RICHARD W. BOONE: Somebody who very seldom goes back. I keep moving. . . .

ROBERT KORSTAD: Forward.

RB: I keep focusing on the future, so you'll have to dig it out of me.

[Interruption]

RK: So how did you come to be born in Louisville?

RB: Well, you've got the pronunciation right. My father was a Floridian, and to this day I'm not sure how he got to the University of Louisville Medical School, but he went there. Then after he graduated, he went to work as a doctor in the coal camps in West Virginia, and then somehow ended up again in Louisville. Married a Louisville girl. She died, and then he married my mother, who was a nurse, and they had met that way. And that's how I got to be in Louisville. Had two older half-brothers. My father was constantly pulled between Louisville and his love for Florida. But he practiced in Louisville, and I grew up there, and was a misfit in Louisville.

RK: You were?

RB: Yes.

RK: How so?

RB: Oh, [pause] I didn't have the peer group that my family thought I should have. It was a class issue. Had a lot of fun with that particular peer group [laughter].

RK: Sounds like you, Neil.

RB: My mother really wanted to please my father a lot, so she was constantly hopeful that I would conform in the appropriate ways.
I didn't. In one sense, it came to a head when I got tickets to go to hear something called the Southerneers, which is a black singing group.

RK: Gospel?

RB: Yeah, mainly black singing group. I don't know why. I'd heard them on the radio or something and got a ticket. It was at the Memorial Hall, Louisville. It turned out that there were about--I hadn't realized this--ten white people in the audience. Afterwards, I was told from the family that that was not the proper thing to do, and that could be an embarrassment to my father and could affect his medical practice and so on. That was kind of a wake-up call, I guess, in some way. We had a black housekeeper, and she and I became very tight. Learned a lot from her about what was going on on the other side of the tracks beyond my peer associations. So I was a nonconformist. I was kind of the black sheep of the family. I wasn't particularly happy in high school. Had a friend by the name of Bobby Theman who was very, very bright. Very smart guy, and he was failing in high school because he was smart. They couldn't keep his interest. I was over at his house one evening, and his mother, she was a divorcée, began talking to me about why didn't Bobby and I go away to school. She didn't know what to do with him. The game was he wouldn't go away to school unless somebody went with him. So she figured I was a good target. She had read in the Readers' Digest about this unusual educator who had started this college where you didn't have to have a high school diploma to get in. Solved all her problems. That was Hutchins at the College of the University of Chicago. I had never heard anything about this, but it sounded
pretty good to me. Get out of Louisville. So one of the more brilliant acts by my father was to agree that that might be a good idea. So off we went to Chicago by train for interviews. And to this day, I don't really know why, he didn't get in. [Laughter] I don't know why. He was a very bright guy. He didn't get in, and I ended up at Chicago when I was not quite seventeen in the College, and that basically changed my life.

RK: You spoke about you had the wrong peer group. What was.. .?

RB: Yeah, I would say that we were solid middle class, maybe upper middle class, and the people that I started running around with were from working-class families for the most part, part through athletics, parts through mutual girlfriends, and all that sort of thing. And I guess, looking back at it, I could have easily ended up in jail, and was probably lucky to get out of Louisville.

[Laughter]

NEIL BOOTHBY: You'd mentioned earlier, too, did your father work in the coal mines?

RB: No, he practiced medicine.

NB: In the coal camps.

RB: Yeah. He went in on horseback.

NB: Do you remember any of those experiences? Was he concerned about the plight of the coal miner?

RB: No, I don't even know why he started there, but he would tell me stories every once and a while about coal camps and coal miners. One of his first experiences was he went into this town, and he hadn't been there before. He was, I guess, going to set up
a practice there. He went to the hotel at night, and like everything in small towns, they know you're coming. He got into his hotel room, and there was a knock on the door, and this guy was standing out. It had been raining a lot, and he said, "I need you. You're a doctor, aren't you?" "Yeah." "I need you." "Why?" "You have to see my wife." So they went out in this rain, and went to this cabin, and the woman was in bed. My father examined her and she was pregnant. I don't know how far she was from delivery, but she was in some pain, and the guy was standing against the wall in the back. And as my father began to examine her, the man said, "Don't touch her. [Laughter] You can't touch my wife." I guess she wasn't very far along, and he then looked up at the man and said, "Your wife's pregnant, and she's in some pain." The man said, "She couldn't be." And he looked up at the man and said, "Well, this may be an immaculate conception but I don't think so." [Laughter] That was his first experience in the coal camps. From that point of view, the major relationship that I developed through him was with a Dr. Ison, a great eastern Kentucky name. George Ison had come to the University of Louisville Medical School with totally inadequate preparation, having been raised in eastern Kentucky. And he and my father established a close relationship, and my father coached him through school, and that formed the basis of a very close relationship. George Ison went to northern Wisconsin to practice medicine, to Crandon, Wisconsin, a small town not too far from Rhinelander. As a kid, we used to go up there in the summer times and visit Dr. Ison and fish and so on. George Ison, for I don't know why, took a liking to me. He had one son. Didn't get along with him. He and his wife
were splitting up. So he used to take me fishing, and then he would tell me stories about eastern Kentucky. Great stories. George always wore a shoulder holster, even in [laughter] northern Wisconsin. I shouldn't say even in northern Wisconsin. Smoked big cigars. One summer when there was a polio epidemic in Louisville, my parents thought it would be best if I stayed up there for a while. I guess I was still in the last part of grade school. Went to school in the fall up there. He was alone in his house except for me, and he would come in in the evenings--this was in September, I guess, when it began to get cool up there--he'd fix us dinner. Sometimes we'd go out fishing for trout just before dinner, and he'd come back and clean the trout, and we'd have dinner. He loved rummy, played rummy. Loved rummy. We'd set up a card table in the living room. Have this huge fire that he'd start. Put on about twelve 78 records, all Kentucky hillbilly music.

RK: Really?

RB: Great stuff. Get out the card table and start playing rummy, and he would fill the room with cigar smoke, and the music would be going like mad, and the fire would be--it was great.

RK: What an image [laughter].

RB: Oh, it was fantastic. When he told me about his childhood in eastern Kentucky. Those stories made a great impression on me. I remember one in particular in which he said that--as you know, kin are everything--he was delegated for some reason to go see his kinfolk. I don't know how far away, but it required a train trip. How the family put the money together for the train trip, I don't know. I don't know how old he was. He was an adolescent. That was
his first pair of new shoes. He'd never been on a train before. Never been out of town before. He got on the train in the coach section, of course, and sat down. Train started. I don't know where it was going. Train started. In those days, there was a young guy coming through with candy and chewing gum and so on with a little thing around his neck, come through and sell it. He spotted young Ison there, and he said, "What do you want?" Ison said, "I don't want anything." He didn't have that much money. So the guy went by and eventually came back through again, and said, "What do you want?" Well, the next time I come through you better buy something." Putting the muscle on him a little bit. Ison didn't say anything. Eventually came through the third time. He said, "Now, I told you to guy something. What are you going to buy?" So I said, "What'd you do, Dr. Ison?" And he said, "Well, I didn't say anything. I just pulled my revolver out of my pocket, put it on my lap." He must have been fifteen years old. I said, "What?" He said, "Yeah, everybody down there had guns. I had guns," [laughter] which I later found was true when I worked at the Kentucky State Reformatory and met a guy there who had been raised in the same area. He said that when he was sixteen years old, he fell in love with a young lady, and he had to walk eight miles to see her, and often he'd come home at dark. He said he would never go without a gun, never. He said life is too cheap. So that was my introduction to eastern Kentucky, in terms of what life was like there. Of course, from Louisville, eastern Kentucky was viewed of the other side of the earth. The jump-off place was Lexington. Lexington was the last of the cultural outposts of that time. Anything east of that was no-man's land. But
I couldn't figure out why George Ison had gone to northern Wisconsin. I never asked him, but there was an enclave of eastern Kentuckians in northern Wisconsin. Even after I'd left, even after I went off to school, I'd ask why'd this guy come north. Then about ten years ago there was an article in the New York Times about this outpost of eastern Kentuckians who had gone to northern Wisconsin and why they'd gone there. They'd gone there because they liked moonshine, and the federals were stepping up the heat on revenuers in eastern Kentucky, and the group had just left. They'd gone to northern Wisconsin where they'd be left in peace. [Laughter] Real frontier story. And that's how they got to northern Wisconsin.

RK: So he just followed them up there?
RB: Yeah, and became their doctor.
NB: In these conversations, you mentioned you were fifteen, so it was around . . . ?
RB: Oh no, this started when I was probably, how old are you when you're in the last year of grade school?
NB: Grade school, about twelve.
RB: Yeah, ten or eleven or twelve, something like that. Yeah, it was a great experience. He was my alter-father.
NB: Fascinating guy.
RB: Oh yeah, he was.

RK: What about race relations in Louisville? You said you caused this big stir going to this black singing group. I can remember similar things. Just going to see Wilson Pickett in Greensboro and this was in the mid-60s, and literally there were 12,000 people there, and twelve of those were white, including my
girlfriend. But I felt no, I mean, it didn't seem odd to me with my own background. There was no tension.

RB: No, there was no tension with me until after I left. [Laughter] Matter of fact, the people there were very gracious. They're okay.

RK: But were you sensitive to race. In the 30s and 40s, I'm sure even there was.

RB: Well, that event then kind of woke me up. I didn't realize there was that great an anxiety about associations at that time. Of course, I went to segregated schools. Went to an all-male high school, no females. But my contacts with blacks as a young person, except for the housekeeper, were nonexistent. I remember on one occasion that I went to visit an aunt in Owenton, Kentucky. She basically was the economic pillar for the town. She owned the restaurant, a drugstore, and a movie theater. I don't know how old I was. I must have been pre-teen. But anyway, I don't know how I met this black guy. Must have been 1920. [1940?] And I don't know how I discovered that he had an old musket. I was really fascinated with the notion. He said he had it at his house, and I said, "I'd like to come see it some day." He said, "Fine," thinking that I would never show up because you don't do those things ( ). I went and found his house, and I'll never forget the surprise, almost embarrassment that I had shown up there, and that I was serious about this. I don't know why I asked if I could buy it from him. I don't think I had the money. He knew he couldn't sell it to me, that it was just too dangerous, and somehow that got through to me. But I didn't understand why at that time. I didn't understand why.
Really limited contact with blacks. And then again, when we went to Florida, no contacts with blacks. None at all.

