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**Interviewer: Bayor, Ronald H.**
**Interviewee: Coleman, Clarence**
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BAYOR: -- four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10. (inaudible) you were Southern Regional Director for the National Urban League, what years were you...

COLEMAN: Let's see, '68 through ['72?]?

BAYOR: Sixty-eight?

COLEMAN: Mid-sixties through (inaudible).

BAYOR: About '64, '65? and were you on any other positions that you were holding during this time?

COLEMAN: [I was?] the Southern League Director, then I was Deputy Case Director for Atlanta.

BAYOR: (inaudible)

COLEMAN: (inaudible).

BAYOR: Sure, [we spoke to that?].

COLEMAN: And I stayed in that job [00:01:00] (inaudible) mid-'60s (inaudible). So, I was elevated from the job as Executive Director for the Atlanta [area?], which was my first job after I graduated from university, and became the Regional Director in the mid-'60s. And I stayed the Regional Director, Urban League, into '72. Moved to New

York [in search of presidents?] with good operations. Stayed in New York in that post, (inaudible) 1979, into ’79, he agreed to let us be socially liberal. Stayed there until two years ago, and now the president of the community (inaudible).

BAYOR: But the regional director thing was in about ’65 to ’73?

COLEMAN: Hm?

BAYOR: How about -- [00:02:00] you were on the steering committee of [Acting?] for Democracy, do you remember that at all? What was that? I’m sure it was you.

COLEMAN: I’m sure it was! (laughter) I’m sure it was. It’ll come back to me (inaudible). Let’s talk a little bit.

BAYOR: OK. One of the main things I wanted to talk to you about -- when I spoke to Robert Flanagan, he mentioned that there had been an agreement made between black and white leaders in the ’60s, right after the Peyton wall incident, that the blacks would take over all the Southwest and located by the Chattahoochee River, and that they were -- that area was to be given over to black expansion. Do you remember any kind of agreement about that? It wasn’t a written agreement, I’m sure (inaudible) --

COLEMAN: Something called [ACA?], it was what you mentioned, Action (inaudible), something called [ACA?], the Atlanta

Committee for Court Direction, yeah, that was [ACRA?]. And ACA was an organization of black leaders [00:03:00] who furthered the need for independent group of professionals who assessed the problems relating to black and white relations in Atlanta. And we ought not to identify with any other organization (inaudible) [served as chairman?] of ACA for a time. And ACA, sort of a think tank in Atlanta, decided there was a need for an organization to address the overall concerns, and they set up another organization called the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference. I served for a time as chairman of the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference, yeah. It was that group that decided there was a need, working with me in (inaudible), you know, to deal with major [record signs?]. ACA, before the Summit Leadership, they'd do a rather exhaustive study [00:04:00] of the problems in Atlanta called -- well, that might have been Action for Democracy, that might have been where, you know, we did have a report, a statement about black concerns. We issued that report. Matter of fact, we got (inaudible) *Journal* on that. (inaudible) They had one, they may have had -- this is my second day here, you see -- called Action for Democracy, I believe. And it was an effort to identify the problems facing black people, and we identified problems of the education field, and the

employment field, and recreation, and housing. And to issue that report, we had a meeting at the (inaudible) YMCA forum, which, at the time, was the only forum that black and white folks could comfortably meet together, and still does, [as a matter of the?] situation. [00:05:00] We issued that reportb and once that report was issued, this -- we recommended -- we determined there was a need for more kind of homegrown organizations [that would be?] a little more directly involved in the social dynamics as a Atlanta (inaudible), so we set up this Summit Leadership Conference, working through the local Atlanta [meeting and the regional league?] where I was serving then as deputy Southern regional conference. We convened a group of citizens and we determined there was a need for this Summit conference. The five of us decided that we would be the ones that would convene the black leadership of all other organizations in Atlanta. And the five of us, as I recall, were (inaudible) [Williamson?]. He died last year, the first black member [00:06:00] of the City Council. Leroy Johnson, who became the first black senator.

BAYOR: I spoke to him.

COLEMAN: [H.E. Rollings?], who was a senior lawyer (inaudible). There may have been, I believe, excuse me, the Atlanta University that we had grown activists, sort of radical

(inaudible) very, very aggressive organization. The five of us got together and sent out, you know, to about 200 different organizations which composed the black membership, invited them to what we called a summit conference, bringing the leadership together over -- I put them in this (inaudible). We invited the Medical Association leaders and student leagues and [neighborhood?] leagues and legal leaders, whatever. Any organization that we could benefit from a structured environment or that I could see the interdenomination (inaudible). And [00:07:00] we did a political agenda, and we've always -- we picked our shots in. We were just delighted at the response.

BAYOR: The Summit Group was an umbrella group for everybody that was...

COLEMAN: Yes, yes, everybody. About 200 groups would come, and the whole idea of convening that group was to see who could trial up for ACA, and not a committee through [court relation?] had done, in terms of that action coming up as it peaks, and do emotional, comprehensive statement and set some machinery dealing with race relations (inaudible). ACA had determined, getting the young Turks at the time -- I can't use that term too freely now -- but then, by that, we meant we were not a part of the structured leadership,

primarily at the time was the Atlanta Negro Voters League, because they were active in the (inaudible), and we were not satisfied with the thrust and the drive.

BAYOR: [Bill Rome?] was part of that.

COLEMAN: Yeah.

BAYOR: He was part of [00:08:00] that group, there.

COLEMAN: Them that had brought up -- he was the pride of the Summit, but we needed his -- we needed him to help us convene the group before, but we still didn't think that the voters' league was really moving in the direction we wanted to and [as fast as?] we wanted to, and with the (inaudible) dynamics. [What I remember was that?] one of the five of us convened that group. We had this kind of a meeting to think of others, this probably was significant. But they're not a new dimension -- (inaudible) we had a meeting to determine because the (inaudible) who seemed to be powerful enough to bring the black leadership together. So ACA (inaudible) We met and we struggled with that question for a whole meaning, is that one name we could use to think of -- demand their -- people's attention. We could not come up with a name we thought would (inaudible). [00:09:00] That's why these five people are mentioned there. Call them the Senator Bureau, they're chosen, we could not find one director. There were two (inaudible) at

the time, [John Reshbadeau?] and [E.T. Woollingly?], (inaudible). We finally decided, overall, to go with the people (inaudible).

BAYOR: So ACA (inaudible) summit group.

COLEMAN: Right. And we convened the Senate Group. We called that as Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference, well before we institutionalized it, in that way, we formalized it.

BAYOR: And this is the group in that goes to Mayor Allen --

COLEMAN: Right, we had to meet him over at ITC. Met on a Saturday. We had old people, young people, neighborhood people, top leadership came to the meeting. We suggested at the outset that we would have so many, probably what I could have done, we had a workshop, we had general statements made about why we're here, and the purpose was to review the whole spectrum of black interest and concern, [00:10:00] white interest, concern, and how can we develop a mechanism to build a better working relationship with the white community? And we made those general statements, then decided we'd divide up the group, (inaudible) that morning. We thought that was the start of a unique -- and, well, I'll tell you what, ten o'clock on a Saturday morning. And (inaudible) registration fee a dollar and a half at most, and that was for [lunch?]. (inaudible). He was just so delighted, meeting the rest at 10 o'clock that

morning (inaudible) [birthday?] lunch (inaudible). BAYOR: So, this somewhat became a business organization? COLEMAN: Right, the [black men?] and the company amenities, it had so far the department of [new?] universities. It even worked for Michigan, when I came to town two months ago, was designated as the...historian is the best word I'm coming up with now, to take the report [00:11:00] of each one of these workshops, which came back to a Trinity session at (inaudible), to identify [bathroom signs?] and actions that need to be taken. And we'd put all those, of course, together, we took it and put it together for us, and we issued this statement, (inaudible) [piece?] we came with up. And the [piece?] (inaudible) ACA (inaudible) booklet. And that became the black agenda for the decade. We decided that we would, with [Mr. Prester?] full together, he would present the black agenda to the (inaudible), the citizenry of the town. So I called Mayor Allen, and I told him we would love to have a meeting with him to discuss some matters of major concern regarding the black and white [and the growth?] development of Atlanta and then focusing on a partnership between black and white people. And we'd like to meet with him. [00:12:00] And we did have one meeting with him, and I propositioned with humor, we wanted him to convene the meeting at city hall,

and we wanted that meeting in city hall to include the following [kinds?] of people. We wanted the Hotel Owners Association, we wanted the Restaurant Owners Association, we wanted the Chamber of Commerce, we wanted members of the Board of Education -- there were no blacks on the Board of Education at that time. We wanted members of the City Council -- and I'm not sure if (inaudible) [Williams?] (inaudible) so only one black.

BAYOR: (inaudible) '65?

