



Interview with Charles Joseph Jones

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Transcript of an Interview about Life in the Jim Crow South
Charlotte (N.C.)

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MR. J. CHARLES JONES
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA
JUNE 16, 1993

INTERVIEWED BY:
KARA MILES

TRANSCRIBED BY: FRANCES COPELAND

BEGINNING OF TAPE

JCJ: Alright, my name is Joseph Charles Jones. I was born in Chester, South Carolina. Four o'clock or thereabouts on August 23, 1937, at home, and I was not quite expected so all preparations had not been made, but it didn't matter to me 'cause I said, alright, let's get it on. I'm here. Rough shot, but let's go with what we got.

KM: Did you grow up in South Carolina?

JCJ: Lived in Chester, South Carolina. One Bailey Street, on top of a hill from 1937 to 1947 when in November of that year, thereabouts, we moved here to Charlotte, North Carolina. My father was a Presbyterian, well, he wasn't a minister at that point, but he was what we call, what they call a missionary, a Sunday school missionary that provided contact with people in the rural south, black, who were not connected to or far away, too far away from any kind of organized church or religious institution. So he went out and found and related to them. But he had to come to Charlotte, because, well, either here or Atlanta because

Johnson C. Smith University Theology Seminary was here and the church was requiring him to get his degree, so we moved here in 1974. Down the street, 2112 which is seven houses from where I presently live.

KM: What do you remember about South Carolina?

JCJ: Well, I remember that we lived in a segregated society meaning there was nothing where black and white folks on a social level or even professional level had any kind of contact of equal status at all. We lived in a segregated system. Although, I remember very, very positive things about growing up, but I was completely aware that we were at a, at a point, we were living in a segregated environment. So what I remember about South Carolina was lot of kids I grew up with, and shoot marbles with. Snatched peaches off folks' trees when they were just about ripe, with or without their permission. Generally, helped to have it. I remember those early times when the soldiers would come through on my street and I would sing to them, you're in the Army now, you're not behind a plow, you'll never get rich by digging a ditch, you're in the Army now. And they would wave back. And I was also selling watermelons and cantaloupes that my father would bring in from friends that he knew in the farms in South Carolina. So, I remember the school was right across the street from where we lived, literally. And, I remember at five years old, it was time for me to go to school. Although, legally I suppose I was suppose

to be six, but Miss Cassell, who was the first grade teacher was a friend of my family's, and a friend of me. So, I went on over and took a couple of books and said, I'm ready for school. Miss Cassell talked later about that experience, and she said to my mother, well, it was kind of funny, because Charlie came in. It was clear that he wasn't going anywhere, but the books he brought, I couldn't help him with and I knew he couldn't read, because one of the books was What All Young Expectant Mothers Should Know. But he came in and sat down anyway. I participated as a full first grader with all the rights and privileges appertaining that to and then when the next year came and I was sent back to the first grade, I said, wait a minute. You don't understand. I've done this. What do you mean. It's not legal. That ain't my problem. So, they, no, you gotta stay here. So, alright, and every time Miss Cassell would ask a question, I'd answer it, either when she'd recognize me or not. I'd just blurt it out. I mean, I been there. So, after about two weeks, they, Miss Cassell, said, wait a minute. I can't teach this child or the class anything. Get him out of here. I said, yes, and I was passed on to second grade. So, I've been a year ahead, and was a year ahead through it all.

KM: What else do you remember about your teachers in South Carolina?

JCJ: Well, my mother, Mrs. Ione Jones, was a teacher, and at

Finley High School which was the high school for black folk. We was Negroes back then. Well, that was the polite way of saying it. We were, I guess we call ourselves Negroes. Small town, so about everybody knew everybody, and when I was passed on to second grade, the teacher, what's her name, I'll think about it. Mobley, I believe it was, had large capital letters and curser capital letters and small letters on the wall and we would be required to copy them on large lined paper. The lines, the space between the paper was large, and she would walk around with a ruler in her hand, and when she detected that you had gone below the line, pow. She'd smack your knuckles with that ruler. And I said to myself, wait a minute. There's something wrong. Why does one have to stay in the lines if one writes the letters legibly and communicates. She didn't want to hear any of that. Pow, it was form, pow, and I said, now I know that this ain't right. So, I managed to persuade, probably my mother and father, that Miss Mobley and I just were not going to make it, and began to understand the class distinctions and power within the black community because my mother was who she was and my father was who he was, whatever that was, I was allowed to leave that school and go to York Road where one of my mother's friends taught, and went through second grade as a member of the group with no necessary, with no apparent special considerations and had to pay my dues. But, I was also aware that even if I screwed off to some extent, I

was probably going to be promoted anyway, because that was the social thing to do. Fortunately, my mother and father required me to use my mind very vigorously and so I tended to try to do that.

Second grade teacher, darling lady, woman. I loved her very much. I loved that she liked me. So, I felt good about me. And if I needed discipline, she'd discipline me and I'd say, yes 'mam.

I was always taught to say yes 'mam. Babcock was her name. And then I was promoted to third grade, six, seven, eight, eight years old and went to the, I don't know, I might have finished third grade in that same class over in York Road. Then I came back to fourth and fifth grade, I believe, fifth grade, five and six, no fourth grade with Miss Crosby. And Miss Crosby was also a friend of the family. Miss Crosby was a very sensuous lady who was open and honest about most things, including sex, and I remember we'd talk about it, and it wasn't no big thing, and most other people in life didn't talk about sex, and procreation, and when you should start it or not start it, and the consequences of having it when your hormones start kicking in, and your sperm start maturing. And I was saying, wow, what's this stuff. And the eggs start maturing in the woman, the young ladies. And I said, wow, that shore is different from what I had heard about the birds and the bees over, and it was nice. It was like a subject that many people were very uncomfortable with. She just like of laid it out there. And as I think about, back, now, she was just a healthy

person who happened to enjoy sex and didn't have any problem communicating it. I don't mean by enjoying sex that she was graphic about sexual intimacy and making love and all that. I don't mean that, but I mean the whole aura around her attitude about sex was very positive and so I learned about the birds and the bees. I learned about, and then at age ten, and in the fifth grade, we came to Charlotte, North Carolina. And the first day, fifth grade, new town, bright lights, big city, from Chester, South Carolina, twenty five thousand folks including dogs and hogs, and things of that nature and kind, and here we were in the bright lights, and the first day, ten o'clock, I went to school. Middleville. And Miss Wheeler, when I walked in, stopped the class and said, we have a new student. Charlie Jones. Well, now let's see where we can place you. I want you to stand right here. Take this book and I want you to read. And all the class members turned around and looked at me. Little red-head kid, freckled face, scared as hell, and I started looking at the book and I was stumbling on words and I was uptight and scared and the kids started laughing and Mrs. Wheeler started laughing, and I thought, oh, my God, what is this. And that evening, Charles Hunt, smacked me up side my head just because I was a little red kid coming to school, and I felt like, oh, my lord. What's this all about. Here I have come from a comfortable womb where I was nurtured as a little old, special bright kid into this environment where the

teachers even laugh at you when you can't read, and you can't read because you're nervous and you've been in school in Chester, South Carolina as a black male child who even though with an English mother who constantly corrected me. I didn't learn that well, and I was uptight about it. Charles Hunt popped me up side my head every day for a week and a half and finally I said, wait a minute.

