Interview with **Andrew Young**
Date: October 27, 1988
Interviewers: Paul Stekler
Camera Rolls: 4030-4037
Sound Rolls: 412-414
Team: D

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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 II*.

[camera roll #4030]
[sound roll #412]

00:00:12:00

Camera Crew Member #1

Sound roll four, one, two. Camera roll forty, thirty. Timecode fourteen, thirty.

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

00:00:22:00

Interviewer:

We're in late 1966, early 1967. Weren't people around Dr. King concerned about the consequences of his coming out publicly against Vietnam? And people must have realized back then that, that most people, Blacks and Whites, at that point in time supported the war. That, that Dr. King was really going out on a limb.

00:00:44:00

Andrew Young:

In late 1966 and early 1967, I think Martin Luther King began to have a conscience attack. Even though SCLC had made a public statement against the war, he had not been personally involved and had encouraged Coretta, who had a background in the peace movement, to be his spokesperson on the peace issue including the war in Vietnam. And I think she was better informed than he was in some ways and began to raise questions with him. Well, it was, it was the end of '66 that he pulled together about a dozen books on Vietnam and took 'em on vacation with him down to Jamaica. He was also writing on *Trumpets* [sic] *of Conscience*. And…but he would read after he got too tired to write, he would read three or four hours a night through these books on Vietnam. And he back from there I think really feeling that as he finally said, the bombs you drop on Vietnam will explode at home. And he was talking about inflation, unemployment, the problems in the cities. And this was a period when Lyndon Johnson was saying we could have both guns and butter. That we didn't have to make a choice between our international security and our domestic stability. And Martin began to realize that that level of aspirations had been so raised in the northern cities by the progress we were enjoying in the South that it was, it was very difficult to expect northern Blacks in cities whose lives were not changing. Indeed they were perhaps getting worse. And that something had to be done about it.

00:03:17:00

Interviewer:

In your conversations with him, did he ever acknowledge the fact though that he was really leading on this issue? That, that most people at that time supported the war, and he was taking a risk?

00:03:16:00

Andrew Young:

Oh, yeah. In the discussions that Martin Luther King had and the leader-leadership conference on civil rights, Roy Wilkins and Whitney Young particularly were convinced that Lyndon Johnson was the best friend that the Black community had ever had and that we really needed to support Lyndon Johnson on the war. Because he had supported us so well on civil rights. And I remember one night we were sitting around talking. It was pretty late, 10:30 p.m., eleven o'clock. After he had been somewhere preaching. And he was arguing with us. Our staff was divided. Some of us felt that we couldn't do anything until we ended the war. Some felt that the only way to end the war was to consolidate our political base in the South and in the northern cities to elect senators and congressman who were more peaceable. So, there was a raging debate in which he launched into a, a long lecture on what was happening in Vietnam. And he talked about…just sort of off the top of his head, but he was so immersed in, in this material. He talked about the mistake we made in not recognizing Ho Chi Minh declaration of freedom from 1945. You have to remember we tend to forget, Ho Chi Minh was a student at Boston University and worked in the Parker House as a, as a baker while he was in school. In 1945, there was no Communist China. And the principles on

which Ho Chi Minh wrote the declaration of freedom from Colonialism with France was probably more influenced by his experience at Boston and the American revolution than the Russian revolution at that stage. And Harry Truman and people in the state department really didn't even know where Vietnam was.

00:06:05:00

Interviewer:

Let me bring, bring you a little bit closer to the Riverside speech.

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

There had been some sort of commitment made to the Spring Mobe people in New York.

Andrew Young:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

And Dr. King send you to New York. Tell me about that. About being sent to New York.

00:06:05:00

Andrew Young:

Yeah. Well, before I was sent to New York, he called a group of us together here in Atlanta, and it was Bayard Rustin, and James Bevel, and Ralph Abernathy, Jose Williams. I don't think Jesse had joined us yet. And we were talking about being involved. And the board had met and made an appeal to him not to get personally involved. Certainly not to merge the peace movement and the civil rights movement. And Martin decided that he couldn't segregate his conscience and that whether he merged the movement and led demonstrations or not, it was important for him to identify with the peace movement. His reading led him to that conclusion. One time during '66, we worked in Cleveland helping to get Carl Stokes elected. And he shared a plane ride with Dr. Spock. And Dr. Spock had a long conversation with him about how important his voice and his leadership would be to the peace movement. So, all of this was going on. And Martin asked me to go to New York because Cora Weiss has invited him to be a part of the Spring Mobilization. I went. And coming from the South where we had a disciplined very specifically nonviolent movement in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition, the secular leftist, radical, you know, approaches of the people in the Spring Mobe really shocked me. I, I thought it was a bunch of crazies for the most part. I

mean, people were, were just so uptight and high strung, bitter. I, I wasn't familiar with that. We didn't…we weren't that way in the South. And so I, I came back saying that, you know, he couldn't be apart of that movement as it was. He said he made a commitment. So, I said, Well, you won't even get a chance to make a statement there. People will be carrying Vietnam flags. They'll be wanting to pit you against Stokely Carmichael. And more than the issues, it'll turn into a leadership struggle. You have to make your position clear somewhere. And I suggested that we call John Bennett, the president of Union Seminary, to invite Martin to speak at Union Seminary to a group of theological students on the war in Vietnam where he would have a chance to fully develop. In, in a mass meeting speech you get five minutes. He needed an hour, hour and a half to explain to the American people why he held those views. And so Dr. Bennett agreed to work with us. Well, there was so much interest in it, we moved it from Riverside Church—I mean from Union Seminary across the street to Riverside Church. And Henry Steele Commager and Rabbi Abraham Heschel how had marched with us in Selma, and Dr. John Bennett, the president of Union Theological Seminary, agreed to comment on his speech.

00:10:26:00

Interviewer:

Can we stop it for a second?

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yeah.

[cut]

[camera roll #4031]

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it please.

Camera Crew Member #1:

Forty, thirty-one. Timecode fourteen, thirteen.

00:10:35:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

00:10:37:00

Interviewer:

Thinking about the national reaction to the Riverside s-speech, what did you think was gonna be the reaction, and what was the reaction?

00:10:35:00

Andrew Young:

Well, Martin gave a brilliant rationale for his position on the war in Vietnam. And as a Nobel Prize winner, we expected people to take it seriously and not to agree with it but to disagree with certain specifics. And…but at least to discuss it as an intelligent position that deserved at least an intelligent answer. ***We didn't get that. We got instead an emotional outburst attacking his right to have an opinion,*** quarreling with his attempt to involve himself in foreign policy. And that ***it was almost, you know, Nigger, you ought to stay in your place.*** And your place is acceptable if you're, you know, dealing with racial segregation. But when you began to talk about foreign policy, you don't have any rights. And Martin quarreled with that. I mean he didn't accept that.

