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Interviewee: Jackson, Maynard

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RONALD BAYOR: Eight, nine, ten. Well, let me get right to this, then. Last time, I was just about to ask you a question about a quote you had made in 1975, and you said that "Racism has disappeared from the political rhetoric in Atlanta," that "Race is the underlying force in the area's politics no matter what the rhetoric." Would that be a good description of that period, 1975?

MAYNARD JACKSON: First of all, I cannot remember that I said that exactly that way.

BAYOR: It came from the *Constitution*, but...

JACKSON: Well, in that case, I'm certain I didn't say it that way. (laughter) That's the old uncertainty about it; it was for the *Constitution*, then it's a misquote. Let me tell you what I would have written, is that race as a part of rhetoric is out of the question. Anyone who runs a racist campaign, for example, -- and such as Sam Massell tried, "Atlanta's too young to die," this kind of thing -- [00:01:00] is in deep trouble. That race is a part of almost every major political issue, however, remains a

fact. Now, what I would say today is the -- what is your quote, there?

BAYOR: "No matter what the rhetoric, race is the underlying force in the area's politic."

JACKSON: The underlying force in the area's politics, the underlying force, to the extent that that is exclusive, I wouldn't say that. But whether I said it, I cannot remember, if that's the gospel truth. The concept, though, I can buy into, that race is a major underlying force in the area's politics. Now, this also goes back to a statement that Ivan Allen made, that in all the years that he was mayor, he could not remember a single major issue that did not involve race as a major consideration. Certainly back in that period. [00:02:00]

BAYOR: How about particularly in relation to annexation issue, as an effort to dilute black political power, and the desire of white businessmen, expressed a number of times, to create a metro-wide government? Did you see race being the underlying factor there?

JACKSON: Well, to get me into commenting on a motivation doesn't really help anybody. That's pure speculation, and speculation is not (inaudible). Would I believe that some people believe that? Yes. Do I believe that some people are not motivated by that? The answer is yes. So, I think

it varies from person to person. Now, as a major issue, race plays -- on the black side and the white side -- a significant role in this whole question of annexation, consolidation, and metro-wide government. Now, the metro-wide government issue is not really even on the board for discussion [00:03:00] because it is such a political impossibility that it's not going to happen. And the other thing is the business community, or the few people that talked about it -- and we can kind of narrow that down to [Carl Sanders?], OK -- nobody else seriously bought into it. Talked about it, yes, but to express the belief that it could happen or would happen? Unh-unh. I remember when Carl Sanders introduced the idea in a major speech in the Atlanta Symphony Hall. I was on the panel that responded to that. So, OK, and he wanted to do everything within I-285. I asked what were the economic consequences? He couldn't tell me, he had done no research on that. I asked him what were the consequences of the planning for it, one thing or another, what could you cut back? You know, how many people would you save if you were to unify [00:04:00] and consolidate and so forth and so on, and therefore save money? What are you saving? How do you save it? How many personnel do you cut? [Boy?], none of that research has been done.

BAYOR: So what was the reason for the -- I don't even know if you want to go --

JACKSON: I don't want to speculate about what his reasons were.

BAYOR: But --

JACKSON: But I'll stand behind the statements that I made that day. Now, let me come on to the question of consolidation: I am for consolidation, Atlanta, Fulton County, and all the other municipalities. Not only for -- but was for this as I ran for office in 1969, for city office, OK? In the black community, there will be some opposition based on the dilution argument. I believe that a [00:05:00] campaign that'll educate on that issue will eliminate that as a serious objection today. I think that the fear is the black vote will be diluted to the point of being inconsequential. And the fact is that any -- that even if all of Fulton County, all of the other municipalities in Atlanta were consolidated today, this would still be a predominantly black jurisdiction.

BAYOR: Metro Atlanta would still be predominantly black?

JACKSON: Well, that new government, all of Fulton, Atlanta, the new Atlanta, which would include Roswell, Alpharetta, the other -- Atlanta, and the other seven municipalities and Fulton County -- so there's 10 municipalities -- would still be around 53-54% black. Now there's no way, in my

opinion, no way in the world -- and the point number two is it may drop eventually by [00:06:00] the idea -- does not, and will not come primarily from inside. It will come from the outside (inaudible). And I think any chance to get out toward Roswell and -- is nonexistent. That is, voluntarily. What I do think would be a fair way to do it, if you let everybody vote, as one voting group, not as separate voting groups, that everybody who lived in Fulton County, whether they lived in a municipality or not, vote on whether they want to seek consolidation.

BAYOR: I don't think there had been a vote since '65 on that, as I read some of the years. And Sandy Springs certainly has been vehemently opposed on a number of occasions.

[00:07:00] Let me get on something else.

JACKSON: So, on the question that -- of whether race plays a part, the answer is for some people it does, but some people, it's not an issue, and not -- I mean, on this issue of consolidation, it's a -- but is the issue generally at odds with a careful eye to the racial implications? The answer is yes, and that's a matter of reality. On both sides of the aisle, there are still anxieties. We had anxieties --

BAYOR: For us, or so --

JACKSON: I mean, one of the roles of leadership, one of the roles that I intend to play, I'm trying to get leadership on this issue. We're doing a [whole workforce?] to careful analysis, and then to move on to stake our position again. And I've written four annexation plans, or maybe it was only three, which never really got out of committee. And even the least offensive one, north to the Chattahoochee, and west to the Chattahoochee, [00:08:00] south to [Buckner Road?], which was the fallback -- called our fallback position -- never even got out of committee.