COLEMAN: I'm not sure if he was on at that particular [meeting?] or not. Anyway. We wanted the Medical Association, and we wanted the Dental Association, and other groups like that, that in our judgment, controlled, you know, the affairs, aspects of life in Atlanta. [00:13:00]

BAYOR: (inaudible)

COLEMAN: (inaudible) black leadership wanted to meet with them -- it wasn't a confrontation so much as kind of like a partnership. And we wanted him to call all the white people and we'd call all the black people, and we wanted to come to City Hall and we wanted to deal with the -- present our agenda to that -- to the group. We did, he responded positively. We met with him. (inaudible) was one of the roles, (inaudible) he convened it, and earlier, we made our

presentation. And the mayor (inaudible)retrospect, we probably did our voice, could I get [us?] to talk together, and decided there's no way to move forward but to establish [some integration?] committees to deal with each one of those concerns. As I recall, they specifically -- there was public accommodations law did not become effective until ['64, '67?], and so we had a problem with restaurants. The first restaurant, as I recall, that would open its doors to black (inaudible) restaurant. Julian Bond had been part of a SNCC organization, and they'd been trying to picket it, SNCC -- and I'm not sure about this. I think it was already (inaudible). And the whole idea was to get the (inaudible) and the [Westin Brothers?] to agree to open their doors. There were no black men would be (inaudible). So, it was a complete different world, you see? It's part of the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

BAYOR: -- there was really two cities operating separated.

COLEMAN: That's right, that's right. And we met and we began to, you know, develop some understanding about it. So we learned, in other words, we had -- I was on a committee that probably met with the Chamber of Commerce, and we met at the Commerce Club. And we [00:15:00] used that occasion to talk about the restricted membership, to talk about restricted opportunities, and that kind of world, and so

forth. And began to make -- make some move in the right direction. The most important aspect of that would not be opening up our hotel, a [Westin?], which did result from that (inaudible) past, but building like negotiation and the partnership and talking about the issue. So, that was really the beginning of a real broad-based effort to try to bring about a political partnership between the black community.

BAYOR: And so, the whites were able to share in power, a little bit, talking to them?

COLEMAN: Prepared to talk about it.

BAYOR: To talk about it.

COLEMAN: And that was a good beginning. Well, prior to that time, there had been no black members of (inaudible) of the Chamber of Commerce. I believe Jesse Hill, [the academic?], and [Russell?] later on came in, as I recall, and both of them were, of course, in the [second black [00:16:00] to be presidents, I believe?], of the Chamber of Commerce.

BAYOR: What do you think Allen’s motivation was, votes?

COLEMAN: Hm?

BAYOR: Allen, Mayor Allen’s motivation. Do you think he was after votes, or just the goodness of his heart, or what?

COLEMAN: I think he could look at himself like about a wealthy man, independent man, and a proud old man, and a leader for the white community, and he was big enough to be different. He could meet with us without being hurt. Some other person, white, might not have had the strength or the feeling of confidence. I think that Allen felt that I was as good as anybody in town, I'm the mayor with the people -- white people, you know -- I know (inaudible) and I represented them, and just because I talk with blacks, [that ain't gonna do me in?] because [I know if?] I go behind doors, I mean, I'm, like I said, a lot of things. I think he was a proud of -- [proud of structure?] -- he was the leader of this.

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: He did; that helped.

BAYOR: Yeah, sure.

COLEMAN: Beyond that, there was some goodness. I think that when he built that, that stone wall out there,, that was crazy, [00:17:00] and he really recognized that. Now, as I recall, he did go to Washington and endorse the Civil Rights Bill, as I recall. Well, I thought that he was open-minded and willing to discuss it and was not afraid of himself, felt very good about himself. So, I feel confident in working with him, a man like that, who feels

so confident that he could open up any doors. I mean, nobody would turn down the telephone call from Ivan Allen, whether he was mayor or not, because he was a man with some power.

BAYOR: How about the other ones? (inaudible) [Richard Rich?], for example? You had trouble with him, didn't you?

COLEMAN: We had trouble with [Rich's?], and trouble with Rich's as a point of the confrontation. As I recall, we -- the borders I linked to [Mayfield?] may have therefore -- (inaudible) a meeting with us about Summit [meet?] in occasion. But many of our meetings were at the Atlanta Life Insurance because there's not a lot of places you can meet, [00:18:00] and Atlanta's owned by black people. Jesse Hill was there, so that wasn't no problem. I remember on occasion, it's very, very interesting. Now, by that time, I worked for the National League as Deputy Director, and [Boyden?] made a speech to us and said, "You know, you've been talking and talking and talking -- let's put it -- let's go to Rich's and go down there right now, (inaudible). And no, I wasn't sure if that was a policy of the National League. I was on the National League payroll, from reading and working and other, guy named [Proyer?] was director (inaudible) sister, and we said, you know, what the hell, you know, (laughter) national position is on

picketing; we think this is the thing to do and the time to do it, so we just walked out of Rich's and (inaudible) a couple days. No (inaudible). Some did -- one or two did once, so I found the beginning, continuation of dialogue, keeping the (inaudible).

BAYOR: Do you remember anything at all about this agreement made after the Peyton Well thing, that [00:19:00] in a sense, the city would agree to a certain part of the southwest going over to the black population expansion?

COLEMAN: That's not the way I recall it. I would say that, well, you couldn't sign in the manifesto. You're signing the... I think the general feeling was that the mayor figured he was strong enough, the white people know this is the line between black and white -- white people over here and black over here. Blacks, you go this way, and you'd bring up in -- we don't think that's right, he was saying. I think he thought he was big enough to make that operate. And then, he built that wall on this street, it's a main street, he's a -- you know, I'm big enough to do it. He's just a powerful man. And when -- I remember my church, I remember Friendship Baptist Church, a man named [Sam Williams?] was over there, a powerful guy, and after church one day, we decided to go and have church service on those [roads?]. That's pretty powerful stuff. Sam really was

very articulate, very able, very aggressive, unafraid, and [00:20:00] it -- the mayor recognized, I'm sure, soon as he told them to put those damn walls up there, that that just didn't make any sense. And he was (inaudible). I mean, after a while, even his friends said, "Well, you can't put them up."

BAYOR: OK, so he was a little embarrassed.

COLEMAN: "You can't get a bridge across the damn street, Mayor." So, he -- I think he was (inaudible) there. BAYOR: But you don't remember any particular verbal agreement about...

COLEMAN: May have been an understanding that he took the thing down as if to say, well, we don't have any right to do that. You don't want to sell, don't sell. And if black people come in all through your city, you don't have to sell your house. You want to pay what they want to pay, I think you just -- probably wouldn't sign the agreement. I think he just said, "It's a lost battle."

BAYOR: In other words, you were saying this area's opened up, it's not --

COLEMAN: Yeah, I would say that's what it was.

BAYOR: You can't come -- if you try and save this area for whites, it's not --

COLEMAN: No, that's right. I think there was sort of an understanding, and the same thing in -- when I came back to Atlanta -- [I went to college?] in Atlanta -- that they -- later, when I moved on, I was on the west side of town, was -- trying to [00:21:00] think of the name of it -- something like [the bachelor?], and have a sign, a zigzag sign, something like that, over on Queens Avenue where I lived (inaudible). And blacks were moving in that area, and the whites, when I came back [with no job?] (inaudible) And we bought a house over there, and it was really rough. A lot of [rental cars?], loudspeakers, frightening, just you would think it's -- you would think it was [Nazis all over again, give them time?]. (laughter) They would talk it over, that one segment of racists that operated. They were trying to stop it, they were trying to put signs up, blacks [wanted?] to move, but the same thing happened with that segment that happened with the mayor. You just can't put up a sign. If people want to sell, and when black people come in, in a society which has the last 200 years kept black people apart, white people follow white people, black people follow black people, and there's been socioeconomic and cultural, and religious things to do. So, when [Keene?] calls [00:22:00] eleven o'clock Sunday morning and just said, "Get out and get dressed," I think

that’s true. It’s true now, it’s true then. But you can’t draw that line. Because I think if I said it, this won’t work. But I don’t think I actually felt so good about it, it just didn’t make sense. The white person sold their house, they want their money, yeah? (inaudible) [Wayne?] County.

BAYOR: Well, Allen pretty much -- he didn’t say, but he pretty much gave you the inclination that the area’s opened up, I suppose, right? He didn’t actually say it?

COLEMAN: It was not a proclamation of “No, we’re not going to say this,” it was sort of a despaired, “I can’t do anything about it, I’m sorry.” That’s the way I see it.

BAYOR: OK. How about the attempt to move blacks out of the south side? You know, with the building of the stadium, for example? Any clue if the stadium was put there because of an effort to get blacks out of that area down there?

