

## Awakenings (1954-1956)

**Unita Blackwell:** I guess our courage came out because we didn't have nothing, and we couldn't lose nothing. But we wanted something for ourselves and for our children. And so we took a chance with our lives.

**Ernest green:** we marched up the steps with this circle of soldiers with bayonets drawn. And walking up the steps that day was probably one of the biggest feelings I've ever had. I figured I had finally cracked it.

**White young man:** my freedom is very much entangled with the freedom of every other man. So, I'm fighting for my own freedom here.

**Reporter:** are you scared?

**White young man:** yes. I'm very much afraid. Everyone here is.

[singing]

**Narrator:** in a ten-year period in the 1950s and 1960s, America fought a second revolution. It was fought in the south by black people and white. It was fought in the streets, in churches, in ports, in schools. It was fought to make America be America for all its citizens. These were America's civil rights years.

**Interviewer:** I take it then that you are advocating negroes in New York to stay out of these national chain stores?

**Adam clayton Powell, Jr:** oh, no. That's not true. I'm advocating that American citizens interested in democracy should stay out of chain stores.

[singing]

**White woman:** I have thought for a long time that negroes should be allowed to sit at the counters where we are served downtown. This is just a part of many things that I think they should be allowed to do.

**Senator Eastland:** all the people of the south are in favor of segregation. And supreme court or no supreme court, we are going to maintain segregated schools down in dixie.

**C.t. Vivian:** we're willing to be beaten for democracy, and you misuse democracy in the streets. You beat people ... (inaudible) [simultaneous conversation].

**Off camera voice:** why don't you get out from in front of the camera and go on?

**C.t. Vivian:** it's not a matter of being in front of the camera. It's a matter of facing your ... (inaudible) [simultaneous conversation], and then hide your blows.

**C.t. Vivian:** there was a clear engagement between those who wished the fullness of their personalities to be met, and those that would destroy us physically and psychologically. You do not walk away from that. This is what movement meant. Movement meant that finally we were encountering, on a mass scale, the evil that had been destroying us on a mass scale. You do not walk away from that. You continue to answer it.

[singing]

**Black woman:** I always think about what Matthew, Jr. Told me. And when he called — when he called from the jail, he said — he said, "be cool, mother." and that was very trying, and yet it was amusing, too. He was telling me to "be cool" at this point.

[singing]

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. And that will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man.

[singing]

**Narrator:** it was a hard fight, challenging America's basic beliefs. What is an inalienable right? What is equal treatment under the law? What is liberty and justice for all? It was a hard fight, but the prize was freedom, and no American could afford to lose.

[singing]

**Narrator:** for much of this century, America was segregated. It was our social system, our way of keeping blacks and whites apart. By custom and by law, most blacks were servants, laborers, tenant farmers, went to separate poorer schools, lived in separate poorer housing. Segregation was the context for black lives throughout the country, but especially in the south — a complete environment socially and psychologically.

**Amzie Moore:** listen. For a long time I had the idea that a man with white skin was superior, because it appeared to me that he had everything. And I figured if god would justify the white man having everything, that god put him in a position to be the best.

**Virginia Durr:** if you're born into a system that's wrong, whether it's a slave system, or whether it's a segregated system, you take it for granted. And I was born into a system that was segregated, and denied blacks the right to vote, and also denied women the right to vote. And I took it for granted. Nobody told me any different, nobody said it was strange or unusual, it wasn't like other states.

**Narrator:** segregation had its rules, and southern blacks knew that if they didn't obey them, if they didn't step aside to let a white man pass, or if a black man looked too closely at a white woman, the system could be enforced by violence. Groups like the Ku Klux Klan used terrorism to uphold white supremacy, and were an ever present symbol of intimidation. But there were always blacks who fought against segregation. Many ministers preached equality, and black unions and organizations like the national association for the advancement of colored people worked for it for decades through speeches, demonstrations, and court cases.

[music]

**All American newsreel:** all American news brings you all people's contributions for America and freedom.

**Narrator:** world war ii had an enormous impact on black hopes for change. Black Americans fought and died in a segregated us army. But they saw a larger, unsegregated world. They saw their own power as they fought, and as some were trained as officers and specialists. And they came back with a new sense of themselves.

**James hicks:** I spent three years overseas in new guinea, and I became an officer during that period. I had been eager to exercise authority, so when we got out it was just one more step to say, "well, look. We aren't going to take this anymore."

**Narrator:** the south they came back to was determined to resist change, and most of the nation was not ready to hear black demands for justice. Then in the early 1950s, after years of carefully planned litigation, the NAACP brought these demands to the supreme court. The test cases were set in schools.

On May 17, 1954, the supreme court ruled unanimously in brown vs. Board of education that segregated schools were unconstitutional. It called into question the whole system of segregation.

**Thomas waring:** it was quite a shock to southerners to be told that the way they had been running their affairs for many, many years was no longer acceptable to the nation as a whole. And a great many of the older crowd of white southerners felt that they had come of an ancestry that were founders of the republic, and they knew the constitution, and customs, and laws of the country as well as anybody else.

**Narrator:** the south resisted desegregation with legal and illegal delays. It would take years before the supreme court's decision would be implemented in any meaningful way. But it had one immediate effect.

**Constance Baker Motley:** I think that the greatest impact of the brown decision was on the black community itself. It was a statement to the black community that they had a friend, so to speak, the supreme court. And so, it emboldened the communities of blacks around the country to move forward, to secure their own rights.

**Narrator:** the change began slowly, especially in rural areas. Blacks knew they could still lose their livelihood or their lives if they pushed whites too fast. But step by step, the change began, first with small acts of personal courage.

In September 1955, an old man named Mose wright took that remarkable first step. His story starts at the Tallahatchie river in money, Mississippi. Here, the body of Mose wright's nephew, Emmett till was found way down in the waters. Two local men were arrested and charged with the murder. They were white. Emmett till was black. Till had come down from Chicago to visit his relatives.

**Mose wright:** this is Mose wright. I am the uncle of Emmett louis till. Sunday morning, about 2:30, someone called at the door. And I said, "who is it?" and he said, "this is Mr. Bryant. I want to talk with you and the boy." and when I opened the door, there was a man standing with a pistol in one hand and a flashlight in the other hand. And he asked me, did I have two boys there from Chicago? I told him, "I have." and he said, "I want it. I want the boy that done all that talk." and they marched him to the car, and they asked someone there, "this is the right boy?" and the answer was, "yes." and they drove toward money.

**Mamie till Bradley:** and I found out about it 9:30 Sunday morning. I was in bed. I got up, called my mother when I got the news, because every decision I have ever made, or ever crack that I had ever been in, it took her to get me out of it. And I took that one to mama, too, because I didn't know what to do. Mother told me to come right over, and she would start making calls. And I got over there as quickly as I could make it, and that wasn't very long.

**Narrator:** by this time, everyone in money knew what had happened. Emmett till had broken one of segregation's rules. He talked fresh to a white woman in a store. He was only 14. He was a northerner, and he didn't understand.

**Curtis jones:** he went into the store to buy some candy. Before he went in, he had shown the boys around his age, he had some picture of some white kids that he had graduated from. That was, you know, female and male. So, he told the boys down there, you know, "hey, gather(?) Around this store." so, it must have been round about maybe ten to twelve youngsters around there, that the girls was his girlfriend, you know. So, one of the local boys said, "hey, there's a girl in that store that." he said, "I bet you won't go in there and talk to her," you know. So, he went in there to get some candy. So, when he was leaving out the store, after buying the candy, he told her, said, "bye, baby." and the next thing I know, one of the boys came up to me and say, "say, man, you got a crazy cousin. He just went in there and said bye to that white woman." and that's when this man I was playing checkers with, this older man — I guess he must have been around about 60 or 70 — he jumps straight up and say, "boy, say you all better get out of here." he say, "that lady will come out of that store and blow your brains off."

**Mose wright:** when the sheriff came and told me they had found a body at pillow [?], and wanted me to go and identify the body, which I did. And we found the body, which it didn't have on any clothes at all. The body was so badly damaged that we couldn't hardly just tell who he was, but he happened to have on a ring with his initials, and that cleared it up.

**Narrator:** the body was shipped home, back north to Chicago where Mamie till Bradley insisted on an open casket funeral, "so all the world can see," she said, "what they did to my boy."

[singing]

**Narrator:** *jet* magazine showed till's corpse, beaten, mutilated, shot through the head. A generation of black people would remember the horror of that photo.

**Mamie till Bradley:** I believe that the whole united states is mourning with me, and that the death of my son can mean something to the other unfortunate people all over the world. Then for him to have died a hero would mean more to me than for him just to have died.

**Narrator:** Roy Bryant, husband of the woman in the store, and j. W. Milam, her brother-in-law, were arrested for the murder of Emmett till. The trial was held in nearby Sumner, Mississippi. Black organizations like the NAACP and the black press were especially interested, and they worked hard to keep the case in the news, to make an example of southern racism for the world.

**Roy Wilkins:** it was because it was a boy that they went there. They had to prove that they were superior. They had to prove it by taking away a 14-year-old boy. You know, it's in the virus, it's in the blood of the Mississippian. He can't help it. **Sheriff h. C. Strider:** I'd like for the NAACP, or any colored organization anywhere, to know that we are here, giving all parties a free trial, and intend to give them a fair and impartial trial. And we don't need the help of the NAACP, and we don't intend for them to help it. We never have any trouble until some of our southern niggers go up north, and the NAACP talks to them, and they come back home.

**James hicks:** I covered the courts in many areas of this country. But the till case was unbelievable. I mean, I just didn't get the sense of being in a court room. It was, first place, segregated. The black press sat at a bridge table far off from the court. And the boy's mother came down. They sat her there at the bridge table with us. Plus, the united states congressman, at that time, Diggs, he came down and I was the one that got him in, because the sheriff wouldn't let him in. He said to the deputy that he called over, he said, "this nigger here," he said, "there's a nigger outside who says that he's a congressman, and he has corresponded with the judge, and the judge had told him to come on down, and he would let him in." he said, "but the sheriff won't let him in, so he's sitting in his car out there." I said, "this guy said a nigger congressman?" and he says, "that's what this nigger said." I said to myself, "my god, I have never seen anything like this in my life."

**Charles Diggs:** there was, of course, a lot of buzzing when I entered the place and was placed in that area. And I think the judge said something about, "yeah, have that boy come on up here and sit down over here with these news reporters," you know.

**Interviewer:** what do you intend to do here today?

**Mamie till Bradley:** to answer any questions that might — that the attorneys might ask me to answer, to the best —

**Interviewer:** how do you think you could possibly be a help to them?

**Mamie till Bradley:** I don't know. Just by answering whatever questions that they ask me.

**Interviewer:** do you have any evidence bearing on this case?

**Mamie till Bradley:** I do know that this is my son.

**Narrator:** the defense argued that the body found tied to the cotton gin fan in the river was so disfigured that it could not be identified as Emmett till. The trial took five, long, hot days. Because of threats to his life, the prosecution's star witness, Mose wright, was kept hidden out of state.

**Interviewer:** will you go back to Mississippi to testify in the kidnap trial?

**Mose wright:** sure, sure. I'll go back, because I promised the sheriff I'd be back. And so if I live, I'm going back to testify. And after the trial, well, I'm through with Mississippi, forever and ever. They can have my part of Mississippi. I'm through with it. I don't want nothing...(inaudible).

**Curtis jones:** at the time, I really didn't realize how brave my grandfather, Mose wright, was, you know. But after I got older, I realized that he was a brave man. He was a mighty brave man to travel back down there, you know, among all those hostile peoples, and testify, and to get up, up in court and point his finger at a white man and accuse him of murder.

**James hicks:** he was called upon to testify as to, could he see anybody in the court room, identify anybody in that court room, that had come to his house that night and got the — Emmett till out? He stood up and there was a tension in the court room. And he says — in his broken language — "dar he."

**Narrator:** "dar he," there he is. Other black witnesses came forward, too. Their courage made no difference in Sumner, Mississippi. As the trial ended, a defense lawyer told the jury he was "sure every last Anglo-Saxon one of you has the courage to free these men." it took the jury the hour to find the men not guilty.

**Interviewer:** how do you folks feel now that it's all over? Roy, how about you?

**Roy Bryant:** I'm just glad it's over with.

**Interviewer:** j. W.?

**J. W. Milam:** I am, too.

**Interviewer:** Mrs. Bryant?

**Mrs. Bryant:** I feel fine.

**Interviewer:** how about you, Mrs. Milam?

**Mrs. Milam:** fine.

**Interviewer:** did you expect this verdict?

**Roy Bryant:** well, I was hoping for it.

**Mamie till Bradley:** well, the whole trial was just a farce, and the verdict was the one that I had expected to be given.

**Narrator:** months later, Roy Bryant and j. W. Milam told their story of the night of august, 28, for \$4,000 dollars to reporter William Bradford Huie.

**William Bradford Huie:** Milam was startled at the belligerent attitude, or the fact that young till didn't appear to be afraid of them. He had gone and gotten him out of bed and had him in the back of the truck, and young till never realized the danger he was in. And I'm quite sure that he never thought these two men would kill him. Or maybe he's just in such a strange environment, he doesn't — he really just doesn't know what he's up against.

And it seems to a rational mind, today, it seems impossible that they could have killed him. But j. W. Milam looked up at me and said, "well, when he told me about this white girl he had," he said, "my friend, that's what this war is about down here now." he says, "that's what we've got to fight to protect." and he says, "I just looked at him and I said, 'boy, you ain't going to ever see the sun come up again.'"

**Narrator:** for much of southern history, lynching had been an ordinary story. Race killings were down by the 1950s, but over the years, there had been more than 500 documented lynchings in Mississippi alone.

**Fred Shuttlesworth:** and the fact that Emmett till, a young black man, could be found floating down the river in Mississippi, as, indeed, many had been done over the years, this set in concrete the determination of people to move forward. And I think we said back there that really only god, only the books in heaven can know how many negroes have come up missing, and dead, and killed under the system in which we lived.

**Narrator:** in Mississippi, a few black people stood up to the system. But it was not enough. Their challenge was easily beaten back. Three months later in Alabama, when many stood together, the challenge would be strong.

It started with a woman named Rosa Parks in Montgomery.

**Joe Azbell:** Montgomery, in 1955, was a typical southern city. We are called the cradle of the confederacy. And there is a tradition in Montgomery of having the — carrying out the old confederate south type of things that — the stars and bars flags. It was a totally segregated community. Department stores had white water fountains and colored water fountains. We had separate taxis. You had black taxis and you had white taxis.

**Narrator:** and Montgomery, like all of the south, had segregated buses. In interstate buses, like this one, and in city buses, the whites sat in the front, the blacks in back. If more whites got on, the blacks had to give them the middle and back seats, too. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger.

**Rosa Parks:** the front seats were occupied, and the one man, a white man, standing. And at this point, the driver asked us to stand up and let him have those seats. And when neither — none of us moved at his first words, he said, "ya'll make it light on yourselves and let me have those seats." and when the police man approached me, one of them spoke and asked me if the driver had asked me to stand. I said, "yes." he said, "why don't you stand up?" I said, "I don't think I should have to stand up." and I asked him, I said, "why do you push us around?" he said, "I do not know, but the law is the law, and you're under arrest."

**E. D. Nixon:** Mrs. Parks was formerly my secretary in the NAACP, in the local branch, for about 12 years. She also worked with me when I was state president in the NAACP. And she also assisted me in the brotherhood of sleeping car porters. And if there ever was a woman who was dedicated to the cause, Rosa Parks was that woman.

**Narrator:** this was not the first time a black person had defied the bus segregation in Montgomery. It was not Mrs. Parks' first time. It was her first arrest. E. D. Nixon went to the police station to bail her out.

**E. D. Nixon:** I said, "Mrs. Parks," I said, "with your permission, we can break down segregation on the bus with your case." I said, "and I'm convinced that we can do it." and I said, "if I already wasn't convinced, I wouldn't be bothered by it." she asked her mother what she thought about it, and she said, "I go along with Mr. Nixon." asked her husband. He said, "I'll support it." says, "that's fine."

**Narrator:** e. D. Nixon and other black leaders called for a one-day bus boycott. In some cities, it would have been impossible to organize 40,000 people in two days. But black Montgomery had a core of activists in the women's political council, and they distributed these boycott notices all over the city.

**Jo Ann Robinson:** I called every person who was in every school, and every place where we had planned to be at that house, somebody at that school, or wherever it was, at a certain time, that I would be there with materials for them to disseminate. I didn't go to bed that night. I cut those stencils, I ran out 35,000 copies.

**Frances Besler:** well, the bus passed right down in front of my house, you know. And I got up to see it, and several buses passed. I was late for work, because I was trying to see how many buses was empty. And they were totally empty.

**Narrator:** the one-day boycott was a success. That night, a mobilized black community turned out for a meeting at the holt street Baptist church, and voted unanimously to continue the boycott.

**Joe Azbell:** the preachers were preaching as I came in. I was about two minutes late coming in, and they were preaching. And that audience was so on fire. The preacher would get up and say, "do you want your freedom?" and they would say, "yeah. Yeah, I want my freedom."

"are you for what we're doing?"

"yeah, go ahead, go ahead."

**Jo Ann Robinson:** overwhelmingly, I don't know if there was one vote that said no, don't continue. That people wanted to continue that boycott. They had been touched by the persecution, the humiliation, that many of them had endured on buses. And they voted for it unanimously, and that meant thousands of people.

**E. D. Nixon:** you see, when I first started fighting, I was fighting to keep — so that the children who came behind me wouldn't suffer the same thing I suffered. Then the night of the bus boycott on December, 5, I told the people that I'd been fighting like that for all these years. And I said, "tonight I changed my mind." I said, "hell, I want to enjoy some of this stuff myself." and you ought to heard people holler.

**Narrator:** the keynote speaker at holt street church was a new preacher in town, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He was only 26 and was almost unknown outside his own congregation. King wasn't sure he should accept when his fellow ministers and other leaders ask him to head the new Montgomery improvement association, and the boycott. But they wanted him, in part, because he was new in Montgomery.

**E. D. Nixon:** reverend King was a young man — a very intelligent young man. He had not been here long enough for the city fathers to put their hand on him.

**Coretta Scott King:** and martin said, "well, you know, I'm not sure I'm the best person for this position, since I'm new in the community, and — but if no one else is going to serve, you know, someone has to do it. And I'd be glad to try to do it." and, of course, I guess everybody then assured him they wanted him. So, he came home very excited about the fact that he had to give the keynote speech that night at mass meeting. He only had 20 minutes to prepare his speech.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** we, the disinherited of this land, we who have been oppressed so long are tired of going through the long night of captivity. And now we are reaching out for the daybreak of freedom and justice and equality.

The only weapon that we have in our hands this evening is the weapon of protest. That's all. And certainly, certainly, this is the glory of America, with all of its faults.

And we are not wrong. We are not wrong in what we are doing. If we are wrong, the supreme court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, the constitution of the united states is wrong. If we are wrong, god almighty is wrong.

**Ralph Abernathy:** we have never seen a crowd like that before. It took 15 minutes before the people would sit down and become quiet and let us begin the meeting. And I can tell you the name of the first song that we sang. And it was "what a fellowship, what a joy divine, leaning on the everlasting arms."

[singing]

**Narrator:** before the boycott, two thirds of the bus riders were black. After December 5, there were almost no blacks at the segregated bus stops or on the buses. They walked and they created a complex system that used private cars to carry thousands of people each day.

**Rufus Lewis:** we asked for persons who had cars and would voluntarily put them in the transportation pool to let us know and what time they could be used. And in that way, we could know when we will have cars, and where they had to go to pick up people.

People would call in and say, "I'm out here on Cloverdale road, on such and such a block, and I'll be ready at such and such a time." but this was being done all through the day, and we would know what time they was supposed to be picked up and where they were.

**Georgia Gilmore:** it was really surprising, because we thought, well, maybe some of the people would continue to ride the bus. But, after all, they had been mistreated, and been mistreated in so many different ways, until I guess they were tired. And they just decided that they just wouldn't ride.

**Narrator:** the black community was inspired by its own success. They held meetings with the mayor and the bus company and found they could stand up to the city commissioners.

**Coretta Scott King:** at first, we didn't even ask for desegregation. We only asked for a more humane system of segregation on the buses. And when the opposition refused to grab that, then we realized that they wouldn't grab anything anyway, so we might as well ask for, you know, complete desegregation. And that's what we went for, and we realized we had to go for broke, so to speak.

**Narrator:** by this time, the boycott had lasted longer than anyone expected. A wave of violence started. Shots fired at buses, bombs thrown at martin King's home, and e. D. Nixon's home.

**Interviewer:** you've had some rather personal and trying experience yourself. Are you afraid?

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** no, I am not. My attitude is that this is a great cause. It is a great issue that we are confronted with. And that the consequences for my person life are not particularly important. It is a triumph of a cause that I am concerned about. And I have always felt that, ultimately, along the way of life, an individual must stand up and be counted, and be willing to face the consequences, whatever they are. And if he is filled with fear, he cannot do it.

**Fred Shuttlesworth:** we thought that you could just shame America. Say, "now, America, look at your promises. Look at how you treated your poor, negro citizens. You ought to be ashamed of yourself." but you know, segregate — you can't shame segregation. Rattlesnakes don't commit suicide. Ball teams don't strike themselves out. You got to put them out.

**Narrator:** the nightly mass meetings in church were the backbone of the boycott.

**Coretta Scott King:** the mass meetings, usually, were attended by the maids and cooks, and janitors, and people who really used the buses a lot. And they would be there singing and praying for hours, sometimes, before the program actually started, the main part of the mass meeting.

[singing]

**Georgia Gilmore:** I attended just about all of them. We were really very interested in it because you could go and you could learn about so many things that you didn't know exist. And so many people would tell you how they was being mistreated, and they were glad that they were able to come up and not have to take the same treatments that they was — had taken and was afraid to admit.

**Ralph Abernathy:** the fear left. The fear that had shackled us across the years, all left suddenly when we were in that church together.

**Coretta Scott King:** Dr. Abernathy would speak first usually. And he had the ability to really make them laugh, and maybe make them cry some. He really knew how to, you know, kind of get them in the mood.

**Ralph Abernathy:** this show is your show. Not only is this show the show of negroes in Montgomery, but this is the show of negroes all over America. And then I want to go a little farther than that, and tell you that truly this show is the show of all freedom loving people all over the world.

**Coretta Scott King:** oh, I guess you'd call it a kind of folksy quality, and he was able to do that, because that was a part of his style. Whereas with martin, he was more, I guess, what you would consider formal, and he would come along with a very thoughtful message.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** let me ask you to be sane and rational. Eventually, segregation in public transportation will pass away. Eventually. And I think we should start now preparing for the inevitable. And let us, when that moment comes, go into the situations that we confront with a great deal of dignity, sanity, and reasonableness.

**Rufus Lewis:** it's very hard for an ordinary person to describe reverend King's speaking ability, because he was such an outstanding — he could make you feel what he was saying, as well as hearing what he was saying. He was sincere and dedicated. And he could lift you out your seat. You couldn't just be quiet, and look like — it was such a stirring thing, that it would affect you — it would just go right through you. So, I can't say much more than that, because it was such a stimulating thing. And he was carried away with his own speech.

**Fred Shuttlesworth:** Dr. King spoke with a new voice. Not only was it a new movement, but it was a new voice, that you must love. You must not hate the people who hate, or who act like they hate, you. You must — and the best thing to make out of your enemy is a friend. So, this had a very profound effect upon not only blacks, but whites at this time.

**Sen. James Eastland:** you are not going to permit the NAACP to control your states.

**Narrator:** as the boycott entered its second month, the white community's position hardened. There were whites who were sympathetic to the boycott, but many more were not. A segregationist group called the white citizen's council held huge rallies and vastly increased its membership, becoming the largest organization in white Montgomery. They targeted anyone, black or white, who supported desegregation.

**State Sen. Sam Engelhard:** ninety percent of the white people in Alabama are all for segregation. But in the last few years, we have had a — quite a number of backsliders, you might say, that, for political reasons, to further their political ambitions have been trying to garner the nigger vote, and would do most anything to get that vote. The citizen's council is out to utterly destroy those people.

**Joe Azbell:** the thing that kept the whites going was segregation, was the old way. Don't break the old way. Don't break this fabric. Don't break down segregation. Don't take this away, this old south. Don't take back the things that we've always known and that we fought a war over these things, and that our forefathers would have us do this.

**Narrator:** despite the pressure, the buses remained empty. The black leaders decided the boycott might weaken if they didn't respond quickly to the violence. They filed suit in federal court, claiming that bus segregation was unconstitutional. White officials retaliated by indicting almost 90 black leaders under an old anti-boycott law. The tactic backfired. Suddenly the national press was very interested in the story, and in the eloquent Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we still feel that we are right and that we stand within our constitutional rights in the protest. And we still advocate non-violence with passive resistance and still are determined to use the weapon of love.

[singing]

**Narrator:** armed with the weapon of non-violence resistance, Montgomery's blacks kept walking, month, after month, after month.

**Interviewer:** how many miles do you think you've walked?

**Donie Jones:** oh, about seven or eight miles a day. Maybe along further than that, because, you know, going and coming, it made a great deal distant.

**Interviewer:** ever take a ride from —

**Donie Jones:** no. Uh-uh. No. But if sometime we would be out on the road coming home, well, it'd be a white lady that'd come along and pick us up and carry us so far. And we would thank her for that. We would be very glad, and we would offer her pay, but she wouldn't take it.

**Virginia Durr:** there's a strange thing that happened, was a kind of play between white women and black women. And the mayor at the time issued an order saying if the white women would just stop carrying their maids back and forth that the boycott would be ended. And so, I don't say all of them, but some of them replied, and said, "well, if he wants to come out and do my cooking and laundry, and nurse the children, and clean up, he can." so, the white women went and got them in the car. They said they did it because the bus had broken down or any excuse you could possibly think of.

**Jo Ann Robinson:** well, I would have to say that there were many sympathetic whites who knew that the system was wrong, and they were doing what they could to help to correct it.

[singing]

**Georgia Gilmore:** well, you know, a lot of times, some of the young whites would come along and they would say, "nigger, don't you know it's better to ride the bus than it is to walk?" and we would say, "no, cracker, no. We rather walk."

**Narrator:** April, 1956. The boycott was four months old. In other states, lawsuits and black pressure were breaking down bus segregation, but not in Alabama.

**Clyde Sellers:** we expect the city bus lines of Montgomery and the people of Montgomery to continue to obey all segregation laws as written. I have, this day, issued orders to the chief of police, and any police department, to continue to make arrests in all violations with reference to the segregation laws.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** several southern cities, including Richmond, Virginia, Little Rock, Arkansas, Dallas, Texas, and others, have ended segregation on city buses. And white and negro passengers rode together on front seats without incident, mishaps, or disturbances. The public officials of the city of Montgomery and of the state of Alabama intend to obey the segregation laws of the city of Montgomery, and we, the negro citizens of Montgomery Alabama, do now, and will continue, to carry on our mass protest.

**Narrator:** June, 1956, six months. There had been boycotts before in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, three years before. Even in Montgomery itself, 50 years before. None had lasted so long with so much support. In Tallahassee, Florida, another boycott started. It was so effective that the bus company was forced to shut down operation. It was clear the boycotts hurt the bus companies, businesses, and the cities. It was not clear if they could end segregation. September, 1956, nine months. The Klan in Montgomery held a series of highly visible rallies.

**Klan speaker:** they want to throw white children and colored children into the melting pot of integration, through out of which will come a conglomerated mulatto mongrel class of people. Both races will be destroyed in such a movement.

**Narrator:** many in the black community were frightened, but they kept walking. Ten months, eleven months. The boycott's second Christmas was approaching. Downtown stores were hurt, but neither the city nor the marchers would compromise.

On November 13, 1956, the US Supreme Court broke the deadlock, ruling unanimously that Montgomery's bus segregation was unconstitutional. That day, the Ku Klux Klan rode and walked the black neighborhoods again. This time, the blacks just watched, unmoved and unafraid.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** the decision rendered by the supreme court yesterday was a victory. But it wasn't a victory for colored folks. God don't make that victory that small. It wasn't a victory for 50,000 negroes in Montgomery. It wasn't merely a victory for 15 million negroes of America. That was a victory for justice and goodwill.

Now, what will be our mode of action in the light of this decision? After thinking through this question very seriously, the executive board of the Montgomery Improvement Association recommends that the 11-month-old protest against the city buses will be called off, and that the negro citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, will return to the buses on a non-segregated basis. Are you ready for the question? All in favor, let it be known by standing on your feet. It seems that it is carried unanimously.

**Fred Shuttlesworth:** because you get the understanding that God is with you, that God can take care of you, that this is God's way. And you are there to do it. And I think there's a sense of drive. That's what many people don't understand about what happened back in the deep south, that here I am. That this is my duty. I've got to do something, and God is with me. And if God is with me, how can you lose, leaning on the everlasting arm?

[singing]

**Rufus Lewis:** when the bus boycott was over, the people just — the blacks got on the bus to sit on the front seat just to show off. And they had a lot of fun sitting on the front seat riding, riding to the college or riding away from the college. Nobody sat in the back then, because all of them sat in the front. It was a jubilation. It was a joy.  
[singing]

**Jo Ann Robinson:** we had won self-respect. We had forced the white man to give what we knew was a part of our own citizenship. And so, we had won that. And if you have never had the feeling to feel that this is not the other man's country and you are an alien in it, but that this is your country, too, then you don't know what I'm talking about. But it is a hilarious feeling that just goes all over you, that makes you feel that America is a great country and we're going to do more to make it greater. [singing]

## Fighting Back (1957-1962)

**Narrator:** in 1954, the supreme court said black children would go to school with white. The south said, never.

**Gov. Orval Faubus:** in the name of god, whom we all revere, in the name of liberty we hold so dear, in the name of decency, which we all cherish, what is happening in America?

**Narrator:** was this the start of a new civil war?

[singing]

**William Carter:** desegregation is against the bible. I find my scripture for this in genesis 9:27, where god did segregate and separate the three sons of Noah, sending one out to be a servant while the other two remained in the tabernacle. I say that god has given the word, his bible. It ain't right for men to end the curse that he's placed upon any human flesh.

**Sen. James Eastland:** all the people of the south are in favor of segregation. And supreme court or no supreme court, we are going to maintain segregated schools down in Dixie.

**Sheriff Mel Bailey:** it wasn't funny then, it's still not funny. But suddenly we have the fourteenth amendment that took 100 years, brought on by the civil war, suddenly must be complied with. Equal treatment under the law. And that was a resistance. They are not going to get equal treatment. What do you mean? Go to school with my little darling? That is why resistance.

**Narrator:** in the late 1950s, the battle for civil rights was fought in the classrooms of the south. The supreme court had ruled in a case called brown vs. Board of education that segregated schools were unconstitutional under the fourteenth amendment. Many southerners saw the decision as an attack on their heritage and traditions. The battle lines were drawn.

**Constance Baker Motley:** I think we were not really quite prepared for the extent to which the south would resist the implementation of the brown decision. In fact, the shutting down of the NAACP in Alabama, the resistance evidenced in places like Virginia and Arkansas, the legislative investigations committees in Florida and in other states really frightened us.

**Narrator:** and the white resistance could also be violent. In February, 1956, a black woman named Autherine Lucy was quietly admitted to the all-white University of Alabama. But the night after she arrived, students and town people began a riot. The University suspended Lucy temporarily, it said, for her own protection. And Autherine Lucy sued, claiming that mob rule was being allowed to overturn the law.

**Autherine Lucy:** what's brought about these actions, I feel, is that lawless elements outside the campus set themselves over and above the law. Their actions were a big discredit to our nation.

**Thurgood Marshall:** the charge has been made, and made by some fairly moderate people, gradualists, you might call them, that the NAACP, ... (inaudible), is moving too far, too fast. That following the decision of the supreme court, you would have been well advised to let things move along gradually for a while. But you can't overthrow the prejudices of 300 years overnight.

**Thurgood Marshall:** you can't — maybe you can't override prejudice overnight, but the emancipation proclamation was issued in 1863, 90 odd years ago. I believe in gradualism. I also believe that 90 odd years is pretty gradual.

**Narrator:** Autherine Lucy won her case. But the board of trustees expelled her anyway for saying the University had used the riots to keep her out. Across the south, the Lucy case gave resisting whites hope. If they were willing to use violence to fight the law, it seemed they could keep black children in black schools. And it seemed the federal government would not step in. After the riots, the president spoke only of extremists on both sides. He worried, like much of the country, about moving too fast on school integration.

**President Dwight Eisenhower:** and I personally believe, if you tried to go too far, too fast in laws in this delicate field that has involved the emotions of so many millions of Americans, you are making a mistake. I believe we've got to have laws that go along with education and understanding. And I believe to go beyond that at any one time, you cause trouble rather than benefit.

**Narrator:** it was over a year before the black community would find its chance to fight back, here in little rock, Arkansas, 1957. Little rock was a moderate southern city in a moderate southern state. By 1956, both the state universities and the city buses were integrated. Its school board made plans to desegregate slowly. The first year, 1957, nine black teenagers would attend one school, central high. Little rock's black leaders were hopeful.

**L.C. Bates:** we have a very enlightened group of people in Arkansas. I know they have accepted everything else. They accepted bus integration without any fanfare, and they will take the school integration as just another going to school.

**Harold Engstrom:** the black children were not getting a chance, and they needed it. They needed more than anyone, and we were very strongly in favor of that, and could see that integration would improve that. But we did, at that stage, have fears, and they were, I guess, just naturally important emotional fears. And so, we needed some help from the officials, the state officials, the county, the city officials, and primarily from governor Faubus as to what he told the people, whether it was the law or not.

**Narrator:** governor Orval Faubus of Arkansas was a moderate by southern standards, a man the black community had supported. But in his last election, he had faced tough opponents, and he knew he'd need the segregationist vote if he wanted to be re-elected. The night before school opened, Faubus made a decision.

**Gov. Orval Faubus:** I have, therefore, in accordance with the solemn responsibility and the oath of my office, taken the following action: units of the national guard have been and are now being mobilized with the mission to maintain or restore the peace and good order of this community. Advanced units are already on duty on the grounds of central high school.

**Narrator:** the Arkansas national guard ringed the school with orders to admit only the white students. It shocked the country. State troops were now being used to prevent enforcement of federal law.

At the center of the crisis were these nine teenagers, selected by the school board because of their excellent grades. The first day, eight of the nine went to school together, accompanied by their parents and ministers. They expected some harassment, but no real trouble.

**Craig Rains:** you could cut it with a knife, the tension. Outside the school were these people who had come in from other



parts of the state, other states. There were license plates from all the other states that were there with people who had come in and were outside our school.

**Narrator:** the eight children and the adults with them were turned away by the national guard. The ninth student, Elizabeth Eckford, had missed the call to gather with the others before school. Elizabeth Eckford walked alone, and met a mob.

**Reporter:** could you tell me your name please? Are you going to go to school here at central high? You don't care to say anything, is that right?

This girl here is the first negro, apparently, of high school age to show up at central high school the day that the federal court ordered it integrated. She was followed in front of the school by an angry crowd, many of them shouting epithets at her.

**Ernest green:** well, it has to be the most frightening thing, I mean, because she had a crowd of white people behind her threatening to kill her. She had nobody. I mean, there was not a black face in sight anywhere, nobody that she could turn to as a friend, except to this woman, came out of the crowd and guided her through the mob and onto the bus and got her home safely.

**Narrator:** the black parents and the NAACP went back to court. The leader of the state organization, daisy bates, became the students' strongest supporter. The national NAACP saw this case as a showdown for desegregation, and they assisted the local lawyers.

**Thurgood Marshall:** well, we consider this case important as one of the segregation cases, but in addition to the fact that this one involves the appearance of the national guard on the scene, and for the first time in any of our cases, it's the action of the governor that eventually will have to be brought into trial.

**Interviewer:** and we see it as a state / federal conflict of authority.

**Thurgood Marshall:** well, I don't think there's any question about that.

**Narrator:** the question was whether the federal government would assert its authority. The pressure on the president increased. Defiance of federal law seemed to be spreading from little rock, here, to north little rock, to Nashville, Tennessee, and to charlotte, North Carolina.

Some people blamed Eisenhower for this resistance, saying his lack of leadership on civil rights had encouraged the extremists.

**Herbert Brownell:** president Eisenhower's position was that he was the president of all the people. He thought that his role was to talk to the moderates throughout the country, including southern states. He felt that, and was told by many advisors, that governor Faubus could be reasoned with, and an amicable solution could be found in the little rock crisis.

**Narrator:** in mid-September, the president and the governor had a meeting at Eisenhower's vacation house in Newport, Rhode Island.

**Herbert Brownell:** the president thought that he had persuaded governor Faubus to go back and allow the black children to enter the high school peaceably. And it was quite a surprise to him — and he felt let down — when governor Faubus decided against allowing the black children to enter the high school.

**Narrator:** Eisenhower had convinced Faubus that ultimately the state could not resist federal authority. Faubus changed his tactic. He simply removed the national guard, leaving only city police in an explosive situation as the little rock nine entered central high school.

**Melba Pattillo Beals:** we entered the side of the building. Thousands of people out front. And we were entering the side, and I could just get a glimpse of this group, and then the car — I could hear on the car radio, I could hear that there was a mob. And I knew what a mob meant, and I knew that the sounds that came from the crowd were very angry. So, we entered the side of the building very, very fast.

**Reporter:** we just got a report here on this end that the students are in. You can see from here some of the action occurring down here.

**Man:** let's go, let's go, let's go.

**James hicks:** the three of us represented the black press, that was all. And we were on the mall in front of the school, and the word got to the crowd outside that "the niggers are in the school." then they said to us, "you come out here as a decoy, and let the other people slip them into the side of this building." so, I said, "hell, no." like that, you see.

**Narrator:** the crowd turned on hicks and on his companions, Moses Newsom and Alex Wilson.

**James hicks:** somebody had a brick in his hand, and instead of throwing the brick, because he was too close, he hit Alex Wilson up the side of his head with this brick. Of course, Wilson was more than six feet tall, an ex-marine. And he went down like a tree.

**Melba Pattillo Beals:** the mob was getting passed the wooden sawhorses, because the police would no longer fight their own in order to keep — to protect us. And so, someone made a suggestion that if they allowed the mob to hang one kid, they could then get the rest out. And a gentleman, whom I believe to be the assistant chief of police said, "how you going to choose? You going to let them draw straws?" he said, "I'll get them out." and we were taken to the basement of this place, and we were put into two cars, grayish, blue colored fords. And the man instructed them, he said, "once you start driving, do not stop."

**Narrator:** the rioting was headline news. The nation and the world saw unmistakably the face of resistance. Finally, president Eisenhower realized he had to act. And he did quickly. That night, he sent in the paratroopers of the 101st airborne division.

**President Dwight Eisenhower:** an extreme situation has been created in little rock. This challenge must be met, and with such measures as will preserve for the people as a whole their lawfully protected rights. If resistance to the federal court order ceases at once, the further presence of federal troops will be unnecessary, and that blot upon the fair name and high honor of our nation in the world will be removed. Mob rule cannot be allowed to override the decisions of our courts.

**Gov. Orval Faubus:** my fellow citizens, we are now an occupied territory. In the name of god, whom we all revere, in the name of liberty we hold so dear, in the name of decency, which we all cherish, what is happening in America?

**Ernest green:** when we got into the jeep — into the station wagon, rather, and the convoy that went from Mrs. Bates's house to school had had a jeep in front, a jeep behind, and they both had machine gun mounts. And then the whole school was rained with the paratroopers and helicopters hovering around. And we marched up the steps with this circle of soldiers with bayonets drawn. I'd figured that we had really gone into school that day. And walking up the steps that day was probably one of the biggest feelings I've ever had. I figured I'd finally cracked it.

**Melba Pattillo Beals:** and there was a feeling of pride and hope, that, yes, this is the united states, yes, there is a reason I salute the flag. And it's going to be okay. You know, if these guys just go with us the first time, it's going to be okay. The troops did not, however, mean the end of harassment. It meant the declaration of war.

[singing]

**Narrator:** it was the beginning of a school year like no other at little rock central high.

**Ernest green:** when we got in the school, they then assigned us an individual soldier to walk us from class to class. He waited outside the classroom, and every time the bell rang and classes changed, he would walk us — we'd have our personal guard walking us to the next class.

**Melba Pattillo Beals:** the troops were wonderful. You know, there was some fear that they were dating the girls in high school. I don't care what they were doing. They were wonderful. But they couldn't be with us everywhere. They couldn't be with us, for example, in the ladies' bathroom. They couldn't be with us in gym. You'd be walking out to the volleyball court and someone would break a bottle and trip you on the ball. I have scars on my right knee from that.

**Harold Engstrom:** of course, we couldn't have a normal school. What we had to have is close to normal as possible. And you couldn't follow every student around with a guard. You know, the stories were that the male guards would go into the restrooms with the female black students, and you couldn't do things like that. And you couldn't sit with them at the cafeteria. There wouldn't be any integration if you did that. So, I'm proud at what we did and what we didn't do.

**Interviewer:** do you think you could get used to going to school with colored children?

**Student:** yes, sir, I think so. I mean, if I'm going to have to do it, I'm going to have to get used to it.

**Interviewer:** well, now, what about this? Do you think that the trouble is with the students here in the high school and in the schools of little rock? Or is it with the parents? Or is it with outsiders? Or where is the trouble?

**Student:** I think it's the parents. I mean, I saw it, you know, all these parents out here and the man kicking that negro and everything.

**Interviewer:** and you don't sympathize with that sort of action at all?

**Student:** no, sir, I don't.

**Interviewer:** what do you think?

**Student:** well, I think it was just downright un-American. I think it was the most terrible thing that has ever been seen in America. I mean, yeah, I'm guessing ...(inaudible) patriotic or something like that, but I always thought that all men were created equal.

**Craig Rains:** and I began to change from being somebody who was — I considered myself a moderate to, if I had my way, would have said, "let's don't integrate, because it's the state's right to decide," to someone who felt a real sense of compassion for these students, and felt like they deserved something that I had. And I also developed a real dislike for the people that were out there that were causing the problems. It was very unsettling to me.

**Student:** I never had anything to do with any until he came here. They'd never lived, what you'd say, close enough to us, so I was just never around them really.

**Interviewer:** isn't that probably what makes it difficult, when you've lived 17 years of your life, and then you start doing something different, all of a sudden?

**Student:** well, I think, like, if a Spanish or a Chinese person came here, it wouldn't be hard to get along with them. It's just that the negroes are, what you might say, more different to us than a Spanish person might be.

**Reporter:** it's early morning here at 1121 cross street in little rock, and a new school day is dawning.

**Mother:** melba.

**Melba Pattillo Beals:** yes, mother.

**Mother:** you'd better hurry. You're going to be late for school.

**Melba Pattillo Beals:** here I come.

**Reporter:** as usual, the girl in the family is running a little late. The girl is melba patillo, 15 years old —

**Melba Patillo Beals:** you know, I worried about silly things like keeping my saddle shoes straight, what am I going to wear today? The things that a 15 year old girl does worry about. But also, which part of the hall to walk in that's the safest? Who's going to hit me with what? Is it going to be hot soup today? Is it going to be so greasy that it ruins the dress my grandmother made for me? I mean, how is this day going to go?

And then, you know, you get out and you get to the car, and then we joke, we'd kind of play with each other. And your stomach would go back into its seat. But then again, we'd get to the head of the NAACP, Daisy Bates's house, and we'd have to face press conference. **Interviewer:** Ms. Bates, how do you feel that you're with both of the school authorities, with the city authorities, and with the military authorities, that the situation is developing now?

**Daisy bates:** very well. The military authorities have been very nice to the children, as well as the school board and the city police.

**Narrator:** by thanksgiving, the little rock nine had become seasoned veterans, giving sophisticated statements to the press at a dinner held by Mr. And Mrs. Bates.

**Gloria ray:** my name is Gloria ray. I am thankful for having a chance to fulfill my educational desires, and for being a citizen in a country where the federal government respects and protects the rights of all its people.

**Terrence Roberts:** my name is Terrence Roberts and I'm a seventh day adventist, and I would like to say that I know that communists enjoy taking advantage of situations such as these to twist the minds of peoples of the world. But I am thankful that in America their actions are being foiled through the efforts of many democratic-minded citizens.

**Minnie jean brown:** I'm Minnie Jean Brown. I'm thankful for the many people who have stood by us and worked diligently in our struggle for a perfect democracy —

**Narrator:** at school, the black teenagers were still being harassed by a few determined whites. Shortly before Christmas, Minnie Jean Brown struck back.

**Ernest green:** for a couple of weeks, there had been a number of white kids following us. A series of hassles, continuous — calling us niggers. "nigger, nigger, nigger," one right after the other. And Minnie was — Minnie Jean Brown was in the lunch line with me. And I was in front of Minnie, and Minnie was behind me. And there was this white kid — fella — who was much shorter than Minnie — Minnie was about five foot ten. And this fella couldn't have been more than five - five, five - four. And he reminded me of a small dog, yelping at somebody's leg. And Minnie had just picked up her chili.

**Melba Pattillo Beals:** I could just see her little head click. She consciously said to herself, "no, Minnie Jean, if you do this, you know you won't be here." but then, this was the time of the year when we all didn't want to be there.

**Ernest green:** and before I could even say, "you know, Minnie, why don't you tell him to shut up?" Minnie had taken this chili, dumped it on this dude's head. It was just absolute silence in the place. And then the help — all black — broke into applause. And the white kids — the other white kids there — didn't know what to do. It was the first time that anybody, I'm sure, had seen somebody black retaliate in that sense.

**Craig Rains:** when Minnie Jean was kicked out of school following the chili incident, maybe 15, 20 students brought cards and gave them out that said, "one down, eight to go." when school was out in May, they still hadn't given up the fight. They came out with a two-colored card that said, "ike(?), go home, liberation day May 29, 1958," which was graduation day. They were still fighting the battle even then.

**Narrator:** on May 29, 1958, central high school prepared to graduate 601 white students and Ernest green.

**Craig Rains:** we still didn't know whether some outsiders might roll in from some other states and firebomb the place. So, we were a little nervous about it, as was Ernest, and he stood around and joked with the students. We were all joking together there, waiting to process in. And I do remember that as the students' names were called, and they get up and go across the platform and receive their diploma, that I really held my breath when Ernest's name was called.

**Ernest green:** there were a lot of claps for the students. You know, they talked about who had received scholarships, who was an honor student and all that as they called their names up. When they called my name, there was nothing. Just a name. And there was this eerie silence. Nobody clapped. But I figured they didn't have to, because after I got that diploma, that was it. I had accomplished what I had come there for.

[singing]

**Interviewer:** Ernest, what's it been like this year? It's been what you expected?

**Ernest green:** well, from the beginning it wasn't quite what we expected, but adding all things together and putting all the sides together, I think it's turned out to be — well, I would say an interesting year. I guess that would be an understatement, but when you put all the sides together, we've had some nice times as well as some rough times. And I think, all in all, it's worked out rather nicely.

**Melba Patillo Beals:** by the time school had ended, I had sort of settled into myself. And I could have gone on for the next five years. It didn't matter anymore. I was past feeling. I was into just that kind of numb pain where you say, "hey, I can make it through whatever you'd like, and it just doesn't matter anymore."

But I came home, and, by myself, I walked to the backyard, and I burned my books. And I burned everything that I could burn. And I just stood there crying, looking into the fire, and wondering whether I would go back, but not wanting to go back.

**Narrator:** melba Patillo didn't have to face that decision. The next year, governor Faubus closed down all little rock's high schools to halt integration. Faubus was so popular that year, he easily won his third term as governor. Faubus's tactic was also used in Virginia, where the governor closed down school after school.

**Gov. Lindsay Almond, Jr:** there will be no enforced integration in Virginia. I have the highest respect for the president of the united states. If troops are sent into Virginia, they will patrol empty school houses.

**Narrator:** governor Almond closed schools in Charlottesville and Norfolk and other towns, and he called for unyielding rejection of integration.

The federal courts were also unyielding, ruling again and again that this resistance was unconstitutional. But while the court cases were fought, the schools stayed closed, and the children, especially the black children, paid the price. So, the crisis in school desegregation continued.

In the fall of 1960 in New Orleans, four little black girls were sent to first grade in white schools. It caused a city-wide riot. This was six years after the supreme court's ruling, and segregation was still a fact of life across the south. But in those six years, desegregation had become a fact of political life. Schools were an issue that touched all Americans, black and white. And national leaders were beginning to recognize that.

**John F. Kennedy:** can we honestly say that it doesn't affect our security and the fight for peace when negroes and others are denied their full constitutional rights? When we who — when we in this country —

**Narrator:** this kind of rhetoric raised black hopes, that the new president would lead the nation in a new commitment to civil rights. In 1961, a black man named James Meredith would test that commitment when he filed suit for admission to the University of Mississippi. His lawyers were Jack Greenburg and Constance Baker Motley of the NAACP.

**Constance Baker Motley:** when the Meredith case was filed, it coincided with the freedom riders' arrival in Mississippi, which, of course, was not a good context in which to bring that suit. But those were historical developments, which we could not control, because it was a genuine revolution on the part of black people.

**Narrator:** James Meredith called it a new spirit among blacks, as sit-ins and freedom rides spread from other southern states into Mississippi. That spirit was part of Meredith's own readiness to face the struggles he knew were ahead.

**Interviewer:** what made you decide on ole miss?

**James Meredith:** well, I thought that I should get an education in my own state. And, of course, ole miss, to my knowledge, is the best University in the state. And also, it's the only school that offers the courses that I'm particularly interested in.

**Interviewer:** you say you were interested in going to the University of Mississippi even as a boy. Were you aware at that time that negroes did not go to the University of Mississippi?

**James Meredith:** well, I've been aware for a long time of the, so-called, place for the negro. Yes, I've been aware.

**Interviewer:** therefore, you've wanted to overcome this barrier since you were a boy?

**James Meredith:** that's right.

**Myrlie Evers:** I think that the faade that he would present to the public was one that was somewhat cold, somewhat cocky. But it was necessary to do that in order to protect himself. Because, after all, he was a human being with feelings, with fear.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** friends, I'm a Mississippi segregationist and I am proud of it.

**Narrator:** Mississippi, from its governor on down, was the most militant of the segregationist states. It was the home of the citizen's council, a group formed specifically to defeat integration.

In 1955, the citizen's council had helped crush the first attempts of desegregation in the state by using economic threats and violence.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** we must eliminate the cowards from our front lines. You did not elect me governor, Mississippi, to bargain your heritage away in our slopefield (?) Hotel room.

**Myrlie Evers:** the governor took a very active role in talking about the threats that the state would make on its blacks who would try to enter the school. It was an effort to instill fear in the hearts of blacks, and it was also an effort, and a very successful one to arouse fear and a kind of frenzy in the white community to fight back.

**Narrator:** Mylie Evers's husband, Medgar Evers, was head of the state NAACP. Evers himself had once tried to integrate ole miss, and now he counseled James Meredith. It was a long, hard, legal battle. Finally, after nine months, the district court ruled there was no policy of segregation at ole miss.

**Judge John minor wisdom:** it was so unreal for the Mississippi to argue and for the judge to hold that there was no policy of segregation at the University of Mississippi. Everyone in the state of Mississippi, and I am sure almost everyone in the entire country, knew that there was segregation in the state of Mississippi. And then for the University to assert that there was no segregation, and for the court to find that there was no segregation, was just like a land of fantasia.

**Narrator:** the court of appeals reversed the decision, ruling ole miss must accept James Meredith. The question, then, as in little rock, was, who would enforce the order? A question the court asked directly the president's representative.

**Burke Marshall:** it was always clear as crystal, and I personally made a commitment, knowing the president would back it up, to the fifth circuit sitting on bunk(?), all nine of them. That whatever force was necessary to make their order effective would be applied.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** I have made my position in this matter crystal clear. I have said in every county in Mississippi that no school in our state will be integrated while I am your governor. I now call on every public official, and every private citizen of our great state to join with me in refusing, in every legal and every constitutional way, and every way, every matter available, my friends, to submit to illegal usurpation of power by the Kennedy administration.

**Narrator:** the conflict was crystal clear, but the politics were not. The president and his advisors were determined that Meredith would go to ole miss. But Kennedy was also determined to avoid direct involvement, which could cost him key southern democratic support. The president wanted a political solution, and caught in the politics was ole miss.

The board of trustees supported Barnett. Most of them did not want to integrate, but they didn't want to see the University shut down because of James Meredith.

**Student:** well, none of the students — and I think I speak for all of them — want the school closed. And I think if it is closed, it would be too much pressure on Mr. Barnett, and he would have to open it within a day or two anyway.

**Interviewer:** do you think if the school had to be closed it would affect the rebel's, the football team?

**Student:** yes, that's one bad thing about it. And all our students are really looking forward to all the football games, and then if the school is closed, we want the ball games played anyway.

**Narrator:** on September 20, the conflict came to a head when governor ross Barnett flew up to the oxford campus of ole miss. There, in defiance of the federal court order, he personally turned James Meredith away. His actions were legal, he said, based on the pre-civil war doctrine of interposition.

**Judge John minor wisdom:** the doctrine is that a state may interpose itself between the national government and some action that is thought to be imposed upon the state, or some of its subdivisions, by the federal government. The supremacy clause, which provides and in case of a conflict between the nation and the states, the nation — the law of the nation prevails, makes hash of the doctrine of interposition. And any lawyer worth his salt knows that. And Barnett was a lawyer who made a good living — still making a good living — out of the law, and he knew better than that.

**Narrator:** five days later on September 25, armed with more court orders on his behalf, James Meredith tried again to register at the University of Mississippi. This time, at its Jackson office, and this time, accompanied by John Doar of the justice department and us marshal James McShane.

**Reporter:** this is Hagan Thompson at the state office building in Jackson. James Meredith has just arrived in the custody of federal officials and apparently making his way up to the tenth floor to register. And in they go, and we'll switch now in just a moment. The crowd is boeing lustily. Inside the Wilfolk (?) Building, I have a crowd of several thousand inside and out.

**Narrator:** again, governor Barnett was waiting.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** I took an oath when I inaugurated governor of this state to uphold and to try to maintain and perpetuate the laws of Mississippi. Gentlemen, my conscience is clear. I'm abiding by the constitution of the united states, and the constitution of Mississippi, and the laws of the state of Mississippi.

**John Doar:** I got to admit, I was surprised when I got to the door of the region's office, and when the door opened, there was, on the threshold, was the governor of the state of Mississippi there blocking the door. I got to say to you that I didn't anticipate that. And he had a proclamation, and he read it, in which — and the line was, "I refuse to register you, under the authority of the laws of the state of Mississippi." so, we left.

**Narrator:** once again, a governor's action had created a constitutional test. Now, the question was, would president Kennedy use the us army as president Eisenhower had? Kennedy was still reluctant. Instead, he tried secret telephone negotiations with governor Barnett.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** well, now you don't understand the situation down here.

