

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG
Executive Director, SCLC
Interviewed by Taylor Branch
April 13, 2017
Total Running Time: 2 hours 32 minutes

00:00:00:00 CREW:
Mr. Young interview, take one, marker, soft sticks.

00:00:07:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
Thank you very much. To begin, Andy, we just want to start a little about your first impressions. I know you met Doctor King before you worked with him, can you talk about meeting him and what drew you to him, from New York to come down here at the beginning of the movement? We're going to start with a few personal questions.

00:00:27:00 ANDREW YOUNG:
Well, actually I was pastoring a little country church in South Georgia, Thomasville and Beachton. And I was invited to Talladega College for religious emphasis week. We both happened to be members of the same fraternity and they invited him and I said, they weren't sure that he might- he would come, so they invited me as a backup and we both showed up. And I don't remember what we talked about, but I was just- I was a little country preacher with 50 members in two churches. And I'd run a voter registration drive, but I knew about him. But- And I had actually heard him speak in Tallahassee at the Reverend C. Kales- Seals Church. So, I was in awe. But we basically talked to college students more or less reflecting on our ordinary, not so special college years. Afterwards, my wife Jean was with me and Andrea who was I guess about six months old, and they began to talk and she asked about Coretta. And I don't know whether I was aware of it, and I'm sure he wasn't, but they both went to

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

the same high school, Marion, Alabama, Lincoln School and had lead pretty much parallel lives. Because Marion, when Coretta was growing up, and when Jean was growing up, was pretty rough place.

00:02:39:00 I mean, Coretta's family had several businesses, so did Jean's family, and they were all destroyed, for no reason, just because there was a resentment of successful, aggressive black people. They destroyed, they burned down the grocery store that Coretta's father had formed and they sabotaged a saw mill and a logging company. Jean's family had little shops downtown. Her great grandfather had been a postmaster or something in reconstruction, so they owned almost a whole block of property with a grocery store, and a shoe shop, and a candy store, and it was the black business community. And somehow, they were swindled out of it. And Jean's grandfather committed suicide, and her father became an alcoholic for a while, and her mother was fired from her teaching position because she resisted the advances of the superintendent. And so during their early teen years, from about twelve to sixteen, Coretta was a little older, so for Coretta it might have been fourteen, but they had both lived very traumatic lives, and they both had experienced the raw cruelty of racism and segregation, and would have been very bitter I think, except that a young Quaker couple, Fran and Cecile Thomas, came down and took an interest in both of them and arranged for Coretta and her sister to go to Antioch College, and Jean and her two sisters went to Manchester College in Indiana.

00:04:59:00 Now, the significance of that is that I think in the fifties, forties, those were the only two schools that I know of that had a required course in nonviolence. Jean had taken a course in New Testament nonviolence. Coretta was a member of the women's strike for peace and I don't whether we could have found two beautiful, intelligent, black women, who were committed to the values that we were struggling with as students. Now, it wasn't as easy. I think both Martin and myself, grew up in a fairly privileged circumstance. I mean, there was all the difference in the world between Atlanta and New Orleans, and Marion, Alabama, Selma, Alabama, Thomasville, Beatchon, Georgia. We were protected from racism and segregation pretty much in the big cities. And it was- well, it was there, but we were taught to deal with it, not to be

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

victims, and we're taught that racism was a sickness and it was the white people who were sick, not you. And you don't get mad with sick people and you don't get upset with them, they just don't know any better. They've been taught that they are better than you, but you know that God created all of us in his image. God created of one blood all of the nations of the earth, and for some reason they have a problem with that, but that's not our problem.

00:06:56:00 And so, I think, while we had sort of spiritual defenses that were part of our growth growing up, we never had them tested. Whereas our wives had been tested and been through the fire and somehow realized that you could come out without being burned. I always say that at that time at Talladega, I don't know whether I realized it then, but that's not just a coincidence, and I've learned to say that coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous, and that- but if we had not married these two little country girls, who had the fire built up in their bones to fight racism and segregation, and not to fear death or walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil, they were some courageous women who never tried to hold us back. In fact, they were always pushing us forward and I don't know if you would have heard of either of us if we had not married these two women.

00:08:30:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
Could you skip forward to sixty-one when you're up in New York and the decision to come south to work with him? What drew you to that job and how did you make that decision to come and become an advisor?

00:08:45:00 ANDREW YOUNG:
Well, there again, I was working with the National Council of Churches. I had been in Thomasville and Beachton, Georgia and I went down to Florida in nineteen fifty-six, fifty-seven, to do bible study at an interracial church conference. And I was offered a job in New York as the Associate Director of Youth Work for the National Council of Churches. Well, actually, Jean did not want to go. She wanted to stay in the South. I was enjoying myself, but at that time, they actually said that the young

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

people in the churches, black and white, need help to go through this difficult period. And while you're moving to New York and would be based in New York, most of your work would be with young people across the nation, but especially in the South. And so that was the only way I convinced Jean to move north. She did not like New York, in fact she hated it. The only good thing about it was that she was able to get her master's degree at Queens College for sixteen dollars a semester.

00:10:20:00 And- but she never really adjusted to New York and we went to New York with me making the commitment that we would only be in New York from four to six years. And we'd been there just about four years and had done- I enjoyed New York, I enjoyed the work with the National Council of Churches. And it gave me an exposure to young people all over the nation. It also got me involved internationally with the church's movements, the liberation movements in Latin America and South Africa, southern Africa, and was a particularly good experience for me. She had been to- Jean had been to Germany in a work camp with the Church of the Brethren back in fifty-three and I tagged along with her there and worked in Austria, so our work with the churches gave us a significant amount of global awareness of what was going on in the world with race and creed and class and color.

00:11:37:00 But we were looking at television, put the kids to bed, and we'd just bought a house in Queens, and had a fire in the fireplace, and was sitting down and the Nashville sit-in story comes on. And we see C.T. Vivian, and Martin Luther King, and Diane Nash, and James Bevel, and Kelly Miller Smith, and John Lewis. And I think John Lewis particularly was a powerful, moving figure that Jean immediately related to. And when the program went off, she said, "It's time for us to go home." I said, "We just bought this house, this is home." She said, "No, this is not home. It's time for us to go back south." I said, "Where?" She says, "I don't know." I said, "Well, what do you want me to do?" She said, "One, you need to quit this job. We need to sell this house." I said, "And then what do we do?" She said, "I don't know, but if we make a commitment to go back, the Lord will find a way to use us." I said, "My god, what kind of crazy woman did I marry?" But I did it. And she was expecting our third child and her master's thesis was due about the same time.

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

00:13:20:00 And so, we were without a house, a job, and nothing to do. I had decided I didn't want to work with- in the movement. I frankly felt that as a member of the United Church of Christ, coming out of a northern, liberal denomination, even though I had passed it only in the South, that I didn't want to get into all the ego battles with all of these Baptist and Methodist preachers in the South. So, I decided I was going to go to Highlander Folk School. That would make me close enough to the movement, but I wouldn't be in the middle of all of the- church politics is probably the worst kin and I don't even go to church meetings. Church politics and university politics, you know. And so, I was trying to stay away from all of the movement politics and accepted a job at the Highlander Folk School. The house sold, the baby was born, Jean got her degree, but then the state of Tennessee closed down Highlander Folk School. It was interesting because the reason they closed it down was they accused this wonderful woman, Mrs. Septima Clark, who was then in her sixties, which I thought was old, they accused her of running a moonshine ring and they actually testified that this lady carried twenty-four gallons of moonshine out in two suitcases to her car. Well, that was the kind of testimony. And the Septima Clark that I knew was a good AME- in fact she was a member of Mother Emmanuel Church, where the nine people were killed a few months ago.

00:15:31:00 But with the town and the- well, with Highlander closed, the foundation, Marshall Field Foundation, had given a grant that SCLC could not receive because they didn't have tax-exempt status. And so, in trying to get the money to Septima, I went to the United Church of Christ and they said they would gladly manage the grant if I would come on as the administrator. And we had properties that the United Church of Christ had, part of the American Missionary Association, at one time they had as many as five-hundred schools and colleges across the South, so I asked them would they help the movement by helping to restore some of these properties. And so, between the Quakers and the Congregationalists, we had training centers at Penn Center in South Carolina, Beaufort, and Dorchester Center in Liberty County, Georgia. And I ended up moving to Atlanta and being placed in an office that was right across the hall from Martin Luther King.

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

00:17:05:00 And I was not officially on SCLC staff, but Dora McDonald, Doctor King's secretary said to me, "Your family's in Alabama and you're here by yourself, maybe," I was living at the YMCA, "maybe you could help with Doctor King's mail." So, I said I'd be glad to try and she brought me a cardboard box, you know, packed down with all of the people who were writing him letters. And I took it over to the YMCA and that's what I did for my orientation. I read and answered, you know, all of his mail, without ever meeting him, without ever talking to him anymore. But when we met at Talladega and started talking about our wives and our children, that's all we talked about, and so I'd never had a conversation with him about the civil rights movement. But I think the kind of parallel upbringing and education- Howard University and Morehouse College are very similar. Doctor Mays had gone to India in nineteen forty-seven, and so did Doctor Mordecai Johnson of Howard. And every time either one of them spoke, they spoke about Mohandas K. Gandhi. And it- well, that was the origin of my understanding of the movement and the fact that- well, I don't know. I was there and there was a job to be done and I did what had to be done.

00:18:51:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
It sounds like by accident, coincidence, and parallel interest in your wives here, you're moving closer toward working with Doctor King, but when did you first tell yourself "Okay, I'm in this with him?"

