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Interview with Joe Reed, chairman of Alabama Democratic Conference, black political organization state wide, and vice chairman for minority affairs for Alabama State Democratic party, July 10, 1974, conducted by Jack Bass and Walter de Vries, transcribed by Linda Killen.

Jack Bass: How about giving us a little background about yourself. Personal, biographical background and also how you got involved in politics.

Reed: I'm a native Alabaman. I attended the public schools in Alabama.

Where? Reed: *Coneca*
J.B.: /In a place called ~~Kinika~~ county, that's in the Evergreen, about 95 miles south of here, between Montgomery and Mobile.

J.B.: That's in the black belt, right?

Reed: No, Kinikacounty is not a black belt county. I left Kinika county in 1956. That's when I finished high school.

J.B.: How do you spell that county?

Reed: c-o-n-e-c-u-h. [Trans: sorry] Writers pronounce it as conecka, but it is kinika, it's an Indian name. I went into the service and I came out in '58. I attended Alabama State University which is located here in Montgomery for my undergraduate. While there I participated in the sit-ins. I helped to organize SNCC in Raleigh, North Carolina. I participated in the Freedom Rides. In other words, I was involved in the civil rights movement, actively involved in the civil rights movement. I was put on probation for helping to, rather for participating in the sit-ins in Montgomery. While in school I served as student body president as well as class president. Class president of course preceded serving as student body president, which was my

senior year. Aside from that, I taught school for one semester. I then

went to graduate school where I received an M.A. in political science at Western Reserve University at that time. Of course it's Case Western Reserve now. Subsequent to that I came back and I got involved in the teachers' association. I was employed as executive secretary of the Alabama State Teachers Association where I served for five years prior to the merging of the black and white associations. Up until 1969 there were two separate associations in all of your southern states. My involvement in politics. My first political involvement came, I guess, in 1960 in Jim ^{Folsom's} ~~Fulsome's~~ campaign. . . John F. Kennedy's campaign, rather. At that time there were very few black voters, but those few blacks we had we tried to get them out. I was relatively young at that point, politically young, anyway. '62 was my first real active campaign where I campaigned for Big Jim Fulsome who was running against George Wallace along with some other candidates. So that was my first major political race. My involvement in politics dates back to campus politics and other social cases of trying to better our people's status in American society as well as trying to just help blacks find a place in the sun.

Walter de Vries: What is your position now?

Reed: I am the associate executive secretary of the Alabama Educational Association. That's where I earn my living. My political affiliations, of course. . . . I was a delegate to the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago. Arthur Shores in Birmingham and I were the delegates. Then, of course, in 1972 I did not run for delegate. I was a page. However, had a chance to speak before the convention because I also served as chairman of the political black caucus of Alabama. We think we have one of the most effective caucuses in the nation. Largely because our caucus is one of the older caucuses in the nation. When I say old, our caucus is about 14 years old. This group was put together in 1960

to help John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. I believe that it was Congressman Dawson out of Illinois who suggested to John F. Kennedy "Why don't you try to get those few blacks in the South who have the vote." There were some folk at one point who felt that if you were a member of the campaign. . . that Kennedy had not really tied himself close enough to the blacks. There was a meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia. And of course, from that meeting, there was a suggestion that each one go back and or state would go back and form a caucus. And of course a fellow like Arthur Shores and John Lewis and others came back and organized the Alabama Democratic Conference. And so the conference was conceived at that particular time. Now since that time we've had. . . I've been chairman for four years. I was first elected chairman around 1970 just preceding the Albert Brewer-George Wallace election. We have, in this state, about 60 counties which are affiliated with the Alabama Democratic Conference. In other words, the conference is not a political party, it is a political pressure group, a political caucus. Of course we've tried to make it so that no candidate can get elected without the caucus endorsement. We have tried to make it that effective. The caucus has representatives from each Congressional district making up the executive committee. We have two meetings annually. An annual meeting and a semi-annual meeting. The annual meeting is much bigger than the semi-annual meeting. The semi-annual meeting. . . really some work shops and covering some resolutions you missed in the annual meeting. We've had the national speakers speak before the caucus. Hubert Humphrey, for an example. Maynard Jackson, for an example. Coretta King. Ed Muskie spoke in Birmingham on the 20th of April when we had a state meeting there. Sargent Shriver.

And others. Just to give some names. We endorse political candidates.

We take positions on candidates. The way we arrive at decisions is kind of a peoples type thing. Ofttimes we're accused of smoke filled room politics, to be sure. But the way we try to operate throughout the organization is that the chairman has the authority to appoint the committees. We usually use volunteers. That is to say that. . . . Let me give you an example for the last meeting we held in Birmingham. We were [going to] appoint say a 200 member screening committee. Or it may be 100. Depending on the number of people there, delegates from the respective counties. But it is drawn from the local leaders. We'll set up as many subcommittees as we have candidates seeking office. That may be a subcommittee for the governor or subcommittee for the lieutenant governor or subcommittee for the attorney general, subcommittee for. . . . Well, I shouldn't say the attorney general because the attorney general and the supreme court judges are all under one. We call that the judiciary committee. But we have these various committees depending on the number of offices running, as I suggested earlier. Each subcommittee has a chairman. The state chairman of the caucus has the responsibility for naming the chairmen. The chairmen of these committees would meet and interview the candidates and then a subcommittee would decide which candidate it feels in the best for blacks in the state of Alabama and the nation. . . without putting those in any priority. . . but the better candidate.

J.B.: Do they interview the candidates?

Reed: Yes. We have a procedure. This was initiated since I've been chairman. We don't endorse candidates who don't come to our meeting. We don't endorse in the dark.

W.D.V.: Do they come to the annual meeting--

Reed: They come to the annual meeting of our caucus [wherever?]

they are. They are there in big numbers.

W.D.V.: Then you endorse at that same meeting?

Reed: Yes, we endorse. They'll come in. We'll interview them. Once the subcommittee makes it's report, the main committee comes back together. That means the 200 or 150 or 300 delegates you're using to make up the committee. [Unclear.] Maybe from 100 to 250. And of course our position is that the people how many are on the committee doesn't bother us. Each subcommittee then will make its report back to the main committee. The main committee has the responsibility of adopting the subcommittees' report or rejecting it. Once the main committee adopts the reports of all. . . . that usually becomes the position of the caucus. However, the following day the delegates assembled have got to ratify the subcommittees report. Okay? I mean the main committee's report. Commonly called the screening committee. And that becomes the position of the caucus.

W.D.V.: Does the executive committees very often reject the recommendations of the subcommittee or change them?

