

- And it was four years later, coming out of Atlantic City. There were lots of reasons for that. That have to do with what happened at Atlantic City, that had to do with our own development. There's one thing, if you have, see, in some ways, the movement had a lot of, that's why it's a movement, it wasn't an organization, it was a movement. Which meant it had lots of dimensions and lots of faces. If you're sitting in because a restaurant has sent you here, racially, cannot eat at this restaurant because you're black and you decide to sit in, it's relatively easy for anybody who agrees with you to join with you. And it's a fairly short step from doing that for a while to forming an organization, which is SNCC, in this instance. Once you form an organization, things get more and more complex as you, you're 18, 19 or 20 years old, grow, develop, gain some experience. Now I think, I'm skipping over an awful lot. We don't have nearly enough time for a lot of this. It seems to me, looking back, that we, inside SNCC, in particular, and I would argue generally in the movement, really didn't know enough to grapple with many of these questions. And I would say, well, why would we? The society didn't know enough. So why should we be expected as 20 somethings to figure out how to deal with all this stuff? All the anger that's happening and alienation that's happening because of Atlantic City, all the stuff we're pulling inside of ourselves as we work in these rural counties. All of this. Why should we? So that's part of it. Now, maybe now, as we enter into the 21st century, it may be that there's enough history with this that there is a generation of young people who can grapple with this more effectively than we could, but I make the point that we, from my vantage point, didn't know enough to grapple, and that's not an apology, that's just a simple observation of what seemed to me to be the reality. To the extent that we did make some, it was not because we thought it through, planned it, or had the ideology, it almost happened by accident.

- I think we have to grapple with it, but I am adamantly opposed to bringing a couple of white folks into my group to say that I'm integrated or vice versa. I don't have no problem with white folks organizing and they got no blacks in there. Ain't got no problem with black folks organizing and they ain't got no white folks in there. My concern is whether they're engaging in truth telling and have created a vision or strategy and a program of work that ultimately deals with the problems that affects all. Because I feel that if you do that, as you look at broadening your base, and getting your support, you will see where your past intersects with mine. Mine intersects with yours. Now, if our paths are gonna intersect, and we're serious, then that creates us, or puts us to the position where we have to begin to deal with one another and through that process of engaging in work, and trying to solve problems, the whole coming together will come about and to throw it together, up front, unofficially and superficially, I don't see it working.

- I want to just respond, before we go on to another point, because I don't think we're talking about people being thrown together. I think in this situation of SNCC, we're talking about people who have worked together, who knew each other, OK, and who knew each other intimately and my argument was, you know, we used to talk very straight to each other, and it didn't matter if you were black or white, I never saw that color in my discussion with people. You either did good work or you screwed up. And if you screwed up, then I wanted to know why. I mean, that was the nature of my engagement with people, I'm gonna speak very specifically to this young man's question, because I'll give you a couple of examples. I worked with one