00:11:55:00

Interviewer:

How did he feel about this national reaction?

00:11:58:00

Andrew Young:

Well, I think he expected people to be upset with him, but he didn't expect what seemed like an organized opposition. Lyndon Johnson immediately convened a meeting of all of the Black journalists. And then another meeting with a group of Black preachers. And they were all encouraged to denounce Martin's position. They went to meet with the, the journalists went to meet with, with Lyndon Johnson just before their own convention, and we went to address them at their convention after they had publicly criticized him. And yet when he finished speaking, they gave him a standing ovation. And it was a matter of, of fighting to keep your constituency because the White House was trying to take our base constituency from us.

00:13:00:00

Interviewer:

And the opposition from people that had been friends, maybe the NAA, was he hurt?

00:13:05:00

Andrew Young:

No, I think he anticipated the difficulty with the NAACP and the Urban League. He also anticipated losing contributions but felt it was a price that had to be paid. I think he was disturbed at the, the aggressiveness of the attacks on him. It wasn't just that the NAACP and the Urban League said that he didn't…they didn't agree. They, too, began to challenge his right to have a strong opinion.

00:13:51:00

Interviewer:

In one sentence, in…'cause the reaction was pretty strong, how would you describe the reaction nationally?

00:13:57:00

Andrew Young:

Oh [sighs] I mean, it, it was like a torrent of hate and venom. And, I mean, this man who had been respected worldwide as a Nobel Prize winner and as the only person in America who was advocating change without violence suddenly applied his nonviolent ethic and practice to the realm of foreign policy. And it…No. It's all right for Black people to be nonviolent when they're dealing with White people, but White people don't need to be nonviolent when they're dealing with brown people.

00:14:45:00

Interviewer:

Let's go to some of the stuff that, that you and he talked about. And this is right to the issue that you wanted to talk about in the beginning. You've got King a national holiday.

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

Sort of like at this point he's somewhat of the Bill Cosby of the, of the civil rights movement.

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

Very nonthreatening. At this point in time, he actually was getting much more militant, and especially in his, in his pronouncements in public. What were his views on economics? I mean, was he a socialist? Was he a revolutionary?

00:15:11:00

Andrew Young:

In one of the last speeches that Martin gave to the staff, he defined very well his views. He felt that capitalism needed more of a conscience and that capitalism had to move to protect people's economic rights. But that Communism had to move to, to protect people's human rights. And he was a critique of both systems. And he saw the process of social justice as the basis for both the, the dilemma we were in in the, on the planet, but he also saw that as the basis for possible change for the better.

00:16:08:00

Interviewer:

Why was this his most militant period?

00:16:13:00

Andrew Young:

I think it was his most militant period because he saw the movement getting away from him. He saw that the help that he got from the federal government to deal with the problems of Blacks in the South was not there when it came time to deal with the Blacks in the North. That the federal government…and he said that it, it didn't cost money to integrate lunch counters or to give people the right to vote. But to put everybody back to work or to solve the problems of American cities, it's going to cost money. And the money that's needed is now being spent in…the money that's needed to rebuild our cities is being spent in Vietnam. A needless and unjust war as he put it.

00:17:14:00

Interviewer:

He was looking for some sort of campaign, and the campaign eventually turns out to be the Poor People's Campaign. Do you remember when you first heard that and how people reacted to it?

00:17:14:00

Andrew Young:

The first time I heard about a possible Poor People's Campaign was from Marian Wright Edelman. She was one of the only Black attorneys in Mississippi at the time, and she called and asked if she could bring some people over from Mississippi to meet with me and Dr. King. We were trying to bring her on as the executive director of SCLC, and so we were glad for her to come over. But she, she brought four men with her, and they talked about how long it had been since they'd had work. And that they had been put out of work by government policy. That government famer policy in the '50s began to pay, and '60s began to pay farmers not to produce food and fiber. And so these men who had worked hard all their life in agriculture now didn't have any jobs because the government paid the landowner but didn't pay the sharecroppers.

00:18:36:00

Interviewer:

And then she, she used these people to, to, to articulate this idea of brining—

00:18:40:00

Andrew Young:

She said that, you know, asked Dr. King to lead a group of poor people from Mississippi to Washington just to try to explain the plight of the poor, a growing number in America to the president. Now, we knew then that we were in the midst of an election, and we knew that congress was all but adjourned. And we didn't have any hope of success. But we felt that the bonus marches by the army in the late '20…late '20s and '30s and early '30s paved the way for the New Deal and that maybe it was necessary for us to go to Washington to establish an agenda for the next president of the United States. And of course at that time we thought that Lyndon Johnson would be reelected or that he would be challenged by Gene McCarthy or Bobby Kennedy. And I think it was the Sunday just before Martin's speech or just after. It was just around the time of Martin's Vietnam speech that Lyndon Johnson decided not to run.

00:20:03:00

Interviewer:

Let me go to what's going on in SCLC. There was a lot of internal problems—

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

—and opposition to the Poor People's Campaign. Why?

00:20:12:00

Andrew Young:

SCLC was always a battle of egos. We were like a team of wild horses. Each one had very strong opinions and their own ideas about the way the movement should go, and Dr. King encouraged that. And our meetings were loud and raucous. And he sat quietly by until we fought issues out, and then he would usually decide. But James Bevel wanted to keep us in the North, in northern cities, and a movement to end slums. Jose Williams felt as though we should stay in the South and do voter registration. Jesse Jackson was beginning to develop Operation Breadbasket, which was an attempt to organize nonviolently to get jobs. I was probably more—

[rollout on camera roll]

[wild sound]

Andrew Young:

—inclined to stay South because people forget that SCLC at that time had a budget of less than a million dollars.

00:21:23:00

Interviewer:

We’re gonna stop for one second.

[cut]

[camera roll #4032]

[wild sound]

Andrew Young:

Do you get Martin’s sense of humor in the footage?

Interviewer:

Somewhat. I mean—

Andrew Young:

Yeah.

Camera Crew Member #1:

Camera roll forty, thirty-two. Timecode fourteen, thirty-two.

00:21:35:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

00:21:38:00

Interviewer:

OK, just one or two brief statements. I mean, was one of the problems with, with the internal dissention on, on the Poor People's movement that it was different people had their own agendas?

