

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

Civil Rights History Project

Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of
African American History & Culture and the
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Lawrence Guyot oral history interview

conducted by Julian Bond

in Washington, D. C., Dec. 30, 2010

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
1		[START AFC2010039_CRHP0005_MV1.WMV]
2		MALE VOICE: Cameras rolling. Ready
3	01:00:01	to roll.
4		INTERVIEWER: Mr. Guyot, thanks for
5		doing this interview.
6		MR. GUYOT: It's a pleasure.
7		INTERVIEWER: Now you were born and
8		grew up in Pass Christian,
9		Mississippi, and you said that racial
10		prejudice by and large did not affect
11		you during your youth? How could
12		that be so in Mississippi at that age
13	01:00:17	in time?
14		MR. GUYOT: I came from the most non-
15		Mississippi-like section of
16		Mississippi. It was a heavy Catholic
17		influence. Ingalls Shipyard was
18		producing most of the major armaments
19		for all hostilities in Pascagoula,
20		hiring people from 63 counties. You
21		had the labor union influence; you
22		had the Catholic Church influence,
23	01:00:40	which was tremendous; and you had a
24		population of 100,000 white people,
25		19,000 black people.

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
26		The Catholic Church in 1957 or '58
27		made a decision that they were going
28	01:00:56	to desegregate the schools. They did
29		it this way. The announcement was we
30		have two programs. We have
31		excommunication and we have
32		integration. Make your choice by
33		Friday. Now there was violence going
34		on in Louisiana. Nothing happened on
35		the Gulf Coast. I learned firsthand
36		that institutions can really have an
37		impact on social policy.
38	01:01:21	I bought three slot machines, Julian,
39		because there was a lot of gambling
40		on the Gulf Coast. I just passed the
41		academic test for entrance into
42		Tougaloo College. I was going to be
43		sent to jail by Gaston Hughes
44		[phonetic]. My father hires Bidwell
45		Adams to represent me. Bidwell Adams
46		is the lieutenant governor under
47		Bilbo. He is the chairman of the
48	01:01:49	Democratic Party in the State of
49		Mississippi, and he's a lawyer who
50		represents black people who've been

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
51		accused of raping white women.
52		We go to his office and my father
53	01:01:59	says here's the problem. Bilbo said,
54		"Don't worry about it." He calls up
55		Gaston Hughes. He said, "No, this
56		boy is not black. He's a Creole." I
57		didn't correct him, Julian. He then
58		said, "This boy is going off to
59		school. I don't want to hear anymore
60		about these slot machines." Gaston
61		said I'm going to send him to
62		Parchman. Bilbo says okay. I
63	01:02:21	looked at my father; we must be in
64		the wrong place. He continued. He
65		says, "Okay, but if I hear anymore
66		about these slot machines, I'm going
67		to call for a federal investigation
68		of all gambling on the Gulf Coast,
69		and I'm going to make sure that
70		everyone knows that you caused it."
71		At the time of this meeting I was 17
72		years old. I'm now 71 years of age.
73	01:02:41	I've never heard about those slot
74		machines and I've never heard about
75		anyone who's heard about those slot

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
76		machines, which drove home to me that
77		all the life that we live is
78	01:02:52	political.
79		INTERVIEWER: Back up a little bit.
80		You're sitting in the office of
81		Theodore Bilbo...
82		MR. GUYOT: No, of Bidwell Adams.
83		INTERVIEWER: Bidwell Adams.
84		MR. GUYOT: Who is lieutenant
85		governor when Bilbo was governor. I
86		was born in Harrison County. Bilbo
87		was born in Hancock County. Bidwell
88	01:03:12	Adams after leaving the lieutenant
89		governorship, then becomes a
90		practicing lawyer and a loyal Kennedy
91		Democrat. This is the guy who
92		handled the patriots for the
93		Democratic Party.
94		I come out of a family--my
95		grandfather's brother was chairman of
96		the Republican Party in Hancock
97		County for 65 years. He died at 105
98	01:03:35	years of age. His name is Louis
99		Piernas. He and I talked about
100		Randolph, who my high school was

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
101		named after. He said, "I saw the
102		civil war fought on the beaches of
103	01:03:51	Bay St. Louis, not far from Waverley
104		[phonetic] where we used to go down
105		to meet." He talked about, "My wife
106		and I did a genealogy study. We run
107		across a WPA interview of him." He
108		says, "Well, Bilbo is really terrible
109		and I just hope that blacks will be
110		able to fight there way into the
111		Democratic Party." I got chills up
112		my spine. I said, "That's what I've
113	01:04:13	been doing."
114		My family was very, very political.
115		My grandfather was a man who taught
116		me the value of listening. Long
117		before communalism was what it is
118		today, he had a lot of Baptist
119		ministers as friends. They would
120		meet outside every Sunday and they
121		would decide what they would go in
122		and convince him of. I knew who was
123	01:04:40	going to win this argument. They
124		would come out convinced that they
125		had convinced my grandfather. They

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
126		were satisfied that he understood
127		them and he agreed with them. I knew
128	01:04:53	that when I talked to him about it
129		afterwards, that it had gone just the
130		other way.
131		He had one habit, Julian. If you
132		went to him and said, "Mr. Joos
133		[phonetic], I'm going fishing," he
134		would repeat the word "fishing". I
135		said, "Grandpa, you're too smart to
136		do that. I've seen the people you
137		talk to." He said, "Boy, it gives me
138	01:05:14	a little bit more time to think about
139		what I'm going to say. From that day
140		on, Julian, I never questioned my
141		grandfather.
142		He and I read the newspaper together
143		every day. We also listened to two
144		people on the radio. Whenever FDR
145		spoke, he gathered the family to
146		listen to our president. Another guy
147		was Ronald Reagan.
148	01:05:32	INTERVIEWER: Really? Why Reagan?
149		MR. GUYOT: Why Reagan? Because we
150		liked his style. We didn't like his

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
151		etiology, but we were impressed with
152		how he did it. I mean he could paint
153	01:05:43	the pictures.
154		I'm 7 years old. He takes me in
155		front of the Catholic Church in
156		Mississippi in St. Philomena's. I
157		read Paul's letters to the Galatians
158		and Ephesians. I'm just proud. I'm
159		with my grandfather; I can read
160		before my congregation; I can do
161		anything. I learned from my family
162		the value of service and the
163	01:06:12	interrelationship between religion
164		and politics.
165		My father was a man who would've made
166		Lyndon Johnson look like a pica if he
167		could've just gotten the kind of
168		political opportunities that I had.
169		My father got in a contest one time
170		about a mathematics problem.
171		Everyone in the town told him that he
172		was wrong, that he had figured out
173	01:06:38	wrong. They sent back to the book
174		manufacturer and the book
175		manufacturer said, "We made a

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
176		mistake. He's right."
177		He's a man who when he got into a
178	01:06:47	jewelry, a woman wanted to get \$6,000
179		from an insurance company. Everybody
180		in the jewelry store said, "That..."
181		My father said, "Send out and get a
182		lot of coffee because until she gets
183		her \$6,000, we're not going to decide
184		anything.
185		I saw my father, Julian, beat one of
186		the richest men in Pass Christian
187		almost to a pulp in front of the post
188	01:07:11	office with his fist and then take me
189		by the hand and walk me home. I come
190		from a city that as the Catholic
191		Church had desegregated, I could use
192		any restaurant I wanted. I could go
193		into any drug store I wanted. I
194		could ride on the bus anywhere. I
195		was a longshoreman at 13. I used the
196		white restroom on the Gulf Coast.
197		Only Dr. Felix Dunn [phonetic], who
198	01:07:40	was a black, wealthy political person
199		and I did that. Now I did it not
200		because it had anything to do with

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
201		nonviolence. I did it because my
202		father would've killed any 20 people
203	01:07:51	that had anything to say to me.
204		INTERVIEWER: Didn't you know that
205		there was a great difference between
206		where you lived in Mississippi and
207		the rest of Mississippi? How did you
208		balance in your mind the fact that
209		you were able to do these things
210		here, but just a few miles away you
211		would take your life in your hands to
212		do them?
213	01:08:09	MR. GUYOT: What really brought this
214		home to me was I went to Tougaloo
215		College. Tougaloo College was
216		threatened with extinction by the
217		State Legislature. It had an
218		interracial faculty. It was
219		perfectly designed for me. I needed
220		to be some place that was
221		academically free, that would be
222		committed to social change, and that
223	01:08:29	would be committed to empowerment and
224		the development of leadership.
225		Tougaloo was all of that. When I get

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
226		there I meet Ed King. I meet David
227		Broder [phonetic]. I meet Ernest
228	01:08:40	Borinski [phonetic]. Ernest Borinski
229		is a Jew driven out of Germany. He
230		comes to Tougaloo. He becomes an
231		institution man. He develops a
232		theory that some institutions are
233		functional only by their absence of
234		function. That's the Democratic
235		Party in Mississippi. It only needs
236		to be organized every four years.
237		They go to a convention; they come
238	01:09:02	back; and then it disbands. If they
239		don't disband, then they have to
240		answer people's problems. You can
241		run the state apparatus without doing
242		that.
243		I meet A.A. Branch. A.A. Branch is a
244		member of the leadership of the YMCA.
245		A.A. Branch says to us the policy of
246		Tougaloo is you can become involved
247		in any demonstration you want around
248	01:09:27	voting. We're going to assist you in
249		doing that, but take your books with
250		you. We're going to test you just

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
251		like everyone else. Only Tougaloo
252		College and Miles College did that.
253	01:09:37	No other college in the South or in
254		America did that to my knowledge.
255		I'm in the perfect place for me. I
256		meet people who are committed to
257		nonviolence. I meet John Salter, who
258		teaches me everything I need to know
259		about socialism. A.A. Branch is a
260		leader of the YWCA, but as A.A.
261		Branch walks into the COFO office
262		with the papers to join with the
263	01:10:12	United Church of Christ and the
264		National Council of Churches in
265		taking over the WLBT television
266		station.
267		INTERVIEWER: Before we jump this far
268		ahead, tell me the names of some of
269		the students you went to school with
270		whom we know as movement people.
271		MR. GUYOT: I went to school with
272		Dorie Ladner.
273	01:10:28	INTERVIEWER: Joyce.
274		MR. GUYOT: Joyce Ladner. Quite a
275		few people. Franklin. Johnny

