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RPW: Why that - why did they do that?

RG: Well, Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company has a very fine hiring policy. They have had a very fine policy of upgrading these roles recently. There was a young Negro fellow, Carl Chansler, who was upgraded to the position of assistant chief attorney in one of the sections, and this was a first with the Illuminating Company. You have another young Negro fellow who has a fairly high position with the Illuminating Company, and there are some others in the lower echelon in the company. At Ohio Bell Telephone you have a Negro who is one of the supervisors down there, Lowell Henry, who was formerly in the City Council of the city of Cleveland, and you have several girls in the supervisory categories on the lower level, on the operating level, and as far as most of the companies, you cannot point to them with the same type of record as you do with the Ohio Bell Telephone Company and at CEI - Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company.

RPW: How much Negro-owned business is there here?

RG: Well, we have in Cleveland quite a few Negro-owned businesses. I was formerly the president of the Cleveland Business League, an organization basically comprised of Negroes in business, in the professions and in the various trade categories. And we have at this time - I'm quite sure - we had a study made about five or six years ago - there are over two thousand Negro businesses and professional men and tradesmen in the city of Cleveland. Many of these businesses are marginal businesses. Some of the businesses are rather substantial. We have the Cleveland Sausage Company - Mr. Credon died last year, but

he headed up the substantial business here in the sausage manufacturing field. We also have Couch's Sausage, and this is a young man who has a good business going. We also have a Savings and Loan Association here - Quincy Savings and Loan - I think they have assets of close to six million dollars - this is a Negro owned and operated business, though there are some white stockholders - they are in a minority. Then you have the Dunbar Division of the Supreme Life Insurance Company - they're operating here. Of course, Supreme bought out the stock in the Dunbar Life Insurance Company, a company started here in Ohio. And as far as the large Negro businesses, you don't have the large substantial businesses that we should have in the community. However, we do have several Negro insurance agencies, whereas ten years ago you did not have one Negro insurance agency because Negroes weren't able to obtain agencies in this city. My law partner is a lawyer but he devotes most of his time to the general insurance field, and he has been in this field for ten years, and he often belabors the fact that he wished that he had started in the insurance business much earlier, but unfortunately he was unable to start in the field until in the early part of the '50's because no Negro was able to get an agency.

RPW: I was talking with Adam Clayton Powell the other day, and one of the first things he said was, the old organizations, the old leadership is finished. They are through. How does that strike you?

RG: Well, I would like to state that I may share his opinion partially

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that they may be through. I don't think that there is any reason for this other than the fact that they are old, and as you know when you have labored in the vineyards of civil rights and other organizations for many, many years you tire of this, and when you reach a certain age you just do not have the vim, vigor and vitality that you formerly had. Now -

RPW: What about CORE?

RG: CORE? You mean the - this is a young people's organization, but I think that CORE -

RPW: He said the same thing about CORE and about SNNC - all together - the big five organizations.

RG: He said - what did he say about that?

RPW: All together - they are not significant any more. That's what he says.

RG: They are not significant? I think Adam Clayton Powell is somewhat wrong in this approach and in this statement. However, we did have a situation to develop here in Cleveland within the last three weeks, when the movement in Cleveland got to the point that - where there were demonstrations several weeks ago - one of the largest dailies in the state which is situated here in Cleveland wrote an editorial asking where are the Negro leaders, the responsible Negro leaders. And they proceeded to name these responsible Negro leaders in their editorial. Now, it just so happened that most of the names of the individuals named were the traditional Negro leaders that have been looked upon by the white community as leaders in this community -

RPW: You mean locally?

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RG: Locally - locally - and they felt that the responsible Negro leaders would come out and object and not agree with the techniques being used by the younger fellows - I guess I could be considered one of the younger fellows in this movement in Cleveland - but we did have a meeting - these so-called Negro leaders called a meeting - twenty-five of them - about thirty of them gathered at the YMCA, and these were your traditional Negro leaders. Some of them were - there were two judges there, and others who have been on the scene for years. It just so happened that a few of us younger fellows were intruded in this meeting, and as a result of that meeting we discussed the school boycott that was to take place in the city of Cleveland. Of course, the newspapers were opposed to the school boycott. And we discussed other things. But as a result of this meeting, all of these leaders - if they were to be called leaders - I am not a leader but I was at the meeting - but we all agreed that evening that the school boycott was a good thing, we went on record as approving and endorsing the school boycott, we went on record as approving and endorsing the program of the United Freedom Movement, which I imagine you've heard of, in Cleveland. And this release was released to the newspaper, and all these men, with the exception of one, assented to the fact that their names could be included in the news release, and of course I am quite sure this dispelled any thinking on the part of the white community that the so-called responsible Negro leaders, who were the older leaders, were not behind the United Freedom Movement. It pointed out

to them that we were all together, including the traditional Negro leadership in the past, and we all joined hands together and they were solidly behind the entire movement here in Cleveland.