00:19:05:00 ANDREW YOUNG:
Well, I think I knew that I was in the movement because of him. It was the organizations that I didn't want to be a part of. I didn't mind being a part of him. But remember, he had been expelled from the Baptist convention, and it was such a kind of petty religious jealousy, and that's what I didn't want any part of. But that was more or less out of Chicago and Reverend Jack- not Jesse Jackson, but-

TAYLOR BRANCH:
J.H. Jackson.

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

00:19:43:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

J.H. Jackson, who actually, even after Doctor King's death, when they changed, they named the street on which his church was, Martin Luther King Avenue, he moved the address of the church around a side street. And so, there was such, there was such pettiness and jealousy that Martin didn't like. In fact, he quite often made fun of it. He used to joke about being stabbed in Harlem., and he said that he had a kind of an out of body experience, and all of these preachers who were particularly rivals and- well, not all of them, there were people like Gardner Taylor and others that were very supportive of him- but there was sort of a mixed group gathered around the bed, and he was sort of supposed to be in a coma, and he said he can remember like he was up in the upper rafters of the room looking down on them, and he said, "I wanted to tell them, 'Don't get too happy, brothers. I ain't gone yet.'" But he could joke about being stabbed and the petty jealousies and rivalries and I think that served him very well. But I think he always knew that each and every thing he did could be the last thing that he did. And he used to say that "If you're really gonna be free, you have to overcome a love of wealth and the fear of death." And he used that to justify paying us very little. He only took a dollar a year and he- I think six thousand dollars a year was the top salary, and he felt that that was enough. And his idea was that if you're going to work with poor people, you've got to- you can't live way above them. It was the exact opposite of some of the prosperity ministry that we see right now.

00:22:04:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

So, as I mentioned the film focuses on Selma forward from that Nobel lecture about racism, war, and poverty and nonviolence as a weapon against all three. That lecture is not widely known, but you were there and he insisted on going straight to Selma. What do you remember about the commitment? Was that a surprise? I assume the lecture itself was not a surprise. The breadth of his commitment.

00:22:31:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

Actually, the idea of redeeming the soul of America from the triple evils of racism, war, and poverty was actually out of the first SCLC gathering in nineteen fifty-seven in New Orleans. And so that had always been a theme that we probably didn't use until it surfaced in his Nobel Prize lecture. We came back from the Nobel Prize lecture and we went to New York. We were met at the Harlem Armory by Governor Rockefeller, Nelson Rockefeller, and Malcolm X. And Malcolm was there to congratulate Martin, but he said "I think it's important for us to keep our work separate, but I want you to know that I have a great deal of admiration and respect for everything you're trying to do. And anything I can do I'd be glad to do to help you, but I don't think it's good for us to be seen or work together." So, he left the armory.

00:23:48:00 When Doctor King got up to speak, Governor Rockefeller- when Martin decided to give the money of the Nobel Prize to the six Civil Rights Organizations divided evenly, Governor Rockefeller decided to match it, so the amount doubled. And he offered us his plane to fly us down to Washington to meet President Johnson. Well, when we got there we were taken to the justice department to meet with the Attorney General Katzenbach and Vice President Hubert Humphrey, and the President was busy for our four o'clock appointment. And we really didn't get over there until almost seven o'clock. We found out later, much later, that what was on his mind and what he was dealing with was that was one of the first efforts of Secretary of Defense McNamara to get President Johnson more involved in the war in Vietnam. And so, he and it seems Richard Russell, a senator from Georgia, were in an extended meeting, so when we finally got to meet with him the President was- well, he had been in the midst of an argument where here's his Secretary of Defense suggesting that they get involved in Vietnam and his mentor, Senator Richard Russell from Georgia, saying "I'd have nothing to do with that. Stay away from Vietnam." In fact, when he realized we were the next appointment he said, "If you want my advice, don't get interested and involved in any one of these causes."

00:25:55:00 So, when we got there the President was in the midst of a very heavy burden, war and domestically, and so we made our case that we really needed voting rights and

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

he agreed and said that he wanted to do a lot more on poverty and also voting rights. And I think the only difference was that I think he was more concerned about going into poverty first and he felt that it was less divisive. And President Johnson's notions of poverty were not just black poverty. His experiences with poverty were from the hills of East Texas and he had taught children which he knew were coming to school with no food for breakfast. And we were pushing voting rights. And we would make a case, or Doctor King would make a case, and President Johnson would agree, but he'd always end with saying that, "Look I just got a bill through Congress six months ago on civil rights in public accommodations. I just don't have the power to go back to the Congress for a Voting Rights Act in this session of Congress." And Doctor King kept pressing the case and President Johnson kept agreeing with him, but saying, "You're right, but I don't have the power." And it was a... [*Sound of siren*]

00:27:46:00 President Johnson's commitment to end poverty and to do as much as he could for the poor of America, you know, were a deep seeded part of his faith and government's abilities to change the world and- but he really, he really did feel powerless and we did not know the conflict, but neither did we know how much we were getting into it, because when we left and I asked Doctor King, well what do you think? His answer was very- I thought he was joking. He said, "Well, we got to figure out how to get this president some power." I said, "Come on now, you gonna get the president of the United States some power?" And I- the school rivalry Howard and Morehouse- I said, "Now you Morehouse men we always say, 'You can tell a Morehouse man, but you can't tell him much.' But this is a new level of arrogance from you. You gonna get the president of the United States some power?" And he was serious. He said, "Look I'm not being flippant." He said, "We just have to find a way to get this president some power."

00:29:22:00 And when I realized he was serious, but he didn't have a clue of where the power would come from and how it would come about, I didn't realize it then, but I think that he had already come to be aware, from the combination of his death threats and stabbing in New York, and the midnight ride and the jailing in solitary confinement in Georgia, that I think he had already come to grips with death. And that his view of

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

the movement was never- and I don't know exactly where it happened, but somewhere between Montgomery and Selma, the movement ceased to be political for him. It was spiritual. And I was still thinking politics, but he was not thinking politically. And when we got back, I think this was- I think we met with the president, I think it was the eighteenth of December because we'd just come back from Oslo and New York and came down to Washington.

00:30:50:00 And we left, went back to Atlanta, two days later Mrs. Amelia Boynton of Selma comes to visit us with no appointment. She and Reverend Reese and a Baptist preacher, Williams, I think, but anyway, there was a Baptist- AME preacher, and Mrs. Amelia Boynton. And they came over to visit us without an appointment, they just drove into the office and Miss Boynton, who had gone to Selma as a nineteen-year-old, working for George Washington Carver, and the reason I remember this is that she turned twenty-one in nineteen thirty-two and registered to vote and I was born in nineteen thirty-two, and so those dates are kind of locked in. She had been in Selma, Alabama working first for George Washington Carver in a kind of New Deal programmed to help sharecropper families and their wives. She married an attorney, I think, and had been involved in social work and political activities in Alabama throughout her life. She actually, not only- well, she lead a Get Out the Vote drive for Barack Obama in two thousand eight when she was, I think, a hundred and two by that time or something. And so here was one of the real saints of the South.

00:32:44:00 Ms. Boynton actually came over to Atlanta to explain to us what was going on in Selma. I always tell young people whenever they say that things are worse off now than they ever were before, I want to, you know, well, I want to say something really crude, but I usually say, "You just don't know." The amazing thing was that we both had wives who grew up thirty miles from Selma, we were back and forth between Marion and Selma and Atlanta all our lives, but we did not realize, nor did it come to the newspapers, that Jim Clark had kind of shut down any kind of protest and was refusing to allow people to have any kind of voter registration or political meetings in the churches. And he said the churches in Selma in Dallas County were not allowed to have politics. In fact, Miss Boynton's husband died and he had his "storm

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

troopers,” I say, block the church and wouldn't let- Jim Clark wouldn't let Miss Boynton's husband be buried in his own church. And so, they had held the funeral in the middle of the street because he said he was too political and he didn't allow politics.

00:34:27:00 So that- when we realized that he had also had an injunction that prevented more than two people from walking down the street together, it was an attempt to prevent demonstrations, but even two or three high schools' kids who were walking home from school together, police would break them up, and if there were three or four people they couldn't walk together. And he's established a kind of police state which even in Atlanta, two hundred miles away, we didn't know about. And so, I think Martin accepted that as a challenge. Now, I don't know what we would do and we didn't even take time to discuss it, but it was just before Christmas and Mrs. Boynton was concerned about the NAACP Emancipation Proclamation meeting that we normally have around the first of January. The first of January was on a Sunday, so Doctor King never missed the first Sunday in his church, and so we decided we were go to Birmingham- I mean, go to Selma Monday night, the second of January, and we would have our Emancipation service in spite of Jim Clark's embargo or- well, whatever his police state rules were, we would challenge them by having that Emancipation Day service. And so, we went there almost looking for trouble. And we knew the trouble was there and that they could not deal with it alone. And so, Martin was almost deliberately inserting himself in between the people of Selma and the racist society.

00:36:34:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
So that's the beginning of Selma, which we don't have time- I mean, very historic movement- I know after it was over, Doctor King and President Johnson had one telephone conversation in which Johnson said, “That was about the best thing that ever happened, you turned out all those people in Selma which allowed me, President Johnson, to go before Congress and call for The Voting Rights Act.” But we want to skip to right after the Voting Rights Act was signed, you're having the

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

SCLC convention and I believe you gave an award to Diane Nash and James Bevel at that convention, but the Watts Riot broke out right in the middle of it. Do you have memories of how the Watts Riot affected you and Doctor King coming after that peak in Selma?

