

1

Mrs. Foster interview

L. Sounds good to me.

B. OK

Terry: How many times you been interviewed in the last year?

MrsF. I had to start turning some of them down, I just couldn't do it because um its always one thing after the other. It's like we had this movement--I was away when the movement started-- I was in kSalt Lake City

Terry: thats where I was born.

Mrs. F. Utah. Huh?

Terry: That's where I was born.

Mrs. F: Say--that's where you what?

Terry: I was BORN__

Mrs. F. Oh-- you was born--?you was born in Salt Lake? Really? Well, I'll have to tell my daughter --

Bill: She lives in Salt Lake?

Mes. kF: Yeah, my son--yeah, they both live there.

Bill: We lived there for, uh, 8 years

Mes. F: Really?

Bill: I went to the university there. And he was born when I was at the university.

Mrs.F: Ah--they'll be here on the 27th--you know, I got to clean this house up (laughs) boy, you come here after the 27th you won't know my house--all those newspapers and things there--be up off the floor--

Bill: How's the sound, Larry?

L. Sounds fine.

Bill: Oh, OK.

L. Just ignore me, Mrs. F.

Bill: Well, why don't we--we were going to ask you ah, saay, before the voting movement began--how many were registereed for voting in say 1962

Mrs. F. Well-- a friend of mineMr. kBoynton (?) he and his wife had been instrumental in registering people trying to get people registered, rather, in the rule (rural?) especially so--because ah, he was county agentand she worked with him--and he kept a record--he called it the honor roll--as you'd getregistered he would ask them to come by his office you know, put your name on the honor roll. I checked that honor roll and it wasnt a 130 names on it--that was in 63 when I started you know when we were fixin to open the citizenship class that I conducted. It wasn't a hundred and 30, that was in the-the county and city combined. Black registered voters.

Bill: How many eligible voters would you say there were?

Not registered, but--what would be your guess, at that time,

how many could have been registered?

Mrs. F: Oh, how many could have been registered, well, the,

the population for ah, registered voters, people of, ah, that were eligible, to vote, so far as age, I think it was --I'm trying to think, was it 18 then, or 21? I don't know, but anyway, the population, the percentage, was over fifty, it was 55, the percentage of blacks over whites, at that time I went to the courthouse and checked to see how many white registered voters we had, and we had over 9000 white registered voters, and did not have a hundred and 30 black registered voters. Now, we outnumber the white registered voters. We have a few more hundred. I guess you found that out, didn't you? (laughs) But it took a lotta work, a lotta work, a lotta courage, a lotta suffering, and a lotta dying, which was sad, you know, for us, to ah, accomplish such victories. Even the death of Jonathan Daniels I wouldn't say even the death, because when anybody give their life give their life they have given their all but--his death and the death of others is the reason that, um, we were able to accomplish the things that we accomplished. They sacrificed and died that we might survive, as first-class citizens. You not a first class citizen until you're registered., till you're a registered voter.

Bill: Did you meet JD?

Eliminated
Tolson
image disappears →
skip cells →
Mrs. F: Ah, well, I never did, you know, just work personally with him, but, whenever newcomers would come to town, and especially whites (sync beep) because, we welcomed everybody of all races, but when whites would come, you know, to work with us, and--we knew that um, they had to be concerned, we felt like that anyway, and for them to come to a place where it was just obvious that it was just --whole lotta trouble-- we were in a lotta trouble here--and there was a lotta racism--and --where there's racism there's a lotta hate, and violence, and for them to an environment like that I felt like that they really had to be concerned, so we welcomed them, and we felt like that um, that that would put more, would give us you know, more clout, you know, when outside people would come in, nevertheless, it really was provoking you know, for the whites here, so many of the whites, they majority of the whites, because back in the 60's, there were some whites that, ah, didn't go along with us, lotta violence and racism, but they didn't have the moral courage to speak up, to speak out, and stand up. So when people like Jonathan Daniels and Mrev. Reeb from Boston, and you take for instance, even the, the white young men from --Schwerener, and--ah, Goodman--I can't think of all three of their names--Cheney, Cheney was the black, yes, Goodman and Schwerener. Although they went to Mississippi, to the same thing was happening, same thing was happening in Alabama, was happening in Mississippi. Parts of Georgia, and

Bill: And you think that their sacrifice, you were saying you think that they're responsible in some way for the increase in the voting --could you--could tell about that a little bit more? Why you think that's so?

