

dick gregory



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On Tuesday, September 27, 1966, Robert Mundy (Editor of Academic Publishing), Marilyn Mundy, Richard Saunders, and Carol Saunders, obtained the following interview with the noted comedian and civil rights leader, Dick Gregory.

Q: At your last show, you started talking about a reporter who had asked you what you felt about the use of the word "Black Power." I don't want to ask that question. What I want to ask is, what do you think about the reaction to the use of the word "Black Power?"

A: I think it's a normal reaction in a country where 10% of the population have no business with Black Power and the only reason we have Black Power is because of the racist segregationist pattern in the country that keeps a segment of the people trapped in one area — which has created Black Power. You don't worry about a gorilla jumping on you when you walk down the street because you know that humans outnumber gorillas, but when I take my daughter to the zoo, I get a sneaking suspicion that if I'm ever going to be jumped on by gorillas, it's gonna happen here, because you're dealing with animal power. It's very interesting how this power came about. We've had Black Power for years, and now the scream for Black Power had gone out, which is another way of saying we're going to channel this power into constructive directions instead of destructive directions. To me it's like standing in a valley looking up at a mountain seeing the snow, and knowing that spring is going to come around and the snow's going to melt, and is going to come rushing down the mountain-side — and if there's not the right facilities, like hydro-electric dams, that are built and irrigation systems, that water's going to sweep into town and just wipe everything away. And this is the way I look at the call to Black Power, as channeling this energy. It's very very interesting because this is the first time in history, probably of the world, that there's a tremendous revolution going on, and this revolution is not going to change the institution. Maybe that's where the Negro has been wrong. Maybe this is why we might all be killed: because this goes against the grain of all revolutions — you go into change; not to keep and accept in. And I think this is the beauty of this revolution — that everybody has missed — in that we're not trying to change one iota. We're saying, "Just cut me in on what belongs to me."

Q: Do you think it's possible to get this through congress, as congress is now acting. For example, turning down the latest civil rights bill. Or can we think in terms of civil rights bills?

A: No. I think a civil rights bill is a racist attitude, which, for the first time, exposed that Negroes are very racist, too, but there's no way you can get around that, coming up in a racist country. It's like a kid growing up in a house and see his mother smoke pot from the time he's born: chances are, when he gets to be 14 years old, he's gonna smoke it, too. And he might not even be aware that he's doing something that's wrong as far as the law is concerned. And the fact that the constitution spells out what the attitude of man's inhumanity to man should be, and the fact that he can give him something less than this, and even make a law out of it, is like being short on your income tax, and have a bunch of your friends run to congress and legalize the short payment that you didn't pay, and then having all of America accept this short payment, you know. And so what's really going to have to happen, is that the Constitution has to be implimented to its fullest — not civil rights legislation. I think the fact that the civil rights bill was defeated was a step in a good direction, unconsciously. Nobody seemed to realize what was going on, but in the history of this country man has treated other men wrongly, and he's always been against the constitution, and he's always broken the law. And what was about to happen with this new civil rights legislation was, for the first time, they were going to have a law to legalize segregated housing. Sixty percent of the housing was going to be segregated by law. And this makes about as much sense as my coming to your house, cutting off both your ears, and you run to the law enforcement agencies, and they say: "Well, this can't happen." And they pass a law that Dick Gregory can't cut off but one ear. And so for the first time in the history of chopping off ears, now I can get your ear legal, you know. And so if I can get your ear, the one that I can legally cut off, and if somewhere down the line I run across old Jabo Jones, who can cut off one legally, baby we'll have all your "hears" in our pocket, you know. So I think that maybe the civil rights movement has gone as far as we can go. Maybe non-violence has gone as far as it can go in talking to one group. Maybe non-violence was invented, in theory, by Hegel and Kant. Maybe their ideas of non-violence meant that a whole area or community had to be non-violent — not just one side. It is very interesting when you sit and

look at non-violence today, which also shows a racist attitude, because I bet non-violence is more important than money, and if Dr. King said all Negroes should have a million dollars, White folks would call him a racist, and he'd probably be knocked out of the movement in a month. And if non-violence is better than money, and more important than money, how is it that King can say all Negroes should be non-violent and don't cut Whitey in? If people knew the joy, the beauty of non-violence, then King would be considered very bigoted, because of telling Negroes not to fight back, and not advocating this to White people. I think this has been the biggest mistake in the non-violent movement — that Negroes seem willing to die at the hands of Negroes, to keep them non-violent, but they don't seem willing to die at the hands of Whites to teach them non-violence. I think non-violence is either going to have to be an attitude if America, and not just the Negro, or either we're going to say that we are better than White people, and because if we feel that we are better than White people, we can teach the Negro non-violence. I think we're in trouble with the whole movement as it is right now, unless we have some drastic changes.

