

Rhodes College Digital Archives - DLynx

Rev. Darrell Doughty, Southwestern at Memphis, 1968

Item Type	Sound
Publisher	Rhodes College
Rights	Digital Audio (c) 2013, University of Memphis Libraries Preservation and Special Collections Department. All rights reserved. Use of this audio shall be governed by the University of Memphis Libraries "Duplication Agreement" http://www.memphis.edu/libraries/pdfs/duplication_agreement.pdf
Download date	2025-05-12 21:14:51
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/10267/33920

SS082.mp3

Joan Beifuss- This is Tape 3 Darrell Doughty, Tape 3.

Joan Beifuss- Ok so then there was about a 3 day period in there before Dr. King came back in again. Now did you meet with the strategy committee during that period?

Darrell Doughty- Yeah...Yeah. I met (muffled)

Joan Beifuss- Well not what was the feeling with the COME people in regards to the first march?

Darrell Doughty- Well they generally pursued the theory that a bunch of young people broke it up. You know outsiders who weren't in the march. You know this is the theory that was officially perpetuated by SCLC that outsiders, we got to bring these young people in and make them part of the march so they feel part of it and they attempted like I said earlier, their main attempt was to bring in them and get all the young people together and the militants and everybody so they would all be part of the next march.

Joan Beifuss- Was COME people also doing this in addition to the SCLC people?

Darrell Doughty- Well SCLC took over after the first, and they brought in more organizers...

Joan Beifuss- Ok then in essence then COME was taking direction from SCLC at that point?

Darrell Doughty- After that march SCLC was handling everything?

Joan Beifuss- Was this agreeable to COME?

Darrell Doughty- Well yeah. They didn't have too much to say about it, because it was out of their hands it had become a national issue.

Joan Beifuss- Did you yourself have any doubts about Dr. King coming back in again? Would you have preferred that he had not?

Darrell Doughty- I didn't have any doubts, I personally thought that he could come back and I thought the march would probably go peacefully because they would have so much military force. So they would march peacefully and I didn't have too many doubts about it. I didn't think it would be very much effective in terms of the sanitation strike which we were primarily concerned.

Joan Beifuss- There was a Strategy meeting I think on Sunday night, where you at that one?

Darrell Doughty- I don't remember that so...

Joan Beifuss- It was one where a minister said about how he had a dream about that something was going to happen to Dr. King.

Darrell Doughty- No I don't remember that.

Joan Beifuss- Ok, so then what is the next step. Do you remember Dr. King then coming back in on Wednesday?

Darrell Doughty- Well I remember if he did come yes.

Joan Beifuss- Had you ever met Dr. King himself?

Darrell Doughty- No, no. I didn't meet him here either I just saw him with the SCLC people.

Joan Beifuss- Were you down at Lorraine at all when King was here.

Darrell Doughty- No.

Joan Beifuss- But you did become the SCLC (muffled)?

Darrell Doughty- They were pretty busy.

Joan Beifuss- Ok so until the actual assassination then everything was kind of quiet as far as you were concerned?

Darrell Doughty- Yeah I don't think the second march would have been as large. Because I think more people were afraid and the mass meetings were way down that week.

Joan Beifuss- After the mini riot the mass meetings were way down?

Darrell Doughty- Yes well the meetings, see during, during the week, when were the mass meetings way down? The mass meetings were down, see when were they having negotiations? The first negotiations?

Joan Beifuss- (muffled) before the 1st march.

Darrell Doughty- Yeah, the mass meetings, see there was one mass meeting I attended where Bevel spoke for the first time there were very few people there.

Joan Beifuss- Were you at the mass meeting where King spoke that Wednesday night?

Darrell Doughty- No.

Joan Beifuss- So then how did you hear that Dr. King had been shot?

Darrell Doughty- From a police radio.

Joan Beifuss- In your car?

Darrell Doughty- No I didn't have a police radio, I just bought it that day and I was listening to it around 5:00 to see if it worked and I heard them talking about something happened at the Lorraine Motel. They were blocking off downtown and they were going over to St. Joseph's hospital and we got the idea that he had been shot. That was when we were phoned up that Dr. King had been shot.

Joan Beifuss- Who phoned?

Darrell Doughty- (Muffled).

Joan Beifuss- What did you do then?

Darrell Doughty- Tried to phone someone else and my phone didn't work. So we decided to, so we didn't know what was happening and we decided to go and stay with someone else that night.

Joan Beifuss- Was this before you knew he was dead of after?

Darrell Doughty- I was pretty sure he was dead as soon as I heard he was shot because we turned on the radio then and it said it had been shot and we just are used to assassinations now if they don't say right away that he is just wounded then usually you assume that it is pretty serious and then see our problem was we were really afraid...where other people were going to be, what was going on.

Joan Beifuss- What were you afraid of?