RK: And that wouldn't have been that unusual?

RB: Oh no, no. None. Except in the servant capacity.

NB: You mentioned that at age seventeen you ended up at the University of Chicago.

RB: Not quite seventeen. Yeah, that really changed things for me. Well, the war had just begun and people from the fraternities were either volunteering or drafted, and the fraternities couldn't keep up their houses financially. So the university took them over and used them for housing for us from the college. The decision by Hutchins then was that in the first year of the college you had to live on campus. So we were housed there. The first thing I remember about that was the fantastic mix of peers, of young people. Just from all over, and all of them seemed much brighter than I was, and many of them nonconformist. I remember one of them, Gordon Farcourt, became a close friend. Gordon, who had been kicked out of the best, Groton, the Cambridge Progressive School, and as he said to me, "If you get kicked out of the Cambridge Progressive School, that's really something." [Laughter] His father had come over from Scotland to Brazil and built the first steel mill in Brazil, the first railway through Guatemala, and he was an entrepreneur and extremely demanding. He brought his son to Chicago, hoping to get him into the college. He marched into Hutchins' office without an appointment and said he wanted to see Dr. Hutchins. The secretary said, "I'm sorry. Dr. Hutchins can't see you today." "We'll wait. Gordon, sit down." [Laughter] So he waited and waited, and finally
went up to the secretary again, and she said, "I'm sorry you can't see him today." "We'll wait." After three hours, he met Hutchins. He said, "I want my son to go to this school. I remand him to your custody." [Laughter] So Gordon got into Chicago.

But each of us was so different. I mean, it was wonderful, just wonderful. I don't know whether you're familiar with the name George Steiner. George Steiner's one of the great linguists of the world. He's living in Geneva now. The age range in our discussion groups was often from fifteen or sixteen to sixty, ten people at the most in a room, ranging from George Steiner, who is fifteen and just transferred from Cambridge in England to nuns, who had come to Chicago for courses because, among other things, Hutchins' great interest in Augustine and all of that. So it was a huge, huge mix of people. That was one of the impressive features. I mean, you became caught up in that whole world. A young person from Louisville, Kentucky, who'd never had this experience before. The other aspect of it was that Hutchins was brilliant in his recruitment of research people and teachers. I mean, they were all being kicked out of Germany, and he went after them. So it became a mecca for that kind of intellectual life. He believed that every academic should teach, which made many of the researchers very unhappy, but he said, "Everybody has to teach, and everybody has to teach in the college."

So I used to go to discussion groups which were run by Robert Redfield, an eminent anthropologist. One of my physics courses was presided over by Enrico Fermi, and on and on it went. Matter of fact, when Fermi first came in the classroom, he was laughing. Of course, we said, "What are you laughing about?" He said, "I'm laughing
because I think I may have forgotten what I'm supposed to teach you."  
[Laughter]

But it was just a fantastic place. It was based on lectures and discussion groups, and you spent an enormous amount of time simply in the library. It was there that I met a professor by the name of Christian (     ), who had been teaching in Vienna and lecturing against the Nazis. He was not Jewish. He was warned he had to stop. He wouldn't stop, and finally, I guess, some of his students literally spirited him out of the country, and he ended up in Reed College, which was one of the places that many of those people went first before they went any place else in the country, and that was run by the Quakers, if I remember correctly. And then he came to Chicago. He had been a student of Max Weber. I was, just by luck, assigned to his discussion group in what was then a cut between history and philosophy. He had been there for a little while and become well known. The discussion to which I was assigned, he was the person to head it up. At that time, you could switch discussion groups. There was no prohibition. You didn't have to stay with one discussion group. Some discussion leaders had not many students. Others had too many students. If you had been assigned to his group, you were okay. But I remember going to his classes. They would start at 8:10 in the mornings, and you would get there around 8:05, and the room would already be filled, and then around the walls students would be standing. Then he would come in, and I remember distinctly on a number of occasions, students would ask him to leave the door to his classroom open because they were going to stand in the hall. They couldn't get in the room, and they wanted to hear
it. He was just, you know, fabulous, unbelievable, and a complete gentleman. "Mr. Boone," everybody was Mr. or Miss so-and-so. Once a month, you'd have an hour with him in a tutorial, in addition to discussion group. So you could bring to him any problem you wanted to ( ). I went to him one day with a concern I had. I think it was something about Aristotle. We sat and talked for a while, and after it was over I said, "I really appreciate this, Dr. ( )." And he carried off something that few people can carry off. He said, "No, no, there's no need to thank me. In these kinds of sessions we both learn." And he carried it off. He got away with it. He actually did it, and it was just marvelous.

He had an enormous influence on me. In his course, I was first introduced to Plato's Republic and Dostoevsky, and I guess of all the writers in the world Dostoevsky has affected me the most. And he was the first people who said to his students, "I would like to introduce you to the Republic, but please listen carefully. The Republic is something that you should carry with you throughout your life, and you should read it and reread it and reread it, because you will get something new out of it each time." Anyway, he was unbelievable. And he ruined every other novelist for me. Every novelist for me is a step down from Dostoevsky. The Brothers I view as the greatest philosophical novel of all, and he introduced me to all that stuff.

RK: What kinds of things were you thinking about then? What were your personal, intellectual, social concerns?

RB: Oh, I didn't have any until I went to Chicago, except for this feeling about something's wrong with the race things. But I
really didn't have any, and it was at Chicago that I met Maynard Krieger who was a sociologist and the secretary of the American Socialist Party. It was at Chicago that I met Hiak, the other side of the street, and got very deeply involved intellectually in... The political science and social science at Chicago were built around two words, security and freedom. And that kind of woke me up. Morris Janowitz was one of my instructors. What's his name? Bloomer, social psychology, wrote a great book on mobs. Burgess, on the family, he was the one who invented the notion of the switch from the patriarchal to the companionship family. The guy who wrote, trying to think of the name of it, one of the major theses on capitalism, risk, uncertainty and profit. It was the beginnings of the Chicago School of Economics, interestingly enough, battling the Law School, which was "progressive," and all that stuff was going on there. It was just in ferment. It was something that I think has never been repeated in American education. Nothing has come close, nothing. You were constantly in proximity to genius, and for the most part, a genius which was polite, unassuming, just fantastic. But it was there that I learned a lot about inequality, concepts of freedom, and we read everything from Aristotle to Hiak to the Mills.

RK: Must have been a great intellectual, the intensity.

RB: Oh, just unbelievable.

RK: What about things going on on the outside?

RB: Well, we were right in the middle of a developing black ghetto in Chicago. But at that time, things had not become rough. There were groups on campus, which I was not a part of, which were raising questions about the university's ownership of property, and
how it was trying to maintain a relatively white enclave around it. Sixty-third Street was the breaking line for basically, at that point, black and white. But in many respects we were in a cocoon which is exactly what Hutchins wanted. He wanted nothing to do with the surrounding community. He said, "This is a community of scholars and that's what it's going to stay," and so on. But the break point for me came when I heard a lecturer in criminology by the name of Joseph Loman. He was very close to a senior professor by the name of Herbert Bloomer, who I mentioned before, who was a social psychologist. And Loman and Bloomer hit it off, and, in a sense, it was Bloomer who protected Loman in academia because Loman was a lecturer, and Chicago didn't think criminology was a legitimate area of pursuit on its own, maybe as a part of sociology. Loman was fascinating because he had had a lot of experiences on the street, and had been very close to organized crime in Chicago, and looked at it all in a way which most other people couldn't see it. The big influence on me through him was a book by an author, I forget his first name, Tannenbaum, who is a labor economist or labor historian at Columbia.

RK: Frank Tannenbaum.

RB: And Tannenbaum and somebody else, who's name I've now forgotten, wrote a book called *Crime in the Community*, which, interestingly enough, if you really trace it, were the intellectual beginnings of the President's Committee on Delinquency during Kennedy's period, and ultimately the Community Action Programs and OEO. The reason I say that is that, first of all, the Tannenbaum thesis, which was picked up by Loman, was diametrically opposed to
the common intellectual explanations and academic explanations of crime at that time. Crime was very individual, and you explained it through psychology. There was some malfunctioning of the individual which causes him or her to become delinquent, and it had a Freudian basis. And Tannenbaum said that in many so-called communities, crime is a normative way of life, and that people become involved in it quite naturally because of the circumstances of the community. Well, this was revolutionary at that time. So the notion was look at the community, don't look at the individual. Look at the social forces, the cultural forces, other forces in the community. Loman was a firm believer in this, and Bloomer was a firm believer in this. That started me to thinking about community. In those days, I got to know Clifford Shaw, who was running community projects in Chicago, based upon the Tannenbaum notion, and he and Saul Alinsky and Loman were in the same mix, although there ultimately was a major falling out between Alinsky and Shaw, over what I'm not sure. But only later did I get to know Alinsky. But as you can imagine, Alinsky bought the thesis too, right? But I was greatly influenced by Loman and wrote a paper that he really liked. That woke him up to me. I mean, I existed after that, and became a protegee. Both Bloomer and Loman said academia has only so much to offer. You've got to get out on the street. You know, bullshit about the stuff on a Ph.D. If you really want to understand this stuff, get out, go, get. I was still living, summers, in Louisville, and across the street from our house in Louisville, there was somebody who was politically connected to the lieutenant governor of Kentucky. I talked to this guy and told him I was interested in criminology.
I wanted a summer internship some place, and in consultation with Loman and this guy, he got me placed, through the lieutenant governor, at the Kentucky State Reformatory for the summer.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A
RB: For the most part, a lot of it was dormitory style. No, that's not true. It was mostly cell block. I had never had that experience. Only academically had I been prepared by this stuff, and that was another wake-up call, being there for three months as the assistant to the institutional parole officer. The institutional parole officer interviewed people and made preparation for their appearance before the parole board. And at least half the inmates were from eastern Kentucky [laughter].

RK: Did you run into any of your old school chums?

RB: [Laughter] At least half of them from eastern Kentucky. [ Interruption ]

NB: ( ) Olin and Cloward?

RB: Yeah, well, see, Olin was a protegee of Loman.

NB: Okay, that's what I wanted to get straight. I wasn't sure.

