5-23-1975

"Black Studies Center Public Dialogue, Part 1"

Portland State University

Maynard Jackson

William M. Harris

Charles Jordan

Clara Peoples

See next page for additional authors

Speakers

Portland State University, Maynard Jackson, William M. Harris, Charles Jordan, Clara Peoples, and Rosemary Allen

Black Studies Center Public Dialogue (Part 1)
Panel participants: Rosemary Allen (PSU student), William M. Harris (PSU Black Studies), Maynard Jackson (Mayor, City of Atlanta), Charles Jordan (Commissioner, City of Portland), Clara Peoples (Portland citizen)
May 23, 1975
Portland State University

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Transcribed by Josee Pearlson, March 11, 2021
Audited by Carolee Harrison, March 2021

WILLIAM HARRIS: [recording begins mid-sentence] …on behalf of Portland State University's Black Studies Center, in a dialogue sponsored by the Black Studies Center and the Oregon Committee for the Humanities. I'd like at this time also to announce that a continuation of this dialogue will be next Friday evening at 7 p.m. with novelist Toni Morrison, author of *The Bluest Eye*. At this time it indeed gives me very great pleasure to introduce to you visiting Mayor Maynard Holbrook Jackson of Atlanta, Georgia.

The man is rather remarkable when we look at the accomplishments for such a very young individual. He is a Southerner born in Texas: Dallas, Texas. One of the things that I have in common with him is that he has two daughters and a son, and I suspect there the comparison ends. [laughter] He is a graduate of Morehouse College, where he did his undergraduate work in political science, so you can see he had a sense of mission early. He is a graduate of North Carolina Central University, where he took his degree in law. Having amassed a number of honors, he has been vice-mayor of Atlanta for 4 years; senior law partner in the law firm of Jackson, Patterson, and Parks; he was manager and director of community relations in Atlanta; and an unsuccessful candidate for the Democratic nomination to the United States Senate in

1968. Mayor Jackson comes to us with a very varied work experience including such things in addition to his mayorship as a lecturer, a waiter, and tobacco picker. Now that's the kind of information a successful mayor gives you; you'd never have me giving you that kind of information! [laughter]

At this time let me give you a few comments about how we expect to operate this evening. Following the mayor's presentation, the three panelists will interact with the mayor about the topic he discusses; I will serve as the moderator. The panelists are, from my immediate right, a student at Portland State University and journalism major, Rosemary Allen. In the middle is commissioner Charles Jordan from the city of Portland, and Clara Peoples, who most of you know is a community activist and an all-around charged-up lady. At this time I give you Maynard Jackson. [applause]

MAYNARD JACKSON: Thank you very much, Dr. Harris. I am very honored that Portland State University's Black Studies Center invited me to come here. It's my first time being in Portland, and to commissioner Jordan, I'm very proud to be in your city; it's a great city, it's a beautiful city and I'm very impressed by it. Ms. Allen, Ms. Peoples. Ladies and gentlemen. I have twenty minutes, so I'm gonna dispense with all the bad jokes and simply bring you greetings from the people of Atlanta, which we believe make up the city which is the greatest city in this country, with the possible exception of Portland. [laughter]

There are today over 110 Black mayors in the United States which have been elected to the highest office within the past few years. When that fact was widely publicized within the past couple of years, many people were quite startled by it, but their amazement was only temporary, for very quickly, cynical political analysts pointed out what they said should have been very clear from the very beginning, and that was the cities were dying and the logical thing to do was to turn them over to those who could not flee the sad but seemingly irreversible urban divides. The cities were plagued with crime, the cynics said, rising taxes, dilapidated housing, congested freeways among other things. Why not, the cynics said, present them to the Black mayors with all good wishes, and then watch the flounderings of those mayors from the security of segregated suburbs. This, the cynics told us, was only logical. But there were other responses to that announcement of over 110 Black mayors in this country. Many Black people all across this nation held their heads a bit higher, walked a bit taller when they realized that at last we were beginning to see the result of long years of fighting and dying for the right to participate in the electoral process. Black citizens from Pritchard, Alabama to Los Angeles, California waited with some hope and more than a little bit of apprehension to see the results of the elections, and made their cities hot news items all across the world. Well-

intentioned white citizens joined with their Black neighbors and coworkers in working to rescue their communities from the grip of the problems that some say threatened their very existence.

But before we take a closer look at what some of those problems are and how they can be solved, let's look just for a moment at the background of these mayoral elections which are now said to be of historic importance. Before World War I, the vast majority of America's Black citizens lived in the rural South. We managed to survive by working land that belonged to somebody else, by and large. We were sharecroppers and our lives were not easy. The ups and downs of farming, the bad seasons outnumbering the good ones, the tired soil that had been worn out by cotton crap after… [laughing] Well, that was true, too. [laughter] Cotton crop after cotton crop. All of these factors conspired with wealthy landowners to keep Black America in the South, in the rural South, in constant debt and in virtual slavery.

When World War I broke out, this country needed two things, desperately, at home. It needed soldiers, of course, and it needed workers to fill the vital jobs that were left vacant by the fighting men. Looking therefore to the rural South, the factory owners realized that here was an untapped source of good, cheap labor: the sharecropper. So factory owners hungry for workers recognized a group of people who were accustomed to hard work and very little money. They also knew that most of the sharecroppers wanted desperately to break the vicious cycle of debt and poverty that chained them to the rural South. So, from the cities came the recruiters. Men whose job it was to find Black farmers, convince them to come to the North and to the cities, which of course we all knew were a land of milk and honey, where there was no lynching and no KKK, except in Indiana where it was founded. Where there was no poverty. Where all the men wore fine clothes and women were all talented, intelligent, and beautiful. Of course, it was impossible to resist the sales pitch, and then thousands and thousands and thousands of Black families packed their meager belongings and stole away under the cover of darkness, leaving their debts behind them and following the recruiters to the cities and to freedom, they thought.

What in fact did we find in the cold, grey cities of the North and the sweltering cities of the South? The golden promises of the recruiters began to fade and the harsh reality of tenements teaming with men, women, and children who had no knowledge of the rules of survival in crowded urban ghettos. The wearisome work of the fields was replaced by the tiresome monotony of the factories. The Jim Crow laws of the rural South were effectively replaced by less obvious, but equally rigid codes of the urban areas. The city's political mechanism was controlled by people who had no intention under the sun of sharing with the newcomers. The closely knit family life of the rural South was ripped apart, literally, by the frustration and the

noise of the city. We found ourselves as hopeless and as powerless as we had been in the grip of the sharecropping system.

Our desperation was given voice by our musicians, who sang, “What did I do to be so Black and blue?” and our poets asked, “What happens to a dream deferred?” One thing in our lives had changed, and it changed dramatically: we were in fact no longer a rural people. We had expanded into the urban centers of the North and the South. And although we were awed and disoriented at first, it was not long before it began to make our presence felt. We joined unions, we fought for open housing and equal job opportunities, we demanded police protection, we watched our children go to school and encouraged them to study and to excel, and we registered to vote. I honestly believe the vote gave us our most important weapon, and not just in the large cities either, but in the smaller towns across the country where we began to realize the vast potential of the ballot box and to risk our jobs and many times our very lives, and our determination to participate fully in the democracy that had been promised, but had never been delivered in fact by this country.

For the people in cities across the nation who have elected Black mayors were not signalling defeat and hopelessness. They were participating in the political process with the faith that their elected representatives could find meaningful, creative solutions to the problems that afflict us: education, law enforcement, city planning, and many many others that must be addressed immediately, especially unemployment. With an understanding of not only how the city works, but the needs and desires of all of the city's people. Young and old, rich and poor, male and female, Black, brown, and white—and that’s where young America comes in, in my opinion. It is absolutely essential in any mayor of any city, that he or she have available a pool of talented people who are willing to work the long, grueling hours, the pressure-packed hours necessary to make a city work. He or she, the mayor, must be able to call upon people and to know that they have not only the dedication, but the talent and the expertise to get the job done, whatever the job may be. So we need city planners and administrators. People who know how a city is put together and how to make the government best serve the people. We need historians to put events into perspective so that we don’t repeat the mistakes of the past. We need people who are well-versed in literature to make sure that our libraries are well-stocked with the materials we need. We need teachers to encourage our children to learn all they can about the world about them, not the world we imagined, but the world we know. We need lawyers to serve as watchdogs over the American legal system—although, Watergate shows they were serving in some other capacities in some cases—and to ensure that the rights of the poor and the uneducated are guaranteed and guarded as zealously as are the rights of those

who are the privileged. We need doctors and scientists, economists, administrators, secretaries, divinity students to help us to keep the faith too.

