Interview with **Tom Hayden**
December 2, 1985
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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.*

00:00:03:00

[camera roll 379]

[sound roll 1334]

[slate]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: READY? MARKER.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: OK. WHO WAS TOM HAYDEN IN '61? THE STUDENT AT MICHIGAN. TELL ME ABOUT HIM, TELL ME THE THINGS HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT.

Hayden: Well I was one of the students in the last great age of apathy on the campuses in the late 1950s and I was an idealist with nowhere to go, with no outlet that I knew of. I therefore was a student editor. I was—I wanted to be a journalist. I wanted to cover issues and world affairs. And several things happened that, I guess, made me put down my pencil and, and become an activist. One was the—simply the, the arrival of John F. Kennedy and his presidency. I became involved in the first group to advocate the Peace Corps in Ann Arbor and candidate John Kennedy listened. He legitimized the idea that youth had a role to play in history which is very important. But, I think, far more fundamental in shaping my attitudes was the emergence of students, primarily, of course, black students in the South who were marching, getting beaten, getting arrested for what they believed. And I believed in civil rights but it was not the issue that attracted me, it was the commitment, it was the sense of

taking their lives in their hands that made me wonder what I was doing being neutral and, and made me look more deeply into what I ought to be doing. And, and become an activist.

00:01:43:00

INTERVIEWER: OK, TALKING ABOUT THE, THE SOUTHERN STUDENTS AND THAT, THAT MOVEMENT, CAN YOU BEGIN TO TALK ABOUT HOW, BEING MORE SPECIFIC IN TERMS OF WHAT KINDS OF CHANGES BEGAN TO START TAKING PLACE IN TERMS OF NORTHERN STUDENTS, WHAT KIND—WHAT DID IT REPRESENT TO THEM, THAT MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTH?

Hayden: Well, the movement in the South represented the first great student action in decades and the first assault on the pillars of segregation in, in a hundred years by, by mass action. And it was very stirring and, and it mobilized a lot of conscience in the North. Most of the students in the North were restless under their apathy and they wanted to do something and here was an opportunity. Some started helping in the boycott by picketing Woolworth's or Kresge's in the North and that had an effect. Some became more involved in their own backyards in tutorial for kids in the, in the slums in northern cities. Some became involved in fundraising, send the money to SNCC or to SCLC in the South. And gradually some started to make the commitment to go south. I was one of those. I wanted to be there in the front lines.

00:03:03:00

INTERVIEWER: WAS THERE AT, THROUGH THAT EXAMPLE, SAY, THE STUDENTS IN THE SOUTH, WAS THERE SOMETHING THAT THAT KIND OF SAID TO STUDENTS IN THE NORTH YEAH THIS IS SOMETHING THAT IS A PART OF ME TOO. THERE WAS—WAS THERE SOME SORT OF AFFINITY, SOMETHING THAT CONNECTED THERE? TALK ABOUT THAT.

Hayden: There was a closeness between the students all over the country though obviously the leadership was being taken by black students in the South. I, I think it was not simply a race issue, it was a generational issue, that it was our time to do something that past solutions had failed that the old institutional remedies, like going to the courts, were exhausted and that it was time to go into the streets. And that no one would do it unless young people did it. And that had a very strong appeal across racial lines to students all over the country I think.

00:03:54:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. TALKING ABOUT JOHN KENNEDY AT THIS TIME AND, AND YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE PEACE CORPS AND, AND HOW YOU REPRESENTED A SENSE OF OPTIMISM. CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT THAT IN TERMS OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL AND WHAT HE REPRESENTED TO, SAY, THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AT THAT TIME?