RB: And we did something called the Illinois Selected Service Felon Study, which was the single most important study I've ever been attached to, and it was to find felons, after World War II, who had gone into the service from Illinois and see what happened to them. We went out all over Chicago to try to find them with only one little card from the Selective Service Commissioner, whoever it was. That was the only identification we had. We often had to go from address to address, and of course, these people wanted to get lost. [Laughter] They didn't want us finding them. The process of finding them and talking to their mothers and girlfriends and their wives and their brothers before you ever got to them was just fantastic. To be trusted to the point where you could finally see
this guy. Olin was the research director of that study when he was at Chicago.

NB: (                    )

RB: And Loman was the director of the project, and that was a Rosenwald grant because Rosenwald was deep into—why he did this, I don't know—race. This grant was made possible, and I was an interviewer. Lloyd was the research director, and he and I became very close friends. Then he went off to Indiana, I guess he was getting his masters at Chicago, and then he went off to Indiana to study with Sutherland and got his Ph.D. with Sutherland. Then he went to Columbia. That's how he and Cloward hooked up in the social work or social welfare department. Then they got into trouble because they were writing about community at the time that social welfare hadn't even discovered group work, really, serious. As a matter of fact, I remember in my one miserable year at the Ford Foundation, the head of the National Association of Social Workers or something like that had lunch with me because he wanted a grant, and he started talking about social work. I ruined the conversations by saying, "I think you and I might have some differences of opinion. I think one of the most social workers in the country is Saul Alinsky."
That was it.

RK: [Laughter]

RB: Anyway, so the Kentucky State Reformatory, and it was there that I think I really first discovered the enormous damning influences of social class and social hierarchy. That was a really fantastic experience for me. The first day I went that a trustee came up to me. He said, "You're just coming to work here." I said,
"Yes." He said, "Glad to know you." He pulled out a golf ball out of his pocket. He said, "See that water tower over there." "Yes."
"I can throw this golf ball over the water tower." Well, anybody that knew that water tower knew that no human being could throw the golf ball over the water. He said, "I bet you a dollar." I said, "You can't do it." He said, "I bet you." So, of course, he threw the golf ball over the water tower and he took my dollar. That's the way he survived at the Kentucky State Reformatory because unless you had some sort of money coming in from the outside, you were in real trouble, unless you prostituted yourself, or unless you were a big enough bully so that you could just take protection money. Many of these people, both at the Kentucky State Reformatory, and eventually at the Illinois State Reformatory. I got to know a lot of people, and they would come to visit me afterwards. So I kept in contact with graduates from these institutions, some of whom are now dead and some of whom went on to lead pretty good lives and so on. But it was there that it hit me how dramatically unfair the criminal justice system was, based upon a class, race. When I say hierarchy, for instance, in eastern Kentucky, who controls the county? It's a triumvirate, the county judge, the county superintendent of schools, and the county sheriff, and they switch jobs. And that's the hierarchy that controls.

Well, my first experience in the Kentucky State Reformatory beyond Pat Faust, who threw the ball over the water tower, was walking down a cell block looking for somebody the day after I arrived, and passing somebody, and hearing, "Mr. Boone. Mr. Boone," which is, again, like a small town. Everybody knows your name before you get
there. I went back and he said, "You're new here, aren't you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You've got to help me." I said, "Well, fine, what can I help you with?" He said, "Here's my number. The why I got it figured I should have been out of here. I've maxed X to all my time." I said, "What?" He said, "Well, I figure I should have been out of here at least two months ago, and I can't convince anybody." I took his number and went back to Mr. Thomlinson. Mr. Thomlinson was the institutional parole officer. I was his intern. I said, "Mr. Thomlinson, this guy says..." He said, "Well, let's look it up." He looked it up. He was figuring with a pencil. He said, "I'll be. He's right. He should have been out of here." I said, "Well, how do we get him out of here." It had nothing to do with parole. Not his department, right? He said, "Better tell the warden." I said, "Okay, are you going to tell the warden?" He said, "No, I'm not going to tell the warden. You can tell the warden." I said, "What's going on here?" He said, "Well, I don't get involved in things like that. Just paroles." So I said, "Well, he should have been out of here." He said, "I know. I know." [Laughter] He said, "How did you get here?" Everybody was a political appointment, right? "How'd you get here?" I said, "Through the lieutenant governor." He said, "You go talk to the warden." [Laughter] So I said, "Okay, how do I do it?" He said, "Just be sure you have your facts."

Warden was named Whaley. So I went down to see his secretary, and I said, "I'd like to see the warden. I think we've got a problem here." About a half an hour, I got in. It's the classic Hollywood, classic Hollywood. Big hat, big cigar [laughter], big boots propped
on his desk. I mean, it was all there. He said, "Boone, how can I help you?" I said, "Well, Warden, I think we have a problem." He said, "Well, every once in a while we have problems here. What's your problem?" I said, "It's not my problem. This man should have been out." He said, "Oh, really? Let me see his jacket." That's his folder. "You've got it figured right." I said, "Well, I got it figured, yeah." "Let me see your figures." Looked at his jacket, looked at the figures, looked at the calendar [laughter]. He said, "I'll be damned. Yeah, that's right. We'll get him out tomorrow." I said, "Is that it?" He said, "Yeah, that's it. We'll get him out tomorrow." He looked at me, and he said, "Boone, you're new here and you're not going to stay here very long. Let me give you a little advice. Some things we never talk about." I said, "Yes sir."

[Laughter]

But everybody was a political appointee. The first night I was there, and this is all instructive in terms of my upbringing, I slept in the guards dormitory. I didn't have to get up early in the morning. Almost everybody had left except one guard who was putting together his dirty clothes in a bag. A black trustee came in, and the guard said, "Where in the hell you been?" He said, "I'm here on time." "No, you're not here on time. I don't have much time. I don't have time at all. Why are you late?" Giving him a bunch of shit, you know. Black trustee, white guard. He said, "I don't have time to fool around with this, and he threw the bag of clothes at him. The trustee looked over at me, and he said, "You're new here, aren't you?" [Laughter] I said, "Yes." I was a kid. I was about twenty, nineteen, maybe not that old. He said, very politely, "Do
you know why that man did that?" I said, "No." "When he gives me his clothes in a bag to take to the laundry, he's supposed to have them itemized on a little thing. The reason he did that is he had to find an excuse. He doesn't know how to read or write."

RK: Really?

RB: So all these little things kind of began adding up [laughter] in my mind. And, I won't go into it, but some of the associations that were established there between me and the inmates resulted in long, long, long term relationships, in which I got to know, after they got out, a lot about that world.

NB: Well, that's quite a ( ). Some of the things we try to do with the students at Duke, because we have this internship program, and we're putting them into places where they're working with AIDS patients or homeless people, and it really can change their lives.

RB: Oh sure.

NB: And open up some insights into these kinds of things. And as you talk, coming back to ( ), your inclusion of this community participation part of all this policy stuff, it sounds like these were some of the early awakenings to that.

RB: Oh yeah.

NB: The political system that exists and the control and hierarchy and immovably, perhaps, of all that.

RB: Oh yeah, as a matter of fact, it all stood me in good stead. Remind me to mention about Ted Sorenson and that stuff and the rains in eastern Kentucky. But one of the learning experiences, I mentioned Pat Faust?
NB: Yeah.

RB: Everybody liked Faust, and he was in for murder, not because he personally had done the murder, but he was a kid in a car in a rural area, and the driver of the car, they wanted to get some money, and they were going to do a robbery. They went into, the driver, actually the driver, went into a candy store and a woman was killed. So they were all sent up. I guess he was sent up when he was about fifteen or so, something like that, for life. Anyway, that summer, before I left, he was transferred to Frankfort to the state police barracks as a trustee to the governor's office. Any kind of cheap labor went, right? And we became very interested in getting him out on parole. So Thomlinson said, "Well, we've got to do a home visit?" I said, "I'll do it." So I went to Whitley County, which is one of the pauper counties just above the Tennessee line, in what is now the general TVA area, to see his parents. They didn't know I was coming. No phones, right? So I went down there, and finally got there about three o'clock in the afternoon. I had to be very, very careful because I wanted to see them, "Why do you want to see them?" "Where are they?" I stopped in a town, "Well, they live around here somewhere. What do you want to see them for?" "I want to see them about their son." "Why?" No one would give me directions until I really began to. . . .

RK: Told them what it was for?

RB: Yeah. Told them a little bit I'm trying to help him, right? So finally I was directed to this place which was kind of out in the boondocks. I got there and on the front porch was the grandfather. Kids were running around, and women who were thirty
and looked like they were fifty. I said, "Is this where the Fausts live?" Very quietly, "Yes." "I'd like to know if I can see Pat Faust's father." "Why?" "Because I know Pat." "How?" So they figured out I had enough information, and that somehow I wasn't the police or wasn't the sheriff, and so on. So I met Pat's father, I forget what his first name is, and I said, "Mr. Faust, I'm so and so, and we're trying to help your son return," which broke the ice. "How is he?" "Okay, fine, and we want him to go out on parole." So he called his wife, and reintroduced me to the grandfather on friendly terms. We talked for about an hour about the situation, and it turned out that there were something like seven kids. He was, I think, the oldest. Pauper county, no money, and he supported the family. Pat supported the family even before he had a legitimate driver's license by running booze between wet and dry counties, and never got caught. He basically supported the family. They had great admiration and respect for Pat. So we talked, and should he come back here, and what would he do if he came back here, and so on. And his father says, "There's no place for him here. I love my son, but there's no place for him here. Some place else, but not here." And we talked about where else. Cincinnati, of course. Everybody was going to Cincinnati, Columbus, all that stuff. So we talked about that, and finally I said, "Well, I'll do the best I can." He didn't even look at me. He said, "Martha, fix the table." He looked at me. He said, "You're staying for dinner." It was early dinner, around five or six o'clock. All the adults were around the table, and the children were some place else. We had some decent food, and afterwards the women cleaned the table. None of the men moved. Out came the
liquor. That was one of the toughest times in my life [laughter]. Let me tell you, it was of the toughest times in my life. Little shot glasses, no water, no nothing. I survived that, standing up. [Interruption]

He was smart enough to know, "There's no place for him. He's going to get in trouble," because he's not going to stand still. So we ultimately paroled him to Cincinnati.

NB: I'm going to skip ahead, and I don't want to get you out of sequence, but I'm just trying to make some of these connections. A lot of your statements and a lot of your positions ( ), you sort of put you as the key. Are they going to be able to stay or go? Was this one of those kind of forerunners as seeing if situations can't support economically people staying in communities, that it's not going to work.