Q: What sort of changes?

A: Well, one, the attitudes of the Federal Government, the attitude of many Whites. You see, what's going on right now that's good — this is the danger point you go, when you let cancer go so far — you have to use every drastic means you can to try to save the body — sometimes radical means because it's gone so far, and we're not willing to accept the consequences. We all want, for instance, Pat Brown to win over Ronald Regan. Well, I wish California had a choice between Yorty and Regan. And then bring this thing down, you know. Goldwater and Johnson — I couldn't vote for Goldwater, but I was hoping he'd won, because when you take the lesser of the two evils, I feel you deserve the evil of the evil. One woman's a prostitute seven days a week, another one's a prostitute on weekends, and you have to marry one, and you stoop to marry the weekend prostitute without realizing you are still married to a whore. And this is what we got with LBJ. The weekend prostitute that started selling his body seven days a week, now — and looking for an eighth day! For instance, you take the White backlash — no one can be hurt by this but the politicians. That's why you never hear this word used except in

an election year. You heard the White backlash used in '64, and we've still bugged White folks down the line, man, but you never heard it used no more till now. And then they try to make us believe that we'll be hurt by the White backlash.

Q: They're now saying that there is Black backlash, too.

A: Yeah, because that means that the Negro is gonna start hurting some politicians now. And then you won't hear this word any more, until another election. And when we talk about drastic changes, one is the change in attitude of people to be able to accept this reaction that you're going to get — and not try to do it as sweet as you can. You see, when ever you have things going in opposite directions, when they hit, you gonna get action — which is electricity — which is the basis of life. Two things travel in opposite directions, and they hit, boom, and turns your lights on. And you see, it's very interesting — the bigot is simply the guy who has convictions. And this is the interesting thing about that bigot: when I march and I look at him, I'm about one millionth of a degree from seeing myself, 'cause this cat has just as much convictions as I have — the only difference between he and I is I have sympathy with my convictions. And he just has convictions. And convictions without sympathy creates the bigot, who is very destructive. But he comes closer to bein' a beautiful cat than the Negro who stays at home — who has no convictions whatsoever. And so there's going to have to be many many drastic changes. America's going to have to solve this problem — not the Negro. Ten percent of a population can destroy nonety percent, much easier than ten percent of a population can convince ninety percent of a people to go in this direction. So if we going to save it, it's gonna take lots and lots and lots of hard work. This is not the Negro's job — to see to it that their constitution works right. It is the job of the federal government. And, it's sort of like very insulting for the federal government to say, "All right, you Negro civil rights leaders, go on out there and get those rights." And the guy who's telling you to go out and get them is the guy who can get them for you. And, if my rights are worth more than money, and I know this same guy's telling me to go out and get them, but would not let me collect the income tax, because they have provisions in the constitution for collecting the income tax, like they have provisions in the constitution for me to get my rights, so eventually, somewhere down the line, it's going to have to stop.

And, maybe this is the year that we took that train off that slow track and put it on the fast one. And the guy never told us that there was another train coming on that fast track, so we'll wait and we'll see.

Q: It seems to a lot of us, that every time we go to vote, we end up having to choose between the lesser of two evils, so we don't vote. Perhaps this is indicative of the need for a new party in this country — an entirely new party.

A: I think we need a new party, but I don't think that's the way to get out, because when you create a new party, just for the cat so he can have someone to vote for, then, what's the difference between voting for the lesser of the two than the lesser of the three evils. I think a new party'd have to be set up for more than giving a guy a right to vote somewhere. Because the basic right in America is not only the right to vote, but the beauty of this country is the right not to vote without nobody putting any pistol to you. And a third party would be very good for many reasons, if it's set up right. For instance, California needs a liberal party to control this right wing. Like New York — the right wing was invented in New York City. But it's been controlled by a liberal party. Because the right wing cat's a very funny cat, man. There's not too many of them because of the qualifications you have to have. They could probably do good if they just talked about the niggers, and let the jews alone, and layed off social security and relief, cause that's stone whitey they're talking about there. And they lose him. That's the interesting thing about the democratic party: no bigot votes right wing — he always votes democrat. There's a certain type of cat that always votes right wing — and that's the interesting thing about a Wallace: Because a Wallace will come up and steal that bigot vote that no right wing cat could ever get. That's why he'll probably be killed before the election — and probably blamed on a Negro. I would just like to see a third party formed, period — an intellectual party, that appeals to the statesman to run, but appeals to the masses — and really show 'em something. And we're going to be very brilliantly organized because voting in America becomes something like a freakish thing — like a horse race — nobody likes to be with the loser. If a party's set up, because there're a lot of things that have to be done, I think there's going to be more time and more brains than money. You just can't beat up money, and the Democrats and Republicans have

