

This is an interview with James Clyburn, Director of South Carolina Human Affairs Commission. The interview was conducted by Jack Bass and Walter DeVries. The transcriber was Susan Hathaway.

J. Bass: We usually ask people what's been the biggest change in politics in the South Carolina and everywhere else in the South since 1948, and the invariable answer is the role of race in politics, and when did you first get active politically?

JAMES CLYBURN: Ugh, let's see.

J.B.: Really, was your first political act when you led demonstrations at State College?

Clyburn: Yeah.

J.B.: What happened then?

Clyburn: That was 1960. That was one of those kind of strange things, I don't know. I don't know exactly how I got involved except that all of a sudden the whole burden was thrust on seven of us, and I was one of the seven guys involved. I guess we were just the kind of guys who, for lack of a better term, just didn't give a damn. There was a lot of fear at that

time and four of us from State College and three from
Claflin sort of formed the steering committee for
the demonstrations. I don't remember . . . it was just
spontaneous. It was after the ~~Greenwood~~ - Greensboro
thing. We just got together one day and decided that it
was the thing to do, and did it.

J.B.: What did you do?

Clyburn: What did we do? Well we met for I guess
two weeks . . . meetings over on ~~Camden~~ *Claflin* College's campus
because during that time the situation was such that you
just couldn't meet on State College's campus. They even
had the NAACP Youth Chapter and stuff ^[banned] Everything ~~was~~ *that*
either smacked with civil rights or politics or blacks
involved in anything of that sort in any kind of activist
matter ^{had} ought to ^[meet] on ~~Camden~~ *Claflin* College's campus. So
we met over there for a few weeks and finally we would
get together late at night and really plan the thing in
sort of a military fashion, and decide how we were going
to get five hundred students on the downtown without
getting locked up, and successfully did it by meeting
late at night, walking out, timing it. It wasn't a
surprise to anybody, so people felt that people always
knew . . . the cops always knew that we were going to
be there, but . . . those meetings, I just don't remember
all the details. I remember the personalities.

J.B.: Without the details, basically, what did you do?

It was a sit-in demonstration?

Clyburn: That's right. Well the first one was not. The first one was just like a mass demonstration to petition, we had a formal petition there on that square, what we call Confederate Square in Orangeburg. That was the first one. We had sit-ins after that, but the first thing was just a massive demonstration of downtown Charleston with a petition.

J.B.: Didn't you have a mass arrest at one point?

Clyburn: Oh yeah.

J.B.: Were you arrested?

Clyburn: Sure.

J.B.: Were you there when they used the water hose?

Clyburn: Sure, that's where I met my wife. I met my wife in jail. That's when I first met her. It was on that day, and they used the water hose on us. In fact, she was one of the ones that the water hose was used on. That is when they arrested 282, and put them in a cow pasture . . . all fenced in. That was maybe the 34th demonstration. During the first demonstration nobody got arrested. We got stopped and turned around. The next time, we went in smaller groups and cars and stuff.

J.B.: What would you have said then, if someone told you that twelve years later you would be in the Governors office?

Clyburn: I don't know. I do have to say this though, I made the decision that when I was in the twelfth grade

before I went to college that I was going to stay in South Carolina and I made the decision at that time that I wanted to serve in the State senate. Of course, I haven't gotten there yet, but I plan to get there. It was a decision that I made when I was in high school when I was 16 years old. I say that because I didn't have a fatalistic attitude about the South or about South Carolina. I always thought that something was going to happen sometime, and I guess that is how I got to listening to and into that movement, and that's why I guess I played the role I played. I looked upon it . . . that as being a step in the so called liberation effort.

[Agnes]

J.B.: Was Miss Wilson a factor in your thinking?

Clyburn: Miss Wilson . . . no, she was a great factor in my personality. I mean she played a tremendous role in my personality, and she taught me . . . I think I was in her home room class . . . no she taught me French when I was in the tenth grade. She has got just a fantastic personality. I mean you just can't be around the lady for a whole year and not just come away having grown. The decision to remain in the South, however, believe it or not came from a white teacher I had Tamantha Callum. I had decided that I wanted to live in Indiana, and she was talking to me one day, at that time her name was Lukens, I heard that after she got married . . . she was talking to me one day and she said "you know, I am very disappointed that you would want

to leave South Carolina. Everybody that gets an education wants to leave, it won't ever change." That said a lot to me and I made my decision then that I would stay. I was teasing the Governor the other day that decision

and it still holds true. I can only think of one thing that would make me change that and that is if Westmoreland gets elected Governor. I think that really had a tremendous impact on me, Mrs. Wilson did, and there were a couple of other people.

J.B.: Then after you finished State, you taught school, is that right?

