

ROBERT PENN WARREN 2/10/64 GILBERT MOSES BOX 3
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Warren: Mr. Moses, How did you get into the Civil Rights Movement, or the - the whole story.

Moses: The Free Press - the Civil Rights Movement. I had left school - Oberlin College, I went to, because I wanted to be either an actor or a writer. I wanted to be both, and I would involve myself in some off-Broadway plays and -

Warren: Hold it a second. I want to check this mike.

When was this?

Moses: This was last year. Last year at this time. I left Oberlin - went to New York to act and to write. I'd been involved in some at Oberlin at college/and I'd come visiting to the college during the time I was at college - that was two years ago. I decided to write when I went to New York and I kept in touch with Charlesworth, whom I had known at Oberlin - and kept in touch with the people who were working with the Free Press and over the summer, I became much more involved with the picketing.

Warren: Where was this?

Moses: In New York. The White Castle picketing in the Bronx. I became much more actively involved in the demonstrations of the Civil Rights protest.

Warren: How did that happen? How did you become more rapidly involved? What motive - what made you do that?

Moses; It starts from - I don't know if I can talk about the motive. My interest in exactly what was taking place and the manner in which I may help is, I believe, I'm working on some sort of philosophy, is something that has to do with the individual being of uttermost importance.

Warren: Couldn't you pull over here so I wouldn't when you speak.

Moses: Of utmost importance to the individual and in fact, that the individual himself could make a great deal of difference in any system - an outsider, a new element, would make a great deal of difference. And, at this time I was specially in my restraint - the fact that I hadn't actively participated in demonstrations - I'd only sort of accumulated a great deal of knowledge and that - and this - and also, the question, you know, of not only why me, but why not me, and this catapulted me, sort of, into the demonstrations in New York. At this time I was working as a copy boy for the New York Post, and I constantly would - every day I would read news articles about the of Kaltenburn, Rider, Algeria, and I then decided that I wanted to help - come South to work, but there were other things involved which I noticed at the beginning. Since I was very small I was involved in the theatre in Cleveland, called Cameron. For quite a while I've wanted to - I thought about starting a theatre in the South somewhere. And, along with my sudden awareness

of the Civil Rights activity, you see, I thought of coming to Jackson and casing the joint, so to speak. Looking around for the best place to start such a ^{Southern} theatre, of course, and here - this is - I was also involved as I told you - I also wanted to be - to combine acting with writing as a playwright, and so what I'm doing - coming down to work for the Free Press and at the same time case the situation as to whether it was possible, whether I was prepared to start a theatre here and everywhere to work and -

Warren: You are starting a theatre here?

Moses: I had intended on bringing you a prospectus on the theatre which I had in mind.

Warren: Will you send me one?

Moses: Yes, I will send you, yes. It already has - it now has sponsors such as Harry Bellefonte, James Baldwin. A repertory theatre, hopefully, with a base in Jackson - money given to them we'll hope will be taken to Mills College, ^{as} their summer theatre project, and we'll start with a summer stock theatre this summer.

Warren: Do they have a theatre already there?

Moses: Yes.

Warren: Well, how would yours differ from their present theatre?

Moses: Well, their theatre is mainly for a college audience. They're doing things that we're interested - broaden whatever the perspective of the college audience is. I want to - I want to have a collective religious phenomenon here in the

South. I want to play to the Negro in the general community
you see - the ^{farm} workers and the cotton pickers - and those people.

Warren: What plays do you envisage as the plays you would produce?

Moses: The only plays that I see that I can head up - plays that I want - here I've gone through the whole thing of the evil plays. I've only known one play that I think would be proper to produce here and this only comes close to the type of play that I want to see done, and that's purely Victorian - as far as a Negro play, I certainly haven't figured on doing ~~Antigone~~ ~~being~~ adaptation of. But the other plays would have to be, and I have been - and I've written by myself. And by other people whom I've interested in the idea.

Warren: But you intend to produce classics?

Moses: I intend to produce classics. Yes.

Warren: As well.

Moses: Yes, but mostly concentrating to - on works of Negro playwrights, and works of people involved with me here.

Warren: Would you exclude those plays that necessarily are (in quotes) "are plays directed at propaganda or action, and action" - or would you see it simply as plays which might be of interest to this particular audience?

Moses: Well, they would naturally be both. There are a few settings that I could say - a play must be entertaining.

interesting - propaganda in favor of thinking - that's the furthest I can use -

Warren: But any good play, then.

Moses: Good play, yes. It would be a good ^{play} except that I have certain ideas as how the propaganda should be directed and written. It's that I am also concerned - I can also state that any good play would be educational and propagandistic at the same time.