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
276		Frazier, who was one of the leaders.
277		He wasn't a student there, but I
278	01:10:44	worked in conjunction with him.
279		Quite a few people. Anderson, who
280		later becomes a member of the State
281		Supreme Court.
282		INTERVIEWER: I know this is
283		counterfactual, but what if you had
284		gone to Jackson State instead of
285		Tougaloo? How would Lawrence Guyot
286		have turned out do you think?
287		MR. GUYOT: I don't think I would've
288	01:11:10	lasted at Jackson State. I believe I
289		come from a town that created a
290		certain political expectation of what
291		was expected of me by my family and
292		by my church. I wouldn't have fit
293		into the strict, rigid conformity and
294		hierarchal leadership of Jackson
295		State. Dorie Ladner and Joyce Ladner
296		went there first. They had to leave
297		there and come to Tougaloo. Tougaloo
298	01:11:45	was an Oasis in the State of
299		Mississippi. It was committed to
300		academic freedom, committed to

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
301		growth, and to leadership. Its very
302		existence was threatened by the state
303	01:11:55	legislature, but they continued to
304		move ahead.
305		INTERVIEWER: Again, let me back up a
306		little bit. I was just thinking
307		about Pass Christian and the
308		community you grew up in, the
309		Catholic Church's influence, and the
310		influence of labor unions. Most of
311		Mississippi doesn't have this. Most
312		of the South doesn't have this.
313	01:12:12	MR. GUYOT: That's right.
314		INTERVIEWER: It's only when you get
315		into Louisiana that there's any real
316		Catholic presence. Outside of your
317		section of Mississippi, probably not
318		much any place else. The same would
319		be true of Alabama, Georgia, and so
320		on. Do you ever consider how lucky
321		you were to run into the Catholic
322		Church and to live in a community
323	01:12:30	where labor unions flourished?
324		MR. GUYOT: Let me add one other
325		thing to it and I'll respond to your

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
326		question. You also had Keesler Air
327		Force Base, which was a major dynamo.
328	01:12:40	Yes. I consider myself very
329		fortunate. I was born in the right
330		town. I get to go to the right
331		church. I get to go to the right
332		college. Then I run into SNCC. I
333		come from a family that understands.
334		In 1964 my favorite uncle says me the
335		mayor wants to meet with you about
336		the Summer Project. I grew walk up
337		the steps to his house.
338	01:13:12	He said but I don't want you to call
339		him from my house. My uncle's scared
340		about being tied to this. But I go
341		down and talk to the mayor. I said
342		here's what we're going to do. He
343		said here's what we're going to do.
344		That's it. I give no quarter. They
345		give no quarter. This is '64.
346		Then in '66 that same uncle runs for
347		Alderman in Pass Christian. You get
348	01:13:39	an idea of impact of the 1965 Voting
349		Rights Act.
350		INTERVIEWER: A moment ago you said

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
351		you ran into SNCC. Tell me about
352		running into SNCC. How did that
353	01:13:49	happen? Who embodied SNCC for you?
354		MR. GUYOT: Dorie Ladner, Joyce
355		Ladner, and Bob Moses. I meet Bob
356		Moses, John Doar, and Marion Barry
357		all at the same time. They come out
358		of McComb. We're all working at 714
359		Rose Street. There we have Moses,
360		the Ladners, Bevel [phonetic], Diane,
361		quite a few other folks, Lavon Brown,
362		Sheila Michaels. This is the Freedom
363	01:14:25	House, right?
364		From there, we move into the Delta.
365		We go to Amzie Moore's house. Amzie
366		Moore parcels it out to Joe McDonald
367		and assistants. We run across a lady
368		named Fannie Lou Hamer. Bevel, me,
369		McLaurin and Forman go to a mass
370		meeting. We open the call for anyone
371		who wants to go down and register.
372		Fannie Lou Hamer raises her hand. We
373	01:14:52	run across a woman who is a religious
374		fundamentalist who knows the bible, a
375		woman who has a perfect sense of

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
376		timing in her speech pattern. She
377		can weave together three different
378	01:15:08	issues and collapse them in 25 words
379		and bring it all together. She's a
380		woman who walks into churches and who
381		takes over. If the minister is a
382		good minister, she treats him as a
383		good minister. If he's wavering, she
384		preaches to him before his
385		congregation and nobody says a word
386		to her.
387		Here we get the perfect melding of
388	01:15:36	religious fundamentalism and
389		pragmatic politics. Not only does
390		she go to register to vote, but as
391		you know, she becomes a national
392		celebrity. She becomes a woman who
393		Andy Young takes to meet with Senator
394		Church when he wants to talk about
395		Vietnam. She's one of the founders
396		of the National Women's Political
397		Caucus. She's the woman who speaks
398	01:16:00	at the '64 Democratic Convention.
399		Lyndon Johnson calls a press
400		conference to interrupt her.

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
401		At that time, there was only ABC,
402		NBC, and CBS, and they all play her
403	01:16:12	speech in its entirety that evening.
404		Then there are 1,200 telegrams saying
405		to seek the Freedom Democratic Party.
406		Then Lyndon has to apply pressure
407		because Lyndon says--and he says it
408		in his tapes--the good thing about
409		Lyndon is we got tapes on him.
410		Lyndon says, "Look, we can't have a
411		floor fight to seat an all-white
412		delegation and then go and ask black
413	01:16:40	people to vote for us in November, so
414		the floor fight must be stopped."
415		Then as President of the United
416		States, he pulled out all of the
417		stops. Delegates from California,
418		one of them was told, "Your husband
419		can be a federal judge. All you have
420		to do is stop voting for the Freedom
421		Democratic Party." Candidates in New
422		York were told, "You all have a lot
423	01:17:02	of OEO money, the Office of Economic
424		INTERVIEWER: [Interposing] Yeah.
425		MR. GUYOT: You can keep it as long

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
426		as you stop supporting the freedom.
427		They went to the delegates in
428	01:17:11	California. Unfortunately, the
429		California Democratic Party had
430		passed the delegation supporting
431		their position. But the President
432		put all of his pressure on all of
433		them. As you know, we couldn't get
434		the floor fight. Not being able to
435		get the floor fight, we were then
436		offered a compromise of two people.
437		I'm proud of the fact that I'm the
438	01:17:33	chairman of the Mississippi Freedom
439		Democratic Party. I'm in jail in
440		Hattiesburg, Mississippi. I couldn't
441		have given a speech as good as Fannie
442		Lou Hamer did. I couldn't have led
443		the Freedom Democratic Party into
444		making what I considered the most
445		courageous, pragmatic, political
446		decision in American politics. They
447		said to this compromise, "No."
448	01:17:56	It's interesting. Some historians--
449		as you know, Bayard Rustin comes out
450		late after that with an article

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
451		called "The difference between
452		politics and protest" in Commentary
453	01:18:07	Magazine. What I am so proud of is
454		no delegation went to the '64
455		Democratic Convention who understood
456		the relationship between dying and
457		the right to vote. Every one of
458		these people had lost money, had
459		served time in jail, had had their
460		names posted in the newspaper when
461		they registered to vote. They were
462		willing to take on the strongest
463	01:18:32	political organization in the State
464		of Mississippi, the Democratic Party,
465		and they were willing to go into
466		Lyndon Johnson's convention and fight
467		in it as though it was their
468		convention.
469		INTERVIEWER: Let me back you up one
470		more time. You're going to Tougaloo
471		and you're majoring in biology and
472		minoring in philosophy. Why'd you
473	01:18:51	choose these fields? What was your
474		career plan then?
475		MR. GUYOT: My career plan then was

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
476		to become a doctor. Then I ran into
477		chemistry and I changed my career
478	01:19:01	plan. I just couldn't. When I
479		tested while in Tougaloo, I scored
480		off the charts on everything except
481		mathematics and chemistry. Well,
482		there was no way I was going to be a
483		doctor having those, so I made a
484		shift.
485		INTERVIEWER: What would you have
486		been?
487		MR. GUYOT: If I had had my druthers,
488	01:19:23	I'd have been a lawyer.
489		INTERVIEWER: Why didn't you go that
490		way?
491		MR. GUYOT: Why didn't I go that way?
492		Because I understood the universality
493		both of politics and how much the
494		judiciary had framed that. I
495		understood the Brown case. I
496		understood the Baker vs. Carr now
497		opened up the political arena to the
498	01:19:47	courts, which meant that there would
499		be more power. History proves me
500		right on that. We have reached a

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
501		point in this country where we have
502		an excellent power and scope of the
503	01:20:03	judiciary, and now we got to fight to
504		keep it.
505		INTERVIEWER: You mentioned a moment
506		ago about running into Bob Moses and
507		the Ladner sisters and so on, and
508		finding this community of people who
509		make up the Student Nonviolent
510		Coordinating Committee. What did you
511		think of them? What was your
512		impression of them and how in your
513	01:20:21	mind did they differ from the run-of-
514		the-mill college students and others
515		you were associated with?
516		MR. GUYOT: I thought that these were
517		people who had a religious commitment
518		to interracialism; that they were
519		fundamentally about change; that they
520		were different from the other
521		organizers that I'd been exposed to
522		in that they were not about creating
523	01:20:44	membership. They were about creating
524		empowerment. That is what fascinated
525		me. Here were people who were very