Reed: Not. . . in some cases yes. We've had a few instances where the main committee--this is not the executive committee--will in some instances the main committee has rejected a subcommittee's report. For example, we had one time a sub-committee came up 50-50 with the recommendation that we not endorse. Two candidates for the supreme court. The subcommittee recommended that we not take a position. The main committee rejected that and took one of the members that the subcommittee had brought out. That's an example.

W.D.V.: How about the main body of delegates?

Reed: Okay. This last year a subcommittee came out with a recom-

mendation for lieutenant governor. The main committee, after much debate,

on the subcommittee's report, accepted it. But the delegates, the next day, rejected it. And so consequently no position was taken.

J.B.: Who did they recommend?

Reed: They recommended Jere Beasley and the delegates rejected that. Rejected him. And therefore no position was taken on Beasley.

J.B.: Do most of the candidates. . . . Are they invited to come?

Reed: Yes.

W.D.V.: Do most of them come?

Reed: Yes.

W.D.V.: Has that been changing in the last four years or five years or ten years?

Reed: Yes. In fact--

W.D.V.: When did it start to change? You just started this procedure four years ago?

Reed: Well, the procedure that we now have was initiated four years ago. We get the list of all the candidates who are running for office and we notify them that--here's an example here. All the candidates who ran for office in this list. We notified them that the Alabama Democratic Conference was holding its annual convention in Birmingham, Alabama, on blank date and as a candidate for office you're invited to come. And if they desire to come please let us know and we will schedule a time for them. That's the end of it. We're finished with it. The candidates who want to come will notify us that they want to come. Then we schedule a time when they can appear before the committee. The Alabama League of Municipalities was meeting at the same time the black caucus was meeting in Birmingham. The League of Municipalities met in Mobile. But the candidates who were in office were in Birmingham. That gives you some

significance as to how important it is for candidates to be there.

W.D.V.: Didn't most of them ?

Reed: They were there. All but George Wallace. Of any significance. All the other candidates were there.

W.D.V.: Has that been changing? If you had done that ten years ago what would have happened?

Reed: No, well, ten years ago they wouldn't have had a need because we didn't have enough votes.

W.D.V.: All right. Five years ago.

Reed: Well, five years ago, I suspect. . . we're probably more organized. Candidates are realizing that there's nothing wrong with getting black support. It's not as popular any more to use the black vote as an issue to defeat your opponent. Now George Wallace did use this in 1970. The black caucus has never supported George Wallace. It's no secret. Everyone in this country knows that I'm adamantly against him. Wallace ran against Albert Brewer which, you all, by now, you know yourself. Wallace ran his campaign the last time against Albert Brewer by attacking the blacks and by attacking me personally. He just simply said "If my opponent is elected Joe Reed and the black vote and the black folks will run this state. The black militants will run this state." But to answer your question precisely, in 1970 it was used. Wallace used it effectively. Macdonald ^{Cal/coh} ~~Gevin~~ [?] who opposed Bill Baxley tried to use it in the general election by running as an independent. Failed miserably with it. I think George Wallace has been more successful in using it than anyone else. This last election it was not used. I'm not so sure why it was not used. I suspect that George Wallace felt he could get elected without using it, so it wasn't necessary to use. If he felt it had been necessary, he would have used it.

W.D.V.: Is it fair to say that white candidates before 1970 didn't

actively seek black endorsements?

Reed: They have always--

W.D.V.: I'm talking about organizational endorsements long before the election. I'm not talking about the night before. Traditionally wasn't it the case that if you got a black endorsement from an organization you wanted it the night before the election and not before that.

Reed: Well, he wanted it as early as he could get it, but he wanted it publicized the night before. He wanted it as early as he could get it, but the answer to your question is yes.

W.D.V.: Has that changed?

Reed: We, for example, do not publicize our endorsements now, unless the candidate wants it publicized. So even to this day, it's not as clear. . . because there's some evidence we've had. . . that there are some whites even to this day will oppose a candidate if they know that the black organization is supporting him. We know this is .
We know this for fact. [Unclear.]

W.D.V.: But when you had your convention. . . when was it, in May?

Reed: Yeah.

W.D.V.: What happened then? Was there a public meeting in which those names were revealed?

Reed: There was a public meeting. We introduced all candidates who appeared. And all the candidates were there. Supreme court judges were there. That's the supreme court right across the street. I guess that's what I'm pointing at. Secretary state and candidate for governor was there. All the candidates who were seeking office were there with the exception of two. Of any significance, okay. And they were introduced. So it was no secret that they were there. The only thing that

happened was the public didn't know which one of those candidates we

selected. And we worked that through our organizations. It's a matter of time, however, before we can, before we have to ultimately go public on all of them. Cause you have your political groundhogs who come out of their holes three months before the election. Working for candidates. And many times they'll go out and say that we have the endorsement of the Alabama Democratic Conference, working for the Democratic Conference. They may be working for a candidate the Democratic Conference opposed. So there are some hazards in not publicizing who we are supporting. Now we did publicize the fact that we were supporting Gene McLean against George Wallace because Gene McLean asked us to announce it publicly and we did.

W.D.V.: So you have an agreement with the candidates, if they want it publicized you will do so. If not, you will not.

Reed: Well, it's not an agreement, it's a policy.

W.D.V.: It's a policy.

Reed: In other words it's the policy to let the candidate have the option.

W.D.V.: But the way you then help the candidate is to let the people in the organizations in the counties know the night before the election?

Reed: Well, it's not necessarily the night before.

W.D.V.: Well, a few days before.

Reed: A week before the election. For example, we don't hold our annual meetings now the weekend before the election. At one time we did. The organization is too big now. We can't get the word around. I'm talking about 300,000 voters and you're trying to get the word out to 300,000 people or 200,000 who are likely to vote your way. So to do

this the night or the weekend before is almost impossible. So we. . . for

example this year the election was May 7 and we met like April 20. Because it takes a good while. A basically most people. . . people know, by and large, who is supported because we put out ballots. We put out ballots for our side. ballots, recommending a slate of candidates. Not only at the state level. We also work at the legislative level. And this year we had an experience we had not had before. That was, we had legislative districts that cut across county lines. Some counties were divided into two or three legislative districts. So what we did, we set up. . . . Our policy is that if a candidate was running for the legislature within the boundaries of a particular county, that local organization handled that, okay. Where it crossed county lines, it was no longer a local matter and became a state matter because you had two counties, two or more counties involved. So then it was necessary to set up a committee made up of persons from that legislative district to screen those legislative candidates. And the legislative candidates would meet before the local screening committee or say city district number whatever district it was. 35 or 33 or 30. That candidate met with blacks in that legislative district and they made a recommendation of which candidates they were going to support. And the state organization just simply accepted that because that committee was a state committee anyway. So that committee would make the recommendation on who to support. And that's the way it was done. That's the way we support legislative candidates. Local candidates or any candidate that runs within the boundaries of a particular county, whether it is legislative or not, is left entirely to the local organization of the Alabama Democratic Conference. Now, certainly from time to time we have been asked "how about candidate x?" or "What do you have on candidate y?" And

then of course we will supply that information when and where it was needed. But basically, that's the way we operate in this state on political candidates.