00:21:47:00

Andrew Young:

I think different people did have their own agendas. But it was different strategies to achieve the same end. But ***Martin usually could bring us together, but he always let us fight it out for ourselves for a long time. And the only time he really got mad with me was when I wouldn't disagree with everybody. He sorta expected me to be the conservative one. And, because a movement needed wild ideas and radical notions, but it also needed to be pulled back into perspective to do something that was actually doable and attainable. And I got tired of being the, the, you know, the, the reactionary. So, I just said, That's right. That's right. That's exactly what we ought to do. And he jumped up and got mad. He said, Andy. He said, If you don't express*** [laughs] ***he said, If you don't, you know, end up giving the conservative view, you don't leave me any room to come down in the middle.*** So, I had to always be so conservative. I mean, the further anybody got out to the left, I had to go to the right because he was always looking for that practical middle road that we could really unite Black and White people. Because he was always conscious of the fact that in America, change required a majority. And Blacks were only eleven percent.

00:23:28:00

Interviewer:

Was that part of the reason of bringing—

Camera Crew Member #2:

Can we stop for a second?

Interviewer:

Yeah, I was—

Camera Crew Member #1:

Stop?

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yes.

[cut]

[slate]

00:23:35:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

OK.

00:23:37:00

Interviewer:

Poor People's Campaign must have been perceived as a threat by Washington. I mean, this idea of bringing together not only Blacks but a coalition of the poor, an army of the poor. How was that…how did, how did you perceive that? How did, how did that threat…

00:02:37:00

Andrew Young:

Well, we didn't realize it was a threat. And we saw the Poor People's Campaign was a nonviolent challenge to democracy. But years later, my daughter did her college thesis on the Poor People's Campaign, and I—

00:24:08:00

Interviewer:

Sorry, I got to stop you for a second.

Andrew Young:

OK.

Interviewer:

We're not allowed to do anything that's, that's not in that time period.

Andrew Young:

Oh, OK.

00:03:01:00

Camera Crew Member #3:

Paul, I think you want to focus the question much more specifically to FBI.

Interviewer:

OK, let's, let's focus on the FBI.

Andrew Young:

OK. OK.

00:24:20:00

Interviewer:

Did you, did you all have a perception that the FBI was doing surveillance? And there's that wonderful story about Dr. Abernathy and his, and his…

00:24:27:00

Andrew Young:

Well, we knew that every…***we knew that everything we were doing during this period was being monitored. We weren't always sure who,*** but Ralph one time found a, a little microphone up under the pulpit. And instead of throwing it away, he took it out and put it on

top of the pulpit and began to preach to it. And he'd say, Little doohickey, I don't know whether you're playing in J. Edgar Hoover's office, or Lyndon Johnson's office, or you may be in George Wallace's office. But I ain't gonna let nobody turn us around. You know? And the church would just go up in, in cheers. But we were not afraid, and we were not threatened by it. But we knew that, that we were, we were monitored constantly.

00:25:18:00

Interviewer:

Dr. King was out doing a nonstop breakneck schedule at this point in time. Mississippi, Alabama, the North.

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

How was he fairing up under that?

00:25:27:00

Andrew Young:

Well, Martin had a constitution of a bull. I mean, he could travel, and preach all day, stay up and read half the night. You know, laugh, and joke, and clown with his friends. Get three or four hours of sleep and be up early in the morning, ready to go again. And it was almost as though in his constitution he understood he didn't have long to live, and so he was gonna live each day to the fullest. In fact that was one of his expressions that he preached about a lot. Living each day to the fullest. Tiny little minute, just sixty seconds in it, but eternity is in it. And we were, we were not concerned about the government because we had an, an undaunted faith in the justice of the system. And we believed that justice would prevail. We didn't mind going to jail. In fact we looked forward to the possibility of spending a year in jail or more. And we knew that that's what was likely to be required if we went to Washington, challenging the federal government.

00:26:58:00

Interviewer:

OK, in the midst of this breakneck schedule, there's an invitation to come to Memphis. How did the staff feel about it?

00:26:59:00

Andrew Young:

Well, ***the staff was really disturbed that Martin would even consider going to Memphis.*** We had charted out fifteen cities that we were going to try to organize. ***We were trying to organize poor Whites, Hispanics, southern Blacks, northern Blacks. I mean, there was just a tremendous organizing job. And I didn't know how you could take on anything else. And he said, Well, Jim Lawson has been around for so long, and here are garbage workers on strike. He just wants me to come in and make a speech, and then lead a march in the morning. And I'll be right back.*** So, I didn't even go to Memphis with him the first time. He left New York and went down to Memphis, and we were supposed to meet in Washington that Monday night. Well, it was that Monday that everything just…all hell broke loose.

00:28:07:00

Interviewer:

Let's stop the camera for a second. How are we doing?

[cut]

00:28:11:00

Camera Crew Member #1:

Speed.

[slate]

00:28:14:00

Interviewer:

Dr. King gets done with the mountaintop speech, and he turns around. And you can see him, you can see the crowd. Describe what you saw.

00:07:09:00

Andrew Young:

Well, I a saw a man who had almost come back from a state of depression. He had been very down and sick, and didn't even want to come to make the speech. And yet it was an ecstatic moment. The crowd had brought him back to life. I just felt very good. It was a great speech.

00:28:42:00

Interviewer:

OK, the next day, what were you generally doing that day? Very briefly.

00:28:47:00

Andrew Young:

The next day I was in the federal court, trying to testify to get the injunction lifted so that we could have a march. And I was in court all day long on the witness stand a good part of that day.

00:29:01:00

Interviewer:

And you got the injunction thrown out?

00:29:03:00

Andrew Young:

We got the injunction thrown out, and we got our permission to march. And I guess about 4:30 p.m. or five o'clock, I came back to the Lorraine Motel, and I found Martin, and AD, and Ralph, and everybody gathered there. And they had been eating, and, and had lunch and were talking and clowning. And when I came in, Martin just grabbed me and threw me down on the bed, and started beating me with a pillow. I mean, he was, he was like a big kid. And he was fussing because I hadn't reported to him, and I tried to tell him I was on the witness stand. I'm here in the federal court. And he was, you know, just standing on the bed swinging the pillow at me, and I'm trying to duck with him saying, You have to let me know what's goin' on. [laughs] ***You know? And finally I snatched a pillow and started swinging back. And it, and, you know, and everybody, it was sorta like the, the, you know, after you make a touchdown, and everybody piles on everybody. It was just…I mean, people just started throwing pillows and piling on top of everybody and laughing, and, and going on. And then he stopped and, and said, Let's go, you know, we're due at dinner at six. And it was at that time about six o'clock. And he went on up to his room to, you know, to put on a shirt and tie.*** I went out in the courtyard, waiting for him, and started shadow boxing with James Orange, who was about, you know, 6' 5" and two hundred eighty pounds. I was mostly continuing the clowning around atmosphere. I mean, James could slap me in the ground with his little finger. But I was, you know, clowning around with him, ***and Martin came out. And ask, You think I need a coat? And we said, Yeah, it's pretty cool, and you've had a cold. You better go back and get a coat. And he said, I don't know whether I need a coat. You know? And the next thing we know, a shot…well, I thought it was a car backfiring or a firecracker.*** And I looked up and didn't see him. And I frankly thought that it was a car that backfired, and he was still clowning. 'Cause he was always given to clowning, particularly in those kinds of, when we'd been very, very well down and then all of a sudden,

you know, things look like they're gonna work out. He could get very giddy almost. But then I ran up and saw that, you know—

00:32:01:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Sound [unintelligible]

Camera Crew Member #1:

[unintelligible]

Interviewer:

Do we—

[cut]

[camera roll #4033]

[sound roll #413]

Camera Crew Member #1:

Camera roll forty, thirty-three. Timecode fourteen, thirty-three. Sound roll four, one, three.