He lived down the street here. At that point, we lived at 2112 which is West Trade Street, which is about five houses from here.

Charles Hunt lived at 2120. We lived one, two, three houses down, and we used to come up an alley, a little alley way in that back 'cause we could walk all the way up to the house. Finally, I, Charles hit me, and I popped him back, and for an hour and a half, we rumbled and fought in the alley and I got him at one point down. There was some barbed wire next to his head, and I was threatening to rub his head in it if he didn't give. And he didn't want to give, but he knew that I had finally gotten the best of him. So, finally, he said, I give, and from that moment Charles and I have been the absolute best friends in life. He went away to the war. I went away to school, and the movement and all, and after twenty some years, he came back home, and he sought me out. I was kind of in, I was kind of like his friend but I was also like his adult male protector. I guess I was his father, though we were peers, and he would come up as he tried to get back into civilian life and talk about things that happened to me. And

we'd sit on the stoop and he would tell me about the people he had killed in Viet Nam, and the circumstances of him killing them to protect himself. Once couple, he choked them, mamasan and papasan with his bare hands. They were about to shoot him, he thought. And we sat on the stoop, and from time to time shed tears and cried about us having grown up from little kids to people who were required to kill people, and neither of us felt good about that because we went to Sunday school together and learned Bible verses about thou shalt not kill, and we believed that because we told that by people that we respected and loved. And he had to go and kill people, and didn't really understand why. Neither did I, but we sat on the stoop and helped him gain his humanity again as I struggled with my own. Ah, he's still a friend and a client of mine. But then that wasn't what you asked me, was it?

KM: Let's go back, the teacher, Mrs. Crosby, taught you about sex. Did you parents know that

JCJ: Well, not exactly, but they did know that sex education was being taught and they weren't very comfortable with it. Most, so called respectable middle-classed black people were not comfortable with talking about sex, particularly in public places or period. So, I guess we was supposed to find out from each other and spread ignorance around. My father, however, did tell me about birth control and being responsible for your own behavior and taking responsibility for what might even, what might happen

as a result of intercourse, a child, and what that might mean for restricting my options, but that I should understand that I should be responsible. We're talking 1930, not, 1940, so I was born in 1937, 1942 and 1943 in Chester, South Carolina, rural south. So that's, it was not, Miss Crosby was not the most popular person in the social setting because people were a little uncomfortable with her teaching sex education.

KM: But no one tried to make her stop it

JCJ: Oh, I'm sure there were some discussions about it, and I'm sure there were parents who talked to the principal, Mr. Finley, about it, but Finley, apparently, let her proceed.

KM: You talked about being aware of class tensions there. That you were allowed special treatment.

JCJ: Sure. Sure, there were the juke joints. As I know have come to, let me talk about it back then, rather than now. There were places where people who worked hard but who drank liquor and occasionally got loud and danced and might even from time to time cut somebody or fight, would go on Friday evenings or Saturday nights. And good people. Good people, respectable people didn't go to juke joints. They didn't drink liquor and talk loud in a crowd and behave like that. So we were not permitted to associate bad people, but I had problems figuring out who was good, bad, because my friends, kids I went to school with, and I did the same things threw bricks and sticks up into the

pecan trees to get the fruits and played marbles and stuff. So I wasn't quite sure what that was all about, but there was a class consciousness based on what your profession was and what the color of your skin was, and my mother's very light skinned and I turned out to be somewhat light skinned. So that in of it's self gave us a status, right, wrong, or indifferent. I tend to think it's a part of the overall sickness of the American culture, but be that as it is, my father was a minister. My father had acquired a couple of little houses, including the one we were living in, for rental property. My father was a minister. My father was a Mason. My father helped the black professional and non-professional men in Chester, South Carolina, do things. They would put on the annual colored fair, of course, because the fair, they, and he would be a participant in the organization of that. As I look back on it now, my father was a very central figure in Chester, South Carolina, socially, politically, and therefore, and my mother, was an English instructor. We owned our own home, and so we were, therefore, accorded as much social status as one can have in a segregated southern, small southern town in 1943. If that answers your question.

KM: How about when you moved to Charlotte, was the same class and color.

JCJ: Yes, absolutely. My uncle, Arthur George, was, he was an uncle by marriage to my aunt, was dean of the theology seminary

at Johnson C. Smith University, and, therefore, knew the president of the school, and the so called important professional black people. So we were invited to maintain the social status that we had become accustomed to in a larger environment, and did, apparently. All of which left me feeling very uncomfortable, because intuitively I knew that I was no better than all of the children who's parents were not professional, and working people and all, and dark skinned or whatever, but I also knew that I was as good as all of the white kids that I knew about and saw from time to time. If that answers your question.

KM: What contact did you have with white kids, growing up, or with whites in general.

JCJ: In Chester, South Carolina, there was a school called Brainard Institute which was a black church related Presbyterian private school immediately across the street from us which had been active since around the end of the Civil War. One of the schools that the church with northern white money and resources helped established. It was, perhaps, fifteen, twenty acres, very well landscaped. There were several buildings on it. There were large pecans trees, which still are there, and other fruit trees.

Right across the street on the other side, which would have been a long block away was where the white community started, and the school had closed as a private church related school and had become, a couple of the buildings, the school house for black

elementary children in that area. Some of the white kids used to come over, my age kids, used to come over and get on the campus, and get pecans. We used to go and get pecans, and periodically, rocks would be thrown. Who started it? It wasn't important, but we would, periodically, run them down the hill from it, and every now and then they would run us and we would regroup. When I was about six, two or three things stand out in my mind. One, Jackie Robinson was knocking a ball everywhere on a white man's baseball field in the north someplace, and stole bases, and just was acting like a colored man, and we would never miss a game. I mean, the entire community would be glued to listening and inevitably Jackie would steal a base or knock a home run, and we'd be rooting. Never did understand how important that was at that point. I do understand it now. About that same time, I remember down in Aiken, South Carolina, or thereabouts, in the area, a story which apparently as follows. A black male in his twenties allegedly said something to a white female. That night the Klan and the respectable members of the community, white, came to, in robes, the house of this man, who was not there. They proceeded to take his wife who was about eight months pregnant to a tree. Strung her up by her legs. Slit her stomach, and the baby rolled out. They left them both. And to this day, nothing was ever done about that. I remember my father's face, sort of fear, I suppose, but indignation. Another incident that I recall, and I'm still in