BAYOR: Well, the original annexation proposals, I remember went back when Sandy Springs was the suggested annexation, and Hartsfield went around, while he was still alive, suggesting that Sandy Springs had to come in to dilute the black population, black Atlanta population, [away?]. It was expressed in those terms particularly, so it's no wonder, really, that annexation is still seen in racial terms.

JACKSON: Yeah. And at least proposed in those terms, well, it's... The motivation of many places has been that, has been racial. And I don't mean just in Atlanta, but even across the nation.

BAYOR: Absolutely, absolutely.

JACKSON: And on the other hand, you can't say that that's the motivation where -- in a place like Portland. (laughter)

BAYOR: I'm not that familiar with Portland.

JACKSON: You know, where you don't have no [vote?] black people. So, you got different situations in some places, in other [00:09:00] states, where the black population is truly maybe less than 1%, less than 2%, a fear of a black takeover or something is not a part.

BAYOR: Well, then again, in Texas, it's been the Hispanics that have been the --

JACKSON: Or the minority takeover.

BAYOR: Yeah, minority takeover. Let me ask you something else about -- given the initial [White Horse polling?], that I've seen evidence in the newspaper, I was curious why there wasn't charter reform in 1973, which strengthened your powers there? I mean, just when a black man was coming in as mayor, the charter is changed, your powers are strengthened, it didn't seem to click in terms of this fear of a black mayor at the same time that the charter's being reformed to give you more powers, why the... congruence [that this fosters?]?

JACKSON: Well, if your question is couched in -- if your question moves from an assumption that the motivation behind a charter revision is racial, [00:10:00] then you

would have to look at what the racial motivation was and what was the strategy behind it. Now the truth is that there had not been a charter revision in 100 years. I cannot tell you what the racial motivation, if any, was behind the charter revision commission, unless it was a limitation on terms, with the theory being... in case you get a black -- now, this is, you know, again, it's pure speculation here. I'm not even sure if it serves a useful purpose. The answer is I don't know, to answer your question.

BAYOR: I was just curious, you know, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: And there was strong black participation in this [00:11:00] charter revision plan, there was. One of the major moving parties behind it, of course, was former State Representative Grace Hamilton, and her motivation was good government, I think by and large... the strict separation of powers, creating a strong mayor form of government was a move in the right direction in my -- (inaudible).

BAYOR: Absolutely. It seems a logical place --

JACKSON: But it did impose limitations; with therefore, presumably more opportunities to elect the chief executive officer.

BAYOR: But it did enhance your powers?

JACKSON: Yes.

BAYOR: And I would think the handwriting was on the wall
[00:12:00] that a black was going to be elected mayor in
1973.

JACKSON: I'm not sure if that was --

BAYOR: [If that was accepted?]?

JACKSON: -- accepted as gospel.

BAYOR: OK, that might be the explanation, to strengthen your
hand at the very time when the white man was fearful of the
black man. But (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: The -- that does not mean that that was the
motivation. It's speculate--

BAYOR: No, no, no (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: You know, if you sat around and look at kind of,
rummage around one's mind about what could have been
motivations, it will be hard to say. But the minutes of
the debate within the charter re-commission, all its
commission, no local elected official was allowed to
participate as a member or to reveal summonses.

BAYOR: I've seen some of that, and there's no mention of race
at all.

JACKSON: Yeah. I don't... [00:13:00] it had been 100 years,
there was a need for a new -- for a charter revision. Now,
there were one or two features of it may have been in the

minds of certain people, may have been a certain more favorable atmosphere for certain other things to happen than would have a different system, but I have no way of knowing that.

BAYOR: OK. Let me [get to this?], too: there were charges from the white power structure in the early period of the administration that you were anti-white, and we spoke about that last time. You were causing businesses to leave Atlanta, and there was the Ivan Allen comment to business leaders in 1974, at that meeting you just mentioned, that some of us have gotten too concerned with wanting the city government to fail because it's black. That was his comment in 1974. How was that tension eased? How was the racial harmony at all restored? What did you do?

JACKSON: Allow me to say that a comment like the one Ivan Allen made was a welcome comment. [00:14:00] That was a gutsy thing for him to say

BAYOR: [Probably after the service?], (inaudible).

JACKSON: because that's precisely what the majority of black leaders in Atlanta believed, that there was a Vietnam-type burn and reclaim strategy. You know, you've got to, you know, let the city go to hell and blame it on the blacks, and we will come back and rebuild, we'll come back and reclaim it.

BAYOR: Do you think that we go through that type of thing?

JACKSON: Well, I would say they, let it be assured that you understand what I'm saying, I'm not ascribing this to any great group of people because I don't believe that a great group of people believed it. But I think that two or three or four or five, six, maybe even more, influential business leaders, especially in a group called the loose group, especially but not exclusively, that group [00:15:00] would have bought into such an idea.

BAYOR: Now, this loose group, you --

JACKSON: If they would have, at that time, oh, [George Munford?], and a few others.

BAYOR: How angry they were at a black victory?

JACKSON: Well, they -- and philosophically opposed. This was a major finance backing group in the Southeastern US, to Nixon and [Wright?], and... But I want to be sure you understand that I'm not ascribing that just -- that we normalize it, that everyone in that group believed that.

BAYOR: But it was accepted by some, apparently?