We need all the talent and all the energy and imagination that young people in Black Studies programs that are programmatically-oriented have. Because the 1970s are going to be very important years, years of testing, probing. We cannot afford to betray the trust that brought our grandmothers and grandfathers to the cities looking for a better way of life for themselves and their children and their children's children. We cannot allow our dreams to be deferred any longer.

Speakers are often tempted to give sage advice to everybody, anybody in fact. Speakers often put forth their addresses as if they were blueprints for the future, which, if followed very closely, could not help but guarantee success and prosperity. But given the difficult and the constantly changing factors in Black America today, I would be less than honest if I set down a list of rules for anybody to follow for guaranteed success, because life, as we all know, regrettably has no guarantees. So what I want to do is to suggest several points which I believe are important enough to warrant consideration, especially by young people who are involved in similar programs, but everybody. If followed, I believe these points will increase our chances for freedom and for success, and thereby keep our lives from becoming nothing more than absurd caricatures of meandering meaninglessness.

Now, point one. It's impossible to know where you're going without a clear understanding of where you've been. Now this is true for individuals as well as for groups. So the knowledge of our past is crucial to Black people. Without that knowledge, and by the way, it's crucial to white people too, maybe more so in the latter case. Without that knowledge, we will continue to make the same mistakes which have cost us so much in time and human life. It's impossible to shape a successful strategy for the 1970s without knowing what was happening to our people in the 1870s, or in the 1920s, or even in the 1960s. And regrettably far too many of us don't even know enough about the struggles that have occurred in our own lifetimes which have helped to shape the thinking of our older brothers and sisters. It is impossible to understand or to evaluate correctly the actions and the ideas of people like Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm or Barbara Jordan, Congressman Andrew Young, United States Senator Edward Brooke or Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, or Commissioner Jordan, without first knowing about Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Jomo Kenyatta. So I say to you that if you don't have a Black Studies history, if you haven't been keeping up on where we are and where we have been, you ought to get a book and start catching up now.

Point two: a good education for our children always has been an all-consuming desire of Black mothers and fathers, and rightly so. Much of our history has been the story of a people struggling against incredible odds to remove the heavy mantle of ignorance which has burdened and oppressed us. But I think those of us in the room tonight here, by and large, have been lucky. Most of us already have received more education than most Black people have ever had available to us, and this point is brought grimly home by the sobering statistics which show us that there are more college-age Black men in prison today than there are on college campuses. So our responsibility collectively is a significant one. We cannot afford to stop our education maybe because we have earned one degree or two degrees, or even three degrees. We are our best natural resource and it must be developed to its utmost. So if the opportunity presents itself, we must keep on learning in the education of life and the university of life, and make sure the skills that we can provide are of the highest quality.

I talked to Dr. Harris today about his Black Studies Center, and he told me that it is the only one in the nation that has a complete urban orientation. There are supplemental courses in culture, heritage, and so forth which are very important. But now it's gearing into delivering on skills and on programs, and I commend Dr. Harris for that because truly, I tell you as one who has to serve a lot of people, that we need those skills more and more everyday.

Now, point three: because we are a group, Black people, Black America, defined as such by all who view us, although of course we are not monolithic; and because our plight is a common plight, we cannot afford the questionable luxury of individual isolationism entirely. We cannot afford to look out only for ourselves. Instead, we must concern ourselves with the plight of all Black people and all poor people, white or Black. This concern, I believe, must be translated into concrete action on the local level. So we have to become involved in our communities, and this involvement should include but not be limited to organized political action. I honestly believe that although it is imperfect, admittedly imperfect, the last non-violent hoorah for Black Americans is politics. The name of the game in politics is pretty simple. If we have two votes and they have one, we win. However, if you're from Portland you have to redefine the word "we." [laughter] …and in Atlanta, as well, although we are 55 percent a Black city, "we" is still valid there in its redefined state. We, I suggest, must come to mean first a unified Black community, which then will coalesce with any allies we can find who understand and adopt our agenda.

Now, we may have to make some concessions on the agenda to attract allies, but it is possible to get people of divergent backgrounds together who are commonly afflicted, provided there is some negotiation around clearly understood points. For example, in Mississippi, in the

pulpwood industry, avowed members, admitted members of the Ku Klux Klan and some Black pulpwood workers, three of whom were descendants of lynched victims at the hands of the Klan, found themselves being oppressed by the management of that industry. Equally oppressed, and although they were obviously antithetical to each other, at least they assumed they were, they sat down at the table together and said, “First of all, we may not like each other, but let’s see if there’s a common basis for cooperation.” Obviously I would prefer, and I’m sure you would prefer, that people would be able to join hands and declare to the heavens that we stand in a state of love, a pristine state of love, and that brotherhood reigns supreme and sisterhood reigns supreme. But if that is not possible, let us not throw up our hands in despair and walk away. Let us move to the next step, which is to talk pragmatically about what people can do even if they don’t like each other. And that is to find a common basis, and that common basis in this country in so many ways cuts across racial lines and involves whites and Blacks alike.

Now, the humanism of recognizing that there are people incidentally who are white and people who are incidentally Black share things in common may evolve out of that relationship, and let’s hope that it does; but meanwhile, a lot of business can be taken care of. But allies—we have to remind our allies—ought to be relied on for support and not for leadership, and there are some people who get very touchy about whether they want to have allies. Some Black people say, “Well, I don’t want anything to do with whites,” some whites say, “I don’t want anything to do with Blacks.” I’m reminded of Julian Bond, who was going to run for president and was going to have a lot support in this country, including mine, said one time that when your house is on fire and somebody runs up with a bucket of water, don’t ask him who he is, don’t ask him where he got it, just make sure it is not gasoline—then pour it on. [laughter] In politics—an imperfect system, but the best available means today for changing how the masses of people live—it is critically important that we first of all have one. When you start talking about putting one with one to form the coalitions, you cannot put one with one if you don’t first of all have one. Which means the Black community must first be together, that’s critically important.

Point four: it is beautiful to be Black, but being Black is not enough. For when the young Black mother says to me, as mayor of Atlanta, “I don’t have any food to feed my children,” it’s not enough for me to say, “Don’t worry, sister, I’m Black.” [laughter] When the young Black father says to me, “I have no job to support my family,” it is not enough for me to simply say to him, “Don’t worry about a thing, it’s all right, because I’m Black.” When the young Black child says to me, “I’m afraid to go to school because there are dope pushers in the halls, and I’m afraid to go home because there are rats in the walls,” it is not enough for me to simply say, “Don’t worry,

son or daughter, because I'm Black." Being Black is to me a state of grace because of the strength of our heritage, but also know that it alone is not enough. We've gotta be Black and beautiful, and being beautiful means being prepared, being disciplined, being committed, and understanding that we can never forget our roots. It means developing the kind of strong continuous programs which will meet not just the needs of one individual, one group or one class, but of all. Not just for one day, but for all time. Thank you.

[applause]

HARRIS: At this time we'll follow the procedure as announced at the beginning. We'll open questions by the panelists; and as moderator, you only get two or three things so I'm gonna get mine in early and see if I can't ask a question of the mayor. You mentioned, Mayor, that in the 70s, politics is the name of the game. What then, if that is so, what then do you see as potentially gains for Blacks in city leadership at all levels of government structure, say for the next ten years?