the money. I remember when I was a kid, we would take pennies and try to file them down to the size of a dime — you couldn't take a stick and beat it, but if you spent a little time and stood on the curb, you could rub it down. See, you can rub money down, but you can't beat it up. And I think in setting up a third party, with laws that cater to the two party system, where you have to go out and get petitions, but that is almost totally impossible in many areas. But I think a third party that would be set up, where you would depend mainly on write-ins, and aim your campaign at telling people, "Don't vote, since we can't get on the ballot. Then just write my name on it, turn around and go back home." And then the good politicians would come to your aid, because you'd be knocking them out of a vote. You see, good politicians have never worried at the poles, because they say, "Well, so-and-so will vote for me." And if a third party was set up where you wouldn't vote for anyone as long as you had to write a name in — just write that name and run — then for the first time a politician could see himself losing millions of votes. And then they would change the law for you.

Q: Well, for example, there are a lot of people in this state — not a lot, unfortunately — but people who feel that Sheer should have run against Cohelan in order to try to draw off enough of Cohelan's votes so that Cohelan would lose, and thus start scaring the Democrats. Another thing that's going on: this coming weekend, in L. A., there's a conference about what they're calling "Power Politics," organized by Californians for Liberal Representation. Possibly, and hopefully, at that meeting Si Cassady will come forward to run against Brown and Regan — and possibly draw off enough votes from Brown so that Regan would win and Brown lose. Do you think that this is effective?

A: Oh yeah, very. Because it makes a guy wake up and realize that either he's going to be totally right in every walk of life, or the guy who's the wrongest will get in. Because when you put the good guy up who is totally right, he will siphon off enough votes so that wrong can win. And wrong needs to win sometimes, if it means that we'll clean up the whole situation, and bring it to a head, you know. The guy who found out he had cancer at eight years old might be able to be saved, you know. So I think it could be a very good thing.

Q: I wanted to know what you thought about Stokely Carmichael and the new SNCC policy of not letting White students work in the South?

A: Well, I don't know how the policy is on not letting White students work. Because, I was in Washington, D. C. at the Black Power convention, and the White folks that got put out were the ones that SNCC had sent to represent them. It was the only organization that showed up with Whites, you know. But I love Stokely. I think he's one of the best things that has happened for the country — particularly for the Negro. And I guess I should say particularly for the White man, because the guy he appeals to, is that brick-thrower for the first time. He has an arena now. Because nobody ever appealed to the brick thrower, you know. He never felt right at the NAACP luncheon. And the Urban League — he don't know where to find that. Through no fault of the Urban League — it's just that it's always located on the wrong side of town. And he was never religious enough to join King's group. And CORE was just too White for him. So he stood on a corner, and when the call went out, when Stokely comes to town for the first time, this guy's got an arena. And the chances are that through this element, riots might be stopped before they start. I'm sure that Stokely is the one guy today that could fly into a town where riots been going on for five days and say, "Stop." And it would have more effect than the United States Army, because he's created this "ear" of people. I think when he went to jail it helped him a lot, because a lot of people that didn't like him, turned to like him — 'cause they were able to see. He says, you know, he says things, that are very honest — in a time when this Nation can't afford honest things. It's like, when you've been wrong for so long, it's sorta like, you know: even if I want to get right, give me a few minutes to do it forst. It's well, we can't trust you. You may be sincere, but I just can't trust you. I think Stokely will be killed, too — not before Casius Clay, though. They've really got to kill Casius. They had no intentions of drafting him in the army — they were just trying to lower the mental test rate so they could get all the types of cats who caused Watts off the street, and in jail. And in order to do this, they have to tamper with Casius, and in order to ease everybody's mind on why he's not in the army and why he won't go, the best thing for them to do is kill him, and I figure that they will do that now. . . . Whenever they find out who's going to do it, you know. The

only thing that keeps you alive sometimes is the FBI can't decide if they gonna do it, or the CIA.

Q: I did a study on racial violence, starting with Atlanta in 1906 and going through to Watts. I came up with the feeling that we'd gone from a form of White intimidation, of various forms, even complete violence, to primarily Negro uprisings — Negro revolts. Not a revolution, because that assumes that you've changed the structure. One, do you think that that characteristic is a fair one, and adequate for explaining Watts — perhaps not for explaining it, but for understanding Watts — and if it is, do you think that America will ever understand that what's going on in Watts is not like what went on in Atlanta in 1906?