JACKSON: No question in our minds. But the point was, it was an influential white leader who said this openly. And the black community was -- now, that alone didn't [00:16:00] change the atmosphere, but that was a factor which helped. Now, what did we do? We just did the best we could on a

day-to-day basis. We organized, tried to increase personal contacts, got more groups organized, got more black power structure held in a more aggressive way, through the Atlanta Action Forum.

BAYOR: That functioned even back then?

JACKSON: Oh, sure. Oh, yeah, absolutely.

BAYOR: So, you tried to establish contacts with the business leaders, let's say?

JACKSON: We did establish.

BAYOR: Did establish, and tried to calm their fears, I imagine?

JACKSON: Precisely. At the same time, tried to hold true to what we believed was the right direction for Atlanta.

BAYOR: My impression was that they thought you -- the blacks -- were taking over the city, and your feeling was that that's not the case, blacks just wanted their equal share of what was...

JACKSON: No. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Perhaps we say "they," the "they" [00:17:00] is we refer to a monolithic group, and the Atlanta power structure, in my opinion, never was monolithic. There have been significant numbers of people in the power structure of Atlanta who may believe a certain way and who probably did believe the blacks were taking over the political structure because, in fact, black

political power in Atlanta is pretty well established.

Black economic power is not well established.

BAYOR: And that's where you (inaudible).

JACKSON: Well, that's where Atlanta was (inaudible), because it's the first time ever that economic and political power had been separated from each other. So, you had groups that were not familiar with each other on a broad basis. I mean, we had to actually call and told them -- I'm talking about broad, the community. Groups which were within the context of our history, [00:18:00] had been antagonistic toward each other, one because it was the oppressor and the other because it was the oppressed, now in charge of two forms of power. One was the political power, and the economic power. First time in the history of Atlanta that's been separated out from each other, and how do you deal with that? The powers didn't know any more than we did. We need to understand, as we look back on this situation, without necessarily just trying to point fingers, but we also had human beings groping for answers to questions that are even unfamiliar. Not only were the answers unfamiliar, but the questions were not even familiar.

BAYOR: I don't want to imply [demonic?] --

JACKSON: No, no, no, no, I'm good, I'm hearing, but my point is that attitudinally, you know, one could kind of get caught up in -- [00:19:00] and I think of this in terms of friends of mine and so forth -- as we think back a little, we start pointing fingers in all this, we also have to back off for a minute and say, "Wait a minute, the white business community didn't do right on this issue, that issue, that issue, and that issue." And in a number of cases, the motivation may have been racial. The other side of that reality, though, is that frankly, they didn't know anything different. Well, I mean, now -- this has been an educational -- that's the gospel truth. Well --

BAYOR: They just didn't know? They had spent years working with the black communities, opposing this --

JACKSON: And a subservient community, and so, that's the difference.

BAYOR: In terms of what they were --

JACKSON: Precisely. Now, all of a sudden, you've got somebody who's not working under you, but with whom -- but with you.

[00:20:00]

BAYOR: (inaudible)

JACKSON: Precisely. Not -- they don't work for me anymore, you know, white community, can only one had -- and see it, not even analyze it properly. They used to work for, but now I

got to work with them. How do you work with somebody who used to work for you? So, there you had a period of groping, also, and I guess, you know, for those who are Christian or who believe in the Judeo-Christian concept of ethical forgiveness, I hope that as we look back in time, we're not going to be caught up in hatred and caught up in vitriolic retribution. And even as low-down [00:21:00] as some things were that happened, the future belongs to those who are going to be able to put it behind us and to say, "I may not like what you did, you may not like what I did, but each of us was groping for the right way to deal with each other." And I think that Atlanta today, relative for all of our problems, historically, still, compared to every other major city in this country, is ahead, without question.

BAYOR: Absolutely. And a big part played by you, no doubt about it.

JACKSON: We worked on it real hard. We spent a lot of time trying to ease white anxiety. Now, if you ask me how did we do it, I mean, there must have been 100 different ways.

BAYOR: OK, but it was done? You did --

JACKSON: And we also spent a significant portion [00:22:00] of our time making sure the black community knew -- not a major portion of the time, we spent some time -- it's -- I

never cease to be amazed by the mother wit, the common sense, of the Afro-American community. It's got to be borne of having survived in slavery, having survived through years of post-slavery oppression. But you think that one would be -- what I've spent a lot of time explaining to black people, "Now, don't get upset when I'm over here talking the power structure. I'm not selling you out, don't you worry about it, don't worry" -- that was not necessary.

BAYOR: But there must have been pressure on you to move a little faster.

JACKSON: No, but the pressure on me was a pressure born of my [00:23:00] recognition of the need to eliminate the problem with it, without delay. I tried to negotiate, and I don't mean just a day or two, most people alone -- well, the banks, for example, I tried to negotiate for 18 months with zero improvement.

BAYOR: So, that says a lot by itself.

JACKSON: Yeah, but see, that's not -- that was not well appreciated, and I wasn't trying to put my foot in somebody's tail just from day one. We were trying to get the job done, we were trying to live in a cooperative way, and they didn't know how to relate to me, in a way, yet they blamed me for not being able to relate to them.

BAYOR: I gathered that from excerpts from that (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: All right, now, I have grown and matured and I have looked back on this with a greater understanding now, that some of these guys who knew it all didn't know it all. Some of the guys ran multi-million-dollar, [00:24:00] billion-dollar corporations, multi-billion-dollar corporations, or whatever, didn't know how to deal with a Maynard Jackson, could not relate.