Chester and I'm there for a youngun' of seven, about ten years old. Another friend of the family, sister of Junior Ayers, who I used to play, me and Christy, King and Junior Ayers, used to play a lot. One of his sisters, Junior, had gone to one of the drug stores in town to get a prescription. She was an instructor, a teacher, and she got her prescription and thanked the man, white, and he said, you say yes sir to me, and she refused to do it, and he slapped her. In the store. In town. In front of a bunch of people. And to this day, to my knowledge, nothing was done about to or concerning the man except that he received certain praises and accolades from the white fathers of the city. I remember the expression on my father's face as he met with, or was going to meet with, some of the elder men. I remember stories about black men who had been arrested and dying in jail. Beaten to death as we were apprised by the cell, other black men, and to this day, to my knowledge, nothing was done about many of those incidents. I remember, and it's interesting that you asked this and at this point, I'm remembering things that I didn't even aware, I wasn't even aware was in my psyche at this point. I remember, incidently, Junior Ayers, another one of Junior Ayers' sisters, bore two daughters, one of whom is Felicia Rashid and the other is what's the sister on,

KM: Debby Allen

JCJ: Yes. I remember another friend, Ayers, Mr. Ayers used

to drink a little alcohol every now and then. Junior and I would find, and Chris and I would find some old bottles that had just a little corner in it, and we'd pour 'em in and we'd drink a little bit and get just as high. We didn't know what the heck we were doing. But I remember one of the members of the so called inner group of professional or middle class black folks was accused of something and I remember the elder men meeting to decided how to protect him and get him out of town and get him up north. I remember that on two or three occasions, because as I recall, they were afraid that if they didn't do that, these folks would be killed. I remember, oh shoot, I remember a man being, black man, being chased down by bloodhounds that were brought in from Columbia. And I remember stories of some who were caught by the blood hounds and ripped apart. I remember other times, one particular occasion, one of the men that was fleeing, either shot at or threw a rock or something and hit one of the dogs, and the police opened up, and what was left of the man after twelve gauge shot guns, pistols, sticks, and whatever was pitiful nothing. I remember two friends of mine, Chris King and Harold Span were undertakers. I remember Chris and I sometimes used to go into the embalming room and we would see the bodies. The mutilated bodies of these black men, not that much older than us, some older men. I remember Chris would be proud of his father because by the time the funeral came around, the caved in faces some times, their eye

sockets that had been bashed in, the bullet wounds to the heads, the shot gun blast to the side of their heads would have been cosmetically so that the families would not have to endure the added pain of out of their children, their babies, their brothers or sisters, uncles and aunts, or uncles, generally black men, were killed. I remember that about white folks in Chester, South Carolina.

KM: What exactly did those things have on your life in the way you thought or believed ()

JCJ: Well, my mama told me, my grandmama too, that they had prayed. Mama told me that she had prayer and asked God for a boy child and if God would give her a boy child, she told me she promised God that she would give him back to him. I'm very much aware of you and I, and it's not that I'm not talking directly to you, but my mind has gone into a mode that I didn't realize I had not walked through. My father told me that you pay for the space you occupy in life, that you gave back of the talents that had been given to you to make the world somewhat better, and I guess I felt that. I wasn't going to be denied, 'cause I'd been told I was just as good as anybody. It made me felt, feel angry, confused, somewhat powerless, but I felt pretty good about myself so I guess that was one of those ingredients that motivated me later on to do some other stuff.

KM: What about whites in Charlotte, do you remember

JCJ: Well, this street, West Trade Street was the dividing line between the black community and a subdivision that was built by the federal government with racial restrictions as a part of the designed plan for white working class people, and we were not allowed to go across the street. Although we looked, the street is a regular width of a city, small community, street and so we were in not only ear shot but eye shot of kids playing in their back yards as we were playing in ours. The only thing that separated us was a street of asphalt about twenty five feet, twenty feet wide. I remember every now and then playing with a couple of the kids, but I also remember their parents yanked them back up and so did mine, and told me, you're not supposed to that.

Now, there's another thing going on in my life at this point, however. My father was very active in the Presbyterian church, the Presbyterian church, Northern Church it was called at that point, and he would be invited by northern churches to come and join with them in summer camps where kids, my age, would come and I got to know some white folks who were caring, sensitive, decent people. We would, every summer, go some place. One of the things that I remember very vividly is that we would go north during the summer on vacations and we had to plan from the time we left home where we were going to stop, with what relative or friend in order to go to the bathroom, in order to get something to eat. As a matter of fact, we would have to plan by calling or writing and

making arrangements before we got on the road, because there were no public accommodations where you would use the bathroom. I remember one time when I was four or five or whatever, needing to go to the bathroom and we were not permitted. We were, I was with my mother and I went, went to the bathroom in my clothes. Extremely humiliating experience, because I didn't have any place to go. But, anyway, we would plan, and the reason we had to plan all this, 'cause there were no public accommodations. There were no restaurants. There were no hotels. Every public accom, facility was segregated. If there were bathrooms, there were colored around the back, either in the grass or in an outhouse or in a hole. Women and men. And as I recall now, my father would not subject us to those kinds of indignities. So we would go north and stop in Charlotte, which was the first stop, where my uncle and aunt were, and then we would drive, from Charlotte we had to drive all the way to Richmond, Virginia. At that point, we're talking about U. S. 1 and not interstate highways, so we would be on the road from Charlotte. There was a little place in South Hill. A black restaurant that served the best stew meat and rice in the world, that had a bath room, that we'd stop and eat at. Friendly faces. Friendly people.

TAPE A - SIDE B

JCJ: Realtor and school teacher would have prepared, uh, I remember driving into the driveway and running into the house to run to the bathroom and all of us were and they knew it and they, gosh, they had two bathrooms, had one in the basement, too. Wow.

So the whole family would be running. We would be planning who would go where first, and the house was so warm, and meals were on the table smelling, had fried chicken and greens, and potato salad, and custard pies, and warmth. Just hugs and eat 'til you got your stomach full, and then, we'd spend the night and go, in next to Washington, D. C. relatives. Same scene. Fried chicken.

The whole bit. Then we'd leave Washington after a day or two, but while in Washington we would be told about some decent white people. Although we were still experiencing segregated facilities, and this is Washington, D. C., as I think about it now in the forties, fifties, and our next stop would be Philadelphia where our other relatives are. The Thomas's. Aunt Phyllis, gosh, would have spaghetti and meat balls, and greens, and fresh bread from yeast, and oh. And then we'd go to New York where other relatives had prepared the meals and beds to sleep in. And there was talk about some decent white folks, but even those trips in the so called north were totally segregated. I remember that. I'm not even sure what the question was. I just ramble on, don't I.

KM: So even in the north it was totally segregated meaning

you went to black restaurants.