JACKSON: Well, the first thing, of course, is that in order for us to have any gains at all there must be tremendous organization. The organizing that must be done, it seems to me, is going to have to be on the most fundamental level. It's gotta be very carefully done. The gains that are potentially there are unlimited in my opinion. I believe we can elect some Black governors in this nation. I believe that the potential to influence the national ticket is quite significant. I believe that it is important that we develop disciplined political leadership, first of all, and disciplined political followship. Whatever gains are to be gotten could be only temporary if those who elect officials do not require that they be disciplined. Now, that's a very important point to me, because what it really says is if someone puts into office a Black elected official who then turns out not to be responsive to the community, turns out not to have a sense of commitment to the community, a sense of owing to the community, and a sense of drive and determination on behalf of the community, that person might as well not even be in there. It is not enough just to elect an official; one must then do the serious job of following up on the official. Well, I think the gains that are to be gotten are significant, because look at how far we have come. With over 110 Black mayors in America, over 3,000 Black elected officials, I can assure you that it sounds fantastic, and it amounts to 1 percent of all the elected officials in this country. So how far do we have to go? The answer is one hell of a long way.

HARRIS: Commissioner Jordan, you are in a minority in terms of the two ladies you're with; […] that was your pecking order legitimately. Would you like to ask the mayor a question?

CHARLES JORDAN: Yes, I would. I would like to maybe ask a question and make a comment; given the current political process, you can often wonder, how can it really speak to the needs of Black people? I premise this on knowing how the system operates, and you really don't know until you become a part of it. You really think you know, and I thought I knew when I was in the community in another part of the system, I really thought I knew how the system worked. But you know how easy it is to systematically shackle someone, and you know where the decisions are made. We know where the decisions are made. We realize that when we appear in public, you know, we go through the acts, but we know where the real decisions have been made, and when you elect an official in a city like Portland, Oregon with a population of less than 3 percent Black, you know, to me I feel like I operate in a segregated context. I know that I can be cut off at any time, and yet I know how the system works also. That you've gotta become a part of that system to work with it, to learn how to manipulate it in order to help your people. Yet because your people do not understand the system, then the cooperation is not there, because they see you becoming a part of that system, and they feel they've lost you. Now, how do you re-establish that line of communication and try to get it across to your brothers and sisters that you have not abandoned them, but in order to become a part of this team, in order to find out how they work and where the decisions are made, it may appear that way? But when you wear your color on your sleeve you can easily be disenfranchised over here, because if you're only one, the expectations are from the white community is that we want an Uncle Tom in there. And from the Black community, we want a Black Moses, and therefore all the eyes are focused on you. Now, how do you function with the current political process in an arena like that?

JACKSON: Very carefully. [laughter and applause] I honestly, as I was listening to you, and we chatted today and I have the highest regard and admiration for Commissioner Jordan. Believe me, I understand what you're asking, because even in a city like Atlanta, which as you know about Black and white, it's roughly evenly divided, you've got the same problem, and it's a very complicated problem. I'm not sure I can advise you because you operate in a milieu which is not… with which I'm really not familiar. I would not even know how to act in a city that only had 3 percent Black population. [laughter]

HARRIS: Very carefully. [laughter]

JACKSON: But what I would say is this: I'd say that your job is a very tough one, and it requires a tremendous amount of education, which I think, by the way, is one of the functions of an elected official. I think the Black elected official especially must educate, must be a teacher which requires, of course, that he or she first of all be a student. That being the case, off the top of my head my recommendations would be that one would maintain very close

interpersonal relations. Have days in the community for example, when… well, we call it people's days; I have had, for example, one Saturday every month we have a people's day, and I'm in the community, we're set up, I have all my commissioners there, and we receive anybody who wants to come, no appointments required, all day; and we've had 16 consecutive months of that now. We're gonna keep on doing that. Now, that alone won't do it, that's only one thing. Then you gotta walk the streets. What it really means in large measure is the Black community honestly, in my opinion, does not believe that a Black elected official has betrayed them, but there is a paranoia born of years of betrayal, more by whites than by Blacks, but some of both, which almost incapacitates large numbers of Black people from understanding the tremendous difficulty of a job that a Black elected official has even in a predominately Black setting, let alone one where the Black population is so miniscule. The only way that I can suggest we can overcome that paranoia—which by the way is not sick, it's healthy—is by constantly staying in touch, being seen, letting people know what's happening, revealing what's happening behind the scenes and talking about it and getting ideas. Involving people to a far greater degree than before. The paranoia, I believe, is healthy because it's like this: if you walk by a guy for 300 days and everytime you walk by him he turns around and busts you in the back of your head, on day 301 if you do not duck, then you're sick. [laughter] So we have to understand that phenomenon. My advice is… and the other thing, of course, is integrity. If you are honest, people will know it. It may take some time, and there will be always be people who, no matter what you do, will be critical, but the best thing to do is to be honest while your program is out there, make sure people know about it, keep on pushing, and never betray the people; never, under any circumstances do that.

HARRIS: I'd like to…

JACKSON: Let me just say one other thing, because this is a pretty complicated question. The other part of the education problem, it seems to me, is to educate the white community to understand what one, as an elected official, a Black, responsible elected official must do to represent the Black community. Now, one of the best ways to do that, I think even for those who may not like, you know, the Black official being too aggressive, is to make them understand that if you are not, they are in trouble; so it becomes a self-interest argument for them. It's a very complicated process, and I think that some of these ideas might work, but I absolutely disclaim having any lock on any intelligence on that question.

HARRIS: I'd like to, at this time, ask the community to begin thinking and holding the questions you may have for the panel and for Mayor Jackson, because after the panelists have an opportunity to interact we will open this up. We want it to be a discussion and not a lecture or

talk-to-you affair. Ms. Peoples, would you like to pose a question, or make a comment to the Mayor on comments he previously made?

CLARA PEOPLES: Thank you very much, Dr. Harris, and I guess I'll have to start out by sounding like the devil's advocate and open the can of worms. And that is, I've heard the Mayor state there's 110 Black mayors in America. I'd like to ask: how do they coordinate in helping to bring about social change and economic justice, because they are in the system for all people? So, that would be my question to the mayor.

JACKSON: There are over 110 Black mayors in the country who belong, along with other Black local elected officials, to an organization known as NBC-LEO, The National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials. It began as the Caucus of Black Local Elected Officials in the National League of Cities. There is a structure; the chairman, the national chairman now is the mayor of Berkeley, California, Mayor Warren Widener, and I'm in my second term as the national first vice-chairman. That organization seeks to do exactly what you've said. There is in the South, in addition to that, where the vast majority of the Black mayors are located, about 70 approximately, an organization known as the Southern Conference of Black Mayors. I'm chairman of the executive committee of that organization. SCBM is staffed and funded, has offices in Atlanta, has federal grants this year totalling almost half a million dollars, but its orientation is almost exclusively for the small-town mayors. I've never had the occasion or the need to call on SCBM to assist me directly in Atlanta, although my job is to assist SCBM in whatever way I can; the Southern Conference of Black Mayors. Its orientation is to help the small-town Black mayors, mayors of towns wherever you may have 1,000, or 2,000 population. Where there literally is almost no resources, where people have to be given help on how to even write a request for federal aid in getting sewers, or streets paved, fundamental basic city services. Those are two of the organizations that are operating. In states, in addition to that, there are groups that are organized statewide. In Georgia it's called GABEO, Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials. I've served as the chairman of the municipal branch of GABEO. So these are some of the major mechanisms by which we coordinate; then there is the informal mechanism of how we pick up the phone and call each other… [laughter] and say, you know, what about this and what about that and so forth. I think things are far from what they need to be, but I think that we're making some real progress.

PEOPLES: May I ask one more question please? I guess I am what you would consider a grassroots everyday person, with no titles other than mother and housewife. So then I would have to ask you: after the beautiful people are elected to these public offices and state that they're gonna do so many things for everybody, somehow or another you come in contact with

the secretary or an assistant and nothing ever gets done, and the elected official—and no offense meant to anyone on the panel or out there—but I'm asking, I guess, how can you turn the everyday citizens back on who have been programmed to death, met to death, studied to death, and when the money comes down it stops at another level and it really never gets down to the people to help them improve?

JACKSON: Well, in the first place, Ms. Peoples, I would take exception to your use of the word "never." I think your premise in that instance is not valid and two points you used that word in relation to how a Black elected official can never be reached and…

PEOPLES: No. Excuse me, I didn't use the word "black" that time, I said the "beautiful" elected officials. That means *all* elected.

JACKSON: I assumed you meant…

PEOPLES: Yes, I'm sorry, I didn't know...