RPW: That would not be true in New York, of course. look
and see - I mean, for instance, CORE suspending
two chapters in New York, the Brooklyn and New York chapter, and the
whole struggle about the boycott there. (talking together)

RG: ... second boycott in New York City.

RPW: And the CORE - they both did. (talking together) And they suspended Bronson's outfit, you know.

RG: I know they suspended Bronson's group.

R PW: There's anything but unity in a situation like that.

RG: It's true - very true.

RPW: Now, what is the moral of that story?

RG: In New York City?

RPW: Yes.

RG: Well, I think that this was probably the result of the organizations in New York wanting to withdraw and not be associated with the more radical movement developing in the Brooklyn chapter of CORE. I think that the NAACP withheld from the - withheld support from the second school boycott in New York because they felt that this was an irresponsible move. But I understand from very good sources in New York City that the NAACP is now unhappy and they feel that they were wrong in not supporting the second school boycott in New York City, because the second school boycott was not a success. Another typical

example of this is what happened in my home town, Kansas City. Kansas City had a school boycott the same day we had a school boycott here in Cleveland, Ohio. In Cleveland, Ohio, between 92 and 95 percent of all Negroes in the city of Cleveland stayed out of school that day - about 65,000 children. In Kansas City, the NAACP withheld their support from the school boycott, and there were only about 40 percent of the children who stayed home from school in Kansas City, Kansas, on the same day we had our school boycott here. I feel that the fragmenting of the efforts by the withholding of support by the NAACP minimized the effectiveness of the school boycott in Kansas City, whereas in Cleveland all of the so-called Negro leaders were behind the movement, the boycott, the NAACP was in support of the boycott, CORE, Freedom Fighters and all the civil rights in this community, including many white organizations supported the school boycott in Cleveland, and it was almost a hundred percent successful in this city last month.

RPW: This matter of unity may or may not carry a price tag - of course one case to another. That is, take the - without the information about the boycott, say, in New York - except on this point. Gulamussen said that his schedule for integration was not kept he would rather see the school system wrecked. This is on record. That the school - public schools may have served their purpose anyway, he said. Now, this position, you see, - we'll say that brings in other questions - unity may be too high a price to pay for this - might be.

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RG: I agree that unity would be too high a price to pay under the circumstances which you just related to me. I did not know that Gulammussen had made the statement -

RPW: He made it - yes.

RG: - that he would rather see the school system wrecked than not to maintain the schedule which he felt was satisfactory integration. I feel there is a point where you can reach where it's just not tenable.

RPW: But youth is not the only consideration.

RG: Oh, no. There must be unity with a purpose, and a worthwhile purpose. Now of course here in Cleveland we felt that the school boycott, a one day boycott, would serve a worthwhile purpose to dramatize to the entire community, to the nation, to the world, how our children are being treated in Cleveland. However, suppose this had been a decision to have a boycott for two months, then I dare say we would not have had the unity even in Cleveland with such a movement as a two-months school boycott.

R PW: The question of integration is not the only issue with you here, is it? It's quality as well.

RG: No, the real problem is quality education, and I feel that some people do not understand what we mean when we say quality education. I don't know whether you know it or not, but the Cleveland Board of Education as a result of the United Freedom Movement's presentation last fall, appointed a citizens' council on human relations to study the school system and to bring forth some recommendations to eradicate

discrimination and various other things existing in the school system, to bring forth recommendations for an inter-service training program for teachers, to bring forth recommendations as to how we can bring about greater pupil contact between groups of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, to bring back recommendations as to how we can help the educationally deprived child, and then to bring back recommendations as to how we can effectively integrate the Cleveland school system, taking into consideration all the rights, privileges of every one in the city. This committee had sixteen members, five of which were Negroes - and I was appointed to this committee, even though I was active in the civil rights organization. I was the only Negro who was appointed to the committee who was active in civil rights organizations and the United Freedom Movement. The only other person appointed to the committee who had an axe to grind or who was affiliated with some other type movement was a young white fellow from the Collinwood area, which is an area where Negroes children are being bussed in as a result of overcrowded conditions in the Negro areas. Now, this committee met for a period of four months approximately from November 20th until March 31st. We found, for instance, that there were schools on the west side that were predominately white, or all white. In one instance there was one junior high school that only had one Negro child in the junior high school. But at this school for instance the pupil turnover between September of last year and January of this year was about a fifty percent turnover in pupils. Then we found that at this particular school there was no parent-