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
526		well educated who could think on
527		their feet, who were interdependent,
528	01:21:02	and who had fierce respect for one
529		another.
530		Once I saw how they operated, then I
531		was totally captivated. Their
532		position was that they were going to
533		work with established leaders who
534		were there: E.W. Steptoe; later
535		Hartman Turnbow. They go into
536		McComb. I don't go into McComb.
537		SNCC is almost killed, almost shot
538	01:21:31	out of McComb. What it discovers is
539		that the black community will protect
540		and support them. It will hide the.
541		It will feed them. It will clothe
542		them. It will lie for them. It will
543		do anything to protect them. This
544		carries us into the Delta.
545		Then we go into Greenwood and we find
546		that in Greenwood, Mississippi there
547		was tremendous fear. Moses proposed
548	01:21:58	let's have some... I said no; they
549		don't know us yet. We got better
550		known moving around. Then when we

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Line#	Timecode	Quote
551		had demonstrations, we had 100 people
552		come into the jail to bring us food
553	01:22:10	and support. That's not supposed to
554		happen. What is the one thing black
555		people learn? Don't go to jail.
556		Don't be associated with those who go
557		to jail. If you're their friends,
558		wait until they get out of jail to be
559		friends. We push Greenwood to the
560		point where we have 500 people come
561		down to register to vote. Hardy
562		Lott, a segregationist lawyer who
563	01:22:38	defends Byron De La Beckwith says to
564		me in the Leflore County Courthouse
565		one day. "Guyot, you should be very
566		proud of how many people you all got
567		coming down in Leflore County."
568		I said, "Well, Mr. Lott, I
569		understand. We got them coming down
570		and you're all turning them away from
571		registration. What we need to do is
572		create a situation where they can
573	01:22:57	come down and get registered. He
574		said, "Well, that's going to be a
575		good fight." It proved to be a good

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
576		fight because what we were able to do
577		in Greenwood was force the Department
578	01:23:07	of Justice. Once the voter
579		registration workers got arrested
580		there, John Doar says, "Okay, we're
581		going into court," but instead of
582		filing a type A suit, he files a type
583		B suit, which just gets us out.
584		What we found was that the Department
585		of Justice to this day defends their
586		position by saying we didn't want to
587		occupy Leflore County.
588	01:23:38	Remember, while this was going on
589		there was also the case of Ole Miss
590		and there was the case of Theron
591		Lynd.
592		I think one of the major achievements
593		of SNCC was to bring about a working
594		relationship with the Department of
595		Justice. We trained them. We took
596		John Doar to Walthall County. We
597		introduced John Doar to a man named
598	01:24:06	John Hardy. John Hardy was a SNCC
599		activist who brought some people in
600		to register to vote. Mr. Woods, the

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
601		registrar, hit him with a gun and a
602		stick, and the Department of Justice
603	01:24:17	said, "Wait a minute. We're going to
604		stop this prosecution. The reason
605		we're stopping it is when you hit
606		him, you hit every black man or woman
607		who might want to come to register to
608		vote."
609		They developed a theory called an
610		appeal, an injunction pending appeal.
611		That's what they do. They said, "You
612		can't prosecute this man," and they
613	01:24:40	take you to the Fifth Circuit Court
614		of Appeals. That's right.
615		INTERVIEWER: Couldn't we say that
616		one of the reasons that happened is
617		because of somebody like John Doar.
618		Not because of the department itself,
619		but because somebody like John Doar
620		stood out among his fellows and
621		pushed hard for these kinds of
622		remedies.
623	01:24:57	MR. GUYOT: John Doar was not the
624		ordinary Department of Justice. John
625		Doar believed in going into the

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
626		field, finding out where the danger
627		was, and he trained his staff to do
628	01:25:11	that. There's no question. John
629		Doar participates not only in that,
630		but John Doar also, when the
631		Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
632		files the first private lawsuit under
633		the Voting Rights Act of 1965. John
634		Doar and the Department of Justice
635		filed an amicus. We go to the
636		Supreme Court. We win it 8 to 1.
637		What does that case say? That case
638	01:25:39	says right now the law says that the
639		attorney general is the only one who
640		can institute suits, but we're going
641		to take the position that from this
642		day forward anyone who's aggrieved by
643		Section 5 has the right to bring a
644		lawsuit under Section 5. You see the
645		range that they're giving it? They
646		broadened Section 5. They give us
647		the best possible interpretation we
648	01:26:03	can. Now this case is my idea. I
649		read a book called Gideon's Trumpet
650		by Anthony Lewis. It describes

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
651		Lyndon Johnson as someone who stole
652		his election.
653	01:26:17	I'd been trained well enough to know
654		that if you had the choice between
655		trained by being given guidance by a
656		thief or by a bishop, choose the
657		thief. The bishop will tell you no;
658		this is not right. The thief will
659		tell you this is how I did it and
660		this is how I've stopped other people
661		from doing it. I knew that Lyndon
662		Johnson didn't want anyone to ever be
663	01:26:44	able to do what he had done. I go
664		and I find Section 5. It's the most
665		beautiful language ever written. It
666		says that any change by a covered
667		political subdivision that has the
668		possibility of diluting the Voting
669		Rights Act must either be pre-cleared
670		by the Department of Justice or
671		litigated before a three-judge panel
672		only in the District of Columbia.
673	01:27:16	Most beautiful words I've ever heard.
674		What we do, once we win that case
675		before the Supreme Court, all lawyers

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
676		in the South switch from the Fifth
677		Amendment to Section 5 of the Voting
678	01:27:27	Rights Act.
679		INTERVIEWER: The work you're doing
680		with the Student Nonviolent
681		Coordinating Committee and these
682		colleagues that you've mentioned
683		earlier doesn't come without a cost,
684		and you're beaten a couple of times.
685		I don't know if it's painful for you
686		now to talk about that.
687		MR. GUYOT: No, it's not painful.
688	01:27:41	It's factual.
689		INTERVIEWER: Tell us about these two
690		cases of where you were beaten.
691		MR. GUYOT: One of them was in
692		Winona. Fannie Lou Hamer, Annie
693		Devine, Annelle Ponder, James West,
694		and June Johnson are returning from a
695		South Carolina meeting. They stop in
696		Winona. They are arrested. I call
697		and ask, "Do you have these people?"
698	01:28:06	He said, "Well, come on over and find
699		out."
700		I go over and I know they're there.

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
701		They beat me almost to death and they
702		want me to sign a statement saying I
703	01:28:17	drove over there and fell out of a
704		car and hurt myself. I said I'm not
705		going to sign that. I'd never driven
706		a car in my life and I wasn't going
707		to sign it.
708		MALE VOICE: Just pause for a moment
709		just so you can get some water. Give
710		me one second.
711		MR. GUYOT: I leave Greenwood and I
712		go into Winona. I'm beaten. They
713	01:28:47	threaten to burn my testicles with
714		wooden sticks. I know that I have to
715		stay conscious; otherwise, they're
716		going to kill me. I'm beaten by 12
717		people and I'm asked to sign a
718		statement which I refuse to sign.
719		Then they charge me with murder.
720		INTERVIEWER: Who had you killed?
721		MR. GUYOT: I hadn't killed anyone.
722		INTERVIEWER: Who did they say you
723	01:29:11	killed?
724		MR. GUYOT: I had a note from someone
725		who had given in the street someone

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
726		had been killed, and they took that
727		and said, "Well, you killed him."
728	01:29:24	What I found was that I knew that I
729		wasn't going to get out of Winona
730		alive. I didn't think any of us that
731		were there. They left my cell door
732		open. They left a knife outside.
733		They sent someone who showed me a
734		fake badge saying, "I'm an FBI agent;
735		now tell me what really happened."
736		Medgar Evers was killed while we were
737		in Winona. I turned off the radio.
738	01:29:53	I knew something tragic had happened.
739		I just didn't know who. Then, Andy
740		Young Bevel and Frank Smith come to
741		get me out of jail. Then we
742		eventually go to the Medgar Evers
743		funeral, and then I leave there and
744		go to Hattiesburg. It was clear to
745		me that we were beaten too badly. We
746		were beaten almost beyond
747		recognition. They were not going to
748	01:30:22	allow us to go about and have
749		pictures taken.
750		As unfortunate as it is, I believe

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
751		that there are two things that saved
752		our lives. One, Roberta Goller and
753	01:30:34	other people from across the country
754		started calling in to ask to speak to
755		us, that let them know that other
756		people know.
757		Number two, the assassination of
758		Medgar Evers. I'd been beaten quite
759		a few other times, but what one time
760		that I remember vividly that I wasn't
761		beaten, but I think it's something I
762		want to talk about now, we were
763	01:31:00	driving in a car from Hattiesburg,
764		Jackson, and it was a car that
765		couldn't go over 50 miles an hour.
766		It had bad tires. Some people with
767		shotguns were behind us. I said stop
768		the car. I got out, I walked back,
769		and I looked in the... I said, "Look,
770		the FBI's been following us. If you
771		want to go to jail for 10 years, just
772		do anything to anybody in that car."
773	01:31:25	Those good old boys turned around and
774		then we got back in the car. He
775		asked you and I lied, but I'd rather

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
776		lie and take control of my life than
777		to leave it to someone else who I
778	01:31:36	didn't think had my good being
779		intentions.
780		INTERVIEWER: Eleanor Holmes Norton,
781		who's the District's representative
782		to the congress has known you since
783		the early 1960s. In fact, did she
784		come with you to get the people out
785		of jail in Winona?
786		MR. GUYOT: She was involved in it.
787		INTERVIEWER: She was a young lawyer
788	01:31:55	then.
789		MR. GUYOT: She was a lawyer. Yes.
790		INTERVIEWER: She said you walked
791		right into terror. What did she mean
792		by that?
793		MR. GUYOT: She said that at a dinner
794		that was given in my name here in
795		Washington. The way she laid it out
796		was she said, "Look, all black
797		southern men were told to stay out of
798	01:32:13	jail." If your friends are in jail,
799		send them money, pray for them, but
800		don't go visit them." Here was man