Hayden: Well, I, I think at the time John Kennedy was, was thought of as a generational

symbol because he too spoke of the need for a changing of the guard. And, in terms of the image, there was a great difference between a young, aggressive, activist, presidential candidate as against President Eisenhower who had seemed to be older to be representative of the silence and the apathy in the country. At least that was the image. And so Kennedy, by his very presence in the race in the election campaign, tended to mobilize and excite young people. And he did some very specific things. He met with students from Ann Arbor and endorsed the proposal for a Peace Corps, which these days might, might not seem like much, but then it was, it was saying that students could play a mature, serious role in the world, and that was extremely important. And he did so despite the fact that we didn't have the eighteen-year-old vote. Secondly, when Dr. King was in jail he placed a phone call to Mrs. King. That too seems minor in the historical landscape, but it made all the difference in terms of the, the black vote and the liberal vote in the country from north to south, and was seen at the time as a, as a, as a major sign of commitment, and probably won John Kennedy the election. I don't know what—

INTERVIEWER: OK.

Hayden: —what else we wanna—let me say one other thing about it. The—

INTERVIEWER: LET'S GO ON.

[cut]

00:05:51:00

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARKER.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: TAKE TWO. IT'S ALL YOURS.

INTERVIEWER: OK.

Hayden: I don't want to say that President Kennedy took the lead. That's not the way it seemed at the time and that wouldn't be accurate. Many of us in the civil rights movement felt that we had to push the administration that their response in the South to brutality and beatings was token or was too slow, that at times they wanted to recommend that the movement stop. I remember when the Assistant Attorney General of the United States told me that he thought that I should leave Mississippi and persuade others to leave Mississippi. I know that as Attorney General, Robert Kennedy hoped that the Freedom Rides wouldn't happen. That's, that's the perspective, but if you look back through time and not just how it appeared in the perspective of 1960 to '63, if you look back through time given how conservative this country was and how unimportant the black vote or the youth vote had been to past administrations, the Kennedy's really were advancing a cause and legitimizing a

cause far more fundamentally than we who were on the front lines thought at the time.

00:07:26:00

INTERVIEWER: NOW YOU—AT, AT THAT TIME, YOU, YOU FELT THAT THIS COULD ALL BE CHANGED WITHIN THE SYSTEM. WAS THAT—TALK ABOUT THE STUDENTS AT THAT TIME AND THAT FEELING THAT THIS, THIS WAS A SYSTEM THAT COULD CHANGE, THAT COULD BEND, THAT COULD DO THE KINDS OF THINGS THAT YOU WANTED, THAT YOU FELT HAD TO BE DONE IN THE COUNTRY, AND HOW THAT BEGAN TO CHANGE SOMEWHAT IF IT CHANGED AT ALL.

Hayden: Well, to what extent it could be changed through the system was a, I think, a course of ongoing debate within the movement and between generations of civil rights activists, between those who favored nonviolent civil disobedience, those who favored voter registration, those who favored alliances with the national Democratic Party. It was never finally settled. I think you'd have to be a genius to tell what was the most important method used, because in the end, it seemed to take something of everything. But I think at the time there was a greater wellspring of hope and belief that if you acted, this system, with its commitment to democracy, would respond. Then there was, say, five years later, when many of us felt that the system had failed the test and we turned to more radical paths or we felt more disillusioned or we felt that hope had been killed with the, the death of King and the Kennedys. There was a certain springtime of idealism and great hope in the early 1960s.

INTERVIEWER: OK, LET'S CUT FOR A SECOND.

[cut]

00:09:06:00

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: ARE YOU READY?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: YEAH.

INTERVIEWER: OK, TALK ABOUT FIRST GOING SOUTH AND HOW YOU GOT THERE.

Hayden: The first time that I went south into the heart of segregation was in response to a call by sharecroppers who had been denied the right to vote and had, had set up a tent city. They were living in tents, Fayetteville, Tennessee, I believe it was, it was in the winter of '60-'61 and a group of students in Ann Arbor, responding to their call, put together a lot of food and supplies, clothing, and we took several vehicles and, and went down. I went as the editor of the *Michigan Daily*, the Ann Arbor student newspaper. And we spent several days there. And the, the first thing I remember was the idealism and the commitment of the sharecroppers, the

people who were putting everything on the line, and secondly, the blind insensitivity of the, of the city's fathers, if that's what you wanted to call them. I remember the first time we were confronted by the sheriff, who wanted us off the, off the land, it was at night, and this had never happened to me before. I took a look at him and his equipment and my legs caved in. It, it, it, it—the fear had never hit me like that, and I just couldn't imagine what it would be like to spend fifty years or seventy-five years under that kind of fear of the law. Later that night we went down—we were downtown trying to find the telephone—

00:10:52:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Hayden: —to file a story over the phones with the Michigan newspaper. And a crowd with bats and clubs found us and descended on us and, and we, we got in our cars and left that town, I don't mind saying at about twice the speed limit with this little mob chasing us. So that was my introduction to the South.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: WE, WE LOST THE LAST—

INTERVIEWER: THAT'S OK.

