—

INTERVIEWER: SO HARD BECAUSE OF THE WAY YOU SAID—

Faubus: There's a lot of them never had it as hard as I did.

INTERVIEWER: NO, BUT YOU, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER—

Faubus: Do you know what my father earned one year to support seven kids and himself and his wife?

INTERVIEWER: OH, I DON'T CARE WHAT YOUR FATHER EARNED. I DON'T

REALLY CARE.

Faubus: That's right. You see, you don't care.

INTERVIEWER: I DON'T REALLY CARE.

Faubus: You've got your mind set. You are prejudiced and you've got your firm opinion and nothing is going to change it.

00:26:21:00

INTERVIEWER: BUT DON'T YOU THINK, DON'T YOU THINK THAT YOU AS A GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS—

Faubus: I do.

INTERVIEWER: IF YOU WERE—IF YOU HAD BEEN A BETTER MAN THAT A LOT OF BLACK PEOPLE COULD NOW BE LIVING A LOT BETTER. DON'T YOU THINK SO?

Faubus: Do you think they'd have made any more progress than they did?

INTERVIEWER: WELL, MAYBE, I THINK THAT MAYBE IT COULD.

Faubus: That's a, that's a maybe, yeah. That's right, no one knows. [pause] We're just very small minute segments in the process of history. What I did will matter very little. They got to make a lot of copy—

INTERVIEWER: BUT YOU HAD THE CHANCE—

Faubus: —a lot of interviews with people like you.

INTERVIEWER: —YOU HAD THE CHANCE. I DIDN'T HAVE THE CHANCE; HE DIDN'T HAVE THE CHANCE; YOU HAD THE CHANCE.

Faubus: I used it—

INTERVIEWER: ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

Faubus: I used it the best I could.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK, KIDS.

Faubus: I didn't, I didn't want anybody to get killed [laughs].

INTERVIEWER: OK. OK. I KINDA LIKE YA EVEN THOUGH I DIDN'T LIKE YA.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: KILL, JULES [sic].

INTERVIEWER: LET ME GET A REFILL. WOULD YOU PLEASE? THANK YOU.

Faubus: Well, you, you kinda [sic] make me think of, of that—the movie "Patton" where he was seated at the table, you know, with the Russian officer and the Russian officer wanted to drink a toast. And Patton said “no, I don't care about drinking a toast with a son of a bitch.” And the interpreter told the officer what he said. And he first looked very displeased and then he kinda laughed and he said to the interpreter and the interpreter went back and talked to Patton, and Patton said, "OK, I agree. A toast. One son of a bitch to another.” [laughs]

INTERVIEWER: ONE SON OF A BITCH TO ANOTHER.

Faubus: So you think I'm a son of a bitch, I think you're a son of a bitch so—

INTERVIEWER: ONE SON OF A BITCH TO ANOTHER.

Faubus: [laughs]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: You've been the most interesting interview I've seen in a long while. [laughs] Can't say it was a laid back interview at all.

Faubus: It'll probably sell—

[cut]

[end of interview]

00:28:18:00

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