00:37:30:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, can I just talk a minute to say that how we got out of Selma, and what happened there, was a series of accidents. One, we didn't know what we were doing and we were moving ahead on faith. But the incidents - one, it was the second of January and not the first, which meant in that year the Sundays were a little different, but the events that went on in Selma all lead us into things- Jimmy Lee Jackson being killed, and our marching to his- put his body to rest- and that was where we started talking about marching from Selma to Montgomery. And they ended up marching on the wrong day, and we didn't have any idea what was happening. But I was just thinking that if Doctor King had been there, leading that march, I doubt that the Justice Department would have allowed him to be beaten in public that way. And it was the fact of people from Lowndes County and Perry County and Dallas County came on the wrong Sunday that maybe made it possible, so that was one of the accidents that seemed to be a kind of spiritual empowerment of the movement that give President Johnson the power.

00:39:24:00 And so, I think that by that time, Martin had decided that anything he did would be - well, every day could be his last, and yet, he pressed on and ... Let's see, how did we get to the Watts Riots? All I remember about the Watts Riots was that I had just let down and I had a terrible migraine headache and he called me early in the morning, Sunday morning, saying that there's a riot in Watts, we've got to go to Los Angeles, and I was feeling very, very ill. And there were a couple of points of disagreement that- it was one of the things I think I argued with him about, one of the few things, that, "What business is it of ours if people riot, see, in Watts?" And I think Robert Kennedy, the Attorney General, in part of his analysis of what was going on in the North, said that the- that black leaders had neglected the North, see. And that made

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

me mad. I said, "Wait a minute. We got no more than fifty people. We have a half a million dollars a year." I think it was only at Selma that the annual budget of SCLC exceeded a half a million dollars, five hundred thousand. We went up to almost six hundred thousand. I said, "It's all we can do to take care of the South. He's got the FBI, the National Guard, the Congress, and the whole Federal Treasury. The North is none of our business."

00:41:39:00 And I think SCLC kind of became divided then, and Martin feeling that we had to prove that nonviolence was relevant in the North, but at the same time not having the resources; financial, political, or human. But one of the things that made the difference was that Los Angeles had had probably the largest fund raiser that had ever been held for SCLC. the whole colosseum there at USC, sixty thousand people showed up, and I think Martin felt that he had a debt to those people. And so, we ended up traipsing out to Watts. Martin always said that he didn't want to be the fireman called in to put out the fire. He said usually the things that cause these problems, we know months and years ahead of time, and we had to find a way to get into these northern cities before the riots occurred. And in his mind, that's where he made the decision to- that the problems in the North were primarily economic, and he was dealing with racism, but he was dealing with racism that was complicated by unemployment, unprepared migrants moving from the South to the North, the slowdown of the economy after World War Two. And the issues were far more complex than black and white as they had been in the South, and so with the same staff, and the same amount of money, he made a commitment that we had to find a way to address the problems of Northern cities.

00:44:02:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
Well this lead to Chicago and I take it that the staff was divided about going to Chicago?

00:44:08:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

Well, when we left Selma, Diane Nash and James Bevel moved to Chicago with Bernard Lafayette, and they were working with the American Friends Service Committee and the confederation of- a Council of Confederated Organizations, COFO or something, in Chicago. And they came and invited us to come to Chicago. Well again, there are more black people in Chicago than there are in the whole state of Alabama, and we were comfortable in Birmingham, in Selma, in Marion. Our staff knew that, but we had very few people from the North And well, you know, the only place that I was scared- I never got scared in the South. I knew the dangers. But when he moved into Chicago and we moved into an apartment on, I think, 16th and Hamlin.

TAYLOR BRANCH:
In Lawndale.

00:45:33:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Yeah. It was a walk-up apartment and with no lights, and no heat, and I realized we were in a different movement. And, you know, I was prepared to get killed in the South, but I wasn't ready to, you know, to have a junky stick a knife in me in the middle of the night coming into that apartment for maybe fifteen or twenty dollars that I had in my pocket. And there was- it took quite an adjustment. But the first week we moved in the temperature dropped to about sixteen degrees below zero, and people came to us to complain that they had no heat. And so, Martin took up all the money he could and we had almost a spontaneous rent strike. They had been talking about rent strikes, but to find babies wrapped in newspaper, and no heat, and sixteen degrees below zero, we had to start firing the furnaces. So, we got all of the money we could and we got enough coal to get all of the buildings that we were able to get the furnaces to work. And there was a lawyer by the name of Kunstler, Bill Kunstler, that had a theory about rent strikes, and so that was the first economic issue.

00:47:16:00 And we called the movement in Chicago "the movement to end slums." And we defined a slum as an area where there was more money taken out of the community

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

than was put in the community. In most communities, money comes from without, and cycles through and goes back and forth. In the slum, whatever money is in the slum is taken out of the slum and nobody reinvests in those properties, nobody reinvests in those schools. In fact, I think in Chicago, they were spending about two hundred and fifty dollars a year on each black child's education, whereas in the suburbs, it was nine hundred dollars a year. And so, you had an economic disparity causing an educational disparity. And it plunged us into several issues- one was the area of poor housing, the other was the area of quality education, and that you couldn't expect black students to compete with white students when the white students, you know, had five times as much invested in them, and they already had a better family background. Unemployment- we went to- we started a jobs training program that would just prepare people. And the people who were in Chicago, many of whom were veterans coming back from the war, there were people coming up from the South, so we needed a kind of jobs training program. We actually got cooperation from Mayor Daley and President Johnson on the jobs training program. So, we had several programs that were becoming successful. Eventually, the slum lords gave up the slum property. We bought it and we converted those slum apartments into condominiums with a federal program helping to renovate it. And people were able to own a condominium that was, you know, had heat, had central heating and plumbing. an up-to-date, modern apartment. And their condo fees and their notes were less than their rent had been and they became homeowners. So, all of those programs seemed to work for us. At least we demonstrated that they could work. The area that Chicago insisted on getting into was open housing. And we started marching into communities, and Chicago is probably the most segregated city I know. I mean, it's not only segregated black and white, but the Irish, the Italians, the Polish, the Jewish community, almost everybody lives in its own enclave in Chicago. And so, we were challenging the way Chicago was structured simply by marching people into the middle of the slums.

00:49:06:00

00:50:45:00

At the same time, we were still being pulled back to the South and James Meredith decided to have a march in Mississippi. And Martin felt we had to divide what we

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

were doing in Chicago and we could not ignore what was happening in Mississippi. So, we had a Mississippi march and a Chicago movement. And they worked out fairly well together. One of the things we did was we took a lot of the gang leaders who were very, you know, macho big shots in Chicago, and we put them on Greyhound buses and we brought them with us down to Mississippi. And they didn't have nearly the confidence. They were scared to death in Mississippi and they suddenly began to look at us with a new sense of appreciation, because we were much more comfortable with southern segregation and it was a new experience for them. But the problem was, we also had Martin being pulled by the student left into the war in Vietnam. And so, you had almost three things coming together in Chicago, pulling the same fifty people with the same half million dollars, and the same leadership in three or four different directions.

00:52:21:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Wow. It sits in an odd place in history. I know that Doctor King lost a lot of media support, and money support, mainly white liberal support, going into Chicago because, believe it or not, a lot of people thought that racism was confined just to the South. Why were they in Chicago? And so, the question is, did you lose white liberal support, and what was that like and how do you view Chicago- to what degree was it a disappointment, and to what degree did you feel it was a success when you came out, not when you went in?

00:52:59:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, one of the things that guided us, and particularly Doctor King, was- and I think Bevel was the one that kind of constantly sounded that alarm, that Gandhi's biography was "Experiments with Truth," "My Experiments with Truth," and so that tended to put- We knew that fifty guys and a half million dollars couldn't change everything, But we could show that it could be changed, and that it could be changed without violence. And so, our success marker was not in terms of public support or money, but "can we demonstrate that these problems can be solved without

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

violence?" And I think, by that standard, we were successful. I remember marching through Gage Park and the difference in the South, you had maybe a couple hundred, at most, of the riff-raff, the Klan, you know. But in Chicago, it was ten thousand. I mean, everybody came out. And they- we were protected by the police and it put Mayor Daley in an awkward position, because he was determined to protect our right to march, but we were marching into communities of his constituents and they didn't like their idea of ethnic neighborhoods being challenged. But, so, you see cherry bombs in the films, the crowds were far more unruly. And I remember this one young lady came up to Doctor King just almost spitting in his face, calling him all kinds of names. And he said, "You know, you're much too beautiful to be so mean." And she stopped. And she went off on the side and- but when we came back through there, she came out of the crowd again and went up to him, and shook his hand, and apologized, and said, "I'm sorry. I never should've been so rude."

00:55:33:00 But, so we had those kinds of things happening, that we were challenging age-old traditions. But the people weren't bad people, and while one group of people were marching against Mayor Daley, Mayor Daley had had maybe the second biggest fundraiser for us at the time of Birmingham, one was in Los Angeles, and Mayor Daley and Mahalia Jackson had put on a fundraiser for us in Chicago to support our work in Birmingham and Selma. And so that was the way nonviolence was supposed to work, that we were supposed to be able to disagree without being disagreeable. And throughout that entire movement, we met regularly with Mayor Daley, and we disagreed, but we always kind of came to a new understanding, and we remained friends, and even supporters, because in the Democratic Party, Daley was part of the liberal wing. I mean, after all, it was probably the Daley machine that helped produce Barack Obama. We never felt enemies, like we were different, but we didn't feel that way in the South either.

00:57:04:16 The war issue was a problem for everybody and- because this was a new constituency for us. These were the radical upper-middle class, upper class white people mostly, who had sort of lived life without challenge or dangers. And they wanted to emulate our tactics, and yet it's just a different world when you're a

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

southern sharecropper with no support, when you're a upper class, privileged kid who's, after the demonstrations are over, is going to go into the family business or is guaranteed a life of success. And so, we were much more comfortable with the poorest of the poor than the rich on the left. And it was, and of course, they were calling us Uncle Toms, and they were making fun of us because we weren't radical enough. We understood their positions, but we never became anti-American.

