

**Julian Bond Oral History Project
“The Making of Julian Bond, 1960-68”**

Interview with Mary Elizabeth King and Peter Bourne

**Special Collections Division
Bender University Library
American University
Washington, D.C.**

2018

PREFACE

This interview is part of an oral history project entitled, “The Making of Julian Bond, 1960-1968.” Unless otherwise indicated, the interviewer is Gregg Ivers, Professor of Government and Director, Julian Bond Oral History Project, American University.

The reader is encouraged to remember that this transcript is a near-verbatim transcription of a recorded interview. The transcript has been edited for minor changes in grammar, clarity and style. No alteration has been made to the conversation that took place.

Notes, where and when appropriate, have been added in [brackets] to clarify people, places, locations and context for the reader.

Biographical Note for Mary Elizabeth King

Mary Elizabeth King (b. 1940), a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan College, moved to Atlanta in 1962 to begin work for the Young Women’s Christian Association [YWCA], where she travelled to college campuses to assess the state of academic freedom and encourage improved race relations. In 1963, after working for SNCC in volunteer and part-time roles, Ms. King joined the communications office in 1963 in Atlanta and remained in that position with SNCC until 1965.

Ms. King went on to a distinguished career in government, academia and nonprofit educational work. Ms. King is the author of several books, including *Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (1986), for which she received a Robert F. Kennedy Book Award. In 2011, Ms. King received the Nonviolent Achievement Award from the James M. Lawson Institute. Currently, Ms. King is Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at the United Nations-affiliated University for Peace and Distinguished Rothermere American Institute Fellow at the University of Oxford.

Biographical Note for Peter Bourne

Peter Bourne (b. 1939), a native of the United Kingdom, came to the Emory University in 1957, finishing his undergraduate degree in 1958. He then entered Emory Medical School later that fall, graduating in 1962. While at Emory, Mr. Bourne became involved in the Atlanta student movement after becoming acquainted with Julian Bond through an inter-campus dialogue between Emory and Atlanta University Center students. Mr. Bourne later established the first drug treatment program in Georgia under Governor Jimmy Carter. After President Carter was elected in 1976, Bourne served for two years as the White House Drug Czar, then went on to serve in several other prominent posts in academia, government and the private sector for the next several decades. In 1997, Mr. Bourne published the well-received, *Jimmy Carter: A Comprehensive Biography from Plains to Post-Presidency*. He remains involved in numerous academic and humanitarian endeavors.

**Julian Bond Oral History Project
“The Making of Julian Bond, 1960-68”
American University**

**Mary King and Peter Bourne Interview (08-JBOHP)
October 19th, 2018
Spotsylvania, Virginia**

**Lead Interviewer: Gregg Ivers
Videographer: Gracie Brett
Production Assistants: Lianna Bright, Audra Gale, Colleen Vivaldi**

Code: Gregg Ivers [GI] Mary King [MK] Peter Bourne [PB]

GI: Today is Friday, October 19th, 2018, and we are at the home of Professor Mary Elizabeth King and Dr. Peter Bourne in Spotsylvania, Virginia, to conduct an oral history interview for the Julian Bond Oral History Project, sponsored in part by the School of Public Affairs at American University. A video recording of this interview, as well as a transcript, will be available through the Special Collections Division of the Bender Library at American University. I am joined today by two outstanding American University undergraduates to assist with the recording and production of this interview, Gracie Brett and Colleen Vivaldi.

Professor King and Dr. Bourne, thank you for having us into your home and agreeing to have this conversation with us.

MK: It's our pleasure. Thank you.

PB: Of course.

MARY KING: ENTERING THE SOUTHERN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

GI: Professor King, how and when did you decide to join the Southern freedom movement?

MK: It's hard to answer this question quickly, because actually that decision was a long time in the making. Since I'm at home, I will say that this is a book that I was given when I was 7 years old, *All About Us*. And it basically debunks as having any such thing as an inferior or superior race, including the idea of how absurd and silly you would be if everybody looked alike. [Ms. King holds up the book to the camera and opens it to show several pages with examples].

It's a child's introduction to diversity. It was profoundly important. I must have read it hundreds of times. My brothers and I would read it to each other. There was a very clear-

cut effort by my parents to make me think in an expansive way about our world, and to make me feel empowered as somebody who could do something about it. When I got to Ohio Wesleyan University the sit-ins started while I was a student there. So, in a sense, if you want to pinpoint the moment I made the decision, it was when the news reports first flashed about the sit-ins. And I immediately began to work at Ohio Wesleyan to organize a student group called "The Student Committee on Race Relations." It grew and expanded and sometimes you could have two hundred people attend the meetings. We raised money to help the sit-ins. I was already engaged [in the movement] while I was still a university student. In my senior year, we took a trip back to Nashville, Atlanta and Tuskegee, and that is where I met Julian Bond, in Atlanta, at that time, during my senior year.

But just to say also, in my family background, people don't normally think about white families being abolitionist families in the South, but I come from a very long genealogy of Methodist ministers from South Carolina, and they were all, so far as I can tell the stories that came to me through my father, very much concerned about race. There was a cognization process that was under way because my family roots go back to the 17th century in Virginia and North Carolina. And I think that my decision was inchoate, it was emerging, it was there, it was present, and it took the sit-ins to have a discernable effect on me, such as I want to do something specific. Then, what I decided to, because I did not know how to go to work for the organization that grew out of the sit-ins, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee [SNCC].

