

A: And when we got off to the last meeting.

Q: You and Bob Moses.

A: And then _____

Q: I don't think so, no, no.

A: _____ We got into the car, there were three cars, _____ we had guns hanging out the windows, and George started off driving, _____ Goddammit, Moses, we're being chased. Bob looked back and could just see the headlights,

Q: At night.

A: Yes. He said, well they won't bother us, and Bob turned over and went to sleep. (laughs) James and I _____ and Bob went to sleep.

Q: ~~XXXX~~ Let's turn to some matter of your personal history.

Mr. Carmichael. Where ~~xxx~~ were you born?

A: I was born in Trinidad, West Indies.

Q: ~~XX~~ Trinidad, West Indies. And would you tell me something.

~~XXX~~ a; When I came here, I was about 10.

Q: You have some recollection of that life?

A: Very much so, I've been doing a lot of thinking about it.

Q: Where did you live in the United States when you came here?

A: In New York, ~~-the-first-place-~~ we first lived, and _____, _____, my father, five of us in the family, four girls and myself, my father was very nervous about the neighborhoods, and ~~we~~ we moved to middle _____ about 180th street, on the east side of the Bronx.

Q: Where did you go to school?

A: Went to Bronx High School of Science.

Q: That's a highly competitive school, isn't it?

A: Yes, I learned that. When I was in elementary school, did a lot of reading, but not ~~xxx~~ the type of reading the students at Science, had done, simple novels and short stories, and _____, I was behind in American history, so I read the Horatio Alger type stories, about Abraham Lincoln, hard working, you know. And I graduated as an honor student, or was graduated as an honor student, without ~~xxxx~~ doing very much work. And so I went into Science, my old man thought I was a genius, I found out that that wasn't true at all.

Q: That's an old story, isn't it? You didn't invent that story. When did you ~~xxx~~ finish the Bronx High School of Science?

A: ~~1960~~ - 1960

Q: And you are a ~~junior~~ junior now, or senior? Senior
a; Senior.

Q: Senior now. What are ~~you~~ you majoring in here?

A: Philosophy.

Q: Yes, I didn't know that. What sort of reading have you been doing at Howard, not your course reading, but your reading by choice. What do you find most nourishing to you.

A: Now that I've been in civil rights, magazines on _____ etc. etc. , books by DuBois, Frazier, McGill.

Q: Ralph McGill?

A: Also, ~~R~~ some of the ^{field} in /Richmond Times, Richmond News, segregationists. What do you call them

Q: Hu ~~thins~~ thins?

A: No, not _____, I ~~ena-it-th~~ can't think of him.

Q: Not Dabnik ?

A: No, not Dubnik. _____ in Richmond Times, oh well, maybe it will come to me.

Q: But you haven't, you ~~have~~ ~~more~~ ~~or~~ ~~less~~ have more or less confined your reading to matters directly ~~xxx~~ bearing on the civil rights.

A: Well, it's started to taper off, I've been ~~xxxx~~ doing that, and also reading a lot of political readings, but I've started reading other things, Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, I read this book last night Segregation in Conflict, I started reading also previously, a lot of white ~~other~~ ~~southerners~~, _____, _____ Smith, Anne Braden, but I want to taper ~~ax~~ off and read a lot of other things/ I find that I'm being dominated by the movement, the whole thing just _____.

Q: Have you read Ellison's fiction?

A: Oh yeah, I read Invisible Man.

Q: ~~XXX~~ It's a wonderful book, wonderful book. Have you read Faulkner's Sound and Fury?

A: No. I think the best thing I read by Faulkner though is the The Beer, a little short story.

Q: Which one?

A: The Beer.

A Q: Yes. Yes.

A: Yes, _____ but I couldn't forget. / I think that's the best one, I haven't read all his works, /

Q: Sometimes, it's ~~a~~ said by a Negro that the character of Dilcy simply represents ~~xxxx~~, you know, the Aunt Jemima type -- slightly disguised, and this character was invented by some Negro critics. How do you feel about Dilcy?

A: I wouldn't ~~tx~~ ~~why~~, I wouldn't criticize Faulkner, my feeling about Faulkner, is I like his style of writing, I don't think that he was writing the story to win anybody, he was just writing a story to recall it, _____, and that's how he saw it. I don't think you

you can blame him for that. He wasn't trying to show everybody there's something wrong with the south.

Q: Well, Baldwin's attack on Faulkner, was to assume something quite different and remote in those things as possibilities, that he is entrapped by a certain southern stereotype about the Negro, unconsciously, and that Dilcy represents a sort of libel/on the Negro, as it were

A: Yes, Baldwin wrote an attack, and ~~that was~~ -- I ---- that's why Baldwin's attack was a form of personal attack, even though he had to admit that, something like -- Nobody Knows My Name --

Q: It was an attack on Faulkner.

A: He admitted, that, you know, he even broadened the criticism if I remember correctly, he said the whole southern way of life, the people who grow up in the south, ~~xxx~~ hate to admit they lost the Civil War, yet they wanted the country, and the whole schizophrenic development. Seems to me his attack was on the schizophrenia, he had to admit that Faulkner was the same who would write about Dilcy, and still give his money, his prize money to the Negro College Fund. Am I getting in.

q; But I think Dilcy, do you feel that this is an honest human rendering, or it does partake of some concealed southern stereotype?

A: I think there ~~xxxx~~ is some concealed type, I can't deny that.

q; In Dilcy?

A: Yes.

Q: Would that be a stereotype if such a person as Dilcy existed not uncommonly?

A: That's what I prefer to _____ about. Because I think that such a person does exist.

Q: Then he is drawing from life, not creating stereotypes, ~~and is not~~ --- just sees himself in some unconscious way.