JACKSON: You said "beautiful" and I just assumed... [laughter] However, I understand what you're asking, and your question comes out of a sense of frustration which is profound and valid; and certainly we as elected officials must understand, and do, probably to a far greater degree than people would recognize. Let me see if I can answer your question for you. There is no way that an elected official, first of all, can do everything. What the elected official however must be looked to, for, if the English teachers will forgive me, is to be a leader, and that means that on the inside of the councils of decision-making and power to represent their interests as best as that person can. Now, that is critically important. The idea of access is something which will vary depending on the office and depending on the breadth of responsibility of the elected official. Obviously, the bigger the responsibility, the less accessible the elected official is going to be. The official, therefore, must program himself or herself to be accessible. You've got to plan that, you've gotta make sure that you don't get cut off like Nixon got cut off for example. Although I suspect that he wanted to be cut off. Now, the other thing is that there's gotta be an understanding on the part of constituents: not a patience with betrayal, not a patience with shortcoming, not a patience with ineptness, not a patience with incompetence, but an understanding of the elected official who *is* trying, who is competent, who is ept, who is committed. Now that person is in there trying to do what the people have asked him or her to do. And the accessibility will deteriorate, diminish, depending on the degree of involvement on the inside. There must always be that access. I'm not arguing against that, I'm arguing for that, but I'm also arguing for a discipline on the part of the electorate.

I'll get back now to educating the followship. The followship must be disciplined not to lose patience with all the meetings. It is the nature of our system of government, of democracy in fact, that meetings proliferate. What is important is whether anything comes out of those meetings. Whether there is an agreed-upon agenda and whether the elected official moves aggressively to fight for the agenda, even if he or she cannot achieve it all. Does that person remain loyal to the agenda? Is that person trying? So I think that there is a need, number one, for more discipline on the part of elected officials to be accessible, to be responsive, to be informed. There's also a critical need for the constituency to be better disciplined, which means therefore better-informed, and to be more understanding of what must happen. Now the final point I want to make is this: the Black elected official, and this was the commissioner's point earlier, is damned if he or she does, and damned if he or she doesn't. It is Valhalla achieved, it is the coming, so to speak, it's the most desired thing on the part of many—not all, but many—whites, elected and unelected, to see the Black elected official deserted. Because then we're able to pick that person off and isolate that person, because then they begin to think that a person has no base, which means therefore that for the elected official to be most effective, inner disagreements that occur must be strictly behind closed doors with the Black community in my opinion, as a matter of strategy. And number two, and I mean when you close the door now. you can light 'em up! [laughter] But when the door is open and that official moves, that other community must know that official moves with support, and otherwise that official cannot do the job that he or she is elected to do.

JORDAN: Could I just add to that, because I really think you made a point there in responding in terms of how one moves outside the closed doors. It's when you're in a city like Portland with a population of less than 3 percent, the strength of any Black elected official is in the masses of Black people. You know if, because for example if I get too far away from the masses of Black people, I could be cut off at any time, and this is why I say we operate in a segregated context and I know that, but in order for me to move up, the masses of Black people must move up, because that's my foundation. But the leadership is something that you should not always go to your Black elected official for, because then, as the mayor said, you isolate him and all the attention is on him. Everytime a Black is locked up you shouldn't call me, you know, to go down and get him out, you know, because then all the attention comes onto me. It's your job, you know, to go to another elected official. Put the heat on him, but behind closed doors let me know what you are doing so that I can work very quietly, and that's so very important; but we like to isolate our Black elected officials. Put them out there, you know, what are you doing, you're not fighting for us. You know, sure, once I start fighting for them then I'm isolated, and then I've got the white community watching me at all times, because every time a Black is

locked up, right or wrong, they're gonna say here comes the squad room lawyer, let's keep our eyes on him; and then I will only be able to deal with the crumbs because they can isolate me from the system. Even though I'm a part of it, I recognize that I can be isolated from that system. One of five commissioners. They can shut me out by the informal communication used by the telephone. They can call each other and say what they're gonna do, you know, and then pin the blame on me in front of the council. This is why the education of the masses is so necessary and is something that probably I need to work on. You're so correct on that.

PEOPLES: Thank you.

HARRIS: Ms. Allen, it always seems with these students to be last, but certainly in my case it's not because you have least, it's because we know you take the best notes. So it's your opportunity.

ROSEMARY ALLEN: [laughter] Right on. Mayor Jackson, I would like to ask you; you made a statement earlier which I think is very true in regards to politics being the way for Blacks today to make some necessary changes. Yet, in order to be effective in politics, you've gotta have an education, especially on the college level, and it's becoming harder and harder for Black students to get that education today. In the sixties, quite a few avenues were opened up to give Black students financial assistance in order to get that education, but today all those channels seem to be closing up. What channels do you see the Black student taking in the seventies in order to get that education which is necessary to be effective in politics?

JACKSON: Well, I do think there is a retrenchment, by the way, in white academia in this country. I want to just lay down for the foundation for anything I say, that I don't want anyone to believe that I speak in generalities or think of the white community nationally as monolithic; it is not. There are some good whites and some bad whites; that's not a profound or unique statement, and there are some good Black people and some bad Black people. What I'm talking about is generally and admitting of the many, many exceptions, there is a discernible and documentable retrenchment on the part of many universities now in this country on the question of Blacks being admitted and getting financial aid. One of the interesting by-products of this is that the United Negro College Fund, as a consequence, becomes far more important than it was even just two, three or four years ago. The United Negro College Fund, as you know, is the fund which assists financially many Black colleges in this country. I don't recall how many, but I think around 50 or so.

Now we have seen, for example, and it's a very interesting thing, the recruiters from the Northeast coming into Atlanta and complaining that whereas three, four, five years ago they could get all the valedictorians they wanted, now those kids are starting to turn again to Morehouse and to Spelman and to Fisk and Talladega and many others; and there has developed, we think, on the part of many, a feeling that Valhalla was not there. The promises were held out, therefore the frustration and disappointment were more acute; in the white context, Black students were invited to come, but were then isolated in many instances—not all, but in many—not really made to feel a part of the academic family as were many white students. And finally now I think there are many Black students who are saying to hell with it. Then, of course, there is the growing appreciation for the Black heritage, and a feeling that you cannot get that in a predominantly white context, with some notable exceptions. One being, of course, programs like you have here at Portland State University, where you have a Black Studies program which will assist greatly in that. So my feeling is, number one, that there must be continued pursuit, a greater militancy—I did not say violence, I said *militancy*, which I believe can be strictly non-violent, but aggressive and persistent—to find money, to find resources, to open up doors to get more Black kids into college. And, on the other hand, I think we also need to support the Black colleges of this nation, because they are, without question, one of the most important resources we have.

HARRIS: Before opening and moving forward to the audience, I'd like to leave that with one more question of my own, and that is to ask the Mayor if he would share with us the things he has done in his police department in Atlanta to assure, and in fact he has done some things, that now assure better police-community relations.

JACKSON: When I became mayor in January of 1974, there was a man who headed the police department, as it was then called, named John Inman. He had been appointed an eight-year term by my predecessor and under the old charter. The new charter became effective when I became mayor and it affected a radical change in government, in the system of government. We used to have a weak mayor, board of aldermen form, and now we have a strong mayor, city council form with strict separation of powers. I reorganized government and put police and fire and civil defense as three bureaus in the department, a new department of public safety. And after a rather bitter confrontation with that chief, which took us into the courts and the whole thing, with his people attacking the validity of the charter and of the reorganization ordinance, and all of this which we won, by the way, entirely, except for the one thing, I had fired him and appointed someone else to replace him. The court told me that I couldn't fire him because the old charter, on that one issue, ruled, and the old system of discharging a department head was charges, trial by the board of aldermen, now called the city council, and a two-thirds vote to

oust the department head. The new charter says the mayor may discharge; the dischargee may then appeal within 21 days to the city council and the city council may overrule the mayor, but only by a two-thirds vote. So with all that having finally settled, I went on to appoint my commissioner of public safety, who is Black. His name is A. Reginald Eaves, a lawyer, former commissioner of corrections in Boston, native of Jacksonville, Florida; Morehouse college graduate, and he'd never been a policeman so I was… we were vulnerable to criticism on that issue, but he had been in the criminal justice system through corrections. He was honest and reliable from my point of view and was someone who administratively had all it took.