00:58:37:00 Doctor King would never- I mean, if you read his Nobel Prize, he never said anything critical of the United States of America. Anywhere we went, we went to Vienna, to meet with the North Vietnamese, and we were much more informed about what was going on there. We had a direct relationship with the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who continually- well, we still have a relationship with his movement. And he invited me to come to join a fast in New York at Nine-Eleven. And so, there was a spiritual connectivity between all of these movements that we were comfortable with, but there were radical elements of violence and anti-American in all of the movements as well. And so- we were also living at a time when Nelson Mandela was at the top of the terrorist lists, you know, and we knew Nelson Mandela to be the saint that people soon discovered he was. But back then, I remember "Sixty Minutes" really tearing into the National Council of Churches for supporting the National Council of Churches of South Africa, which was Bishop Desmond Tutu.

01:00:14:00 And so, we've always been in the middle of a complicated world, and I think part of Doctor King's genius was that he never forgot that we were all on the same side. He didn't have any enemies. We had people with whom we differed. And I think that actually Jimmy Carter was a part of that movement also, and much of what was happening in Jimmy Carter's life later, as he became president, he was very much of that same spirit, coming at it from the position not only of a Georgia peanut farmer in one of the most racist areas of the state, and not being racist, but he was also a nuclear engineer who helped Admiral Rickover develop the nuclear Navy, and I think because of his awareness of the horrors of nuclear war, was determined that he was going to not start a war as president, and came very close to our movement when he was governor, which was about the same time.

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

01:01:48:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Okay, like to have just a couple of questions about the Meredith March, because you're marching through Mississippi, and Stokely proclaims Black Power and it intoxicates the media and precipitates an argument as you're marching along. What Stokely told me was the he was trying to- he said he was using Doctor King, but that he was tired of being nonviolent and he thought why did America admire nonviolence only in black people, and Doctor King argued that it was a leadership doctrine, that it was ahead of white people. So anyway, that was his take, but he also said that that's when he felt that he and Doctor King became friends, beneath the media portrayal that they were bitter enemies. So, what do you remember about Black Power and the relationship between Doctor King and the young SNCC students on that march?

01:02:47:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, my recollection of the dynamics of the movement at that time were not so much SNCC and SCLC, but it was northern and southern. There was never any tension between Martin Luther King and John Lewis, for instance, or me and John Lewis. And actually, the Black Power movement was more an attempt to take SNCC from the Southerners, than it was to challenge- well, it was also to challenge Martin Luther King's leadership, but what I find is that there's a complete difference in the way we were brought up in the South and they were brought up in the north. One, there was a far more Christian attitude, and we never viewed this as black against white. We were trying to redeem the soul of America and there were good people and bad people, but it could've been reversed. In fact, I remember Doctor King saying one time, to one of the bitter young men who was saying he couldn't forgive white people and this, that, and the other, for all this, and Martin said, "Well, I'm sure glad that you're not white." He said, "Because, you know, that we have to deal with people with differing backgrounds and differing attitudes."

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

01:04:18:00 And for us, these were always human problems, and probably more related to sin in an old fashioned Christian sense. That it was the willfulness and pride of man against the will of God. And we were not - we never felt that we could solely claim- I always get uncomfortable when we would sing "God On Our Side." That always offends me. We have to be on God's side. And I think Martin kept that perspective. But it was never black and white, rich and poor, young and old. It was those who were willing to stand up for what was right, regardless of how they were born. And those who, you know, could not appreciate and love others who were different. I accuse Stokely of being just an angry, frustrated young man, who would have been against anybody who was reasonable and calm. I remember when we were tear gassed in Canton, I think, he cracked up and started screaming and I was having to calm him down. I got tear gassed too, but I was- well, I was older. But the thing about tear gas is, it reminds you of the fact that you are totally helpless and it frustrates the hell out of you because you can't breathe and you can't talk and you're crying. I mean, you're humiliated. And he kind of cracked up there. In fact, that sort of settled the whole argument.

01:06:28:00 Now, that's important for today, because with a group of young people just last week, it suddenly hit me that, what's the difference between those of us who are left around and those who died? What happened to the angry young men, the Black Panthers? The militants of the South who, who- I mean, they're dead. And my father taught me when I was four years old, and the Nazi party was on the corner of my house, "You don't let this racial sickness get you upset. This is not your problem, this is their problem. You don't get mad. If you get angry and frustrated in a fight, you lose your edge. Don't get mad, get smart." See? And so, I think the ability not to internalize your anger and frustration, but to objectify it and deal with it rationally, was something that you're taught in the South. I mean, I was four years old, being lectured about understanding sick white people who were Nazis. You know, I mean, and- but I had to go past that corner three or four times a day to visit an aunt that lived right behind the German-American Bund.

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

01:07:57:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Was Stokely right when he said though that the relationship between Doctor King and him on that march when the cameras were turned off at night was totally different than what was projected in the media?

01:08:48:09 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, Martin was an amazingly tolerant, understanding father figure for all of us. He understood Hosea's frustrations, he understood Stokely's frustrations, but he- and he never took it personally. And he made a special effort to invite Stokely to come to church and have Coretta- when he came, had Coretta bring him to his home to dinner. And that was the way we sort of dealt with- that's the way we dealt with the Blackstone Rangers and, you know, and the invaders in Mississippi. We embraced them and we tried to give them an understanding of our understanding of their situation. We were never judge- we were never judging them. It was necessary. I think one of the keys to nonviolence is you have to find a no-fault solution and a win-win way out. And the rivalries between us in SCLC were just as strong as it was between us and SNCC, in fact sometimes it was stronger.

01:09:32:00

And the only time Doctor King cussed me out was when I just didn't feel like arguing and they said something very militant and stupid, and I said, "Okay. Let's go. If you're not scared I'm not scared." And he stopped the meeting and he took me off on the side. He said, "Look." He said, "You know that most of us are certifiably insane." And he said, "When people get irrational and emotional like that, your job is to kind of be cool and calm things down." I said, "I get tired of being the Uncle Tom." He said, "That's your role." He said, "You have to take the discussion as far to the right as you can to give me enough leverage in between so that I can come down." He said, "I don't mind, I don't mind risking my life, but I don't want to throw it away over some foolishness." And for me to cut through the emotion- he said, "Everybody has a right to be angry, everybody has a right to be frustrated, but if you give in to your anger and your frustrations, you know, you're going to lose." That was a message he got from his father, I got from my father, as a baby.

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

- 01:10:51:00 Kids don't get that nowadays. Kids from the North are not prepared for discrimination and they want to blame somebody on it. At four, we had to take responsibility for dealing with segregation in our own neighborhoods and that was a difference in southern upbringing. We also, we also- well, Doctor King would also say, "Look, in order to be segregated this long, we had to cooperate with it. A man can't ride your back if you don't bend down and let him. And when you straighten up your back, he falls to his feet, and it becomes possible for you to be brothers. But if you're going to bend over and let him ride your back, he's certainly going to do it." Now, Stokely never had those kinds of lessons, see? And he had lived in Harlem. He didn't know as many white people. In fact, the frustration comes about because people really don't know each other. And in the South, we knew each other.
- 01:12:08:00 There's nobody that had a more cruel childhood and upbringing than James Bevel, or Hosea Williams. Bevel never got mad. Hosea would get mad, but he'd come to his senses. And the young people in SNCC from the North, came south thinking they were going to change Mississippi in a summer, and they got frustrated when it didn't change. We knew that freedom is a constant struggle. It's not a sprint, it's a marathon. It's a lifetime commitment to doing the right thing to make the world a better place. And that psychological difference and the ability to kind of try to stay smart and not get mad- I mean, C.T. Vivian was the earliest of the freedom fighters. He was beaten up demonstrating in Peoria, Illinois, in nineteen forty-seven. C.T. is ninety-five and he still- I mean, he still takes all his lickings with a smile. And he's very philosophical about it. He's one of the most loving, understanding human beings I know. And...
- 01:13:37:20 Anger eats away at your own soul, and it hurts you. We started seeing the young- well, Stokely had a heart attack very young. And it was his inability to control his anger and frustration. So, you're killing yourself when you get mad. That's why my daddy told me over and over again, "Don't get mad. Get smart," and he'd slap me in the face like that and he expected me to duck and dodge, but if I got angry and fought back, he'd give me a good whop. He said, "When you lose your temper, you lose your head," you know. I mean, that was lessons beaten into me before

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

kindergarten. Kids from the North and kids in the twenty first century don't have that and so they think they have a right to be angry. Being angry is being stupid. And they get mad with me when I say that.

01:14:49:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

I'd like to shift to talking about Doctor King and anger, but not anger. There were times when he was given to depression. There was a story, I believe you told me, about him getting depressed in Grenada, Mississippi not long after Chicago and that summer of September of sixty-six where he wouldn't get out of bed. I don't know whether it was because of the war or the Black Power march or Chicago or what and Doctor King- Coretta said that he was conscience driven and often given to bouts of depression. What was the pattern and how did you think of that? How would he get out of it? Do you remember that story in Grenada, Mississippi? I think Joan Baez had to go in and sing to him to wake him up.

01:15:55:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

I remember Grenada and I remember his, I'd rather say, his bouts with conscience. I mean, as much as he did, he always blamed himself for not doing enough. And- like he was trying to take the blame. He let Bobby Kennedy put him on a guilt trip, and he was very depressed that he hadn't been more forceful in his nonviolence and that- and I said, "Wait a minute. This is not- I mean, you're not the savior of the world, you know, you're doing better than anybody else is doing. There's no reason for you to feel guilty," but he always felt he wasn't doing enough. He took the burden and blame on himself and, and those were periods when he was really just physically exhausted. And the only time- well, actually when he received word of the Nobel Prize, he was in the hospital and there wasn't anything wrong with him except that he got so hopped up and so revved up that, you know, he couldn't relax at home and the doctor checked him into the hospital basically to slow him down. And it was there, I think because of his feeling that somehow, he wasn't good enough to be the leader,

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

so, you know, he'd feel guilty about getting a Nobel Prize and that he didn't deserve it, see?