A: Yeah, well ~~wh~~ that's what I started off saying. He's writing about it as he saw it. If I were writing the story, and I were depicting Dilcy, I would do it, probably the same way he did it, but then I'd go on a little further and say, well I can ~~under~~ understand it and it might be that I would be rationalizing.

Q: Well, Dilcy is made the moral center of the book, isn't she? She is the only person in the book who is totally human. In control of her faith in the ~~moral~~ moral sense. And has compAssion and understanding for others.

A: Well, this is the whole stereotype of the Negro maid. She's compassionate, she's understanding, her faith,

Q: We're going now to the story of Requiem for a Nun?

A: Well, I haven't read that.

Q: Oh, well, you're just as well off, I think. ~~Not~~ ^{I t's} not, one of his weakestbooks.

a; ~~W~~ See, the trouble ~~with-it,-when-you-----~~ is that when you stand on , on an issue like this, ~~there's~~--there's just nobody run, you have to take one side of the ~~coin~~ coin. I think we ought to be careful, when we start criticizing people, ~~because~~-we're not just criticizing people, because as Negroes, we want to wipe out all the stereotypes . See, I'm not sure I want to wipe itout.

Q: But here is thepoint you're getting at, then. I don't want to nag at this question, but it's an important question, I really feel. If, given the whole context of life, in which a Dilcy or people like ~~###~~ Dilcy, grew up, you have here a kind of great moral triumph, out ~~of~~ of various kinds of deprivation , and oppressions, you have a character, morally and in all ways superior to anything aroundher. The white world around her is given by a Faulkner, as a decaying and corrupted world. She is themoral center, the moral force of the book.

~~His-intentions-~~

Now his intention was to glorify her , show her strenght, her strength of character, it admits people who are incomplete or weak or wicked, that's his intention, the intention of the book, the picture he gives. Yet then how , _____ ~~Her~~ her becomes taken as a libel on the Negro race.

A: Well, I think it becomes a libel because people read into it what they want to read. They don't want to remember the Aunt Jemima type.

Q: In other words, it's the fact that her being poor, oppressed, and loyal to certain white people, her loyalty to certain white people, comes up as a mark against her, is that it?

A: Well, in ~~affair~~ ^{a sense,} it becomes that way especially since Faulkner was writing it, I think the fact that Faulkner is writing it, I think for instance, if Baldwin had written it,

Q: Baldwin not being white, and not being southern, it would have been

A: Right

Q: would have been then a moral triumph for Dilcy to have a ~~pit-fer--~~ pity for the ~~idiot~~ idiot whiteboy Benjy. ~~Well~~ Well, now, if Faulkner does it, it's not a moral triumph, it's a piece of obsequiousness and stupidity.

A: Absolutely. For an example. You know Malcolm X. Malcom

Q: Pardon

Q: If you ever listen to Malcom X personally. Malcom X does the exact same thing that all white people have been saying. Negroes are dirty, they should clean themselves up, they should stop drinking, ~~a~~ they should stop smoking, they should stop cutting each other, go to church, get good jobs, clean up their neighborhoods. Now, if a white person

Were to get up and say it, he'd be attacked from here to God knows where. Now Malcom X can get up and say --well we know why, it's because the white people, you know, and get away with it. I think this has to do a lot with color.

In other words,

Q: Now you are ~~saying~~ studying Logic, now this is the odd homonym, isn't it? The extreme, isn't it?

A: Well, that's because we all ~~try to~~ try to see ourselves, as _____ it ~~does it~~ doesn't really make a difference whether _____

Q: How did you first become involved in this, in the civil rights movement, how did you enter M SNICK for instance.

A: Oh, when I entered Science, I

Q: This would be about '56?

A: Yes. This was ~~xxx~~ '56. I realized you know, how inadequate my whole intellectual background was. For example, I was attending school with students who knew so much about things you know that I just vaguely heard about. I remember in my freshman year walking ~~o~~ into a ~~science~~ science class and students the same age as me, explain Einstein's theory of relativity, and all I knew about ~~Exxx~~ Einstein, he was some nut, who used to go out in the sun with an umbrella. I remember having people talking about Marx ~~and~~ in social studies, you know, dialectical ~~materialism~~ materialism, and ~~ix~~ all I knew was that ~~Marx~~ Marx was a dirty guy who was a communist. I remember making friends ~~ithra~~ ---with a fellow, Gene Dennis, and finding out later, that in meeting his father, I thought ~~his father was~~ brilliant, good looking, charming fellow, finding out later, his father was Chairman of the Communist Party, and he ~~was~~ a communist.

Q: This was a fellow student.

A: Yes.

Q: At Bronx ~~Mix~~ Science.

A: And these ~~were~~ were all confusing to me, I ~~didn't~~ didn't know, I

wasn't
~~fake~~ thought that I ~~was~~ supposed to hang around with communists.
And here they were letting one come to school. I began to realize, my parents never finished high school, we had no intellectual background, all these student's fathers had been Harvard, Yale, _____, doctors, dentists, PhDs, they had the intellectual background which I didn't have, tried to develop my own. Oh, just beginning to read as quickly as I could, anything that anyone mentioned, to develop my own intellectual background, it was naive at that time, but it was sincere, in that I felt that I had to beat everybody in Science. The fact that I was a Negro did stand out, everybody was my best friend, I went to all the teas with everybody else,

Q: Excuse me, let me interrupt, how many Negroes were there in the school?

A: I ~~think~~ think in my graduating class, were only about six of us.

Q: And a couple of hundred students?

A: Oh, let's see, there were about, 2000 students, and out of that, I'd say there were about 50 Negroes

Q: 50 Negroes in the whole thing?

You said everybody was your best friend. What do you mean by that?

A: Well, I ~~was~~ was always being invited to parties, and I remember,

Q: You mean, you were being invited because people were leaning over backward to be nice to you, because you were a Negro student in the school.