COLEMAN: I think it was put there because it was a -- that would be one factor. I think race would -- I think economics would be a primary factor. It’s a part of the town that will give this economic [feasible?] (inaudible). [00:23:00] The blacks didn’t have the political power, so that wouldn’t be a problem. The space was there. Accessibility was a factor -- close to downtown, get rail coming -- so I think white was just insignificant. I think

the economics was just so obvious that they just wanted to -- BAYOR: I had heard that there was a desire there (inaudible) black project there, and to block that, Allen put the stadium there. I mean, it might have been economically feasible and all that, but it was designed pretty much to put a barrier in between the downtown area and the south side projects.

COLEMAN: That would seem reasonable, you know, political decision to be made at the time. I'm not conscious enough -- I'm not conscious of the details. But it was in -- pretty much in line, trying to keep the blacks and white people apart.

BAYOR: How about the effort to ship blacks to the west side through the building of the projects? [00:24:00] Most of the projects wound up on the west side, not on the north side (inaudible). Do you think that was a conscious process of the --

COLEMAN: I think no question that was true, and I think it was also the conscious on the part of the voter education. A lot of school teaching time [and training up for the school year, most of that out?]. I think was unquestionably their desire, on the part of the leaders of the town, that what Mr. Mayor (inaudible) white people of the town made a certain determinations. One was in order to delay forever

integration of schools, that their own black schools, wherever the black people ought to be. There were black schools all over the damn place, small schools, so if black people are here going to school here, and the white people here and blacks are here, you build one -- you build one in the middle of the black community and they would tend to go to the school closest to them.

BAYOR: So, in other words --

COLEMAN: And so, the fight for integrating the schools would be less and less, and that worked along --

BAYOR: Now, why would that be? In other words, put the school right in the middle of the white --

COLEMAN: Black community.

BAYOR: -- or the white-owned [00:25:00] (inaudible)?

COLEMAN: Well, the black folks aren't moving -- moving west, but white people were, and ready to question 10 years from now about going to [white?] schools, they'd build a school in the direction that black people are going. There's one, for example on, I think it's [Hallowbrook?] Road, they call -- it'll come to me in a minute. It was a beautiful school. I worked at the [local?] Urban League at that time, and I got a call from the people, and -- who were telling us how proud they were to have the school out in this neighborhood. And we were not -- they said they did

have a problem, and that problem was the traffic. And it took the local Urban League hitting them, these white people, to deal with it. [And they said, “Of course.”]? I’m the community organization worker, that’s my field, with the local Urban League that I’d been training and how our job is to respond to the needs of the black neighborhood. And as I go out and meet with them Sunday afternoon and they said, “You know, we have a beautiful school, we love that school, [a nice clean?] school, they have a committee that cuts the grass, we rake up the stuff, and our children like to go, and the teachers, you know, are nice and it’s ours, [00:26:00] we named it, and we feel good about it.” And we did get -- helped them to get a light on the corner. So, we did suggest how to organize themselves, in order that we would deal with the problems of the children and a more meaningful and systematic way. And we asked them some questions about the quality of their school versus what happened at the white school, which was already that old school. And it was ridiculous from the start, looking, they didn’t know the questions to ask. In other words, what’s the reading level of the first and the sixth graders [in?] the black school, what’s the reading level of the whites, that’s just a few blocks away. And then, had conceptualizing, trying to evaluate their school

in that way. Also found out that many black teachers didn't want to go to middle and upper class whites, didn't want to travel out to this isolated neighborhood for the black schools, although new. So, they didn't want to have much to do with it. So, PTA meetings were not -- were not all that popular, and the black -- the blacks [00:27:00] didn't feel comfortable in working in the neighborhood. So, you had a culture of economic great difference between the black teachers and the white -- and the black people in the neighborhood. And so the teachers that were sent to these schools, since they were in undesirable locations, were teachers who were not doing so well [in their place?]. That turned out to be a very, very bad scene, and we learned that when we had meetings. (inaudible) meetings with them. The teachers didn't care, and they'd get a -- they'd get in there (inaudible) and get out of there, to the same school because (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

BAYOR: Because (inaudible) or...?

COLEMAN: Well, the city wouldn't do anything about it. Just a dead end, just a group of blacks. All we had -- we had poor black people out there, and the teachers lived over here, you understand that is, and they'd say, "Well... it isn't what we bother with." So, (laughter) so the poor blacks, you know, we'd get them [winning?], and there was

no airport. Or the white superintendent of the school, (inaudible), at the time, to deal with our situation. [00:28:00]

BAYOR: Well, what could he have done?

COLEMAN: Hm?

BAYOR: What could he have done?

COLEMAN: [It?] was a woman.

BAYOR: [What could the woman do?]?

COLEMAN: We raised the question with the Board of Education, we had this question, how did they do it through -- in the first place? They said they filled the two open courses... People in the area of their schools (inaudible) neither. Actually, the government, we got a map of the City of Atlanta, which we did readily, doing an assessment of the location, Census tract by Census tract. It was pretty obvious that the schools were being built and the schools that were on the drawing board were really the design (inaudible) schools, not to build on an education system that was going to be corrected. And they moved toward integrating the schools (inaudible) what we did.

BAYOR: Well, so, let me just get this straight: the black schools, you say, were put in areas where the Board of Education thought blacks were moving, or where they weren’t going to be moved to, they were --

COLEMAN: And to keep them from moving, which the -- the [00:29:00] direction of the country, if you tend to move towards some kind of integrated proposition, sometimes they teach you the best way to avoid that would be to have blacks to have their own schools.

BAYOR: OK. So, in other words, they'd keep the blacks from moving towards white neighborhoods --

COLEMAN: They'd get a school for the blacks wherever they lived at. As the blacks got older, they'd still go to school, they'd still close (inaudible) better there. (laughs) They'd build a school to keep the blacks in their place, and then later, during the integration days, if there's inconvenience for blacks to go -- that's how the whole busing system came about, because they were busing blacks from the integrated because the white people [had grown?], so they said, it was designed -- the plan -- somebody upstairs, they planned it very beautifully, to keep -- keep [black?] folks [poor?].

BAYOR: OK, black schools were (inaudible).

COLEMAN: Right.

BAYOR: They were built to keep blacks from what they were -- keep blacks from moving towards the white neighborhoods, and the black schools were put in certain locations, put in certain directions, and --

COLEMAN: Right, in order to protect the segregated system. [00:30:00]

BAYOR: So, in other words, the blacks would not come near the white neighborhoods because (inaudible).

COLEMAN: Right. And also, another consideration is that, you know, is the transportation system. It all was designed to keep whites going this way and black people going this way, and so we'd -- you'd set up a system to keep them apart.

BAYOR: Now, this is the --

COLEMAN: And look down there, you look down, it still works. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

BAYOR: The bus system? Or what?

COLEMAN: I didn't mean the bus system; I mean the very design, the schematics, in order to keep the black and the white from having to work together, it presents a real problem. I'm on the MARTA board, for example. We're discussing right now -- off the record -- well, I'm on the record. (laughter)

(pause in recording)

COLEMAN: (inaudible) blacks and whites in Atlanta was such that in City Hall, the (inaudible) Ivan Allen... is -- that's when I became real active in this. Was that city employment [00:31:00] structure, and the management and control of City Hall was so predominantly judged [by?] the

white community that black people didn’t always feel comfortable going to City Hall. The Urban League, as a matter of fact, had a person on the staff who -- [merely?] a job development and employment. And we had an arrangement with the City Hall that if they would send us applications for employment and we would refer people to City Hall. They were so comfortable with that, that I’ll select the -- our selectees, they would hire most of the people we would refer to them. But we’d only know about jobs if they were willing to have blacks in it in the first place. So, we sent a committee to meet with the -- with Mayor Allen on this matter of job opportunities in City Hall -- to give you a flavor of the tone of the race relations at the time. And we asked the mayor -- I was the (inaudible) chairman, or not chairman, I was the staff person working the committee to explore new employment opportunities in the City of Atlanta. [00:32:00] And the mayor said, “You mean to tell me that you all are telling us that we’re discriminating against black people here in the City Hall?” We said, “Yes, that’s why we’re here, [we were wondering?] about the job opportunities.” He said, “If you want a job in City Hall, you take the examination like everybody else. You pass the examination, you get the job.” We said, “We don’t think it works that way.” He

said, “Oh, yes, it does.” So, he called (inaudible) director in, and he repeated this to him, “These people say that we’re discriminating. Explain that to me.” I went all around (inaudible), any discrimination against anybody, certainly not black citizens of Atlanta, for any job in the City Hall. Now, what do you do about that? He said, “Well, Mayor, we advertise the job, everybody knows about it, and meanwhile, once you pass the examination, you get the top three names, they send you three names to the department head, and the department head has the right to choose one of those three. And we -- I’ve never had -- I do not have in my -- of any of my five years, I don’t have anything in my records indicating [00:33:00] any black person is discriminated against.”

BAYOR: Where would they advertise it?

COLEMAN: Hm?

BAYOR: Where’d they advertise the job?