00:32:11:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

Camera Crew Member #2:

OK.

00:32:15:00

Interviewer:

Resurrection City, did it ever stand a chance? What went wrong with it?

00:32:20:00

Andrew Young:

Well, Resurrection City was designed to house fifteen hundred well-trained well-disciplined demonstrators who were actually coming to Washington to organize the Black community in Washington. And Martin was killed, and instead of fifteen hundred, over a period of time we had probably close to fifteen thousand. At any given day, there was six or seven thousand people trying to live in a city that was being built for fifteen hundred. Also the—[background noise]

00:33:03:00

Camera Crew Member #3:

Cut.

Interviewer:

Cut

Camera Crew Member #2:

We got—

[cut]

Camera Crew Member #1:

Rolling and speed.

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

Interviewer:

Again, what went…

Camera Crew Member #2:

Do you want to start again?

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Camera Crew Member #2:

OK.

Camera Crew Member #1:

Stop.

[cut]

00:33:18:00

Cameraman:

Rolling and speed.

[slate]

00:33:22:00

Interviewer:

Resurrection City, what went wrong with it?

00:33:25:00

Andrew Young:

Resurrection City was a community that was designed for fifteen hundred, and many, many more people than that showed up. They were fifteen hundred well trained, well-disciplined demonstrators that were going to be recruited from around the country. And in the middle of this process, Martin Luther King was killed. So, that set us back both in training and in building of Resurrection City, and everybody wanted to be a part of the Poor People's Campaign after Martin's death. The funeral was the same way. We would have thought that, you know, ten, fifteen thousand people coming to Martin's funeral would have been all we could handle. There were probably closer to a hundred thousand people. And, and yet we, we made it. But Resurrection City was not just more people than we could house or handle. There were people in Resurrection City who were placed there, I think, to disrupt and create discontent. And so we were constantly fighting a battle both inside and outside.

00:34:48:00

Interviewer:

And what about the weather?

00:34:50:00

Andrew Young:

Oh, it rained, and rained, and rained. Like, you know, all night Georgia rain. And the place where we had built it ended up being like a, a six-inch mud puddle all the time. ***I mean, I was constantly in the mud.*** Mm-hmm.

00:35:12:00

Interviewer:

You had talked to me about Bobby Kennedy's death happening at this [unintelligible], how this woke you up from something. I mean, how, how were you affected by Kennedy's death?

00:35:22:00

Andrew Young:

Well, following Martin Luther King's death, immediately after we left the hospital we had a meeting, and we said that if you let people stop the dream when the dreamer is slain then you just encourage people to keep on killing your leadership. So, the most important thing was to pick up the movement and keep it going. So, we didn't have time to grieve. We didn't have time to even miss Martin Luther King. We had to go on with his work. And so we pushed ourselves even though we were probably all, you know, emotionally and internally on the verge of exploding. And we pushed ourselves right on through the early days of the Poor People's Campaign. But then on the 6th of June, right after Martin's death on the 4th of April, ***Robert Kennedy's assassination just brought everything to a halt. And I think we began to grieve about Martin in the context of Bobby Kennedy's assassination. Because Bobby Kennedy had been with us in Atlanta at Martin's funeral, and many of us began to see in him a hope for the future. We kinda transferred the little of our loyalty, a little of our trust, and a little of our hope to him. And now he was gone, too.***

00:36:54:00

Interviewer:

And where did that leave you personally?

00:36:57:00

Andrew Young:

Well, personally it left me really just hanging on. And it was almost after that, we were just going through the motions. We knew we were not going to get a positive reaction from the congress. We never expected to do that. We didn't really know how to evaluate the possibilities of the next election. But we were just trying to figure out how to close out Resurrection City gracefully and frankly get into the next election.

00:37:42:00

Interviewer:

Let me ask you one more question. Where was the movement after Resurrection City ended, where was the movement now without Martin there?

00:37:53:00

Andrew Young:

After Resurrection City, the movement was I think in a state of chaos. And everybody began to try to find the way. But between Martin's death and Resurrection City, we were looking for the way together. I think after Resurrection City, it was…we were pulling in differing directions. I was already pulling toward politics, though, and was very interested in the '68 elections. And so we were looking to bring a delegation from the Poor People's Campaign to the Democratic convention. But we were bringing a nonviolent demonstration. We didn't anticipate the hostility and violence of the White kids who were coming or the police in Chicago who were in some ways on that occasion as bad as police had been anywhere in the country.

00:39:04:00

Interviewer:

At the end of 1968, how did you feel?

00:39:10:00

Andrew Young:

[sighs] Well, I was floundering at the end of 1968, and I think the only thing that saved me was the, the hospital workers strike in Charleston, South Carolina. And I went over to Charleston in early '69 in response to hospital workers union 1199. And I got involved with Charleston for the next hundred days.

00:39:49:00

Interviewer:

Cut it for a second.

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yes.

[cut]

00:39:51:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

00:39:54:00

Interviewer:

You're in Atlanta. Things really happened after the election of the first Black mayor. What did Maynard do in office?

00:40:02:00

Andrew Young:

Well, Maynard did a number of very successful things as the first Black mayor of the city of Atlanta. One, he established a sense of justice and fairness in the police department. He also built the world's busiest airport and did it in such a way that minority contractors received twenty-five percent of all of the contracts on what started out to be almost a billion-dollar project. And he built it on time and under budget with twenty-five percent minority participation. And I think that's clearly the Maynard Jackson legacy, not only for Atlanta but for the nation. He brought Blacks into the mainstream of the business life of the city.

00:40:53:00

Interviewer:

So, he promised change, and he was serious about delivering on it?

00:40:56:00

Andrew Young:

He promised change. He was serious about delivering on it, and he made a lot of enemies doing it. He moved money out of the banks because there was no loan officers that could make decisions. So, until each bank had a Black vice president and a Black on the board, the city wouldn't put any money in those banks. Those were gutsy calls at that time. And they provided the basis of change in the city though, which has proved to be the solid foundation for our growth.