Warren: That is, Hedda Gabler would be, for instance.

Moses: Hedda Gabler would be my - if, but not only - only not with this audience because of the levels of .

Warren: That's something, yes. I mean, in theory it would be as relevant as another.

Moses: Yes, I could direct Mr. Albee.

Warren: When do you expect to be in business with this theatre?
Next summer?

Moses: Beginning of this summer.

Warren: This coming summer?

Moses: Yes. I hope to have the theatre facilities at the Tougalou or - we're asking for the Nation, and I'm working with a group now, come s to us from Jackson State, the students from Tougalou that are interested in the theatre. I'm giving them lessons, and so we're forming a troupe, and I've learned different ^{that are cheap,} ~~repetitory~~ techniques/that we can use for traveling. I

want to play in the communities, where the mad communities in

Warren: Do you have a program for the summer already laid down; have you chosen your plays?

Moses: Pearlie Victorius, Mountain of Stars, which I know is quite ambitious - is two - these are considerations, and a play which I'm putting together.

Warren: Your play?

Moses: Yes, which will be a documentary of Jackson, 1963.

Warren: Let me read a quotation to you, getting off the point to you both, from Dr. Kenneth Clark. You know who he is - a psychologist at C. C. N. Y., with reference to Martin Luther King's philosophy. I can use as a starting point. "On the surface, King's philosophy appears to reflect health and stability, while the black nationalists" - he'd been talking about the Muslims, you see, "while the black nationalists betray pathology and instability. A deeper analysis, however, reveals that there is also an unrealistic, if not pathological basis in King's doctrine. The natural reaction to injustice is bitterness and resentment. The forms which such bitterness takes need not be overtly violent, but the corrosion of the human spirit seems inevitable. It would seem, therefore, that any demand that the victims of oppression be required to love them that oppress them, places an additional and intolerable psychological burden upon these victims." How would you respond to that? How would you respond Mr. ?

Mr. Murphy?

Murphy: A lot at one time. I feel I'm wasting your tape. Maybe you should start -

Warren: Well, you start then, why don't you.

Moses: Well, my reaction - I don't know how I can exactly react, little bit is true or false. Except that I think that any ~~inculcation~~ - and religious inculcation, I think is just as harmful as a racist inculcation, unless they are both used as a tactic and not as a philosophy. I think that even Negro, itself, we must understand that - I have often said - I have often thought that we are very - we're sympathetic actually to white supremacy, because we have been forced to think along this Negro - racism. But, we must understand that we can't use that as a philosophy, but as a tactic, in order for organizations, in order to get what - well -

Warren: You mean, use the concept of Negro as a tactic to get solidarity for practical purposes, is that it?

Moses: Yes. And I think that in the first sentence - non-violence and the religious non-violence and the racism that the Muslims are in the first that tactics, but when they become religious beliefs or philosophy, I think that they're limited and harmful to reflect their thinking.

Warren: That is, you have the anti-theological.

Moses: I am definitely. I am not saying that I am anti-

theological. I'm saying that I'm anti- in the way that religion has been practiced here. I think religion is a great stumbling block for a great many of the Negroes.

Warren: Well, now, what did you feel between the truths of Christianity - truths in whatever quotes you want to put them in - or principles, whether or not you want to see these revealed, or if man-made - distinguishing that side from the matter of practice. Now, I'm certain that Martin Luther King would make that distinction, and say that he is not defending the practice of Christianity as it's been observed in Birmingham.

Moses: Yes. What I'm saying is that everyone I suppose - we all make this distinction between the creed and the - the American creed that - and how it is practiced. I'm saying that the most - that any time that this is used, or any time there are other - there are words one can extract, other than the real thing, the reality of what non-violence is, the reality of what racism is - I think anything, or something other worldly, or supernatural, religious, and both of them become religious, it seems. And when that is extracted, it is harmful. So, when I make the distinction that abstract makes this practices, and whatever it is, I think organized religion, unless it serves a definite sociological function, and that naturally the sociological function has to be one which I think would be constructive to producing an atmosphere which reflects

thinking - of thought. I think any other type of organization is harmful. I think the religions that are organized, even non-violence, when it's organized from that type of basis, is harmful and Black Muslim religion also. But, I also think I am much more in sympathy with the Black Muslim creed than I have with King's philosophy of non-violence.

