

SEPTEMBER 24, 2018

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>> Guha Shankar: Thank you all very much for coming to part two for this lovely symposium. It's a terrific morning. And we're going to move right into panel two. It's called Culture Production, Activism and a Creative Hub: The Drum and Spear Bookstore. Since we are talking about cultural politics, region, geography, democracy and all those things, we wanted to bring it all the way home here at the Library of Congress. And we're going to start by saying that there were some bios. I believe they're out there. If not, you can actually dial them up on your cell phones, iPhones, smartphones, tablets, what have you. And we're going to start with our panel here. Distinguished panel of folks, many of whom have been interviewed here for the Civil Rights History Project, a joint initiative of the Library of Congress and National Museum of African American History and Culture. And to my right, your left, that's for the camera as well, Judy Richardson, activist, media producer, longtime stalwart of many artistic productions here at DC and across the country. Next to her, Tony Gittens, well-known to some of you as the director of DC's Premier Film Festival. To my left, Jennifer Lawson, another media producer, activist. To her left is Josh Davis. And we sort of inverted the order because our final guest, Josh Davis, professor at the University of Baltimore, author of aforementioned book which I've held up for you -- and he is available for signatures and what not later on. And all the way to his left is Courtland Cox, activist, organizer, political worker, member of the DC government in many capacities over the course of time. And we are very, very thrilled to have them all here. I'm going to stop talking at this moment and sit and do what John Fend did, which was to kind of mediate everybody. And I'm going to begin by also starting off with a film loop which will play in the background as we're talking, and it gives you some sense of what the cultural milieu and the social structure and all those things of 1968 and so on Washington DC was as they speak. There are no particular -- I think there will be some references made to some of these photographs, but they'll not be speaking directly with them. So Judy, if you would start. Thank you.

>> Judy Richardson: Okie-dokie. Well, thank you, everybody, and thank you, Guha, for introing us. Let me just say that for me, Drum and Spear bookstore was a continuity of the work, a continuation of the work that we did in SNCC. Expanding the awareness of ourselves and of our power to change the world. And Drum and Spear becomes the largest African American bookstore in the country. Now when I first see the store, I had to go through tear gas to get to it. It was May 1968. It was on 14th and Fairmont Streets, and the street had just recently been tear gassed after the rebellions that followed the assassination of Dr. King. So I meet Tony Gittens, this person here, who is the manager of the store. And we go through the tear gas and he opens the door. And what I see is a space with maybe three or four recently stained bookcases and no books. So I had arrived in DC just a few days before because my SNCC buddies had asked me to come run the office for the parent company, African American Resources, Inc. So I'd left DC where I'd been attending Columbia University since returning to school after three years on SNCC staff in Mississippi, Alabama, Southwest

Georgia. And I headed to DC with my mattress on the roof of a car driven by Curtis Hayes, another SNCC person who was involved in setting up the store. Tony outlined to me what needed to be done and the process for getting there. He was the first person I saw. I knew that Courtland and Charlie Cobb and a number of other people, Jennifer, were involved. But Tony as the first person that I see in the store through this tear gas, right? And so he outlines what has to be done and the target date for the opening of the store, which is just a month away. And I'm sitting there looking, there are no books. So at some point we set up an account with Bookazine which was book distributor. I actually remember this, in New York City. And the bookstore had purchased a VW van which I drove. So Tony and I drive up to New York City. We get to Bookazine and there is this incredible black salesperson at Bookazine. So we tell him about the store and that you know, it's a black bookstore, that it's going to be right in the heart of the community in DC. And he gets so excited, right? We give him a list of books that we were interested in. Books about the African Diaspora here in the US, in Africa, in the Caribbean, wherever. And books about history, politics, culture, intellectual discourse, whatever. So he pulled the titles as we requested, but then he pulled a lot more. He also showed us a few black kids books, mainly African folktales and a few others, but just a few. Because this is 1968. So we didn't yet have the federal mandate that required that children's books used in schools reflect the makeup of the children in the communities that they served. That had not happened yet. So we got more books, we stained the bookshelves and we opened the store. Purposely, we wanted it on 14th Street, but I'm going to let Tony and Jennifer and Courtland talk about that, about the politics of the location, why they decided to start the store. I will say what I did understand even first coming in was that Charlie Cobb had initially had the idea from going through Vietnam. And that's a whole other story which I won't take up my seven minutes to tell you about. But he sees this idea, he comes through Paris. He sees it in Paris, sees the cafe, sees books and people having coffee and discoursing. And he thinks, "Oh, I can do that in DC." Now it helps him that his father was the founder and then 15 years into being the executive director of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. So he had money. So he gives us the first \$10,000. Hey. So we are set at least for the first \$10,000. We also have the Episcopal church at 815 Second Avenue. They used to give us money as well. Okay, so the basic point is that we sited the store deliberately at 14th and Fairmont because it was in the heart of the black community. And understanding to that this was an economically depressed section of DC. This was not the Gold Coast, right? But it was a section of high energy and culture. There was a jazz place that I can't remember the name of up the street. There was just lots going on. And it was just such high cultural and political energy in DC at that time, it really was chocolate city. So we are able to bounce off of all of that energy in doing our store. Now I was going to ask Tony to do this, but he doesn't really remember it, so I'm going to tell the story anyway, okay? So we were selling not only to individuals in DC, but also institutionally to the new black studies departments that had been fueled by the Toward the Black University Conference that comes out of the takeover that Tony was one of the two main leaders for. So that had just happened in 1968, take over the administration building at Howard, right? I see Tony at the bookstore. I don't even know that he's just come off that. What I do know is that in '69, because of the Toward the Black University Conference that gets fueled by the takeover -- because that's one of the demands and they get a Toward the Black University Conference -- you get black studies departments. No, programs. They rarely become departments. Black studies programs at San Francisco State, at Cornell, at a