white woman who happened to be very well placed, who had a big black book, OK, and what we wanted to do in the state of Georgia was to change the welfare law. Now, the welfare law was really bad. This goes way back, now, this is prior to 1978, so. But the average welfare payment was \$40 a month, and I know people think that there are all these welfare queens, et cetera, but you need to look at the welfare checks to really get some idea what welfare's really about. And in any case, so \$40 a month would hardly take care of anything, so what we did, we worked with a group of southern white Baptists, and they said, here's X amount of money, and we want you to change the shape of this welfare legislation. With her little black book, we had two telephones and we literally sat back to back for months. She called her little black book, and I called my little black book. And we just called people and all we said to them, and this was working with white people, primarily, we don't think it's right. We're not gonna tell you what we think it ought to be. We just don't think it's right. And we just happen to be across the street from the state capital. I mean, we were asconded in a little office. And one day, I was looking out the window, and I said, "Hey, come here and look at this." Busloads of people were coming. They had organized their parishes, their churches, their schools, their whatevers. And were just sauntering in to meet with the legislator to talk with them about something that they didn't think was right. Now, that's very little, but it was a state wide effort. It was very cheap, OK? It was the cost of a lot of volunteer time and two telephones. Now, that's one idea. Now, these things can always escalate. We got to start somewhere. People always say you gotta start with the big picture. No, you start with the small. The racism grows by increments, OK? It's the first comment that passes that ought to be challenged. It's the first act that passes that ought to be challenged. In a reverse situation, I worked with a young guy from South Africa, didn't like him. Anybody knows about the South African apartheid situation, he was a cape colored, he always thought I was beneath his fleet. But I saw him fired. And I didn't like it. And so I said, "No." And so I organized, only got out of possibly 30 teachers, I got six people to go down and fire him on human rights charges, and I mean I literally had to sit on people to go down and fire. And to make a long story short, then I had to jack up to South Africa to make him fired. It took 12 years. I put up \$35,000 of my own money to see this case through and we finally won. It took 12 years, had to jack up the lawyer, had to jack up everybody that I was with. But I use that as an example. If you believe in something hard enough, you will see to it that the right comes out. And that's just a point that I'm making. You know, a lot of times, people keep looking for the easy things. I said to you this morning. The line in the sand is always before you. Whether it's in school, whether it's in your job, whether it's at the store, the parking lot. Every day, black people go through thousands and thousands of insults every single day by an interaction, and I'm sure, because I work with white people in SNCC, that white people see these interactions. And I'm sure that white people know what is happening. Learn to find voice. Learn to say, "In my presence, you may not. "You may not use my name, you may not function "in my name, to continue this crap. "It's over." And when you start to speak out as individuals, there will be a new dimension set in your environment. Either they will choose to avoid you, which is maybe all right, but since you white, you can go there and say, "You can't avoid me." Or you can say, "I'm willing to work on the changes." And I'm being very upfront about this. I worked in a very high powered all white operation at one point. I was in charge of \$14,000,000. These white folks threw this money at me because they thought it was gonna kill me. They said, "She's not gonna be able to do this." I was sick for two weeks. I never handled anything over a couple of thousand. And it occurred to me that the 14,000,000 is simply adding \$14 with a couple of more zeroes behind it, and if I could handle \$14 OK, maybe I could handle \$14,000,000 OK, and that was the position that I took. One day, I found everybody, we were sitting around in huge tables, as big as this room, only six

people. Handling a multimillion dollar operation. One by one, everybody got up. I turned around, I was the only person in the room. I got up and I went and knocked on the men's bathroom door. And they were having the meeting in the men's bathroom. And I told them, I said, "You know, you don't need "to meet in the men's bathroom "if you don't want me present." And they were all, there were five white men and me. I said, "If you don't want me present, "at your decision making, it's perfectly fine. "I'm gonna go back to my office. "But I think it's absolutely ridiculous that you "were gonna sit here in the bathroom to avoid discussion "with me." Now, I'm a direct person. Maybe some people need to find their directness. Because what I say to you is that part of what happens in this country is your silence allows people to assume your affirmation. And when they have your affirmation at one level, it doesn't take long for them to move it to another level. You know, and pretty soon, you turn up with the big issues. But you don't have any base. And you've got to learn how to establish a base. So people got to know what you stand for. Who are you? When you raise a question in class, do you raise the question in a way that people can learn from it, or do you raise the question so that it is directly antagonistic? You gotta learn style. You gotta learn information. Well I was reading the other day, I know you have us reading so and so, but I was reading the other day such and such a thing. Why don't some of us have group meetings? I was surprised to see how individualistically people go to school these days. We used to have study groups. People used to get together, you know? And help each other pass. You know what I mean? Or share material. If the professor had 20 things in the library on what do you call it, on reserve, you know, we used to share that stuff. Because our group wasn't gonna fall apart. And I'm saying, when you do that at one level, you build a loyalty factor. So that people then begin to hear you a lot more clearly when you have a difference of opinion. You got to put out to get it, do you understand what I'm trying to say? I just want to give you some practical examples of how to begin organizing.

Man: We got 10 more minutes. 12 to be exact. So. Go ahead.