COLEMAN: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Well, what he said was, “Well, we advertise them in the newspaper,” he said, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) which means -- well, you said, yes, in the newspapers, we put it -- everybody reads the same -- “Everybody gets the same information at the same time.” That’s the way he put it. The mayor says, “You heard what the man said, what about it?” We were

ready for something like that because we did have a professional staff person, in this case, it was myself, and the person in charge (inaudible) local Urban League that could really try to get the facts. So, we said, “You know, we appreciate it, Mr. Mayor, but would you have any objections if we would do a little study of the matter for you, and then bring the findings back to you, and then you take a look at what we find, if you make information available to us?” He said, “Listen, you’re citizens like everybody else, I’m the mayor of the town, this is an open city, you take it, go with it.” He told (inaudible). We got the five-year study of government employment factors in City Hall. Let me give you an example of [00:34:00] one of the findings that makes the point. I think we had 27 departments we looked at. We wanted to know whether race, sex, salary, job classifications, and turnover rate were the key questions that were posed. We thought we had took -- take a good look at sanitary departments that opportunities for employment for blacks might be a little bit better. We found a problem. I think there were 250 trucks, garbage trucks. Five garbage men were assigned to each one of the trucks. We found a problem. Of the 250 trucks, there were two of them -- you’ve got 200 drivers of the trucks. The driver of the truck was the supervisor of

the crew of garbage men, run -- now, you don’t have to go to the back; then, you’d go to your backyard and get the garbage, put it on the shoulder, then you’d go to the truck and dump it in. Over the five-year period that we studied, there was a turnover rate for the truck driver, who was a supervisor, who kept a record of who worked and the number of hours, he had to go by the name and number of hours [00:35:00] and multiply time and get -- calculate his money because they turned that in every day. That was the mathematical skill that a person needed. I’ll come back to that in a minute and then they discussed the -- the test that you have to pass. And we found that over a five-year period, the turnover rate was 60% -- 60%. Not one black person had been hired as a truck driver in the sanitation department during the five-year period. All were white. Five men were assigned to each one of these trucks, so five times 200 trucks would be -- whatever number that is. The turnover rate had not been as high, we were surprised to learn. The turnover rate had been lower, we found out later, because black folks didn’t have opportunities. And once they got a job, even as a garbage truck driver, he kept his job. Turnover rate was 30%. In the five-year period, not one white person was hired as a garbage collector in the city, not one in the five-year period.

[00:36:00] We checked the water department, we got put out of the water department when we went down to talk to the men [who ran it?] at the time, a man named [Carl Weer?]. [We called him Carl Weird?] after that. But we stood up and dismissed us and we really went to him to talk about this matter there. At any rate, as water meter readers, there's a lot of Georgia Tech graduates in the summer and during the year, to read water meters. Blacks represented about, as I recall, 37% of the population at the time, and they had part-time workers and others to read these water meters. You go to the front house, it's the sidewalk, you know, got a [proof?], you open up the meter, you write down the amount of water used from the new building, go -- so there's no interaction between the household and this person. I don't recall the number, but anyway, whatever number they needed, maybe 300 that they needed at the time, part-time workers, Georgia Tech, of course they had engineers, and well, they just assumed that was a, you know, [00:37:00] a good place to find people who knew about such things. Not one single black person with five -- under -- four undergraduate schools, five universities, and five schools, (inaudible), had been hired during a five-year period to read not one water meter reader in a five-year period. We found that black women had all the jobs

cleaning the white women's toilets, the black men worked in City Hall cleaned the black men's toilets, cleaned the floor, and that kind of -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) -- always, always, across the board, in every department. The jailhouse or whatever it was, to City Hall, hospitals, and so forth. And we had that report. We had -- We went through 27 departments, and we took it in and showed the mayor. "Where'd you get this information from?" We said, "We got it from the personnel records," "Go get him," he told me. (inaudible) "Yes, sir." "Is that accurate?" He said, "Yes, sir." He said, "Well, (inaudible) doesn't that seem a little strange?" "Strange, [00:38:00] Mr. Mayor?" "Nothing strange about it." Says, "I told you, (inaudible) available, we publish it; if the blacks don't want to apply for a job and the whites don't want to apply for a job with the garbage, I can't make them apply. There's hope for -- This is a public institution. And you wouldn't allow that Mr. Mayor, and I wouldn't either, I'm your manager." The mayor was very pleased for one time, he said, you now, you dismissed all these -- the staff people, and he said, "This is very revealing. And I'll tell you what I would do. I think that you ought to try to find a way to change it because what you have said to us, you black people have said to us, is there is such a

thing as white jobs and black jobs. And whatever the system is that results in this, now, you got to -- you got to attack it in some way, or address it in some way." He wasn't a strong advocate, but he was taking the right position, recognizing that something is wrong. And he said, "I'm going to do this," and it's not unusual, I've found, [00:39:00] (inaudible). He said, "What I think I will do is first of all, I want you all to continue with me. I'm going to increase my staff by one, at least one secretary," and he said, "but many white people say, I want you to get me an attractive" -- he didn't say a "fair-skinned" because we understand the code word -- "I want you to find me an attractive black woman and I'm going to put in a -- put in my office and let the people know that I really mean business; we're going to bring more black people in different kinds of jobs in City Hall. That's my way of making that message." You think that's a good -- it wasn't a bad move to make. And in addition to that, he set out a recommendation, that he ought to call his department together, once a month, invite us to come in, he's going to call the roll. What have you done on this issue since that time? That was done. That was very significant. That through -- you know, he was willing, that he was bold

enough and independent enough in his own thinking, [00:40:00] to be a decent person. I felt good about that.

BAYOR: How about when Jackson came to be mayor?

COLEMAN: Jackson came in to be -- as vice mayor, and again --

BAYOR: He worked -- the mayor -- he worked -- when he came in to the mayor, what do you think that made a difference about?

COLEMAN: It made a great difference, and he --

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) to Jackson, there was a big split, can you tell me about (inaudible) --

COLEMAN: Maynard was a decent dude, always opened his door, felt comfortable with him, he's a reasonable man, I liked him, reckon he and Allen, you know, [he was efficient movement?], [martyr?], very comfortable with him, his attitude was right because he was a decent man. We felthis general attitude about race was different, his tone, his background, and so forth was different.

BAYOR: This is...?

COLEMAN: Massell. He wasn't that upper class, rich WASP that they're running the world, or running this part of our world. He didn't -- he felt comfortable with black people, Massell did. You felt comfortable with Massell. He did what he could, we felt we had a friend ready to listen, to do what he could [00:41:00] in a hostile environment.

That’s my -- That’s the way I would see it. But like -- And then, Maynard came on as mayor, (inaudible). He took -- Maynard Jackson took a very strong black posture, and he was identifying with black causes, he was identifying with black community, which is how highly regarded in the black community. And not so highly regarded in the white community. When he came in, I guess 75% of the jobs, I would roughly say, were held by white people at City Hall.

BAYOR: Even with Allen and Massell --

COLEMAN: Yeah. (inaudible), but you know, it was -- it was the Old South, when he left, although I told you he was trying to change, did change. When Maynard came in, he made a difference. He stood as mayor as eight years. He came in, about, I guess -- I’m guessing at this, now -- I would say close to 75% of the jobs, meaningful job, were held by white people, regardless of the (inaudible) of jobs, you know? (inaudible) were white. When he left, (inaudible), about 60, 75% of the people working at City Hall were black people. [00:42:00] A significant difference. Let me give you just one example of what a black person who’s committed to doing something about it because he represents them in the population. Black people didn’t like it, white people probably didn’t -- some probably didn’t -- they’re going too far. I think gave me heavy duties, at the time, and

[the event was changing?]. I hold him in very high regard for changing the system. I believe [not even a job?], even the Urban League has shifted from helping get a job for individuals (inaudible)changing the system. And he had to change the system. He wanted, an example, he had such a hard time in the water department, I believe, the sanitary department, he found a black engineer doing the job to take it in the department, get going. Well, you can't go bring -- a damn thing to do is go drive (inaudible). I mean, people got to take, I mean, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). And he found a black dude who had all the credentials down in the Bahamas someplace, the Caribbean, he brought him up here and made him head of the damn water department. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) I'm saying he found him. [00:43:00] Our kid-- my kids were -- [my wife's friends want to talk?] about it around the country, that black people are physically different in one way. Black people can -- can see better than white people, have better vision. Well --

BAYOR: How did you -- you (inaudible) somebody who was really...

COLEMAN: With Jackson?

BAYOR: Yeah, with Jackson. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

COLEMAN: Yeah, but he lost -- not -- “lost” is not the word. He did not have the -- he didn’t have the -- he did not have the warm support of the white business community because they thought he was selling them out. (laughs)

BAYOR: What were they (inaudible) --

COLEMAN: Respectful. He was respectful, too, but he wouldn’t care too much about that.

BAYOR: Why do you think the whites opposed him? Because he was giving too many jobs to blacks, or...?

COLEMAN: Yeah, it was too much with strong (inaudibles) black men.

