

CORE Chapter 12

ANONYMOUS BLACK MALE

Interview

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male, 26, CORE staff

Negro

Q: I'm not going to put your name on the tape, and it will not be used in connection with anything you say... So first of all I want to know some other things about you, like how old are you? You don't have to hold that up.

A: 26.

Q: Where are you from?

A: Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Q: Are you living at home? I mean...

A: No, I'm now living in San Francisco, when I'm not here.

Q: What?

A: I'm living in San Francisco when I'm not here.

Q: Oh. Are you in school?

A: No, I'm not.

Q: Do you have a job?

A: Yeah, I work for CORE.

Q: Were you with CORE in San Francisco before you came down here?

A: Yes. I'm a CORE employee.

Q: What?

A: I'm a CORE employee.

Q: Oh... uh, how long have you been working for CORE?

A: About a year and a half.

Q: What..... why did you first start working with them?

A: Well, because I realized there was a problem, and it had to be solved, and it couldn't be solved by people sitting at home on their asses.

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Q: Was this when you were in San Francisco?

A: Right.

Q: Were you a college graduate or not?

A: I'm not a graduate, I plan to go back and finish someday, as soon as I get time.

Q: What will you major in if you do, or do you have any ideas?

A: I'm going to change my major... I don't know what it is.. ~~but~~ I don't like sociology any more, so..

Q: Did you apply to come to Bogalusa...?

A: Did I plan to come here?

Q: ~~Or~~ Did you apply to come to Louisiana?

A: No, I was just sent here.

Q: What was your reaction to that?

A: I didn't mind it.

Q: You didn't particularly want to come, though?

A: Well, I was.. well, I tell you, it's like this... I was glad when I got the opportunity to come here..

Q: Are you going to be here after the summer is over?

A: Quite possibly.

Q: What kind of, uh, things were you doing with CORE back in San Francisco?

A: Working on discriminatory hiring practices of the Restaurant Assoc.... East Bay Restaurant Association.... worked on that for quite some time, in fact, I worked on that for all the time I was there, up until the time I came down here.

Q: Uh, what are you doing down here?

A: Project Director and trouble-shooter for St. Tammany Parish and Washington Parish.

Q: What kind of things does this involve doing?

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A: Community organization... setting up direct action programs... It, you know.... running a project is, you know, getting the necessary information for filing lawsuits,... trying to keep the police in check, so they don't go around beating people without reason..... getting information for injunctions... making the people in the community know, know theirself.... that they are in a position to.. to do good things.

Q: ..... We were talking about what you do as project director... ummm, well how do you get this information, basically,, I mean, is it, you know....

A: How do you get it? Well.. well, when the incidents happen to people you make out... the affidavits... you.. you know, file these affidavits with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Justice Department...You keep a copy of them... After you get a certain number of them, then you turn them over to your lawyers, and your lawyers start working with them.

Q: Uh.... how would you define a community organization?

A: I don't know.

Q: Well, what kinds of things do you do that..

A: Well, community organization is...

Q: What kinds of things would you do that you'd call community organization?

A: Oh, organizing a committ.... organizing a community so that it can run itself without our presence.

Q: Well, how.. how do you go about that?

A: Making the people interested, making the people in town, you know, not making them, but making them, getting them interested enough to take an active part in the movement.

Q: Well, how would you say that community organization is going here in Bogalusa?

A: It's slow the way it is in every community, but it's better than most.

Q: What does your staff do? What do you have them do?

A: They sit around and eat watermelon!..... No, it's...

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it...I don't know.. they have certain jobs, they set up committees, and they work with the people in the community. The hold voter registration clinics, setting up Freedom Schools, helping welfare committees, recreation,.. committees.. things like that..

Q: And how valuable do you think that the people that just come down for one summer are? Are they very much help or does it take them a while, ~~to learn~~ so long to learn that it's not worth it, or...?

A: Well, it depends on the people... Sometimes you get some good people come down just for a summer.

Q: Would you say that was in general true, or...?

A: No, it's not very often that you get good people just for a summer.

Q: Well, is most of the CORE staff here just here for.. just the summer..?

A: We have.. well, there's only two staffmembers here; the rest of them are summer volunteers.

Q: ..... What else (?) is there to talk about!!!  
Well, do you... What do you think is the major problem with these people, who just come down for one summer?

A: They feel they can come down and solve the problems of the South in 3 months.

Q: Do they.... Do you think they're.... Do the same kind of people come down for one summer as who come down to stay.... or is there a difference in.....?

