

SNCC 50th Anniversary Conference  
Shaw University, Raleigh NC, April 2010  
Transcript Video Recording #17  
(Raw, unedited, no annotation)

Speaker 1 (00:00:18):

Thank you. Um, I'd like to ask Reverend David Forbes, who was here at Forbes university was in the sit-ins from Shaw 50 years ago. And who's one of our, is the main host for this conference. Reverend Forbes will pray for us,

Speaker 2 (00:00:45):

Let us be together with God, Lord. I've been known for verbose prayers, But all of us here gathered are mindful that 50 years have passed And it's been through many dangers, talls and snares that we have already come. And it was your grace that brought us safe thus far, your grace will lead us on. We honor today. The bold woman of God Who summons student from campuses across the south and even the north to this location To walk together, not be weary. And to discover that there could indeed be a great camp meeting in the promised land. We come Sobered By how it was possible for students 17 and 18 and 19 and 20 and 21 young folks to put their butts on the line to risk danger, to challenge the structures and to speak truth to power one, Lord God, we admit we had no clue where those efforts would go. And now our souls look back and wonder how we got over.

Speaker 2 (00:02:34):

We are now old enough, headed enough to be able to connect the dots and to understand had there been no SCC that would not have been a voting rights act. Had there been no SCC that would not have been a civil rights act had not been no SCC that be no March on Washington had there been in no SNCC, there would not be the effects of having our people to vote and to impact the body politic that would had there been no SCC. There would not be African American leaders in political and corporate structures. Had there been no SCC, there would not be a bar rock Husain Obama in Washington, DC. We thank you that we are sober to understand that you used us to usher in change and the difference be glorified. Oh God. As we give you, thanks, we did not do it, but you did it through us. And for that we bow heads humbly and say, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

Speaker 1 (00:03:58):

Thank you day of it. Um, for those of you who didn't do it this morning, could I ask everybody who was here 50 years ago at the founding meeting to stand up again? Thank you. Uh, now I'd like to introduce, um, the, uh, president Yancy of Shaw university to bring us greetings and to we thank you again for hosting us

Speaker 3 (00:04:57):

On behalf of the board trustees, faculty, staff, students, and alumni. I would like to welcome you to Shaw university, the oldest, H B C U in the south and the home of Ella baker. We are proud to have you. I think we should give, give special, thanks to Dr. Forbes, who is a member of the Shaw verse board of trustees and Dr. Saul. Who's a member of this administration and the local arrangements for committee, for planning for you and not knowing how many of you would show up. Let's give them a hand. We also, we also need to take thank hospitality, the food service, who somehow has been like my grandmother. She could make the pie stretch to feed everybody who came on Sunday and they've stressed this food to make sure you had enough today. We welcome all of you because all of you played a role in the movement. We welcome. Some people would call the giants of the movement, Mr. Har Bellfonte and others. And I'd like to welcome my mentor, who I thought was a crazy man. When I got to Johnson, C Smith in August of 1960, and he told me I had to protest Charles Jones. I know you are here somewhere.

Speaker 3 (00:06:28):

So there was some of us, there was some of us who couldn't come to the April meeting because we hadn't left home yet and didn't know out it. But when we got to school that fall, we took to the streets and joined the rest of you. And I'd like to thank you for your leadership and your serving as role models for us, because we sure followed you. I'd like to also welcome my special Atlanta mafia. I see a lot of them here, including I saw him earlier. There he is. And I want to congratulate Shaw Snick on his 50th anniversary celebration, but we don't want you to wait a hundred years before you come back. You know, Shaw welcomes you. You don't have to for the celebration, you can just come by. Anytime the latch is always out. We know you have a well planned program. We know you'd have a lot of things you'll ask for, ask us for anything reasonable, those things that are not reasonable, go out and protest and see if we can't get them.

Speaker 1 (00:07:43):

Uh, I now, uh, proud as in, uh, living in Atlanta, I want to introduce to you Michael Julian bond, the son of Julian bond, and he is here to make a presentation that really gonna be thrilling. Michael Julian bond.