00:41:41:00

Interviewer:

Are we rolling out now?

Camera Crew Member #1:

That's a roll out on camera roll forty—

Camera Crew Member #2:

No it's not.

Camera Crew Member #1:

—thirty-three.

Interviewer:

Do we have enough for a question?

Camera Crew Member #2:

[inaudible]

Camera Crew Member #1:

I'm sorry it's not a roll out.

[cut]

00:41:51:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

00:41:53:00

Interviewer:

How did you feel about George Wallace's candidacy?

00:41:56:00

Andrew Young:

Well, George Wallace's candidacy was a threat to us because it was based on a divide and conquer strategy. And we were trying to prove that there was a new South where Blacks and Whites were working together. And George Wallace was resurrecting the old South, a South based on he—fear and hatred.

00:42:15:00

Interviewer:

Was he also doing this nationwide?

00:42:17:00

Andrew Young:

He was also beginning to stir up racial feelings in northern cities. And while Wallace had been a great help to us in his opposition in Alabama, when he began to attract followers in Michigan and Wisconsin, places that we thought were liberal states, it was clearly a threat.

00:42:42:00

Interviewer:

That's great.

Camera Crew Member #2:

OK.

[cut]

[camera roll #4034]

Camera Crew Member #1:

Camera roll forty, thirty-four. Ti-timecode fourteen, thirty-four.

00:42:51:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

00:42:54:00

Interviewer:

Selma in 1965, describe your concerns when Malcolm X came to speak in Selma in February of '65.

00:43:04:00

Andrew Young:

Well, I knew Malcolm well, and Malcolm quite often stopped by the SCLC headquarters. So, my concerns were minimal. I think what we had to address was the concern that was being fostered by the press, and that was getting to the kids that Malcolm X was coming. And the promise was that…or the threat that they were describing was that he would stir up sentiments of violence and make it difficult for us to control the movement.

00:43:37:00

Interviewer:

So, there were no great concerns about him speaking per se?

00:43:40:00

Andrew Young:

No. I had heard Malcolm speak and knew that he was a very effective speaker up north. But I figured the kids down south that were involved with us really at that time didn't know him and didn't understand him very well. So, Malcolm spoke sandwiched between James Bevel and Fred Shuttlesworth, you know, two experienced southern preachers who knew all the southern language and style. And he made a very good speech, but no negative impact at all on the movement.

00:44:23:00

Interviewer:

How did Dr. King feel about Malcolm X's assassination?

00:44:28:00

Andrew Young:

I think any time there was an assassination, Martin felt that, There but for the grace of God go I and that I'll probably be next. He felt that way about John Kennedy's assassination, and he felt that way about Martin…about Malcolm's assassination. I don't know that he ever believed that it was just internal fighting within the Muslim movement that led to Malcolm's death.

00:45:05:00

Interviewer:

Can we cut it for a second?

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yes.

[cut]

Camera Crew Member #1:

Speed.

00:45:08:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

00:45:13:00

Interviewer:

Did SCLC support the idea of an independent political party, or did you feel that Black people should belong to the Democratic Party? Even with Wallace as its head in Alabama.

00:45:22:00

Andrew Young:

Well, Martin felt that Black people should always be in the mainstream of politics. And that that meant being apart of the Democrat or the Republican Party. He was very suspicious of third-party politics. And even though we had worked with the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, our experience had been that they began to think that the symbolic process of an, an election was real power. And so the differences that we had over the Freedom Democratic Party in Atlantic City in '64 convinced us that we had to find a way to work with the Democrat and Republican Parties.

00:46:13:00

Interviewer:

SCLC was close to John Lewis.

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

When he lost out to Stokely Carmichael as the national chairman of SNCC, how did Dr. King and SCLC feel about where SNCC was headed?

00:46:25:00

Andrew Young:

Well, I don't think that SCLC had any concerns because we were not…we knew John Lewis and liked him, and respect him, respected him, but we also knew Stokely and knew Stokely as a very bright and aggressive kid from the North. And our main concern was that he was not comfortable enough in the South. And on the Meredith March, for instance, Stokely freaked out. I mean, he just went berserk. Not in violence, but, I mean, the tear gas just got him. And at the time he became the head of SNCC, we were just beginning to realize the impact of the assassination of Johnathan Daniels on Stokely Carmichael. Psychologically it's a terrible thing to be with two people, and both of them get gunned down and you not touched. Jonathan Daniels was…went to get Stokely Carmichael out of jail. No, it was Father Morrisroe went to get Stokely and Jonathan Daniels out of jail in Lowndes County. And when they came out, Father Morrisroe was shot, and Jonathan Daniels was killed. And Stokely was left there, filled with bitterness and I'd say a legitimate hatred that would begin to work on him at similar kinds of times. So that a, a year or so later in Canton, Mississippi when we were tear gassed, he lost control temporarily. And so it was those kinds of things that bothered us. But Martin and Stokely never lost friendship. Even in the days when there was the battle in the press of them being pitted against each other. Whenever Stokely came to

Atlanta, he made a point of going to Ebenezer to church to hear Martin preach. And Martin and Coretta made a point of inviting him home to dinner. And it was not only a means of trying to keep the movement together, but he saw Stokely as a young man with tremendous potential and ability. And Black Power itself was something Martin disagreed with tactically. In fact what he said all the time was Jews have power, but if you ever accuse them of power they deny it. Catholics have power, but they always deny it. In a pluralistic society to have real power, you have to deny it. [laughs] And if you go around claiming power, the whole society turns on you and crushes you. And it was not Black Power that he was against. It was the slogan "Black Power" because he said if you really have power, you don't need a slogan.

00:49:53:00

Interviewer:

Let's cut it there for a second.

[cut]

00:49:56:00

Camera Crew Member #1:

Speed.

[slate]

00:49:58:00

Interviewer:

Describe what happened when you all heard that James Meredith had been shot in Mississippi.

00:50:04:00

Andrew Young:

Well, we…the SCLC executive staff was in a staff meeting in the SCLC boardroom in Atlanta, and the word came that James Meredith has been killed. And Bob Green, and Jose, and everybody just jumped up and said, We got to go. Find out when the next plane is to Mississippi. And it was part of our thought, our strategy and philosophy that if somebody is killed, whatever they're doing, others had to take it up. And so they were ready to go to Mississippi. Then we got a call that he wasn't dead, that he was just wounded, and he was goin' to recover. Well, I wanted to sit back down and have the meeting. [laughs] Because we were a very small staff with about a half a million dollar a year budget. And we were already committed to voter registration in the South, and we were already committed to voter

registration, a movement against slums, Operation Breadbasket, and a movement to help home ownership for the poor in the North. And to go to Mississippi meant to abandon these other things and possibly get bogged down 'cause I didn't see how we could do all of it. But I didn't prevail, but I didn't go. I said, You all go on. This is crazy. And when they went over, and Martin went with them, then he called and said, We're gonna go on and complete the Meredith March. I said, Oh, Lord. Have mercy. What are we into now? Because we had less than a hundred staff. And, see, you could operate in Birmingham, or Selma, or Montgomery with a small staff 'cause those are small towns. Chicago had more Black people than the whole state of Alabama or Mississippi, so we needed more staff in Chicago than we needed still working in the South. And then to take on Alabama, and Chicago, and then add Mississippi I thought was, was just tryin' to do too much.