Mrs. F. Well, I think that's so because um, whenever, (two

sync beeps) they would come in, the white or blacks, but seems like its just like I say, the whites made a a special impact, because it was a surprise, you know, to, for so many, to so many blacks, that ah, you know, whites would come in to help us. because blacks had really been, we'd really been treated so badly until sometimes, I mean, they just paint the picture, you know, that all whites are just alike, so when they would come in, that would really seems like, raise the self esteem of my people. because they had such low self-esteem, you see, they would just, ah, they had developed hopeless as I have said, and felt like it was no need to keep trying to get registered to vote. They would tell me so. "Welll, Mrs. Foster, what you want us to go back for? They not gonna do anything but just write ya a letter saying 'You missed on or more pertinent questions, try again.'"? Well, that's what they would do, you know, and they would do thayt for a a long, long time before, finally, they say, well, seems like would say, "We'd better pass somebody," because they knew that there were some of us out there working that just might follow through, you know, take steps to do something about it. And we couldn't say they didn't register anybody. But, the people they would register --now, teachers, doctors, professional people, they they would register, the, people of, you know, elementary grades and some people just, the most, illiterate, you know, well, they would register those people.

Larry: I wonder why they'd do that, why thosepeople?

Mrs. F: Well, I guess they felt like there's--some people just feel that they gotcha down, they'll do everything in their power to keep you down, and they feel like if if certain people would rise, you know, if they would let certain people rise, that they might bejust, they might have the expertise to kinda take over and do what they are doing.

Larry: Sounds like the Union of South Africa, they way you describe it.

Mrs. F: Ye-yeah, they're really experienced in going through--but the same, we had the same problems-- the only difference --we were usen the, um, non-violence philosophy method, which I guess I wouldn't be sitting here today had we done that, I know I wouldn't have, because they would do things, you know, to provoke a riot, and, had there been a riot, you know, they'd just shoot you down, you know, they wanted to kill, this, this, so-called leader (segment?)

Bill: There had to be an excuse for them to do what they

Mrs. F: Ah, yeah. But you know, I-I think about, ah, people in Africa, and--oh, I started out saying the only difference--some of the things that have been done to them like they weren't even allowed to attend the funerals of the people they would kill, they would kill some of them, you know, on route you know, to the funeral, you know, in the processions. Well, we didn't have that. They would kill you all right, but, I mean, but they would do it, you know, it, on the, I mean, under cover. In other words, um, I guess its like stabbing you in the back but you dead just the

same, but, but they didn't just you know, approach a whole crowd of people and just shoot em down like ah, they do in Africa, and I guess those people would--I guess they felt like --and you can't come to that point in life, that, I mean, you just soon die as to live, you know, just, to live, like a --prisoner, just to have someone over ya, treating you like you're nothing, nobody, and--that's why we started that phrase, from Doctor King, and-- and Abernathy used to say it quite often, whenever he would speak, "I am somebody." Jesse says it often, because as you know, Jesse was very young when he started out in the struggle. I remember Jesse well, he came here and worked and fought with us in the trenches.

Bill: Now, you went on the march, and you were the only woman to finish the march without a ride, is that right?

Mrs. Foster: Well, it was two of us, Viola Miller, from Dallas, from Dallas County. We had a more, I think, they were men, though, or something like two or three men to-from Perry County, to walk all the way, and without a rest ride. It took us five days, and it rained almost every day. And um (three sync beeps) /we were entertained by a group from Hollywood on the last night, at Saint Jude's--no, we leftah, yes, were at Saint Jude's, that was our last stop, and then the next morning we supposed to walk to the capitol to see the governor, tell him we wanted the right to vote. He didn't come out to see us, though. George Wallace was the governor then. And-- on the way back home, we saw all these people on the highway, all these lights flashing, and we wondered what it was. And behold, they had shot and killed Mrs. Viola Liuzzo, a white woman, from Detroit, who came here to help us, just like Jonathan Daniels. So, whenever these people give their lives like that---just that in itself to kill a person in cold blood, I mean, and they were killing people of their race, that made--that caused many blacks to really know, and realize the power of the ballot. They knew it was power in that ballot. And that really gave them inspiration you know, to fight that much harder. That's why I say, when white people gave their lives, it seems like it it, uh, it made more of an impact in a way, you know, then it did when blacks were killed. Cause they would say, well now, "You know, Mrs. Foster, if they shoot and kill people of their race, it must be power in that ballot." I'd say, "Well, I'm telling you --that it is, I have told you that there's power in the ballot, so that's all evidence." And when you get it, use it. But I don't know why we don't have more people and I know too, people are not getting the results that they think they should get.