JCJ: Sure, absolutely. There were times, however, say like in New York City. I remember the automats. There was a restaurant that had food in vending boxes that you could go in and put so much change in and get this, that, and the other, and it was like a cafeteria. And you could get your food and sit down with whomever. But my recollections were that most of the facilities on the way were segregated that my contacts primarily, 99.99% were black, but people in the north tended to have better jobs and tended to be a little more confident, and arrogant, and cocky. I remember that.

KM: You first said hearing talk of good white people. What kind of talk. What were they saying.

JCJ: Well, that on the job, for instance, I remember one of my uncles talking about a white man taking up for him when he'd been accused of something that he hadn't done. I'm talking about church folks, ministers, white ministers in northern churches, and other lay people who seemed to be genuinely interested in you as a person, but they were few and far between, but I remember stories about. Also, during that period of time, many churches in the north, Presbyterian churches, and throughout the north and midwest, as far away as Iowa would send to my father clothing. Some new. Some used, but excellent shape. Quality stuff that members of the church had gathered. Toys for Christmas. Baby

clothes and children's clothes. That my father would take and he would take me, wow, with him often into rural sections of the south, of South Carolina, Georgia. I remember very clearly down in Clarendon County, South Carolina, Daddy would, we went to this place. We had to stop at the big white house. It was a share cropping situation if you want to dignify it, to call it that. And I remember Daddy had to get permission from the land owner, white, and I remember my father, I remember my father, this proud but laid back black man saying when he was advised, not to disturb them niggers now. You can go back there. I remember my father saying, yes sir. And I remember the look on his face. And I remember when we left, him looking at me and kind of winking and said that's the only way we can get back here. And when we got back there, I remember him going into the house and all the elders would come in, and they would have meditation, and he would lead them in prayer, and establish trust, and I remember them talking to him as one of the elders. The men and the women who allowed in the conversation about things and how they were going and what problems they were having as they went through some of the clothes and got things for themselves. And I remember he would charge like for an overcoat, he would charge like three fifty, and like people could pile up stuff they needed and he would go through the piles and there would be shoes for kids who I saw in November and December running around with no shoes on, snooty nose. There'd be

warm shoes and socks, and pants, and shirts for the children. And I remember the old ladies going through the clothes to get some good Sunday go to meeting dresses. And I remember after they would get all that they needed from the boxes, we'd come in, and I'd help him bring it in. He'd count up the piles, and for like \$12 or \$15 the women would have clothing for all of their children, and their husbands, and themselves, and toys for Christmas. I remember the children would be put out when the toy boxes would come in. I don't know where all this is coming from.

Thank God it is though. And the mothers would select toys for the kids and between them all, they might have \$3.00. And Daddy would take a chicken, depending on the time of year, a watermelon or cantaloupe. He might pay the difference between what the things were and the cost of a ham that they had been able to cure.

And then when all was done, I remember folks getting in a circle and holding each other's hand and maybe an old sister would sing a song or pray. And inevitably, they would talk about "In The Sweet By and By" but things were going to be different, and they were going to meet at the table and be welcomed. And I remember my father singing a song, leading the folks in a spiritual and telling them it was going to be alright and that he had some contacts and he'd get back with them on that problem about the man always at the end of the season telling the people who had worked their asses off that they still owed him \$200. And they felt

trapped (). The songs, and the spirit, and the holding of hands, and the hugging as we left, and the ladies had such hope on their faces, and the little dignity that I saw and the men too, and then we'd ride back by the house and Daddy would straighten himself up, put his tie back, then stop and thank the man. Smile as we went by and then we got out of range, he'd looked at me without a smile on his face, but I didn't understand that smile until I understood later on that that's how most black men survived, black people generally, but most black men survived in the generation before me, and before me, and before me, and before me by being wise enough to know what to say, how to say it, how to position your body at a submissive position so as not to threaten some no tooth, red necked ass hole. Excuse me, Lord. I don't usually even say shit like that. And then a little later on I got, I came to understand my father and not feel that he should have told the man to kiss his butt, would have gotten shot, and me shot, and those people in trouble. Did I answer your question?

KM: When did you begin feeling like that? When did you begin understanding why your father had to do that, and why he smiled at you like that.

JCJ: Well, you want to turn that off a second.

KM: I asked you when you began understanding the way your father had to interact with whites.

JCJ: Going through the, after we moved to Charlotte, and in

answering your question, I went through the tenth grade here in public schools. At that point in Charlotte, of course, we're talking 1947, 48, 49 and early fifties, Charlotte, too, of course, was totally segregated. We lived in, all the schools, all the social life, political life, was mostly, with one or two exceptions, business and professions were all totally segregated.

Black people did their thing in black places. White folks did their thing. I remember going downtown which was the social meeting place during holidays when folk would be in and you dress up in your finest clothes and go downtown. Really to be social with other kids from around the city and folk who had gone away to college and it was kind of like a gathering place, because there really was no other, other than churches themselves, no other common meeting ground. But on your finest behavior, washed your behind and put on sweet water, and combed your hair, and acted at the most polite as you had been taught to, you still could not eat uptown. You could not go to theaters uptown. There was, well, you could eat. You couldn't sit down. You could go in the back and order something to go at () Woolworth's, and Kress. You could order and stand up in the back and eat, but you were not allowed to sit down. You were encouraged to spend all the money you could make at clothing sections and appliances but you were not allowed to sit down. And I remember that this wasn't right. I became, I went to Johnson C. Smith University, finished high

school, and I went to a boarding school down in, Harbison Junior College, just out of Columbia, South Carolina for my junior and senior years in high school, finished there, and my grandmother was living in turmoil. A grandmother who thought I was a special gift and treated me that way, but disciplined me quite well, and gave me the love and freedom to roam the woods and explore nature, and go fishing, and come home to a big hug and admonition that one day you're going to be somebody. My mother remembers those conversations from her too, and as I got to college. Incidentally, one of the things that happened to me when the kids in the fifth grade, my first day in school laughed at me and the teacher laughed at me, and I realized that I could not read publicly, comfortably was that I developed this ability to talk, and with my mother's requirements of proper arrangement of verbs, and nouns, and pronouns, and use of the Queen's English to articulate concepts and ideals in such a way that it would appear that I was intelligent, had some information and knowledge, and knew how to organize it. I developed the capacity to speak in public as if I were flowingly reading in public, but the speaking, since it came out of my head and experiences tended to flow and sounded much more persuasive than that which was written by someone else and being read. So I found myself, once I got to college, very anxious to learn, put more information and knowledge in my head because by the time it came out of my mouth, it had

