

Interview with **Dr. William G. Anderson**

November 7, 1985

Atlanta, Georgia

Interviewer: James A. DeVinney

Production Team: C

Camera Rolls: 546-549

Sound Rolls: 1520-1521

Interview gathered as part of *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954-1965)*. Produced by Blackside, Inc. Housed at the Washington University Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection.

Preferred Citation

Interview with Dr. William Anderson, conducted by Blackside, Inc. on November 7, 1985, for *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years (1954-1965)*. Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection.

Note: These transcripts contain material that did not appear in the final program. Only text appearing in *bold italics* was used in the final version of *Eyes on the Prize*.

00:00:02:00

[camera roll 546]

[sound roll 1520]

[slate]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: WE'RE GONNA HAVE FLAGS.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: WE'RE HOT. OK.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: JIM, IT'S ALL YOURS.

INTERVIEWER: OK JUST TO KIND OF GET THINGS STARTED HERE, WE'D LIKE TO ASK YOU WHEN YOU MIGHT HAVE FELT THAT YOU WERE PART OF SOMETHING A LITTLE BIT LARGER. A—A BROADER MOVEMENT, RATHER THAN JUST BEING AN INDIVIDUAL DEALING WITH—

Anderson: Well, I guess I first got the impression that we were caught up in what was happening nationwide when the SNCC representatives came into Albany. And they sort of infiltrated the community. And all of the organizations in the community, social, civic, religious organizations and sort of became a part of us. And recognizing that these were all

outsiders, and in a small rural town like Albany, Georgia, we just weren't accustomed to outsiders coming in, so that you began to get the impression that you were a part of something bigger with all of these outsiders infiltrating our small town community.

00:01:11:00

INTERVIEWER: ONE OF THOSE OUTSIDERS WAS A YOUNG MAN NAMED CHARLES SHERROD. WHAT DID CHARLIE LOOK LIKE IN THOSE DAYS?

Anderson: Well, Charlie looked like the typical college kid, who had been caught up with the excitement of the time. He was very dedicated, very well motivated and nothing would suit him better than to make a reputation for himself and his organization and Albany looked like the perfect place to do that.

00:02:14:00

INTERVIEWER: WAS THAT YOUR REACTION OR WAS THAT THE COMMUNITY'S REACTION?

Anderson: I believe collectively that was our reaction. He was received very well. He was a very dynamic individual—presented himself very well, spoke fluently, and I think the community at large kind of perceived him as being a person who was assuming a position in life that would somehow enough, somehow sooner or later make an indelible imprint not only on Albany, but on the nation. He seemed to be destined for that.

00:02:15:00

INTERVIEWER: TELL ME ABOUT THE FORMATION OF THE ALBANY MOVEMENT.

Anderson: The Albany Movement was sort of a—a spontaneous thing. The name itself speaks eloquently to that spontaneity. What else is going to be called a movement? What happened was, as a result of this catalyst, and the catalyst was of course the SNCC students coming in, as a result of that catalytic reaction in the city of Albany, a number of the civic and social organizations sort of got together and—and decided all in one night—the people in the community apparently are ready for whatever is happening. We are their leaders. And we are not ready for what the people appear to be ready for. So we decided at that time it would be better for us local leaders to, give some direction to whatever is happening than for these outsiders to, to give that direction. So we decided at, at that first meeting that was held at the home of Dr. Ed Hamilton, a dentist, we decided then that we representatives of the established civic and social organizations of the city of Albany should bind ourselves together. And we should become a part of what was happening, because the people apparently are ready for a change, and we their leaders have not taken the lead in this endeavor. And so after, a good deal of conversation about well, what shall we call ourselves? And naturally we tossed around all sorts of names, but when the word "Albany Movement" or the words "Albany Movement" were spoken it sort of took hold at that time. And we never

looked at any other names.

00:04:06:00

INTERVIEWER: YOU HAVE TO TELL ME, HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE THE NAME OF THAT COMMUNITY DOWN THERE?

Anderson: You've got to call it Albany. If you were from New York you'd call it something else, but in Georgia, it's Albany.