A: I don't think it's important that America understands this. No more than a woman has to understand the gestation period to be pregnant. You do that first thing, and nature's going to take care of the rest. Well, revolts are naturistic characteristics, that are always going on where there's injustice. We call it evolution — which is a gradual change through nature — but that leads into revolution, which is quick change. Man has not been able to put the parallels together yet. Nature is very sweet and very gentle — she gives you all the time through the evolution period to get straight, but if you're not straight by the time that revolution hits, then you're destroyed. A woman can't wait, after the evolution period, which is the nine months, and make a deal because she hasn't paid her Blue Cross or Blue Shield or because she's not married. When that water bag busts, revolution starts and evolution stops — and all the armies in the world can't keep that baby up in there. And so this is the period that America has reached. We've had this gradual change now. And the difference with what you were talking about in 1906 and now is Nature. Five disciplined cops can stop a riot, but Hitler's army couldn't put down a protest, because one is inspired by nature and another one is inspired by man. And there's a tremendous difference in the two. Had Britain realized the difference between a protest and a riot, we might all have a British accent today. But she failed to realize this. She failed to realize the beauty of nature and the way nature was. For instance, everybody thinks that somebody must be teaching Negroes how to make Molotov cocktails. But no one's ever thought about how a group of people can throw them for five years without one

burn to themselves. But she doesn't understand what she's dealing with. Like we have nineteen laws in America that say Black can't marry White, which are very good laws for a racist country like this. You have millions of people that feel this way, which is also a very good feeling for a racist country. But the only mistake they've made is they've gone against nature. Whitey can pass laws that say Negroes can't catch TB, Cancer, or Polio, which are very good laws if he wants them, for a racist country. But nature's not going to respect them. So if nature didn't want me to have a White woman, she'd have made her like a tree. I can't screw a tree, and a chicken can't rape my mama. And anything nature didn't glock, I defy man, be he black or white, to try it and survive. And this is the beauty of this idiot. Now he's dealing with nature. And if I never came out and held another march, he's doomed. And what's going on now is like a hurricane, you know, a tornado. And they're being promoted by the same element that promotes hurricanes and tornados. Once you get a situation with the right ingredients, where cold air meets hot air, you gonna get an explosion. You can call it lightning, thunder, anything you want to call it. Nature don't put names to it. It just happens. You put on a tight shoe, you get a corn. You wear the shoe long enough, the corn turns into a callous. You keep on wearing it, the callous turns into a bunyon. Eventually you wear the shoe out. Because nature's one law is that she don't want anything rubbing against her own. And when you rub against her own, you get a reaction. And when she gives a reaction, she gonna win, if it means mass destruction. Negroes in America have got a callous around their soul. And if this shoe don't backup, it's all coming down. And so, there is a tremendous difference between 1906 and now. Take Watts — Watts was legal, not only through nature, but on the Declaration of Independence. They say: we hold these truths to be self evidence that all men are created equal and endowed by the creator with certain inalienable rights. And when these rights are destroyed, over long periods of time, it is your duty to destroy or abolish that government. That legalized Watts. 'Course I look at Watts as Urgan Renewal without graft. It's very interesting how we can justify certain things. When a man stoops to solve a problem by murder, like America has in her wars, then I say there's an intelligent way to do a thing and a stupid way to even be wrong. The hoodlum that participates in crooked gambling — there's a stupid way and an intelligent way of doing it, you know. And when I look at

murder, and how we can justify a Negro from Mississippi going to Viet Nam, chasing the Viet Cong through the bushes of Viet Nam, trying to kill him, but you can't justify the same Mississippi Negro chasing a Mississippi racist Klu Klux Klan through the swamps of Mississippi trying to kill him. Who needs killing? The Viet Cong can't kill no one but me. But Mississippi racists can kill me, my five kids, my wife, and blow my church up. So who needs killing? If you're talking about protecting your family, I'm much safer killing this racist here, than that Cong over there, because he can't kill no one but me. And if I'm going to die to protect my family, I have no guarantee that at the same time's the Cong's putting a bullet through my head, the Klan won't be lynching my mammy. This is the cat that I got to get off my back first, if I'm gonna involve myself in killing. And so, we have many problems that's going to have to be solved.

Q: What can the people who are against this war do now? What do you think is the most effective means to stop the war? Or can we stop it?