Clyburn: Yeah, of course, that started . . . the demonstrations . . . I think this was in '42. The demonstrations of 1960 just changed tremendously the outlook of blacks. Now very few people will admit this, but you know I will talk very frankly about the race issue. Up until about 1960, to be clean on a black college campus, you had to be [right]. I mean it was just that simple. You had to be light, bright, damn near white . . . you had to have long hair and all that kind of bull shit, and that was the mentality of black people, and to them that was beauty. That was the closest thing to the white concept of beauty. To be President of the Student body, all these kinds of things . . . even to get elected to anything, all this stuff, you had to have as close as you could possibly be to the white image. Some people won't admit

this, but that is how Adam Clayton Powell came to power. I mean you look up all the early political guys. I am saying early in terms of this, in more than black political history; they were mulattos. Simply because, well, for many reasons mulattoes were the only ones allowed some semblance of education because people put some kind of stock in that. But after the demonstrations of 1960 that attitude changed tremendously on black college campuses all over the South. I remember very well we came out of that demonstration for the first time the student body president was not the candidate picked by the administration. The administration would always pick out three people and you had to vote on one of the three. It came out in the demonstrations "hell no, we aren't going to do it that way." We elected a girl Catherine ^{Peppers} ~~Kefauver~~ from here. It was the first time in the history of the school a girl had been elected student body President, but she was one of us.

J.B.: Catherine who?

Clyburn: Peppers. She is a graduate of C. A. Johnson High School. Unfortunately Catherine . . . that and alot of other things was a little bit much for them. Catherine is now on Broadway doing some Broadway stuff, after having a bout with, she got sick and had a nervous breakdown, came back okay and is now on Broadway, but Catherine became student body president because we made it so and said to hell with the administration. Once we ran her, everybody

else withdrew. I mean we just took over the politics of the campus. We determined who the State College President was going to be irrespective of what the administration wanted, and I think . . . what I am saying is that out of that grew some good. There was some real independent thoughts starting to be developed.

J.B.: Did you go from there to Charleston?

Clyburn: I went from there to Charleston, and taught there for three years.

J.B.: And then you what? Come with the Farm Workers Commission?

Clyburn: No, taught in Charleston. My second year teaching was a funny year because the lady that really started me in Charleston politics was Sister Mary Anthony, who was by here today, I just saw a note from her, she stopped by here today. She started putting together a branch of the Big Brother Program, and she had always you know, done things right across from the school, and she came over one day and came by my classroom and asked me if I would volunteer to help with that program, and I did, and a little while later I met Lucene Brown up here and he helped to write the grant and that's how I got involved from the community standpoint and got to know a little bit about it. I didn't know anything about Charleston and got to learn and just got involved that way. The next year I just quit teaching. I gave them

them four days notice and quit and then I went to the Employment Service and worked there for a year, and after that that is when I got real active in the Young Democrats the state-wide Young Democrats. I went to the Employment Service and then I ran the Neighborhood Youth Corp in the Careers Program . . . all the Manpower Programs in Charleston County for two and a half years. I didn't go to the Farm Commission until 1968. See, I went to Charleston in '62.

J.B.: Alright, you are one of the founders of the United Citizens Party in effect?

Clyburn: Yeah. Not just in effect, that's a reality.

J.B.: That's a reality. Why was the United Citizens Party founded, one; and two, did the shooting at Orangeburg play a role in it?

Clyburn: No, the shooting at Orangeburg didn't play a role in it at all. That never entered my mind. One of the great problems that I have is . . . if it can really be called a problem, is that, I don't think it's a problem, I mean, I am not emotional about politics at all, I mean I try to keep my emotions out of it. I read these books and those books and I think it is very significant to study history, and I was convinced that the only way that you were going to get rid of things like the Full Slate Law, or neutralize the effects of the Full Slate Law and some other political decisions that were being made was to

exert an independent political base, and I came up here one day and met with at that time, what was that boys name, Allen Austin, who was very vocal in some things here in Columbia and Ike Williams. I met with him . . . I remember the day very well, it was October 22, 1968, I am sorry '69, October 22, 1969. The three of us met over at the Town and Church for lunch, and I told them what I had in mind, and showed them the figures and showed them what counted if we really could put an organization together, what counted as we could exert some real , and they bought the idea. So we decided to meet on November 22, and at that time we were calling in some other people and we got together about 50 or 60 people, and laid out the blue prints for them at that time. Those were the first two meetings and we had a meeting in December. It was in December when Jack Bass and

I think we were meeting in December over at, if my memory serves me well, we met at St. Lukes Church, and I think you came in that day, but we had to put you out of the meeting. I think we talked afterwards. That's when we decided to mount a petition drive. One of the real funny things about that. Everybody was talking about the Republican effort being financed by Republicans, that was the biggest

[nonsense] . That whole petition drive was financed out of my left hip pocket. I paid for the whole drive. No money came from anywhere. We might have passed a hat at the meeting or something, and we might have raised \$50

at a meeting or something.

J.B.: What do you think has been the effect of the United Citizens Party?

Clyburn: My being here is one, Jim on the Elections is another, Herbert Pierce's Elections is another, all of those are the effects of the United Citizens Party.

J.B.: Are you saying you think it made the Democratic Party more responsive to blacks?

Clyburn: No question about it.

J.B.: That was the reason for organizing?