00:11:22:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 380]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARKER.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK.

INTERVIEWER: OK LET'S FINISH THAT STORY, COMING DOWNTOWN.

Hayden: So immediately afterwards, I went downtown looking for a telephone to file a story back to Ann Arbor, over the phone, you know, to meet the deadline and, and while I was trying to do that with my—a couple of friends, we got surrounded by a group of really mean looking people with bats and clubs and cars and it looked like I wouldn't be able to file that story, you know, right on the spot. So we decided to jump in our cars and I believe we left that town at about double or triple the speed limit and filed the story a little later about a hundred miles down the road.

00:12:15:00

INTERVIEWER: YOU WERE HOW—WHAT, NINETEEN AT THE TIME?

Hayden: I was probably twenty.

INTERVIEWER: TWENTY YEARS OLD. WHAT—WHY, WHY DID YOU GO DOWN THERE? WHAT MADE, WHAT MADE TOM HAYDEN FEEL LIKE HE WAS A PART OF THIS THING? WHAT—YOU'RE FROM MICHIGAN, THIS IS FAR FROM HOME, YOUR HOME, YOUR NEEDS, I MEAN, WHAT—WHY, WHY DOWN THERE? WHY DID YOU GO?

Hayden: Well Mi-[pause] why did I go? Michigan was a fairly liberal state, politically. And I had been brought up and gone to the university and edited the newspaper and had liberal ideals. This was the first time that those ideals were put to the test. Would I give token support to this cause where others were taking big risks or would I take risks myself? It became a test of commitment. And in those days it was relatively simple, if you wanted to do something you could send food, you could raise money, you could boycott Woolworth's or you could go south. And if you went south, you could live on virtually nothing, and you could register people to vote, and periodically you could go to demonstrations where you would get beaten up and go to jail and so it, it was before you. If you didn't do it, it was difficult on your conscience. And, and so I, I chose to finally move to Atlanta for, at least a couple of years, and try to be some kind of communications link between what was going on among students in the South, communicate that back to students up north.

00:13:56:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. I WANT TO JUMP AHEAD A LITTLE BIT AND, AND GET INTO MISSISSIPPI AND I'D LIKE YOU—YOU WERE IN MISSISSIPPI AS AN OBSERVER. YOU OBSERVED WHAT WAS GOING ON AND WRITING BACK. DESCRIBE FOR ME WHAT YOU, WHAT YOU SAW IN MISSISSIPPI, WHAT YOU THOUGHT MISSISSIPPI REPRESENTED IN TERMS OF THE MOVEMENT AT THAT TIME, WHAT YOU SAW.

Hayden: Well, the, the places that I, I thought were the most foreboding, and that America knew the least about were the rural areas. Southern Georgia, I spent a lot of time, and southern Mississippi. And these were the heartland of segregation, this was the, this was the black belt, this is where the arm of the United States government didn't seem to reach, and to take responsibility for going into these areas to knock on doors, to set up an office, to call yourself a civil rights worker was tantamount to signing a suicide note. There was just no protection. And I found the people that went into those areas to be exceptionally brave to, to be certainly the moral equivalent of, of, of veterans in any of our wars. And if it was not for them what we called the iceberg of the Deep South would never have been broken open; the country never would have seen anything. I went to Mississippi once in 1961 with another white student, Paul Potter, and we followed Bob Moses into Jackson and rented cars and