W.D.V.: How effective is it?

Reed: It's pretty good. It's pretty damn effective.

W.D.V.: Are you building more unity among blacks on political matters or less?

Reed: More. And I'll tell you exactly why I think we're building more. The first screening committee I participated on, it disturbed me. This is not a criticism of my predecessor. Mr Gotlieb [?] went through far more than I did. I was executive secretary of the black teachers association. The state superintendent of education was elected then by the people at large. Popular election. There was kind of an informal understanding that the black teachers associations ought to have a say as to who they wanted for state superintendent of education. So it was kind of a quasi understanding that if black teachers wanted candidate x the entire black caucus would support candidate x because the black teachers wanted him. Okay? That particular meeting disturbed me because we were there discussing candidates and debating what candidates the blacks should support, but not a single candidate was there. And there were only about 25 individuals there. That's a good caucus, 25 individuals. And maybe at the time. . . we did not have the votes that we have today. . . so maybe that was enough. But it disturbed me, because I didn't see enough involvement. And what to me. . . the only way to deliver is to have enough people saying this is the guy. And we are effective in Alabama because we have enough people saying this is the guy. If you have 200 leaders from across the state of Alabama,

67 counties, who attended a state meeting and endorsed. . . interviewed these candidates. They can go back home and say "I was there. We talked with them. And this is what we voted on." You're damn right you're going to be effective. Failure is almost impossible. Because you've got enough people saying it.

W.D.V.: That's assuming you've got one political black organization and that organization functions without faction.

Reed: Well, even with factions, even with factions. . . and we have factions in Alabama and I would be the last one to suggest that we don't. . . . I don't think that every candidate the ADC has endorsed that every black person in Alabama voted for him. I'll be the last one to suggest that. I would say that I don't know of any candidate. . . . At this point there are no what I call major factions in this state. By and large we have tried to utilize. . . even those who may differ with me personally and which is perfectly--

W.D.V.: But do you see the growth of those factions increasing or decreasing say in the next six years, by 1980?

Reed: I see that. . . unless people are involved. . . with the continuing involvement I see the factions probably lessening to some extent. Now let me give you why I say that. A person doesn't become a leader by simply anointing themselves and saying "I am a leader." Right? At least I don't feel that way. I think that the thing that we have is a growing number of black elected officials in Alabama. Which four years ago, six years ago we did not have. To me that's a force to be reckoned with. And when I say reckoned with I mean that's a force you don't ignore. So to me, the thing to do is to involve the black elected officials as much as possible in the organization.

W.D.V.: They don't have their own organization?

Reed: No, they have a black elected officials organization but it's not partisan. We're Democrats. We're partisan as hell. No questions as to where we are. The Democratic primary is the election for all practical purposes in Alabama, like most other southern states. So, to me, when the black elected officials were elected. . . first of all, the Alabama Democratic Conference helped many of these guys to get elected. That's number one. We encouraged many of them to run for office. Not all of them, no. Most of them, yes. So, as they are elected, to me you're strengthening the conference.

J.B.: Does the conference play any active role in voter registration?

Reed: Yes.

J.B.: To what extent?

Reed: To the extent that we have, in all meetings, for example. . . we hold meetings throughout the year. Congressional district meetings. Voter registration is emphasized. We try to even collect money to help people get to the polls for voter registration. Talk about our annual dinner. Well, our annual dinner for example is a fund raising affair. Aside from that, we assess our counties so much to run the organization. We have a small staff. And we also expend funds to get people to the polls on election day.

J.B.: Do these funds come from candidates you endorse?

Reed: No, they don't come from candidates we endorse. Funds come primarily from our counties, from. . . . Now all candidates are invited to participate in the dinner where they will buy tickets. We don't give tickets to any candidates. But by and large. . . . Labor unions for example have. . . . 1970. Went to the labor unions to help in the voter registration drive. The same as they'd helped Southern Christian

Leadership and other groups. But our funds come primarily from our county units and our fund raising efforts. And sometimes I give a speech. You know, things like that.

J.B.: The fund raising dinner, for example. How much are the tickets?

Reed: \$20.

J.B.: \$20. And how many people do you usually have?

Reed: One year we had 800 and this past dinner I believe we had 700.

J.B.: What percentage of that is black?

Reed: Oh, I guess 65%. 35% of the attendance at this meeting was white. Many of them candidates. Candidates like hell there. They come to that meeting and they're lobbying. You know, Congressman Walter Flowers, for example. Our organization did not endorse him. Hell, Walter Flowers came to our meeting I guess at 9 o'clock that morning. You know, lobbying delegates. That's fine with us. The only thing we require is when the caucus makes a decision that everybody abide by it. That's an example of lobbying. Every candidate in Alabama of any significance has been before our caucus. With the exception of Gov Wallace.

J.B.: Was he invited?

Reed: Yes, he was invited. We sent a form letter to all candidates. No candidate received any special invitation. Everybody got a form letter.

W.D.V.: How is the recommendation of the caucus binding?

Reed: They're not binding.

W.D.V.: You said everybody would be bound by it.

Reed: Well, we expect everybody to be bound by it. You can't

enforce it. If a group goes out and violates the conference's recommenda-

tion, then certainly the next time around that group will not be participating. To that extent it is binding. They'll be out there on their own.

J.B.: Has your organization or anyone else that you know of made a really thorough analysis of the predominantly black voting precincts in the last governor's election?

Reed: No, we haven't. We have looked at some of them.

W.D.V.: Has anybody done it?

Reed: To my knowledge, no. To my knowledge, no. Emory Jackson might have done some. I think he did some. But he's probably the only guy.

J.B.: Who is he?

Reed: Emory Jackson is the editor of this little black newspaper here in Birmingham. He's been around for some time.

W.D.V.: Could we go back to that point again about factions. It seems to me that as you build a larger and larger voting bloc and raise more and more potential leaders and real leaders that you increase the chance for more and more factions. What I was asking, do you see that happening here now? Do you see it happening in the future? Where as you bring up leaders you build more factions.

Reed: The potential is greater as we build. We are mindful of that and every effort is being made to avoid factions. We have it now. We have individuals, for an example, who do not support the conference. For example, mayor Cooper in Mobile doesn't support the conference even though he claims he does. We had some differences this time around. Some individual blacks who supported Gov Wallace. They took their stands individually. Those we can. . . . I took issue with them individually.