Bill: Through the political process.

Mrs. Foster: That's right.

Bill: I imagine when Jonathan worked in Lowndes County,, trying to register voters, that must have been a pretty scary, kind of an experience.

Mrs. kFoster. Yees. And it took a lotta nerves, and a lotta courage for for him to even go to Lowndes County, because

MR. ARNOLD
277, 5105
A

313

voice not
image not
with day
T. 3

image
disappears

voice
ends

they were bad enough--it was rough enough here , in Dallas County. But they were, ah, a little bit more I guess they they would treat you just as cruel in Dallas County as they would in the--you know, in the smaller counties, but they they really --I don't know, I think they could hide maybe better, you know, in those smaller counties. Sometimes you'd think they were rough, in Dallas County, but they would treat people, much worse you know, in counties like Lownes County, Wilcox --cause, as I said, we didn't have a quite a hundred and thirty in Dallas-- Wilcox county did not have not o n e black registered voter. And to listen to the black man tell you what happened to him when he went to the he say he didn't know whether it was the board of registrars or where he was going, but it was the courthouse there, and he went in , he'd say, he walked in and he said this man was--sitting in in this room, with his feet propped up on the deskhe's sitting in a chair, he'd rat back, he said -I'm telling you just like he told it--, said he walked in said, he said tohim, and this man, told this story, he was taller than you, he was tall, and he was heavy, stout, robust fella--and he said that this white man say he walked in and said good morning sir, he said he didn't speak "What you want, boy?" AndMr. Davis said when he said boy, he said he looked round, like that, you know , there have been some blacks that, as badly as we've been treated and has much as the Klansman have tried to scare and frighten just black peoplek you know, so that they'd even be scared you know, to tryto exist--there are some that, they couldn't frighten, you know, they couldn't scare. He said he looked around fore he said anything as if he was lookin for a boy cause he he said he knew he wasn't a boy. So then he said, "I looked him in the eye, Miss Foster, and said, 'I wanna register to vote.' He said you know when I said that he threw his feet off the desk --'What? You wanna do what?' He said, "I wanna register to vote." He said, "Miss Foster, you want me to tell you what he said, will you excuse me, what he said? I said, what did he say, Mr. Davis? He said, well, he threw his feet down and he he cursed me. Called him a black S.O.B. Told him, niggers didn't vote in jWilcox County. "And if you don't get out of here, I will kick you out of here." And Mr. Davis said, he stood there, "I stood there, and looked at him, before I responded, , I just loked at him for a few seconds and I said to him, white folks, and then, you know, I used to wonder why did some of my people address white people as white folks? (laughs) and so, I knew then, because, Mr. Davis didn't know his name? and he didn't even care toask him his name. he said, I told him, "If you--you had your feet propped up on lthat desk cause you have em down now--but if you kick me outta here, or attempt to kick me outta here, that will be the laaast person that you will ever kick." He said that man, just looked at him, and he turned all colors, and he says, he say he just couldn't like he couldn't believe what he was hearing. He said, "But I stood there until, for a few seconds, to make sure he had

