Interview with **Robert Moses**
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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.*

00:00:02:00

[camera roll 405]

[sound roll 1349]

[slate]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SPEED.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SO, ONE MINUTE, I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU FIRST IS IF YOU CAN HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND, BOB MOSES, HELP THE PEOPLE WHO ARE GONNA WATCH THIS SHOW UNDERSTAND, BOB MOSES, WHEN HE FIRST DECIDES TO GO SOUTH AND GET INVOLVED IN THE MOVEMENT. WHAT ARE, WHAT ARE IDEAS IN HIS HEAD? WHAT IS HE THINKING ABOUT AT THAT TIME?

Moses: Well, when the sit in movements broke in February 1960, I was teaching at Horace Mann, mathematics and I was struck by the pictures, basically, that I saw on the cover of *The New York Times* every day. And I decided to go to Hampton, where my Uncle was teaching at, Hampton Institute, to get a firsthand look during my spring break. So I did and while I was there I participated in a demonstration in *Newport News* and heard Wyatt Walker who came down from Petersburg to speak, talk about a rally they were holding for King back in New York City. So when I went back home, I went and joined the office which was promoting that rally. And that's, that was my first real contact with the movement.

00:01:23:00

INTERVIEWER: BUT THEN YOU WENT, YOU, YOU WENT SOUTH AND YOU MET AMZIE MOORE AND AMZIE TALKED TO YOU ABOUT COMING TO MISSISSIPPI. WHAT WAS IT ABOUT POSSIBLY YOU AND, AND JUST THE IDEA OF BRINGING PEOPLE INTO MISSISSIPPI, WHY DO YOU THINK HE NEEDED PEOPLE TO COME IN TO WORK WITH HIM TO BEGIN ORGANIZING?

Moses: Hold it. OK.

INTERVIEWER: LET'S STOP FOR A SECOND.

[cut]

00:01:45:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SO TALK TO ME ABOUT MEETING AMZIE AND THE IDEA TO, TO BRING AN OUTSIDER, LIKE YOURSELF, IN. AND WHAT WERE, WHAT WERE— WHAT COULD AN OUTSIDER LIKE YOU DO AT THAT TIME?

Moses: OK. In the summer of 1960, I went on a trip through Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana for SNCC.

INTERVIEWER 2: I'M SORRY I THINK THE SOUND—

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

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: SPEED.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: OK.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SIRENS I'LL STOP FOR.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: OOPS. AGAIN SECOND BALK.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: OH I'M SORRY. YOU HAVE TO GO A LITTLE CLOSER.

[sync tone]

Moses: OK. In the summer of 1960, I was on a trip for SNCC and going through Mississippi and Ella Baker had written ahead to Amzie Moore and I stopped in to see him in Cleveland Mississippi. And Amzie laid out really what was voter registration project for the Delta of Mississippi and he wanted SNCC to come in and do it. In fact he was the only person in the leadership of the NACP [sic] that I met at that time that was willing to welcome SNCC and so I agreed to come back and help on that project.

00:03:08:00

INTERVIEWER: NOW, HOW, HOW DID YOU THEN—HELP ME TO—DESCRIBE TO ME IN VERY, VERY GOOD DETAIL OF HOW YOU WOULD THEN GET PEOPLE TO COME OUT AND TO, TO GO AND REGISTER TO VOTE?

Moses: Hold it.

INTERVIEWER: HOLD IT. WE GOTTA CUT FOR A SECOND.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SURE.

[cut]

00:03:23:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SO DESCRIBE TO ME, IN SOME DETAIL—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: AGAIN.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: GOOD. THANK YOU.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT THAT ORGANIZING EFFORT IS ALL ABOUT AT THAT TIME.

Moses: The first project, actually, got started in McComb and what we faced initially was state resistance or resistance organized at the state level. For example, the first people that we took down to register in Liberty which is a small town in Amy County, outside of McComb. On our way back it was the highway patrolman who had been at the office all the time that we were there who flagged us down. And began talking to the people who had tried to

register and then when I got out of the car to ask him a question, he arrested me and brought me in to the county jail there in Magnolia in Pike County. And I spent a couple days in jail when I refused to accept the sentence of the judge then. So the very first level, I think, it was organized at the state level, that is the highway patrolman, the officers of the various counties were—what you were facing up against. Now I'm not sure cause you said a minute and a half, or a minute, now—

00:04:57:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

INTERVIEWER: NOW HOW DO YOU GET THEM TO DO THAT? HOW DO YOU GET THEM TO—

00:05:01:00

[cut]

[sync tone]

Moses: The people, by and large, most of the people in Amite County were afraid to go down. We had workshops for several weeks before we could get a handful who would agree to go. Once we got the handful to go, they would go if we went with them. And our opposition was that if the people wanted us to go with them, then we would go with them. If they wanted to go by themselves, then that was fine, they would go by themselves. But I think they felt some sense of security and, clearly, we were acting as some kind of buffer because the initial physical violence was always directed at us—at the voter registration workers who were taking the people down to register. That was the first stage. Now when that didn't work, then, you began to get violence directed at the people who were involved. The first being Herbert Lee, who was murdered by a state representative Hearst, who lived down in that general area of southwest Mississippi in Amite County with Lee and Steptoe and the rest. And then after that kind of—

INTERVIEWER: OKAY NOW TAKE IT TO ANOTHER LEVEL. IT'S SO—HOW ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE AN ORGANIZATION LIKE THE CITIZENS COUNCIL. ANOTHER LEVEL OF REALLY ORGANIZED—

Moses: Well, yeah, the Citizens Councils and the Klans in Mississippi they were in back of the action which resulted in those kind of murders because what we knew was that there were meetings in Liberty. Drawing cars and license plates from all across the southern part of Mississippi and on up into the middle part of Mississippi. People coming and sitting down talking what are they going to do about this voter registration drive. Now we don't know what they planned, but we do know that after the meetings there's violence began to break out. Direct attacks on us, as the voter registration workers, and then these murders. First

Herbert Lee and then a couple years later Louis Allan, both killed right there in Liberty, Mississippi.