A: I remember for instance, going to a party on Park Avenue with a friend of mine, I think he's in Yale now, he invited me, he kept asking me -- won't I come to a party, and ~~and~~ I didn't care about going to a party, but he just kept on me, he said -- won't you come, won't you

come, I decided, well I'll just go to the party to see what it's like. So I went ~~xxx~~ to the party, and well ~~x~~ I got t here, ~~ixxxx~~ was very impressed with the place, doorman at the door, and elevator went up and opened to the living room, sunken living room, open fire place, stereo all over the house, rugs about that thick. Never seen this ~~xxxxx~~ before, only in movies. His mother came in ^{during} ~~te~~ the party and he insisted that everybody meet his mother, ~~and~~ but more than that, he insisted that I meet his mother, I didn't particularly care to meet his ~~xxxx~~ mother. I was so fascinated with the place, he was living on about the 15th floor, and I was looking out the window, just enjoying myself just being there. But he insisted, so ~~xxxx~~ finally I thought I'd just appease him. Well, his mother had a group of other ladies there, I was about the last one to meet her, and like I hit it off right away -- she said, oh, I've heard so much about you, you've got such a good sense of humor, ___ always talks about you, you're such a good looking boy, what ~~fa~~ features you have, on and on and on and on. Finally when I was leaving, the door was just about closed, his mother ~~started to--~~ ~~turned~~ -- turned to the ~~x~~ elevator, said, oh yes, we let Jimmy hang around ~~ithw~~ -- with Negroes, I didn't like that.

Q: Not very much.

A: I left the party. It was a continual thing, everybody would ~~xxx~~ ask ~~myx~~ me, whose party are you going to, we'll be there, oh, you ~~an-d-c-~~ can dance so well, I ~~#~~ can't dance -- all the stereotypes were carried over, leaning backwards.

Q: Reverse.

A: Yeah, reverse. ~~Theyx~~ Everyone telling me how well I ~~xxxx~~ could sing, I ~~enalt-e-~~ can't carry a tune. And all the stereotypes, with a good sense of humor,

Q: Now, how much of this was ~~xxxx~~ merely fashion, merely chiqueness, and how much was some kind of honesty mixed ~~x~~ up in it?

A: I think they were sincere without realizing it.

Q: Without realizing what they were doing, in their sincerity.

A: Yea, I think they ~~were~~ were sincere, they wanted to be my friend, really want to be my friend, and of course, ^{everytime} there was some racial conference, I was always consulted as the spokesman.

Q: You mean, they wanted to be your friend as "the Negro," but not your friend as Stokely Carmichael, is that it?

A: Well, I think there was a little of both mixed.

Q: But ~~you~~ what you resented was being taken as a type.

A: Right.

Q: As an example, rather than a person.

A: Right. I had great fun with this, I just went out to the N.S.A. Conference, and I would take the floor and just say any ridiculous thing, you know, about Negroes, about the race conference, here were students from all over the country, and they would never have thank me no matter what I said, because I was a Negro. The whole thing is shifted so much, if you're a Negro, you're among a white group, you're good, you're great, you're -- I'm sure, you know, Negroes are bastards too. You know, but I was good no matter what I did.

Q: Now, have you followed the controversy between Irving Howe ~~and~~ and Ralph Ellison in Dissent and New Leader in recent months?

A: No, I didn't see that, I just got the subscription to Dissent in the last two issues.

Q: Well, it just came out in the fall, the substance of it, is this -- similar to what you have been saying, about yourself. I won't dwell on it now, but Irving Howe deplores the fact that as a novelist, Ralph Ellison has not pursued the protest line of Richard Wright, the angry man, the violent protestor against his life, ~~and his~~ and his pain, his lot, as a ~~typical~~ Negro. Well, Ralph turned around, and this is just like Bilbo, you are trying to stereotype me,

I refuse to stereotype, because life tells something else to me, as well as the indignities in the white man's world. And I intend to be an artist, and not accept your stereotype.

A: I remember Baldwin, and fellow who did Purly Victorious,

Q: Can't remember him ~~now~~ now.

A: ~~Says~~ Jessie Davis, and Killens, they were all saying that in order for them to write anything, now, it has to be a protest, publishers won't publish anything by Negroes unless they're writing protest.

Q: They publish Ralph.

A: Well Ralph Ellison, when was that book published -- 194

Q: No, in 1952, or 53, '52, I guess, and he publishes whenever he wishes, he's ~~xxx~~ in a great demand, he hasn't finished his other ~~book~~ book, it will come

Q: Well, the only book he's written is The ~~Invisible~~ Invisible Man.

A: The only book, yes. But now did you feel that the ~~invisible~~ Invisible Man was a ~~betrayal~~-betrayal of Ralph's obligation as a Negro?

A: I did not. I thought it was a fantastic book, I thought it was a well portrayed book, introspective feeling of Negroes. I think the whole development from the south to the north, the old feeling of still being alienated _____. I ~~could~~ couldn't see the betrayal. He was involved with the radical people, got involved with them in north, I think the communists he was talking about, I don't see ~~any~~ it as being a betrayal. He could have written something, / could have a ~~bigger~~ Bigger Thomas, ~~#####~~, but then I think he would be Wright, if he wrote a Bigger Thomas.

q; Ralph says, ~~xxx~~ in one ~~of~~ ~~thes~~--- of his replies to Irving Howe, that no Negro has tried to pressure him into writing protest novels, always white people.

a; And it's probably true.

Q: That if the white stereotype, another one, a more fashionable one now, is being imposed.

A: This is the mistake that Baldwin is going to make. I think that the white press is going to demand that Baldwin keeps writing protest novels, and if he ever tries anything else, he's dead. And you wonder how long can he go, how far can he go.

Q: Do you see any difference in quality between Baldwin's polemical writing, and essays, and his fiction?

A: Yes, he's an essayist.