Speaker 4 (00:08:10):

Thank you con I wanna say good afternoon, everyone. Good afternoon, Dr. Yancy, uh, good afternoon, uh, members of the Dias, miss develop Ponte, the freedom fighters of SNCC. I bring you greetings from the city of Atlanta, from our mayor, the honorable Reed and our council president, uh, Caesar Mitchell and the, I am returning to office after an absence. I was just elected again this fall. Uh, but the first action that I took was to introduce a resolution, uh, that was signed by all, all of the members of the city council and passed unanimously on February. The first of this year, uh, to rename Raymond street, uh, the former home of the headquarters of SNCC in Atlanta to SNCC way in Atlanta.

Speaker 5 (00:09:41):

It,

Speaker 4 (00:10:12):

We wanted to recognize your 50th anniversary. And if you happen to be in Atlanta on may the 10th at 11:00 AM, uh, we will have the official unveiling of the street sign on that date. So we wanted to say congratulations to you. Thank you for all that you've done. God bless you and keep on fighting.

Speaker 5 (00:10:36):

Oh,

Speaker 4 (00:10:38):

And all, all of you who can, I'd like to ask you after this luncheon is over to come down and put your signature on this sign. Cause we're gonna put it on display in Atlanta city hall, uh, during, during, during the dead time of the dedication. So as many as you can please come down and I've got only one sharp me. Uh, so we wanna make sure everybody gets their signature on the sign. Thank you.

Speaker 1 (00:11:08):

Uh, now I'd like to introduce, uh, the Michael Julian Bond's father, Julian bond.

Speaker 6 (00:11:23):

Thank you, Connie. My task is a simple one and that is to give some recognition to the former chairs of the student nonviolent coordinating committee. All of them could not be here, but as I call their names, uh, of the absent members, uh, please give them a big, big round of applause. Marion Barry, Our last chair, who could not be here, Phil Hutchins, An earlier chair, who will be with us tomorrow, the honorable John Robert Lewis And the chair who was with us for many, many years ago, and who is still with us to do day, despite his years, the honorable Charles

Frederick MACDU And representing who has gone on to meet his reward, his sister Naji Malik, give her a big round of applause And representing Jamil, a Amin who cannot be with us, his brother, ed brown. Thank you all.

Speaker 1 (00:13:48):

Okay, well, it's really to try to say that this next person needs no introduction. So instead I will say

Speaker 7 (00:13:58):

Day Come

Speaker 1 (00:14:54):

Well, I should have known better. Okay. <laugh> forgot where I was. Well, who would've believed, I'll start that way and said that some 60 years ago, after my swooning over this man, every time he sang the boat song and many others, I would be introducing him to you.

Speaker 7 (00:15:16):

Harry

Speaker 1 (00:15:17):

Harry bee's father and mother were born in the Caribbean and he spent some time in Jamaica as a youth. He was aware of racism at an early age and of the Bri oppression in the islands. His political beliefs were greatly inspired by a man that he still views as a mentor singer and activist. Paul Robison,

Speaker 1 (00:15:52):

A man who is, was in his own time, a controversial figure for political stands in the United States and Africa. We are celebrating Harry's being here for his inestimable help to SNCC from its inception and to the civil rights movement. In general, I must have looked in 20, over 20 books about the movement in general or by SNCC people. And in all of them, he has described with love and reverence, and he has referenced over 50 times in Taylor branches book in clay Carson's book books by Charles Payne, John Dier, John Lewis, Mary King, Bob Moses, and on and on Harry worked with SCLC in the fifties. And Keta Scott King speaks of meeting him in 1956 and quote, he was to become one of our truest friends. Whenever we got into trouble or tragedy struck. Harry has always come to our aid, his generous heart wide open,

Speaker 1 (00:17:10):

Um, in, at a SNCC meeting in Baltimore in 1961, a report was given on a meeting earlier that year with Harry who supported a broad expansion of the student movement and a possible priority of voter registration by the young SCC staff. After that, he, he was sending plane tickets, bail money all over the place to get Chuck McDo out of jail and McComb <laugh> to, uh, and cleave sellers told me a lot long ago that Harry got him that some SNCC people were protesting at the, um, embassy of the, of the, uh, South Africa. And they picked him and took him to Rikers island and Harry and SI Portier were there and had already bailed them out of Rikers island in, um, in New York. Um, but he also enabled SNCC work workers to visit Africa in the sixties. Uh, he flew to all over the country to raise money for SNCC, but it was not only financial support. Harry flew to the Mississippi Delta several times, bringing funds and clothing applies. And during freedom, summer 1964, he flew down with \$60,000 in cash and sang the banana, the banana boat song for, to entertain a crowd in Greenwood, Mississippi, and Andy young. Thanks Harry, in his book for introducing him to Melina McCury do you know that? Yeah. Okay. And then I bet here's something you all don't know, Harry and Bob Zelnor wear the same size shoe