00:04:17:00

INTERVIEWER: TELL ME, WHAT WAS ALBANY LIKE IN THOSE DAYS?

Anderson: Albany was a typical small town in Georgia. Well, Albany was not as small of course as many towns. Albany at that time had nearly 50,000 people. So it's not small by, by rural Georgia small town standards where the population may be as low as 500. But I'm saying that Albany was a semi-rural community and a lot of the industry was at least in part dependent upon farming. The, there was very little industry. It was a rather close-knit town in that people knew each other. It was a totally segregated town. Blacks held no positions in any of the stores downtown as salespersons, clerks or what have you. Of course, there were no black policemen, blacks held no political office. As a matter of fact they weren't even called blacks. They were called negroes by the ones who were more liberal and benevolent, and they were called more unsavory things by others. You couldn't say that it was a community where you could experience racial harmony. The interplay or interaction was non-existent. And most of the people who had lived in Albany all of their lives had sort of come to accept things as they were. Or at least there was no outward expression of opposition to things as they were. So Albany was not unlike thousands of other towns of that size or smaller, dotted throughout the south, where you had a total segregation of the, of the races. You had a community that was, that, primarily was dependent upon the farm industry to some extent or another. You had a community that blacks who were employed were employed in the service industries with very few professionals. The only professionals you could find would be school teachers, ministers and a very few doctors. At the time that the Albany Movement started there was fortunately a black lawyer. This was a rarity of course in a town of that size in Georgia.

00:06:43:00

INTERVIEWER: I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT LAURIE PRITCHETT SAID IT WASN'T ALL THAT SEGREGATED. THEY HAD A CATHOLIC MAYOR AND A JEWISH JUDGE.

Anderson: Well, when I speak of segregation, I don't speak in terms of segregation by religious origin, or for that matter, so far as ethnic background is concerned. When I speak of segregation I'm speaking in terms of segregation between black and white. The Jews could change their names and be integrated into the society. There were others who merely needed

to change their name to be accepted. It was a bit more difficult for a black to be accepted. So when I speak of total segregation I mean segregation based on race—

[wild audio]

or color. Not religious.

INTERVIEWER: OK WE JUST ROLLED OUT.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: YEAH.

00:07:29:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change camera roll 547]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: I HAVE FLAGS AND LOCK—

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: OK LET ME GET ALL FOCUSED UP HERE. OK JIM IT IS ALL YOURS.

INTERVIEWER: GIVE ME SOME SENSE OF WHAT LED UP TO THE DECISION TO CALL IN DR. KING.

Anderson: Well, when the Albany Movement was organized, we did draft a purpose for the organization. The purpose was to seek a means of desegregating the city of Albany. We drafted the petition to present to the City Council of Albany. And I took that petition to the City Council, and I went to the City Council meeting to get a response to our petition. The Council conducted its business as usual on that evening, and Mayor Asa Kelley, who chaired the Council announced that the meeting was about to adjourn, whereupon I asked for a hearing. And this was granted. And I asked about our petition. I said, we have petitioned the City Council to set into place some mechanism whereby we can seek means of desegregating the City of Albany. And we gave all the reasons why we felt as though this should be done. Well, Mayor Kelley said that we discussed this in the executive session of the City Council and we determined that there is no common ground for discussion, and did not deem it appropriate to have it as an agenda item. Adjourned. Before I left I said it is regrettable. This is not in the best interest of Albany. And I left. The next day the local newspaper, *The Albany Herald*, edited by our friend Mr. Gray, who may at that time have been State Democratic Chairman, had on the front page of his newspaper that the Albany Movement demands complete and total desegregation of the City of Albany. And it went on to relate the, the event of my attending the City Council meeting and storming out, he described it as storming