Q: Great polemical writer, great essayist.

~~XXX~~ A: Great essayist. Funny, but I liked Geiovanni's Room, not many people did.

Q: I didn't, to be honest, I thought it was a great come down from his first novel.

A: Now, Go tell it on the Mountain, is a fantastic, a fantastic work.

Q: A real honest portrayal of a boy growing up.

a; Right. Fantastic work. Flashback, and all the luxury of a good writer. But I still think ~~he's an~~ that as an essayist, he's better.

Q: I should agree, that 's the way he found himself. Lets go back to your involvement in civil rights movement, and your growth and awareness, about the ~~whole~~ whole question, ~~behind~~. You say when ~~you~~ you went to the Bronx High School, you had your ~~friends~~ friends, and you were pampered as the respectable Negro.

A: I was always told that I was going to be a brilliant Negro leader. And my parents wanted me to be a doctor, good Negro doctor, regular ~~stere~~ stereotype, I didn't particularly want to be a doctor, but I never told them I didn't want to be a doctor, just let them assume.

While at Science, I started meeting a lot of people on the left. Young socialists, people in Advance, ran around to Ben Davis' office, listened to what a lot of people had to say, began ~~xxx~~ doing a lot of ~~reading~~-reading on the left, I became aware of the fact, and I even believed that I could be groomed as a Negro leader, maybe not a Booker T. Washington, and I heard about DuBois at that time, did a little bit of his reading, I thought that he made some mistakes, and I thought that I was going to be brilliant, and study very hard, I was gonna solve the race problem.

In 1960 I picked up the newspaper, and I read about Adele Bland's Four Companions, and my first reaction to this was this is the wrong way of doing it.

Q: The sit-in.

A: Yes. Threw the paper down. This was the New York Times.

Q: Why this reaction?

A: Why this ~~reaction~~ reaction, well, actually what I said, was Niggers always looking to get themselves ^{in the papers,} ~~into places~~, no matter how they do it. And my opinion, was we don't know what they're doing, and I'm quite convinced now, that they didn't know what they were doing. _____ and spoke to them.

Q: You mean, they stumbled on this.

A: Yeah, they didn't know what they were doing. ~~xxxx~~ About three weeks later, the New York Times documented on the front page, the ~~sit-ins~~-sit-ins that had spread all over the south. My reaction then was, Niggers are just like monkeys, one do, all do. Threw the paper down again. About a month later, television interviews began to appear. I'd hear students from A & I, students from Greensboro College, and _____, very distressed about this, you know, you don't want a revolution, you want to be intelligent, I still had conceived the idea that you got to have ~~xx~~ somebody in the same, you know,

emotionally
not just talk about it ~~mostly~~ we've been treated bad, I get tired of seeing that stuff all the time. About how badly Negroes were treated. By about ~~xxxxxxx~~ March, no about by April, mid-April,

Q: '61

A: '60, still '60. ~~xxxxxx~~ I thought there were possibilities. Something could be done with this. In May of 1960, I was on the Committee, and ~~Anti-hu--Anti-AN-~~ Anti-HUAC Committee. And we had the hearings on the Merchant Marines in Washington, D.C. Came down to D.C. as part of the protest, group to listen to HUAC, and met a number of people who were then involved in the sit-ins.

Q: You were still in the high school now.

A: Right. I left the HUAC, and went on a sit-in Virginia, very impressed, with the kids, they had what seemed to me, courage, I had always been oriented on the left, from an economic point of view, sort of, well not an economic determinist, but certainly great proclivity for that sort of thing. And realized that a lot of ~~things~~ kids weren't talking what I thought they would be talking about. They said -- we have the right to human dignity,

~~XXX~~ Q: You mean, this as opposed to an economic approach.

A: Right.

q; You mean a human approach, the moral approach, as opposed to the economic approach.

A: It seemed to me this euphemistic, is always covered up, I think men always cover up their actions with moral issues. So I began thinking seriously about this whole problem, whether it was an economic problem, or whether these students were right, whether ~~non~~ nonviolence and love, was really the thing, /I never took the approach, of you know, we've got to teach them to love us. I thought that was nonsense, from the beginning. But I was really, I was really impressed by the way they conducted themselves on the ~~sit-ins~~-sit-ins. The way they just sat

there and took all the _____.

q; You mean by their not just fortitude, but by self-discipline, and personal power, inner ~~power~~ power.

a; Right. I was really impressed, because when I lived down _____, I learned, you know, that you don't get tapped on the shoulder without turning around, it was a rough neighborhood, and my aunt lived in Harlem and I used to spend a lot of time down there, and got to know all the young fellows my age on the block and there's always internal conflicts too, ~~with~~ with this way of life _____.

Q: In what sense? The internal conflict.

a; The gang-fighting, the stealing cars, and when I moved to the East Bronx, an old Italian neighborhood, balanced on the one side by a Jewish neighborhood, Irish neighborhood, we're about the only Negroes in the neighborhood, and my father kept saying before we moved, that we're moving to a good neighborhood. And when I first moved up to this good neighborhood, I had a fight, my first week, you know, everybody had heard that Negroes were tough, and wanted to see how tough I was. I had to prove all the bad things to prove my point. Gang fight with everybody else. ~~By~~ By the time I got to about the 8th grade, well, ~~an~~ interesting thing happened, when I was in the 8th grade, and I knew all about Marijuana, and pot, had heard ~~about~~ about ~~pot~~ ~~from~~ from my cousin, I never ~~thought~~ touched the stuff, in the 8th grade, ~~from~~ from some friends, acquaintances, from school, said that he had some, and he wanted me to show him how to do it. Before I knew it, I had to put on a demonstration for about 30 people in the bathroom, how to blow up. I did it.

Q: Now, who are these people?

A: People, white Italian fellows.

Q: Any other Negroes besides ~~you~~ yourself?

a; No, I was the only

q; The only one.