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** well, the only thing is, I got my responsibility. This is not my order, I just have to carry it out. So, I want to get together and try to do it with you in a way which is the most satisfactory and causes the least chance of damage to people in Mississippi. That's my interest.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** Is that right? Well, you'd be willing to wait a while and let the people cool on the whole thing. Well, you make a statement to the fact, Mr. President, that under the circumstances existing, that there'll be bloodshed. You want to protect the life of James Meredith and all other people. And under the circumstances at this time, it just wouldn't be fair to him or others to try to register him.

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** well, then, at what time would it be fair?

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** well, we could wait — I don't know. It might be in two or three weeks, it might cool off.

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** would you undertake to register him in two weeks?

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** well, you know, I can't undertake to register him myself, but you all make some progress that way.

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** well, we'd be faced with ...(inaudible), unless we had your support.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** I'm going to cooperate.

**Robert Ellis:** if the federal government had told governor Barnett, "we're coming in and we're going to maintain order, and we're going to register Meredith," they would have had my complete respect and cooperation. They wouldn't do that. And by the same token, the governor was so obsessed with the idea of maintaining our way of life, that that was the ultimate objective. And with those two points of view, and with the two political leaders trying to make each other look as good as they could, the situation just got out of hand.

**Narrator:** The situation in Oxford was becoming very tense, as hundreds of people streamed into the area to defend Ole Miss and the southern way of life.

**Nicholas Katzenbach:** we have had to put throughout — not merely the students, but all kinds of people pouring in, in cars, in order to prevent Meredith from being admitted to Ole Miss. One, now, has to remember also that that was the squirrel hunting season in Mississippi, so there were literally hundreds, thousands, of guns. Every pick up truck had a couple of guns in it, and so the situation was really very dangerous.

**Narrator:** Saturday, September 29. The Ole Miss campus was deserted as the students flocked to Jackson for the football game against Kentucky. The halftime speaker was Governor Ross Barnett.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** I love Mississippi. I love her people... (inaudible). I love, and I respect our heritage.

**Narrator:** the next day, Sunday, September 30. Finally, President Kennedy decided the time had come to enroll James Meredith at Ole Miss. He sent several hundred US Marshals to the campus to prepare, and he announced he'd make a special speech to the state that night.

**Nicholas Katzenbach:** Sunday night when I flew down in the government plane to the airstrip at the University of Mississippi. And we had marshals already down there. We had about four or 500 marshals sworn in from the prison guards, from the border patrol, from the US Marshals Service, from any other place we could find reasonably trained law enforcement officers. And they were, themselves, inert to the students who were returning from a football weekend. And we had no place to sort of hide the marshals. They were around the Lyceum building, which was the center of the campus, and, unbeknownst to us, a — sort of a tradition and a place of great honor.

**Jan Robertson:** students came and, of course, they saw the marshals. I know I got angry when I saw the marshals. It just seemed a betrayal. It made me — you know, why are these people here when we haven't done anything, and people are behaving themselves? And, you know, what is going on? And I caught myself really with some of these feelings.

**Narrator:** after the marshals had secured their positions, James Meredith was flown into Oxford airport and driven to a secret location at Ole Miss. The crowds didn't know where he was, but they knew he was on campus. And at eight o'clock, just as the president went on the air, Ole Miss turned into a battlefield. Very few people heard the president's words.

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** Americans are free, in short, to disagree with the law, but not to disobey it. For any government of laws, and not of man, no man, however prominent or powerful, and no mob, however unruly or boisterous, is entitled to defy a court of law. The eyes of the nation and all the world are upon you and upon all of us.

**Narrator:** the marshals were ordered not to use guns against the rioters who were shooting and throwing Molotov cocktails. And the rioters were targeting the media, smashing cameras and attacking reporters.

**Jan Robertson:** there was one freshman girl that had been this little flower of southern gentility when I had met her. And she came up to me, and her face was absolutely contorted, and I almost didn't recognize her. And she was absolutely furious, because she had picked up a brick and thrown it at a marshal, and it had only hit him in the head and scratched him, and she had not put his eye out.

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** well, you see, we got to get order up there, and that's what we thought we were going to have.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** president, please, why don't you give an order, try to remove ...(inaudible)?

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** how can I remove him, governor, when there's a riot in the street and he may step out of that building and something happen to him. I can't remove him under those conditions.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** people are wiring me and calling me, saying, "well, you've given up." I said, I had to say, "no, I'm not giving up. I'm not giving up any fight. I never give up. I have courage and faith, and I'm going to win this fight." you understand. It's not just the Mississippi people.

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** I understand, but I don't think anybody in Mississippi or any place else wants a lot of people killed.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** oh, no, no.

**Pres. John F. Kennedy:** governor, that's the most important thing.

**Gov. Ross Barnett:** I'll issue any statement, anytime, about peace and violence.

**Narrator:** while the president and the governor argued, the riot worsened. Finally, Katzenbach asked the White House for troops. It took hours for them to arrive, and during the night, 35 marshals were shot, and two people — a French journalist and an Oxford worker — were killed. But by dawn, the army had restored order.

**Burke Marshall:** of course the president's going to win in the end. He's got the whole armed forces of the United States. He can call in the Air Force, he can bring Navy ships up the Mississippi River, he can call out the army as he did, he can drop parachuters in. I suppose he could shoot missiles at Oxford, Mississippi. So, he's going to win at the end.

**Robert Ellis:** I recall driving to the campus, and I guess when I got to the circle was when I really saw the impact of the riot from the previous evening. I reported to my office — as I recall it, there weren't very many of the staff there. Many of

them were too afraid to come to the campus on Monday. And later, James Meredith came to my private office, and I accommodated the registration there.

**Burke Marshall:** it wasn't a cause for laughter and champagne, but it was a cause for some relief. And it was, the fact that that was over with. I mean, in a way, oxford had become the symbol of massive resistance in the final gasp of the civil war, if you want to look at it that way. And it was over. It had ended.

**Interviewer:** sir, there's been a great deal of turmoil and conflict. Two people have been killed. Do you have any feelings of guilt? Have you given it any second thoughts?

**James Meredith:** I'm very sorry that anyone had to get hurt or killed. But, of course, I think that's an unfair question to me. I don't believe any of you believe that I had anything to do with that.

**Interviewer:** how are you getting along in school, sir?

**James Meredith:** just fine. Just fine.

**Interviewer:** how are the students? ...(inaudible) talking to, any reactions?

**James Meredith:** no. Just acting like students, I suppose.

**Interviewer:** is that kind of a lonely life for you, despite all of these people around you?

**James Meredith:** I've been living a lonely life a long time.

**Narrator:** it was a lonely victory for James Meredith, but it was a victory for him and the country. The constitution had held and been reaffirmed in a major crisis. Thousands of black people felt the victory, and saw James Meredith as an example to follow, a symbol, like the little rock nine, of their own power to move the nation.

## Ain't Scared Of Your Jails (1960-1961)

**Narrator:** February 1st, 1960. In Greensboro, North Carolina, four black college students sat down at a lunch counter reserved for whites and refused to leave. This sit-in was a direct challenge to southern tradition.

**White kid:** well, it's just not the things we're used to down here. I mean, they come in and they sit down and we're not used to them sitting down beside us, because I wasn't raised with them, I never have lived with them and I'm not going to start now.

**Narrator:** trained in nonviolence, the students refused to fight back. As the sit-in spread, they threatened the established order in cities across the south.

**Ben West:** I am Ben West, and this is my city. For the past ten years, I have been its mayor. I have watched it grow from an overgrown country town into a great metropolitan complex. While Nashville is a city, yet the ways of its people are small-townish. The morning greeting is commonplace.

**Narrator:** Nashville was proud of its progressive tradition. A center for education, the arts and industry, it had long promoted itself as the Athens of the south. But for its 70,000 black residents, this was still the segregated south. Movies, hotels and city buses were segregated. Blacks spent money in downtown stores, but were refused seats at lunch counters. In Nashville, a generation that had grown up with segregation was about to demand a change.

**Leo Lillard:** when I was a boy, of course Nashville was clearly two divided towns. We were very much aware of that. And yet on the other hand, we really didn't care. We were very much contained. We knew our culture, we knew what we were about. But it was clear that when I was very young that I had some problems asking my mother questions about why that was. I knew that it was, but I was always curious as to why it was.

And one day we were in kress, and kress had these beautiful marble fountains, water fountains. And one said colored and one said white. And being the kind of kid I was, I went over to both fountains and tasted the water and told my mother, "taste the same to me, mom." she said, "boy, come over here." I said, "mother, what's the reason? Why are there two names up there and the water is exactly the same, mom?" she said, "well, come over here, we ain't got time to fool around with that kind of mess." and I always thought, you know, that there was something in the back of her head that she wasn't giving me.

**Narrator:** Nashville's four black colleges attracted young people from across the country. For many, segregation would be an unforgettable lesson.

**Diane Nash:** I was looking forward in college to really expanding myself and growing. I was taking those kinds of issues very seriously. And that played quite a part when I got to Nashville and why I so keenly resented segregation and not being allowed to do basic kinds of things like eating at restaurants in the ten cent stores, even. So, you know, I really felt stifled and shut in very unfairly.

**Narrator:** the students were drawn to activist Jim Lawson and his workshops in nonviolent direction action.

**Jim Lawson:** we have important business to try to accomplish. And that is to try to have one major role playing experience which sort of tries to set the stage for an actual demonstration, for an actual sit-in.

**Rev. C.t. Vivian:** when Jim Lawson came to the city, he came to organize students, all right? And most important to that, for both students and we who were ministers, was that we had workshops, and the workshops in nonviolence made the difference. We began to understand the philosophy behind it, the tactics, the techniques, how to in fact begin to take the blows and still respond with some sense of dignity.

**Narrator:** Lawson's plan to confront segregation directly was a bold step. The first target for this direct action would be the lunch counters downtown. John Lewis, Angela butler, and Diane Nash led students to Nashville's first sit-in.

**John Lewis:** the students were dressed like they were on the way to church. We went into the local store. These stores were known all across the south, and for the most part all across the country. We took our seats in a very orderly, peaceful fashion. We stayed there at the lunch counter studying and preparing our homework because we were denied service. The manager ordered that the lunch counters be closed, that the restaurants be closed. We just sat there and we continued to sit all day long. The first day in terms of violence or any disorder, nothing happened.

**Diane Nash:** the first sit-in we had was really funny because the waitresses were nervous and they must have dropped \$2,000 worth of dishes that day. [laughter] I mean, literally it was almost a cartoon because I can remember wanting to take out a sheet and she was so nervous, she picked up dishes and she dropped one and she'd pick up another one and she'd drop it. [laughter] it was really funny, and we were sitting there trying not to laugh because we thought that laughing would be insulting and, you know, we didn't want to create that kind of atmosphere. At the same time, we were scared to death.

**Bernie Schweid:** most people did not take the sit-ins too seriously at the beginning because they felt, well, you know, these are the outside — these are agitators, these are students, they've come from New York and other places and they're not the one — they're not our negroes. Our negroes are happy, they're well off and we know them and we'd even — you know, some of these people would ask their maid or something, this is a joke, you know. And the maid would say, "oh, I just don't pay no attention to them, no good trash." and then she'd leave and she'd go of the NAACP meeting.

**Narrator:** the sit-ins continued without incident for almost two weeks. Then, on February 27th, a warning. Gangs of toughs were gathering downtown. The students sat in as planned. The police did nothing to protect them. The students remained true to their training in nonviolence. When the police vans arrived, more than 80 demonstrators were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

**Diane Nash:** the day that the police first arrested us, they announced to us, "okay, all you niggers, get up from the lunch counter and, you know, or we're going to arrest you." and the attitude was like, "well, we warned you." so they repeated it a couple of times and nobody moved. And of course we were prepared for this. So they said, "well, we warned you, you won't move, okay everybody's under arrest." and then they turned and they looked around at the lunch counter again, and the second wave of students had all taken seats. They were confounded and kind of looked at each other like, "now what do we do," you know? And they said, "well, okay, we'll arrest those too," and they did it and then the third wave. And no matter what they did and how many they arrested, there was still a lunch counter full of students there.

**Ben West:** peace, quiet and good order will be maintained in our city to the best of our ability. Riots, melees and disturbances of the peace are against the interest of all our people and therefore cannot be permitted.

**Narrator:** Nashville's mayor, Ben West, was faced with more than maintaining public order. For generations, whites had taken for granted the second class status of the city's black residents. Now, the students were forcing people to decide whether segregation was right or wrong.

**White Nashville woman:** I think that people who strive to gain social acceptance through their — although they're called nonviolent or passive resistance, there's a most violent — I also think that it is in violation to my civil rights if someone can say you must serve me. If you own — if a man owns an eating establishment, if he can't choose whom he pleases to serve or not to serve, that can affect me and you and anyone else.

**Nashville resident:** now, the people in the south have always fed people who came and knocked at the back door and asked for something to eat. But they have always reserved the right to eat only with invited guests.

**Narrator:** the local black community began to unite behind the students. Black merchants supplied food to those in jail. Homeowners put up property for bail money. Z. Alexander Looby, the city's leading black lawyer, headed the defense. The court found the students guilty of disorderly conduct. John Lewis refused to pay the \$50 fine. He chose 33 days in the city workhouse instead. Most of the other students joined him in jail.

**John Lewis:** growing up in the rural south, it was not the thing to do, not to go to jail. It was bringing shame and disgrace on the family. But for me, I tell you, it was like being involved in a holy crusade. It became a badge of honor.

**Narrator:** parents worried that arrest records could hurt their children's future, and they feared for the safety of their children.

**Black mother:** while there was plenty of things ... (inaudible), but I always think of — it's like Matthew, Jr., called me, when he called — when he called from the jail, he said, "be cool, mother." and that was very trying, and yet it was amusing, too, his telling me to be cool at this point. So even now when I think of it, I get quite a bit of fun out of it. Just to hear him say it, I can't say it as he said it. But he said, "be cool, mother." [laughter] and I tried to be cool.

**Narrator:** to fight the jailings of their children, parents turned to the power of their own pocketbook. In Nashville in 1960, negro buying power was estimated at \$50 million a year, with \$10 million spent at the downtown stores alone.

**Leo Lillard:** someone developed the idea of, "let's stop spending money downtown." and basically it was like the bus boycott. "let's stop supporting the system we're trying to change." the bus boycott in Nashville, primarily focused on the Nashville downtown stores, the Nashville retail merchants. We figured that if they would feel the pinch of not having shoppers buy in the stores downtown Nashville, then that will put pressure on the mayor, on the political fabric of town, of Nashville, to change the rules, the regulations.

**Rev. C.t. Vivian:** we saw the easter boycott as a chance to get over many ideas of nonviolence and help create a reconciliation of all the forces in the city. Easter was a most important time to buy. All blacks had to have a full, brand new outfit at Easter, no matter how poor you were, right? You may start three months ahead of time paying for that Easter outfit, and you may be paying for it for three months later.

**Narrator:** within two months, the sit-ins had spread to 69 cities, from Greensboro to san Antonio, and 2,000 had been arrested. To support the sit-in movement, a national boycott was organized. Those chain stores which discriminated in the south were also picketed in the north.

**Reporter:** do you think that the boycott has had any great impact on these national chains in a city like New York up to this time?

**Adam clayton Powell:** well, I've already seen statements from some of the executive offices of both kress and worldwide, indicating that they are concerned that a decline has already been noted and is just beginning.

**Reporter:** I take it, then, that you are advocating negroes in New York to stay out of these national chain stores?

**Adam clayton Powell:** oh no, that's not true. I'm advocating that American citizens interested in democracy to stay out of chain stores.

**Leo Lillard:** the boycott was in perfect time to say "stay out of town." and Nashville as a whole, black and white, did stay out of town because the white folks didn't go downtown because of the potential violence, the riots as they saw it. The black folks, although there were some black folks who went to downtown to try and break the boycott and we had to send some educating committees downtown to convince them that that was not the thing to do. And we had hurt them, but we did kind of snatch their bags and tear things away from them, from their arms and let them fall on the ground and say, "stay out of town." and of course, the word got around pretty quick, you don't go downtown anymore.

**Narrator:** within a month, the boycott by black customers was almost completely effective.

**Bernie Schweid:** when it starts to hit your pocketbook, then you realize, "hey, this is serious." the merchants are getting it from both sides. Then there was some violence, blacks and some sympathetic whites were hit over the head by these blond-headed hoods that seem to come out of the sewer for such occasions. And those who were standing in line for a movie, or trying to get into a restaurant or cafeteria, they were very hurt, and this created a fear so that then white people started to be afraid to come to shop, too. And that was the main feeling I remember about those times, fear.

**Narrator:** it was not just student protesters who were attacked, blacks who worked downtown also became targets of random violence. Nashville, the moderate southern city, looked on in disbelief. April 19th, dynamite thrown from a passing car at 5:30 in the morning destroyed the home of z. Alexander Looby, one of Nashville's black city councilman and defense attorney for the arrested students. The blast was so powerful it shattered 147 windows in Meharry medical college across the street. Miraculously, no one was killed.

**Rev. C.t. Vivian:** it was such an outrageous act that it could be very useful to a nonviolent movement then to move, okay? It was a uniting of the city, but the outcome would be decided by how we, in fact, channeled that energy, right? And we then had the first major march of the movement. People began to gather, and we began to march and students came out from the lunchrooms and they came out from being on the campus grounds. And they joined, and they came out of buildings and dormitories. We filled Jefferson avenue. It's a long, long way down Jefferson. After a while, there was a certain bit of singing. And as we came closer to town, it was merely the silence of the feet.

One of the things that stood out in mind, as we walked by a place where there were workers out for the noon hour, white workers and they had never seen anything like this. And here was all the 4,000 people marching down the street, and all you could hear was their feet as we silently moved. And they didn't know what to do and they moved back up against the



wall and they simply stood against the wall, just looking. There was a fear there, there was an awe, and they did not know what to do. But they knew that this was not to be stopped, this was not to be played with or to be joked with.

**Narrator:** racial issues now threatened to tear the city apart. Face to face on the steps of city hall, reverend c. T. Vivian condemned the mayor for his failure to speak out in the past. Diane Nash pushed Ben West to take a personal stand.

**Diane Nash:** we needed him to say, "integrate the counters," or to tell Nashville to do what Nashville knows it should have done a long time ago, like about 95 years ago after the civil war. So I asked the mayor, "first of all, mayor west, do you feel that it's wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of his race or color?"

**Ben West:** they asked me some pretty soul-searching questions. And one that was addressed to me as a man, and I tried as best I could to answer it frankly and honestly, that I could not agree that it was morally right for someone to sell them merchandise and refuse them service. And I had to answer it just exactly that way.

Of course, I received considerable criticism for it, but had I to answer it again, I would answer it in the same way again because it was a moral question and it was one that a man has to answer and not a politician.

**Diane Nash:** I have a lot of respect for the way he responded. He didn't have to respond the way he did. He said that he felt like it was wrong for citizens of Nashville to be discriminated against at the lunch counter solely on the basis of the color of their skin. And I think that was the turning point.

**Narrator:** three weeks after Ben West's statement on the steps of city hall, black customers were served for the first time at lunch counters in downtown stores. Supported by the black community, Nashville's college and high school students had demonstrated their ability to move out in front of the civil rights movement. The next big step in the growth of the student movement would be the formation of SNCC, the student nonviolent coordinating committee. In the spring of 1960, more than 200 veterans of the sit-in movement from Nashville and from other cities around the country attended an organizing conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. On April 15th, the students met under the sponsorship of the southern Christian leadership conference. But sclc's Ella baker advised the students to stay independent of adult organizations.

**Diane Nash:** Ella baker was very important giving direction to the student movement. And not giving direction in a way of her making decisions as to what the students ought to do, but in terms of really seeing how important it was to recognize the fact that the students should set the goals and directions and maintain control of the student movement.

**Narrator:** SNCC was based on a new optimism, a feeling that youth could be a real force for change in the 1960s. The hard-fought presidential campaign of 1960, John Kennedy and Richard Nixon did not differ much in their moderate support of civil rights. Both candidates also looked to the white south for votes. But civil rights did become a campaign issue when martin Luther King was arrested at a student sit-in in Atlanta. King sentenced to four months hard labor enraged the black community. Kennedy and Nixon were still wary of losing southern white votes and avoided making public statements. But privately, Kennedy and his staff felt they had to take action.

**Harris Wofford:** there's martin Luther King sitting in a county jail and Kennedy wanted to do something, to say something. Finally, some of us had the idea that Kennedy might just call Mrs. King and express his sympathy and tell her what he was doing to get King out of jail.

**Coretta Scott King:** he said, "I'm thinking about you and your husband, and I know this must be very difficult for you. If there's anything I can do to be of help, I want you to please feel free to call me." and I didn't quite know what to say except to thank him and say, "well, I really appreciate this. And if there is anything that you can do, I would deeply appreciate it."

**Harris Wofford:** and then that very night, Robert Kennedy called the judge in Georgia and called him to get that judge to get King out of jail.

**Narrator:** the Kennedy phone calls proved to be a smart political move. The next day, King was released on bail. On the Sunday before election day, black ministers around the country endorsed Kennedy from their pulpits. It was to be one of the closest elections in American history, with John Kennedy winning by less than two-thirds of one percent of the popular vote.

**James farmer:** many of us felt that Kennedy's commitment to civil rights was political, that it was a device to get him elected. Because in the first six to eight months, he had done very little. Let me illustrate that. During the campaign, he had indicated that there was one whole area of discrimination that the president could wipe out with merely a stroke of the pen, and that was the area of public housing discrimination. And if elected, he would use that stroke of the pen by issuing an executive order that would do the job. Well, we waited for more than a year for that stroke of the pen, then decided that his pen must have run dry.

**Narrator:** the congress of racial equality was determined to keep the pressure on Kennedy. Core wanted the president to enforce two supreme court decisions banning segregated interstate travel. These supreme court decisions had been largely ignored throughout the south. In 1961, blacks were still forced to ride in the back of the bus and were shut out of the white only waiting room. The administration had the power to force the southern states to obey the law through the ICC, the interstate commerce commission. Core dramatized the need for the government to use that power with the tactic called the freedom ride.

**James farmer:** we decided the way to do it was to have a group, an interracial group, ride through the south. This was not civil disobedience, really, because we would be doing merely what the supreme court said we had a right to do. The whites in the group would sit in the back of the bus, the blacks would sit in the front of the bus and would refuse to move when ordered. At every rest stop, the whites would go into the waiting room for blacks, and the blacks into the waiting room for whites and would seek to use all the facilities, refusing to leave. And we felt that we could then count upon the racists of the south to create a crisis so that the federal government would be compelled to enforce federal law. And that was the rationale for the freedom ride.

**Narrator:** the freedom riders would board two buses in Washington, dc, on May 4th. Their itinerary would take them through the deep south and on to New Orleans by May 17th.

**John Lewis:** I believe the freedom rides started the first week in May, 1961, in Washington, dc. As a matter of fact, on the night of May 3rd, 1961, this group of 13 freedom riders, seven white and six black, had a dinner at a Chinese restaurant in Washington, dc. It was my first time having Chinese food. Being someone growing up in the south and going to school in Nashville, never had Chinese food. And this meal was like — to me, it was like the last supper because you didn't know what to expect, going on the freedom ride.

**Narrator:** the riders encountered only minor resistance as they traveled through the upper south. On Mother's Day, May 14th, two buses left Atlanta for Birmingham. Outside of Anniston, a mob fire bombed the lead bus and blocked the exits. Twelve riders were hospitalized. The bus was destroyed. The second bus was met in Birmingham by a mob of Klansmen. Freedom rider Jim Peck took the brunt of the beating.

**Robert Shackney:** this is Robert Shackney in Birmingham at the home of a negro clergyman. And with me are part of a group calling themselves the freedom riders, an interracial group traveling through the deep south to challenge some of the segregated bus facilities in this part of the country. Yesterday, they ran into trouble, they ran into violence. Today, they say they intend to keep up their pilgrimage. Mr. Peck, you obviously have been injured, you're wearing bandages, what happened to you?

**Jim Peck:** I got a beating twice yesterday by hoodlums, once aboard the bus and once in the common on Birmingham.

**Gov. John Patterson:** we can't act as nursemaids to agitators. I think when they learn that when they go somewhere to create a riot, that there's not going to be somebody there to stand between them and the other crowd, they ought to stay home. That's been my experience with this type of individuals. You see, they always seeking the help of the police to protect them, but they are the first to criticize the police when the police are unable to protect them. And you just can't guarantee the safety of a fool, and that's what these folks are, just fools.

**James Farmer:** we had hoped there would be protection. Indeed, that's one of the reasons that they sent a letter to the FBI. We had thought that the FBI would provide protection for us, would see to it at each stop that we were not brutalized and killed. But that did not happen.

**Burke Marshall:** the FBI had information, it turns out, that was quite specific about what was going to happen in Birmingham. They might have had some more information about what was going to happen in Anniston, but I'm not sure of that. But they clearly had advance information from Klan sources that the freedom riders were going to be attacked in the bus station at Birmingham, and that the Birmingham police were going to absent themselves and not do anything to protect the rioters. The bureau knew that. The bureau didn't pass that information along to anybody in any other part of the department.

**Narrator:** core riders boarded a plane to New Orleans after bus drivers refused to take them any further. It appeared the freedom ride was over. But the SNCC students from Nashville decided the ride must continue.

**Diane Nash:** you know, if the freedom ride had been stopped as a result of violence, I strongly felt that the future of the movement was going to be just cut short because the impression would have been given that whenever a movement starts, that all that has to be done is that you attack it with massive violence and the blacks would stop.

**James Farmer:** it was at that point, after the SNCC students from Nashville, went into Birmingham, that Bobby Kennedy, the attorney general, became really involved in it. Drivers walked off the job and would not drive the bus. And Kennedy got on the phone and called down to the bus terminal demanding that they find the driver. "where's Mr. Greyhound?" he stormed. "can't he drive a bus?"

**Gov. John Patterson:** Robert Kennedy started calling me on the telephone. Robert started calling the president of the Greyhound bus company making demands on them. They had trouble getting drivers to drive the buses because they were concerned about their buses and themselves, I guess. But finally, every time I would talk to Robert, I would immediately read in the paper or hear on the wire service quotes from his office and from the white house saying that I said certain things. And many times, it would be things that I did not say.

**Narrator:** when Patterson refused to talk further, Kennedy sent special assistant John Seigenthaler to Alabama.

**John Seigenthaler:** finally, governor Patterson did agree to a meeting, and I went down from Birmingham to Montgomery to meet with him. Went into that antebellum building that is the state capitol there, he had me into his office, had his whole cabinet seated around this great conference table.

**Gov. John Patterson:** Robert was insisting on a guarantee from us that none of them would be bothered or none of them would be injured. And of course, you couldn't give a guarantee like that for people who are not going to do what you say, are not going to obey the police, who are looking for difficulty and trouble.

**John Seigenthaler:** my duty as a federal officer was to inform him that if the state could not protect citizens of the United States, either in the cities or on the highways, that it was a federal responsibility and we were prepared to assert it but that we hoped we would not have to. He said he was not sure safety, safe conduct, to be given to these agitators, as he called them. Ford Mann broke in and said, "governor, as your chief law enforcement officer, I assure you if you give me the responsibility, I can protect them." that was the first breakthrough.

**Floyd Mann:** I was really impressed with Mr. Seigenthaler's seemingly sincere efforts to resolve this mess. And he pushed real hard to get an answer about could he get me to guarantee the safety of these people. The governor was just as adamant not to give that commitment. So at that point in time, I certainly felt that my having been appointed by the governor, I certainly should assure them at that time that I felt that law and order could prevail in Alabama.

**Narrator:** May 20th, the new contingent of 21 freedom riders received word that Alabama would protect them.

**John Lewis:** at 8:30 Saturday morning, we understood an arrangement had been worked out between the justice department and the official ... (inaudible) officials of the state of Alabama, where we would board the bus with other customers or passengers, and there would be two officials of Greyhound, a private plane would fly over the bus. There would be a state patrol car every 15 or 20 miles along the highway between Birmingham and Montgomery, about 90 miles. We got on the bus and a great many of the riders really literally took a nap, they went to sleep. I took a seat in the front, seat right behind the driver, with a young man by the name of Jim Zwerg, a young white guy. I was a spokesman for this particular group of riders and we did see the plane.

But I would say about 40 miles or less from the city of Montgomery, all sign of protection disappeared. There was no plane, no patrol car, and when we arrived at the bus station, it was just like eerie, just a strange feeling. It was so quiet, so peaceful, nothing.

**Frederick Leonard:** and then all of a sudden, just like magic. White people, sticks and bricks, they're going, "kill the niggers." we were still on the bus, you know? But I think we're all kind of deciding, "well, maybe we should go off the back of this bus." because we kind of knew that if we had gone off the back of the bus, then maybe they wouldn't be so bad on us. They wanted us to go off the back of the bus. And we decided no, no, we'll go off the front and take what's coming to us. We went out the front of the bus. Jim Zwerg was a white fellow from Madison, Wisconsin. He had a lot of nerve. And I think that's what saved me, Bernard Lafayette, Alan Casein. When Jim Zwerg walked off the bus in front of us, and they

were so — it was like they were possessed, they couldn't believe that there was a white man who would help us. And they grabbed him and pulled him into the mob. I mean, it was a mob. When we came off the bus, they were so — their attention was on him. It's like they didn't see the rest of us for like maybe 30 seconds, they didn't see us, they didn't see us at all. And we were held up by this ray, a ray of light at the bus station, parking lot down below, cars down there. And then when they did turn toward us, we had a choice. About 10 or 15 feet below. We could stand there and take it, or we could go over the rail. Over the rail we went, me and Bernard Lafayette. Alan Casein always carried his little typewriter, always had his typewriter. Over the rail he went, on top of a car. Hit the ground, took off. Ran into the back of this building. It was the post office, and the people were in there carrying on their business, just like nothing was happening outside.

But when we came through there, the mail went to flying everywhere because we were running.

**John Seigenthaler:** as I drove along, I saw two young women who were freedom riders being pummeled to one side, there was a woman who was walking along behind one of these young women. She had a purse on a strap and she was beating her over the head. A young skinny, blond teenager in a t-shirt was sort of dancing backward in front of her, punching her in the face. Instinctively, I just bumped up onto the sidewalk, blew the horn, jumped out of the car, came around, grabbed the one who was being hit, took her back to the car. The other young woman got in the back seat of the car. And I opened the door, pushed this young woman whose name I think was Susan Rober, and said, "get in the car." and she said, "mister, this is not your fight. I'm nonviolent, don't get hurt because of me."

I almost got away with it. If she'd gotten into the car, I think I could have gotten away. But that moment of hesitation gave the mob a chance to collect their wits and one grabbed me by the arm, wheeled me around and said, "what the hell you doing?" and I said, "get back, I'm a federal man," turned back to her and the lights went out. I was hit with a pipe over this ear.

**James Farmer:** that ride, from Montgomery to Jackson, was like a military operation. As we rode on the bus, there were Alabama national guardsmen on the bus with us, about six of them, with bayonets fixed on their rifles. There were helicopters chopping around overhead. There were police cars screaming up and down the highways, their sirens blaring. We got to the border between Alabama and Mississippi and saw that famous sign, "welcome to the magnolia state." our hearts jumped into our mouths, and there were Mississippi national guardsmen flanking the highway at this point with their guns pointed toward the forest from both sides of the road.

And the bus proceeded on into the environs of Jackson and then Jackson. Now, as we got to the suburbs of Jackson, one of the freedom riders had broke into song, and this was as it had to be. I can't sing, I wish I could, but his words went something like this: I'm taking a ride on the greyhound bus line, I'm a-riding the front seat to Jackson this time.

Hallelujah, I'm a-traveling, hallelujah, ain't it fine, hallelujah, I'm a-traveling down freedoms main line.

**Frederick Leonard:** in Jackson, they were on the ponies outside the terminal, inside the terminal. As we walked through, the police just saying keep moving and they let us go through the white side. We never got to stop, you know. They said keep moving, and they passed us on through the white tunnel into the paddy wagon and into jail. There was no violence in Mississippi.

**Narrator:** attorney general Robert Kennedy had made a deal with Mississippi authorities. He would not enforce the supreme court decision giving the riders the right to use any public area in the bus station. In return, Mississippi would make sure there was no violence. Kennedy avoided bloodshed, but by giving in to Mississippi's segregation laws, he put the freedom riders at the mercy of the local police and local judges.

**Frederick Leonard:** the next day after we were arrested in Jackson, we went to court. Prosecutor got up, accused us of trespassing, took a seat. Our attorney, Jack Gillan, got up to defend us as human beings having a right to be treated like human beings. While he was defending us, the judge turned his back, looked at the wall. When he finished, the judge turned around, bam, 60 days in the state penitentiary. And there we were on the way to Parchman. Maximum security.

**Narrator:** after the first arrest on May 24th, 1961, freedom riders continued to pour into Jackson. By summer's end, 300 had been arrested and sentenced.

**Man:** you're under arrest, get your hands up.

**Narrator:** that same summer, Robert Kennedy petitioned the interstate commerce commission to issue regulations banning segregation in interstate travel. In late September, the commission complied. The students had won their victory, and they had become a major force in America's civil rights movement, experienced indirection action and its consequences.

**Frederick Leonard:** in the penitentiary, Parchman, we were only allowed one book, that was the bible. So we did a lot of singing, praying too, but a lot of singing. And those folks just couldn't understand how we could be happy, singing. So they would say, "shut up! Shut up!" and the women, we could hear the women on the other side, they'd sing to us and we'd sing to them. So they came to us, "if you don't shut up, we're taking mattresses." that didn't bother us, we kept singing. So they came through and took our mattresses. I let my mattress go, everybody let their mattress go. The next night, they gave us our mattress back, mattresses back. So we start singing again.

They threaten us again. "we will take your mattresses and you will have to sleep on that steel without a mattress." and that steel was cold, and you only had a pair of shorts and a little t-shirt on. We kept singing freedom songs. "freedom's coming and it won't be long." and they came through our cell block, Stokely Carmichael was my cell mate. I told Stokely, "I'm not letting my mattress go." everybody peacefully let their mattress go. But that was in the middle of the night before when I had to sleep on that steel. So they came in to take my mattress, I was holding my mattress. They drug me out into the cell block and I still had my mattress, I wouldn't turn it loose. And one of the inmates, they were using black inmates to come and get our mattresses. I mean the inmates, you know? And there was this guy, peewee they called him. Short, muscular. And they said, "peewee, get him." peewee came down on my head, man, whonk, whonk. He was crying. Peewee was crying. I still had my mattress. And that's when I — you remember when your parents used to whip you and say, "it's going to hurt me more than it hurt you?" hurt peewee more than it hurt me.

## No Easy Walk (1961-1963)

**Wyatt tee walker:** I don't think any white person can really understand what it is to be a negro in America.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the negro is granted his citizenship rights.

**Laurie Pritchett:** we didn't want to be forced into doing something, which is one sense what it was. We were intimidated, we were threatened.

**Narrator:** segregation had learned to beat the civil rights movement at its own game. The movement leaders had to find new ways to fight back. But it was still no easy walk.

**George c. Wallace:** I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever.

**Narrator:** on January 14th, 1963, these words made Alabama governor George Wallace the symbol of southern resistance. That year, movement leaders targeted the largest city in his state for a major civil rights confrontation, Birmingham, Alabama, a city that had attracted national attention for its strict segregation and racial hatred. A city that some called Bombingham because of the many bomb attacks against blacks. For years, reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and others have fought the segregated system. In 1956, Shuttlesworth demanded the desegregation of city buses. Many of his friends tried to talk him out of it.

**Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth:** they say we ought to stop and think this thing out. I said, "there's nothing to think out. We say we're going to ride, and we ride. We do what we say for a change." so we rode the buses and over 250 people got arrested, I guess, and joined desegregated riding.

**Narrator:** because of his efforts, his house and church were bombed as he slept.

**Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth:** they blew the floor out from under my bed, spaces I guess 15 feet. The springs I was lying on, we never found. I walked out from this and instead of running away from the blast, running away from the Klansmen, I said to the Klansmen police that came, he said, "reverend, if I were you, I'd get out of town as fast as I could." I said, "officer, you're not me. You go back and tell your Klan brethren that if god could keep me through this, then I'm here for the duration." I think that's what gave people the feeling that I wouldn't run, I didn't run, and that god had to be there.

**Narrator:** in September of 1957, Shuttlesworth was attacked again as he tried to enroll his children in an all white school. This kind of violence was not stopped by city officials. The most famous was commissioner of public safety, Theophilus Eugene Connor, bull Connor, whose opinions earned him election to six terms.

**Bull Connor:** the so-called negro movement is a part of the attempted takeover of our country by the lazy, the indolent, the beatniks, the ignorant, and by some misguided religions and bleeding hearts, and all being led by the politicians who stay in office by appealing, remember not to reason, but to the most votes.

**Narrator:** public sentiment turned against Connor in 1961 when the freedom riders were attacked in Birmingham on mother's day. Connor was linked to the Klan violence and the local newspaper demanded to know where his police had been. The incident attracted national attention and the city was embarrassed into taking action.

**David Vann:** something had to be changed. The business community, when they had supported bull Connor for election, they really hadn't intended for him to do things like the — allowing things like the bus station to occur.

**Narrator:** it was too late for an easy change. Birmingham was on a collision course with the national civil rights movement, and movement leaders were ready. They had just learned some hard lessons in a small city in southwest Georgia, Albany. Here, martin Luther King suffered what some had called one of his greatest defeats. The Albany campaign started in 1961. Young organizers from the student nonviolent coordinating committee, or SNCC, came here to help the black community organize against segregation. In November, a federal agency ordered the desegregation of all facilities used for interstate travel. SNCC representative Charles Sherrod sent students into the trailways bus station to see if local authorities would arrest them.

**Charles Sherrod:** some of us really didn't think they would get arrested because this was a federal mandate. They mess with us now, but they're going to get the federal government on them, you know. Nobody's going to mess with the federal government, we thought.

**Narrator:** but the students were arrested. Sherrod and SNCC continued to work with the community, finding it rewarding because of the special quality they found in the people of Albany.

**Bernice Reagon:** if you have a gold mine, then there's a point in the gold mine when you have the richest part. And that's called the mother lode. That's what Albany is to black people in terms of just the concentrated essence of the spirit of the people. And if you can imagine black people at our most powerful point in terms of community and peoplehood, then that's Albany, Georgia.

**Narrator:** the black community attacked segregation wherever it existed. Demonstrations took place throughout the city, at libraries, schools, movie theaters, and city hall.

**Charles Sherrod:** and we just put pressure, pressure, pressure. Sometimes we don't know who controls this, who controls the other. So we stomp around and stop and see whose feet we get. And then somebody's going to holler, "oh, you got me." so then when he hollers, that's the direction we go in. And that was a general strategy. We didn't know what we were doing.

**Dr. W. G. Anderson:** you want to know what the negro in Albany is going to do? He's going to do whatever is necessary to insure his freedom.

**Narrator:** Dr. William g. Anderson was president of the Albany movement, an umbrella organization formed to coordinate all the civil rights groups in the community. By mid-December, Dr. Anderson became concerned because more than 500 demonstrators had been jailed.

**Dr. W. G. Anderson:** these were common, ordinary, every day people, housewives, cooks, maids, laborers, children out of school. We had made no provisions for these people going to jail because we did not anticipate the mass arrest. So we concluded that night that we are into something that really we need some extra help in.

**Narrator:** Dr. Anderson invited reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., to help in Albany. King brought with him the SCIC, the southern Christian leadership conference, a civil rights organization based in black churches and led by ministry.

**Andrew Young:** they had asked martin to come down just to make a speech. And he went only to make a speech. So Dr. King, right, he came there with not even an overnight bag or a toothbrush. I responded to my call, and I do not anticipate that he expected to get as intimately involved with the Albany movement as he did. Dr. Anderson got carried away, and in public asked martin to demonstrate, to lead the march with him and he agreed. And then he got put in jail, and with no plan, no thought of what we were going to do.

**Narrator:** King accepted release from jail. As he divided his time between Albany and other commitments, SNCC grew unhappy with SCIC's role.

**Charles Sherrod:** when Dr. King would come in, we'd get two or three thousand people without much effort, so that was in our favor. But when he left, it was more difficult for us to get people to come so that this phenomenon of doc flying into places where we worked and then flying out to another place, which was needed, made it difficult for us to organize.

**Wyatt tee walker:** well, in Albany we were like firefighters. The fire was already burning, and I'll try to say this as charitably as I can. SNCC was in over its head and they wanted the international and national attention that martin Luther King's presence would generate, but they did not want the input of his organization.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I don't have but one speech. I don't have but one message as I journey around this country. And it is a message which says that I am convinced that the most potent weapon available to oppressed people as they struggle for freedom and justice is the weapon of nonviolence.

**Narrator:** as the movement took the nonviolent struggle into the streets of Albany, organizers expected the same reaction encountered in most southern communities, police brutality. But they had never met a law enforcement officer like this one, Albany's chief of police, Laurie Pritchett.

**Chief Laurie Pritchett:** you're welcome to picket, just ... (inaudible) don't stop. You'll be allowed two here in this block, the others will move out. We'll allow two picketers in this block. If you're going to city hall where you're picketing, you can leave two here, or you can go. Others that don't go will continue to be arrested unless they have two in this, right here where you picket.

I did research, I found his method was nonviolence, that his method was to fill the jail, same as Gandhi in India. And once they filled the jails, we'd have no capacity to arrest and then we'd have to give in to his demands.

**Narrator:** Pritchett made sure his jails wouldn't fill up, he had planned carefully.

**Chief Laurie Pritchett:** I had sat down and took a map and went 15 miles, how many jails was in a 15 mile radius, how many was in a 30 mile radius, on up to maybe 50, 60 mile radius. And I'd contacted those authorities, they'd assured us that we could use their facilities. And we had, when the mass arrests started, and we'd have marches and there'd be 200, 300 — at one time there, I think we had almost 2,000, but none in our jail.

**Dr. W. G. Anderson:** but you'd have to understand that going to jail was probably one of the most feared things in rural Georgia. There were many blacks who were arrested in small towns in Georgia, never to be heard from again. We have ever reason to believe that many of these were lynched. So going to jail was no small thing.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** Dr. Steele, what are the conditions there? Is it crowded?

**Man:** yes, it's very crowded.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** how many is that cell supposed to hold?

**Man:** ... (inaudible) on the floor, some of them.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** is that so? It's built to hold ten, and there are 69 in there?

**Man:** yes.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** uh-huh.

**Narrator:** because chief Pritchett sent prisoners into these jails, some questioned how nonviolent he really was.

**Wyatt tee walker:** I think the apt description was slick. He did have enough intelligence to read Dr. King's book, and he culled from that a way to avoid the confrontation in inducing the great ferment in the national community by being non-brutal rather than being nonviolent. It's almost bizarre to say that a segregationist system or a law enforcement official of a segregationist system could be nonviolent because first of all, nonviolence works in a moral climate, and segregation is not a moral climate.

**Charles Sherrod:** I remember a statement that chief Pritchett made to me one time when he said, "you know Sherrod, it's just a matter of mind over matter. I don't mind and you don't matter."

**Narrator:** against the solid resistance of city officials, the Albany movement found strength in mass meetings and song.

**Bernice Reagon:** mostly the mass meetings were singing in Albany. There was more singing than there was talking. And so most of the work that was done in terms of taking care of movement business had to do with nurturing the people who had come. And there would be two or three people who would talk, but basically the song was the bed of everything.

**Narrator:** July, 1962, Dr. King and reverend ralph Abernathy began serving a 45-day sentence. They were determined to stay in jail to protest Albany's segregation. But three days later, they were released. A stunned Dr. King explained that someone had mysteriously paid their fines.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** at which time the chief said to us that we had been released. In other words, that our fine had been paid. I said, "well chief, we want to serve this time." his only response then was, "god knows, reverend, I don't want you in my jail."

**Chief Laurie Pritchett:** I knew that if he stayed in jail, we'd continue to have problems. So I talked to some people, I said, "we've got to get him out. And once we do, I think he'll leave here." and arrangements were made. Frankly, I don't know who the man was who paid the bond.

**Man:** but it was done at your request?

**Chief Laurie Pritchett:** yes, it was done at my request. And it sort of surprised Dr. King. This was the one time that I — only time I've ever seen him when he seemed — when he didn't know which way to go.

**Narrator:** in late July, the Albany movement received another setback. At the city's request, federal judge j. Robert Elliott issued a restraining order to end the demonstrations which had been going on for almost nine months.

**Coretta Scott King:** when the federal court started ruling against us, that created a whole different thing in terms of what strategy do you use now? Because up to that point, mine had been willing to break state laws that were unjust laws, and our ally was the federal judiciary. And so if we would take our case to the federal court and the federal court ruled against us, what recourse did we have?

**Narrator:** frustrated by the federal court action, Dr. King called for president Kennedy to intervene, but Kennedy remained distant.

**Burke Marshall:** the president had decided that he was going to delegate the civil rights matter to the attorney general, and that that was going to be a primary area of responsibility for the attorney general. And the president was going to spend his time dealing with other parts of the administration policy, and especially, of course, foreign affairs.

**President John F. Kennedy:** the united states government is involved in sitting down at Geneva with the soviet union, I can't understand why the government of Albany, city council of Albany, cannot do the same for American citizens.

**Narrator:** by august, Dr. King realized there would be no clear cut victories in Albany. He was depressed as he left the city. Albany remained as segregated as it was the previous December when he first arrived.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I'm under orders to keep walking.

**Narrator:** the Albany movement continued without him.

**Charles Sherrod:** don't get weary and do it until the end. What does the bible say about it? Victory is not to the swift or the strong, but the hero who's holding out until the end. We got to hold out.

Now, I can't help how Dr. King might have felt, or ... (inaudible) might have felt, or Bernard Leo and the rest of them in the SCIC, in NAACP, core or any other groups were felt. But as far as we were concerned, things moved on. We didn't skip one beat.

**Narrator:** the ministers of SCIC left Albany, but they took with them some important lessons, lessons that defined movement strategy for Birmingham.

**Wyatt tee walker:** the strength of the Albany movement was it was perhaps the first time in this period of struggle of black people that we had mobilized an entire community against segregation. And secondly, we learned that valid and crucial lesson, that you must pinpoint your targets so that you do not dilute the strength of your attack.

**Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth:** coming out of Albany, which many people considered not a victory, they need a victory. Dr. King's image at this time was slightly on the wane because he had not projected. I said, "I assure you if you come to Birmingham, this movement can not only gain prestige, but really shake the country."

**Narrator:** SCIC's leaders accepted this challenge. They arrived in Birmingham in the midst of a campaign to replace bull Connor and the other commissioners with a new form of government.

**David Vann:** I'm pleased to have a cloud removed so the people of the city can get down to the very serious business of securing the very best men possible to man the new city government.

**Bull Connor:** regardless of what form of government we have, it is important that we put in office men who have records which show that they are not owned or controlled by anybody, or by any group.

**Narrator:** bull Connor tried to keep power by running for mayor. But on April 2nd, 1963, he lost to albert Boudwell, a racial moderate. The next day, SCIC launched project c, c for confrontation.

**Wyatt tee walker:** learning by the Albany circumstance, I targeted three stores because this was one, I don't recall the other two stores now. And since the 16th street Baptist church was going to be our headquarters, I had it timed as to how long it took a youngster to walk down there, how long it would take an older person to walk down there, how long it would take a middle aged person to walk down there. And I picked out what would be the best routes. Under some subterfuge, I visited all three of these stores and counted the stools, the tables, the chairs, etc., and what the best method of ingress and egress was.

**Narrator:** twenty-one demonstrators were arrested on the first day of protest, and the city of Birmingham discovered it had another problem. The outgoing commissioners announced that they had no intention of stepping aside for the newly-elected government.

**David Vann:** I remember now the day we swore in the mayor and before the day was over, we discovered we had two mayors, two city governments and Dr. Martin Luther King and the SCIC starting marches up and down the street. The marches occurred almost entirely during the 37 day period when Birmingham had two governments. On Tuesdays, the commission met, proceeded to govern the city. And when they finished, they would march out and nine council members would march in and they would proceed to adopt laws and spend money and conduct the affairs of the city.

**Narrator:** until the courts could decide which city government was the legal one, bull Connor remained in charge of the police and fire departments. And Connor took a lesson from Laurie Pritchett showing restraint as he supervised the arrest of hundreds of demonstrators. It was a week and a half before Easter. As planned, the demonstrations affected business during a major shopping season. Merchants and community leaders were upset.

**A. G. Gaston:** we got some mighty good people in this income, both white and colored.

**Narrator:** businessman a. G. Gaston supported the new administration.

**A. G. Gaston:** we didn't anticipate the need for martin King at that time. This martin King thing came and all of sudden.

**David Vann:** I was upset with Dr. King because he wouldn't give us a chance to prove what we could do through the political processes. And a year and a day after Connor had been elected with the largest vote in history, a majority of the people of this city voted to terminate his office. And when he ran for mayor, they rejected him.

**Robert Kennedy:** I believe a representative of my office at the department of justice—

**Narrator:** the federal government also thought the protests were ill timed.

**Robert Kennedy:** the fact that there was a change in administration in Birmingham, that the new administration had not yet taken over in their responsibilities and their duties and perhaps the timing of these demonstrations could be reconsidered.

**Narrator:** on April 10th, Birmingham obtained a state court injunction, ordering an end to the demonstrations. Dr. King grew discouraged, worried that the campaign here, as in Albany, would stall.

**Andrew Young:** we had about five or six hundred people in jail, but all the money was gone and we couldn't get people out of jail. And the business community, black business community and some of the white clergy, were pressuring us to call off the demonstrations and just get out of town. And we didn't know what to do. And he sat there in room 30 in the Gaston motel and martin didn't say anything. And then finally, he got up and he went in the bedroom and he came back with his blue jeans on and his jacket and he said, "look," he said, "I don't know what to do. I just know that something has got to change in Birmingham. I don't know whether I can raise money to get people out of jail. I do know that I can go into jail with them." and not knowing how it's going to work out, he walked out of the room and led his demonstration and went to jail. That was, I think, the beginning of his true leadership.

**Narrator:** at this time local white clergy were criticizing King and the campaign.

**Andrew Young:** the ministers published in the newspapers a diatribe against martin calling him a troublemaker and saying that he was there stirring up trouble to get publicity. And he sat down and took that newspaper and he had no paper, and he was in solitary confinement. And he started writing an answer to that one page ad around the margins of the *New York times*.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was well timed in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now, I have heard the word wait. It rings in the ear of every negro with piecing familiarity. This wait has almost always meant never. We must come to see with one of our distinguished jurists that justice too long delayed is justice denied.

**Narrator:** as King sat in Birmingham jail, the demonstrations lost supporters. Eight days after his arrest, King accepted release on bond to plan the next phase of project c. It would be the most controversial move yet.

**James bevel:** we wanted to get the black community in Birmingham involved, and the way you get people involved is to get their children involved.

**A. G. Gaston:** they were taking the kids out of school, you know, marching, and I thought that was unnecessary. In fact, my idea was that the kids, many of them didn't know what it was all about ... (inaudible).

**James bevel:** most adults have bills to pay, house notes, rents, car notes, utility bills. But the young people, wherein they can think at the same level, are not at this point hooked with all those responsibilities. So a boy from high school, he get the same effect in terms of being in jail, in terms of putting pressure on the city as his father, and yet he's not — there's no economic effect on the family because the father's still on the job.

**Narrator:** Thursday, May 2nd, would be the day the children began to march in Birmingham. At first, the groups were small. Police arrested them, loaded them in paddy wagons and took them away to Birmingham jail. As the children continued to march in increasing numbers, paddy wagons became inadequate. Finally, school buses were brought in to gather the demonstrators. By the end of that Thursday, 700 children were taken to Birmingham jail.

Friday, more than 1,000 children stayed out of school and arrived at the 16th street church to march. Bull Connor tried to stop the marches before they began and brought out the city's police dogs. Next, the fire department was brought in and bull Connor ordered water hoses turned on the demonstrators. With 100 pounds of pressure per square inch, the water hit with enough force to knock the bark off trees. As water pounded the demonstrators, David van was on the phone with a. G. Gaston.

**David Vann:** and he was expressing a great deal of resentment about King coming in and messing up the — saying just we were getting a new start. And then he said to me, "but lawyer Vann, they've turned fire hoses on a black girl. They're rolling that little girl right in the middle of the street now. I can't talk to you any longer."

**A. G. Gaston:** it was standing on my building looking down on bull Connor and them shooting water in the park right across from my office there in that park. I guess that's the most outstanding thing in my mind right now. I just couldn't imagine what could happen.

**Narrator:** bull Connor's white tank patrolled the city streets as the fire hoses stopped the demonstrators. Some hid behind the trees of Kelly Ingram park. Others frolicked in defiance. The conflict gained national attention and news coverage the event shocked the American public.

**David Vann:** and it was a masterpiece of the use of media to explain a cause to the general public of the nation because in those days, you had 15 minutes of national news and 15 minutes of local news. And in marching only one block, they could get enough news film to fill all the newscasts of all the television stations in the united states.

**Narrator:** photographs appeared in newspapers throughout the world, and the Birmingham story was told in many languages. The Russian newspaper *Pravda* ran a cartoon of police intimidating a black child. The federal government worried about America's image in other parts of the world. Governor Wallace saw it differently.

**Governor Wallace:** it seems that other parts of the world ought to be concerned about what we think of them instead of what they think of us. After all, we're feeding most of them and whenever they start rejecting 25 cents of each dollar of foreign aid money that we send to them, then I'll be concerned about their attitude toward us. But until they reject that 25 cents out of each dollar that southern taxpayers pay for foreign aid to these countries, I will never be concerned about their attitude. In the first place, the average man in Africa and Asia doesn't even know where he is, much less where Alabama is.

**Narrator:** on Saturday, the dogs and water hoses provoked angry responses from bystanders, some of them carrying weapons. Seeing the beginnings of violence, James bevel borrowed a bull horn from a nearby policeman.

**James bevel:** so I took the bull horn and said, "okay, get off the streets now. We're not going to have violence. If you're not going to ... (inaudible) policemen, you're not going to be in the movement and, you know." so it was strange, I guess, to them. I'm with the police talking through the bull horn and giving orders and everybody was obeying the orders. [laughter] it was like, wow. But what was at stake was the possibility of a riot and that once in a movement, once a riot break out, you have to stop, takes you four or five more days to get reestablished and I was trying to avoid that kind of situation.

**Narrator:** Monday, the fifth day of the children's campaign. Comedian dick Gregory arrived in Birmingham and marched with the young demonstrators. Like hundreds before him, he was arrested. Law enforcement officials were working over time to keep up with the arrests.

**Mel bailey:** there was no such thing as off days, everybody working seven days; sleeping, cat napping and just holding firm. We all had the confirmed belief that this couldn't go on for long because it was pressing the issue to the wall.

**Narrator:** the confrontation moved outside the park. Once again, bull Connor summoned his firemen. With no place to run, no trees for protection, the demonstrators were hit with the full force of the water. By Monday night, 2,500 demonstrators had been arrested, over 2,000 of them children. All jails in the city and county were filled.

**Mel bailey:** at one time, I had here in this building on the 7th and 8th floor, we had over 1,200 male juveniles, black, on top of our regular complement of probably near a thousand. At the same time, I had nearly 600 females who were now in the ... (inaudible) dormitory at the fairgrounds.

