RPW: This is Tape #2 of the conversation with Mr. Richard Gunn—proceed. Are you aware that—division of impulse—or does it mean anything to you?

RG: Yes, unfortunately I am aware of the impulse you have just referred to, but there are some Negroes who attempt to lose their identity with the Negro community, and as they become more affluent they seem to have less identity with the Negro community, and in many instances this is manifested in the fact that they may leave a particular church affiliation with a Negro church or a predominately Negro church and go to a predominately white church. In many instances they may try to associate with others of different racial backgrounds and racial identifications. And they will not in many instances identify with the so-called Negro civil rights movement for various reasons, and they tend to feel that possibly since they live in a nice neighborhood and they have a good job and they enjoy the privileges of first class citizenship, they feel, that they cannot readily identify with the Negro cause per se. I am painfully aware of this, but I feel that recently here in Cleveland we have found a rallying point, and many of these people have re-aligned themselves on the cause of the Negro and they have re-aligned themselves with civil rights organizations in the city. I am aware of this problem.

RPW: A significant shift has taken place you feel here?

RG: Yes, I feel that there has been a significant shift. I don't know whether it is a permanent shift, but I have seen some of my friends—
alluded to the fact earlier that we had a meeting of twenty-five or thirty Negro leaders, and many of these people in this particular meeting I'm sure are of the opinion and the feeling that you just mentioned, that they have somewhat lost their identity, and I can say that there was not complete unanimity in conversation, but there was complete unanimity when a decision was finally called for. I know that there are those who feel this way, and there are those Negroes who do not want to antagonize their dear white friends. But when the chips were down they had to take a stand, and I feel that many of them did not want to be called Uncle Toms, and this had already been -

RPW: The pressure is on.

RG: - this had been bandied about - this is what was being said. When the meeting was first announced in the newspapers it was leaked by some one in the newspapers and Negroes immediately started saying that these were just a bunch of Uncle Toms being called to this meeting, they did not know - for instance, many people I talked to that I had been invited, and that several other fellows who had been active in the civil rights movement had been invited.

RPW: Isn't that part of a tradition almost - a traditional feeling among Negroes to assume that success in ordinary standards - success means that a Negro who has succeeded has moved out into the white world and cut his - potentially cut his ties - isn't that a fairly common feeling among the masses of Negroes?

RG: It may be. I can not always speak for the masses, but you see here where I live, and I don't think that there has been any under-
current of criticism against me for my participation. I don't know whether most Negroes even know where I live. But certainly they do not feel that - maybe because I have reached a certain position - that I will sell them down the proverbial river, or that I am an Uncle Tom because I'm not, and I've been very forceful in this civil rights movement here in Cleveland.

RPW: I know you have - that's not the point at stake. It's a question of whether there's a split between the mass of Negroes - the really deprived mass - and the possibly enlarging group of Negroes with considerable or great success. Do you think that's -

RG: I don't think so. I think that there is not the obvious split because we all can identify when there is a reason for identifying. We all identify together regardless of our status, because as I have often remarked to my white friends, no matter how high I may rise, no matter where I may move, no matter how much money I may have or may make, I am still a Negro, and the lowest grade of white man will look at me and feel that he's better than I am, though he may not have as much money as I have, though he may not live in a house comparable to mine, but he feels he's better than I am.

RPW: One analysis of this new Negro movement is that it's primarily a sort of middle upper class movement, that is, the successful or more or less successful Negroes who have of success as you described it. But that has been the cutting edge providing the leadership group. Professional people, by and large, and teachers.

RG: I think that you may have a correct analysis there, that the
leadership in the civil rights movement here in Cleveland basically is comprised of people who are those who have the ability, they have the education, possibly have attained a certain status in the community, and they are providing leadership. I think the real difference is this, that in the past Negroes who have attained the status you refer to, have not wanted to serve in the leadership role to the extent of causing discomfiture in the majority community.

RPW: And now they'll take the risk?

RG: Well, there are some who are willing to take the risk, and I think that basically they're the younger fellows who are willing to take this risk. In the past many of your so-called Negro leaders have been rewarded for their attainment of success by being given jobs with the government or with governmental agencies within the city - appointments to boards and agencies where they can draw a salary - and naturally when you're in this position you don't want to rock the boat too much for fear of disturbing the source of income, whereas here in Cleveland today those individuals who are taking part in the civil rights movement, basically are those who have no responsibility to governmental agencies. They are those who have jobs where they can work in civil rights or they are in their own profession, and they have nothing that they can necessarily lose that is given to them by the white community.