- 01:17:47:00 And one of the most beautiful scenes I remember was him being in the hospital and Archbishop Hallinan of the Catholic Church coming into congratulate him on winning the Nobel Prize, and I moved away from them and they were talking and Bishop Hallinan said, "Well I must be on my way. May I give you my blessing?" And Martin said, "Oh, of course." And so, he made the sign of the cross and mumbled something in Latin and then he knelt down beside the bed and said, "May I receive yours?" I said, damn. I never thought I'd see an Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church getting on his knees to a black Baptist preacher named Martin Luther. You know, how far have we come? I mean, and those were- I think an incident like that would do more to inspire him and rev him up than us trying to convince him that he was all right and he was doing- it hurt him when we came out of the meeting with- that was probably one of the most despairing times I remember.
- 01:19:04:00 We went to meet with Ambassador Goldberg at the United Nations. And Goldberg pretty much agreed with us that the war in Vietnam was not in anybody's interest and when we came out they asked Martin to report on the conversation and he said, "Well, we were here at the invitation of Ambassador Goldberg and I think it's more appropriate for him to give the comment on what we discussed." And so, we started walking away and the guy, who I later had an encounter with when I was at the UN, said "Well, did you discuss China?" And he said, "No, we didn't." He said, "Well what do you think of China?" And he said, "Well, eight hundred million people will not disappear because we refuse to admit that they are there." A very simple truth. I think the press the next day was the worst we ever had. That James Reston, New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Sun Times- I mean, everybody, all of the television stations, everybody blasted him. He had no business having an opinion about foreign affairs. He was a civil rights leader, see?
- 01:20:26:00 And his answer was very simple. "Well, I'm afraid I can't segregate my life or my conscience." But it hurt. It hurt him to see people attack him and try to discredit him for a simple, honest truth. And it was his disappointment in- I mean, he believed in

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

America. These were people he looked up... He admired- he had really admired Ralph McGill, but when Ralph McGill got brainwashed by Hoover and the war, you know, and the war in Vietnam and things like that, there was a period when Ralph McGill would write critical articles about him and his opinions. And I think that's what got him depressed.

01:21:28:00 He didn't get tired or depressed, he sort of got disappointed in America and he took the blame for it, that he wasn't good enough, he wasn't strong enough. And, well, I think that's sort of what we felt about his determination to go to Memphis. That, you know, that it wasn't necessary. The thing I think he had dreamed about from childhood was to be able to pastor a church like Riverside Church in New York and teach at Union Theological Seminary. Well, I think William Sloane Coffin retired and Riverside Church was vacant for a while and they actually offered him the job as interim pastor when he was about thirty-eight, and all of us said, "Look you're entitled to a sabbatical. You've been at this for twelve years nonstop. And you can take two years as a pastor at Riverside, teach anything you want to teach at Union Theological Seminary. You come out, you'll just be forty years old. The election will be over and you'd get a new perspective on what you should do with the rest of your life." And he wouldn't even consider it. He wouldn't even go to New York to meet with the selection committee and discuss though that was what he really wanted to do probably and needed to do, we thought.

01:23:17:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
People talk often about him saying that he'd like to be dean of the chapel like Howard Thurman or something like that and dreaming of retiring, but what I hear you saying is that was just a dream that he- that the demands of the movement overwhelmed him.

01:23:34:00 ANDREW YOUNG:
Well, that the demands of the movement were so overwhelming, but he felt as though there was nobody else that could help him out very much. And...

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

01:23:49:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Speaking of the Riverside Church though, I mean, we can't skip over that speech. There was a lot of disagreement within the staff about whether he should give that speech on Vietnam. It's not like he hadn't criticized the war, but he hadn't come out full bore the way he did in that speech. Can you describe the decision for him to do it? Why he did it? I know there were a lot of people who didn't want him to and then that was again when he was disappointed in the media reaction, which was ferocious as it was about that comment on China.

01:24:23:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, all of this happened about the same time that the war in Vietnam heated up. We actually met with Ralph Bunche also. And Ralph Bunche had been marching with us in Selma. He said he was sorry. He said, "You're right on Vietnam." He said, "But I'm sorry you came out publicly." And he said, "There's only so much one person can bear." And he said, "The only reason I've survived here is that I've been much more private, and I have refused" In fact, Ralph Bunche tried to turn down the Nobel Prize and give it to the United Nations. He didn't want it to be given to him personally. And he felt that Martin became far more exposed to enemies by taking on both civil rights and the war issue. But he said, "I cannot segregate my conscience. And I can't be for nonviolence at home and advocate violence abroad." And he said, "I'm trapped by my own, you know" beliefs. And I refuse to give up my beliefs in order to be popular." Or- there was a little riff he used to run about, sometimes it's necessary to do things that are neither a popular, politic or, something that you do it because it's right. And he felt as though he had no alternative.

01:26:14:00 Now, the difference was- it was a sophisticated difference. We didn't want him taking his moral position into an extreme left environment, with kids who were kind of anti-American, who were communist, who were burning American flags. And we could not control that. And so, the argument was not about whether or not he should oppose the war in Vietnam, but whether he should allow the Vietnam movement to

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

use him. And the compromise that we came to was that, if he made his views clear, and do it in the context of- we started saying Union Theological Seminary- and do it with men of stature and eminence, and scholars like Rabbi Abraham Isaac Heschel, Henry Steele Commager, a noted historian, and Doctor John Bennett, who was president of Union Theological Seminary. So, we went to them and tried to set up this forum for him with them. They insisted that they would support him, but people were so interested, they moved it to the Riverside Church from the Union Seminary chapel, and then he had an opportunity to state his views clearly.

01:28:00:00 The difficulty though was that, even within our staff, we had- I don't know what you call it. It was sort of righteous indignation. There were some people- well, I don't know how to put it, but it showed up in the speech. One of the lines was that, "The United States is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." Well, some of us didn't want him to be that hard. We didn't want it to be an anti-American speech. We wanted it to be a pro-peace on Earth speech. That was the only speech that I think there was much collaboration on. And he allowed a number of people to give him drafts, and then he put them together. Ultimately, it was all true. The question was, did he need to be the one who said it? And I think that that was one of the things that J. Edgar Hoover used to try to turn the government completely against him.

01:29:53:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
And the reaction within the staff and the reaction within the press was just as harsh as it was the comment about China in a way. I mean, Ralph Bunche, whom you said spoke- said he agreed with Doctor King about the war in private. I mean, he actually attacked Doctor King in public for making that speech after saying the opposite to you in private. So, it must have been very painful, the harshness of the public response.

01:30:24:00 ANDREW YOUNG:
Well, you know, the same guy who asked him that question asked me, walking across the street to the UN when I was ambassador, he said, "You don't think South

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

Africa is a legitimate government, do you?" I said, "Uh-uh." That's all I said. And he wrote the headline in the Daily News, "Young says South African government illegitimate," and I wouldn't back up. But I was not- and I think that's one of the temptations that we're drawn into. And I don't know whether there is- well, the only ethic in the press it seems is ratings. And so, the dedication to truth sometimes is slippery. And I think that's one of the things that's wrong with the country now, that we have people who are fighting to get conflict, and they're not really seeking truth, they're seeking ratings. And Martin probably was one of the first victims of that.

TAYLOR BRANCH:
You're- let's- before...

01:31:51:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, he probably wasn't any more of a victim of that, and that's what I have to remind myself, that he was the same kind of victim that Thomas Jefferson was, and that Abraham Lincoln was, and that Franklin Roosevelt was. That when you said something new- in fact he used to say, "Remember, this is a ten-day nation." And he said, "There's a thirty-day news cycle. The first ten days, no matter what you say and no matter how true you might know it to be, you're absolutely wrong. You're stupid. You're crazy. You're being bribed or paid for. They'll say anything to get against you." He said, "But the second ten days, if you keep on saying the same thing, they'll say, 'Well, maybe he's got a point, but he's going about it in the wrong way'. And then the third ten days they'll say, 'Well, we were going to do this all along and we would have gotten it done if he hadn't been raising all this fuss'." So, he said, "You'll never get credit for the truth of your work, but we're not doing it for credit. We're doing it because it's right and it doesn't matter who gets the credit."

01:33:04:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

That's philosophical, with an edge of humor. Could you talk a little bit just before lunch about Doctor King's personal side? His sense of humor, his practical joking,

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

preaching about funerals, sitting around with the preachers. I know you must have been part of that on many evenings and observing it.

01:33:26:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, I think much of the time I was the victim of the kind of, you know, humor that- he would always try to take- I mean, if he felt somebody was sensitive he wouldn't pick on them, but he would take something that somebody else said or did and blame it on me. Or he would talk about people in the distant past, but all preachers have a volume of life experience and stories, and people in the past in their lives. And one of the ways they entertain themselves is by, not in a malicious way, but pointing out the, you know, the humor in the poverty and suffering that we face. And he would make you laugh at your own death.

01:34:39:00 And he would say- in fact, when we went to Birmingham, the CBS reporter who had been with us since Montgomery said, "Andy, look I got to keep a camera on Martin." He said, "And I know you don't like us around with the cameras, but if he gets shot and I don't have a picture of it, I'll lose my job." And Martin heard that and he'd say, "Well, I'm not worried about that, but somebody's gonna probably have to give their life for Birmingham." He says, "It's probably gonna be one of you guys jumping in the front of the camera trying to get your picture taken that will take the bullet that's been for me, but don't worry, I think I can preach you into heaven." Then, he would start preaching your funeral. And he would do a very sadistic caricature of all of your faults and foibles and things that you would never want said about you in public. And he'd weave it into a sermon and quite often he'd have a similar demon from the bible who had the same problems and by the time he got through he had everybody laughing at what was a life and death situation. Mostly his life.