out of the meeting, indicating that this was not in the best interest of Albany. And I might add that he put in that same article, not only my address, but my phone number with my complete name. This led to a series of events that just coincided with the arrival of the Freedom Riders. They came into Albany on a Sunday. I can remember very vividly. Needless to say they were arrested as they got off the train. And that night we had a meeting of the Albany Movement at which time we decided that we would not let these people stay in jail alone, we would fill up the jails. That next morning, at breakfast, I was advising my wife and my kids that their father and husband would very likely wind up in jail before the week was out, because the Albany Movement had decided that the best way to respond to first ignoring the petition of the Albany Movement, and secondly to arresting these Freedom Riders, the most appropriate response would be mass demonstrations. And I said, "I'll probably wind up in jail, and I want you kids to understand, why this is being done." ***You have to understand that going to jail was probably one of the most feared things in rural Georgia. There were many blacks who were arrested in small towns in Georgia never to be heard from again. We have every reason to believe many of these were lynched. So going to jail was no small thing.*** It was nothing to be taken lightly by any black. Because there were all kinds of horror stories of atrocities that had been suffered by blacks in jails. Well, as it turned out we had going at the same time sit-ins at the local bus station. My wife happened to be one of those participants at the bus station. But on this Monday morning following the arrests on Sunday, we met at a church, and we started a march downtown, and we were going to walk around the courthouse and go back to the church. We made it around the first time and I was at the head of the line with my wife. But after we made it around the first time not getting arrested I went on to my office, but the group went around a second time to make this impression that we are united behind these people that you have unjustly arrested. But the second time around they were arrested. And some 700 were arrested before they stopped.

00:12:49:00

INTERVIEWER: OK I THINK WE'RE STILL WAITING TO FIND OUT WHAT LED TO THE DECISION TO BRING IN DR. KING.

Anderson: That's what did it. When we got to the point that we had this many people in jail—

INTERVIEWER: I'M SORRY SIR, COULD I HAVE YOU START THAT AGAIN. I WAS MESSING WITH THE LENS.

Anderson: When we had this many people in jail, we had a meeting of the Albany Movement that night and we all recognized that we had no experience in what we were doing. We had never been involved in mass demonstrations, mass arrests. We had no provisions for bonding. No provisions for taking care of families of people who were in jail. And recognize that this was not a select group. ***These were common, ordinary, everyday people, housewives, cooks, maids, laborers, children out of school. We had made no provisions for these people going to jail because we did not anticipate the mass arrests. So we concluded that night that we are into something that really we need some expert help in,*** someone who has had the experience. And I knew Dr. King from years earlier. My wife and Dr. King had been high school schoolmates, and my wife's brother and Dr. King were classmates and

very close friends at David D. Howard High School here in Atlanta. And I indicated that I felt that I knew Dr. King well enough that if I were to call him he would come down and help us. Needless to say, there was not total agreement initially with issuing this call. Because recognizing that now SNCC was on the scene and by virtue of the Freedom Riders coming through CORE was on the scene, and they did also have established organizations. They wanted to protect the integrity—integrity of those organizations. We also recognize that to the extent that they received some publicity it helped to further their cause and they would be able to raise money to continue their activities. But anyway, we were able to get unanimous decision of the Albany Movement to call in Dr. King. So that night I tracked down Dr. King. I don't remember where he was at the time. But I called him personally. And he, he merely asked of me if this is the desire of all involved. And I said, "Yes it is." And he asked that I send him a telegram to that extent. And I did. And the telegram, I indicated on the telegram all the organizations that were represented now in the Albany Movement. And he responded to that call.

00:15:35:00

INTERVIEWER: I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST SOMETHING TO YOU THAT ANDY YOUNG HAS SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS WHEN DR. KING CAME IN HE WAS REALLY TO JUST EXPECTING TO GIVE A SPEECH ONE NIGHT. SPEAK AT THE CHURCH, AND THEN SUDDENLY HE WAS DRAWN INTO DEMONSTRATING THE NEXT DAY AND GETTING ARRESTED. HE GOT IN DEEPER, FASTER THAN HE EVER EXPECTED TO.

Anderson: If I was to say that this was the first major spontaneous civil rights movement in America, you can believe that that's factual. Neither Dr. King, nor Abernathy, nor Anderson, or Andy Young or anyone else involved had experienced such spontaneity. ***So Dr. King, right, he came there with not even an overnight bag or a toothbrush. Responded to my call, and I do not anticipate that he expected to get as intimately involved with the Albany movement as he did.*** It was infectious. Contagious. And even Dr. King could not resist it.