Mayor Ford at Tuskegee. Judge William Branch at Green county. Sheriff

John Hewlett in Lowndes county. Are three elected officials who I know that endorsed Gov Wallace. They endorsed him far in advance of the state organization's meeting. But when the organization met, I mean, of course they weren't there. They haven't participated in the organization hardly anyway. So yes, your factions are there. How much they will grow I think will depend on how we respond to the needs of the black constituents in Alabama. The factions going to grow. It will grow if we sit back and not involve people. If we sit back and don't address ourselves to the common needs. I think that the factions have been. . . what potential factions we have have been minimized by the fact that everybody gets a letter to come to this caucus. I have a standing list of all elected black officials, for example. They get letters to come. And somebody's going to ask, every time "Weren't you invited?" And it's difficult for a black to say that I'm not going to support the candidate that all the other blacks are supporting. Because here's a risk that you run. And that is whether or not somebody's paying him to work for them individually. Unanimity on white candidates is not awfully hard to get anyway. The further away from home you get the easier it is to get unanimity. It's much easier to get unanimity on a governor's race than it is to get it on a local mayor's race. The closer you get to home the less unanimity you can get. But by and large, the growth of faction as I see it. . . . We all know what. . . Jefferson talked about faction in Federalist Paper No. 10. You're going to have them. You can't avoid factions. The question is how much are they minimized. I don't know whether I responded to you. . . ?

W.D.V.: That's all right. [Unclear.] As you move down the ballot, does the conference get more and more effective? Or as you say, it's easier to get unanimity the further away you get from home.

Reed: That's not only for the conference. That's for any election. I'm thinking about people now, generally.

W.D.V.: Yeah, but is it also true of the conference?

Reed: I think so. I've found this. . . we may be 95% effective on the governor's race where you may be only 80% effective on a local candidate's race. Two or three reasons. We've found often that people don't vote as much for say local candidates as they do for. . . . Well, you really get this in your ballot. At the governor's race you get a lot. The further you move down state officials, the fewer votes you get. The fewer votes they get. We've found this to be a pattern in this state. Then once you get back down again to your local sheriff's race, you pick up again. Congressional district candidates, legislative district candidates will get fewer. It is easier. . . and it's simple to me, why. I don't have a hard time understanding why you get more unanimity at the state level. Because the candidate is far removed than the local leaders. But we have been effective, I would say, 80% at all levels. By and large. There are some--

W.D.V.: What do you mean by effective? That your endorsement was related to a win?

Reed: That's right.

[Interruption on tape.]

W.D.V.:--your assessment of the impact of George Wallace on Alabama, the white community and the black community?

Reed: I heard you. State it again.

W.D.V.: What's your assessment of the impact that George Wallace, on Alabama, the state of Alabama?

Reed: Okay. I think that Wallace has set Alabama back over the

last 12 years he's been in control of this state state govern-

ment. I think he's done a lot to divide whites and blacks. Wallace has never offered positive leadership in terms of trying to get the citizens of the state to look forward and look to the future. Wallace has been more concerned about helping himself, what ever avenue he had to walk to achieve that goal, then that's what he was [willing to do]. I think basic of it, deep down, George Wallace is a racist. Deep in his heart he's one. I just think that. As the political climate changes, I think basically he will adjust because he understands, too, there are certain realities that. . . . Just like I understand the reality that I can't run for governor of Alabama because I'm black, irrespective of how many white allies I can pick up, I can't pick up enough to be elected governor. The same thing. . . he sees that he can not continue to find a place in history as a racist. So now an effort is being made to minimize that. He feels that he needs blacks generally and Alabama blacks in particular to say that this guy's all right now. To get back to your original point, he's had a definite impact. I think Wallace. . . one thing, he's helped in some respects to unify blacks. I think that by Wallace's negative acts. . . Alabama officials. . . every major civil rights bill. If you would look back, Alabama had a part in it. 1957 Voting Rights Act was passed primarily because of what Alabama officials were doing to black Ph.D.s in Tuskegee, Alabama. Aside from other things. The 1960 Civil Rights bill was passed because of what George Wallace and John Patterson tried to do in the 1957 civil rights act. The 1964 civil rights bill was passed because, among other things, Birmingham, Alabama. The 1965 bill was passed, among other things, what happened in Selma, Alabama. Based. . . because of the inability, because we had so many shortsighted officials in this state, the impact on the

black community that we finally got the nation to see and the federal

government to see that you're not going to rectify these conditions until you do something about it. Has Wallace made a contribution to, or any part of contributions to Alabama? I fail to see any. And I've looked and listened with a thirsty ear. I have not been able to really pin point anything positive that he has done. . . at least say, "Well, if it had not been for George, this probably would not have been done" that was positive. Now I know we talk about a lot of what we've done in education. But Alabama has a special education trust fund that comes primarily from the income tax and sales tax. Inflation? Sales tax is high? It goes in this trust fund. Something that Wallace didn't create. The only thing the governor has to decide with the legislature is where you're going to spend the money. Not how you get it. The money's going to be in the trust fund, whoever's governor.

J.B.: When was that created? That trust fund?

Reed: Oh, back in 193-- something. Long time ago. So, on the white community. . . I think he's really taken advantage of the white community. Because that group is the group that elected him all the time. And he played on their fears. And so this impact has been primarily a negative one. And I've searched sincerely and I just have not been able to point out anything I said had it not been for Wallace this might not have been done, the way I could say if I was talking about John F. Kennedy there would be some things I could point out that Kennedy brought there. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. Point to Eisenhower's highway program. Lot of things you could talk about had it not of been for this, this may not have been done. I can not say the same thing for this state. Did I answer your question?

W.D.V.: Uhhuh. The basic question being asked today is has he changed?

Reed: No. I don't think so and I have analyzed that because there are some people who say he has changed. First of all, I would like to take the man at his word. He said he has not changed. He said "I haven't changed." He said the other people have changed. "And they're coming telling me now that what I was saying all along was right." So I take him at his word first that he has not changed. Okay? Now, let's go to another. . . . Let's assume that he was saying one thing and the evidence was not. But the evidence supports what he is saying. There's a suit pending right now in federal court over. . . Wallace has discriminated against blacks in political appointments. When Wallace has had the opportunity to appoint blacks, he has not appointed blacks. For an example, the chief justice of the supreme court. The judge on the court of civil appeals and the lieutenant governor recommended that Wallace put a black on the board of correction. No, strike the board of correction. The pardon and parole board. No, he wouldn't do that. And he could have done. Got a vacancy and a good man. The guy they proposed was not what you would call a militant. Hell, you know the chief justice of the supreme court and the lieutenant governor all were white. . . were not going to send a black militant over to George Wallace. He said no.