RPW: They're not living on patronage of any kind.

RG: That's right. And as a result they feel much freer to serve as leaders in the civil rights movement in Cleveland.
RPW: Let me cut to something else, Mr. Gunn. Going back to the matters of demonstrations, now some Negroes, some of, you know, importance and authority, would say there are two types of demonstration - legitimate demonstration and illegitimate - put it this way - use those words loosely. One being - the first being a demonstration directed at a particular target, you see. Now, a distinction would occur for some people in the sit-ins, the stall-ins - they're legitimate - the fair grounds demonstrations as legitimate, having a special target, and not being antisocial - particular point. Does this distinction make any sense to you as a lawyer?

RG: Yes, I think that really what we have tried to do in Cleveland, though some people disagree with this has been our technique, we have tried to relate our demonstrations to something fundamental, something real.

RPW: A specific target.

RG: Some specific target, rather than going off on a tangent and stopping traffic on Lake Shore Boulevard, for instance, because of discrimination in the schools. We try to relate it to a specific problem. Now, there are those who feel that this was not done in the case of certain schools. We first started demonstrating as far as the educational problem is concerned, around the board of education last fall. We had two hundred or three hundred pickets walking around the entire block where the board of education is situated. And then this past winter in January when it was rather cold, we had pickets around the board of education. This did not seem to help, so we were picketing
because of the segregation of bus transported children. Negro children were being segregated in the receiving schools where they were being transported. So after picketing the board of education, then we shifted our focus from the board of education out to the receiving schools where the Negro children were located. And this was the first time that we had violence in Cleveland as far as demonstrations were concerned. Our pickets were peaceful. I want to stress that. Our pickets were peaceful demonstrators, they marched with dignity, with a purpose, and they were not violent. But the white neighbors living in this neighborhood where we went, they spat upon our pickets, they pushed them, they shoved them, they drove automobiles up on the sidewalks, the curb, and almost struck our pickets.

RPW: Is this the Italian section?

RG: No, this was not the - well, there are Italians living out in this section too. This was out at Brett and Memorial School. Now, there were police there, and the police made no arrests even though there were indications and the police saw these various assaults taking place. Then a few days after this demonstration we proceeded to decide to demonstrate at Murray Hill School - this was another receiving school - and this is an Italian neighborhood - just about all Italians. We did not even reach the site of this school because the people were so belligerent and antagonistic. As we gathered at a parking lot down near Western Reserve University, preparing to march up to Murray Hill School, we received word that there were a lot of people gathered around this school. They were very belligerent, and
we were told that there probably would be bloodshed, possibly death, if we walked up there. There were police there, and unfortunately these police did not protect the innocent victims who were up in that neighborhood because there were Negroes who accidentally drove through the neighborhood, not affiliated with the civil rights movement, whose cars were stoned and who were - well, some of them were struck - two Negro reporters were chased, white reporters' cameras were smashed - one white reporter was up on the third floor taking pictures - the second floor - and they threatened to throw him off the porch if he did not surrender his film. And this was the type of conduct that we had up at this school. Negroes had fruit and vegetables thrown at them. One of my very close friends and a member of my church, a lawyer, he had to seek refuge to protect himself because he came up to picket not knowing that we had decided not to picket. And this was generally a chaotic situation there. Police actually saw the law being violated but they made no arrests. No arrests were made. And this gives you an idea as to what some people felt was wrong. They said they were up there to protect their children. Why, all these demonstrations were peaceful so there was no reason to protect their children, and particularly to protect their children with violence. We arranged these demonstrations so they would occur when the children were in class, and not when they were coming to school or leaving school. We specifically did this so the children would not see the demonstrators. And they all stated that we made children the pawns of this situation, that the children would be disturbed by this. Well, the children
should not have seen it because they were in school. Now, many people said that this was a wrong place to demonstrate because the board of education headquarters were where the decision was made.

RPW: Who said it was wrong to demonstrate?