**Narrator:** meanwhile, the justice department tried to move negotiations forward.

**Burke Marshall:** I participated in all of — in order to try to get some kind of agreement between people that often wouldn't talk to each other at all. I don't mean that the blacks wouldn't talk to anybody, but I mean there were any whites

who wouldn't talk to any blacks and there was some — and there were many more whites who wouldn't talk to certain blacks, and there were no whites, I think, except for David Vann, who would talk to Martin King.

**Narrator:** Tuesday, May 7th. Fighting broke out between blacks and whites in the downtown area. Both Marshall and the business leaders had just left the negotiating table for lunch. The situation was fast reaching the riot proportions that James Bevel had feared. The businessman quickly returned to negotiations ready to talk.

**David Vann:** as we began to analyze, now what are your problems, what are our problems. We got to recognize one, that we don't have a government. We've got two governments, neither of them can be effective. We've got to find a way to work this thing out within private sector formats.

**Narrator:** both sides agree to a day of truce. A resolution was reached, but there was a last minute hitch.

**David Vann:** after we reached the settlement, and it looks like a mole hill today, to say we were going to take down the signs. We'd have a 60 day cooling off period and desegregate lunch counters and begin a program of employment in downtown Birmingham with at least three clerks hired. I think somebody in New York asked Reverend Shuttlesworth, did he — why he would settle for just three clerks in downtown Birmingham. And he said, "I meant three in every store." and the thing almost came unglued.

**Andrew Young:** by that time, Reverend Shuttlesworth was so worked up that I can remember Fred cussing and David Vann crying, and it just seemed like when David Vann wanted to settle, Fred wasn't ready to settle.

**Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth:** well, you must remember that as always, some disagreement when it looks as if you're not getting what you're aiming at. And there are people who want victories, social victories, to come quickly.

**Narrator:** on Friday, May 10th, 38 days after project C began, an agreement was reached with the business community. Reverend Shuttlesworth had been right. When the movement came to Birmingham, it won a much needed victory and to gain national attention. The next night, the Ku Klux Klan met outside the city, and Grand Dragon Robert Shelton gave this opinion of the Birmingham agreement.

**Robert Shelton:** no businesspeople in Birmingham or any other city has the authority to attempt any type of negotiation when it deals in governmental affairs and municipality. Martin Luther King, in my opinion, epitaph can be written here in Birmingham.

**Narrator:** several hours later, a bomb exploded outside Martin Luther King's room at the Gaston Motel. King had already left Birmingham, and no one was in the room at the time. As a large crowd gathered, the Alabama state police moved in and began beating blacks with clubs and rifles. In response, angry blacks rioted and set fire to several buildings. Over the next few weeks, the riots that began in Birmingham spread to other cities. Racial tensions gripped the country, and President Kennedy was moved to action. On June 11th, he took a stronger position than any president since Lincoln, calling civil rights a moral issue.

**President John F. Kennedy:** now the time has come for this nation to fulfill its promise. The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no city or state or legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them. The fires of frustration and discord are burning in every city, north and south, where legal remedies are not at hand. Regress is sought in the street, in demonstrations, parades, and protests which create tensions and threaten violence and threaten lives. Next week, I shall ask the Congress of the United States to act, to make a commitment it has not fully made in this century to the proposition that race has no place in American life or law.

**Narrator:** Kennedy pushed for a new civil rights bill but was troubled when the movement announced plans for a mass march on Washington. Fearing more violence, Attorney General Robert Kennedy had tried to prevent the march, without success.

**A. Philip Randolph:** there will be a mass march, there is no doubt about that.

**Man:** how many people?

**A. Philip Randolph:** and it is our purpose and it is our hope that this march will carry on in a manner that will be definitely and effectively in support of a civil rights program.

**Loudspeaker:** freedom now movement, hear me. We are requesting all citizens to move into Washington.

**Narrator:** the movement that had learned to mobilize communities now set about trying to mobilize a nation. Across the country, people made plans to attend the march on Washington, demonstrating for jobs and freedom. Among the thousands who traveled to Washington, there were black and white activists, labor leaders, clergy, and Hollywood stars.

**Bayard Rustin:** they came from every state, they came in jalopies, on trains, buses, anything they could get, some walked.

**Narrator:** Bayard Rustin was the master organizer behind the day's events, coordinating hundreds of details. Volunteers painted signs to state the issues. They made 80,000 cheese sandwiches to feed the marchers. Security was carefully set up so violence would not mar the day. As the day began, march organizers worried that the turnout would not be large enough to attract the nation's attention. By early afternoon, more than 200,000 people gathered for the symbolic march from the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial. It was a triumphant day for ... (inaudible) who had first proposed the idea for such a march in 1941 during Franklin Roosevelt's administration.

But there was trouble behind the scenes as the marchers gathered at the Lincoln Memorial. The White House was upset about a speech that was to be given by John Lewis, national chairman for the student nonviolent coordinating committee.

**John Lewis:** in the first part of the speech, I said something like we cannot support the proposed bill then introduced or being presented by President Kennedy. It was too little and too late.

**Courtland Cox:** and John's speech was the only speech at the march on Washington that criticized the Kennedy administration for lack of civil rights enforcement because SNCC before being brutalized in the south. Bayard asked us to change his speech and we told him that we weren't going to change the speech and that, you know, he would have to do it over our dead bodies, we weren't going to change it. Then he went down in the crowd and got a Philip Randolph.

**Narrator:** Lewis was to be speaker number six on the program. The opening speeches were already under way and the conflict remained unsolved. A. Philip Randolph finally made a personal appeal to the young men from SNCC.

**Courtland Cox:** he was 75, and here we were, you know, one-third his age and, you know, he was asking us to do this for him. He said, "I waited all my life for this opportunity, please don't ruin it." and we felt that for him, we had to make some concession.

**James Forman:** so the three of us, John Lewis, Courtland Cox and myself, you know, we huddled and sat together and the rewriting took place at the Lincoln Memorial and, you know, the — and it was then out of a spirit of unity. You know, we



wanted the march on Washington to go forward and we wanted, you know, the SNCC participation to be very visible, and we certainly weren't interested in withdrawing from the march on Washington.

**John Lewis:** if we do not get meaningful legislation out of this congress, the time will come when we will not confine our march into Washington. We will march through the south, through the streets of Jackson, through the streets of Danville, through the streets of ... (inaudible) the streets of Birmingham. How long can we be patient? We want our freedom, and we want it now.

**Narrator:** the disagreement over this speech was contained so well, few people knew of the problem. The speech that captured the nation's attention was the stirring oratory of Martin Luther King.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** so let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania. Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado. Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California. But not only that, let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia. Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and mole hill of Mississippi, from every mountainside, let freedom ring. When we are allowed to let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholic, will be able to join hands and sing in the ways of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty we are free at last."

**Narrator:** only one year after the doubts and despair of Albany, Georgia, Martin Luther King had triumphed. Much of the nation now saw him as the leader of the movement. In the White House, President Kennedy saw the marchers support for passage of his civil rights bill. That evening, Reverend Ralph Abernathy returned to the Lincoln Memorial.

**Rev. Abernathy:** where 250,000 people had sat that day, there was nothing but the wind blowing the leftover programs and scattered them across the way, across the reflection pool, the wind was moving and blowing and blowing and keeping music. And we were so proud of the fact that no violence had taken place that day, and we were so pleased. But this beautiful scene of the wind dancing and the sands of the Lincoln Memorial will never forget. This was the greatest day of my life.

**Narrator:** eighteen days after the march on Washington, Birmingham, Alabama, a bomb exploded in the 16th Street Baptist Church just before a Sunday morning service. Fifteen people were injured, four children were killed. The murder of these children shook the nonviolent movement to its core. As the people buried their dead, they sang "We shall overcome," but in anger and in rage, many wondered how.

## Mississippi: Is This America? (1962-1964)

**Roy Wilkins:** there is no state with a record that approaches that of Mississippi in inhumanity, murder and brutality and racial hatred. It is absolutely at the bottom of the list.

**Narrator:** in 1964, the state of Mississippi called it an invasion. Civil rights workers called it freedom summer. To change Mississippi and the country, they would risk beatings, arrest, and their lives.

**Fanny Chaney:** you all know what my child is doing? He was trying for us all to make a better living. And he had two fellows from New York, had their own home and everything, didn't have nothing to worry, but they come here to help us. Did you all know they come here to help us? They died for us.

**Unita Blackwell:** people like myself, I was born on this river. And I love the land. It's the delta, and to me it's now a challenge, it's history, it's everything, to what black people it's all about. We came about slavery and this is where we acted it out, I suppose. All of the work, all them hard works and all that. But we put in our blood, sweat and tears and we love the land. This is Mississippi.

**White hunter:** I lived in this delta all my life, my parents before me, my grandparents. I've hunted and fished this land since I was a child. This land is composed of two different cultures, a white culture and a colored culture, and I lived close to them all my life. But I'm told now that we mistreated them and that we must change, and these changes are coming faster than I expected. And I'm required to make decisions on the basis of a new way of thinking and it's difficult. It's difficult for me, it's difficult for all southerners.

**William Simmons:** I was born in Mississippi, in the united states, and I'm a product of my heredity and education and the society in which I was raised. And I have a vested interest in that society, and I along with a million other white Mississippians will do everything in our power to protect that vested interest. It's just as simple as that.

**Narrator:** in 1954, the citizens council was established in the delta, the northwest section of the state where blacks outnumbered whites. The council's purpose, to preserve white political power by opposing integration. Council chapters soon spread across the state.

**Hodding carter:** within four years, the citizens council was powerful enough that in the election of 1959, it threw its support openly and actively behind the candidacy of a damage suit lawyer named ross Barnett, not one of the world's most successful politicians up to then and saw him elected over a supposed moderate who was himself a segregationist, but with a quieter voice than ross Barnett. And from 1959 until 1963 in the Barnett administration, the citizens council was the state and the state effectively on matters racial was the citizens council.

**Narrator:** bankers, politicians and owners of businesses joined the citizens councils throughout the south. They punished people who supported integration or black voting rights by foreclosing mortgages, firing workers, or refusing loans to farmers. And they used their influence to push through laws that would insure continued white domination.

**William Simmons:** it's primarily a struggle for power, and I think we would be stupid indeed if we failed to see where the consequences of a supine surrender on our part would lead.

**Narrator:** at the center of Mississippi's struggle for power was the black vote. In some counties, blacks outnumbered whites four to one. In 1962, in many counties, no blacks were registered.

**Bob Moses:** it's a big psychological, you know, gap to overcome, is what a lot of people call the psychology of fear on part of most of the negroes. They're afraid of losing their jobs, they've been brainwashed. They think that somehow all of this is the business of the white man and it's not something that they're supposed to be doing.

**Narrator:** twenty-six year old bob Moses came to Mississippi at the request of Amsey Moore, an NAACP leader. Moses and other SNCC organizers opened offices throughout the state to recruit local Mississippians.

**Unita Blackwell:** I was asked, would I join the SNCC, which was student nonviolent coordinating committee and I said yes, and "what do I have to do?" they said just try to encourage people to go and try to register over to the courthouse. And that was my start of going around here to my neighbors and friends and asking them, you know, would they come and go to the courthouse and try to register to vote. People was being put off the plantations, people were threatened, folks was put in jail just because we wanted people to try to register to vote.

**Narrator:** some attempting to register had even been murdered to stop black political activity. And the state passed new voting laws to make registration more difficult.

**Registrar:** on this side ... (inaudible) just like your meaning, your understanding of it.

**Lawrence Guyot:** registering to vote at that time meant that you filled out a 22-question questionnaire. One of the questions was interpret any of the 286 sections of the Mississippi constitution to the satisfaction of the registrar. Now, you have to bear in mind that some of those registrars couldn't read or write, but that didn't matter, they could still determine who should be registered if that person happened to be black. Because all whites who attempted to register were registered.

**Narrator:** as the struggle for voting rights escalated in the delta, tension was building in Jackson, the state capital, and the last stop of the freedom rides in 1961. A leader in Jackson and throughout the state was Medgar Evers, NAACP state field secretary. Evers had supported James Meredith during the battle to integrate the University of Mississippi. For ten years, he had traveled the state fighting for racial justice. And now helped organize the NAACP boycott of downtown stores.

**Medgar Evers:** don't shop for anything on capitol street. Let's let the merchants down on capitol street feel the economic pinch. Let me say this to you. I had one merchant call me and he said, "I want you to know that I've talked to my national office today, and they want me to tell you that we don't need nigger business." these are stores that help to support the white citizens council, the council that is dedicated to keeping you and I second class citizens. Now finally, ladies and gentlemen, we'll be demonstrating here until freedom comes to negroes here in Jackson, Mississippi.

**Narrator:** in June, 1963, students in Jackson poured out of their schools to protest the beatings and arrest of demonstrators at downtown sit-ins. In response, Jackson officials put police and firemen on 24 hour alert with orders to contain the demonstrators. Hundreds were arrested. Mayor Allen Thompson announced that Jackson could handle 10,000 if

necessary. The attitude of Jackson city officials was another reminder that blacks in Mississippi would have no real power until they had the power to elect those who governed them.

**Rev. R. L. T. Smith:** if you are not a registered voter, remember this one thing. That Alan Thompson got in the mayor's office by the majority of the folks who were qualified to vote and voted on the day that he was elected. Ross Barnett got in office because he was elected by the majority of the folks who were qualified to vote and voted on the day that he was elected. And if you don't like this thing, let's get ready to change it.

**Narrator:** demonstrators were not backing down, and many were being injured. For Medgar Evers, the situation grew more dangerous with every passing day.

**Myrlie Evers:** it was simply in the air. You knew that something was going to happen, and the logical person for it to happen to was Medgar. It certainly brought us closer during that time. As a matter of fact, we didn't talk, we didn't have to. We communicated without words. It was a touch, it was a look, it was holding each other, it was music playing. And I used to try to reassure him and tell him, "nothing's going to happen to you. The FBI is here." he'd laugh. "everybody knows you, you're in the press, they wouldn't dare do anything to you."

**Narrator:** on June 11th, 1963, Myrlie Evers watched at home as president John Kennedy made his strongest speech on civil rights.

**President John F. Kennedy:** it is not enough to pin the blame on others, to say it is the problem of one section of the country or another, or deplore the facts that we face. A great change is at hand, and our task, our obligation, is to make that revolution, that change, peaceful and constructive for all. Those who do nothing are inviting shame as well as violence. Those who act boldly are recognizing right as well as reality.

**Myrlie Evers:** late that night, he came home, the children were still up. I was asleep across the bed, and we heard the motor of a car coming in and pulling into the driveway. We heard him get out of the car, and the car door slam. And in that same instance, we heard the loud gunfire. The children fell to the floor, as he had taught them to do. I made a run for the front door, turned on the light, and there he was. The force of the bullet had pushed him forward, as I understand, and the strong man that he was, he had his keys in his hand and had pulled his body around the rest of the way to the door. There he lay, and I screamed and people came out, our next door neighbor fired a gun, as he said, to try to frighten anyone away. And I knew then that that was it.

**Narrator:** Medgar Evers had been shot in the back by a single round from a high powered rifle. The one fingerprint found on the weapon belonged to Byron de la Beckwith, a member of the citizens council in Greenwood, Mississippi. Medgar Evers, 37 years old, died one hour later.

**Myrlie Evers:** when Medgar was felled by that shot and I rushed out and saw him lying there and people from the neighborhood began to gather, there were also some whose color happened to have been white. I don't think I have ever hated as much in my life as I did at that particular moment with anyone who had white skin. I screamed at the neighbors and when the police finally got there, I told them that they had killed Medgar. And I can recall wanting so much to have a machine gun or something in my hand and just stand there and mow them all down. I was just — I can't explain the depth of my hatred at that point.

**-Roy Wilkins:** we view this as a cold, brutal, deliberate killing in a savage, uncivilized state; the most savage, the most uncivilized state in the entire 50 states. There is no state with a record that approaches that of Mississippi in inhumanity, murder, brutality and racial hatred. It is absolutely at the bottom of the list.

**Dave Dennis:** on the day that Medgar was killed, I mean, there was violence. There was no way to predict it, that was a different element of people who had never participated in a movement before. Guys off the street who were just angry, you know, who at that time we had very little contact with in the Jackson area. We had mostly worked through churches, we had worked through students, young people, and then with people in general. But the street people, we had not really worked with because they don't have anything to do with this because they always felt that they could not cope with the nonviolence. Not that they disagreed with what the movement, they just thought the tactics ... (inaudible). You know ... (inaudible) that group of people decided to speak out.

The police department and others came and they actually antagonized the people. They were there in full battalion gear with the riot armor on and guns and they were being pretty rough with the people on the street. And the people just said, "we're not going to take that. This is a funeral of our leader and here they are, you know, harassing us and the white folk killed him."

**Narrator:** shots had already been fired when John Dorr, a justice department attorney, stepped between the crowds and the police. With the help of Dave Dennis and others, Dorr convinced both sides to back off. The demonstrators went home. Medgar Evers was buried in Arlington cemetery with full military honors. No one was ever convicted of his murder. The assassination of Medgar Evers focused national attention on the state which seemed at war with half of its own citizens. As anger grew, so did a concern that Mississippi could never be made to change from within. Civil rights leaders and sympathetic whites traveled to the south to see first hand the state called the closed society.

**Allard Lowenstein:** any doubts we had about the desirability of coming down before we came had been removed by what we've seen since we've been here. At least what we've discovered is the people who run Mississippi today can only do so by force. They cannot allow free election in Mississippi because if they did, they wouldn't run Mississippi. And as we go around Mississippi and are arrested and beaten and charged with miscellaneous and very imaginative traffic violations that don't occur and threatened and told to leave, we understand why the people asked us to come down here. Because inside Mississippi, the rule of force is so hard on them that they can't shake the ... (inaudible). But when we leave Mississippi, we'll tell what we found and the people of the United States aren't going to allow this to go on forever.

**Narrator:** movement leaders debated on how to keep national attention on Mississippi. In June, 1964, Bob Moses announced freedom summer.

**Bob Moses:** we hope to send in to Mississippi this summer upwards of 1,000 teachers, ministers, lawyers, and students, from all around the country who will engage in what we're calling freedom school, community center programs, voter registration activity, research work, work in the white communities. And in general, a program designed to open up Mississippi to the country.

**Narrator:** opening up Mississippi would not be easy. Local newspapers warned of a coming invasion. Governor Paul Johnson calls in more highway patrolmen. The city of Jackson ordered an armor truck for riot control, all to resist college students from across the country who had volunteered to work in the state during the summer.

**Bob Moses:** most of the students that people were bringing in for the summer project were from the large universities and from the families of —who were politicians, bankers, lawyers and others. And we felt by this fact that bringing those particular people that the attention of their parents and relatives from the various different other parts of the country would be on these areas. And by having ... (inaudible) whites in here is the press, the American public would have much more concern than if they were just a bunch of blacks they're bringing in the state.

**Narrator:** the first freedom summer volunteers gathered for training in oxford, Ohio.

**Jim Forman:** we're going down there, we're trying to place a real situation that will occur, namely there'll be a mob at the courthouse and we want to get used to this, used to people jeering at us. And we also want the white students who are playing the mob to get used to saying things, calling out epithets, calling people niggers and nigger-lovers.

That was very good because you all got carried away, see? I mean, you were just supposed to yell and you started hitting us, so you got out our frustration. But that's what happens, you know? It's just what happens. People begins shouting, then somebody lurches forward and then everybody begins to lurch forward so that was even better than we had anticipated.

**Narrator:** the students were warned of violence and of the possibility of death once they crossed the Mississippi state line.

**Andy Goodman:** I want people in this room to understand one, that people should expect to get beaten and—

**Narrator:** the first wave of recruits, including 20 year old Andrew Goodman from New York city, left Saturday, June 20th, for Mississippi. Goodman rode with veteran civil rights workers James Chaney, age 21, and Michael Schwerner, age 24. Sunday, June 21st, on Andy Goodman's first day in Mississippi, the three men drove to investigate the burning of a black methodist church. The church had been the scene of a civil rights meeting just weeks before. Around 3:00 that afternoon, their 1963 blue ford station wagon was stopped by deputy sheriff Cecil price outside the town of Philadelphia. The three young men were released by deputy price around 10:30 that night. It was then that they disappeared. In oxford, Ohio, volunteers were waiting to travel south.

**Bob Moses:** we had to tell the students what we thought was going on, because if in fact anyone was arrested and then taken out of the jail, then the chances that they're alive was just almost zero. And we had to confront the students with that before they went down because they now had —the ball game is changed.

**Narrator:** within days, the disappearance was national news. A massive search was ordered by president Lyndon Johnson. Two hundred sailors from the naval air station in meridien moved into the Philadelphia area and were joined there by FBI agents.

**TV Commentator:** in meridien, the wife of missing mickey Schwerner, Rita Schwerner, flew from oxford where she had been training many of the summer volunteers. She was greeted by James farmer, head of core, the congress of racial equality.

**Rita Schwerner:** it's tragic, as far as I'm concerned, that white northerners have to be caught up in the machinery of injustice and indifference in the south before the American people register concern. I personally suspect that if Mr. Chaney, who is a native Mississippian negro, had been alone at the time of the disappearance, that this case, like so many others that have come before, would have gone completely unnoticed.

**Summer volunteer:** their disappearance, although it might have been calculated to try and drive people away from this state, just the opposite effect on me and everyone else. Whenever an incident like this happens, and they happen fairly often, although not usually this serious, everyone reacts the same way. They become more and more determined to stay in this state and fight the evil system that people have to live under here. I'm down here because I believe my freedom is very much entangled with the freedom of every other man, and if another man's not free, then I'm not free. So I'm fighting for my own freedom here.

**Reporter:** are you scared?

**Summer volunteer:** yes, I'm very much afraid. Everyone here is. But we knew before we came down something about what it's going to be like and I don't know of anybody that's turning back because of things like this that happen.

**J. Edgar hoover:** we most certainly do not and will not give protection to civil rights workers. In the first place, the FBI is not a police organization. It's purely an investigative organization, and the protection of individual citizens, either natives of this state or coming into the state, is a matter for the local authorities. The FBI will not participate in any such protection.

**Narrator:** by early July, the volunteers had arrived in full force. During the summer, 80 civil rights workers were beaten, and 1,000 arrests were reported. One of the most dangerous jobs was traveling from house to house in isolated rural areas to build support for a new political party.

**Victoria gray:** we have organized into the Mississippi freedom democratic party. We are holding a ... (inaudible) registration drive throughout the state, encouraging every negro and white who wants a stake in his political future to prove it by getting his name on a freedom registration book. We have scheduled three state meetings and district caucuses. And on august 6th, here in Jackson, we will hold our state convention. At that time, we will elect a slate of delegates to the national convention in Atlantic city. And when that convention meets, we will present ourselves for seating as the only democratically constituted body of Mississippi citizens worthy of taking part in that convention's business.

**Narrator:** volunteers collecting signatures for the party found themselves openly challenging the way life had been lived in Mississippi for three-quarters of a century.

**Peter Orris:** people would be sitting down and you would say hello and you'd shake their hands. Now, that was an unusual thing for a white person to do to a black person in Mississippi at that time. Frequently, people would respond by not looking us in the eye. At the end of every phrase, there would be a ma'am or a sir, depending on who as there, and they would say yes to everything we said. We'd say, "would you like to be involved in the voter registration project? Will you go down to vote?" "yes, sir." and we knew we were not getting across. We knew they were just waiting for us to go away because we were a danger to them. And in many ways we were. We had much less to risk than they did. This was their lives, their land, their family, and they were going to be here when we were gone.

**Narrator:** despite the fear, 60,000 signed up as members of the Mississippi freedom democratic party. This mass political awakening reminded segregationists of the years following the civil war, a time when blacks had been elected to high political office.

**William Simmons:** we have had experience in the past with negro political domination. It was known as the reconstruction. There are some who call this present attempt to build up political power through a mass registration of unqualified nigger voters the second reconstruction.

**Judge tom Brady:** I don't want the negro, as I have known him and contacted him during my lifetime, as a class to control the making of the law that controls me. To control the government under which I live.

**Reporter:** would you feel better, then, if there were some legal means of keeping all negroes off the rolls?

**Judge tom Brady:** I'd feel better, and I think this country would be better off if all negroes were removed from it, because I think it is a potential source of racial strife.

**Narrator:** while the search for the missing civil rights workers continued, president Lyndon Johnson signed the civil rights act of 1964. The new law increased the federal government's power to ban discrimination in public places, but did little to give southern blacks the vote. In Mississippi, the civil rights groups pushed forward with the drive to sign up members for the new freedom democratic party. Summer volunteers also supplied legal and medical services and set up a system of community centers and alternative schools, all part of freedom summer.

For years, most blacks in Mississippi had been denied the right to a decent education. SNCC opened 41 freedom schools across the state. By day, the volunteers taught everything from the 3rs to innovative courses in black history. By night, the schools were used for political meetings, to explain the new party and to sign up new members. These activities and the presence of white volunteers teaching in black schools and living in black homes offended many white Mississippians.

**William Simmons:** when the civil rights workers invaded the state in the summer of 1964 to change us presumably into their own image, they were met with a feeling of some curiosity, but mostly resentment. They fanned out across the state, made a great to-do of breaking up our customs, of flaunting social practices that had been respected by people here over the years. That was the time of the hippies just coming in. Many had on hippie uniforms and conducted themselves in hippie ways. They were not exactly the types of models that most people that I knew wanted to emulate. Also, the arrogance that they showed in wanting to reform a whole state in the way they thought it should be created resentment.

**Narrator:** by late July, the three young men had been missing for six weeks. Many lost hope that they were still alive, but the goals for freedom summer were unchanged. Volunteers wanted to prove that black and white could live and work together.

**Unita Blackwell:** I remember cooking some pinto beans and that's all we had. And everybody just got around the pot, you know, and that was an experience, you know, just to see white people coming around the pot and getting a bowl and putting some stuff in. And then sitting around talking and sitting on the floor, sitting anywhere because, you know, there wasn't any great dining room tables and stuff that we had been used to working in the white people houses. And go in there and find them all sitting, you know, and everybody sitting and they'd ring a bell or something and tap, and you'd come in and bring the stuff and put it around. But this, you were sitting on the floor and they were talking, you know, and we was sitting there laughing. I guess they become very real and very human, we each to one another.

**Narrator:** on august 4th, on a farm outside the town of Philadelphia, the bodies of Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner were discovered buried together in an earthen dam. The autopsy reports indicated that the men had been killed by .38 caliber bullets. A later report revealed that James Chaney, the one black victim, had also suffered severe bone and skull fractures.

**Mr. Goodman and wife:** throughout our history, countless Americans have died in the continuing struggle for equality. We shall continue to work for this goal and we fervently hope that Americans so engaged will be aided and protected in this noble mission. For ourselves, we wish to express our pride in our son's commitment and that of his companions ... (inaudible) and that of his companion now lie now in Mississippi asking each hour to express those truths that are self evident.

**Narrator:** august 7th, 1964, the funeral of James Chaney in meridian, Mississippi.

**Dave Dennis:** I feel that he's got his freedom and we're still fighting for it. But what I want to talk about right now is the living dead that we have right among our midst, not only in the state of Mississippi, but throughout the nation. Those are the people who don't care, those who do care but don't have the guts enough to sign up for it, and those people who are busy up in Washington and other places using my freedom and my life to play politics with. That includes the president on down to the governor of the state of Mississippi. In my opinion, as I stand here, I not only blame the people who pulled the trigger or did the beating or dug the hole with the shovel, I bury the peace ... (inaudible). But I blame the people in Washington, dc and on down in the state of Mississippi for what happened just as much as I blame those who pulled the trigger.

See, I know what's going to happen. I feel that even if they find the people who killed those guys in ... (inaudible), you got to come back to the state of Mississippi and have a jury or they come, their aunts, their uncles. And I know what they're going to say, not guilty because no one started pulling the trigger. I'm tired of that.

Another thing that makes me even tired, though, that is the fact that we as people here in the state and the country are allowing this to continue to happen, even us black folk. So I look at the young kids here, that's something else that I grieve about. And little ben Chaney here and the other ones like him around in this audience. When you want someone to baby-sit ... (inaudible) black mammy to hold her baby. And as long as he can do that, he can sit down beside me, he can watch me go up there and register to vote, and he can watch me take some ... (inaudible) the garbage in this state and he can sit down as I rule over him just as he's ruled over me for years. This is our country, too. We didn't have to come here, and they brought us over here.

I have been approached by the people of my national office at core, and that is to make sure that this speech that's given is calm, they don't want a lot of, you know, things stirred up and everything else like that. And I'd agreed to do that. And I said, "okay, fine, that's good." then when I got up there and I looked out there and I saw little ben Chaney, things just sort of snapped and I was in a fantasy world, to be sitting up here talking about things are going to get better and we should do it in an easy manner in nonviolence and stuff like that because this country, you cannot make a man change by speaking a foreign language, he doesn't understand what you're talking about. This country operated then, and still operates, on violence. I mean, as you've said, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, that's what we respect.

**Narrator:** the parents of Chaney and Schwerner wanted their sons buried side by side in meridian. But Mississippi law enforced segregation even in death. James Chaney, age 21, was buried alone in a segregated cemetery. The state never brought anyone to trial for the murder of the three young men. But in federal court, deputy Cecil price and six others were found guilty of civil rights violations in connection with the killings and received sentences ranging from three to ten years.

As freedom summer moved towards August, the state's democratic party met to select delegates to the national convention. As usual, blacks were not allowed to participate. But this would be no ordinary election year. Two weeks later, the Mississippi freedom democratic party chose its own delegates to challenge the right of the all white regulars to represent the state. The MFDP emphasized that it was open to all citizens. **Ella Baker:** the Mississippi freedom democratic party is only beginning, and it is beginning on the basis that it believes that a political party should be open to all the people who wish to subscribe to its principles. That means it's open to even the son of the father on whose plantation you worked, if that son has reached the point that he is willing to subscribe to your principles.

**Narrator:** the MFDP delegation of 64 blacks and 4 whites prepared to leave for Atlantic City. Their goal was to be seated at the democratic national convention as the true representatives of their own state. For many, it was their first trip out of Mississippi. For all, this was the culmination of freedom summer, the final opportunity to open up Mississippi to the nation.

**Victoria Gray:** yeah, I think one of the things that made the delegation of the Mississippi freedom democratic party so hopeful, you know, so expectant, was the fact that people had made a discovery, a discovery that there is a way out of, you know, much of what is wrong with our lives. And that there is a way to change it, and that is through the execution of this vote, you know. And so we can't get past these people at the state level because they lock us out. But we just know that once we get to the national level, with all the proof that we have been locked out and the fact that we've had the courage to go ahead and create our own party, then we feel like we are going to get that representation that we've been denied for so long.

**Narrator:** Atlantic City, New Jersey, site of the 1964 democratic convention. Lyndon Johnson expected no opposition in getting his party's nomination, but was concerned the MFDP would disrupt party unity. With the arrival of the freedom democrats on August 20th, there were now two delegations in town from Mississippi. The democratic party would have to decide which would represent the state on the convention floor. That decision would be made by the credentials committee. On Saturday, August 22nd, America watched this nationally televised hearing.

**Joe Rauh:** it is the very terror that these people are living through that is the reason that negroes aren't voting, that they're kept out of the democratic party by the terror of the regular party. And what I want the credentials committee to hear is the terror which the regular party uses on the people of Mississippi, which is what Reverend King was explaining, which is what Aaron Henry was explaining, and which is what the next witness will explain, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer.

**Fannie Lou Hamer:** Mr. Chairman and to the credentials committee, my name is Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, and I live at 66 East Lafayette Street, Ruleville, Mississippi. Some ... (inaudible) is the home of Senator James O. Eastman and Senator Stennis. But the freedom democratic party is not seated. Now, I question America. Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our telephones off of their hooks because our lives are threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings in America.

**Edward Newman:** we will return to this scene in Atlantic City, but now we switch to the White House and NBC's Robert Kurlanski.

**Narrator:** Lyndon Johnson cut off coverage of MFDP testimony by making a last minute request for network air time.

**Joe Rauh:** we had an hour before the credentials committee. Fannie Lou Hamer made her famous pitch, Martin Luther King — we had the greatest array of people you can ever imagine and the credentials committee was very impressed, but Johnson was not.

**Narrator:** despite the TV cutoff by the president, Mrs. Hamer's message had gotten through. Viewers back home sent telegrams to delegates, urging support of the MFDP. But President Johnson was afraid southerners would desert the party if the MFDP were seated. He began pressuring liberals close to the freedom democrats. Senator Hubert Humphrey, a long time champion of civil rights, was feeling that pressure. Many believed he would not be selected for the vice presidency unless he helped stop the MFDP.

**Hubert Humphrey:** my only interest in this is an attempt to try to bring about a reconciliation of views in the hopes to keep our convention united with one objective: to defeat Mr. Goldwater in November and to carry forward the democratic program.

**Narrator:** Humphrey assigned Walter Mondale, his young protégé from Minnesota, to work out a solution.

**Walter Mondale:** see, everybody was trying to think of something that was simple and would solve it, that would satisfy everybody. The problem was there was no such solution. And so we'd go around and around and around and everybody try this and try that, and writers would see if they could write around the problems and philosophers to see if they could dream of something to dream over the problem. It wouldn't go away, it had to be resolved. It had to be compromise, I think, in the way that we did it. And it was inevitable that some people would be unhappy.

**Narrator:** the committee did come up with a compromise. It offered the MFDP two seats at large, meaning they would not represent the state of Mississippi. It allowed the all white regulars to be seated only if they would swear loyalty to the democratic ticket. Finally, the committee promised to bar from future conventions any delegation guilty of discrimination. In response, all but four of the all white regulars walked out of the convention.

**Walter Mondale:** it may not satisfy everybody, the extremes on the right or the extremes on the left. But we think it is a just compromise. We think it is based soundly on the law. We think it clearly recognizes without compromising the basic devotion of this party to human rights, and we think it represents and sets the stage for the overwhelming victory of the man who more than anybody else in the world represents the cause of justice and law today, President Lyndon Baines Johnson.

**Narrator:** Lyndon Johnson announced that Hubert Humphrey would be his running mate before boarding the plane for the convention. In Atlantic City, the freedom democrats had not yet decided whether to accept or reject the compromise.

**Joe Rauh:** we've got an offer to our people, we've got a great deal out of this. I think to call this a loss is a mistake.

**Reporter:** you were talking before of no compromise. Now you've got two delegates in, the regular party's gotten three. Do you think you've made substantial gain?

**Joe Rauh:** I think we made a terrific gain. We'll always talk no compromise at a convention ... (inaudible).

**Reporter:** are the leaders of the freedom democrats satisfied?

**Joe Rauh:** I don't think so and I don't blame them. Nobody ever gets all they want. The leaders and the regulars aren't satisfied either, they're going back to Jackson.

**Narrator:** political allies and national civil rights leaders urged the MFDP to accept the compromise. But the freedom democrats voted overwhelmingly to turn it down. In the words of Fannie Lou Hamer, "we didn't come all this way for no two seats when all of us is tired."

**Bob Moses:** I think people felt that the democratic party would actually embrace them. I think there was a lack of real understanding of the depth to which the local southern politicians were entwined in the democratic party and that there would be a real reluctance on the part of the national democratic party leadership to take in black people at the expense of these southern politicians.

**-Unita Blackwell:** the whole issue around the compromise for us, and for me, was that it was some kind of political ploy that they understood, but for us, for Mississippi, it was what was right and what was wrong. It was we had been done wrong. Our rights had been taken away, and you just couldn't issue some two seats at large to correct that. And it was a moral situation that had to be righted. So it was not just a political something to get away with, is that we sit in rooms and negotiate. You know, they knew about those kind of things, but we didn't. How to sit in rooms and negotiate away and say, "you know, we'll take the best of this, a piece of that." we went after what was right, and it was the wrong, the way we had been treated for hundreds and hundreds of years; denied the right to register to vote, denied the right to participate in the political process, and that's what was going on.

**Narrator:** the MFDP delegates made one last appeal for national attention. They tried to sit in the seats abandoned by the Mississippi regulars.

**Reporter:** would you identify yourself for us, please?

**Fannie Lou Hamer:** my name is Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer. I'm the vice chairman of the freedom democrat party.

**Reporter:** where did you get the credentials to get into the building tonight, Mrs. Hamer?

**Fannie Lou Hamer:** some of my old friends of ours gave us an invitation to come in. We sit with them a while, and we wanted to sit in our own seats.

**Reporter:** do you have any kind of credentials that will get you into these seats?

**Fannie Lou Hamer:** no, we don't. Only as American citizens.

**Reporter:** Mr. Sergeant at arms, have you had any contingency plans for this?

**Sergeant at arms:** not at all, I'm just standing here peacefully trying to keep this aisle clear.

**Annie Devine:** that's the way do down in Mississippi when they are before the eyes of the world, they are peaceful and loving. And when they get back to Mississippi, "nigger, you can't come in here, nigger, you can't come in there. Nigger, you get out!" and here we are in the eyes of the world and seeing the same thing that happens down, way down, in the deep south, Mississippi.

**Narrator:** the MFDP was never seated at the 1964 convention, but their protest opened up the democratic party and changed national politics. For some, Atlantic city ended in disillusionment. They had lost faith in America's leaders, but they had come to know their own power.

**Annie Devine:** the country refuses to demand that Mississippi give negroes their rights, their privileges. We didn't ask to be elected to anything, we didn't ask for any patronage. All we ask is to let us sit.

## Bridge To Freedom (1965)

**Narrator:** Selma, Alabama, 1965.

**C. T. Vivian:** I don't want to ... (inaudible) leave. We have come to register to vote.

**Rachel west nelson:** if we can't vote, you ain't free. If you ain't free, well then you're slaves.

**C. T. Vivian:** we're willing to be beaten for democracy.

**Narrator:** years of struggle came down to this climactic battle for voting rights. Before it ended, black and white Americans gave their lives. But would that be enough?

**C. T. Vivian:** you people beat people bloody in order that they will not have the privilege to vote.

**Malcolm X:** in the areas of the country where the government has proven itself unable or unwilling to defend the negroes when they are being brutally and unjustly attacked, then the negroes themselves should take whatever steps necessary to defend themselves.

**Narrator:** to many Americans, black and white, this was their worst nightmare. Race riots in northern cities during the summer of 1964. The civil rights movement was ten years old, nonviolence had been the strategy. But could nonviolence work in a society which grew angrier each day?

**Gunnar Jahn:** on behalf of the Nobel committee —

**Narrator:** to the world, Martin Luther King, Jr., had come to symbolize the success of nonviolent strategy. He received the Nobel peace prize in December, 1964.

**Gunnar Jahn:** — and the gold medal.

**Narrator:** but in America, young militants were beginning to challenge King's leadership. Dallas county, Selma, Alabama. For more than a year, organizers from the student nonviolent coordinating committee, SNCC, had worked with local residents in waging a voter registration campaign. They met some resistance.

By the end of 1964, SNCC was exhausted, with little money to continue. Selma's black leaders turned to Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for help.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** today marks the beginning of a determined, organized, mobilized campaign.

**Narrator:** King's presence reopened an old rivalry between the ministers of SCLC and the young organizers of SNCC.

**James Forman:** we felt that there should be a projection and an organization of indigenous leadership and leadership from the community. Whereas the Southern Christian Leadership Conference took the position that Martin was a charismatic leader who was mainly responsible for raising money and they raised most money off of his leadership. But this difference in leadership then led to differences in style of work. We wanted a movement that would survive the loss of our lives; therefore, the necessity to build a broad based movement and not just a charismatic leader.

**Narrator:** SNCC and SCLC put aside their differences and launched a combined effort on January 18th, 1965. The Dallas county courthouse steps became a dramatic stage as prospective voters lined up for the registrar's office in Selma. The key actor was Sheriff Jim Clark. Movement leaders counted on Clark to draw media attention, the kind of attention that would interest Washington and win voting rights legislation.

**Mayor Smitherman:** I am a segregationist. I do not believe in biracial committees.

**Narrator:** Selma's political leaders understood the movement's tactics and were desperate not to get caught in the middle. Mayor Joseph Smitherman and his public safety director, Wilson Baker, hoped to restrain the volatile Sheriff Clark as he dealt with the demonstrators.

**Joseph Smitherman:** they picked Selma just like a movie producer would pick a set. You had the right ingredients. I mean, you'd had to have seen Clark in his day. He had a helmet on like General Patton, he had the clothes, the Eisenhower jacket and a swagger stick, and then Baker was very impressive and I guess I was the least of all. I was 145 pounds and a crew cut and big ears. So you had a young mayor with no background or experience.

**Mayor Smitherman:** our city and our county has been subjected to the greatest pressures I think any community in the country has had to withstand. We've had in our area here outside agitation groups of all levels. We've had Martin Luther King — pardon me, sir, Martin Luther King, we have had people of the Nazi party, the States Rights party, both of these groups have come in, they have continually harassed and agitated us for approximately three or four weeks.

**Narrator:** more than half of Dallas county's citizens were black, but less than one percent were registered by 1965. Throughout much of the South, custom and law had long prevented blacks from registering. In Selma, the registrar's office was open only two days a month. Registrars would arrive late, leave early, and take long lunch hours. Few blacks who lined up would get in. And getting in was no guarantee of being registered.

President Johnson knew the problem, and now having soundly defeated conservative Barry Goldwater in the recent election, he set this goal. **President Lyndon B. Johnson:** I propose that we eliminate every remaining obstacle to the right and the opportunity to vote.

**Narrator:** but Johnson's staff had doubts about pushing for more legislation.

**Nicholas Katzenbach:** I think those of us who had been involved day in and day out in civil rights legislation, in getting the 1964 Civil Rights Act through Congress were the people who were dragging our feet and wanted breathing room. The president didn't want that. He said, "get it and get it now because we'll never have a better opportunity to get legislation on any subject including civil rights than we have right now in 1965. We have the majority to do it, we can do it."

**Narrator:** although Sheriff Clark tried to control his temper, the strain began to show. In mid-January, he arrested Mrs. Amelia Boynton, a highly respected community leader. Angered by Mrs. Boynton's arrest, 105 local teachers marched to the courthouse in protest, knowing they might be fired by the white school board.

**Sheriff Clark:** this court house is a serious place of business and you seem to think you can take it just to be, uh, Disneyland or something on parade. Do you have business in the court house?

**Teacher:** we just, we just want to pass through.

**Sheriff Clark:** do you have any business in the court house?

**Teacher:** the only business we have is to come by the board of registrars to register...

**Sheriff Clark:** the board of registrars is not in session this afternoon as you were informed. You came down to make a mockery out of this court house and we're not going to have it.



**Rev. Frederick d. Reese:** so I saw then that he was not going to arrest us, as I really wanted him to do. Therefore, we asked the teachers then to regroup and we marched back, not to the school but to the brown chapel church, at which time there was a rally held.

**Narrator:** the teachers march was the first black middle class demonstration in Selma. Sheyann Webb and Rachel west were schoolchildren at the time.

**Sheyann Webb:** and it was a amazing to see how many teachers had participated. I remember vividly on that day when I saw my teachers marching with me, you know, just for the right to vote.

**Rachel west nelson:** teachers there was somewhat like up in the upper class, you know. People looked up to teachers then, they looked up to preachers. They were somewhat like leaders for back then.

**Rev. Frederick d. Reese:** then the undertakers got a group and they marched. The beauticians got a group, they marched. Everybody marched after the teachers marched because teachers had more influence than they ever dreamed in the community.

**C. T. Vivian:** and we want you to know, gentlemen, that every one of you, we know your badge numbers, we know your names.

**Narrator:** in mid-February, reverend c. T. Vivian, an SCIC organizer, confronted sheriff Clark and his deputies on the courthouse steps.

**C. T. Vivian:** but believe me, there were those that followed Hitler, like you blindly follow this sheriff Clark who didn't think their day was coming. But they also were pulled into courtrooms and they were also given their death sentences. You're not this bad a racist, but you're a racist in the same way Hitler was a racist. And you're blindly following a man that's leading you down a road that's going to bring you into federal court. Now, I'm representing people in Dallas county and I have that right to do so. Now, and as I represent them and they can speak for themselves, is what I'm saying true? Is it what you think and what you believe? For this is not a local problem, gentlemen. This is a national problem. You can't keep anyone in the united states from voting without hurting the rights of all other citizens. Democracy is built on this. This is why every man has the right to vote, regardless.

**Jim Clark:** and he started shouting at me that I was a Hitler, I was a brute, I was a Nazi. I don't remember everything he called me. And I did lose my temper then.

**C. T. Vivian:** we have come to be here because they are registering at this time.

**Sheriff Clark:** turn that light out. You're blinding me and I can't enforce the law with the light in my face.

**C. T. Vivian:** we have come to register and this is our reason for being here. We're not —

**Sheriff Clark:** you're blinding me with that light. Move back.

**C. T. Vivian:** you can arrest us. You can arrest us, sheriff Clark. You don't have to beat us.

**Jim Clark:** I don't remember even hitting him, but I went to the doctor, got an x-ray and found out I had a linear fracture on my finger on my left hand.

**C. T. Vivian:** with Jim Clark, it was a clear engagement between the forces and movements and the forces of the structure that would destroy movement. It was a clear engagement between those who wished the fullness of their personalities to be met and those that would destroy us physically and psychologically. You do not walk away from that. This is what movement meant. Movement meant that finally we were encountering on a mass scale the evil that had been destroying us on a mass scale. You do not walk away from that, you continue to answer it.

**C. T. Vivian:** if we're wrong, why don't you arrest us?

**Policeman:** why don't you get out of in front of the camera and go on. Go on.

**C. T. Vivian:** it's not a matter of being in front of the camera. It's a matter of facing your sheriff and facing your judge. We're willing to be beaten for democracy, and you misuse democracy in this street. You beat people bloody in order that they will not have the privilege to vote. You beat me in the side and then hide your blows. We have come to register to vote.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I'm here to tell you tonight that the businessmen, the mayor of this city, the police commissioner of this city, and everybody in the white power structure of this city must take a responsibility for everything that Jim Clark does and has created. It's time for us to say to these men that if you don't do something about it, we will have no alternative but to engage in broader and more drastic forms of civil disobedience in order to bring the attention of a nation to this whole issue in Selma, Alabama.

**Narrator:** the campaign in Selma escalated when violence erupted during a march in a neighboring town.

**Richard Valeriani:** the march in Marion, Alabama, was a nighttime march, and a nighttime march was always dangerous. And there was always discussion within the movement whether or not to have nighttime marches because they knew they were dangerous. We went up there this night, and we knew there was going to be trouble right away because local folks came up to us and threatened us, sprayed our cameras with black paint so we couldn't shoot, ordered us to put the cameras down and harassed us. And it was a very tense situation.

**Albert turner:** the whole town was surrounded at night by auxiliary police, state troopers, ... (inaudible) and anybody who wanted to come in, really, who felt like beating folks up. We went around the side of the church and after getting back into the church, some of us tried to go back in the front door and some of us just went where we could because as we moved, they also moved. They was whipping us as we went.

**Richard Valeriani:** somebody walked up behind me and hit me with a knife handle, hit me in the head with a knife handle, drew blood, which required stitches, and I was taken to a hospital. But before I left, a white man walked up to me and he said, "are you hurt? Do you need a doctor?" and I was stunned, and I put my hand to the back of my head and I pulled it back and it was full of blood. And I said to him, "yeah, I think I do, I'm bleeding." and then he thrust his face right up against mine and he said, "well, we don't have doctors for people like you."

**Narrator:** that same night, a young man named jimmy lee Jackson attempted to protect his mother from a similar attack. He was shot at point blank range by an Alabama state trooper and died eight days later.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** he was murdered by the irresponsibility of every politician from governors on down who have fed his constituents a stale bread of hatred and the spoiled meat of racism. He was murdered by the timidity of a federal government that can spend millions of dollars a day to keep troops in south Vietnam and cannot protect the lives of its own citizens seeking the right to vote.

**John Lewis:** I just felt during the period, it was too much, too much, too many, too many funerals and some of us will say, "how many more?" we were infuriated to a point that we wanted to carry jimmy's body to George Wallace and dump it on the steps of the capitol. We had got ... (inaudible) like the white folk or we had determined or decided that we were going to get killed or we was going to be free and be frank about it. And all of us just about felt that way. So we had intended to do everything we could because we was made, I guess you see, and we said that we would take jimmy down and just put his casket on the doorsteps of the capitol.

**Rev. James bevel:** in the nonviolent movement, if you went back to some of the classical strategies of Gandhi, when you have, say, a great violation of the people and there's a great sense of injury, you have to give people an honorable means and context in which to express and eliminate that grief and speak decisively and succinctly back to the issue. Otherwise, your movement will break down in violence and chaos.

**Narrator:** as a response to jimmy lee Jackson's death, SCIC proposed a symbolic march that would begin in Selma and travel 54 miles to the capitol in Montgomery.

**Rev. James bevel:** so agreeing to go to Montgomery was that kind of tool that would absorb a tremendous amount of energy and effort, and it was to keep the issue of disenfranchisement before the whole nation. And the whole point was walking from Selma to Montgomery, it'd take you five or six days, and which would give you the time to discuss in the nation through the papers, radio, television and going around speaking what the real issues were.

**Narrator:** governor Wallace was determined that the march would not take place.

**Gov. George c. Wallace:** such action will not be allowed on the part of any other group of citizens or non-citizens of the state of Alabama and will not be allowed in this instance. The government must proceed in an orderly manner and lawful and law abiding citizens must transact their business with the government in such a manner. There will be no march between Selma, Alabama and Montgomery, and I have so instructed the department of public safety.

**Narrator:** despite the governor's ban, 600 people gathered at brown chapel ame church on Sunday, March 7th, to begin the march to Montgomery. Dr. King was preaching in Atlanta. Hosea Williams and John Lewis led the march. Lewis chose to march, even though his organization, the student nonviolent coordinating committee, opposed SCIC strategy and decided not to take part. Surprisingly, as they walked through the center of town, there were no police in sight. The route out of Selma crossed over the Edmund Pettus bridge.

**Rachel west nelson:** Sheyann and I went to the Edmund Pettus bridge. There is where I turned around and left Sheyann simply because I'm saying I was afraid.

**Narrator:** waiting on the other side were Alabama state troopers under orders from governor Wallace to stop the marchers. Clark's posse was on the sideline.

**Major John cloud:** it would be detrimental to your safety to continue this march and I'm saying that this is an unlawful assembly. You have to disperse, you are ordered to disperse. Go home or go to your church. This march will not continue. Is that clear to you? I've got nothing further to say to you.

**Sheyann Webb:** all I could remember was an outburst of tear gas and I saw people being beaten and I began to just try to run home as fast as I could. And as I began to run home, I saw horses behind me, and I will never forget, a freedom fighter picked me up, Holver (?) Williams, and I told him to put me down. He wasn't running fast enough. And I ran and I ran and I ran.

**Andrew Young:** we were about two blocks away from the bridge, and we went back to try to help people back. But the police were riding along on horseback beating people, and the teargas was so thick you couldn't get to where people were in need of help. And so we really had to turn the church into a hospital just to get people back to their senses. And there — it was a horrible two or three hours.

**Narrator:** shock gave way to anger. There was talk of retaliation.

**Andrew Young:** there were people who came back to the church and started talking about going to get their guns. You had to talk them down, and you had to talk them down by simply asking questions, "what kind of gun you got?" "a .32, .38." "how's that going to hold up against the automatic rifles and 10 gauge shotguns that they've got? And how many you got? There are at least 200, you know, shotguns out there with buckshot in them. You ever see buckshot? You ever see what buckshot does to a deer?" and most of them had. And you make people think about the specifics of violence and then they realize how suicidal and nonsensical it is.

**Narrator:** the day after bloody Sunday, governor Wallace reprimanded law enforcement officers for the scene on the bridge.

**Gov. George c. Wallace:** it was something that happened that enraged me because I didn't intend for it to happen that way. But I didn't want them to get beyond that point where there was some people that told me there might be some violence.

**Narrator:** Sunday night, the television networks broke into regular programming to show these scenes to a national audience. ABC interrupted its primetime movie, "judgment at Nuremberg," a film about Nazi war crime.

**Joseph Smitherman:** when that beating happened at the foot of the bridge, it looked like a war that went all over the country. And then people, the wrath of the nation came down on us.

**Attorney general Katzenbach:** governor Wallace had made clear his intention to prevent this march on the grounds of public safety and danger on the highways. And while we knew there would be a confrontation, state and local law enforcement officials were prepared for major disorders. We had no reason to believe that local law enforcement officials would set upon nonviolent and peaceful citizens in the way in which they did. On prior occasions, this has not occurred.

**Sen. Ralph yarborough:** shame on you, George Wallace, for the wet ropes that bruise the muscles, for the bull whips that cut the flesh, for the clubs that broke the bones, and for the tear gas that seared the eyes and the nose and the nostrils and the lungs and choked people into insensibility. This is not the American way.

When this happened at Selma and I saw it on television, to me it expanded beyond civil rights, beyond whether you vote or where you sit in a restaurant, but in a café or on planes, trains, or buses. It became a matter of human life and it became an issue that transcended any of those we're voting on. It became bigger than that.

**Andrew Young:** after the beating on the bridge, we immediately sent out a call for our friends. We didn't think we could provide — we could count on police protection. People said we should send in the national guard. We didn't think they would send in the national guard to protect black people. And so we sent out a call to people of good will.

**Narrator:** from all over the country, people came to Selma, among them 450 white clergymen.

**Rev. Frederick Reese:** the group of people, black and white, send to us, "we are here to share with the people of Selma in this struggle for the right to vote. We have seen on the television screen the violence that took place and we're here to share with you."

And you could see a change in the atmosphere, a spirit of inspiration, motivation and seemingly hope coming back into the eyes and into the minds of these people. And then renewed commitment to the nonviolent method.

**Narrator:** they planned to march on Tuesday, but president Johnson wanted them to wait until they could be sure there would be no violence. In Montgomery, another Johnson, federal judge Frank Johnson, banned the march pending a hearing. Dr. King had never violated a federal order, but there was increasing pressure to march, especially from SNCC. The SCIC ministers left the decision about marching to King. The young members of SNCC, angered by Sunday's attack, wanted to be sure King wouldn't back down.

**James Forman:** you know, federal injunctions and ... (inaudible) have been handed down in the past and really the people here have to make up their minds and make their decisions themselves about what it is they want to do.

**Narrator:** there was private disagreement but public unity.

**James Forman:** there's no disagreement between SNCC and SCIC and that's not — you know, that's not at issue here. The announcement was made to the people in the audience that the march that Tuesday would go forward, all right. But some of us also knew that Dr. King had told — I mean, that Johnson, that he was going to call off the march. So we had a meeting from about 11:00 to 5:00 that morning where we were trying to lay out to him the necessity to keep his word to the people that the march would go forward and that it would not be called off.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** we have no alternative but to keep moving with determination. We've gone too far now to turn back. And in a real sense, we are moving and we cannot afford to stop because Alabama and because our nation has a date with destiny.

**Narrator:** Tuesday, March 9th, 2,000 marchers set out to cross the Pettus bridge. This time, there were politicians, labor and church leaders, members of SNCC, the widow of a U.S. Senator and a few southern whites. They were side by side with those who had been beaten two days earlier.