J.B.: This was how recent?

Reed: Three months ago. I say three, give me six.

J.B.: This year?

Reed: This year.

J.B.: 1974.

Reed: Yes.

J.B.: Has he appointed blacks to boards and commissions?

Reed: I read two days ago where ^{he} ~~he~~ appointed a black to the Alabama

Education Television Commission. And it's one of the most fruitless appointments one could possibly make.

J.B.: How about the other boards and commissions.

Reed: He appointed a black to the youth advisory council. These appointments were made in the last year. This appointment--

W.D.V.: But on the regulatory and other boards and commissions?

Reed: Positions of power, no.

W.D.V.: None?

Reed: Positions of power, no.

J.B.: But he appoints most of those boards and commissions?

Reed: He appoints them. Practically everyone who serves on a board in Alabama. Not practically. Everyone. Is a Wallace appointee.

J.B.: University board of trustees is an exception to that, isn't it?

Reed: Well, yes. Except the University of Alabama board of trustees.

J.B.: How about the state board of education?

Reed: It's elected.

W.D.V.: He's supposed to have started this transformation about two years ago, after his injury. But you don't see any objective, imperical evidence that indicates change?

Reed: No, no I don't.

W.D.V.: How about the crowning of the queen?

Reed: He does that every year anyway. Just so happened that the kids at the University of Alabama elected a queen who happened to be black. And the governor crowns the queen every year. It's impossible for him to come up this year "I'm not going to crown the queen" when he's been doing it all the time. "But I'm not going to crown this one." [Something about next year.] So the crowning of a queen for a do that

you've been doing all the time, it's nothing. he spoke to

the black mayor of Alabama. What the hell? He's always spoken to segregated groups. The fact that he spoke to some black mayors doesn't tell me that he's changed. I remember--

J.B.: You say, though that he's spoken to segregated groups. Has he spoken to black groups?

Reed: Sure. George Wallace met with a group of civil rights leaders the day following the Selma-Montgomery march right in the state capital. Okay. So that's an example. I'm sure that. . . he spoke at Alabama state University five years ago.

J.B.: Your position then is his--
[End of side of tape.]

J.B.: When I say more moderate rhetoric, I'm referring to his campaign this year to be governor of all the people as opposed to 1970 he talked about the black bloc vote.

Reed: That's correct.

J.B.: That's a change in rhetoric. Am I correct. . . ? I just want to make sure I understand it. Your position is that this is nothing more than his own recognition that one, because of his changed circumstances being one that there's now a great sympathy vote for him in the white community, that he didn't need to play the race issue any more and that two, in terms of his national ambitions and for him to gain national respectability, it's also to his political advantage not to be blowing the old horn. There's no more mileage in it and that's why he's changed.

Reed: That's correct. George Wallace is currently running for vice president of this country.

J.B.: But you view all of this as nothing more than a strictly political move, reflecting no basic change in attitude on his part.

Reed: Yes. There's been no change in attitude on his part. And I would like lack of rhetoric. The fact that he omitted, this time around, was because it was not necessary. That's. . . it was not a close race and that's why. . . .

J.B.: Art Fletcher talked to the Republican Southern Conference or whatever they called it, Southern Republican meeting in Atlanta last December. He was talking to southern Republicans that they ought to do more about trying to get black support. He said . . . his term was that George Wallace looked over Jordan and what he saw was a bunch of black voters coming after him.

W.D.V.: I know that this is futile speculation, but had it been perceived as a close race and had he pulled that racial, plucked that racial string again, would it have worked in '74? Are attitudes changing?

Reed: For some it would have worked in '74. It probably would not have worked as effective in '74 as it worked in '70. It was probably less effective in '70 than it was in '65.

W.D.V.: Did anybody do that in '74 in any state wide contests or legislative contests? Where race was openly used as an issue.

Reed: I don't recall off hand. I don't recall. . . .

W.D.V.: Is that a change from four years ago, eight years ago?

Reed: From eight years ago. Only person who used race as an issue from four. . . was George Wallace four years ago.

J.B.: What about the attorney general's race?

Reed: Oh yes. Macdonald ^{Gallion} ~~Gavin~~ used it when he ran as an independent. That's correct. It didn't help. It didn't work for him in '70. It worked for Wallace in '70 but not Macdonald ^{Gallion} ~~Gavin~~ in '70.

W.D.V.: What I'm getting at. . . . Do you think that will work in the future or is that gone?

Reed: Oh, I think that it's impact will be lessened as time goes on, yes. It may be used, and it may work some, but it will work very little. I wouldn't want to say it's not going to work at all. It depends on what happens nationally. Maybe not. 1965, George Wallace. . . 1966 rather. Laurleen ran. '64 civil rights bill in hand. Had '65 voting rights act. He had [resisted] guide line on desegregating public education. And he [played] up the fears. "We've got our backs against the walls. We've got to fight." So, you have that climate. This year the climate is much more subdued, from a racial point. At least. . . while the people are probably still dying in the cities from all the diseases they've died of before, we did not have the big city demonstrations taking place. And so the racial climate was somewhat subdued anyway this election. Considering the national climate, and Wallace's ambitions and other things, then it's easy to understand why race was not a [major] factor here. But shift that again four years from now you can . Cross city busing and a lot of things that people are fearful about that they shouldn't. Then of course you do pick up. . . probably pick up some anti-black vote.

W.D.V.: The perceptions of his image, though. . . the change in his image is working, isn't it? According to Lou Harris, the last Harris poll, [more] people see him as different than they saw him in '72.

Reed: I noticed that. I don't think there's any question that according to Harris it's happening. And it's not without some understanding. Here's a guy that rocked bottom. See, he had no place to go but up. One. Two, I think there were some black people endorsing him.

W.D.V.: Didn't that help?

Reed: That helped him some. It helped him because. . . . And then you have some of the well meaning liberal reporters who don't do their homework. And will come down and do an interview or stay in New York and do an interview, do a write up on Wallace, and there we are. Soon it's published in one of the major magazines or the major newspapers and after all, the average American reads. . . the bulk of information he gets is from the newspapers. What's happening from day to day. So that's another factor to be included there. But I think that the fact that blacks. . . and the liberal press. The press that I have found. . . I've been far more pleased with what I call the southern press than I have with the northern press. The southern writers have been far more, I think, understanding of what's taken place here than the northern press. I think the guys do their homework better. Particularly as relates to George. I've looked at it. Those guys who are writing George Wallace articles are not southern [reporters from] Georgia or Alabama.