EG: Well, the newspapers said it was wrong to demonstrate out at these school sites, and many white citizens said we were wrong for doing this. Now, I feel that this does not a situation that it's illegal demonstration or unlawful demonstration, as it was related to something that was going on in those schools.

RPW: You had a clear target?

EG: That's right. We had a clear target right in the schools where we were demonstrating.

RPW: How did you feel about the stall-ins as compared with the actual demonstrations in the fairgrounds, picking particular pavilions - does that distinction apply there?

EG: I think there's a distinction, but really I'm not one of the persons who are way out on the demonstration question. But sometimes I feel that these things are necessary.

RPW: Which things are we talking about now?

EG: The stall-ins. Now, maybe I would not participate in the stall-ins, but I would have no objection to others doing this if they thought this was necessary in their community. Evidently there were not many people who agreed with the fellow from Brooklyn because it was not effective. But really, if they feel this was necessary in some locality I would have no objection to it.
RPW: There is a - clearly there was a big split of opinion on the stall-ins. That is, people who were perfectly willing to demonstrate in the fairgrounds or at particular targets and go to jail for it, would not condone the stall-ins, as we know from the fact of the whole debate between the central office of CORE and the Brooklyn and the New York -

RG: All I can say is this, if you're willing to go to jail, does it make much difference for what reason you're going to jail?

RPW: Well, the question would be this - what is your relation to society, not because of jail but because of the thing you did.

RG: Well, to my mind, when you're doing something to subject yourself to arrest, it's wrong regardless of whether it's killing some man or whether it's stabbing a man and injuring him or shooting someone and injuring him - this is wrong. Now, one is worse than the other, of course. A murder or homicide is worse than maybe stealing a nickel candybar. But they're both wrong, and I would hate to - they're legal - I would hate to stealing a candybar with murder or homicide. But if you're going to do something - commit an offense that is comparable in severity of punishment, I can see no difference between stalling in on the highway or causing a disturbance inside the fairgrounds. If you have committed yourself to this type of law violation I see nothing wrong with it. Maybe this would shake the people up in New York a little bit. Maybe it would have been a good thing if three thousand Negroes had stalled their automobiles on the highways leading to the fairgrounds. Maybe this would have dramatized to the city of
New York and to this entire country that Negroes are dissatisfied with their lot. And I hesitate to even reach this point, because I am fundamentally a lawyer first, and I'm in favor of maintaining the law at all times, but it disturbs me in this country of mine that we must do the many things we do to gain just the smallest measure of success as far as our requests for rights are concerned. I often say that my wife and I went to Europe last summer, and we traveled throughout Europe - not all over Europe but we went to ten countries. At no time was I aware of any discrimination in Europe. I'm not a citizen of Europe. I'm a citizen of the United States, and I traveled all over Europe and stayed in hotels, I ate in restaurants without question all over Europe - the parts that I was in. But in my own country several years ago my wife and I drove to Seattle and we took a plane and flew up to Alaska, stayed there several weeks and then came back down to Seattle, drove to California, then came back through the southern part of the United States, through the southwest part, and when we reached New Mexico, we were refused accommodations at a motel, in New Mexico. Now, I know this happens in our country because I have been aware of this for many, many years, having lived in Kansas City where a Negro could not even go to a white hotel when I was living there. It's different now. But you wonder what do you have to do in this country to be accorded full citizenship rights when the Constitution is existent, the Bill of Rights is existent, when we profess to be a democracy, when we profess to be basically a Christian nation. What do you have to do to shock the consciences of the people in this country
in order that they will treat me as a human being, in order that they will give me all the rights that anyone else is entitled to? When I can go to Europe and have no trouble at all, but I couldn't go to Mississippi and have the same feeling and treatment that I had in Europe.

RPW: Mr. Ellis - Charles Ellis, told me two or three months ago now, that he had much more hope of settlement in Mississippi than he had down farther south.