01:36:03:00 And so, he was prepared to die, but he was also determined that his death and his life would have meaning, and I think that's what he was wrestling with with Vietnam and Chicago and the, you know, and the Poor People's Campaign. He was really aware of the fact that we had not hardly raised the issue of poverty, but the reason was if you talked about economics in the sixties, it was automatically- and it's still something of

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

the case- was automatically assumed that you were talking about the redistribution of wealth and that made you a Communist. And so, we really didn't talk about money, and we didn't talk about- we talked about jobs, we talked about education, we talked about human rights, and- but it was very hard to raise economic questions. Also, none of us were much good at Economics. In fact, I would say that even today the greatest dilemma that's facing the world in which we live is that we still have rather nationalistic provincial views of how the money works in the world in a global economy that's basically run by computers and cell phones and not by the Congress. I mean, I like Bernie Sanders, but you can't have Socialism and cell phones. You know, I mean, the government cannot control wealth when you can transfer wealth on your cell phone. And, I mean, we have not gotten an economic understanding that is capable of dealing with the complexities of the twenty first Century technology.

TAYLOR BRANCH:
Thank you.

01:38:21:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

But that was already true for him. And later, when I went to Vietnam looking at jobs supposedly going overseas. The truth of it was we did better with Vietnam sending- letting them make Nikes, then we did getting fifty thousand Americans killed. And that was not part of the understanding of the Cold War. We've moved a little bit on that, but not much.

01:38:59:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Let me ask you one more person question before lunch about the Doctor King's complex personality, because you said earlier a nice, pithy thing about "you have to get over about money," and he didn't care about money, wasn't worth very much when he died. So, he was austere even to the point of Coretta complaining about it, not taking care of the family. And yet, at the same time, he was very fastidious about his dress and his use of language and big words, so he was kind of- he was austere,

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

but he was princely at the same time. A humble prince. How do you put those two things together?

01:39:43:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, actually, that's the definition of a good Baptist preacher. And you have to be- well, we got- I mean, we walked around the rural south in suit and tie, and SNCC walked around in flip flops and blue jeans, but people- the poorest of the poor in the South wanted- they saw it as a lack of respect if a preacher showed up in church without a shirt and tie. And they would say, "If you were going to a white church, you'd put on a shirt and tie." See? And so, we were caught in a double standard, and the way we lived in the world- if he was going to New York to meet the President, when he met with Ms. Fannie Lou Hamer in Mississippi he ought to dress the same way. See, he ought not dress down to make her feel comfortable. She didn't want that. And those were- those are the kinds of questions that young people want to be fastidious and purist about. But, you know, I always kid them because before when I was still struggling in the Congress and as mayor, there were a lot of SNCC kids that went right straight to Wall Street. And that was not bad, but they had they- they had already had the educational opportunity. They were privileged young people. They gave their lives for one summer and then they went back to their trust funds.

01:41:37:00 And but, we were committed to this movement for life and it didn't matter what title we had, you know, we had to be fairly consistent with our own lifestyles. But, I mean, it carried over. I mean, Tom Bradley told me that I could bring the Olympics to Atlanta, but I couldn't make any money on it. And so, you know, we brought the Olympics, we raised two and half billion dollars, but nobody in my family, you know, could make any money on it. We couldn't be seen to be profiting by the movement, but it didn't mean that you had to wear sack-cloth and ashes quite like Gandhi. But the truth of it was, we were great discount shoppers. I think we discovered what is now K and G. Well, I would buy suits in New Orleans from the Haspel factory, the rejects, for fifteen dollars. Every time we went to Baltimore Doctor Levi Watkins from Johns Hopkins would take Martin to some factory outlet

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

and buy him two or three suits, you know, so it was, I mean, it was our friends and people wanting us to be respectable and look good. But, you know, that never became part of the- that was not a problem of ours.

01:43:28:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Just a couple more things on Vietnam after the Riverside speech. There are a couple of references saying that the Vietnam war began to haunt Doctor King, images and things like that. Do you have instances of that? Would you say that that's accurate?

01:43:45:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

No, I think that the thing that haunted Doctor King was not so much images of the war, but the tragedy that the war was bringing to our country. He liked Lyndon Johnson, and he and Lyndon Johnson had a conversation the week before Lyndon Johnson decided not to run, and he was quite surprised that he was not running, and it- I mean, he saw- I think that one of the phrases was, "The bombs we drop on Vietnam are exploding- will explode at home in unemployment and inflation." And, I mean, he said that quite often, but nobody ever picked that up. And that was the kind of thing that bothered him, that he felt that, well, we went to Vienna to meet with the North Vietnamese, and really all they wanted to do was sit down and talk, see, but they were not going to give up. And, you know, when I went to Vietnam and realized how little we knew- I mean, that was the thing that we began to realize, that they had no understanding of these people.

01:45:16:00 And when I was at the UN, I had to intervene in a fight between Vietnam and China in the UN. And it was an indication to me that there was never much- that both China- China was more afraid of Russia than they were of us, Vietnam was more afraid of China than they were of us. And we could have had relations with China, Vietnam, and North Korea if we had just known a little more about the country and the people and the history. Nobody hardly knows that the North Vietnamese were really educated by Presbyterian missionaries and they fought as a militia against the Japanese in the war with Japan. When Japan surrendered, we were more comfortable

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

with the surrendered Japanese than with this radical militia that they just assumed was Chinese and they drove over to China. They labeled them Communist, but the founder of that movement was basically the son of a Presbyterian missionary, and the Presbyterian church in South Korea is, you know, totally committed to finding ways for reunification, but they can't say that to us, see. It's just that we were making decisions in the parts of the world that we didn't know anything about and we were applying these European concepts of Cold War and- what did they call it- domino theory. They just were not true. You know, it's sort of like Bush and Cheney didn't seem to understand that Shia and Sunni don't get along and have not gotten along for fifteen hundred years. We felt and we knew that somebody had gotten us into wars where we didn't need to be and we were hurting ourselves and destroying any possibility of.... [*Sound of siren*]

01:47:47:00 Yeah, Doctor King was worried that we were hurting ourselves and that the consequences of the war, the returning veterans, the inflation, unemployment, the loss of the White House because of the confusion around Lyndon Johnson and Hubert Humphrey, we felt that we were moving in the right direction, but actually that sixty-eight election- is that right? Yeah. That sixty-eight election was the beginning of the end of the movement that we were making an effort to lead. And we had to regroup, and we did regroup. A couple years later when I got to Congress, I tried to continue some of those themes, both in Vietnam and one of our first votes was to stop the money that was going to bomb Vietnam, and that maybe led to the peace talks that Kissinger had with China.

01:49:12:00 But I think he was just- he was realizing that he was running out of gas, that the attacks and the criticisms on him were getting more and more vicious, and they were clumsy and they were awkward, see. I mean, well, just a couple years ago, I found a wire running into my house. You know, we put up a fence and we were trying to get the gate programmed, and it turned out the wire was running to a house about six houses down the street from me, which is now owned by one my wife's sorority sisters, but whenever they talk they'd always have trouble on the line until we find

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

that line was running down there, and we suspect that might have been a place that the FBI was monitoring our neighborhood from.

01:50:15:00 And none of this- I mean, everything the FBI was doing to hurt us was very clumsy, and I think it didn't do so much to- it could not stop the movement, but it made us question the validity.... You wonder whether this country was so sick that it couldn't be saved, and the country run by J. Edgar Hoover was too sick to be saved, but it's different, and I think we have seen, we've seen significant differences in the world since then. I hate to see the FBI- I mean, I really like Comey. Comey used to take the FBI agents out to the Martin Luther King Memorial and, I mean, here was a guy who really wanted to do right, now, now he's confused. But the confusion really now is the same as it was. We still have little to no understanding. We have a Cold War mentality in the press and in the Congress. And yet, it's probably much better to have Russian money building Trump's hotel towers than building bombs. And we have not, I mean, he shouldn't be doing it as president probably, but it's such a complex world in which we live. And he understood it, but the smartest people that he knew didn't want to get it. They wanted things to go back to the "good ol' days," which we knew was impossible. And I think that that kind of frustration worried him.

01:52:33:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
Took a toll? Yes. How, today, because of the FBI and so many of those attacks, there are still a lot of people who use the FBI's accusations about Doctor King's personal life, personal flaws, to discredit his work? How do you answer that?

ANDREW YOUNG:
I don't.

TAYLOR BRANCH:
You don't.

01:52:58:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

I don't- I mean, I guess that ... Well, you know, "let him that is without sin cast the first stone." And I think that... we were never running a program of personal piety. We were running a program of social and political and economic justice. And, I mean, we'd be in a whole lot of trouble if, you know, if we had to judge the teachings of the Catholic Church, or Protestant churches, by the behavior of its priests and ministers. "It's while we are yet sinners that Christ died for us." And it's one of the things that makes it possible for us to understand the difficulties and weaknesses in other people, is that we are aware of them in ourselves. And it's being able to love each other, when we are unlovable, and even in the best of families and best of marriages that's a recurring theme.

01:54:24:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

So, on a different topic, just Doctor King's temperament and everything, did you consider him- I know he's incredibly ballast and sturdy, but did you consider him an emotional person? Did you see him cry often?