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
801		who knew that there were civil rights
802		workers arrested and he went right
803	01:32:26	into jail knowing what the terror
804		was. He looked at terror and walked
805		right into it. I felt very
806		complimented about that.
807		INTERVIEWER: Can you tell us quickly
808		what differences before between the
809		NAACP, long-established organization
810		active across the State of
811		Mississippi, and SLCL, relatively new
812		organization. How do these
813	01:32:50	organizations differ in the ways they
814		operated in Mississippi with SNCC--
815		NAACP, SCLC, and SNCC?
816		INTERVIEWER: The NAACP took the
817		position--and I'm quoting Roy Wilkins
818		who said part of this on the great
819		documentary "Eyes on the Prize"--
820		Mississippi is a bestial state. It
821		should be cut off and allowed to be
822		drifted to sea. He didn't say this
823	01:33:19	on camera, but he said it later.
824		Anyone who attempts to organize is
825		crazy. Were going to raise money out

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
826		of the atrocities of Mississippi and
827		move forward. We're going to
828	01:33:28	litigate there when possible and
829		that's it.
830		SCLC is a tougher problem to answer.
831		Everything that was done that shows
832		how creative, how pluralistic, how
833		indigenous and how really
834		sophisticated the politics in
835		Mississippi was, was backed by Martin
836		Luther King. We got to separate
837		Martin Luther King from SCLC. Martin
838	01:33:58	Luther King supported us in the
839		Freedom Election, which we got 80,000
840		voters. He supported us in the
841		Summer Project, which we were able to
842		really create the Freedom Democratic
843		Party, create the Freedom Schools,
844		and create the Wednesday Group by
845		Dorothy Height. The Wednesday Group
846		was bringing in black and white women
847		from across the country. They meet
848	01:34:19	with people who were in the movement
849		and then go back and talk to their
850		ministers, their bishops, and their

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
851		senators and their congressman. We
852		also create the Freedom Schools,
853	01:34:30	which are to this day carried out by
854		the Children's Defense Fund.
855		INTERVIEWER: Why is there this
856		dichotomy between Martin Luther King,
857		the head of SCLC, and SCLC? Why is
858		he behaving in one way and the
859		organization is behaving in another
860		way?
861		MR. GUYOT: Well, I'll tell you why.
862		I think what he appreciated was the
863	01:34:52	freedom and the creativity of what
864		was going on in Mississippi. Here we
865		were sending a message to the country
866		that if you allow us to vote in
867		Mississippi unimpeded, we will do it.
868		80,000 people backed that up. We
869		said about '64 Summer Project we
870		can't bring Mississippi to America,
871		but we can bring America to
872		Mississippi. We found out we could
873	01:35:20	not protect ourselves. We're going
874		to be picked off one by one. We were
875		organizing against the entire state

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
876		apparatus of Mississippi and the
877		country. The country was totally
878	01:35:32	indifferent to voting. We had to
879		nationalize this problem.
880		We then challenged the Democratic
881		Party in Atlantic City. We were
882		supported in all of these endeavors
883		by Martin Luther King. He supports
884		us in the congressional challenge.
885		Then I asked him to do something
886		harder than anything else he'd ever
887		done. I said, "Look, Martin. We
888	01:35:55	know that the Voting Rights Act is
889		going to pass. We need you to sign a
890		memorandum along with me, John Lewis,
891		and other people, saying that we
892		realized the Voting Rights Act is
893		going to pass, but the congressional
894		delegation of Mississippi still
895		should be unseated. He does it.
896		When he does that, they said first of
897		all you all forged his name. He
898	01:36:17	sticks with us. Then what happens,
899		Julian, is--and this is David Garrow
900		in his book. As you know, David

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
901		Garrow is the chronicle of Martin
902		Luther, makes the point that the
903	01:36:29	Freedom Democratic Party in this
904		memorandum had a larger impact on the
905		Voting Rights Act than did Selma.
906		David Garrow says it.
907		This all happened because of a guy
908		named Michael Thelwell. Michael
909		Thelwell gets a chance to attend the
910		leadership conference meetings. When
911		you read the first proposal for the
912		Voting Rights Act, it's as weak as
913	01:36:53	can be. You would need 20 complaints
914		and the president may authorize. We
915		needed a greater trigger mechanism.
916		Section 5 was that trigger mechanism,
917		but Section 5 wouldn't have been
918		created unless we brought the
919		congressional challenge. We got 149
920		congressmen to say yes, the
921		congressional delegation from
922		Mississippi, GBC.
923	01:37:17	At the same time, the United States
924		Supreme Court was hearing a case
925		called the United States versus

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
926		Mississippi filed in 1962 that argued
927		in 1965 that it would declare all of
928	01:37:29	the laws in Mississippi
929		unconstitutional. Imagine if you
930		will if the Department of Justice had
931		asked for emergency relief. That
932		would've meant new elections for
933		everything in Mississippi. They
934		didn't. Because of course Lyndon
935		didn't want to fight with us in '64
936		and then give us the gift of
937		political empowerment in '65.
938	01:37:51	What I'm saying, the Student
939		Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
940		leads to one of the most brilliant
941		encumbering people involving
942		empowerment process of attack on any
943		oppressed state. There was no state
944		more oppressed than Mississippi.
945		Lyndon Johnson said it best. There's
946		America; there's the South; and then
947		there's Mississippi.
948	01:38:18	INTERVIEWER: I've said and I have
949		people object to me saying that you
950		and I and others like us belong to

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
951		the last generation of African
952		Americans who have engaged in
953	01:38:31	sustained mobilization in the 20th
954		century. You and I are members of
955		the last generation that have done
956		that. Nothing has happened since we
957		were of college age. We haven't seen
958		any repetition of this. Why is that
959		so? Why are we unique?
960		MR. GUYOT: I'll tell you why. We're
961		not really unique. I appreciate the
962		laudatory way in which you handled
963	01:38:53	that.
964		INTERVIEWER: Thanks. I like to
965		praise us.
966		MR. GUYOT: I want to say very
967		clearly we are entitled to praise.
968		We are a group of people who changed
969		the world.
970		INTERVIEWER: Of course.
971		MR. GUYOT: It is very important that
972		we understand it, but when we look at
973	01:39:09	operation understanding, when we look
974		at cultural leadership, when we look
975		at the Children's Defense Fund, I

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
976		think the best training of what we
977		did is now being done by those three
978	01:39:18	groups and the young people's project
979		headed by Moses' children. They are
980		doing the kind of organizing we did.
981		What we must do is use the mantra of
982		pull the power right here. We got
983		the literature. We got the mantra.
984		We got the history. What we have an
985		opportunity to do and it is very
986		necessary for us to do it meld our
987		experience.
988	01:39:46	What distinguishes us from a lot of
989		other people; we saw total oppression
990		and we brought about change. Every
991		impediment to us we turned it around.
992		You can't register to vote? We're
993		going to register to vote. You won't
994		allow us to vote? We're going to
995		vote anyway.
996		You can't organize politically. We
997		were not going to allow you to. We
998	01:40:10	were going to put your name in the
999		newspaper. When we get, Julian,
1000		thousands of people who have

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1001		everything to risk and they are
1002		willing to risk their lives and their
1003	01:40:43	children's lives and everything they
1004		have, and you can't do it secretly,
1005		that's success. That's called real
1006		political mobilization.
1007		I think from January 23rd to 26th,
1008		the people who created this, the
1009		veterans of the civil rights movement
1010		in Mississippi were meeting.
1011		Yesterday I read in the Washington
1012		Post about civil rights activist
1013	01:40:49	going online. The Color Purple, the
1014		NAACP. My concern is how do we get
1015		those people to come down? As far as
1016		I'm concerned, the greatest
1017		organizers in America come out of
1018		Mississippi and SNCC. Who do you
1019		compare us to?
1020		INTERVIEWER: No one. There is no
1021		comparison.
1022		MR. GUYOT: None.
1023	01:41:13	INTERVIEWER: There's no mobilization
1024		of the sort we engaged in in the
1025		1960s today. I'm always asking why

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1026		is this so? Why is it such a failure
1027		of our community to mobilize in the
1028	01:41:26	way we did when we were young people
1029		and a little more vigorous than we
1030		are now?
1031		MR. GUYOT: Let me give you what is
1032		the most logical and most practical
1033		answer. We're now given the perfect
1034		solution, the perfect opportunity
1035		that brings us back to that period.
1036		If we allow the Republicans to have
1037		control of the house and the senate,
1038	01:41:51	except for the next two years--they
1039		don't control the senate--then we
1040		must forever write off that whole
1041		beautiful mantra that we created
1042		before then. It's very clear.
1043		I'm astounded that the political
1044		commentators look at a sense of
1045		equivalence between the Republican
1046		Party and the Democratic Party.
1047		There is none. The Republican Party
1048	01:42:19	is by definition obstructionist and
1049		wants to narrow the scope and
1050		function of government. The

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1051		Democratic Party wants to do just the
1052		converse.
1053	01:42:30	We now have a golden opportunity to
1054		fight for what we have because it's
1055		all on the table, everything you can
1056		imagine, given the Republican's need
1057		to destroy America as we know it. We
1058		can prevent them. A million of us
1059		who voted in 2008 didn't vote in the
1060		midterm elections. What we've got to
1061		do now is use all of our resources.
1062		For the next two years, I'm going to
1063	01:43:00	do nothing but push books, the mantra
1064		of SNCC, the example of SNCC as an
1065		organizing vehicle, and I'm going to
1066		call on everyone who participated in
1067		the Freedom Elections, in the Freedom
1068		Riots, in the Summer Project. You
1069		name them. It's time for action now.
1070		The reason I can do that with
1071		confidence is there's a difference
1072		between people who have made change
1073	01:43:26	and there's a difference to people
1074		who have written about change. We
1075		are those who made change. We now