- I just want to focus on the idea of, I work with different student groups at my university, I go to NC State. And I work with different groups in the country, on the east coast, and the most, I'm a member of the Asian American Student Organization, and a member of another student organization, a lot of different organizations around the world. The main thing I've seen is, coming from the suburban perspective, working with that one aspect of the community, Asian, African, whatever, you gotta make sure you know kind of the goals you're setting, make sure you're dividing between racial relations and racial justice or equality, equity. Because you have to build with the students you're working with on a racial understanding. Not just an understanding from an aspect of a dominant group saying, "Well, these are the issues, this is how we feel. "These are the issues, this is how these groups "are being oppressed, or pushed into these situations feel." Making sure you're bringing in information from those outside sources, versus putting on your impression or perspective on those groups. And then once you build the net of understanding of information through those students you're working with, be it through books, readings, current time information, or bringing in people to speak to you, then you look at setting up relationships with other dominant groups, be it Society of African Culture, be it Asian Students Association, set up things where you meet maybe on an issue for. Or you meet on an outing or something. You share that way. Once that's kind of established, you got yourself kind of fixed, then you look at the issues of racial equity or racial justice because you got an understanding of perspective, not from your own diatribe, your own group, but perspective from a broader sense, of those being oppressed. If you just walk up in there with the liberal,

kind of the white liberal mentality, well this is how we white liberals feel this should be fixed, this is the way we should fix it, not thinking of how they would want it to be fixed, versus applying stuff onto them, in another dominant form, then you're setting yourself up again. And so before you come to the base, you ask people around them who are dealing with these questions what they're really feeling. You can understand from reading whatever, what they're going through, versus implying what you think they're going through. Then you look at the racial equity and the racial oppression through justice and apply that in whatever way. That's how we work with different student groups.

Woman: Let's see if we can move around. Sister here, then you.

- My name is Sanclair, I'm a graduate student with Cav University. I have a question dealing with the evolution of SNCC. We didn't talk about, talking about a few minutes ago. I wanted to know what impact did the liberation struggle in Africa, the rising black consciousness, and the meeting of Malcolm X affect SNCC's decision to move to that exclusive black organization? I think you start talking a little bit about the personal evolution of SNCC, members individually, but as an organization, how did that affect the direction that they went in?

- Well, there's no short answer to this. Just, suffice to say that, I mean, as we developed part of an important part of our development was exposure to this wider, ever wider range of people and ideas. I mean, you know, when we started out, literally, with the civil rights idea. And then over time, we, because of what we were doing, got exposed to, there's lots of ways to talk about that. Dingo Dinga coming to Atlanta and what happened. Malcolm X and the young people in Alabama. The African Liberation movement, the emergence of independent African nations that were occurring at the same time as a lot of the '60s civil rights movements. Particularly what was happening in South Africa, from Sharkville all the way through the arrest of Nelson Mandela, all this is affecting us. Films and books and ideas are all affecting. And we, I don't think you can speak to it organizationally in any significant way. I think you could say, yes, I could talk about people I was close to, and I could tell you in very precise terms how they took these ideas and what kind of impact these ideas had. And I think it must not be very different, with students who are active today. But.

- Well, we're also having some affect on them. I think the African. (chattering) And one of the ironic things is that SNCC moved to become exclusionist at the same time Malcolm X was moving from a separatist position to an inclusive, more revolutionary.

- I just wanted to say that, we did a couple of accommodations testing, route 40, which used to be highway from New York to Washington DC, and part of the focus on that was because African delegates could not eat at any of those restaurants or you know. So to that degree, yeah. And I can remember one time when Stanley Weiss was arrested in the car, and Stanley took on the monocle of an African diplomat as a means of getting out of the arrest. So, I mean. I'm just, that was the humorous part, but there was a cross fertilization with organizations, I can't say you can put it on the table, as something that we looked at.

- Thank you. Hate to have to compete with that, but. For all of the sort of, of your concern about not linking up and not talking about different things, it seems like there's a really powerful set of themes running