Now, what we have done is really, I think, impressive, if you don't mind my saying so. I'm impressed with the results, frankly. The first thing was to reorganize the department of the police bureau because it was poorly administered, very poorly administered; Atlanta became Atlanta despite the organization of city government, not because of it. We are reorganizing now, putting management systems into place where there were none in the past. It's a fantastic city, but it had a very old way of doing things, a very old system. For example, the police, when I became mayor, were trained, the police recruits were trained six weeks, and now the training period is eighteen weeks. There was no chance for persons to get to know the police, so we've gone to a team policing concept on an experimental basis in several sections of Atlanta. Police brutality had been a serious problem in Atlanta for a long, long—all of my life—long time and now it is not an issue at all. I'll show you how bad it was in 1973, the year before I became mayor. There were twenty-two killings of civilians by police. I'm not saying the police were always at fault, I'm not making that judgment, but that was a leading statistic in the nation on an absolute basis, not just per capita. Now that has all changed. The other thing is that we have had six recruit classes since I have been mayor. Not one of them has had less than thirty-three percent females. The last class was forty-one percent female, and the last class was the first class in Atlanta's history to be predominately Black.

We are teaching human relations in our training now. We have now taken all experienced policemen and for the first time put them on a re-training cycle. For one week every year, every old policeman now is gonna be retrained, is being retrained. We have begun more programs than I even have time to go into right now, but the effect is that last year our crime rate increased by seven percent compared to a national crime rate increase of seventeen percent. Homicides—and we were number one in the nation per capita in homicides in 1973—in 1974 we had an absolute reduction of two percent in homicides and two percent in rapes. We reorganized a whole rape squad concept, we put women in charge, women police officers and got trained people in handling victims and encourgaing the reporting of crimes. We have succeeded so much in getting rapes reported that our crime rape statistics went up, so it makes

us look bad. We remain number one per capita in homicides even though we had an absolute reduction of two percent. I don't have to explain why, but that happened; so, there are many other programs that are going on, but the major thing is that the speed of the boss is the speed of the crew. You've got to have somebody in there who absolutely means business; and Eaves does and so do I, and that is understood now. We now have instituted a merit system, the first merit system in the history of the police department, to give people a chance to advance based on what they know, not just based on whom they know, and there are many others as well.

HARRIS: Well, now is your chance. Let me try to set some ground rules. Since I'm very anxious that this be a dialogue, a discussion between… and the questions don't have to, by the way, all be asked to Mayor Jackson, they may be posed to any of the panelists other than myself. And there are microphones in the aisles that are operating.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Mayor Jackson, I'm wondering what your views are on… [off microphone, inaudible]

JACKSON: That is a fact. It is one of the most significant trends, population trends in the nation now, and a majority of those who return to the South or who come there initially, who are Black, are by and large at least college-educated, at least a BA degree, who understand now that they aren't really free in the North any more than they would be in the South; and the problems of racism are nationwide and the streets in fact are not paved with gold in the North, so you might as well live where you can eat grits every morning, and where your mother and father and your grandmother and your grandfather came from. Where the climate is more pleasant, and where the Black Belt is, and where therefore the political potential is probably far greater. It is very significant in Atlanta, to the point now that when there is a position open, instead of having one qualified Black person, there may be thirty equally qualified for that position, so the competition is quite keen in Atlanta. That's because of bright lights happening, and there are many other places in Georgia that are in desperate need of Black people, trained, qualified Black people, but of course they don't have the bright lights. Now there are twenty-two counties in Georgia that are predominantly Black, and not one has a Black state representative *yet*, we're gonna change that next year. And there are an additional sixty-four counties in Georgia whose Black population is between thirty-three and fifty percent, which means that out of a hundred and fifty-nine counties in Georgia—the most of any state in the nation by the way, regrettably—there are eighty-four counties whose Black population is over one third. Now what that means is that with all the progress we have made in Georgia, Black elected officials in cities, in counties, on the state level, and a Congressman, Andrew Young, we have not really tapped their potential. I mean, we've tapped it, but I mean we haven't really

gotten down to the nub. So there is great promise and great hope, therefore, tremendous potential for growth, and that is understood I think more and more by many people; but I think the key to it has been an acceptance of the fact that Black people are not any freer in the North than they would be in the South.

HARRIS: I'm gonna ask that other questions from the audience indeed be directed to the microphones, because we are taping this by request of a number of people, especially the brothers at the Oregon State Penitentiary, and if you don't use the mics there is an excellent chance that your questions will not be on the recorder.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Mayor Jackson, I realize that money is a big issue in every city and the programs you've outlined, obviously it takes dollars. How are you using your revenue sharing dollars?

JACKSON: Very poorly; well, that's because the former mayor had a lock on ten votes out of eighteen on the Board of Aldermen, as it was then called, when I was vice-mayor and president of the Board of Aldermen. When revenue sharing came to Atlanta, a mistake was made. I fought against it and the vote on that issue was ten to eight. Had it been one more vote the other way I would have broken the tie, but I voted only to break a tie. And the mistake that was made was to commit revenue sharing funds to several things, but the bulk of the money by far, of the average of seven million per year—and declining amounts, of course, in these declining years of that program which is a five-year program, as you know—the bulk of the money was committed to an increase in salaries of firemen. The problem with that is that you commit your resources' operational expense, if you commit it one year you must commit it every year to maintain that level. So that's how it's being used.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Thank you.

HARRIS: Commissioner Jordan, I wonder if you care to respond to that from a local level.

JORDAN: Well I could probably just say "ditto" and let it go at that. [laughter] As I indicated earlier when—and I think probably Mr. Batiste has alluded to the fact that such a very small amount is going to what we call and we have […] social services, what we call software-type projects, but as I indicated earlier, for cities, as Maynard indicated earlier today too, that it's a new experience for citizens to get involved into what we call social programs. It's just something we traditionally have not been in before. Therefore they are not mandated services. There are a lot of mandated services coming down from the state now, but yet the bucks are

not coming along with those services. Therefore, when the cities start cutting back on services, their gonna cut back on social services, and when revenue sharing came in, this was an opportunity for local officials to make the decision here. You know, citizen participation was token. The federal government said, we've done all we can for the last ten years, and we really can't cope with the problem. We thought we could really take over and run your city for you. We would earmark our dollars coming out of Washington D.C.; we're gonna tell you how to spend your dollars, but after ten years of that the government said we really can't help, we're gonna throw up our hands, so we're gonna give it back to you public officials. You make the decision as to how you're gonna spend your dollars. And I have to say, admittedly so, that cities say this is a chance to get even, because for so long you had city dollars marked for a particular area and the local official couldn't do anything about that at all but just sit there and simmer. You had other federal dollars coming down, saying these dollars or a percentage must go into low-income areas, primarily Black communities, and the local officials couldn't do anything but to sit back and say, you know, one day we'll get even. When revenue sharing came down and community development came down they said, now is the time to get even, and we're gonna go to those areas that we've neglected for so long. The initial grant came into Portland, you know, went into capital outlay projects, and also salary for firemen, because they are very… they have a very strong union in every city and there are some very fine negotiators. So I'd have to say that we're also spending our dollars very poorly, but they are going to bricks and mortars because they want to show some results, and they can do that with bricks and mortars.

JACKSON: The biggest concession we were able to get during that battle was the segregation of about a million dollars. The separation of a million dollars of the money we got to identify that for EOA, which was our community action program, Economic Opportunity Atlanta Incorporated, which is a very successful community action program. Then a few other capital projects, but by and large it was, in my opinion, not properly used.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Mayor Jackson, I want to say hello to a homebody, because Atlanta was home for me; and I felt doubly good when you mentioned Talladega, because that's my school. I have a couple of questions to ask however, both relating to education. Because of all of the Black colleges in the Atlanta area, I wonder to what extent those graduates remain in the area, or do you find them going away from Atlanta to become involved in professions? The second question, while I'm on my feet, is what is the relationship between the city government and the education in the city of Atlanta?