followed him down to McComb, a drive of several hours. We had been up all night, and we checked into a motel and Bob went on to their, to their office headquarters and we met later. And I'll tell you how we met to give you an example of how tough it was. We met in the middle of the night by driving into the black community with the lights off, into the gas station parking lot and then lying down on, on the floor of the car waiting for another car to come and pick us up to take us to a meeting which was in a home where there were just a couple of dim lights on and blankets pulled up over all the windows of the house so the house looked dark. This was merely to have a discussion of what we were going to see the following day. There was gonna be a march of sixteen and seventeen year old high school students one mile, asking for some students who had been expelled from school for civil rights work to be returned to school. That was in the United States in Mississippi in 1961. Now when we went down to the, to the demonstration it was clear that the police already knew that these two northern whites were in town up to no good. We even went around to, in our innocence, and introduced ourselves to the newspaper editor, to the chief of police, Mr. Emerick, Mr. Guy, and told them our business. And, and the Chief of Police had photographs of everybody who was a member of SNCC right on his desk, the way a general does wi— with his opponents. And when we went to the demonstration, we were sitting in the car thinking the doors were locked and all of a sudden, bang, the doors were ripped open and a, a mob of people tore us out of the car one at a time and just beat us and kicked us in, in the streets. And it happened that a photographer was there, and he hid the photographs, he was a brave fellow, and he said that they knew where we were staying, what motel, and that we, we were going to be killed that night if we didn't get out of town. We were then taken to the police station and interviewed by a gentleman from something called The Sovereignty Commission who wanted to know why we were harming the image of the state of Mississippi. And he encouraged us, in no uncertain terms, to leave, which we said we would, and we then went on to Atlanta and Washington. Talking to the FBI, asking them to do something, and we were told in Washington, by the Assistant Attorney General, a good man, Burke Marshall, that probably nothing could be done and he advised us never to go to Mississippi again and to use our powers if we could to persuade the SNCC workers to leave, because it was just too dangerous to their lives. We didn't take his advice, because if the SNCC workers had left, I was thinking, well what would have happened to all the people who wanted to vote there? Who would have, who would have stood for them?

00:18:48:00

INTERVIEWER: NOW YOU DESCRIBED THE SNCC WORKERS THERE AS ALMOST LIKE WARRIORS, AND, I GUESS, WHAT I'D LIKE TO GET TO IS, IS OTHER STUDENTS, STUDENTS WHO MIGHT NOT HAVE HAD THAT FIRST HAND EXPERIENCE, DO YOU—AND THEIR, THEIR IDEAS AND UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WAS GOING ON IN THE SOUTH. THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THESE PEOPLE THERE WHO WERE FIGHTING IN THESE STATES, WAS IT A ROMANTIC IDEAL? WAS IT—OR DID THEY HAVE A REAL—THEIR DESIRE TO BE A PART OF IT ALL? WHAT, WHERE DID—

Hayden: You mean the northern students?

INTERVIEWER: THE NORTHERN STUDENTS.

Hayden: Well I think in any kind of social revolution like this you get people who have all kinds of motivations. Not all of them pure, and certainly none of them simple. I think there was some romanticism on the part of white students who wanted to come down. I think there was probably some guilt at work, but I'm not a psychologist I don't look at motives, I try to look at behavior and what are the consequences. And for all the, the problems that the students might have borne with them after all they were trying to deal with responsibilities that the adult generation had failed to deal with for a hundred years. I think that the results were, historically, very, very significant. That is in a short period of time, we didn't solve all the problems of America but we did away with the system of legalized segregation that had prevented millions of people from being able to think of themselves as human beings, citizens with the right to vote. And, I think, that was one of the great achievements of the 20th century, and it was these students, with all of our frailties, with all of our inexperience, that were in the forefront of, of making that happen, and that's something that I think that generation can rightly be proud of for all time.

INTERVIEWER: OK, CAN WE CUT FOR A SECOND, PLEASE?

00:20:44:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

INTERVIER: AND LET'S FIRST—

00:20:46:00

[cut]

INTERVIEWER: TALK ABOUT—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARKER.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: —THE IDEA OF THE FACT THAT THEY SHOULD BE PROTECTED HOW? WHAT—WHO, WHO'S RESPONSIBLE—WHERE'S THE RESPONSIBILITY? OK.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK.