Speaker 8 (00:19:03):

<laugh>

Speaker 1 (00:19:05):

And you can check Bob. He probably has on a pair of Harry be shoes, big shoes to fill. Okay. Now Harry has influenced presidents and foundations and movements all over the world and was there for the marches and demonstrations everywhere. He was vocal in his criticism of George W. Bush and one it's called and of his administration. And what's called Bush a terrorist <laugh>.

Speaker 1 (00:19:43):

But Harry continues to labor today to get young people involved in the struggle he found, he founded the gathering for justice in 2005, some of whom are representatives here. He was galvanized after seeing a kindergartner in Florida who had been arrested and shackled by police for acting out in class over 6,000 youth. Some of whom will be here at the conference, but thousands of youth across the country, and many elders engaged in social action over the years have come together and declared their commitment to this present justice issue. Now. So I am honored and thrilled to introduce to you a civil rights warrior. But if I may add a personal note, the sexiest civil rights warrior

Speaker 9 (00:21:03):

Is that,

Speaker 10 (00:21:20):

Thank you, Chuck. I've been doing this for 60 years.

Speaker 9 (00:21:38):

<laugh>

Speaker 11 (00:21:41):

Now You

Speaker 10 (00:21:48):

I've been through a lot for SNCC, but nothing topped my having to stand here yesterday and listened to Chuck my do saying I'm climbing Jacobs ladder

Speaker 9 (00:22:01):

<laugh>.

Speaker 10 (00:22:07):

And now after 10 decades of performing for audiences all over the world, he's now decided to tell me how to use microphone. <laugh> I forever humbled by each other. There are many delights And having come to this summit, Most of them are human delights looking into the faces of so many people whom I have known so well and for so long, and to be able to see many of them standing so strong, But also it's all the faces I've never seen before, especially those that we would call the youth. It is good to see that stick into yours. It's good to know that there is a family that is still curious about those of us who were there once doing the things that we did and them now turning to us wondering whether or not you'll be able to pass onto them. The wisdom that we have acquired to discuss the mistakes that we made in our time, and to be able to help them forge a path for our, There are some things that are A little to skew. There are some things that Trouble me In the time that I've been here. There has been no small demonstration of the fact that there's still great intellectual capacity.

Speaker 10 (00:24:10):

I've listened to many, a wise man and women stand up and speak And say eloquent things. Unfortunately, most of what they've had to say, Lingers and dwells in the stuff Al and we are having great re reflections on what used to be. I had hoped that this particular 50th anniversary

would be an event filled with so much fire in the ballet. So much passion about where we are and where we have to go. That I would have to every five minutes, run outside, to catch some fresh air, to keep up with the energy in the rules that I have been privileged to visit during the discourse so far, I'm saddened at the fact that most of what I've been hearing is mostly about what was and how well we did it. We all know what was, We all know how well we did it. The question is talking about what is and how badly we are doing it. Now, I had hoped That out of this gathering on the 50th anniversary, we would've left here with some Marching orders. We have left here with some grasp Of what it is that we have to do to turn this sucker around.

Speaker 10 (00:26:08):

I had thought that perhaps it was because we had somehow lost our sense of moral purpose. Maybe somehow that which drove us once Got lost along the way. And we were in a search for our moral center Cause politics without morality Is really tyranny. And one of the things that made our cause, so righteous was its moral center was its moral purpose was how we envisioned what was happening to us and what we had to do to change it. That was key to almost every leader's Bag tricks. It certainly was the most powerful tool in Dr. King's legacy it and certainly almost everything SCC did. You'd always find moral purpose at the center of what it was that we did and that moral purpose baffled the enemy. He did not know what to do in the midst of our onslaught because we all morally so strong. Well, we've lost a lot of that. And if we haven't lost it, it has become so buried in our daily menu that we hardly speak To the larger moral issues that face our time. I, and I think that one fact is what has done more than anything else to distance us.