00:07:44:00

INTERVIEWER: NOW HOW—WHAT ABOUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT? WEREN'T YOU THEN TRYING TO GET THEM TO DO SOMETHING, TO PROTECT NOT JUST THE ORGANIZERS, BUT ALSO PROTECT THE LOCAL PEOPLE WHO WERE TRYING TO REGISTER?

Moses: Well, we made, in the context of conducting the voter registration drives we were continually sending reports back to the Justice Department and you—as you know the Justice Department then was organized under Kennedy and had a special civil rights division.

INTERVIEWER: LET ME, LET ME—START AGAIN FROM—DON'T SAY AS "I KNOW" BECAUSE I'M NOT HERE WITH YOU, OK?

Moses: All right.

INTERVIEWER: YOU'RE TALKING TO PEOPLE. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BEGINS—

Moses: Well, as we, we were doing our voter-registration work, we were continually sending reports back to the Justice Department which was organized under Kennedy and had a special civil rights division. However, at that time, the position they took about counties in which violence was taking place, that they would not file suit. So they did not file a suit in Amite County. And what they told us was because of the violence. I think what is at issue is whether they were going to get in the position of being asked to provide Federal Marshals. Protection, actual federal presence against violence and, at that time, they weren't willing to do that. And so they didn't want to file a suit in that county and they didn't. They took a—I think an adjacent county and filed suit and began their own investigation and filed suit over there.

00:09:20:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. I WANT TO JUMP BACK ONE MORE TIME. AMZIE MOORE, TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT HIM. WHAT—WHERE, WHERE, WHERE DID HE PLAY—YOU KNOW, GIVE ME A SENSE OF HIS IMPORTANCE.

Moses: Right. When I went to Mississippi in 1960 and traveled through getting people to try to come to an initial SNCC meeting, the only person that I met in the whole state who was willing to actually embrace the students and what they stood for and the organization that they had begun to create was Amzie. And I think he saw in the students what had been lacking, that is, some kind of deep commitment that no matter what the cost, people were going to get this done. They were actually going to get out there and do the job and that's what Amzie wanted to do. I mean he didn't want the Courts, you know he didn't want the

legal procedures that he had been going through for years. He wanted to get the work done.

INTERVIEWER: OK, LET'S CUT PLEASE.

[cut]

00:10:34:00

[slate]

[change to camera roll 406]

Moses: What, what the lesson was that was learned in Greenwood or—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARKER.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: OK. HELP THOSE, THE PEOPLE WATCHING, THEY WILL SEE THAT THE FOOD—THAT THE FOOD EFFORT GOES ON AND PEOPLE COME OUT AND BEGIN TO, TO GO DOWN AND REGISTER TO VOTE, BUT, IN TERMS OF THE MOVEMENT, IN TERMS OF THE EFFORT TO, TO, TO MOVE IN RURAL AREAS, WHAT IS THE SIG—SIGNIFICANCE OF THE POOR COUNTY GREENWOOD AT THAT TIME?

The significance of the movement in Laflore County in Greenwood is that for the first time we were able to penetrate into the heart of the Delta of Mississippi, we were just a few miles away from in—cut.

INTERVIEWER: JUST START AGAIN.

Moses: Yeah. Let's stop.

00:11:31:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

INTERVIEWER: YEAH.

Moses: Yes?

INTERVIEWER: WHEN YOU SAY, WHEN YOU SAY PENETRATING THE DELTA—

INTERVIEWER 2: WHEN YOU SAY STUFF LIKE PENETRATING THE DELTA I'M

JUST THINKING THAT AS A VIEWER I MIGHT NOT KNOW, NOT KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. PENETRATE WHAT? HOW? YOU KNOW. REMEMBER MOST PEOPLE DON'T HAVE A VERY GOOD IDEA OF WHAT YOU'RE EVEN DOING THERE.

Moses: OK.

INTERVIEWER: IT'S TOUGH.

INTERVIEWER 2: YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE OVER GROUND, GROUND ZERO WITH THE AUDIENCE. I MEAN THEY MAY NOT KNOW VERY MUCH.

Moses: But you want it all in a minute and a half?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT YOU WHAT YOU SAID BEFORE THIS—

00:12:11:00

[cut]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SO HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CAMPAIGN. WHAT'S GOING ON?

Moses: Right. I think that when you look at Mississippi, John Silver, who was at U—University of Mississippi characterized Mississippi as the closed society. And here we were trying to drive a kind of wedge into it and begin to open it up. And the people who were actually organizing and deeply behind the closure were right up there in the Delta and the initial meetings of the White Citizens' Councils were held right there in, Indianola, Mississippi right in Sunflower County which was James Eastland's home county. Greenwood was right next door and so we were in their backyard now. And what they had counted on was that we would never be able to actually involve the mass of the people in large numbers. They had counted on what they were calling apathy. That people were really satisfied with their present lot and they really couldn't get out in large numbers and Greenwood just dispelled that. I mean after Greenwood nobody could say that the people are apathetic. They could say they were hungry, but they couldn't say they were apathetic. In exchange for a little bit of food they were willing to risk everything they had, really, to go down and stand at the registrar's office and try to register and vote.

00:14:01:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. SO AT THE, AT THE SAME TIME, DURING THE CAMPAIGN,

MOST OF THE ORGANIZATION ALL—MOST OF THE ORGANIZING PEOPLE IN THE STATE COME TO GREENWOOD TO, TO, TO WORK TOGETHER AND SAYING—THAT'S ALSO THE TIME WHEN THERE'S AN ATTEMPT ON YOUR LIFE AND JIMMY TRAVIS IS SHOT AND PEOPLE COME TOGETHER. NOW A PERSON THAT CAME THERE WAS MEDGAR. CORRECT?

Moses: Right.

INTERVIEWER: HE CAME DOWN. NOW CAN YOU HELP ME, AT THIS TIME, TO UNDERSTAND WHERE MEDGAR, A PERSON WHO'S BEEN IN THE STATE FOR A WHILE WHO WAS AN ORGANISER, WHERE HE—WHAT HE HAD SEEN AND HOW HE WAS BEING AFFECTED BY WHAT'S HAPPENING IN GREENWOOD AT THIS TIME?