W.D.V.: How about the assertion that he's basically a populist? That originally he was a racial not a liberal, but a moderate, but he's retained this streak of populism all along.

Reed: Oh, I think so some If you look at his taxes, however, he's--

W.D.V.: I was going to ask you that next.

Reed: Most of his taxes have been on the average man. He's not taxed these plantation owners.

W.D.V.: So where's the populism?

Reed: I think he has espoused what we would call a populist philosophy, but his actions have been less populist. He still basically, you know. . . . He can't get away from being. . . from his old bourbon

aristocracy. While he himself was not a rich boy, he grew up in that bourbon aristocracy is ^{Barbour}~~Barber~~ county. And to some degree that is still. . . he's influenced by that to some degree. So I have not been overly enthusiastic about Wallace's populism, so to speak. I think that he does talk about tax breaks for the little man. But after all, you know, he's got some tax breaks, too, including some of his memoirs. You know, he's sold some. . . . I remember reading it, I don't know the details. But there is something. . . I believe that Wallace also got some exemptions from his taxes on his memoirs. So as you proceed with your studies you may want to raise up this with somebody who knows more about it. I'm sure the person in the archives and history. . . .

J.B.: Let me get back to that meeting with the black mayors last November. There was this distinction between previous meetings. Here he goes in to black mayors and--I'm paraphrasing--but in effect he made a speech that many of them responded to very positively and talked about all of us being God's children. This sort of theme. Is that not a difference?

Reed: No, I don't think Wallace has ever been foolish enough to come to a black group and be as racist as he would be with a white group. When he spoke to the Alabama State student body five years ago, at the epitome of his popularity for what he had done on the race issue, he talked about building Alabama State University. He picked out a subject that people could live with. So, the fact that he said it to the mayors, to me, is not a change in his position. He said that five years. . . he did the same thing five years ago at the Alabama State University.

J.B.: Do you think the reason that some of the non-Alabama mayors at that meeting came away impressed, thinking he'd changed, was that they

didn't really know his background?

Reed: Yeah, this is what happens with many. . . this is what happened. You know, Wallace is, first of all, is not a fool. You've got to give the guy some credit for at least being a thinker. He knows how to most of the people. He knows common decency. He knows that you don't go to a man's house pushing down the dresser, turning over the table. So to go to a meeting of black mayors. . . he wasn't going to go up there and insult those guys. It's not to his advantage. I mean, you know, there are certain common courtesies you owe to the guy on the street. Eisenhower, as much as he probably hated Khrushchev, he extended certain courtesies to him. I don't praise a guy for extending social graces. That's a part of the guy. He has to do that, if you please. So the fact that he met with the mayors and the guys want to praise him for his social graces, fine. That's the way they looked at it. But I don't see how one could walk away saying he had changed.

J.B.: Well, many people, of course link the change with the fact that he had a brush with death. You're saying that you haven't seen any evidence of. . . .

Reed: I just really haven't.

J.B.: Is the fact that he didn't attend the conference of the Democratic caucus, Democratic conference meeting this year, an indication to you of no change?

Reed: No. I think he was smart not coming. The chairman of the Alabama Democratic Conference is against Wallace. And Wallace knew he was not going to get endorsed. He knew that pretty much that the black vote in Alabama is not going to support him. And I don't not hardly blame him for not coming.

W.D.V.: One of the things that people tell us about him is that he

avoids those situations where he doesn't believe he can win, so there would be no point to his coming.

Reed: That's exactly right. That's exactly right. We beat the hell out of him--

W.D.V.: That's why some saw this defeat in the state executive committee of his candidate for chairman as significant. He was there; he thought he was going to win and he got clobbered.

Reed: Sure. They came out with an announcement that morning, Friday morning, saying that the governor was suffering from a slight cold or something and that he might not be able to make it. What they were really doing. . . counting the votes. They were doing their last count. And their last count--

W.D.V.: Is that a behavioral characteristic of him that you think is true, that he will not put himself in a position where he thinks he's going to be defeated?

Reed: Surely. That's one of his characteristics.

J.B.: You were at the meeting, right?

Reed: Yes. Cast my vote.

J.B.: How did Wallace react when the vote was announced?

Reed: Uh. . . well. . . the governor came in and everybody stood up and clapped. I stood up. I didn't clap. A motion was made that we would have a secret ballot. Wallace's man got up and made an impassioned plea that we do not. The chair ruled *[in favor of a secret ballot]*. When it was ruled that we would have a secret ballot, I was not near Wallace. I was on the right side of the Aisle and he was on the far left of the aisle. A person near him said Wallace remarked that "Good gracious, why doesn't he want an open ballot?" And that's basically the

only thing I heard he said. The only thing I could see was the expression of dismay on his face when the ballots were counted. That was just a . . . boom, you know. Expression of dismay, of disbelief. And of course he was rather upset about it. He was embarrassed. And the speech that he made, after everything was over. . . . You could hear it ringing in his speech that he was upset and dismayed at what had happened. That was an example. . . . Of course the black member[s] on that committee made the difference in that vote. No question about it.

W.D.V.: How do you explain his hold on the state? Most politicians, after five, ten, years, fourteen years are down the tube.

Reed: You're right. But --

W.D.V.: He's at the zenith.

Reed: I don't think so. I think he's going down now, he's going down. I think he was at the zenith in. . . I guess '68. I think he's been going down since '68. Basically he thrive[d/s] on racism and he used it. He just simply kept banging on the fears of the people. And of course. . . '66 as I said before, you had three major civil rights bills. So he was able to come and exploit that. Of course fate caused that, too. One, a person that was headed for victory in this state was killed in a plane crash. ^{Ryan} ~~Ron~~ de Graffenreid. So when ^{Ryan} ~~Ron~~ de Graffenreid died, that left no one out there. Okay. Except Richmond Flowers, who was closely identified to the black community and who had been fighting Wallace all along. And Alabama wasn't ready for that kind of governor. Okay. That's '66. I keep saying '65. '66. Then in 1970 we had the Brewer-Wallace race which, of course. . . a lot of reasons can be given as to why he lost and all that. I need not go into all those. . . why Brewer lost or why Wallace won. I don't know any one may

be accurate, I don't know. I think his presidential bids, also, I think helped him in this state. I think it really did.

J.B.: Is the key to his current popularity now the accident and his personal misfortunes and recovery from that?

Reed: Yeah. I think the day he was shot. . . I recall. . . unfortunately, hearing some blacks say "Well, we've got him out of the way now." And I said "No, I don't think so. Let's defeat the guy with the ballot, not with the bullet." I want to have [a chance to defeat] George Wallace if I live long enough. I don't think it's going to come [soon].

W.D.V.: Give you a seniority award. Starting in 1978 when Cornelia runs.