01:54:40:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

I never saw him cry, I don't think. I saw him maybe shed a tear when Lyndon Johnson was speaking in Selma, but that was nothing emotional. I mean, it was emotional, but he never gave into his emotions. And I guess the things we used to worry about most was his fatigue. And that whenever he'd get really run-down, you'd almost have to find an excuse to confine him to bed. One of the ways he escaped that though, was to take a vacation to Jamaica. But even there, he'd wake up at five or six in the morning, and he'd write for two hours before breakfast, then he'd have breakfast and he'd go back to work and work until lunch, and he might take a nap for a little while after lunch, and work in the afternoon, and maybe go out for dinner at night, but still come back and do some more. And Ralph used to say that he had a "war on sleep" and that he was a kind of workaholic where he was never content. That he was driven by a kind of need for perfection and he was always feeling that he wasn't doing his best.

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

01:56:23:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

There was one story during the Poor People's Campaign, jumping a little ahead, from Marks, Mississippi, where- that he became overcome by the poverty of the people coming into one of the meetings to recruit for the Poor People's Campaign. I don't know that you were there, you know, when they were hopping around on the plane and they went to Marks, and some women came in with malnourished children, or something, and he was moved by it.

01:56:52:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, I think that he was always very sensitive to the poor, but I never saw him break down and cry about it. He was an extremely disciplined person, emotionally and rationally. I mean, probably the most emotional I might have seen him, and he didn't shed any tears then, was at the "been to the mountaintop" speech. And we got him out of bed, where he was sick with a fever, and he came to that church thinking that he was just going to make remarks, and he had asked Ralph to give the major speech, and then he got up and he gave that speech as though he knew that the end was near. I didn't think that was the case because I had heard him give that speech before. But it was in always situations where- it was in Demopolis, Alabama, during the time of Selma, and it was in Philadelphia, Mississippi, during the Mississippi march, when we had just had a meeting with the sheriffs and- well, not a meeting, we had a demonstration outside the courthouse where the sheriffs actually had killed the three civil rights workers, and a truck tried to run our demonstration off the road. And it was- I mean, he was constantly aware that everyday could be his last and the way he dealt with it was probably to push on harder and not stop. And so, he was always physically run-down.

01:59:02:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Can you tell us about- I believe it was a decision or debate at Airlie House about whether to undertake what became the Poor People's Campaign? Or stick with, or

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

launch, a larger movement against Vietnam? This is in fall of sixty-seven- or basically, just the origins of the Poor People's Campaign-

01:59:26:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, actually, I don't think there was ever an "either-or." We had made- he had made, the decision in sixty-five that he had to be against the war. And he made that decision knowing that the board of SCLC was not going to agree with him. And so, he made that as a personal, rather than an institutional, opposition. So, there was never any question about his opposition to the war. It was Marian Edelman who brought four sharecroppers to SCLC, who convinced us we had to do something about the War on Poverty. And what she- I mean, the thing was, these were four men in their forties, and none of them had had a job in ten or fifteen years, but they all wanted to work. But they couldn't work, because the government was paying the landowners not to grow food and fiber. And the landowners were using this to drive the sharecroppers off the land.

02:00:50:00 And basically, in Mississippi, remember, they were giving people bus tickets to go north. And he saw that as a challenge that we had to meet, but we really didn't know how. And I think we were still believers in the New Deal, but we were already experiencing a backlash against the New Deal that has continued to this day. And so, we were- his speeches were things like, "Everybody's against welfare, but only welfare for the poor, see. They don't mind farm subsidies, it's all right for big multinational farm companies to get welfare, it's all right for the oil companies to have an oil depletion allowance, which is a welfare for the oil companies." I mean, he had a whole list of contradictions between how we're willing to aid the rich and we talk about the laziness of the poor and the fact that they don't want to work, you know, and I think he had committed to that.

02:02:18:00 What I remember about Airlie House was, I mean, his sense of humor, because we were up there on that balcony and we were being served iced tea and lemonade by a group of students from University of Virginia in white coats. And we were looking out over the land and there was a tractor out there mowing the grass. It was a

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

beautiful scenery, and he says, "You know, I can't blame white folks." He said, "This plantation system looks pretty good from up here." You know, we were rocking back and ice tea, and he had a, I mean, he had a very good sense of humor laughing at things like that. And I think that what got him that I didn't realize, was that he was constantly aware of the imminence of death. And he used to say that to us all the time, you know, "You're going to die, and you can never say what you die f- "I mean, "how you're going to die, when you're going to die, or where you're going to die. Your only choice is what you give your life for." And I've heard him say that forty or fifty times in different situations. And he was warning us, but I think at the same time he was reminding himself that whenever his end came he wanted it to be for the purpose of the least of these God's children.

02:03:58:00 And that's why when we tried to stop him from going to Memphis- we did not want him to go to Memphis at all, there was no need, the strike was going to go on. They had a big union staff running it, a number of pastors were supporting them, and we wanted him to go on to New York. But he got up at six o'clock in the morning, and we'd had a meeting I think with Harry and John Conyers, Dick Hatcher and myself, on how you take the energy of the movement and get it into politics. And we broke up about eleven, eleven-thirty, and I told him that, you know, "You need to go ahead and sleep 'til about noon tomorrow. We don't have to be in Washington until, you know, six, seven o'clock. We can catch the three o'clock shuttle and have an easy day, you need the rest." He said, "No, I'm going to catch the six o'clock flight to Memphis." I said, "But nobody's going with you." He said, "Ralph is going to meet me there." And Bernard Lee and Martin went by themselves to Memphis to a march that we had nothing to do with, no pre-planning, and it got disrupted. And it was almost like he walked into a trap that had been set for him.

TAYLOR BRANCH:

That's the march that turned violent on March twenty-eighth.

02:05:36:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

That's the march that turned violent. Well, the invaders said they had been paid to disrupt the march, and where they were angry with the preachers not with him. It's a very complicated situation, but it's one that I think gave him the end that he wanted. I mean, if he was going to end the march and end his life, he wanted it to be with the likes of the sanitation workers of Memphis, because that aligned him with the poor all over the world, and that's what we were trying to do. And people forget that he was trying to make the poor people's campaign a multiracial opportunity. We had twenty-three different ethnic groupings, Native Americans, Hispanics, two or three different kinds of Hispanic groups, poor blacks, poor whites, Appalachian whites, whites from big cities, whites from down in the swamps of Louisiana. And it was an attempt to organize the nation to be more sensitive to the poorest of the poor.

02:06:56:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

This is not widely known, the meeting at the church on, I think it was March fourteenth, this is less than a month before he died, to try to get those groups of poor people that had never been together, together. What was that, I know there was a lot of staffers at this, when I interviewed Hosea, he said he thought it was terrible to take his little budgeting and give some of it to white people. I know there was controversy about it, but it's not widely known. As a witness to that meeting where he's trying to bring together those groups, what was it like?

02:07:32:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Now, really, it- the meeting was not about opposition to giving- working with white people. Hosea was working with white people, Hosea- the SCOPE Project was overwhelmingly white students from the North and Hosea had probably one of the most integrated staffs in SCLC. That was part of the image that he liked to pursue. But the problem was that we were tired, and we knew he was tired, and what we wanted him to do was to accept the job at Riverside Church. A sabbatical for him would have been a sabbatical for us. We would have had two years to spend time with our families, to reassess where we were politically and economically, and we

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

knew what we wanted. When we went to desegregate the buses or desegregate the lunch counters or get the right to vote, we had almost fifty years of legal precedent already established by the NAACP, but even as late as last summer when young white people mostly started talking about Occupy Wall Street, I said, "What for? What do you want?" You know, they had no answers. We do not yet have a comprehensive answer to how to deal with a question of economic inequity on the planet or in these United States.

02:09:16:00 I was at a meeting yesterday though that's trying to deal with that, it's Operation HOPE, and Jesse Jackson showed up in Memphis with John Bryant, and he said something that was shocking to me, he said, you know, "It may be that this is the continuation of our movement. Operation HOPE and financial literacy may have some of the answers to poverty." And he said, "It's like the apostle Paul never got to meet Jesus, but he produced half the books in the New Testament." It was almost Jesse blessing the economic movement, which up to now has been seen as a- well, not seen as relevant to race, but I have always contended and still will contend that Ferguson, Missouri is not race problem, it's an economic problem. The problem is that Saint Louis is in a depression and they move people out of Pruitt-Igoe Housing Project into a suburb with no jobs, but that's not race, that was, that's making urban economics work.

02:10:34:00 Now, we did the same thing here. We moved people out of a downtown project into a Southern suburb, but we sort of followed it up with a Porsche plant. And so, in the Olympics, when we first moved people, they had a tough time for almost a decade, but in the last- beginning of two thousand, end of end of two thousand sixteen, that was one of the fastest growing counties in the United States economically. And because we have followed up our urban problems with suburban strategies that help to distribute the wealth, and so as we move people out of the cities we don't move them out there and strand them, but we try to provide jobs. And the people who are coming into the cities are also doing it on their own voluntarily. How long that lasts, I don't know, but we're in a period of technical, social, and economic upheaval.

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

02:11:55:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Bernard Lafayette told us about- that Doctor King went on a mini-hunger strike to try to get the staff to be more devoted to the poor people's campaign. Do you remember anything like that?

02:12:07:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Well, he went on periodic fasts, but he never made much out of them. And... I don't quite remember him ... I mean, he was fasting usually to try to make sure that he was doing what his conscience required. I don't think he ever fasted to change our minds. He did give us a good cussing out about not being supportive of him. And it was the only time I saw him angry at the whole staff. Usually it was just me that he got upset with. And... but-

TAYLOR BRANCH:

This is during Memphis ...

ANDREW YOUNG:

This was in between the first march and our going back to Memphis.

TAYLOR BRANCH:

Right. "You've forgotten the simple truths of witness," or something like that? He just went off on people.