INTERVIEWER: YOU READY?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: YEAH.

INTERVIEWER: OK TALK TO ME—WHAT YOUR EXPECTATIONS, SAY, OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN TO PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS WORKERS.

Hayden: My expectation of what my Federal Government should have been doing was the protection of civil rights workers and the enactment of legislation to protect the right to vote, both of them. And, and I think that we were, many of us were shocked by the slowness if, if—for lack of another word, with which the Federal Government moved. Although there were competent federal officials in many areas, it was also true that the FBI, under J. Edgar Hoover, had no great sympathy with this cause. Many of their agents were on cozy terms with Southern state officials. Many of them were absent at the scene of the action or if they were there they filed completely innocuous reports or sometimes blaming the victims for the, for the violence. So we came to feel—

00:22:00:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Hayden: —that the arm of the Federal Government simply didn't reach to the South, that some political arrangement superseded the Constitution, that political arrangement respected the power of the Southern segregationists in, in Washington.

INTERVIEWER: OK, LET'S CUT.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SUPERSEDED.

INTERVIEWER: OK. I GUESS WHAT I'D, I'D LIKE TO ALSO TAKING YOURSELF BACK—

00:22:25:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 381]

INTERVIEWER: THEN—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: THIS WILL BE CAMERA ROLL THREE-EIGHT-ONE, TAKE SIX.

INTERVIEWER: SO.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SO?

Hayden: Where are we?

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: WE'RE TALKING ABOUT—

Hayden: Back to the FBI, all right.

INTERVIEWER: —GOVERNMENT PROTECTION. AND I WANT YOU TO BE ABLE TELL ME THEN WHEN YOU BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT THESE THINGS WERE NOT, THEY WERE NOT THERE TO, GOING TO BE ABLE TO PROTECT YOU—

Hayden: Friends, these are not your friends, right.

INTERVIEWER: OK. YOU READY?

Hayden: Well there was a suspicion that the FBI were not our friends in the South certainly that came from the top. The views of J. Edgar Hoover were that Dr. Martin Luther King was a Communist and a dangerous agitator who ought not to be honored or respected and that must have filtered down. In addition, the FBI had friendly relationships with a lot of the local law enforcement in the South that we were directly confronting. It came home most dramatically to me after being beaten up in Southern Mississippi talking to the FBI agents who came to interview me in Atlanta, myself and Paul. It appeared that they must have thought we were from outer space. We certainly thought that, that, that they were because it appeared that, that they thought that we were the cause of this problem and they were looking for an explanation for our behavior. When what I thought was since they were Federal law enforcement officers, they ought to arrest the people who broke the law by violating our rights and beating us up. There was no communication that the perspectives were that far apart.

00:24:11:00

INTERVIEWER: WHEN—WHAT, WHAT DID THIS, WHAT DID THIS TELL YOU, WHAT DID THIS MAKE YOU FEEL MATTER MOST?

Hayden: Well I think the lesson the—that was learned very rapidly was that the FBI in the South could not be counted upon to enforce the Constitution, that they had other priorities. And that secondly, they were doing everything they could to distort the true aims of the movement and cast negative aspersions on Dr. King and, and others. How far this reached into the Justice Department or the Kennedy administration, we didn't know, but it certainly tarnished our original belief that the Federal Government, particularly with its law enforcement arm, would be there to stop the violence and ensure the right to vote. We were very much on our own, now that was the conclusion that we drew.

00:25:10:00

INTERVIEWER: OK, JUMPING A LITTLE, A LITTLE BIT FURTHER AHEAD. TALK TO ME ABOUT THE SUMMER PROJECT, ABOUT STUDENTS COMING INTO MISSISSIPPI FROM THE NORTH, WHAT YOU FELT THAT WAS GOING TO DO FOR THE MOVEMENT AND FOR THE—SPECIFICALLY MISSISSIPPI AT THAT TIME.