Reed: No. So this accident. Agnew's visit. All the visits. All these helped. And it's a sympathy vote. All these factors played on it.

J.B.: How do blacks react to the shooting and his recovery?

Reed: . . . Most blacks regretted it. Most blacks regretted it. I just couldn't find blacks of any significance. . .

J.B.: Regretted the shooting.

Reed: Yes.

J.B.: Yeah, I'm talking about the recovery and the personal qualities he displayed in overcoming the shooting.

Reed: I don't think they were [struck?] by that one way or the other. I think they regretted he was shot and glad he recovered. Any qualities that came out of that or any other side effects. . . I don't think blacks paid any attention to it one way or the other. But basically that's [the way I view it?].

J.B.: Why do you think the black elected officials who endorsed him did so?

Reed: I think two or three reasons. One is that you've got to know the officials. There are some black elected officials who are not Democratic, who are not Republican, who are simply opportunists. I think you have that part in it. Some officials felt that by supporting Wallace they could get certain grants, LEPA grants. There are some who would endorse anybody. [Unclear.]

I have someone in mind for each one of those I described there. I was thinking about a particular one of them. But that's why I think *[they endorsed him]*. Some for opportun--you know, personal reasons. Some of them did it for political reasons. I opposed it because I just don't think blacks need to get wrapped up with a man. . . . Wallace. . . bad political style. Even politically is damaging. Aside from everything else. Because a person who endorses Wallace will wear that badge for 20 years after Wallace goes off the scene. And here's a man who built his career on the backs of black folk. Built his career by denying black folks the things that they wanted. By, in effect, destroying the state in part. Particularly as relates to racial relations. And to me it's bad political [style/stock] either way it goes.

J.B.: What was your reaction to Ted Kennedy's visit down here?

Reed: I was against it. Told him I was against it.

J.B.: Before he came?

Reed: Yes.

J.B.: Did he call you or you call him or what?

Reed: He called me.

W.D.V.: Why did he do it?

Reed: I don't know. I didn't ask him.

J.B.: Why did you tell him you were against it?

Reed: I told him that George Wallace had not marched across the New Frontier with John F Kennedy. He hadn't helped Johnson build a Great Society. And that he was running on a third party when Hubert Humphrey was trying to keep Nixon out of the White House. And he turned his back on McGovern and Shriver. And I didn't think that Kennedy should [lend/leave] his image to share a platform with George Wallace. If he wanted [to have an audience] in the South [unclear--something about there were better people and better places] that share his sympathies and his feelings about the nation's problems. If he was going to do it in the South, I didn't think that was the forum.

J.B.: What would George Wallace have to do to either convince you he had changed or at least raise substantive doubts that he hadn't changed?

Reed: Produce.

J.B.: What would be an example?

Reed: [He could] put blacks on all committees in Alabama. Employ blacks in all positions in Alabama. And then recognize that I made a mistake.

J.B.: And acknowledge it?

Reed: That's right. That's what I see and I don't think that's too much to ask, to put citizens on committees, put citizens in jobs, and say to the citizens--

J.B.: He has no blacks on his staff in any sort of--

Reed: No. Unless he's got a little secretary or something.

J.B.: Nobody in a--

Reed: No.

J.B.:--above the secretarial level, right?

Reed: No. That's right.

J.B.: He doesn't even have an assistant for minority affairs in any. . . .?

Reed: No.

W.D.V.: How would you feel about him as vice president or president?

Reed: I would oppose Wallace and the person who put him on.

W.D.V.: Did you read Bill Shannon's piece this morning?

Reed: No, I have not read it.

W.D.V.: His argument is that Wallace has not changed his stripes at all. That for the Democrats to try to woo him on the assumption that they're going to change him by 1976 is crazy.

Reed: I read. . . . Someone from the Associated Press did a story on that last week, I believe. In effect this reporter was giving the reaction of key Democrats who attended some meeting in Washington not very long ago. I was somewhat pleased with the thinking of the key Democrats. And I see now a shift. People are realizing one thing, that you cannot have Wallace on the ticket. We might as well now start planning to win without him. And this is I think the attitude we ought to take. And I think that the Democrats are whistling Dixie if they think that Wallace has changed. Because. . . after all. . . people go to the polls. . . . Blacks don't have to vote for a Republican to hurt the Democrats. They just don't have to go to the polls at all. The Democrats [will] still hurt. And at this point in time I just don't see any way. . . . Suppose he's on with Kennedy? I don't care if he's on with me. It doesn't make him liked. So by putting him on with Kennedy doesn't make Wallace right. I don't need Kennedy. I don't need Humphrey. I don't need anybody. I don't need Maynard Jackson or anybody to tell me what Wallace is. And the fact that somebody says he's all right is not

going to make me believe he's all right. So my position's very clear.

J.B.: You would accept Wallace as being a changed man if he did some substantive. . . took action to show that he's changed. Is that the basic. . . .?

Reed: I would accept him as a changing man. Not a changed man. Because, you know, if he did all that. . . . He would do all that if he thought that would get him on the ticket. So that wouldn't necessarily be change. I would look at him with some possibilities.

J.B.: What's your reaction to Strauss' efforts to keep Wallace happy? Or keep him in the party?

Reed: I have not been enthusiastic about any of the national figures paying homage to Wallace. That's one. In politics to some degree I'm not unmindful of what. . . I have some understanding I guess of what the chairman is doing. I would point this out. I would frankly think though that many of the Democrats are thinking that Wallace has more power than he has. Wallace got the hell beat out of him here in Alabama when he endorsed a candidate for the state legislature in a special election about two years ago. North Alabama. And black people aren't up there. There's only a few blacks up there. Not a black area. Sand mountain.

J.B.: What race was that?

Reed: A fellow by the name of Baker. What was senator Baker's first name?

J.B.: Was he the winner of the loser?

Reed: He was the winner. Wallace endorsed the loser and Wallace ran last.

J.B.: Where does Baker live?

Reed: It's in the same area. It's in Jackson county, Alabama. And Wallace put a lot of effort in that. Money and everything else and he lost. Same thing happened when he endorsed Ben Reeves. Wallace endorsed Ben Reeves against Bill Dickerson. Dickerson's a Republican Congressman. All right? Got the hell beat out of him.

[Interruption on tape.]

W.D.V.: You optimistic about blacks' participation in politics in Alabama?

Reed: Yes. I think that we blacks have a golden opportunity. I'm relatively pleased, frankly. I was somewhat disturbed when we didn't elect more blacks to the legislature.

J.B.: How many were elected?

Reed: 15.

J.B.: How many in each house?

W.D.V.: There were what, two?