00:16:45:00

INTERVIEWER: THE, JUST GIVE US A MOMENT, I WANT TO STRAIGHTEN MY THOUGHTS HERE.

[cut]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: FLAGS.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: WE HAVE ABOUT, I'D SAY MAYBE 45 SECONDS.

INTERVIEWER: OK, START IT OFF—

Anderson: ALRIGHT. Dr. King and I had met with the, masses of people at an early morning rally. By the end of the week there were regular demonstrations going on practically everyday. And Dr. King, Dr. Abernathy, along with, my wife led a demonstration that involved several hundreds of people. And we were arrested and dispersed throughout Southwest Georgia. On Monday morning following these arrests, we were carried to the courthouse in Albany, and negotiating teams were identified and charged with the responsibility of meeting with us as leaders of the movement and meeting with members of the City Council to see if we could somehow resolve our differences. And end these mass demonstrations and arrests. We—identified three people that, that would represent the Albany Movement, and they were Mr. Cochran, Frank Cochran, Solomon Walker, and a Chapman, a Thomas Chapman. They met along with our attorneys, C.B. King and Don Hallowell, and they would meet with representatives of the City Council. I cannot say that they met directly with the City Council and that intermediary more likely than not was Sheriff Pritchett and maybe some others—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: OPPTS, JUST RAN OUT.

00:18:35:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change camera roll to 548]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: I HAVE FLAGS, AND MARK.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: YOU STEPPING ON MIKE?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: YEAH. MICROPHONE IS GOOD.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: OKAY, GO AHEAD.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: I'M HOT.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: JIM IT'S ALL YOURS.

00:18:52:00

INTERVIEWER: OK, TELL US ABOUT THE OFFER.

Anderson: The negotiators reported to us. And I was seated in the court at the time with Dr. King and Dr. Abernathy that a tacit agreement had been reached with the city whereby they would set into place mechanisms whereby our concerns would be answered. And certain

specific changes would take place in the city. And they included things like desegregation of the bus station. Desegregation of some of the public facilities like lunch counters, the— the bus station, the train station and some of the other facilities. We asked that this be placed in writing, and Dr. King was quite emphatic with requesting that, that this agreement be placed in writing. But we were given the assurance through the intermediaries that these were honorable people who were making this agreement and it would be given to the press in the form of a statement. And we felt as though there was a certain amount of security in having such an agreement made public knowledge, and being given to what we considered a sympathetic press. And, and we accepted the agreement. There were some who were uncomfortable with it. Dr. King was uncomfortable with it. Attorney C.B. King was uncomfortable with it. But we all agreed that we—that it was in the best interests of the people of Albany to have the matter resolved and to accept the—the agreement with it being publicized.

INTERVIEWER: BUT LATER THEY RENEGED ON THE AGREEMENT?

Anderson: They reneged 100 percent. Oh, part of the agreement was that, that all of the people who were in jail and there were several hundred in jail at the time, would be permitted to, to post straw bonds, no money, straw bonds. And those who had placed up cash bonds, the money would be returned and these cases would never be brought to trial. They reneged on each and every one of those commitments.

00:20:52:00

INTERVIEWER: DURING THE MONTHS THAT DR. KING WAS IN ALBANY, THIS WAS SORT OF THE BEGINNING OF SOME QUESTIONS THAT WERE RAISED ABOUT HIM AND HIS ABILITY AS A LEADER. HOW DID YOU PERCEIVE THAT? DID YOU THINK THAT HE WAS FAILING IN HTS LEADERSHIP ABILITY?

Anderson: Absolutely not. I think that Dr. King, was true to the spirit of the movement that he initiated in Montgomery in that the Movements were, were the activities of the people. He did not run the movement as a dictator, but more as a part of the people and acquiescing to the needs of the people and the desires of the people. At no time did Dr. King take over, if you would, the Albany Movement. He would attend the, the Board Meetings and he was a participant in the Board Meetings, and I have seen Dr. King come to those meetings with his mind apparently made up on issues. And when he engaged in the conversation with the other members of the movement, changed his mind and went the other way, or a different way.