through everything that you guys have been saying today. And I think there are elements of it that are really crucial to answering the question that you raised, what does this organization look like? And I think a big part of the answer is, you don't know until you're in the middle of it. And that each organization is gonna be different, each struggle is gonna be different, each one is gonna come out of the local circumstances and your success is going to be from being open and learning and humble, as Joan was suggesting, and willing to absorb all of the stuff that's going on and reflect back what's best in it, what's most important in it. And that if you are approaching it from the local perspective, and trying to do a little bit, trying to see what's moving in the direction and move it a little bit further, that's when you're going to have the opportunity to take advantage of the luck that comes your way. When something is going on, but nobody's found it yet. And you move it a little bit further, then suddenly it blossoms into this thing that nobody could have directed from the outside. I'm an ex-student activist now, I was a student activist about 10 years ago. And worried a lot about these questions and frankly I think I was, in many ways, kind of a piss poor student activist. But and I, but the thing was that the experiences of immersing myself in a local situation, learning how to talk to all sorts of different kinds of people, learning how to listen to all sorts of different kinds of people, wound up, years later, in a direction that I never could have anticipated, giving me the tools to be a historian and to be a teacher in the city university of New York, so that I can go into a classroom and all of the stuff that I learned that didn't really get put to great world changing affect, in the movement, is now the stuff that I'm able to use to make a difference as a teacher and to have a perspective on the movement and write some of the histories. So, and I think that that sense of localism, and that sense of openness, is something that came through beautifully in all five of your talks. So thank you.

- And all of those organizations should be grounded in work.

Woman: That's right, work. Absolutely.

- It's too late. It's too much.

- Did you have a short one? No. OK. Well. I'm hoping that we will continue to dialogue with one another, one on one, one on two. (chattering) (applauding) ♪ Ain't gonna let nobody ♪ ♪ Turn you round ♪ ♪ Turn you round ♪ ♪ Turn you round ♪ ♪ Ain't gonna let nobody ♪ ♪ Turn you round ♪ ♪ Gonna keep on walking ♪ ♪ Keep on talking ♪ ♪ Marching after freedom ♪ (chattering)

- All right, let's hear the next what you wanted to see out of this workshop.

- I'd like to hear your personal beliefs about in the long run, what did desegregation of schools, and public facilities, what were the gains and what were the losses of desegregation?

- Of schools? Quite specific.

- Well, schools and public facilities, but I think public schools, the issues that, form public facilities were even more heightened in schools.

- Yes.

- I'd like to hear you talk about how organizing today, is it more inclusive to organize around race and race issues, or class and those issues? And if one has become more or less important since the time of SNCC in the '60s.

- Yes?

- Since you're both clergies, I was wondering if you could talk briefly about the role of the clergy and religion in general on SNCC, in '61, and what is the role of religion and clergy today in the movement for social justice?

- OK.

- Reverend Shrev, you brought up wanting to see new leaders in the SNCC Society right now. I wanted to know, how could SNCC be useful right now and what's its purpose and where's it going? What's the future of SNCC, do you see it as?

- OK, yes.

- What do we do about the resurgence of the segregationist politics, at the electoral level? (chattering)

- All right, who next? (laughing)

Woman: I wanted to know how we maybe, some of these same issues of the '60s are still, and how they expand, extend past black white, extend into other like communities?

- The images of the '60s?

- Issues.

- Say it again.

- How these same issues like, how they're more than black white, how they affect other like racial ethnic groups?

- You want to restate it?

- I think you're asking, you know that the issues are more than just issues of race, they're larger issues here that affect all groups of people. And other ethnic groups, whites, too. And what's going on? How can they talk about what's, how does race fit into this, but what's the larger picture?

- Right. And also, how do the same issues touch different groups besides black and white issues? Does that make sense?

- Yes.

- I'd like to be, the opinion on how to inspire or motivate today's youth to tackle these issues, because that's a very big problem. Before we even get to.

- Today's youth. (laughing)

- No, well. Myself inclusive. (chattering)

- All right.

Man: We'll give you another set. When you finish this.

- Well, one assumption I'd like you to make, at the very beginning is, that is that we, we did not dismantle racism in the United States in the '60s. Be sure you understand that. I understood it, King understood it. A lot of us, Charles Sherard understood it. And while we wanted to desegregate, we did not complete that task in the '60s. It's still an unfinished task. 80% of children of color in our country are in segregated schools. North, south, east, west. 80 plus percent. And Mississippi is one illustration. Private academies are white. Because that's what Trent Lott and his company in the '60s decreed as lawsuits were coming down the pike. And pressures changed. So, Trent Lott and the Mississippi Sovereign Commission and the White Citizens Council moved to put white children into white academies, and in some counties, the public schools were all black, and the private academies and private schools were all white. That's why Trent Lott is full of school file suits because he wants to destroy the public school system period. Lott.

- Same thing in Georgia.