A: Well, I don't think you can be able to stop it. I don't think it should be stopped; not by the people out here who are against the war, because you haven't got enough sincere people out here. You got scared people out here, who are against being killed themselves. But I can't understand how a peace movement in this country can go out and march and demonstrate in fifty given cities on any Saturday, saying America can't drop napalm bombs on Vietnamese kids and Vietnamese women, but you can lynch my grandma any given day, and that same kid don't come out and hit the streets. What are you against — wars or killing? I'm not against wars — I'm against killing. And I'm safer with a cat who's against killing than a cat who's against war. Because I've watched. I've watched black folks killed in the Congo, and I didn't see a peace movement move. Because he knows he don't have to go to the Congo. In any situation in this whole goddamn country where this cat doesn't have to go, he won't march with it. There's a few cats, man, who are really sincere in this peace movement — who march when anybody's killed. But as long as he thinks he's going to get drafted somewhere, then he comes out and hits the street. Well, he needs to be dead, too. Actually, I have more sympathy with the soldier who's over there through ignorance, than this cat, here, who claims to be with peace, but he's

really just marching to save his own ass. If you're sincere about peace, then any form of disturbance would promote you to come out and march. You can kill, kill, kill. The same guy who's interested in not killing, has got to march against capital punishment. And he's got to march maybe 24 hours. But he's not marching on capital punishment, because he feels that he'll never do anything in his life to get the electric chair. But if he did, he'd be out there marching against capital punishment. I'm not against the army. I think all countries need an army — to clean up after her earthquakes, her tornados, hurricanes, floods. So I'm not against the army at all. I'm against killing. I'm not against wars — I'm against killing. If two countries get together and make a deal, and say, "We gonna have a war," but over chess, then cool, baby, and then who ever loses the chess game gets the country. This is okay with me. I have never been against war — just killing, period. And the cats who's against war — I find no protection with them at all, because those same cats don't seem to be marching against killing — capital punishment, and the whole vicious scene that goes on. So I don't even relate the two of them together at all.

Q: Is there a relationship between what's happening in Viet Nam and what's happening in Watts? Is it the same thing or is it a different thing?

A: Well, what's happening in Viet Nam with the Vietnamese is the same thing as is happening here. They're having an uprising against tyranny — against oppression. As far as the Americans over there are concerned, the same thing that's happening here is happening there. They're having more race riots some weeks, over there, among Negro and White servicemen, then they have over here. See, you carry your cancer with you. There's no such thing as having a cancer in your foot, and then come by my house for dinner and tell me you haven't brought that germ with you. Wherever you go — it goes with you. And this country has cancer. And there's no way in the world we can go anywhere in this world without taking it with us.

Q: Do you think that this cancer can be cured?

A: That I don't know. I don't know if we've gone beyond the point of no return. We brought out a very beautiful thing in Chicago

this summer, by marching into the White neighborhoods. For the first time, I saw a very beautiful naturalistic reaction among White folks, because this was the only way they could have reacted, under the circumstances. In the South, the southern cats have, I guess, been clever enough to keep the wages so that every White man in the South has been able to hire my Grandma for a quarter. Consequently every White person's had a nigger in their house, and they've met a Negro school-teacher, a Negro doctor, a Negro lawyer. The White racist bigot knows that Negro schoolteachers exist. Whereas up north this poor, dumb, trampy, ignorant, bigoted hillbilly and foreigner, has never had the luxury of hiring my nigger mama for a quarter. So consequently they couldn't have anybody in their house. So when we marched through their neighborhoods, it was the first time they ever saw Negroes. They don't know what a Negro doctor looks like, or know that Negro principals exist. So when I marched through his neighborhoods it was like turning a bunch of gorillas loose. He's gonna kill everyone who comes into his block. This is a normal reaction. And there's going to be more of it in the North ... It's very difficult to say if this country can be saved. People want to put more on us than anybody else. People tell us we shouldn't riot. The Irish are very funny. They say, "Well look, we came over here, and we got ours." But they don't tell you that they used to take those non-Irish women and slit their babies out of their pregnant bellies, you know.

Q: Let me go back to what you'd said before. To a great extent I would agree with you, that when a lot of people go into the streets against Viet Nam, very few people go when someone's on death row. Although, in this state, there was a demonstration when Chessman was there, although there was not one in the past few weeks, when there was the possibility of another man going to the chamber. But I think there are people in the peace movement who mean peace, not in the sense of simply being against a war ...

A: This is evident. Women are not going to get drafted, so, I'm not saying there's anybody out there who's out there simply because they don't want to go to war.

Q: There aren't enough people out there.

A: There are 80 year old people out there.