RB: Yeah, well, there are two things--well, a lot of things--but two things kind of came out of a lot of that experience. One, the community, as against the individual, or let me put it this way, the importance of the community on the individual. That was one thing, which was anti-professional social work, and I carried that theme way through. For instance, when I ran the program working with adolescent gangs in Chicago, we, and some people in New York, developed the first so-called detached worker program. That came directly out of my anti-social work thing, where the social worker sat behind a desk and had appointments, and they came in, and so on and so on. I said, "Well, that's bullshit." So we hired workers who had no social work background, but had a lot of street smarts and could get along. We said, "You'll not have an office. We'll
give you a station wagon." So each of our workers had station wagons and no offices, and made contact with the gangs and so on. So all of that came as a result of that experience. That was one major factor. The second major factor is, in a sense, given economic situations in certain places, the best thing to do was to help people gain the option of staying or going, a real option of staying or going. I remember when I was at OEO, we had divided the world up into urban, rural, Indian, and migrant. This came out of our work with the White House Special Projects thing when we tried to create a Domestic Service Corps. Bob Kennedy was very interested. So rather arbitrarily we said, "Urban, rural, Indian, and migrant, this is the way we'll look at the world." Then I got reintroduced to Appalachia and the poverty of Appalachia. Finally when Shriver and I started working together, I had no sympathy at that time for the historic, I must say, liberal notion that what you have to do is to be sure that these people maintain their culture, handicrafts, etc. etc. Of course, they'd all forgotten how to make handicrafts. I mean, you go through Gatlinburg and they're all Japanese. [Laughter]

RK: Indian tomahawks are made in Japan or Thailand.

RB: That's right. And mind you, when I was a kid, I was greatly impressed by Berea and the wood working and the cabinet making and all that stuff. Only later did I realize that Berea was a farce. That those graduates didn't go back either. [Laughter] They didn't go back. They didn't want to go back. But anyway, in terms of how this affected me, I once, not jokingly, suggested that if you really wanted to do something to help people in Appalachia, you would make two big investments. One in massive health care institutions, which
had training and learning components, and satellite support industries— you know, all sort of things feed in there—as a legitimate economic system supporting this massive development as a way of one, dealing with health problems. And also have all sorts of mobile outreach programs, in order to deal, as early as possible, with major health problems. So that, at least from a health standpoint, a person was well enough to make a decision to go or stay. And secondly, to do exactly the same thing educationally. Major training institutions, which were not training specifically for the mountains, but you're dealing with basic education, remedial to some extent, and basic training for jobs with the understanding that probably they're not going to do it. But then you'd have a satellite industry surrounded, supporting the system, a service industry. That was one alternative. The second alternative was to make all of Cumberland Plateau a national park [laughter], all of it, and have various feeder entrances to it, and reinvent Gatlinburg, but for Americans, you know [laughter] as industry. And that's how cynical, in a sense, I began about doing very much in Appalachia, given what I knew at that time about its history. For instance, in OEO the notion was how do we get industry into these places. One of the things that we discovered that the ruling elite didn't want it in those areas. It would upset the political economy of the area, and they would lose their control. So they wanted to keep the three things. They wanted to keep the judgeships, the sheriffs, and the county superintendent of schools, who had the largest contract in the county. That's the way it was. That's the way they wanted it. They didn't want a new factory coming in there, because they...
RK: It would upset everything.

RB: Sure. So a lot of that influenced some of my thinking about these things. But anyway, that was Kentucky State Reformatory.

NB: So Pat got out (   ) Cincinnati?

RB: Yeah, as a matter of fact, after that internship. I had married, and Loman became, under Governor Stevenson, the chairman of the Parole and Pardon Board of Illinois. He recruited me to go to the Illinois State Reformatory as the actuarialist [laughter]. They're only a hundred people in the world. Olin became the research director for the state Parole and Pardon Board in Illinois under Loman. So we all kind of stayed together in one way or another. We were living in Sheridan, Illinois, a town of 500, totally dependent on the reformatory, and I was making $32.50 a week with free housing. Not free food, but free housing. We finally got tied of Sheridan and moved to Ottawa, Illinois which is about 20 miles. I was part of car pool of guards. Learned a lot that way, going up and down to Sheridan. Pat came to visit us in Ottawa. Really good guy. I said, "How you doing in Cincinnati?" He said, "Okay, but I really ought to stay out of the bars." I said, "Why?" He said, "They're too rough." I said, "You're rough." He said, "But no, they're rough." A guy started picking on me in a bar one night. You know, I'm not supposed to be in a bar on parole anyway, but that doesn't make any difference. I was in a bar and a guy started picking on me, and I just got mad." I said, "All right, let's go outside." So he said, "Okay." So he went outside and we started fighting. Well, fighting is basically some form between boxing and wrestling,
whatever works, right? They shuffled on the ground, and I said, "What happened?" He said, "Mr. Boone, you know what happened? He started biting me." [Laughter] I said, "What'd you do?" I said, "No fair biting." [Laughter] He's a good guy. I don't know what happened to him after that, but he was okay. He was a car hiker in Cincinnati. He got a job as a car hiker in a garage. But I knew a lot of those people after they got out. My wife always reminds me of it. Because whenever they come, you feed them. I mean, that's part of the ritual. Anyway, that's the Kentucky State Reformatory. Where'd I go after that? That was the internship. Then I went to Loman's parole thing in Illinois.

NB: Is that when that study took place?

RB: No, the study had taken place when I was still in Chicago. Now, again, big, big learning. Big learning, for two reasons. One, I was on my own. I was running around Chicago chasing these people who didn't want to see me, and the whole process of getting to know people, getting them to trust you, and then talking to them. Black, white, great, great. Once you got in, they really unloaded. They really unloaded, because they were proud of their experience. They got honorable discharge. They were in combat. So what turned out, which is never really been--I don't know why Olin never did this, because it's so demonstrable of what we all believed in. About, if I remember correctly, 90% of those who went in from prison and parole, got honorable discharge. That's unheard of. They're felons. Was the screen process that good? Absolutely not. Anybody went in who wasn't an arsonist or who wasn't involved in some sort of sex crime. Murderers went. Everybody went in. What we discovered was that
when they went into the army, they weren't at home. They went some place else. There was no economic difference. They all wore the same uniform. They had new peer associations, and they all had important jobs to do because we were at war, and it worked. You created new communities of importance, of purpose, and very few of them, after they came out, messed up. Why? One of the reasons was that when they went to get a job, nobody asked about their past. The only thing that the employer wanted to know was do you have an honorable discharge. That's all they wanted to know. So they had the credentials to take the next step. It's all enormously instructive, enormously instructive. So that was Olin and Loman, and a guy by the name of Hans Maddock, who committed suicide not long ago. We all were in it together.

Then Loman was the head of the Parole Board under Stevenson, and Dick Daley had a problem. He had something called Summerville Police Scandal in Chicago. It was very embarrassing to him, a big scandal, where police were working with real theft artists, and then they would fence the stuff. The police would be involved and take a cut off the fencing and also take a lot of the goods. Big, big thing, very embarrassing. And it was very difficult for Daley because at that time you couldn't become anything in the Chicago Police Department unless you were a member of the Knights of Columbus. No sergeant was sergeant without being a member of the Knights of Columbus. The real head of the Chicago Police Department was Cardinal Strech. [Laughter] Daley was a good Catholic, but he was also very political, right? How are we going to deal with this? So he and Stevenson thought up this brilliant notion of having Joe Loman,
a blue ribbon candidate, run for sheriff of Cooke County. Very smart. You know, professor from University of Chicago, head of the state Parole and Pardon Board, true, clean, hadn't been in the system before. Endorsed by Daley and Stevenson. So Loman said, "Yeah, I'll run." So he became sheriff of Cooke County. Immediately after becoming sheriff of Cooke County, he then said, "All right, we're going to create a new regime." He called me at Sheridan and he said, "You've got to come to work. I want you to head up the police juvenile bureau." [Laughter] I had no police background. I said, "I don't have any police." He said, "That's the whole point."

RK: He didn't have any sheriff background.

RB: That's the whole point. I said, "Well, I'll come in and talk to you about it." He said, "No, no, no, you don't understand. I need you right away. I don't want to talk to you about it. I just want you to come." I said, "Okay, I've got to give notice here." "No, don't give notice there. I want you to leave tomorrow." I said, "I can't leave." "Yes, you can. They don't need you there." And all this bullshit. Anyway, I left and went there, and overnight became a lieutenant of police. [Laughter] We reorganized the whole police juvenile bureau, began to go into the schools, working around the whole issue of prevention and so on, which was pretty novel then. We had a great time. I put together, obviously all plain clothes, but we had to also have weapons. One of the persons who came in for a job was a guy named Ralph Caprio, who, at that time, was twenty-one and looked all of seventeen. Northern Italian, and my secretary was northern Italian. So she came back, and she said, "There's a young man who wants to become a juvenile officer. I strongly recommend
him."

[Laughter] I said, "Well, who is he?" "He's an Italian." I said, "Okay," so I talked to him, had a big conversation with him, and he is a counselor in a public school. He fills me in in five minutes about the politics of being a counselor in a public school. It's the lowest thing in the school system. You have no authority. You can do nothing, and he wanted out. He had read about this new, police juvenile bureau. So I did a check on him, and we brought him back in the office. Angela Novela was her name, was his patron. She really wanted him to be hired. So I said, "Okay, we're going to hire you." I wrote down an address, and I said, "Here's where you can get a 38 calibre revolver." He said, "What?" [Laughter] He said, "What?" I said, "You have to have a revolver. You're a police juvenile officer." He said, "Oh, I didn't understand that." But anyway he joined. So we did a lot of juvenile work, and for purposes of being competitive within the department, I was promoted to captain and was dealing with the under sheriff. That was in the county though, not really in the city. I have a lot of experiences in that, but ultimately we discovered there was gambling and vice going on in the county, even under Sheriff Loman. What it meant was that basically some sort of deal had been cut between somebody and organized crime in the county. So I began to move, trying to protect Loman, my people into gambling and vice. So we began to tangle with Acardo's and Gianicano's people. That's another story.