Clyburn: No, no, not at all. The reason was a positive thing that didn't turn out to be positive. What basically happened is that I never agreed with John Harper philosophically. We are the best of friends, we still are the best of friends. My wife is crazy about him. You know, when I wouldn't see him for a while, I would pick up the phone and call him and we would sit down and talk, but politically, I believe in a little more diplomacy than John believes in. In fact, somebody told me that he is going to have a press conference today somewhere about something, I don't know. But you know the things . . . the way he wants to do things just isn't my way of doing it, and the reason I severed my relationship with the UCP . . . my former relationship with it, though I still carry on a very cordial relationship with has to do with the commitment I made. And another thing . . . in the case of how I feel about politics, I made

a commitment to I. P. ^{Stanback,} ~~Sandburgh~~, who will tell you to this day that UCP had nothing to do with anything that has happened politically, you know the time just came for this to happen, but he came to me after the story first broke, and met me down in the . . . Captain Brown one morning called me up late one night and said he wanted to see me for breakfast, and asked me what I was doing, and I explained to him exactly what I saw of the UCP movement, you know, how I saw it coming, what it could do, how callus it could be politically.

J.B.: What was that role?

Clyburn: It was a two fold role. Number one, I thought that running candidates under the UCP banner in counties like Allendale, Hampton, possibly Beaufort, Fairfield, Williamsburg; Counties where there was close to fifty - fifty and in Allendale at that time it was a majority of black, and there could have been a majority in , and it ended up as it is now a majority in Williamsburg, and Fairfield. I thought that the candidates running outside, not even bothering to go to the Democratic primary where they were really controlled, the candidates running on the UCP ticket in general elections could in fact win. I thought that was very necessary that we elected people to the legislature. And the second thing was that I saw at that time a decided degree of cynicism on the part of

the young blacks. People my age and younger who just felt that they were outside of things politically and they were leaving the State in droves. Now anytime you turn out 280 students graduating from South Carolina State College in June and by July 1, 76% have left this state, then to me that isn't a future. That's a bad omen to me. Especially looking at the fact that 78% of all the students graduating from the University of South Carolina remaining in the State. I saw this, and I knew what was happening. I knew that something had to be done to create an interest on the part of young blacks, and I thought that the UCP could be that catalyst because, you know, they felt alienated from you know, for obvious reasons, from the Republican Party, and to me for obvious reasons from the Democratic party, and I explained that to I. P. and he bought it, and that's how . . . you know, very few people realize how we got those goddamn signatures because the Democratic party used everything it could to stop them including [Pressure on] a lot of my very good black friends, but I. P. Stanback says, you know, there has never been anything like that before. This is the first time that anybody had ever laid it out and he could buy it. He said "get me the petitions." At that time, he was the grand master of the Masons. I got him a bunch of petitions, remember time was running out and they were trying to change the law up here to move it from 10,000 to 25,000, I forgot what it was, and we had to

have those signatures right away, and I.P. mailed the petitions to every Masonic Lodge in this State with a note that he thought that they should sign it, and that is how we got the 10,000 signatures, and I made a commitment to him that morning that if he would do that for me, then I would guarantee him we wouldn't run any candidates for state-wide office. I told him the Counties, there were 10 counties, and I told him that those were the Counties we would concentrate on and there won't be any state-wide offices. I took off on a three week vacation, and I remember I went out to San Francisco, and I don't remember what happened. I remember I was out there long, and my wife met me in Pittsburgh, and she said "you know, I've heard some strange rumors around the State. The UCP may run somebody for Governor." I said no, no, they couldn't do that. I said that we had made a commitment that we would not do that, and I said so I knew that could not be true. We stayed up there for four or five days, [Interruption] . . . then we went to Washington, just happened to phone my brother in Washington and I had just walked in the house, just from the Airport, and Jim said "how long are you going to be there," and I said for three or four days, and he said "I'll be out there in about 30 minutes. He came out and told me that he had just come from Columbia and Tom ^{Broadwater} ~~Broadie~~ had just announced for Governor, and Mack Davis had announced for

Lieutenant Governor, and I called down there, and I called John ~~Hopkin~~ ^{Harper} and asked what the hell they were doing, and he gave me some song and dance. So, that was my last formal act with them. I made a commitment, it was made on behalf of the party. We had gotten those signatures because I. P. had asked for that commitment and I gave it to him because there was no way we could get 10,000 signatures, there was no doubt about it, we couldn't get them, and I just felt that that was a breach of trust that I just couldn't put up with. So I called I. P. and apologized to him for it, and there wasn't anything I could do about it then, and I have never had anything to do with them since then. I didn't tell John Harper until two years later why, and he understood when I told him, but he never could understand it, and that was it, and I think that . . .

J.B.: Then you ran for the House in 1970 from Charleston right?

Clyburn: Right.

J.B.: You won in the Democratic primary and then lost . . . the lone Democratic nominee that didn't get elected. How did you feel then?

Clyburn: Just like I said in the paper I didn't get enough votes. You know, I knew I was running against odds. I knew that my chances of getting elected were very slim.