A: Yea I was. There were only three of us in the school.

And I thought, now why did I do that. To prove a point. When I went into Science in my freshman year, it was hard for me to adjust, because even though I did that little gang fighting nonsense, always fighting with people, I ~~always~~ always kept reading, because my mother kept saying, you know, ~~xxx~~ you must remember one thing, those guys are white, ~~and y---~~ and you're Negro, they all make it, and you ~~won't~~ won't unless you're on top of the rung, ~~and she~~ kept drumming it into my head, and to get her off my back, I read, as long as my grades were good, she didn't care what I read. Stayed out of trouble. When I got to Science, -----Q+ found that people did more than fight each other, you know, they'd ~~swear~~ swear, and were respectable, and they read a lot, good books, ~~maybe-cussed-all-the-teachers,~~ and they discussed all these things at the lunch table, read, elementary school, we discussed _____ ~~he-w---w-~~ who was the best writer, read the New York Times editorial, etc., hard for me to adjust. At the same time, I was ~~being-alienated-~~ beginning to alienate myself from my old neighborhood. And by about the end of my freshman year, that summer I stayed in New York City, and hung around with all the fellows I used to ~~a~~ hang around with, the gang, stole cars, gang fighting and all that, ~~xxx~~. By about the middle of the summer, I kept thinking, you know, I'm gonna get into real trouble if I keep this up. So I used to start alienating myself from them. And I started calling up people from Science, who I knew, started to hang around with ~~xxx~~ them more, and go swimming, play tennis, of course, all my old friends would call me fag; by about the middle of my sophomore year, I had completely broken ~~off~~ all ties with my old

neighborhood.

Q: This raises the question as a kind of interruption, you know from Dubois and from ~~xxxx~~ other writers, the notion of the psychic split in Negro. Thinking of ourselves and loyalties, on the one hand, the feeling of commitment to a tradition which is Negro, _____#, black mystique and all of this, and Negro culture, as separate from white western European culture. On the other hand, the impulse to move into this white society, to integrate with the society, ~~ex~~ accept it certainly to a large degree, its values even if they are criticized, and perhaps be absorbed racially, and biologically into that world, later, actual loss of identity. Now, some think this is a real problem. A real ~~spiritual---~~problem of real spiritual depth. To others it is not. How do you feel about it? You were talking about another kind, now how do you feel about this.

A: X Well, it's also ~~a-question-of---~~split between Negro neighborhood, I was gonna get to that, because I developed certain loyalty ties in Harlem, used to go to parties down there, at the same time my mother and father consciously talking ~~xxxx~~ about the fact that you ~~xxxx~~ hang around with all these white kids, where 's your social life gonna be, they don't ~~xx~~ really accept you. Don't be fooled by them. ~~Max~~ Old distrust. My father was a laborer. ~~Carpenter-~~ Carpenter. He really got screwed around by the union.

Q: Couldn't get into the union?

a; Well, see, my father was an Honest Abe., he wouldn't steal, he wouldn't bribe, and he believed, very very religious fellow, more than my mother, because God would always take care of everything. Maybe that's one of the reasons why I left the church. Because of my father. He was in the union, and his union representative would never give him a job, because he wouldn't bribe him, see, all the other fellows bribed him, Of course, he attributed this to the fact that he

was Negro. Well, my mother and I called the union representative over, I was a freshman in high school, we had a cousin who works on the S.S.America, and he happened to pick up some perfume, my mother ~~ave-him~~ gave him some perfume and \$50. for his wife, my father got a job. My father never knew this, of course, he attributed ~~k~~ it to God's good will, and God will take care of us. But he'd always get screwed on the job, ~~and~~ in terms of being foreman and other little things. A lot of them were justified, a lot of them were over-emphasized, overexaggerated. He had a complete distrust of white people, it always worried me. White kids are coming to meet me, ~~and then~~ and then when I'd bring up my friends from Harlem, he was worried, you know, don't you have any respectable Negro friends? I began thinking, why do I need respectable Negro friends. They thought they were moving into a white neighborhood, and those white kids taught me tricks, and I never knew about breaking into a store, stealing cars, I never knew that, maybe because I was younger, I guess had I stayed around the _____ in Harlem, I would have learned all these things. But they still said it was a good neighborhood because it didn't have all the things connected with the ghetto. We owned our own house, it was a shack, and my father was a carpenter, and remodeled it, with long long hours, he was industrious, man, I sometimes wouldn't see my father for a whole week. He'd work his regular job, and he'd ~~world-odd~~ work odd job, and then he'd drive a taxi at night. When things got rough in the winter, he became a marine, and he'd go out on the sea. As ~~xxx~~ long as he provided for his family, that was the important thing. All this was a conflict, because he wanted me to be respectable, with white kids. ~~ixwaxexdmg~~ He didn't like me to wear dungarees. I wore dungarees, all the time. He wanted me to be very proper, speak, do the same things as all the white kids were doing, ~~ixwax~~ wasn't sure

I wanted to do all that.

I used to hang down in the vilalge, witheverybody young, about 16, we'd all go down ~~to the~~ to Greenwich Village, because that's where everything is, that's happening. I used to see a complete reverse, _____ white kids jumping into Negro neighborhoods, beocming completely Negrofied. If you can use that word. Yeah, man, yeah, baby, you know, everything out of context, ~~just~~ just dropping words that come from the Negro neighborhood. I always thought this isn't right, ~~and I~~---and I ~~wanted~~---wondered, wouldn't I do the same thing.

Q: In making over a white world.

A: Right. ~~A~~ Would I do the same thing. And that bothe red me quite a bit, because I didn't want todo that .

Q: You thought some loss of integrat~~ty~~, is that the idea.

A: I wasn't sure if it was loss of integrat~~ty~~, maybe there was, some some loss of integrity, as it was loss of not being yourself. I was always concerned about that.