Warren: This reminds me of something that I first encountered many years ago in reading DuBoise. He talked about a split in the Negro psyche between an attachment to a Negro tradition, toward the Negro blood, toward the solidarity of experience that the community has experienced - the identification of the Negro himself with the Negro-ness, as exclusive of the white cultural tradition and the white mode of life, and everything else - this distinction. On the other hand, the pull, the convictive pull on the other - it splits the Negro psyche, according to his interpretation - the pull towards the Western cultural tradition. The pull to identify with that - to integrate with that - to be absorbed, perhaps, in the end into that and to lose, perhaps in the course of time, the very identity of Negro in a common blood stream, in a common cultural situation. This for him, is a division - a split difficult to heal, and remains that for some people. What would you say to this problem. Is it a problem for you?

Moses: Yes, it has been a problem for me. The Afrikans term

of this Negro-ness is something like Negritude - or Negri -

Warren: Negritude or Mystiqueoise -

Moses: Mystiqueoise - I have - you see, we can talk about it in two terms. For me, by repeating things that I have thought about before relieves the world of my outlook, my view - what - something always contains, has something to do with race. I will see a multiplicity of colors, I will see a multiplicity of bone structures. I can think of it in these terms - that I will never forget who I am unless they - a Negro - or where I come from. I think this is the only - the fact that we do have a unity of at least, I don't know if we have a unity of outlook, or you, at least those Negroes who have reached some sort of equanimity have a unity of outlook, which can be termed this Mystiqueoise, or Negritude - the fact that they are Negroes and they have certain unique experiences as Negroes that a white person is unable to share. As far as it's actually existing, I think that it's more of an intangible thing ~~made~~ tangible. And I think it's an imposition - it's an imposed tangibility. This uniqueness - I - is one that's imposed simply, in the same sense I think, a great deal of our - other things that we actually pride ourselves, even though we reject the stereotype - the rhythms, the mortality bits and the sports. I - there's a ^{pride} certain/and attachment to this Negritude, which in fact encompasses the stereotype that we fought against.

Warren: Would you - that's a very interesting point. It encompasses the stereotype you have fought against. What I'm asking now - may I say it in another way? To reverse the question - would you, along this line of thought, envisage, conceive of a time when, say, Civil Rights are achieved, opportunities have been evened out, you know, that the pressures are removed - then would Negritude disappear? Or, is that to be brought on by external pressure? Or do you feel it's a positive which you would cling to pridefully under all circumstances?

Moses: At this point I would say that it was positive, and I would cling to it - and that I think that the only time that one can reach some sort of - and this is a contradiction some sort of equanimity - is by accepting the Negritude. Now, this goes back into what I think about the theatre. I think that a great deal of many of us have not turned back, as far as history, into our history, have not turned back to the other people, the other Negro people who are struggling through the same - not only economic evolution, but mental evolutions of thought, and I think that is bad. Only through our own culture, only through our own unique experience, will we ever be able to think in terms, or will be able to think in terms of some of - we ever be able to gain some sort of universality. If they will only be able to lose our Negritude by turning directly and towards an acceptance

and creating from it. I don't know exactly - T. S. Eliot talks about the way of dispossession, or the way of possession - to go by different methods, and I kind of believe this - I - the only way that I could be a writer is to devote my time to writing - which limits my work severely, and I don't want to say the only time I could be a Negro - but the only way that I am going to be able to use my unique experience as a Negro is - if I'm going to use this racism which I must do in order to be an artist, I have to think of turning back to the people whence I came, and the times from whence I came, to help them to seek solutions, honor, in a level that would involve Negroes themselves. And it's through this way, perhaps, we can approach a culture - we can actually approach the thing and decide - as history probably we've always heard of everyone - quickly - quickly states the new Negro - he - everyone quickly says that there's a Negro culture - there's a - but I'm sure that this Negro wealth, this Negro culture hasn't^{been}/developed, and it's because Negroes haven't turned back to work within it, and develop it. I don't think - I think that we will have a Negritude, an honest positive Negritude, only when Negroes go back, become Negroes and work within their own culture to produce their culture.

Warren: Does that mean that you refer to Africa, or just to the development of, say, the American Negro community - that

community of experience? Here - as opposed to the African?

Moses: Well, I think that the Africans are hid - that they don't - I'm referring to the American Negro's experience.

Warren: Without reference to the African experience.

Moses: Because I think the African has started from that. They have much more unanimity of thought and unanimity of culture than the American Negro; at least their ambition and their determination hasn't been drained from them by this -

Warren: You mean that the American Negro - I'm just trying to interpret it to myself - was de-culturalized when brought to America, and had to start over again, in terms of how the Western context, the Western cultural context - is that it?

Moses: Yes, I think so.

Warren: May I ask a question? It's a little bit of an aside, but does it strike you as possible that a Southerner, a man down here in the street in Jackson, Mississippi, in his blind, blundering way - he's not a thoughtful man, say - is partly, among other motives, trying to defend a sense of cultural identity against the pressures of an outside world, that is fixed on his relation with the Negroes as a necessary aspect of his cultural identity? See what I'm driving at?