I was pretty well prepared for it. There were two reasons that I didn't get elected. One, was basically because I ran outside the party structure. I never went to the party leaders to ask for permission to run. I just never did it that way, and that is the way you were supposed to do it. I knew that I had the popularity in back of me and I knew that I could win the primary, and I hoped that after I had won the primary I could get the party leaders afterwards, and if you look at the returns from 1970, you'll find that I led the party in every black ward. I led the ticket in every black ward. I even beat him in his own precinct by 75 votes. I wasn't running against him, I was just running. I announced and ran along with 21 other guys, there were 22 of us, and I finished eighth leading the ticket in every black ward even in the general election when I lost. So, and I knew [Interruption]

W.D.: Does that mean people were leaving the Democratic party.

Clyburn: No what I think has happened since . . . they found themselves outside of the mainstream of the black . I think there are a lot of black people who sit by and basically sort of smile at the likes of the "Burn Baby Burn" type of concept, smile when they saw Washington burn, but they aren't going to participate

and that sort of thing, and they aren't going to look for their leadership in that group. Well goddamn it, they deserve it. Nobody is going to look to that concept for leadership. You have to recognize a couple things

that very few people recognize, and that is you never hear me say blacks and poor whites. I don't want the two together. It's very offensive to black people because all black people are not poor, and it offends a lot of black people to even be lumped, for people to say "this is what we are doing for blacks and poor whites," it's the wrong thing to do, and most of those guys who really think it, and I have talked with them, but they don't see it, and they can't see why their popularity remains so low, and that is one of the reasons. I mean not just the expression, not just that alone, but they act out these expressions and that is the way they are. They call a press conference and say the Governor ain't doing what he should be doing for blacks and poor whites. Well, you'll never hear me say that simply because I know that the vast thought in the black community is that the majority of the black people don't look upon themselves as being poor. The lack of income isn't necessarily being poor. My family had a lack of income and I never thought I was poor. I really didn't know what wealth there was until I was on the State College Campus. I never knew what it was, but

I happen to know, looking back at the family income, I know goddamn well we qualified for it. We were never on Welfare and nobody in our neighborhood that I knew of was on Welfare. If anybody in my neighborhood was on Welfare, I didn't know it. I was at State College, maybe a Junior at State College, before I knew there was anything called a Welfare system. Now that may be hard for a lot of people to believe, but I think that was more the rule than the exception.

J.B.: Your parents did what for a livelihood?

Clyburn: My father is a Minister, who never Pastored full time. I was away in College before he Pastored full time. I mean, he Pastored every Sunday morning for \$10 a week, that was his pay. He earned his income by I guess you would say as a carpenter. My mother was a high school graduate who married my dad when he was working in the bakery shop. She went to College, when I was eight or nine years old. She went to College after all three of us were born. She enrolled in Mars College after the three of us were born. She taught for six weeks and decided she had to be her own boss. So she quit teaching, went to Cosmetology School, and opened her own Beauty Shop. When she was dying she had 18 girls working for her, running the Beauty Shop and the Beauty and Bar Supply. In fact, at one point in South Carolina, S.B. had only made two small loans.

The SBA, Small Business Administration only made two loans to black people in the State and my mother had both of them. She died right after I came here, and I always believed that she just worked herself to death.

J.B.: You have got how many brothers and sisters?

Clyburn: Two brothers. Don is in *Washington* and Charles is in Charlotte.

W.D.: Some of the blacks we have talked to have said that the time has now arrived for one black leader to emerge in ~~S~~outh Carolina.

Clyburn: The time is now ripe?

W.D.: Unlike the other states, the conditions are not as . The blacks behind one political leader.

Clyburn: Wait a minute. You said the time is now ripe for one to emerge?

W.D.:

Clyburn: No, never happen.

J.B.: Where do you see black politics at in South Carolina?

Clyburn: Crossroads. I think that this election year may tell the story. I think you will see a lot of blacks running for office. There are a lot of blacks already running, but I have learned one thing about this business that sometimes you have to play close to the chest. I've encouraged everybody who has come to me to just be quiet

and let's see what happens during reapportionment because I think that will revolutionize South Carolina politics, and for anybody . . . there are some people around here now who are planning a campaign and designing a campaign, but at this point they are crazy. I mean, it is just wasted effort. To give you a good example, Ralph here in Columbia. Ralph came to me and he said "I'm going to run for the house," and I said "yeah." He said *[he was going to run]*, and I said "do you know where you live?" He said "yeah," and I said "you live right across the street from Willie Williams who is a Republican and one of my best friends." And he lived right around the corner from ~~Avis~~ Franks, who is now and I knew he was leaving then. He also lived just a few blocks from Jim Felder, even less blocks from John Harper, and just one more block from me, and even closer to ~~Cape Hanson~~ *Ray Patterson*. I said "if they come out here with single member districts, you wouldn't have a goddamn chance." I said "what are you talking about?" I said "you knew this, all these people have run before, Jim is President of the house, *Ray Patterson* ~~Cape Hanson~~ ran the last time and Willie Williams is one of the most popular guys in this community, who happens to be a Republican. You know, and I don't take much away from my popularity out there in that area. I said "where you going to get a chance from." I said "if you end up in a single member district, and you

run around telling everybody you are going to run, and you end up in a single member district with all those guys," I said "how are you going to win." I said "you would probably end up last in the group." But it is true and he knows it is true. I said "the best thing for you to do is to sit back and wait and keep your mouth closed so you can save yourself some embarrassment." Well you know, it is just emotion with most of these guys. They get up one morning, you know, and decide, you know, that is the thing for me to do, and they start talking about it, but rather than sitting down and really looking at it from a pragmatic standpoint. So I am not doing anything political at this point, just waiting to see what happens with reapportionment, and I think I know what is going to happen, and after that happens then I'll make some hard fast decisions. Even at this point . . .