been processed in such a way as to sound like an intelligent person with some information, perhaps some knowledge, and perhaps a little wisdom, and as life would have it. I ran into a number of other students my age who felt as I did, who liked to talk as I did, and we would spend hours discussing and arguing about whether all people should be treated equally and why and how to deal with that whole notion that separated us and segregated us. And I ran into two professors, Dr. Elgin R. Steele who wrote a book called The Bible and The Human Quest and taught religious education, was head of the religious education department at Johnson C. Smith University. And the book started off by saying the Bible claims to be holy, however, upon more carefully examination we have come to understand that the Bible was written by people like us, inspired but represent the best experiences of people in their time to understand their relationship with God and the universe around them and other people, but is not to be taken literally or needed be. That one is required to use one's common sense and judgement and instincts and where there is a conflict between what one is being told, generally the European writings and one's own sense of intuition that one should go with one's own intuition. And I said, yeah. And then Dr. Coleman was a professor of philosophy and walked us through Plato and Aristotle and Greek or Roman thought as if it were Sunday school class and was so familiar with it and comfortable that he communicated and required

us to learn and communicate and acquire information and understand concepts that all cultures had wrestled with through their experiences in their time and how no really new thoughts had been on the table in several hundred years so that all of these notions of a unique Christian concept was simply a continuation of the thought processes and philosophical notions of at least northern Europe. And walked us right on through ancient philosophy to modern philosophy, middle ages, and he also would allow us to understand though our own process of him asking questions and moving us on that where a conflict presented itself between what we were being told in the written recitations of European history, information, philosophy, where that conflicted with one's own considered or intuitions and one's own intelligence, to go with one's own intelligence. To take very critically the arguments presented, but do not accept them unless your own intellect and your own knowledge and wisdom agreed. Oh, shit. So, I majored in those two minds. Those two people. Those two African men. I explored their minds and absorbed every thing that they had to tell us, and after we finished the required courses, we, we meaning there was a group of about seven or eight of us, couple of black, couple of females and another male who took advance courses with both Dr. Steele and Dr. Coleman. In which we talked about the facilities of segregation, the fallacies of Jim Crow, the facilities and conflicts between the affirmations of the Judia

Christian white community and the behavior that though the church in many ways would not go with the Klan to lynch people, they certainly had service and blessed them on their journey. And how the African experience, the family, the respect for life, the respect for the earth, the gardens that everybody had, the respect for each other, the respect for family, and the values of respect for every human being starting with one's self was more valuable than reciting the conclusions of pale European men who fought wars and killed people and segregated and acted generally like savages.

Yes! Excuse me. Thank you African men. So that I can now talk to anyone on any subject including the language of the law which is a European language of power without feeling like I did in fifth grade when Miss Whaler, God rest her soul, and nether feel defensive or in any way less than in the conversations. I guess I answered your question.

KM: So when did you get into law.

JCJ: I still haven't answered your question. Thank you, baby. Ok. While at Smith, this group established contacts with counter parts at Davidson College which was a white male private school, just up the road. Queens College which was a white women's private college over here in Charlotte. And we would challenge them on their turf to debates about history, about race, about politics and not only hold our own with their best bright southern breed men, not only would we hold our own, but our

spirituality would also generally prevail. Then I went to Europe, my senior year in college, went to a festival of about 110 countries, youth organizations, student organizations from around the country, from around the world, that was organized by the Eastern European Student Communist Student Organization. It's purpose being to bring all of these cultures together and to persuade them that capitalism had created the system that not only discriminated, but restricted the flow of resources. And that the Communist concept was the answer to the world's distribution of resources and wealth. And I went with a group of about a hundred students from around the country. Some of them were white. Most of them were white. For the purpose of entering into dialogue about that. I remember meeting Paul Robeson, Jr. at a session with African students, west African students, central African students, African, black African students, and I remember being drawn into this conversation when Robeson, Jr. said black folk don't vote in the United States at all, places like New York, Washington, D. C., and Philadelphia and Detroit. And, of course, I knew that wasn't true because the people, my family that we would stop and visit from the time I could remember were active politically in all of those towns. So I found myself saying, well, that's not exactly true although there is rampant discrimination and capitalism has no interest or concern about black folk. However, just factually, that's not true. Here's

what I recall and remember factually to be the case. And that kind of dialectic went on for two weeks with Asian, South American, African students. The group I was with were generally presidents of student bodies through the country, major white and black institutions. Tim Jenkins and I, Tim was from Howard University, graduate students, free lance reporters who were covering the festival one of which was covering it for the Knight Publication Company which owned The Charlotte Observer. The Charlotte Observer was the primary paper at that point, although there was an evening news which was much more conservative, but The Observer carried a series of stories about this young colored boy from Charlotte, North Carolina who was defending democracy at a communist festival. Pictures and all, and stories talking about how this young colored boy was, while not necessarily defending democracy, well, maybe he was defending democracy. He was saying that this was possible. And there was a series of articles in the paper here, Observer, pictures, and I got back here. This was in 1959, I believe it was. I got back and when I went downtown as we did do because we were still totally segregated, dressed and clean, people would stop me on the street and said, we've been reading about you. You're a credit to your race. The mayor of the city ran into me on the street and said, Charlie Jones, I've been reading about you and we are proud of you. You are a credit to your race, and the country too. And, I'm checking all out, and

then the House Committee on Un-American activities asked me if I would come and testify as a friendly witness before the committee about my trip. And I suppose I was wise enough, intuitively to know that this was an opportunity to cover my butt among other things. So I agree to go with the understanding that two of the reporters that had covered the trip in Europe would be there and cover the testimony. So, here I was before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Mr. Jones, don't you agree that we have a better system than the communist who indoctrinate their children that communism is the only way. I said, it is obviously much easier to be anti-communist than it is to be pro-democracy. Now let's examine what you're saying. You've indoctrinated me from the time I was so big that your way is right, but you've never respected me at all, never, and the only reason I'm here today is that you want to dump on a lot of other people. Now what I believe is that in an environment where the minority opinion is respected and in a system that has a constitution that through it guarantees full protection of the laws that we have an opportunity to work toward changing what you have indoctrinated most of us of.

So, I think it's easier to be anti than pro, positive, anything which is my impression of the committee. But, Mr. Jones, I noticed that you had some discussions about Paul Robeson, Jr. Don't you think he is a bad influence. Absolutely not. I respect his father and him profoundly. They chose because of the

continuing humiliation that this country gave them professionally, he chose to get some relief from this nonsense and whether he's better than me or I'm better than him because I chose to stay here and fight or not, not only is not for me to say, but I have a great deal of admiration and respect for both of them. And this went on for several hours, and the reporters sent the story back to The Observer about the substance, and it got, when it became very clear that I was not a friendly witness, the committee members tried to slide into the extremist kind of dialogue about communism as the bad guys and us as the good guys, and I would not let them get away with it. Every time they would recite something, I'd come right back, chapter and verse about the behavior of conservative white men like them and what that has meant to me and black folks and other people in this culture. A couple of folks on the committee who carried on because they were apparently anxious to get that fight going on too. So, when I left, the committee members were arguing and fighting with each other, and the Robeson club was back there rooting me on, and the press in Charlotte had "local colored boy challenges House Committee". Ok, on my way back driving from that hearing, about four o'clock one February morning, by myself, somewhere around South Hill, Virginia, I heard a story about four students at A & T College who had gone downtown and sat in a Woolworth's and didn't move, and my body and my spirit said, yes! Came back, got some