I decided to go to graduate school either at Emory or Tulane just to get myself into the Deep South, from which I would make my way into SNCC somehow. And I did not know how. However, after returning from the trip to Ohio Wesleyan, I was sitting in the bus station waiting for the bus to take me home when a phone call came saying that Miss Ella Baker and Professor Howard Zinn would like to interview you, and would you be willing to fly to North Carolina to be interviewed? I said yes! Then, I called my parents and said, "I'm not coming home." I didn't care because I'd been invited by some of the people that I met on the trip in my senior year. I did meet Miss Baker and Howard Zinn, and I began working with them on a project called "The Human Relations Project" that was paid for by the Marshall Field Foundation. The concept that Miss Baker had worked out with the campus-wide national student YWCA and a black woman social worker named Rosetta Gardner was that there would be a pairing of a white woman and a black woman to travel together to campuses to talk about race.

In point of fact we could not do that in 1962. It was impossible. There was only one university in the South that would have me and my partner Bobbi Yancy, who is now very senior at the Schomburg Center [for Research in Black Culture] in New York. Bobbi and I could not travel anywhere except to Chapel Hill. I could go with her to the black colleges, but she could not go with me [to white colleges]. So we changed the plan a bit. However, the point is we were not really talking about race. I was not talking about race when I was talking on white campuses because you couldn't get invited onto a campus if that's what you wanted to talk about. I was talking about academic freedom, which was a kind of rubric under which you could begin to broach subjects like the fact that the cost of bearing two systems of education was a very, very heavy burden for states that were already very poor

in educational accomplishment. We did the best that we could. However, the point of our work was to identify likely or interested students across the South who would like to come to a human relations workshop with Ella Baker and Howard Zinn. Bobbi and I were also playing a role in the running of those workshops, so we ran workshops all over the South.

Meanwhile, on weekends or anytime I had a spare day, I was working at the SNCC office. So throughout that year, starting in approximately the summer of 1962 through approximately the following summer of 1963 while working on the human relations project, I was also working in the SNCC office as a volunteer. That's when I would have met Julian the second time, after the trip that I had taken that introduced me to him in Atlanta in June 1962. I know you're interested in what my reactions were to him. I thought him extremely urbane for someone so young. And one of the most polished people that I had ever met. I was intrigued by the way he phrased things, by his phraseology, the way he talked, the way he expressed himself. I'm very interested in words. So it attracted me because I might not ever make a sentence like that. I'm interested in words. Obviously, he is interested in communication and expression and words and so on, so that that appealed to me immediately.

PETER BOURNE: MEETING JULIAN BOND

GI: Dr. Bourne, do you want to tell us about how you first met Julian Bond and what your initial impressions of him were? And please tell us how you got involved in the Atlanta student movement.

PB: I came to Atlanta when I was seventeen. I came from the UK and I, to a modest degree, was subjected to a certain amount of discrimination in the South myself, mainly because my background was different from the Southerners around me. I also was immediately disturbed by the fact that there were no black students at Emory, no black faculty. There was no contact between Emory University, which was all white, and the Atlanta University Center, which was all black. It was in the aftermath, of course, of the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. So there was a kind of unspoken momentum in terms of civil rights. The ambiance was the need to move civil rights forward, and I think perhaps one of the things that really convinced me to put as much effort into this issue as I did was that, at the medical school in our junior year, we were allowed to work on black patients, but it wasn't until we were in our senior year that we were allowed to move up and work on white patients. And I thought, "This can't be right. This is a dreadful situation." With a small group of like-minded students at Emory, we decided in 1960 to reach out to the growing student movement in the Atlanta University system. We invited six students, African American students, probably the first who had ever been on the Emory campus, to come to Emory.

We had a two-hour meeting to which we invited any Emory students who wanted to come and about thirty showed up. They just talked and answered questions about the nascent student movement, both in Atlanta and elsewhere in the country. Julian Bond was one of those six students and the other five all went on to become very distinguished figures in their own right. I and everybody else there, as was almost always the case, hit it off

immediately with Julian. He was so affable, easy to get along with. He was, as Mary said, so urbane and well informed, and well read, and well spoken. For students at Emory, the white students – most of whom had never met a black person who wasn't in a totally subservient role as a janitor or a domestic – they were stunned by Julian and indeed by the other students as well. We then decided to start joint communications between the two institutions. We supported the Atlanta student movement in 1960. When the students at Atlanta University, led by those six, put out "An Appeal for Human Rights" that was published in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, we issued a statement published in the student newspaper at Emory strongly supporting what they had done and the content of this statement.

GI: What was the response at Emory?

PB: The students' decision to publish and support "The Appeal" – it was interesting. There were quite a lot of academic faculty members who were very supportive. Quite a lot of them weren't from the South. All of them were very well-educated, sophisticated people, and they didn't want to jeopardize their standing in the university. But they were quite happy to say to me, "You have to have my support and if you need some money, I'll be happy to contribute." And then there was the university administration, which was adamantly against what we were doing, and called us all in. It had originally refused to give us a room even to meet in. Their attitude was that this going not only to damage the reputation of the university, but it put in jeopardy the tax-free status of the university, which from that from their perspective was probably a legitimate concern. The legislature was only too happy to threaten to take away the tax-free status of any educational organization that sought to foster integration.

MARY KING: JOINING SNCC

GI: Professor King, is June 1963 when you began officially working for SNCC?

MK: Well, that's when I went on staff, but I had been volunteering on weekends and working on days off and any spare time that I could get. So I knew everybody, and I was helping on whatever needed to be done. Really, that was the ethic that prevailed in SNCC. You did whatever had to be done and there was no hierarchy in the organization, so I had a very easy transition. The day came when Jim Forman, who was the executive secretary of SNCC and who was a little bit older than everybody else – he had been a teacher in Chicago, a sophisticated, strategically smart person but also very affectionate – said, "Mary, let's have a chat." So I sat down with him next to his desk, which was probably donated. He said, "Well, would you be willing to work on communications?" I didn't have that much to offer, to tell you the truth. I could read. I could write. I guess that's why he thought, okay, communications. He would sometimes sweep the floor of the office. I could have done that too if he had asked me. He didn't ask me to do that. He asked if I would like to work in communications and he would have had to clear that with Julian.