NB: Just a kind of a quick question here about your friend Loman talking, and you sort of said, "Well, I don't have any experience." And he said, "That's the point." I mean, that's an expression of some vision of what it may take. What did you think he meant at that
RB: Oh, I knew exactly what he meant, once he said it. He said, "We're going to deal with the status quo, and the way to deal with the status quo is come from the outside with authority and to shake it up." If you have too many friends in the system and if you're too enmeshed in the system, you can't do that. So you come from the outside with the power and authority and you reorganize. That's what he meant. The whole notion was if you've been in the police in Cooke County, you're probably of no value to me. But that was another system where--as Captain of Police I made $5,000 a year. Now, what that meant was that you're supposed to live off graft, and the $5,000 a year you give to your wife to play with. Your real money comes from other sources. Well, I wasn't playing that game, so I was living [laughter] in a subdivided apartment on the south side of Chicago in two rooms, a living room, a kitchen, and bedroom, facing an alley. END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A
START OF TAPE 1, SIDE B

RB: The Sheridan Reformatory as an inmate, and they all looked me up afterwards. "Can I come see you?" I said, "Yes." I gave him the address, and he came in with great theater, great theater. He came in, and he said, "Why are you living here? You're Captain of Police. What's wrong?" I said, "Michael, I'm not getting paid much." He said, "Come on, now." "No, it's true. I'm not getting paid much." Came over and he looked at my coat, and he said, "That's frayed. Even if you're not being paid much, you ought to dress with class." I said, "Michael, I'm on the legit. I don't have the money." He said, "I'll help you out." I said, "How?" I know where I can get two really good Hart, Schaffner & Marx suits." "Yeah, Mike, and they'll be hot, won't they?" "No, no, no," this is Chicago, right, "no, they were stolen in Milwaukee." [Laughter]

RK: So how'd you get involved in working with the youth gangs?

RB: Well, while I was in the police, I don't know how we made contact, oh, yeah, sure. I'm trying to get the sequence straight. I don't remember how I made contact with the General Secretary of YMCA Metropolitan Chicago, good guy, name of Root. This is the biggest YMCA in the country, and one of the few good ones. They decided, yes, they were going to expand to the suburbs, but they were also going to stay in the inner city. One of the reasons that they decided, the more cynical reason, was that the chair of the board was Theodore Houser who was the chief officer of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, and Sears, Roebuck, and Company still had the place of the west side of Chicago, and everybody had to come to work. But to his credit, Houser saw all that, and said, "We have some responsibility
beyond Sears" and so on. So they had this whole things. So the notion was what to do with the gangs? I forget how Root and I got in touch, but Root asked if I would help them organize a program to work with the gangs. He didn't have any more pro-social work background than I did, strangely enough. And so that's how we started all that. And then when finally the police thing ended, kind of blew up, he asked me if I'd come over and head up the program, and I agreed to come over and head up the program. We just did it with pretty good resources, and even got a MIMH grant to research it. So we did all that stuff. From there I made the huge mistake of going to the Ford Foundation.

RK: What was wrong with that?

RB: Well, the good part of it was that I got to know David Hunter, who was then at the Ford Foundation working with Paul Ylvisaker. It was Hunter who discovered me and asked if I would come to work on youth things at Ford. I agreed to do that. Ford was a bad experience for me, extremely bureaucratic, very bureaucratic, and in many ways very isolating, very isolating. The President's Committee on Delinquency had started. Hunter knew Olin through Columbia and through Mobilization for Youth, where Olin and Cloward were basically testing their ideas with, remember this, no money from Ford, not withstanding all of the misinformation. The money came from NIMH, and Leonard Cottrell was the godfather, and he was the contact with NIMH. Ford would not buy in, not withstanding David Hunter's pleas for them to go in. It was too radical for them. And all this stuff about the Ford Foundation being the genesis of the community action programs is bullshit. [Laughter]
NB: Wasn't Ford part of that Gray Areas Program...?

RB: No, Great City's Gray Areas Program epitomized by Minneapolis and New Haven, right, that was the program. It was the notion that you use the school ( ). Quite different from what Olin and Cloward were doing. Dike Brown, who was vice president of Ford, had breakfast with David Hackett. He had heard about Olin through David Hunter. David Hunter and Dike were close. Dike was upset with Ford too, and he left. Ylvisaker stayed. But the point of the story was that they had breakfast soon after Bob Kennedy asked David Hackett to come in and head up the President's Committee. Hackett knew nothing about this, nothing. He had just been a very close friend of Bob Kennedy. What's the book?

NB: Migration to Chicago?

RB: No, no, I'm trying to think of the book which is kind of the story of David Hackett. It's a well known novel. He was kind of an Adonis character.

NB: Oh, with Milton Academy?

RB: Yeah.

NB: ( )

RB: Any case, Hackett had run the boiler room for the Kennedy campaign. Didn't know anything about this. The one great thing about Hackett, he had no ego problems. He said, "I've got to find people who know a lot more than I do," which was his saving grace. He had breakfast with Dike Brown, and Dike Brown had heard about Olin. So he said, "You ought to get to know Lloyd Olin." So Hackett said, "Fine." [Laughter] So he gets to know Olin. Nirvana has arrived, "Will you come and head up, for tactical purposes, the President's
Committee on Delinquency?" And Olin was at Columbia, and he started commuting. And that was the genesis of the President's Committee on Delinquency, and Olin was coming right out of Mobilization for Youth with all of that stuff. So the opportunity theory, which was the Olin-Cloward book, Delinquency and Opportunity, was the initial intellectual underpinnings for the President's Committee on Delinquency. That's how all that got started. Then, I guess it was Olin who connected me with Hackett. I'm trying to remember all this. I can't remember all this. But Hackett met me and said, "Would you become a consultant to us?" I wanted an out from the Ford Foundation, and so I said, "Sure. I'll be glad to do that." So that's how I got involved in all that stuff.

RK: What was that like going to Washington at that point in time?

RB: Oh, great.

RK: Felt like you could. . . .

RB: Do something.

RK: A sense of optimism.

RB: Oh sure, yeah. [Laughter] But I'd not met Bob Kennedy, and Hackett's office was right next to Kennedy's office. So he said, "Well, you ought to meet the Attorney General." I said, "Fine." So I went in, and it was the classic Bob Kennedy, you know, white shirts, shirt sleeves up, (     ) on his desk. He came out from behind his desk, and I went over to shake hands with him. Well, my father had always said, "Never give anybody a fish shake. Always a big (     ), and look them straight in the eye." And all through my youth that was. . . . [Laughter] Well, it turned out that his father had said
the same thing to him. So we stood there staring each other in the
eye [laughter], shaking hands. No one was going to let his hand go
first, right? It's all macho, very macho. Finally, we both kind
of understood what was happening, and we starting laughing, and that
was the beginning of a relationship with Bob Kennedy. And of course,
he came from an extremely conservative background. The saving grace
for Bob Kennedy was that he had a capacity to learn, not withstanding
that background and the trappings of power.

RK: So did you feel like in that job and the kinds of work that
you were doing that you were kind of making progress in dealing with
some of the issues that you'd seen?

RB: Well, I got shunted to the White House Special Projects
Staff because Bob Kennedy wanted to create a National Service Corps,
a Domestic Peace Corps. We started working on that, and that's where
urban, rural, migrant, and Indian got started [laughter], because
we were going to divide up the world. Two things of great importance
happened there. The first thing was that I got reintroduced to a
guy named Bob Russell, who had been an anthropology student at
Chicago, and who'd gotten a degree in education, horrible field. He
had grown up, I guess, in New Mexico, Arizona or New Mexico. I think,
if I remember correctly, his father had been a lawyer, and became
very concerned about Indians, and went from place to place trying
to help them. And Bob grew up in that atmosphere and went into
anthropology. How he got to know Karl Menniger, I don't know, but
he and Menniger had become close friends. He learned a lot from
Menniger. I don't know how we got together when I was doing the
Domestic Peace Corps thing, but I wanted some contacts with Indians,
Native Americans. I knew Bob somehow was involved in that, so I contacted him, and we established a relationship again. He said to me, which was great, "Dick, you may really have an unusual opportunity. Try to remember something. I don't want to give you lectures. Try to remember something. If you're really going to try to reach these people, including Native Americans, remember something, don't plan for them. Plan with them." Now, being in Washington, you naturally plan for them. That really stuck with me. That was one thing, and in some degree, that was the origins of maximum feasible participation.

The other thing was, given my anti professional social work background, one of the things we tried to do was to get the national voluntary agencies interested in a national service corps. I should have known. They were frightened to death. You will cheapen or we will threaten voluntarism, and we need volunteers, and this will be not a good thing to do, which made me all the more committed to do it. [Laughter] Course, when you look at what they do with volunteers mostly, they're menial tasks, you know, nothing to do with responsibility. So that stuck with me once again. So it was continued learning things. Then Congressman Gross killed all hope of a domestic or a national service corps. While that was being done, the president was killed.

RK: This National Service Corps, I mean, this is an idea, again, the wheel's been reinvented a couple of times, but that's the kinds of things that our students, that's kind of what they want to do now. We're always trying to figure out ways of trying to teach them some history about it, and also the limitations of it, and their
own self. . . . Because the thing is that when you start looking at these things, who learns the most from these things or gets the most of them usually is the young people who go into them. We were in Ivanhoe, Virginia this week talking to a woman who brings college students in. This is a little civic league. She has a whole different concept. The students are actually coming in to learn about them, and the people in the community tell the students what they want them to do. So they do a combination of helping and stuff, but I just wonder, maybe some reflections on that as a . . . .

RB: Device?

RK: Yeah, or as a kind of value of this whole thing.

NB: You also used the word "shunted to" this positional change.

RB: Yeah, it was unclear when I got down there what I was going to do with the President's Committee. Hackett wanted me down there, and, in a sense, I was kind of the new boy on the block. I was kind of waiting around to get my hands on something, and before that happened--shunted may be the wrong term--they asked me to go do this thing. On the service thing, I think it's very, very tricky. One of the things that I think I've learned the most about through all these varied experiences, which I've been very lucky to have, is, first of all, the enormous dangers of pervasive bureaucracy. I mean, I got in trouble once--I forget where, some academic institution--for saying, years and years ago, that the great similarity between the Soviets and us is bureaucracy. Part of my understanding of all of this came from Christian (       ) who had been a student of Max Weber. In any case, that is a very, very dangerous thing. That anything with a national dimension will have a hard time dealing with
the eventual deadening effect of bureaucracy. Now, one of the reasons that I think bureaucracy is so deadening, two of the reasons, one, is that the people in it begin to represent themselves, as against a constituency. And secondly, lawyers kill them [laughter]. I mean, by the time lawyers get finished, they have so many regulations that they have to have to protect the system from the attacks, that it would require a magician to move rapidly. So that's one problem. The second problem has been, maybe not now, but at the time we were playing with this, what will these people be allowed to do. And there are two problems. One, they are "nonprofessional." They're not credentialed, which I think that's, in many cases, a lot of bullshit, but it's the system. It's the gild system. That's one thing. And the other thing is unions.