Speaker 10 (00:27:50):

Those of us who came from that struggle in our relationship to the young people today, they do not understand where sits the moral purpose of our daily lives. They do not understand the value of systems we seem to capitulate to. They do not seem to understand what it is that we are talking about when we can talk about the things with great clarity that affect their lives and their daily experiences who speaks to that, Who daily gets up and speaks to that with passion and with clarity and the willingness to pay the price that we must pay in order to put this country on course In August of 2005, Uh, just come back from south South Africa and a meeting with Nelson Mandela and some African leaders talking about the future of Africa and its youth. When I arrived, I was in my hotel getting ready to change for the next event. When I saw on the television screen, a breaking news story And it caught my attention. Cause the image that flashed upon the screen was that of a five year old child, a five year old little girl down in Florida being arrested in her classroom by three white police officers who had thrown her across the desk. And I was handcuffing her. And on the face of this child was this

Speaker 10 (00:29:38):

Vision of enormous terror. Her sense of abandonment, her sense of loss, her sense of fear, all written in that one moment and these white police officers standing over her and no one there To hold her

Speaker 12 (00:29:56):

To

Speaker 10 (00:29:56):

Hug her, to try to soothe her pain and show her a better day. None of this existed. And I was caught With how imoral

Speaker 12 (00:30:10):

This

Speaker 10 (00:30:11):

Picture was. What had we come to? I said to myself, I thought I was involved. I thought I knew pretty much what was going, but I'd never seen a five year old child

Speaker 12 (00:30:25):

Being handcuffed

Speaker 10 (00:30:27):

And eventually shackled By white police officers in Florida. And when I looked around for some answers, I finally wound up talking to a young woman from California by the name of Constance rice. Connie rice is an attorney, A woman of enormous credentials. And she is in the criminal justice movement. She's a power to be reckoned with in California. And I called Connie and I told her of this visual moment of this experience. And I said, I fail to, to understand that the comprehend, what is going on here, is this a common experience or is this something new? She said, it has not yet reached an epidemic, but it is critical. And it's across the length and breadth of this nation, hundreds and hundreds of children below the age of 10 have been consistently incarcerated, have consistently handcuffed. And then she began to run through a litany of cases That supported that

Speaker 12 (00:31:36):

Fact.

Speaker 10 (00:31:37):

And I said to her, what are we doing about it? And she said, we're obviously not doing very much. And I said, well, then I think it's time for us to shake this thing up a bit. And for the first time in my life, I dare to issue a call. I've attended a lot of meetings. I've come to a lot of places when people have called for my service or my support, and I've always gone willingly, But this was the first time I ever called a meeting and I called it the gathering of the elders. And there was no one

Speaker 12 (00:32:17):

Who

Speaker 10 (00:32:18):

Appeared at that gathering in Atlanta, whom you would not know the list was vast. The popular profile Ministers, politicians, civil rights leaders, 226 all gathered in Atlanta in the hotel, the gathering of the elders to talk about the conditions of our children and what they were facing. And the cameras were rolling from the beginning to the end. And one speaker after the other got up and spoke with passion and clarity and uh, yielded one statistic after another Proving, there was no ignorance among them about what was going on. And as we went into the day and on to the early part of the next day, I began to slowly realize that, uh, not much was going to be yielded from this Gathering. I began to understand that what needed to be done was not going to be nurtured in that room That although they all had credentials and we all had reason to praise them and to honor them for what they had done in the past, they seemed to be completely oblivious as to what is going on with the present while they were so busy, running around, being important, running around, taking care of their own private little turf, making themselves popular, rushing to get had to command the press as they spoke to issues that were irrelevant

Speaker 10 (00:33:58):

To human suffering and human need. And as this day, dwindled by, I waited to hear from them and I heard nothing And not yielding to this reality. The thing I thought that I had to do next was to perhaps call the gathering of the young There perhaps would lay the key

Speaker 12 (00:34:26):

To resolve.