Moses: You some question. It's a baited question.

Warren: It's a what?

Moses: A baited question.

Warren: It's baited - yes. But that doesn't mean you - that I'm trying to dictate an answer.

Moses: Certainly not.

Warren: Any good question is baited.

Moses: I don't - take it to a doctor in there -
it another way -

Warren: Let's put it is there a Southern tradition like Negritude, which could be conceived of positively, as distinguishable from a view which says we must embrace the whole theory of racism and the impression of the Negro to defend his cultural identity. Another approach to it, you see. Or put it this way, right or wrong, is the Southerner with more or less self-awareness, trying to expend his cultural identity against Americanism, as another culture - the modern, industrial, financed capitalist? That make any sense?

Moses: I would think that the conservative Southerner tends to be - tends to be more fundamentally American than perhaps, than perhaps Americans in any other region.

Warren: In what sense? That's interesting.

Moses: Well, In terms of fundamentalism in religion, I think all of this has to be realized in terms of enormous contradictions. Fundamentalism in religion which can never quite explain the parts of its own creed that are missing. The enormous amount of attention that is paid to terms like "laissez-faire" free enterprise, which is being stifled by outside pressures, and

which seems to me are much more fundamental, or a much earlier idea of Americanism and one's likely to find in the North. The point is that none of these terms - neither the religious, nor the political terms ever complete themselves and I don't think - seems to me as though they are almost used as blankets to conceal any further thought.

Warren: At the same time that a man has laissez-faire and States-rights and this, he wants a big handout from the Federal government. Is that it?

Murphy: No, not that simple, but at the same time, if you maintain that every man has a right to succeed by his own initiative, if you also maintain a system of racial depression - yet in which case the term becomes so large - or all the terms of Southern - in the Southern ^{thought} / it seems to me, become so large that they rule out all other areas of thought.

Warren: To take another thing about the Southern situation, James Baldwin writes this in his last book. "The Southern mob does not represent the majority will of the South. It merely moves in to fill a moral vacuum." That's almost a direct quote. Does that make sense to you?

Moses: Talk.

Murphy: You were doing much better than I.

Warren: In fact, many people say the same thing. Even the police don't represent the majority will. Beg pardon?

Moses: I think that's true. To talk first - to talk about what they - the mob moves in to fill a moral vacuum, that's - or not - that's - I don't - that prevents me from thinking any further than that; I think that's pure - as far as the police not representing the majority of - what we find here is a legalized and enforced segregation. Enforced segregation. We find that the institutions have built within every facet of themselves discriminatory practices, and that continue to exist when the opinions of the people who work with those institutions change. The practices still exist. I think mostly that the system - I think people left alone, if they want it, the City officials and the government officials themselves did not enforce - or did not keep this thing in the papers and so forth - we have people controlling institutions here who are definitely segregationists. Who mold the opinions of the people, here. And, if not for these people, I think, well, I think that it would take a much more natural course. But, we have the Heddaman's as far as the newspaper is concerned, and we have the police officials themselves who actually enforce - they control themselves. When we go to a bus station here, they tell you to move. The people themselves don't even know that - they think that they are bound to the majority will of the people, and well - they tell you - the people in the institutions themselves, tell you - "Sit over here." The bus drivers, whatever, are the people who - of

course, depends on whether - whether the masses - that they ever had such a position as a policeman or a bus driver, et cetera, would do this too. Do you understand that? I think it's a legalized - I think it's an enforced thing by City officials - and not the majority of the people. We talk about the moral vacuum is - you talk -

Warren: You think the moral vacuum stretches around here?

Moses: Right.

Warren: Let's drop that - excuse me please. It's said over and over again - this is from Sterling Brown, you know. A quotation from Sterling Brown - the Negro writer, professor. He was at Howard, I think, and he for years. He's not a young man. "The Negro's plight in the South, will be lightened only when the plight of the poor white is lightened. When these cannot be pitted against each other in hatred and contempt, that their fate is tied together". What about that.