BAYOR: Couldn't with you -- you mean --

JACKSON: Psychically could not relate to a fellow who represents, in terms of background, training, character development, everything that they say they want in a mayor, OK?

BAYOR: Right.

JACKSON: All right. If I had been white... on several key issues, this -- mainly revolving around the affirmative action bill, when the white -- when most of the white support that I had in the power structure, I emphasized that, because the white community is not monolithic, either. Even the white power structure [00:25:00] had problems with me, most of them. Still I had two or three friends who remained that I worked with --

BAYOR: Who was that?

JACKSON: Power structure.

BAYOR: [Clay Austin]?

JACKSON: Clay Austin was one.

BAYOR: Woodruff?

JACKSON: Woodruff didn't really relate to anybody. He was kind of almost too old, and -- to do so. A couple of other people who always wanted to play a very quiet role...

BAYOR: So, they supported you during the campaign and they stuck with you afterwards?

JACKSON: Precisely. The problem was that at a certain point, well, these issues got very hot. Many of the white leaders got -- who disagreed with what we were doing -- dealt with it by calling me arrogant as a rationale for their walking away, for their deserting me and the issue.

BAYOR: So, they didn't want to deal with the issue?

JACKSON: They didn't know how to deal. [00:26:00]

BAYOR: You became anti-white, then, temporarily.

JACKSON: That's the only way they could rationalize what they were doing --

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: -- whether -- that's my analysis.

BAYOR: You would not have faced if you were white, of course.

JACKSON: Not only would not have faced if I were white, but they would have stuck in there, that they would know how to

deal with each other, and that's the way they should have dealt with me. That is, go and close the door and call me a bunch of SOB's if you want to, you know, "God damn it, Maynard, you're going the wrong way," and so forth and so on, "I disagree vehemently," and so on and so on, "and we're not going to be with you on this kind of thing." But where do they legitimately disagree? I mean, on -- strongly disagree on issues. Now, I've only, frankly, come to this realization in recent years. I didn't have time to sit down and analyze it then, when it was happening. I had to go on and get the problem solved, get the job done, [00:27:00] and bruised feelings matter a great deal to me. If anything, by the way, I would say that one of the great personal -- one of the great personal regrets that came out of my service was there, is what I believed to be the misperception of me among many or some white business leaders. That began in the first term and their lack of willingness, or lack of ability, to come to grips with that, from their perspective, what they have done not to help the conflict, which carried over into a continuing semi-hostility. You know, we were there, [00:28:00] we did business, it was always cordial. Nobody refused to shake hands, or there was never that kind of stuff.

BAYOR: But you were clearly the adversary?

JACKSON: Well, just, you know, not even that in the second term as much as had been the case in the first term.

BAYOR: Plus, the more I read today is that they changed their opinion about you, totally.

JACKSON: Well, I think that we both have grown up.

BAYOR: We've come as far as (inaudible) on this side, he said to you, "I appreciate what you've done."

JACKSON: Yeah. We have -- we are the [victims?] of a history of racism, and that has distorted the perception of oppressor and oppressed alike. Yes. As my Grandpa Jackson once said, "It [00:29:00] differs in phase and not in kind," in a monograph he wrote, talking about the effect of oppressor and oppressed.

BAYOR: Racism has been (inaudible).

JACKSON: What I regret also is how much time we lost.

BAYOR: Well, that's a mature --

JACKSON: OK, now, one of the attractions of running for mayor again, of course, is I don't have to be the first, emphasize the word "first," black mayor again. And the other thing is, I always philosophically felt that I've lived in a matter consistent with the philosophy of integration as a means, and the primary means, to a society of equal opportunity, of equal likeness. So, for people

who are not qualified [00:30:00] to judge me, to say that I'm anti-white, is particularly irksome. (laughter)

BAYOR: What was your relationship with the state government, as it was back then?

JACKSON: Not bad. No hostility.

BAYOR: Willing to work with you?

JACKSON: Yeah, now, the degree to which we succeeded had its ups and downs.

BAYOR: Yeah.

JACKSON: But that is, in my opinion, a reflection of how our local delegations functioned.

BAYOR: We spoke about some members of state government, more or less than when the white mayor's out? There's no effort to ostracize you in any way?

JACKSON: No. In fact, we -- I would say that we pretty much [00:31:00] held our own. One of the biggest problems was, it was hard to gauge how we did compared to how white administrations had done, is that you didn't really have white mayors who went over to curry favor with the state anyhow, because they were offended by the anti-Atlanta sentiment that was pervasive in the state government. And didn't even bother with it. In fact, this is a generalization, I'm sure there are many exceptions to this, but -- I'm sure the mayors all met with the governor, all

the mayors before I became mayor, and tried to do what they could do. But there is -- there is a great deal of writing on prior mayors Hartsfield and Allen, and how they had [00:32:00] their problems with the state, and so forth. So did Massell -- though Massell worked at better relations. Whether he succeeded or not is a matter of some debate, but I mean, he would put signs on City Hall yards saying, "Welcome, state legislators," you know, facing the State Capitol, as an indication of his determination to create better relationships. And --

BAYOR: You seem very different than that.