Speaker 10 (00:34:29):

And so I called Connie and I said, I want to talk to some of the young men and women in the bloods and the Crips I'm coming to California. I'd known some of them from before working with them on the issues of incarceration and injustice. And so we picked EPS, Alabama and almost 300 young men and women of color came to EPS, Alabama to sit among black farmers in a rural area. They hosted us. And I picked F Alabama because the cell phone doesn't work down there.

Speaker 12 (00:35:08):

<laugh>

Speaker 10 (00:35:09):

The closest bar is about 50 miles away. So I knew I had them cornered, But I didn't need to worry about that. Cause for three days, these young people spoke truth to power.

Speaker 10 (00:35:26):

They spoke truth to power in ways that were reminiscent of what early Snickers did, what early people did in the days of core and the youth divisions of the NAACP and S E C, many of whom were their age, sitting here now as elders. What a journey and when these young men and women spoke, the more they spoke, the more I understood how much in need they were of the history of SNCC. And those of us who had come from the past that could give them bits of wisdom and help guide them into the struggles that they were to face. And as we talked, I discovered that in the midst of all this by islands and stuff that they had experienced in their communities, they hardly knew one another. They didn't even know each other living in the same communities. And so I said, there's some deep grassroots work that has to be done here.

Speaker 10 (00:36:33):

First of all, we got to start with knowing who we are, who are you? And when they asked me what was the agenda? I said, I don't know. I really think that the agenda here with you is to find the agenda because there have been millions of agendas in my past life. And they've all been available to you. However reason they've bypass you, you've not been able to access them. You've not been able to hold onto them. So let's sit here together while you struggle. And you tell me what you think it is that you need in your time to do, to make the kind of difference that we had to struggle with in our day when we sought to forge our own true us, because the elders of our time failed us as well. Not all as all do not now, but something went to skew.

Speaker 10 (00:37:30):

And until we seized, the young people seized the high ground to begin to move along the struggle and the agenda and to rebel in the ways in which we did not much was going to happen. Uh, leaders in the past have gotten soft. They're having a lot of cocktail afternoons at the white house, sitting down, discussing the ins and outs of tricky legislation. Quoting philosophers and admiring one another in our, we is a, or our absence of it as we do now. And so these young people began to say, well, where do we start? I said, start with yourselves, know each other. And while you discuss this problem of owning each other, think about those whom you have set out to destroy all the Latinos in California who were daily murdered by black young men and all the black young men who were daily murdered by Latinos who don't even know each other who had never sung one another's song who never stood long enough to hear each other's pain.

Speaker 10 (00:38:47):

Let's start with visiting one another in our different communities. So these hundreds of young people from S Alabama then went on to Santa Cruz to meet with the Latino gangs. And there were the blacks sitting with the gladiators of the Browns up in Northern California. And after we had a long few days of chit chat and exchange of ideas and thoughts, we moved on to Onaga of the native American tribes and had us talk with the indigenous about their experiences with

violence and their experiences with injustice and the prison system. And that group, once they become rooted in some sense of purpose and one another, then moved on to meet with the young white poor people down in Appalachia. And they stayed for many days in the midst of young white men and women who were suffering, who were feeling the same anguish that black youth were feeling.

Speaker 10 (00:39:51):

Hispanic youth were feeling and native American youth were feeling. They found this common in one another. Then last but not least, we went on to the Asian Pacific community, went among the, the Asian gangs. Some of the most complicated cultures I've ever witnessed, but they all came together and they decided to call themselves the gathering. They never incorporated then never went out and got legal title. They just called themselves the gathering. What do you do? I belong to the gathering and what is the gathering doing? And then they began to, to recite chapter verse what they were doing in their communities. Cause what was agreed that no one could belong to this little movement we were in. I igniting, unless you were rooted in community action, unless you had some community based work you were doing. So everybody came to the table with a story.

Speaker 10 (00:40:52):

Everybody came to the table with a sense of purpose and then came my greatest dilemma. I cannot tell you how often I reached out to fellow Snickers who were just a little too busy fellow Snickers, who were just a little too busy to be able to come to pay attention and to give instruction and to help guide these young people who are desperately in need of our history and the knowledge of who we were and what they should be doing and how we could help them do it. And there are around rich black men and rich black women. And I went around everywhere to those who were of privilege in this country. And I saw them holy shallow in the use of their lives and the use of their platform and the use of their base, But to gather and prevailed, They held together, they scrubbed and they gleaned pennies from all over the place to continue to stay the course. I'm glad to say that some of them are here today and I'd like to acknowledge the chair of the gathering. The young woman from California will speak tomorrow. Her name is car Perez. Please call me, stand up.