sleep. I was on the student council. Had a meeting that night. I went to the meeting and after we had resolved the conflicts between whether the queues were going to be able to be at twelve o'clock in front of the Administration Building or the Alphas or whatever. I said, ladies and gentlemen, tomorrow morning I'm going down to Woolworth's. If any would like to join me, fine. As for me, however, I will be at the lunch counter. Meeting here at nine o'clock. Talked to or three my colleagues because at the core of that group that I was telling you about were on the council, basically, the leadership on the campus. Came home. We were down at 2112 at that point, about seven houses from here, and I mentioned, I said to my mother and father what I was going to do, and I never forget that look on Daddy's face. It was somewhere between pride, fear, wanting to protect but also wanted to nurture and support. And he said, do what you got to do. So the next morning, I went to the appointed place at the Administration Building, and there were 350 students. Dressed and ready to go. And we went downtown to the same streets that I had walked and had been greeted by the genteelly of the white world and walked into Woolworth's and sat my little colored boy ass down. And the students came in and filled up all that. And the press came running as we came out of Woolworth's and there was that same little colored boy that had been defending so called democracy, been on the page, front page of The Observer, same

little colored boy who had taken on the House Committee on Un-American Activities sitting at a lunch counter saying, we hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and that they are endowed. And the press is looking at me, by their creator with certain inalienable rights that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and the ability and the right to sit at this lunch counter. Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream. Up to that point, the press had had who, what, how, but no why, and I got to talking. And for seventeen days straight as other students throughout the south joined in the movement, lunch counters, all over, ABC, CBS, and NBC fed out of Charlotte me talking about why.

And I ran into the mayor on the street, and he looked at me, and I say, what's up. He turned his head and went by on the other side and of course the press followed him. And as we got into the strategy sessions of how to continue it, I began to understand my father, my father's restraint, my father's wisdom, because it was more important to accomplish a common object with dignity than to challenge at every stage, everything that the system, the white males, were confronting us with. So we assumed the higher ground, took all the rhetoric that the christian white church and the constitution had taught us and beat the devil out of them with it.

Beat them. Earlier I had heard tell of and read about this man in Montgomery, Alabama, who after a sister had refused to give a

white man a seat, say

TAPE 2 - SIDE A

JCJ: Well, meet your capacity to inflict violence without capacity to overcome and love that it is possible to put one's bodies into the machinery of the culture and of segregation in a non-violent dignified way and to change the practices and behavior of the culture. That indeed there is a dignity higher than any battlefield or any guns. There is a power greater than all the weapons that the culture has produced in the human spirit and its capacity to over power you with unsolicited violence without capacity. Tolov. And again my body and spirit said, yes! Yes! So then the African men began to become much more prominent in my psyche as the responsibilities of making choices that affect the lives of now hundreds of people. And I came to know his struggle. My father's struggle. And then went on to lead the city. Let's see, in Charlotte. Went down to Rock Hill, South Carolina not that far from Clarendon County and got arrested in Rock Hill for trying to get a hot dog and a coke and joined eight students that had done the same thing from Friendship College in Rock Hill and spent thirty days, we spent thirty days on the chain gang as a means of drawing attention to and unifying the students throughout the south who did response from Nashville, and South Carolina, and

Tennessee, and other places and came in as we, then met early that spring in Raleigh to organize with the help and guidance and wisdom of Ella Baker. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. Marian Berry, Charles Sherrod, Charles Mc(), Diane Nash, Diane (), myself, Furgeson, and we formed the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, Executive Committee. I was an initial member of that. While on the thirty days, in the chain gang, of Rock Hill, South Carolina, where among other things we made concrete drain pipes and laid them in places where my grandfather, A. A. Jones, had established churches, two churches. And I felt the culture. The black, the African man surrounding me with such love and with such wisdom I wasn't scared. My draft board after the thirty days said that I was not a student and I was inducted the military. And the president of Johnson C. Smith, Dr. Perry, said, in commenting on Mrs. Brooks, white chairman of the Selective Service Board here, that I am the president of Johnson C. Smith University and I will determine who is or is not a student in good standing and Mr. Jones is indeed a student in good standing and will be admitted back to his regular classes with dignity. Yes! So, oh, twice the research papers as others and in one case, a German professor who made me write three pages to every, I mean, three papers to everyone else's one. I finished my second year in the School of Divinity. At twelve o'clock, at one thirty, Clyde Furgeson and myself were on a bus, Greyhound,

going to join the Freedom Riders that had come through two days earlier and we had entertained, Stokely, Farmer, Jim Foreman, CORE representatives heading to Alabama. Got to Atlanta and in the airport ran into Bill McGuire, a, an instructor at Wesleyan University. White. Bill Coffin, who was Dean of the Theological Seminary at Yale. White. A black law student. Who were on their way to join. So we joined up and took a bus from Atlanta and headed into Alabama. Georgia. Alabama. Montgomery. Got there about an hour after the first bus load of Freedom Riders had left Jackson, had left Montgomery, no, was it Birmingham, going to Jackson. The crowds, well, they had a thousands of people were there. The rocks were coming over and we were being protected by this little thin line of young reserve, white kids, who were off times pretty much the members of the crowd. I guess I answered your question.

KM: Why did your professors make you do extra papers?

JCJ: To make sure that any scrutiny by anyone the high standards of the school would have been maintain and no special consideration, on the academic side, would have been accorded. Wisdom of the elders in the African village.

KM: Before 1960, before the sit-ins, were there any actions in Charlotte similar to that?

JCJ: Until that point the process of identifying and protecting the general African community was on the shoulders of

the NAACP. Kelly Alexander, Sr. Dr. Hawkins. Dr. Hawkins had become somewhat more public and outspoken so there were court cases that affected primarily the litigants and ultimately, decisions that guaranteed constitutional protections in different forms and other, that were generally implemented by one or two people with the help of where possible and appropriate, the federal government. That whole period of school desegregation, but there had not been the sort of spontaneous mass response until the students said, hey, there's another way, and elders, we respect you. We appreciate what you have done to get us to where we are. We need you to be with us, however, this is our game and we will have to play it on our terms, and I hope you understand, elders. And most of them did. So we had from the very beginning here in Charlotte, the overwhelming support of the total black community including the village elders who not only did not criticize us, publicly, but gave public statements and public support which then freed a larger group of people. And so, the second day, for instances, or the third day, one of them, Barbers, A. D. Neil, organized all of the Cadillacs owned by black folk in the city of Charlotte, and dispatched them to pick up these students at Johnson C. Smith University and chauffeur them downtown. And, I said, yes! After that rather intense February, March, April, May, June, April, May, during which we were able to make contact with several key white players in the city political