JACKSON: I would go and I would -- well, I'd -- just almost every legislative session, I think I missed maybe a couple of them, but I mean, the opening day that I was at every legislative session at one time or another while I was in office, and, well, when -- say hi to people, let them know that we very much appreciated what they were doing. We beefed up our lobbying action, hired, for the first time, a full-time lobbyist [00:33:00] over there, had a table set up in the State Capitol to handle the problems of legislators, whatever they were, OK? And you know, they wanted tickets for 30 school kids to go to Atlanta Zoo, they got them for free.

BAYOR: Yeah, their relations were good.

JACKSON: We worked hard at it and we got it, made some headway.

But I think we might have made more headway if certain factors of the local delegation had existed, which would have made them a bit more powerful, a bit more persuasive, with the state.

BAYOR: Let me get to the airport situation, I've got a question on that.

JACKSON: And on that point, but the delegation did a lot for the city, too, [00:34:00] but there were some things that were unclear about how we did with them.

BAYOR: I have two points on the airport situation. First, the idea is to build a second airport in Henry County with a terminal in South Atlanta, which you proposed, rather than Fulton County. Was this suggested as a way of redressing the lack of the economy in the black sections of the cities, also?

JACKSON: No.

BAYOR: You didn't see it that way?

JACKSON: No. My decision and my opinion is it may have that effect, and if so, that's great.

BAYOR: Especially the terminal in South Atlanta, I'd say that that was part of what you were trying to do there.

JACKSON: No, no. Because if the present airport told us to do it, a supplement to it is not going to make any difference. A supplement is farther away.

BAYOR: Unless a second airport involved (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: South Side, I'm talking about South Side of the City of Atlanta.

BAYOR: Right.

JACKSON: OK. Now, I've never said Henry County. [00:35:00] What I may have said is south of the Atlanta airport.

BAYOR: But the other suggestion (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

JACKSON: Which could be Clayton, could be Henry, could be somewhere else, I don't know where.

BAYOR: And the terminal was to be in South Atlanta?

JACKSON: No, the terminal would be where it is now.

BAYOR: Well, I read the fact that your terminal was to be in South Atlanta --

JACKSON: No, we're talking about taking the present airport and keeping --

BAYOR: Right, that's right.

JACKSON: Building in a new landing area.

BAYOR: Right, and then, I think, making a rail connection --

JACKSON: High speed, fixed rail, dedicated rail into the present terminal.

BAYOR: The joint venture, I'm sure you know, for the airport, were they efforts to remove power from you as a result of this controversy? Particularly to create, for example, an airport authority run by the state in an effort to bypass your authority? Was that suggested -- was that a reality in --

JACKSON: Yes, that was discussed on the state side. It didn't happen. [00:36:00] I saw it as a point of leverage used by certain people, the threat of it, I think, was intended to back us off of the issue. We never allowed that to happen.

BAYOR: Was the state very interested in doing that at all?

JACKSON: Well, I think always there have been certain people on the state side who have wanted to do that, but the state cannot just take over the airport. We own it.

BAYOR: (inaudible)

JACKSON: Now, the state may get control of it through legal means; we'd have to sit down and talk with them about whether we'd want that to happen.

BAYOR: So, it was a possibility, but not a really realistic possibility?

JACKSON: It never occurred to me, as a realistic legal likelihood.

BAYOR: It was a power or leverage against you, it's a --

JACKSON: Now, the other thing is that we have to remember that we in Atlanta are not alone in Georgia. [00:37:00] The folks were scattered on what the state government does. The state government tries to take Atlanta's airport, why would it try to fix Atlanta's airport? Or Columbus's airport?

BAYOR: But the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

JACKSON: In fact, there would be precedent for it. Would cause the others to be deeply concerned about it. So, I'm not at all sure that they would be able to engender any support from major urban centers around this state.

BAYOR: Oh, I thought they would either -- but the threat was made? (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: Well, that is correct.

BAYOR: And when there were white -- at the beginning, on the joint venture issue, did they give in with the idea of giving (inaudible) to black businesses? I mean, it was a very perfunctory type of giving in.

JACKSON: It was, in most cases, with teeth gritted, [00:38:00] and doing not more than the letter of the language required.

BAYOR: And this came from all --

JACKSON: And even then, there was resistance in every conceivable way by certain contractors. Not by all of them. Some contractors said this is a reality, whether I like it or not, I'm going to deal with it, make the best out of it, establish relationships, so they were willing to do so. We had accompany that resisted -- I mean, it just became their passion to fight this all -- they threatened us with everything they possibly could think of, and went on. And we just said OK, you know, if you want to do it, you want to go to court, fine. We'll see you in court. But we're not going to back off on this policy because it's right, and because it is a means, [00:39:00] and the most effective means we can think of at this point, by which we can correct the wrongs of the past. That does not mean extra compensation. It means if the law and if the policies and the practices leading up to the time that we came into office were wrong, racist, unfair, and all the other kind of stuff, all the other kinds of negative descriptions, that had to be corrected.

BAYOR: So, the whites didn't say it --

JACKSON: And not just -- when we say "the whites," just be sure that you understand, I keep bringing it back to this point,

it's important to remember this: the white community was not and is not monolithic.

BAYOR: OK. Who supported you on this issue?

JACKSON: The small white businesspeople saw an opportunity to compete here, too, and some -- not all -- who had been blocked out by the big boys, [00:40:00] so to speak, historically, because the big boys were using this rhetoric to keep the playing field just for themselves. This was not only a racial thing, this was the good old boy system, the good old boy network, and its ultimate --

BAYOR: And by "good old boys," you mean -- what do you mean? The banks, here, the...