Speaker 10 (00:42:30):

Now I'm not putting down my brothers and sisters. Not at all. <affirmative> what I am saying is what happened to us? What happened to us? I sat down day after day here, a panel left the panel, listening to these intellectual bits of trickery, talking about what's going on And how eloquent they were admirably we could listen to them. And yet I could find that one thing that was said that was instantly applicable to the pain and the anguish. That's crushing our planet today. I don't hear much about what's going on with incarceration and us moving to tear down the walls of oppression, around issues of the prison system.

Speaker 10 (00:43:24):

I don't hear much about the wisdom that we acquired through the years. And what's going on in Africa with the millions of women who suffer in the Congo, who are being raped and who are being taught, who are being used as father. I don't have much talk about the kids running around in the child, armies of the African continent coming out of the lips and the mouths of organizations that are black. And in this country saying they're taking care of business. Where is the dialogue? Where is the passion around those issues? Whereas the protest against those Afro Germans of which there hundreds of thousands who recently got burned down in Dresden while Neo fascists and skinheads put them in a building and torched them and danced in the streets while they watched men and women of color burned to death,

Speaker 10 (00:44:20):



Where is our voice? Why are we so soft? How can we be so complacent? How can we service ourselves with just enough rhetoric? The just of sound to make us think we are doing something. When in fact the enemy is having the greatest of harvest they've ever had, do you see them? Do you see how bold they are? Do you see how arrogant they are? Do you see how racist driven they are? Do you see what they're doing and how cleverly they're doing it while we sit here and worry about what the Democrats may or may not do? Where are we? Who are we talking to? And what are we talking about? We should not leave this meeting. We should not leave this gathering this 50th anniversary of SNCC that coming out here with some passionate idea of what we should going out there, going and doing, uh, about the, the predicament in which we find ourselves. Yes. I'm proud that Barack is president. I'm proud that we could have lived long enough to see America stumble into some place that hardly expected to go. But when I look at the agenda and I look at what is going on with governance, I find nothing that speaks to the issue of the poor. I find nothing that speaks to the issue of the disenfranchised.

Speaker 10 (00:46:03):

And I find a lot of people rushing for cover. Anytime you dare criticize Barack Obama. Well, I don't find any particular joy in running around criticizing black leaders. I had no choice when I spoke out on co Powell, I spoke about him cause he lied to the nation. He lied to the nation and led us into another imoral moment. Yeah. When he helped create the arena and gave validity to the idea that we could invade Iraq, I had to speak out. I couldn't wait for the committee to get together, to pass the proposal, to come to a conclusion as to whether it was right or wrong. I knew I was gonna take a hit, but I've been at back so often I can see the pitch coming.

Speaker 9 (00:47:04):

<laugh>

Speaker 10 (00:47:06):

Sometimes I swing and miss, but so often it's so sweet when I watch it go over the fence. This gathering here, this 50th anniversary should have been the best wake of call Americas had in a long time. It's Snick that made the goal. It's all the mighty men and women who have the guts and the courage and the power to face death and to face pain and to face all the negative things that we had to face in our time to make it happen. And we walked through it and we made it happen. And we were successful. The question is, where did we capitulate? Where did we turn in the road? That took us off course. Why can't our children find us? Why can't they hear us more clearly? What are we so busy doing that we can afford to abandon them and then have the arrogance and the nerve to accuse them for being lost. I'm gonna be here for the rest of the time. I'll hang in here to see how this thing winds up. It meant a lot to me that I could come to the 50th anniversary of SNCC. I don't think I'll see another 50.