00:21:58:00

INTERVIEWER: NOW WYATT WALKER SAYS THAT, A LOT OF TIMES HE WAS NOT GIVEN ENOUGH CONTROL. AND IF PERHAPS DR. KING AND MR. WALKER, REV. WALKER AS THE SCLC REPRESENTATIVE HAD HAD MORE CONTROL THAT THAT COULD HAVE BEEN MORE SUCCESSFUL.

Anderson: Well, I am one of those who is of the opinion that the most effective form of

government is a benevolent dictatorship. I cannot dispute anyone who would say, if Dr. King and company had complete control of the Albany Movement things would not have been different and even better. I cannot dispute that. But recognizing that, that we had other organizations in there, other established organizations. By this time we had the NAACP, with its own ideas as to how things should be done, a highly respected, well-organized long established organization. We had CORE, we had SCLC and other smaller organizations. Even the Urban League had a hand in it. So I am saying that I think Dr. King was benevolent in that he did not take complete control of the Albany Movement, and maybe retrospectively now that that was one of the reasons why we did not get as much out of the Albany Movement as we all thought we should have gotten and possibly could have gotten.

00:23:17:00

INTERVIEWER: I'LL ALLOW YOU THAT MOMENT OF RETROSPECTION.

Anderson: OK, thank you.

INTERVIEWER: YOU MADE REFERENCE TO OF THE ALBANY MOVEMENT BEFORE, AND A LOT OF PEOPLE DO TALK ABOUT THE WONDERFUL SPIRIT, THE MUSIC, THE PRAYERS, TALK ABOUT THAT A LITTLE.

Anderson: Let me restate that. This was the first spontaneous mass movement of the civil rights movement era. We did not have planned demonstrations anymore than we had planned mass rallies. None of us wrote speeches that were, there was no prepared agenda, there was no text. There was very little form to the meetings. We spoke as we felt it. And I'm sure those of you who've had the opportunity to review some of the film clips from the movement will recognize that our presentations to the masses at those rallies was completely spontaneous. The people literally got caught up in the movement. And I have never seen more spirit in all of my years as the spirit I saw there. And mind you I am a baptized Baptist. And if anyone knows how the spirit can catch on in a Baptist meeting in a Baptist revival, I know. But I never in my life experienced the kind of spirit that I saw that permeated the Albany Movement meetings.

00:24:40:00

INTERVIEWER: TELL ME ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE MUSIC.

Anderson: The music even was spontaneous. And the people would get caught up in the music. And you have never heard "We Shall Overcome" or any of the other civil rights songs sang in the manner in which they were sung in those rallies. Without benefit mind you, of any musical instruments.

00:25:00:00

INTERVIEWER: I WANT TO TALK ABOUT LAURIE PRITCHETT. HOW DID HE LOOK TO YOU IN THOSE DAYS?

Anderson: Laurie Pritchett, we often had to remark during the movement that Laurie Pritchett was somewhat different from the other police chiefs and sheriffs that had been encountered during the civil rights movement—up to that point even. Laurie Pritchett was a man that most of us who got to know him closely and talk with him on a personal basis got the impression that he was a sensitive man. He was a professional in that he did his job according to the way his, his bosses directed him. His bosses, of course, were the members of the City Council. He did his job in a professional manner, using as little brutal force as necessary in order to maintain control over the situation.

INTERVIEWER: NOW YOU SAY, "AS LITTLE BRUTAL FORCE AS NECESSARY."

Anderson: Yeah, because there were those times, I—I would have to admit that there were times when—when arrest was resisted. Of course we advised all of our followers, don't resist arrest. Go willingly. But there were those occasions when arrest would be resisted. And the only way you could get those people into jail of course would be to bodily take them in. So I am saying that, if, to the extent that that's some brutality, I don't believe that Laurie Pritchett condoned or would have sanctioned at any time, outward brutality as was experienced later. Dogs, water hoses, even beating with clubs. I don't believe he would have condoned that. Because we, we perceived him as being a man who was first, a professional policeman. Not someone who was a policeman because he was the meanest man in town. Not because he hated and despised blacks more than anyone, but we don't feel as though those were his qualifications. Fortunately for the City of Albany, they had a policeman who was a professional. He did the job that was assigned to him, but he did it in as professional a manner as he possibly could do it.