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1076		simply have to bring in young people
1077		to help us do it again.
1078	01:43:39	INTERVIEWER: We seem to have trouble
1079		with attracting insufficient number
1080		of young people today. I know you
1081		mentioned the Moses children were
1082		doing wonderful work and the other
1083		groups were doing wonderful work, but
1084		there's no equivalent today of the
1085		actions we engaged in in the 1960s.
1086		No equivalent anywhere in the country
1087		that I can see.
1088	01:43:59	MR. GUYOT: Let me say to you my dear
1089		friend, if there was ever a time to
1090		get into motion to bring that about,
1091		it is now. We've got two years.
1092		INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. If we
1093		don't act now, it's all lost.
1094		MR. GUYOT: Not only will it be lost,
1095		but it will be irretrievable. It's
1096		not a question of waiting 10 years
1097		and there'll be another flip.
1098	01:44:20	INTERVIEWER: No. It won't happen.
1099		Well, let's not deal with these dim
1100		thoughts. I want you to give the

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1101		people who will see this some picture
1102		of how you occupied yourself say in
1103	01:44:33	the summer of 1964. What would a
1104		typical week be for you if there's
1105		such a thing as a typical week in
1106		Mississippi in 1964? How would you
1107		occupy yourself? What would you do
1108		all day?
1109		MR. GUYOT: I would stay in contact
1110		with people who were organizing. I
1111		would--
1112		INTERVIEWER: [Interposing] Where
1113	01:44:49	would you be located in the summer of
1114		'64?
1115		MR. GUYOT: I would be in
1116		Hattiesburg, Mississippi or in
1117		Jackson or in Greenwood.
1118		INTERVIEWER: The SNCC headquarters
1119		was in Greenwood for the summer.
1120		MR. GUYOT: That's right. I was one
1121		of the first to go into Greenwood.
1122		My job was to stay abreast of the
1123	01:45:07	political... Where did communities
1124		need help? What kind of support did
1125		they need? How could we assist them

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1126		in empowering people? Our position
1127		was SNCC people were capable. One or
1128	01:45:21	two SNCC people would go into a town,
1129		get it organized in two weeks, and
1130		find a place to stay, all on a salary
1131		of \$10 a week when it was available.
1132		We wanted to facilitate that as much
1133		as possible. We had to stay in tough
1134		with the political news. What was
1135		happening on the other side? How did
1136		we respond to it? What kind of
1137		pressure release is there? Then we'd
1138	01:45:45	call you and Mary King and others
1139		when we needed help. It meant
1140		setting up meetings, carrying out
1141		meetings, and improving the skills of
1142		the leadership that was there.
1143		Harry Bowie and I traveled the state
1144		of Mississippi. Bowie was a black
1145		Episcopalian, one of the most
1146		brilliant men I've ever met. He
1147		worked for the Delta Ministry. The
1148	01:46:07	Delta Ministry was organized because
1149		I invited all religious groups to
1150		come to Hattiesburg in '63. When

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1151		SNCC leaves Mississippi in '66,
1152		they're replaced by the Delta
1153	01:46:19	Ministry.
1154		The new ally for the Freedom
1155		Democratic Party is the Delta
1156		Ministry. They support the
1157		Children's Defense Fund. The
1158		Children's Defense Fund headed by
1159		Edelman hires 3,000 people in
1160		Mississippi. That instantly becomes
1161		a negative attraction to Senator
1162		Stennis, and he must be killed, so
1163	01:46:44	there's an attempt to destroy it.
1164		It is the ability of SNCC to continue
1165		to bring in forces to be used in its
1166		political methodology. We bring in
1167		the Lawyer's Committee for Civil
1168		Rights under the law. I'm proud of
1169		the fact that they were to the left
1170		and we got castigated for that. I
1171		remember when Dave Dennis, Bob Moses,
1172		and I met with Counselor Canoy
1173	01:47:20	[phonetic] and others. I said, "Do
1174		you all agree that we will make the
1175		decisions and you all do the

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1176		litigating?" They said yes, and they
1177		never deviated from that.
1178	01:47:36	I'm very proud that SNCC took the
1179		position that we were not going to
1180		let anyone tell us what to do. I
1181		remember after Kennedy was killed
1182		there was a request by Lyndon Johnson
1183		that there be a moratorium on
1184		demonstrations. Theodore White had
1185		written a book saying that SNCC was
1186		really communist, really dangerous
1187		people.
1188	01:48:01	We analyzed that we had a conference
1189		at Howard University. Bayard Rustin
1190		spoke there. Baldwin spoke there.
1191		The great socialist Norman Thomas
1192		spoke there. Norman Thomas said,
1193		"Look, we can't win by singing, but
1194		we can't win unless we sing." He
1195		said, "You must understand. Every
1196		program that we came up with, the
1197		Democrats litigated, turned into
1198	01:48:32	laws." The question was: would we be
1199		part of the nullification? We said
1200		no. We're going to have a Summer

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1201		Project.
1202		Summer Project was not universally
1203	01:8:49	accepted. Fannie Lou Hamer and I
1204		were two of the few people that
1205		supported it originally. Once Bob
1206		Moses comes back from McComb, when
1207		one of the witnesses was killed that
1208		evening, that witness to the Herbert
1209		Lee killing. He then throws his
1210		weight behind--
1211		INTERVIEWER: Louis Allen.
1212		MR. GUYOT: Louis Allen. He then
1213	01:49:05	throws his weight behind Summer
1214		Project, and it happens. I think the
1215		Summer Project was one of the most
1216		creative, indigenous, empowering,
1217		nationalizing activities. It
1218		couldn't have been pulled off by
1219		anyone but SNCC. SNCC was not
1220		answerable to anyone who could tell
1221		it anything. When we pulled off the
1222		Freedom Election, the Voter Education
1223	01:49:38	Project said we can no longer fund
1224		you all.
1225		INTERVIEWER: When you were doing

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1226		this activity with SNCC, how much
1227		were you paid?
1228	01:49:44	MR. GUYOT: \$10 a week.
1229		INTERVIEWER: This is before you were
1230		married?
1231		MR. GUYOT: That's right.
1232		INTERVIEWER: Did you get married
1233		while you worked for SNCC?
1234		MR. GUYOT: Yes.
1235		INTERVIEWER: Did your salary go up?
1236		MR. GUYOT: No.
1237		INTERVIEWER: Mine did.
1238	01:49:56	MR. GUYOT: I'm glad you did.
1239		INTERVIEWER: But I had children.
1240		You mentioned earlier on, and I'm
1241		amazed that you recall, the 714 Rose
1242		Street, which is the address of the
1243		Freedom House in Jackson. What would
1244		life be like with Freedom House?
1245		MR. GUYOT: Life would be like this.
1246		Bevel was there. Diane was there.
1247		Thomas Gaither was there. Paul
1248	01:50:17	Brooks was there. Dorie Ladner was
1249		there. Joyce Ladner was there.
1250		Moses was there. I was there. Lavon

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1251		Brown was there. What it served as
1252		is a reconciliation post for everyone
1253	01:50:29	arrested in the Freedom Riots.
1254		Because when you got arrested in the
1255		Freedom Riots, you were tried in
1256		Jackson. When you came to Jackson,
1257		you came to 714 Rose Street.
1258		Then we acquainted you with what was
1259		going on in the state and how you
1260		could be helpful when you went back
1261		to wherever you were. It was this
1262		cross-fertilization of activism that
1263	01:50:51	was uninhibited, that was indigenous,
1264		that was empowering, and that was
1265		answerable to no one. We were able
1266		to creatively involve all the major...
1267		The National Council of Churches gets
1268		committed once they come to
1269		Hattiesburg. They create the Delta
1270		Ministry, which lasts for 25 years.
1271		They also join us when we challenge
1272		the congressional delegation.
1273	01:51:19	Breeden, Fitzsimmons, these are
1274		people from the National Council of
1275		Churches. They come to us and they

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1276		talk to Michael Thelwell. I said,
1277		"What can we do about the
1278	01:51:30	congressional challenge?" They said,
1279		"What you can do is open doors.
1280		Where we don't have a civil rights
1281		movement, we have churches." James
1282		Farmer of CORE and I got to talk to
1283		Forwood [phonetic], who later becomes
1284		President Forwood because his bishop
1285		called him and said you got to talk
1286		to him.
1287		What we found is that the labor
1288	01:51:54	unions remember. At the Howard
1289		University meeting, the FLCL
1290		[phonetic] said to us, "We're going
1291		to give you a contribution of
1292		\$25,000, and we're going to send for
1293		Board of Directors to tell you what
1294		to do." You can imagine how long
1295		that lasted.
1296		Then if you look at when the Summer
1297		Project was agreed to, some people
1298	01:52:16	said to us, "William Sloane Coffin
1299		has to head this." It never
1300		happened, Julian. Then you remember

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1301		the great meeting in New York after
1302		the Democratic convention. You got
1303	01:52:32	Gloster Current; you got Roy Wilkins;
1304		you got Courtland Cox; you got James
1305		Farmer. They said, "Look,
1306		Mississippi is now becoming a
1307		national and international paradigm.
1308		We can't allow the people that are
1309		running it down there to run it, the
1310		underbrushing"
1311		INTERVIEWER: Ignorant people like
1312		Fannie Lou Hamer.
1313	01:52:52	MR. GUYOT: Like Fannie Lou Hamer,
1314		and the underbrush like--
1315		INTERVIEWER: [Interposing]
1316		Incredible.
1317		MR. GUYOT: Courtland said, "Don't
1318		you think you should talk to the
1319		people in Mississippi about this?"
1320		They said no. What we found was that
1321		we were creating something in
1322		Mississippi. When you beat the best,
1323	01:53:15	and when you can organize around the
1324		worst, then you create a political
1325		example of what can be.