**Major John Cloud:** you are ordered to stop, stand where you are. This march will not commence.

**Narrator:** the marchers asked to kneel and pray.

**Rev. Ralph Abernathy:** because we know that America was founded on the principles that all men are free and equal, not just white men, but all men. We don't have much money, but we do have our bodies. And we live on the altar for thee and for our freedom today.

**Narrator:** then Dr. King turned the marchers around and walked back across the bridge. Some expressed relief, others shock.

**Orloff Miller:** all of a sudden, I realized that the people in front were turning around and coming back and I was aghast. What is going on? Are we not going to go through with this confrontation? What's happening?

**Andrew Young:** the truth of it was that there was nothing much else to do. We'd been ordered by a judge not to go any further. If we had run into that police line, they would have beaten us up with court approval.

**Narrator:** SNCC members would call the turnaround a sellout, worsening the split between them and SCIC. For others, there was a sense of confusion.

**Orloff Miller:** we waited to hear Dr. King's explanation of why this had been. We never fully understood, but what we did understand is saying as many of you as can, could you stay a few more days? Could you remain? Most of us had come without even a toothbrush because we thought it was a one-day event. But nevertheless, a number of us decided to stay, I among them.

**Narrator:** later that evening, Reverend Miller, along with ministers Clark, Olson, and James Reeb were returning from dinner. Unfamiliar with the town, they took a wrong turn past the Silver Moon Café.

**Orloff Miller:** and as we started walking, from across the street there appeared four or five white men. And they yelled at us, "hey, you niggers." and we did not look across at them, but we just sort of quickened our pace. We didn't run but continued walking in the same direction. And they apparently came across the street from our left and behind us. And one of them was carrying a club. And Clark said he turned around and saw the club just as it was swung. And Jim Reeb being closest to the curb, caught the full impact of that blow.

**Narrator:** James Reeb died two days later. News of the attack provoked a national outcry. In many cities, demonstrators protested the violence in Selma. Some blacks were angry that the death of a white minister stirred a nation that had ignored the death of Jimmy Lee Jackson.

**Stokely Carmichael:** what it seemed to me is that the movement itself is playing into the hands of racism, because what you want as a nation to be upset when anybody is killed, and especially when one of us is killed. And so it just played into the hands of racism and it's almost like, you know, for this to be recognized, a white person must be killed. Well, what are you saying?

**Narrator:** when the police barricaded the area around Brown Chapel, SNCC withdrew from the Selma campaign in frustration. The barricades were to keep hostile whites out, the protesters in. One group, led by Jimmy Webb, broke free of the barricade. They were stopped by Clark's men.

**L. C. Crocker:** I can't follow you and I'm not going to follow you and give you police protection. I'm telling you for your own benefit, you had better turn around and get out of this area. You're not going to the cool house in a group under condition that you come here, and I assure you that.

**Jimmy Webb:** all we'd like to do, sir, is to go to the courthouse —

**L. C. Crocker:** courthouse is closed. There's no business there, I'm saying.

**Jimmy Webb:** we don't want to go into the courthouse, all we want to do is go to the lawn of the courthouse to kneel in prayer and we'll gladly return...

**L. C. Crocker:** you take your prayers back to your church. That's the proper place to pray. I'm sure that God will hear your prayer just as well down there as it will up here, but you're not going on this courthouse lawn.

**Jimmy Webb:** sir, whenever there are men who are in sinful conditions, prayers should be uttered wherever they are.

**L. C. Crocker:** then why don't you pray where you are? Go back down and pray. You think you're lily white? You think you'll have ... (inaudible)? Well, then go back to your church and pray.

**Jimmy Webb:** well, sir, can we pray together, you and I?

**L. C. Crocker:** you do your praying, I do mine, big boy. You don't pray for me. I don't want you to pray for me.

**Jimmy Webb:** well, will you pray for us?

**L. C. Crocker:** because I don't think your prayers get above your head.

**Jimmy Webb:** well, will you pray for us?

**L. C. Crocker:** no, I'm not going to pray for you. I tend to my business, you tend to yours. Now, you better move these people out of here.

**Man:** sir? Sir?

**Girl:** you have to know how to love before you can pray.

**L. C. Crocker:** I don't have to love anybody I don't want to love. Do your own loving. You love your little niggers, I love who I please.

**Jimmy Webb:** do you believe in equal justice for all?

**L. C. Crocker:** I believe in justice.

**Jimmy Webb:** do you believe in equal —

**L. C. Crocker:** I don't believe in equal nothing. There's no two people in this world alike, and they're not equal on any terms or conditions. There's no two peas in the world alike, no two pieces of money or nothing else.

**Jimmy Webb:** then sir, are you saying that if I have a quarter and I'm black, and you have a quarter and you're white, then my quarter isn't worth as much as yours?

**L. C. Crocker:** that's your quarter. I'll decide what my quarter's worth, you use yours and I use mine.

**Cop:** you buy a catfish sandwich with yours.

**L. C. Crocker:** I have nothing else to say.

**Wilson baker:** what's the deal here now. You people in this small group want to turn and walk back to the group waiting on you?

**Jimmy Webb:** do we have your protection?

**Wilson baker:** we'll do everything we can, just go on back down there. You didn't have it coming up here.

**Narrator:** plans for the march to Montgomery remained at a standstill pending a federal court decision. Now protecting the marchers became an issue for both president Johnson and governor Wallace.

**George Wallace:** we got a report, how much it would take to guarantee absolute protection from everyone and we didn't have the resources. So I called on president Johnson and article iv, section iv of the constitution to send us troops to help us maintain order.

**Narrator:** Wallace met with president Johnson in Washington on March 13th.

**Burke Marshall:** and what happened in the meeting was the president totally snowed us. Governor Wallace didn't quite grovel, but he was so pliant by the end of the two hours with president Johnson putting his arm around him and squeezing him and telling him it's a moment of history and how do we want to be remembered in history? Do you want to be remembered as petty little men, or do we want to be remembered as great figures that faced up to our moments of crisis, and that kind of thing. And then he led governor Wallace out in the hopes that governor Wallace who was, by that time, like a rubber band, would give a press statement that confirmed his determination to protect the marchers at Selma, to comply with the court order from judge Johnson and act like a responsible governor.

**Gov. Wallace:** well, all I can say is I'm very hopeful that we can have a solution to the problems that confront us in this regard and that I did request — I did make some suggestions and I hope that we can have a cessation some time of the demonstrations, although I recognize the right to peacefully assemble. But I do think there are limitations, but that's all.

**Man:** can you tell us, governor, what the president —

**Narrator:** governor Wallace still refused to pay for protecting the marchers. President Johnson, sensing the mood of the country, addressed congress on national television.

**President Lyndon b. Johnson:** what happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement which reaches into every section and state of America. It is the —

**Narrator:** eight days after bloody Sunday, four days after Reeb's death, the president asked for a comprehensive voting rights bill and astonished the nation by using the words of the movement.

**President Lyndon b. Johnson:** their cause must be our cause, too. Because it's not just negroes, but really it's all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome.

**Joseph Smitherman:** Lyndon Johnson came on, the late president, and said, "we shall overcome." and it was just like you'd stuck a dagger in your heart or something like that. I mean, you know, what's this guy doing? And, you know, you had respect for your ... (inaudible) we were patriotic, but it just destroyed everything you'd been allegedly fighting for.

**C. T. Vivian:** we were all sitting around together, and martin was sitting in a chair looking toward the tv set. And when LBJ said, "and we shall overcome," we all cheered and I looked over toward martin, and martin was very quietly sitting in the chair and a tear ran down his cheek. It was a victory like none other. It was an affirmation of the movement.

**Narrator:** but SNCC didn't see any victory. In Montgomery, where they had moved operations, they were being beaten by Alabama police as they tried to confront governor Wallace.

**James Forman:** there's only one man in this country that can stop George Wallace and ... (inaudible). We can present thousands and thousands of bodies in the streets if we want to. And we can have all of the ... (inaudible) and the moral commitment around this world. But a lot of these problems will not be solved until that ... (inaudible) place called the white house begins to shake and gets on the phone and says, "now listen, George, we're coming down there and throwing you in jail if you don't stop that mess." it's not just the sheriff of this county or the mayor or the police commissioner or George Wallace. This problem goes to the very bottom of the united states. And you know, I said it to them and I will say it again. If we can't sit at the table, let's knock the fucking legs off, excuse me.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** now there are points that we agree on and there are still points that we must negotiate before we come to a final resolution of the problem.

**Narrator:** martin Luther King tried to calm the situation in Montgomery while waiting, still, for the court decision on the march.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** let me give you this statement which I think will come as an expression to all of us. Judge Johnson has just ruled that we have a legal and constitutional right to march from Selma to Montgomery.

**Narrator:** the judge's action cleared the way for the march. But governor Wallace still refused to provide the necessary protection. So president Johnson federalized the Alabama national guard. Sunday, March 21st, only 62 days after the campaign began, 3,200 people gathered at brown chapel church for the journey to Montgomery.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we are going to walk nonviolently and peacefully to let the nation and the world know we are tired now. We've lived with slavery and segregation 345 years, we waited a long time for freedom. We are trying to remind the nation of the urgency of the moment. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to transform Alabama, the heart of Dixie, to a state with a heart for brotherhood and peace and good will. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of god's children.

**Reporter:** do you have any feelings about this march?

**Sheriff Jim Clark:** no, I'm glad to get rid of the ones who are leaving, but I wish they'd come back and get the rest of them.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** how you doing? Wonderful, wonderful. Why are you marching?

**Sheyann Webb:** so we can be free and justice. And so other people can be free and so troopers can't hit no more.

**Nun:** I'm from Kansas City, Missouri, and I've answered a call for the interracial council there in Kansas City to join the march here. These ideals that have been expressed by all the people have been mine for a long time. I've had an opportunity to do something about it now.

**Actor:** I'm from Hollywood, California, I'm an actor. And I just decided I've got to come, I've got to see what it's all about and I feel very deeply about the situation. And for the first time, I realize what the negro position is, because here I am called a white nigger.

**Narrator:** the Alabama national guard under federal direction, kept the hecklers at a distance and checked for bombs. Eleven miles outside Selma, the marchers left Dallas county and came into neighboring Lowndes county. While in Lowndes county, some SNCC members seized the opportunity to do some organizing of their own.

**Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael):** we were against the march. I, too, was against it. But again, I said it was a fait accompli. We couldn't stop it, King was going to have it, and there was no way to stop it. So what we had to do now is make a positive out of a negative. What I did was when it entered Lowndes county, I would seek out all the people from Lowndes county who came to the march. I would get them, write down their names, record it, their addresses and tell them, you know, "listen, we're going to stay in Lowndes county, we're not going to pass through." and they'd be excited to hear that. So the Black Panther Party was built off of the mobilization that King sprout out inside of Lowndes county, and he give us a perfect job.

**Narrator:** as they approached Montgomery, SCIC heard of a plot against martin Luther King's life, but King refused to leave the march.

**Andrew Young:** martin always wore the good preacher blue suit, and I figured since we couldn't stop him from marching, we just kind of had to believe it was true when white folks said we all look alike. So everybody that was about martin's size and had on a blue suit, I put in the front of the line with him. And we all just lined up, but there were some very important people who felt as though they were being pushed back. But all of the preachers loved the chance to get up front in the front line with martin Luther King, but I don't think to this day most of them know why they were up there.

**Narrator:** fifty-four miles and five days marching. They were now 25,000 strong.

**John Lewis:** to me, there was never a march like this one before and hasn't been once since. It was a sense of community moving there. And as you walked, you saw people coming, waving, bringing you food or bringing you something to drink. You saw the power of the most powerful country on the face of the earth.

**Narrator:** the euphoria of the moment, no one could know the traditional civil rights movement would never again be the same. The fragile coalition that had shaped the movement for so long was coming to an end.

**Coretta Scott King:** it was a great moment to go back to Montgomery. Because you see for us, it was returning to Montgomery after ten years. And I kept thinking about ten years earlier, how we were visibly just blacks and when you looked at that march, you had catholic priests and nuns, you had other clergy and you had a lot of white people. It was really a beautiful thing to pass Basker avenue and go toward the capitol, marching together and listening to martin's speech.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we must come to see the being we seek. As a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. And that will be a day not as a white man, not as a black man, that will be the day of man as man. However difficult the moment, however frustrating the hour, it will not be long because truth crushed to earth will rise again. How long? Not long. Because no lie can live forever. How long? Not long. Because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice. How long? Not long. Because mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the lord. He's tramping out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. He's loosed the faithful lightning of his terrible swift sword, his truth is marching on. Glory, hallelujah. Glory, hallelujah. Glory, hallelujah. Glory, hallelujah. His truth is marching on.

**Narrator:** that night, Viola Liuzzo, a white housewife from michigan, was murdered by klansmen as she transported marchers back to Selma. President Johnson signed the voting rights bill into law on august 6th, 1965. By the following summer, 9,000 blacks registered to vote in Dallas county. August 11, five days after the voting rights bill was signed, the watts area of Los angeles, California, exploded in racial violence. More than 1,000 people were injured, 34 died. It signaled a new direction for the movement, the next phase of America's civil rights years.



## The Time Has Come (1964-1966)

**Man:** what Dr. King gave us, what Stokely Carmichael gave us, what Malcolm X gave us, everybody gave us, whether you agreed with them or not, the energy of that time and the goals that we were all aspiring to, I think, is what it was all about at its best. At its worst, it was when we did nothing.

**Man:** black people are dissatisfied. They're dissatisfied not only with the white man, but they're dissatisfied with these negroes who have been sitting around here posing as leaders and spokesmen for black people and actually making the problem worse instead of making the problem better.

**Man:** I'm tired of marching, tired of marching for something that should have been mine at birth.

**Woman:** many days I would come home and I would think about all the liberals that got on the buses and went south when — for sit-ins and boycotts in the south. And I really would come home and wonder, you know, where were they now?

**Narrator:** by the mid-1960s, the civil rights movements had changed the laws that divided us by race. But the struggle from unity was far from done.

**Woman:** just because I'm white doesn't mean that the 14th amendment doesn't apply to me either. I am white and I want my rights.

**Man:** we look at miss America, we see white. We look at miss world, we see white. We look at miss universe, we see white. Even tigers from the Kingdom and jungle in black Africa are white.

**Man:** the Black Panthers preach every day hate, kill whitey, kill the police, kill the pigs. Hate, hate, hate, that's all you hear from them.

**Man:** we don't hate nobody because of their color, we hate oppression. We hate murder of black people in our communities. We hate the growing unemployment in our communities. We hate black man being ... (inaudible) into the military service.

**Man:** sergeant, you've just recently returned from Vietnam. Can you tell us how it feels to have to come from one zone of combat in a foreign land to one in your own land?

**Man:** it's not a good feeling, not one I'm kind of proud of.

**Man:** we stand on the eve of a black revolution, brothers. Masses of our people in the streets. The rebellions that we see are merely dress rehearsals for the revolution that's to come.

**Woman:** are you going to live outside of the American culture, or are you going to live within it? As long as you stay in America, you've got to conform. What else can you do?

**Narrator:** this television series chronicles a period of history when our nation stood at a racial crossroads, a time when Americans struggled to define what was truly meant by liberty and justice for all. It was a time for anger and fear, a time when a gain for blacks was sometimes seen as a loss for whites.

**Man:** are the people of Cleveland willing to vote for a candidate for mayor who has the best qualifications, but whose skin does happen to be black?

**Woman:** we pick our lipsticks by color, sometimes our dresses, but we don't vote that way. We study the candidates.

**Man:** I believe that.

**Narrator:** it was also a time for triumph, a time when victory blurred the color line. A time when once again America struggled to be America for all of its citizens.

**Man:** when we come together, what time is it? When we respect each other, what time is it? When we get ourselves confident, what time is it?

**Man:** it's nation time, it's nation time, it's nation time. You can hear reverberating all those cries ... (inaudible) from the '40s and the '30s and the '50s and the '60s. I mean, came to be fulfilled in that moment of crying that it's nation time now.

**James Haughton:** less than 2 percent of the negro people in Harlem have taken an active part in the civil rights struggle. We observe that there have been other groups out on the streets. The nationalists have been out on the streets, the Muslims have been out on the streets, but the NAACP up to this point has not been out there where the people are at.

**Louis Michaux:** all over America, there's not one black citizen in the united states. I defy Dr. Martin Luther King to tell me that they're citizens of this no-good country because integration will never happen. You'll never, as long as you live, integrate into the white man's system.

**Narrator:** in the early 1960s, on inner city street corners in the north, many groups competed for the hearts and minds of black America.

**Malcolm X:** all praise is due to Allah. Everybody in Harlem is a Muslim.

**Narrator:** one of the groups attracting the largest crowds was the nation of Islam.

**Malcolm X:** we too have been taught by the honorable Elijah Mohammed that we were stripped of everything we had and then cast into the fiery furnace. A land where they've been making it hot as hell for us for 400 years.

**Narrator:** the nation of Islam was a religious organization. Its approach to teaching black pride and self reliance often provoked controversy. In major cities across the country, the nation built temples for prayer, established businesses to encourage economic independence in black communities, and created schools to educate its children. Members of the nation of Islam were sometimes referred to as black Muslims. Their god was Allah, and his messenger was Elijah Mohammed.

**Elijah Muhammad:** the so-called American negro have to be completely reeducated. He have to be completely made over again. And the condition that he is now in is not fit for self. And Islam gives him that qualification, that he can feel proud and does not feel ashamed to be called a black man.

**Narrator:** Elijah Mohammed successfully rehabilitated many convicts and drug addicts, teaching discipline and self respect.

**Unidentified Muslim:** after taking drugs in 1958, after I heard the program of the honorable Elijah Mohammed, this is the only thing that ever gave me the inspiration or the strength not to use narcotics. And he opened the door for me to show me that some of the good things of this earth could be mine with just a little effort and following him.

**Malcolm X:** the honorable Elijah Mohammed doesn't condemn the victim, he goes to work on the victim. He doesn't say that all the —

**Narrator:** one of the converts was Malcolm X, who would soon transform the nation of Islam. He was born Malcolm Little. His father was an organizer for black nationalist Marcus Garvey. After the father's violent death, which many believe to be a lynching, and the subsequent breakup of his family, the young Malcolm drifted into a life of drugs and crime. In 1946, he was convicted of burglary and sentenced to 10 years in prison, where he was introduced to the teachings of Elijah Mohammed. After his release, he became a Muslim minister, and through street corner rallies, brought many new members into the nation of Islam.

**Malcolm X:** the honorable Elijah Mohammed teaches us that it is time for you and me to stand up for ourselves. It is time for you and me to see for ourselves. It is time for you and me to hear for ourselves, and it is time for you and me to fight for ourselves. We don't need anybody today speaking for us, seeing for us, or fighting for us. We'll fight our own battles with the help of our god.

**Ossie Davis:** so the first time I actually saw him was in the mosque in Harlem one Sunday afternoon as he preached one of his sermons. And he described how we as black folks smelled. He described how we looked, he described how we felt. And then he described what caused us to feel that way, and of the chains of slavery are still in your minds and in your heads and you look at a white man and you love him, that's what you do. You hate the fact that he let you go from slavery, you want to go back there. But no, the honorable Elijah Mohammed is here now and we're going to change all that. You know, the righteous black man is on the scene and we're not going to be satisfied with you and your shuckin' and jivin'. The time has come.

**Narrator:** in 1959, the media discovered the nation of Islam.

**Mike Wallace:** while city officials, state agencies, white liberals and sober minded negroes stand idly by, a group of negro dissenters is taking the street corner stepladders, church pulpits, sports arenas and ballroom platforms across the united states to preach a gospel of hate that would set off a federal investigation if it were preached by southern whites.

Louis Lomax, a reporter I'd never heard of, came to my office, told me about something called the black Muslims. I'd never heard of them. Would we be interested in doing a broadcast, a documentary about them? I suggested that yeah, we might. Let's learn more about them. One of the conditions about doing the broadcast, he said, was they will not talk to a white reporter.

**Louis Lomax:** this is the first time I think my color's ever been in my favor rather than against me. But on the whole, I would say that this assignment was a little rough.

**Narrator:** assigned a white camera crew, Lomax filmed this rally in Washington, DC. The program included a performance of a play by Louis X called "the trial" in which whites are tried for their offenses against blacks.

**Speaker:** I charge the white man, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, with being the greatest murderer on earth. I charge the white man with being the greatest liar on earth. I charge the white man with being the greatest troublemaker on earth. So therefore, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I ask you bring back a verdict of guilty as charged.

**Mike Wallace:** when Louis Lomax came back with a film of the rally, the black Muslim rally, I was simply stunned. I mean, here was this auditorium overflowing, thousands of people, about an organization I knew nothing about. I found it difficult to credit when I saw it.

**Louis Lomax:** have you ever been accused, sir, of preaching hate?

**Elijah Muhammad:** yes.

**Louis Lomax:** do you think you are preaching hate?

**Elijah Muhammad:** no.

**Louis Lomax:** what are you preaching, sir?

**Elijah Muhammad:** the truth.

**Malcolm X:** they call Mr. Muhammed a hate teacher because he makes you hate dope and alcohol. They call Mr. Muhammed a black supremacist because he teaches you and me not only that we're as good as the white man, but better than the white man. Yeah, better than the white man. You are better than the white man. And that's not saying anything. That's not saying — you ... Nowhere just to be equal with him. Who is he to be equal with? You look at your skin. You can't compare your skin with his skin. Why, your skin looks like gold beside his skin. You find that old pale thing laying out in the sun trying to get to look like you, that pale thing.

**Narrator:** in 1963, Malcolm X became national spokesman for the nation of Islam.

**Malcolm X:** you find him using man tan trying to look like me. That old pale thing.

**Sonia Sanchez:** I was standing on the island there, looking at him, and my friend said, "I'm going back to the office, we're going back." and I said, "I'm going to stay because I like the rain." there was this kind of quiet drizzle that was happening there.

**Malcolm X:** I hope you're not getting too wet.

**Sonia Sanchez:** and I looked up and looked around determined not to look at him, determined not to listen. But he started to talk and I found myself more and more listening to him. And I began to nod my head and say, "yeah, that's right, that makes sense."

**Malcolm X:** the government accepts its responsible for the poverty that makes you and me turn to alcohol, to dope, and to crime. The government is responsible for the housing conditions that exist here in Harlem. The government is responsible for the rats that bite our little children and the cockroaches that eat better than we do. Don't look for the ... (inaudible) in Harlem, go downtown and look for them in city hall. And brothers and sisters, if you don't find them in city hall, look for them in Albany in the state house, or look for him in Washington in the white house.

Malcolm X: you don't have any boats or airplanes bringing drugs into this country. The white man brings it in. The white man brings it to Harlem. The white man makes you a drug addict. The white man then puts you in jail when he catches you using drugs. We're trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty, of ignorance, of apathy, of disease, and of death. And they have these ol' uncle toms, negro leaders, coming to Harlem, telling you and me that the times are getting better. The times will never get better until you make 'em better.

**Sonia Sanchez:** when he came off the stage, I jumped off the island, walked up to him and of course when I got to him, the bodyguards moved in front and he just pushed them away and I went in front of him and extended my hand and said, "I like some of what you said. I didn't agree with all that you said, but I liked some of what you said." and he looked at me, held my hand in a very gentle fashion and said, "one day you will, sister."

**Narrator:** as his reputation grew, Malcolm X began to write a book with Alex Haley.



**Alex Haley:** when I began to interview Malcolm for the book that would later be called "the autobiography of Malcolm x," he would talk about the greater glories of Mr. Elijah Mohammed, his leader, and about the nation of Islam and there was nothing else he would talk about. And finally, I began very delicately as I could to say to him, "Mr. Malcolm, this book is to be about you, so I know about them, you've told me. I've written with you about them, but we need now to go into your life." and he would always get first testy about it, and then he got distinctly annoyed about it, and finally he would get angry.

I said, "Mr. Malcolm, could you tell me something about your mother?" and I will never, ever forget how he stopped almost as if he was suspended like a marionette. And he said, "I remember the kind of dresses she used to wear. They were old and faded and gray." and then he walked some more. And he said, "I remember how she was always bent over the stove, trying to stretch what little we had." and that was the beginning, that night, of his walk. And he walked that floor until just about daybreak.

**Narrator:** largely ignoring Elijah Mohammed, the media focused on Malcolm x, contrasting him with Martin Luther King, Jr. **Martin Luther King, Jr:** and it is a message which says that I am convinced that the most potent weapon available to oppressed people as they struggle for freedom and justice, is the weapon of nonviolence.

**Malcolm X:** we're nonviolent with people who are nonviolent with us. Because we are not nonviolent with anyone who is violent with us.

**John Lewis:** Malcolm X represented a different brand of leadership. Many of us that grew up in the south had been deeply influenced by the church, by the preaching of black ministers, but also by the message, the philosophy, the teaching of Martin Luther King, Jr., the philosophy and discipline of nonviolence. We saw Malcolm as someone, in a sense, from the outside, coming from the north to tell us there was a different way, a different approach. And I think many of us in the south had some reservations about it.

**Ossie Davis:** martin and the regular civil rights leaders were presenting to America our best face, our nonviolent face, our desire to be included into American society and we wanted to show the world that we had no evil intentions against anybody, we just wanted to be included. But they also understood that America, in spite of our reassurances, would be frightened and hesitant to open the door to black folks.

So Malcolm as the outsider, as the man they thought represented the possibilities of violence was the counter that they could use. They would say to the powers that be, "look, here's martin Luther King and all these guys, we are nonviolent. Now, outside the door, if you don't deal with us, is the other brother, and he ain't like us."

**Malcolm X:** one white man named Lincoln supposedly fought the civil war to solve the race problem and the problem is still here. And then another white man named Kennedy came along running for president and told negroes what all he was going to do for them if they voted for him, and they voted for him, 80 percent, and he's been in office now for three years and the problem is still here. When police dogs were biting black women and black children and black babies in Birmingham, Alabama, that Kennedy talked about what he couldn't do because no federal law had been violated. And as soon as the negroes exploded and began to protect themselves and got the best of the crackers in Birmingham, then Kennedy sent for the troops and there as no — he didn't have any new law when he sent for the troops when the negroes erupted than he had at the time when whites were erupting.

**Narrator:** in November, 1963, John F. Kennedy was assassinated. In the midst of national mourning, Elijah Mohammed suspended Malcolm X for his comments on the president's death.

**Peter bailey:** this came about as a result of statements in the press indicating or trying to imply that he had rejoiced over the assassination of president John Kennedy, a statement that brother Malcolm had said at the time that it was a case of the chickens coming home to roost. He had been saying all along that the violence, the whole violent atmosphere that had been created as a result of the movement, and by the government not doing anything about this. In this case, Kennedy was the president at the time, that it created a whole atmosphere of violence, and finally this violence had reached the white house.

**Narrator:** the relationship between Malcolm X and the nation of Islam rapidly deteriorated.

**Elijah Muhammad:** he felt that he was now a big man before the public and this seemed to have been his desire. He wanted to be seen or heard or he wanted to exalt himself above his teacher.

**Malcolm X:** the nation of Islam, as it is guided spiritually by the honorable Elijah Mohammed doesn't involve itself in politics in any form. Because of its failure to become actively involved in the struggle of the negroes over all, many persons in the past have drifted away from it, and are now becoming involved with us in an axis effort to work with other groups towards solving the political, social and economic evils that afflict our people.

**Narrator:** Malcolm X now advanced his own program for black Americans. He formed the organization of Afro-American unity dedicated to the philosophy of black nationalism.

**Malcolm X:** which means the black man should control the politics of his own community and control the politicians who are in his own community. My personal economic philosophy is also black nationalism, which means that the black man should have a hand in controlling the economy of the so-called negro community. He should be developing the type of knowledge that would enable him to own and operate the businesses and thereby be able to create employment for his own people, for his own kind.

**Narrator:** Malcolm X made two trips to Africa, including a pilgrimage to mecca to become an orthodox Muslim. His meetings with African leaders to seek their support attracted the attention of the u.s. Justice and state departments.

**Malcolm X:** well, my purpose here is to remind the African heads of state that there are 22 million of us in America who are also of African descent. And to remind them also that we are the victims of America's colonialism or American imperialism and that our problem is not an American problem, it's a human problem. It's not a negro problem, it's a problem of humanity. It's not a problem of civil rights, but a problem of human rights.

**Peter bailey:** what he ultimately was aiming for in a foreign policy level was to have the government, the u.s. Government, have to defend its inaction in terms of the racist attacks that were going on at that time, to defend his actions before the u.s. Commission on human rights and take it before the world court.

**Reporter:** Malcolm, are you prepared to go into the united nations at this point and ask that charges be brought against the united states for its treatment of American negroes?

**Malcolm X:** oh, yes. The audience will have to be quiet. Yes, as I pointed out when I was — during my traveling, that nations look, and African nations and Asian nations and Latin American nations look very hypocritical when they stand up

in the united nations condemning the racist practices of south Africa and that which is practiced by Portugal and Angola and saying nothing in the U.N. About the racist practices that are manifest every day against negroes in this society.

**Reporter:** you're prepared to work with some of the leaders of the other civil rights organizations?

**Malcolm X:** certainly, certainly. We will work with any groups, organizations or leaders in any way as long as it's genuinely designed to get results.

**Narrator:** Malcolm X received many threats, but an attempted poisoning in Africa made him believe the danger went beyond the nation of Islam. On December 3rd, 1964, he took part in this debate in oxford, England.

**Malcolm X:** and I live in a society whose social system is based upon the castration of the black man, whose political system is based on castration of the black man, and whose economy is based upon the castration of the black man. They came up with what they call a civil rights bill in 1964 supposedly to solve our problem, and after the bill was signed, three civil rights workers were murdered in cold blood. Civil rights bill down the drain. No matter how many bills pass, black people in that country where I'm from still our lives are not worth two cents. Well, any time you live in a society supposedly based upon law and it doesn't enforce its own law because of the color of a man's skin happens to be wrong, then I say those people are justified to resort to any means necessary to bring about justice where the government can't give them justice.

**Narrator:** Malcolm x's influence was strong among young people, especially for some members of the student nonviolent coordinating committee.

**Stokely Carmichael:** so many people in SNCC who didn't even know who Malcolm was began to sit up and take notice. So here in SNCC, it became first of all, right, Malcolm X is having an effect where you don't even think he's having an effect, so people began to look closer. Of course, the closer they look to Malcolm x, the quicker they got hooked on Malcolm x.

**Narrator:** early in 1964, SNCC and Dr. Martin Luther King joined forces for a voting rights campaign in Selma, Alabama. When SNCC invited Malcolm X to speak in Selma, he reaffirmed his willingness to support other civil rights leaders.

**Malcolm X:** and I think that the people in this part of the world would do well to listen to Dr. Martin Luther King and give him what he's asking for and give it to him fast before some other factions come along and try to do it another way. What he's asking for is rights and that's the ballot. And if he can't get it the way he's trying to get it, then it's going to be gotten one way or the other.

**Narrator:** on February 14, 1965, Malcolm x's home was bombed as he and his family slept inside.

**Reporter:** had you had any threats of anything like this?

**Betty Shabazz:** have I had any threats? The only thing I get is threats. I get not less than six or seven threatening phone calls every day.

**Alex Haley:** and the phone rang and I picked it up, it was a morning, a Saturday morning as I recall, and this voice came on and started talking. And I'm wondering, who is it? I didn't recognize the voice. And finally, something he said made me realize with a great shock, my shock, that was Malcolm x. And for the first time in our whole acquaintance of years, I really didn't perceive who he was. The thing was, he was under such pressure that it was as if it had constricted his vocal cords. He just felt, I guess, as near desperate as I ever saw him because, again, here's the image of the fearsome, indomitable Malcolm x, but bottom line was he was a father and he was a husband and his wife and daughters were imperiled and what could he do about it?

**Malcolm X:** my house was bombed, it was bombed by the black Muslim movement upon the orders of Elijah Mohammed.

**Narrator:** but within the week, Malcolm X expressed doubt that the Muslims were responsible. He planned to speak again the following Sunday at the Audubon ballroom.

**Sonia Sanchez:** I was going to the Audubon that day, had been out the night before reading, had gotten lazy and had said simply, "ah, I'll go next week," and so proceeded to go into the kitchen, put some coffee on, turn on the radio. And my little apartment there, I had a little black and white kitchen table with these little black chairs. And I had this little black radio on that table, and I clicked the radio on. As I stood there thinking about what had happened the night before, turned towards the stove to pick up the coffee. And the flash came through on this station and said Malcolm had been assassinated.

**Narrator:** Malcolm X was killed by 16 gun shots fired at close range. He was 39 years old.

**Betty Shabazz:** and my children were crying, "what's going on, what's going on, are they going to shoot us?" and I just knew they had shot him.

**Ossie Davis:** and that night we went into the Harlem community to walk and mingle with the people. There was a kind of sense of loss, and as we passed people, some who were even strangers, we would stop and greet each other and say what this man had meant to us.

**Peter bailey:** he was a master teacher and there is no greater loss to a community than the loss of a master teacher.

**Narrator:** during the next three days, 20,000 people endured subfreezing temperatures to say goodbye to Malcolm x.

**Ossie Davis:** when the funeral was over and Malcolm was stripped of his western clothes and then the Muslims came and dressed him for proper Muslim burial, they had a service.

We went out to Ardsley, the cemetery. And when we got there, you know, the professional gravediggers was standing there with their shovels, but some of the black brothers said, "no, huh-uh, we can't let you do that. We dig this grave. You know, we cover this brother with dirt." and it was a moving moment, and I was proud at that moment to be black and proud that my community and people, no matter what had been said by the outside world, said to the brother, "we loved and respected and admired you." so we buried him and there it is. **Narrator:** Malcolm X had a far reaching effect on the civil rights movement. In the south, there had been a long tradition of self reliance. Malcolm x's ideas now touched that tradition. In 1965, the student nonviolent coordinating committee launched new strategies to challenge white control of southern politics.

**Stokely Carmichael:** our direction was clear, a heavy emphasis on nationalism, strong, as strong as Malcolm had it, as strong as we could get it.

**Narrator:** Carmichael and other SNCC members began a voter drive in Lowndes county, Alabama, known as bloody Lowndes for its violence against blacks. Although 80 percent of the population was black, there were no black elected officials. Economically dependent on white plantation owners, many were afraid to join civil rights efforts. And none had been allowed to register to vote until early 1965.

**Stokely Carmichael:** now, in this country it says majority rules. We are 80 percent of the majority in this — we are 80 percent in this county and we have the right to rule this county. We have the right to rule this county and we're going to rule it. I don't care how poor we are and how black we are, we are going to govern this county.

**John Hulett:** Stokely Carmichael and Colton Cox and others who got together and told us according to the Alabama law, if we didn't like what the democratic party was doing in our county, or the republican party, we could form our own political organization and it could become a political party.

**Stokely Carmichael:** George Wallace was the head of the Alabama democratic party. The Alabama democratic party was racist. Its symbol at that time had a white rooster and it had the words of white supremacy. That was the official emblem of the democratic party in Alabama. So here it would be easy for us to tell our people, "hey look, this party's not for us. We need our own party."

**Narrator:** the new political party was named the Lowndes county freedom organization. But it became better known by the symbol it chose, a Black Panther.

**John Hulett:** and then when we chose that symbol, the Black Panther, the minute the people in that county started saying we were violent during that time. You know, now you got a violent group in Lowndes county who is turning out — who are going to start killing white folks. But it wasn't that, it was a political — just a symbol to our own race that we were here to stay and we were going to do whatever needed to be done to survive.

**John Jackson:** everybody was excited because they said, "well, they have the rooster, which represents the democratic party, the elephant which represents the republican party, why can't we have a black cat to represent us? Everybody knows how a cat look," and we were excited because we knew that if a person couldn't read or write, they sure knew the difference between a cat, an elephant and a rooster.

**Narrator:** SNCC went door to door and farm to farm explaining to first time voters the rules for taking part in the Lowndes county primary.

**Stokely Carmichael:** now, the law says you can't vote in ours and also vote in the democratic primary, which has to be held on the same day according to the law. So what we'll have to do is vote on one and not the other. So if you want to vote for our candidates for sheriff, for tax assessor, tax collector, coroner and the school board, then you have to vote for us.

**Narrator:** on May 3rd, 1966, Lowndes county blacks voted for the first time since the end of reconstruction. Some voted as democrats in the Hayville courthouse. Several blocks away, the Lowndes county freedom organization held its primary on the grounds of the first baptist church. Voters for the independent party were introduced to candidates for seven offices, including sheriff, before casting their ballots. Even with the ever-present threat of violence, 900 black voters showed up that day to vote for the panther.

**John Hulett:** this was the first time that the black people in this county came together to make choices of their own candidates for public office. It was important also because the numbers of people that turned out for the election that day and voted for their candidates and felt that they had done something for themselves, to start making some of the kinds of changes they wanted to see happen in the system.

**Narrator:** eleven days later, Stokely Carmichael, representing the new militancy within SNCC, defeated John Lewis as national chairman.

**Stokely Carmichael:** if you took a clear look at John Lewis, he looked more like a young Martin Luther King, Jr., than anything else.

**John Lewis:** it was almost like a coup. People were saying we need someone who would stand up to Lyndon Johnson, we need someone who would stand up to Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Stokely Carmichael:** it was clear that he'd been alienated from the SNCC staff. So the vote against him represented that. But more importantly, it represented the clear insight of the SNCC organizers that understood that the question of morality upon which King's organization depended to bring about changes in the community were not possible. The SNCC people had seen raw talent and they understood properly this raw talent had nothing to do with morality, but had to do clearly with power.

**Narrator:** it had been almost a year since congress passed the voting rights act, but white resistance remained strong. In Mississippi alone, more than 300,000 blacks were not registered to vote. James Meredith, the first black person to enroll at the University of Mississippi, was determined to change all that. On June 5th, 1966, Meredith left Memphis, Tennessee, prepared to walk 220 miles to Jackson, Mississippi. He called it a march against fear.

**James Meredith:** to point out and challenge, if necessary, this all pervasive and overriding fear that's so much a part of the day to day life of the negro in this country, and especially in Mississippi.

**Narrator:** on the second day of his march, James Meredith was shot from ambush.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** we, as you know, have been greatly concerned about the shooting of James Meredith, we have expressed that.

**Narrator:** leaders of major civil rights organizations rushed to Memphis, Tennessee, where James Meredith was hospitalized. They vowed to continue the march for him.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** and something needs to be done to make it clear that we are not going to be stopped, we're not going to be intimidated.

**Narrator:** from the start, there was conflict.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** if we're going to be free, we will have to suffer for that freedom, we will have to sacrifice for it.

**Stokely Carmichael:** but I'm not going to beg the white man for anything that I deserve, I'm going to take it. We need power, we need power, that's what we need. We need power ... (inaudible).

**Floyd McKissick:** and I think it was more of a youth movement in all of the organizations asserting themselves far more than it was competition among leaders themselves. It was a clash of ideas, no question about a clash of ideas.

**Narrator:** the leaders began marching at the point where Meredith had been shot. Mississippi state troopers forcefully prevented them from marching on the road surface. Carmichael, angered by this rough handling, stepped forward to retaliate, but Dr. King restrained him.

**Stokely Carmichael:** we've got to realize the white folk in the state of Mississippi ain't nothing but a bunch of racists. And the only people who can stop them are the black folk in Mississippi. Now, we've got to make this march our march. This has got to be the march for the black people in Mississippi. And the only way we can make that our march is that we've

got to go into every little place and get every black man and black woman, black boy and black girl out, who's not afraid and let's march and let's make this our Mississippi. It's got to be our Mississippi.

**Narrator:** in sweltering heat, the marchers walked along highway 51, stopping in towns along the way to register new voters.

**Reporter:** how long have you waited to register, how many years?

**El Fondren:** oh, long time. Long time.

**Reporter:** how many years? How old are you?

**El Fondren:** I'm 106 years old, 9 months. Never fool with this ... (inaudible).

**Reporter:** how do you feel, sir?

**El Fondren:** me? I feel good.

**Narrator:** twenty Mississippi state troopers provided some protection, but half way through the march, that number was reduced to four. Governor Paul Johnson announced he wasn't, "going to wet nurse a bunch of showmen." as James Meredith recovered from his wounds, the threat of another attack against the marchers was an ever-present concern.

**David Dawley:** there was a new sense of anxiety that we were becoming involved in something that might have consequences, something real. It wasn't an academic exercise.

**Narrator:** as the marchers camped each night, they were protected by an organization known as the deacons for defense and justice.

**Reporter:** are any of them armed?

**Ernest Thomas:** well, I would think so.

**Reporter:** what are they carrying?

**Ernest Thomas:** well, it depends, .38s .45s, m-2s.

**Reporter:** are they prepared or trained to use them?

**Ernest Thomas:** yes, they are.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I'm tired of violence. I've seen too much of it. I've seen hate on the face of too many sheriffs in this house. And I'm not going to let my oppressor dictate to me what method I must use.

**Narrator:** SNCC planned to issue a dramatic call as the march approached Greenwood, Mississippi.

**Stokely Carmichael:** Willie Ricks was sent out as head as the advanced scout, and sometimes he could have as many as 20 to 40, as we grew bigger, even 20 or 40 people under his direction to spread out. And his task was to take them, spread them out to plantations, speak to the sharecroppers, tell them the march was coming through, but to throw out black power and to give little black power speeches to get their reaction. I think about three nights before Greenwood, because SNCC was deciding where's the best place for us to launch it? About three nights before Greenwood, I remember about 2:00 in the morning, Ricks came back and he was giving a report and Cleve Sellers was sitting next to me, I remember. And Ricks was saying, "we ought to drop it now. The people are ready for it. I said it the other day, and they dropped their hoes," you know. And I said, to Cleve, I said, "you know, you sent the wrong man out because we need a clear analysis here and this man is given to exaggerations."

Ricks had everybody primed. He said, "just get to your speech, we're going against freedom now, we're going for black power. Don't hit too much on freedom now, but hit the need for power." so we built up on the need for power. And just when I got there, before I got there, Ricks was there saying, "hit them now, hit them now." I kept saying, "give me time, give me time." when we finally got in, we dropped the black power, of course they had been primed and they responded immediately. But I myself, to be honest, I didn't expect that enthusiastic response.

**David Dawley:** until finally everyone together was thundering, "black power, black power." and that was chilling, that was frightening.

**Floyd McKissick:** it scared people because they did not understand, they could not subtract violence from power. They could only see power as a violent instrument accompanying it.

**John Lewis:** it was empty rhetoric, it was not a message. And the student nonviolent coordinating committee had a rich history of being involved in programmatic efforts and not just the use of slogan. It was at that point during that march that I made a decision to leave the student nonviolent coordinating committee.

**Stokely Carmichael:** the cause of black equality will be decided by black people because —

**Narrator:** the media saw the call for black power as a major shift in the civil rights movement.

**Arlie Schardt:** there was a tendency, I thought, to overlay it. There were a lot of new reporters, reporters that were new to this beat who were coming in from a lot of papers around the country as the march began to pick up momentum and as this black power theme began to get some publicity. The second reason was that the theme was never really clearly articulated, or at least what it meant was never clearly defined. And so it was open to very broad interpretation, and there were some whites for their own reasons who wanted to take this as a signal of real black hostility and enmity.

**David Dawley:** and the strategy coming out of black power from SNCC was that blacks should organize with blacks, and whites should organize with whites.

**Cleveland Sellers:** SNCC took the position that if there was going to be a march in Mississippi, it should be a march that's indigenous. Meaning that Mississippians should be involved and we should not call out the liberal armies from the north to come in and assist with that march.

**David Dawley:** so we moved on to work with whites on issues that we felt we should work with. In the next year, that was not civil rights, that was Vietnam.

**Narrator:** as the march neared Canton, Mississippi, reporters played up the differences between Martin Luther King and Stokely Carmichael.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** let me say first that this march is nonviolent, it is a nonviolent expression of our determination to be free. This is the principle of the march and certainly we intend to keep this march nonviolent.

**Frank McGee:** Mr. Carmichael, are you as committed to the nonviolent approach as Dr. King is?

**Stokely Carmichael:** no, I'm not.

**Frank McGee:** why aren't you?

**Stokely Carmichael:** well, I just don't see it as a way of life, I never have. But I also realize that no one in this country is asking the white community in the south to be nonviolent. And that in a sense is giving them a free license to go ahead and shoot us at will.

**Narrator:** the marchers began to set up their tents for the night on the grounds of an all black school in canton, Mississippi. Permission to use the school grounds had been granted by the black school board but was later revoked by white city officials.

**Stokely Carmichael:** we don't want anybody to move. The time for running has come to an end. You tell them white folk in Mississippi that all the scared niggers are dead. You tell them they shot on the rabbits, they going to deal with some men.

**Narrator:** Mississippi state troopers who had once been assigned to protect the marchers now took another stance.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I want to get this over because this is important. We're going to stick together, if necessary we are willing to fill up all of the jails in the state of Mississippi. And I don't believe they have enough jails for all of us people if they arrest us.

**Arlie Schardt:** it was like a scene of hell with the smoke rising and people vomiting and crawling around and choking and crying. And then there was a kind of an eerie silence and the one thing you could hear over and over again was this thug, thug, thug sound. And what it was was Mississippi troopers kicking people on the ground or hitting them with their rifle butts.

**John hart:** how were you hurt?

**Stokely Carmichael:** they hit me in the chest with a canister.

**John hart:** with a canister?

**Willie ricks:** white power, that's what it is, white power.

**Narrator:** despite the tear gas and beatings, the marchers remained nonviolent, but voices in the night told of the rage that many were feeling.

**Woman:** we will overcome.

**Man:** whitey got to go. Whitey got to go. Whitey got to go.

**Narrator:** on June 26th, the march entered Jackson, Mississippi. Along the route, 4,000 new voters were added to Mississippi voting rolls since Meredith first began his march against fear 22 days earlier in Memphis.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** and I have watched my dreams turn into a nightmare, I still have a dream. I still have a dream that one day right here in the state of Mississippi, justice will become a reality for all of god's children. I still have a dream.

**Stokely Carmichael:** we have to march to a position where we can see a strength and unity amongst each other from ... (inaudible) where we won't ever be afraid. And the last thing we have to do is to build a power base so strong in this country that we'll bring them to their knees every time they mess with us.

**Narrator:** this was the last great march of the southern civil rights movement. The call for power would now be raised in communities across the nation, challenging Americans to look at the realities of their democracy. Black Americans were changing, and there was no turning back.

**Floyd Mckissick:** and let 1966 be the year that we decided that we would develop our whole culture, that we would be proud of being black people, that we would no longer accept the use of the word negro, but we would become mature and we would regard ourselves as black men, black men in America.

## Two Societies (1965-1968)

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** there is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people in that society who feel they have no stake in it, who feel like they have nothing to lose. People who have stake in their society protect that society, but when they don't have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it.

**Narrator:** august, 1965, black residents in watts, a Los Angeles neighborhood, took to streets in anger. The uprising lasted six days and left 34 people dead. Watts was a challenge to the nation and to the nonviolent philosophy of martin Luther King.

**Man:** to Dr. King that we have here, I say this. Sure, we like to be nonviolent, but we up here in the Los Angeles area, will not turn the other cheek.

**Narrator:** the civil rights movement King led had won a major victory days earlier when president Lyndon Johnson signed the voting rights act. But outside the south, little had changed. Anger was building. It was time for King and his staff to move north. Their first target, Chicago, Illinois, the second largest city in America. A fourth of Chicago's residents were black. Despite a decade of protest and some successes, many faced profound poverty and discrimination.

**Linda Bryant-hall:** when I first heard that Dr. King was going to come to Chicago, I was elated. I said, "oh my gosh, Chicago's going to get involved in all of this. You know, Dr. King has got a powerful following, a powerful message and he's going to bring it to Chicago to help with the movement here. He's sure needed."

**Andrew Young:** when we went to Chicago, we were trying to see would nonviolence work in the north, and what elements of nonviolence would work. Voter registration, marches and direct action, could we end slums and create good housing? Could we create jobs and educational opportunities?

**Narrator:** a successful campaign in Chicago might provide a model for combating problems throughout the north. Other cities had been considered, but some black leaders refused to work with King and his staff. Chicago's civil rights leaders welcomed them.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we have looked forward to our coming to Chicago with great and eager anticipation. And as we have said in the past, we are here to study the conditions as they relate themselves in housing, jobs and the whole school question.

**Narrator:** Chicago officials were cautious. Ed Marciniak greeted King on behalf of the city.

**Ed Marciniak:** that welcome was, I think, both genuine and part of a strategy. The strategy was here was a man coming to a city he didn't know, to a city whose political institutions with which he was not familiar. He was dealing with people basically who were non-political, suspicious of the political establishment. And so the advice and counsel that he would be getting would be by and large advice that didn't come through the normal political channels.

**Narrator:** Chicago was the political dominion of mayor Richard j. Daley, one of the most powerful men in America. Daley's influence extended into the national democratic party. For 11 years, Daley had run the neighborhoods and city wards of Chicago through a political machine built on patronage. Some blacks were included in the machine, but many saw Daley as the power behind the system that locked them out.

**Clory Bryant:** the Daley machine is — well, I guess I could do that best by trying to describe mayor Daley. He seemed to many to be omnipotent. He took a Machiavelli approach to government, he was in control, he was strong, demanding, and ruthless.

**Jesse Jackson:** Daley had blacks on his staff and black officials and some black ministers who marched with Dr. King in the south, went to school with him at Morehouse, but on Daley plantation, they had press conferences and urged Dr. King to leave Chicago saying there's no place for you here. It really broke his heart to see some of his classmates turn on him in Chicago.

**Narrator:** the mayor himself had supported the campaign for civil rights in the south. Now, Daley kept watch as King's organization and local civil rights groups formed the Chicago freedom movement. In January, 1966, they launched a nonviolent war on slums.

**Woman:** and a lot of people get offended when you say slums. But we have to realize it's not just something that you can see in a community and say that you can't see that makes that slum. So we've got to do something about these problems, and the only way we can do something about it is to be together, see. And we're going to be together, we're going to get something done here, not only East Garfield park, not only in Lawndale, not only in Chicago, but we're going to get things done in New York, California, every state we got, we're going to have something done.

**Narrator:** many of Chicago's black residents were trapped in decaying and segregated neighborhoods. Fifty years earlier, those neighborhoods had been the point of entry for southern blacks recruited to work in northern industries. Other ethnic groups had worked their way out of slums. Strict segregation locked blacks in. Rents were high, services were neglected.

**Minnie Dunlap:** when I moved into the building on 3400 Madison, it was predominantly white. And when blacks started moving into that building, it seemed like white people just moved out overnight, they weren't there. And the services started to go down. He stopped painting, he stopped doing any repairs and things in the building.

**Woman organizer:** what's your name?

**Tenant:** my name is Mrs. Williams.

**Man organizer:** we're trying to get a meeting together with the people in this building so we can deal with some of the problems around here.

**Tenant:** well, just a minute, let me come down.

**Man organizer:** you come on down. I work for Dr. Martin Luther King.

**Minnie Dunlap:** so I sort of made myself an organizer and started talking with the tenants that were in the building about holding their rent. So I got only about seven of them to say that they would work with me at that particular time. The others I felt that wanted to work with me but were afraid because they were on fixed incomes, particularly public assistance. And they were afraid that the landlord would get their checks cut off.

**Narrator:** opposition to the mayor could be costly. Daley's political machine controlled city services and had influence over public housing and welfare. The mayor used that power against the Chicago freedom movement.

**-Nancy Jefferson:** he owned that system, Richard j. Daley did. And I remember the inspectors were going from door to door to those of us that were participating with martin Luther King. And they came to my house, but you know, people were harassed at that level, inspectors, for violations that they couldn't fix. So when you got a violation, who did you have to go to? You had to go to one of Daley's men to fix the code or else, you know, you were fined.

**John McDermott:** when King actually came to town, Daley received him politely. And then every time Dr. King and the movement would raise an issue, Daley would institute some kind of response or a program to show that the movement wasn't needed and that the city was on top of the problem. This is particularly true if it had to do with city services. If Dr. King would go to, as he did, to the west side and help to shovel out filth in an apartment in a very dirty, rundown section of town, why the next day, the garbage trucks would arrive and the place would be all cleaned up. And it is true in the minds of the people and the press, it became hard to see Daley as some kind of enemy because he would always respond.

**Richard j. Daley:** we'd like to know if places are run down or it's a hazard to human life. The fire department wants to know if a building is in such shape that it's a danger to life of the people that are in it. And they can be of great help in giving us this information.

**Ed Marciniak:** it was clear, I think, to us at the time, was what the Chicago freedom movement wanted was a way to get confrontation with city hall. And our purpose was to see if we could avoid a confrontation, to diffuse any issue that might precipitate a confrontation. We were not Birmingham, we were not Selma, we were Chicago.

**Narrator:** King had chosen Chicago as the proving ground for a nonviolent campaign in the north. But six months had gone by and there were no victories in sight. On July 10th, 1966, the freedom movement held a rally at soldier field. Some were questioning the strategy of nonviolence. King argued in its defense.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we assemble here today to march to city hall to demand the redress of our legitimate freedom. I want every one of you here to march with us today. By the thousands, we will march there in a few minutes, make our great witness. I'm still convinced there is nothing more powerful to dramatize and expose the social evils than the transplant of marching people.

**Narrator:** in sweltering heat, 5,000 marched with King to city hall. He taped a list of demands to the door, calling for city action to end discrimination. The following day, movement leaders met with the mayor, the talks reached an impasse.

**Richard j. Daley:** while I asked for their answer to the solution of many of these questions, and they had no solutions. They had the recitation of the problem, but I said, "well, how do you eliminate the slum and blight over night? What would you men do that we haven't done in Chicago?"

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** and no specific commitments were made. We requested, for instance, a police or a civilian review board and that, again, no commitment was made. In the housing area, no commitments were made. And for this reason, we will have to move right on with our program, action program, to dramatize these issues and to bring it squarely before not only the attention but the conscience of the Chicago community.

**Narrator:** a day later, the movement's plans were interrupted. The oppressive July heat had fueled growing tension in the city. When officials closed fire hydrants in a black neighborhood, tempers flared. Leaders of the freedom movement mobilized quickly. The future of their nonviolent campaign was at stake.

**Al Raby:** Dr. King and I and Andy drove around trying to persuade particularly young black people that they were, one, not helping the problem. We understood their frustration, we were trying to address it and find avenues for that energy and frustration and anger to be challenged in a constructive way. And that the most dangerous situation was that the police would overreact and they would, in fact, be physically hurt or damaged or end up in jail.

**Narrator:** the battle on the streets continued for four days, two people were killed, but Chicago was spared the devastation that had hit watts a year earlier. Some credited King and the freedom movement. Mayor Daley felt otherwise.

**Ed Marciniak:** the mayor did feel that there was no need for outsiders to stir up the troops in Chicago, and therefore I think his natural inclination was to say, "well, we have never had these things before, now they're happening. What's the explanation? It must be these events and these people and the way they're doing things that was responsible for the rioting that took place."