BAYOR: How about the minority [fundraiser?]? I’d love to talk to the angry -- to that, too, I suppose.

COLEMAN: Yes, he brought in the whole question of minority contracting, and the City Council, you know, set up a system of [00:44:00] set-asides and the whole question of encouraging blacks to get a piece of the action became a part of the demonstration, he identifies with it, and it worked across the board. And the council ultimately, when you had a few more blacks on the board that went along with him, and the change had been brought about. And the whole attitude about Atlanta in the -- and the black world, nationwide, is very positive in terms of Atlanta having great opportunities for the black professionals, yeah.

BAYOR: (inaudible) black mayor and not a white -- (inaudible) really important to (inaudible) somebody who's black in there?

COLEMAN: In my judgment, unquestionably. It would have changed. It was changing.

BAYOR: Yeah, but (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: No, no.

BAYOR: Right.

COLEMAN: We grow the city a whole, in my early days, I'm talking about, you know, we mentioned to -- I remember my first knowledge of anything to do with the mayor was my first job, being at college, the university, as an intern, you know, separated toilets, colored water fountains [00:45:00] (inaudible). Just a matter of practice in the South. And you know, you start talking about getting rid of the [wall?] and all kinds of stuff, it was just a [grave?] change, trying to get black people and white people to recognize it, that wasn't the case. And I was in (inaudible), and the busing, you're talking about. I was getting on the bus and moving to the back, that was just a part of the traditions of the South and this nation. And that slowly, very slowly, changed. We had our first black bus driver, I recall, (inaudible), 1968? Never, in the history of Atlanta -- and we were talking about (inaudible)

in the days with the first mayor, with the -- making [Hartsfield?], [Leonard?], he had to go -- I [took?] the Urban League down (inaudible) Avenue and (inaudible) nearby. And when he -- when we approached him about black policemen, he said, [00:46:00] you know, as if to say, “I can’t make a decision on that; we’d never had a black policeman or black fireman in Atlanta.” And we said, “What’s that got to do with it?” And he -- But he finally said, “Well, I will call the (inaudible) together and discuss it.” So, before he had to admit even there was a problem that ought to be addressed, he had (inaudible) all over the place. Particularly white communities, say, you know, don’t you think it was all right, you know, if you have the black police? Black policemen!

BAYOR: Was that kind of [unspoken?]?

COLEMAN: He thought he needed somebody to say, “OK, go ahead, it’s OK, get two or three in there.” And the same thing with the firemen.

(pause in recording)

BAYOR: (inaudible)

COLEMAN: (inaudible) finally decided that, well, you know, I’ll be a black policeman (inaudible) black policemen. What’s wrong with it? He was trying. He didn’t have the educational background or thepolitical, or the [00:47:00]

strength of the business connection that Ivan Allen had, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) he was -- that's right.

BAYOR: All right.

COLEMAN: He was. (inaudible) was a sophisticated leader of the business community, so we were -- he was the president, I believe, of the Chamber of Commerce. I don't know -- but I may have well remembered that. He may have also ended up being mayor. And once he finally decided, "Well, I'm going to hire those black people, I'm going to put them in the black communities. Black people are beating up black people, and we ought to stop that," and I think white people said, "Well, OK, OK," (inaudible).

BAYOR: (inaudible)

COLEMAN: I'm inclined to think that he was doing it for votes, and I understand he said at one time that he could do something -- he wouldn't meet with black what Ivan Allen did, but if they brought a large number of votes, he would, you know, he would consider it, and he wouldn't come from -- the meeting did come later. So, I would say (inaudible), and I think he wanted to do something, he didn't know what to do, didn't have the power to do it, and finally decided he'd better go through the white people and they sort of said, "Well, hire a few." And he hired a few. [00:48:00] (inaudible) restrictions. Number one, they could wear the

uniform only on duty; had to take it off before they got back on the street. Number two, they could not ride in an automobile, a regular police vehicle. Number three, they checked in at the [Butler?] Street YMCA on [Northern?] Avenue, for that meaning --

BAYOR: What, I suppose, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: Right, so, and many of those were hired, we interviewed -- [I interviewed?] -- I got in a little trouble once. I was a young fellow, somewhat (inaudible), went [by over the law?], but the [lady who was?] with me just sort of [let?] me have a little drink, something like that, and the policemen, of course -- it's a funny story. My wife, I haven't told my wife this one. And the guy comes along, shines his light in, shines the light -- [just probably getting there park, in Washington?] Park, and I said, "Lord, have mercy, what am I doing [out here?] at nine o'clock at night, and an Atlanta policeman sneaks up on me." [00:49:00] And the guy flashed the light on my face, and I'm about to have a heart attack. He said, "Hello, Mr. Coleman." I said, "Hello, sir." [Turned on my lights?]. Said, "Everything all right?" I said, "Fine, thank you." He said, "OK, I'll see you." One of the policemen by the interview, they told me later on, a long, long time ago, they got a job because, you know,

(overlapping dialogue; inaudible). (laughter) What I suggesting to you was that it was really another world, another time, being black in America, in the South, unless you had some strength, you know, it's tough not to hate [white people?] (inaudible).

BAYOR: Yeah, I could get -- from the stories I've heard -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: Just plain horrible. And it is -- it's different now, a difference now, but it's hard not to -- BAYOR: It's hard to give up those old feelings (inaudible).

COLEMAN: That's true, that's true. So, then we had to go through the same thing with the black firemen, and then Maynard Jackson came along. [00:50:00] He said to open up the gate and said, you know, this system -- this system -- it's not our job, a policeman is a policeman is a policeman, [let's just move?]. And we'll -- people got used to that. But white people had not gotten used to, we found out later, to black leadership. So, when Maynard comes on, having him in charge of City Hall and white people had been running a long time, changing the guard from white to black was a great challenge to the -- to the white people [living at the time?], and they finally got -- they wanted to find a way to get him out, but he was reelected because of the numbers, it's a numbers game. And

Maynard’s been brought out... [Andy?] brought the numbers, the numbers again. I think Atlanta finally has decided, you know, we can keep those damn numbers, so what will we do to set up some other kind of organization? I don’t want to name any, but we need our own structures, so we -- you set up [00:51:00] something to take care of white interests, they can run the politics, but we’ll run the money so we can control it in this thing.” So, I will say that that’s where we are now, not only Atlanta, I think it certainly just -- it’s certainly true in Chicago because just recently, you know, what happened in that elections (inaudible) Washington (inaudible).

BAYOR: Sort of feel that in order to -- (inaudible) blacks have the politics and whites have the money?

COLEMAN: Right. But we have not -- I think the blacks have a -- just opportunity, how to transfer political power and economic strength, they hadn’t done that. That’s a little -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). And white people, I think the federal government at Fort Williams was beginning through Civil Rights Commission and through affirmative action. And a Republican, Eisenhower, is (inaudible) recognize that we’ve got to open up the door and Nixon even had that election. [00:52:00] Open the doors, (inaudible). So, you did find, I’m sure, that some blacks

who were able to compete because it's -- it's not an easy matter of competing for contracting jobs and so forth -- and surely you're going to find whites who will open up -- because whites hadn't had that experience -- but I think that's all a part of growth and development in the nation economically, to get to whites and a piece of the pie. I think that we moved in the right direction and in (inaudible).

BAYOR: I have a feeling that no matter what Maynard's direction was going to be, the first black mayor would have [borne complications?] of the white community.

COLEMAN: Probably, and -- but we did have this great advantage. Number one is strength. Number two, he's articulate. Number three, he feels good about himself. Number four, probably, (inaudible) was a minister, and he felt good about himself. So, an educated father, and he's an educated man, and he feels independent [00:53:00] and feels good about who he is. And he gives a damn. I mean, you'd have to care, you didn't have the boldness that other black men had at the time. And in a sense, the same is true of Andy.

BAYOR: Yeah. He's [certainly a little sensitive?]. He's the only one that hasn't gotten (inaudible). He says he

doesn’t want to talk about that period. (inaudible) he seems to be very welcome to --

COLEMAN: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). He maybe doesn’t say it --

BAYOR: Oh, well, maybe he is, I don’t know. He’s the only one I haven’t been able to get to. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

COLEMAN: He’s a good man, I hold him in the very highest regard.

BAYOR: I think he did a great job.

COLEMAN: And he did a good job. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) He’s probably one of the best in the country.

BAYOR: He did a plain old job and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

COLEMAN: And he felt good about it. I think the key thing where we’re really going to have to make compromises. He didn’t think we had to make compromises, he didn’t think of that.

BAYOR: Well, he did to a certain extent. The (inaudible), he did have to make certain compromises, I suppose, you know?

COLEMAN: Well, I’m sure he had to make adjustments in the -- relating to the money pile, I’m sure. What I mean was that, you know, at a broader aspect of the leadership in City Hall, [00:54:00] he felt good about himself and never

had the -- had to tap dance. He just -- he might have to shift gears and handle that. (inaudible) circle, and feels comfortable in his circles, and he doesn't feel any sense of inadequacy. And I think that comes from a feeling of really -- as having [ultimate?] confidence. He did really (inaudible). And it is, too.