Moses: Well, Medgar came to Greenwood after Jimmy Travis was shot on the highway, just gunned down, and addressed a mass meeting there. And I remember how he spoke to the people when he said that. Greenwood did something to him that made him feel that they needed, that he needed to go back to Jackson and to really start working, that is, if people up in Greenwood could get themselves together and move in the way they had then there was no excuse for Jackson, because Jackson, of course, had always been thought of as the leadership around civil rights in the state. So, he went back determined to move Jackson.

00:15:34:00

INTERVIEWER: OK, AND MEDGAR IS, IS KILLED IN JACKSON NOT LONG AFTER THAT. WHAT DID THAT, WHAT DID THAT SAY, SAY TO PEOPLE IN MISSISSIPPI? WHAT DID THAT—HOW DID THEY REACT TO THAT WHEN THAT HAPPENED?

Moses: Hold it.

INTERVIEWER: CUT.

[cut]

00:15:54:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARKER.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: I ASKED YOU ABOUT—MEDGAR'S SHOT—

Moses: Shortly after Medgar left Greenwood then he began to really organize the Jackson movement. And it was a man from Greenwood who went down and shot him, Byron de la Beckwith, I think, his name was. And for people in the movement it was simply another in a long list of assassinations. I mean what Amzie said was the modern form of lynching is the

shooting. And that was what was happening, I mean, for Herbert Lee down in Amite County in 1960. The attempt on Jimmy Travis and myself and up in Greenwood in 1962 or ‘63. And then Medgar. And then after Medger there was Louis Allen in 196—early 1964 and then somewhere around in that time, we don't know when, two young students at Alcorn were murdered and buried. They were later uncovered when they were looking for the bodies of Micky and Chaney and Goodman. So it was just a pattern of—if you can't stop them try to kill off the leadership. And people were determined to go on. I mean you had already come to grips with the fact that if you were down there working then you were subject to that kind of violence and the decision was are you gonna do this work or are you not going to do the work? And the people were determined to do it.

00:18:13:00

INTERVIEWER: SEE, I MEAN, EVEN MORE PERSONAL, LIKE YOURSELF, YOU LIVED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF DEATH EVERY DAY.

Moses: No. I don't think so. The thing about it was that, and this was to me the key of surviving, was that sometimes you were in no danger and sometimes you were in very real danger. And you can't live as though you're in very real danger every day, every minute. Right. No one can survive like that. And the trick was to begin to understand those times when you were in very real danger. And how to move in those times and also to take advantage of those times when you were not in real danger so that you could relax. But it is true that we were often in danger.

INTERVIEWER: LET’S CUT.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: CUT.

[cut]

00:19:14:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: OK, YOU KNOW, IN ‘63 COFO HAD A SIZABLE FREEDOM VOTE. NOW HELP ME—WHAT DID THE OUTCOME OF THE FREEDOM VOTE SAY ABOUT MISSISSIPPIANS DESIRE TO, TO TAKE PART IN THE POLITCAL PROCESS?

Moses: The, the freedom vote that we held in 1963 was a continuation of a tactic that began in 1960 when we ran Reverend Smith for Congress in the fourth congressional district even though he didn't have a chance of winning. But we used it one, as an organizing tool and two, as a way to raise consciousness of people, that is, eventually people were going to be electing people to office, black people to office, but it wasn't a thought in their mind, at that time. So

what you had to do was to begin to prepare them. Use the voter registration drive as a way of preparing them for what was coming next. Which was the actual election of people to these offices and to expand their consciousness so that they could begin to think that someday a black person would run for Governor of Mississippi, for Lieutenant Governor of Mississippi. That they would be responsible for putting a slate together. And that's what we did with the freedom vote and I think it helped.

00:20:54:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Moses: Which involves Aaron Henry and Ed King and they want the students you know, and Lowenstein has—

00:21:05:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 407]

Moses: —has sold them on the students—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SO, HELP—EXPLAIN TO ME THE CONCERNS THAT WERE RAISED ABOUT BRINGING STUDENTS IN, WHITE STUDENTS IN, TO WORK IN MISSISSIPPI.

Moses: Right. There had grown a concern within SNCC and the movement about the involvement of white students in the Deep South as actual organizers and workers in the field. This was first demonstrated in southwest Georgia and I remember in Greenwood when we were working there in ‘62, Martha Prescott and Jean Wheeler, who had been working in Southwest Georgia and were two young black girls, left that project and came to Mississippi because of the presence of too many white people who were working there. And they mirrored a kind of concern which existed within the Mississippi staff which was predominantly people who grew up and lived in Mississippi, were from Mississippi, had spent their lives in—under the Mississippi condition which was strict segregation and really living in this closed society. So they had very little working contact with white people and they weren't anxious to introduce them into the project which they viewed as, and rightly so, as their project, their effort. Something which they had created out of nothing really and at

great risk to themselves. So they had voted down the attempt in SNCC in 1963 in the beginning of 1963 to introduce white people into Mississippi as part of the Mississippi staff. And then when the freedom vote came and the question arose of bringing in the volunteers, they reluctantly agreed, since they were going along with the campaign, with what Aaron Henry and Ed King wanted and since they knew that it was only gonna last for a couple of weeks, that is, the volunteers from Yale and from Stanford would be coming down for a couple of weeks would be working with them, mobilizing the vote and then they would be gone.

00:23:40:00

INTERVIEWER: WELL NOW AFTER THE FREEDOM VOTE THE DISCUSSION CONTINUED ON FOR THE NEXT YEAR. TALK ABOUT—HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THAT DISCUSSION WENT. WHERE, WHERE THE DISCUSSION WENT AFTER THE FREEDOM VOTE AND HOW IT WAS DECIDED THEN AND IN '64.

Moses: Right. The, the idea of bringing in students from Stanford, Yale students who were part of the elite institutions of the country came from Al Lowenstein and he particularly, I think, felt that you needed to do this to capture the attention of the country. Immediately after the freedom vote, which was successful, then there came the question of should we do this in the summer of 1964, that is, Al proposed that we actually bring down students in the summer of '64 from all across the country. From the nation's most prestigious schools and so forth and the discussion then arose within the staff as to do we want to do this or not. And we were split. I mean we met for months over this question. By and large most of the staff did not want to do it. They felt—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: GIVE ME JUST A MINUTE.