teachers association. The parents weren't interested enough to have a PTA. We found that there was a high absentee rate, a high tardyism rate. We found also that at this school the principal related that half of the children graduated from this junior high school were not ready to enter high school. Now, this was a school where there was only one Negro child - there were nine hundred white - or more white children there - there were only two Negro teachers in this school. So this is the type of quality education that they are getting on the west side. Now, another example of the quality of education we're getting here in Cleveland for all children is the fact that last week - week before last - they announced the winners of the National Merit Scholarship Examinations, and these examinations are given all over the country, and in greater Cleveland we had several scholarship winners. In the city of Cleveland, which has over 150,000 children in the school system, which is more than double the next largest community in this county, there was only one child to win a scholarship in Cleveland. Whether it's important or not, the one child was a Negro girl. Not one white child in Cleveland won a scholarship. Now, where we are now - I live here in Shaker Heights - this is a rather small suburb, and this is a suburb where there aren't too many children - not nearly as many as you have in Cleveland - but they had about two or three - I know at least two scholarship winners in this small suburb. In University Heights, another suburb just east of Cleveland, you had one or two or three scholarship winners in that small suburb. But in the city of Cleveland you only had one out of

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all the thousands of children in the city, to win a scholarship.

RPW: Yes, that makes the point.

RG: This to me speaks more clearly than anything I can say as to the quality of education all children are getting in the city of Cleveland. We do not have libraries in our elementary schools in Cleveland, and Congressman Green when she was here about two weeks ago deplored the fact that in a city of this size and magnitude they have no libraries in the elementary schools. This is ridiculous. So really as we complain about the integration we are also complaining about a lack of quality education in the community - in this community of Cleveland.

RPW: Do you have children?

RG: No, we have no children unfortunately, but I have clients who have children. I don't want to say that I am being selfish about this because I did come up through a segregated school system in Kansas, and I know the ills that can be derived from having a segregated education, I know how difficult it was. When I went to the University of Kansas, for the first time in my life - Lawrence, Kansas - I was thrown into contact with white students. I had been an honor roll student in Kansas City, Kansas, in the segregated school system. I was on the Honor Society, and I did not have to study too hard because all the Negroes in the community went to this one school, Sumner High School, and when I graduated from high school there were only about 160 children graduating. So you can see how limited my competition was. But when I was thrown into competition with children from all over the

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state of Kansas, all over this country, and foreign students from all over the world, for the first time in my life I learned that I had to study, and I had to work a little harder to keep up, and I never was able to make the honor society or honor roll in college because I did not have the background I felt I needed to compete on equal basis with these other children because they were taking courses in high school that we didn't even have in our high school. And this is what we are fighting for in Cleveland, and I know this, that if a child does not have a good education he cannot come out and get a good job.

RPW: Have you been following this HarYou program in Harlem, in the papers?

RG: Which program is that?

RPW: HarYou - H-a-r-Y-o-u - the new -

RG: (talking together) ... action for youth that's under the federal program for delinquent children?

RPW: Yes. Dr. Kenneth Clark is the mainspring of it.

RG: Yes, we have one here in Cleveland similar to the one in Harlem, called CAY in Cleveland - Community Action for Youth.

RPW: Has that been effective?

RG: Well, I hesitate to say. They've had a very difficult time getting it off the ground because of many petty jealousies existing at the top. We had the assistant director who resigned, he was the man that did all the leg work, to get the money for the program in Cleveland.

RPW: How much money was involved in it here?

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RG: Let me see - I think it was about ten million dollars or something like that.

RPW: Pretty substantial.

RG: Yes, it's very substantial sum, and it's a temporary program. They have had a difficult time hiring staff - they're just getting the staff completed, because a lot of people are fearful of coming to this city for this temporary program - it's only guaranteed for three years, and I have several friends working in the program, and the work that they are doing is a very excellent job, but they've had difficulty getting it off the ground.

RPW: Well apparently the other has an enormous financial background - a couple of hundred million, apparently -

RG: In Harlem? We may have more than ten million dollars allocated to it, because I have not been active in the program and there are others who know much more about Community Action for Youth than I know about it.

RPW: What I was getting at is this -

RG: In fact, they just brought a boy from New York to head this one - a 36 year old Negro fellow, to head the program here.