process. There was a councilwoman, Martha Evans. Harry Golden was a Jewish writer who at that point was publishing a paper called the Carolina Israelite. He talked and poked fun at segregation through humor, but he was articulating what we were doing through rational supportive eyes. As a matter of fact, we had to take Harry and sit him down every now and then because Harry, Harry liked to talk more I did. And at that point my little old ego said, Harry, this is our thing. Shut up and sit down. That was kind of hard on Harry, but he adjusted. We got to meet several other key players. Miss Martha, Margaret Cannon who was the widow of one of the Cannon brothers who founded Cannon Mills who had money and class, and invited us, meaning the core group of students and rational and influential whites to dinner at her home, and opened her home as a facility for us to gather and talk, and plan strategy which we did. And also in that group was Doug Wright, I believe his name. He was the night editor of The Observer who was a southern and a professional journalist who wrote the stories without emotional charged words, innuendoes, suggestions, or prejudices, who I could call at ten thirty at night to respond to comments of the Belk's, or the Ivey's, or the mayor, or whatever, which information had been shared with me by him who had, who was developing the story, so that by the time the city edition hit the stands, which my father used to go down every night, every night during that whole period, Daddy went down to

the docks of The Observer to get the first edition of the paper. Some of which we would see what was being said and by the time that, the first edition was not the city edition. The first edition was the one that went down into South Carolina. By the time we read the first edition and before the last edition, the city edition, came out, we were able then to comment, to clarify, and to continue the offensive in the public dialogue. So Charlotte very quickly understood that in order for a southern progressive city like Charlotte to survive that period, surviving meaning to maintain an image that was tolerant, rational, and accommodating so as to maintain it's attractive status with industry, with business, with the developing banking industry which Charlotte was. So the word went forth to police chief, Little John, Chief Little John was his name to control violence so that when the group came up from Monroe, members of the Klan, police were there, gave them tickets for over parking or whatever, and ushered them out from the confrontations at the places we were sitting in at. The mayor set up a bi-racial committee which is still going strong this day for the purpose of negotiating some resolution to the conflict. The committee recommended and worked out agreements with the owners of the lunch counters to open up in June. We started in February, in June. When the day, I think it was June 3, whatever, came, my father and I went down to one of the keys place, right on the square, Rexall Drug Store, went to

the lunch counter and here again was that fear, pride, dignity, sat down and ordered, I think we had tuna fish and coke, whatever, and then Charlotte went on about its business. Theaters were involved. Public eating places were involved. Once we went into Mississippi, Alabama, where we got arrested, I regrouped and we regrouped with Snake and that's a whole 'nother story. Harry Bellafonte brought us to Washington. We talked about what had to be done. We organized and agreed who was going to go back into full time work and we did that. So for a couple of years, I worked in the south, but I guess I answered your question.

KM: Again, before 1960, were there any organizations besides the NAACP.

JCJ: Yeah. Dr. Hawkins had, I forget what his group was called, but it might have been CORE. Southern Christian Leadership Conference is one of those, and there was a little competition beginning to develop between those two. He got immediately finessed into some criminal charges of obtaining money from the federal government, Medicaid, whatever, through false information, had a long trail and all. But, yeah, those two. There's one other source at that point. A Dr. J. Nathaniel Tross was a black minister, a colored minister, that had a half hour radio show on WBT. He was chosen by Jefferson Standard Broadcasting Company to be the spokesman for colored folks, and the first week spent about fifteen minutes of his radio program

telling the students how much he was ashamed of us, and how we should go back to school and behave ourselves, and let the white folk take care of this business. And the students burned Dr. Tross in effigy on campus with a huge ceremony, and explained to the white community what a Uncle Tom was. Dr. Tross was still being held up by the few dying now public supporters of segregation, but his credibility in the black communities zapped. And as fate would have it, he had planned this huge rally in support of God and decent colored people, and was in a plane coming back from somewhere that crashed and killed him. And with the exception of WBT, a brief moment, his friends, them four and no more, he stepped totally out of the picture. So, there was the litigation in summary by the NAACP. There was Kelly confronting the city sanitation department, the banks, in terms of their employment practices, but it was a struggle of incident and incident, and legal case and legal case. Once the sit-ins started, the whole dynamic of the way in which problems were identified and addressed was changed and Kelly honored me at a rally and gave me something. There is a picture there, my mother does all this stuff, there's a picture there when we down at Ivey's. Mr. Exits Ivey, why don't you want to go that way. And that period will document there was a, just with Dr. King, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, CORE. There was a proliferation, and SCLC, there was a proliferation of other

forces, and groups, and energy. And, Charlotte then, with Julius Chambers who had finished law school and came back and set up a firm, who incidently had asked me to come and join him at that point. I was in law school at Howard, but I had these arrests and I was convinced that I would never get to be admitted before the bar within the next few years which apparently was the case. Took me ten, after, I finished law school in '66. It wasn't until '76 that I came back and took the bar and passed it, but I took the bar. The bar has a requirement that one, of course, be proficient at understanding and applying legal concepts, but also they wants character. Be free of criminal conduct. () we call it a criminal state of mind. Because a trespass was a criminal act which I had several of, both in South Carolina, and when we the () arrested down in Albany, Georgia, when we went into after having worked to get the wording of the inter-state commerce commission posted on all public accommodations that seating is on first come first basis and went to challenge that in Albany, Georgia, and was arrested in the so called white (). Just so called disorderly conduct, inciting a riot, in Birmingham, in Montgomery, because when we went, after buying tickets to go inter-state to Jackson, Mississippi, and sat at the white lunch counter, we were charged with inciting the white men outside to do violence. That case went to the supreme court, and when I was at law school, when I was in law school, first year, the case was

being heard and I was invited by the justices of the United States Supreme Court to come and sit in to hear one of my cases being argued. And, of course, they dismissed it. Of course, they dismissed it. But I was convinced, because of the arrests, but, ok, ten years later, passed the bar, character committee, local, all white men, of course, at that point. At the, toward the end of session, a young white lawyer says, uh, incidentally, Mr. Jones, I know with a great deal of interest and pride that you were arrested on several occasions in your effort to change the application of the law to affect all people, and that I know with even more interest, that the courts, principally the United States Supreme Court, either dismissed these cases, found you not guilty, or that that rulings abated all of the other cases you were involved in. We'd like to welcome you to the bar. And I said to myself, yes!

KM: What had you done in between the ten years of getting your degree and actually taking the bar?