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we are trying to conduct a nonviolent movement here in Chicago, and we are going on with that program. But we need support, and there's no point in the power structure and anybody else saying that because we are peacefully going around trying to change conditions that we are the cause of the riots. That's dishonest, it is untrue, it is unfair to say it to the public. Because we have stood up for nonviolence with all of our hearts. And those who will make this peaceful revolution impossible will make a violent revolution inevitable. And we've got to get this over, I need help. I need some victories. I need some concessions to take back.

**Narrator:** within days, leaders of the freedom movement shifted focus. They took their protest out of the slums that contained blacks and into the white neighborhoods that excluded them.

**Bernard Lafayette:** there were patterns of segregation and discrimination, clear patterns. For an example, there were no signs that said, "blacks cannot live here." but it was white only and it was obvious, the white only. And there were reasons why it was white. It's not because blacks chose not to live in those communities, it's because they were systematically denied, primarily by the real estate agent.

**Narrator:** protesters charged realtors, banks and insurance companies with block busting. White neighborhood were targeted, homeowners were pressured to sell low and flee, and homes were resold to blacks at a premium. Within months, areas were changed from all white to all black and city and financial services decreased.

**Rosemary porter:** the white people didn't make money, the black people didn't make money, the real estates made money and they do it because of that. They can move the blacks into middle class, white neighborhoods, they can move the whites out of middle class neighborhoods into the suburbs. They make the money, we don't make anything. But they propagate the idea that because blacks move in to white neighborhoods, your house values are going to go down.

**Narrator:** freedom movement volunteers crossed the line that divided black and white Chicago. They began marching into all-white neighborhoods.

**John McDermott:** this neighborhood was convinced that we were there to take away their most precious possession, their homes and the beauty of their neighborhood. And as we walked deeper and deeper into the neighborhood, you had a great sense of isolation. Would I ever get out of here? And the expressions of anger and hate, the swastikas which were held up, just unbelievable. And it showed the problem. That's all the point was, to show the problem. To show the fear, to show the rejection, to show the hate, to show the problems we were trying to solve.

**Jesse Jackson:** it was said that you could not expose segregation in the north because it was subtle. This actually was everything except subtle. It was dynamic, it was real, blatant, ugly, violent. I was just hit three times.

**Reporter:** were any of your other people hit?

**Jesse Jackson:** I don't know.

**Reporter:** how many of your people were arrested?

**Jesse Jackson:** I don't know.

**Narrator:** three days of marching exposed white resistance and heightened black skepticism about the use of nonviolence.

**Minnie Dunlap:** I was sick that time. When I watched it on tv, I got angry, I got scared, I got upset. And when I watched that kind of hostility and that kind of prejudiceness, they like to not understand, so I just couldn't see why they would do that. And in looking at that I said, "gee, I'm not as nonviolent as I think I am, especially when Dr. King wanted us to be nonviolent." because if I had been there and they had threw those ... (inaudible) and had spit on me, I think I would have just hit back.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we sent negroes in large numbers to the real estate offices in gage park. Every time negroes went in, the real estate agent said, "oh, I'm sorry, we don't have anything listed." now, you can find something somewhere, but it was always back in the ghetto, but they didn't have anything. And then soon after that, we sent some of our fine white staff members in to those same real estate offices, and the minute the white persons got in, they opened the books, "oh yes, we have several things. Now what exactly do you want?"

**Narrator:** on august 5th, the marchers returned to the southwest side. Mayor Daley had sent 1,200 police officers. They estimated the mob at 5,000.

**Andy Young:** now, in the south we faced mobs, but in the south, it would be a couple of hundred, or even 50 or 75. The violence in the south always came from a rabble element. But these were women and children and husbands and wives coming out of their homes, becoming a mob. And in some ways, it was far more frightening. There was just a rain of rocks and cherry bombs. So you didn't know what it was.

**Bernard Lafayette:** then martin Luther King was struck on the head... And I remember the reaction they had. They all, you know, surged forward and the march was stopped. They said, "halt, wait," you know, and I remember -Jesse Jackson running in, because he was right near martin Luther King and they held his head down because we knew he would be the target of any kind of, you know, personal attack. And we tried to regroup ourselves. And I remember the tension that people had. And we felt completely surrounded.

**Narrator:** the marchers remained nonviolent, but many were angry.

**Nancy Jefferson:** Dr. King was only trying to say to America, trying to say to gage park, "we are human beings, I am a citizen of this city. I'm a black American, I have a right to move wherever I want to move if I have the money to move. What's wrong with that?" you know, and I think that's what it was all about, was that I dare one part of this society to say that you can't move wherever you want to move. I think that was the anger that was in us.

**Jesse Jackson:** the possibility that we might get arrested —

**Narrator:** acting on his own, Jesse Jackson announced the march into cicero, a white suburb known for racial hostility. His challenge caught both city officials and movement leaders off guard.

**Jesse Jackson:** is there any one individual, or any one leader, any one group of leaders, worth the perpetuation of the historical deprivations of negro people? That's the question we have to deal with. And I have counted up the costs: my life, bevel's life, even Dr. King's life, over and against a generation and the continuation of a kind of sin that's going to internally disrupt this country and possibly this world. I counted the cost. I'm going to cicero."

**Clory Bryant:** you don't know what cicero meant to people in Chicago. You don't go into the viaduct, honey, because if you do, you may not get back. Cicero was on the other side of the viaduct. And you didn't walk through cicero alone. You didn't let your car break down in cicero and get out to change a tire.

**Narrator:** fifteen thousand blacks worked in cicero, none lived there.

**Woman:** there's a lot of good ones say they work there, but still we don't want to mix with them, to live with them.

**Reporter:** why? You work with them, you —

**Woman:** but I don't want to live with them.

**Reporter:** why?

**Woman:** because I moved out of a neighborhood that was colored, I had to move. Everybody that lives with the colored has to move.

**Reporter:** why?

**Woman:** because you're not safe walking the streets at night. You cannot leave the house.

**White Man:** negroes have a right to move in under the constitution. The only thing is what kind of a negro?

**Linda Bryant hall:** the cicero community has been a very hostile community to blacks for years, ever since I could remember. And I looked forward to the time that I could march down those streets in defiance of all those people there.

**Bob Lucas:** there was a lot of fear in the white community and some parts of the black community that there was going to be some sort of a big racial explosion. There were a lot of demand on the part of the citizens, particularly the white citizens, on mayor Daley to stop the marches, there were some demand on the part of the black leadership to martin Luther King to stop the marches. So you see, everybody wanted a way out, both sides wanted a way out.

**Narrator:** religious leaders led the call for a city-wide summit that would stop the marches. King agreed to negotiate, but he vowed to continue marching until a settlement was reached.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I don't mind saying to Chicago or to anybody, I'm tired of marching. Tired of marching for something that should have been mine at birth. I don't mind saying to you tonight... I don't mind saying to you tonight that I'm tired of the tensions surrounding our days. I don't mind saying to you tonight that I'm tired of living every day under the threat of death. I have no martyr complex. I want to live as long as anybody in this building tonight, and sometimes I begin to doubt whether I'm going to make it through. I must confess I'm tired.

**Narrator:** King and his staff had hoped that their campaign in Chicago would serve as a model for others in the north, but their work in Chicago had failed to win support from former allies, including the federal government and northern liberals. It was time to move on.

**Andrew Young:** the SWIC went to Chicago to see if nonviolence would work in the north. And so we were doing a number of things. The marches were only one, but Chicago was so much bigger than any city that we'd worked in in the south. We



knew we couldn't do them all at the same time and that we couldn't sustain an aggressive movement as long as — much longer. So we were trying to find a way to wind it up.

**Albert Raby:** we reached the point in which we thought that we had achieved not everything we wanted, but everything we could achieve. And there was those who disagreed with that. But we had the burden of decision, we made the best one we could, as honestly as we could, with all the suspicions that were shared by those of us who were criticizing us.

**Narrator:** august 26th, 1966, both sides signed a ten point agreement. The city promised to enforce its open housing laws and desegregate public housing. Banks and realtors agreed to comply. Critics doubted the agreement would be enforced, but King saw it as a first step. He agreed to stop the marches, including the march into cicero.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** the Chicago freedom movement has pledged its resources to assist in the implementation of these programs and hereby agrees to halt neighborhood marches and demonstrations in Chicago on the issue of open housing. So long as these —

**Narrator:** King's announcement immediately split the Chicago movement.

**Linda Bryant-hall:** when he called off the march, we were surprised. We were shocked. This is a march we looked forward to. The other marches were nice, but the one in cicero had special meaning for us. We don't care about summits taking place without us. We don't care about covenants. We want contracts in black and white with some hard answers for us, with some signatures and some people we can hold responsible to and some time frames. But none of this was there.

**Narrator:** local groups announced their own march into cicero. It would take place without Jesse Jackson or Dr. King.

**Chester Robinson:** we are not marching into cicero to appeal to the white conscience, but to demonstrate to everybody that rank and file people now are a new breed, a new kind of cat without fear. We do not come head in hand, scratching our heads, shuffling our feets to beg for a few concessions. At this march, we are serving notice. Beginning today, every negro can see, act and live out the assumption that he can walk anywhere, that he is a human like anybody and is to be treated like anybody else.

**Robert Lucas:** the day that the march took place, Dr. King called me at home and he said to me, "you know, bob, we would like to save cicero to use it later on for something, and that I wish you wouldn't go." and I told Dr. King, I said, "well, doc, my conscience dictates to me that I must lead the march into cicero."

**Clory Bryant:** we got there and it was such few, we became a little frightened. And we kept standing around, and finally it was 12:00, I believe it was 12:00, and all of a sudden, guys started getting out of cars and people started coming out of doorways and they said, okay, Lucas, step off time."

**Narrator:** about 250 marchers began walking into cicero. Over 3,000 law enforcement agents were on hand.

**Clory Bryant:** well, it was not a King march. You know, we just went out there on faith... We just went... Little people and that was the difference. It was a ground swell of grass root people. And when they threw bricks, they got them back. We caught them and we threw them back. So it was give and take in cicero for ah oh a mile or so. And I'll never forget it.

**Narrator:** as the marchers left cicero, little had been resolved. The southern civil rights victories had not been repeated in the north. The problems, and the anger, remained. The tension building between black and white America would explode with the greatest force in Detroit, Michigan. In 1967, Detroit was booming. Federally funded urban renewal brought highways and skyscrapers. The auto industry brought employment. But success looked different to Detroit's black community. Urban renewal built expressways through black neighborhoods. It took jobs and resources to white suburbs. It left black residents behind.

**Helen Kelly:** the expressway divided the community when you could walk across the street and talk to your neighbor, it's no longer there. You got to go cross the bridge, and if you go across that bridge, you ain't going to find that same neighbor because that space, the street is gone. All those houses in that neighborhood is gone.

**Ron Scott:** you constantly saw white guys on the assembly line performing in white shirts, who would leave and who would drive to a better neighborhood, who would drive a better car, and so forth. And there wasn't the opportunity there. There wasn't the opportunity.

**Narrator:** opportunity came with power. In Detroit, that meant white power. It was symbolized by a police force that was 95 percent white. Generations of black residents had contended with police, especially four man squads known as the big four.

**Grant Friley:** when the big four pulled up, you jumped. I mean, when they said move off the corner, you moved off the corner. And where do young black men have, but a corner? They don't have swimming pools, they don't have estates, they have corners in the cities. And they stand around, they harmonize, they clown, they have fun. But when the big four would say give me that corner, you gave them that corner, or else.

**Herb Boyd:** and it wasn't unusual to see the cops coming into neighborhoods and just arbitrarily grabbing people, you know, without any kind of provocation and slam us up against the walls, ask us for identification, where you going, what you been doing, any kind of suspicious whatsoever would be cause for them to just go ahead and accost you.

**Narrator:** police community tension was near combustion by the summer of 1967. The spark came on July 23rd. Police conducted a routine raid on a blind pig, an illegal after hours club.

**John Nichols:** at this particular time, there was more there than the crew expected, required shuttling several times from the station to the scene, taking prisoners back and forth. And the crowd become restive and what was kind of a mood of hilarity grew into some derisive talk to the police and ultimately was stoning the cars.

**Man:** that's why the negroes are all rioting up town, you know what that means? All these folks, every time you see one of them, he going to stop a brother. You know, he never stop no whites, that's why we out here rioting and we going to keep on rioting until they stop all this.

**Narrator:** it was Sunday morning, few police were in the area. Reinforcements were called in as the growing crowd began looting and burning.

**Herb Boyd:** the feeling in the streets at that time, kind of a sense of euphoria, a sense of freedom and rebellion. Everybody felt like unified, that you know, the revolution was right around the corner. Because we had been talking about those things in the community anyway. So everybody felt that this was the catalyst, this was the charge, this was the igniter.

**Helen Kelly:** when my daughter got to church, she called back and said, "mama, it's judgement day." I say, "what you mean?" she say, "everything is burning." I say, "why?" she say, "they say it's a riot going on." and I almost had a fit behind that.

**Narrator:** moderate black leaders offered to help police. Dr. Arthur Johnson drove into the area with congressman John Conyers.

**Arthur Johnson:** the crowd, the whole scene was such that I could not drive my car further. John Conyers finally got out of the car, stood on the hood of it and attempted to speak to the people about leaving the street and returning to their homes. And finally, I got out of my car and whispered in John's ear, "I would like to get my car out of here if I can."

**Richard Strichartz:** the city was burning, and all the work that we had done was being destroyed. The distress was more than distress, it was agony and tears came to my eyes, and it was — we thought we had the answers, and the fact is nobody had the answers.

**Ron Scott:** inside of most black people, there was a time bomb. There was a pot that was about to overflow, and there was rage that was about to come out. And the rebellion just provided an opportunity for that. I mean, why else would people get upset about the cops raiding a blind pig? They'd done that numerous times before. But people just got tired. People just got tired of it. And it just exploded.

**Guardsmen:** return to your homes to protect your own property. It's the best thing you can do, protect your own property. Protect your own property.

**Narrator:** twelve hours after the initial police raid, governor George Romney called in the Michigan national guard. Seven thousand guardsmen began arriving as night fell. Most were young, white and heavily armed. They had little or no training in riot control. One hundred city blocks were in turmoil.

**Eleanor Josaitis:** it looked like a war torn zone. That's all you could think of, was my god, this is 20 miles from where I live and it's — they dropped a bomb. That was what you saw on television and what you heard in the community was, "why are they doing this? Why are they doing this?"

**Rev. Albert Cleage:** this is a racial incident, it represents a racial rebellion that goes from coast to coast. In the city of Detroit, it represents one simple thing: black people want control of black communities.

**Narrator:** despite a nine p.m. curfew, thousands of people were on the streets.

**Edward Vaughn:** a hardware store was being looted by a lot of people, apparently people who lived in that community. And a carload of brothers rolled up and they asked everyone, had they gotten enough and did they need anything else? And people finally said no after they had gotten what they wanted, and so these brothers said, fine. And so they got everybody out of the store and they fire bombed it and they left. They didn't take anything themselves.

**Herb Boyd:** the cry in the air was "let's burn this place down, let's torch it. This sucker was always ripping us off anyway. You know, they never hired many black people," so it's kind of anger and frustration was in the wind.

**Narrator:** protected by police and guardsmen, fire fighters faced an onslaught of rocks and debris. Reports of gunfire increased through the night. Police suspected snipers.

**Woman:** I could smell smoke. Those people's houses across the street are on fire. I don't see nobody — everybody on that block's got along fine. I don't know nobody in that block, the children even now, they play nice together. I don't see why this has to happen.

**John Nichols:** there were fires going on, there was a great deal of excitement, street lights were being shot out by the police. There was a great deal of noise, great deal of confusion. Nobody knew where their parent organizations were. The entire situation was one of semi controlled chaos. Everybody was uptight, very uptight.

**Grant Friley:** I was afraid of being shot by a national guardsman, I was afraid of being shot by police officers, and I was afraid of being shot by looters and rioters. I was afraid of being shot, period.

**Narrator:** in an atmosphere fed by rumors and fear, everyone was at risk.

**Albert Wilson:** going into the five and ten cent store, you didn't know what danger you were in, and I hear this officer say, police officer say, "all you black mother fuckers come out from the back there." well, I immediately get up and come to the door, as you know, head for the door, the archway of the door, to do what he says. When I'm told, I hear a voice, one of my neighbors, I knew it was her voice. And she told me, "don't go out there, come back, come back." and at that time, I went to turn to go back and get there next to her behind this bolting of carpeting, and I just remember seeing a flash of light at that time and going back there to lay down on a bolt and to wake up, I guess, a couple of days later and to hear a doctor tell my mother that the bullet had injured my spine and I probably wouldn't walk again.

**Narrator:** by Monday morning, hundreds had been injured. Six people were dead, four had been shot, two others died in fires.

**Arthur Johnson:** the growing sense of concern in the community was that the situation was out of hand. That no one knew where it was going, when it would end, or even how to end it.

**Gov. George Romney:** as governor of the state of Michigan, I do hereby officially recommend the immediate deployment of federal troops into Michigan to assist state and local authorities to reestablish —

**Narrator:** during the night, governor Romney had called u.s. Attorney general Ramsey Clark to recommend that president Johnson send federal troops.

**Gov. George Romney:** and he indicated that we would get federal assistance, that the troops would be made available. Then he called us back several hours later to indicate that he'd have to have a written statement indicating that the riot was completely beyond our ability to control. Well, the difficulty of that was is that it would have nullified all of the insurance policies over the whole area. And furthermore, we didn't know with certainty we couldn't control it. We felt we might not be able to, so I indicated that to him.

**Roger Wilkins:** finally, they reached a compromise and Johnson decided that a number of us would go to Detroit. And he started telling us and occasionally he could be on the phone to ft. Bragg to the general in charge of the 2nd airborne. And one thing he kept saying, "I don't want bullets in those guns. I don't want our troops to have bullets in those guns." and he went on and on and he just got himself all worked up. And he said, "I don't want anybody to say that my troops shot a pregnant ni —" and he looked at me, and his face went red and then he finished his sentence without finishing that word. And as — he then sent us out to go and pack and then go to Andrews air force base.

**Narrator:** forty-seven hundred paratroopers from the 101st and 82nd airborne divisions began arriving Monday afternoon. Soldiers from these same units had been sent to protect black school children in little rock in 1957, and James Meredith at old miss in 1962. At the president's order, they would not be deployed in Detroit unless absolutely necessary. Johnson's envoys assessed the situation.

**Cyrus Vance:** the mass national guard had been very spotty. There was much too much indiscriminate shooting. They had shot out the street lights, which is the worst thing you can do in a situation like that because that makes it even more likely that the law enforcement people are going to be shot at. It creates a fear in the community, it creates fear, really, in the enforcement officials as well. So that it was not going well when we arrived.

**Narrator:** looting and burning had continued into the second day. Firefighters from over 35 communities were on the streets. Police arrested 3,900 people by Monday night. There was no end in sight.

**Grant Friley:** I was totally wiped out. It got to a point where I had to watch out for my temper. It got to a point where those persons who were yelling and screaming about down with the whitey and all of that, I was looking into his eyes and wanting to knock the hell out of him because he didn't know what the hell he was talking about.

**Howard Holland:** I got a chance to sneak a phone call home one night just to let my parents know I was all right, because it had been three or four days since I had let them know what was going on. And my mother expressed a thought, and I guess it stuck in my mind ever since. Said, "here I have one son in Vietnam in a combat zone, and now I'm worried about you in our own hometown. You know, downtown Detroit."

**Narrator:** at 11:20 Monday night, president Johnson sent the federal troops into Detroit. They were ordered to carry unloaded weapons. At least 19 people had died since the raid on the blind pig.

**Reporter:** sergeant, you've just recently returned from Vietnam. Could you tell us how it feels to have to come from one zone of combat in a foreign land to one in your own land?

**Sergeant:** not a good feeling, not one I'm kind of proud of, but it's a job, it's a duty that has to be done.

**Second paratrooper:** and it's something different.

**Reporter:** did you ever expect this kind of call when you joined the service?

**Second paratrooper:** I expected calls, but it kind of surprised me when I got there that morning. They said, "fall out with all this gear, you're going." and I said, "where?"

**Herb Boyd:** clearly, the presence of a large number of national guardsman and federal troops, along with a bolstered police department, they had that armed presence out there, so the looting was all over. The curfew had been put into effect.

**Narrator:** in total, there were 17,000 law enforcement people in Detroit. The disorder was three days old. Much of the looting and burning had ended. But exhausted and still heavily armed, national guardsmen and state and local police continued their patrols.

**Roger Wilkins:** one night, a black coworker and I were driving up grand river, which is a major artery in Detroit. And we're about to turn left onto joy road when all of a sudden we realized that this convoy of state police cars had made a U-turn and were pulling us over. So I came out of the car with my hands up, and what I saw was — I was circled by people with long guns and pistols and they were all pointing at me and they were all nervous people and they were all white. And I'm a black guy and I'm a high government official, but I was a nigger, a nigger in white America and I thought at that moment I was going to be dead. Thirty-five years old and dead at the corner of joy road and grand river.

**Narrator:** within days, police arrested 7,200 people. Most were young, black men.

**John Conyers:** the police stations were all overrun and the jails were filled, so they just created detention centers. So people were calling up, reporting what the police were doing or did, or reporting missing people. People wanting to file complaints, fear, anger, it was — could this be happening in America?

**Narrator:** at least two people died when national guardsmen, fearing snipers, sprayed buildings with gun fire.

**Woman:** it sounded like we were in Vietnam or something, all this excitement and boy, I was panicked and I told my husband about it and then he says, "get on that floor," and I got on the floor. And then we went in this woman's apartment and then the voice, the cops says to come outside, put your hands on your head.

**Ron Scott:** and I opened the door and there are about four or five national guardsmen, all young, all white, looking around with rifles and bayonets. And this one guy, he said, "we heard some shooting here." and everybody who had been shot up to this point that we heard about, they all said that they had a gun. And that they were shooting at the police, that became the line. This guy was a sniper, he was shooting at the police. And I knew that if I was shot, if my family was shot, that they could have closed the door in this apartment and nobody would have ever known what happened.

**Narrator:** as the nightmare in Detroit began to end, the press uncovered a story about three young black men killed during a police raid at the Algiers motel. Murder charges were brought against a white police officer. Two other officers and a black security guard were also implicated. There were no convictions.

Five days after the raid on the blind pig, Detroit had reached a tentative peace. Forty-three people were dead, 33 were black. Insurance estimates of property loss neared \$50 million. The uprising in Detroit marked the fifth year of civil unrest in America, the nation and its president struggled for answers.

**Pres. Lyndon b. Johnson:** the civil peace has been shattered in a number of cities. The American people are deeply disturbed. No society can tolerate massive violence any more than a body can tolerate massive disease. And we in America shall not tolerate it. But just saying that does not solve the problem. We need to know the answer, I think, to three basic questions about these riots. What happened? Why did it happen? What can be done to prevent it from happening again and again?

**Narrator:** the president appointed an advisory commission to investigate. On March 1st, 1968, the Kerner Commission published a report that said America was becoming two societies, black and white, separate and unequal. It urged the nation to tear down racial barriers to opportunity and education, employment, housing, government, and the media. It stated, "the need is not so much for government to design new programs as it is for the nation to generate new will."

**Roger Wilkins:** it was a mandate, had the president chosen to take it and say, "by god, we didn't know how serious the problem was. There is racism in this society and it is deep. And since I have said that I am going to be the president who finishes what Lincoln started," he could have used that as a springboard for more social action. Instead, he refused even to have the commission come over and present it to him.

**Narrator:** president Johnson was faced with the cost of an escalating war in Vietnam and growing political conservatism at home.

**Eleanor Josaitis:** there began to be a feeling that '68 was going to be a very hot summer. So the talk in the neighborhood was we have to stock our basement with food, that's the first thing we have to do. We must go over to Dearborn and take pistol practice lessons. When do we want to sign up for the vigilante? When do you want to go and

stand at the overpass on telegraph road and wait for all the black folks to come out from the city and riot in our community? And there was so much fear that that was going to take place, that it was going to come and we better be prepared for it.

**Al Cleage:** black people are not worried about white people in the suburbs. What we're trying to do is to control our own community, build our own black community and make it beautiful. Self determination as a concept for black people is a part of the rebellion. It's a black revolution sweeping America and self determination is the expression. That's what we want, that's what we're rebelling for. Oppression doesn't destroy people. The acceptance of oppression destroys any people.

## Power! (1966-1968)

**Stokely Carmichael:** this country knows what power is, it knows it very well, and it knows what black power is because it deprived black people of it for 400 years. We are on the move for our liberation. We have been tired of trying to prove things to white people. We are tired of trying to explain to white people that we're not going to hurt them. We are concerned with getting the things we want, the things that we have to have to be able to function.

**Narrator:** by 1967, the freedom movement was changing course.

**Floyd McKissick:** black people seek power and they must have power to change the conditions under which they live.

**Narrator:** across the nation, black men and women struggled for control of their lives through the ballot box, on the street, in the schools. The call for power challenged the established relationship between blacks and whites in America.

**Carl Stokes:** are the people in Cleveland willing to vote for a candidate for mayor who has the best qualifications, who has the best program, who has the philosophy of government and its relationship with people, but whose skin does happen to be black?

**Narrator:** fifteen million black Americans lived in the cities; yet in 1967, no major city had ever elected a black mayor. Determined to break with that past, the black community in Cleveland, Ohio, launched a voter registration campaign to support Carl Stokes.

**Geraldine Williams:** well, we thought a black mayor could do as well as some of the white mayors had done, and we certainly thought it would be an improvement in police/citizen relations because at that time they weren't too good. And we thought maybe he could do something about housing. We thought he would have the interest of the blacks more at heart, which the white mayors didn't seem to have particularly.

**Narrator:** two years earlier, Carl Stokes, an Ohio state legislator, had run for mayor and lost by a narrow margin. White supporters had not supported a black candidate. Now, some were saying he might save the city from the unrest erupting in other urban areas. Cleveland had seen the fires, a violent uprising in the black neighborhood of Huff that had claimed four lives and destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses. In the democratic primary, Ralph Loker the incumbent mayor, was Stokes' major opponent.

**Ralph Locher:** we can't solve our problem so long as we have disrespect for law, so long as we have anarchy and so long as we thumb our nose at law and order. With that in mind, this council and this administration has added 234 additional police to our force, and we've said to the hoodlum, "we're going to run you out of town and we're going to have law and order in this city."

**Narrator:** Mayor Locher sought to reassure the city there would be no repeat of the disturbances in Huff. Loker's administration was also marked by industrial decline and rising unemployment. Housing for one-third of Cleveland's residents were considered substandard. But for some, these were not the major issues of the campaign.

**Reporter:** this election seems to have a lot more interest than a lot of elections in recent years. Why do you think so?

**Woman:** you know, I guess it's the racial, the racial point.

**Reporter:** what is there about Loker that, you know —?

**Woman:** well, I like what he's done and just like he said, I think he'll find the mistakes he's made and won't make them again.

**Reporter:** well, why wouldn't give Stokes a chance?

**Woman:** well, I guess it's the idea of having a colored guy in.

**Carl Stokes:** the realities of being elected mayor of the city of Cleveland, which was 35 percent black at that time and 65 percent white and white, eastern European ethnics, was that you couldn't run a civil rights campaign here, you had to run a straight political in which you blurred or eliminated the racial distinctions as much as you could.

**Man:** do you feel like you're making any progress with it?

**Carl Stokes:** I wouldn't be out here tonight if I didn't believe that. I hope I made it with you, for instance.

**Woman:** good luck. Good luck. I wanted to tell the gentleman in back that all of us ladies, we pick our lipsticks by color, sometimes our dresses, but we don't vote that we, we study the candidates.

**Carl Stokes:** I believe that.

**Charles Butts:** civil rights was a movement where people believed that they could change the way people were treated. And in the Stokes campaign, while it was a political campaign, it had a candidate and became a campaign that stood for that kind of change.

**Narrator:** Cleveland was just over one-third black. Stokes needed to win white support and increase voter turnout in the black ward.

**Geraldine Williams:** we knew we had the votes, but we had to get them out. It's one thing to have them, but to have them just sit there. So we organized block by block.

**Narrator:** by late summer, the registration drive had added 30,000 black voters to the rolls. But with the primary only weeks away, campaign workers in the black neighborhoods found they had another battle to win.

**Thompson Gaines:** there was a certain segment of people who had this negative attitude, they felt — this just can't be. The people just won't elect a black man.

**Carl Stokes:** we were in a motorcade coming down East 55th Street, and my wife Shirley and I are sitting on the back seat of the convertible. And a little black kid that was maybe eight years old, probably, came up to us as we were stopped at a traffic signal and he said, "are you Carl Stokes?" and I said, "yes." and he just gave a little leap in the air and ran down the street clapping his hands saying, "he's colored, he's colored, he's colored, he's colored." I thought that sort of caught a sense of pride that I felt as I went through the black areas of the city of Cleveland.

Don't vote for me because I'm a negro, but god knows, don't vote against me because I'm a negro. We ain't what we want to be, and lord, we ain't what we're going to be. But great god, we sure ain't what we was, lord.

**Narrator:** on primary election day, blacks voted in record numbers. Stokes supporters knew that victory was within reach.

**Charles Butts:** we went back to the campaign headquarters but it was a very difficult job even getting close to it. The campaign headquarters that I had opened months before as an empty, barren place was now just surrounded by people far out into the street, and there was dancing in the street on Superior Avenue.

**Narrator:** stokes' primary victory was clear cut; 96 percent support in the black community and 52 percent support city-wide. But the campaign was far from over.

**Geraldine Williams:** we had stressed so much that you must vote for carl in the primary and you won't get a second chance. Now, if you don't put him on the ballot, you can forget the whole deal. So they went out and voted for him, I think that was October the 3rd. Okay, we said, "now, we got to get them back to the polls again November 7th." so we had telephone banks going and we would call them and we would visit them, we'd have the block captains go see them, the block supervisors. And they'd tell us, "already voted for him." we said, "oh my god, we got to do a voter education campaign." they said, "yes, but you just put him on the ticket, you've got to go back again and vote to be sure that he's the mayor." and that was a job.

**Woman at church rally:** we got to get out and knock on these doors. We got to bring the ones that never get out and never think about what is going to become of the city. That's a few of us have to get out and bring the ... (inaudible) committee of one and get the vote out for carl stokes, and then we can sing, "we're going to walk together, children, we're going to ... (inaudible) children," and we are going to have our mayor down there that's going to reach for everybody's children. Let's go on and work for carl stokes.

**Narrator:** in Cleveland, 80 percent of the voters were democrats. Winning the democratic primary usually meant certain election. But white voters were moving to the republican candidate, Seth Taft.

**Seth Taft:** so right after the primary, we just had thousands of people marching into our headquarters saying, "we want to campaign for you, we think you're the great guy." they'd never heard of me before. So it made a very uncomfortable situation, I can assure you, when a whole batch of people rush into your headquarters and want to work in your campaign when you don't like their motive. We fired a whole batch of them that went out and campaigned saying, "hey, you wouldn't want a black mayor of this city, would you?" and we got rid of everybody we could of that sort. Frankly, both of us ran, I think, a very much affirmative, non-rationally oriented campaign, but the racial issue was like one postage stamp thickness below the surface.

**Narrator:** stokes brought the issue into the open during a candidates debate at a white, west side high school.

**Geraldine Williams:** well, there were very few blacks over there to start out with, I think just a handful of us from the campaign. And blacks didn't go on the west side too much. I mean, they never did feel too welcome. And stokes introduced the matter of race into the campaign.

**Carl stokes:** well, I am going to be brutally frank with you, and equally frank with Seth Taft. The personal analysis of Seth Taft is that Seth Taft may win in the November 7th election, but only for one reason. And that reason is that his skin happens to be white.

**Seth Taft:** the whole place went kabooey, you couldn't hear a thing for five minutes. And carl was trying to say, "hey, hey, hey," to get attention and so forth, but he lost the audience. Now, that audience was a west side audience and it was 90 percent white.

**Carl stokes:** Seth himself has attempted to bypass this so-called black-white issue. But in practically every public utterance he has made during this campaign, he not so subtly points out that, "carl stokes has more experience than Seth Taft at being a negro," which is true. And he goes on to say that, "Seth Taft has had more experience at being white." well now, if this is not some kind of subtle appeal, then why continually bring it up?

**Seth Taft:** well, well, well.

**Geraldine Williams:** yeah, I guess it took Seth quite by surprise, and he said, "well, well, well. I guess if you don't vote for carl stokes you're a racist," and our hearts just sank because that was his very best remark of the whole night. And I'm sure that by carl introducing this into the campaign caught him by surprise, but he certainly rose to the occasion, you can believe that. And it scared us to death.

**Seth Taft:** it seems that the race issue is with us. Now it appears that if I say something on this subject, it's racism. If carl stokes says something about it, it's fair play.

**Narrator:** the debate was a turning point. Opinion polls showed large numbers of undecided white voters moving to Taft. With 15 days left to campaign, Taft reached out to the white west side.

**Seth Taft:** hello there, sir. I'm Seth Taft, how are you?

**Pollster:** for whom did you intend to vote for?

**Woman:** Taft.

**Pollster:** what do you feel the major political issue is? Race, crime, urban renewal?

**Woman:** I'd say crime.

**Pollster:** crime?

**Slovak man for Taft:** and I want you to know that all the Slovak people are for Seth Taft for mayor in this town, and this is the way they say it in Slovak. (speaking Slovakian)

**Narrator:** stokes struggled to hold on to his white support, but as he continued to slip in the polls, he returned to the black community to make his appeal.

**Carl stokes:** the thing upon which I have depended has been that if you show people that you have the qualification, that then you're not going to be penalized just because you happen to be a negro.

**Woman for stokes:** Mr. Stokes, he knows more about what we need, he can do more for us, and he's going to do it. And I think he's going to get it. Because we have worked awfully hard.

**Thompson Gaines:** we never gave up hope because I guess we were very loose in this endeavor because carl b. Stokes had brought more unity amongst the people of Cleveland than I had ever witnessed. And losing really wasn't part of my thought at the time.

**Seth Taft:** we were ahead in what had come in so far, and so the guys were getting me practiced up on an acceptance speech, or whatever we might call it, and then somebody came in with a list of what precincts had not reported. And as soon as I saw that, it was all over because the precincts that hadn't been reported at that moment were precincts in the black community.

**Narrator:** at five a.m., the final tally was announced. By a narrow margin, carl stokes had been elected mayor of America's 10th largest city.

**Reporter:** how's it feel?

**Carl Stokes:** it's a wonderful moment. Never has one man owed so much to so many. Those of us who are Polish, Hungarian, Croatian, Romanian, Negroes, German, Irish, Jewish — yeah! Yes, sir, and I can find no more fitting way to end this appeal by saying to all of you in the most serious and in the most meaningful way that I can, that truly never before have I ever known the full meaning of the words God Bless America. Thanks a lot.

**Geraldine Williams:** oh yes, it was a first. We had done something that hadn't been done any place in the country before. And since folks laughed at us in '65 and we pulled it off in '67, I guess we felt pretty smug about it. Yeah, we were very happy about it. And we said if it can be done here, it can be done in other places.

**Narrator:** in Cleveland, the power of the vote had put a black man in charge of city government. Two months later Gary, Indiana, inaugurated its first black mayor, Richard Hatcher. In Oakland, California, the search for power began on the streets. Blacks had little say in how their community was run; in particular, many questioned the role of the police.

**Huey Newton:** the police throughout the black communities in the country were really the government. We had more contact with the police than we did the city council. The police were universally disliked.

**Narrator:** the size of the mostly white police force were increasing, so were complaints of police brutality. Influenced by freedom struggles in the south and in third world nations, in 1966, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party for self defense, a symbol taken from a Lowndes County, Alabama, political organization. Armed with law books and with guns, the Black Panthers monitored the actions of the police in the black community.

**Bobby Seale:** I remember one of these first events when we got out of the car. We saw a policeman making an arrest of some kind, about 20 or 30 people in the community standing to the side watching. And the black folks, one of them said, "hey, who are these people? Hey man, these guys are — hey man, I'm going to move out of here, these guys got guns and stuff like that."

**Richard Jensen:** they were out looking at what the police were doing. We had officers stopping a car, and then we would have a carload full of these Black Panther people pull up behind them and watch them and see what they were doing. They were looking at what the police were doing.

**Huey Newton:** we would follow the police around, and when the police would arrest or detain someone, we'd read their rights to them. And it came down to some point when the policemen says, "what are you doing with those guys?" and Huey says, "well, we got to defend ourselves and to observe you and the police." "you have no right to observe me," and Huey was all this law — because he'd been in night law school at the time. "California supreme court ruling states that everyone has the right to observe a police officer carrying out his duty as long as they stand a reasonable distance away, and a reasonable distance was constituted in that particular California supreme court ruling as eight to ten feet. I'm standing approximately 22 feet from you, I will observe you carrying out your duties whether you like it or not." and the black community is saying, "well, go get on and tell it."

**Narrator:** the boldness of the panther actions attracted young blacks, many in their teens. Carrying loaded firearms in public was a well protected legal right in California. But with the emergence of the Black Panthers, state officials introduced legislation to outlaw carrying loaded firearms within city limits. May 1967, in protest the panthers traveled to Sacramento, the state capital.

**Bobby Seale:** we arrived there, all these black men and women, 24 males and 6 females, with guns and Ronald Reagan, then the governor, was on the lawn with 200 future leaders of America, you know, 12 and 13 and 14 year old kids. And these kids started this session on the lawn and coming to see us. And these young white kids thought we were a gun club.

**Narrator:** knowing the media would be there, the group of men and women then entered the capitol building.

**Reporter:** they're heavily armed, whether their weapons are loaded or not, nobody seems to know.

**Panther:** wait a minute. Am I under arrest? Am I under arrest? Am I under arrest? Take your hands off me if I'm not under arrest. If I'm under arrest, I'll come, if I'm not don't put your hands on me. Is this the way the racist government works? Don't let a man exercise his constitutional right? I'd like to make a statement now with this respect. Statement of the Black Panther Party for self defense. On the ... (inaudible) now pending before the California legislature, the Black Panther Party for self defense calls upon the American people in general and the black people in particular, to take full note of the racist California legislature which is now considering legislation aimed at keeping the black people disarmed and powerless at the very same time that racist police agencies throughout the country are intensifying the terror, brutality, murder and repression of black people.

**Narrator:** a nation that had grown used to the nonviolent civil rights movement was now confronted with new images of black protest. Later, at a Sacramento service station, news cameras documented the continuing debate over law and gun.

**Panther:** ain't no sawed off, that's a ride shotgun, just like yours.

**Bobby Hutton:** do you all know the constitutional rights?

**Police officer:** sure we do. We're well aware of the constitutional right —

**Bobby Hutton:** you have no right to take my gun away from me. You breakin' the constitutional rights.

**Reporter:** the pamphlet says that the Black Panther Party for self defense calls on the American people in general to take careful note of the racist California legislature. Why do you believe the legislature is racist?

**Emory Douglas:** don't you know? You're a part of it and obviously this is a white system. This is obviously where we at.

**Reporter:** do you believe everything that's in that pamphlet?

**Emory Douglas:** the pamphlet speaks for itself.

It was like being a part of a movement that had seen on tv and now being able to participate and share that movement. When you heard talk about Malcolm, seen Malcolm on tv at that time, you had heard and talked about Stokely Carmichael, rap brown and SNCC and what have you, and all the different things were happening. And to become a part of a movement that had encompassed all these different concepts and ideals in its own creative way, it brought a sense of pride. But there's also — there was the doubts and fear of whether you were going to survive or exist, but which became a part of your makeup and you went on, took care of business the way you had to.

**Narrator:** the panthers had not violated California gun law. They were charged instead with disturbing the peace. Six panthers, including Bobby Seale, were convicted.

**Charles O'Brien:** well, the chief deputy attorney general, we'd had — I'd had experience in the department of justice in the state of California, had experience in the 1960s prior to this time, with a variety of nut groups, both extreme left and extreme right, who were running around with guns thinking they could solve the problems of California and the world through direct ... (inaudible) and action. And we were and had been well informed and in some cases had surveillance

upon extreme groups that carried weapons. When these characters came along, we thought they were another irritating part of the bouillabaisse that was starting to bubble all over California. We needed them like a severe case of bad disease.

**Narrator:** the Black Panther Party style and dramatic actions captured the attention of the media, yet the panthers often disagreed with the way they were portrayed.

**Bobby Seale:** examiner made a report back here in last Sunday's paper that we were anti-white, that we hold no bones, this is a quote, "hold no bones about being anti-white." we insist this is a bold faced lie. We don't hate nobody because of their color, we hate oppression. We hate murder of black people in our communities. We hate the gross unemployment that exists in our communities. We hate black men being taken off into the military service to be fighting for the racist, decadent American promisins' us freedom.

**Narrator:** to present their story and their program for social change, the Black Panthers created a national newspaper. Language and art were important tools of the new party.

**Huey newton:** I knew that images had to be changed. I know sociologically that words, the power of the word, words stigmatize people and we felt that the police needed the label, a label other than that fear image that they carried in the community. So we used the pig as a rather low lifed animal in order to identify the police and it worked.

**Narrator:** some feared the reaction that the panther stance might provoke.

**Emory Douglas:** my parents or the neighbors were kind of reluctant, kind of standoffish in their attitudes towards the Black Panther Party. Because here you had a new dynamic kind of organization coming out doing things that never had been done in the history of this country before. Carrying guns, standing up to the police, standing up to the power structure.

**Narrator:** Eldridge cleaver, who had gained fame from his writings in prison, was the chief spokesman for the party.

**Eldridge cleaver:** and we feel that the police must be brought under control by any means necessary, including through force of arms. We have never bit our tongue about that, we say it now loud and clear. We will always say it, we're not afraid to say it, that these racist gestapo pigs have to stop brutalizing our community or we're going to take up guns, we're going to drive them out.

**Richard Jensen:** we were advised by our sergeants and lieutenants and captains that the panthers were armed and violent and were going to be aggressive in their behavior towards us. We were advised to be aware of that.

**Narrator:** as the Black Panther Party grew, so did tensions with police. In October of 1967, a year after the party's formation, Huey newton was shot in the stomach in a confrontation with police. Police officer Herbert Haines was also seriously wounded. Officer John fry died from gunshots believed to be from a police revolver. With the death of a policeman, government pressures on the young organization intensified. Newton was charged with first degree murder. He maintained he had been framed.

**Huey newton:** in America, black people are treated very much as are the Vietnamese people, or any other colonized people because we're used, we're brutalized, the police in our community occupy our area of our community as a foreign troop occupies territory.

**Charles O'Brien:** the panthers seemed to be in deliberate, open, provocative confrontation with the police departments in their early periods. They used revolutionary language, provocative language and seemed to be deliberately seeking to confront established authority particularly police authority. But then we observed that they seemed to have a social side, a concept of doing something beyond these angry confrontations.

**Narrator:** the panthers called themselves a revolutionary organization. The ten point program was their blueprint for change.

**Bobby Seale:** and we wrote out this program. We want power to determine our own destiny in our own black communities, immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people, was point number seven. The right to have juries of our peers in the courts, what have you. We summed it up, we wanted land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace.

**Narrator:** the Black Panthers distributed free food and later developed a free breakfast program for children.

**Teacher:** good morning.

**Class:** good morning.

**Teacher:** I can't hear you, good morning.

**Class:** good morning.

**Black Panther Party member:** the idea was obviously twofold for the specific purpose of serving those people who were directly benefited by our programs. But also secondarily, to influence the minds of people to understand not only that the Black Panther Party was providing them this, but more importantly, that if they could get food, that maybe they would want clothing, maybe they'd want housing, maybe they'd want land and maybe they would ultimately want some abstract thing called freedom.

**Narrator:** around the country, particularly in urban areas, young black men and women formed local chapters.

**Huey newton:** the party grew much too rapidly because many of the young people were very enthusiastic about the guns and about the berets, but they knew little about the community programs that were really our reason for existing.

**Narrator:** the growing party still faced the dilemma of having its leader, Huey newton, in prison. Court proceedings attracted national attention, bringing support to the panthers from an alliance of white and black political organizations.

**Reporter:** you're obviously in good spirits, Huey, why?

**Huey newton:** because I have the people behind me and the people are my strength.

**Narrator:** February 17th, 1968, Stokely Carmichael, James foreman, h. Rap brown, leaders of the student nonviolent coordinating committee now joined forces with the Black Panther Party in their call for revolution.

**Stokely Carmichael:** and so in talking about brother Huey newton tonight, we have to talk about the struggle of black people, not only in the united states but in the world today and how he becomes part and parcel of that struggle, how we move on so that our people will survive America.

**H. R. Brown:** there is no in between. You're either free or you're a slave. There's no such thing as second class citizenship. The only politics in this country that's relevant to black people today is the politics of revolution, none other.

**Narrator:** April 6, 1968, a gun battle on the streets of west Oakland. Five men were wounded, three police officers and two panthers. A third panther, bobby Hutton, aged 17, was shot to death.



**Bobby Seale:** black people are now to organize in a fashion where we have maximum retaliation against all forms of racist, police brutality and attacks.

**Reporter:** what changes have there been in the Black Panther Party since the gun fight last weekend?

**Bobby Seale:** what you mean what changes? We have a black man that's dead, murdered by pigs, that's the change.

**Elaine brown:** here was a man who was saying this, and we are willing to take charge of our lives, we are willing to stand up, we are willing — I mean, there was the appeal that Malcolm had in many ways that a certain subjective appeal to my psyche and to my emotional need to say, "yes, there were men in this world who cared, black men, who cared about the community and wanted to do something and were willing to take it to the last degree."

**Narrator:** in the fall of 1968, two years after the party's founding, Huey newton was convicted of manslaughter in the death of police officer Frey, a conviction which was later overturned. With chapters in 25 cities, government surveillance was increasing. The member of the Black Panther Party had reached several thousand and was growing.

**Bobby Seale:** it was a battle, it was a struggle and I think we ... (inaudible) ourselves in, in the sense that we began to get millions of black folks to really look at where were coming from in our stand against the power structure. Now, a lot of people call a revolution a confrontation. Really, what ... (inaudible) our revolution was a need to revolve more political power and economic power back into the hands of the people. That's really what a revolution is.

**Narrator:** the Black Panthers continued their struggle working outside the system. In Brooklyn, New York, black and Latino parents challenged the established order working within the system. They demanded the power to run their neighborhood schools, to improve their children's future.

**Mother:** the children are ready to work. They come to school to work, and when they get to school, the teachers, they don't know what to do. The first thing they say, "we don't understand the children." well, if they would try to understand the children, these problems wouldn't exist. The children are not stupid. They know, they know when the teachers are there to help them.

**Rev. C. Herbert Oliver:** when my family moved here from Birmingham in 1965, they came from totally segregated schools. The children were all black, the teachers were all black, the principals were all black. One of my sons was above the national average in mathematics, but when he came to the schools here in Brooklyn, within one year, he was flunking math. And I went to the school to find out why. The teacher said my son was doing fine. I said, "he's not bringing home assignments and he's flunking math and he came here from Alabama and he was ahead of the national average and you're telling me he's doing fine. Something is wrong."

**Narrator:** in New York city, only half of the children in black and Latino neighborhoods finished high school. To make the schools work for their children, parents in the ocean hill-Brownsville section of Brooklyn planned to take charge. In the beginning, city officials were hopeful.

**John Lindsay:** this decentralization plan does for our city schools in New York exactly what any stable, good school in any suburb has, which is to involve the parents sufficiently so they have a stake in the whole process of schools. And that's all we seek to do.

**Narrator:** in 1967 with support from the ford foundation, the city made ocean hill-Brownsville an experimental district. An interracial governing board elected by the community chose educator Rhody McCoy to lead the experiment. He became the first black superintendent in New York city.

**Rhody McCoy:** the black people in this community have assumed the responsibility for their schools to try to improve and set the stage for quality education in an urban setting. This was what the experiment was designed to do, and this is the reason that the parents became involved.

**Rhody McCoy:** it was a joy to go to a board meeting. Not only were the board members present, but the community folk were sitting around. And they had as much input as the board members. And it was always on a positive note. How do we help the youngsters?

**Narrator:** before the experiment, four out of five teachers in the district were white. Now, younger teachers, a number of them black, transferred to ocean hill-Brownsville. The students, 95 percent black and Latino, responded.

**Karima Jordan:** you felt more accepted. You weren't the outsider in your own school. They were a part of your environment. I mean, they were black, you can identify with them and they can identify with you. Just as simple as that, there's no big mystery.

**Narrator:** at first, the newly formed teachers union, the united federation of teachers, supported the experiment. But with administrative decisions now being made by the community, the teachers were worried.

**Sandra Feldman:** it was supposed to be an experiment and an involvement of teachers and parents. And suddenly, decisions started to get made and no one knew how they were made and when they were made. So it was a lot of wariness on the part of teachers.

**Narrator:** Albert Shanker, the uft president, questioned where decentralization of the schools might lead.

**Albert Shanker:** under the new proposal, teachers and supervisors would be hired on the basis of interview by local people, and this would mean that New York city would be faced with the same problem that a lot of other areas are; namely, where local people don't want whites, there won't be any whites teaching. Where they don't want any blacks, there won't be any blacks. And where they don't want Jews or Italians or Irish or anybody else, we will essentially develop within New York city a series of school systems that are more segregated than the school system is at the present time. And I say that that is the beginning of the destruction of our school system.

**Narrator:** through the 1967-1968 school year, the community board worked to assemble an integrated teaching staff. Some tenure teachers resisted neighborhood control of schools. The community board faced a dilemma.

**John Powis:** in May, the local board had its regular meeting. I guess we were having meetings at that point about every two weeks. And on the agenda that night, McCoy had put an item, the transfer of 13 teachers and also some assistant principals, I guess there was five or six of them.

**Rhody McCoy:** and we sat down and talked to the governing board members of the school and the principal of the school, and we came to the conclusion that these people were not going to work well in the system. And they had also demonstrated that they were opposed to the experiment.

**Dolores Torres:** we were asking teachers to make an extra effort to get along with our kids, to teach our kids, if there was any problem, to possibly visit in the homes. Well, the union, this wasn't in their contract, they didn't have to do any of these things.

**Rev. C Herbert Oliver:** there was discussion, there was disagreement, there was a vote.

**John Powis:** and we finally came to the conclusion so that we could have a demonstration district, this was like eight months after it had begun, that some of these people would have to be transferred, would have to go. But again, transferring teachers from one district to another, with the board of education, was something that was very ordinary. If a teacher was having problems, you would simply call up the superintendent of schools down at Livingston street, and the person would be transferred. No questions were asked. But when McCoy tried to do it, of course that created the scene of the century.

**Narrator:** the teachers argued that the transfers were illegal. The city agreed. The dismissed teachers attempted to return to junior high school 271, but community members refused to let them in.

**Mrs. Rooke:** Mr. Nauman, Mr. Goldberg and Mr., Mr. Now what you want here? You received a letter from the governing board, right? This is the parents and the community, so you let your albert Shanker continue running your lives and keep on making it! You're not coming in this school.

**Dolores Torres:** well, there's 19, there's all many more, but we figured we'd start slowly. These 19 have been knocking the program, have been causing trouble in the schools. We have people that are telling the black children that the Puerto Ricans are against them, and the Puerto Ricans are against the blacks. We have to take steps to keep these people out, to make sure these people are not allowed in to mis-educate our kids. Because if we allow this, then we're condoning it because we're paying their salaries.

**Reporter:** you're sabotaging the classes. Now, I tried to find out what she meant by that. Do you know?

**Fred Nauman:** the charges that were made previously, or the statement that's been made previously is that you're sabotaging the project. Now, if that means questioning some of the actions of the governing board, then we must be guilty for this. We have not been in complete agreement with everything we've done. Obviously, we're not in agreement with what they've done now.

At no time had anybody mentioned there was a problem with my service, or for that matter, with any of the people who were named, or certainly the majority of them, I didn't know them all. But here was this letter that ordered me out. So all I can say is I was dumbfounded. **Narrator:** three hundred and fifty union teachers walked out of ocean hill-Brownsville schools to support the dismissed teachers. The community vowed to keep the schools open and maintain control.

**Rhody McCoy:** so at one point, the issue was just removing those teachers from our conflict. And now the basic issue has to do with total community control over the schools.

**Reporter:** what does that mean, Mr. McCoy?

**Rhody McCoy:** it means control over the schools; personnel, finance, everything.

**Reporter:** hiring, firing?

**Rhody McCoy:** absolutely.

**Narrator:** September, 1968, a year school year. The local board refused to take back the dismissed teachers. The teachers union called a city-wide strike. In the city of New York, education stopped for one million children. But in ocean hill-Brownsville, many teachers, black and white, crossed the picket lines in defiance of the union.

**Man:** I came into the district because I want to be accountable to the community. If I'm not doing a job, then I want them to kick me out. See, this is the only way that we're going to bring about any change. We have to be accountable to someone. And in the New York city school system, there's no problem, nobody gets fired.

**Man:** well, the strike was a unifying factor in the black community. Groups that had previously been at each others throat found themselves together at rallies and meetings surrounding ocean hill. It was an issue that whether you were core or the NAACP or the urban league, or the Black Panther Party, or republic of new Africa, you could rally around this community issue. Everybody understood the importance of black children receiving a quality education.

**Man:** during the strike of 1968, during the fall, probably the place that I spent most of my time was in front of 271. And the scene that I remember there most, and I've often thought of it, is a scene of children coming to school with their books, very intent. And I think they also understood the — just what was all going on here.

**Woman:** we came in from the Howard avenue side, and we had to go through barricades to get to the school. And we'd look up and on the roof tops across the street from the school, the cops were with the helmet gear and the playground was converted into a precinct. And walking up to the school, you have just mass confusion. There are the community people out there, you have the uft, you were just amazed. You couldn't believe this was happening. You know, and you just went to school.

**Narrator:** the teachers who remained in the classroom looked for new ways to teach the basic skills. Some also brought a new cultural awareness.

**Woman:** and today we're going to talk about the ... (inaudible) culture of west Africa. If we could trace our ancestral line back, most of us would go back to ... (inaudible) tribe.

Karima Jordan: what the black teachers did do was to broaden us, our perspective of looking at things. We were no longer members of a small community called ocean hill-Brownsville, we were broadened to w. E. B. Dubois, his readings, Langston Hughes, Malcolm x, Marcus Garvey, h. Rap brown, Mao Tse-Tung, the red book. I mean, we became international. And it was a good thing because black people are the third world, the third world is much larger than European history.

**Narrator:** outside of New York city schools, the battle was escalating. Community members questioned the union's commitment to the children. Union leaders charged extremists had taken over the experiment.

**Albert Shanker:** I think the public sees what's going on and every single parent in the city of New York understands that if Mr. McCoy and the ocean hill-Brownsville governing board succeed that they will be next. That there will be people in their own communities who will see this as a model of success and move in and take over these institutions.

**Narrator:** the city ordered the community board to allow the union teachers to return. Neighborhood leaders declared the community would decide.

**Sonny Carson:** the community has said it already. They don't want them there, so that means they're not coming in.

**Reporter:** is that because they're white?

**Sonny Carson:** I don't know, you'd have to ask the governing board. If it was left up to me, they wouldn't be let in simply because they're white, right.