Speaker 10 (00:48:41):

I would like to, but, uh, the creator has other plans. I feel it every day, getting up for me, it's a privilege and it's an opportunity to take a look at the calendar of events and say, what didn't I do yesterday that I can do today. And if I miss doing it today, how much time is left tomorrow? But can I get on with it? We are of the most powerful culture in the world, in the hip hop culture. I know it I'm a student of it

Speaker 10 (00:49:22):

In Africa, bombard and me, Mel, and all of them got together in the south Bronx and put the graffiti art together and put the break dance together and put the rap songs together. What a great moment for black America and for all of America, our youth had risen up in the midst of their own pain and degradation and spoke out with enormous force and with great clarity and magnificent poetry about the conditions they were facing <affirmative> and they became deeply self dependent and they were moving along the way until somebody heard the jingle. And once they found out that there was money in, then their Hills capitalism moved in and broke hav They

co-opted this culture. And they let us, our young men and women off to places where they began to drown themselves in gold chains And intellectual depravity. They began to sing things that dishonored us. They began to announce themselves and their families and their women and their history. And we all stood by and watched it. I cannot imagine in our day, any such thing, go on and then not being out righteous, rage expressed all over the place. No one would've did speak against black women. The way hip hoppers did in the recent past and got away with

Speaker 9 (00:50:59):

It.

Speaker 10 (00:51:04):

And what did we do? We didn't examine and carefully what was at stake. We condemned the saw rather than the environment that created the kind of lyrics where you listen to. We put our kids down, We let them feel like they or valueless because they dared embrace this kind of music The way parents did back in the days. When I first embraced jazz, what are you listening to? When I first embraced the blues? What are you listening to? The kind of Criticism that came when I put on my peg pants and my shiny shoes, I went to Theo ballroom to do the Lin hop, looking the young ladies up and down

Speaker 9 (00:51:54):

<laugh>

Speaker 10 (00:51:57):

We let a lot go by. We lost vision. And then I woke up one day and I found that this hip hop culture was the most powerful cultural force on the face of the

Speaker 9 (00:52:09):

Earth.

Speaker 10 (00:52:12):

I woke up And all over China. I found Chinese rappers in Japan. I found Japanese rappers and the faves of Brazil and in Venezuela And in Bolivia and in Jamaica and in Cuba and everywhere I went, hip hop was the top of the game. And a lot of young men and women were struggling to come together around a more solid core of how to use the power of this culture. And where were we? Those who could validate what they were doing and help bring guidance and light and insight and encourage them to make their art more political, to make their art more socially conscious and to speak in more glowing terms about who they were. We've missed a lot. And what defies me is the fact that I don't hear the central to any discourse. I've had the privilege to sit it since I've been here. I don't know what's to come. I'm going to be still around listening, but I would hope that somewhere in all of this, we become far more self critical. We become far more self analytic, and we begin to say, what have we missed? And more importantly, why did we miss it?

Speaker 10 (00:53:37):

What got in our way? Yes. I understand a lot of things. I was part of what had happen When black people in this country got the right to vote. The next big question after that right came was what do we vote for? And who do we vote for? And people could only vote for what they knew and what they trusted and who was that? They were the leaders that came out of the civil rights movement.

Speaker 10 (00:54:08):

So these mighty leaders that came out of the movement had to now move to the next level of battle. They had to take on a whole set of obligations for which most of them were not really prepared. They were courageous. And they stepped in to become legislators and to write law, to do battle with those who had, so co-opted this country. They had a fierce time of it, but they had

to go and going. They left the space and that space was not adequately filled. That those who could take up the challenge that they had left behind of our young men and women went off to take advantage of the new economic horizon. They went off to become economists and to take positions in capitalistic America. And they went in art with the promise that once they got into these positions of power, they would not forget home base. They would not forget from when they had come. They would not forget those whose shoulders. They stood on to become what they became. But that promise did not hold law. They forgot very quickly. And now in many ways, they become the very evil that we sent out before to destroy it.

Speaker 10 (00:55:31):

And we constantly run to them to pay homage. We become beggars without conscience. We slither along to our wealthy black brothers and sisters and say, I beg you for a thousand here. And for a thousand there, my mother didn't eat. My kids are not in school. I don't have no job. And they say, well, we'll take care of you later. We have to fix the banks. First. We have to fix the wall street and, uh, we have to follow what Barack Obama says. Cause he's got his eye on the Sparrow. Who's in Sparrow. I love the young man. I pray for him. I really do. I want him to make it, But there's only so much we can surrender In having that wish and having that prayer. We have to stand strong. We have to stand up and say no more. Not another black child should die from the gun of a racist police officer. Not another Hispanic kid should die for, from a gun in the hands of some distraught black youth from across town. No more prisoners should be built in this country, making the prison industrial complex. The most powerful, Not another Sunday should go by where the minister who stands in the pulpit does not speak strongly and profoundly to the rape of black people, to the rape of black women.