- Q: Is the difficulty with that that too many of the people who are out there who are eligible for the draft are going to be fair-weather friends ...
- A: Yeah.
- Q: And that the problems with Viet Nam are perhaps a little deeper than simply people going over there and fighting something?
- A: Well, it's like pacifists. I don't believe a man can be a true pacifist and not be a vegetarian, because animals are just as human in the stroke of nature as man is. They go through the same gestation period to create little animals, the same air that keeps them alive keeps us alive, and the only way that we separate ourselves from animals is through material things, period. And so, I just can't understand how a man can call himself a pacifist, and justify eating meat. Because the same thing that we do to animals, the system is doing to us. If you had to go and kill your own hog, chances are you couldn't eat it. And if the power structure in this country had to do their own dirty work, chances are they couldn't do it. But when you go and get your pork chop, the blood's washed off of it, and the parsley's sitting there, and it looks very good. And when the top business corporation minds in this country come down to see us, they see only the finished product of what was good that came out of it. So there's no difference at all. I just can't understand how we're going to try to solve the problem without solving the problem of man's inhumanity to man and animals. I looked at my mother when I was a kid, and my mother couldn't understand how racist bigoted White folks could justify racial segregation out of the Bible. She couldn't understand that. But she can understand how she can justify eating meat out of the Bible, which said, "Thou shalt not kill." It doesn't say "man"; it said, "thou shalt not kill." She's twisted that statement to cover where she could eat all the steak she wanted, and then whitey twists his, where he can eat all the niggers he wants. If you're going to use the book wrong, let everybody use it wrong, or clean it up completely. And so eventually it will come to a vegetarian world or no world at all. It's going to have to come here very quickly, too.
- Q: We've listened to your act, now, and also at various other demonstrations, probably eight or nine times. The first time

we listened to you, you were extremely funny. I don't mean it derogatorily at all. But the more we listen to you, the more we find your humor frightening to us, and tragic to a certain extent; not exactly frightening, but the things that you are saying are so true that we find it hard to laugh any more. I don't know how to ask the question, because I don't know if it's the type of question that can be answered.

A: It can be. I think we both are growing up.

Q: Okay . . . How much time do you really spend in night clubs?

A: I'd say about ten percent of my time in the course of a year.

Q: And ninety percent of the time you're out on the road?

A: That's right. Yeah.

Q: Tell us about your campaign against Mayor Daly [Mr. Gregory plans to run as an independent against Mayor Daly of Chicago.]

A: Well, I haven't even started it, yet. I was going to start it this summer, until the demonstrations started. I decided to pull out, because I know by marching through those White neighborhoods, if my campaign was going on, they would have grabbed me. Not literally, but they would have taken out that bitterness by saying, "I'm not going to vote for Dick Gregory." But they weren't going to vote for me, anyway. Now they have grabbed the mayor, and said that they're not going to vote for the Democratic party. So I'm going in and organize my campaign right after the November election. My race comes up in the spring of next year. And I have no doubt at all that it's going to be very effective, because many people want a change . . . I don't want to appeal to the racist vote, be it black or white. I'll leave that for somebody else. I'd feel very insulted if I won the election with a racist vote from the whites or from the blacks. But, I can't lose, because either I'll get enough votes to win, or I'll get enough votes to destroy that machine. And either one is going to be a victory.

Q: Is King supporting you? Do you think he will? Or do you even want his support?

A: I don't want his support. That's my home town, there. And,

you know, when a man has to go out and get another man to support him in his own home town, he's in trouble! That's like asking King to help me support my kids. They're my kids, and Chicago's my home town, you understand. I got a record to stand on in Chicago, period.

Q: What're you going to do if you win?

A: Ask for a recount. To be honest with you, I don't know how I could learn to adjust to living on thirty thousand dollars a year. That's six weeks pay for me, now. And I don't steal. I'd be in pretty bad shape, man.

Q: When we were here last time, you were talking about a campaign to get commercials off television.

A: No, I haven't had time. I was going to go to court on that, but I haven't had time.

Q: Why were you against advertisements on television?

A: Because I don't feel that a guy can use my house, and my electric, to sell his product without paying me. No more than you'd put a billboard up on my front lawn without paying me. This is my house, it's my television set, and if you're going to come in my house, and use my television set, to reach my friends who I might be feeding or something, then you pay me, period.

Q: When I read your book [Nigger, Pocket Book Paperback, 75¢], I read the part about when you first spoke before the Playboy Club in Chicago. How did you feel that night before you spoke?

A: I don't remember, now. I'd have to concentrate and take about three or four hours to really create an atmosphere where I could. It's back in my head somewhere, but I just don't have the brilliance to release things back there, like that. That was the interesting thing in doing the book. I drifted all the way back to childhood, and then one thing related to another, and the atmosphere was created, but I've never been able, just on a minute's notice to go back in that file cabinet and pull out that stuff. I couldn't even say how it was, right now.

Q: Is there any chance of changing the attitude of religion in this country?