00:52:24:00

Interviewer:

Were you at the meeting—

Camera Crew Member #2:

Just a sec. Let me check footage.

Interviewer:

We just made two productions teams [unintelligible]

Camera Crew Member #2:

We have half a minute.

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Camera Crew Member #1:

Still rolling?

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yes, still rolling.

Interviewer:

Like, I can't think of any of these questions in [unintelligible]—

Camera Crew Member #2:

OK, let's cut.

Interviewer:

—just cut this roll.

[rollout on camera roll]

[wild sound]

Camera Crew Member #1:

OK, end of camera roll forty, thirty-four.

Andrew Young:

[sighs]

Interviewer:

[unintelligible] jump to the last six months

[cut]

[camera roll #4035]

Camera Crew Member #1:

Camera roll forty, thirty-five. Timecode fourteen, thirty-five. Continuation of sound roll fourteen, thirteen.

00:52:53:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it please.

[slate]

00:52:56:00

Interviewer:

Why did the SCLC go along with the participation of the Deacons for Defense on the march?

00:53:02:00

Andrew Young:

The SCLC was aggressively nonviolent, but Martin made distinctions between nonviolence, defensive violence, and retaliatory violence. And he was far more understanding of defensive violence. I remember in Georgia, a Black man was being intimidated because the people who owned his place were flirting with his wife. And he wouldn't let his wife go out with this man, and they came by to, to shoot him. He jumped out the back window and blasted the front of the shot…you know, blasted him off his porch with a shotgun. And Martin's attitude was you can never fault a man for protecting his home and his wife. Yeah. And we saw the Deacons as defending their home and their wives and children. Now, Martin said he would never himself resort to violence even in self-defense, but he would not demand that of others. That was a religious commitment into which one had to grow.

00:54:29:00

Interviewer:

There was a discussion about the role of White people on the march. Why was that an issue?

00:54:39:00

Andrew Young:

The role of White people on the march began to be discussed because [pause] the student movement for a long time had been heavily dominated by Whites. Whites tended to have more political experience, more money of their own, and, and generally took the leadership. And there was a decision in…on the part of some of the Blacks in SNCC that we don't just wanna get people free. We wanna develop indigenous Black leadership. And one of the ways to force the development of indigenous Black leadership is to get rid of all this paternalism. Now, they were paternalists themselves in many ways because we were outsiders just as Whites were. And that's the reason SCLC never went along with that. We felt yes, we have to develop local leadership, but you don't wanna blame the frustrations of local leadership development on Whites alone. We were also partially responsible for usurping some of the leadership.

00:56:04:00

Interviewer:

And for the tear-gassing in Canton, when you've come into Canton and had that, that terrible experience with the police chasing people off with tear-gas. Dr. King reportedly said that the federal government had to give him a victory if he was gonna be able to keep the movement

nonviolent. Did the government abandon the movement? And if you can, if you made that statement, can you incorporate that statement into the answer?

00:56:30:00

Andrew Young:

Yes, the government did abandon the movement, and Martin felt that unless nonviolence could achieve victories it was going to end up with people turning more and more towards violence. The Canton tear-gassing was one of the most difficult things we had experienced up to that time. We were simply stopping on a school ground, and police surrounded a group of mostly women and children and just started shooting teargas. I was up on the top of a truck, trying to give instructions. Run against the wind, don't run with the wind. Cover your faces with handkerchiefs, and all of a sudden the tear-gas came up and caught me. And I jumped from the top of the truck, and it was a combination of tear-gas and nausea gas, and I was retching and running. And all of the instructions I gave to everybody else I completely forgot myself. I was running with the wind into more and more tear-gas, and the only thing I remember was that there was a preacher up in front of me, and we hit a six-foot wick wire fence around the school. And he must have been about fifty. And he and I both cleared that fence. [laughs] And I think that was one of the few times in the movement that I really got mad. And the anger was at myself because that was the first time I'd ever lost control. But it was also anger at Mississippi troopers for tear-gassing women and children who were simply standing around, singing hymns, and preparing to camp there for the night.

00:58:31:00

Interviewer:

Can we stop for one second?

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yes.

[cut]

Camera Crew Member #1:

And speed.

00:58:35:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

00:58:38:00

Interviewer:

One source says that you were so angry that night that you felt like torching the state trooper cars. Can you tell us about that?

00:58:46:00

Andrew Young:

No, I don't think that I got quite that angry. I, I said…actually what happened was Willy Ricks who now calls himself Brother Africa was going around, talking about talking torching cars. And I grabbed…he was up on top of a car, and I grabbed him and pulled him down, and I said, Don't be foolish. You lead these people into these state troopers, and you're just gonna get us all killed. So, and I said to him, If you had as many machine guns as they had then violence might make sense. But they've got machine guns, and you're gonna go throw bricks and bottles? That's not violence. That's stupidity. You know? And…but I was angry. But I wasn't so angry that I was ready to be suicidal. And…but I, I later found, and I, I guess I even knew then that I was also angry at myself for losing control in that situation. But it, it, once I saw Willy Ricks beginning to take, you know…I mean, once his anger began to endanger the lives of other people, I came to my senses pretty quick.

01:00:08:00

Interviewer:

Last question for this time. By the time the march ended in Jackson, what were your feelings about the future of the movement? Was there any hope for unity?

01:00:22:00

Andrew Young:

I always felt that unity did not mean uniformity. In my own family, my parents were, were the NAACP and Urban League. I was with SCLC. My brother had done some work with CORE. If we'd had a younger brother, he would have probably been in SNCC. And the diversity in the movement really expressed the age and cultural breadth of the movement, so I was never threatened by that. I knew we would, there would always be tension, but I knew we were always working towards the same goal. And as long as SCLC with Martin's leadership was strong enough and bold enough to be willing to support everybody. We didn't sell memberships to compete with the NAACP. We didn't go after government grants to compete with the Urban League. We didn't organize on college campuses to compete with SNCC. We saw ourselves as supporting everybody. So, everybody wanted Martin's support

and SCLC's support, but they'd usually get mad when we started getting credit. But they couldn't have done it without us, and certainly it couldn't have been done without Martin Luther King. So, that was just one of the burdens we lived with. It's like the, the tensions one lives with with a brother that one both loves and competes with all through life.