JACKSON: Well, whoever makes it the good old boys system. I don't need to get into deciding who all they are, but the good old boys take care of each other, right? And if you're not a good old boy, you're out -- white, brown, or black, you're out.

BAYOR: Were they any of the big players who were supporting on this issue, and joined in?

JACKSON: We got more small, white businesses involved instead of -- and got them -- than ever before, too.

BAYOR: But about some of the big Joes?

JACKSON: On the supporters?

BAYOR: I guess, were there? Not necessarily people involved in engineering and construction, but --

JACKSON: Now, if by support, [00:41:00] you mean came out for us and said, "We're with you on this," publicly declared that?

BAYOR: Either up front or behind the scenes, said, "We're going to stick with you on this."

JACKSON: I cannot remember a single major white firm who did that.

BAYOR: OK. Is this point where your white friends walked out on you, then?

JACKSON: Chronologically, it would be hard to -- I'd have to think back on where that actually happened. But it was about this issue. This was the major --

BAYOR: More so than throwing money at the banks, then?

JACKSON: Well, that was part of this issue, though. Oh, yeah, that was the affirmative action thing, city contracts. They were managing \$600 million of city money, and the city was predominantly black.

BAYOR: So, it was getting [00:42:00] black --

JACKSON: It had nobody black on the boards, no black VPs, and that's a low -- that's a kind of a lower middle position in the bank.

BAYOR: Affirmative action in the banks and joint venture construction and architectural projects, those were the issues that the whites really bailed out, I suppose, the ones you thought were your supporters?

JACKSON: Yes, but let's redefine that issue, let's put it this way: economic integration -- in other words, these attempts at economic integration caused the bailout more than anything else. Now, I must tell you, by the way, that we made our share of mistakes, too, in communications. When things got hot and heavy, in terms of management, what all that we had to do -- I only had eight years.

[00:43:00] I knew that I only had eight years at most, [somewhat like?] my predecessors. Remember that. OK. I knew that my term, the maximum I could serve would be eight years, and that's assuming I would be reelected. So, I had to go out and get my job done. There came a point beyond which it was not responsible to go on letting an issue ride. Eighteen months of negotiation with certain segments of the financial community.

BAYOR: If you were willing to have the struggle, and you said there would be weeds growing in the airport before you changed your mind on this issue, then you came down pretty solidly on this issue.

JACKSON: No question. That's precisely right.

BAYOR: OK, that's where you made your stand.

JACKSON: And it, in fact, [00:44:00] it stood still for a year.

BAYOR: Right.

JACKSON: Well, obviously, I was deeply concerned about what the effect of that one-year wait would be, deeply concerned, because I wanted to be sure that, you know, we were standing up for what was right. We also didn't lose ground, we didn't lose money. And as it turns out, we worked hard and we came out at the end of that year, not only not losing money but having a better design and a better plan that saved \$7 million over the prior plan.

BAYOR: Well, the issue was worked -- was then worked out wonderful.

JACKSON: Yeah. It was not just a matter of luck, though, I want you to know that. That was our goal. (laughter)

BAYOR: No, I'm sure.

JACKSON: Our goal that year was to find a better way to do what we had been talking about.

BAYOR: At what point did the big business leaders, any or all of them, come in behind you on this issue and say, "OK, we're going to back you on joint venture and not stand in the way anymore." [00:45:00] Were they realizing that you weren't going to budge?

JACKSON: No, that -- what you just described did not happen.

To the best of my recollection, that happened only in the second term.

BAYOR: They never backed joint venture, did they?

JACKSON: In that first term.

BAYOR: The first term...

JACKSON: Now, I could be mistaken, but I cannot remember that it happened in my first term, that somebody had said, "OK, we're going to work with you on this kind of thing." The chamber never said a word in support of it.

BAYOR: Did they also oppose --

JACKSON: CAP never said a word in support of it, but it may have been -- at least in my first term. But if they did after that, I can't remember what they did.

BAYOR: And they didn't back you for reelection, though, I suppose? If that was still sticking in their throat.

[00:46:00]

JACKSON: No, I had pretty good business support in my reelection efforts to -- think -- most of the business leaders.

BAYOR: Yeah, not all.

JACKSON: And the whites, right.

BAYOR: But that you would be reelected and they might as well work with you, as well?

JACKSON: I think that was one. I think the other thing was that there was some -- there was a beginning of a grudging acceptance of the quality of leadership we were giving.

BAYOR: So, they did come around.

JACKSON: But I think that the practical side led. The practical realization of, "Hey, this guy is going to be there, we got to do business."

BAYOR: Right.

JACKSON: OK. Now, that's fine, if that helps to open up the doors. I made my share of mistakes. I must tell you that I -- I am not limitless in my patience. (laughter)

BAYOR: Who is?

JACKSON: And after a while, [00:47:00] I feel like I'm running after folks to, hey, you know, say, "Hey, look at me."