That is not something that Jim would have done without Julian having to mull that over and buy into it. The room in which we worked was tiny. It was about one-third less than the

size of the room that we're sitting in now. It had two desks, two manual typewriters and two telephones. I had a box into which I put absolutely everything that I wrote. So when I finished typing something and took it out of the typewriter, I put a copy in that box and that later became the collection that is now at the Wisconsin State Historical Society. So that was the communications office. No other civil rights group had anything like this. It was imperative. We were working under conditions where the Southern white newspapers and media, such as they were, were severely imbalanced and lopsided in their reporting of anything having to do with race, if they reported it at all. In fact, it was the failure of the Southern white news media to report simply what was happening that made it so important for us to have a communications office.

ON THE ATLANTA NEWS MEDIA AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS STORY

GI: Dr. Bourne, do you agree with Mary's assessment that local media were not really tuned in to what was happening in Atlanta, that they just weren't getting the civil rights story?

PB: Yes, I do agree. Atlanta was somewhat unique in that there was a black newspaper in town. Later, I would become very good friends with one of the top reporters, Paul Delaney, who started there with the black newspaper and then ended his career with *The New York Times* in New York.

The Atlanta Constitution walked an interesting line. There was a man called Ralph McGill, who was sort of a promoter of Atlanta, and he always tried to write sitting on the fence. He didn't want to repeat the sort of racist chants that you got from rural Georgia. On the other hand, he didn't want to be seen as easily pro-integration. That's how it was. One thing that they did, as Mary said, was just to ignore any black news. They covered nothing in the black community. Their argument was, well, it would all be covered in *The Atlanta [Daily] World*. That was their justification. But really that they were just playing to the racist sentiment in society.

GI: Professor King, could you talk about what your perception was of the Atlanta news media once you got settled in to your new job, particularly *The Atlanta Constitution* and Ralph McGill?

MK: I think Atlanta newspapers had some individuals who were willing to go against the editorial policies of the newspapers. The newspapers were very wishy-washy. There is no question about it. They were not taking any heroic stance whatsoever. They believed in the First Amendment – sort of. But there were individuals who were willing to really let go of all of the platitudes and just do a good job of reporting. Those are the people that I had on my clipboard. I had a clipboard filled with the names and telephone numbers, the “hot numbers” for the key reporters, the people that we really trusted. They were international as well as in Atlanta. But there's no question that the Atlanta media was walking down the middle of the road and were not a courageous force. So we were working with the individuals, not the papers.

Within the first few days of the assassination of President Kennedy, the bodies of five black men turned up in the Natchez River. One of my roles in communications was to call regularly all of our main offices in Mississippi while I was still in Atlanta. So this would have been November 1963. With reports that there were bodies of five black men floating in the Natchez River, I also sensed a tremendous amount of fear on the part of the people in the offices that I was talking with and an anxiety. There were times when we would call a reporter and say something's up and you might want to know about it. But we were careful to understate things, because we did not want to compromise the credibility we had built up. When I thought about this assignment, it was Nick Von Hoffman that I thought about calling first because he was tough. He'd been writing for *The Chicago Tribune* and he suffered no fools. I told him about the corpses in the Natchez River. I said, "I sense that there's a great deal of fear in the local community from the people that I'm talking with. Would you by any chance be willing to go and see about this situation?"

Well, he called me after he got to Natchez and he said, "Mary, the fear is liquid and it's everywhere." So [Van Hoffman] was a very brazen, unafraid, fearless reporter and he was my first choice to contact. There were others in that category. Claude Sitton was definitely somebody that I felt that I could call and say, "There's something that you need to know about. I think you ought to check this out." One of the very important capacities of Julian, one of his attributes, the reason that we had that credibility [was] Julian, as a matter of his own personal strength, was inclined to understatement. He taught me to always minimize, always underestimate, under no circumstances ever exaggerate. I'm surprised today at how little people understand that because people on social media are counting the number of people who like them and bragging about the number of likes they have.

But for us the situation was so extremely dangerous that the last thing that you wanted to do was ever to inflate a number or to speculate on anything. I owe it entirely to Julian that he schooled me in this approach of always depreciating, underestimating, minimizing. Let the reporters go out and verify the numbers. Overtime, this built up huge credibility for the [SNCC] communications office because eventually some of the reporters would take whatever we called them with. There were many people on that clip board for whom I could eventually go into print with. I could do that eventually with Claude Sitton.

The figures that John Herbert published in *The New York Times* for the fatalities and atrocities at the end of Mississippi Freedom Summer are the figures that I had hammered out and include them in my book, *Freedom Song*. He took his figures from me without attribution. We were not seeking attribution. That was another thing, another dimension of Julian's modulated approach, very honed approach. We were not seeking credit. This is something that today's young people seem to have a completely antithetical approach to. We didn't want credit. We simply wanted the news to be reported so that atrocities would be known, so that deaths would be known.

Fred Powledge [of *The Atlanta Journal*] was [among the reporters] in whom had a great deal of trust. I remember that Paul Good of ABC was also very interested in what we were doing. Bill Minor of *The New Orleans Times Picayune*. There are any number of them. So it was the individual reporter that Julian and I would seek out and develop a relationship with, and

they knew that we were not seeking credit. We did not expect to see our names mentioned or even SNCC mentioned, although there would be something just saying a spokesperson of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee claims such and such. They would go right into print with that it.

MARY KING: WORKING WITH JULIAN BOND

GI: Professor King, I'd like you to talk a bit about how you and Julian worked as a team.