JACKSON: The city of Atlanta absorbs only about one out of four of the graduates of the AU center schools. It's an interesting phenomenon because Atlanta is a tremendous attraction to

Black people. There is tremendous competition there. The other thing is that colleges have been feeding into the Atlanta area since the 1880s, and there is truly one of the most extraordinary Black communities, I think the most extraordinary in the country. Which means there is a tremendous mass of qualified Black people who are very competitive. Now, on the second point, the relationship between city government and those schools is excellent. It's number one. It is systematized in several different ways. When I became mayor, one of the first things we did was to set up an internship program with the Atlanta University center. We also included students from Georgia Tech and Georgia State as well, but it was administered officially between AU and the city of Atlanta. Now we have about a hundred and forty-seven interns in city government who are students at AU, and we require them that they be directly involved in the affairs of the city. They aren't just off on the side doing research, they're involved in the practical experience of government.

Number two, we have set up what is a unique program among cities in the country, called the Atlanta Fellows program. It is modeled after the White House Fellows program funded by the Rockefeller Corporation, and it works this way. We now have the first four on board. You must be between twenty-five and thirty-five years of age, which means obviously you must… the person is already out and working or has completed a significant amount of graduate work. There is a non-taxable stipend of twenty thousand dollars per year for each Atlanta fellow and they work in the highest level of government. There are two in my office who work directly with me. One is a woman, a Black woman who is a Harvard Law school graduate, and the other is a guy who has a master's in health planning and urban planning. And the other two are an urban historian, the only one in Atlanta, and he's in our planning department, and the fourth is a woman who works in community development with a background in that as well, primarily of course in structuring federal programs and delivery mechanisms. So we have a very strong program in that regard; and I'm delighted to see you so far from home—you must come on home.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Mr. Mayor, do you have a workable program for citizens of low income over sixty?

JACKSON: No we don't, yet. Well, the answer is that we're still working on it. Now here's what we have to do. First of all, in 1952, Atlanta and Fulton county made a deal; it was called the plan of improvement. Atlanta, effective in January 1953, took over for Atlanta and for the county the police, fire, water, parks, and libraries. The county took over all health, welfare, and social services. So there has been no history of an involvement such as you mentioned until now. I developed a department of community and human development. It has four bureaus:

the bureau of community development, the bureau of human services, the bureau of corrections—the city prison farm, so to speak, or the correctional institution is not under police, but is in the human and community development department—and code enforcement, seeing this as an adjunct to community development. Within the human services bureau we are in the process now of hiring the director. This is all very new. And looking for that person, as a matter of fact, very currently. There will be offices in that bureau of aging, youth, consumer services, for which we already have structure, which has already been staffed, as well as manpower, which we're gonna take to bureau status I believe, because it is so important and has the funding there. So those matters are coming. My prediction is that within six days from today, there will be an operative office of aging in Atlanta.

Now the other thing, let me mention this to you.. When you say the city, I assume you mean the city government per se, but the city has had a very close relationship with our community action program called EOA, Economic Opportunity Atlanta. And that has been our social services delivery mechanism for ten years now, and in fact they have all of those offices, all of those concerns on aging and family planning; they have neighborhood service centers, veterans' affairs, manpower, youth opportunities. All of these, and they get their money from the city of Atlanta primarily, in addition to federal dollars. They respond to city initiatives and city direction by and large, yet it is a separate agency with its own board.

HARRIS: Before the next question, that… this is again an appropriate opportunity I think for commission Jordan to respond, because he too has the responsibility for aging programs in the city of Portland and I believe he is doing some innovative things in that respect.

JORDAN: Yeah, I would just like to say, in a county like Multnomah where we have some 9,600 people over the age of fifty-five, you know the problems with aging have become quite acute. However, it is a losing battle because of the philosophical differences that now exist in many minds that one thing about America is that once you get to age fifty-five, we feel that we should turn you out to pasture and that you're no longer useful. Therefore, we just provide you with enough to keep you alive and that's it. We don't try to bring you back into the mainstream, and yet when you come in with something innovative and try to bring senior citizens back into the mainstream, in a youth-oriented society you don't get that much support. I think that there is going to be a switch here as well as in Atlanta now, because I think the senior citizens are becoming more vocal. They're becoming more militant and violent. [laughter] Let me tell you.

So I think that you're gonna have more attention directed toward them. I think there are some things that we do have to work on. How do we want to deliver services to them? Do we want to try to bring them back into the mainstream, or do we just want to provide a substituent level? And that's a very difficult conversation, and we are of course going to have to address ourselves to it. Right now we really don't know.

JACKSON: Let me add just one thing, if I can. The point the commissioner made… the points he made really are extremely valid, and part of our big problem in the aging question, the question of the elderly is changing the attitude of the nation toward the elderly here. Our society does not respect age. We can learn an awful lot from the Oriental society I believe in that regard, but I also think there are some things we can do to influence attitude. One of the things that I'm intent on seeing become policy in Atlanta is that we will stop developing housing for the elderly exclusively. And go to a new form of architecture where you bring into contact the young and the old. Now, we understand that elderly people, like all people from time to time, need seclusion and quiet, need peace; and to have kids around all the time could be very disturbing. Yet, at the same time, there is a need for the elderly to draw from the vigor of the young and a need for the young to draw from the wisdom and experience and guidance and steady hand of the elderly. If we could design housing, for example, which has the elderly in their own quarters where they can retire to peace and quiet whenever they want to have it and yet have in the same complex, but in a separate building, young families with children and so forth and common areas. Common areas of eating, or courtyards and so forth in kind of like a compound setting, where there can be exchanges when the people want to have it. It might help a little bit. I think it would help some. Obviously, that would be a very incremental, very small change, but I think it is maybe one potential change in what could be a long chain of changes.

PROF. CROW: I believe you quoted one-third of your police cadet class was women, and I would like to know what, under your administration, how many women have, or the percentage have gone into managerial or supervisory roles in government in Atlanta. I guess what I'm really getting at is, being a good Wagnerian like you, has Atlanta become a Valhalla for women?

HARRIS: Mayor, before you answer that one now, Professor Crow teaches a Black women's course at Portland State, and I don't know if that's loaded or not.

JACKSON: Well, in that regard, I would recommend that the fieldwork for your students be done in Atlanta. [laughter] Valhalla does not exist for women in this country anywhere. I am astounded by the amount of sex discrimination that cuts across racial lines among the men in this nation. But let me answer your question more specifically. I have a very strong

commitment to making sure that women who can do the job like anybody else have a chance to do it. The result is that the policewomen do anything that a policeman does and everything, they patrol the streets, they walk the back alleys, they are armed, they arrest people, they do everything and anything that a policeman does. If they can't cut it, that's their fault, but it won't be that they don't have the chance to do it. Now some can and some cannot, but there are some men who can and cannot too.

The next thing is there never had been a woman head of department before I became mayor. I became mayor in January of '74. My first female appointment was of Emma Darnell, holder of a law degree and two master's degrees, to head the department of administrative services, which put her over all personnel, all purchasing for the city, and real estate. It put her over all labor relations and all general services: those four bureaus. General services means that she's over city hall, the management of the building, and other city installations like that. Over four thousand pieces of equipment, rolling stock, etc. What it means, therefore, is that purchasing and contract compliance, EEO and all of those, those are all of her responsibilities. She controls the EEO and the contract compliance mechanism. Now we have hired another woman, another Harvard-trained lawyer—she is Black, as well as Emma Darnell is Black—to head up contract compliance. Now again, I want to remind you that my theory is that if you change how the system works, it helps to have the people administering the system, which means that all contracts are controlled by Emma Darnell. Contract procedures, personnel; the bureau of personnel by my appointment has a Black woman heading it, also. And I appoint the personnel board which is a citizen board that is not elected. There are five members. That personnel board, by my appointment, has three Black people and two white people. It has three women and two men. Which means, therefore, that the board that sets all the policies for hiring is controlled by women. The license review board controlling all licenses that are affecting the police power, liquor licenses, pouring licenses, taxi-cabs, solicitation licenses, all of those. A five-member board by my appointment, three are women, two are men; the chairperson a woman lawyer, and another one of the women is a lawyer as well. We now have a prosecutor in city court, municipal court, by my appointment a woman. We have a vacancy on the municipal court as of today and I'm going to appoint a woman to that slot if I can find one that will take the job. The one I wanted to take it turned it down two days ago. She is an assistant city attorney by my appointment. And then I have appointed a white woman who heads the department of parks, libraries, and cultural affairs for the city. Those three bureaus, parks, libraries, and cultural affairs, and she is the honcho for that. Now I have not even named all the stuff I've gotten to on that issue, but that's just a sample.