BAYOR: Yeah, he is. I want to get back to the schools, you know, I just want to make sure I get that straight in my mind. Was there any reflex about showing -- about the Board of Education was putting black schools in areas to direct the black population flow? You know, anything that was written down?

COLEMAN: The only person I found, except that -- I can mention this, but [secretly?], my idea was (inaudible). He did more, made more about it [00:55:00] the housing patterns and helped the Urban League to set up a department locally, and also he set up a department nationally, giving the kind of -- nobody else like it had -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

BAYOR: Well, it was pretty obvious, as you look at the student (inaudible).

COLEMAN: You see, when you -- see, when you integrate the school, you don't need the (inaudible), and now the city --

the city government now, now on a black superintendent, they always have two of them.

BAYOR: So, in other words, they were building black schools --

COLEMAN: To keep the black people there, you know? Keep them --

BAYOR: Building black schools to keep the blacks (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) areas. Now(inaudible) blacks (inaudible) for that school, didn't provide bus service, right?

COLEMAN: Oh, no, niggers were niggers, you know. You'd just try to do the best we can to keep the -- lower the cost of it.

BAYOR: In other words, if there's one high school -- there's Washington High School, over on the west side and you live on the east side, [you can get there?] any way you want, right? COLEMAN: Yeah, they did, that's right. And --

BAYOR: And also, Washington High was here and this is a white neighborhood here, then they make sure to build no black public schools right around the white area.

COLEMAN: That's right.

BAYOR: How about when the [00:56:00] schools began to be desegregated in the transitional neighborhoods?

COLEMAN: Well, they're doing -- still doing, children, for -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) -- black administration are attempting to integrate the black schools. So, what I've told, if the whites have moved to the county or whatever, and whatever, in Center City, blacks are going to be at Center City, that's about survival. I couldn't (inaudible).

BAYOR: My folks (inaudible) from Atlanta, but Atlanta was (inaudible). My folks (inaudible) Atlanta, but Atlanta (inaudible). Part of your schools in Atlanta, my mother and daddy went to private [education?]. In high school, the blacks went through the eleventh grade and graduated. In high school, the white people went in the twelfth grade and they graduated. My mother's older sister had one child, well, one of her ambitions was that her daughter -- [I'm?] proud of her daughter -- wanted to be a schoolteacher, [how to get?] that twelfth grade. So, and the only folks that get twelfth grade education for black folks in Georgia is Washington High School in Atlanta, the only one in the state. So she moved to Atlanta and worked with the telephone company as a maid, at [00:57:00] $5 a week, and sent that daughter for Washington High School to graduate again in the twelfth grade. Once she got here, she found out for the first time in her life, there's

something called “normal.” Normal was something like a junior college level. You can go to school for two years and graduate, and most of the time the people who are teaching are black. And once she got into that and they only started two years beyond that, you can go to college. So, she sent her to the high school, to the second for the twelfth grade, and normal prep college, and graduated (inaudible) coming after that. And she was able to come and said, “Oh, I [saw you’re a graduate?]. You’d still be (inaudible).” My wife as a schoolteacher. But what the Atlanta system wanted to do is to try to build a better school in the black community. And then when they integrate the black schools, [00:58:00] since the students wouldn’t leave, they were going to send white -- white integrated faculty associated --

BAYOR: Right.

COLEMAN: Right. And make the (inaudible) years. And my wife was a good example. They sent three teachers, the teachers, school where my wife was teaching. (inaudible) you can probably (inaudible) a situation like that. Most of the young teachers, the older teachers, white teachers, didn’t want to go. They were asking for volunteers. And the young black -- had one black lady came just [in the light?], and the wife and I were able to [relate, so she

started to feel a little confident about it?]. We lived in a neighborhood that has come up for rent sometimes, got to be good friends. We'd go to [that wedding?], would come down, and we'd be at homes and (inaudible). Then we developed a friendly relationship. But the black teachers [at them?] schools don't have any (inaudible) because the white teachers wouldn't come. Now, the person we were talking to -- they'd come in with a very practical reason, and you know, I'm not mad. I live on the north side, and the fact -- and the fact that [00:59:00] PTA meetings, seven o'clock, everyone (inaudible) she has this person say, "What if you have a flat tire and run out of gas? And there's nothing but black service stations out here." Yeah. That's the (laughter) (inaudible), yeah! But she had a real fear of having a flat tire in the black communities, and now damn now. I told my momma and daddy that and I -- I'm out here alone, (inaudible). I got to call you, I got to go to some home, and I don't know anyone. And there's a fear of her being alone, so in order to keep the white teachers in the black schools, they just don't have PTA meetings in order. Otherwise, they'd have to penalize the black ones there, and make the black ones -- white teachers would come. They couldn't do all because

they didn’t make the right ones gone, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). (laughter)

BAYOR: It was a young white teacher that was worried, couldn’t get about (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

COLEMAN: Yeah, every once in a while, either the young are very old. Didn’t nobody else want them.

BAYOR: All right, what also was that -- in order to give a [01:00:00] sort of assembling of integrated teaching, that they took some of the other black teachers and put them up in the white schools (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)?

COLEMAN: And some of them -- had done integration, they’d send up about a black student and put them in the white schools.

BAYOR: In other words --

COLEMAN: I had thought of that at Turner High School, we lived near, and my wife’s a teacher, so you could manipulate the system if you [didn’t?] wanted to work at it. And [we said?] what the hell, you go and try to act (inaudible) there. But after they came through and said to the principal, “Oh, he wants to manage the system,” whatever that is, he said, “You know, (inaudible). Now, don’t send any children out there that are not going to look good for us. So, if they get their cute little [kid?], all send them off, and [they’re all star-struck?] and they smile” --

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: -- “damn right, and send them right here.” Now, here’s 60 going -- where they’re going, and they said, “You go, you do good, now, because you’re representing all of us.” And so, you get a, like, a drop in pressure of the situation. And once they go there, then they [hold fort?] in the Atlanta for (inaudible) granddaughter (inaudible) my daughter (inaudible) Atlanta, [01:01:00], and she goes to private school. You know, she’s marvelous, she’s a -- she gets 90% white, (inaudible) birthday party just recently, and she [was asked if?] (inaudible) could come. And they were wondering like, you know, if -- it’d be a very pleasant surprise, that. She had about 12, [let’s put them right, get the media in like that?]. (inaudible).

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) jumped up and down and did one of the little [had fun?], crowed, and then they didn’t make a difference. Real pleased about that.

BAYOR: I think things have changed.

COLEMAN: All right, yeah.

BAYOR: How about transitional schools? For example, some schools, [Rob Lorin?], let’s say, [First State High?], where the neighborhood is [getting?] black, there’s still whites there, there’s an effort to (inaudible) integration (inaudible). And I know the [swap?] organization was

active out there. Was there anything that the city or the Board of Education [01:02:00] was doing to try and maintain a -- an interracial and integrated school? Or did they just say, you know, to hell with it, and you know, let the whites move out and let the blacks come in?

COLEMAN: My guess would be that the Board of Education would be (inaudible) they have now, he's a good man, he's a good friend, and I know they struggle to make things (inaudible) integrated school system, very difficult to do, search through, whites -- and the whites are moving away --

BAYOR: How about in the '60s, though, did they --

COLEMAN: I would say maybe just like -- I would (inaudible). I think they think of (inaudible) funds and the attitude about it and the mayor is trying to do something and a town is trying to -- [you're too busy to hate?] you know? (inaudible) So, I think that he was -- without saying so or putting it in writing -- I think there was -- there was very definitely an indication that, you know, we're going to do everything we can to build this as a school of excellence. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) I guess that school superintendent you mentioned, that woman was -- [01:03:00]

COLEMAN: Oh, yeah.

BAYOR: What -- First of all, up to the *Brown* decision, just before, there was a flurry of activity to upgrade black schools so that they wouldn't want to integrate with whites.

COLEMAN: Yeah, yeah.

BAYOR: OK. And the other thing is that when blacks began to come into white neighborhoods and [schools, you began?] to see the [administrative bulk, that?] the Board of Education allowed that school to deteriorate, thereby allowing the neighborhood to move over to a black neighborhood more quickly, getting the whites out. That there wasn't any commitment to holding that school.

COLEMAN: Oh, no room to doubt that those kind of schematics were going on all the time, at every level, and I think there was an understanding (inaudible) [until now?] that you've got to keep them in their place and they want to be by themselves, and it's been that way, you're happy, they're happy, so don't mess with it, don't try to change it, and the [moment [01:04:00] was too great?] in any event, so let's sort of keep things like as long as humanly possible, (inaudible) when necessary, [move them?] when you have to, and then just use a pressure, a variety of kinds, when it came to enhance --

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) neglect. They neglected the schools, so everybody was dissatisfied, [all the?] whites said, “Well, you know, let’s move someplace else,” and the school became all black and the neighborhood became all black, and pretty much -- well, you know, what holds most people in a neighborhood? It’s the schools. Schools began to deteriorate when people moved. That seemed to be (inaudible)’s attitude.