- Georgia.

- Same thing.

- Yeah. All across the south, that's the case. So, we did not dismantle racism. That is a task still to be done. And I do not care what president, I mean, former President Reagan says or Bill Clinton, racism is epidemic, pathological, and securely in place. And I want you to make the second assumption that racism is not a peripheral issue in the United States. Thereby, the concern primarily of black people. Racism, as it comes out of slavery, was an economic institution, and it was a national economic institution. It was an economic institution which Wall Street and the financial pages today still preach and teach. Namely, that it's important for there to be a lot of people who work, but who are kept poor. So that their work, the results of their work go into the hands of a few. That was what slavery, slavery was an economic theory. Understand that. Nearly 4,000,000 people were released from slavery by the Emancipation Proclamation, those

4,000,000 people working, for 250 years, produced massive wealth for a few people. And provided the development of capital for the industrialization of the United States. I did not say for the industrialization of Birmingham, but for the industrialization of the United States. And the banks of the north and the industrialists of the north greatly benefited from slavery. So when we talk about slavery, when you talk about racism, you talk about a problem that has affected the body politic, the spiritual politics, the political politics, the social politics, the cultural politics of this nation for over 250 years.

- And still does.

- And still does. Exactly. It is an issue for all people. Now, both the church and the Democratic and Republican parties and Wall Street want you to think that racism is a peripheral issue. But speaking as a pastor, the critical law of the spiritual life, according to the scriptures, Moses and Jesus, the primary figures of the Judeo Christian scriptures, the principle law is you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength and neighbor as yourself. This does not represent four or five different laws, but a single law. A human being cannot be a human being without their neighbor. Race, racism, and prejudice and bias and violence and sexism are all denials of that fundamental religious principle. Those are two assumptions I want to put on the table.

- Describe, what was the first question?

Woman: OK, I didn't catch Leia's question. Your question, the one that came before you started the list, that one. And everything after that.

Man: Beloved community, is that community, and does it have a role for white people? (chattering)

Man: Particularly like suburban, wealthy white people. (chattering)

- In our country. Is made up of. All kinds of people. We got people from every, just about every country in the world. So. Whatever the solution to the problem of race in our country is gonna be solved by the people of our country. So, I cannot see how each one of us can not be a part of the solution. And that was the reason why in the '60s, I was kicked out of SNCC. Because of that. I made a proposal and acted on the proposal that white students, before the Mississippi Program, before, about two or three years before, before the Mississippi Project, I had 16, 30, large numbers of white students on the project. And it was based on the fact that I believed, and learned, I believed in that whatever solution we come up with, it's got to be a multifaceted solution. And we all must participate in this. No matter how unsettling it makes me, I got to deal with it. I got to deal with your problems, your culture, and you gotta deal with mine. And by working together, being close together, there's no better chance to observe those difference and make adjustments in our working together. So. What I found out, that SNCC found out, that's why they did the Mississippi Project, which I figured would happen, was that anywhere we wanted action to happen, if we wanted action to happen, we would put some white students there and action would happen, some kind of action. Maybe action we didn't want. Somebody would get hurt or whatever. But there wouldn't be a quiet moment. From the time that white students appeared on our project, there wasn't quiet one. There wasn't a quiet moment.

But. White students from these universities brought with them the media and protection of the United States. At all levels. Way back then. Through long haired boy was thinking like that. And I knew that if one of 'em got hurt down there, we would get the resources of a whole lot of cousins and aunties. Now, I don't have no auntie that owns a big company. No cousins, no brothers, no sisters that own nothing. But they did, and they do. Y'all do. See? And all those resources that you have, that you don't even think about. Because you just go without thought. I knew that they would be at our fingertips. At some point. And that was the logic among other things, in bringing whites into our confines and trying my best to prepare my people for it. They, some of the black guys. Every time, we gonna talk to the people, and they be looking at the white folk. And that's the white folk. I'm sick and tired of, well, tell 'em to shut up, bro. Tell 'em, just tell 'em to shut up. They'll shut up if you tell 'em to shut up. Just tell 'em before you go to the house. But they'll keep looking at the white cat. You talk. And let, and adjust. We had to adjust. What I'm saying is, and I understood it would be hard for, we all were young. And getting used to authority. Getting used to power. Because it's power. We had a little power. We could pull a thousand people here, a thousand people there, that's power. We getting used to that. But then when we had to share that power with somebody who represent what you're fighting against, you getting two things you got to unmix those things. But you see, that mixture is internalized. The hostility is internalized. You know, we would be free from this hostility that was in us because of our history. And we had to deal with. To get ourselves free. It's a whole process. And so. We saw some young people becoming free. In the short time that we had whites. Whites working with us. And all those things happened that didn't have to happen if the whites weren't there, we wouldn't have had what we thought our church surrounding. We wouldn't have gotten that church burned down, that church burned down in one of the other counties. But. They were burning churches before they came. I'm telling you what my response would be.