00:27:18:00

INTERVIEWER: DURING THIS TIME THERE WAS—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER: EXCUSE ME.

[cut]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: I HAVE FLAGS AND—

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: MARK. IT'S ALL YOURS.

INTERVIEWER: THERE WAS A LOT OF DISAPPOINTMENT ABOUT THAT TIME BECAUSE THERE WAS NO DIRECT INVOLVEMENT FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. TALK TO ME ABOUT THAT.

Anderson: Well, needless to say we were in constant contact with the federal government. Even from the time Dr. King initially came into Albany. Contact had been made with,

Attorney General Bob Kennedy, and he had sort of, turned us over to Burke Marshall. And, when Dr. King was coming in we requested some protection for him coming into town. Laurie Pritchett, I understand was contacted by Burke Marshall, and was requested to provide, security for Dr. King, and initially Laurie Pritchett said that he couldn't do it. He couldn't guarantee the safety of Dr. King coming into town. So Burke Marshall indicated, if you can't then I'll send in enough federal marshals to do it, whereupon Laurie Pritchett decided, well maybe I can. But even, we, we never at any time got any of the Justice Department officials to come in to my knowledge. Even as observers during the arrest or during the court hearings. There were FBI agents on the scene, but no one from the Justice Department that we thought would be there to protect our civil rights. We didn't have that.

00:28:47:00

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE EXPECTED FROM THEM?

Anderson: I would have expected a representative from the Justice Department to be on the scene as an observer if nothing else because civil rights were being violated. For example, we were not permitted to—to demonstrate at all, even following all the guidelines that had been set forth by the city, we attempted picketing of—of selected stores in small numbers, widely spaced. Not blocking any ingress or egress, all the guidelines that were given so that you could picket, we would do that and still got arrested. I was arrested on several occasions just walking down the street holding a piece of paper in my hand and under the pretense of passing out literature without a permit or something to that effect. I'm saying that Justice Officials were not there as observers, and if they were there mind you—

[wild audio]

Anderson: —they were not identified as such, and to my knowledge no action was taken relative to the violation of our civil rights.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: WE RAN OUT AT THE WORDS “AS SUCH”.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: YEAH.

00:29:49:00

[cut]

[slate]

[change to camera roll 549]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: FLAGS AND—

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: –MARK. WE'RE HOT.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: IT'S ALL YOURS.

00:29:59:00

INTERVIEWER: I'M GOING TO URGE BREVITY ON THIS, BUT I WOULD LIKE YOU TO COMMENT ON THE FACT THAT THERE WAS A SORT OF MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH TO THE DEMONSTRATIONS AT THAT TIME, AND HOW, HOW YOU FELT THAT EITHER HELPED OR HINDERED YOUR, YOUR APPROACH.

Anderson: Multi-level in that?

INTERVIEWER: WELL, INSOFAR AS YOU TRIED TO DESEGREGATE MANY MANY THINGS FROM SWIMMING POOLS TO THEATRES.

Anderson: Oh. We recognized that, that Albany was totally segregated and, and we were frustrated by determining what targets we should take. And we did go at all targets at the same time. This means we, we sought to desegregate the buses at the same time, integrate the lunch counters and integrate the bus station and the train station all at the same time.

INTERVIEWER: AND THE MOVIE HOUSES.

Anderson: And the movie houses.

00:30:49:00

INTERVIEWER: OK, NOW HOW DO YOU THINK THAT HELPED YOU OR HURT YOU?

Anderson: I certainly feel as though we did not have sufficient resources to effectively attack all of those areas at the same time. But again, recognize that we were inexperienced as civil rights activists. I had never been directly involved in any such activity and I was the leader of the movement. And I, I was just frustrated in that in a city that was totally segregated, all of the—the facets of segregation seemed to be equally important, and I attacked them all.