RPW: What I was getting at was this, that Dr. Clark has in recent years changed his view that he had some years ago - not too many years ago - and some others who are responsible and thoughtful people in the New York system - the social New York system of schools - who are interested in it - have changed their position - modified it - not in saying - not integration but in saying that this is not - it has

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become secondary for the drive for immediate crash program education. Integration not as the watchword, integration to be achieved but immediately improve on the quality program.

RG: Creating the quality of education -

RPW: Immediately.

RG: I have heard that Dr. Clark has somewhat shifted positions on -

RPW: (talking together) He has shifted positions on that, and a lot of other people have too in the last year as far as I can make out.

Oscar Handlin had his recent book, and his desires and his prescriptions I think would satisfy most people. That is, he is for an integrated society and for integrated schools without any question - no equivocation - it's a question of how you arrive at this. He wants to emphasize equality as a means rather than integration as a solution - equality of means by all legal aspects and all - not merely civil rights but all the but integration has been a difficult thing to achieve in certain practical ways immediately, and he emphasized that the approach of the quality rather than the other.

RG: I agree that integration in itself should not be the total end, but in Cleveland for instance it will be very difficult to integrate all the children in the city of Cleveland. In fact, there are more Negro children in the city of Cleveland than there are white children in the school system.

RPW: There's our problem right there.

RG: So there's a problem, and not only that, but Cleveland is peculiarly

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set up physically in that we have a river running down between the east side and the west side of Cleveland, and most of the people living on the west side of Cleveland are white, and I understand that close to 85 or 90 percent of the Negro children live east of the river on the east side, so right there you have a somewhat more difficult physical barrier toward integration than in most cities. But on the other hand, we are not asking for hundred percent integration of the school system, we're not asking, for instance, to have children bussed across the city, a massive reverse bussing is what it's called. We're only asking to achieve maximum integration under the situation in Cleveland. But in addition to that we want to upgrade the quality of education. There aren't many areas where integration can be achieved, and we want them to do the things necessary to integrate.

RPW: Now, your situation, as far as I can make out, is somewhat distorted or given incomplete coverage in the national press.

RG: That's true. For instance -

RPW: As far as I can make out.

RG: Well, in the national press, but even in the local press, we don't get the proper coverage of the problem here in Cleveland. The local press does not paint a very good picture of the civil rights movement in Cleveland. At every opportunity they attempt to more or less miscolor the situation and to confuse the citizens. I have had many white citizens that I've talked to - many groups - and they ask why could not you have gotten this in the newspaper? Why could they not explain the situation the way you have explained it? And I indi-

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cated to them that we don't run the newspapers. We give them releases and we give them statements - they will not print them. So we really don't get a good dissemination of the facts not even in Cleveland, not just in the national press but even locally. So this is one of the great problems we have in this city. People just don't know. There are so many things that are wrong with the city of Cleveland's educational system and other things going on here, that you just cannot get a favorable press. For example, the press - when I say the press I am speaking about both newspapers, since one of them is called The Press - the newspapers in Cleveland would lead the people to believe as a result of the Supreme Court of the United States not deciding to hear the Gary, Indiana case, that the Supreme Court of the United States has pronounced that the neighborhood school is the law of the land and they will do nothing to disturb the concept of the neighborhood school, and the United States Supreme Court said nothing of the kind. They only refused to hear the case. This does not make a conclusive finding that the neighborhood school is sacrosanct. Now, on the other hand we didn't read anything to my knowledge in the Cleveland papers about the Manhasset, New York, decision, where the federal court decreed that they should integrate the school system and that the board of education was within its rights to take affirmative steps to integrate the school system and eradicate de facto segregation. In the New York Times Tuesday of this week - Monday of this week, I guess - no, Tuesday - Tuesday of this week - day before yesterday - they had an article in the New York Times about the Supreme Court de-

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cision, and they went on to amplify what it meant, and they had a statement in the New York Times attributed to Robert Carter, the teacher counsel of the NAACP, and then they also had an article about the Montclair, New Jersey, decision that was rendered by the Supreme Court of New Jersey, in which the Supreme Court of New Jersey unanimously decided that Montclair, New Jersey, school board was right in eradicating - completely eliminating an all-Negro junior high school and distributing the Negro children to the other three junior high schools in the city. There was nothing in the Cleveland papers about this decision - nothing.

RPW: This is the end of Tape #1 of the conversation with Mr. Gunn.

Proceed on Tape #2.

(end of tape)