Q: You thought your identity was being betrayed, somehow, is that it?

x ~~xxx~~ A: Yes, like, I would, ~~Negere~~---Negroes and whites, teenagers, dance entirely differently. Now I've danced both ways, and I find myself, at a party for instance, beginning-to lindy, now lindy, I don't know if it's still around, is probably a white dance, Negroes ~~slop~~. And when everybody would start looking at me, ~~they~~ they said, now you dance just like a ~~white-boy~~--white boy. And then I'd stop, and I'd catch myself, and I'd say -- yeah. I do. You hang~~x~~ around wi th them white kids there? And I said, yeah, I hang around with white kids. Many, you ought ~~xxx~~ to be square, you don't know what's happening. Then I'd go to a white dance, and do a slop, and oh man! that's cool! that's real cool, show me how to dance! You

know. This was leaning over backwards here. Now I wonder whether or not -- in Harlem, they were completely fair when they said I was square ~~whenever~~ when I was hanging ~~around~~ around with white kids. Well, that was internal conflict. I resolved the problem with my just going wherever I wanted to go. If I felt like going to Harlem, I'd go to Harlem, if I felt like going down the Village, I'd go down to do whatever I wanted to do. But there certainly was a ~~law~~ ladd and a cutting off of culture.

Q: Let me make another excursion for a moment. Several people have told me, most notably, Robert Moses, that when you've had students or ~~or~~ people little older, coming in to help with the voter ~~registration~~ registration, who are white or sometimes northern Negroes, real friction may or sometimes develop. One of the objections is that the white boys coming in, will try to assume attitudes, vocabulary, and stances that are Negro. Now this is resented or at least, if not resented deeply, becomes a ~~manner~~ ^{matter} of satire, some contempt for the person who feels ~~that~~ he can enter arbitrarily and take over another world. One ~~of~~ of the points of friction. You see. ~~Did~~ Did you encounter that in the movement?

A: Quite a bit. Bob Zelman, _____, from Alabama,

Q: I haven't spoken to him, no.

A: Well, there are a few other white people in the movement, who haven't, what we call, completely ~~or~~ Negrotized. He ~~is~~ maintains, you know, there's still a difference, you can tell, you know, people who come into the ~~movement~~ movement, try and say that there is no difference. Also, the other conflict, you get, northern white, you know, one of the reasons they do this, all committed to equality, on a humanitarian level, and intellectual level, and they themselves don't know ~~the~~ Negroes, they don't even have Negroes ~~in~~ in their own neighborhoods, never known a Negro. And ~~that~~ they don't a Negro is

really different. When they come south, and find out that it's entirely different, and they jump into it right away, to accept it.

Q: Try to assume the culture without understanding what's ~~skinx~~ behind it.

A: Right, and they~~xxx~~ say things ~~k~~ without realizing what they're saying. You know --yeah, man, I really dig that, you know, and dig can be used in two ways, really, you know, sarcastically, _____ a lot of time,s, they use words completely out of context, without knowin git, they want to be accepted ~~xxx~~ right away, without being accepted for their work,

Q: Social ~~skinx~~ climbing.

A: That is _____. They want to be accepted right away for their work, as a Negro, not as an individual, or their ability to assimilate into a culture which -- we'll show them, well, look, I'm not ~~k~~ like the other whites, you know, I dig you _____ snap their fingers, out of tune, _____. talk about -- I dig Ray Charles, and~~xx~~ _____ once a white fellow came in and he started playing Ray Charles, and _____ Negroes _____ he came by and he said, man! Ray Charles is _____, he's swell, nan! too much! And after he walked out, one ~~xxx~~ of the Negroes out loud, in the whole Barbecue Shop, because he did this out loud, so everybody would know that he was there, and you know, he's good guy, said~~k~~, -- you know, that white boy don't even understand, cause Ray Charles play like white boy can't even think. And everybody laughed. It seems ~~xxx~~ so true that Ray Charles played music the way white people don't even think, and for him, to come on, ~~ndxxx~~ and putting on a show, was resented. As much as it would be ~~erxxx~~ resented if I put on a show to show how white I was. How much I absorbed the culture.

Q: In other words, both wings, the question of some self~~xy~~, understanding of self-respect is being violated, is that it?

A: I think so, because I remember at one point, I merely , I think I was about a sophomore in high school, realized that I was really being ashamed of being a Negro. You know. And one point I was really ashamed of it, I~~waxx~~ would stop saying things that I would say, you know, in the Negro neighborhood, and I was afraid of gospel music, which I always liked, you know, I remember thinking about that for about two weeks. And then I decided I'd go back to my gospel music.

Q: How common do you think is the situation of the Negro accepting some derogatory white stereotype of himself? Unconsciously

-----A:--U--or consciously.

a; I think it's very very common, because ^{whether our} ~~although~~ Negroes admit ~~den't-admit~~ it, they are ~~only-50%-American,---~~ 150% Americans. They think, they act, they accept America without even questioning it.

Q: Including the white man's version of himself?

A: Including that, I'm afraid. Including that. When one becomes aware of the x~~xxx~~ real problem , because you're not sure how much truth there is to it, if ~~a~~ you really want to be honest about it, you have to admit if you just walk through Harlem, it is about the dirtiest place, there are always drunks on the street, ~~thexxx~~ people are always cutting each other, there are prostitutes on every corner, there are bars on every corner, you have to admit all this, now then you've made one of the prime reasons, and you want to be careful that you're not just rationalizing. Now you start off with the basic premise ~~hat Negroes---~~ Negroes aren't really inferior. And you wonder about ~~hac-the--hve~~ the conditions really been thrust upon them, or are they

just, are they really lazy, this problem bothered me for a while, too. But you do accept it unconsciously.