00:31:26:00

INTERVIEWER: WERE YOU EVER SCARED?

Anderson: Constantly.

INTERVIEWER: NOBODY HEARD ME. CONSTANTLY WHAT?

Anderson: I was, I was afraid on occasion. Needless to say my life was threatened several times. We got threatening phone calls at my home. My home was stoned several times. And I

was afraid for the safety of my wife and my kids, as well as for myself. I was not afraid to the extent that I was paranoiac about it. I didn't stop going to work everyday. I did not stop going out on house calls and delivering babies in the middle of the night. I would attend the mass rallies and I never had any escorts. I never had any bodyguards. But yes, I was afraid. But at the same time it was not a morbid fear, and I had reached that point in life, where if it meant my life would be in jeopardy because of what we were doing so be it.

00:32:24:00

INTERVIEWER: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHITE COMMUNITY LEADERS—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: I'M SORRY I NEED—

[cut]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: MARK.

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: WE'RE HOT. JIM IT'S ALL YOURS.

00:32:24:00

INTERVIEWER: YOU SPOKE OF YOUR FEAR, I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU THTNK WAS THE FEAR OF THE WHITE COMMUNITY THAT THEY WERE SO RESISTANT TO YOU?

Anderson: I am—I'm certain that there were those white people in the community that were afraid for themselves and for the city as a whole, especially in the downtown area. At the height of the demonstrations practically no white people would be in town. Because I feel as though they did not want to be caught up in what could have turned out to be a violent confrontation between us as civil rights demonstrators and the police, or the National Guard for that matter, who were present.

INTERVIEWER: I'D LIKE YOU TO ADDRESS THIS MORE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF WHY THEY WERE SO RESISTANT TO DESEGREGATION? NOT JUST AFRAID OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS, BUT THE VERY THOUGHT OF DESEGREGATION.

Anderson: This is the fear of the unknown. I remarked to Laurie Pritchett at one time when he asked of me, "Dr. Anderson, do you think this is the way to get white people to accept you?" And I said to him, "You will never know whether or not I would be acceptable to you if somehow we are not given the opportunity to get together." I believe that a lot of white people feared, mixing with blacks because they had never had the experience. And they had been taught all of their lives that blacks were somehow inferior, dirty, smelly, unintelligible and all of the bad things that could be spoken about any person. They had been told this.

They were brought up in that environment; that blacks should be totally segregated. They should be denied access to public accommodations. And I think that blacks were more afraid of the unknown. Not of actually having experienced being in the presence of blacks as equals.

00:34:31:00

INTERVIEWER: WHAT WAS FREEDOM ALLEY?

Anderson: That was an alley where many of us got arrested.

INTERVIEWER: WITH THE NAME IN—

Anderson: All right. Freedom Alley was attached to an alley that was immediately adjacent to the City Jail. And as the demonstrators would be parading around in front of the courthouse or would have been arrested at other sites throughout the city, they would be brought into the alley, to await their arraignment and their arrest.

INTERVIEWER: AND HOW DID IT GET ITS NAME?

Anderson: It got its name by the people. The freedom alley name was granted by the people.

INTERVIEWER: WHAT DID IT MEAN?

Anderson: It meant that those of us who found ourselves in that alley, Freedom Alley, were determined that we were going to get our freedom, and this was the route to get there.

00:35:23:00

INTERVIEWER: THROUGH THE JAIL. OK, AND WHAT WAS YOUR FINAL ASSESSMENT OF ALBANY? WAS IT A SUCCESS, WAS IT A FAILURE, WAS IT A QUALIFIED SUCCESS?

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: HOLD ON. ONE SECOND. JUST LET ME SLIDE DOWN DON'T CUT.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: I KNOW. WE'RE NOT. I'M STILL ROLLING.

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: OK.

INTERVIEWER: OK, YOU'VE HEARD THE QUESTION SO WHEN HE GIVES YOU THE GO-AHEAD—

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: LET'S GO.