- A: Of religion?
- Q: Yeah, the churches.
- A: I doubt it. I doubt it very seriously.
- Q: Because, well, we read in the paper that you'd given a "sermon" [at Glide Memorial] and that you were applauded greatly. I had no doubt that they applauded you and probably gave you a standing ovation — but I was very fearful that when they left, they forgot.
- A: Well, I don't know whether they forgot. I don't even know if they remembered it there. But, religion is its own biggest enemy. If the Church would just get hip enough to run itself like a football team, they could probably survive. And if a football team started running itself like the Church, they'd be wiped out in the morning. If the football players showed up only on Saturday for the game, like the church people show up on Sunday for the game, man, they'd lose them all. The only thing that keeps football going, and keeps the game as beautiful as it is, is the practice that goes on all week. The agony that you go through in the practice sets, makes Saturday a beautiful game. Hell, I could go to a coach and say, "Look, I'll play football for you if you'll guarantee I won't get tackled during scrimmage." And he could give me that guarantee. But he couldn't guarantee me on Saturday at the game, that the first tackle I was hit with wouldn't break my neck and kill me. So the Church just plays the game, but they never coach the team. And so these are the many problems that the Church has, but this is the basic problem that it has.
- Q: You sort of talked about two things. When you were talking about Viet Nam, before, you said that you were very much against killing, whether it be in Viet Nam, or Mississippi, or in Chicago, or Sing Sing. And yet, in a lot of other things that you said, today, you've talked about a metaphor of either two trains coming together, or electricity, or some two very opposing things coming head on to each other, which tends toward an explosion — a violent explosion. I was just wondering how these two fit together in your mind.
- A: Well, nature. Nature's always had the right to kill, to destroy. This is the only person that can kill, without question. But

not man. It's the theory of spontaneous combustion — you put those dirty, oily, greasy, rags in the closet, and close the door, where no air can circulate, and you know what's going to happen. Well, in the black ghettos, today, that's the oily, greasy rags. And if you don't let that air circulate, you're going to get that thing. This is the beauty about nature. When that woman's nine months pregnant, she's going to drop that baby, if it means death to the mother and the child. Well, America's racial pregnancy is up, and the baby's gonna fall one way or the other.

Q: How do you think it will fall? Do you think it will be a violent or a non-violent birth?

A: I think it will be very violent. Very very violent.

Q: Do you think the baby will be still-born?

A: A new baby can come up from ashes. You're talking about the birth of nations. Hell, the Romans fell. See, again, we get to this old selfish fuckin' thing, man, that we really don't want to save America — we want to save ourselves. If we had the world concerned, the best thing happen to America is she fall. We have the whole world so fucked up, all over, man. Six percent of the world's population, we own sixty percent of the natural resources all over the world. We supply ninety percent of the ammunition around the world. This isn't racial violence ... If a big rock hit this bastard in the morning, from outer space, and completely crushed it, the world might have a chance. But the longer, every day America exists, the whole world's fucked up, man, because of what we doin'; above and beyond our racist attitude.

Q: Well, how the hell do we stop it without being violent?

A: Be good. But, you know, it's like a man coming to me and saying, "I'm married, and I don't want to cheat on my wife." Just stop, man — but that's too simple. So then he wants you to cut his balls off. But, you tell him, it's a simple fuckin' thing to do — just don't cheat on your old lady, man — it's just that simple. No big trick to that. But we got so fouled up in our thinking, that the simple thing, he don't want. So now he says, "Please help me so I won't cheat on my wife." So, ok, put it there and I'm going to chop it off for you, man. But you

really don't need that nonsense. Just don't do it, man. It's like birth control. Nature gave you the power to keep your fuckin' legs crossed. It's the greatest birth control you got. Don't have to invent no pill — 'cause all the sex organs were made for in the first place was to reproduce — nothing else — not to have no fun with. When man starts using his ears to have as much fun with outside of hearing what nature gave to him, he's gonna need a pill for his ears, too. The eyes was made to see with; the mouth to chew with, taste with, talk with; the nose to smell with; the ears to hear with; the sex organs only to reproduce. And the day we use our other organs man, and our other senses as foul as we use the sex organs, then you're in trouble. And that's the basis for prostitution. When man gets hip and realizes that the sex organ was only to reproduce, and every time he puts it in a broad it should be only to have a baby, then we won't want to have a baby with any strange woman in the street, so prostitution is automatically dead. The simplest things in the world can be solved. But we've gone so far overboard with them now, that now you've got to go the other route.

Q: When a person gets fed up with this country, as I'm afraid an awful lot of us are; because, like, you know, there is no effective way of protesting the way — not to make it stop. And there doesn't seem to be too terribly much you can do about civil rights unless, you know, you go out and pick up a gun. Well we're coming very close to leaving the country, because maybe — okay, other countries have things wrong with them too — but at least they're new and different, and maybe you can do some good in an atmosphere unlike this one.