Moses: ~~Cuba~~ ^{made something} ~~that's~~ that's an interesting statement, in which I recognize storm, since the Negro revolution of the was the first step in ending the apathy of the U. S. courts . In other words, that was creating an awareness of whatever the situation is - of property and - if we agree that a country or a state - the prosperity of a country depends on the resources of that country, and then of that state - let's accept that they cannot help themselves - then we have to recognize that Mississippi

is the lowest economically poor - one of the lowest states in the Union. Certainly, if we could approach this normally, approach this problem normally, say, by having - by bringing in programs that - and bringing in things that would be best economically for Mississippi, instead of pity - using the racial as a lever to continue the oligarchy, the ruling rich few here, then we could start as any other normal country - as any other normal state does. And, recognize and face the fact that we're very low economically and there's certain programs that are needed - to - by training all the resources such - and certain programs that are needed to better direct progress in Mississippi. And with the acceptance of this fact, then, and I'm just sort of paraphrasing exactly what he's saying - the Negro and white poor farmer, the poor person, would certainly be in the same boat, because Mississippi is definitely poor. After we - demon - where can we go? We - Mississippi doesn't have enough money to furnish jobs. And we can't expect an economic turnover immediately. We can't expect an educational turnover immediately. In other words, Mississippi has a long way to go before it reaches an equal level of jobs or of prosperity. The only thing we can say is that it's hindered because the ruling few use a great deal of propaganda and the race lever, et cetera, et cetera. And so I certainly think that that statement is true.

Warren: You'd say that the oligarchy in Mississippi uses the race question as a device to maintain its own position.

Is that it?

Moses: Yes.

Warren: Its own economic advantage. How conscious do you think that is? Or is that simply a sociological reflex on their part-inborn with them. Inborn with them. An inborn cunning.

Moses: I don't know if it's any other conscious. I certainly know this. Conscious in this sense . you see I've talked to a few Southerners here who actually are not able to reason. They pride themselves on being reasonable, but ~~are~~ not able to distinguish real issues as far as I can see the real issues are. All I know is that the system is a beautiful system. It's an almost perfect system, that has to be measured in terms of accumulation of past in history, rather than something that is a conscious effort to maintain every day. That it started a long time ago and the Mississippi legislature has been passing laws that have reinforced this, and the educational institution has reinforced the system and the way of thinking here, so that I often think that rather than being conscious that the system itself, and all the ramifications of the vicious cycle of the system are not necessarily conscious of - but inescapable. And the only way that these things can be broken up is by a mass of

outside elements coming in.

Warren: Do you notice any difference between, say, the young - those under thirty and those above thirty?

Moses: I don't know if I can give you any such distinct division.

Warren: Well, I put the knife edge down arbitrarily there, between, say, the young and the middle-aged, wherever that line is.

Yousee -

Moses. Yes. I think - you want to say something?

Warren: Yes, please.

Murphy: I would think generally that the propaganda machine for race propaganda has become more and more well-oiled, and is more closely organized around a few cliches, which seem to control thought. I would think, unless the young people here had a chance for exposure, for some exposure, either in their homes or some independence at home, or some exposure out of state, that they would be more likely to - they would be more likely to think only in terms of these few - these few cliches that the polite Citizens' Council has.

Warren: How many young Mississippians do you know, of roughly your age?

Murphy: Well, not many. I would say I've spoken to four or five or six. No, it would be more than that. Under a dozen - that is, that's not knowing either really. That's pretty much -

Warren: What kind of people were they - social-economic background, of these twelve be?

Murphy: Students for the most part. One a salesman. Let's see - can you think of -

Warren: But these young people all accept the standard segregation's lies, is that it?

Murphy: No, on the whole these were people who - yes - reasonable. On the other hand - there was something that stopped - you would seem to - you came to a phrase. I remember a conversation about paternalism, for example, which we talked about for a long time - for about Mississippians treating Negroes well, and of the genuine love that existed here, and we tried to get closer to define the term. To say, well, how can it be love if you never allow people to pass beyond a certain point? You never allow them to go any further. So that what the term meant to us, it did not mean to them - and we could really never get beyond this.

Warren: This question has many - has the possibility of human relations - decent human relations. I've talked to people in this town - Negroes in this town who have said that the fact that over the centuries there have been bonds of personal understanding and personal affection between Negro and white individuals is a great asset in the Southern situation. Not a few Negroes will say that. Others will deny ^{it} / hotly - there's always been a trap, always been a lie. You find any thing said about this.

Moses: Well, I talked to lots of Negroes about this - and as I see it, you see. I'll just start with one thing and then I'll go through the whole resume of . We've had long conversations about Negritude - about Negroness - about legal things in America, but not of America somehow, and thereby Negroes, or the majority of Negroes, it is said, have escaped the evils of America, its and of this sort. From this generalization I react in this manner. I cannot say that because he's not been of America, he's escaped, simply because he hasn't really participated he doesn't - he's not aware of - or he can't be damaged by the practices of America - the culture and the mediocrity. As I see it, the fact that the Negro hasn't been involved in the dynamic aspects of American government means that he girds to himself the most shallow parts of our culture - of the American culture, in general, and - in other words, that I think - my feeling is that the majority as such is suffering under a great delusion. As far as - now this goes - this goes to the personal affection that has existed between the white Southerners - the whites and Negroes, I found that they mostly use this as a - one that sort of defrays the - that pushes the guilt. You see, they walk around in this atmosphere of secrecy -

Warren: The Negro does?