Moses: Well, what happened was, you had the staff on the one hand and the people and then the people we were working with on the other. The people by and large wanted the students to come back. Mrs. Hamer's, an excellent case in point. She wanted the students to come back and so we were at loggerheads. We couldn't get off right that fight and actually what happened was down in Hattiesburg, I think it was January 1964, and we were there having a demonstration, picketing the Courthouse, Mrs. Hamer was there and staff from all around the state and we were taking up the question again, and we got a telephone call that Louis Allen had been murdered on his front lawn in Liberty. And I went over there to speak to his wife who then moved down to Baton Rouge and in the process of helping her and thinking through this, I felt like I had to step in and make my weight felt in terms of this decision about the summer project. Cause up to then I had just been letting the discussion go on. And I guess what I felt was that we couldn't guarantee as we were going now, the safety of the people we were working with. And there were larger things that were happening in the country. There was the 1963 Civil Rights Act. Mississippi was acting—reacting to that and we were feeling like the backwash of the whole feeling that was growing up in Mississippi against gains that were being made nationally, but which were not having any immediate effect in Mississippi in terms of actually people being able to participate in some of those

gains. But what they were feeling was the oppression. The backwash that was rising up in Mississippi. Burning churches, the murder of those two boys from Alcorn state occurred at that same time—Louis Allen down there in Liberty. We felt that we had to do something. And I felt that in that context that I had to step in between this loggerhead between the staff, on the one hand, and the people that we were working with. And so, that's how the decision was made to actually invite the students down for the summer of '64.

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

[cut]

00:27:59:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: OK. DESCRIBING WHAT THE INTENTIONS, WHAT THE GOALS FOR THE SUMMER WERE THAT POINT.

Moses: In the summer project what we wanted to do was, basically, I think, open up the state of Mississippi. If you go back to Silver and his image of Mississippi as a closed society we were actually, with that summer project, trying to open up the state and, I think, we did. We opened up the black community. That is we made it possible for the black community to receive and be host to white people. We couldn't open up the white community, but those communities which we were—had something to do with which we were living in, we opened them up. And if we didn't do anything else that was a big accomplishment. I think part of the difficulty was people thinking that they had to do something on a grand scale, particularly, the volunteers. But just their presence in the black community—

[sound roll out]

[cut]

00:29:31:00

[slate]

[change to sound roll 1350]

INTERVIEWER: LET'S PICK UP—

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: —WITH THE, THE INTENTION OF BRINGING WHITES INTO THE BLACK COMMUNITY, WHAT THAT MEANT TO THAT COMMUNITY.

Moses: Right. If you go back to Silver and his image of Mississippi as a closed society, it was true for the black community as well as the white community. That is the black community was also closed. It was not possible for white people to actually live in any kind of normal day to day association with black people in the black community. And so, what we were trying to do with the students was to open up the black community, that is, to make the black community a place in which black people could feel that they could invite whomever they pleased into their home. It was their home. We integrated the black restaurants. The little black stands, right. People could serve whom they pleased in their own little coffee shop, right. That white people were welcome in the black community even if black people were not welcome in the white community. That this business about separation and segregation was something which was part of the white consciousness. It wasn't part, necessarily, of the black consciousness. They were ready to open up their communities. That was one important thing. Along with this was the right to organize. We were fighting for the right to hand out a leaflet. Just to walk down the street and say to somebody what we wanted to say. When we first did voter registration in Indianola, in 1962, when Mrs. Hamer went down with a group of us those of us who were handing out leaflets were arrested. We didn't have the right to, to actually walk the street and hand out a leaflet to somebody about voter registration. Well, after '64 that right was won. And people had the right, actually, to organize. We were also of course trying to dispel the idea of, of apathy. That what the—what's holding people back in Mississippi was their apathy. What we were trying to do was demonstrate—

00:31:58:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Moses: —the energy that was there within people. So when we held the freedom—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SORRY, WE'RE OUT.

INTERVIEWER: IT'S GOOD THOUGH. IT'S VERY GOOD. OK.

Moses: What is it? You're gonna—

INTERVIEWER: TALK TO YOU ABOUT—KINDA [sic] MOVE AHEAD TO THE STUDENTS AT OXFORD NOW AND ORIENTATION AND THE MISSING VOLUNTEERS.

00:32:35:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 408]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: THIS OK? SLATE.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: WHAT I'D LIKE YOU TO DO FOR ME IS I'D LIKE, FOR YOU, TO TAKE YOURSELF BACK TO THEN AND DESCRIBE FOR ME THAT MOMENT WHEN—WHERE YOU HEARD—YOUR—THAT THESE VOLUNTEERS WERE MISSING AND YOUR FIRST REACTION TO IT WHEN YOU, WHEN YOU HEARD THAT NEWS.

Moses: Well, we were at Oxford at the orientation and Mickey Schwerner was at the orientation and he took Andrew Goodman and James Chaney, who had been working with him, James was from Mississippi, back to Neshoba County to try and look for some housing for volunteers cause he had been recruiting volunteers. And what we heard was that they had been arrested by the sheriff in Neshoba County and then we heard that they had been taken out of the jail. What I remember was Rita, who was Mickey's wife, who was still at the orientation session, speaking to the volunteers about that incident, that is, that they had been arrested, that they had been in jail, that they'd been taken out. And then she left and she was very emotional. Upset, at that time, and the—she was asking for the students help, that is pressure on the Justice Department and so forth. And I remember that I spoke after her, I waited until she left because ***we had to tell the students what we thought was going on because if, in fact, anyone is arrested and then taken out of the jail, then the chances that they are alive was just almost zero. And we had to confront the students with that before they went down, because they now had—the ballgame was changed.*** I mean, whatever they thought they were coming down to get into they now knew what they were getting into, what they had to know, what it was they were getting into. So we talked to them about the fact that, as far as we could see, these—all of them, were dead. And that they had to make the decision now, as to whether they really wanted to carry through on this and go down. And then we left them. We sang a couple of songs and for awhile I was worried because no one was leaving. But finally a few of them did leave so I did think that the message had gotten through because you couldn't think that all of those who came to that orientation session were prepared to face the actual murder of their fellow students.