02:13:15:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

Yeah, he did. It was in his office at Ebenezer, and he cussed us out, and got up, and walked out. And we went behind him trying to reassure him and- but he just, he just went on off. But again, I was not apologetic, see. I mean, I thought that it was wrong to take on another movement in the case- state we were in, see. And that we could not save the world ourselves by ourselves. And I think I had gotten to the point where I really thought we were beyond the dangers. He had already been stabbed and

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

jailed and beaten and everything and he'd won a Nobel Prize, and other than J. Edgar Hoover we were, you know, doing extremely well with almost everybody on the planet. And so, I didn't see the urgency. I mean, I thought it was okay to take a sabbatical when you're thirty-eight years old. You don't have to die at thirty-nine, wait until forty-five, see, or fifty-five. He used to say that some of us are not going to live to be fifty, or- but it was- I think he never- I used to say, "Some of us are not going to see- live to be fifty, so you better live good now and live a righteous life." And he was constantly- it was almost as though he saw death as an escape and that he could not escape the way we wanted him to escape. He couldn't put it off, he couldn't run from it. And it's, I mean, it was more for me like Jesus' disciples trying to keep him from going to Jerusalem. And... You know.

02:15:42:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:

Could you talk about your testimony in court on the last day? The transcript of that testimony is an awful lot about nonviolence. You were there all afternoon and then came back for the pillow fight. Do you ...

02:16:02:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

You know, I don't remember my testimony. I remember being in the courtroom, trying to convince a very good court with the help of the Justice Department that we should and could be able, would be able to maintain a nonviolent march once our staff was there. We found that the young men who had disrupted the march were very repentant and they were willing to work with us. But they didn't have any understanding of what we were trying to do. And the kinds of things they asked us to give them for our help, we didn't have. I mean, they wanted something like three cars or station wagons to do voter registration. We said, you know, we bought ten cars in sixty-five, and I don't think we've bought any since, we found a way to get our own cars. But they had a kind of a pimpish mentality that they wanted to get rich helping the poor, and we said it doesn't work that way, but they were coming around. And I

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

think we probably could have worked with them and many of them did continue to work in human rights causes.

02:17:27:23 But when we won the permission to march and I came back to the Lorraine Motel, I hadn't talked to him all day. In fact, I didn't even talk to him before I went to court. I was trying to let him get as much sleep as possible, so I got to court, you know, at eight o'clock in the morning and I hadn't touched base with him all day, but I was on the witness stand most of that day. And I really don't remember what it was about, except that I think I was able to answer all of the questions that they challenged us with and we got permission to stage the march the next few days. And when I got back he was, you know, childish and giddy and cussed me out, threw a pillow at me, I threw it back. He was, you know, "Where you been?"

02:18:31:00 But it was the happiest I had seen in him a long time. His brother was there, Ralph was there, you know, it was all his inner circle, and they had been almost having a last supper because somebody had brought in a whole load of catfish. And he was just extremely relaxed and comfortable and playful. And when he started beating me with a pillow, you know, I kind of feebly fought back, but everybody else picked up pillows and they were- it was like a bunch of ten-year olds. And so, I fell- I ended up down on the floor between the two beds and they piled all the pillows up on me and then settled back, and just about that time Billy Kyles knocked on the door and said, "Look, you all are due at my wife's house by six o'clock. She's got dinner waiting, come on, what- I been looking for you," see, and that was- and so he jumped up and went upstairs to put on a shirt and tie. But his last moments on earth were amongst the happiest that he had had in a long time.

02:20:00:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
I know you must be asked an awful lot about the last day and your reaction and- to all that, but what do you carry with you about that last time now?

02:20:15:00 ANDREW YOUNG:

KUNHARDT **FILM** FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

Well, that- my first reaction was to be mad with him. You got us in all this hell now you going to heaven and leaving us in hell? Why, why don't you take us with you? And I realized that he- if anybody deserved a rest, he did. And that was the only way he was gonna get a rest. He could not stop, and his last breath was going to be trying to say something about justice or mercy and peace on earth and goodwill to all men, women and children. But I was panicked to know how we followed, and... it- well, we were not able to stay together without him and the movement began to fragment.

02:21:21:00 And I ended up running for Congress because nobody else wanted to run. And it was Harry Belafonte that really- nobody asked me- I was trying to get him to raise some money for SCLC and he turned around and he just ignored me and called his wife and said, "Can you get Sidney Poitier and Lena Horne and maybe Allen King, and we're going to have to do a benefit." And I thought it was a benefit for SCLC, and he said, "No, Andy's running for Congress." I said, "Wait a minute, that's not my role." He said, "It is now." And... but... I don't know, I have seen the kind of comradery in South Africa, in Zimbabwe and Nigeria, but it always comes with the same tensions, and even Gandhi was killed by one of his own disciples for adopting a Muslim child. And so, the complexity of good and evil in this world is going to always be with us. I don't know that anybody has struggled with it anymore or did any better than Martin King in my lifetime. And... but he always said, "We've come a long, long way, but we've still got a long way to go."

02:23:11:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
Thank you. You say the movement couldn't stay together without him or at least all those people. What about the struggle to affirm nonviolence in the wake of it because I think the popular perception is that nonviolence vanished along with him or in the wake of it?

02:23:30:00 ANDREW YOUNG:
Well, that's not true. It's not true that nonviolence vanished. Nonviolence began to adopt different forms. Jesse Jackson and Bevel and Bernard Lafayette continued to

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

follow up on the slums problems, the education problems. Jesse introduced Operation PUSH, which was a jobs integration of private sector. Hosea continued to work on voter registration across the South, and I think we probably, by the end of that decade, we probably had more black elected officials in the old south than we did in any part of north. And between our work, nonviolence and football, basketball and business, we probably are doing far better in the South than I ever imagined we could, this quick. I never thought the thing would go this far. In fact, right now I'm almost afraid they've gone too far, that I don't want to leave our white brothers and sisters behind. I thought of that in the last election when I heard that the Klan was getting out the vote for Donald Trump, and I said, you know, these are- the Klan in nineteen sixty-four was deputized by the sheriff and one of their contributions to my life was to give me a good beating. And I said, now, that was one of the finest days of my life. I think that sort of gave me a kind of credential that let me go on to be congressman and mayor and UN.

02:25:36:00 And so, I look on that day not as a problem, but that was a test of my manhood that I passed. I said, now the problem is that these Klansmen who are out here looking for something in Donald Trump, which I don't think is there- I mean, I don't think he's deliberately catering to racism, but I think he's... I think they're looking to him for help, and I hope they don't get betrayed. But in case they do get betrayed, my foundation has been trying to work on some things that we can work on in the South and in the cities along the Mississippi River that will still deal with poverty, maybe one family at a time. But I think we did a pretty fair job with Atlanta and my running for mayor of Atlanta was to continue the Poor People's Campaign. And we got a lot of people out of poverty, growing the economy in Atlanta, and we financed it not with government funds, but with private funds, and we put Atlanta at the center of a global economy through our airport and we financed it from Wall Street, and we brought in the Olympics, and we had a profitable Olympics with no government money. And everything we do we have at least forty percent minority in female participation in every contract.

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

02:27:18:00 And so, I think we've made a contribution toward the eradication of poverty, by producing- in fact Maynard Jackson and I used to argue about which one of us had generated the most millionaires, black and female, in our times as mayor. And neither one of us was concerned about getting rich, but we were concerned about- in fact Maynard went into politics because Martin Luther King got killed. And so, we saw politics- and I think we saw that as much in Jimmy Carter as we did in Barack Obama. And I think Jimmy Carter was far more a product of the Civil Rights movement, and he followed the nonviolence, and not a single person was killed, no soldier was killed by any other soldier, no soldier killed anybody during his four years. Barack Obama came out of the Chicago movement and the Harvard University movement. And... but I think that his motivation and the support for him also can be traced back to Martin Luther King and our movement. But we still have not been able to get those northern and southern movements together.

02:28:49:00 TAYLOR BRANCH:
Last question. You've mentioned in a number of speeches about, I don't know whether you were quoting King or these are your speeches, about "wandering in the wilderness" as a metaphor for the last years before the, trying to find applications for nonviolence? Or- what's your- what's the meaning of that metaphor?

02:29:09:00 ANDREW YOUNG:
No, I think that that was Doctor King's metaphor for the period of segregation. He said, "We have come out of the slavery of Egypt and we have wandered in the wilderness of separate but equal, and we're about to move into the Promised Land of creative integration, and I don't know whether I'll get there, but my people will get to the Promised Land. "And I think that was his metaphor. I think that's appropriate for him.... a little too apocalyptic to me- for me. The Promised Land, even for the Israelis, has continued to be a place of struggle for peace and prosperity. And, you know, that- I got dragged into that against my will by Moshe Dayan and Shimon Peres and the Palestinians. I was prepared to take on the problems of Africa, and- but

KUNHARDT **FILM** / FOUNDATION

ANDREW YOUNG INTERVIEW
KING IN THE WILDERNESS
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

I wanted President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to keep the Middle East off my platform at the UN. I wasn't able to do that.

02:30:35:00 But the problems we have that Martin thought about and lived for are still with us. And I don't think- I don't think we- I don't even believe that wherever Martin is beyond this place of time and space, there's no rest for the wicked and the righteous don't need it. And somewhere he's struggling, you know, beyond this place and time and space. And so, I just think that life is a continued- or creation is continuous and it doesn't stop. I have a little globe that somebody gave me on my desk and I like it because every time I rear back and look at it, it's moved from one place to another, and it continues to turn very slowly. And it reminds me that we will never have- well, there's no rest for the wicked and the righteous don't need it.

02:31:59:23 END OF INTERVIEW