Hayden: Well I was not in the Summer Project, I was, I was doing similar work in the, our ghettos of northern New Jersey, at the time. But I knew the people well who organized the Summer Project and we thought of ourselves as, as doing similar things. The goal of the Summer Project, had it been achieved, might have made a major difference for the rest of the 1960s. The goal was through legal means, within the system, to displace a party, a branch of the Democratic Party, the Mississippi branch of the Democratic Party, which was clearly in violation of the Democratic Party's own civil rights stand, was clearly in violation of Federal law, clearly in violation of the U.S. Constitution, and replace that party with an integrated black and white new party in the state of Mississippi. And had that happened, I really think that it would have been to the, to the benefit of all and would not have been a political liability for the National Democratic Party. It would have been an asset. But instead, the keepers of the national party, the guardians of the gates, decided, I think for tactical reasons, that they could not offend, could not alienate the South. And by the South that was a code word for the segregationists. And so they embittered a whole generation of civil rights workers and of southern blacks by—without reason, refusing to seat the Freedom Democratic delegation. I remember being there then and driving away that night and it was just like a dagger had been driven into the heart of, of SNCC. Excuse me I'm losing my voice.

[cut]

00:27:24:00

Hayden: You gotta ask that question—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARKER.

[sync tone]

Hayden: —cause I don't know where to start on that. Where are you starting?

INTERVIEWER: WELL I'D, I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THAT DILEMMA OF, SAY, PROTEST AND POLITICS—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SEVEN.

INTERVIEWER: —AND HOW THAT BEGAN TO, TO BE A PROB—YOU KNOW, A PART OF THE PROBLEM OF RECONCILING—GETTING ANY SORT OF SOLUTION TO THE CHALLENGE IN '64. OK.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK, IT'S ALL YOURS.

Hayden: Well, the conflict at the Democratic Convention was very much in, in retrospect between pragmatic liberal leadership of the Democratic Party versus a new generation of activists who were basically possessed by a dream and by a vision and didn't want to hear about compromise. It was not over the direction of the Democratic Party from the delegates' point of view because the delegates were for the seating of the Mississippi Freedom Delegation. We had the votes, the people had signed up. What it was, was the pragmatic liberals deciding that it was not in the national interest of the party, the strategic interest of winning elections, to allow this to occur. And that caused a polarization that caused a tremendous bitterness because it meant to the poor blacks from the South, the SNCC organizers, the advocates, that they were just seeing, liberalism basically unmasked and turning itself into pragmatism without purpose. That's how it was seen. And it was, it was actually in retrospect unnecessary. I think Johnson would have defeated Goldwater, in any event, but what happened is that it poisoned progressive and liberal politics and set the stage, I think, for black power and for, for other new developments because the basic lesson that these p—possessed and extremely idealistically driven civil rights workers took from that convention was that you can't trust liberals. They had already had it with segregationists, they knew conservatives, the last hope was the liberals, and the liberals let, let, let them down.

00:29:39:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. I WANT—GETTING BACK TO, TO THE SUMMER PROJECT, I WAS TALKING ABOUT BEFORE, TO THE IDEA OF STUDENTS, WHITE STUDENTS, COMING IN MISSISSIPPI EN MASSE LIKE THAT, WHAT DID YOU THINK IT—HOW DID, HOW DID THAT AFFECT THE COUNTRY? HOW DID IT AFFECT—WHAT, WHAT IMPACT DID YOU THINK IT WAS GOING TO HAVE ON THE MOVEMENT AND—

Hayden: Well I was in Mississippi when there were very few white students or northern whites there at all. And I remember the thinking was if this simply remains a black thing, where the white official violence is visited upon black sharecroppers or black civil rights workers, how will a country that is significantly prejudiced respond? What's gonna make them interested? And the conclusion was that for all the problems in it, it, it would be necessary to bring down the white sons and daughters of the country's middle class from the liberal north by the hundreds, by the thousands, if possible, to experience whether—the true nature of southern segregation. And that out of that clash there'd be a stronger message to the North. The idea being that if you mobilize the North, it was kind of like a political civil war, if you mobilize the North that then pressure would be put on Congress and on the administration, and then they would finally do something about these strongholds of segregation in the South. And the—I think that there was some truth to that strategy.