00:36:06:00

INTERVIEWER: THERE—YOU KNOW, THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO SAY THAT THAT WAS THE WHOLE REASON WHY STUDENTS WERE BROUGHT THERE. THIS IS WHAT THE MOVEMENT LEADERSHIP WANTED TO HAPPEN AT THAT TIME. BUT HOW—

Moses: Well, I mean, the question, the real question was how was it that a handful of black students that nobody knew was able to actually command the respect of a thousand white students and for them, these white students, to agree to come down under those conditions

where they were actually in threat of losing their lives. And I think the only answer is that that we had gone through the same thing. There wasn't one of our people who had not worked under conditions in which we were threatened to be killed. And so we weren't asking them to do something that we ourselves weren't willing to do. We weren't asking them—we weren't sending them someplace that we ourselves were not willing to go. We, we were asking them to come where we were and experience the conditions as we experienced them. And if they were willing to do that, fine, and if they weren't willing to do that there was nothing to get, you know, to make them go. There was no pressure that we had to make anybody go. So that was the real question, I think. It was an example that was set before children, students that they responded to.

INTERVIEWER: YOU WERE, WHAT, THIRTY, THIRTY-TWO YEARS OLD THEN?

Moses: 1964. 1964 I was thirty.

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

00:38:09:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Moses: 1964. Thirty-five—thirty.

00:38:14:00

[cut]

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SO HELP ME TO, TO KNOW THEM THROUGH YOUR CONSCIOUS. WHO THEY ARE.

Moses: Mickey was actually working for CORE. What we had in the state was an association, we call it Council of Federated Organizations and CORE was a part of it and worked the third congressional district of which Neshoba County and Meridian were part. And Micky had come down, I think, in 1963 first to work for CORE as a volunteer from New York and had been based in Meridian for almost a year or before the summer project. And he had gotten James Chaney to join him. James was black from Meridian and his family lived there and he became a part of the CORE staff and of Mickey's project there. So they had had some exposure to Mississippi and the conditions. Mickey over a year and James, of course, all his life. Then when they went to Oxford they took Andrew Goodman back with them, who was—had just come to Oxford and knew nothing about Mississippi, and the three of them went back to try and look for some places for volunteers to live in that area and for some churches, I think, for meeting places. You see one thing is, is that—

INTERVIEWER: LET'S CUT PLEASE.

00:40:06:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Moses: OK I'll see if—what I can remember. OK.

00:40:20:00

[cut]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SO FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW VERY MUCH ABOUT THIS SUMMER PROJECT. NOW, TELL ME MORE ABOUT IT. DOES IT MEAN CONCRETE SORTS OF THINGS WERE SET UP?

Moses: All right. I remember one thing that changed Jim Forman's mind about the summer project was the response that he began to get in the friends of SNCC offices to the summer project in the sense that a lot of support was flowing into the offices around the students. That is not only were the students coming down but they were beginning to mobilize and to help mobilize around the country a support effort. One in terms of medical support. We had a whole organization of doctors who came down to Mississippi. Alvin Poussaint headed up that service. Doctors began to explore all the medical conditions in Mississippi. Open clinics, built health stations, work that has continued till this day. The lawyers, around the effort on the summer project they organized groups of lawyers. Even I think LCDC, Lawyers for a Constitutional Defense Committee, I think it was called, was organized. Lawyers from all over the country came down and began to work on the segregation statutes of Mississippi and began to file suits opening up various restaurants all the public accommodations in Mississippi under the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Church people. Bob Spike with the National Council of Churches had organized the Mississippi/Delta project and they began to send down church people, some of whom are there to this day, who took part in community organizing and took part in the summer project: the Free Southern Theater. Gil Moses and John O'Neil organized the Free Southern Theater, right there in Mississippi, in the context of the Mississippi summer project. Then they later moved it to New Orleans because it was too much action in Mississippi. So there was a lot of activity which got generated. It was—the summer project sort of served as a catalyst for a lot of things that later on took effect.

00:43:23:00

INTERVIEWER: OK NOW, DO IT FOR ME ONE MORE TIME JUST KIND OF LIST THOSE THINGS INSTEAD OF TELLING ME ABOUT THEM. SAY THE WORDS LIKE MEDICAL PROGRAMS, ETCETERA. IF I WANTED THESE I HAVE A QUICKER RESPONSE AS WELL.

Moses: All right. We had the Free Southern Theater. We had organized with John O'Neil and Gil Moses. We had the different lawyers' groups, the National Lawyers Guild, the LCDC, Lawyers for Constitutional Defense, the National Legal Defense Committee of—

00:43:58:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Moses: —the NAACP sent down a group of lawyers, I think, Marian Wright headed that up. We had—

00:44:07:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 409]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK. MARKER.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: THIS—DESCRIBE IT SOME MORE.

Moses: Right. The—around the summer project there was quite a group of support that was organized. In fact every day we had what we called COFO shuttle which flew over from Atlanta to Jackson and quite literally they filled the plane. There were lawyers representing different lawyers' groups: Legal Defense Fund, LCDC, National Lawyers Guild. There were doctors from the Medical Committee for Human Rights which Al Poussaint was heading up. There were church people organized around Bob Spike. There were all of these things going on. There was the Free Southern Theater, Gil Moses and John O'Neil had organized.

00:45:05:00

INTERVIEWER: THERE WERE SCHOOLS TO. WHAT WAS THE—IN TERMS OF THE SCHOOLS AND THE FREEDOM SCHOOLS—

Moses: The Freedom Schools in Mississippi. Yes. Darten Lynn headed that up. And they

tried to develop the idea which—of alternative education, that is, that what's important is that the people in Mississippi, the young people in Mississippi, have a forum in which they could really think through and discuss through problems which were really important for them. And they did. I mean they met in little hot rooms all through the summer and did a lot of things basic discussion and education about the problems in Mississippi. They came out with some statements about Vietnam. They came out with some statements about the politics of Mississippi and lack of representation.