RK: They were opposed?

RB: No, they were for it, but you can't do this and you can't do this and you can't do this and you can't do this. It reminded me of prison labor, where prisoners can't do anything because they are competing with the open economy. So they ended up making license plates. Matter of fact, some of them even had a hard time making brooms [laughter] before they were challenged on that. So that's another problem. There's a third problem that has not been looked at very carefully. And that is, it might be a nice thing for middle class whites, but there are serious questions whether it's a valuable thing for Latinos and blacks, coming from relatively poor families, unless there is an extremely valuable training component to it. Not service, training. I don't know whether it's any better than it was. One of the major conservations, or whatever you want to call it, was
out here in California, service programs. I don't know what the story is now, but they had a hell of a time trying to get blacks and Latinos in. So who's it for and what does it do for the person, and what does it do out there are all very important questions before you get into it. Now, the current notion of the left, I think, is if this comes alive again, how do we use it to help young people, not just serve, but to understand what the problems are really. I mean, that's the notion of what the payoff would be if you can do this. I've got big questions, I mean, really big questions about this sort of thing.

RK: It's hard for people to learn, or to teach them, whether they want to learn or teach, or whether they just want to work out some emotional problems that they have themselves.

RB: Yeah. I would love to see something experientially that would break the education continuum from high school to college, and even a year off in college where they can get a perspective that has a real experiential quality. But one of the things that I work in is trying to open up space for young people to participate effectively in projects of social value. Do you know how few adult-based organizations that are working in the social arena have or want young people involved, substantively? Very few. Very few.

RK: They don't even want them around.

RB: No. One of the things that I recently did was to look at the environmental organizations, knowing that a lot of young people, you know, are deeply interested in the environment. The big ten, they don't want them. They don't want to organize, even adults, they don't want to organize out there. They want memberships for one
thing and one thing only, dues.

RK: To sustain them.

RB: And they sure as hell don't want young people because they clutter up the place, and young people ultimately ask serious questions. They don't want them. So there's a real problem, outside of a movement psychology, of young people entering into the system of dealing with the environment. I mean, one of the few things going at the college level was SEAC, Student Environmental Action Coalition. I don't know where it's going, but the thing is that it exists, and it has chapters all over the place. They're now turning inward to look at environmental issues on campus, which is one way to get it. But the point is that there are very few roads for young people into these systems, outside of getting the appropriate credential. Starting out and getting the appropriate credential, and then coming back and trying to get in at that level with no experiential basis beyond what they, as individual entrepreneur, do themselves.

NB: Yeah, the other part of that dilemma is that once you get your professional training, it narrows you and tells you should function this way, when, in fact, what has to happen is have ( ) professional that way. It a real Catch 22.

RB: Yeah, and the whole things is reinforced by academia. But what I wanted to mention before I forget it because I think it's significant in my experience, when we were doing the study group on National Service Corps, the rains came to eastern Kentucky. Homer Biggart of the New York Times wrote this front page article in the New York Times about the effects of the rains, right? John Kennedy
saw it, and he had a special love for Appalachia because that's where he beat Humphrey.

RK: Went over the top, yeah.

RB: So he said, "We have to do something about this." So he called Sorenson in and said, "We have to do something about this. We've got to do something." So Sorenson calls an interagency meeting in the White House. I was asked to come to represent Bob Kennedy. So I went over there, and Franklin Roosevelt was there. Sorenson was there, and I think, Wilbur Cohen was there who headed up HEW at that point. Everybody was there. "We've got to do something about this." HEW, you're supposed to do this, and ( ) is supposed to do this. I think, if I remember correctly, I'm not sure, it was February of something like that, maybe early March. I'm sitting listening to this stuff and knowing eastern Kentucky, and knowing where they had to go. Up the hollows and all that craziness. I said to Sorenson, "This all sounds good, but you better do it soon because when the rains start, you're going to have a hard time getting anything in there." They were floored, "What? "There are no paved roads." [Laughter] "What?" No one suggested helicopters. Well, that, interestingly enough, it shows you how this stuff works. That made me an instant authority in that group, just by chance. So everybody was given assignments, and then afterwards Sorenson came over. He said, "I need to talk to you. Can you come over tomorrow?" I said, "Yeah, sure." So I went over. He said, "What do you really think can be done right now?" I said, "Right now? One, right now is very important." Oh, the other thing I said to them, which was fun, "The rains are one thing and getting the stuff in is one thing.
The other thing is that the systems for getting them in are top-down systems. By the time they get to the people who really need them, a lot's going to be siphoned off." And that's not new. That usually happens, right? Because these people who are running things down there care, most of all, about themselves. That made an impression. So when Sorenson talked to me, he said, "What do you think?" I said, "You're talking about eastern Kentucky. It's limited. You're talking about a serious top-down problem, and you're talking about doing it now, and people who are not coming from the outside, hopefully, because they're foreigners." "So how do you do it?" I said, "We'll create the Appalachian Volunteers. And we'll get college and university students from the region to participate." He said, "You think you can do that?" I said, "Who knows? But at least you avoid top-down. You're dealing with students, for the most part, who come from the region." He said, "Why don't you make some telephone calls and do whatever you have to do, and let me know whether you think we can create that." So I said, "Okay, how much money do you have?" He said, "None." [Laughter]

NB: A real lot.

RB: I said, "What?" He said, "No, no, this whole thing is based upon contributions from the various departments," and so on and so on. I said, "Thanks a lot." [Laughter] So anyway, I called a guy named Burly Aire, who was running the Council of the Southern Mountains out of Berea. I said, "Burly, you think this can be done?" He said, "I'll call you back." So he called me back and he said yes. So out of that was created the Appalachian Volunteers, and out of that came a guy by the name of Milton Ogle, who had been in Berea,
and he basically ran the Appalachian Volunteers for Burly. Great
guy, great guy, and eventually became the chief person in the VISTA
program in Appalachia, and is now in West Virginia, running the legal
services program.

But one of the key persons who came out of that experience was
Philip Cann, who is now, I think, vice president of the Western State
University of Kentucky. Phil was a member of a Tennessee family.
He went to Berea. A Tennessee family, his father was a very senior
person in the Church of God. He was, I think, the oldest of fourteen
children. I got to know him. The richness of this experience,
getting to know all these kinds of people, was just unbelievable.
I've always tried to learn from people younger than myself, because
I think most people my age are dead. They're so entrapped in one
way or another, mentally or economically or whatever. I've been
fortunate because I've always sought younger people who think
everything's possible. I've learned a huge amount from them, from
Pat Faust to Cann. In any case, Phil was in that, and he was, at
that point, head of a work crew of students. We had companies
bringing in tar paper. We had companies bringing in corrugated
roofing. One of the things they concentrated on was rebuilding
school houses. Many of them were still one-room school houses. And
Phil, who had this great twang, said to me, "I have a story for you.
I went out with my crew on a Saturday morning. We had everything.
We had the corrugated, we had everything. We knew where we were
going, and we were dealing with this one room school house. It was
beginning to slide down the mountain from the erosion from the rains.
We were all gung-ho. We were going to put underpinnings, everything.
And this farmer was over there looking at us. So to be sociable and let him know what we were doing, I went over and introduced myself, and told him I was a fellow Kentuckian, very important, and that we'd come here to do this. He put his hands on his hips, and said to me, "Young man, why are you doing that?"

Phil said, explained to him, "This thing is sliding down the mountain." The guy looked at him and said, "Well, you can go ahead and do it if you want, but I don't see why you're doing it." Said, "See that tree stump down there, that school house is going to slide right down there, and it's going to hit that tree stump, and it's not going to go any further. You don't have to do all this other stuff." [Laughter]

NB: That's a great story.

RB: See, out of all of this, I'm a firm believer in Harry Caudill and all that he had to say about that world. Only half jokingly, in the latter part of his life, did he say, "What we need in some of these areas is a giant army camp. We've got to deal with the gene pool." And his basic thesis was that there's so much inbreeding down there, and he wasn't joking. That's what he came to in relation to some of this. What makes me angry, in many respects, is the glorification, the mystique, that certain people want to project in terms of these lives down there. And it has no basis in contact with them.

RK: It's just idealizations that they have?

RB: Sure. I don't know where I was, I was with the Field Foundation or what, but I went to a conference. This must have been ten years ago, more than that, in Epes, Mississippi. [Alabama] This was the Federation of Southern Coops, ha-ha-ha. And we all sat
around a big table about the future of the southern, black farmer who owned a little bit of land. And I listened to all this stuff, and the whole notion was how we can protect this person, how we can keep him from selling his land because he doesn't know what else to do or somebody wants it, and how important this world is. And I had had enough experience that I knew, I think I knew, I thought I knew, as you go around these places, it's hard to find young people after the age of fifteen. They leave, no matter how good that life is, they leave. Because it isn't good at all. It's tough. It's hard. It's nasty, and it's boring. And there were all these notions about how we can help them economically and so on, with relatively little money. You can't really bring them together effectively. There can't be a major planning operation. There cannot be a major quality control program, etc., etc., etc. So that their produce is not useable in the mass market for the most part, or hasn't been. Standardized, I mean, you have to be standardized for the mass market. All these things. And all the kids were leaving. So they were left with the young children and the elderly, and here they were, and this group was saying, "We have to protect them. We have to help them and so-and-so." Bullshit. So in order to try to create a stir, I said, "I don't know what those people who are really far out there, but those who have land fairly contiguous to urban areas, somehow we ought to make it possible for them to get contacts to pave it all over, and put trailer courts up on it and collect the rent." Just to shock them. I was also ridden out of the state.

RK: I can imagine that wouldn't go over at the Federation of Southern Coops.
RB: I was almost ridden out, but the point that I wanted to make was that most of these people, I thought, were talking in never-neverland. And I still they're talking in never-never-land.

NB: At one point I remember reading you made a distinction between a liberal perspective and a populist perspective. Is this what you're talking about to some extent?