Q: Then the question of how the , what is the escape, what is the solution? Of this acceptance of the version ~~xxx~~ that defines you as inferior? What is the solution, the psychological ~~all~~ solution?

~~XXX~~ A: Well, for me , the psychological solution was to read as much as I could, to show that this is, maybe I even do it now, I think I still do it, as ~~a~~ soon as I meet a white student, I want to prove to him that he is ~~xxx~~ any smarter than I am, you know, that I do just as much ~~xxx~~ reading, as he does, I'm aware of what's going on. And before we even get a chance, to do anything, this is what Baldwin talks about, when the black boy meets white boy, play a game of cat and mouse, let's see how much you know, and I'll tell you ~~a~~ how much I know, cause I know you think that because I'm a Negro, I don't know very much, I'm gonna prove to you that that's not true.

And so you see, subconsciously, you go completely on the reverse, for instance, I even caught myself during this September, I met a white boy from Yale, and kept playing this game. So, ~~xxxxxx~~ you know, how do you analyse the situation, and then I ~~xxxx~~ caught myself, what do I have to prove to him. Why am I doing it?

Q: In other words, you are acting like the Yale boy who got to Mississippi.

A: Yah, yah. In the reverse. So you see, it's so subconscious, that unless we play with it and ~~it-lets-me-play~~, ~~we~~ think about it constantly, we don't really become aware of it. Want to go back to involvement.

Q: Yes, let's go back to involvement, your involvement in the civil rights movement, go back to your high school days.

A: I worked with the youth march on Washington, in my high school. That was ~~xxx~~ really no problem, because everybody thought it was

a good thing, and . Now I was vaguely aware of the problems that existed in New York, became more aware of it as I took an economic look at the question. I used to hear a lot of people talk, and they say that when the revolution comes , and they throw that word around, it will come from the south first, and then move up north. X

Q: The revolution being the Negro civil rights movement, or the revolution ~~xxxx~~ being something else?

A: Well, the revolution first ~~started~~ ^{starting} with the Negro civil rights movement. One of the reason why I began to distrust a lot of people on the left, it seems to me that they were always jumping on this band wagon, let's get the Negroes on it, and they'll start it for us.

Q: Pull the chestnuts out of the fire, you mean.

A: Yeah, and I really became very very suspicious, of this, because we have that goal, everyone would want to tell me how we should start the revolution, how Negroes should do it, and then after they'd been convinced that once you ~~xxxx~~ ^{got it} started it, they can come in, and then we can follow all this _____. You know, it seemed to me that they weren't really sincere about Negroes, they were just trying to use Negroes, to get something that I wasn't sure I wanted. And they all seemed to be convinced, and they knew what they wanted. And I asked them to define or outline a program , they never knew, see. And neither do I, you know, I don't know how in the long run things are going to be solved. I think about that. I was arrested two years ago in New York, on a demonstration. I was arrested two years ago in New York on a demonstration at Bethel Hospital, trying to get the union to organize Negroes and Puerto Rican, and while sitting around talking, some Negro who had been working for quite a while, said, he remembered when they had a big stink about getting Negroes hired. I ~~theyng~~---thought what a vicious cycle this was, 15 years ago they fight

to get hired, and now here they are, having a vicious fight, just to get higher wages, you ~~now~~ know, where does ~~xxx~~ it all end. When does it end, and it started me thinking, well, am I really gonna get started, what I am doing, why I am in this fight, why did you go to school, what am I gonna get out of this, do I know what I ~~want~~ want out of this. Funny, but when I read that line in the book about the segregationist who said -- well, I don't know why I'm doing it, but I guess I got to do it -- I sort of of thought last night, you know, what is Mr. Warren going to ask me tomorrow, ~~will~~ and am I really like this guy, I ~~feel~~ just ~~feel~~ feel that I have to do it, When I first came ~~back~~-f-back from Mississippi, freedom ride, I had everybody on my back, calling me , asking me why, why, why, why, people from all over the ~~country~~-country, and I couldn't answer why, and I still can't answer why.

Q: You've got a compulsion which you couldn't analyze.

A: Yeah, you know.

Q: Joined the freedom ride.

A: Well, from , if we go back to ~~1960~~ 1960

Q: Yes, let's go back.

A: After that demonstration, I became very impressed with these people whom I had seen , the southern students, and really _____ now it seemed to me that they wanted

Q: Like Lamb (?R) and a people like that.

A: Right. Dionne _____, they wanted restaurants integrated. And they were willing to pay the price, for it. I didn't think that that was too important, and I thought well, you got to start somewhere. At that point, I had thought that, along with Tom _____ in his _____ Revolution, that the labor unions were gonna come in ultimately, and help really ~~to~~ get the problem going. I'd done a little bit of reading on the Populist Party, and thought that this would solve

a lot of the things. Well, during that summer, I'd take frequent trips back down to Washington on weekends, and worked with the people in Virginia. One of the deciding factors that made me decide to come to Howard University, I wasn't sure I wanted to go to Howard University, didn't want to go to an all Negro school, wanted to go to school, where I thought I'd get a good education, and I wasn't sure that Howard University was a school that could give me a good education, and so I did decide to come to Howard ~~University~~ University.

And one of the deciding factors ~~is~~ was the fact that I ~~could~~ could work in the Movement while I was here. ~~At~~ All year I worked with the movement around Virginia, sitting in, etc., and the December of 1960, went to Fayette County in Tennessee, took a ride down. Very impressed with the people down there, ~~the people are really~~-it seemed to me that they were really doing something on this issue of the vote.

Q: You mean the Negro workers there?