MK: All of SNCC, in a sense, was built on divisions of responsibility. And these were not written in job descriptions or anything like that. They just worked out arrangements that worked from day to day. In Danville, for example, I was dealing with reporters who were right there on the scene. I was based in a church, in the church basement, and it was the movement church that was most active. Reporters would come and seek me out and I would give them all the help that I could give them. I would refer them to this one or refer them to that one. When I would tell them exactly what had happened I'd give them accounts. I could find out information for them. I'd help them with their writing. I'd answer questions, but I also had to get the Danville news out through the wire services. That's where Julian came in. I called him in Atlanta and said, "Three enormous firehoses have just been snaked up onto the steps of the municipal building in preparation for the demonstration that is planned for tonight. I believe that there will be no caution in the way that they are used."

That was exactly what happened in Danville. There were these enormous firehoses were used by an extremely petty city government against a little local movement. They just wanted jobs in the police force, secretaries to be hired in the municipal building and desegregation of the public library. Instead, the officials of the library closed it down and when they reopened it there were no chairs in it. The demands were very, very modest. And yet the response was horrific. It was as bad as anything in Birmingham in 1963. This is approximately the same period as the Birmingham Children's Crusade in April of 1963.

So Julian and I always worked very much in tandem. I would say that Julian wrote more easily than I wrote. It took more concentration for me to work out a draft. I might have to go through many drafts. Julian just seemed to have a kind of nonchalance in the way that the words poured from his fingers, typing on the typewriter with the same kind of elegance that he presented personally, whereas I might go through one, two, three or eight drafts of something before I got it ready [laughs]!

The other thing is that when I was first sent to Danville by Jim Forman and Julian Bond I didn't actually know how to write a news release yet. I had started working with Julian but I was still sort of a learner and I was doing other things. He sent me to Albany to write a special report. I was taking affidavits somewhere else, so I was working on smaller reports and special publications. And then when Jim said, "Go handle communications in Danville," I said, "Jim, I don't really know how to write a press release yet." He said, "You'll learn [laughs]." This was very indicative of the attitude of SNCC.

There was no time for elegant preparation. There was no time for laborious, detailed preparation. We really just had to move with the demands. Danville was very dangerous, actually. One day, as I was at work in the church basement, one of the movement lawyers, Len Holt, a black lawyer with the Congress of Racial Equality, who I remember so well and so kindly, came in to see me and said, "Mary, the grand jury has been seated and they are planning to indict you for acts of violence and war." This is actually a codicil language that came after the Nat Turner uprising in Virginia, in which there were a number of slave owners who were killed. I believe it was approximately 1831 this was instituted. That's what the grand jury was getting ready to indict before.

Now bear in mind this: I never walked on a single demonstration in Danville. I never was seen in public if I could avoid it. I'm on the phone and I'm on the typewriter. I went back and forth between the black community at night – I was staying with a family. We stayed at the end of a long bayou. There was a narrow road that went into the black community and the police officers would trail us. They did something that I've never seen done anywhere else. They would follow us in front. In other words, they would put their cars in front of our cars so tight that any failure to put on a turn signal or, at the time, put your left arm out for left, or your arm up for right, put your arm down for stop, their sirens would go on and you'd be arrested immediately. One inch over the [dividing] line and we would be arrested. This was a textile manufacturing community and the Dan River was part of the water source used for the manufacturing of textiles. The black community had only one road to it. The police would peel off and not follow our cars into the black community.

I just mention that because it's a mistake to believe that there was anything natural or inherent about African Americans adopting the strategies and tactics of nonviolent action. This is something they had to learn and there were any number of agents that were involved in that process. We had the Reverend Dr. James M. Lawson working with us and training us. We had Bayard Rustin, a great strategist working with us periodically, preparing us and getting us ready for whatever needed to be done. There were others who assisted. Although I never worked with Glenn Smiley, I certainly heard a lot of stories about him. There were individuals like Staughton Lynd, who had studied Gandhi and the history of nonviolent action in the United States very deeply and who understood the theories and the methods. So it's a mistake to think that there was a foregone conclusion that the black community would be nonviolent. This was something that required translation and interpretation. There is a great deal of naivete about what was involved in black communities deciding that they would embark on a nonviolent approach for their localized campaign.

GI: Dr. Bourne, I want to come back to you. Since you were still in Atlanta during the early 1960s, what were your observations on what was happening in Atlanta during that time?

PB: I graduated from medical school in June of 1962, and I was offered a fellowship in psychiatry to study alcoholism in the Atlanta City Jail. It was something of a research project and I was supposed to get out of that some understanding of why there were 50,000 arrests each year to public drunkenness. By no means were all of those African Americans but the majority were African Americans. That led me to have a great deal of

contact with the black community, particularly black churches that were concerned about alcoholism, with my friend that I mentioned earlier, Paul Delaney. Paul Delaney had been writing for *The Atlanta [Daily] World* and he criticized the poor treatment of African-Americans in the Atlanta court system and said how very poor it was and there were no probation officers. The judges in the court said, "All right, if you feel that way, we will hire you as the probation officer." So he went from being a journalist to being a probation officer, and I worked very closely with him. He was trained as a journalist but also an activist. He was somewhat older than Julian and the others, the students, but he was extremely well plugged into the Atlanta black community. So I worked with him on alcoholism and I just learned a great deal. It was only a year, but I understood the black community incredibly better by the end of that year than I did previously.

COMPARING NEWS COVERAGE OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA WITH THE WHITE MAINSTREAM MEDIA

GI: Professor King, how was your relationship with the black newspapers compared to the relationship you had with the mainstream white media?

MK: Well, this is a slightly complicated answer and it also depends of what time and where in the chronology or in answering this question . . .