**Reporter:** you would keep them out just because they were white. Why is that?

**Sonny Carson:** I certainly would.

**Reporter:** why?

**Sonny Carson:** because I don't think that any white person is interested in giving black children an education. That's my particular feeling.

**Reporter:** what if they persist and try to get in here?

**Sonny Carson:** well, by whatever means necessary, they're going to be kept out.

**Narrator:** the teachers union accused the community of anti-Semitism. In a city with a Jewish population of over one million, the charge carried enormous political weight. Although many Jewish teachers crossed picket lines and continued to teach, the accusation threatened city support of the experiment.

**Teacher:** it is a well known fact that the overwhelming majority of the teachers in New York city are of the Jewish faith. We have become the butt of their resentment and I think there's but one simple step from resenting white people to resenting Jewish people since most of the teachers are Jewish.

**Fred Nauman:** I didn't feel then, I don't feel now, that anti-Semitism was a major part of that situation. It was a black-white confrontation. A lot of the teachers involved were Jewish, though some people drew that conclusion from the start.

**Reporter:** reverend Oliver, what about the business of anti-Semitism, and what kind of scars do you think this is going to leave?

**Rev. C. Herbert Oliver:** yes, there will be scars left, it seems, because so many untruths floating around. But people must — the teachers must realize that the communities must be heard. The people of the community must be heard, and it apparently does not sit well with them to have to reckon with the local communities, but they will have to. And it's unfortunate that scars must come, but we have had 300 years of scars, and it's about time those scars were healing.

**Narrator:** the community board refused to give up control of the classrooms.

**Rev. May:** all of the people who care about children are here. The teachers are here, white and black teachers are here. There are some white teachers who are supporting us. We are grateful to all of our friends and all people who believe in fairness to black and white people. Come in children, come in children.

**Narrator:** October, 1968. Fearing a continuation of the city-wide strikes, the New York city board of education suspended the ocean hill-Brownsville community board.

**Bernard Donovan:** Mr. McCoy has indicated to me clearly that he intends to obey the directions of the suspended ocean hill-Brownsville school board and not those of the board of education or the superintendent of schools. It is necessary, therefore, for me to relieve Mr. McCoy of his duties.

**Narrator:** confrontations broke out in other New York neighborhoods as blacks and latinos protested the city's withdrawal of support for community control of schools.

**Man:** this is a struggle against educational colonialism. They took over the school again.

**Man:** we were here, these were our people trying to run our schools. Now in defiance of that, the white community has said you got to cool it man until we can give it to you. They're not going to give us a darn thing, we're going to take what belongs to us. We're going to take what belongs to us.

**Narrator:** the city and the teachers union agreed, the experiment must end. The community board's power was taken away. But in the neighborhoods, many were moved by the struggle of the ocean hill-Brownsville community. From new York's five boroughs, thousands marched to city hall in support of community control of schools.

**Man:** there was a lot of disappointment on the part of all of us, and I think we felt extremely bad. We had put an awful lot of effort into this. But I think this was a period — the '60s were such an incredibly interesting period that I think we realized also that something really good had happened.

**Man:** you have to understand that these were community people who were disenfranchised with the system, who were nameless and faceless, who had never been incorporated and included even though their children were mandated to go to school. For them to take on that responsibility was tremendous.

**Narrator:** the demonstrators then headed across the Brooklyn bridge to march to board of education headquarters in support of the community of ocean hill-Brownsville.

**Woman:** there was a lot of people yelling black power, black power, power to the people. Power to the people I liked because I think that what we were going through, any poor neighborhood, regardless of the ethnic makeup, is ... (inaudible) the same thing. I liked power to the people. People really needed to have some power, and we really needed, as the school board, to have power.

**Narrator:** it was 1968, communities across America, each choosing different paths, organized in the struggle for power. Power to the people was a promise as old as the nation. Now, new voices demanded that the promise be fulfilled.

## The Promised Land (1967-1968)

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** we read one day, we hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But if a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty. And the possibility for the pursuit of happiness, he merely exists.

Bombs in Vietnam explode at home. The destroyed the dream and possibility for a decent America. It is estimated that we spend \$322,000 for each enemy we kill in Vietnam while we spend in the so-called war on poverty in America only about \$53 for each person classified as poor.

**Narrator:** by 1967, America was deeply entrenched in Vietnam. War overseas, poverty at home. For Martin Luther King, the issues were inseparable, but he saw that publicly opposing this war would involve great risks. He would risk the alliance between the movement and the government. He would risk his standing as a national leader. He would risk being called a traitor. Some in the movement had already taken those risks. They urged King to join them.

**Stokely Carmichael:** he called me in Atlanta, he said, "what you doing?" I said, "tomorrow's Sunday." he said, "you going to be a good christian and go to church?" I said, well, like a good heathen, I'm going to work for the people. I got all this paperwork, I've been working since 6:00 in the morning." he said, "well, I want you to come to church." I said, "come to church, where?" he said, "the Ebenezer." I said, "what's happening there?" he said, "I'm preaching." I said, "well, you know, I can always come hear you preaching because even though I don't believe in your stuff, you make me tap my feet." you know, we joked. And he said, "well, I really want you to come tomorrow." I said, "okay, I'll come." he said, "because tomorrow I'm going to make my statement against the war in Vietnam." and I think between us, there must have been 35 seconds of silence. And then I said to him, "I'm going to be on the front seat of your church."

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** they seem to forget that before I was a civil rights leader, I answered the call, which left the spirit of the lord upon me and anointed me to preach the gospel. And during the early days of my ministry, I read the apostle Paul saying, "be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." and I decided then that I was going to tell the truth as god revealed it to me. I don't know about you, I ain't going to study war no more.

**Narrator:** president Lyndon Johnson had fought for strong civil rights legislation. In 1964, his administration had declared an unprecedented war on poverty, but Vietnam had undermined that commitment and put Johnson and King on a collision course.

**Michael Harrington:** he knew that if he made the statement of hostility to the war, that he was breaking his ties with Lyndon Johnson, that he would no longer be welcome in the white house. Johnson didn't in this period let people do that. He decided that he had to do it.

**Narrator:** April 4th, 1967, New York city, riverside church. King had spoken out on the war before, but now in front of the national media, he broke publicly with Johnson.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I come to this magnificent house of worship tonight because my conscience leaves me no other choice. A time comes when silence is betrayal, and that time has come for us in relation to Vietnam.

**Andrew Young:** Martin gave a brilliant rationale for his position on the war in Vietnam. And as a Nobel prize winner, we expected people to take it seriously and not to agree with it, but to disagree with certain specifics. We didn't get that. We got, instead, an emotional outburst attacking his right to have an opinion. It was almost, you know, "nigger, you ought to stay in your place."

**Barry Goldwater:** I can't believe that they're going to pay any attention to Martin Luther King, but don't brush this aside. Martin Luther King is a power in this country, and unfortunately, he has of now has gotten into bed with some of these lesser likes.

**Edward Brooke:** my objection to what Dr. King has done and as I said, I don't question his motives, I question his judgment, in that in tying the Vietnam war into the civil rights movement that he is doing irreparable harm to the civil rights movement. He is losing thousands and thousands of allies.

**Narrator:** the most powerful ally had been president Johnson.

**Harry McPherson:** Johnson was bitterly disappointed with King's opposition to the war and he was being told by Hoover that King had lots of pro-communist friends who were advising him.

**Narrator:** the FBI worked to discredit King and continued its surveillance of him and his associates.

**Andrew Young:** we knew that everything we were doing during this period was being monitored. We weren't always sure who.

**Harry Belafonte:** we talked about that constantly, so that there were times when we spoke to one another from safe phones, given what the nature of the information was and where we would be. Find a safe phone, give me the number, I'll go to a safe phone and call you.

**Narrator:** with his opposition now public, contributions to King's organization, the southern christian leadership conference, dropped sharply.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** the promises of the great society have been shot down on the battlefields of Vietnam, making the poor, white and negro, bear the heaviest burden both at the front and at home.

**Marian Logan:** you know, it wasn't a thing he had to do, I think it was a not a political thing. As it turned out, I think it was kind of like a death knell for him. But it was a very brave thing for him to do because he went against all the people, you know, who we considered reasonable.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** others can do what they want to do, that's their business. If other civil rights leaders for various reasons refuse or can't take a stand or have to go along with the administration, that's their business. But I'm afraid tonight that I know that justice is indivisible, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

**Narrator:** as war raged in Vietnam, the government's war on poverty suffered. In 1967, one in every seven Americans lived below the poverty line. The question was how to regain the nation's attention.

**Mrs. Wilson:** I felt like the lowest thing on earth when I went to welfare. I felt like they were all better than me, that they could walk all over me. Which I got down on my hands and knees to them and thanked them for coats and boots for these children at wintertime.

**Narrator:** King was searching for national solutions. Groups were organizing at the grassroots level. The issues were jobs, welfare, the price of food.

**Woman:** we're trying to get everybody to stick together, one person just don't have to fight for their self, all of us fighting for each other.

**Narrator:** in the south, poverty was even more widespread. Field hands earned as little as \$3 a day. Civil rights activists looked for answers. A senate committee was invited to Mississippi by a colleague of King's, Marian Wright.

**Marian wright:** they're starving, they're starving and those who can get the bus fare to go north are trying to go north. But there's absolutely nothing for them to do, there's nowhere to go, and somebody must begin to respond to them.

**Robert Kennedy:** we would think that all of us would be able to provide for some of our citizens living in this part of the country.

**Marian wright:** I tried to bring the senators down to Mississippi because I was trying to figure our ways of getting the country to see. I mean, we were having major problems with hunger, even starvation. There were people in Mississippi who had no income.

**Narrator:** the next day, senator Kennedy and Marian wright toured the Mississippi delta.

**Marian wright:** we would just go from house to house and go in and talk to the people. These were very rural, very poor people and walked through the house, talked to the inhabitants, go in the kitchen, look in the refrigerator, ask them what they ate the night before. And usually you would find awfully bare cupboards when you opened them.

**Robert Kennedy:** what did you have for lunch?

**Child:** we haven't had lunch yet.

**Robert Kennedy:** you haven't had lunch yet?

**Child:** no.

**Robert Kennedy:** if you're doing reasonably well, you don't run up against this kind of poverty. And certainly people elsewhere in the country have very little personal knowledge or information about it.

**Narrator:** the need for solutions grew more pressing. After three summers of urban violence, many feared a national confrontation between blacks and whites. In the summer of 1967, there were riots in 180 cities. Eighty people died.

**H. Rap brown:** we stand on the eve of a black revolution, brothers. Masses of our people are in the streets, they're fighting tit for tat, tooth for tooth. An eye for an eye, and a life for a life. The rebellions that we seek are merely dress rehearsals for the revolution that's to come.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** the riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met, and it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and the status quo than about justice, equality and humanity.

**Narrator:** events were driving King toward more radical solutions. Some proposed marching the poor to the nation's capitol to force government action on the problems of poverty. In august, Marion wright took the idea of a poor people's march on Washington to her friend, martin King.

**Marian wright:** he immediately understood that it was right, and then we chatted a bit about how it would be done. But there was never any discussion about whether that was the right thing to do.

**Coretta Scott King:** so when he came home that evening, he was real excited, you know, about this idea of a poor people's campaign starting in marks, Mississippi, with a mule train and going all the way to Washington, dc, picking up people along the way.

**Narrator:** the campaign would recruit among all races, bring them to Washington, commit massive civil disobedience, force the government to respond, a nonviolent army of the poor.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** very frankly, this is a search for an alternative to riots. And if the nation doesn't respond to us as we labor there two or three months, however long it takes, god only knows what we will face in terms of chaos. This is a kind of last, desperate demand for the nation to respond to nonviolence.

**Michael Harrington:** part of his genius was to understand that you could not have a movement simply based on promises of the future, that you had to deliver. And he had delivered on voting rights, he had delivered on public accommodations, he had delivered on the Montgomery bus boycott and on so many other things. And he understood now above all was the time to deliver.

**Narrator:** SCIC staff meeting, the Ebenezer baptist church, Atlanta.

**Young woman:** listen, I want this movement to work and I don't want — I want to cut down —

**Narrator:** King's closest aides were unsure about the poor people's campaign. What could it accomplish? Could they mobilize a nationwide movement? Was King's nonviolence perceived as being too conservative?

Hosea Williams: this is why I say the most radical guy living in the 20th century was Martin Luther King, Jr., it took a radical cat. Let me say my thing and then I'll listen here. The most radical cat alive in the 20th century was Martin Luther King, Jr. It took a radical cat to put 50,000 black people in Alabama on buses.

**Al Sampson:** the question as I understood it was not the fact that Dr. King didn't do anything, wasn't the issue. The issue was if we're going to take people on a go for broke, what are we going to be able to return back to Mississippi with in our hands? What are we going to be able to return back to Chicago with in our hands? And what Carlos, as I understood was saying, if we're not, then let's just say we're not going to do that and then he'll know, and if we are, then we are.

**Andrew Young:** can I speak for myself, because — no —

**Carlos Russell:** this is not nonsense, okay? This is the thing that comes to the man, and then you don't come back with the demands, you're in trouble.

**Andrew Young:** I don't think we can give anybody any guarantees. But we reached a point where we're almost are where the Jews are when Hitler took power. That are you going to sit by and wait until you're put in a concentration camp, or are you going to organize and fight? Now, I don't know whether we're going to win or lose or draw, or what we're going to bring back, but I'm not going to sit by and let the liberal wing or the progressive forces in the negro community get chopped up. I'm going to fight, and if we -

Martin usually could bring us together, but he always let us fight it out for ourselves for a long time. And the only time he really got mad with me was when I wouldn't disagree with everybody. He sort of expected me to be the conservative one and because a movement needed wild ideas and radical notions. But it also needed to be pulled back into perspective, to do something that was actually doable and attainable. And I got tired of being the, you know, the reactionary. So I just said, "that's right, that's right, that's exactly what we ought to do." and he jumped up and got mad and he said, "Andy, if you don't express" — he said, "if you don't, you know, end up giving the conservative view, you don't leave me any room to come down in the middle."

Now, some folks celebrate Abraham Lincoln, but we're going to celebrate Martin Luther King's day today. Don't let him out of here. (singing happy birthday)

**Xernona Clayton:** we know how fond you are of our president Lyndon Johnson, and we know how you're supporting everything. I got this little cup for you and I want to say it, because it's nice. And let me read it, it says, "we are cooperating with Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty. Drop coins and bills in the cup."

**Narrator:** Martin Luther King was 39 years old. King began to recruit volunteers and raise money for the new campaign, scheduled to start in less than two months.

**William Rutherford:** we organized the poor people's campaign by putting out what is known in the movement as a call, a call to worship, a call to participate, a call for camaraderie and so on. Whoever hears your call will respond. When I call you, it means I need you and you will come.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** the other thing I want you to understand is this. That it didn't cost the nation one penny to integrate lunch counters. It didn't cost the nation one penny to guarantee the right to vote. But now we are dealing with issues that cannot be solved without the nation spending billions of dollars and undergoing a radical redistribution of economic power.

**Narrator:** back in Atlanta, in his pastors study, King and his aids prepared for a long-term campaign.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** but I felt throughout the campaign, we ought to — it ought to be a continuing, massive lobby-in. Now, not just one day, every time people come in that town, they are to go straight to Capitol Hill, to the departments of government, justice department, department of commerce, health, wealth and education. They just going day in and day out.

**Hosea Williams:** you go and ask Johnson for what we really want, you got as much chance of getting it as flying from the top of this house.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** I think we got to pit the president against the congress. I don't think we ought to make this an anti-Lyndon Johnson battle. I really think that we ought to leave Lyndon alone and go on and throw attention on the congress and have Lyndon in the position where he'll almost be forced to support us.

**Narrator:** at that moment, Johnson's attention was elsewhere. He was running for reelection and the war in Vietnam was taking a decisive turn. The enemy's tet offensive destroyed U.S. illusions that the end of the war was in sight. Johnson's popularity plummeted. Johnson almost lost the New Hampshire presidential primary to anti-war candidate, Eugene McCarthy. Four days later, Robert Kennedy entered the race.

George Wallace, who had built his political career by defending racial segregation in the south, was gaining support up north for his own third party candidacy. In the national political turmoil, few were paying attention to a labor conflict in Tennessee. Memphis, Tennessee, a bitter strike of black garbage workers echoed the issues of the poor people's campaign, the same issues King planned to bring to Washington.

**Taylor Rogers:** and I have seven kids in school, trying to educate my kids, trying to buy a home. It was just — it was really rough. But I know that something had to happen, that we couldn't continue on making \$1.04 an hour.

**Narrator:** the city refused to recognize the local sanitation workers union. In late January, the union accused the city of racial bias. Days later, two black workers were accidentally killed on the job. Their families were not entitled to compensation. The workers decided they had had enough.

**Taylor Rogers:** so we decided we were going to be men, stand up and be men, and that's what we did. Thirteen hundred men decided that they were tired and wasn't going to take it anymore.

**Henry Loeb:** I say to you, and I was with you for four years and you know me, that when I tell you something you can believe it. We are working —

**Jerred Blanchard:** mayor Loeb's attitude towards the strikers was that of a father whose children had gone astray. He simply didn't understand that instead of a garbage strike he had a racial problem and he never did understand that.

**Narrator:** the mayor refused to negotiate with the union. Eleven days into the strike, the city's black leaders marched with the workers.

**James Smith:** the march went fine for two or three blocks. But as we approached Madison street, I think, the policemen began to come in and to move us over further and further to the curb.

**Narrator:** tempers flared, police moved in with nightsticks and mace.

**James Smith:** and that was the turning point. If they would fire upon us, they would fire upon anybody. Nobody was safe in Memphis.

**Narrator:** the strike entered its second month. Strike leader James Lawson asked his friend, Martin Luther King, to come to Memphis.

**Andrew Young:** the staff was really disturbed that Martin would even consider going to Memphis. We were trying to organize poor whites, hispanics, southern blacks, northern blacks. I mean, there was just a tremendous organizing job, and I didn't know how you could take on anything else. And he said, "well, Jim Lawson has been around for so long and here are garbage workers on strike. He just wants me to come in and make a speech and then lead a march in the morning, and I'll be right back."

**Jerred Blanchard:** the attitude of the white community was one of dread, there's no other way to describe it. Please bear in mind that all of us who could read knew about Watts and Newark and Detroit and all of the troubles that we had in our big city ghettos, and we knew about the march in Selma, Alabama and Mrs. Montgomery and — or Rosa Parks in Montgomery, excuse me. All these things we knew, and somehow or other, the name of Martin Luther King, Jr., was associated with deep trouble. And Memphis dreaded his approach.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** all labor has dignity. But you are doing another thing, you are reminding not only Memphis but you are reminding the nation that it is a crime for people to live in this rich nation and receive starvation wages.

**Narrator:** King's poor people's campaign was scheduled to start in less than a month, but he promised to return to Memphis. The next morning, in Mississippi, he resumed his recruiting.

**James Figgs:** we were very excited about this poor people campaign that he spoke about. First time that the concentration had been on poor peoples and their living conditions, and we wanted to be a part of that. That's what we had been working toward. We felt through voter registration that political power would bring economic power. Then we were able to turn people out to hear him that had never been to a mass meeting before.

**Mrs. Barnes:** there's just so many of us running that don't have — children don't have shoes, clothes, to go around. They're naked and hungry. Most times you have to cook your children pinto beans morning dinner and supper. They don't know what it is to get a good meal. We go to work in Miss Ann's house for \$2 a day. If you don't want to do that, she tell us, "well, you got to move."

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** I want some of you all to go to Washington with us, even if you have to bring your whole family, we are going to have in Washington facilities and we're going to have food and we are going to demand that the government do something about these conditions. Rick, tell those ... (inaudible) to rush off.

**Narrator:** despite King's personal popularity, SCIC had trouble recruiting people. As he traveled north, King met more indifference.

**Old Man:** march on down to Washington.

**Young Man:** the south is a different place than New York.

**Andrew Young:** well, that's true.

**Young Man:** you can't tell a young kid today that lives in Harlem that nonviolence, you can't get through to them about nonviolence today. You have to have some type of approach with them, and I say that Dr. King's approach is a little outdated for Harlem, for Bedford Stuyvesant, any part of New York.

**Narrator:** King's nonviolent approach would be directly challenged when he returned to Memphis. On the morning of March 28th, a tense and restless crowd waited two hours before King arrived. The strike was in its 7th week. Some younger supporters had grown impatient with the strike leaders.

**Bill Lucy:** while we were marching, I was about in the first one-third of the march as I could tell at that point. And we began to hear windows breaking, we began to hear, you know, loud — I mean, he's in there among the marchers. And then we began to see individuals who were stepping out of the march and throwing things.

**Taylor Rogers:** and all the glass started breaking and the noise and the police cars were running, the sirens and everybody was all confused and just running over each other.

**Narrator:** fearing for King's safety, his aids commandeered a passing car and drove him to a nearby hotel. It was the first time King had led marchers who had turned to violence. Secluded for the night, he braced himself for criticism. If he couldn't control a single march in Memphis, how could he control a mass movement of poor people in the nation's capital? The FBI, monitoring King in Memphis, used its press contacts to create doubt about the upcoming campaign in Washington. The strike continued. SCIC staffers worked to insure nonviolence at the next march. A distraught King and his closest aide, Ralph Abernathy, left for Atlanta.

**Coretta Scott King:** that evening, we went to the Abernathys' for dinner and we spent the evening at their home. And Martin, of course, liked to eat and Mrs. Abernathy had some of his favorite food, and even homemade ice cream.

**Juanita Abernathy:** and we did not talk about Memphis. The news came on, and whenever there was a flash on tv about it, he got very quiet and he was really, really sort of depressed. And I think he was more depressed that night, I believe, than I'd ever seen him because the violence really got to him.

**Narrator:** visibly exhausted, King continued his campaign for the poor. Sunday, March 31st, he spoke at the national cathedral in Washington.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** this is America's opportunity to help bridge the gulf between the haves and the have-nots. And the question is whether America will do it. There's nothing new about poverty. What is new is we now have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will.

**Narrator:** on April 3rd, King returned to Memphis to prove that nonviolence could work. SCIC planned to challenge a court injunction blocking the next march. King hoped to avoid speaking at that night's rally and to rest instead at the Lorraine motel.

**Ralph Abernathy:** there was a tornado warning in Memphis that evening, and it was raining, raining and wind was blowing everywhere. I believe a little tornado came to Memphis also. And he knew that there would not be a big crowd and he said to me in the meeting with the staff, "Ralph, I want you to go and speak this evening at the mass meeting."

**Coretta Scott King:** and he didn't want to go to that meeting that night. He said he had sent brother Abernathy over and he said because "I just didn't feel like going, but it's thundering and lightning here, we have a thunderstorm taking place," he said. "but you know, Ralph has just called and said that I needed to come over and said the people were waiting for me and they really didn't want anybody else to speak but me." so he said, "I guess I'll go on over there, I'll call you later." he said, "I'll call you tomorrow night."

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** all we say to America is be true to what you said on paper. If I lived in China or even Russia or even any totalitarian country, maybe I could understand some of these illegal injunctions. Maybe I could understand the denial of certain basic first amendment privileges because they haven't committed themselves to that over there. But somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for rights.

And so just as I say we aren't going to let any dogs or water hoses turn us around, we aren't going to let any injunction turn us around. Well, I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountain top. I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life, longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will and he has allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I've looked over and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land.

So I'm happy tonight, I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

**Andrew Young:** the next day, I was in the federal court. We got the injunction thrown out and we got our permission to march. And I guess about 4:30 or 5:00, I came back to the Lorraine motel and I found Martin and A. D. and Ralph and everybody gathered there. And they'd been eating and had lunch and were talking and clowning. And when I came in, Martin just grabbed me and threw me down on the bed and started beating me with a pillow. I mean, he was like a big kid. And he was fussing because I hadn't reported to him and I tried to tell him I was on the witness stand here in the federal court and he was, you know, just standing on the bed swinging the pillow at me and I'm trying to duck with him saying, "you have to let me know what's going on." and finally, I snatched a pillow and started swinging back and everybody — it was sort of like the — you know, after you make a touchdown and everybody piles on everybody. It was just — I mean, people just started throwing pillows and piling on top of everybody and laughing and going on.

And then he stopped and said, "let's go -" you know, we do a dinner at six. And it was at that time about 6:00. And he went on up to his room to put on a shirt and tie. And Martin came out and asked, "you think I need a coat?" and we said, "yeah, it's pretty cool and you've had a cold, you better go back and get a coat." and he said, "I don't know whether I need a coat." you know, the next thing we know, a shot — well, I thought it was a car backfiring or a firecracker.

**Ralph Abernathy:** and I jumped, naturally, and I turned and saw only his feet and I ran to him and took his head into my hand and began to pat his cheek and said, "Martin, this is Ralph, this is Ralph, this is Ralph. It will be all right. Everything is going to be all right. Everything is going to be all right, Martin."

**Narrator:** an hour after he was shot, Martin Luther King, Jr., died. That night, America's cities exploded.

**Angry woman:** it's too late now. We're ready to start, and we're gonna finish it up!

**Sad woman:** I don't think Americans should mourn Martin Luther King, I think they should mourn themselves.

**Marian Logan:** we didn't know where we were going, everything was in a state of flux. And our leader was gone and we felt a great void and a terrible, sick emptiness. And I think we all felt we just had to do something that we hoped would be meaningful.

**Narrator:** SCIC was in shock, but committed itself to carry out King's campaign. From Mississippi, from New Mexico, from New York, thousands set out for Washington. Five weeks after King's death, his poor people's campaign reached the nation's capitol. Five years after the march on Washington, his movement built a city on the same ground.

**Ralph Abernathy:** I declare this be the site of our new city, resurrection city, USA.

**Bill Rutherford:** the purpose and the goal of the poor people's campaign was to focus the attention of the nation and the world on poverty. The tactic being used was to gather the poorest of the poor in the nation's capitol in the heart of the wealthiest country in the world to camp them, these homeless, hungry people, in the heart of the city and its fabulous mall situated between the Lincoln memorial and the Washington memorial.

**James Figgs:** when we got to resurrection city, and quite frankly we were scared as hell. Being in Washington, DC and being out on the U.S. Government turf, you couldn't help but think that if something happened, Dr. King is not here.

**Black woman:** I'm doing much better than I was doing in Mississippi and I'm going to stay here if it's his will until I receive what I came for.

**Narrator:** in the first week, the poor people dramatized their demands through direct action.

**Jesse Jackson:** we had to march for some food, so we decided to march to the agriculture department because we were putting focus on feeding and nutrition. So we went and grouped food and agriculture department.

He got more than he can eat, sitting up there grinning while people are starving. Now, this is America that Mr. Freeman knows, but this is not the America Mrs. Brooks knows. Or four million other people.

**Daniel Schorr:** he took them down to the cafeteria, they picked up trays. And when they'd all gone through the line, Jackson took them back up on — and he announced to everybody, "okay," he said, "this government owes us a lot and they've just begun to pay a little bit of it with this lunch."

**Jesse Jackson:** to remain disciplined and not disturb this operation.

**Narrator:** having made his point, SCIC later paid the bill.

**Jesse Jackson:** I am somebody. I may be uneducated, but I am somebody. I may be unemployed, but I am somebody. I may not have a job —

**Narrator:** running a city consumed SCIC, no time to plan, no clear agenda, no new government program. And then it began to rain.

**Andrew Young:** oh, it rained and rained and rained like, you know, all night Georgia rain. And the place where we had built it ended up being like a six inch mud puddle. I mean, I was constantly in the mud.

**Narrator:** press coverage of the mud and discontent overshadowed the issue of poverty in America. Three thousand miles away, Robert Kennedy, one of the poor people's strongest allies, campaigned for the democratic presidential nomination with strong support from black and Hispanic voters.

**Robert Kennedy:** I don't think any of us can be satisfied in the United States until that war is brought to an honorable end and American soldiers are brought back here to the United States of America.

**Narrator:** on the night of June 4th, Kennedy won a major victory in the California primary.

**Robert Kennedy:** my thanks to all of you and now on to Chicago and let's win there.

**Narrator:** moments later, Kennedy was shot. Four days after Kennedy's death, the train carrying his body made its way to Washington.

**Andrew Young:** Bobby Kennedy's assassination just brought everything to a halt. And I think we began to grieve about Martin in the context of Bobby Kennedy's assassination. Because Bobby Kennedy had been with us in Atlanta at Martin's funeral, and many of us began to see in him a hope for the future. We kind of transferred a little of our loyalty, a little of our trust and a little of our hope to him, and now he was gone, too.

**Narrator:** in recognition of the poor people's campaign, the funeral procession was scheduled to stop at resurrection city.

**Marian Logan:** it started to rain, very light rainfall. At the foot of the Lincoln memorial, there was a group of schoolchildren because they had on middy blouses and skirts, I remember, and they were singing "battle hymn of the republic." oh boy. And I looked and I saw the hearse coming along right in front of the foot of the Lincoln memorial. People from resurrection city started singing "battle." I looked up and saw the pin spot on Lincoln's head and I thought that was the moon. And it stopped raining. As they marched over the bridge into Arlington, it was one of the most dramatic, profoundly moving moments I've ever known in my life. I'll never forget it.



**Narrator:** people began to leave. The few left in resurrection city tried to keep the campaign alive. Some in congress called to close the city down.

**Bill Rutherford:** the last days of resurrection city were like being in the camp of a defeated army. I think the spirit went out of people, there were people there who had no place to go, people who had come to Washington, come to resurrection city with a great deal of hope, and who had none left. It was literally at the end of the major battle, the battle of the poor, and they'd lost.

**Narrator:** just 81 days after King was killed, resurrection city was shut down.

**Marian wright:** 1968 was an extraordinarily difficult year. We lost martin, we lost bobby, and for those of us who were determined to carry on the legacy of martin, it was a time to regroup and rethink and get up and figure out new strategies, to build new paths towards the future, to deal with the issues of poverty and deal with the issues of race that were going to be ongoing, but clearly much more difficult.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** one day, we will have to stand before the god of history and we will talk in terms of things we've done. It seems as if I can hear the god of history saying, "that was not enough. For I was hungry, and you fed me not."

## Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More (1964-1968)

**Amiri Baraka:** I know it's hard to be black, and we're all controlled by white folks. Dubois said we always have the double consciousness. We're trying to be black, and meanwhile you got a white ghost hovering over your head that says, "if you don't do this, you'll get killed. If you don't do this, you won't get no money. If you don't do this, nobody'll think you're beautiful. If you don't do this, nobody'll think you're smart." that's the ghost. You're trying to be black and the ghost is telling you to be a ghost.

**Narrator:** for almost four centuries, American negroes were judged by white standards of beauty, culture and learning. To be expected, many downplayed their African features and rejected their cultural heritage. But times were changing.

**Last Poets:** poetry is black, poetry is black people. You know, black people like black poetry, black people like you and me movin' and groovin' and black, doing the shigalig and....

**Narrator:** in the 1960s, negroes celebrated their own standards. They were blacks in America, and black was beautiful.

**Sonia Sanchez:** can you really imagine whole generations living and dying and never once having loved themselves, that's what we tried to change when we moved into the black arts, black culture, black consciousness movement. I said never again will I allow anyone to live and walk on the planet earth and not like what they are, what they've been.

**Narrator:** this struggle for black pride was galvanized by the national civil rights movement. Now, black Americans began to demand respect on their own terms. Among them was Cassius Marcellus Clay. Clay had won the Olympic gold medal in 1960. Four years later, he challenged Sonny Liston for the heavyweight championship of the world.

**Muhammad Ali:** I'm not gonna get knocked out. Not if he whups me, you tell this to your camera, your t.v. Man, your radio man, you right there in the whole world. If sonny Liston whups me, I'll kiss his feet in the ring. I'll bow down in the ring, on my knees, tell him he's the greatest, and catch the next jet out of the country!

**Narrator:** Liston was considered a devastating heavyweight. He had won the title with a first round knockout.

**Sonny Liston:** I'm for real, man, I'm for real. You just get past Patterson. Come on, ring number two. Sloan's gonna fall in five. Or in four. Man, I don't get hit. I'm the fastest thing on two feet, man. Are you crazy?

**Edwin pope:** I thought Liston would absolutely take this kid apart and just kill him. I mean, Liston was an absolute thug and the very idea of this spindly kid from Louisville just out of the Olympics going in there with Liston, who'd had so many fights in and out of the ring and having a chance was impossible for anybody to digest.

**Reporter:** I saw sonny Liston a few days ago, Cassius.

**Muhammad Ali:** ain't he ugly? He's too ugly to be the world's champ. The world's champ should be pretty like me.

**Reporter:** well, he told me to bet my life that you wouldn't go three rounds.

**Muhammad Ali:** well, if you want to lose your money, then bet on sonny.

**Reporter:** what percentage of the fans are coming to see you fight sonny Liston? What percentage of the fans do you feel will be coming to see him, and what percentage do you feel will be coming to see you?

**Muhammad Ali:** well, a hundred percent will be coming to see me, but 99 percent will be coming to see me get beat.

**Reporter:** do you really feel that way?

**Muhammad Ali:** they probably think I talk too much.

**Kareem Abdul Jabbar:** I remember when I was in high school, the teachers at my high school didn't like him because he was so antiestablishment and he kind of thumbed his nose at authority and got away with it. And they didn't like that at all. The fact that he was proud to be a black man and that he was — had so much talent and could enjoy it in a way that was not seen to be — it didn't have the dignity that they assumed it should have. I think that was something that really made certain people love him and made other people think that he was dangerous.

**Narrator:** for many, clay's friendship with Malcolm X was especially threatening. Malcolm X was the national spokesman for a black religious organization, the nation of Islam.

**Malcolm X:** we choose to obey the law. We teach you carry yourselves in a respectable way. But at the same time, we teach you that anyone that puts his hand on you, do your best to see that he doesn't put it on anybody else.

**Narrator:** the nation of Islam taught black pride, self reliance and self defense. Many saw it as a militant, separatist group. One of the fight promoters got nervous.

**Angelo Dundee:** and he came to me and said, "Angelo, unless Cassius Marcellus Dlay refutes the reports out of Chicago that he's not a Muslim, I'm going to cancel the fight." so I said, "well, jeez, I'll talk to the kid." and I said, "better still, you go talk to the kid." and I made him go off into another area to speak to the fighter. So Cassius came back and I'm sitting in the office and he says, "ang, I don't think we're going to have a fight." I said, "why?" he said, "well, because they want me to say I'm not a Muslim and I am a Muslim."

**Narrator:** Clay refused to deny his religion, but with millions of dollars at stake, promoters went ahead with the bout.

**Announcer:** they might be stopping it, that might be all, ladies and gentlemen! Get up there, joe. Get up there, get up in the ring!

**Muhammad Ali:** after beating sonny Liston and after becoming champion, I no longer had to talk to convince people that I was the best because they knew it.

**Narrator:** Clay publicly confirmed his membership in the nation of Islam. Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad required his followers to drop the family names originally imposed by slave masters. Heavyweight champion Cassius Clay was no exception.

**Herbert Muhammad:** my father called me that night and asked me did I know how to get in touch with Cassius clay. And he told me to get in touch with him if I could and let him know that his name has been changed, he's changing his name from Cassius marcellus Clay to Muhammad Ali.

**Sonia Sanchez:** when Muhammad Ali joined the nation, it was the continuation of what we knew was happening already. Everyone had seen Malcolm down in his camp, everyone had seen — knew that he was teaching him and instructing him at that particular time. So when he changed his name, we said very simply, "that's his name." when people called him Cassius clay, we would say, "that's not his name. Call the brother by his name, his name is Muhammad Ali. Go on, do it. Get it, walk on." and we were very pleased and very happy.

**Angelo Dundee:** but what's in a name? The thing with me was the individual. But the tough, tough thing about it really was that it was such a pretty name. We had nurtured it and played it up, you know? Cassius Marcellus clay, and then there was the rhyme on it, it was a beautiful name. And then he changed it Muhammad Ali. People resented that. You know, why? Why? A lot of people wouldn't call him — but what's in a name? To me, he was still the same individual, same guy. And I actually — I didn't know what a Muslim was, really, because I thought it was a piece of cloth.

**Reporter:** Cassius Clay is the name no more, is that right?

**Muhammad Ali:** yes, sir. It's Muhammad Ali. Muhammad means worthy of all praises, and Ali means most high in the Asian African language.

**Reporter:** how long have you had the name?

**Muhammad Ali:** well, for about two weeks now.

**Reporter:** anybody special give you the name?

**Muhammad Ali:** yes, sir. My leader and teacher, the most honorable Elijah Muhammad.

**Narrator:** in the spring of 1964, Ali traveled through Ghana, Nigeria and Egypt.

**Herbert Muhammad:** they received him as though he was the president of a country or a King, actually. In fact, in Ghana I thought I might even get killed because so many people was running to Ali, I ranned away from him to get to save my life. And the same thing happened in Egypt.

**Narrator:** Ali returned to his boxing career in the states. In 1965, he entered a war of words with former heavyweight champion, Floyd Patterson.

**Floyd Patterson:** I just expressed the way I felt about the things he believed, and he expressed the way he felt about the things I believe. I only did this because of some of the derogatory things he was saying about my beliefs. He called me a white man's champion, and I resented that.

**Narrator:** a devout catholic, Patterson was seen as a humble and gracious fighter. For many in America, he was a more acceptable champion than the boastful Muhammad Ali, a black Muslim.

**Muhammad Ali:** so obviously I'm a better champion for America than Floyd Patterson, and I am the real champion. I go all throughout the streets everywhere, meeting all the people. Obviously, I'm the real champion.

**Narrator:** Ali and Patterson took their fight to the ring in November, 1965.

**Angelo Dundee:** well, it was a good guy/bad guy situation where Patterson was a well loved individual and he's fighting Muhammad Ali. And Floyd had the — always had this thing about saying, "Cassius, Cassius, Cassius," you know. And it gets to be a rub after a while, and his name was Muhammad Ali.

The fight with Patterson, my kid was doing a number on him, he said, "what's my name?" [laughter] pop. "what's my name?" pop, you know? I felt sorry for Floyd because Muhammad did a number on him.

**Narrator:** in 12 rounds, Ali defeated Patterson and again proved his right to the title. His next major fight would take place outside the ring. By December, 1965, America had committed 180,000 troops to the escalating war in Vietnam. Four months after he defeated Patterson, America's heavyweight champion was drafted. Ali requested deferment as a minister of Islam and a conscientious objector. He added his voice to the small but growing opposition, black and white, to the war.

**Muhammad Ali:** the real enemies of my people are right here, not in Vietnam. And we who follow the most honorable Elijah Muhammad take no parts in wars. As the holy Koran teaches us, we take parts in no wars on the side of infidels or christians or non-believers in Islam. No war unless it's declared by almighty god, Allah himself, or his messengers.

**Narrator:** Ali was training for an upcoming fight in Illinois. The state athletic commission demanded that he apologize for remarks they considered unpatriotic. If he refused, the commission would cancel the fight.

**Commissioner:** what about your unpatriotic remarks that you made?

**Muhammad Ali:** I apologize for saying things to the newspaper that I should have said to the government officials or the draft board, rather, I mean to say. I apologize for opening my mouth and saying things that should have been taken up with them and not just with newspaper writers over the telephone.

**Commissioner:** commissioners, do you have any questions to ask of the witness?

**Commissioner:** Mr. Clay, when you —

**Muhammad Ali:** Muhammad Ali, sir.

**Commissioner:** Mr. Clay —

**Ali:** Muhammad Ali, sir.

**Commissioner:** Mr. Muhammad Ali, either one —

**Muhammad Ali:** just Muhammad Ali.

**Commissioner:** when you appear before the —

**Narrator:** the fight was canceled. Ali's next four bouts took place outside the united states.

**Herbert Muhammad:** when Ali made his statement that he was not going to be a party to an unjust war against the Viet Cong, Vietnam, the Viet Cong people, that it was a backlash from the white community. Some of them would call him all times of night, threatening to blow up his house, they would throw rocks at his house. Some would even drive by in cars, hollering and drunk and shooting at his place and different things like that.

**White Man:** we feel like if we send a boy from Owens county and draft him for the armed forces, we feel like what's good for the goose is good for the gander. They should go, the entertainers and the so-called ministers, should go, too.

**Stokely Carmichael:** Mr. Muhammad Ali is from Louisville, Kentucky. Did you know that? He was born in Louisville, Kentucky. Do you know what's happening in Louisville, Kentucky today? They're marching for open housing. They're marching for open occupancy. Now, here's a black man who can't live where he wants to live in Kentucky and the honkies are going to send him to Vietnam to fight for freedom.

**Jackie Robinson:** I think that he's hurting, I think, the morale of a lot of young negro soldiers over in Vietnam. And the tragedy to me is that Cassius has made millions of dollars off of the American public, and now he's not willing to show his appreciation to a country that is giving him, in my view, a fantastic opportunity, hurts a great number of people.

**Narrator:** Ali's requests for deferment were denied. He was ordered to report to the Houston draft board. Refusal to serve could mean five years in prison.

**Reporter:** what might this do to your boxing career?

**Muhammad Ali:** no comment on the boxing career, no comment on nothing. I just face the judge, that's all, I have to face the judge.

**Herbert Muhammad:** before Ali was to appear before the induction board, he called me that morning, as he do most mornings and most nights and he was asking me, you know, like, what do you think going to happen? Not what he should do. I think Ali was already convinced in his own conscience that he was going to stand up for his principles, but he always liked to bounce it off to me how I felt about it because we also realized the repercussion that this could have about his career.

**Narrator:** April 28th, 1967, Ali arrived at the Houston induction center.

**Man:** apparently, you still have a little bit of humor left in you.

**Steven Dunkeley:** Muhammad Ali and the people who were to be inducted that day came in. I explained to them that as I called their name, they would take a step forward and that step forward would constitute their induction in the u.s. Army. Okay, so then I started down through the list, starting with the as. The army always starts with the as and ends with the zs, so I started with the as. And when I got down to the MS, Muhammad Ali, I said Muhammad Ali, and I looked him in the eye, wondering if he was going to do it. And he didn't do anything. And then I called Cassius Clay and he didn't do anything, because we wanted to make sure that the name was correct that we were calling.

**Col. McKee:** ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Muhammad Ali has just refused to be inducted into the united states armed forces. Notification of his refusal is being made to the united states attorney, the state director of the selective service system, and the local selective service board for whatever action deemed to be appropriate.

**Narrator:** Ali was sentenced to five years in prison. He appealed the decision. For many, Ali remained a popular figure, but his struggle cost in the heavyweight title. Until the courts made a decision, he was effectively banned from boxing.

**Muhammad Ali:** I would like to say to those of the press and those of the people who think that I lost so much by not taking this step, I would like to say that I did not lose a thing up until this very moment, I haven't lost one thing. I have gained a lot. Number one, I have gained a peace of mind. I have gained a peace of heart.

**Narrator:** in 1970, the supreme court overturned Ali's conviction. It was an expensive victory. Ali had lost three years at the height of his career, but four years later, he defeated George foreman in Zaire. At the age of 32, Ali was once again heavyweight champion of the world.

**Harry Belafonte:** he was the genuine product of the moment, he was the best example. He was the negro kid who came up in a black moment who was Cassius clay, then became Muhammad Ali, then took on all of the characteristics and was the embodiment of the thrust of the movement. He was courageous, he put his class issues on the line. He didn't care about money, he didn't care about the white man's success and the things that you aspire to. He brought America to its most wonderful and most naked moment. "I will not play your game, I will not kill in your behalf. You are immoral, unjust, and I stand here to attest to it. Now do with me what you will." and he was terribly, terribly powerful and delicious. And he made it, he made it.

**Narrator:** Muhammad Ali had forced America to recognize him on his own terms. In the mid-1960's, black students demanded that same recognition from Howard University in Washington, dc. Howard was a prestigious black institution and it provided leadership for the civil rights movement.

**Tony Gittens:** the whole attitude of the civil rights movement was shifting and Howard wasn't shifting with it. The attitude was that one of integration, of assimilation. And the whole movement was beginning to shift towards one of self-identity and self empowerment. And Howard was resisting that as opposed to carrying that forward.

**Mrs. E. Franklin Frazier:** you've got to conform to the society in which you live. You have to within it or outside of it. You can't straddle the fence. Now, are you going to live outside of the American culture, or are you going to live within it? As long as you stay in America, you've got to conform. What else can you do?

**Narrator:** for nearly a century, Howard graduates had been trained to compete with their white counterparts on every level: educational, cultural, social. By the 1960's, half the nation's black physicians and a fourth of its black lawyers were Howard graduates. Known as the black Harvard, Howard mirrored white schools in many ways, including curriculum. Few courses focused on black history or culture. Howard's annual homecoming celebration, October, 1966. Four months earlier, black power had become a rallying cry for many in the civil rights movement. At Howard, five women ran for homecoming queen. Among them was robin Gregory.

**Paula Giddings:** she had an afro, which of course was the statement that she made physically. And robin talked about the movement and robin talked about black politics. Robin was not the traditional homecoming queen candidate.

**Robin Gregory:** I felt it was real important at that time, you know, because the black power movement was new, that we as a people begin to accept ourselves, you know, just as who we were. Because over the years, there was a tremendous amount of shame. You know, we were made to feel ugly, especially by media images and things that people told us. And we did everything we could so that we wouldn't look like who we are, which was, you know, descendents of African people.

**Narrator:** the campaign lasted two weeks. On election night, the auditorium was packed.

**Paula Giddings:** I remember very much the evening when the homecoming queen was crowned. The lights went down, the candidates went back. Then you heard the curtains open, and you heard the crank of the revolving stage begin. And as the stage revolved and turned around toward the audience, the lights began to come up at the same time. Well, before you saw robin, you saw the way that the lights cast a silhouette on the curtains and you saw the silhouette of her afro before you saw her. Well, the auditorium exploded and everybody exploded. It was a wonderful moment. People started jumping up and screaming and some were raising their fists.

Then spontaneously, a chant began. The chant was *umgawa*, black power, *umgawa*, black power. And a chain was created, people started to march to it, to the rhythm of *umgawa*, black power. And there was a line and it went all the way around the auditorium and more and more people joined the line, I did too, as it went around the auditorium, and finally out the door and into the streets of Washington, dc, past the campus and still chanting, *umgawa*, black power. And that was really the launching of that movement at Howard.

**Narrator:** the movement grew. In April 1967, a student black power group invited Muhammad Ali to speak at Howard.

**Muhammad Ali:** see, we have been brainwashed. Everything good and of authority was made white. We look at Jesus, we see a white with blond hair and blue eyes. We look at all the angels, we see white with blond hair and blue eyes. Now, I'm sure if there's a heaven in the sky and the colored folks die and go to heaven, where are the colored angels? They must be in the kitchen preparing the milk and honey. We look at miss America, we see white. We look at miss world, we see white. We look at miss universe, we see white. Even Tarzan, the King of the jungle in black Africa, he's white!

**Narrator:** over the next three semesters, students and some faculty pushed Howard to proclaim itself a black institution. They demanded more courses in black culture and history. They demonstrated against military training on campus. A protest against the war in Vietnam led student government leaders to denounce fellow students.

**Gloster current:** it has been apparent that throughout the year, certain elements have attempted to transform Howard University into a haven of black power and a center of race controversy. While we recognize the need for negroes to organize politically and socially, and many of us here have led vital demonstrations for the people, any tendency to disrupt the normal process of this University and accepted standards of society cannot be condoned.

**Fred Black:** as a student leader, you felt like you were being pulled apart, pulled in different directions by what you thought the right way to deal with the problem was as opposed to what the popular opinions on campus happened to reflect. A much more militant attitude on the part of some students in dealing with the administration, techniques and tactics that were directly coming from the broader civil rights struggle off the campus. And you had to feel like this was not necessarily going to work on a University campus.

**Narrator:** throughout America, students were confronting the nation's inaction on civil rights and its involvement in the Vietnam war. As protests escalated, so did conflicts between students and police. During a civil rights protest in February, 1968, three unarmed black students were shot and killed by police in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

**Tony Gittens:** and then what we were doing at Howard and the dangers there seemed minimal compared to what other people were willing to face for the same kind of reason.

**Narrator:** students at Howard moved with a new urgency. They issued a manifesto. It demanded that Howard move towards the student's vision of a black institution. The students set a deadline for the administration's response.

**Fred Black:** it was almost unheard of in those days to place demands on administrators, but yet people demanded the resignation of the president and the dean of liberal arts and the vice president of the University. I don't think many of the elected student government leaders would have gone that far.

**Narrator:** in March, 1968, protesters went farther. When the University failed to respond to the manifesto, 1,200 students took over the administration building.

**Adrienne Mann's:** in a press release issued by the students was staging a sit-in in the administration building. If Howard University has raised the federal government to serve an injunction against us, many of us will stay in the administration building and be arrested. I'm sorry, brothers. We feel that the administration must give some public indication that they will move to establish democracy and a black oriented curriculum before we can discontinue our protest. Our position is legitimate, and we must continue to push for all of our demands.

Specifically, the black issue was that Howard should exist for the benefit of a black community. That it ought to be involved in economic change and political change, that it had a mission, let's say, or a purpose, a goal, that didn't allow it just to be a place where you came and got a liberal education and became a member of the middle class and went on with no consciousness.

**Charles Epps:** it was, for all practical purposes, a black University. Now, I don't know how it could have been more black, and I'm not sure what they were trying to say. But Howard provided a mainstream education which prepared people to be competitive in their every field. I don't recognize, and I don't think the world recognizes, that there's any black physics, there's no black engineering, there's no black medicine. So that the mission of the University was to train students to be competitive and competent in whatever field.

**Narrator:** news of the takeover spread throughout Washington. On capitol hill, legislators reminded the press that congress was responsible for more than half of Howard's annual funding.

**Senator Robert Byrd:** I'm shocked and dismayed by the situation that has developed at Howard University here in the nation's capital. I believe that citizens throughout the country who believe in democratic processes, who cherish an orderly society and who with the tax dollars which they pay, support this nation's institutions of higher learning, will be outraged by the fact that it has become necessarily, temporarily at least, to close this institution because of a student uprising that can only be described as anarchy.

**Narrator:** the following day, student leaders telephoned members of Howard's board of trustees.

**Kenneth Clark:** I was primarily concerned with protecting the students and the University from chaos and violence. They were organized and they had taken over a couple of the buildings and they seemed to — quite persistent and insistent in — a few of us on the board felt that if we didn't establish some communication with them that things would get worse and worse and worse.

**Ewart brown:** we want to make Howard University a University which is quite relevant to the black community. We want Howard not shut off from George avenue and 14th street. We want Howard University to stand as a pinnacle of black America as far as education is concerned.

**Tony Gittens:** you know, we're talking about Howard University, we're talking about black people, black people asking for freedom and more rights. We don't care what happens at white universities.

**Reporter:** realistically, how long can you sit in this building?

**Tony Gittens:** oh, realistically, we're going to stay here until, you know, we get what we want. That's being very realistic. At some point, the University trustees and administration, they wanted to negotiate, they wanted to sit and talk with us to find out what was going on. And so we put together a negotiating team, and the team was headed by Adrienne Mann's.

**Adrienne Mann's:** and so we were going back and forth, back and forth, on a lot of issues. And it came down to two that were a problem. First was Nabor's resignation, and the trustees told us that he planned to retire the next year so that they felt there was no need to ask him to resign. And secondly was on the matter of black, the word black. We wanted Howard to make a statement about its commitment to the black community, to the welfare of the black community. And the trustees said no, they couldn't do that.

**Narrator:** the takeover had entered its third day. Students expected to be evicted by the Washington, dc police, a force that was predominantly white. Despite the bravado, many feared police action on campus.

**Kenneth Clark:** I felt strongly that we should do everything within our power to keep police from coming into this conflict, or coming on campus, because I had images of police using their nightsticks and their bludgeons and worse, really.

**Adrienne Mann's:** I had been at — in October '67, at the pentagon for the big peace march. I had gone to that and I'd seen how they had beat those people at the pentagon. You know, young white people. And since they'll do that to them, I know what they'll do to us.

**Narrator:** by the fourth day, the trustees were ready to take legal action against the students. Clark pleaded with the students to end their protest. He told them the trustees would not accept the students definition of a black University. But they would give students a greater voice in developing the curriculum.

**Tony Gittens:** we talked about it that night, and that morning we got up and we went down and we said, you know "it's time for us to go." and we gave our reasons why we should go. And we asked all the press to leave who were there, and we had open mikes so students could come up and they could say whether they were for it, whether they were against it, whatever the — that went on for about an hour, hour and a half, two hours. We took a voice vote, and the agreement was that we should go.

**Tony Gittens:** we have made a major move in our protest to move Howard toward becoming a black University. Howard is well on its way towards its becoming a black University, the type of black University we want to see. If we didn't believe that, we would not come out of this building.

**Kenneth Clark:** we are concerned, first, with these young people, the students of Howard University as human beings and we are identified with them as human beings.

**Narrator:** the students ended their takeover. It had lasted five days. Police had not intervened. The following semester, Howard University sponsored a national conference called for the black University. It energized a growing black studies movement throughout the country.

**President Richard Nixon:** I am the resurrection and the light, says the lord. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, literally lives. And whosoever liveth —

**Narrator:** twelve days after the takeover at Howard, martin Luther King was assassinated. Anger tore through American cities. It was the nation's fifth year of civil unrest. In November, 1968, republican Richard m. Nixon was elected president. His campaign had called for law and order.

**President Richard Nixon:** we've been putting out billions of dollars for programs for federal jobs and federal housing and federal welfare and I'll tell you what we've reaped. We've reaped a harvest of riot and frustration and failure, and now they want to put billions more into the same programs and I say no. My friends, I say when you're on a wrong road, you get off of it and you take a new road.

**Arthur eve:** many of us had experienced great expectations and hopes on the great society and programs of the '60s and civil rights and so forth. We saw Nixon's election as taking away those gains. We saw the system moving away from a commitment to people and hunger and housing and political empowerment.

**Narrator:** the Nixon years saw a rise in government repression in black activists at the national and local levels.

**Rev. Ben Chavis:** for example, I was put in jail one night because my signal light didn't work. Another time I was put in jail because the registration of my car was not in my glove compartment, but in the trunk, in my briefcase and they wouldn't allow me to get my briefcase out of the trunk. But what it prevented me from doing was having a rally that night. It prevented me from organizing.

**Amiri Baraka:** oh, what can it be? What can it be, whoa, whoa, be, what can it be? Oh that's holding me, what can it be, that's holding, holding me, holding me from-from-from getting free? Whoa, whoa, whoa, do you, do you, do you know?

**Narrator:** new visions were emerging. Black nationalists like poet Imamu Amiri Baraka called for black unity based on common concerns and a shared African heritage.

**Amiri Baraka:** we a big, we a big, big, big, black, black, we are the big black, bad, bad me, me, me, me to hook up, hook, hook, hook up into a bad black, we are bad, bad, a black, black, black, we, yeah, bad we, yeah, yeah, bad, bad we, see, yeah, we a, we a, we a bad, bad, black devil jammin', we, yeah.

**Narrator:** March 10th, 1972, black nationalists and elected officials, often at odds, put aside their differences to hold the national black political convention. It took place in Gary, Indiana, a city run by a black mayor.