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1326		Curtis Gaines, who is one of the top
1327		demographers of the vote ever year
1328	01:55:31	wrote a letter in 1965. He said,
1329		"I've toured the South and if this
1330		SNCC MFDP kind of operation is
1331		allowed to happen in the South, it
1332		will not be loyal to the National
1333		Democratic Party. This letter is
1334		written in its entire in Local People
1335		by John Dittmer. I got it, I gave it
1336		to Dittmer, and he put it in the
1337		book. He said what we must do is
1338	01:3:58	quickly pass the Voting Rights Act so
1339		we can then bring blacks into the
1340		Democratic Party. I just wanted to
1341		say that to say, "Look at how many
1342		other forces we were resonating with,
1343		and they put their own interpretation
1344		on it."
1345		The NEA and AFT both send
1346		representatives to the Summer Project
1347		to capture the Freedom curriculum.
1348	01:54:24	We meet in Hartford, Connecticut
1349		years later. There's someone there
1350		who stands up and says we had a

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1351		discussion about the curriculum for
1352		the Freedom Schools last week.
1353	01:54:37	There's this tremendous infusion of
1354		bringing the political process to the
1355		average citizen.
1356		INTERVIEWER: After '64, did you
1357		leave Mississippi? When did you move
1358		to D.C.?
1359		MR. GUYOT: I moved to D.C. in 1968.
1360		I was a delegate to the Democratic
1361		convention in '68. Harry Bowie and I
1362		organized. What happened was this.
1363	01:55:08	The loyalists thought that they would
1364		become part of the regular Democratic
1365		Party. Bidwell Adams, my dear
1366		friend, was chairing the state
1367		convention. He said, "Look, if you
1368		don't desegregate this delegation,
1369		you're wasting your bus fare to
1370		Chicago." We waited for that to
1371		happen. Aaron Henry and the
1372		loyalists, who were set up as an
1373	01:55:29	alternative to destroy MFDP, they
1374		were unsuccessful.
1375		Then I said to them, "Let's join

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1376		together." The loyalists hooked up
1377		with the MFDP. We got 50% of the
1378	01:55:40	delegation; they got 50%; and we were
1379		seated in '68. Harry Bowie and I met
1380		with Charles Evers and Harding
1381		Carter. They looked at the names.
1382		They said, "How did you all do it?"
1383		I said, "Well, look; you all had the
1384		money. You all had the prestige. We
1385		knew all of these people years before
1386		they knew you." We went up and
1387		selected, nominated, and we got Ms.
1388	01:56:08	Rutger [phonetic]. We got our
1389		people.
1390		INTERVIEWER: When you came up here,
1391		you began to focus on D.C. issues.
1392		Tell us a little bit about that.
1393		MR. GUYOT: I had a good time up
1394		here. I began to fight for the same-
1395		sex marriage. I began to fight for
1396		having the first presidential primary
1397		in Washington so we could point out
1398	01:56:35	to the country the fact that we don't
1399		have congressional or senatorial
1400		representation. We get the first

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1401		primary, but quite a few of the
1402		Democrats don't participate in it.
1403	01:56:45	Then I publicly lambast them for
1404		that.
1405		I fight to do away with term limits.
1406		I believe that we fought too much.
1407		Too many of us have died to allow the
1408		calendar to determine the political
1409		situation. We do away with term
1410		limits here. I find this a very
1411		creative city council. It is one
1412		that I can operate conveniently with.
1413	01:57:12	I become an ANC commissioner. I
1414		begin delving in economic
1415		development. I'm involved in
1416		everything that was developed in
1417		Columbia Heights. Every one of those
1418		37 proposals was brought to us. We
1419		were told to pick a developer to
1420		analyze and to grade them. We did
1421		that.
1422		I built some of the political
1423	01:57:32	infrastructure of the city, and I am
1424		very much of an activist. I
1425		supported Fenty for mayor. I

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1426		supported the write-in. I remember
1427		in 1968 and you remember I'm sure
1428	01:57:51	when we made a decision to move from
1429		the civil rights movement to carry
1430		the church with us into the political
1431		arena. We said we're not going to
1432		hate people, and we're going to
1433		choose the ballot instead. The bible
1434		and the ballot infusion.
1435		Then I see a campaign that to me was
1436		the real implementation of more hate
1437		than I've ever seen in my life.
1438	01:58:19	Fenty was not only defeated; he was
1439		turned into a hate caricature.
1440		Because of that, I joined him in the
1441		write-in. Of all the things I've
1442		done politically, I'm just as proud
1443		of that. One of the things I
1444		understand there very clearly, if
1445		black people ever make the mistake of
1446		separating our politics from our
1447		religion, we're damn not finished.
1448	01:58:45	INTERVIEWER: The same time you
1449		mentioned same-sex marriage, same-sex
1450		marriage is just an anathema in many

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1451		black homes and in the black church
1452		community. One of the biggest
1453	01:58:57	opponents is Walter Fauntroy, who's
1454		Dr. King's lieutenant here. How do
1455		you manage in your practice of
1456		Christianity to balance the support
1457		for something that many black
1458		Christians just think is terrible?
1459		MR. GUYOT: Well, I think one of the
1460		best movements in that position is my
1461		wife. My wife and I met when I went
1462		to California. She was raising money
1463	01:58:27	for SNCC. She comes to Mississippi.
1464		We leave there. We get married in
1465		Washington in '67. She supports me
1466		in everything I've done. She gets
1467		the job to help pay my way through
1468		Rutgers law school. She goes to jail
1469		with me in Mississippi. We live
1470		together in Mississippi. My wife is
1471		white. Whenever I've gone to the
1472		hospital, she's come with me. Quite
1473	01:59:53	a few times she saved my life.
1474		I said to myself, "Can I really
1475		accept all of this and deny it to two

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1476		other people of the same sex who are
1477		in love with one another?" I
1478	02:00:06	couldn't. I may shock and amaze you
1479		when I say this, but all of my
1480		politics has been based on my
1481		religious beliefs. I tell people. I
1482		say when you're told religiously to
1483		feed the hungry clothe the naked,
1484		those who are bound, it doesn't tell
1485		you to find out what the charges are.
1486		Whenever you attempt to do any of
1487		those three, you enter into the
1488	02:00:33	political arena. That's all right
1489		because there's no other way to do
1490		it.
1491		I teach political empowerment. The
1492		first question I ask of my class is
1493		let's talk about something that's not
1494		political. Once we've gotten through
1495		that, then we go on to the question.
1496		What are you doing to enhance your
1497		political mobility and motility in
1498	02:00:56	options?
1499		I was thinking as you were talking
1500		there about the years we've known

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1501		each other. I frankly have not
1502		thought about you as a religious
1503	02:01:05	person.
1504		MR. GUYOT: I understand.
1505		INTERVIEWER: Probably I don't know
1506		that side of you at all well.
1507		MR. GUYOT: That's understandable.
1508		I'm not offended by that at all. I'm
1509		very happy with my relationship. I
1510		remember when you would share your
1511		poems early in SNCC. We both love
1512		books and we both are very proud of
1513	02:01:26	what we've done.
1514		I learned that we must be able to
1515		ethically transcend ourselves and put
1516		ourselves in other fellows' shoes,
1517		and then make a judgment. I have no
1518		problems. I testified before the
1519		city council and I said, "I'm
1520		astounded by people wanting to vote
1521		on denying other people human
1522		rights." I said, "We didn't
1523	02:01:57	sacrifice lives for that." The vote
1524		should be used to build, to
1525		strengthen. It should be used

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1526		affirmatively. Quite a few people
1527		agreed with me on that.
1528	02:02:11	I think the beauty of politics, even
1529		though it has a bad name right now,
1530		will be revived. In order to save
1531		this country, we're going to have to
1532		revive it. I look at it as a good
1533		joining. As long as you have a
1534		country in which 6 out of 10 people
1535		don't know the difference between the
1536		various layers of government, how can
1537		you really create public opinion
1538	02:02:43	about affirmative and moving?
1539		Jefferson said it very clear. He
1540		said in order to have a Republican
1541		style of government, you've got to
1542		have an informed election. My dear
1543		friend, we have a most tragically and
1544		misinformed electorate right now.
1545		MALE VOICE: Hold on from here
1546		because we're at the one-hour mark.
1547		I have to put in a new tape. Do you
1548	02:03:08	want to get up?
1549		INTERVIEWER: No. I want to stretch.
1550		[END AFC2010039_CRHP0005_MV1.WMV]

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1551		[START AFC2010039_CRHP0005_MV2.WMV]
1552		INTERVIEWER: Ready to go?
1553	01:00:04	MALE VOICE: Rolling.
1554		INTERVIEWER: Larry, I want to go
1555		through a long list of names and ask
1556		you if you could very quickly tell
1557		the people who will see this who
1558		these people were.
1559		MR. GUYOT: Very good.'
1560		INTERVIEWER: Because we went over
1561		them very quickly earlier. John
1562		Salter.
1563	01:0:18	MR. GUYOT: John Salter was a teacher
1564		at Tougaloo College who was very
1565		political. He was involved in
1566		demonstrations in Jackson that were
1567		NAACP led. He worked very closely
1568		with Edgar Evers and he worked very
1569		closely with Ed King.
1570		INTERVIEWER: Medgar Evers.
1571		MR. GUYOT: Medgar Evers was the
1572		executive director of the NAACP. He
1573	01:00:37	was a person who went disguised to
1574		get information about the Emmett Till
1575		case. He was the political leader of

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1576		the NAACP in Mississippi. He was
1577		very involved in a lot of the
1578	01:00:52	political activity and civil rights
1579		involvement in the state.
1580		INTERVIEWER: Tom Gaither.
1581		MR. GUYOT: Tom Gaither was a CORE
1582		member early in Mississippi, and
1583		continues to be involved in the civil
1584		rights movement to this day.
1585		INTERVIEWER: You mentioned when you
1586		were talking about the Freedom House
1587		earlier that it was a place of
1588	01:01:11	reconciliation. What did you mean by
1589		that?
1590		MR. GUYOT: What I meant was that it
1591		was a place for people who regardless
1592		of where you stood in the movement,
1593		you were welcome there. Breeden
1594		comes into the meeting. As you know,
1595		Breeden was a leftist.
1596		INTERVIEWER: Carl Breeden.
1597		MR. GUYOT: Carl Breeden. He buys
1598	01:01:32	food. At that particular time, we
1599		didn't have any money. It was his
1600		kind of place. That's why I termed

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1601		it that way.
1602		INTERVIEWER: John Doar. We
1603	01:01:44	mentioned him a bit. Tell us a
1604		little bit more about John Doar.
1605		MR. GUYOT: John Doar is a hero of
1606		the civil rights movement. He is
1607		best characterized as a man who was a
1608		relentless worker who didn't stick to
1609		the script, who was responsible for
1610		moving the Department of Justice into
1611		civil rights vigorously.
1612		INTERVIEWER: He's an assistant
1613	01:02:12	attorney general.
1614		MR. GUYOT: He was the assistant
1615		attorney general to Robert Kennedy,
1616		who was the U.S. Attorney General.
1617		John Doar was a Republican, very
1618		perceptive, very creative. I watched
1619		John Doar represent the government in
1620		the case of Schwerner, Chaney, and
1621		Goodman. He quoted [background
1622		noise]. He said people will little
1623	01:02:42	note here what we say, but they will
1624		long note what we do. Of course,
1625		those people were convicted.'