GI: We can be wherever you want to be.

MK: I would say this: that a *Jet* magazine [reporter] was there all the time or on the phone. Walking in and out of the office. *Jet* was "Johnny-on-the-spot" all the time. They had other sources obviously besides us. But with regard to the other newspapers we were dealing with them. What I remember in particular is making phone calls to offer [black newspapers] actualities that we had taped by telephone after calling a local movement or a local campaign office. Let us say that something had just happened in Little Rock, Arkansas. Either Julian or I would get on the phone to somebody in the Little Rock office and ask them what had happened. They would come on the phone and they would say exactly what had happened. Then we would make out what is called in the news industry is an actuality, meaning it's a literal "actual" report from the scene and offer those. So we would offer those to the Gary [Indiana] newspaper, the *Amsterdam News*, all of the classic black newspapers that were so important in bringing the news from India of what was happening in the independence struggle. By the way, I should mention there was a kind of avid reportage of what was going on what Gandhi was doing. He was referred to as "The Little Brown Man," but [he] was coming into black homes through the black newspapers was constant reporting of the struggles in India. That was that was part of the background, part of the backdrop to the decisions that were made in the black community to pursue these matters with nonviolent struggle.

GI: Why do you think the white mainstream press was so afraid to cover the civil rights movement?

MK: At least at that time in 1963, 1964 – this is a very difficult question for me because it

was not part of my job to try to make breakthroughs. What Julian and I concocted – and to my recollection this is something that he and I figured out ourselves – is what we needed to do was to find a way to work through UPI and AP – United Press International and Associated Press – wire services. The reasoning being that if we could get something going from Atlanta to Portland, Oregon or Seattle or to Boston, Massachusetts, in the course of going to those places it would have to go through the ticker tape machines all over the country. If we wanted to get all of AP and all of UPI carrying a story of something that had happened, what we needed to do was to prompt a request to come in from a distant subscriber to the news service.

We worked this out in conjunction with the "Friends of SNCC" program. What we would do is contact the local "Friends of SNCC" program. We had "Friends of SNCC" organizations in Princeton, New York, Chicago, Boston Portland, Seattle – many, many cities across the United States. They were basically support groups for fundraising. Later, they would help in the recruitment for Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964. We would contact them and say, "There's a story or I have a report," or I would contact them and say, "I've just had a phone call from Hattiesburg, Mississippi to the effect that such and such, who is from Chicago, was arrested. Would you please call AP and find out if they're carrying anything on the arrest of the Chicagoan? Call AP in Chicago." Ask, "Do they have anything on this?"

Well, of course, there would be nothing because they were languishing in the jails. So part of what Julian and I were doing was following up when we found out that someone who was from outside the South was arrested. That meant that we would be able to activate this national network of the wire services if we could activate the "Friends of SNCC" group. We could also get them to go to the wire services and saying someone from Newark, New Jersey is being held in a jail.

This is a very complicated and I think sophisticated advanced approach that we used. But it was born from the circumstances, which were that we really couldn't trust the white southern media. I myself don't know whether this was a business decision or whether this was just sheer, systemic racism. I don't think that I would have any way of knowing that and I haven't done the research to go back to find out. I'm in the process of interviewing someone from the *Jackson Clarion Ledger* now for a book that I'm working on about Mississippi. But there's no question about it. Black deaths or atrocities against black people were not considered newsworthy. The reporters told us, told Julian and me, they told us these are not newsworthy. We can't get a story published to this effect. Our editors won't run it. They knew what they could run and what they could not. It's devastatingly widespread. It's part of our national problem that we have done such a poor job of confronting historical atrocities of the past and making some form of atonement or apology for them.

GI: Peter, your thoughts?

PB: I do think what *The Atlanta Constitution* and *Journal* loss of advertising revenue was a really important consideration. Also, although it's hard to correlate it, I think they were very worried about a drop in circulation if they broke the traditional taboos. In fact, they

didn't lose circulation when they started to cover black news. But I know with the sit-ins at Rich's Department Store there as a great deal of discussion between the board members of Rich's and *The Atlanta Constitution* as to how it should be covered. Rich's preferred that it just not be covered at all because they thought that it would just look bad. Then the people at the newspaper didn't want to go against what Rich's wanted because Rich's would stop advertising with them. So it was a complicated thing, I think actually, by the early 60s, it driven almost exclusively by commercial concerns not so much about pure racism.

GETTING OUT THE NEWS TO THE NATION AND THE WORLD

MK: It's very likely that there was a great deal of concealed injustice in the ownership of the Southern news media. Whatever it was they did not act as if their job was to get out the news. They acted more as a pacification and interpretation of what was going on in such a way that the white community would not be too alarmed or too disturbed. It would have been much better if they had taken on their First Amendment responsibilities and actually reported the news. We were doing many, many things you need to be aware of. The fact that we had twelve professional photographers strung across the South. When I say "we," I mean Julian and I, then in the communications shop. Part of that began with Dorothy Miller Zellner, who was doing the work that I would be doing before me.¹ It took years for this actually to develop. By 1964, we had twelve professional photographers spread across the South. We had photography, high class professional photographs that were available that Julian and I could use helpfully in getting out of the news. We were publishing a weekly newspaper called, *The Student Voice*. It went out by snail mail, to be sure. It went out to anybody who gave even a dollar to SNCC would get on the student voice subscription list.

We began actually to use photographs in our news releases. So instead of just being mimeographed and your hands stank for a week afterwards, we now had photographs of the news on our press releases. But we were also issuing special reports. We were compiling the reports from the Wide Area Telephone Service every day. It was called the WATS line for Wide Area Telephone Service. This was a real advantage when Jim Forman got it because [the WATS line allowed] SNCC to pay a monthly fee for SNCC being able to talk all that it wanted per month across all of its telephones. Before that, when I was on a toll basis, we had to be more scrupulous and when we called and how we called and how long we talked. With the WATS line, we could spend as much time as was needed, and you could type as long as you needed to get all the information.