Darrell Doughty- We were afraid of white people, but the ku klux klan and somebody may really have, we had heard before there had been all kinds of rumors that they had decided to make Memphis a showdown. That the Birchers had decided to make a showdown in Memphis. I think there is good reason to believe this. This is going to be a last ditch stand against socialism, communism, labor and anything else. And so we didn't know how far they were going to go and we didn't assume anyone was safe that was involved in this thing very much.

Joan Beifuss- had you had any kind of harassment before?

Darrell Doughty- We didn't, are telephone number was not in the book, so we didn't, since our friends did it was just rumors that I had heard you know. People were talking about even idlewild church (muffled) we hadn't had any direct ones, no.

Joan Beifuss- Did you get in touch with the communications network people when you heard King had been shot?

Darrell Doughty- Yeah. I am trying to think one of our men was in town that day. He had come back to a living situation...I know he was here because we were talking about fundraising. We had been down all day talking with Jackson about fundraising. But he was in town by accident the day King was shot. So what we did was went up to visit, took Mary and the kids up to some of our friends house and

then I went down and we were in the Peabody hotel that night and we set up headquarters there and some other men came in from St. Louis.

Joan Beifuss- Some of the communications network people?

Darrell Doughty- Yeah.

Joan Beifuss- Came in when they heard he was shot?

Darrell Doughty- Yeah. The Presbyterian racial council some people came in.

Joan Beifuss- Did you have any personal reaction to King being shot?

Darrell Doughty- Oh I don't know. That would be surprised I guess. What kind of personal reaction?

Joan Beifuss- Well I surprised I suppose that much.

Darrell Doughty- Yeah I don't think I was surprised.

Joan Beifuss- Then the next morning when there was that meeting of the ministers that went to see the mayor? Where you at that meeting?

Darrell Doughty- No I was not at that, I stayed at the hotel and manned the telephones so everyone else could go to the meeting.

Joan Beifuss- So you didn't fight the mayor with Rabbi Wax?

Darrell Doughty- No I didn't.

Joan Beifuss- Ok then can we go back Darrell to the save our city? The founding of save our city back in march can you talk about that a little bit?

Darrell Doughty- How did that get started? I wasn't at the first meeting was I. See I have a blank suddenly, asked me how I got started and I forget how that ever got organized that first meeting.

Joan Beifuss- I want to say for the tape that Dave Young has been joined by Gerry Beyer, were you at that first meeting?

Gerry Beyer- No but I was trying to think who organized the first meeting. Well I remember after, this was the Sunday after the ladies went to the mayor's office on Thursday and I can remember us talking at that meeting thinking there must be other people in the white community who would support the sanitation workers if we just had an organization to get together.

Darrell Doughty- I forget if we called people or mailed out things or what?

Gerry Beyer- No we called people.

Darrell Doughty- It was telephone wasn't it that was all we did.

Gerry Beyer- We thought it might be interesting to come to that first meeting.

Darrell Doughty- That was all we did.

Gerry Beyer- And we couldn't get a babysitter.

Joan Beifuss- But you became the co-chairman of save our city?

Darrell Doughty- Yeah, they nominated people that night.

Joan Beifuss- what did you see as the function of save our city?

Darrell Doughty- Well at that immediate time it was simply a white organization supporting the sanitation workers was the immediate function. Because there was not white support and at least we wanted to have some symbolic white support. And, that is essentially what it was because the first group that met brought the advertisement in the paper in support of the sanitation workers. That was the first public white support of the sanitation workers.

Joan Beifuss- Ok then give me your theories about non-organization organizations. In other words did you see save our city functioning much in the same way as the communications network.

Darrell Doughty- Yeah very much so, almost level. See this is really not, I don't think this is too relevant to the sanitation strike (muffled). You see in other words what I think we have to do is enable or motivate the organizations and institutions that already exist to function and do their jobs and the way you do this is not by building new organizations but by building various structures outside, well I all them structures or networks outside of the organizations which help these or enable or motivate these institutions to function. In other words in the Presbyterian church USA we have a Presbyterian interracial council which is sort of a shadow organization of people concerned about racism which encourages and enables, motivates forces the men of the Presbyterian church to be relevant tot eh problem of race. Secondly in Memphis we felt there was a tremendous information gap you know, people weren't being informed of what was going on in the city We hope that somehow sought we could do this. The kind of people you see we are dealing with in save our city are professional people, academic people who have very little time to attend meetings and things but if there is a cause there if there is a crisis there we will respond with money or even come, try and be there at a particular time. You don't have to explain to them everything that is going on they will be there but they don't have time to go to a lot of meetings and also most organizations get hung up because of their very structure they can't take stands they can't become involved because they have to vote on it. I remember a meeting our city had to see if King was assassinated, you were at that meeting over at Southwestern , when all this people were there it was the night search for meeting began. Somebody said let's do a research job on the Memphis newspapers, Mrs. Jones said that and some guy says I second it let's vote. Well there is no reason to vote everyone who wants to go do it, go do it. If we voted it might have voted down and we would have sat there and it

would never have gotten started. So the beauty of this thing was those who wanted to do it could do it.