Woman: Can you remind me why these accusations were made? I mean, what was the reality there?

- The reality was that we had college students. College students who talk better than we do. Express things better than we do. And our people are used to saluting white folk. That's the way I talk. (laughing) And we couldn't stand it. They looked, they respected the white man more than they respect me. And there's some ego involved. So these folks coming around, they're gonna leave, I'm still gonna be here. All kinds of excuses.

- SNCC break. Why the SNCC break? Why did SNCC kick, in the mid '60s, the white members of SNCC out? And tell the whites to go home? This was of course primarily encouraged by. Development.

- And in a word, we were feeling our Cheerios. We could tell thousand students all over the country to bare their ass at four o'clock October the 15th. In front of every college in the country. And we would have a representative number. Now, again, I'm sort of exaggerating, but on the other hand, there were moonings going on at the time. (laughing) We didn't, we never promoted any of those kinds of demonstrations, but I'm saying, that's the kind of power that we had. And you know, we had 15, we had a fleet of cars. We had walkie talkies. We had numbers of people coming to mass meetings. To listen to what we had to say. We had support.

- And money.

- We had money coming in. Yeah, we had, at one point, we had about \$300,000 a month, almost, 300,000 a year, at least. Would you say, coming in. That was a lot of money. (chattering) (laughing)

- Yes, please, please.

- I think there's another slant on this, and I want to certainly support and congratulate y'all for openly running biracial projects before anyone else did. But I think the other tack on this is SNCC was then faced with, we were suffering a couple of attacks. One internally, a lot of the leadership in SNCC decided to write off the Democratic party after Atlantic City. And they led, they were followed by a lot of people. Two, the money was cutting down. And three, in this period, we just followed the aftermath of taking a position on Vietnam. And we have to work all of those factors in, and we had some people who were tired, battle weary, and I think that when any group who has been, after all, we're only talking about the most sophisticated local group in American history when we talk about SNCC. But it had reached a point where it was no longer externalizing its creativity. It turned inward, and it stopped being creative. It became rigid, it became, once the rigidity set in, the question was who gets excluded? Not whether or not it would be exclusion. So we have to be very fair on that. Because I think, I don't think you can study American southern politics without studying SNCC. And the law and others. And I just think it is so important because I think that as the south was in the '60s, America is now. Yes, I think we have a country in America that is racially polarized and as it relates to income disparity and as it relates to the social acceptance of racism. That's what gets me. So.

- It's socially acceptable. In all sorts of areas. And it's also, there are signs of racism that no one deals with. And of course, you had the racist right, religious and political, pretend that we solved the problems of races. Reagan said during his presidency that we had put those behind us. But what, the only thing that's really happened is that with the push of the conservative elements, of the racist elements like Trent Lott and I name names quite deliberately so that we can identify these. With their assent, that their drive and push, George Will, William Buckley, Pat Robinson, James Dobson, and a whole host of guys. Well documented in the literature. What they pushed for then was a racism being firmed up in the institutions of America so that as an illustration, one of the signs of racism in the United States is clearly the criminal justice system and prisons, law enforcement, capital punishment. I link those all together. But it is an atrocious part of racism in the United States that is probably as destructive and rapacious as any time of lynching or as any time of slavery. 2,000,000 people in jail. Over 3,500 people on death row. I, from time to time, said and continue to say, 50% of those in prison would not be in prison if the Constitution had been obeyed, if they had had proper defense in their courtrooms. If police departments could not frame, lie, and DAs could not insist that their task is to put people in jail, not justice. The executions that have taken place since 1976, when the Supreme Court basically appointed, by the attacks from the right on activist judges, that therefore permitted the likes of a William Renquist to get into the court and a number of others, the nine today, most of whom are of that ilk. Reinstated the death penalty in 1976. After it had been pretty much engaged in a national moratorium. Since 1976, 625 people have been executed across our country. And any number of these people committed their crimes when they were children or teenagers. Any number of them were mentally retarded. Any number are, any number were, rather, mentally ill. Sizeable number have been black