00:46:14:00

INTERVIEWER: NOW, IT'S DURING THAT SUMMER WAS THE TIME WHEN, WHEN THE THREE WORKERS ARE FOUND. THAT YOU ANNOUNCED THEIR FINDING TO A GROUP AT THE SAME TIME YOU SPEAK ABOUT VIETNAM. HOW DID—TALK AND, AND GIVE ME SOME SENSE OF HOW THEY BOTH, WHAT THEY BOTH MEANT IN TERMS OF THE STRUGGLE THAT YOU WERE INVOLVED IN, WHETEHR IT—VIETNAM, MISSISSIPPI—WHETHER IT—

Moses: What I used to think of, what struck me when they found the bodies of Schwerner and Goodman and Chaney and when *Life* magazine put on the front cover the pictures of the Sheriff, Rainey, and his corps, as though it was all a big joke. They had a picture of them kind of eating in the Courtroom and laughing and so forth. And what we were confronted with was what I came to call the murderer's jury. Because they could not actually bring an indictment for murder in Neshoba County and they haven't brought one to this day because the person that handled the jury was the sheriff. And unless the sheriff impaneled whatever they call it to reach a verdict about bringing an indictment for murder, they couldn't do it. So, what I call it was the case of the murderer's jury. How is it that—when you're the murderer, is the sheriff, how are you going to get any kind of justice. All right. And I thought of the same thing of the United States, vis-a-vis Vietnam, that we were here now involved in—on a larger scale of the same case. Where now the President has engaged us in a war which congress has not declared. And how in this country are we going to get together any semblance of kind of protest or understanding to combat that. Where do we go? Because our legal institution which is entitled to declare war has opted out, has rested, silence. So then the next summer in 1965 we had our citizens congress there in Washington to protest really what we felt was the abdication of Congress, of its responsibility.

00:49:03:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. JUMPING TO THE MFDP. THE CONVENTION IS HELD IN AUGUST IN JACKSON. GIVE ME A SENSE OF THAT CONVENTION AND THE MOOD THERE WAS. PEOPLE FEELING OUT THE MISSISSIPPI—FEELING LIKE—WAS THERE A LEVEL OF HOPE THAT THIS CHALLENGE WAS GOING TO BE RECOGNIZED AND, AND HEARD BY THE BLACKS TOO? SHOULD WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

Moses: No. We OK. [pause] In the summer of 1964 we held a convention of the Freedom Mississippi Democratic Party and we had delegates from all across the state who, for the first

time, were representing the people of Mississippi, all the people of Mississippi in going to the National Democratic Convention to say that they wanted to be a part of the Democratic Party. What they felt, I believe—they, they believed that actually the Democratic party would embrace them, because it was the Democratic Party through the government, the Kennedy administration, which had been actively, in their minds, fighting for the civil rights gains that they had already attained. So, ***I think people felt that the Democratic Party would actually embrace them. I think there was a lack of real understanding of the depth to which the local southern politicians were entwined in the Democratic Party and that there would be a real reluctance on the part of the national Democratic Party leadership to take in black people at the expense of the southern politicians.*** But we tried to warn them at that convention that we couldn't, necessarily, expect that we would actually be seated. What we could expect that we would get a hearing, right, and we could expect that we would actually demonstrate that black people were going to now demand to participate in politics at the national level even if we weren't actually seated.

00:51:38:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. BUT—WHY, WHY FORM, AT THAT TIME, AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL PARTY WHICH MFDP WAS AT THAT TIME? AND WHY, WHY TAKE A CHALLENGE TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION? I MEAN THERE IS THE IDEA OF THEIR REPRESENTATION, BUT WERE LEADERSHIPS SEE SOMETHING MORE THAN THAT, IN TERMS OF THE NEXT—A, A, A STRATEGIC MOVE HERE IN TERMS OF—

Moses: Well, we had been doing voter registration and clearly in doing voter registration we were confronted with the question well where does all this lead? Okay, eventually you get the right to vote, what next? Right. The other thing we were confronted with was while we were doing voter registration we had so to speak the field to our self, because people could not just come in and organize politically. There wasn't any space to organize. I mean to organize you had to take life threatening risks. Now very few people were willing to do that. So while we were in the voter registration phase of this, we had space then to create some kind of political organization which we felt would be responsible to the people that we were working for. So we moved from voter registration to political organizing sort of as a natural sequence, right, but also to take advantage of-the fact that for a short while, we had clear run. We had actual access to the people that other people were not willing to do the game because of the risks involved. And so, we did that with the MFDP as an attempt within the Democratic Party to actually gain credence in the Democratic Party, as the legal and rightful representation in Mississippi.

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

00:53:49:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Moses: And meeting, and Bayard—meeting with King, Aaron Henry and Ed King and Andy Young to tell them what the deal is and ask them to accept it. And then we find out about that meeting and insist that Mrs. Hamer and myself go. So we go—

00:54:18:00

[cut]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OK.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SO LET'S FIRST—GIVE ME THE EXAMPLE OF THE MEETING TO HELP ME UNDERSTAND HOW YOU—THE, THE DELEGATION REALLY IS NOT INVOLVED OR, OR REALLY ACTIVE IN ANYTHING THAT'S GOING ON. THEY'RE REALLY NOT—THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON THERE.

Moses: Right. Once we were at the convention the delegations role began to—was to lobby the, the delegates from the other states to try to get them to convince the credentials committee to accept their position. But the intensive actual political infighting that was going on was within the Democratic Party and the Johnson administration. We were not part of that or were not consulted as in terms of what our actual positions were. When it came down to the final decisions being made, what happens was a meeting was set up with Hubert Humphrey and Walter Reuther who flew down from Detroit—

00:55:30:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Moses: —and Bayard Rustin with Martin Luther King and Andy Young and Aaron Henry and Ed King.

00:55:38:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 410]

[change to sound roll 1351]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: ALL RIGHT.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: YES. HOPE TO FINISH IT. IN THE ROLL—

INTERVIEWER 2: YEAH.