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1626		John Doar, and I'm going to quote
1627		him, in 1967 was at a conference at
1628	01:02:59	Ole Miss and he was talking about the
1629		press and the civil rights movement.
1630		He said the Voting Rights Act was
1631		passed in two cities, McComb, and the
1632		streets of Greenwood. What we were
1633		able to do was convince John Doar and
1634		others that illiterates had the right
1635		to vote. We convinced them. We got
1636		that written into the Voting Rights
1637		Act.
1638	01:03:22	Katzenbach, who was then testifying
1639		before judiciary committee said, "I'm
1640		convinced of the constitutionality of
1641		all of this except the right of
1642		illiterates to vote. We got the
1643		congress to go along with us. No
1644		other group fought for the right of
1645		illiterates to vote except SNCC.
1646		INTERVIEWER: Gerald Ford.
1647		MR. GUYOT: Gerald Ford was a
1648	01:03:45	congressman from Michigan, and then
1649		later President of the United States.
1650		When I talked to him, he was a member

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1651		of the congress. He agreed to talk
1652		with us. He told us because his
1653	01:03:56	bishop had asked him to. When we
1654		talked to him, we talked about the
1655		congressional challenge, what was the
1656		basis of it, and he told us that he
1657		was going to do what the law
1658		requires.
1659		INTERVIEWER: The Wednesday Group.
1660		You mentioned a little bit about
1661		them. Tell us a little bit about
1662		what the Wednesday Group was.
1663	01:04:11	MR. GUYOT: Of course. The Wednesday
1664		Group was organized by Dorothy
1665		Height. The Wednesday Group were
1666		people brought in from across the
1667		country, from various states at
1668		various times to come in and listen
1669		to the activists in Mississippi, find
1670		out what's going on, find out what
1671		they can do. Then they would leave
1672		and go back to their hometowns and
1673	01:04:31	talk to their senators, their
1674		congressman, their bankers, their
1675		civic clubs to put pressure on the

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1676		Department of Justice to protect the
1677		Voting Rights activists.
1678	01:04:43	INTERVIEWER: You also mentioned a
1679		couple of times the Ladner sisters.
1680		Flesh them out a little bit more.
1681		MR. GUYOT: Joyce and Dorie Ladner
1682		come out of Hattiesburg, Mississippi.
1683		They are related to Vernon Dahmer,
1684		who is a real civil rights hero.
1685		They're related to Medgar Evers.
1686		They're related to Victoria Gray, who
1687		is the National Committee woman of
1688	01:05:06	the Freedom Democratic Party, who was
1689		also very active in SCLC. Victoria
1690		Gray goes to SCLC and gives a great
1691		speech in Abernathy. Okay, Victor,
1692		what do you want? He said I want
1693		\$7,000 for the Freedom Democratic
1694		Party and the right check.
1695		Victoria Gray was another religious
1696		fanatic. We had one in Fannie Lou
1697		Hamer and had another in Victoria
1698	01:05:30	Gray, who becomes a political
1699		activist, who brings in her family.
1700		There were more people in the Freedom

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1701		Schools in Hattiesburg than anywhere
1702		else in the state. The case of
1703	01:05:46	Theron Lynd is tried by the Fifth
1704		Circuit Court of Appeals in
1705		Hattiesburg.
1706		INTERVIEWER: He's the registrar in
1707		Forest County.
1708		MR. GUYOT: He's the registrar in
1709		Forest County. He takes the position
1710		that he's not--Julian, he turned down
1711		postgraduate degree people because
1712		they said, "You just didn't complete
1713	01:06:04	the test right."
1714		There's a great book written about
1715		him. It's called "Count them One by
1716		One." It's written by one of the
1717		attorneys who operated in that state.
1718		Why is it a great book? Because it
1719		talks about the trying of Theron Lynd
1720		for contempt. It talks about the
1721		courage of the witnesses who
1722		participate in that. It establishes
1723	01:06:39	a basis, as does the office and I
1724		totally agree, for really passing the
1725		Voting Rights Act. It was very clear

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1726		they were recalcitrants of this
1727		registrar, which was also analogous
1728	01:06:44	to 82 other registrars like him
1729		because there's one in each county.
1730		Once the court ruled against him, he
1731		simply refused to register people.
1732		This is the federal court.
1733		John Doar when they're trying Theron
1734		Lynd introduces me to Judge Brown,
1735		Tuttle, and Bell. There's a great
1736		book about this called "Unsung
1737		Heroes" by Jack Bass. The Fifth
1738	01:07:16	Circuit Court of Appeals follows and
1739		joins the Department of Justice in
1740		making sure that whatever they can do
1741		to back up the movement in
1742		Mississippi, they do it. We knew if
1743		we lost in Meridian or Jackson, all
1744		we had to do was wait until we get to
1745		New Orleans because in New Orleans we
1746		win.
1747		INTERVIEWER: Griffin Bell voted--
1748	01:07:37	MALE VOICE: One moment. We have
1749		somebody at the door. They went
1750		away?

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1751		[Break in video]
1752		INTERVIEWER: --and now hopefully
1753	01:07:46	was back in those days.
1754		MR. GUYOT: The Fifth Circuit was
1755		made up of the most creative group of
1756		people who were committed to making
1757		the law useful for social and
1758		political change. Ironically, these
1759		were all Eisenhower appointees. Each
1760		one of them files challenge
1761		delegations in their states,
1762		Louisiana, Georgia, and Texas. They
1763	01:08:19	won those positions, which helped
1764		Eisenhower get the presidency.
1765		Eisenhower said to them, "What do you
1766		all want?" They wanted to get on the
1767		Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. They
1768		established a legend of expanding the
1769		constitutional rights of everyone
1770		that came before them. Their
1771		position on the City of Jackson was
1772		that Jackson had an apartheid policy
1773	01:08:49	that was incomparable of anywhere
1774		else in the United States. That was
1775		the official position of the 5th

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1776		Circuit.
1777		They validated the removal of cases
1778	01:09:00	filed by Arthur Canoy, and they were
1779		later overturned by the Supreme Court
1780		and narrowed. They validated all
1781		Section 5 cases. John Doar simply
1782		had to get to New Orleans, bring the
1783		case, and it was won. They
1784		overturned decision after decision by
1785		Judge Cox, who was an atrocious
1786		racist, who talked about black people
1787		registering to vote as a bunch of
1788	01:09:28	chimpanzees. Once we got to the
1789		Fifth Circuit, he was overturned.
1790		INTERVIEWER: One of them you
1791		mentioned, however, Griffin Bell,
1792		voted against me and kept me out of
1793		the Georgia legislature for almost
1794		six months.
1795		MR. GUYOT: Griffin Bell did some
1796		things worse than that. Griffin Bell
1797		said to Andy Young, "Don't testify
1798	01:09:46	against Bork [phonetic]." Of course,
1799		as you know, Andy Young to his credit
1800		testified against Bork.

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1801		I want to make it clear that of the
1802		judges on the Fifth Circuit, Bell was
1803	01:09:57	the least praiseworthy. But the
1804		Fifth Circuit was of the highest
1805		caliber of productivity for
1806		empowerment and for the
1807		revitalization of the 15th amendment.
1808		It as amazing. These people treated
1809		what we were doing as their work.
1810		The only reason the Fifth Circuit
1811		didn't send Theron Lynd to jail was
1812		because they were again concerned
1813	01:10:22	about the political impact. He was
1814		7'4" and he weighed 400 pounds. They
1815		didn't want him to die in jail. But
1816		they tried him for contempt and they
1817		got what they wanted out of him.
1818		Again, once it became clear that you
1819		were faced with Theron Lynd-type
1820		recalcitrance throughout the State of
1821		Mississippi, then you had to come up
1822		with a new mechanism. Allah; comes
1823	01:10:50	the Voting Rights Act, and it was
1824		written by the Department of Justice.
1825		INTERVIEWER: Let me mention another

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1826		name you mentioned that needs some
1827	01:10:58	explanation of who he is. Michael
1828		Thelwell.
1829		MR. GUYOT: Michael Thelwell is a
1830		brilliant man who comes out of NAG at
1831		the student--
1832		INTERVIEWER: NAG was a Nonviolent
1833		Action Group.
1834		MR. GUYOT: Out of Howard University.
1835		He becomes involved with SNCC. I ask
1836		him. We raised some money and I
1837		said, "Michael, here's the check. Go
1838	01:11:19	to Washington and set up an office
1839		for the NFDP. Well, what he does, he
1840		comes to Washington. He works with a
1841		couple of people. He is able to
1842		follow the legislation in the
1843		congress. He's able to deal with the
1844		Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
1845		and he's able to keep us informed on
1846		what he's doing. He writes a letter
1847		to Lyndon Johnson saying, "We're
1848	01:11:59	astounded. All of the work that the
1849		Freedom Democratic Party did to get
1850		you elected in Mississippi and none