**Rev. Ben Chavis:** I remember when we first saw the sign saying, "welcome to Gary." and we got downtown Gary, I mean we thought we were in a different country. I mean, to see a city in the united states, given the backdrop now of all this Nixon repression going on, a sense of disillusionment in some quarters of the nation, to drive into Gary, Indiana and see streamers, red, black and green, and "welcome, national black political convention." I mean, it was a fulfillment of what a lot of our dreams were.

**Narrator:** eight thousand people arrived in Gary. Nearly half were delegates representing over 45 states. Their goal, to develop a national black agenda that would set priorities for black America. But not every black organization was represented.

**Mary Hightower:** one of our NAACP leaders came to the convention and he was opposed to our being there. And he was saying that we were separating ourselves, but we didn't see it that way.

**Jesse Jackson:** there was a sense of alienation from the democratic party, democrats taking us for granted, republicans writing us off, and agenda items for jobs and peace and justice would no longer be an afterthought for some other party or some other person and the sense that we had to assert this new dynamic.

**Narrator:** expectations were high on Saturday as mayor Richard hatcher opened the convention.

**Richard hatcher:** probably one of the most glorious moments of my life was when I walked out and saw all of these black people of every color, every hue, every shade, but colorful dashikis and other African garb that some of them wore, mixing with the three piece suits and so forth. It was just an incredible sight to behold.

I believe that the '70s will be the decade of an independent black political thrust. Its destiny will depend on us here at Gary this afternoon. How shall we respond? Will we walk in unity or disperse in a thousand different directions? Will we stand for principle or settle for a mess of potage? Will we maintain our integrity or will we succumb to the man's temptation? Will we act like free black men or like timid, shivering chattel? Will we do what must be done? These are the questions confronting this convention and we, you and I, are the only ones that can answer them and history will be the judge.

Thank you.

**Jesse Jackson:** we are pregnant. We are ready for change and whether a doctor is there or not, the water has broke, the blood has spilled. A new black Jesus is going to be born! We know who our parents are, their baby has now been born. We are grown, we ain't taking it no more. No more "yes, sir boss." no more bowing and scraping. We are 25 million strong, cut us in or cut it out. We're their new ball game.

**Narrator:** the crowd began calling for nation time.

**Jesse Jackson:** what time is it? When we come together, what time is it? When we respect each other, what time is it? When we get ourself confident, what time is it? When we form our own political party, what time is it? I'd drawn much of the strength of nation time from a poem written by Leroi Jones, Amiri Baraka at that time. The sense of people saying, "what's happening?" "nothing's happening, man." "say, what's really happening?" it's nation time, it's time to come together, this time to organize politically, time for partnership.

**Harry Belafonte:** it was an enormously exciting experiment and an idea. Could we come together, this diverse group? And in the absence of the glue that held it together previously, meaning Dr. King, meaning Malcolm X, in the absence of those leaders, and particularly Dr. King, what would emerge out of this? Could there be a consensus?

**Narrator:** the convention's theme was unity without uniformity. But agreement on a single black agenda would be difficult.

**Charles Diggs:** the chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Mclynn.

**Mr. Mclynn:** Mr. Speaker, I move that nominations be closed.

**Narrator:** congressman Charles Diggs attempted to close nominations for convener, but many delegates had been shut out of other political conventions. They were determined to be heard at Gary.

**Charles Diggs:** the nominations have been closed. All of those in favor of closing the nominations, signify by saying aye. Opposed, nay. In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it.

**Rev. Ben Chavis:** and unfortunately, Diggs misread the crowd because when he said the chair rules that the nominations are closed, hey, pandemonium broke out. We wanted an open convention, not a repressed convention. And so Diggs, you know, got himself in some hot water. And it took Amiri Baraka, imam Baraka, to come with his version of Africans consensus. I remember Baraka's statement, he said, "now, sisters and brothers, we must use some scientific process to bring this gathering together so that we can achieve our objectives." but it was the way that Baraka said it. He didn't say it arrogantly, he said it caringly.

**Amiri Baraka:** I wasn't an elected official, I wasn't a mayor or wasn't a congressman, but I was a black nationalist, I was an activist, and I felt a lot of those people had come to Gary because of our organizing, our, you know, pleading with people to come and, you know, be part of the whole black political development. And I thought it was important that the thing not fly apart.

Can we do that? California, will you accept that? Can we move by general acclimation to accept that and add that to our revolution? All right. **Narrator:** with Baraka presiding, intense debate began on the agenda.

**Richard hatcher:** it was a wonderful agenda. It addressed the issue of political parity. But we also talked about economic parity and the need to establish economic institutions. Many of the discussions that are ongoing today were occurring at that meeting. Unemployment, the proportionate level of unemployment among blacks, the disproportionate level of poverty among blacks and what to do about it, what kinds of new institutions could be created to address those problems?

**Man:** there's a report, a resolution that we must make and it has to do with the suffering, the suffering of our young children as it relates to the educational policies that are in existence in the south.

**Narrator:** delegates proposed remedies for years of inequity in education, housing, and job opportunities. And they went further, addressing issues on behalf of all Americans; the need for national health insurance, for day care and elder care, and for environmental safeguards.

**Narrator:** the push to establish national priorities collided with local interests.

**Amiri Baraka:** now, some of you all need to cool yourself out a little bit. New York, Michigan, Illinois —

After those meetings, people wouldn't go to sleep, they would caucus. And each state would caucus, you know, and then there would be caucuses inside the caucuses because then you'd have the elected officials caucusing inside the state and then you'd have the black nationalists caucusing inside there, and then a lot of time, there was a Marxist or somebody else, they'd be caucusing.

**Queen mother Moore:** and this document tells you why the man owes you reparation. There honey, you want reparations? Take it. This is reparations. This is how you've been injured, this is how you've been destroyed. You was changed from an African into a negro, you've been damaged, injured. They took your name, took your pulse. I don't have my sunny black color —

**Man:** thank you very much.

**Queen mother Moore:** no, I want an afro. I can't even wear one, the man done messed it up.

**Dick Gregory:** what baffles me is so many white folks in America keep wanting to know, "what's wrong with them? Niggers must be crazy." oh baby, understand one thing, niggers got more sense today than ever before in their history of America. And when niggers was basically crazy, that's when he thought we had good sense. Yeah, that's right. When he was running around goosing me in the rump, rubbing my head, "come here, jabbo." "yassir, boss?" when I was basically crazy. Now we talk about getting our thing together, getting our sanity together, baby. Once you get your mind together, baby, ain't nobody deal with you. That's what this convention is all about, getting our minds together. When we leave here, it's going to be a different day.

**Richard hatcher:** the last day of the convention was Sunday. We were slated to wrap up at noon, and the purpose of that last day was the adoption of the resolutions that had been agreed to by the body.

**Amiri Baraka:** let's get back and deal with the situation. Now please, will you delegates return to your seats?

**Narrator:** delegates pushed to adopt the national black agenda, but some Michigan delegates felt the document was too separatist in tone and might hurt black alliances, especially with organized labor. The delegation threatened to walk.

**Amiri Baraka:** we going to vote. Only we have more unreadiness which we going to allow. And that is to hear what Michigan has to say because we're going to call this vote.

**Coleman young:** Mr. Chairman, now it was my understanding, and I believe that the six man committee will confirm it, that the agreement before you rules out a walk out by us or any minority port. We, too, are trying to preserve black unity.

**Willie Felder:** you must remember that 65 percent or better of that delegate body from Michigan were from labor; auto workers, steel workers, municipal workers and so forth. And you had some of the most renown labor personalities folded into that delegation who were international figures.

**Narrator:** Michigan asked for more time, but the request was denied. As pressure mounted to approve the agenda, members of the Michigan delegation began to walk. At the 11th hour, the fragile coalition at Gary seemed on the verge of falling apart.

**Amiri Baraka:** Michigan, Michigan.

**Mary Hightower:** we felt like once Michigan delegation walked out, others were going to walk out. And we was, you know, we were really afraid, you know. Everybody was — is like standing there dumbfounded for a while, really realizing what's going to happen next?

**Narrator:** but the coalition held. Not all the Michigan delegates had walked.

**Man:** and to second that, to second that motion Mr. Chairman, I also want to point out that we want to succeed with adopting that agenda because time has long passed when a state or an instance can intimidate the whole black nation.

**Rev. Ben Chavis:** it's nation time, it's nation time, it's nation time. Let the black nation rise. I mean, you could hear reverberating all those prior stories from the '40s and the '30s and the '50s and the '60s, I mean, came to be fulfilled in that moment of crying that it's nation time now. Not next year, not next century, but now, in 1973 in Gary, Indiana.

**Richard hatcher:** people went back home, rolled up their sleeves and ran for public office in a way that blacks had never thought about running for public office before.

**Narrator:** the national black agenda was published on the birthday of Malcolm x. It articulated a new spirit of independent black politics. Within ten years, the number of black elected officials in the united states jumped from 2,264 to more than 5,000.



## A Nation Of Law? (1968-1971)

**Bobby Seale:** when our brother, martin King, exhausted a means of nonviolence with his life being taken by some racist, what is being done to us is what we hate, and what happened to martin Luther King is what we hate. You're darn right, we respect nonviolence. But to sit and watch ourselves be slaughtered like our brother, we must defend ourselves, as Malcolm X says, by any means necessary.

**William O'Neal:** at this point, I question the whole purpose of the Black Panther Party. In my thinking, they were necessary as a shock treatment for white America to see black men running around with guns just like black men saw the white man running around with guns. Yeah, that was a shock treatment. It was good in that extent. But it got a lot of black people hurt.

**Elaine brown:** there was no joke about what was going on, but we believed in our hearts that we should defend ourselves. And there were so many that did do that.

**Narrator:** by 1968, the Black Panther Party was part of an increasingly volatile political scene. That summer, the national democratic convention in Chicago was disrupted by violent clashes between demonstrators and police. The war in Vietnam polarized the nation and the political and racial upheaval at home soon became an issue in the presidential campaign.

**President Richard Nixon:** this is a nation of laws and as Abraham Lincoln had said, no one is above the law, no one is below the law, and we're going to enforce the law and Americans should remember that if we're going to have law and order.

**Jerris Leonard:** I think it's fair to say that as the Nixon administration came into office, as we came into office in 1969, there certainly was a strong perception of radicalization.

**Narrator:** in Chicago, and in other cities, FBI director j. Edgar hoover, expanded surveillance of organizations in the black community, especially the Black Panther Party. Directives issued by FBI headquarters a few weeks after the elections called for "imaginative and hard hitting counterintelligence measures aimed at crippling the Black Panther Party." on Chicago's west side, the panthers had just opened their first office in Illinois.

**Father George Clements:** well, the thing that I really loved about the Black Panthers is that they refused to be ignored. It was very easy to ignore black people back then because everybody figured, "well, it's just a lot of talk. They're not going to do anything, they'll just go on and on and on moaning and groaning about how terrible everything is. And they at the best, they just might get involved in some acts of nonviolence." but that's about it, and they just kind of — you know, business as usual. You couldn't have business as usual with the Black Panthers. The Black Panthers were definitely going to be heard.

**Fred Hampton:** so we say, we always say in the Black Panther Party, that they can do anything they want to us. We might not be back, I might be in jail, I might be anywhere. But when I leave, you can come out there, with the last words on my lips, I am a revolutionary and you're going to have to keep on saying that. You're going to have to say that I am a proletariat. I am the people, I'm not the pig. You got to make a distinction. And the people are going to have to attack the pigs. The people are going to have to stand up against the pigs. That's what the panthers is doing, that's what the panthers are doing all over the world.

**Narrator:** Fred Hampton, a former NAACP youth organizer, became at age 20, chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party. The panther's programs drew mixed reactions in Chicago's black community.

**Marion Stamps:** many black people initially was very, very afraid of the Black Panther Party.

**Nancy Jefferson:** I understood where they were trying to go politically and felt that they had to change things, and when I talk about fear, I was afraid they weren't going to do it right. And I was always trying to cool them out and say, "that's not the right way to go." they were too direct.

**Howard Saffold:** you could tell that this was a movement that was very meaningful to them. And none of them were suicidal, so it wasn't like they were out there trying to figure out a way to get killed. But they did honestly and truly believe in power to the people. I mean, that was their slogan.

**Marion Stamps:** here you found some brothers and sisters saying first, you know — look, the united states constitution guarantees us the right to bear arms and to protect ourselves. And we understand that we need protection in the black community and it's our responsibility to protect black women and black children, not the police. Because the police is not here to serve and protect us, only to continue to enslave us. It is our responsibility to see to it that our people have a decent place to live, decent food to eat, and quality health care, not the system. So that find a lot of people — I mean, they didn't think that it could happen, they didn't think that it was right.

**Fred Hampton:** people learn by example. I don't think anybody here has an argument with that. I think that when Huey p. Newton said that people learn basically by observation and participation, I think that everybody caught on to that. So what we're saying here certainly is they learn by observation and participation, then we need to do more acting than we need to do writing. And I think the Black Panther Party is doing that. We didn't talk about a breakfast for children program, we got one.

**Panther:** come on in, little brothers, come on in, little sisters, you all can sit down and get something to eat.

**Narrator:** the new breakfast for children program soon attracted the attention of the FBI. Claiming the program served to indoctrinate children, the bureau directed field offices to "formulate specific counterintelligence techniques to disrupt this nefarious activity." the FBI stepped up its efforts to recruit blacks to infiltrate the Black Panther Party.

**William O'Neal:** my recruitment by the FBI was very efficient, very simple, really. I'd stole a car and went joyriding over the state limit. And they had a potential case against me, and I was looking for an opportunity to work it off. And a couple months alter, that opportunity came when the FBI agent Roy Mitchell asked me to go down to the local office of the Black Panther Party and try to gain membership.

**Deborah Johnson:** I think everyone that was in the Black Panther Party kind of understood that it was a given that we would have wiretaps, that we would be followed, that we would be harassed, we'd be locked up, that we would even be beaten by the police.

**Narrator:** in the winter of 1969, law enforcement agencies launched efforts to undermine an attempted coalition between the Black Panther Party and the Blackstone rangers, a Chicago gang.

**Howard Saffold:** the panthers were pursuing an ideology that said we need to take these young minds, this young energy, and turn it into part of our movement in terms of black liberation and the rest of it. And I saw a very purposeful, intentional effort on the part of the police department to keep that head from hooking up to that body. It was like, you know, do not let this thing become a part of what could ultimately be a political movement, because that's exactly what it was.

**Narrator:** FBI agents wrote an anonymous letter to Jeff fort, the leader of the Blackstone rangers warning fort that the panthers have, "a hit out for you." the bureau knew that the information was false, but believed that fort might take retaliatory action against the panthers. Meanwhile, city officials announced a crackdown on gangs.

**Reporter:** would you say that street gangs can do no good? Is that what you would say?

**Edward v. Hanrahan:** no, I wouldn't say that. I think that the energy of youth properly directed could be a tremendous betterment, could lead to a tremendous betterment of our city and individuals progress themselves. Now, I am complaining about the misdirection, I am complaining about the fact that 620 out of 693 shooting victims are black themselves, and I think that's a tragedy. That is where the black genocide is occurring here.

**Narrator:** the Chicago police expanded their anti-gang campaign to include the Black Panther Party. In late May, Fred Hampton was sent to prison. He had been convicted on a charge of stealing \$71 worth of ice cream bars.

**William O'Neal:** we tried to develop negative information to discredit him, just like we did everybody else. We, me and the FBI, tried to come up with signs of him doing drugs or something. And never could, he was clean, he was dedicated. I've had private conversations with him. We got along pretty well.

**Narrator:** while Fred Hampton was in prison, a police raid on the panther office turned into a shootout. Five policemen and three panthers were wounded.

**Panther:** they did it. ... (inaudible) brothers down, they went back up there and fired inside.

**Reporter:** nobody was up there except the police when the fire started?

**Panther:** that's right.

**Reporter:** frank, you want to come...

**Panther:** get a picture of that, too. Check that door out, man. That's a riot shotgun.

**Bobby rush:** they shot up the door... At the office, arrested some panthers. And just to show you the nature of the raiding officers there, they burned boxes of cereal that we had on the third floor, deliberately set fire to that. They didn't set fire to the second floor, they set fire to the third floor where all the, you know, and that was kind of indicative of what they were thinking and how they were moving.

**Bobby Seale:** the idea on the part of the police was to psych the community out. They call me up the next day, I says, "is the office open?" "well no, the police boarded the place up." I say, "open it back up, you got the lease to the place."

"what?" I says, "open it up, take all that boarding down, paint that place." and the Black Panther Party members start working for a couple of days. The next thing you know, the community starts bringing wood, paint and everything and opened the Black Panther Party office right back up. And of course this was an attempt to terrorize us out of existence, at the same time if we would close down, it would leave the black community saying, "well, they stopped them."

**Narrator:** in a report made public in the summer of 1969, FBI director hoover declared the Black Panther Party the number one threat to the internal security of the united states.

**Jerris Leonard:** I think, frankly, that he overstated the concern, the real concern, that the Black Panthers were to the country. I think it was legitimate for him to state that they were a violent and unlawful element. But referring to them as the most dangerous or most important, and I don't remember exactly the words he used, the greatest threat to the united states at that time I think was an overstatement.

**Howard Saffold:** the police community is sort of a built in reward and punishment system of its own, and you get a lot of rewards when you go after who the boss says is the bad guy and you get him. And I think what j. Edgar hoover was able to do was to give police officers the impression that it was okay, it was open season. You didn't have to worry about the law, you didn't have to worry about the difference in the executive branch of government and the judicial branch of government. I think what he in effect said, it's our ball game, guys. We've got the authority, we have the capacity, let's crush them.

**Narrator:** panther leader Fred Hampton was still in prison, but efforts were under way to appeal his conviction.

**Flint Taylor:** we were successful and we got him out of jail towards the end of that summer because a supreme court justice in the state of Illinois looked at what kind of a person he was, looked at the kind of case it was and gave him appeal bond. That's the first time I saw Fred, and I was a young, white student in a predominantly black church, full to the rafters, welcoming Fred Hampton back.

**Fred Hampton:** okay, you can put your hands down now, we're all power to all people. You say white power to white people. Brown power to brown people. Yellow power to yellow people. Black power to black people.

**Elaine brown:** we'd go out, we'd drive along some schoolyard or something, and there are like 200, 300 people waiting there for Fred to show up. And the phenomenal part was, I mean, these are all people from the streets, I mean, who are not going to get up and go to work or anything else, and never had no discipline and never would. But there they were, and it was 6:30 in the morning, freezing Chicago weather. And Fred would have them out there doing pushups and jumping jacks and getting themselves energized for the day's work, which included making the breakfast, which included selling papers, which included working in the medical clinic, which included a bunch of stuff. This was a very day to day kind of thing of the Black Panther Party. And you have Fred out there rallying them, and he'd say, "all right, all right, all right, power to the people." everybody'd say, "power to the people." he'd say, "now, I'm not going to die on no airplane." they'd say, "no." "I'm not going to die slipping on no ice." they'd say, "no." he'd say, "I'm going to die for the people because I'm going to live for the people." they said, "right on." he said, "I'm going to live for the people because I love the people." and they'd say, "right on." and he'd say, "I love the people, why?" and they'd say, "because we're high on the people, because we're high on the people." and that was Fred Hampton. When you saw this, this was 21 years old, it was unbelievable. You could not not be moved by Fred Hampton.

**Narrator:** in the fall of 1969, Chicago was the scene of a controversial trial. The defendants were leaders of the anti-war demonstrations that had taken place during the democratic party convention. National panther chairman, Bobby Seale, insisted on speaking in his own defense. On October 29th, trial judge Julius Hoffman ordered Seale bound and gagged.

**Rev. C.T. Vivian:** this is a symbol to every one of us, black men in our courts, are gagged. Black men in our courts do not feel as though there is any justice. Black men in our courts, when ever case they come, feel the judges do not understand and are without mercy.

**Narrator:** two weeks later, a gun battle on Chicago's south side further escalated tensions. A former panther and two policemen were killed. The deaths provoked a response from informant William O'Neal's FBI contact.

**William O'Neal:** Mitchell became more specific during that time. He wanted to know the locations of weapons caches. He wanted to know if we had explosives. He needed to know who was staying at what locations, who spent the night where. His information didn't change so much as he requested more detail. And I knew why, the shootout on the south side had pretty much laid the foundation within the party, within the Black Panthers, we knew that the police would react some type of way.

**Narrator:** expecting police action, the Black Panthers had fortified their office. FBI informant O'Neal was now head of panther security in Chicago.

**Fred Hampton:** we are very confident that nobody's coming in the front door, nobody. Everybody getting on the roof, you know.

Yes, we do defend our office as we do defend our homes. This is a constitutional right everybody has, and nothing's funny about that. The only reason they get mad at the Black Panther Party when you do it is for the simple reason that we're political. And they don't want to admit that there are a lot of young organizations around, but we're a political organization. We are an organization that understands that politics is nothing but war without bloodshed and war is nothing but politics with bloodshed.

**Narrator:** on November 19th, FBI agent Roy Mitchell drew a floor plan of Hampton's apartment based on information supplied by informant O'Neal. On December 4th, at 4:45 in the morning, fourteen policemen, nine white and five black, raided the apartment. Deborah Johnson, eight months pregnant, was asleep in the back bedroom next to Fred Hampton.

**Deborah Johnson:** the first thing I remember after Fred and I had went to sleep was being awakened by somebody shaking Fred while we were laying in bed saying, "chairman, chairman, wake up. The pigs are vamping, the pigs are vamping." this person that was in the room with me kept shouting out, "we have a pregnant sister in here, stop shooting." eventually, the shooting stopped and they said we could come out. I remember crossing over Fred and telling myself over and over, be real careful, don't stumble, they'll try to shoot you. Just be real calm, watch how you walk, keep your hands up, don't reach for anything. Don't even try to close your robe.

When I was in the kitchen, I heard a voice, an unfamiliar voice say, "he's barely alive, or he'll barely make it." then the shooting started back again. Then I heard this same unfamiliar voice say, "he's good and dead now." and I knew in my mind they were — I assumed they were talking about Fred. I knew when I left out of there, I couldn't look towards the room.

**Narrator:** party leaders Mark Clark and Fred Hampton were killed in the raid. Four of the seven surviving occupants of the apartment were wounded. All were charged with assault and attempted murder.

**Deborah Johnson:** when they locked me up at the police station, I kept begging them for a call, to make one call. I called, I think, the office, the Black Panther office and I spoke to Bobby Rush and he told me that Fred was dead. Fred had been killed.

**William O'Neal:** I remember walking out of the office and looking through a little clearing over on the next block, which was right in front of the Monroe street address and seeing a lot of police cars over there. And at that time, Bobby Rush came to the office, he had just come from over there, maybe the coroner's office. In any case, we walked back over there and we both were speechless. We just walked through the house and saw where — what had taken place and where he'd died and it was shocking. And then I was, you know, I just began to realize that the information that I had supplied leading up to that moment had facilitated that raid. I knew that indirectly, I had contributed and I felt it, and I felt bad about it. And then I got mad. You know, I had — and then I had to conceal those feelings, which made it worse. I couldn't say anything, I just had to continue to play the role.

**Narrator:** FBI headquarters authorized payment of a \$300 bonus to informant William O'Neal for "uniquely valuable services which he rendered over the past several months."

**Marion Stamps:** they came in our community just like a thief in the night and they snatched — they just snatched Fred's life, just like that, you know? And it was just like why? Why? This brother has done nothing to none of you all. The only thing that this brother has done was to instill a sense of pride and dignity and self determination in his people.

**Narrator:** state's attorney Edward Hanrahan gave an official account of the raid to the press.

**Edward v. Hanrahan:** as soon as sergeant Gross and officers James Davis who were leading our men, announced their office, occupants of the apartment attacked them with shotgun fire. The officers immediately took cover. The occupants continued firing at our policemen from several rooms within the apartment. Thereafter, three times sergeant Gross ordered all his men to cease firing and told the occupants to come out with their hands up. Each time, one of the occupants replied, "shoot it out," and continued firing at the police officers.

**Flint Taylor:** the press at the beginning had taken Hanrahan's line, this was a shootout, 200 shots were fired, the panthers fired half of them. Nobody was really challenging that except a young sometimes reporter by the name of Brian Boyer who went down there, and he saw the evidence and it didn't take a genius to look at what had — what was there and see that all the bullets were going in one direction and all those bullet holes were pointing towards Fred Hampton's bedroom and the middle bedroom where Verlana and Doc Satchel and everyone was.

**Narrator:** conflicting descriptions of the raid made headlines in the Chicago papers.

**Edward v. Hanrahan:** the account that we made public yesterday gives a detailed explanation of what happened in that apartment. I stand wholeheartedly behind it as absolutely accurate.

**Reporter:** there is one inconsistency in, well, for example —

**Edward v. Hanrahan:** I do not intend to quibble about that account.

**Reporter:** do you know it is the truth?

**Edward v. Hanrahan:** the account that we gave of the events is the truth.

**Narrator:** the state's attorney Hanrahan supported his account with photographs intended to prove the panthers had fired at the police.

**Flint Taylor:** we went, took those pictures, and saw they weren't what they appeared to be. The back door, the circles around the bullet holes, they turned out to be nail heads. We went and we saw that they were nail heads because we had possession of the apartment. As far as the door that the panthers were really supposedly firing into, that turned out to be the bedroom door, and it was the door that the police had made into swiss cheese with their machine gun bullets.

**Narrator:** the controversy grew.

**Rev. Thomas Strieter:** this blatant act of legitimized murder strips all credibility from law enforcement. In the context of other acts against militant blacks in recent months, it suggests an official policy of systematic repression.

**Joseph Lefevour:** the Black Panthers preach every day hate, kill whitey, kill the police, kill the pigs, hate, hate, hate, that's all you hear from them. And they expect us police officers to walk into that apartment with peashooters? You've seen the guns that were there. What were they there for?

**Deborah Johnson:** members of the Black Panther Party were taking people from the community through the apartment so they can actually see what was going on. People were able to go through the house and they were lined up all around the block in the cold, in the wintertime, to see what actually happened.

**Panther:** we want to keep everything just the way it is.

**Panther:** don't touch no walls.

**Panther:** this is the room where first brother mark Clark was murdered at.

**Panther:** even if they want to take somebody to jail, it would be a simple matter, just shoot some tear gas and ... (inaudible).

**Tour group member:** right on.

**Panther:** this is where our chairman had his brains blown out as he was laying in bed, sleeping at 4:30 in the morning.

**Flint Taylor:** I think that the police waited until the 17th of December to actually seal that apartment, so it was open for almost two weeks. And we spent a better part of those two weeks getting that evidence out of there. And so we would be talking to people when they went through and so while we were working, these people walking through constantly. And I'll never forget, I don't know what day it was or what, but I just remember some older black woman coming through there, shaking her head and going, "it's nothing but a northern lynching."

**Howard Saffold:** the people who had just come purely out of curiosity, were saying, "this is atrocious." even law and order people were saying, "this is unlawful and it's disorderly and it's obviously not part of what I want to condone in terms of my law enforcement or my taxes to be protected. This is not the police function here." people realized that there had been a trial, a conviction, and an execution in that house.

**Nancy Jefferson:** you know, it can happen to any of us, and that was fear, shame, you know, sorry. What could we do? Why couldn't we have protected Fred?

**George Clements:** I had a mass for Fred, and I was just shattered, I was devastated. And in the midst of this mass, I was trying to explain to our children, we had all the school children there, all 1,300, and I was trying to explain to them the importance of Fred. And I wasn't getting through, at least I felt like I wasn't getting through. And in the midst of my explanation, I just burst into tears. And the next thing I knew was here was one of our 8th grade boys. He jumped up and he said, "I am Fred Hampton." and then a girl in the 6th grade, she jumps up and says, "I am Fred Hampton." another kid in first grade, "I'm Fred Hampton." and before you knew it, the whole church, kids were all shouting, "I am Fred Hampton." and wow, I just felt so wonderful, I felt like gee whiz, this death was not in vain at all because these kids are saying that they are willing to get up here and speak out for liberation, for first class citizenship.

**Narrator:** in the weeks that followed, public pressure lead to a series of investigations. An FBI ballistic expert established that all but one of the more than 90 shots had been fired by the police. All charges against the panthers were dropped, no police were indicted. But the families of Hampton and Clark and the survivors of the raid sued the government for violation of their civil rights. Years later, the case was closed when federal and local governments and the police agreed to an out of court settlement of \$1.8 million dollars. The scope of the FBI counterintelligence program, Cointelpro, began to emerge in 1971 after political activists broke into an FBI office in media, Pennsylvania. Stolen FBI files documented extensive FBI operations against u.s. Citizens and organizations, including traditional civil rights groups.

Amid growing criticism of the counterintelligence program, president Richard Nixon reaffirmed his support for the FBI during graduation ceremonies at the bureau's national academy.

**President Richard Nixon:** I am honored to be here to break into your graduation ceremony, to reassure you and all of the men in law enforcement throughout the country of the support you have at the very highest levels in government for your work. And I am honored to speak for the entire nation in saying to you congratulations, wishing you well and seeing that this nation is one in which we will have respect for law, in which the American people can have freedom from fear.

**Angela Davis:** we had talked about police brutality, the Black Panther Party talked about the police as an occupying force in the community. But we had not really understood the extent to which the whole criminal justice system, the police, the courts, the prison system, is very much intertwined with the economic oppression of black people.

**Narrator:** blacks and latinos filled the nation's prisons in disproportionate numbers. At Attica correctional facility in upstate New York, they comprised more than 60 percent of the inmate population. Most came from poor, inner city neighborhoods.

**Michael smith:** I think the system was damaging to the people that came in. The only inspiration anybody could have not to go back, the desire not to go back to a place like that is because of what a horrible place it was.

**Angela Davis:** there's always the tendency to push prisons to the fringes of our awareness so that we don't have to deal with what happens inside of these horrifying institutions.

**Frank smith:** conditions in 1971, before the rebellion, was bad. You know, bad food, bad educational programs, very, very low, low wages. We were called slave wages. You know myself, I was working in the laundry and I was making like 30 cents a day being the warden's laundry boy, and that was the title that you had, was my job, warden's boy. And I'm far from a boy.

**Amiri Baraka:** we always thought of the jails as a kind of explosive resource for, you know, revolutionary change. Certainly people like Malcolm X had come out of prison and the nation of Islam had done a great job of, you know, transforming a lot of people who had been in prison. And some people in prison, you know, had been in the panthers and things like that. So we saw revolutionary activity as a means of transforming prisoners into revolutionaries.

**Narrator:** one of the most impassioned voices to emerge was George Jackson's. His published letters from prison had reached a wide audience. On August 21st, 1971, Jackson was shot to death in San Quentin prison in California. At Attica, the news of his death greatly affected the inmates.

**Frank Smith:** when it really hit me was going to breakfast that morning. And everybody was crying, nobody wasn't picking up no silverware. You know, when you go in the dining room in the mess hall, you had to pick up a knife, spoon and fork. And when you come out, you had to have that. Nobody was picking up, nobody was talking.

**Herbert x. Blyden:** I don't know if I can describe in words how it affected me because George was, in effect, my mentor. I remember his going to court in shackles and the brother would stand erect, you know, proud black man that he was. And they had not broken his spirit, and these were the things that Dr. King and Malcolm talked about, the breaking down of the black man's spirit.

**Narrator:** three weeks later, a fight between inmates and guards at Attica sparked a prison-wide uprising. Violence swept through the institutions.

**Herbert x. Blyden:** the general chaos was such that even I was taken aback. Because you had 40 or 50 correction officers who no longer appeared to have control of the institution. So order had to be made out of this disorder, and at that point, the Muslim contingent in the yard, I think there were 35 Muslim brothers, saw to it that there was no further injuries to the hostages.

**Narrator:** the newly established inmate leadership released 11 injured guards, but still held hostage 39 prison employees. Commission of corrections, Russell Oswald, agreed to negotiate. Accompanied by advisors and a local television crew, he entered the yard where 1,200 inmates were in control. A news team was permitted to talk to a hostage.

**Reporter:** have you been treated all right?

**Frank Strollo:** yes, I have so far been treated very good.

**Reporter:** no complaints, no problems?

**Frank Strollo:** no.

**Narrator:** the meeting with commissioner Oswald quickly focused on inmate fear of reprisals for the rebellion.

**Herbert x. Blyden:** due to the fact now that the sheriff's department of the various counties and the state troopers has taken over because it has been declared now a state of emergency, you couldn't guarantee no reprisal anyway. This is now out of your hands, isn't it, commissioner?

**Russell g. Oswald:** no, it is not.

**Herbert x. Blyden:** you still control the state troopers?

**Russell g. Oswald:** absolutely.

**Herbert x. Blyden:** all right now, you want to put your no reprisals in writing?

**Russell g. Oswald:** yes.

**Herbert x. Blyden:** would you start doing that?

**Russell g. Oswald:** I talked as rationally as I could with them, and listened to them for some period of time. And ultimately, they said they had an agenda of what they wanted. And I said, "well, give me the agenda."

**Narrator:** the agenda included demands for improved conditions. The inmates called for educational programs, an end to censorship of letters and magazines, adequate health care and hiring of black and Spanish speaking guards. Distrustful of state officials, the inmates also asked for outsiders to observe negotiations.

**Elliott Barkley:** assemblyman Arthur o. Eve of Buffalo. The prison solidarity committee of New York. Minister Farrakhan and the Muslims. We want Huey p. Newton from the Black Panther Party. And we want the chairman of the young lords party.

**Narrator:** in all, the inmates requested 13 observers.

**Frank Smith:** I felt good. You know, I felt relieved. I felt, I guess, liberated, you know, that I didn't have to worry about the bar in the front of me. Even though I knew that I was — I felt and knew that I was in prison, now that's the reality. But that visible thing wasn't there no more. You know, the walls was there, but that bar wasn't really in the front of me, that visible bar. It was more invisible then.

**Elliott Barkley:** wait 'til you get the cue. It's on now? All of us here realize that wherever there is struggle, there is sacrifice.

**Narrator:** the next morning, commissioner Oswald returned to the yard, still seeking a negotiated solution to the crisis.

**Russell g. Oswald:** I talked with the governor's legal counsel yesterday and he told me the same as Mr. Schwartz told me, and that is that the governor, and no one else, has the power to grant amnesty for the commission of a crime and that falls within the purview of the local law enforcement authorities.

**Herbert x. Blyden:** Mr. Oswald, Mr. Oswald, now you and I know that's a lie.

**Arthur o. Eve:** amnesty was very important to the inmates because it to a great degree would determine what happened to them after the state took over, whether or not there was going to be a peaceful kind of takeover, and subsequently how they would be treated.

**Narrator:** the talks had reached an impasse. Tensions in the yard increased.

**Inmate:** we have been asking for over 29 hours for food and water. We haven't got none, we're going to keep Mr. Oswald, Mr. Russell g. Oswald here until we get some food and water.

**Russell g. Oswald:** I'll see as soon as I get back there that food is brought into this yard.

**Narrator:** protected by the inmate security force, commissioner Oswald left the yard. The hopes of both sides now rested on the outside observers who arrived in Attica later that day.

**Tom Wicker:** we were led down a long corridor which had been trashed and burned out in the initial rioting.

I mean, the first feeling of shock I think for sort of a sedentary, middle class person like me, was the feeling of being out of reach of the law that one ordinarily thinks protects you. You know, that sort of protection we all take for granted until you don't have it. And all of a sudden, I realized that there wasn't anything in there to protect me except these other inmates, and these inmates and it's all too easy to think of them as murderers and thieves and so forth. And that is a

somewhat scary feeling, there's no question.

But very shortly after that, we all got down to the business of trying to work out the problems there. The inmate leaders got into some very fervid oratory, they were great orators.

**Elliott Barkley:** we are men, we are not beasts and we do not intend to be driven or beaten as such. The entire prison populace has set forth to change forever the ruthless brutalization and disregard for the lives of the prisoners here and throughout the united states. What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed.

**Laverne Barkley:** the moment I saw him speak on television, I said to myself, "what have you done? What are you doing?" because I felt that they would make him pay for that and pay dearly.

**Narrator:** the first meeting of observers and inmates lasted almost until dawn. The public address system set up in the yard kept the 1,200 inmates informed.

**Arthur o. Eve:** there was a sense of hope that for the first time there were some outsiders, people would now begin to listen, and hopefully some changes could be made.

**Narrator:** on Saturday, the third day of the uprising, troopers surrounding the prison yard waited for a decision by the state. Using a video camera, they recorded the activities of the inmates.

**Police narrator:** there is the ugliest, blackest negro gentleman I've ever seen in my life in that black outfit. Boy, when they painted him, they painted him dark.

The man doing the speaking is wearing a bright red robe and he's just gotten several very loud responses from the crowd. Typical rabble rouser type talk.

**Frank smith:** it was a good feeling, you know, and especially after we start dealing and start organizing and start talking about the conditions and start talking about why we were out there and start talking about the grievances, and start talking about why we were rebelling and why rebelling was necessary. The feeling became more and more and more into me, and I started feeling a part of it more.

**Inmate:** ain't nothing dead about us, we going to die. We are not dying here.

**Arthur o. Eve:** it was almost a community within a community and it was somewhat very, very impressive, that they said this is our home and we're going to make it as livable as possible. And there was a tremendous amount of discipline there within the yard.

**Narrator:** families and friends of the hostages gathered outside the prison walls, waiting for news. Relatives and supporters of the inmates demonstrated nearby. That evening, the mood in the yard changed. William Quinn, a guard hurt in the initial takeover, had died in the hospital. Governor Nelson Rockefeller and commissioner Oswald had earlier agreed to most of the demands concerning prison conditions, but rebelling inmates could now face murder charges unless amnesty was granted. The next day, state troopers moved into position to retake the prison, if ordered.

**Police narration:** time is 1:55 p.m., we're on the roof of c block looking at a detail of 270 marksmen with instructions to clear the catwalks upon command.

**Tom wicker:** we thought that the situation reached crisis, that in fact there was about to be an attempt to retake the prison. We thought there would be a lot of bloodshed. In fact, we said to the governor that if that happened, there would be a massacre. And his response was that basically that he sympathized with our position, he felt that everything had been done that could be done. He was very, if you — anyone who remembers governor Rockefeller will remember his effusive manner. He was very — thanked us greatly for our efforts and that sort of thing, but the net effect of it was that he felt everything had been done that could be done. He could not grant amnesty and in fact said that, "even if I could, I wouldn't do it."

**Narrator:** with negotiations deadlocked, inmates requested black and Latino reporters and a member of the establishment press. It was an attempt to speak directly to the public.

**Inmate:** you all dudes running around here shooting that dope, running around here shooting that dope, getting high, raping them sisters, them white folks justifying the cause of revolution. Well, we're going to die here in Attica today or tomorrow, and we ask you to get together, get our people together and unite.

**Inmate:** the people in here are treated like dogs, not only the black, the Puerto Rican and the white. And we're going to get what we planned or we're going to die trying.

**Inmate:** and I want you brothers to get together because we together here, and these people think we shuckin' and jivin' but we is for real.

**Inmate:** all these dogs up there with all those rifles are trying to kill us. Well, we ain't gonna quit. You know, we're not white and we're not going to quit because we're one, we're one unit. We're tired of being beaten, we're tired of being oppressed. We gonna get this if we all have to die, all of us.

**Inmates in yard:** we are ready to die. We're going to die, all of us.

**Arthur o. Eve:** the hostages appealed to the state not to come in, not to kill, that the inmates requests were right, and at last they were — I mean, it was a very emotional kind of exchange from the hostages and from everyone.

**Stephen smith:** I just hope that the commissioner and the other people on the committee that they've gathered together can come up with a solution to solve these people's problems, and ours.

I'll tell you what I got to say. We've stood out here since Thursday, and my son is in there. Michael smith is one of the hostages. I've talked with several of the other people here that have husbands in there and some of the fathers. And I can't speak for all of them, but my feelings are this. You can only pacify a kid with a pacifier so long. At 3:00 this afternoon, we was led to believe that there was going to be a definite decision, they was going to bring them out. Now damn it all, do it!

**Narrator:** Monday morning, day five. Commissioner Oswald demanded the immediate release of the hostages. In response, the inmates positioned eight of the hostages on the catwalk. By their side, stood inmates armed with knives and clubs, threatening to kill the hostages in case of an attack.

**Michael smith:** I was led blindfolded to the top of the catwalk and I can recall when that helicopter flew overhead, besides being able to hear it, you could actually feel the concussion of the propellers from the helicopter overhead.

**Frank smith:** we knew that they were going to come in, but we never knew that they were going to come in there that way. That was really a big surprise, the way that they came in the yard. We thought they were going to come in there and knock some heads and bust some heads open and that kind of way. And once we started seeing the helicopters and they

started shooting the gas pellets and I start seeing people get opened up with shotguns, you know, then I knew that they were really coming in there in a violent, violent way.

**John Johnson:** it's an awful scene. William Kunstler has said that people are dying in there and I agree with that. I think that people are dying in there and the scene is — I'm going to cut this off. Helicopters are still flying overhead. It seems there was announcement from the helicopter right above me to the inmates below that they should put their hands on their heads and come out. And I know whether anyone has died inside, as I'm upset and it's unfortunate, what has happened here. Whatever happens after the situation here in Attica, the penal system in the United States and the people who are kept inside of them will never be the same.

**Narrator:** as the inmates surrendered, they were herded into an adjacent yard.

**Herbert x. Blyden:** we were made to strip, lay in the mud, face down... And crawl to a guard 10 to 20 feet away from me, guard that had you stripped. At that point, that guard would mark an X with white chalk on the back of select inmates who were then removed from the mud physically by two additional guards, placed in a line to run the gauntlet of correction officers to be beaten all the way to another cell block.

**Frank Smith:** you know, you got to let me explain it this way. You know, it was very, very barbaric, you know, very, very cruel, you know? And, you know, and I really feel it, you know, what they really did. You know, they ripped our clothes off and they made us crawl on the ground like we were animals, you know, and they'd snatch me and they lay me on a table, you know, and they beat me in my testicles and they burned me with cigarettes and they dropped hot shells on me. And they put a football up under my throat and they kept telling me that it would drop, they was going to kill me. And I really felt, you know, after seeing so many people shot for no apparent reason, that they really were going to do this.

**Russell g. Oswald:** the armed rebellion like the type we have faced threatens the destruction of our free society. We cannot permit that destruction to happen. It has indeed been an agonizing decision.

**Tom wicker:** we had predicted the day before that it was going to be a massacre. But Herman Badillo turned to me and said, "I don't know what the hurry was. There's always time to die." and I don't know what the hurry was either. You know, those guys weren't going anywhere. They were inside 30 foot walls, it was September, it was getting cold up there, the food was running out, the sanitary conditions were bad, the place smelled awful. I mean, that sense of freedom that the guys had to begin with, just being out of their cells, that was beginning to wear away and the reality of their situation. I don't know what the hurry was, they could have waited two days, three days, four days, those guys would have given up. They didn't have to go in and kill them all. But they did.

**Narrator:** thirty-nine men were killed in the assault; 29 inmates and 10 hostages. Among the dead, inmate leader Elliott Barkley. Eighty-nine men were seriously wounded. Hostage Michael Smith was shot four times in the abdomen. Three inmates were found stabbed to death, killed earlier by other prisoners. Initial reports by state officials that the hostages had died of slashed throats were refuted by the medical examiner.

**Dr. John Edland:** the first eight autopsies were on the cases identified to us as hostages. All eight cases died of gunshot wounds.

**Narrator:** the medical examiner's finding was significant. The inmates had no firearms. Gunfire by state troopers and prison guards was responsible for all the deaths during the retaking of the prison.

**Reporter:** what did you do during those moments when the assault was actually taking place, the order had been given?

**Gov. Nelson Rockefeller:** well, I kept in touch by phone and I'll never forget the moment when the report was given that 14 guards had come out alive and while I was on the phone with Bobby Douglas, he said now it's 15, now it's 16, now it's 17, now it's 18, and we went up to 21. And I want to tell you, I just was absolutely overwhelmed. I just didn't see how it was possible with 1,200 men in there armed with electrified barricades, with trenches with a pledge which they said that they would all go right down fighting to the last man, how it was going to be possible.

**Reporter:** what does this tell you about the prisoners, governor?

**Gov. Nelson Rockefeller:** pardon me?

**Reporter:** what does this tell you about the prisoners, the fact that so many men did emerge unharmed?

**Gov. Nelson Rockefeller:** are you talking now about — I think what it tells is that the use of this gas is a fantastic instrument in a situation of this kind.

**Reporter:** governor, after that order had been given, did you pray?

**Gov. Nelson Rockefeller:** not after it, I prayed before.

**Narrator:** in towns near Attica, people gathered to mourn the dead hostages. In the cities, families and friends carried the bodies of the dead inmates to their graves. In a country troubled by unrest, the call for law and order remained popular, but many wondered, was the nation well served by law enforcement used to silence voices of dissent? And was America willing to maintain order, no matter what the cost?

## The Keys To The Kingdom (1974-1980)

**Mary Frances berry:** when brown against the board of education was decided in 1954, I happened to be downtown in Nashville, Tennessee, with my high school teacher. And we were buying some materials for the senior class play, I was graduating that year. And I saw the headline on the case, and I said to my teacher, "you know, this means that next year all the kids will be going to school together. You know, they won't have to be going to separate schools." and she said, "it's not going to happen quite that fast. Not next year."

**Narrator:** ten years after the supreme court ruled school segregation unlawful, the fight for black progress had moved north to Boston, Massachusetts.

**Ruth Batson:** when we fight about education, we're fighting for our lives. We're fighting for what that education will give us, we're fighting for a job, we're fighting to eat, we're fighting to pay our medical bills, we're fighting for a lot of things. So this is a total fight with us.

**Narrator:** by the 1960's, a small but growing number of parents and teachers were complaining about conditions of the schools.

**Jean McGuire:** here I was a brand new teacher coming into my first teaching experience, and I walked into this old building built in 1842 named after a wonderful new England writer, Louisa May Alcott, and I had 42 students, 36 seats. We didn't have new crayons, we had a box of old, nubby crayons. Pencils had to be collected at the end of the day so you would have enough for the children for the next day. There wasn't enough white paper.

**Narrator:** books were often in short supply, and sometimes contained lessons that damaged.

**Jean McGuire:** and here was this book I found which had um — it had the word niggers in it, ten little niggers sitting on a fence, nine little niggers playing in a line, and it was just like ten little Indians, nine little Indians, and it was very offensive.

**Louise day hicks:** many of the negro parents believe that predominantly negro schools is inferior, per se. But we here in Boston do not believe that premise.

**Narrator:** Louise day hicks said that the schools were fine the way they were. The city's top vote getter in the mid-'60s, hicks chaired the Boston school committee. In 1965, one in four students was black. Only one in 200 teachers was black, and there was not one black principal. The NAACP brought parents concerns to the school committee.

**Tom Atkins:** we just want them to say yes there is segregation in the schools, and we wanted them to acknowledge that the problem exists and to commit themselves to do something about it.

**Mrs. Johnson:** I feel that at this time, any school that is predominantly negro is an inadequate school and I —

**Mrs. Hicks:** I didn't hear what you said, Mrs. Johnson.

**Mrs. Johnson:** I said that any school that is predominantly negro in Boston is an inadequate school.

**Mrs. Hicks:** Mrs. Johnson, the superintendent of schools has stated as his policy that a racially imbalanced school is not educationally harmful.

**Mrs. Johnson:** Mrs. Hicks, Madame chairman, may I say this. Superintendent Ohrenberger and yourself and other committee members do not have children in a racially imbalanced school, so you do not know what the effect is on our children.

**Ruth Batson:** the statement that we made to the school committee said that where there were a majority of black students, there was not concern for how these kids learned, that there were crowded classrooms, temporary teachers, not enough books and supplies were low and all of that kind of thing. Even physical conditions were poor.

**Narrator:** community activists could not force the school committee to acknowledge a problem. Parents responded with a variety of strategies throughout the mid-'60s. They organized one day school boycotts and freedom schools. But short-term protest was not enough. They ran candidates for the school committee, but they lost. They pushed through a state law outlawing racially imbalanced schools, but the school committee refused to enforce it. Not yet 15 percent of the city, blacks were a minority too small to strongly influence elections or elected officials. So parents took matters into their own hands. Some set up voluntary programs that moved children to empty seats in white schools.

**Ruth Batson:** we decided that where there were a large number of white students, that's where the care went, that's where the books went, that's where the money went. So therefore, our theory was move our kids into those schools where they're putting all of the resources so they can get a better education.

**Narrator:** other parents took a different approach. Instead of working to integrate white schools, they established their own parent-run, independent schools.

**Teacher:** does anybody have any questions?

**Children:** no.

**Teacher:** go to work.

**Juanita wade:** parents saw that public education was not offering young people not only the strong education they needed, but the social relationships or recognition of who they were as African Americans, just wasn't happening in the Boston public school system. So there was a real move, community-wide, to develop institutions that would meet both of those needs.

**Narrator:** the black community could not afford to transport all its students to white schools, nor to run its own school system. The battle for quality education would have to be fought in the public schools. That struggle had been going on for a decade. Black parents were not going to give up. The school committee was not going to give in, and most other city leaders did not want to get involved.

**Robert Kiley:** I think it's not unfair to say that the business community, the financial community and I would say the religious community took a walk in the early 1970's, leaving really only the politicians and the parents as the people who cared about the issue. And in a certain sense, the parents got pitted against one another, white neighborhoods against black neighborhoods in a way that no one had ever bargained for.

**Narrator:** in 1972, under NAACP leadership, black parents filed a class action suit against the school committee in federal district court. A confrontation was looming that would change the city in ways never expected.



**Thomas Atkins:** we filed a lawsuit in the federal court because there was no other place for us to go. It was literally the court of last resort.

**Narrator:** in a city where neighborhoods were divided by race, desegregating the schools would mean busing children from one neighborhood to another.

**White woman:** I wouldn't care if they were green or purple, it's the idea of putting my kid on a bus when I have a school right across the street from where they should go. I don't care what color they are.

**Narrator:** on June 21st, 1974, federal district court judge w. Arthur Garrity ruled that the Boston school committee was guilty of consciously maintaining two separate school systems, one black, one white. He ordered an immediate remedy, city-wide busing to start in September. Less than a mile separated two of Boston's poorer neighborhoods. Roxbury was the heart of the black community; south Boston was Louise day hicks' home and the center of white resistance. Students were to be bused between the two neighborhoods.

**Ruth Batson:** when Garrity's decision came down in June of 1974, we were sunk when we heard some of the remedies, the one of busing to south Boston because those of us who had lived in Boston all of our lives knew that this was going to be a very, very difficult thing to pull off.

**Narrator:** with the opening of school only 12 weeks away, political differences among blacks gave way to shared concern for the safety of the children. Freedom house, a Roxbury community center, coordinated black preparations for busing.

**Woman:** one of the objectives during that period over the summer was to assure that it would be a peaceful transition and that we would commit ourselves to do that.

**Ellen Jackson:** we stand united at this critical time to provide leadership and resource to the parents and children who are residents in our community, and those children with their parents who will be attending public schools in this community. We call on other sections in the city to assume the same kind of responsibilities that we are assuming.

**Al Lupo:** Boston is a very hidebound, distrustful, turf conscious, class conscious, parochial city full of people who did not make much progress over the years. I'm talking about white folks. They were not middle income people. They were poor folk, and they were running hardscrabble operations. And they were scared. By the time busing came around, these people were ripe for revolution.

**White woman:** it's tearing them apart. People. As a community, it's tearing them apart. They may say this is helping, it's tearing them apart. I'm not bothered, I don't care. My one will not go to school, but it's tearing them apart!

**Kevin white:** well, I'm the mayor and the first recognition is that it's a court order, it has to be enforced by the city, but it's a final decision, that it's irrevocable and that I'm going to be responsible at a minimum for public safety and at a maximum for the social health. In a way it's a little exaggerated, but the morals of the town, it's a moral question as well as a political question. What I did was respond politically.

**Narrator:** in a series of coffee hours set up in homes throughout the city, the mayor met with white parents opposed to busing.

**Kevin white:** all right, but it's not behind us yet. It'll be a painful process going through it because the salt didn't just slide through it, it tore them apart as it'll help to tear us apart.

**Ellen Jackson:** the mood was one of confusion, concern, and fear because the elected officials during that summer of 1974 after the order had been given by judge Garrity were very often making statements that this would not happen.

**John Kerrigan:** now, how can we beat the federal court? By getting some strong anti-busing legislation from Washington. So I suggest to you if we're going to win, if you're going to keep your children in their neighborhood schools, that you join with the rest of the city on September the 9th in a grand march before the federal building.

**Janet Palmariello:** just because I'm white doesn't mean that the 14th amendment doesn't refer to me, either. I am white and I want my rights.

**Narrator:** demonstrators had come to the federal building to protest senator Edward Kennedy's support of desegregation. His family had always been the pride of Boston's Irish community, but now the crowd turned on Kennedy.

**Man:** those people out there don't care to listen to you.

**Narrator:** the crowd pursued Kennedy to the doors of the federal building. School was due to start in three days. September 12th, 1974, under court order against school committee wishes, the integration of Boston schools began. It was a quiet first day of school in Roxbury, as it was in most of the city. A committee of black parents waited inside to greet the few white students who came to Roxbury high school. But across town, crowds of whites had been gathering outside south Boston high school since early morning. The school's headmaster had been at south Boston high for nine years.

**Headmaster Reid:** let's go, gentlemen, come on.

**Woman:** if you tell us to leave, then we can tell kids not to go to school.

**Headmaster Reid:** come on, let's go, go to school or go home. Let's go. Go to school or go home, let's go.

**Narrator:** inside, things were quiet with most white students absent. At the end of the school day, more trouble waited outside. On the evening news, Bostonians saw school buses being attacked as they left south Boston.

**Black girl:** and they were throwing eggs at the windows and trying to hit people with them and they called us black niggers.

**Betty Johnson:** my little boy got back safe but the only reason I don't think why they should bus all the kids across the — they get all hurt when they can't defend themselves. I feel like they should go over here to our school over here. Instead of busing them way across because they can't defend themselves, they can't fight, they can't do nothing.

**Narrator:** racial violence in the city known as the cradle of liberty made headlines across the country and around the world. The black community was apprehensive but hopeful.

**Black cop:** every day — yesterday the first day — every day go by, there's going to be more improvement. You know, like yesterday the first day, today's the second, you have more improvement today than you had yesterday.

**Man:** gotta be.

**Black cop:** yeah, you know, and it's going to continue that way till it gets better. It's going to take a while you can't do it all in one day.

**Black mother:** they're not going until they get some black cops and some black drivers. They did not pick my kid up at school, they left her over there.

**Woman:** left her in south Boston?

**Black mother:** they left her in south Boston. They left over there, all those people out there are Irish. They left her out there and they refused to go get her.

**Narrator:** whites staged a city-wide school boycott, a tactic borrowed from the civil rights movement. At the boycott's peak, more than 50 percent of all white students stayed home.

**Jane Duwors:** well, the boycott was that if there were no children in school, they couldn't implement the plan. So we decided to — and it came from another thing, it came from the freedom schools in Roxbury in the '60s. We had a community meeting, asked the parents, explained what we thought and asked the parents if they would go along with the boycott. The majority of people did.