HARRIS: Seems to me if the man has a bias, it's toward lawyers. [laughter]

JACKSON: Well, we had so few, and so far to go.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Mayor Jackson, I have three questions.

JACKSON: Yes ma'am.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: One in the area of education. How does the local government—and Gladys McCoy touched on this, and you dealt with at the university level—but how does the local government under your administration have an impact on the affirmative action kinds of things in local school districts that facilitate educating minority children? My second question is, under your proposed bureau of manpower, how is the vocational education affected; is that bureau going to have an impact from your office to local community colleges and the local school district? And the third question is, what are you doing with your impact money for juveniles in school?

JACKSON: Well, in the first question, the schools are completely controlled by a separately elected board of education. It, like all of the city's elected officials, that board runs at the same time that we do. It has a four-year term. It has nine members. Its president, Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, is a former president of Morehouse College. Of the nine members, five are Black; they take care of the schools. The school superintendent, Dr. Alonzo Krim, who used to be in California, in Compton, California, is the superintendent of schools in Atlanta. Which means that in response to your first question, the city government really has virtually no impact on the schools directly, and I think that that is a good system, but I also think that there is a need for some coordination. And toward that end, we have scheduled for Tuesday as a matter of fact, I talked to the secretary about three hours ago, a meeting with Dr. Krim, the school superintendent, Dr. Mays, the school board president, and myself, to explore how the city government might be able to better support schools. And number two, vocational education is controlled by the school system. There is Atlanta Area Tech, which is a technical institution where the voc ed is carried out; otherwise it is primarily a state function. Now the voc ed program in Georgia is said to be one of the best in the country, I don't know, but that's what all the Georgians who run the voc ed program claim. The impact money, let me ask you, do you mean the impact manpower, or impact crime?

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Both.

JACKSON: We are one of the impact cities. As you know, about twenty million dollars in LEAA funds flowing in a five-year program; the object is to reduce stranger-to-stranger crimes. In certain categories, five percent in two years and twenty percent in five years. Now that money is programmed in many different ways, but as far as being directed specifically to schools, the answer is it is not, except in tangential ways. In other words, there is no program that is a school program in the high-impact crime money. Yet, there are many programs that are very deeply involved in crime prevention in the schools and that kind of thing. Drug control, drug abuse, and that kind of thing. Now, the impact manpower money. The training mechanism is controlled by ETECH which used to be called MAPSI, it's our employment and training advisory committee. It only is advisory, I make the final decision under our new charter as to where the money goes. But we have training mechanisms by contract with several organizations. Among them, by the way, OIC, the Urban League, and some others as well.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Mr. Moderator, because I seem to see we do have an integrated group this evening, I'd like to ask this question, but I don't know exactly who to point it out to, so I'll run with the ball. What role does anyone see our white sympathizers playing in the plight and the future of minorities, specifically Blacks? And because we have what the commissioner said I think was 3% in the city, I think this is a fair question at this time as far as I'm concerned.

JACKSON: Are you asking me?

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Well, I just threw it out.

JACKSON: All right. Well, I'll be happy to respond if I may. The role of whites is a very difficult role. It must be one to fight racism in the white community and that's not easy to do. It’s kind of hard to deal with your peers, with your friends, folks you’ve grown up with and gone to school with, attend church and synagogue with. But that's, I think, a critically important feature. There are some people who felt that to show liberalism was to come into the ghetto and paint a house. There's nothing wrong with helping out in a direct way that way, and one should never discourage that, but to work in the white community on the issue is just as important, in fact more so, I think, than anything else. Number two, I think there is a critical need for Blacks and whites to form coalitions in this country. Political coalitions, social coalitions, educational coalitions, and many others. However, insofar as the Black experience is concerned, it is my opinion that, and let me make sure that I make myself clear on this, that the whites don't get turned off when they're not able to control the situation. Now in the 60s, and following the 60s, there has been a tremendous drop-out nationally of the white liberal community. There are a number of reasons for it. One is that in the Black community there was some rejection. The

other was in the white community there was some disillusionment because Blacks began to say, well, look, I can do this, or I can make this decision. What I think we have to ask whites to understand more and more, is that in pursuit of the Black answer, allies are very much needed, but allies are to be relied on for support and not for leadership. So I think the role is number one very viable; I think it is very complicated, but I think it must be pursued and it does require some education in white and the Black community.

HARRIS: Commissioner, it seems to me you've got to have some response to that in terms of our community, and… [audio cuts out and skips briefly]

JORDAN: [audio resuming mid-sentence] …Knows what it's like to feel like a minority. They know what it's like to be discriminated against now. They're out there just waiting to be picked off. The senior citizens are waiting , the minorities are waiting. If those three could coalesce they would be such a threat to the white male that you wouldn't believe it, but they will never come together. We need some mechanism to pull that group together, because those three groups right there would have a political power base second to none. You know, so there is a role, but I would say that the Blacks must first get some themselves together, come up with a division of labor and say we need white counterparts to play this role, and that way they cannot assume the leadership, because we have a plan and you manage that plan by objectives.

HARRIS: Well, I guess Barry has been waiting for some time.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Thank you. Mayor Jackson, could you please give us your views pertaining to the desegregation, as well as busing, and what exactly is going on in your city to address itself to this particular issue?

JACKSON: Well, I believe in busing, but I also view it as not an end, but as a means to an end, as integration is a means to an end and not an end unto itself. The idea is for Black people to live as Black people may choose to live, however that may be. Integration is a must, and I'm an integrationist by the way; it is a must because we know that there is no such thing as "separate but equal" in this country. It could not happen, it would never happen. Now, how do you achieve… what is the means to achieve, the means to an end? In some communities the only answer is busing. Until housing patterns are changed, and that's the last major civil rights frontier in this country. I mean that many others are going on in different stages, but that is the biggest, I believe, remaining, largely untapped frontier. We live in enclaves, by and large; all of them have many integrated communities all across the country. How do you achieve the integration? Well, obviously the end in education must be the quality of the education. That's

gotta be the major concern. So I think where you have to have busing to achieve that, I favor it. But I also believe as Dr. Krim does, in Atlanta, that the main issue from the Black community's point of view is, does busing improve the quality of the education?

Now, what are we doing in Atlanta? Well, very interesting question. I got put off the executive branch NAACP on this issue, along with twenty-two others, because we had worked through a committee, a subcommittee we set up for eleven months on a ladder plan. Got it, got consensus form the Black community on it, and the court approved it. It was a multi-modal system, in that you had some busing, some pairing of schools, and an M-to-M transfer program, a majority-to-minority transfer program. A kid in Atlanta can now transfer to any school anywhere in the city provided that child's race is in the minority in the school to which he or she will transfer. The plan called for busing only 2,600 students. The national NAACP wanted us to bus 26,000. We said it won't work here, because the student population is 85% Black, and there are not enough white kids to go around. [laughter] I know that sounds funny, but that's true.

Well, the national NAACP said you either do it our way or we are going to excommunicate you, and they did, because we didn't. Now our plan is operative, and that action by the national branch, by the way, was a tremendous disappointment to me. I even stopped paying on my life membership, but I remained a member, and I am now paying again on my membership. The peak of the moment has passed, but that's basically the answer. One of the very interesting ironies, by the way, of recent history, is the Charlotte high school student and the the Atlanta high school student who have gotten together with many of their cohorts to raise money to bring kids from Boston down South to see how integration in the schools is working and succeeding. Valdosta, Georgia integrated a school and there was no problem. It completely integrated. It did away with one of the high schools, all the kids go to one high school now; and it's happening that way in Ludowici, Georgia as well. I think part of it also drives the attention the South has gotten from the federal government as well. There was an operative presumption that in the North you didn't have that problem. We now see that's not true.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Being as you are an attorney, I don't feel too bad about asking you this particular question. However, you're mayor of a city where you have a predominant Black population, and this is true of some other major cities of the country; and now we have Black mayors in a lot of major urban areas. However, cities are creatures of the state…

JACKSON: [interjecting] Don't I know it.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: [continuing] …and insofar as that is the case, what problems do you run into with the state governments, local governments, and the courts and trying to proceed with your programs in the large urban areas?