W.D.: How about for the State-Wide Constitutional Office?

Clyburn: Well, it was pretty well a foregone conclusion that I was going to run for Secretary of State this time, but I do have enough sense to know that I can't challenge Frank Thornton and beat him.

J.B.: Why not?

Clyburn: Just can't, can't beat him. I'm practical about politics, I'm not running for the fun of running. If I run, I run to win and I can't beat Frank Thornton. The

control vote in this . . . you see, people talk about the black vote being the control vote, but that's not . . . the black vote is not the control vote as the swing vote is. You get blocks of votes. A large proportion of the people vote in blocks. The strong ones sit down with Caroline Candle and decide this and that about the candidate, and word goes out across the State and that is who we should be for, and you ain't going to beat no damn

, and I know the Committee is backing Frank Thornton, to be committed second to me, because I've got their commitment right now, and I've got their commitment if somebody else challenges. If somebody else comes forward and challenges Frank Thornton then I will get in the race and I can win, but I can't win by challenging him because the Committee committed to him first.

J.B.: As far as the black community at large is a crossroads . . .

Clyburn: That's it. It's reapportionment. It is just how we relate to it if it didn't come out as 124 single member districts, what do we do with it. If it comes out with County, Greenville County, Spartanburg and Tossen having to be sub-divided, if it comes out with that, then how do we deal with it. And I'll tell you how we are going to have to deal with it, and people don't want to talk about it that way, but even if you come out

with single member districts there, that ain't where the Democratic vote is. The Democratic vote in this State is over in the PD, and the Sixth Congressional District, and there isn't a single big county over there that would be subdivided. They would still be allowed to go on multi-member district plans, if they come out with a Texas kind of plan, and if the Justice Department accepts that, and that is where the big black vote is . . . the Democratic vote, the big Democratic vote is in the Fifth Congressional District, and not one of those communities in the Fifth Congressional District. So for anybody to sit here and talk about the emotionalism of this thing, I mean, they are crazy. You have got to sit down and look where the vote is. There are 19 Counties in this State 24 member district plan, than there is one kind of strategy that has got to be used, if you come with less than that, than you come out with a Texas kind of plan there is a different kind of strategy that has got to be used.

W.D.:

Clyburn: To make this decision? It won't mean few in terms of two or three, there will be a lot of people. You know, it all depends on where you are. [Interruption]

J.B.: You don't see blacks in South Carolina coming together behind any single one or two or three people?

Clyburn: No sir, it ain't going to happen. Don't

let anybody tell you that. If you believe that than the
is going to happen. Shit. He got the
reception he never thought he was going to get, there
is just no question about it, and it ain't going to
happen.

J.B.: Well what do you see, local leaders?

Clyburn: Yeah, yeah.

J.B.: On a community basis, not even the County
basis, am I correct?

Clyburn: No, not anytime soon. I don't know if
anything will emerge . . . look at this way, and I look
at it and say it with all modesty . . . politically
probably in the black community the two most popular
people in Charleston are me and Herbert ~~Peters~~^{Fielding}. Herbert
hasn't lost any of his popularity by getting beat, in
fact he may have gained some. As long as we stay together,
we might get something done. But Herbert and I don't see
eye to eye on everything politically, we just don't. I
mean he is one of my best friends. I talk to him every
day on the phone and go to see him as much as I can, but
we don't see eye to eye on things. We are just different.
Herbert is 51 years old, 19 years my senior, and I just
see things a little different from the way he sees things,
and we just disagree.

J.B.: How much of a division is there in the State
between people your age and younger, as opposed to say

people 35 and older?

Clyburn: I don't think it's an age division. I think it is more philosophical than age.

J.B.: Alright. What is the philosophical difference?

Clyburn: Well there are those who believe in the things we have done from a more revolutionary than others who believe in the evolutionary thing. But ~~Menen~~ *Newman* for example, is very powerful. He is much more powerful than a lot of people think he is. A lot of people think he has lost it, but he hasn't lost it . . . in some spots maybe, but he hasn't lost it, but he's contented to see things evolve. I mean, he has got patience to see it evolve. There are a lot of other people in the State who just don't have the patience to see it evolve and they like to sit down and say that this next election is going to do it all. It just can't happen that way. There were a lot of people who thought that when John West got elected because Mike Wilkes stood behind him the way he did, that that was going to be it. Well, it ain't going to happen that way.