Speaker 10 (00:57:18):

And to understand the extent to which they themselves pimp off the poor, There's a lot of work to be done. So when I came here, I came with a sense of expectation. I came with a hope that I'd be hearing something about tomorrow. Something about retrieving something about coming together under some mighty banner of possibility And making something happen. I would hope That nobody here Is offended by anything that I've said, Call it tough, love, Call it history. I've been around a long time and I was weed by the best Dr. Dub boys was my tutor. Paul Rose was my mentor.

Speaker 10 (00:58:14):

Ele Roosevelt was my universal experience. She held me, she guided me. She instructed me. And then Dr. K one day called and said, I need to talk to you. You don't know who I am. And there, when we finally met this young man who was two years younger than I was presented himself, and I listened to him transfixed at the basement of the AIA church in Harlem, at the end of our discussion, I knew I'd ever be in his service. And I understood the arrows that we would face, but I admired him. And then through him, I got to know Ella baker and getting to know Ella baker. I got to know Fannie Lou Hamer and through Fannie Lou and Ella got to know Snick and all the young people. And I got to find out how to use money and how to use platform and how was my little personal zone of power. And I enjoyed every inch of the walk. It was a glorious place to be, and it is still a glorious place to be. I just think we gotta get off it, wake up, let's get it on. We have been lazy too long. We've missed the boat. Let's make another one. Let's make this thing work. Let's lead America to the place we know it has to go. If it is the last thing Dr. King ever said to in me, and this is no, this, this is no

Speaker 10 (00:59:44):

Trickier. This is no statement that is rooted in truth. He came from New Jersey was the last meeting we had at my home before he went down to Memphis. We were having a strategy session as we always did before every great moment. But we made a new thrust. We met with the Northern forces to make sure we understood the battle plan to make sure we had the resources to make sure that people were gonna get arrested would be covered financially so that

no child would link language too long in jail and keep black mothers upset. All those. They were taken care of in great detail by remarkable men and women who were thinkers. But on this particular day, Dr. King came in and he seemed deeply disturbed. And I said, what's the matter Martin? He said, you know, I just came from Newark where I've met with some of the young brothers And their commitment to violence overwhelms me And they, they and I have so much in common. I understand them. I just wish I, you, how to make them understand me a little better to let them understand the power of nonviolence. And I failed to do that.

Speaker 10 (01:00:59):

And I'm sorry for that. I said, you know, I've come I into a conclusion, have come to believe that we fought for so much and we are going to gain a lot, But I'm afraid that in our integration movement, we are integrating into a burning house. And I never understood the power Of a rather prophetic remark, That metaphor. We are integrating into a burning house. And as we sat in the room quietly, reflecting on that thought from our leader, The question was asked, then what would you have us do if that be the case? And he said, we are just going to have to become firemen. We're just gonna have to become firemen. And I understood him much later when I saw what George W. Bush and those years Don move from us,

Speaker 13 (01:01:56):

How coopted deeps, that evidence led us into and hardly extricate ourselves from the death of this degradation. Here we are, and we can become fire and we should become fire. So Dr. King said, the Reverend said

Speaker 10 (01:02:18):

Just the other day, the truth of the matter, from a moral perspective, the only forces in this country that can lead America from its base of darkness and moral thought are the black people in this country. And the poor, we are charged with that responsibility. And so far we have failed to carry out that mandate. We have to get off this soft play. We have to understand like a Polish worker. One said in the early years of the immigrants coming to this country, a Polish worker wrote this verse and he said, calculate carefully and ponder it well, and remember this, when you do that, my two hands are mine to sell. They made your machines and they could stop them too. And until we understand that we have the response ability to stop the machine. We have oppression and do it fully and completely. We will have surrendered to the enemy for the foreseeable future. We have got to stop them from being able to live. So, uh, uh, graciously off our struggle and our pain. They are comfortable with our suffering. We've got to make life very uncomfortable for them.

Speaker 14 (01:05:16):

<silence>.