JCJ: Well, I ran a program in Washington, D.C., a consulting service that provided technical assistance to communities, organizations, and throughout the south about the availability of federal funds and other funds to keep programs going that we had gotten under way up here. I got married. I had three babies. Michael Scott, the first one, who was conceived when I was in law school. Iriti, who was here when you came in, my daughter who is

teaching here now, or just finished teaching, a younger picture of Michael. That's a younger picture of Iriti and Charles, Jr. my child, that's Charles, Jr. finishing West Charlotte. He came to live with me in his junior year, college, in high school. We was, that was second marriage, got separated, and Charlie and Riti. I went to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and ran a program called VITA, Volunteers In Technical Assistance that provided very high skilled middle and upper management resources primarily from volunteers, middle and upper management of basically corporate management, white corporate management, into specific programs that the Office of Economic, OEO, Office of Economic Opportunities through it's legislation had provided for developing health care programs, tutoring programs, all kinds of stuff. We provided technical assistance to that, and also MBA. That was a Minority Business Enterprise program that we provided technical assistance for minority businesses in the city of Pittsburgh associating with the Allegheny Conference on Community Development which is made up of the top executive officers of the top corporations of the company most of which are headquartered in Pittsburgh. Came back to Charlotte. Worked with Chambers, the law firm. Took them up on their offer for several months. Took a bar review course and after ten years, no, nothing to do with law, I was able to pass the bar and got word on the twenty third of August, my birthday, with that (which one of those, that one there) State of North

Carolina. To whom it may concern, be it known that a J. Charles Jones has successfully completed. I opened up that letter on my birthday and said, yes! Was employed by the district attorney at that point as an assistant D. A. He had promised a job to a brother who had not been fortunate enough to pass the bar and Peter needed somebody. So did the attorney, D. A. over in Gastonia, Brown, but this was home and so I, for a couple of years, was an assistant district attorney and then went into private practice. In the meantime I went, to answer that other part of the question you asked me, after, during law school, I became active and organized a group called ACCESS. Action Coordinating Committee To End Segregation In the Suburbs. This is '63 to '66. All of the housing around Washington, D. C. was segregated. All apartments, all housing period. We were right in the midst of the Viet Nam War and I called together a group of committed souls in Washington and started demonstrating at prominent apartment complexes in Prince George's, Alexander, Fairfax counties around, near military establishments where black military personnel among others were not allowed to get accommodations, and started talking about the conflict twixt, between the assertions of freedom fall and black soldiers in Viet Nam dying and their families could not get accommodations near the bases. We ended up, we walked around the beltway to demonstrate or (), and ended up, I called McNamara, who was the Secretary of

Defense, one night and got his wife and told her who I was, that I had absolutely no intention of embarrassing her husband or herself, that is wasn't about any of that. That I was a law student. That we were very serious about what we were doing and wanted the military to help us in putting pressure on these establishments to open up to all military, and that I was seriously considering going to Viet Nam to talk with soldiers there who had families in the area who couldn't get the accommodations and wanted to sit down and talk with him. And she thanked me for calling and the next morning I got up early. I got a call from Cyrus Vance, who was the deputy. What time is it?

KM: Twelve thirty ()

JCJ: Deputy Secretary Vance called and said, Mr. Jones, could you meet with us at eleven o'clock tomorrow to discuss your proposals, and I said, would be delighted to sir. And the core of the group that had developed the policy which was to have the Secretary of Defense declare off-limits all housing within a five mile radius of any military establishment in Washington and throughout the country as off-limits. The same power that had been used to protect the moral, and safety, and health of the military in Europe in terms of houses of prostitution, any other way they needed to end that, the moral of the military (), but particularly the moral of the African American soldiers presently fighting and dying in Viet Nam was being affected by their being

segregated against and their families segregated against even as they bled and died. We met in the War Room, one of the war rooms. Blew my mind. I'm talking maps that were the length of this room of this house, of every strategic point of conflict in the country, in the world, with this huge array of technical communication machinery. Here he could sit there, and did a couple of times, talk to someone, you could see the light up there on there we were on. We sat there and wrestled out a policy which he recommended eventually to McNamara who then adopted it. I was a senior at law school. Finishing up law school, junior and senior. The policy was declared. Housing quickly, the legislature, the county, the county commissioners after the policy was announced, quickly in succession enacted open housing and fair housing legislation around the beltway. And I said, yes! And then, left Washington, that was right after the riots, right after Dr. King was assassinated. I was visiting my son Michael, my oldest boy, Michael, in Jersey City at the time, when I heard about the assigation and the stuff started hitting the fan everywhere. Rushed back to Washington, and became a facilitator on the streets to provide information on how to protect one's self from the tear gas where the activity was presently going on, and though I did not myself, loot and steal, I was on the streets for the three days assisting as a technical advisor together with Dion Diamond, several other CORE people that had been active out of the

Howard University thing, in keeping, and became, this is interesting, historically, it may or may not ever be told this way. But, as the city began to burn, we had organized the first united black front. Stokley had to come back and, as a matter of fact, I gave that boy, he came in there with nothing. I gave that boy some clothes. Gave him all albums and stuff. Never did get my. I had about sixty L, come to think of it, Stokley and Stan kept all my stuff. Anyway, we, I was chosen by whom I do not know. I have not met or maybe I did, to be a negotiator, or the principle negotiator for the black community with, well, the President of the United States was who it was. Johnson was really coordinating all this but we met with his representatives. And my job was to negotiate. My job was not to do anything else but to negotiate. And I was advised that our objective was a committee to rebuild the city, a rebuilding committee. That we needed a majority vote on. That was my objective. So I went to the meeting, the first meeting, and we were advised that indeed a committee would be set up, but we could have only four members out of twelve, I believe it was. And I thanked them. And I went back and reported to my source what had been done, and was advised not to worry or say anything. That night another huge fire broke out, and the next morning another huge fire broke out, and I went back to the session, and was advised that, well, maybe we could have six, and I was, I told, that my instructions were that we needed a

majority of the votes on the committee that was going to be making the decisions about rebuilding the black community. You can't have that. I reported back and that night, getting much closer to the White House, a fire broke out at a huge paint company about six blocks from the White House, and it was professionally ignited that within ten minutes the entire structure was ablaze. And then over in southwest Charlotte, a manufacturing company, just as quickly, shoo. I went back to the negotiations the next day. Ten o'clock was the time. And was advised that, well, perhaps, we could have, () we have seven, but they would pick four. I said that's not my instructions. My instructions are that we are to have a majority of the votes. That we are to have a majority of the votes. Well, we can't do that. We have seven others in the House, on the, (). Those are my instructions, gentlemen. It's been a pleasure. I will see you tomorrow. And that night, about three blocks from the White House, a building went up, and one of, a huge fire in one of the department stores down near the Capitol. A huge blaze. And the next day I was advised that we could, indeed, choose who would be our representative. I never knew who was doing the burning. I was advised that I need not know, that they were professionally folk who had been trained in the military, in Viet Nam, black, to kill and burn, and they were using their skills in this fight. And I said, yes!

KM: This has been wonderful, but I know you have an

appointment and I have forms to fill out with you. So if you have an ink pen.

JCJ: You missed a lot of juicy stuff. I was fortunate to continue to be active full time after this freedom rides in Albany, Georgia, as the chairman of the voter registration wing of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. I worked in Albany for about a year. There's a lot of stories out there that a lot of historians have done that you may or may not have any interest in. Parting of the waters. Several of them. But, anyway.

END OF TAPE