J.B.: How do you evaluate that administration?

Clyburn: This administration?

J.B.: From the inside?

Clyburn: I don't know where the things I just wrote are. Simply, I think that this administration has done a

real good job at creating an atmosphere which has allowed a lot of other things to happen. If I could equate it to anything that you might be real familiar with it is probably . . . I could equate this administration with what I conceive to be one of the main reasons I favored ~~Don's~~ ^{Dorn's} candidacy. I equate this administration with a possible ~~Don~~ ^{Dorn} administration, the same way I compare the Kennedy administration with the Johnson administration. I think Kennedy articulated some things that people had never articulated before. He created an atmosphere to get a lot of things done, but it took the real politician like Lyndon Johnson to put those things through, and I suspect that that is the only way that you are going to get things done in South Carolina as far as blacks are concerned. I think that the John West administration has done a good job in articulating the problems and has done a real good job exposing these things to people. I think he has done a good job creating the kind of atmosphere, but you are going to have to have somebody outside who is not a ^[product] of that legislature up there that will make anything happen in this state, and that is the only way I see it really happening for black people. Anybody ^[from the] legislature, you can just forget it because it isn't going to happen otherwise. There has to be somebody to come into power in the State, outside of that and can be able to . . . and don't feel any real

loyalty other than wanting the program to go. So that is the way I see this administration as setting the stage for some things to happen, and whether or not we get the right kind of actors on stage, I just don't know.

J.B.: Where do you see Republicans and blacks going?

Clyburn: I don't think . . . I think we are at least ten years away from blacks becoming identified as Republican Party in South Carolina. As long as the men that control that party continue to control it, blacks will never become a part of it. Not just blacks, progressive white groups are becoming a realistic part of it. It's just that . . . it's a to them, they ain't looking for political part of the participation. I don't see it happening any time soon. I am not one of those who think that something is all that bad about being Republican because I have been one. In fact, if I was in New York State right now I would be a Republican right now. I haven't got anything against the Republicans, I haven't got anything against any Republican. I just don't think that the people who control the Republican party will make it conducive to black people in the foreseeable future.

J.B.: How important both symbolically and substantively is the extension of the Voting Rights Act after 1975?

Clyburn: It's real funny. I said to the Governor one time when he was raising hell about the Voting Rights

Act, and one of the commitments he wanted from McGovern and got from him was that he would get South Carolina out from under the Voting Rights Act. I said "that's a goddamn shame, how the hell do you think you got in?" So that is how significant it is. It is one of the great problems in our political system and he knows darn well that without the black vote he wouldn't have gotten here, and without the Voting Rights Act he wouldn't have gotten the black vote. It is just that simple, and I think that has been the most significant thing that has happened to blacks in the whole South.

J.B.: Well what is going to be the effect if it is not renewed?

Clyburn: If it's not renewed? I think it has just gone too far now. If it is not renewed I don't think it will have any effect whatsoever. There will be some problems with . . . because the Voting Rights Act pressured the Supreme Court into making some of its decisions and it created the atmosphere that would get a lot of decisions in. You know, Baker B. Carr . . . reapportionment in 1923, I believe, and we didn't get ^{Reynolds} ~~Wells~~ vs. Simms in 1964 after this kind of atmosphere was created and the Supreme Court came out with that kind of decision which I think was very important in terms of reapportionment. So I think the dye has been cast as far as that is concerned. They don't have to renew the Voting Rights Act, the Court has set the

stage bringing reapportionment questions into the Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Laws. As before it always seemed to be a political question which they wouldn't deal with, but . . . So I think that even without the Voting Rights Act now, that there is adequate relief in terms of the legal precedent has been set down. So I don't see it as having a tremendous effect upon anybody if it is not renewed.

J.B.: What do you see as the course of the Democratic party in South Carolina?

Clyburn: The course plan? In the past or the future?

J.B.: Right now and the future.

Clyburn: Ummm.

J.B.: Well let me phrase it differently. Do you see blacks and the Wallace vote basically getting together and being the controlling influence in South Carolina politics?

Clyburn: Exactly. I think that . . . I don't know why people play this down, that is how John West got elected. It was the Wallace vote and the black vote that got him elected and very few people realize that. John West carried the so-called *[rednecks]*, and he carried the blacks and that is how he got elected. That is how Brian Dorn is going to get elected. That's right. There ain't no other way in this State. That is why I know there will be no real emerging of anyone black, because that is something that all blacks just cannot stomach. There is

no way in the world she can stand to stay in the same room with George Wallace.

J.B.: Who is this?

Clyburn: My wife. She won't have nothing to do with him. Go to these receptions, she would rather be dead, but the practical reality is that she says she is a Democrat, but there is no Democrat in the State that will be elected unless they get the George Wallace vote. Look at Anderson County. Now you know that is his County in this State. Look at it and see how John West carried it, and go through the rest of them. Very few people look at it that way, but that is the difference in winning and losing in the Democratic party.

J.B.: Is that going to be the difference in winning and losing in the general election?

Clyburn: Sure, that there was a general election. John West carried Anderson County real big.