Then we were calling with the radio actualities and actualities offered to other news media, who just wanted to hear it from the spoken word. A lot of those went to the black press, which was very eager to have that material. We were also doing affidavits, so just to have a formally scrupulous report of an atrocity or something terrible that had happened.

Now, with Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964, I was asked by Jim Forman and Julian to go to Jackson and be based at the Council of Federated Organizations [COFO], which was an umbrella that had been created for pooling the efforts of all of the civil rights groups to

¹. Dorothy Zellner (JBOHP-07) was interviewed for this project.

have a presence under that umbrella. The groups were not equal by any means. SNCC was far and away the largest of the civil rights groups at that time. We had 122 staff members based in Mississippi. But what we wanted was the presence of, the moral presence of, all the groups, so that it included the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and CORE and other groups. They were all involved.

Now, from COFO, we would get out to be present in local communities when there were decisions being made. Our office became less devoted to the who, what, why, and where, and more devoted to filling in the dotted lines of what was happening and had been happening. What were the causes of injustice and background? By then, we had a research shop headed by Jack Minnis, a political scientist from Louisiana State University, who had joined us. So we were putting out more and more sophisticated materials, including analyses [of events].

With Mississippi Freedom Summer, on the first day of the project in June 1964, three young workers who had gone out to investigate a firebombing of the Mt. Zion Methodist Church in Neshoba County disappeared. Part of the protocol under which I worked, and Julian did too – we developed this protocol together – was to call every jail in the area, to phone every jail in the area on the WATS line and to inquire as to whether this one, this one and this one were being held in their jail.

On June 21st, 1964, I did what I was meant to do, and what Julian was meant to do. We called every jail in the area of where there had been an atrocity or there was something that had happened to somebody. Or in this case, the disappearance of Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman. James Chaney was a local young man, Andrew Goodman was a volunteer who had just arrived from the training program at the Oxford College for Women in Ohio. He had literally just gotten off the bus. Mickey Schwerner was already on hand working for the Congress of Racial Equality.

I called all of the jails in a nine-county area asking if they were holding James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, one of which would have been Neshoba County. I believe it was Cecil Price, the deputy sheriff, who denied to me that they were holding them. It later became very clear they were holding them and in fact he was about ready to pass them on to convey them over to their killers in the Ku Klux Klan or who were affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan.

So what we were doing was a multi-purpose, multi-function everything, from calling jails to getting out more and more sophisticated news reports, getting out more and more sophisticated special reports offering actualities with live voices from the local movement and working with the elite of the national news corps who were these individuals of conscience. They were making fights with their editors to get those stories carried. None of them was having an easy time of it. Some had earned enough credibility that just their filing would be enough. Claude Sitton [of *The New York Times*] definitely fell in that category.

But others were still having to make fights and they would often tell us about it. This is why I have such an awareness of the fact that the Southern news media considered black

atrocities or black deaths to be not newsworthy. They would tell us how their editors saw that. How else would I know that? It's not my supposition. It's not my opinion. It's what I was told by stalwart fearless exceptions, who were ready to work hard to get something broken in the news.

THE KENNEDY AND JOHNSON ADMINISTRATIONS

GI: Professor King, what was your view of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations?

MK: On June 21st, 1964, when the three young men Mickey Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman disappeared, I was the one who typed the news release that went out that night.² Around midnight, according to my notes, I called John Doar of the Justice Department. We had a very good relationship with John Doar. We respected him. We admired him.

I have no emotional bad memory of that conversation with him. I would have called him Mr. Doar. Remember, I'm very young. He was Mr. Doar of the Justice Department and I'm an official spokesperson [for SNCC]. I told him what had happened. There were individuals in the Kennedy administration that were in the Lyndon Johnson administration. There wasn't that much difference between the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. The Kennedy administration was not a monolith, first of all. I would say that it's quite important to remember that the Kennedy family had a kind of Harvard liberalism. They did not really know black families.

So I think that it's very important to remember where they were from and the fact that their take was the take of an elite family under elite circumstances looking at a people that they did not know and were not intimate with. There was a great deal of intimacy in the South. Some of it was brutal and cruel, but not all of it. The other thing that I remember is the historian Howard Sitkoff talking to me. I quote him in *Freedom Song*, as matter of fact. He said the Kennedy posture was one of minimalism. Just do as little as you possibly can. And I think that there was some truth to that because there was not a great deal of energy or muscle from that family until Bobby, in his final days, was free and operating on his own. But up until then I think that Howard Sitkoff had it right. It was a minimalist policy that seemed to pervade everything.

THE FBI

GI: Professor King, can you tell us about your experience working with the FBI?

MK: Well [long pause, then smiles], I find it very difficult to say that we "worked" with the FBI because that is the wrong verb. In the protocols that Julian and I worked out for what we did every day, if something had happened that constituted a federal infraction, calling the FBI was part of what we were meant to do. But they were distant and cold. Moreover, I

². Professor King donated her SNCC papers to the Wisconsin State Historical Society. You can find them on line at: <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/p15932coll2>

believe that there was complete collusion between the FBI and the law officers and vigilante groups and terror organizations. They were all working together hand in glove. This is particularly true in Mississippi. I remember when I was working in Atlanta with Miss Ella Baker, I would come downstairs from 31 Exchange Place, I think it was, and there would be men, with great big abdomens and smoking cigars and spitting tobacco and so on. Their hats pulled down just standing across the street from 31 Exchange Place watching who was coming out and sometimes taking photographs. Everybody around me said they were the Georgia Bureau of Investigation [GBI], which worked hand in glove with the FBI.