(break in audio)

JACKSON: Reasonable and honorable steps to build bridges. But if it gets to a point that I feel like I'm kind of beginning to scrape and bow to be accepted, I'm not prepared to go that far. I was right at the edge on that, right up at the edge. I've bit my tongue many a time. It's all about pride, many a time. But never wrote off the business community. But some of them believe that I did -- never, ever, ever did I do it because my obligation was to serve them, like it [00:48:00] was to serve anybody else in

Atlanta. Number two, the city moves better, and is governed better, and serves the interests of the city long-range better when the business community is a part of leading the change. And so, I was after that. I was working for that. The... There is not a meeting after, not even 60% of the way, at a certain point. I was determined not to let go of the commitment to seek the support of the business community. What I hit upon then because I was being besieged with having to manage the change that came with a [00:49:00] new charter, a recession -- I mean, some of these people -- some of the people were blaming me for the problems the recession brought on them. That's when they talk about running business out of Atlanta, I mean, I've never run anybody out of Atlanta.

BAYOR: Yeah, well --

JACKSON: Now, if my being black caused some people to leave, well then, I can't help that. I mean, what am I supposed to go about that? (laughter)

BAYOR: A better problem was probably -- the problem was some of these people who just, as you said, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: That was the place where the white leadership alone could turn the tide. I told them that, too. I said, "If somebody is running out of Atlanta because I'm black,

there's not a thing in the world I can say to them that I haven't already said because I've been to many people." When I would hear a rumor about so-and-so leaving, I'd go right to it. And we cut off several of those that I can name, [00:50:00] made (inaudible) come over here between 10th and 11th Street, (inaudible) met with them, for your concern, they told us, we responded, they were impressed. They stayed. Other firms, no, they were caught up -- by the way, you're talking about pressures, the real estate folks from I-285 were in downtown Atlanta every day, selling for all it was worth their space up on I-285, and then I get blamed if somebody leaves, they get promised two years of free rent. (laughter) So, we -- we need to understand that there's nothing that... (inaudible).

F1: There's somebody for you on the outside line.

JACKSON: OK, I need to take this.

(break in audio)

JACKSON: I never give it out. I think that the more we talk, the more I kind of realize some things, and become a little bit more analytical. I've gathered before, that I maybe reflect --

BAYOR: Of course.

JACKSON: -- [00:51:00] a bit more dispassionately, on that period of time. What I was going to say to you, though,

was that one of the mistakes that I made was in dealing -- was in getting so swamped and having become so preoccupied with the problems of managing all the change, getting government turned around and moving ahead, in this atmosphere of increased white anxiety and increased black expectations, that to handle this pressure of communication with the power structure, rather than calling six, seven, eight, nine, ten people on every major issue, kind of as a base-touching thing, I was looking for a shortcut, and made a decision on that shortcut that was a mistake, in retrospect. And it was to deal within -- primarily with the representatives of the power structure, [00:52:00] who are honorable decent, able people. I'm talking about [Dan Swift?] for CEP, and his counterpart for the chamber. Now, we didn't always agree on everything, but we were talking the same language. They were people who had dealt with the public arena before. They had realistic expectations and knew how things happened in governments and all this kind of thing, and it was a good relationship. Not always agreeable in the sense that we always agreed on every issue, because each of them represented a constituency, which I also had the obligation to try to represent, but I did not represent them exclusively, as they did.

BAYOR: So, you're saying that rather than work with the representatives, you should have worked with the --

JACKSON: No question about it. There's no reflection on them.

BAYOR: Oh, yeah, I --

JACKSON: These guys did an excellent job, I'm sure the best they could, on certain factors, [00:53:00] but what I'm saying is the greatest person in the world could not have done as effective a job in interpreting to the power structure as I could have done in a give and take session on a continuing basis. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) -
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BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) but they really weren't?

JACKSON: Yeah, because if you lose the eyeball contact, the human element decreases. And... That was a mistake. And one of the first -- one of the things I advised Andy, when he came into office, was not to make that mistake. There's no reflection -- these guys are great and there ought to be communication with them as the CEOs of these organizations, but to do that and therefore use that without -- use that in place of direct communication with the major players, [00:54:00] was a strategic error on my part.

BAYOR: What, did they have a sense of your arrogance, I suppose? Is it --

JACKSON: Well, distance generates the perception of arrogance. But there were people who would say, "Well, I couldn't reach him." I'd get on the phone and I would hear this, all the time, there's always somebody -- so-and-so said he couldn't reach you. I'd get on the phone and we'd call, and I would say, "You're trying to reach me?" "Yes." We would get into when -- they wouldn't want to talk about when, but I would kind of try to get them to tell me when they had been trying to reach me, and in 80% of the cases, they finally said, "Well, actually, I didn't call because I knew I couldn't reach you."

BAYOR: The perception was just...

JACKSON: Now... And some people say, "Yes, I did call," and sometimes we missed. But those times were few, I'm talking about in the 15% category, where we actually missed [00:55:00] somebody's call. We tried real hard to relate. The other thing that we had to deal with was this, this is another point, kind of standing back away from it long enough now, see some things that were going on -- some of the dynamics that were going on -- these men in powerful positions were accustomed to the mayor being their mayor, and relating to them first and primarily. Now, we have a mayor who wanted to be their mayor and everybody else's mayor, too. Didn't want to be their boy, but wanted to be

their mayor, their public servant, just like everybody else. And this new mayor [00:56:00] did not relate first and primarily to them.

BAYOR: I guess that's the trouble with Massell, now, too, is it's --

JACKSON: Massell... Yes, I think Massell had that problem, too. Remember, he was the first mayor elected with only a minority of the white vote.

BAYOR: And he wasn't blessed by them.