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1851		of our people have been invited to
1852		the inaugural."
1853	01:11:59	Fannie Lou Hamer calls and she says,
1854		"Mike, you know the man who's the
1855		postman?" He said no. She said,
1856		"Well, he brings me this big envelope
1857		from the White House."
1858		Then Mr. Turnbow calls. He said,
1859		"Michael, I want to let you know I
1860		got an invitation to the White House
1861		and I want you to do something for
1862		me, Michael." Michael said, "What do
1863	01:12:20	you want me to do, Mr. Turnbow?" He
1864		said, "I want you to find out what
1865		ball the Governor of Mississippi is
1866		going to because I want to dance with
1867		his wife."
1868		Hartman Turnbow, as you know, is a
1869		man who was accused of destroying his
1870		house, setting his house on fire.
1871		His wife and his daughter are in this
1872		house. He comes out shooting, and he
1873	01:12:44	kills a white man. The State of
1874		Mississippi said we can't have a
1875		situation. We're charging someone

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1876		who's defending his wife and his
1877		daughter from a burning house as he
1878	01:12:56	is. What they decided, Julian, was
1879		that this man died of a heart attack.
1880		I know that you may find this hard to
1881		believe. John Doar and others asked
1882		me if I'd be willing to go to the
1883		sheriff or Leflore County, get him to
1884		sign arrested - - bond to take to the
1885		sheriff of Holmes County and have Mr.
1886		Turnbow released to me.
1887		In Holmes County, 80% of the black
1888	01:13:24	people own their land. What was so
1889		strange about this was the Department
1890		of Justice understood that the only
1891		way to handle this was to go along
1892		with the State of Mississippi in the
1893		position that there was no murder.
1894		It was a just a house burning. Of
1895		course, because the Department of
1896		Justice rigorously defends Mr.
1897		Turnbow, all charges are dropped on
1898	01:13:49	that. I did this myself.
1899		I'll tell you what. There is no
1900		other recorded event where two

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1901		sheriffs in the South combine to
1902		release by bond that they signed
1903	01:14:03	civil rights workers anywhere in the
1904		South. It never happened again.
1905		INTERVIEWER: One final name you
1906		mentioned a couple of times. Robert
1907		Moses.
1908		MR. GUYOT: Robert Moses is a young
1909		man who came to Mississippi, a
1910		mathematician and a philosopher who
1911		was able to get the most out of
1912		people regardless of what they
1913	01:14:22	thought of themselves. Robert Moses
1914		was a person who was totally
1915		committed to social change, who was
1916		able to work with anyone. He was
1917		able to be both an intellectual and a
1918		total humanist. He was a man who
1919		believed that there was political
1920		potential in everyone and who behaved
1921		that way, and who got a lot of people
1922		associated with him to behave that
1923	01:15:03	way. He was a totally courageous
1924		person, totally committed, and a
1925		thinker that has few people on his

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1926		level. He was able to take problems
1927		and turn them into solutions. He was
1928	01:15:21	able to meld the difference between
1929		the rigidity of some of the SNCC
1930		folks with the free expression of
1931		total liberty to others.
1932		He firmly believed that he was ahead
1933		of the game on one other tenant. He
1934		firmly believed that those who do the
1935		work should make the decisions. He
1936		firmly believed that whenever anyone
1937		was arrested in SNCC, you either go
1938	01:15:47	to get them out of jail or you go to
1939		jail with them.
1940		He was a man who was beaten in
1941		McComb, and he files charges against
1942		the person who beat him. The sheriff
1943		heard and he held a trial. We know
1944		how the trial went Julian. Then they
1945		guide him out of town. It's just
1946		unheard of. You mean expect to be
1947		treated legally by a legal system
1948	01:16:13	that is designed not to treat people
1949		like you? He goes before a judge in
1950		McComb and the judge brags about how

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1951		good we treat our donkeys. Moses
1952		writes, "Racists are never more
1953	01:16:27	exposed than when they brag."
1954		He was a man who was able to lay out
1955		the framework of what's was going to
1956		happen in Mississippi. We couldn't
1957		do anything in Mississippi without
1958		the approval of the people of
1959		Mississippi, and we got it. We got
1960		it because we made it clear to them
1961		that we were never going to say to
1962		them, "Look, you need to go register
1963	01:16:56	to vote. Here's where the courthouse
1964		is. Go on down there." We said to
1965		them, "We're going and want you to
1966		come with us."
1967		We never said to them, "We're going
1968		to protect you." We never said,
1969		"Your name's going to be in the
1970		newspaper." We never said to them,
1971		"You'll become an enemy of the state
1972		once you register to vote." The
1973	01:17:18	complexity and the beauty of how
1974		Mississippi was organized was we got
1975		thousands of people to make that

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
1976		commitment.
1977		I think it pivoted on two things.
1978	01:17:30	One, our style of operation. Two,
1979		the church. Three, the need for
1980		people to create a better way of life
1981		for their children. We didn't have
1982		to tell people in Mississippi
1983		everything is political because they
1984		understood that the Board of
1985		Supervisors determined whether or not
1986		there was a hospital, whether or not
1987		there were jobs, who was going to get
1988	01:17:52	paid. You could look at who was
1989		registered to vote on the street by
1990		the houses that were paid. You
1991		wanted tax exemptions.
1992		There was nothing that was
1993		nonpolitical in Mississippi, so we
1994		arrived at the early conclusion that
1995		the political avenue was a solution
1996		to a lot of our problems. In the
1997		'60s, there was no Republican Party
1998	01:18:23	in the South. Nowhere to be found.
1999		It wasn't until 1964 that the
2000		Democratic Party in Mississippi

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
2001		creates the unpledged electoral
2002		system, which allows us to become the
2003	01:18:38	presidential electives for Lyndon
2004		Johnson. But it also allows the
2005		infusion of the Republican Party.
2006		In 1964, the Republican Party in San
2007		Francisco kicks out black delegates.
2008		Kicks them out. The Democratic Party
2009		is supporting the passage of the '64
2010		public accommodations act and of
2011		course later on the '65 voting rights
2012		act. In 1960 you have the Democratic
2013	01:19:06	Party being approached to intervene
2014		in Martin Luther King's arrest.
2015		Louis Martin and others get the
2016		president to call Dr. King's wife,
2017		Coretta Scott King.
2018		The first black baseball player,
2019		Jackie Robinson, goes to Nixon and
2020		says, "Look, you can do this. You
2021		should do this." He leaves crying
2022		because Nixon refuses to do it. We
2023	01:19:38	both know that that telephone call
2024		and the blue leaflet that was passed
2025		out to every black church in America

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
2026		within six days is what made
2027		President Kennedy President Kennedy.
2028	01:19:52	Without the black vote--
2029		INTERVIEWER: [Interposing] I wish I
2030		could lay my hands on a copy of that
2031		leaflet. They call it the blue bomb.
2032		MR. GUYOT: I'm sure we can get it
2033		for you. The guy who can get it for
2034		you is a guy named Harp Davis
2035		[phonetic] at the University of
2036		Southern Florida. I have a copy of
2037		the trial transcript at Winona. I
2038	01:20:11	have a copy of every deposition taken
2039		by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic
2040		Party, and I got it all from him.
2041		INTERVIEWER: When all is said and
2042		done, what would you like the world
2043		to know about you and the work you
2044		did in the freedom movement.
2045		MR. GUYOT: What I'd like the world
2046		to know is that I was man who carried
2047		out his religious beliefs by his
2048	01:20:35	political activity. I never stepped
2049		away from a fight. I never asked any
2050		quarter. I never gave any. I

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
2051		recognize the value of reading and of
2052		books. I want to be remembered as
2053	01:20:51	someone who is committed to
2054		perpetuation of the mantra of the
2055		Student Nonviolent Coordinating
2056		Committee.
2057		The only thing that the Student
2058		Nonviolent Coordinating Committee can
2059		be compared with is the Anti-Saloon
2060		League. The Anti-Saloon League was
2061		very effective, though short lived.
2062		The Student Nonviolent Coordinating
2063	01:21:11	Committee changed the very concept of
2064		democracy, changed the concept of
2065		citizenship, and opened to everyone
2066		the vehicle of empowerment.
2067		Empowerment is something that's
2068		contagious. Once an individual makes
2069		something happen that they made
2070		happen, they're a different person.
2071		They don't wait for the next day.
2072		They say, "What do I need to do
2073	01:21:39	today?" Those are the kinds of
2074		people we need to have a good
2075		America.

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
2076		INTERVIEWER: Is there something we
2077		should've asked you that I didn't
2078	01:21:47	ask?
2079		MR. GUYOT: I can't think of
2080		anything, except that we have an
2081		obligation to transfer our skills and
2082		our knowledge to other people.
2083		You're doing that and I'm doing that.
2084		INTERVIEWER: Are we doing it as much
2085		as we should.
2086		MR. GUYOT: No, but let us hope that
2087		we will understand the gravity of our
2088	01:22:17	situation, and in the next two years
2089		we will spread by geometric
2090		progression those who are actively
2091		organizing. We don't need people to
2092		support us and agree with us and not
2093		register their families to vote, not
2094		register their churches to vote, not
2095		register their clubs to vote, and not
2096		really make organizing a social
2097		necessity.
2098	01:22:43	We should declare those who are not
2099		organized and following empowerment
2100		and from the political change in the

Civil Rights History Project

Line#	Timecode	Quote
2101		next two years as social pariahs.
2102		They no longer function on our
2103	01:22:56	behalf. Isn't it amazing how we as a
2104		race have moved from the concept of
2105		"us" to "me"? We're the last group
2106		that can afford that. Now we're
2107		faced with an opposition that is so
2108		menacing to everything we value, that
2109		now we must fight or everything we've
2110		fought for will be beyond retrieving.
2111		INTERVIEWER: On that happy note,
2112		let's thank you for doing this. We
2113	01:23:34	greatly appreciate it.
2114		MR. GUYOT: I really appreciate it.
2115		Thank you very much.
2116		INTERVIEWER: It's our pleasure.
2117		MALE VOICE: Thank you both.
2118		[END AFC2010039_CRHP0005_MV2.WMV]