INTERVIEWER: SO LETS PICK IT UP AT THE MEETING.

Moses: Okay, as we got close to the actual nomination of Johnson, there was a meeting which was called—which Humphrey—

INTERVIEWER: CAN I ASK YOU, START AGAIN. WHEN YOU'RE GETTING CLOSE TO THE CREDENTIALS LET'S, LET'S KEEP IT WITHIN OUR, OUR, HOLDING THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE—

Moses: Okay, so as the Credentials Committee was meeting and coming to a decision about the MFDP and in the day on which they were, what turned out to be their last meeting, we were called to a meeting which was hosted by Humphrey, Walter Ruther, who had flown down from Detroit, and Bayard Rustin at which they had invited Martin Luther King and Andy Young and Aaron Henry and Ed King as representation for the MFDP. And when we heard about it we asked that myself and Mrs. Hamer be allowed to be present at that meeting. Well, we got to that meeting and in effect what they told us that they had decided that the MFDP would be entitled to two kind of symbolic seats at the convention and that they had chosed Aaron Henry and Ed King to fill those seats. Now they had done all of that without consulting the delegation in any way. I, I don't know that—I don't think they talked to Aaron Henry or Ed King about that decision. And then we rejected that. In front of Humphrey and Reuther and it got quite tense there for a while, but we told them that we did not think that—we certainly couldn't accept that decision on behalf of the delegation without the delegation itself discussing and deciding whether that was something that they accepted. But when we went outside the meeting they were announcing on national tel—television that in fact the delegation had been presented with this, this decision and had already accepted it.

00:58:10:00

INTERVIEWER: NOW, THE NEXT DAY THERE'S A MEETING AT THE CHURCH. WHO COMES OUT FOR THIS MEETING? WHAT IS THE POINT? WHAT IS, WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING?

Moses: Well, at the first meeting when we were with Humphrey and Reuther and King and so forth the question arose as to the delegation itself actually deciding whether it would agree with what was offered. And we agreed that anyone who wanted to talk to the delegation to persuade them should have access to them, but that the whole delegation should be able to sit down and listen through all the arguments. And so, they set up a meeting at which all of the delegation was present and the leadership of the civil rights movement, King, Farmer, the leadership of the National Council of Churches. The leadership of lawyers groups that had

been represented in Mississippi, Congressmen, Senators, all these people came before the delegation to try to persuade them to accept the compromise or the offer. I don't call it a compromise, but this offer of two symbolic seats and the delegation rejected it.

00:59:37:00

INTERVIEWER: OKAY SO, THE—WHAT—SOME SAY—SOME PEOPLE WOULD SAY THAT THE MFDP, THE FDP [sic] PEOPLE WERE POLITICALLY NAÏVE. THEY REALLY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND POLITICS. THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT INITIAL RIGHT AND WRONG AND THEY WERE AT A POLITICAL CONVENTION AND THERE WAS NO WAY ANYTHING COULD BE WORKED OUT WITH THOSE KINDS OF—I MEAN, POLITICS AND PROTEST KIND OF COMING TOGETHER LIKE THAT. HOW DO YOU?

Moses: Well, what I think the issue for our people certainly was a moral issue. It certainly is true that they were bringing to this country and to the Democratic Party, as its major political institution, a question of generations of black people who had been denied political process and who were now asking that they get it. What is ironic is that we were told that morality doesn't enter into politics. That what is at issue here is really what is politically correct, right. It's ironic because we are now twenty years later in an era in which politics is defined by what is morally correct.

INTERVIEWER: YOU CAN'T DO THAT. THAT'S VERY GOOD BUT—[pause] LBJ AND THE PRESSURE, HOW CAN YOU HELP ILLUSTRATE JUST THE PRESSURE THAT WAS COMING DOWN FROM LBJ IN TERMS OF THE LEADERSHIP OR PRESSURE ON THE DELEGATION TO ACCEPT—SUPPORT FOR THE DELEGRATION.

Moses: Cut for a second.

INTERVIEWER 2: PLEASE CUT.

[cut]

01:01:27:00

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: SPEAK TO ME ABOUT LBJ AND THE PRESSURE HE WAS EXERTING AT THAT TIME.

Moses: Well, it seemed that Johnson was bringing a lot of people down to the convention with the explicit purpose of trying to persuade the MFDP to change its mind. One such person I remember was honest enough to say openly was Roy Wilkins. I remember we were in a meeting together where he said well, I'm not going to be Johnson's running boy and he left. And, as far as I know, he was the only national leader who came down and took a look

around and decided that what was going on was really not something that he needed to be involved in.

INTERVIEWER: DID, DID PRESSURE—DID JOHNSON'S PRESSURE TAKE ANY OTHER FORMS THAT—THINGS VERY OBVIOUSLY—

Moses: Well, what we heard was pressure on delegates. Specific pressure in terms of judgeships, you know, people who were up for appointments or things like that.

INTERVIEWER: THAT'S ALL RIGHT. THAT'S, THAT'S ENOUGH THERE. I HAVE A PICTURE OF A FILM BEFORE THE CONVENTIONS. CAN WE CUT FOR A SECOND?

[cut]

01:03:02:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARKER.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER 2: OK.

Moses: So that's Fannie Lou Hamer.

INTERVIEWER: YES, YES THAT'S FANNIE LOU HAMER.

Moses: And—

INTERVIEWER: YOU'RE STANDING NEXT TO HER ON THE FLOOR AT THE CONVENTION AND SHE HAS—THEY HAVE—THE SEARGENT OF ARMS HAS STOPPED HER AND SAID AND ASKED HER WHAT SHE WANTS AND A NEWSMAN IS INTERVIEWING HER. SHE SAID I WANT—MY NAME IS FANNIE HAMER AND I WANT TO SIT WHERE I'M GOING IN—WITH THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI. AND SHE STANDING OVER WITH MRS. GRAY—NO NOT MRS. GRAY—MRS. DEVINE.