absaawwbed (absorbed) what I was sayin. This man was a teacher, a smart fellow. And hesaid, he said, he turned and walked out, and he just he just left the man just sitting there, you know, just like he's spellbound. Of course, he did not register him, and no blacks got registered there until after I started that class, and in that book you will see where I have here--Bernard Lafayette with me Bernard Lafayette--I have the date here. Bernard took my little ragged Chevrolet that he he went around and and went out in Browns Station, as we would call it. That was in jBrowns, (?)Alabama, those people out there, which was in jDallas County. It was people there, where they were interested and had been here many times trying to register to vote. And they were turned down. And he went out and he, um, brought those people in, talked to them, and encouraged them to come in. And it was not until then he also went to Wilcox County, he went to Camden, and it took a lotta nerve to do that, because there were some reeal mean people there. Not any meaner than people we had here, though. But they--people here you know, they they just ah, seems like, I don't know, maybe they had more sense than they do some things, that they more sensible about some things then ah, the ones in the smaller places but its many of em, you know would do just what they would do out there. Because they they did everything like intimidation, intimidating you, trying to intimidate you, I had them ride home behind with the lights on bright, those were the Klansmen. They would ride round with their Confederate flag draped over the back of the truck--that's why black people feel the way they do about the Confederate flag and I know you've been readingf about--we've been asking them to take the flag off the Capitol and they say its history to them, and and that history means as much to them, as our history means to us. But it seems like they've always been a step ahead of us. And--we were enslaved by them. And of course I don't see how they could compare --I don't see any comparison there. But uh, that's why we feel the way we do about that flag, and anytime they parade and meddle us and attack us they have that flag, they have the Confederate flag. Waving it, you know, so we associate the flag with the klansmen.

Larry and Bill: With good reason, yeah, right.

Mrs. F: We have reasons, that's right.

Larry. Well, Mrs. Foster, you need a black governor in the statehouse.

Mrs. F: Yeah, that would be good. They's take that flag down. We got some whites. We about to get a governor in there, I doubt he'd make Sigimond. I believe Sigimond would take that flag down. Because since I've been--since the voting rights act passed there have--there have been many barries and hurdles that we still had to fight through and break through jump over, you know, and he was secrety of state then and of course the secretary of state has a lotta influence you know with registration and voting. And um, we used to go over there see him in committees, we'd call

and he'd tell us to come --yhe would come over here--you know, and ah, he would tell them that voter registrar he's get up and straighten out, he said. Even after black people were deputized as deputy registrars, you know, they'd try to come up with rules that --there's just a certain time that you can register people, certain days and you're supposed to ah notify the (unwin?) when you are coming ((???)set up a booth--and you know, just everything to block you. And so he said you can go, you can go anytime, you can register anytime, anydate, anywhere. if you a deputy registrar. He came two three times and he finally, you know, straightened things out.

Larry: What happened to Richmond Flowers?

Mrs. F: Do you know, I would like to know that myself?

Larry: We'd like to talk to him. Cause he lost his job, and I believe was put in jail over this whole thing--something happened to him. cause he tried to get coleman the man who killed Daniels-- tried in a way that was fair--and what happened was he tried to get the trial held until the only white witness who was wounded(whle story of that trial business)

Mrs. Foster-I really-have you--I have wondered and I have asked not recently, but, seems like he just mysteriously disappeared. L: Well, we can ask Sheriff John Hulet tomorrow, we're going to see him in Hayneville. Sheriff Hulett.

Mrs. F: Um-hum.

Larry. Maybe he will know.

Mrs. Foster: I doubt it. You know, uh--since you mention it, I'm gonna ask some whites. I'm gonna see if I can --I'm trying to think of some whites back there--cause you know back in those days, I didn't have many white friends.

(laughs)

Bill: But you've got some white signatures on your jacket. Any back from 65?

Mrs. F. Lemme tell you somethin. Do you know--they might not love me which I know they don't but you know they respect me? You'd be surprized. They respect me, I say, thas all I want. That's well and good. Just if they respect me. But I-I-have always felt that all whites--I'm not saying this now, don't think I'm saying it because you three white folks are here--but I've always felt like-- and I still feel like this--that all whites are not alike. I say well, and they say (laughs) Mom kFoster, but sometimes they have used illustrations, saying, "You say all whites not alike." I say, "Well now, as a race, I mean, they are terrible. But individually, I just have met some whites, that I can-- I'm a pretty good judge of people---and I can tell what they're doin and how they think it comes from the inside. It depends upon how a person because you-you can be any color, black, green, blue, yella, you know, and if you're wrong on the inside, you mean on the inside, you're mean! (Laughs)

Larry: My theory about greaves' racism as illness, disease.