A: In Tennessee. One of the things that really impressed me, while I was there, actually it was about four days, I was cold, hungry, freezing and miserable, the ground was hard, when it was hard, and muddy, ankle deep, there was fire wood, and kids would go out ~~and~~ and chop fire wood, come back, and sit around and sing songs in the evening, very very moving thing, I thought this was way more important than a restaurant. You know, the power to vote. I came back, and we still worked along the sit-in movement, I kept thinking, now, if I don't believe ~~in this~~- in this, as much as I think I am, ~~what~~ am I doing here. ~~I came~~ I came to the situation, well, you've got to motivate people, on some issues, you've got to motivate them on an issue that they can see clearly. Now they can see this clearly. And then after they see this=~~thing, they--~~, then maybe you can move on. Then came the freedom ride, and I packed up and left. ~~After~~ After that, I just stayed ~~in~~ in the south.

Q: Was that in the first Freedom Ride?

A: Yes, the first freedom ride.

q; What were your experiences on that ride, I mean, your internal as well as your external experiences. Your _____ mood.
Try to tell me, will you?

A: Well, from Harlem, I knew that people could hate pretty viciously, and I'd seen what people could do to people.
From my neighborhood, five guys could jump up on someone and beat him up, I was sometimes the victim of that. And I realized that, you know, for instance, we used to have a constant gang war with people who crossed the bridge. Kids who crossed the bridge. I don't know what they call themselves, the Parkchester boys, or something like that. And we ~~would-march-xxxxxx~~ were the Mosh Park Avenue Dukes, if a ~~the~~ Mosh Park Avenue Duke ~~s~~ saw a Parkchester boy, you just had to ~~hit~~ hit him. I thought that was kid stuff. I saw a lot of vicious things that people do to each other. So I was aware of what people could do to each other. But the whole thing about, you know, for instance, in Fayette County, they tell about how they were being shot at, etc.,

Q: This is around in Jackson, Tennessee, you mean,

A: No, Jackson was the place. but I first went into New Orleans.

Q: Jackson, Tennessee, I'm talking about.

a; Yeah, Fayette County. Now, I felt when I was going, you know, this is really serious. And somebody may really die, and I thought, now, do I really want to put myself in a position where I can die? Do I think that if I die, that something will be solved? Well, I got rid of that very easy, by saying -- yes, somebody will die, but it won't be me, it will be the guy next to me. And that was all there was

to that. So the next question, was why was I going? Well, I was supposed to go on the first ~~freedom-ride-the-~~, be the first bus that left, the bus that was burned, but I had about a week and a half left of school, and I felt well, it was silly to leave school now, I'll just come down here after I finish with school. When the bus was burned, and everybody was beaten, everybody on the bus I'd known very well, I'd worked with, was ~~xxxx~~ very upset. And I thought, now you just can't go off, just because somebody got beaten, or just because the bus was ~~xxxx~~ burned, you know, what's that gonna prove? The decision was well, I have to go, because they're in jail, we're buddies, they need friends, you know, the least I can do, is keep them company, well, I thought that's pretty weak. I thought I have to go because you've got to keep the issue alive, and you've got to show the southerners that you're not gonna be ~~scared-~~scared off, as we've been scared off in the past. And no matter what they do, we're still gonna keep coming ~~xxxx~~ back. Perhaps that was the deciding factor. When ~~xxx~~ we got into New Orleans, about 3 o'clock in the morning, and never seen a mob ~~xxxx~~ stay up till 3 o'clock in the morning, but they were there at the airport. People just yelling and screaming, and throwing cigarette butts and what have you, and my first reaction was wow! I sure hope those policemen/^{can}keep them under control cause I don't know what I would do. See, I'd been involved in situations in Virginia, you know, but I thought, gee, this isn't Virginia, this is Louisiana. When we got in a car and ~~drove-~~drove away, the next morning, we went to the train station, we were all arrested, I didn't know for what,

Q: You say you got off the plane. And then drove from the plane to . How ~~did~~ did the mob know you were arriving by air.

A: That I don't know. I don't know that. Maybe someone -- I was very worried ~~about that~~--about that, it was 3 o'clock in the

morning. And they were still there. Maybe they notified the police. I think what CORE ~~xxxx~~ might have done, they probably notified the police for protection, and somehow we got out. Well, anyway, we had a police escort for a while, and then pretty soon we went to the ~~upskirts~~--outskirts of town, stayed in some project. We got up the next morning, went to the train station, got arrested, I don't remember what for, we were released about 45 minutes later, I kept remembering the face of the ~~xxx~~ ~~xx~~ chief, who kept saying --"you're not going to change anything, you're not gonna change anything, you know, I mean, we'll just keep throwing you in jail, we'll beat you up, and further more q; He said this.

A: Yes, "and furt hermore, those people are gonna end up killing you, you're not gonna change anything. You're not gonna change a nything." So we were relased and we were getting onthe train, to go to Mississippi, ~~xxx~~ were mobbed all over, I've never seen people for the first time in my life, I really got scared of people. Just had all sort s of faces, One thing was an old lady in particular, she was about 70 years old, shaking a cane viciously, just trembling all over, and I just kept looking at her, not because I ~~x~~ wanted to antagonize her, but because I reallycouldn't believe this. We got on the train, and wherever we stopped, there were policemen wi t pump rifles, keeping mobs back. I kept thinking, why, why, why are there such mobs, why are they so loud, what is it. Of course, when we got into Jackson, the p0lice were waiting, in the waiting room, ~~xxx~~ not outside, before we got outside, we had ~~xx~~ quite a struggle to get through~~x~~ the mob. And people just saying--"I'll kill you." And for once, I really believed that they meant it, you know, people said to me, they'd kill me, before, I never took it seriously, but then I thought these people meant it, ~~ad~~ I wondered ~~x~~ whether or not, I really believe they maant it, or whether I was scared because I was in the south, and heard so many stories

about it, you know.

END OF TAPE ONE

Q: THIS IS THE END OF TAPE ONE, BY STOKELY CARMICHAEL, IN WASHINGTON
D.C., MARCH 4. TO TAPE TWO.