J.B.: Do you see that getting stronger?

Clyburn: Yeah, because I think people are beginning to recognize their vested interest. I don't look at the black vote as being a color vote, I look at it as being a vested interest vote. I look at the Chamber of Commerce type of vote a certain way because their interest is a certain way, and I think that more and more. The economic question is going to determine how people are going to vote. People are always more concerned about social issues, you

know, who care whether or not you sit down next to in a restaurant anymore. People are worried about whether or not they are going to be able to pay their bill, and I think that is what is going to determine the factor. There was a time when it was [Interruption]

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1

J.B.: Do you see it going that way all over the South?

Clyburn: I just don't know. I just have to beg off that because I just don't know anything about Georgia or Alabama, North Carolina or Mississippi, I just don't know.

W.D.: But do you see that as resulting in the election of more and more blacks?

J.B.: Do you see blacks then getting votes from Wallace supporters . . . black candidates getting votes from Wallace supporters?

Clyburn: Sure. That thing I the other day. This guy, he came in here from Chanley, and said "I came by because I really want to meeting you." He said "everywhere I go across the State . . .

J.B.: What is your feeling toward labor? Organized labor?

Clyburn: Well, I think that organized labor is a very good thing. It is just like any other organization, there are some good ones and there are some bad ones. I

mean there is just on way in the world I can just come out and say I blanketly support people like Tony Boyle, and those son-of-a-bitches . . . I don't give blanket approval to anybody. I don't give blanket approval to the church. So I think as a concept, I think organized labor is good, but I think it has been misused in many instances just like a lot of people misuse the church, and I think you just have some people who unfortunately [misuse] the movement, and I think how can I possibly support the Trade Unions in the northeast and in the mid-west, when their policy is to keep blacks out, and that has always been their policy. How can I just tell you that I give blanket approval to that, I don't. I told Sam Williams the same damn thing. I don't give a damn if he never supports me for anything. I just can't support that kind of thing. There are some labor unions that I feel very good about. The Council is one of them. It's a joke around here they don't care anything about me and I sure don't care about them.

W.D.:

Clyburn: 1978. I think I might get elected in '78.
(Sound here becomes inaudible)

W.D.: Well, we got our prediction.

Clyburn: [Interruption] Move along at the rate that

they are presently moving . . . You know, even though no one thought we were going to have the backlash of '68, but we've got it. So there may be a backlash in '74, maybe again in '76, I don't know.

J.B.: Well, do you see blacks in South Carolina becoming more alienated from politics and the political system or more turned on by it?

Clyburn: I think they are more turned on. You know, one of the good things about having the people here . . . you know I am not the only one, other people work close to the thing. I guess I am just about the most political, outside of , I don't think there is anybody in the State who is any more political than I am and that is because I want it that way, and I mean this is just my first love, and I study it. Just like my dad studies the Bible, I study the states politics, and I think I know it. Not just black politics, I think I know state politics, and I think that what is really happening is that I can go on the College campuses and go and talk to the young blacks and can talk to them in terms of the fact that "I don't buy this concept that so many people that you have got to have fresh new faces in politics, that's crap, you know. Everybody has come out since Watergate that there has got to be some fresh new faces, you know, but when you look at the facts, when you look at it, that's what gave us Watergate, fresh

new faces, and that is how we got it. Those are the bastards that really did it. It wasn't the professional politician. I think that . . .

W.D.: Yeah, but they were fresh non-political faces.

Clyburn: That is exactly what I am saying. Fresh, non-political faces, and what I say to young blacks "is that what we have got to have is professional politicians in this business. Black people have never had professional politicians. I mean the only way that you can get elected is to be independently employed, and for the most part you either had to be an undertaker or preacher, or someone of that sort and if you look at it, that is all you ever heard from politicians among black people. These are the only professions that we had people in. To be able to get into those areas which would train a black person to be a professional politician, you know, to be able to sit here, as I sit here and go to Law School full time, you know, a black person could never do that before, he just never could. So I think that what is going to happen is that as black people move into the professions and gain the kind of experience that will cause them to be able to professionalize, I think they will become turned on by it. It is not going to be a haphazard thing anymore. So I don't see them from

, I see them . . . I'm telling you that that is not just an empty idea on my part; I see it all the time,

and that's what turned my people on more than anything else. I'll tell you something about black people, and I say that I am sure that whatever you get from George Hamilton and that crowd is going to be altogether different from what you get from me, simply because I know that my people look to . . . they look for perfection, you know. They aren't looking for anybody to play at it anymore, they are looking for perfection, and they are willing to sit down and help a guy. I don't have many problems when I go into a Congressional District because I get a lot of help from a lot of people, and because they see that there is a good possibility to have a professional politician and they want one. So I think that is what is going to happen. I see blacks getting turned on more and more to politics, and I can see it, I can feel it, and it's really happening for the first, you know, . . . State College students leaving the State way down, less than 60% now. When I came here three years ago, it was 76%. Now it is less than 60%. That means something, and I think . . .

J.B.: That still is not a majority.