A: Well, it all depends. I think people have various attitudes, you know. I don't know why I'm staying. Maybe I just want to take pictures of it when she falls. Different people got different attitudes. It's like the beautiful non-violent kids who are marching, who hate war so bad and hate death so bad, but they're still pulling for the Viet Cong to kill. Where do you swing the balance? What's the difference, you know? And they're really pulling for the Viet Cong, not because they're against killing, but because they're for the underdog. And they're pulling for the underdog. And if America happens to be the underdog — it'd be the same thing. There's these tremendous people, man, who are really against that war in Viet Nam. When that napalm falls on those American soldiers,

they cheer. If that napalm plant out there in Clyde, California wiped out that whole town, they would be happy. Now, what is this, you know? American kids can be killed by napalm, accidentally, but you don't have the same feeling when a little foreign kid's been killed?

A: Yeah, but if that happened, to just those few people out there, then a lot of people in this country would realize what it looks like, and what it's like to those people over there when they are killed and maimed by napalm. These people don't have any realization of what's happening.

A: Yeah, but that's the same attitude that the right wing general has — that if we drop this napalm on the fucking kids over here, then a lot of people'll realize that we're not going to put up with this bullshit. It's the same attitude, just twisted around the other way.

Q: I realize it's very close.

A: The only way you can justify this feeling is go get you some napalm, and do it yourself. You know, go into that neighborhood and catch that little kid, and say, "Alright, here." And then say, when the cop comes, "I just wanted to show you what napalm looked like. Now you all come out and look at this little bitch. Here she is." Maybe that would be effective, you know. But to sit back and wait for an explosion that's not going to happen, you know

Q: Or put it on yourself.

A: Yeah, put it on yourself, you know.

Q: I decided that the only effective way to end this war is to put Johnson and Congress on the front line in Viet Nam.

A: With their luck, they'd probably win, man. They'd end up making it a barbecue pit.

Q: What did you think of Clyde, when you were out there? Port Chicago. How long were you there?

A: I was there not over an hour.

A: Well, he's dying. He's dying of cancer. That's probably why. That's why all of his staff is getting away from him. You know, his tight buddies, you know, are like splitting now. Best thing to do is split and get you a good job before the boss dies...

Q: He's looking older every time I see him.

A: He is older.

Q: And sicker and grayer.

Q: In France, before they had the Republic, when they had the royal thing, when Louis XV died, you know they had the legend of him saying, "After me, the revolution." Could you see any link between some thinking like that and, "After Johnson, the revolution."

A: No. There's a Johnson on every block, man. And Johnson not just one bad cat, man — every block — damn near every house, got a LBJ in it, in some form or another. I think it's evidenced here: Vigilantes to protect themselves against pacifists, man. It's never happened before.

Q: I can't think of any more questions I'd like to ask.

A: Then that's it. Let's stop it, then. I can go back to bed.

ACADEMIC PUBLISHING-BERKELEY

Academic Publishing-Berkeley is a student organization on the Berkeley campus of the University of California with the purpose of publishing material of academic interest to students. The people who are presently working with the organization have been engaging in three activities: one has been sitting at a table on campus selling Particle and Podium magazines. In the future we hope to be able to help these and other magazines which join the organization, not only by distributing and selling the magazines, but also in producing them. If the organization becomes strong financially, it may be able to either subsidize magazines of academic interest to students, or grant them loans. The organization hopes to receive financial backing in the form of dues and donations from the more established magazines and from benefactors.

A second activity has been to provide a mimeographing service for students. Those students who have written something academic and would like to print up copies for their friends or for distribution on campus can put out 500 pages for \$2.00 on the machine we have access to. These students may sell their papers or have them sold at the table set up by Academic Publishing-Berkeley, but all the profit shall go into the organization's funds. In this way we can strengthen the organization, while at the same time avoiding the danger of having people exploit the inexpensiveness of this service to fill their pockets, instead of using the machine to advance their own views and hopefully add to the body of human knowledge.

The third activity, which we call Lecture Transcripts, is that of taping, transcribing, and printing lectures given on campus. Our projects so far, consist of transcribing a set of lectures from a series being given on campus consisting of lectures on censorship under the title, The Right to Know, a lecture given on campus by Erich Fromm on The Humanist Renaissance of Today, including his answers to questions posed to him by students after the lecture, and finally the debate which took place here between American Ambassador to the United Nations Arthur Goldberg and Professor Franz Schurmann of the University of California. We think the students will take an interest in these publications and have had several people assure us that they are willing to pay three dollars for a subscription to them.

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In the future we should find many ways to expand our activities. We might sponsor our own lectures and publish them. We might set up groups to criticize and evaluate papers which students submit to the organization for this purpose. If students on other campuses are eager to form their own chapters, all the chapters would benefit materially by exchanging papers and ideas.

We hope that such chapters on other campuses will be formed and that the activities we have described here will encourage others to take up activities with similar aims.

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