00:35:38:00

Anderson: The Albany Movement was a qualified success. Qualified in that at the time the movement came to an end, and it didn't come to an abrupt end. It was sort of phased out, the phasing out was marked by the cessation of the mass demonstration and the picketing. At that time, none of the facilities had been desegregated. The buses had become desegregated, the train station, the bus station. But these were being desegregated by federal edict. And it was not a voluntary move on the part of the people of Albany. But the lunch counters, there were no blacks employed as clerks in the stores. The parks and other public accommodations were not desegregated at the time the Albany Movement came to an end, end in the sense of no more mass demonstrations. But the Albany Movement was an overwhelming success in that first of all there was a change in the attitude of the people. The people who were involved in the movement, the people involved in the demonstrations because they had made a determination within their own minds that they would never accept that segregated society as it was, anymore. There was a change in attitude of the kids who saw their parents step into the forefront and lead the demonstrations and they were determined that they would never go through what their parents went through to get the recognition that they should have as citizens. Secondly, I think that the Albany Movement was a success in that it served as a trial or as a proving ground for subsequent civil rights movements. There would be those from all over the world that would look at Albany, they would look at the Albany Movement and how the people responded when they were, were led, and how they were able to identify the problems and address those problems in a very affirmative manner. So that we, we think that the Albany Movement was very meaningful in the total picture of the civil rights movement in that it gave some direction. The mistakes were not to be repeated that were made in Albany, for example, that settlement on a handshake if you would. That would never be repeated anytime in the future.

00:38:02:00

INTERVIEWER: AND WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS THE BOTTOM LINE AS FAR AS YOUR DECISION TO BRING IN DR. KING?

Anderson: It was probably the smartest thing that we ever did. Because by bringing in Dr. King not only did we get the benefit of having a well-established, well-experienced civil rights organization as a part of the Albany Movement, but it also brought in world attention. The eyes of the world were focused on Albany primarily because of Dr. King.

INTERVIEWER: HOW WERE THEY FOCUSED? YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT MEDIA?

Anderson: I mean media. The media came into Albany en mass. There was not a major newspaper in the world that was not represented in Albany. Not a major television station in the United States or a television network in the United States that was not represented in Albany. And having been there before Dr. King came and knowing of the activity that we had before Dr. King, and having seen the results of his coming there in terms of the increase in the number of media people present, I know that they came there because Dr. King was there. He was a media event. We felt as though we needed the media attention because we thought that we could not get what we were looking for by appealing to the local people.

There would have to be outside pressure, and the only way we could get the outside pressure would be that the media would have to call to the attention of those outside people what was happening in Albany.

00:39:33:00

INTERVIEWER: THANK YOU VERY MUCH DR. ANDERSON. GENTLEMAN I THINK I'M DONE.

[wild audio]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 2: I THINK GREAT, UNLESS YOU WANT TO SING SOME SONGS AT ALL—

[cut]

[sync tone]

CAMERA CREW MEMBER 1: WE HAVE ABOUT THIRTY SECONDS OF FILM.

00:39:46:00

INTERVIEWER: OK, LAURIE PRITCHETT WAS ALWAYS SO MUCH IN CONTROL, BUT DID YOU EVER SEE HIM GET FRUSTRATED?

Anderson: I saw Laurie Pritchett get frustrated on several occasions.

INTERVIEWER: TELL ME ONE.

Anderson: An occasion when Dr. King and I were arrested for the third time. And he took us into his office, and he placed his hand over his heart and he asked, "Is this the way you feel that you have to get my attention?" And we told him, this is the only way we felt that we could get his attention.

00:40:21:00

INTERVIEWER: ALL RIGHT I'M JUST CURIOUS, I WONDERED IF HE EVER REACTED TO THE SONG.

Anderson: I think that he, he sort of enjoyed the song. I think he enjoyed all the attention he got as he was a part of the movement. And whenever he would attend the mass rallies and occasionally he would, he would always be singled out and recognized. And he accepted it, and he even spoke at one of the rallies.

INTERVIEWER: GREAT. GOOD.

[cut]

[end of interview]

00:40:48:00

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