Moses: All right. What we liked about Mrs. Hamer was that she spoke from her heart. And she spoke about what was real to her from all of her experience. And even when she was thrown into the spotlight, as a media person, she had matured enough so that she didn't change. She always spoke the same way. When she spoke at a small meeting in Mississippi, talking to people about what they had to do to get up and go register or anything. When she spoke at Atlantic City in front of national TV, she spoke the same way. And what came through, always, was her soul. I mean what you felt when she spoke and when she sang was someone who was opening up her soul and really telling you what she felt and the pain that she had felt and the life that she had lived. And somehow she was able to convey to that to people in a way in which we couldn't and, I think, one of the most beautiful things about the

movement in Mississippi was that it was such that it enable the person like Mrs. Hamer to emerge.

01:05:09:00

INTERVIEWER: NOW AT THE END OF THAT CONVENTION, ESPECIALLY THAT MEETING ON SUNDAY, THE, THE MISSISSIPPI DELEGATION WERE CALLED SHARECROPPERS. SAID THEY WERE IGNORANT. I MEAN PEOPLE ACTUALLY GOT UP AND SAID THESE THINGS TO THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT WILLING TO TAKE THIS COMPRIMISE. DID THAT, HOW DID, HOW DID, WHAT DID THAT—DID THAT ANGER YOU? WHAT DID YOU FEEL WHEN THESE KINDS OF THINGS WERE GOING ON, THIS KIND OF…

Moses: Well, I mean, they were sharecroppers. And if you think of knowledge in terms of book knowledge, they were ignorant. They hadn't been through the schools they hadn't been processed. That was the thing about that delegation, about a large number of them, they weren't processed. There wasn't any of the legitimate institutions that this country recognized that they had been filed through and passed through and processed through. And so, these were people who were bringing with them just their ordinary life experiences. They weren't ignorant about that and they weren't ignorant about the relationship of those experiences to the larger political processes which were oppressing them. Right. But what was tragic was that the Democratic Party was not—

01:06:30:00

[cut]

[wild audio]

Moses: —able to take these people who were not processed in ways in which they expected people to be processed.

01:06:41:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 411]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: CAUSE—LET'S JUST PICK IT UP WITH HELPING TO UNDERSTAND THAT THESE PEOPLE HAD NOT BEEN TO INSTITUTIONS THAT

THEY WERE SHARECROPPERS, THEY WERE—

Moses: The delegation was different in two ways. One it was black. The other it represented rural people: people who were sharecroppers, people who had not been processed in the ways in which most delegates were processed. They had not been through book learning. What they knew about was life. And they had lived it to the full and they knew about life in Mississippi and the relationship of the politics that they were trying to challenge to the lives that they lead. And they were as cognizant of that as anyone needed to be, right. And that's what we were relying on plus the ability to speak to the truth.

01:07:57:00

INTERVIEWER: SO, BUT THE PARTY DIDN'T—COULD NOT SEE THIS—THEY COULD NOT HEAR WHAT THEY WERE SAYING?

Moses: Well, I don't think that the Democratic Party to this day, has confronted the issue of bringing into its ranks the kind of people that were represented by the MFDP, that is, the real underclass of this country. The Democratic Party primarily has organized around the middle class. And we were challenging them not only on the racial grounds, the obvious racial grounds, but we were challenging them on the existence of a whole group of people who are the underclass in this country, white and black who are not represented. And they weren't prepared to hear that, I don't know if they heard.

01:08:48:00

INTERVIEWER: OK. NOW I'M GONNA SWITCH GEARS HERE. I'M GOING TO SOMETHING ELSE, BUT I WANTED TO GET AN IDEA OF AFTER THE PASSAGE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS BILL, JULY '64, WHAT WAS THE REACTION TO THE LEGISLATION IN MISSISSIPPI AFTER THIS PASSAGE? DID IT HAVE—THAT YOU, AS A PERSON WHO WAS THERE, RECOGNIZE CHANGE IN THE STATE IN ANY FORM? DO YOU WANT TIME TO THINK ON THIS ONE? LET'S CUT.

[cut]

01:09:19:00

INTERVIEWER: FEAR, PEOPLE'S FEAR.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

INTERVIEWER: WHEN THEY, WHEN THEY, WHEN THEY ATTEMPTED TO REGISTER TO VOTE. HOW DO YOU AS AN ORGANIZER, HOW DO YOU PEOPLE PASS THAT POINT? SORT OF THEY DO TAKE THAT FIRST STEP, THEY DO MOVE?

Moses: The, the problem of the organizer I think is to slow down. That is, you want people to move who are not currently in motion. So the first thing you have to do is slow down and get into the motion of the people in whatever way they are moving. And then you have to move with them in ways which seem meaningful to them, right, and the second problem is patience. That is a lot of what turned out to be organizing, turned out to be patience—waiting patiently until people were ready to move. I mean you can't force people to move, right. But just the presence of the organizer and the knowledge that the organizer is there and committing himself to something which people want to do, right, they all agreed that they do want to register to vote. Then that ongoing presence seems eventually to help as a catalyst so that people do decide to move. Then, in the context in which we were working, then the next step is to move with them. That is the organizer has to be prepared to move with them, to accept whatever consequences they might face him or herself.

INTERVIEWER: OK. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO TELL ME, ANYTHING THAT WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED? LET'S CUT FOR A SECOND.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: SURE.

[cut]

01:11:29:00

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: MARK IT.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: ONE SECOND. WAIT.

Moses: When I think about Amzie and his relationship to the movement one of the things which I keep coming back to is his insight into Mississippi and into the consciousness and the mentality of white people who lived in Mississippi. And what it was that would be the kind of key to unlocking the situation in Mississippi. And somehow Amzie understood that the vote and the subsequent political action would actually unlock the key to Mississippi and he had dedicated—he wasn't distracted by school integration. He was for it, but it didn't distract him from the central, centrality of the right to vote. He wasn't distracted at all about integration of public facilities. It was a good thing, but it was not going straight to the heart of what was the trouble in Mississippi. And somehow, in following his guidance there, we stumbled on the key. That is the right to vote and the political action that ensued.

INTERVIEWER: OK. LET'S CUT.

[cut]

[end of interview]

01:13:15:00