**Tracy Amalfitano:** I did not support the boycott and I sent my son to school from the very first day. And for a long period of time, he rode the bus by himself.

**First woman:** I know who you are, and you're a sellout, too, lady.

**Second woman:** oh no. People have their rights to —

**Third woman:** we wouldn't even bring them up. We fear for their safety.

**First woman:** for one lousy day, they couldn't have boycotted? One day. One day. That they couldn't do that. My kids are out and they're not going.

**Tracy Amalfitano:** it was very difficult for us. It was almost like getting up every morning and going to war. And many days, I would come home and I would think about all the liberals that got on the buses and went south for sit-ins and boycotts in the south. I really would come home and wonder, you know, where were they now?

**Narrator:** the message was clear, whites opposed to change in the school system were not going to back down. Most schools were calm, but some were battlegrounds.

**Phyllis Ellison:** when we started up the hill, you could hear people saying, "niggers, go home." there were signs of — they had made a sign saying, "black people stay out, we don't want any niggers in our schools." and there were people on the corners holding bananas like we were apes.

**Ruth Batson:** as we went up the hill and approached the school, our students got very, very quiet. Where they had been just like any other kid riding the bus, making noise, laughing, talking, suddenly as they approached this place, they got very, very quiet. And then they would have to stay there until the police came over, escorted them out the bus and in through the metal detectors into the schools. It was a — I began for the first time to say, "Ruth, maybe you shouldn't have gotten involved. Maybe you shouldn't have urged this desegregation." it killed me to see our black students go through that procedure.

**Kathy downs:** pretty aggravating, actually, to go and be put all through this before you even started a day at school, you know? Kind of ridiculous for a 17 year old person to be treated this way.

**Phyllis Ellison:** on a normal day, there would be anywhere between 10 and 15 fights per day.

**Kathy downs:** the white kids felt intimidated that they had black kids in the school, the black kids are intimidated because they're in this white school and they did not want to be pushed around.

**Phyllis Ellison:** you could walk down the corridor and a black person would bump into a white person and vice versa. That would be one fight, and they'd try to separate it. Because at that time, it was so — it was so much tension in the school.

**Kathy downs:** just the slightest thing would set it off.

**Narrator:** the NAACP surveyed black students on problems at south Boston high.

**Tom Atkins:** about a week later, I was sitting in my office one night, and I reached into my briefcase and here were these forms. So I took them out, and I began sort of absently to read through them. As I read through one after another of these forms, what I saw was that these kids couldn't spell. They could not write a simple declaratory sentence. And as I read these forms, none of which were grammatically correct or spelling proper, I just started to cry. It was impossible to explain the feeling of pain on the one hand, but on the other hand, I knew we were right.

**Narrator:** but the fight to correct years of mis-education was overshadowed by fear and violence. In October, a south Boston mob pulled a passing black motorist from his car. Policemen fired shots over the heads of the crowd and pulled the man to safety.

**Sandy young:** we don't teach our kids to hate anybody. All we want for our kids is to love and to get a decent education and to live decently as human beings. But we're not even distinguished as human beings as far as east Boston goes, or south Boston. We're niggers! And I would be damned if I had any child of mine exposed to anything like that. I wouldn't want my child to sit beside it, because see, I'm not going to teach it to hate. And that's what's happening. That's the lesson that those kids have been getting out there in south Boston. "stand beside mommy, sweetie, and throw a rock at the nigger."

**Narrator:** for the first time, the mob violence in south Boston was echoed in Roxbury. Groups of black students roamed the streets, pelting white passers-by with rocks.

**President Gerald ford:** I deplore the violence that I've read about and seen on television. I think that's most unfortunate.

**Narrator:** whites opposed to busing took heart from Gerald ford's first press conference as president.

**President Gerald ford:** I have consistently opposed forcing busing to achieve racial balance as a solution to quality education. And therefore, I respectfully disagree with the judge's order.

**Narrator:** Boston was left on its own. The city's neighborhoods grew even more isolated and hostile.

**Jean McGuire:** but this city should have been open to everyone and it wasn't. And it was that fear that if you stepped out of your place, you could be attacked. There was no leadership that said it's off limits.

**Ruth Batson:** I never heard any public official on the state level or on the city level come out and say, "this is a good thing, we should all learn together, we should all live together." there was no encouragement from anybody. I call it complete, official neglect.

**Narrator:** south Boston, December 11th, 1974. A fight at the high school between a black and a white student got out of hand.

**Phyllis Ellison:** I remember the day Michael faith got stabbed vividly because I was in the principal's office and all of a sudden you heard a lot of commotion and you heard kids screaming and yelling saying, "he's dead, he's dead, that black nigger killed him, he's dead, he's dead."

**Kathy downs:** oh, gees, there was — we were close enough that we saw there was blood, you know, on the hallway floor.

**Narrator:** white students left, rumors spread. South Boston residents and others surrounded the school. The black students were trapped inside. Louise day hicks appealed to the crowd.

**Louise day hicks:** I want you to allow the black children to go back to Roxbury. There's only one way to get them back to Roxbury, and that's to have them go back by bus. Okay, I'm going to ask you, will you please move to the other side of the street so they can go back?

**Phyllis Ellison:** I remember the police cars coming up the — or attempting to and turning over the police cars. I was amazed that they could do something like that. So they tried, the police tried to get horses up. They wouldn't let the horses get up, they stoned the horses, they stoned the cars and I thought that day we would never get out of south Boston high school.

**Narrator:** black community leaders and officials worked out a rescue plan. Volunteers rode decoy buses through the school.

**Ellen Jackson:** frankly, we were scared. But we went up and when we got closer to the school, we could hear the noise and like a hollow feeling when you go up that hill.

**Phyllis Ellison:** finally, it must have been 2:30 or 3:00 that afternoon, all of a sudden all you heard was, "you're going out the back door, you're going out the back door." at that moment, we had to run to the buses.

**Narrator:** while the decoy buses distracted the mob at the front of the school, other buses pulled up to the back. The black students and leaders made it out of south Boston safely. Michael faith did not die, but his stabbing and the ensuing riot further polarized the city. The school committee stiffened its resolve not to comply with the court order. In response, judge Garrity placed three members in contempt of court.

**John McDonough:** it seems to me that judge Garrity is going to bring us this plan with the boot of official authority and the uniforms. In a certain sense, you can say that reconstruction has finally come to the north with a vengeance.

**Narrator:** in the face of school committee intransigence, the schools were run by the court. Judge Garrity's was the final word on curriculum, hiring and firing, and policy.

**Reporter:** I mean, just time will change these people's minds in your opinion?

**Judge Garrity:** no, I think not necessarily. I think that time will bring about an understanding on the part of most people that there's no alternative but to compliance with the principles set out by the supreme court of the united states.

**Narrator:** over the next few years, resistance continued. In the first two years of desegregation, almost a third of the white students left the system. Over time, the court gradually forced changes in the Boston public schools, but the cost remained high.

**Reporter:** what do you think's going to happen when you go to school?

**Little girl:** when we go up there, we're going to be stoned. It's not fair to me because why is it the other way around, when they come up here? When they come up here, we won't mess with them, so why when we come up there, they mess with us?

**Reporter:** what do you think about the people of south Boston, Joanne? If you had a message you'd like to tell them, what would it be?

**Little girl:** I don't think it's fair, it's not fair to me.

**Narrator:** the greatest changes were not found in the schools. In 1977, Louise day hicks political career ended in defeat. And for the first time in the 20th century, a black candidate won election to the Boston school committee.

**Jean McGuire:** I felt that what took place absolutely had to happen. It may not have had to happen that way, if there had been a different kind of leadership provided by the white Bostonians of all classes and all neighborhoods. However, when you're the anvil you bear and when you're the hammer, you will strike and we were striking, and there was no turning back.

**Narrator:** in Boston, blacks were a minority, forced to rely on the federal court in their fight for quality education. In Atlanta, blacks had just become a majority. Here, the fight for black progress focused on economic equity. In October, 1973, Atlanta made history. Maynard Jackson was elected the first black mayor of a large southern city.

**Maynard Jackson:** never, never, never. Never, never shall I let you down. Being the first black mayor is what you wish your enemy, okay? And I say that with tongue in cheek. Great pride to be mayor of Atlanta and every black mayor that's been the first black mayor I'm sure has felt the same thing. But it truly is part hell. First of all, start with exaggerated black expectations, that overnight Valhalla will be found, heaven will come on earth and it's all because the black mayor's been elected. And things just don't work that way. The obligation that I felt was to try with everything in my power and every legal and ethical way that I could to move things as quickly as possible in that direction.

We must see the other Atlanta, the one across the tracks, the inner city one, the Atlanta in the valleys and the shadows just beyond the first expressway exits one passes when leaving downtown.

**Ethel Mae Mathews:** it really made a difference because that's the first black mayor we had. And that's what we was working hard for, to bring a black person in office, you know, that knew some of the pride of the poor peoples.

**Maynard Jackson:** all of a sudden, I became a mayor, not just of Atlanta, but the black people in Georgia and even some neighboring states. Now equally important and equally difficult was what we found in the white community. Exaggerated anxiety, that anxiety was, "oh my god, what are we going to do? We got a black mayor. What does this mean? Is this the end of Atlanta?" we had just come from a runoff election where my opponent ran a campaign that said Atlanta is too young to die.

**Dillard Munford:** I supported the white candidate, and as most white people did. We were very frightened because we had nothing to go on, no experience there. And we had no idea of what was going to happen.

**Walter Huntley:** I came to Atlanta in the summer of 1972, and I had read every magazine saying where it was a black mecca and there were people saying that if you were black and had a college degree, this was the best place in the world to live.

**Ethel Mae Matthews:** it's an excellent place for some black peoples. It is. It's an excellent place for some black peoples, but not for all black peoples, it's not an excellent place to live. Because if it was an excellent place to live, they would get people some job.

**Narrator:** Atlanta was hard hit by a nationwide recession. Many Atlantans subsisted on unemployment benefits.

**Black woman:** well, \$37 a week is not much to live on. It won't even cover food for four kids and myself alone.

**White woman:** the thing about it is, it may seem like a nice vacation to some people, but it's really, really bad for the economy and people are really worried about it.

**Narrator:** Jackson moved into a public housing project for a weekend. The Thomases were selected to be his host family.

**Maggie Thomas:** it was very strange. And the strangest thing to me was that they chose me to house him. Because when I got off of work, I came up to the edge of the apartment and I looked down in the court, and the court was just full of news medias, just full of people. I knew I couldn't go through that crowd. So I turned around and I went all the way down through the back, and I crawled up my back steps to get in my house to avoid the news medias. But when I got in the house, then I seen, you know, the mayor coming. I knew I had to open the door then. It was just a mob, really. Just a pure mob, just fell all in the doors, standing up all on my furniture.

**Maynard Jackson:** we want to dramatize what are dramatically horrible conditions. So the people will understand when we begin to talk about dramatic changes and dramatic corrective actions that we're not just overreacting. The conditions here defy description.

**Narrator:** the mayor had limited impact on federally funded public housing. But Jackson did have the power to change the way the city operated. He hired more minorities and women. He moved against discriminatory business practices, affirmative action was already federal policy, Jackson made it city policy.

**Maynard Jackson:** when I became mayor, zero point five percent of all the contracts in the city of Atlanta went to Afro-Americans in a city which at that time was 50/50.

**Narrator:** many in the business community resisted Jackson's affirmative action policy.

**Maynard Jackson:** this was a major — manager of a major white corporation who got very upset with me about the policy on affirmative action. And said, "I don't see this to be necessary, we're going to do what's right, you can trust us," and so forth. And I said, "I have every confidence, but yeah I want to trust you, but I also want you to sign on the dotted line." said, "well look, I'm just not going to go out and hire the first negro I see." I said, "I think that's a pretty sound personnel policy, I wouldn't either." [laughter]

**Narrator:** Jackson's support of black business pulled him into the ring with Muhammad Ali at a promotional event.

**Maynard Jackson:** this is our ode to Ali. Dance like a butterfly, sting like a bee, my fists are so fast that they'll dazzle Ali. The champ may be strong, but he isn't all there if he thinks he can beat this dynamite man. But I'll tell you this, and you better know it, I may not be a fighter, but I'm darn sure poised. So come out and see the fight of the year, I'll face Ali's challenge with courage, not fear. Because he may be a fighter, but I'll throw out this dare, he wouldn't survive for a week being mayor.

**News announcer:** after the fight, Ali said it was the mayor's stalwart boxing trunks that saved him. One thing is for sure, Ali has learned that you cannot fight city hall.

**Narrator:** the challenge to Jackson's affirmative action policy was about to escalate. The issue, airport expansion.

**Walter Huntley:** the construction of a new airport for the city of Atlanta was one of the major projects, if not the major project in the Jackson administration. There were a number of big construction projects between 1976 and 1979, or '80, but this was the crown jewel.

**Narrator:** planning was already under way. But despite public criticism, Jackson announced that construction would not begin without full black participation. Emma Darnell, one of the first two women commissioners ever appointed in Atlanta was responsible for implementing affirmative action guidelines.

**Emma Darnell:** when you begin to move in public policy, in areas that involve race, you can expect a great deal of emotion.

**Buddy Fowlkes:** the bidding processes that we've had in this city have stood for years and years like a granite rock. They've been steady and they've stood and we've had very little problems with them as long as we adhere to the lowest and the best bid.

**Emma Darnell:** operationally. But there are two relevant laws already on the books which I think impact upon this question. The first —

**Willie Bolden:** and the white power structure downtown couldn't deal with Emma because not only was she black and a female, but she was smart and she was a very excellent communicator. So she would look at the contract and if it didn't have the appropriate amount of minority participation, she'd say, "take that back and get it right." they couldn't deal with that, not a black female.

**Maynard Jackson:** I looked at how the power structure members dealt with each other. If they disagreed they'd say, you know, "the hell with you and you're a so and so and all this," but they would not walk away from the relationship. I said, "that's fair enough. I can deal with that." my preference was to do it as a team. If we stumbled, let's stumble together. If I made a mistake, fine, say I'm a dummy, but don't walk away from the relationship. I was dead wrong. When times got hot, even some of the closest friends I had in the business community, and I'm talking about the white power structure now, said, "Maynard, that was the dumbest thing I've ever seen and good-bye." so I miscalculated.

**Dillard Munford:** black leadership must accept the new roles as city leaders and not black city leaders. With power and responsibility, they must be able to stand —

We found that we were at bay, we were out there barking and nothing was happening. There was no question but he was a full fledged racist against white people. And this is what his charge was, was to see it was turned over to blacks, and you had to be a racist to do that. Colorblindness was not part of his repertoire.

**Narrator:** Jackson held his ground. No affirmative action, no airport. After almost a year of political infighting, the city council approved the first minority contract. New city guidelines called for a minimum of 20 percent minority participation in all phases of the work. Affirmative action opened up opportunities for some, but times were still hard for Atlanta's working poor. Demanding higher wages, the city sanitation workers went out on strike.

**Striking man:** I mean, he promised them money and the money's there, so they may as well give it to us. Or give us something.

**Narrator:** Jackson said the city had no money to meet the strikers demands. But some thought that he wanted to prove that he could hold the line on spending, even against a predominantly black union.

**Maynard Jackson:** what they think is that a liberal black mayor with a pro union background would not dare to defy any demand they would make.

**Willie Bolden:** we didn't strike Maynard because he was black, we struck him because our folk were picking up garbage, working among maggots and we felt that they need to get paid for doing that, seven, eight, nine thousand dollars a year, in our opinion, was not enough.

**Maynard Jackson:** representing Atlanta, I urge all city employees to report to work immediately. I emphasize that those who ignore this directive will be discharged.

**Narrator:** Jackson gave notice to 1,000 strikers, most of whom were black. The union lost a bitter and divisive struggle, but Jackson remained popular among most blacks. Later that year, he won reelection by a landslide. Four a.m., September 21st, 1980, the first scheduled flight arrived at the world's largest passenger terminal. The midfield terminal of the Hartsfield international airport was officially open. Confounding critics who labeled affirmative action a social experiment doomed to fail, the \$700 million facility was completed on schedule and on budget with a minimum of 20 percent minority participation in all phases of the work.

Affirmative action and the airport were major triumphs of the Jackson administration. But most blacks in Atlanta had not benefited. By the time the airport opened, Atlanta was the second poorest city in the country. There were clear limits to what local electoral power could achieve. Electing blacks to office was only the beginning.

**Emma Darnell:** we were, for all practical purposes, engaged in a revolution. We knew that that's what it was. It was still a civil rights revolution. Those persons during the '60s laid down their lives and died to put us into these positions of power. We did not consider these positions of power to be ends in and of themselves.

**Maynard Jackson:** Dr. King taught us to remember our roots, remember our brothers and sisters who are still now locked in the dungeons of deprivation. Yet today, he sees some black people who have escaped from poverty, for the time being, and who also are trying to escape their duty to the poor.

**Emma Darnell:** what it's about is what's on the inside, you know. Have you really been deeply and permanently affected by the blood that has been shed in order for you to sit behind the desk? Do you actually feel any sensitivity and responsibility to all of those folk out there in those churches and those programs who stand up and give you big applause, believing that you stayed on the case? Or are you really in there, trying to hold your ground, to get your house, get your car, get your BMW, get invited to the right receptions, and be considered a leader?

**Narrator:** October, 1977, black students nationwide were worried. Affirmative action in higher education was under attack. In ten years of affirmative action efforts, the numbers of black students enrolled in colleges and universities had more than doubled.

**Mary Frances berry:** when I went to Washington to run education in the carter administration in 1977, one of the first things that happened was the head of my statistical agency came in to see me and she said, "good news. The college going rate for blacks is equal to the college going rate for whites for the first time in American history." so this was just wonderful news. And I thought to myself, boy, if we can just keep up this progress for the next few years, just think of how far we will have come.

**Narrator:** black progress was facing a challenge. Allan Bakke was an engineer in his 30s when he decided to become a doctor. He was turned down by 12 medical schools, twice by the one at the University of California at Davis. Bakke sued Davis. He alleged its affirmative action program unfairly limited his chances of admission. But Toni Johnson was admitted to Davis medical school. First in her family to attend college, she had gone to Stanford University on an academic scholarship and had graduated in three years.

**Toni Johnson-Chavis:** when I was selected for UC at Davis and went into Davis, it was not until well into my first year that I had any idea that I had been selected through affirmative action. Solely, I had met all the criteria for regular entrance. Suddenly, there were other students, white students, who did not even meet the same criteria. Their GPA was far less than mine, their MCAT scores were far less than mine. So I had no idea that I had even come in through affirmative action.

I heard about Allan Bakke the very first year I was in medical school. There was not much said other than there was a guy who wanted to get into our class and he was really angry that he didn't get into the class and he was going to sue.

**Robert links:** I think from the day Bakke walked in our door, we knew what was at stake. Back then, people said that these programs like the Davis program are great things because they include people and bring them into the class. And I think the shortcoming of that analysis is they forget that when you bring in one person, you're keeping out another person.

**Narrator:** the Bakke case reached the supreme court and stimulated a national debate on affirmative action.

**Senator James Buckley:** I think we were making enormous progress before anyone conjured up this perversion of affirmative action. I believe there's been a good faith effort, too, on the part of most Americans to comply, to drop the blinders that too many of us have worn over the years. Progress has been made. But what we are now seeing, and what I feel, frankly, is a backlash and a very serious backlash. You see this in unions, for example, you see this in colleges, even in colleges, where people are saying we must discriminate against someone who happens to be white and happens to be male.

**Mary Frances berry:** when you start talking about affirmative action as being preferential treatment, you have already set up a situation where anybody who is the beneficiary of preferential treatment will lose. If you say reverse discrimination against somebody, it already sounds like a bad thing is happening and you don't focus on what the injustice was.

**Eleanor Holmes Norton:** if in fact women, blacks, hispanics, have been excluded, the question becomes how do you include them? How do you make up for the legal wrong?

**Narrator:** hundreds of people camped overnight on the steps of the supreme court to gain admission to what was being called the most important civil rights case since *brown v. Board of education*. Archibald cox defended U Cal Davis. He argued for using race as a factor in selecting qualified applicants, not to discriminate against whites, but to remedy the effects of generations of discrimination against blacks. Bakke's lawyer, Reynold Colvin, presented his client as one discriminated against because of his race.

**Reynold Colvin:** we believe that this is a case where an individual's rights have been defied. We think that —

**Eleanor Holmes Norton:** one of the more unfortunate things about the Bakke case is it became the vehicle for educating, or should I say mis-educating, the public about affirmative action. The public learned about affirmative action almost literally for the first time through sound bites, ten second sound bites on television with people polarized against one

another. As a result, what is really a quite complicated concept, one hard enough to explain even if you have a lot of time, became digested as an element of unfairness.

**Narrator:** the supreme court handed down a divided decision. The only thing clear was that Bakke would be admitted to Davis. Affirmative action was found permissible, but not mandatory. Civil rights advocates worried that the court had backed off from unequivocal support. Did this signal a change in the way that America looked at civil rights?

**Reporter:** do you think it's going to be bad for minorities?

**First black student:** I think it's going to be definitely bad for minorities.

**Second black student:** I think people instead of, you know, the sincerity involved in really going out and getting minority students into different professional schools, that sincerity will be lost, all right, since there is a legal precedent stated now that, you know, it sort of kills the thrust of the program.

**Mary Frances berry:** by 1979, the climate of opinion had changed almost completely in the country on issues related to civil rights and the advancement toward equality for blacks in American society.

For example, people would say, "well, we can't have equal opportunity and excellence at the same time." and what did they mean by excellence? In many cases it seemed that they meant an absence of black folk at every level of any importance in the society.

**Narrator:** for many Americans, the cost of remedying a history of discrimination was too high. For others, the cost of turning back were all too clear. When she completed her studies, Dr. Toni Johnson Chavez set up practice in a black and Latino community.

**Toni Johnson-Chavis:** there are a large amount of poor people and there are only two pediatricians in that whole city. The two pediatricians here are both black. If the two of us had not been trained in that era and were not here, who would have fulfilled that need? That's the question I asked then, and that's the question that I ask now.

## Back To The Movement (1979-mid 1980s)

**Narrator:** in the spring of 1980, the city of Miami was flooded with refugees in search of the American dream.

**Cuban refugee:** this is a big country. I like this system because I — now I know the freedom.

**Narrator:** they came in search of economic opportunities, in search of political freedom. They came from Cuba and from Haiti. But that spring in Miami, 25 years after the civil rights movement began, the American dream was on trial.

**Gladys Taylor:** I'm asking for the black people to be calm, because this time we can't ... This sitting down. We must take to the streets again like we did in the '60s.

**Irate man:** I want to believe in the American system. No more, never again.

**Narrator:** once again, the nation stood at a racial crossroads. Would America move closer to its promise of equal opportunity and equal justice, or would it back away? The question had been asked a generation before in the 1950s when most of Miami's black population lived on the northern edge of downtown Miami in an area known as Overtown.

**Dewey knight:** Overtown was a viable community in which people had common causes and related to each other, there was economic development, businesses, furniture stores, clothing stores, soda water bottling company. The professionals, doctors, lawyers, other professionals were there. The youngsters were considered youngsters of the community so that everyone felt some responsibility for youngsters.

**Lonnie Lawrence:** growing up in Overtown was different from anything else that you could probably even imagine. And I guess because, you know, it was like family, everybody was like family. There was so much togetherness, so much — everything there was like close knit.

**Dewey knight:** it was a place, a focal point for black people. Segregation, of course, contributed to that, but segregation caused it to be a community where people had a real sense of community.

**Narrator:** segregation also affected nightlife in Overtown. Internationally known black entertainers could perform on Miami beach, but they were not permitted to stay at the hotels. Instead, they stayed in Overtown. Clyde Killens featured many of them at his nightclub, the sir John.

**Clyde Killens:** Nat King Cole, Sammy Davis, Joyce kern, all those guys, when they come down here, they worked at Miami beach, but their show was in the hotel, they off at 2:00 and they all would come over to sir John. And they would go in the line and there'd be seven, eight, or ten musicians there jamming.

**Narrator:** but in family life, blacks remained second class citizens under Miami's laws of segregation. Protests were staged at downtown lunch counters which refused service to black customers.

**Reporter:** Dr. Brown, now what do you hope to accomplish by this demonstration?

**Dr. John o. Brown:** we hope to eliminate racial discrimination in all public accommodations here in the city of Miami.

**Narrator:** in the '50s, the practice of segregation was slow to change. But other changes did affect Overtown and life would never be the same.

**Dr. John o. Brown:** well, there was an individual in this community who handled about 75 percent of all the rental property in Overtown area. His name was Luther brooks, and Luther brooks came to us to tell us about what some of the plans were for Overtown and the black community. And he brought his maps of everything and showed us, this was about 1959, 1960, how the only way downtown Miami could expand was to expand into what was then known as the Overtown area, a black community.

**Narrator:** one of the major changes would be the construction of this interstate highway system which would displace many homeowners.

**Dorothy graham:** the house was in my mother's name and she received the letter saying that — I don't remember now exactly what it said, other than by the right of eminent domain or something to that effect, we would have to move. And other people, they compared notes, and other people got the same kind of notice.

**Georgia Ayers:** I'll tell you what we said, the niggers had to go. So they came out and talked to all of the property owners and told them by eminent domain, this property is needed to build this expressway. You know, growth is coming on and sometimes some people lose and invariably blacks would lose.

**Dorothy graham:** it was very rough on my mother. You see, it was her house that she and my grandmother had worked for. And it meant that everything we had had was being just taken away. Even your shrubbery that you had cherished and had planted, you couldn't take the with you.

**Jessie McCrary:** black people were easy prey. They had no political power because they didn't have any people in office. So what government did was they took a little at a time. First they cut the finger off and then they cut the hand off and then they cut the arm off and pretty soon, over time's, dead.

**Narrator:** ultimately, the expressway displaced 20,000 people; 50 percent of Overtown's population.

**Dewey knight:** i-95 which was basically developed to get people from suburbia downtown, and in the process destroyed Overtown and that sense of community. All of a sudden, you saw concrete apartment houses coming up, what we called concrete monsters, simply because the demand was for space.

**Jesse McCrary:** we have not been as militant as we should have been. There is no way we should have let Overtown disappear. But we got snookered, and we got snookered because we were not minding our knitting, we should have been there at the governmental board meetings, at the meetings that talk about development, we were not there. And we trusted people that it was going to be okay.

**Narrator:** many Overtown residents relocated into nearby liberty city and to neighborhoods that had previously been all white. Frank Legree was among the first.

**Frank Legree:** at least two weeks after moving in, we were sitting out on the porch one day, and then the mailman came to give us a letter. I thought it was, "hey, who knows where we're living already?" and when I opened the letter, it said, "nigger, get out." I say this is something, so we laughed about it. It was nothing, you know, of course we didn't pay no attention to it. So my mother, she said, "oh, this don't sound too good." I told her, "oh, don't worry about it." I said, "it's just somebody, you know." so anyway, two weeks later, after we received this, I came home one night and they called to say, "your windows is all knocked out." somebody threw a brick and knocked the windows out.

Only thing I wanted was a home for my mother and my family to live. And this is all. But they started this picketing, so I just let them walk and walk. So I went outside, got my sprinklers, put it on my lawn, turned the water up, is that good, you know? And water going — they just started running from the water, so away went and called the police. When the police come, still they getting them to ... (inaudible).

**Dr. John o. Brown:** I think at that time, most of us in the black community felt that education was the key, and once the schools were integrated and black kids were given the opportunities to get training and everything, then a lot of these other things would disappear.

**Narrator:** by the mid-'60s, the success of the civil rights movement promised new opportunities. When Sammy Davis, Jr., visited Miami, he encouraged children to be ready to meet those challenges.

**Sammy Davis, Jr:** it's no longer like, "well, man, I'm colored, I ain't going to make it no more," and all that. It ain't like that no more. And what happens is that all of the — all of the civil rights, all of the marches, all of the people who have died in the civil rights struggle will have died in vain if — and the bigots will win out — if once the opportunity, once the doors are opened, no one is prepared for it.

**Narrator:** many students at Booker T. Washington high school were ready to meet that challenge. One of them was Arthur McDuffie.

**Frederica McDuffie:** to my knowledge, his goal on mind was to strive and strive for nothing but the best, no matter what you were involving yourself, just strive and strive for the top and nothing but to the top.

**Lonnie Lawrence:** when I graduated from high school, I went to DC and worked up there for a year and lo and behold, I went to the marine corps after being up there for a year, and who the hell I see, you know? And I walk in the barracks and there he was. Art was a hell of a marine. He was truly a reflection, when you see that commercial about, you know, about this guy and the uniform and carving out something that really — that was art. Art was really the kind of person that took a lot of pride in how he looked in that marine corps uniform.

**Narrator:** in 1968, McDuffie came home from the marines. That same year, he married his high school sweetheart. As the years passed, Arthur McDuffie became a successful business executive. Even to family members, he could be an exacting boss.

**Louis McDuffie:** so I went in and he says, "well, you're supposed to see Mrs. So-and-so?" and I says, "yeah." he says, "why didn't you?" I says, "well, I forgot it." he says, "well, I'm going to tell you one thing, I'm going to look over it this time, but don't let it happen again." and he was down to the point. And after that was all over, I proceeded to do my work and he came out and he pat me on the shoulder. He says, "you know, I have to do that because, you know, we can be brothers in the street, but we got a job to do here." I mean, he was just right to the point with it. [laughter]

**Narrator:** by the late 1970s, whites had moved out of the liberty city area, leaving it predominantly black. But many black people had also moved out, leaving behind a struggling community.

**Dewey knight:** the upward mobility types had gone. When everyone was there, when the professionals were there and everybody, things moved up that benefited everybody. And as a consequence, the housing goes down, the streets go down, there are very few businesses.

**Narrator:** while the Miami area enjoyed an economic boom, the residents of Overtown and liberty city, the years had been hard. Black unemployment was 17 percent, twice that of whites. Among black teenagers, it had risen to 40 percent.

**Checker man:** lot of people want a job and they can't get one. No jobs for them. Therefore, they on welfare. They on welfare because they can't get no job. They go to a place, they get turned down. And half of the things people doin' on the street right now, people forcin' 'em to do it. Because there ain't no jobs, they got to do something to feed their kids. If you got to feed your kids, you may do anything, you know? A lot of good people turn bad because there ain't no jobs.

**Narrator:** liberty city was part of an area known to the police as the central district.

**Dale Bowlin:** it's a very busy area, it's a very volatile area. There's a lot of serious calls in that area. It was not a pleasant place to work for most of our white officers. And so in my opinion, it was used as a punishment area. Some of the worst police officers are put in there to punish them, to show that this is where you're going to end up if you defy the administration, and so forth. And I think that's what happened, I know that's what happened in our department.

**Narrator:** in December, 1979, Arthur McDuffie went for a late night motorcycle ride. He failed to stop for a red light, resulting in a high speed police chase through the streets of the central district. According to the police report, McDuffie was injured crashing his motorcycle. Then violently resisted arrest and was taken to Jackson memorial hospital.

**Frederica McDuffie:** they would not let me in to see him. I asked the doctor why, they said to me, "we're working on him. You will be able to see him in a couple of hours." there was four hours before I seen Arthur. When I did see Arthur, it was like, "this is not Arthur. This is not an accident."

**Dale Bowlin:** when I went and looked at the motorcycle, and I had some background training in accident reconstruction, I know when a motorcycle slides on its side, that the pegs would stick out, the rubber pegs where you rest your feet should have had worn marks on them from coming in contact with the pavement. I didn't find that. I didn't believe that that motorcycle slid on its side.

**Narrator:** McDuffie's friend, Lonnie Lawrence, was a spokesman for the Dade county public safety department. He had a personal reaction to news of the investigation.

**Lonnie Lawrence:** the young lady who was handling the case from the internal review section, I asked her I said, "well, you know, who is this person you're talking about?" you know, because I hadn't really heard anything about it. And she told me the name, and I sort of just sat there because I thought, "well, maybe it's somebody else." and you know, it — when I finally realized that she was talking about the Arthur McDuffie that I knew, that I had grown up with, I just couldn't react to it. And I found myself in a very difficult situation because I found myself being an official spokesperson for the department, but trying to deal with the fact that here was a person who was a very good friend of mine, who I grew up with, who I knew very well, was the victim of this police brutality.

**Reporter:** what did he die from?

**Dr. Ronald wright:** he died as a result of blunt head injuries with the destruction of his underlying brain. He was beaten to death.

**Reporter:** how hard would someone have to hit someone to inflict such an injury?

**Dr. Ronald wright:** amazingly hard.



**Eula McDuffie:** my child is dead, they beat him to death like a dog. Just as a dog, they beat him to death, they beat up his head just like a dog.

**Narrator:** on December 29th, 1979, Arthur McDuffie, dressed in his marine corps uniform, was buried with full military honors. But public outcry over his death could not be laid to rest.

**Janet Reno:** we have filed charges today against five officers of the public safety department as a result of the tragic killing of Mr. Arthur McDuffie and the ensuing effort to cover up the circumstances surrounding it.

**Narrator:** some of the officers were charged with manslaughter, others with tampering with evidence. One was charged with second degree murder. The prosecution's case was supported by statements from other officers who had been at the scene that night.

**Charles Veverka:** I gave statements to the state attorney's office and I did plan on testifying.

**Reporter:** were you given immunity?

**Charles Ververka:** I was today, yes.

**Reporter:** what are you guilty of?

**Mark Meier:** I witnessed the incident, I helped cover it up, I lied to the internal review investigators investigating the incident.

**Lawyer:** we don't intend for a trial to be had where before they go in they've already said that these men are guilty.

**Narrator:** lawyers for the defendants asked for a change of venue. In the spring of 1980, the trial was moved to Tampa, Florida, and heard by an all male, all white jury. The defense maintained that McDuffie had fought violently and that the officers used only the force necessary to subdue him.

**Maurice Ferre:** for weeks on end, the newspapers, and especially the television stations in the evening would report what was going on in the trial so that the people of Miami, and especially the black community, were patently aware of every gruesome detail of how that poor man had died. That they held his head, what kind of a flashlight with how many batteries, where the blood was splattering.

**Charles Veverka:** with the impact of the second strike. As I stated, I was standing east of Mr. McDuffie and Mr. Marrero. I got splattered with blood.

**Dewey knight:** my expectation as was the expectation of everyone in the black community was that those men would be convicted of killing McDuffie. To us, the evidence appeared to be overwhelming, that they were responsible for the death of McDuffie and should have been dealt with accordingly.

**Judge Lenore Nesbitt:** bailiff? The bailiff will hand to the clerk, please place them face down for just a moment.

**Narrator:** on May 17th, 1980, the jury gave its verdict.

**Judge Lenore Nesbitt:** madam clerk, publish the verdict.

**Madam clerk:** we the jury at Tampa, Hillsboro county, the 17th day of May, 1980, find the defendant Alex Marrero as to second degree murder as charged in count one of the information not guilty. We the jury at Tampa, Hillsboro county, the 17th day of May, 1980, find the defendant Ira Diggs as to manslaughter —

**Narrator:** the policemen were cleared of all charges.

**Dr. John o. Brown:** we knew that a black man had been killed by a policeman. We knew the policemen who were present. And yet when they have the trial of Arthur McDuffie up there, they came back with a verdict of not guilty, that these people are not guilty of murdering this man. It was just another lynching.

**Dorothy graham:** I remember the McDuffie verdict and I feel that black women who have black sons, they must be fools because there seemingly is no justice for a black man.

**Chanting:** we want justice, we want justice.

**Narrator:** it was now five months since the death of Arthur McDuffie. In Miami, people began to gather outside the justice building to protest the verdict in Tampa.

**Lonnie Lawrence:** I stood in my office window talking to my director at that point, and I looked out the window. I'm talking to him on the phone, and I said to him, I said, "you're not going to believe this, but I've never in my life seen so many black folk in one place than I see right now." and he says, "what the hell are you talking about?" and I said, "it's about to hit the fan because they're marching down 14th street."

**Narrator:** the police tried to restrain angry demonstrators outside the justice building. Cars were set on fire. More fires were started throughout Overtown and liberty city. The police couldn't stop the growing furor.

**Dale Bowlin:** I would direct officers to set up a certain intersection, and I would say, "stop the citizens from going in there. Let's seal this area off where the violence is taking place." and they would come back on the radio and say, "I'm not staying here. I'm being shot at, I'm pulling out of here. You get somebody else in here." I mean, just open defiance on the air. And looking back on it, I can't blame them. We were totally overwhelmed by the anger and the number of people that were angry and the violence that was taking place. We weren't ready for it.

**Narrator:** in liberty city, white-owned businesses were burned. Individual whites also became targets for violence.

**Reporter:** don't know what's going on down there, what do you see down there?

**Man in car:** they're angry over the results of McDuffie, they're angry. They're angry. They're angry. They're emotional and anything that looks like it might be Caucasian, they're throwing bricks and rocks and shooting.

**Reporter:** and shooting?

**Man in car:** and shooting, they're for real.

**Reporter:** they got guns out.

**Man in car:** there's two Caucasians laying in the middle of the street right now. Two people are laying down right in the middle of the street. Don't go down, matter of fact, you're too close, you're too close.

**Narrator:** the riot lasted three days, 17 people died, 10 black, 7 white. More than 1,000 people were arrested, most of them with no previous arrest record.

**Narrator:** property damage in Overtown and liberty city ran to nearly \$100 million.

**Man in car:** they lost, man, all the way around. And they can keep going because they're losing, jack, they're losing battle. Because, you know, I feel like, man, when we had the rally downtown, we had enough people there for some positive things to get done. If they could have exerted all their energy into something positive, man, hey, no telling where we could have went. We could have went a long damn way with that, man.

**Otis Pitts:** you know, we have to recognize that even no matter how well intentioned people are, that we have to solve our own problems ultimately. I mean, at best, we can receive some assistance in doing that, but the solution has to be ours and ultimately, we have to implement the solution.

**Narrator:** three weeks later, president jimmy carter met with the city's officials and leaders. He wanted Miami to take strong local action before he committed federal funds to rebuild riot-torn areas.

**President jimmy carter:** we have ... (inaudible) service problems here to address. The prime initiative must come from this community. It cannot come from Washington. And the community must realize that violence and dissention and destruction hurts most those who are least able to afford it.

**Narrator:** carter had been elected with substantial support in the nation's black communities. But now the crowd which lined the street outside was angry that no one seemed to be addressing the injustice which led to the recent uprising. As the president left the meeting, a bottle thrown from the crowd smashed on the limousine's roof.

**Man on the street:** the incident itself was an ignorant act. But there's a point behind it, and maybe they don't have another way of expressing themselves or getting that particular attention.

**Reporter:** and the point is?

**Man on street:** that we need help.

**Narrator:** help had always come from within the community, and at times from allies in the federal government. Now, the community was in jeopardy and the government was changing priorities. It was an election year and president jimmy carter was challenged in his bid for reelection by governor Ronald Reagan of California. While campaigning in Philadelphia, Mississippi, he promised a more conservative federal government.

**Gov. Ronald Reagan:** I am going to devote myself to trying to reorder those priorities and to restore to states and local communities those functions which properly belong there.

**Narrator:** Reagan was elected by a substantial majority, an election which signaled an aggressive shift in federal programs and politics.

**Rep. Walter Fautroy:** just last night, our president has announced the first of \$13 billion additional cuts, a part of \$100 billion in cuts in programs that are vital to the role of government to care, protect and defend the poor of our nation and our world.

**Narrator:** in Chicago, Illinois, a grassroots coalition began to fight back against what it saw as government's lack of concern. The coalition had its origins in the 1979 snowstorm when Michael Bilandic was mayor.

**Renault Robinson:** Bilandic went on tv and made a lot of promises about what was going to happen with the snow because it was unusually high, it had paralyzed neighborhoods, it had closed schools and it had made transportation impossible.

**Nancy Jefferson:** people were standing on el platforms, and I'll never forget that evening at 4:00 in the evening, he ordered those els not to stop in black communities. It was the same on the south side and every side of town, was to pass up the black communities. And the black community people became irate because it was a personal affront, a personal insult and they went to war.

**Narrator:** Jane Byrne was running for mayor against Michael Bilandic and she found strong support on the elevated train platforms.

**Jane Byrne:** so I went to the people and where do you see the most people? You see them going to work in the morning. You see them going into the factories, so yeah, I was up on the el platforms.

**Narrator:** with strong support from black voters, jane Byrne went on to become Chicago's first woman mayor.

**Jane Byrne:** and I will be more than happy to take the advice of the coalition that put me in as mayor, the chairman of the party, and the people in the neighborhoods. Thank you very, very much.

**Narrator:** after two years of Byrne's leadership, many in the black neighborhoods charged that they were underrepresented in her appointments and in city jobs and contracts. Another conflict developed here at Cabrini green. In this public housing complex, nearly 14,000 people lived within six square blocks. They were plagued by high unemployment, a high crime rate and gang violence. In 1981, jane Byrne announced that she was moving in.

**Jane Byrne:** I'm going to straighten out project living in this city because by allowing it, we can harm the whole city, and I'm not going to have it.

**Marian stamps:** now you're going to bring your stuff up into the public housing community and tell us that only you can save our children? That's the ultimate of disrespect, okay? And I was not going to get ready for that. I could not accept that because, see, I understood that if we had allowed these children to believe that their salvation was going to come from the great white hope, then what did that say about me as a mother, as a grandmother, and as a black woman?

**Alderman Kelly:** Madame president and members of the city council, the tenants may also have a problem relating to the new neighbor based on the fact that, Madame mayor, you will have your body guards, limousine with detailed car, bulletproof glass has been installed, and I understand a new driveway that's going to be put in there. I don't think that most of those people there can relate to that sort of situation.

**Jane Byrne:** alderman Kelly, they have many vacancies in Cabrini green at the present time. If you do not want a general on the front line, you can use any of the apartments there any time you would like to also get a first hand view, thank you.

**Alderman Kelly:** I don't need to do that, I've lived there all of my life.

**Narrator:** mayor Byrne lived in Cabrini green for three weeks. Public housing was managed by the Chicago housing authority. The chairman of cha was Charles Swibal.

**Marian stamps:** Swibal was not providing any services in public housing, and he very seldom talked to any of the residents. Therefore, the people had no opportunity or no recourse in terms of how they addressed their concerns in public housing.

**Narrator:** public outcry over his performance forced Charles Swibal to resign. But the furor continued when mayor Byrne replaced him with Andrew moony. At the same time, the mayor expanded the cha board, appointing two white women.

**Jane Byrne:** and I didn't make the switch to put those two white women on that you always hear about until after I lived there, and after I saw that it was a very, very woman dominated society.

**Narrator:** the issue became one of representation. Eighty-five percent of the residents in public housing were black. Mayor Byrne's appointment made the cha board predominantly white.

**Marian stamps:** and you have no intention of doing what you said. We say it's an illegal meeting, it is not representative and the meeting is over with. Ain't gonna be no more meetings today.

**Renault Robinson:** it was wild. But, of course, the city council approved all three of them anyway. What happened, though, was that we said this is exactly what we needed. This shows black people unless we register to vote, we have no chance of ever overturning this kind of oppression.

**Narrator:** voter registration was also an issue in the spring of 1982 when the Illinois department of public aid reduced the funds available for recipients.

**Nancy Jefferson:** we took a group to public aid, to Springfield, to the legislators about the public aid cutback. And so we were told by the legislators, "your people don't vote." you know, and which was the truth. These public aid people were not voting. And we just came back and took that as a lead to organize public aid recipients to vote.

**Slim Coleman:** we had a meeting and said we're going to have to get some respect out of these politicians. The only thing they respect is votes, and we're going to have to get our own folks registered. We formed a group then called power with about 23 different community based organizations around the city and determined to go register people at the public aid and unemployment offices.

**Narrator:** a voter registration effort began on the streets of Chicago. Behind the scenes, leaders focused on the need for worthy candidates.

**Lutrelle Palmer:** we were up here in this very room talking one night in our regular meeting, and we had a list of black mayors on the wall. And there were more than 200 black mayors, and somebody said, "well, why can't we have a black mayor in Chicago?"

**Nancy Jefferson:** and I think we were dealing with not so much as who as to what we wanted. What kind of person we wanted. We was first ironing all that out. And then I think it was Lou or somebody that talked about let's look at Harold Washington.

**Narrator:** Harold Washington ran for mayor in 1977, following the death of mayor Richard J. Daley, he lost.

**Harold Washington:** this is congressman Harold Washington speaking to you from Chicago.

**Narrator:** now he was the United States congressman from Chicago's south side. Secure in his national post, he was reluctant to run again for mayor.

**Renault Robinson:** the real issue with Harold was did we have an opportunity to make black people understand what was going on and what could happen? It had nothing to do with the incident. Black people had been insulted every kind of way you can insult black people. Over the years, they had been insulted daily, plundered by example after example and it tended to just wash over their heads and they didn't understand, they didn't do anything about it. They cared, but then they didn't care. It was like, "well, what can we do about this?" and so Harold was saying, "look, if we're going to end up with people having the same reaction, we're not going to be able to pull it off."

**Lutrelle Palmer:** I also believe in an idea and when an idea whose moment comes, when that moment truly comes, nothing, nothing, nothing can turn it around or chase it away.

**Narrator:** black leaders trusted the community's feelings about who should run for mayor. A field of six names was presented to this meeting on Chicago's south side.

**Lutrelle Palmer:** so in essence what we did was to present those six names. We did not have the people, those six people there, but we just presented their names and the people voted. Once again, -Harold Washington was far and away the number one choice.

**Renault Robinson:** it took a lot of doing to get Harold to show up there. And only after a pre-arrangement between myself and Lu, that Harold would not be forced to declare his candidacy, did Harold finally agree to show. And with great reluctance he came and made one hell of a speech, absolutely electrifying speech.

**Lutrelle Palmer:** at that meeting, Harold made a strange speech, it was really a strange speech. And he started talking about it's not the man, it's the plan. And when he finished speaking, I walked over to Harold and said, "what are you talking about?" I said, "what's this man and the plan business, and when are you going to give us kind of a concrete time frame?" Harold said to me on the platform, while the program was still going on, Harold said, "I'm not going to run." and I looked at Harold, thunderstruck.

**Renault Robinson:** we were able to sit Harold back down and say, "if you were to run, what would it take to show you that people were really serious?" and this was, of course, part of a prearranged proposition. He said, "fifty thousand new registrants and \$100,000." fine. Then we let Harold go, I stayed and we worked through how we were going to accomplish that.

**Narrator:** the registration effort continued. Now with a goal of 50,000 new voters by the registration deadline of October 5th.

**Ed Gardner:** and I had never had a conversation with Renault Robinson before, so he came by and he explained the whole problem. He said, "you know, we're not going to do anything to change this city because we're not registered." two hundred and fifty thousand black Chicagoans need to be registered, and what can we do about it? My son and daughter, Terry, said, they said, "well, look dad, why don't we allocate our last quarter advertisement dollars to voter registration in this city?"

We were in radio commercials for two or three weeks. Come alive October 5. But also, once we advertised on a station, we had the station also match our spots, so we had a large number of spots running every day, but we had that power and the strength as a major advertiser to get them to do this.

**Woman on street:** I just registered, I didn't vote last time. And I hate it, I regret it.

**Reporter:** why?

**Woman on street:** because of all those leaders we got. I mean, Reagan cutting everything, Thompson's cutting everything, burrows cutting everything. We might as well just tear the whole machine down.

**Reporter:** what made you stop by to register?

**Young father:** because I'm 22 years old and I haven't registered to vote yet. I would think it's about — long overdue.

**Narrator:** by October 5, voting rolls swelled to include more than 100,000 newly registered black voters, twice the number required by -Harold Washington. On November 10th, 1982, Washington announced his long-awaited decision.

**Harold Washington:** I have been urged by those various pleas of thousands of people to enter this race. Therefore, I hereby declare my candidacy for mayor of Chicago.

**Narrator:** the 1983 democratic race for mayor would include -Harold Washington, mayor Jane Byrne, and Richard M. Daley, son of the late mayor Daley of Chicago. But the question remained, could -Harold Washington get the new voters to the polls on election day?

**Harold Washington:** the people who believe in us who take it upon themselves to talk to other people, we can dispel this business about I can't win. We got the votes out here, why can't I win? It's simply saying that people won't come out and vote. We have 670,000 black registered voters in this city, and those are votes I need to win this campaign running away? You know how many votes I need? Four hundred and fifty thousand votes and I can walk in. We got 670,000 out here. And we have never argued that we want anything short of a coalition. When you get right down to it, the votes are there. They're here, they're here.

**Joseph Gardner:** it was truly a grassroots campaign in the strict sense of the word. In all of my years of being involved in politics in the city of Chicago, I had never seen such an outpouring of support from people, many of whom had never really been involved in political campaigns. There were teachers for Harold, there were barbers for Harold, beauticians for Harold, taxi cab drivers for Harold.

**Narrator:** a Washington win would not come easily. His campaign lost the support of leading democrats. Jane Byrne was endorsed by senator Edward Kennedy, a past presidential candidate. Future presidential candidate Walter Mondale endorsed Richard Daley.

**Jesse Jackson:** well, there was a sense that we had been abandoned by liberals. If the most progressive liberals, Mondale and Kennedy, had this disregard for what the Chicago movement meant, we could only change that by becoming their peers. That meant someone had to begin to run against them in the primaries. It is out of that context our fighting for Harold and fighting against liberal contempt, that my own candidacy emerged out of this crucible, out of this process.

**Narrator:** Jane Byrne held a commanding lead in the polls. The two weeks before the primary, Washington supporters showed their increasing strength, 15,000 attended this rally. As Washington gained on Jane Byrne, the mayor's advisors proposed a strategy to appeal to white voters.

**Jane Byrne:** we had to get on tv. The emotion that was really taking place in the black community so that people began to say, "Harold is a real challenge here." so my press secretary made an announcement that I was canceling. To this day I think it was stupid. That I was canceling all my stops in the white community, all of them, and I was going strictly to the black community to shore up my vote with the thought if I went nowhere else, under equal time, they would have to put on what was really happening out there to Jane Byrne when she went into the black community.

**Man on megaphone:** the snow queen has returned to the scene, but not for long. In this building, we're going to punch 29 for ... (inaudible) and punch nine for Harold Washington.

**Jane Byrne:** I mean, forget it, forget it, you know? Harold, Harold, Harold. And they wanted it on the tube. And that way they thought people would know, okay, that we've got a real race here.

**Rosie Mars:** I got up one Saturday a week before the election, I was all set to vote for Jane Byrne for mayor. And my radio normally don't be turned to a talk show, but this morning it was on operation push. So I was listening to Jesse Jackson speak, and Harold Washington came on the radio. I never saw his face, I didn't know who was running against Jane Byrne or color of skin, and he spoke. So I sit down, he was speaking so clearly and for all of the city and the people, I sit down on the couch and I went to listening to this man speak. And what brought me out of this trance was my burnt biscuits, the biscuits was burning in my oven. And I sent my children to the adult learning center in the next building to get literature on Harold Washington.

**Lutelle Palmer:** on election day, I'm in my office and an old man walked in on those walkers. And said, "could I just rest for a minute?" I said, "certainly." I said, "are you on your way to vote?" he said, "yes." I said, "we'll take you to the polls." you know what that man said? He said, "no, I want to go on my own and vote for that boy."

**Narrator:** on February 22nd, 1983, Harold Washington won Chicago's democratic primary. The grassroots organizing had worked. Seventy-nine percent of the registered black voters went to the polls that day.

**Harold Washington:** you want Harold? You're gonna get him now.

**Narrator:** seven weeks later, Harold Washington was elected Chicago's first black mayor.

**Joseph Gardner:** many of us have to remember how we were able to elect Harold Washington. We didn't get a popular candidate first, we started talking about issues that were of concern to people throughout the city of Chicago. We built a coalition, we registered people to vote, we had a movement, if you will, that got transformed into a fairly sophisticated political organization. And then we had a candidate who could drive it forward. I think that formula worked in Chicago in '83, it'll work in other major cities around this country if it's followed because I think it's a blueprint for victory.

**Marian stamps:** the election was about us gaining control of our own community. Real simple. And the night that mayor Washington was elected, I mean, the people in Cabrini, it was a major celebration.

**Nancy Jefferson:** we danced in the street, we danced in the street. We absolutely — it was the greatest feeling we ever had in life, it just — everybody felt empowered.

**Rosie Mars:** I felt like I was a part of something. He said, "you know, we were making history. You know, so I was a part of it. I was a small person in the corner, wouldn't get the big headlines, but I made it happen."

**Narrator:** many people made the movement happen. Ordinary people who stood up to injustice and inspired others to follow.

**C.t. Vivian:** it was a clear engagement between those who wished the fullness of their personalities to be met and those that would destroy us physically and psychologically. You do not walk away from that. This is what movement meant. Movement meant that finally we were encountering on a mass scale the evils that had been destroying us on a mass scale. You do not walk away from that, you continue to answer it.

**Narrator:** on the journey to freedom, they won battles that became universal in their meaning.

**Martin Luther King, Jr:** the decision rendered by the supreme court yesterday was a victory. It wasn't merely a victory for 16 million negroes of America. That was a victory for justice.

**Narrator:** in the early 1960s, the battle for justice raged.

**Fannie Lou Hamer:** is this America, the land of the free, the home of the brave? To have my life be threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings in America.

**Malcolm X:** our problem is not an American problem, it's a human problem. It's not a negro problem, it's a problem of humanity. It's not a problem of civil rights, but a problem of human rights.

**Narrator:** in the 1970s and '80s, the struggle continued, bringing America closer to the promises it made. Despite the resistance, the movement could not be stopped.

**Unita Blackwell:** 1964, I went to Atlantic city, new jersey, challenging the regular democratic party, fighting to get people to know that we had been denied the democratic process. By 1984, I was asked to speak in the national democratic convention in san Francisco.

It's been a long haul, but I have come from the outside to the inside and now to the podium. And that — I felt tears because Fannie Lou Hamer should have been standing there. She was standing there in us, in me, in Jesse, in all of us.

**Jesse Jackson:** our flags is red, white and blue. But our nation is rainbow, red, yellow, brown, black and white, we're all precious in god's sight.

**Unita Blackwell:** that's what I felt. That I was standing there for all who had died, all who will live, all for the generation to come. **Narrator:** in less than two generations, the movement made a beautiful beginning and sent a message to the world.

**Eleanor Holmes Norton:** when the civil rights movement is no longer needed and we ask ourselves, what did it mean, it seems to me the answer will be that it meant something universal. It meant something beyond Chicago and Detroit and Mississippi. Our own freedom is precious and important, but in the end what gives our movement its majesty is the example that's set throughout the world for people of color, and for people who in any way were oppressed and found in that example a reason to hope and strive for a different life.

**George Clements:** I'm grateful for anybody, white, black, yellow, red, brown, anybody who's going to do something to stop these people from dying from drugs.

**Narrator:** the movement is not yet over, the story is not yet done. America faces new challenges.

**Woman in Chicago:** we want to stop the drugs and stop the crime, and we gonna keep on fighting.

**Narrator:** they had the courage to stand up and point out the road all of us must travel. Brothers, sisters, children, all the colors of the earth, standing up. Still standing up. Amen.