A: Well... there's a difference between people who come down to stay and people who come down just for one summer.

Q: Can you describe the difference?

A: ...No, it's something you can see, but, you know, you can't put your finger on it.

Q: Well, do you think the summer projects are valuable?

A: Yes, I think they're valuable. If nothing else, they make.. the Negro communities in the South a little more aware of what's going on around them... even if they

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don't accomplish very much community organization during that time. They start the people thinking along the right lines, anyway.

Q: Oh, is this.. sort of new orientation towards communi.... now, is this orientation towards community organization something that's new?

A: It's relatively new.. We've only been working on it for about two years down here in the South.

Q: Is it something they use at all outside of the South?

A: I think it's something that we're trying to encourage in the North... It's not always easy for people in the CORE chapter to go out and.... work (?) with community organization. Community organization isn't something that you can accomplish in a month or two. It takes constant work for, you know, God knows how long.

Q: Do you... can you make a.... Do you have something you want to say.....?

A: Hurry up.

Q: Can you make any comparisons between the situation in the south and the, say, San Francisco..... say, here in Bogalusa and in San Francisco.

A: Well, community organization is much easier in the South than it is in the North, for one reason, the community in the South is, you know, they're...their problems are out in the open where they can be seen by everybody... And in the North you have to uncover the problem first, and then make the people aware of it, and then try to organize it.

Q: What do you think about the San Francisco paper coverage of printers,--and the problems with in their home town? (2)

A: It's not the best.

Q: What do you think of their coverage of the problems in the South?

A: I really don't know. I haven't read a San Francisco paper in a long time.

Q: When did you get down here?

A: About three months ago.

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Q: About three months ago? What was going on at that time?

A: What do you mean?

Q: Here in Bogalusa, what was the situation then?

A: Pretty much as it is now, it hasn't changed much.

Q: Were they having marches and everything?

A: They were having marches then, yeah.

Q: And did you have as many.. as many workers under you as you do now?

A: No, I'm afraid I didn't.

Q: Well, did you get along better without... less, or..?

A: Sometimes I think so.

Q: What do you think the prospects are for settlement?

A: Well, if we keep applying the pressure, they can't stand it under this much longer, they're going to have to do something. And when the Governor flies down to talk to the Voters' League, that's a good sign of something.

Q: Do you think this will help throughout the parish or just here in Bogalusa?

A: Well, I think it should help throughout the parish and throughout the state, if we can come to a reasonable agreement with the people of Bogalusa.. We'lll have set a precedent in Louisiana, you know.

Q: Do you think that...

A: And since this is Klan headquarters...

Q: Yeah.... Do you think that the people here are... in general... I... well, in general, like those you see all along the streets, or do you think there's....?

A: I'm sure there's good people in this town, like there are in any other town, except the good people in this town are just afraid to speak up, because of the Klan intimidation...that they're constantly confronted with..

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Q: Are you a believer in non-violence?

A: To a degree.

Q: To a degree. Okay. Are you involved in... Were you back in San Francisco before involved in any other political activities?

A: Yeah.... FSM over in Berkeley, and things like that.

Q: (unintelligible comment) Are you registered with any political party?

A: No, not at the present time. I haven't been registered since the..... Kennedy-Nixon election... I wasn't about to vote in the last election.

Q: Uhhh..... Are you a member of any church?

A: I don't know, how long does a membership stand in a church?

Q: Well, it's.... you know, whether you...

A: Am I an active member?

Q: I don't care... whether you still believe in it?

A: Yeah, I still believe in church.

Q: This is just background information..... hmmmmmm.... well, unless there's something else you want to.... you know, comment on....

A: No, this is alright, I mean, you're doing quite well, I think...

Q: I don't think so! I'm feeling all thumbs, verbally..

A: You're just nervous.

Q: Yeah... Well, what..... I've asked <sup>people</sup>/this question before and sometimes I get some good answers because.. What do you think the aims of the civil rights movement are?

A: What do I think the aims of the civil rights movement are? I can't speak for the whole movement, but....

Q: <sup>(are your aims?)</sup> What ~~do you think~~ personally?



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A: .... I can speak for my self..... Equality,  
first, and then integration.

Q: Okay. Is there anything else you want to say about  
the movement? Do you want to criticize any of... maybe  
any of the tactics used by this organization or other  
organizations?

A: No, I ain't in any position to criticize anybody's  
tactics.

Q: Do you want to praise anybody's?

A: Nope.

Q: Well, unless you have some comment that you want  
to make, I guess that's it.

A: No comment.

Q: Thank you.