01:02:01:00

Interviewer:

Stop it there for a second.

Camera Crew Member #2:

Sure.

[cut]

[sound roll #414]

01:02:04:00

Camera Crew Member #1:

Sound roll four, fourteen.

[slate]

01:02:07:00

Interviewer:

Why did SCLC decide to, to bring its nonviolent campaign north?

01:40:58:00

Andrew Young:

I think that the reason more than anything else that Mar…motivated, let me start that over. I think the thing that, that bugged Martin the most was the fact that Robert Kennedy said that the problems in the North existed because the leadership in the South hadn't paid any attention to the North. And it was an unfair charge, a charge I disagreed with. But it was a charge that Martin took seriously. And so he wanted to go to a northern city basically to prove that nonviolence could work in the North. And Bevel and Bernard Lafayette were in Chicago, and there was already a good support base with the City Mission Society, with the CCCO organization, with Bill Berry and the Urban League. And, and Martin just felt that if we've got to north, let's go into Chicago.

01:03:28:00

Interviewer:

Let's roll out on this one and I'll start another question on another one.

Camera Crew Member #1:

That’s a roll out on camera roll forty, thirty-five.

Interviewer:

[unintelligible]

[cut]

[camera roll #4036]

Camera Crew Member #1:

Camera roll forty, thirty-six. Timecode fourteen, thirty-six. Continuation of four, fourteen sound.

01:03:46:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

01:03:49:00

Interviewer:

Why in particular Chicago?

01:03:53:00

Andrew Young:

We chose Chicago because we knew the forces in Chicago. We knew the people in Chicago. But most of all, Chicago had an organized campaign to invite SCLC to come. And we received requests from just about every Black leader. Martin had a number of good friends

that were pastors of the bigger churches. And, and we had staff already in place in Chicago. In James Bevel, Bernard Lafayette, Jesse Jackson.

01:04:28:00

Interviewer:

You were invited specifically by Al Raby?

01:04:30:00

Andrew Young:

We were invited specifically by Al Raby and Bill Berry, who, of the Urban League, who represented Chicago Coordinating Council of Community Organizations. Mm-hmm.

01:04:45:00

Interviewer:

Back then, did you agree with that decision? Did Chicago seem like it was too ambitious a project?

01:04:50:00

Andrew Young:

Well, I was always one that favored the South. And I always analyzed the problem of America as reform of the South. But at that time, the lock that southern chairman had on the Congress of the United States influenced the appointment of judges in the North, influenced military spending, influenced agricultural policy. I mean, the South controlled the senate. And so I said until you have in those days I thought a two-party system and an integrated south, you weren't going to be able to deal with the problems of urban American anyway. That the problems of urban America were elect…were directly related to congressional expenditures. You could put money into rural areas. You could put money into farm programs, but you didn't have the same senatorial constituency for the cities. And one of the reasons was that you had two parties in the cities, and you had a one-party system in the South.

01:06:04:00

Interviewer:

Going to Chicago, how did you see Mayor Daley?

01:06:09:00

Andrew Young:

Well, we didn't see Mayor Daley as an enemy. Mayor Daley had, had held one of the biggest most successful benefits that SCLC had ever had at the time of Birmingham. Mayor Daley and Mahalia Jackson put it together, together. And they wouldn't let anybody charge expenses, and they made every penny available to SCLC. So, Martin was an admirer of Mayor Daley and to some extent a defender of Mayor Daley as a man who knew how to run a city. He didn't agree with him, but he had a tremendous amount of respect for him. Also Mayor Daley's police and Mayor Daley defended us against mobs in Cicero, and Gage Park. And, I mean, some of the most violent mobs we'd ever faced we faced in Chicago. One of the stories that Martin used to tell was of a…as we were lined up waiting to get started, this crowd came by. And there was this very attractive White girl who came with just tears in her eyes. She was so enraged. And Martin looked at her and said, Sweetheart, you're so beautiful. You shouldn't be filled with that kinda hatred. You know? And it just took her…I mean, it, it just took her off guard. And then we marched. We went on through the march, and she came back toward the end of the march afterwards. And she came up to him, and she was smiling. Then she said, You remember me? And he said, Yeah, I remember you. She said…he said, You're the one that I said was too pretty to hate. And she smiled and walked away.

01:07:55:00

Interviewer:

Hmm. That's a good story. Did your view of Mayor Daley change as this, the, the, the, the Chicago actions went on?

01:08:04:00

Andrew Young:

No, Daley was doing what he had to do. And I find myself in very similar situations nowadays, so I'm probably even more sympathetic to Mayor Daley now as a mayor than I was then.

01:08:18:00

Interviewer:

What was he doing? I mean, how, how was he managing the situation?

01:08:21:00

Andrew Young:

Well, Mayor Daley was trying to keep together a political machine. We were trying to break up a political machine. We were trying to get more registered voters. He saw too many registered voters as being more than he could control. He wanted to control and count his vote. He saw the movement as a direct threat to his machine. And we saw the machine as the basis of the slums, of the poverty, of the exploitation of Black folk. At the same time I think Martin agreed with Ralph Metcalfe that for Black people coming up from Mississippi and Alabama in the Second World War, the political machine had been a very helpful vehicle. And under Congressman Dawson, the organization of Blacks in Chicago politics was probably the best in the world. The machine had served the Black community well, but its days were over. And we were there to announce that, but Daley wasn't ready to turn loose.

01:09:31:00

Interviewer:

Were you at Gage Park with Dr. King?

Andrew Young:

Yes, I was.

Interviewer:

Dr. King is hit by a rock.

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

Can you describe that moment, and how it looked, and how you felt?

01:09:40:00

Andrew Young:

Well, I was standing there in the middle of Gage Park when ***there was just a rain of rocks and cherry bombs. So, you didn't know what it was.*** And so we were ducking because we didn't know whether it was a hand grenade or, or some more serious explosion. A rock, a bottle. I, I was standing right next to him when he was hit. And he, he wasn't hurt, and he just sluffed it off. The guy that was standing right where I was standing was hit in the face with a brick. I mean, they…I was standing next to Dr. King, and he told me to go see about something. And I left and put another guy in my place, and he was hit very badly. And, and it was a dangerous time. But the police in fact…I had just rented a little yellow Ford, and it got set on fire and pushed into the lake. So, I, I, I mean, it was a, a rough day where maybe a

couple of hundred demonstrators were surrounded by a mob of ten thousand or more in Gage Park. ***Now, in the South we faced mobs. But in the South, it would be a couple of hundred or even fifty or seventy-five. The violence in the South always came from a rabble element, but these were women, and children, and husbands and wives coming out of their homes, becoming a mob. And in some ways it was far more frightening.***

01:11:33:00

Interviewer:

You must have been very scared.