RB: Well, I'm kind of caught. I have great criticism of a lot of what the liberal community--and I was part of that community--has done in our time by being overly concerned about First Amendment issues, privacy, social legislation without responsibility for follow-up, without responsibility for implementation, and not facing up to some of the political quagmires which are occasioned by taking those positions, such as First Amendments issues and, say, the rights of individuals in the Criminal Justice System without ever looking at the question of crime, without ever being willing to look at the politics of the issue writ large. So I began very concerned about that. Secondly, I became very concerned about the unwillingness of many in the liberal community to seriously embrace political democracy. By that meaning, to have any faith at all in majoritarian democracy. I find the liberal community afraid of it, because they're concerned with, for the most part, minority issues, and the majority becomes an implicit threat. And so, the classic case for me is in the field of education where the liberals will jump through hoops to fight against books being removed from a library, but they will have nothing to say about the quality of education for kids generally in the schools. They think that as long as it's public free education, that's good. Long as it's not parochial, etc., etc.,
etc. But nothing for majoritarian education issues or mainline education issues. Yes, they want kids who have troubles to be not shunted aside. They want them to be mainlined into the system, the rights of kids who have problems to be a part of, that's all great. But a part of what? What is the quality of the what? One of the things that I've been most concerned about is that many people that I know don't think twice about the importance of education for democracy as a mainline issue in the schools. The last person who seemed to be interested in that in that sort of way was John Dewey. [Laughter] That's the last person. Who else? And you saw what happened to him. So the liberal community has not been concerned about majoritarian issues as they effect the practice of democracy.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE A
START OF TAPE 2, SIDE B

RB: Major support for voter registration education, particularly in the South and VEP and so on. That's the one thing. And I became progressively concerned about these other issues. As a result of that, I tired to support programs which were much more directed towards a Populist/Progressive sort of thing, and fortunately got very substantial support from the board. Some things worked, and other things didn't work. We put major money into major expansions of voter registration education, with very questionable results. We got very interested in the media for mass uses, and created a national media organization, which is probably the first of its kind, dealing with trying to help private non-profit organizations understand that there's something beyond a press conference. [Laughter] You know, trying to popularize stuff. You guys know Bob Greenstein?

RK: Yeah, at the budget bureau.

RB: Who was Reagan's point person at OMB?

RK: Stockman?

RB: Yeah, David Stockman, and he was the mouthpiece for the safety net on the Hill. All a bunch of bullshit, and he was feeding out all this information to the media. The media doesn't have its own research department, doesn't know where to go to check it out. If you go to the Urban Institute, it takes two years to get an answer [laughter]. If you go to Brookings, it'll take a year and a half, and you need it on a time-current basis and you need it for popular dissemination. So we discovered Greenstein. Somebody said, "He's the best analyst in Washington. Ran the Food Stamp Program under
So we approached him and said, "Look, we're not asking you to do new research. We're asking you to take the numbers and analysis them, and do it quickly, and be a resource to national media because we think this stuff has to get out to the larger public. It can't be in research documents." So he said, "I'll do it." Fortunately, just about that time, Marian Edleman was trying to steal him [laughter] from the Children's' Defense Fund, and we said, "No, no, no, don't do that. We will set you up," which is very unusual for Field to make that kind of single investment. Well, he did it.

RK: Their stuff is really good. We've got a lot of it.

RB: And the media constantly steals it which is exactly what it should do, and their turnaround time for information is very fast. Well, those are the things that I became interested in order to try to get--you know, it's a battle for the hearts and minds, right? And this is way beyond where the liberal community in recent times has been prepared to go. They've been doing rear guard defense actions without being willing or able to say, "What is our stake in the larger picture?" And so, it progressively has fallen into the kind of world that ACLU finds itself in. Now, I happen to think ACLU is very good and very important. Fine for what it does, but I don't think that this is the whole of the [laughter]. . . .

RK: Battle, right. I'd like to talk about politics a bit more but kind of change the focus of it and go backwards and forwards both at the same time. One of the things that we're kind of intrigued by in looking at all this and talking about anti-poverty programs or some new initiatives, is to try to evaluate whether the domestic political scene has changed in this country in a way that might make
for some opportunities that didn't exist. I mean, if you go back and look at OEO and then your movement out of there, the national politics and the relationship between local politics and national politics made so many of these programs and so many of these opportunities—I mean, they couldn't fight their way through, not just the bureaucracy, but the political power that a Jamie Whitten had, both in Mississippi and also in Washington. I'm just wondering what you think about it. How significant that was as an impediment to really dealing with these issues of poverty?

RB: Oh, it's huge. In a sense, you could go so far and not further. But on the other hand, what was so far? For instance, when we ran the Crusade against Poverty, Marian Edelman, I remember, came up from Mississippi, and we had a meeting, a number of us. She was dead tired. I'll never forget it. She put her hands on the desk in front of her, and she was just exhausted. Then she suddenly sat up and said something to the effect, "These people that I work with don't have enough to eat. Doesn't anybody understand that?" And we started talking about it. Out of that conversation came the notion of a National Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in America. I was the director of the program, and Jack Conway was, in a sense, at that time representing Walter Ruether in keeping an eye on me. [Laughter] I ultimately was able to deal with that, and Ruether and I got to know each other well. I had enormous respect for Ruether. But it was Conway who said that one of the first persons we should see was the Secretary of Agriculture and see whether he wants to cooperate with us. Good idea. I'm trying to think of who it was at that time under the Kennedy administration.
RK: Orville Freeman?

RB: Could have been. I don't remember. So we went over and discussed this with him, and he said, "I think you're doing very important things." So we said, "Well, can you cooperate with us? Will you help us?" He said, "I don't think so." [Laughter] Then he made this wonderful statement. We said, "Well, we don't understand." Conway and I were sitting in the room. He said, "You have to understand. I don't run the Department of Agriculture. Jamie Whitten runs the Department of Agriculture." He was so concerned about that politics, notwithstanding our notion that there were a lot of people, Americans, hungry and so on. So we started it. Don't remember the guy's name. He was from Texas, head of the House Agricultural Appropriations Committee, McCain or something. Probably dead now. He basically thought that this notion was un-American. That anybody who really wanted to eat had enough. . . . He went to J. Edgar Hoover and had Hoover lend a group of FBI agents to investigate us, using a blind office in the Department of Agriculture. [Laughter] And all of us associated with this were investigated. Those are some of the impediments. The question is what do you do with the impediments. What happened was we had enough presence of mind to get a young lawyer by the name of Harry Boyd who was interested in all of this. We had a skull session on what to do. So our decision was very simple. Contact everybody we're working with in the field and tell them to expect a meeting with an FBI officer. When the FBI guy comes in, say, "I'm glad to see you, but I insist upon tape recording this meeting." That killed it, literally killed it in terms of field investigation. We got the hell
investigated out of us. I was living in Washington, and I was living across the street from the Second Secretary of the British Embassy. One morning I was walking down the street. He called over to me and said, "Mr. Boone, how about having a spot of tea with me?" I said, "Fine, what time?" I went over to his garden. We sat down. He said, "I just want you to know I'm concerned." I said, "What?" He said, "Well, I don't like what your people have recently done," meaning the FBI. They came to his house while his kids were home from England on vacation, and the parents weren't there. They wanted to come in and question the kids about us. And he said, "I don't like that sort of thing." [Laughter] That what shit was going on.

Then when the report came at about the extent of--and this is how the doctors got in--when the report came out, none of us imagined, none of us imagined, it would have the impact that it did. None of us. It was front headline all over the country, and we were getting calls from Germany and England and all that stuff from the press. "How could this be happening in America?" And then the people who carried the weight from that point forward were Kennedy and the senator from Pennsylvania, Clark, and Javitz and so on, and what you got was the Food Stamp package. And you switched from commodities to stamps. But there were a lot of impediments but you just kind of blasted ahead because beyond those impediments was sympathy.

Now, on the OEO stuff, for me, the classic instruction which should be relevant to your work was CDGM. That was the classic, where, for the first time in the history of the South, massive amounts of money, relatively speaking, went directly to blacks, not through the white power structure, for Headstart. And of course, they used
it as organizing tools and created some extremely important and very, very democratic, grassroots organizations. Great threat. Stennis, Eastland wanted to kill him. Called Johnson. Johnson, "What's going on here?" [Laughter] So we had Stennis, Johnson, Eastland, the Democratic Study Group, all aligned against us, and against CDGM. We were their representative in Washington. It was a great battle.

RK: Yeah, it's a great story.

RB: It's a great, great story because if you really want to help people to help themselves in a community setting, there's no better example of that, as far as I'm concerned, than CDGM. But it quickly began a threat to an existing and pervasive power structure. And we had this huge, knock-down, drag-out with Shiver. You know, Shiver's wondering, here I worked with him, and here I was attacking him. And then we had this big ad in the New York Times, Say It Isn't So, Sarg, which was paid for by the Presbyterian Church with a hundred people signing on. But this same guy who had worked for me in Chicago, Ralph Caprio, who'd been a counselor in the high schools, had come to work with me at the Citizens' Crusade, and he became one of the chief organizers in Washington of our attempting to keep CDGM alive. So one of the strategies was to bring busloads of kids and their mothers up to Washington to appeal to the conscience of the nation and to leave gifts for Mrs. Johnson. Gifts that they had made for Mrs. Johnson. She made the serious tactical blunder of being too afraid to accept them.

RK: No?

RB: So we left them at the White House gate with all sort of
publicity. And we picketed Hubert Humphrey's--he was vice
president--house, which was unheard of. You can picket an office,
but you can never go to somebody's house. We picketed his house.
And the person who was most influential in helping us and the people
of Mississippi on that was Nick Von Hoffman.

RK: Oh, in terms of getting publicity and making....

RB: **New York Times** wouldn't touch the story. Wouldn't touch
it. Nick Von Hoffman ran it and it was on the front page on the
*Washington Post* day after day. And again, learning for me. Part
of the thing was a huge rally by CDGM at Jackson State University
in their auditorium. I went down for it, and Nick went down for it.
Nick and I had known each other. Did you know that he was Alinsky's
most successful organizer?

RK: No, I haven't read the new biography, Alinsky's.

RB: He was the guy who was the initial, principle organizer
for the Woodlawn Organization.

NB: Oh, he was? I didn't know that.

RB: Yeah, before Brazer. Yeah, there's a great story about
that. Alinsky said, "He was the best person I ever trained." And
from there he went, ultimately, maybe he went to the *Sun Times* first,
then he went to the *Washington Post*, and then he went out and started
writing novels and stuff. But Nick followed this and he had sympathy
for it, and he kept the whole thing alive, enormously. He went down
for this Jackson State University thing. I was down there. The guy
who was in charge, running, at that point, CDGM, was John Mudd. Do
you know John Mudd?