or Native American or latino. And killing goes on. Surely racist. Then in the meantime, since that 1976, 87 people who were convicted and on death row have been exonerated by independent investigations, not by the DAs, not by the police. But by independent investigations. One such group has been Northwestern University School of Law, where they have gotten off of death row in Illinois five people. I think a couple of those cases they found, they solved the murders. They found the murderer. But the person on death row had already been convicted and there faced execution. So that's, in the state of Illinois, 12 out of 13 out of 25 on death row were found innocent. And that's why the Republican governor called for a moratorium in Illinois. Now, I'm saying, I'm saying that, that's only one. But that's one huge symptom of racism that is highly destructive of families in this country.

Woman: I'm from Chicago, so I mean, the other part of that is that a number of those people had been defended by lawyers who had been disbarred, and it was found out later. But I actually wanted to ask both of you and Jim Lawson, particular to the link what you're raising now about the state affairs with something I think you were getting at earlier, in the earlier session, you took objection to, to the comments about, one needs to become a part of the middle class, and all this kind of stuff, and I think that comment, I appreciated your intervention, I supported the sister trying to chair the meeting, but I appreciated the importance of your intervention because I think that that outlook is directly linked to perpetuating some of the problems because it offers a kind of counter explanation. That is, the reason that people are in jail, the reason that people are in poverty, et cetera. And that's coming from within the African American community. Actually, I also think it's very much linked to a kind of romanticization of patriarchy and the idea that what we need is strong, nuclear male headed families and that's gonna cure all. And it becomes a very conservative message, very much linked to indicting people who don't fit that model, the so called underclass. So, I don't know if you want to address that. Yeah.

- What's that now? Larry. I hope you feel free to step in because you know one of our outstanding warriors.

- What?

- Still in the struggle from the '60s and still today.

- From you, I consider that the ultimate compliment. Let me say this. I was glad to witness that because I believe, I do a lot of talking and speaking and talking and analyzing on the question of race. And for someone to say that in the name of SNCC is treasonous.

- To say?

- To say that the ideal today is a member of the middle class--

- I'm just wondering. Maybe you need to tell the story of what happened.

- OK. Why don't someone who heard all of it tell the story? Because I walked in.

- One of the students had asked--

- Thomas, who was in the east conference in 1960.

Man: Right, but one of the students asked a question, what can I do as a young black man to help the struggle? And Mr. Thomas stood up and said, "Join the middle class "and be a good father. "Stay with your family." And that's it, that's all, that was his whole answer to the problem.

- Now, what that does not deal with.

Man: He also said, it was the cause of poverty.

Woman: Yes, which is not true.

Man: Education would automatically put you into the middle class.

- Yes, he said "Get your college degree and you will automatically "be in the middle class." This is what, and Jim, you should probably say what you said. (laughing) Let's have a reenactment.

- Well, I said I protest. (laughing) I protest. Larry, go on.

- Let me be not as gentle as he was. (laughing) And say directly, if SNCC had been designed to extend and perpetuate the middle class, it would have never have done anything it did. We have, it would have never decided to go into the least and the most impoverished, the most controlled communities and say, "We are about facilitating your empowerment." I think, also, we have to be very careful. When we look at the black middle class, we look at people that we facilitate their pragmatic psychological and financial escape from responsibility. And I do that in contradiction to the Jewish community. In the Jewish community, the more money you make, the more you have to answer to the community. In the black community, the more money you make, the less you have to answer. Now, some people may not like that. But I think this conference is about forcing us to think and we should use honesty and raw credibility to have this kind of dialogue. I think that unless, you see, because we fall into the trap of simply becoming a member of the middle class, then we don't have to deal with national health insurance, we don't have to deal with housing. We don't have to deal with the fact that internationally, we are 18th in educating people. And we don't have to deal with the solution now to urban America, and that's encapsulated in one book, the Future Happened Here, by Fred Siegal. He looked at New York, San Francisco, and Washington DC, said, "It's very simple. "Subway system. "Subway, black people work in the suburbs. "Don't build any housing, schools, facilities. "And subway back home." That's the way to protect our interests, and that's where we are. Fred Siegal gave a conference at institution and every federal agency you can imagine was there. So we're not talking about, I'm simply saying that, if we fall into the, I hesitate and try to restrain myself from slapping people when they raise the question of class. Because, Marty Saver was interviewing me for teacher to be shown about Anthony Williams, and he said, "What do you think of Anthony Williams?" I said, "Well, Anthony Williams is a racial illiterate." In a city that all of the decisions are made in Washington DC on the question of race. And he said,