JACKSON: Well let's see, that's a $64,000 question. As you know, a city only has derivative power, it only has charter power, not constitutional power. There are only two constitutional governments, the state government and the county government. A city gets its power by a charter that is voted on like a law or an act of the state legislature. The group that gives is a group that can take away. In 1972, there was an "abolish Atlanta" bill that missed in the state House by nine votes. Now if it had passed, it would have simply resulted in there being no longer a charter, no longer a corporation whose name is "city of Atlanta." You would then have had just Fulton County, with all the services of course, vested therein. Now this is a matter of current, very immediate, current concern because there's no question that in January there's going to be an attempt to move on the city of Atlanta. There is also no doubt in my mind it's going to lose.

Now, I could answer your question and it could take another 30 minutes. But let me just speak to one part of that. There has been a lot of talk about after Eaves was appointed, who is Black, and he heads all police, fire, and civil defense. And there cropped up talk on the state side about the state taking over police services; just a few people, nothing in an orchestrated way, but any talk is too much talk on that issue. I don't think it would happen, and the other thing is that I began to say, fine, if the state wants to take over the police departments of Atlanta and Macon and Augusta and Columbus and Savannah and all but the Governor's home, fine, we will be happy to talk about it. Short of that, don't bother us.

The other thing is that it's very complicated; this is one of my favorite subjects. There may be a change in the boundaries of Atlanta, but any change that comes will only succeed if it has the Black community's support. I don't care what the state legislature does, because if we have to we can take them to court and lock that plan up like Richmond did and beat them. However, there is one plan to expand our boundaries that we may want to consider, because of the expansion of the tax base involved in that plan. Not every expansion of one's boundaries is an improvement of one's tax base; it depends on what you take in when you expand. For example, taking in more houses is not desirable, and this is not a racist argument. Some people will say well, you don't want all the whites to come to the city… that's not my argument at all. I don't want the Blacks outside the city to come in if the only thing they're bringing is their house, because the average Atlanta home pays 400 bucks a year in taxes. The same average Atlanta home consumes city services valued at 1400 bucks a year, which means there is a per house

average deficit of $1,000 per year in Atlanta. So what is the key? The key is in the industrial development and the commercial development, and the key is in the Fulton County industrial district, which would add 95 million dollars to our tax digest overnight if it comes in.

I don't care what else comes in, and unincorporated Fulton, I don't think, provided that comes in, but if that is not in the plan, no deal. Now, what are the options? We can consolidate with all of unincorporated Fulton County. The result there will be to drop the Black population from 55% to 48.7%, to drop Black voter registration from 50.5% to 41.2%, about a 9 point drop; or consolidate Atlanta with all of Fulton County including the other municipalities, and there are 12 others in the county, small, little bitty towns. That would drop the Black population from 55% to 41% and the Black vote from 50.5% to 36.1%. The third option is what they call metro government, and that is no change in boundaries or the superimposition of another level of government like a council, a metro council of governments, which will then take over services or more specifically, take the services. Atlanta would participate with the other counties of the seven-county metro region and the other towns in those seven counties, and we'd have a certain number of votes in a much larger body. No deal.

Now, on the first one, dropping us to a population of 55 to 48.7%, that might be workable. Because ordinarily whereas voter registration figures, now, the given here is an improvement in our tax base, and in this plan we have costed it out and the improvements in our tax base would be significant, that's a given. Now, the political consideration is ordinarily what is the voter registration. When we drop to 48.7% population, that puts us 3/10 of 1% under the Black population when I was elected mayor. We produce a higher percentage of our vote in every election than the white community does. Even in public housing projects, historically they have voted 30 to 34% in Atlanta. When I ran for mayor, we produced 82% turnout in the public housing projects. Now, the Black registered vote would drop of 55.5% to 41.2%, but we could register our voters. That might be a workable plan, and I have 15 people in my basement Tuesday night talking about that. We've broken down into subcommittees now, in three subcommittees. One is on the economics of the issue, the other is on the politics of the issue, different research questions, and the third is on the strategy of the issue. We'll get together on the 20th of June and we're going to make some decisions. The purpose of that group will be to decide if that group can agree. If it agrees, then we're going to sell the plan to the Black community. But we've gotta first of all do our homework.

HARRIS: One more question.

SPEAKER [unidentified]: Yes, you mentioned that in your presentation that Black politicians should remain visible in the people's day and all that. I'm trying to remember, when I was in Atlanta in October—and you correct me if I'm wrong—I think it was in the papers that you were going to spend a weekend in public housing or something. Is that true? Did you?

JACKSON: Yes, I spent three days. I moved in with a family and lived there. The result—you know, everything is happening very currently in Atlanta—I've got the report coming out of that experience. I've set up a task force. We have come up with 35 to 34 different projects. Thirteen have been completed since October. There are a lot of problems, but you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. Because I moved into—Bankhead Court was the name of it—every other public housing project in town said, you don't care about us, and we want you to spend a week in our public housing project. They understood, I mean there was a little bit of that, but there was an understanding too, because I stressed that was exemplary of all public housing in Atlanta. There are 55,000 public housing tenants in our city. Now, I have in my briefcase with me tonight, and I will complete reading it on the way back to Atlanta tonight, the final report of the task force. We are going to announce it Tuesday in our weekly press conference. It is going to have a fabulous impact, I believe, because it is so highly structured and achievable, these programs are. It relies a great deal on a tremendous amount of citizen involvement in which I believe very strongly.

However, something political may have to happen also. The Atlanta Housing Authority controls all public housing, urban redevelopment, and so forth. We've just taken urban redevelopment away from them now and put it under community human development. As you know, that bill subsumed Model Cities and community development open space and sewer grants and so forth, public facilities. Now here are five members of the Board of Commissioners in the housing authority, and it's an *authority*. Once they're appointed, they can look at me and say go straight… wherever you want to go. There's nothing that I can do until their term is up. I've only had… they have staggered terms, I've only had two appointments. First appointment was of a woman who lives in public housing and who organized public housing tenants in Atlanta. My second appointment—she's Black, it was all white before although 92% of all the public housing tenants… strike that, 88% are Black. The second appointment was a young Black lawyer who represented public housing tenants. I've challenged all of them, the four who don't live in public housing already, to move in themselves and to see what it is like. The young Black attorney has and the three whites have not. And if they don't, I'm not going to re-appoint them, and I've told them that publicly, because they have to see. Listen, I grew up and I played in public housing projects, okay. Went to school with kids, I mean, some of my tightest buddies and some of my best friends are public housing tenants. [laughter]

But seriously, for me, even for me it was an eye-opener, and they've got to see, they've got to walk in the shoes of those people. Proud people trying to make it within a system that really is oppressive, politically and socially oppressive. Far better than it used to be; and the Housing Authority is far better than it used to be. The director of housing now is Black, for the Housing Authority: Ernest Jackson, no relation. So things are getting better, but out of that weekend came a whole strategy on public housing for Atlanta, and what I have done is to take the initiative away from the Housing Authority which was not doing enough. We're going to change it.

HARRIS: And just one last question is, what is Lester Maddox doing now?

JACKSON: Selling chicken. [laughter] And Pickwick axe handles in a section of Atlanta, in a large entertainment section called Underground Atlanta. He has a restaurant and a curio shop, and I hear his food is excellent and it is very cheap. The latter is typical of him, the former is certainly atypical of him. But as a political force in Georgia, the times passed him by.

HARRIS: I certainly want to thank our distinguished guests… [applause]

JACKSON: Thank you very much. Thank you.

HARRIS: Now, of course, I want to thank each of my panelists who so graciously gave of their time to come participate tonight, and more especially the community, those of you who are here. The auspices under which we got this grant, mostly… I think in fact this will probably be the only Black grant awarded this year, certainly one of the very few that will. And I think we can each go home tonight as living testaments of our very real public dialogue, and I only wish I… I got it on tape; I only wish I had it on *video* tape so the next time the question is asked or brought up how you do a dialogue, I think I've got that answer. Thank you, and good night. [applause]

JACKSON: Thank you, I enjoyed it.

[some background chatter; program ends]