I never engaged them, although I could be mischievous. There were times when I called and gave false reports just to see if there would be any reaction. I once called the Atlanta police using the name of a New England Transcendentalist, Margaret Fuller.

I said, "This is Margaret Fuller calling. There's a demonstration at such and such street and such and such street. Is the Atlanta police force aware of this? Are you aware of this?" Then I went to that place and I watched to see if they came and they did. I don't think I've ever talked about this before, but I did that once to find out whether they paid any attention to anything that was going on because we couldn't discern any effectiveness.

We couldn't discern any intervention. We couldn't discern any mediation, any concern for getting an accurate record. We couldn't discern any difference that was being made by the FBI. That's the long and the short of it.

GI: So they were not they were not a friendly witness?

MK: Not in our experience. That doesn't pertain to our ability to reach Mr. Doar. But then he was at a very senior level and he had the authority to be involved in ways other than a local agent would have had.

GI: Was there anyone other than John Doar that you felt could or would help you?

MK: No [pauses]. No [pauses]. I don't remember anything like that whatsoever. I also remember the *Jackson Clarion Ledger*. I remember thinking to myself that it should be printed in red, like dripping blood, because it just seemed so aligned with the forces of no change, just opposed to any change whatsoever.

PETER BOURNE: A FOREIGNER CONFRONTS SOUTHERN SEGREGATION

GI: Dr. Bourne, as a young student from England, can you tell us some of your first impressions about coming to the segregated South?

PB: In retrospect, I was still quite young. It was just before my 18th birthday, and I was still in the process of learning the difference between being an adolescent and an adult. My world initially was very much the world of Emory and my academic pursuits. I was very struck by the difference between academic institutions in the UK and academic institutions in the U.S. A lot of the students at that time at Emory were, if not from Georgia, from the

South. The thing that struck me and appalled me were just simple things, like students would be in the library with their feet on the table in the library. And they would stick their chewing gum under the edge of the tables. I was used to students who were more refined than that. The whole thing was kind of like cultural shock. The race issue: you could address it or not address it. It was very easy to just ignore it and just go about your life. It wasn't my problem. That could have been my attitude, certainly, for the first year that I was there when I was still an undergraduate.

So I say I essentially met no black people because there was no occasion where I would ever be exposed to black people. In the beginning it was hard for me to distinguish between the South and America, more largely. My assumption was that everything I saw in the South or upset me here in the South was the same all over America. I loved that most of that was not, in fact, true. When I graduated from medical school and spent a year as a fellow working in the city jail, I had to go somewhere to do a regular internship. I decided to apply to the main city hospital in Seattle, in part because it was as far away from Atlanta as possible. In addition, it was, at the time, one of the best internships in the country. So I had an academic motivation, but I was quite struck by how incredibly different Seattle was and how different the [Pacific] Northwest was from the South.

It is just kind of interesting -- the South grows on you. The things that shocked me during my early years in Atlanta I have nostalgic affection for now. Part of it is that, over time, [because of my] involvement with the establishment of Atlanta. I met this fellow and convinced him to run for president [smiles].³ It was a different experience. I see people absolutely appalled with Jeff Sessions as attorney general.⁴ Many of the things he's done. I think that the appalling. But I know people like that there all over the South like Jeff Sessions. At one level they're elegant and charming, patrician, even though they may be as racist as can be. For people to get really upset about Jeff Sessions, I find it difficult to get into that because I just known those people all of my adult life. So you take them knowing what they are. All of my experiences after I came to the U.S., I suppose was, after the first year, I got to know people like Julian. There were a lot of other people.

The black community in Atlanta was far more sophisticated than the white community in Atlanta, even though the white people were incredibly self-assured and arrogant, and thought they just knew all about everything. There was Maynard Jackson, who [in 1972] became [the first African American] mayor of Atlanta. He had a sister who was a distinguished opera singer. She had great acclaim everywhere, but not in Atlanta. Jesse Norman, who actually was from Augusta, not Atlanta, was a world acclaimed singer. White Atlanta didn't produce people like that. Yet, there were organizations like the Piedmont Driving Club, which was the most incredible organization of self-appointed ignoramuses

³. Dr. Bourne is referring to Jimmy Carter, who won the 1976 presidential election. Dr. Bourne served in the Carter White House as the Drug Czar from 1977-1978.

⁴. Jeff Sessions served as Attorney General in the Trump Administration from 2017-2018. A native Alabaman, he was a controversial figure dating back to late 1980s, when he failed to receive confirmation for a federal judicial appointment after allegations of racism in his personal and professional life. Among those opposing his confirmation was Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., who wrote a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee outlining her objections. He resigned shortly after this interview was conducted.

that you could possibly imagine. And it was sort of geared to perpetuating memories of the Old South.

But these people knew nothing about the rest of the world. They hadn't been outside of Georgia or outside of Atlanta. Their view of the world, I thought, was just ignorant and uninformed. How can you be so arrogant? So that's what struck me. I didn't put it in my book on [Jimmy] Carter because he told me incredible stories about, firstly, when he was running for governor and then secondly when he was running for president how badly he was treated by the Atlanta establishment. They didn't take him seriously. They didn't think he was going anywhere. He was from South Georgia, and they just treated him appallingly.

THE LEGACY OF JULIAN BOND

GI: Do either of you have memories of Julian's 1965 run for the Georgia Legislature?