Clyburn: It is still not a majority, no, but hell it still isn't 76% either. Who knows, in another year or two, it may be less than 50%. I'm not staying here because one day I woke up and said I am staying in South Carolina. They are staying here because they see themselves as being able

for the first time to manipulate the system, and they see some opportunities to get in, and that is why they are beginning to see. Suddenly they aren't looking for the promised land anymore. They are making it here because there is an opportunity to do it, and I think that . . . in fact I know it. 1,300 people and I would say that out of that thirteen hundred people maybe 300 of them may have some long with politics, but everyone of them has interest in politics.

J.B.:

Clyburn: I don't know. I think basically when I talked about the crossroads I guess the best way to really understand that . . . what I mean by that I guess would be for you to study Blacks after the Civil War and their involvement in politics in 1874, and I think that you will find the correlation between the 1874 and the 1974 power relationship more frightening.

J.B.: What are those correlations between 1874 and 1974?

Clyburn: election as Governor. The deal he made with blacks. The same kind of deal that Dennis Chamberlain, Carpetbaggers came down from Massachusetts and in less than eight years he was the Governor. In fact it was two years before he was Secretary of . . . I think he was State Treasurer within two years. Correlation in that it was very much like this year when you look at

Westmoreland and the attempts that are being made on the part of the Republicans. I think it was ~~Leroy~~ ^{Lerone} Bennett in . . . I don't have that book, but I sure need to buy it.

J.B.: Do you see Westmoreland playing Chamberlain's role. Is that what you are saying?

Clyburn: Yeah, I see him playing Chamberlain's role, and I see Earl Morris playing that same role that the Democratic businessman played in 1884. Rome Bennett

line in his speech. [Interruption]

"It was in South Carolina and elsewhere black votes were unusually in their choice of allies. They were so unlucky in fact that the explanation must be sought in the situation, not in the personalities. In South Carolina and elsewhere black workers had to work with what they had, and what they had in the man were business oriented ties with little real sympathy for the basic aspirations of black electorates." Look at the whole campaign of their remarks put together they got the Chamber of Commerce the same business type oriented wing. They have got no goddamn feelings whatsoever about black peoples aspirations . . . none whatsoever, and if you look at the way they put that campaign . . . the whole thrust of the Governorship in 1874 and you look at what is happening in South Carolina in 1974, it is so similar that it is frightening. [Interruption]

In 1874 the black people really went to the crossroads in South Carolina and they made the wrong damn choice. I just hope we don't make it in 1974, they made the wrong choice. All the troops were out, the deal was very plain, "we'll give our lecture of votes, you let us handle the niggers," it was very plain. That's were they were and the next thing they knew they didn't have a damn thing.

J.B.: Let me ask you this question. On that score, do you think the southern strategy of the Nixon administration basically is the parallel of the Hayes deal?

Clyburn: Sure. There is no question about it.

I think said it before, there is no question.

In fact I gave a spe^ech up in Charlotte on the eve of the election, the November election, and in that spe^ech I went through the whole correlation between the Hayes thing of 1876 and I told that crowd that day that if all the polls were correct, it's right in there somewhere, if the polls were correct, and if the election came out the way they are saying it was going to come out, then I guarantee that what we were going to do on November 4th or 7th or whenever it was . . . what we were going to see in January was not the inauguration of a President, but the coronation of a King, and I really felt that, and I told John, are you going to see the Governor today?

J.B.: Yeah.

Clyburn: Ask him, ask him what I told him going into

that election. [Interruption]

J.B.: '68?

Clyburn: No, no, '72. Oh sure it's there. It is plain as day. I mean I am agreeing with you. I am just saying that . . .

J.B.: You agree just as you said it before

Clyburn: Certainly, there is no question about it.

J.B.:

W.D.:

Clyburn: Sure, there is no question man.

W.D.: That was only a reaffirmation of those policies about four years but it was a go ahead single. You know, go more.

Clyburn: Go more, that is exactly what it was, and I think that it really had this country under such control until . . . there was no question

J.B.: Well one of the working data we have on this book is the Southern Politics of the Second Reconstruction, but do you view the Nixon administration marking the end of the second reconstruction?

Clyburn: There is no question.

J.B.: Where do you see it heading now and in the future though?

Clyburn: I have to come back to this crossroads. I have

got to come back to that simply because if I can see . . .

J.B.: Do you think it would depend on who wins the 1976 Presidential election?

Clyburn: There is no question at all.

W.D.: I think that there is another step though, isn't there.

Clyburn: There is a step before that. Yeah, there is no question about that.

J.B.: In '74 as far as South Carolina is concerned.

Clyburn: Yeah.

J.B.: I am talking about . . .

Clyburn: Yeah, but '76 as far as the nation.

J.B.: So far as the whole South and the whole nation is concerned, you think the '76 election will determine whether or not the second reconstruction has indeed been ended.

Clyburn: That's right.

J.B.: So then you are talking about post programs to implement the goals of the Civil Right movement meaning economic equality as well as legal equality . . . basic.

Clyburn: Exactly. Exactly. Exactly.

End interview.