Mrs. F. Oh, excuse me, I thought that was my phone. Well, I tell you one thing--you take for instance, if a baby was born right out here on this front porch --if that baby comes here-- I don't care what color that baby is-- a woman bout the color of my shoe could take that baby -- and take that baby home with her-- and nurse that baby--which a lotta blacks --back in the slave days--they nursed white babies they nursed even since slavery there have been black women that have whites dependent on them so much --they found that we are dependable--I don't say all blacks but-- that is a characteristic --of us, you know, so many of us-- and they just trust--their liveswith their servants--still--let's see--now this was abuncuntecha (?)they ride out, they got to be on the back seat--they ashamed of 'em--and they don't want to sit with em, they don't wanna associate with em, or sit with em in public--but at home they in the bed sleepin with the children--when they go out, you know, dancing, thru the night, and they can sleep in bed with the children, and all that kinda thing, and then you know, in public, and they don't wanna be seen with us. But I guess, I started out sayin so much --oh!-- as I was saying, you take this baby,

and this baby wouldn't know anything else about any mother, but a black mother, and really the color of her skin black, you know? If she nursed that baby, and give that baby the the tender feeling and the love, you know, that she would give any other child, that child would be just as endeared to her, he or she wouldn't know any doubts--you know. We got to be taught these things, and and and then you know, your environmental conditions you know that that conditions you, I mean you act accordingly these things that you ah --you know treat (?) disposed to, you know, when you, when you're young, I mean, as you develop, in your formative stage, when you get older, well, they stick you.

Bill: Like that song in South Pacific, you got to be taught to hate.

Mrs. kFoster: That's right. And and how many, how many ah, cooks, these black cooks, have said, and have told us, (or, perhaps, havent said and havent' told us?) and--my mother, was she was a cook, they wouldn't be listening when they were around the dinner table? and this is what the white parents would teach the children, what they would say! You know, not sjpposed to, and sometimes its like if they don't, the children would be playin with the black --the black parents they presented it, then that's what they'd be chastized for, "You don't play with him!" "You gettin' too large, now, to play with him!" I mean, if they start playin while they was small, seems like they didn't think too much about it, but they gettin a little older, "Well, why can't I play with him?" "Because, he--don't you see, he's not your color, he's not your equal brother (?) ---and they gonna teach em all this --that's why all this hate starts, you see, and they start sticking their tongue out atcha, and you know, sayin things, doing what their momma and poppa done told me, but there are some whites, that didn't do that, see, I had some whites to tell me, you take for instance, um, I married very, very young, because my mother was a deeply religious formative(?) boy, she was so strict! She left my father, my father he raised Catholic, she wanted us educated in the city, she didn't want us educated in the rural--and he promised--to move this house, so we could be educated in the city, and he didn't do it, so she she pulled up and slipped away and --brought us up here, brought us to Selma. MY momma had been married twice--her first husband died, and of course, ah, she married again, and, my dad never did, he never did, ah, just give up, momma said he loved the cows more than he did us! But he died up here in Selma, he was living right here in this house with me, when he died, cause he died in the hospital, but ah, I was sayin that, to say that, ah, --I kinda lost my point!--

Larry: Well, you were talking about how people become racist.

Mrs. Foster: Oh, yes! How they become racist! Uh, huh. Yes, that's right. And so, my mother, and so she brought here, but the white people down there, they told my dad, that ah, my mother was, she was real fair, and ah, you

listen to her, she thinks she's white, and blah, blah, bah, you know, and planted all of them ideas in his head, that "if she really cared for you, she wouldn't have left you!" But my mother said that um, she did her stepfather brought her to Selma, and put her in Selma University, put her and her half-sister in Selma University, to go to school, and her mother which (unintelligible) said "No, they got to help me on the farm, they got to help me work." I didn't have-- (end of side A)

you can;t get it either, you know, you got to stay here and help me work." And he had to come up here and get my momma and she didn't have a chance, you know, no more of this getting an education, she could read and write , but not no, you know, real high formal education. So for that reason, you know, poppa never, he never did come up so my mother just practically reared us by herself.

LARRY: Did they vote, either of your parents?

Mrs. Foster: No, no. No, it done took him close to eight years to register to vote. Right here in Selma.

Larry: Did your father get to register to vote before he died?

Mrs. F: No, no. No, he didn't. And, --do you know what? Many people, after ah, before '63, in was in my mind, to, you know, one day, just start some kind of direct action, you know, like I did, you know, just to do something about it, that what was going on, you know, to do something about changin things--ah-huh. And improving conditions for black people. I had that dream. And when Dr. King came by, you know, talking about his dream? I said, oh my God, I had a dream all this time." I was reluctant--very shy, or something, to talk about it,, I said, so since I didn't, I won't now, because people would say, "Oh, she just sayin that because (laughs) Dr. King had a dream!" But honest to goodness, I am a dreamer! I guess that's why I have accomplished what I have.