Reed: Three. Thirteen house members and two senators. And I think that we should have gotten four senate seats and about. . . . We should have had at least 17 house members. So we're about six seats short. We should have come out of there with at least 20 members of the legislature.

J.B.: And you got 15.

Reed: Uhuh. We anticipated. . . . In fact we had predicted 15 to 20. That's what we predicted. We never said more than that. We said 15 to 20. And with luck you might get 21. We was 15 to 20 and we got 15. That was the minimum we figured and I thought we should have come out with the maximum.

J.B.: Have you ever run for political office?

Reed: Yes, I ran for the legislature in 1970. I lost. I ran in a three county area. , and Sumter counties. At that time we had multi-county districts. I must have lost by, I think, 6 or 700 votes. Something like that. And I decided this time not to run. However, I am in a district that's black, at least 70% black. In fact a black person is representing the district now. A former chairman of the Alabama Democratic Conference. He's in his late 60s.

J.B.: Who is that?

Reed: Rufus Lewis. We talked about it and I urged him to run.

[Interruption on tape.]

W.D.V.: --even further back to the early movement days, could you have foreseen the changes that have occurred in race relations in this state.

Reed: Probably I would have to say not. To the extent, no. I always felt, though, that people basically will support leadership. And I've always thought that the leadership in Alabama was causing most of the problems than the guy on the street. I've never. . . a lot about that guy. We've talked about the rosin [?] chewer and the maids and all those folks. Those guys didn't have the mind or the know how to concoct all the resistance and all the problems, all the court battles, legislative acts. So to me it was always the leadership question. But in all fairness I never thought that even

the citizens would come along as far as we have come. Of course now we have a subdued type of situation. We're still living in this. . . . Where a lot of problems are not being faced. And we still have massive discrimination in employment. I think we've made more progress I think politically than probably any other area. I think the 1965 Voting Rights

Act was probably one of the most significant pieces of legislature passed in the whole civil rights movement. I think the Brown decision and that act are probably the most significant pieces of legislation. One thing that came out of the civil rights movement, we can say came out of the '60s, that it made all of us look at ourselves and face our problems. At least recognize we have problems. No longer now does the patient claim he's not ill. We finally recognized that we're sick. And so we now try to do something about it. I think that's the most significant thing: we recognize our illness. And by recognizing our illness, then we start treating it. Before that time we never even recognized it. We said we were not ill. We're doing fine. That it was the guys on the outside saying we were sick . I think that came out. That's one of the most significant things as I look back.

W.D.V.: Anything else we should have asked you that we didn't?

Reed: No. I think probably we could. . . talking about the party structure. While blacks are not adequately represented. . . to me, adequate representation means to me that you would reflect your population. That's my measurement. Adequate representation means about, approximate to population. And I'm thinking about the state Democratic executive committee. While blacks are on the committee. . . certainly not adequately represented. I do think that the blacks' involvement in political affairs and executive. . . has helped the state tremendously. And I think Bob Vance. . . . There are some young whites negative points about what is really happening, but there's some hope. We have men like Bob Vance and like Bill Baxley. Men like. . . supreme court of Alabama. Five of the guys on the supreme court were endorsed by the black caucus. In my work we do a lot of litigation. So I'm. . .

I'm going to start thinking about going to state courts for some cases I would now want to take to the federal court. State officials are now recognizing the importance of blacks as voters. No question. . . toned down their attitudes. No candidate now will say that I won't employ blacks. For example, we had the president of the Alabama public

. That job does not have a lot of patronage in it but. . . public sales commissioner can't even run a . want our help

whites going to benefit from that too. We had only one appointment, so we exchanged. Made him public sales commission and we took the other appointment. What we're trying to do, and I think we've probably arrived. . . . Of course we have not won the governor's chair so it's a different ball game. We're trying. . . as I said at the offset. . . we want it so that no politician can get elected without blacks in Alabama. It's not our desire to control politics in Alabama. It is simply our desire to participate and enjoy the benefits therefrom. Black people serve on committees. Black people serving in state government. Black people serving throughout. Not only black, white people too. I am concerned about what white person is appointed to a position. I would not be satisfied by having a black placed at some high level office

and everything else and all around him the whites who are appointed are vicious. So I'm concerned also about the white person who gets the position. And whatever we've got. Whoever is on that committee. Same thing about the legislature. Our organization supports black and white candidates for the legislature. And this is the thing that I see emerging. These candidates seek black support. I guess this tells us also.

J.B.: How do you assess the role of the federal judiciary has played

in Alabama?

Reed: I think it's been very significant in some cases and hasn't been worth a damn in others. Frank Johnson, I think, has been great. That's why his picture is hanging on my wall. That's my respect for him. He's been great. Had it not been for Frank Johnson, things that black folk have in this state, we wouldn't have it. When George Wallace stands up and says "Well, now, school's integrated in Alabama." Frank Johnson did it. You talk about black folk. . . we got 25% state troopers. Frank Johnson did it. When he talks about all these other things, Frank Johnson did it. So my respect for Frank Johnson is very high. My respect for the judiciary has been very high. Frank Johnson has done a superb job and the 5th circuit court has done a reasonable job. I think the southern district court in Mobile is lousy. I think the northern district court in Birmingham has been lousy. I would say the judiciary, all in all, has been very poor except where Frank Johnson. . . . He's done a superb job. I guess if he were running for office I would support him, I don't care what party he ran for. That's how much I think about him. Whatever else is said about Alabama, whatever Alabama's place in the future is, that man. . . influence history will never probably give it because they won't go into that.

I hope that will be one thing in putting your book together. You look at the role of the federal judiciary in insuring blacks their rights. That role has been significant. There is not a single man in this country who has given more or who has done more for the cause than Frank Johnson. I would rate him with Lyndon Johnson.

I'm a strong Johnson man, Lyndon Johnson, Frank Johnson. I don't know of any two officials who have done any more

for the cause of blacks in this nation than those guys. Both of them were southerners. [I'll be]

trying to get a southerner on the ticket in 1972.

J.B.: If you get a southerner on the ticket in '76--

Reed: '76 I mean.

J.B.: --who would you pick?

Reed: Too early to tell. I wouldn't hazard a guess now. I just know one I'm against. Don't know who I'm for, but I know who I'm against. I'm against Wallace. But who are those that I'm for, I don't know yet. There are some good potential men. Terry Sanford. Askew from Florida. Probably Bumpers of Arkansas. Those three ran in my head. George Wallace is in their way. There's no question in my mind about it.

J.B.: How do you think the Democratic national party and committee should treat George Wallace?

Reed: I wouldn't give him any special treatment. I would treat him like I treat Terry Sanford and the rest of them.

[interruption on tape.]

[End of interview.]