RK: I know who he is. White guy.
RB: He's white. And he comes from a wealthy family. He's a great guy. How he survived it all, I don't know, but he did. He was there at Jackson State, and all this stuff was going on. There were some rumblings in the crowd about why is a white person running this? ( ) You know how that was solved? Fannie Lou Hammer and John Mudd were very close. And Fannie Lou Hammer got up on the stage, sang, and--this is a very important movement--and all of a sudden she said, "John Mudd, you come up here on this stage." John said, "Oh!" John came up, and she put her arms around him and she said, "I love this man," and that was it. [Laughter]

RK: One thing Neil and I were talking about yesterday is that in a situation like that, when the government has all these, you can't really look for the government as an ally because of all of the political problems. . . .

RB: You can look at them so far. At some point. . . .

RK: They take a walk. But the role of the foundation, because Field Foundation intervenes at that point, and I guess Les is at the. . . .

RB: Yeah.

RK: And actually funds the CDGM for a while.

RB: Funds the infrastructure. Mrs. Steele participated in the press conference in which it was said, "We will do this as long as it's necessary, including going into capital," which was a statement, you're not going to be able to kill this organization, which was an unusual, highly unusual, thing to do and extremely supportive. Very important. It's an important play, a move, in a chess match, but the chess match is very big and it goes on [laughter].
And the question is, okay, how long can you do this? And it has substantive value, but more than that, it has probably more symbolic than, in fact, substantive value. And that was a key holding device, very important at that time. The key architect of the compromise was Bob Kennedy.

RK: Is that right? I didn't know that.

RB: Peter Edleman called me. He was working for Robert Kennedy at that time. Jules Sugarman was representing Shriver for Headstart. I've got great Headstart stories to tell you. Basically, Jules had his instructions, cool this operation down, [laughter] and create some sort of an alternative. Don't try to kill it, just cool it out, and maybe you can create something else or build on something else, which was MAP in Mississippi, which was basically supported by the white establishment. And I'm not faulting Jules for that. He was in an impossible situation. He was running Headstart and so on. Then we launched these major attacks on Shriver [laughter]. It kept getting play in the press, and Bob Kennedy was very interested in it, having gone down to Mississippi and saw what life was really like down there. So Peter called me and he said, "Dick, Bob wants to know what has to be done?" I said, "This program has to stay alive, and the only way it can stay alive is if Shriver allows it to stay alive. And that, it seems to me, means a call between Bob Kennedy and his brother-in-law." So he made the call. Of course, he was a lame duck. But he basically said, I don't know what he said to him. So we had a compromise which I thought we could live with at that time. But the costs, of course, the battle and the blood and everything else were pretty great, and it was the
classic example for us of you could go so far, but ultimately unless
you had the horses, which we didn't have, you're going to come up
against a wall. And there's going to be blood.

RK: The fact that the political structure in the South has changed. Now that you have Mike Espy, with voting rights and black registration, the dynamics of southern politics and national politics have changed. Is that enough at this point?

RB: It's an opening. And it seems to me—I'm not as close to it as I used to be—one of the problems of that, well, there's several problems. First of all, there isn't any federal government, in terms of resources, and if the resources were there, would the inclination be there? That's one problem. The second problem, I think, I don't know, somebody must have done studies of this. There was a whole system of leadership in the civil rights movement at one time. Where is it now? From generation to generation, where is it now? And I think that's probably a very serious problem. Very serious problem. And why? Why did it not regenerate itself in terms of leadership? Was it because it was a "movement?" As say, Alinsky would make the distinction between an organization and a movement, or organization and movement. What is it? On the other hand, certainly the repudiation of the Bork nomination was very instructive in terms of the power of blacks. But what are the sustaining and building characteristics? But that's true across the nation. There always is this tendency—you're a southerner, right—on the part of people in the South to say, "The South is different. We have our literature. We have our culture, historically. We have this and that. The South is different."
RK: Not much.

RB: Exactly. I mean, in some ways certainly it is. It's cost the nation dearly in terms of political leadership.

RK: Yeah, it has.

NB: Several weeks ago he were down in Mississippi in a place called Mound Bayou.

RB: Oh sure, I know where that is.

NB: The Health Clinic there and whatnot. Now, they were recipients of some of your efforts, and kind of talking with Geiger and L.C. Dorsey and John Hatch. What a great group of people, by the way. They talked about what they were able to do, and there were moments of real, real hope and optimism and organizing and cooperative stuff. What they sort of said was when it came to the point of trying to actually acquire capital, when the cooperative wanted to buy a cannery, that's where the politicians really stopped them. Does that surprise you?

RB: Not at all, absolutely not. Follow the money. That's why it became so threatening to Stennis and Eastland, there was money going in there. Money for organizing, money for reinforcing, money for building, independent and unfettered. Sure, it's a major threat. The most recent example, of course, is Los Angeles. Not the riots, but if you look post-Watts at what kind of capital was available for any kind of building in those areas, the prohibition, as far as I'm concerned, was both economic and political. The red lining was basically economic on the part of the banks and so on and so on and so on. But it was also political. I mean, why weren't the politicians pushing to get money in there for capital purposes.
Because if you do that, you may create a viable community, and if you create a viable community, you don't control it. I don't know, in this voter registration, education stuff we did with a consortium of foundations, we certainly did not rely, for instance, on black, urban politicians to help mount a major voter registration campaign in black areas. They were afraid it would get out of control. I mean, it goes back to eastern Kentucky and not wanting an industry.

NB: After John Kennedy was killed, and what that did, in some ways, to kind of create momentum around and made perhaps even possible, you know, in attempting to sort of memorialize him, this poverty thing became increasingly important. And during this time, there you were. . . .

RB: Became politically feasible.

NB: Politically feasible. You were there with a pretty consistent message about this maximum community participation. It strikes me already at this point, you know that this is going to set up a kind of oppositional organizing community base kind of things that going to be in opposition to local political structures, etc.

RB: Yeah.

NB: And yet, you're trying to get this through kind of the mainstream of the mainstream, you know, political system. Was this kind of an effort to push the question, so how far can you go?

RB: Sure. Well, that and something else. What were the alternatives? There wasn't any money. People called the War on Poverty massive, massive amounts of money through OEO. That's a joke. There wasn't any money in OEO. As a matter of fact, I once said that the combined budgets for CAP programs, which, incidentally,
I had some problems with, in New York, Chicago, Minneapolis, Cincinnati, Omaha, and Atlanta didn't equal what it cost to develop one fin on a missile. Research and development, God! It was a joke. Seed money, that's what it was, and there wasn't even enough seed money--and one of the tragic flaws of the CAP programs--to force the school systems to buy in. So when you're talking about the CAP system locally, look, and see how many school systems really bought in to the ideology. Very few. Very few, which was one of the major flaws. But the notion that it was a War on Poverty was crazy. There wasn't any money, very little money. So you're first faced with that. Secondly, could you transform things into entitlements, rather than money for community this, community that? In other words, could you do a Social Security Act over again for poor people? No money, we don't have any money for that. That's really massive amounts of money. So I thought that the options were very limited. What are the options? Well, you put a jerry-built system together of trying to foster opportunity by job training, this, that, and so on, with very little money. As a matter of fact, if Bob Kennedy hadn't been around to coordinate HEW, Labor, and Justice, and pooling some of the money from HEW and Justice, there would have been nothing for the Delinquency Program which was the predecessor to. It's just a graduation from delinquency to poverty. Don't have any money.

So I felt that the options were very limited. Could you create first some form of economic democracy? No money. That drove me to political democracy. And if you're serious about political democracy, once it starts you don't control it, which means ultimately it bites the hand that feeds it. Okay, all right, fine.
But what are the options? The usual service systems, which I had historically [laughter] concerned about. And so the notion of maximum feasible participation grew out as part of those beliefs. The one corollary, add-on, to that was the notion of the nonprofessional worker. What's his name who wrote *New Careers for the Poor*? Still alive. Wrote this book, *New Careers for the Poor*, and I think, at that point, they called them sub-professionals, which is a horrible term. But the notion was you don't have to have all these credentials to go to work. So we kind of made the demand on the community action people--I wasn't running that--for every community action program you must have a budget for nonprofessionals, so that they have a chance for mainline training and jobs. The big gain in that was hospital workers, where they eventually unionized and so on.

**RK:** Yeah, that's true. That's a major outcome of that.

**RB:** That's the one area. But did I think that there would be some battles down the line? Absolutely. As a matter of fact, we [laughter] were not very long into it when--what was the place in upper New York that Alinsky went into with OEO money? I think it was Buffalo.

**RK:** Buffalo, I think, yeah.

**NB:** Rochester?

**RB:** No, that was something. That was prior to that. [Laughter] Moynihan saved the Rochester situation. He and Alinsky became friends, and when Moynihan went to the White House, he used to invite Alinsky over for cocktails. I always joked with Alinsky, I said, "God, if everybody knew about this Saul, we'd be in real
trouble." [Laughter] But the CAP programs, I think, were the most problematic. I think real difficulties because they were very complex. Basically a three-legged stool, public agencies, privates agencies, and representatives of poor people, and no one knew how to recruit representatives of poor people. There wasn't a natural system for that, so that was a serious weakness of the thing. The school systems could never be purchased into the program. What the CAP programs did, more than anything else, was to produce a whole new world of urban black leadership, more than anything else. Then there was a real question, do you tack Headstart onto the CAP programs? Do you do it through the schools? Do you do it independently? Traver was in trouble fairly early on on the CAP programs, because he couldn't explain what they were doing. You know, even then you were in sound bites with Congress. You say, Job Corps doing this, and so and so is doing this. How do you explain Community Action. Big problem. Initially Sarg was against the Community Action Programs because of his Chicago experience with the schools. Inevitable, interminable delays in getting anything decided and done through this collaboration, but finally he bought into it. In part, Headstart was invented as a way of keeping OEO above water. Simple "single purpose," children, etc. So when Sister Jacquelyn came in from St. Louis and said, "I have an idea." Basically, Shriver said, "That's fantastic." So he called some of us in and said, "Sister Jacquelyn and I have this idea. Why don't you think about it?" So we went back and we thought about it. "Ah, it's a pretty good idea?"

RK: We probably need to stop.
END OF TAPE 2, SIDE B