"Well, look, that's not right." You see, Anthony Williams was concerned about picking up trash, whose trash? Whose trash? And we get down to the question of, he said, "Well, look, maybe the middle class passed you by." And I said to him, "Look, remember what Malcolm X said. "What do you call a black millionaire? "And the answer is nigger." And I said, "OK, OK, go on to back." (laughing) But my point is this, and I went on to say, I went on to say, "There is no class to get into "to make yourself insulated from the question of racism." I finish.

- Good. Well, the difficulty with that response this morning, of course, is that racism is a form of depriving people of humanity and opportunity, and that's what's going on in our society. The poverty did not produce the dysfunction, no, I'm not saying that right. Dysfunctionality did not produce poverty. Poverty is present. It's been here. Now, if you want to see the effect of economic impoverishment in the United States, go and read some of the case studies of communities in the United States and in some instances, all white communities, where the company factories, the factories close down. The workers, people who had been in those factories 10, 20, 30 years and who followed their fathers in those companies, those companies stopped, they made it, they shipped out, they closed down. Go read the case studies of what happened to those families and those communities. They found an escalation of drug addictions of all kinds. Escalation of suicide. Escalation of all kinds of crime, including family abuse and wife battering. Escalation of diseases of depression and especially alcoholism. I was, one morning early, I opened up the Los Angeles Times about two years ago, and it had a front page story on Sawhitley, Pennsylvania. And my brother Phil was born in Sawhitley, Pennsylvania. And I was astonished. Sawhitley is a steel town. Just short, just south of Pittsburgh. The steel mills closed down, period. And the churches and the schools then discovered this radical escalation of dysfunctionality, break up of families, and juvenile delinquency, and the whole bit. And you can study this in Racine, Wisconsin, Youngstown, Ohio. A whole slew of cities, all across this country, where the factories, and therefore the economy, have shut down. Now, that's what slavery was all the time. That's what racism has been all the time. Not occasionally, but all the time. And none of that has been dismantled. Task of dismantling racism and education and the economy and law enforcement and the courts in congress, and the white house, and the governor's mansion, the legislator, the task of dismantling the racism, the economics of racism, the color prejudice, the white male domination of racism, the sexism of racism, the patriarchal standards of racism, that is the unfinished task and that's why in the '60s William Buckley and Paul Ranock called a meeting of some of their friends and said, "We must organize now "to not only reverse what the '60s are saying, "but to put our agendas back on the front burner "of the American people." And if you read the New York Times or the LA Times or the Washington Post or the Atlantic Journal you'll find that their language is on the front page. Reverse discrimination. Welfare reform. (laughing) Remember some of them. The Heritage Foundation coined. But they're on the front pages. They're in the commentaries.

- And that's why. You must organize. And you and you and you and you. Those are the issues of today. They're the same issues. They haven't changed. They've just been glossed over.

Woman: But they're not just black white.

- They're not just black white.

- This affects everybody.

- People are hurt. Whatever people are hurting is where you can organize. How you do it, you find the people who are hurting. You can't manufacture an issue. And expect people to come to a meeting and talk about an issue, people will come to a meeting.

- I want to take issue that the issues are the same. Because I think the issues are different. And they're different because of globalization and the INF and the fact that has consolidated its power, so therefore, I think that because they've consolidated their power, the oppression is greater. And that at least in our country, we have been educated to think that we have this good life. And this is across the board with black and white. You get a couple of pennies and you think you're hot.