Larry: How many black voters have you registered, or have been responsible for registering since you started?

Mrs. Foster: Oh, my God, well once, did I show you this?

LARRY: Yeah. Must be hundreds.

Mrs.F: Sure. Just in a short period. I didn't have a chance to--you know what happened? We had a black man, Reverend F. D. Reese, to run for mayor. And-- I understand Mr. Smitherman said, there was only one person that he was afraid that maybe would stand in his way, by being re-elected, and that was Marie Foster. He and Earl Goodwin--I call Mr. Goodwin right now my friendly enemy, we are very friendly and--I'm voting for him--he's running for re-electionhe's in the run-off. He's chairrman of the Dallas County ah, Executive , the County Executive Committee. He's Chairman--I'm a member, I'm one of the first blacks to become a member of the Dallas County Executive Committee. And he--Noopie Cosby, who is, ah--

Larry: his picture's all over town?

Mrs. F: Yes. He ran--he didn't have to be in the run-off.

His opponent was one of our white friends--now coming back to white friends--I believe he's truly a friend. He has been with us, he's been ostracized, he's a doctor, he's a psychiatrist, Dr. Hodo(?) And his she's a lovely person. And I really believe--they are real people that's all they approve of to be, just real people.

Terry: Did he lose business for his stand?

Mrs. f; Dr. Hodo? He got just about more than he can do! He has a lot of, you know, black people, too, but he has white patients, yes, he has white patients. I tell you, there's a lotta white people has been educated to the point where they have learned that ostracizing themselves you know, from the whites, that helped blacks, and believe in, justice for blacks, they have found out, --it doesn't help and it does no good. You know, for them, to, ah, cut em off and ah, dislike em and and ostracize them, and, you know. I think they found themselves out there, by themselves, you know, in the eighties, you know. (Laughs)

Larry: I have to ask this question. Is Noofie Crosby anything like he looks?

Mrs. Foster: Say what:

Larry: What's he like? As a politician?

Mrs. F: Who?

Larry: Noofie.

Mrs. F. oooh.

Larry. Not good. That's that what I thought!

Bill: (laughs)

Larry: When I saw that poster Mrs. Foster, and I thought to myself that guy's--

Mrs. F: (laughs)

Larry: His elevator doesn't go to the top.

Mrs. f: So--you-you're pretty good! (laughs)

Terry and the rest (laugh)

Mrs. F: (laughs) Well--I tell you what--

Larry: Yes?

Mrs. F: We have a republican governor now. First in 112 years, did you hear about that?

Bill and Terry: Yeah, we've heard about that!

Mrs. F: And an old, old, old racist, white democrat Gray--he just pushed em in there, you know, he he ah, all of that, "wake up democrats" did you happen to see that one?

Bill: Yeah! I was going to ask you to read a couple of things for us.

Mrs. F: (Laughs)

kjBill: I was going to ask you to read ah, "Wake up Democrats"--

Mrs. Foster: (laughs) He brainwashed the Democrats--

Larry: Want me to film this?

Bill: Yeah, I think this would be nice. Would you read, ah, the first paragraph, and then maybe and then maybe read the eyes on the prize because I think it shows that you're still pretty conscious of racism in the south. (Selma?)

Mrs. F: (walking on Bill's lines) I can read it (unintelligible word) but would you get could you go out there and get--

Bill: Glasses?

Mrs. F: Ah, hah. They're in my pocketbook. I guess you know, I couldn't get the newspaper --the Montgomery Advertiser my favorite paper! But I found out--ah, the owner is a republican, Alvin Thenn (?) he's our journalist, he's the editor here, he he would not ah, Wake up Democrats, he wouldn't publish it in his paper.

kBill: First one you're gonna read is what, "Wake up Democrats"?

Mrs. Foster? Wake up Democrats?

Bill: This is your message to democrats, right?

Mrs. F: Yes, this is my message to democrats.

Larry: Give me a second, here.

Bill: he'll get it ready.

(four sync beeps)

LaRRY: OK, all yours.

Bill: ok.