RG: I think he's right. You know, this is a great problem, and I think this is what is bothering people in Cleveland and throughout the north. You know, it was so easy for the northern newspapers, for the northern white people, to criticize Mississippi in the case of the young man - Meredith - trying to go to the University of Mississippi, and criticizing Alabama when the governor of Alabama was trying to keep Negroes out of the university, and criticizing the governor of Arkansas when he tried to keep these little girls out of the high school in Little Rock, and we all said in the north that this was horrible, the way they treat Negroes in the south and the many things that they do that are inimical to the safety and welfare of Negroes, and when they looked in the papers and - in the south and saw the pictures of a Negro girl on the ground and a policeman - a white policeman with his knee in her collar down in Birmingham - the white citizens of the north felt that this was horrible and they deplored what the people in the south were doing. And they just felt that the people in the south should change. Now, when the same thing reaches the north,
now many of the northern whites are saying, now, the Negro should be patient, and you can't achieve all your rights over night. It was easy for them to criticize the south and say it's wrong for the white people to treat the Negro the way they do in the south. But when the same thing comes up in their own back yard - their front yard, and we find that many of the northern white people have the same feeling of hatred and the same feeling toward Negroes that have been sublimated all these years that the southern white man have - the northern whites hate to see this come to fore, and in many instances, as you suggest, it will probably be more difficult for us to obtain our rights in the north than it will be in the south.

RPW: One of the arguments runs, in the south it's clearcut situations, it's by and large a matter of local ordinances and state laws as well as local practices. The target is clear. The target here is not clear in the north.

RG: Well, there are many whites here in Cleveland, for instance - I've talked to some - they feel that the Civil Rights Bill is wrong. I had some young people - I spoke to a young group over on the west side, a suburb on the west side, and they felt that it was wrong for the United States Government to dictate to a businessman whom he should serve in his business. And one young fellow asked me why is it that the Negroes wanted to eat in white restaurants anyhow - why didn't they eat in Negro restaurants and stay with their own people? And of course I asked him, what would he do if someone suggested that - I don't know what his nationality was, but if he was a German, that he
should eat in a German restaurant, and he would forever be forbidden
to go to a Chinese restaurant and have Chinese food, or a Hungarian
restaurant and have Hungarian food, or to any other type of nationality
restaurant and eat. This is a misconception that many northern whites
have, that the civil rights bill pending before the Senate today is
detracting from the rights of the white businessman and is going to
hurt the white community. They don't realize that in the state of
Ohio today we have just about all the laws on the books that are in-
corporated in the civil rights bill. We have a fair employment law in
the state of Ohio. We have a law pertaining to nondiscriminatory prac-
tices and places of public accommodation, we have a public accommoda-
tion law. We have laws that protect the voting rights of Negroes in
this state.

RPW: Housing?

RG: We do not have a fair housing law, but the federal legislation
does not have any provision for fair housing. So this - we get reper-
cussions from the white community in the north as to the civil rights
bill, when really the civil rights bill will not even have any appli-
cation to most northern states because we already have the laws. This
law is directed primarily to the south, where Negroes do not have the
right to go into a place of public accommodation because there are so
many laws in states and cities preventing this. And Negroes do not
have the right to vote, particularly in Mississippi and some other
states. So this is going to bring those rights to those people the
same as we have in Ohio. But you get this backlash of criticism from
whites communities here in the north against the civil rights bill.

RPW: According to the last poll results I saw, we have about seventy percent northerners favoring the accommodation section of the civil rights bill, but about sixty-five percent saying they'd move out - consider moving out if in their section Negroes moved in. That's a strange paradox. Accepting public accommodations but resenting apartment house or subdivision or -

RG: Well, you know this is a funny - this is a paradox, Mr. Warren, that in the south - you know they often say this - we Negroes allude to this fact - in the south the whites don't care where you live, they don't care if you live next door to them. I mean, there are many places in the south where whites and Negroes are living in the same neighborhood. But they don't want you to go to school with their children necessarily, and they don't care - they don't want you to rise above them too much - they don't object to it but they don't want you going to school with their children. They don't care how high up you go in the south, they don't care whether you live in their neighborhood, but they don't want you to go to school with their children necessarily, or mix socially with them, and go to places where they go socially. In the north, the whites in the north don't care how high you go, they don't care how much education you get, they don't mind you coming into the restaurants sitting at the next table to them, but they do not want you living in their neighborhood.

RPW: That's the point.