COLEMAN: I think unquestionably, the racial attitude, or racist attitude, and that attitude to design, it’d be whatever could be done to maintain the separate society, (inaudible).

BAYOR: And this was going on beyond Allen -- Allen may have not supported this --

COLEMAN: Unquestionably.

BAYOR: It was going on anyway without his -- (inaudible).

COLEMAN: I think the society [01:05:00] in general. And I think black people just accepted it. I think that we did, in the [homecoming?], is you know, you try to do what you can to try to change the system, you continue to work at it, try to do everything you can to develop yourself, to compete, and (inaudible) never give up on the chance to look at it. We, for example, now, this very morning, at the Atlanta Board, [the city pictures themselves?], we’re

struggling, trying to figure out what to do with [Poplar Creek?]. I don’t consider it’s a struggle at all. Very, very (inaudible) had a very heated discussion -- friendly, though -- with my peers this morning about what we ought to do. It just happened that the [person?] was just in front of me, we can’t do this in Poplar Creek because it just didn’t make sense economically, and I agree you ought to do the same things there that come against (inaudible).

BAYOR: That’s the long-term promise that they -- [01:06:00] they --

COLEMAN: Fifteen years, yeah. They promise, [like heavy rail?].BAYOR: That’s right.

COLEMAN: And they promise to do it in a hurry. And the [note?] that I know over there -- and I don’t mind making it on this record, either -- that we brought it(inaudible) on the board, 17 of the board members (inaudible), and there was a push by some members of the committee of 15 [female?] chairman, and... That he wouldn’t stand up -- I made this comment that he didn’t make [it to the end?]. That we (inaudible), before I think we got enough information to start going on priorities, that you are ought to vote, and you did vote, you agree, the system is absolute (inaudible), what originally was set up (inaudible) for buses. We voted to upgrade that to a rail system. Well, I

tried to tie the two together (inaudible) to try to get Poplar Creek (inaudible) to really stabilize [01:07:00] our thinking about what we're going to do in Poplar Creek, at least to vote with a real system, we weren't able to get that across. We still -- We're still fighting that battle.

BAYOR: (inaudible). That was a promise made to black leaders.

BAYOR: It was, it was, indeed.

COLEMAN: And that's what we're discussing now, it's been a long ride, you know --

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: -- and we decided today, we decided on that (inaudible). There's a strong feeling -- not necessarily by [Attorney David Jessen?], I'm not blaming him for that -- I think it's a community feeling that the community's dead, it's dying, it's gone, and just as far as we promised 15 years ago, we did it again because it [was a flowering?] community and we hoped it was going to be different, but it's not different, and you know, we hoped to [grow old?]. You know, where are we going to send out to that housing bubble, the best we can do. Use the bus system.

BAYOR: (inaudible) 15 years ago, that's right.

COLEMAN: That's true. Or sometimes we'll (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). Race relations improved slightly.

BAYOR: I think it's improved, too, but you know, [01:08:00] it's like --

COLEMAN: Slightly.

BAYOR: -- it -- that tremendous white flight out of the city during that period [really hurt?] (inaudible), you know that -- well --

COLEMAN: Yeah, facing us -- we're still facing it with MARTA. I see it all the time. Because which way do you go? Schools and MARTA and universities?

BAYOR: I think the feeling I got from -- I think what probably should have been done, rather than giving students the choice of where they wanted to transfer to in terms of school, I think for the Board of Education, should have just made a massive reassignment policy and said that, "You white kids go here, you black kids go here," and I think that would have been [a good thing?] to just take it (inaudible), instead of just saying, "Well, put in an application for where you want to go and we'll approve it or we'll not approve it and --

COLEMAN: [They all?] designed (inaudible) as possible and hope things will never change.

BAYOR: It seemed to me that's what it is.

COLEMAN: And it didn't seem too much else. And the economics almost saying there's still a real serious problem, and how

-- how the blacks can take the numbers that was given to [strength politically?] and translate that in economic terms is the next big push, in my judgment.

BAYOR: Well, and -- but if the city knew that, [01:09:00] you know, that the insurance company, [universal?] (inaudible) black schools here.

COLEMAN: And the numbers and the schools, and they do have, you know, the four undergraduate schools and they have the medical school that's new, and then they have their own university, [railway?], and then they have the interdenominational theological center, all in the center together. But the point that we must make, that for a wider stake for 25,000 students, thereabouts, we have 10, maybe 10 or 12 in the university itself this year, people [at the university upstate?], they -- how far students are going to go out of state? It's -- They're not getting -- they're really not part of the system. Unless you're a football player and an athlete and can make some money and live good, that's fine. As far as really caring, as far as integrating, as far as trying to build a community where the students ought to have respect and have social and cultural and educational [01:10:00] environment that is a mutually beneficial, there's a lot to be desired, here. You just ought to go, and you have some blacks in the

classroom, but you know, you don’t... Yes, but the system doesn’t do something to try to encourage the (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). I know one young man, a friend of mine, he went to that church, as [popular teacher?] at... here. (inaudible). Well, you know... You’re an opinion. You’re not a part of the system. You know, this what can you do to do something about that? I think somebody all around here has -- [01:11:00] what -- (inaudible). There are many social and culture (inaudible).

BAYOR: So, we should move on because it’s getting (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: Once they’re there, I hope that they wouldn’t have to do what [Kemp?] had to do in dealing with the athletes that affected the Alabama and (inaudible) itself, and they’re superstars, in basketball. But when the school is legitimately dealing with the economic policy, so, if you have a segregated school in the ghetto, like we were talking about, well, the teachers who really don’t want to go and you don’t motivate the kids to learn their fullest potential, and one day they’ll get in a car, go in the car, you got that right, there was a need to try to do -- to deal with that educational dilemma, which is really a negative educational service for black people. We got to, like, (inaudible).

BAYOR: The black kids, I'm told, are doing pretty good.

COLEMAN: Yeah?

BAYOR: Yeah. We have some bright kids, and [01:12:00] I don't know how much they fit in socially or anything, but --

COLEMAN: What's there to understand? I'd go to him with the problem, but I was thinking about those who -- we may get the -- you get the goodies, but the ones who are not quite as good, now, the black universities has taken on those, and I'm on the board of the [black colleges and black schools?] and that, we had to move into (inaudible), spoke to him the other day, and he said, you know, I'd hoped that the black college [would not give up?], they [would have?] the major responsibility for all of the students who had difficulty getting another place. I just talked to a student who was a C or D+ student, I would never have thought it, but I was (inaudible), that's why they're home. That's what they wanted. You know? A home, and teachers and they're supporting them. Something goes wrong, they call me in and say, "There's a good feeling, this is my place." And when you get that feeling, although you might not have been motivated back in high school, you may get motivated somewhere along the line because someone cared. Now, if you're treated as a student as far as when you're

really learned and you've passed examinations, [01:13:00] it's a different question, this is a field you're going to carry, and this fellow was saying to us, to me, (inaudible) southern colleges, we need to think of our students as [not being able to?] compete in that environment. I remember when I was a youth, I had one teacher that helped me to understand that. We got assigned our students in social work like the medical profession, you're assigned as an intern in a social sort of agency where you are taught by a trained social worker and supervised by your school. And this teacher, my supervisor, my teacher's supervisor, and also she was a friend of mine (inaudible)... But when she had a student who came from (inaudible) and then they're a big town, and they went through college and they had (inaudible) don't know anybody and how to operate, she would talk to that student and try to figure out, you know, where should I send this particular student [01:14:00] in this day and time, a black female, 23? She'd take them, pick them up, and send them straight to Chicago. Had a big enough institution where the black and whites working together to learn something about the dynamics of living in the big world. (inaudible) at that place. So, it's a question of she -- this woman put me at the liberal [university?], she sent me on a tour of places, and then

finally (inaudible) just right for what I was interested in. I also did a placement under [Warren Puffy?] (inaudible). I didn't like him, but I learned a hell of a lot. (inaudible) He it was good, too, but we had to call that (inaudible) Duke University who was my supervisor, and I learned an awful lot of how to run [my operations?].

BAYOR: Well, you know, so, that's something I want [01:15:00] to get into. And I realize (inaudible) said about the school system, that's something I haven't been really able to follow. There's so much little stuff that's behind the scenes, that's not (inaudible) to really be addressed (inaudible).

COLEMAN: I have (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) very good. And I think about it, if I come up with a name of someone who's intimately (inaudible) with that situation, I'd be happy to --

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) anything about (inaudible) see if they were, in terms of where the neighborhoods growing up...