Mrs. F: "If I'm called a liberal because I want to provide jobs for the jobless, shelter for the homeless, health for the sick, food for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and education for the children, then Lord, please don't let them call me by any other name. And let my epitaph read: 'Marie Liberal Foster.' Wake up, Democrats! Can;t you see Bush is using fallacies (?) to sway you from your party? He is avoiding the real issues, taking you for granted, that he has his fingers in your eyes, and is leading some of the-- and leading some by the nose. But you must stand tall on your tiptoes and say loudly, 'I know my foes! I'm not going any further.' The Democrats are portrayed to look so bad. Can;t you see you've been had? If we don't see the handwriting on the wall, then we don't have any sense at all. The republican party is having a round-up. Headed up by our cowboys, Reagan and Bush. They are going from state to state, campaigning with a grin, twirling their ropes in a loop, to rope you in. They have set their round-up goal for 100--99 won't do! Wake up, Democrats! They are out to get you! Watch Mr. Reagan go back to his ranch to ride his big white mare! While the jobless, the cutoffs, the cutbacks, are ig-nored. And the sick watch from their wheelchairs. While Bush preaches liberalism and conservatism, a fool don't need a school to explain what he's trying to do you. He wants you to look bad, and feel sad, sometimes you can't help but feel blue. But you must wake up, Democrats, cause Bush is out to get you! Don't be misled on the slick trick topics high taxes liberalism, big spending, and mainstream--they don't mean what they say. or say what they mean. You pay hidden taxes, that make the rich richer. Under Democrats, you are aware of your tax. It helps the poor to eliminate slums, and (slide?), and will take the bite out of crime. Wake up, democrats! Don't follow what they pursued(?) And don't you forget--they are out to get you. Peace and Love, Marie Foster, Selma, Alabama.

Terry: Great--that;s great

Bill: See that's message delivered. How about this one --maybe you can tell us a little about it --

Mrs. F: (walking over) about ah--you know, the people get weary, they fight so hard, for so long. And--that's human nature, you know. They get tired. They don't get--you hear Andrew Young use the phrase--we started that phrase here in Selma--"I noways tired" (?) But physically, you know, they get tired.

Terry: I read a quote by Thurgood Marshall once who said, "I'm tired of trying to save the white man's soul."

Mrs. F: (laughs) That's right. So, we start saying to them "it's the prize that you are working for." And the only way to win this prize -- and that's the prize is your total freedom, and justice, and the only way to win it is to keep your eyes on the prize.

:Larry: Whenever you want to start.

Mrs. F: I thought about, "keep your eyes on the prize."

Lary: Just gimme a second.

Mrs. F. Excuse me.

Larry: That's OK (5 sync beeps)

Mrs. F: Keep your eyes on the Prize. We've made some progress, but don't optimize, because racism is on the rise. Keep your eyes on the prize, the Howard Beach tragedy was not a surmise, it actually happened. And one thing it exemplified, a surge of racism on the rise. Keep your eyes on the prize. The Forsythe--the Forsythe County incident for some was a surprise. How could we be so despised? And deprived of living anywhere on God's green earth? He made, that we all might abide. Keep your eyes on the prize, when nights are weary, and days are dark, pray and hold tight with all your might, for God will lead you to the light, and someday I do believe, things will be all right. Ma Marie Foster.

Larry: You wanna know something interesting? Just on your last words, we ran outta film. It's empty.

Bill: That was very nice, thank you.

Larry: Anything else that you'd like to add, that's you'd like to say before we--before we adjourn?

Mrs. F: Well--did I bring my, uh huh, my note book, Oh, this is my orange badge of courage. You know, I have the autograph of so many people on here, that I do consider my true friends, there's many people on here, yes, that were with us in the trenches. Here's a lady on here --I'm sorry you are out of film because

Larry: I've got a little bit left on another magazine, so I'm gonna use it up, hang on.

Bill: OK; He's gonna take a shot of it.

(a minute of discussion about lightmeter, etc.)

Bill: Tell us about one of those names?

Mrs. F: Yees, I'm trying to see which one.

Bill: Was it this one?

Mrs. ff: Oh, yes. This lady was 92 years old!

Terry: 92 when she signed it?

Mrs. F: 92 and still-- she was teachin music at Howard University three times a week. And she had educated all her children, she had 6--she passed away just a few months ago.

Filmed
Tape 5

large hoop
voice lds

But its people llike that, you know, that --gives you courage.

Larry: Want me to film you talking about that?