00:31:14:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. I WANT TO TAKE YOU TO ANOTHER, ANOTHER PLACE HERE AND TALK ABOUT SNCC, WHEN IT WAS ORGANIZED AND ITS MEMBERSHIP AND, AS A STUDENT COMING FROM THE NORTH, WHO DID YOU THINK IT REPRESENTED? WHERE—DID YOU FEEL A PART OF IT? YOU KNOW, TALK TO ME ABOUT THAT, THAT TIME. AND HOW IT BEGAN TO SLOWLY CHANGE, HOW STUDENTS BEGAN TO COME INTO IT FROM THE NORTH.

Hayden: I'm not sure how to—

INTERVIEWER: LET'S CUT FOR A SECOND.

Hayden: Yeah I'm not sure what the—

INTERVIEWER: OK.

[cut]

00:31:42:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK.

INTERVIEWER: OK. BEGIN—JUST TELL ME ABOUT SNCC AS A, AS AN ORGANIZATION AND HOW IT, AND ITS CONNECTION IT WAS MAKING WITH, SAY, NORTHERN STUDENTS ESPECIALLY AT THAT TIME.

Hayden: Well every now and then there's a surge of history in which a group of people have the chance to determine events by taking their lives into their own hands, their destiny into their own hands and SNCC was such an organization. It was not a bureaucracy, not the kind of bureaucracy that exists between crises, but it arose out of a crisis and it was composed of students, high school and college students primarily, some dropouts from all over the South, mostly black, some white, who sensed, the, the—suddenly sensed the opportunity to break down segregation. That their—the previous generations had not felt the strength to do. And, I don't think SNCC ever had a chance of becoming permanent or institutionalized or lasting because it was, it was a spontaneous arising of, of thousands of people who, who wanted to come out of their private life of unhappiness under segregation and do what was necessary to break it and then, and then return hopefully to, to their personal lives. And so it was a very romantic, very appealing magnetic organization because it was a spontaneous—

00:33:28:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Hayden: — formation of conscience that you just wanted to be part of—

INTERVIEWER: OK. FINAL—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: WE'RE OUT. WE'RE OUT. WE JUST RAN OUT.

INTERVIEWER: YOU JUST RAN OUT?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: RIGHT ON CONSCIENCE.

INTERVIEWER: YOU GOT CONSCIENCE? THAT WAS GOOD.

00:33:41:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 382]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: TAKE NINE.

Hayden: —back to private life, kind of.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: —HARD—YEAH HARD TO GO BACK.

Hayden: Yeah. No no, but we're talking hundreds and thousands of people for the most part.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: CUT.

[cut]

00:33:57:00

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: AND WHAT I WANT TO ASK YOU HERE IS, IS BACK IN '60, '61 YOU'RE A, A YOUNG ANALYST, A POLITICAL ANALYST AND A YOUNG STUDENT. DID YOU THINK THEN THAT YOU WERE A PART OF, A PART OF A, SOMETHING THAT WAS GOING TO ALEVIATE THE WAY IT WAS AT THAT

TIME? THAT WAS GOING TO REALLY FORCE THE HAND OF THE GOVERNMENT SOME TIME? AND WHEN DID YOU THINK YOU—THIS, THIS MOVEMENT THAT YOU HAD PROBABLY WISHED FOR AND THINGS WAS REALLY HAPPENING.

Hayden: I was drawn into this movement because among other things I thought that it was historical. That it, it, it, it meant great things. It meant a fundamental shift, it meant the coming of a new generation to political and social responsibility in America. There was no question in my mind and the minds of my associates that we were making history. Did that lead us into crazy thoughts or, or utopian directions sometimes? Sure it did. But it was far better than apathy or cynicism. There was a, an innocence to it that was necessary because it meant that, that we could dream of achieving great things and, and expect to.

INTERVIEWER: OK. THAT'S A CUT.

[cut]

[end of interview]

00:35:29:00