COLEMAN: I got to think about that. I might could come up with a name of someone you -- [who would actually know?].

BAYOR: Basically, though, you're trying to build the black schools away from any white neighborhoods in an effort to --

COLEMAN: That's the pattern of the school system, it's the pattern of the city, the pattern of the community leaders, the pattern of the business community was to do whatever was necessary [01:16:00] to moving slowly or moving not at all, and to move as slowly as possible, to keep things the way that they were. But you can -- I know there's a (inaudible) very tough job.

BAYOR: You've worked the (inaudible), so I mean, you know.

COLEMAN: It's just the thing. I'm the only retired, for example, (inaudible) first job that they gave to me, and was telling me (inaudible) we head down to the state track, just to see them together, (inaudible) one [class?] of black and one [class?] of white. And originally just to see what would happen, because (inaudible) a civic education program at the [level you need?], that you -- you know, this is my job, and I'm not going to try to technically -- up in arms with the black community, and let the black community take care of itself. That is totally [actually what you're not supposed to do?]. I want to go down, you know, [circling up, to learn what I thought?] about our operations.

BAYOR: (inaudible).

COLEMAN: Some rednecks down South, but they just opened up [01:17:00] (inaudible). And he just sort of (inaudible)

and they’re all over the damn place, to come up looking for (inaudible). (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

BAYOR: I’m going to --

COLEMAN: Racism is alive and very well, has been for a long -- (break in audio)

BAYOR: I know it is. It is. I’m sure that you have -- you have -- I’m sure (inaudible) --

COLEMAN: (inaudible) -- 129 [churches?], I think, last Sunday. He got out a long time. Because the... [This town, this town would be?] better than most. And he said, “Racism is alive and (inaudible).” [01:18:00] BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). (laughter)

COLEMAN: But I lived to New York, I like New York, too. But -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). At Columbia.

BAYOR: Yeah, I mean, that’s my hometown, so...

COLEMAN: Lived in Manhattan, that new office, which is on New York and 66th Street, and 67th Street. And we were all over -- [Jackie?], my wife, took me to the city. [It was all about the glamour?]. Wanting the modern, the modern, the modern, going to New York, my wife was trying to (inaudible), but you know what, black people live in New York have done this within their running. [A little happiness, a little time, in here?]. In fact, the Jewish community, (inaudible) and the Hispanic community, are

quick to deal. Those folks have crafted an independence for real, you're doing about -- looking at -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). [01:19:00] You know, he doesn't believe in -- in -- what is it, relationships, with one another?

(break in audio)

BAYOR: (inaudible). Yeah.

COLEMAN: [John Restindau?] and [Dave?] --

BAYOR: Yeah, he's gone. His papers are available, but actually ... Actually --

COLEMAN: Oh, OK, OK. Spoke to [Gordon Waters?] at the -- (audio interruption; inaudible) --

BAYOR: OK. All right.

COLEMAN: He -- He doesn't remember all that much. He's getting out (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

BAYOR: Oh, yeah, and he -- and I, you know, I heard a lot about --

COLEMAN: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

BAYOR: Spoke to C.E. Scott.

COLEMAN: C.E. Scott (laughter) -- Lord have mercy.

BAYOR: [You know he's really?] black conservative [back then?]. (laughter). (inaudible) [He didn't know why we wanted to do?] Republicans.

COLEMAN: Yeah...

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). (laughter)

COLEMAN: We did organize, though, when I was happening, it was Jesse Hill, Dr. [Warner?], [Ted Warner?], [Herman Russell?], (inaudible), [Carl Holton?], Carl Holton's the president of the (inaudible) [01:20:00]. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Five of us, all playing different kinds of roles. Can you -- when we had the -- (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) -- And we're organizing my inquiry for civil rights week. This -- Scott just changed over to the Republican Party, he was -- he wasn't (inaudible). And the Constitution, yeah, the Constitution, anyway, responding of, yeah, our needs for black [men?]. And we simply organized like that -- I was secretary for us, Jesse was chairman, and Russell was (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

BAYOR: You were [supposed to be?] young Turks, I guess, in the --

COLEMAN: Well, yeah, we said, "To hell with y'all. We'll do what we damn please, [organize our own?] (inaudible)." (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

BAYOR: Did you get a lot of flak from the old-time business, in town, black community leaders at all? In Dodge and Malden and here?

COLEMAN: No, we didn't give a damn, but we'd already decided we were going to replace anyway, that one was -- [01:21:00] (inaudible) Summit Conference, all alone, was going to be -- we decided that one thing we needed to do (inaudible), but to get clear of the Voters League because they were not moving fast. And we really, really, replaced that group, and just as well [that we come when they all look alike?]. Making waves, so you'd tell them, giving them the kind of leadership, if somebody else were [down there?], that (inaudible) even yesterday, one time, some years, we desperately need, and the judge said it, a group of black leaders to do what the Voters League at one time could. The Voters League, at one time, that's 25 of the biggest leaders, (inaudible). Nobody, black or white, ran for political office (inaudible). When a ticket would be called, that's not the way that you --

BAYOR: Yeah, a ticket?

COLEMAN: Was signed by [A.T. Ross?], [01:22:00] got to turn on a dime, he had one of those on everybody's [base set?]. Oh, that's your name? People wrote it down 99-95%, the probably quoted the black ticket. (inaudible) And that fellow was telling me in the league, "Oh, losing politicians we think that people who were kind of having some effect on the [political fabric?] -- you have a narrow

interest in your group. And we ought to come up, some of us, (inaudible).”

BAYOR: Do you think they were outspoken about community when they inquired as to (inaudible) supporting decisions and (inaudible)?

COLEMAN: No, they said we had it. We got -- I thought general support. Which is of the -- the issues that actually report, that got names --

BAYOR: So, there was nobody splitting the vote?

COLEMAN: Yeah. We had that -- what do they call the actors? Well, at right now -- at that time, we said, “Hell, we’re taking over.” And whatever we think we’ve done, [01:23:00] we took over and moved, but it’s time for others now to come on and -- and be sort of -- tore up that old, and then we got too involved in things, and became independent in our own way, and I moved that couple of times, (inaudible) organizations, I like to have a little something just in order to make money and run the business aspect of it, but we don’t have the ones that might be representative. I’m thinking of this as a last week, I get to (inaudible).

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). Oh, sure, sure.

COLEMAN: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). [Ronald Branson?]? I tried to go to work and they’d be talking about it.

BAYOR: (inaudible). (laughter)

COLEMAN: When I have a party, had a party, I wanted to have meetings (inaudible). (laughter) Sorry. (inaudible)

BAYOR: [I think it's good on here?]. [01:24:00] But you know, you're going [a big spark?] in the black community, of the citizens, of the -- (inaudible) system of the US bench work, that's a -- Yeah, so I'll always hold that the -- that the Bobbies and the Waltons were sort of annoyed that somebody tried to take over their power, and they were annoyed.

COLEMAN: It was real bad, they didn't -- they just -- they weren't able to deal with it. We didn't -- I didn't conceive it to be anything that was really a serious problem, not a --

BAYOR: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

COLEMAN: But in time, Jesse's sort of moving, (inaudible) started moving out, and... (inaudible) They just moved, began to move all the way, took on bigger and broader issues --

BAYOR: So it wasn't nothing -- there wasn't a --

COLEMAN: I didn't consider it.

BAYOR: (inaudible)?

COLEMAN: Why didn't it?

BAYOR: When and why?

COLEMAN: It did, they're still outraged.

BAYOR: [Is that right?]? (inaudible).

COLEMAN: I think what we did is Jesse and -- [01:25:00] as a matter of fact, I got a check the other day. I didn't get any (inaudible) but I started moving in the business direction, in my judgment, that's just me. And I will mention, I didn't enter into it, but as far as opportunities, the instrument for social change, for system change, this is my interest. I ain't going to be bothered with this, but they sent me a -- a [game?] with my stock (inaudible). But I didn't realize I had to give it all away. They sent me a check for $100,000, I said, "What the hell is this?" (laughter) (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

BAYOR: I didn't know it was (inaudible), that'd be nice, I had the earlier issues. I didn't think it was through --

COLEMAN: It got to be too busy, (inaudible) runs it, somebody wants to come in and take it and make something out of it, it could be a big operation.

BAYOR: Yeah, I bet the [daily world?], likely, I know that's good, couple of (inaudible), but... Well, so, you know, [keeping on writing?].

COLEMAN: And reading.

BAYOR: Social jur--

COLEMAN: Yeah, it's social, yeah.

BAYOR: So, I mean, that’s -- politically, it’s --

COLEMAN: Well, I -- politically, I think it’s where I could be, [01:26:00] you know?

BAYOR: Well, I think you need a little --

COLEMAN: And the boys came on after that.

BAYOR: Yeah.

COLEMAN: The guy and the [girls?] in (inaudible). Let me know how you come along.

BAYOR: Yeah, well, great job, I appreciate --

END OF AUDIO FILE