RG: This is the thing. They will accept anything but a Negro moving
next door to them. Whereas in the south they will accept your living
next door to them, but they don't want you to go into any of their
places of public accommodation or going to school with their children.
This is an interesting paradox in this country.
RPW: It is. Part of that is historical accident of course. That is,
a person in association with Negroes is no rarity in the south. It's
quite common.
RG: But it isn't so common in the north. I've been surprised - I've
been on television several times recently and radio, and as a result
of these appearances you get people calling you, and it's surprising
the number of whites who call and - eventually I usually ask them
whether - they're not prejudiced - they always start off their con-
versation by saying they're not prejudiced - and I always like to dis-
pel their feeling of non-prejudice by asking them whether they would
like to have a Negro to move next door to them, and invariably they
just will not accept a Negro living next door to them, and if -
finally one lady said that she wouldn't mind my living next door to
them because she thought I was a fairly nice person after talking to
me on the phone - but they generally - she said I don't mind you liv-
ing next door to me, Mr. Gunn, but I wouldn't want a Negro living on
the other side of me. And this is interesting, that many of these
people don't even know Negroes. They have no contact with Negroes.
They have not the slightest conception of how we live. They have not
the slightest conception that we have the same desires for nice neigh-
borhoods and nice homes that they have, and we maintain our homes and
our neighborhoods when we can afford to maintain them. And it's interesting that they just don't understand. I think that we've had one project in Cleveland that has helped dispel many of these fears. We've had a series of interracial discussion groups called dialogues, wherein Negroes and whites meet in each other's homes and they discuss problems concerning race relations and things of this nature. It's just an attempt to get people together to discuss the problems in the racial field. And it has met with fairly good results in this city, and many associations have been made that are more or less ongoing.

RPW: Do you think it's actually bona fide things - that sort of association - that sort of -

RG: Well, it has its inception in the false type of presentation, in that the people are brought together artificially. But as a result of this there have been some continuation of these associations, and I think the greatest test is when a white person who meets a Negro will eventually or ultimately invite the Negro couple or two Negro couples in to his home on a social basis where he has invited his other white friends who may not have had this exposure. And I think this is the real test of how effective the association has been. And there have been many instances of this being done. I know my wife and I went to one person's home - couple's home one night where they had out of town guests from another city, and they invited several of their friends in and they had two Negro couples there. And the evening - we spent the whole evening. There was nothing said about the racial problem, and
I'm sure this is a real test, but I'm quite sure that many of their friends were somewhat disturbed or concerned about it. There have been instances - I spoke to a group last Sunday out in Willoughby, Ohio. This is out here near the lake, a suburb east of Cleveland, and this lady had several white couples in and two or three Negro couples and I went out to talk to them. And she said before she invited the group her next door neighbor came over and talked to her for two hours and just told her off, told her how wrong she thought she was for inviting Negroes out in their neighborhood and just gave her the devil generally. And she took it and told her neighbor that she thought her neighbor was wrong. But this is the type of abuse that whites have to take when they invite Negroes out into their homes. There was one young lady there last Sunday who indicated she lived on the west side of Cleveland in the suburbs and she would not dare invite any Negroes to her home for fear of recriminations from her neighbors. But I say that when a person feels that he is not free to invite someone of a different race to his home, this is partially slavery too. I mean, you're not free to do what you would like to do. And this is true of many whites in the south. A lady called me last week. Her son was just sentenced to one year in prison down in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

RPW: He was a demonstrator there?

RG: Yes, he left college to work in this movement. He's from Cleveland. And she went on to say that her son espoused this proposition, that he feels that he is not free when there is a south -
RPW: Is he a Negro or a white?

RG: He's white. He lives in one of the suburbs here. And he feels that he is not free when he cannot even go to a Negro restaurant to eat with his Negro friends without fear of being arrested. And now he is in jail. He was sentenced to one year at the farm - or labor farm or something. And they suspended two years with the further condition that he not participate in civil rights demonstrations for five years. This is a young white boy.

RPW: As long as he stays in North Carolina.

RG: That's right. But this is actually what has happened down in the city - he was going to school in Chapel Hill. I don't know - it's surprising to me that this young man was caught up in this movement because he lives in a suburb in Cleveland where there are no Negroes living in this particular suburb, so that I imagine his exposure to Negroes has been very limited.

RPW: It sounds so. Very limited. There's a good deal of resistance - how much I don't know because you can't assess these things - it's always hearsay to me -

(end of tape)