Joan Beifuss- Do you see save our city functioning continually in the community?

Darrell Doughty- Yeah. Definitely in fact we have some things we are going to bring up in the next few weeks I think where I think we want to get a task force working on schools and we are going to have to (muffled) save our city in a week or so.

Joan Beifuss- And you say save our city then functioning outside of organizations (muffled) whether or not a crisis situation exists in our city or not?

Darrell Doughty- I think it will continue from my own point of view I think that somehow people with common concerns and we define our concern of save our city as people who are concerned about the crisis in our city and cities across the nation and want to relate relevantly to that. I think these people have to keep in contact with each other. They have to be able to contact each other when they need to so that, and this is what save our city is able to do with the mailing list. You know and so the last thing we responded to was this, they had a push for funds here for a recreation program here during the summer and we suddenly needed people to respond to this.

Joan Beifuss- Are there save our city's being set up in other cities do you know?

Darrell Doughty- No, there is very similar organizations in other cities, it is called people against racism. Which you find in some northern cities. It is probably more structure than save our city but I think related to it in some ways with racism.

Joan Beifuss- Do you see an organization like save our city moving into (muffled) area at all?

Darrell Doughty- Not as an organization because save our city doesn't move as an organization. I can see people in save our city becoming politically involved you see but we don't move as an organization at all, only as individuals. But it is obviously a (muffled) people that share these concerns. So it won't move us into organization but it obviously has put some implications.

Joan Beifuss- That was what I was wondering about?

Darrell Doughty- Well I mean one man (muffled) we had over at Southwestern wanted to set up ward and precinct organizations right away. That was an Ingram man who was there and we vetoed that. Because that is not what we are up to do but when the next election comes if there you know I mean who knows, what is conceivable if we might have tried to organize and do a (muffled). That would be something else, I don't think save our city would ever...

Joan Beifuss- Yeah, do you see now at this point in June 3 months after Dr. King was killed and the sanitation strike was settled, what is going to emerge in the black community can you tell at all?

Darrell Doughty- Yeah, chaos right now is what it looks like to me.

Joan Beifuss- A period of chaos?

Darrell Doughty- A lot of things have happened, see there were organizers we thought about this. Everybody and their brother came into Memphis trying to organize Memphis for about 6 weeks there.

Joan Beifuss- What kind of organize? Like Saul Lewinsky.

Darrell Doughty- There was a man from Lewinsky's group here.

Joan Beifuss- At whose request?

Darrell Doughty- He came in under IFCO the inter-religious foundation for community organization. He came into Memphis and spent 2 weeks here surveying the entire situation and talking to everyone in the black community about organization and I spent a lot of time with him and he decided it was impossible to organize Memphis at least under Saul Lewinsky's kind of thing, which doesn't come right away but he decided it was impossible because the factions in the black community were too great. So and then there is the American friends field services is still you know interested in working in Memphis in the black community. The ecumenical institute of Chicago is working here and are starting to go in the white community. So there are a number of equal here, SCLC has been trying Urban League had a task force in from Atlanta the urban league moving again. So a lot has been going on but we could get into the gory details about what's going on with the black community right now but the thing is COME is (muffled). I mean Jim Lawson, he goes from beginning of the thing until the end. He is not an organizer and it is being revealed even now.

Joan Beifuss- Well then what is going to have to come up new leadership in the black community then. Willis and Sugarmen are rejected and then the black ministers are rejected.

Darrell Doughty- Well the new leadership I think without a doubt will be the black organizing project. They are the only people organizing. They are sophisticated they know what they are doing. They are in contact with similar organizers in other cities and they have got a good understanding of what needs to be done and eventually they will be the guys to organize the black community. I am terribly impressed with what they did at Carboro High School. When they ended up getting 2090 parents together. That is fantastic. We had some ladies in our workshop you know some (muffled) workshop, one day I was meeting on black power were just appalled by the whole idea and after the Carboro high school event they were all for it because they learned what it was all about.

Joan Beifuss- Well I think the black power are playing confrontation politics again.

Darrell Doughty- They do have a lot of long range goals. You see what you can't get people to do even NAACP is top think in terms of long range and lay out a 5 year plan for the black community. They respond to crisis.

Joan Beifuss- I was going to say do you think it is possible for the black community to organize without having a specific object against which....

Darrell Doughty- That's it. It is if you do it like the....you have to be much more sophisticated and proceed much more slowly and spend full time at it.. These guys can do it I think.

Joan Beifuss- Thank you very....(Tape End)