01:11:38:00

Andrew Young:

I don't…I think the only thing I was afraid of in Chicago was going home at night. We lived in a fourth story walkup flat on 16th and Hamlin. And it was a corner where all the junkies hung out, and I knew that, you know, somebody could stick a knife in you for fifty dollars and not even worry about it. And coming back home every night, it…I guess we were taught not to be afraid of dying for a purpose. So, if I'd been killed in a demonstration, I, you know, I…that's a blessing in a way. In some ways a honor. But to be killed by a junkie in an ally was a humiliation. You know? I mean, and so I think that was the only, that was my biggest fear.

01:12:34:00

Interviewer:

The marches continue, and, and they continue. And, and finally the cities call for a summit meeting. What pressures was SCLC under to settle? I mean, did you need to find some kind of victory? Were you looking for some way out eventually?

01:12:48:00

Andrew Young:

Well, I think we realized that ***when we went to Chicago we were trying to see would nonviolence work in the North, and what elements of nonviolence would work. Voter registration, marches and direct action, could we end slums and create good housing, could we create jobs and educational opportunities.*** And all of those…oh, and could we build affordable housing for poor people as homeowners. [sneezes] Excuse me.

01:13:25:00

Interviewer:

Do you want to cut for a second?

Andrew Young:

Sorry. I'm OK.

Camera Crew Member #3:

[coughs]

Interviewer:

[unintelligible]

[cut]

[camera roll #4037]

Camera Crew Member #1:

Camera roll forty, thirty-seven. Timecode fourteen, thirty-seven. Continuation of sound four, fourteen.

01:13:34:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mark it.

[slate]

01:13:37:00

Interviewer:

If we can start by, by going through the, the fact that SCLC was trying to do a lot of different things that as the marches continued, was there a pressure to settle?

01:13:50:00

Andrew Young:

SCLC went to Chicago to see if nonviolence would work in the North, and so we were doing a number of things. The marches were only one. The marches were a part of an open housing effort, but we were also trying to end slums and create home ownership

opportunities for poor people. We were trying to generate jobs. We were trying to do voter registration. We were trying to integrate the economic opportunities through Operation Breadbasket, which was Jesse Jackson's project. And all of these were working enough for us to know that we could many of the same things in the North that we'd done in the South. ***But Chicago was so much bigger than any city that we'd worked in in the South. We knew we couldn't do them all at the same time and that we couldn't sustain an aggressive movement as long as, you know, much longer. So, we were trying to find a way to wind it up*** and maybe institutionalize it. Get some settlement and some response and agreements from Daley. And, and then commit to a slow long-term change period.

01:15:07:00

Interviewer:

Did you feel pressure at that point to settle?

01:15:10:00

Andrew Young:

The pressure was from our own internal needs. We had come right out of Selma and gone to Cleveland to help Carl Stokes get elected. And then moved right into Chicago. And then we got pulled down to Mississippi and then back to Chicago. We were physically exhausted and, and needed to get back home.

01:15:36:00

Interviewer:

Dr. King signs the agreement and postpones the marches indefinitely. As you walked out of the summit meeting, did you feel that the nonviolent movement had won a victory in Chicago?

01:15:47:00

Andrew Young:

Not victory comparable…I mean, we didn't feel that the nonviolent movement had won a victory comparable to any of those that we'd won in the South. But when we signed an agreement in Birmingham, it was the same way. It wasn't until after the Birmingham agreement that we got congress with a march…I mean, congress to introduce the civil rights bill and a march on Washington that helped get it past. But we felt that we had done about all that we could do at that point and that something else would have to happen from that point on to deal with the problems of the northern major cities. In fact the thing that had to happen was we had to find some more government money to invest in cities. The city's infrastructure, the city's transportation system, the city's housing. All of those things were

terribly underfunded. The city's education system. At that time Chicago was spending approximately two hundred and thirty-five dollars on every Black child's education and four hundred and thirty-five dollars on every White child's education. In the suburbs, they were spending seven hundred dollars on every White child's education. And in Evanston, they were spending nine hundred dollars on every White child's education. There's no way that you could expect a child on the South side of Chicago to compete with a child in Evanston when all of the advantages and all of the money were being put in the Evanstons and little or nothing on the South and West side.

01:17:33:00

Interviewer:

Last question. There were…SCLC in Chicago was described by some people as being between, to use a cliché, a, a rock and a hard place. In that you had the White neighborhoods that were so, so enraged by the marches, but you also had groups that had been motivated by Black Power. You had Bob Lucas—

Andrew Young:

Mm-hmm.

Interviewer:

—of CORE in Chicago and Monroe Sharp of SNCC who wanted to continue the marches, who were much more militant. Was—did this put pressure on SCLC in Chicago?

01:18:10:00

Andrew Young:

It was the same kinda pressure we'd been in all along. I mean, from the very earliest days in Albany, it was SNCC that wanted to up the ante. In Birmingham, there, it was the guys in the pool hall that wanted to launch a violent movement. In Selma, we'd had some tensions with SNCC again. There was nothing unusual about this. This was the life that we lived. We were caught between a rock and a hard place. And, and yet I think we were quite comfortable there 'cause we believed we were right, and we believed that disciplined, well organized, organized good will, i.e. nonviolence would prevail and that it was the only way to bring about change in America.

01:19:06:00

Interviewer:

How did Dr. King personally feel about those people who were more militant who accused him of a sell out with the [unintelligible]—

01:19:11:00

Andrew Young:

They weren't more militant. They were more neurotic. And I think that's the way he dealt with it personally. We knew people, and we knew that people operated in movements as much out of their hostility and frustration as they did out of their intelligence. But you don't give in to hostility and frustration. If you do, you, you're wasted. I mean, my daddy always told me even as a child, you know, don't get mad, get smart. That, that violence is counterproductive. And we never questioned that. And even in the more aggressive nonviolent and civil disobedience days, there was always a disciplined nonviolent well-organized effort that contained little or no bitterness.

01:20:13:00

Interviewer:

Last question. And we talked about this earlier. Did you and SCLC and Dr. King fear being tagged as militants yourselves?

01:20:24:00

Andrew Young:

I think that SCLC took seriously the charge of being communist. We didn't mind being militant. But militantly nonviolent. We didn't like the charge of being violent, and we didn't like the charge of being communist. Mainly because it's legitimate to kill communists. It's legitimate to kill people who are violent. And so we fought to maintain our nonviolent integrity. But what other folk thought of us beyond that didn't really matter a great deal.

01:21:06:00

Interviewer:

Cut. Thank you very much.

[cut]

[end of interview]

01:21:11:00