Moses: The Negro and the white, who has this -

Warren: Both?

Moses: Yes, both. Who have this - yes both of them, suddenly - the white side^I/think, are under much more direct pressure from whatever the whites have discounted in the Negroes, but the fear for the Negroes lives long after naturally the reason for that fear. What I'm saying is that the whites and the Negroes who do have this sort of bond use it mostly to show to each other how reasonable they are. Or, they use it to - I've know them to use it indulgently, sort of a patting themselves on the back sort of thing - a very secret understanding of the real problems and the fact that they can - that a bond can exist between us too. And they - it's a - for the Negro I think it's - well, certainly there can be a genuine affection between two people, period. For the Negroes here who haven't risen further than shoe-shine boys, or the taxi-cab drivers, for them I think, it's out of the schism that you said the - that DuBoise talks about as the assimilation or - for the Negroes who are on the upper level, the higher echelon here - who have developed bonds of relationships between whites and Negro - let's say I - that you can't - either in-system. If Mississippi is a product of an/exposure and ignorance, let's say, neither party then is going to escape unharmed. I don't - now - this means that both of them have somehow to be damaged, mentally - their patterns of thought cannot be normal, and I would start from there and say not casually at all that any relationship they have together cannot be just a

positive - it can be positive, but it cannot be one that can be accepted on a normal basis. They have to have - there has to be certain conversations, and over-conversations that are enmeshed in the relationship.

Warren: I was talking with a very brilliant young lady, at Howard, some little time back. She's second in the law class there and has been through the mill. She's been in on the demonstrations and in the jails, and she's a splendid orator too. A very appealing one. But, this is in a private conversation. She said that "I am born on a farm in Virginia; raised there and I have optimism about the Southern situation," she said, "because the Negroes and the whites in the South have a common history - and lots of common recognition, mutual recognition, human recognitions, over the centuries. But even when you find violence, you find it in human terms. The man knows what he's doing and in the human sense; has some inkling of it anyway. What frightens me is Harlem, or Detroit, or Chicago, where there's no common experience to fall back on. I think here we have some grounds for optimism for working it out into a world of decent human relations." Does that make any sense to you? Now, you both are from another world. Make any sense to you?

Moses: I used to think somehow the South - the Southern situation was involved more purely the black and white relationship than in the Northern states. That was before I lived -

Warren: Where have you lived except Mississippi?

Moses: In Ohio, Cleveland.

Warren: I mean anywhere in the South have you lived?

Moses: Nowhere. Nowhere lived, except Mississippi. I've been to Atlanta, and visited there for two weeks.

Warren: But you think she's wrong now.

Moses: I think that - that she's opposing the things which don't necessarily relate. I think that the Northern situation can almost be approached from the level that would apply to the American situation - that there is unemployment; there needs to be better housing conditions; there needs to be integration of the schools. So - for economic reasons I consider that the Northern situation is one that has a much more natural ^{focus,} - their ghettos, Negro ghettos, their Puerto Rican ghettos, their Polish ghettos, and the persons who is in Government should take this thing and would have to approach it from the fact that we're getting of our ghettos. I think that in one segment the situation is equally hopeless, because I don't find that - I think that the Southern Negro - the Southern white is very ignorant of the Southern Negro. And almost entirely now when he is much more afraid - at least, in the North there are chances for - they say. for instance to think of a common background as a uniting force. And, of course, we think of it when it's all in the spirit, such as in France, I suppose, when - if I was in France and I was a Frenchman and I walked into a room

with Frenchmen and with a whole lot of Americans, I would naturally gravitate to the table with Frenchmen; in the uniting of cultural ideas, to apply it to - to make it, in fact, you can't improvise - to make it, in fact, say that one world produces so much that one has a much more positive effect in the South - I think that the Southern white is entirely ignorant of the Southern Negro. And I'll say it's because the bonds of affection and the sympathy have been on distorted terms, and that wherever they have known a Negro, or a Southern White has known a Negro, he's never known a real Southern Negro - or he's never known that Negro. He's known a facade that the Southern Negro has had to put up in order to preserve himself. And, the Southern whites have never come out in the open to really know that Negro. He had to put on a facade with the Negro himself. I think that in - where it's wrong, violates - happens to be an outbreak in Harlem, where there is raw violence because they have seen each other actually. I'm - in other words, I don't agree with her.

Warren: This young lady?