Mrs. F: Oh, my jacket?

Bill: The one you want to talk about, we've only got one more shot, so--a name that you want to talk about.

Larry: Pick it, but don't start till we--

Bill: till wetell you to get going.

Larry: You let me know when you're about ready.

(three sync beeps) larry: all yours.

Mrs. F: Ye,s, well, Mahalia Jackson? (Larrythat'd be great)

Mahalia Jackson, she was a greatsupporter of Dr. King. She RAISED MONEY for Dr. King,

(Larry: Could you hold up her name a little bit so that we could see it?

Mrs.f: ah, Mahalia--Mahalia Jackson, she kissed me when she autographed this jacket.

Larry: aim it at

Bill: Just keep it.

Mrs. kF:Oh; aimed at him?

Bill: yeah.

Larry: any others?

Mrds. F: we have Jesse Jackson, who was in the trenches with us, and still fighting for justice; Isabell Hammonds, a 92 year old lady that was teaching music three times a week--you all out?

Larry: Yeah. Cut.

Mrs. F: That's the end? Oh, boy, I wish I could have elaborated on that, but I 'll just tell you about--

Larry: The tape recorder's still going.

Mrs. F: Terry Manufacturing Company in Roanoke, Alabama. My friend, Amelia Boynton, who is the widow of Mr. Boynton, that I told you that was president of the dallas county voter's league--that's the organization (nice train whistle in background!) that we worked under, that name, and we were members of it. And he was the one who had worked with blacks you know through the years, we were at his office, when we had this first meeting to--I think I talked with you yesterday--(Bill, yes) and I was telling you about his wife she worked at this insurance company? and this citizenship class that I conducted, we just went on in this office, of this insurance company, they didn't even know we were having classes in this building, we didn't have no money, but it just shows you where there's a will, there's a way. (laughs) And we really proved that. But-- she and I went to Roanoke, Alabama, to visit Mr. Terry, and Mr. Terry had a story to tell us, like, he started out, with his business, justa hole in the wall, and he promoted this business to um to ah, a large ah, factory, where he made garments for stores like Penny's and and now, when he was tstruggling, he went to the office of this white man, oh, I forgot what age, I can't remember, but anyway, the whites was--they were angry, you know, becuase, he was in this business, you know, and ah, they didn't like it, and and and the man told him called a

T. Kent

(LAST TAKE)

image disappears →

voice ends ↗

black sob and told him to round to the back, and don't you ever come to my front again. Niggers don't come to my front, they don't come to my front to see me, you want to see me you go around the back. Mr. Terry said he looked at him for a few minutes and he turned and walked out of his his yard, and he said, well, whatever it was, you know, he said that if he couldn't get it somewhere else he just wouldn't get it, because he wouldn't deal with him. After a period of time, when he found this was gonna make it, anyway, and when he comes up with this big factory, you know, and just ignoring him, the white (??) and all the rest who was at odds with him. He invites Mr. Terry and his wife to have dinner at his home. I said, "Mr. Terry, you've got to be kidding," he say, "Yees, Ms Foster, in his dining room, in his fine home," and he said, Miss Emilia Boynton said, "Did you go?" he said, "I went," I said, "Im glad he did," sure, and (laughs) he said, "Yes, I did go," so that was one of those cases where, if you can't lick em, join em?

Bill: LaUGHS. particularly if they've got a good meal. I want to ask a question, not supposed to ask a woman, but--how old are you, now?

Mrs. F: (laughs) Hey, you know what? This country, is broke out, with racism and agism. But this is your first time, and we talked, and then, really, what I have done, I admit I have I have done a whole lot. (laughs) They are wondering what time ?? (laughs), I guess. Because believe it or not, solid(?) truth, I went back to school when I finished Jr college, my grandchildren came to my graduation, but my husband died in his middle twenties with a heart condition, and left me with those three children, and they were very young, and I was saying my mother was so strict, and she, a religious woman, but she taught me, and brought me up like she did, I know, I wouldn't be sitting here to day and I that's the second time Ive said I wouldn't be sitting here if certain things hadn't happened. Like--had we followed Dr King's philosophy of non-violence. Because he was just so right. They did want us to strike back and fight back, so they could kill us off like that, you know. They would go for the leaders first, see?

Bill: Well, we'd better break down.'

Larry: Well, we're doing all right. (end of tape)