JACKSON: Oh, he was opposed by the (inaudible), aggressively, as they were in support of his opponent. And Ivan Allen, in fact, about 10 or another days before the election, came out and endorsed Councilman -- why am I blanking on his name? -- who was Republican, and of course, these labels were not supposed to --

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

JACKSON: Rodney Cook. But they worked with the guy, they thought he was going to be their guy, and together, they used -- there were some people who were afraid, in the power structure, who were afraid of [00:57:00] relations with certain people who were close to Sam. Well, that's all history, now.

BAYOR: Let me just ask you one last thing: the issue involving Police Chief Inman, did that create -- or did

that split among racial lines, in terms of support in the city council, among the business community? Was the white community disturbed at all by the police brutality issue, as [indicated?] by Inman?

JACKSON: Well, that question is a very interesting question. It's a question that ought to be asked at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, all over Atlanta. Should have been, at that time. The answer has to be -- I mean, this is not being critical, it's being analytical -- has to be "No." [00:58:00] The majority of the white community was not deeply concerned about the police brutality issue. Now, that's not based on a poll, but it's based on a perception that they had the power and they didn't do anything about it. And do I believe that most whites don't care about police brutality? No, I think that most whites do care about police brutality.

BAYOR: But it wasn't high on their list?

JACKSON: Well, they didn't believe it.

BAYOR: Oh, they didn't believe it?

JACKSON: No, I don't think they believed it. And number two, it was not high on their list, for various other reasons. But I think that the reason it was not higher on their list, see, if you believe that it's going on, if you are an ethical person, you've got to have a [power?] in this,

right? So, not -- how do you rationalize that? I honestly believe the majority of whites in Atlanta [00:59:00] believed that the allegations about police brutality were lies, for so many years, and believed the police without question when they made statements about how these things happened. That was a mistake. One of the great breakthroughs was when [Wade Mitchell?] of Trust Company Bank, City of Atlanta alderman on the police committee, to hear a white police officer finally break down and testify that this black man was shot on Peachtree Street, near the Crawford Long Hospital, and that he saw this other cop plant either a knife or a gun, it was a small Saturday night special, in the dead black man's hand.

BAYOR: When did this happen?

JACKSON: Well, I was vice-mayor, so it had to be between '70 and '74. It was approximately '72, [01:00:00] OK?

BAYOR: So, even with that, though --

JACKSON: And then, for Wade Mitchell to hear... See, Wade was Georgia Tech, All-American quarterback, banker, blessed with the mantle of the power structure, and a very decent, smart man, and a courageous man, once he saw the truth. He had the guts to search for the truth, too. It was in a meeting in the police committee where I was president, I served as vice-mayor, but the mayor was not present on

voting, the mayor was 99% not present on voting, so I made that one of my activities on the police committee. When Wade and I and the other members of the police committee heard his testimony, that in his opinion, a majority of the Atlanta police -- I've forgotten [01:01:00] what he said, whether it was 40%, 50%, or 60% -- somewhere -- but it was a significant number, maybe the majority of Atlanta police carried a drop knife or a drop gun -- even had names for them, drop knife and drop gun -- just for this purpose, to plant these things on people they had shot wrongfully.

BAYOR: Even when a --

JACKSON: Wade's conscience was -- as anybody's would be. Now, that revelation is the kind of revelation that it would take to move the average citizen, the average white citizen, off of assuming that everything, anything these officers said, was the gospel truth, to the point of questioning whether or not -- and to point of questioning what is the truth in a given case, let's wait until all the facts are in.

BAYOR: Even to that, I mean, the Inman situation came up, basically that split along racial lines, didn't it?

JACKSON: Well, my discharge of [01:02:00] a --

BAYOR: Police brutality was an issue there, too.

JACKSON: No question. My discharge of Inman was seen by many people as being an attempt to fire a white chief. The interesting thing is that when I hired the next chief, who also was white, in later years, that was forgotten.

BAYOR: But of course, you had created a (inaudible) chief --

JACKSON: Because Reggie dominated the perception, Reggie Eaves, and so, the perception was you fired Inman to get Reggie Eaves in. (laughter) Oh, brother. [01:03:00] I'm not going to tell you everything -- you're going to write my book. (laughter) I've already told you too much.

BAYOR: Well, it's great to hear information. I saw one thing in the *Atlanta Voice* --

JACKSON: What are you trying to do with this?

BAYOR: Oh, work on a book. I mean, this is a -- it's really a study of race relations in twentieth century America, really bringing it back to (inaudible) the 1906 Riot, I take it from there. I talked about -- [Merkudo?] was down in (inaudible) your grandfather's papers.

JACKSON: Really?

BAYOR: Yeah, those are very interesting.

JACKSON: At the historic exhibit?

BAYOR: At the Amistad (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: Yeah, Amistad, right. Let's -- you know, it's
regrettable we don't have somebody in Atlanta who wanted to
take care of those papers like Amistad.

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

JACKSON: Huh? Well, you know where Dr. [Beans?]'s papers have
gone?

BAYOR: No, I would -- I don't know.

JACKSON: Yeah. But the point is if AU couldn't do it,
[01:04:00] either didn't have the capacity or didn't know
how to do it, what about Georgia State? What about Emory
University?

BAYOR: Emory has a very good collection of --

JACKSON: I mean, you know, we're losing... So, you see, my
point is there's not the level of interest in a legitimate,
major piece of Atlanta history that there ought to be.

BAYOR: I agree. I was very surprised they've just gone all
over the country like this.

JACKSON: I wish you well on your -- it sounds like you're being
very --

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