Moses: This young lady. I think that it's all a lot of - I think that's a product - it's a whole lot of sympathetic bull. Bull crap. To think that the Southern - you know, that this can be approached on a sympathetic bonds and some lien that unites the two simply because they have known the - you know,

I think that's some product of it, as a matter of fact, too.

Warren: Do you think it's easier in Cleveland?

Moses: Easier in Cleveland? I think that -

Warren: To have to have in the future a rational society? A humane society?

Moses: Yes, I think it's easier in Cleveland. I think here, after we go through the racial relations bit, we have to go through the whole ignorance bit. I mean these have to coincide, but I think I've not found such a deficit in mental - in thought here, than I've found in any place I've gone. And the institutions preserve it. I think, that see, while, I think that it's not a project of emotions. I approach it consciously, and I think that while in Cleveland and in New York they are clearing up the educational system, the revolution in that - there's a possibility of academic feat in there, and there's propaganda in favor of thinking. Here there's not, and they will resolve our pure - we can talk in these terms about better white races because people will be able to think better, not because of any sympathetic bonds. People are not able to think here. That's a lot. I say, I used to think that too, but I face here, you see, a Cleveland. I face here very similar to Cleveland and I grew up there.

Warren: Yes, you said Cleveland.

Moses: Yes, well, I'm more like a grown-up in Cleveland than I

grew up in. And as I see Cleveland going through certain evolutions. My mother called me and said, "They're having riots here because the Negro doesn't get the education that the white kid does." And my mother - but to admit this. ~~Two~~ years ago, she couldn't have. But I see - just like when I was in France I saw a 1942 Americanisms of the claims and the advertising and the whole influx of American society. I think that it is not only - you know - it's irrational - this evolution of thought developed.

Warren: Let me give another quote, from a starting point. Well, I'll paraphrase it. I don't lay hand to it immediately. Oh, yes. This is by Gordon Hancock, another Negro social-scientist and historian. "The color question is a social problem and as such is no different, essentially, from any other social problem. And, by reason of this fact, it responds to the same pressures of adjustment or maladjustment. Social problems by their very nature do not lend themselves to instantaneous and absolute solutions." Now, how do we square such a deal with Freedom Now? Does Freedom Now mean instantaneous and absolute solutions? If not, how do we square them. Do you see what I'm driving at?

Moses: Yes.

Warren: I didn't pretty well -

Moses: Do you want to say -

Murphy: I just as soon not, but on the other hand, I fail to see how anyone could operate against these odds without having a very high ideal in mind.

Warren: Well, an ideal, yes. But, let's press it a little bit. You mean Freedom Now is an emotional slogan, which cannot by the nature of the case conform, be referred to as real social process, is that right? Is that what you're saying.

Murphy: Freedom Now represents and it cannot be made to - what happens is - it's certainly emotional, but what it represents is the question of why - it's the facing the abomination of the incomprehensibility of the system itself and why at the same time -

Warren: Say that again - that struck me as interesting. Can you say it again.

Murphy: I guess. Certainly, it's emotional reaction. To make it - to put it in these terms and say it cannot be made to conform with the regular, due process of social change - what it is - it's the confrontation with the incomprehensibility of the system, or the incomprehensibility of prejudice and discrimination, and so in a sense it is at the same time asking why isn't it possible that it - social change can be instantaneous. I mean, it's a very naive question in a sense. Why isn't it possible that people are able to realize and that social changes is able to come about because you've improved a fallacy and

because you can see exactly what's being done by discrimination, the caste system. So, it seems to me that although reasonable people realize that change will be a gradual process, that Freedom Now is again an attempt - and can only be an attempt - especially in Mississippi where we realize that jobs will not come easily, you know. That employment will not be solved immediately, because -

Warren: Because they aren't here, you mean.

Murphy: Because they aren't here. Yes. There can only be an attempt to attract the national attention - only be an attempt to make someone a witness, bring into the mainstream of society the injustices that one has suffered. Now, this is the only way that we're ever going to accomplish any change, I suppose - to make people aware of what exactly is going on.

Warren: You mean - I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I want to say it back so I make sure I've got what you mean, - and a little differently. Do you mean that the Now - actually is a definition of a direction of achievement, rather than an expectation - a statement of expectation of immediate solution.

Murphy: It's both. At the same time, I was saying that the emotional reaction is the expectation of immediate solution. And for leaders, I would suppose - the people who realize that Freedom means - I shouldn't - are in terms of sitting where you want to in the Coliseum - I mean making sure that the taxpayers'

money is going for the benefit of the whole society of sewers and street lamps, and of responsible government. For people who realize that this is what freedom is - I - not - for them I guess it's a direction. I mean, they are leading the people, they're leading the people - for the people themselves, for me and I would choose the mode of questioning. I would choose, even though this is not politic. This is not the way that - this is - in other words, to say that - there is - when people talk about gradual change, when people talk about understanding the system and reacting realistically within it, which I would suppose, which would be in agreement with the due processes of social change. These people themselves are almost incompetent -

Warren: Excuse me a second. I don't think Handicapped means by due process necessarily retarding the process, but just the fact that time is always an element of social change.