MK: I was not involved in his Georgia bid. Of course, we all were participants in it. There was a certain amount of discussion within SNCC staff about whether this was a good idea or not. Some people liked it very much because there was a very strong debate as to whether we should move toward actually dealing with the power structures and actually beginning to influence directly the institutions and organs of power in the country. Others thought that there should be more of the approach that we have been taking. The approach that we have been taking involved a great deal of what Gandhi had called the "constructive program," in which, essentially, when a people is under oppression, they withdraw themselves from the powers that have created that oppression. They begin, even though they're still living in the old order, creating the new order by building institutions that will someday serve with them. It's a very, very potent concept.

This is a lot of what we did in Mississippi, although no one has written to interpret it yet. I'm working toward that. Staughton Lynd had studied this material and it was through Staughton Lynd, who was very influential with the Freedom Schools [during Mississippi Summer], that we began to articulate and to work on that. So the Freedom Schools pulled the children out of pathetically impoverished black schools and, for that summer, gave them a view of history that recognized the enormity of the contribution made to the building of the United States of America by African people.

I can't think of any people who have given more to the building of this country than Africans. They are not the only ones, of course, but they are among the great builders and creators of this country. So they got history as it ought to have been taught to them. And there were other ways in which we did this, too. Martin Luther King considered voter registration to be part of the "constructive program." The building of cooperatives, the development of credit unions, the development of an alternative political party, the development of alternative parallel institutions is a big part of the constructive program.

So this was really quite a significant situation that was underway. Within SNCC, there was a big debate as to whether or not to seek political office or to continue operating as if you were solely on the outside, sort of "inside versus outside." It was a big debate issue.

Everybody had an opinion. But I was not involved. I didn't have any responsibility. I'll tell you a funny story. Later, when Julian ran against John Lewis for the Congress, we had one night for dinner Congressman Bill Richardson of New Mexico, who had also been Governor of New Mexico. When we sat down Bill said, "Oh, Mary, I saw John Lewis today and he said to me, "You know, Mary is all right. Mary is all right. There's only one thing." And Bill said he said, "What's that?" And [John] said, "Well, she helped Julian in his race, not me." In fact I didn't help either of them. I gave neither of them a dime. I just sat it out. How can I decide between John and Julian? I couldn't. It's just a funny story.

Going onto Julian's legacy, I think that there are a number of really important things that we need to highlight here. One is the recognition that he was very young and yet was able to be enormously influential because of his native gifts, the extraordinary talents that he possessed in his own mind, his own ability to speak, his ability to articulate, his ability to write, which was quite extraordinary. But I think it's a reminder to young people that at a very, very early age you can make a demonstrative difference and you should not in any way be intimidated by youth. It's an asset. You don't know how big the obstacles are. You're not aware of all the hindrances, all the blockages that lie ahead, all of the forms of opposition. Fine. Use that as a protective sort of tent around you that allows you to do that work. You don't want to be aware of too many of the obstacles because it's too daunting.

Another thing I think to remember is that when you involve yourself in a justice effort, such as the freedom movement in the United States, which is what we called it, by the way – and thank you for calling it that. Even now when I hear the term civil rights, I think of lawyers going into courthouses – I think about the extraordinary, marvelous, magnanimous, generous black people with whom I lived and worked for four years. The term "freedom movement" was much closer to what we were aiming for and that's what we called the movement internally. Since we've done such a bad job on historiography and getting the news out as to what the movement was like so far, I don't hold out much hope that this is ever going to be recognized. But I do think that, with Julian, that had he lived, he would have, until his very last day, still been working on the freedom movement.

I think that's one of the big aspects of his legacy that we should be aware of. His understanding that it was prudent to understate rather than to ever overstate seems to me one of the biggest and most profound lessons that today's generations can take from studying the movement. I think that it is imperative that people realize that how you talk the language that you use how you articulate your goals, the articulation of claims and demands, these are all much more important than walking on a demonstration. I myself am not interested in protest and I'm not interested in witness. Don't ask me for help on sheer protest. Don't ask me for help on sheer witness. It's not enough.

We know a great deal now about how non-violent action works that we did not know during the days of the movement. We understand it because a great deal of research has been done by a number of scholars all over the world. We now understand this kind of power. This is a distinct form of power, distinctive from other forms of power and we know a lot more about it. We need to continue working on one of Julian's real contributions, which is an understanding that the articulation and expression, the choice of words, the way that

you talk about what it is that you're seeking is maybe as important as any action that you would ever take. I would highlight that as one of the major and possibly unique contributions that he made to the movement. Certainly, it has shaped my life. The way that I speak, the way I write, the way I handle anything.

Speaking of which, we have now got so much non-violent action in the United States, most of it ineffective because of the inability to discern what the claims are what the demands are that are being asked. So there is no conveyance of actionable requests that would allow a bench sitter or an onlooker or an observer to say, "Oh, that's right. I'd like to be involved." We have marches, huge grandiose marches. Everybody's carrying a different sign or no sign at all or the sign that they're carrying bears no claim. No demand. I think that this is a very big mistake. I would also say that we need to do something, and this is something that I've talked with Jim Lawson about a great deal. We need to pay more attention to the preamble of the Declaration of Independence because it articulates the consent of the population the consent of the people. This is basically how non-violent action works. It withdraws the consent of the people. It non-cooperates. It denies obedience. One of the discernments that Gandhi had made as early as 1905 while he was still working in South Africa was that no system can stand if the people cease to obey it.

So Julian, because he was so articulate and so elegant in his ability to express ideas and write ideas, I think stands as a very wonderful exemplar for today's movement that tomorrow's movements and today's campaigns and tomorrow's campaigns of the importance of how you articulate and express what it is that you're seeking. By the way, I would say that based on my own study of movements all over the years, it's very, very important to be able to articulate and to say this is what we're fighting for and to have it be explicable, understandable and something that others will want to help and join in.

GI: Dr. Bourne, do you have any final thoughts.

PB: I think he lived an extraordinary life and was a wonderful model for a lot of other people.