Murphy: ...turn your questions around, but I would wonder if the leaders responsible for bringing about ^{social} some/change can ever be asked to understand due process.

Warren: Perhaps the leaders do, but know something else, that it's not politic to state it that way.

Murphy: No, I think then they cease to be leaders.

Warren: Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and also said, "Liberty is gained by inches."

dramatic Revolutionary act. The other is this colorful observation. See, out of the same man. See what I'm getting at?

Murphy: I would say then that perhaps the programs, y s, I can see the programs organized under the banner of Freedom Now, as perhaps only moving by inches. On the other hand, I think the impatience has to be established.

Warren: This is the same topic, but I want to approach it another way. Why would this revolution not have occurred thirty years ago, in the middle of the Depression? There was certainly provocation. There was suffering. There was the same, even more injustice, by some standards, you see. There was more brutality then, than now. Why wasn't the revolution then?

Moses: .. do it. You see, it seems that in the thirties there wasn't ^{as} much identification with the, with the labor force, which was a revolution mainly of labor -

Warren: Labor revolution.

Moses: Didn't combine - didn't encompass the world that the revolution that the Negro workers usually come - the labor forces did not encompass the moral - did not, as a matter of fact it was under a banner - it was under a more ideological banner fluctuating between - well, in other words, I'm saying that this - the Negro revolution, I think, encompasses more - touches

upon more institutions, touches on more - it has an added dimension, which would tend to involve people than the labor of a certain -

Warren: But why didn't the Negro make himself felt then in something approximating the way he makes himself felt now?

Moses: All I can say is that there is an evolution of thought going on. There's an interesting essay by Jackson, ~~Ethel~~ Jackson who writes about the Negro, the Negro looked on and reviewed with modern day sensibility, which is - she chooses the image of the absurd, and she chooses three novelists - Richard Wright, and -

Warren: You want to get your phone?

Moses: O.k. I want to say what I - she goes to Ellison -

Warren: Ralph?

Moses: Ralph Ellison, and shows this as a - as the evolution say, of the Negro stock, of the Negro equilibrium, the Negro equanimity. And saying that the novel that Richard Wright wrote, used as the image of wealth - the whole point is that I would say that - I would tend to say that - well, first there are added things. I can add the Africa - the fact that Africa is certainly asserting itself, and before there used to be a non-identification with Africa, and now is identification with the power there and the blackness. And this also is a step in the evolution of thought. And there's an accumulation of knowledge of ourselves

here. I'm not sure if I - whether I'm speaking of it in the correct terms.

Warren: Increase in group identity?

Moses: Increase in group identity and also knowledge of the past - knowledge of the fact that our history, the struggle of history started with the slave revolts; and that it's been going on. And, I mean that people have been doing - if we were aware of the fact that Nat Turner, DuBoise said and thought in 1910 - you know, whatever, 1910, what we're thinking now - and was faced with the same problems.

Warren: So it's a long evolutionary process involved, in which this is an episode.

Moses: Pardon? Of which -

Warren: Of which this is an episode.

Moses: Yes, I would think of it in those terms.

Warren: I don't want to keep you away from that phone.

Moses: I'm going. An evolution of thought and an evolution of awareness.

Warren: Where would the Negro leadership have come from, a massive Negro leadership, have come from thirty years ago? Was it there, or -

Moses: I suppose that is - I haven't thought of it - too much - I suppose that's true, naturally, the fact that -

Warren: There are individuals that we can name. But now there

are so many, you couldn't begin to name them. If you have that quality of leadership, who actually are functioning as leaders and organizers. Where would they have come from thirty years ago?

Moses: Well, from the big cities.

Warren: If they were there, why didn't you get the action?

Moses: Well, see, here's the whole thing here. It seems that during this time Negroes have been struggling to make it to the white society, more than the Negroes in general did not have a special opportunity to think of revolution, of changes. That they were - Harry Bellefonte at that time, was struggling to become a singer. Other people who have made it were struggling just simply to show that their own individual talents were recognized. And I say that I think that this is part of it - that we've gone through certain stages.

Warren: Yes.

Moses: And if you ask where would the Negroes have come from - Harry Bellefonte might be a leader, instead of a singer if he were born after the War, post-World War -

end of tape.