lot of these universities. So they're institutionally buying books from Drum and Spear Bookstore. That's really helpful. I should also say that what the Bookazine staffer started in terms of children's books we ran with. So we built what became a wonderful and extensive children's section of black books. Picture books, young adult books, comic books, et cetera. And we were able to include Eloise Greenfield, Sharon Bell Mathis, DC authors, as well as Lucille Clifton from Baltimore and so many others. In fact, we became a magnet for some black teachers who normally did not come up into that portion of 14th Street. And they would often be amazed to find all of the children's books that had black and Latino children in it. Because they had not formerly been exposed to that. And that has to do with who wrote the books and whom they were sold to. And we can go into that at some other point. At that point you had Brent Hanos and that was then the chain down town. But it really wasn't carrying black books, adult or children's. And in fact, our experience starting Drum and Spear Bookstore seemed to really surprise both the mainstream bookstores and the publishers to find out that black people really read books. What a concept, right? And they started doing books at a lower price but never the extensive stock that we had in both children's books and adult books and -- oh gosh, African literary services. We had so much from the African diaspora around the world. Now we also ended up -- and in fact, by the way, the children's section with history and literature for all ages becomes one of the most popular sections of the store.

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And I know Debra Mancart who was head of Teaching for Change -- and everybody should go grab her at the end of this. She had the bookstore at Busboy's and Towitz. Not Towitz. Busboys and Poets at 14th Street, initially. And is still so active and has what, 84,000 teachers nationwide on their list. This is the lady, okay? So in a lot of ways, what we were learning is the importance of children's books to bring in people. And that's something we knew in SNCC. This is obscure. Something we knew in SNCC, because one of the ways we organized SNCC is that you started freedom schools and you did things with children because it brought the parents in. And then they would get registered to vote. We understood the importance of children. Okay, so we ended up doing a number of teachers conferences and exhibits in DC and out of town. And we often made more in a one-day exhibit than we sometimes made in a week in the store. So Drum and Spear Press, brings me to how we published the first book of now-famous children's book author Eloise Greenfield, Bubbles. She's a DC native. She still lives and writes here in DC. Oh, they want me to slow down. Oh no, he's telling me I've got tow minutes. That's why I'm talking so quickly.

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Okay, so we had formed Drum and Spear Press. We had our office in the Roundstone and Amos Morgan at 18th and Belmont, all three floors. And only one other black publisher then existed, and that was of nonfiction books, and that was Dudley Randal who had Broadside. But he mainly did poetry. So Eloise Greenfield hadn't yet published. And she sent us her manuscript, what becomes her first book, Bubbles. I was the children's book editor. I remember now these folks, Charlie and Courtland and Jennifer were away in Tanzania doing Drum and Spear Press East Africa. So I'm up there. We had no money. So we had no fuel. So I was freezing. I remember being in a coat. Jimmy the rat had the kitchen and I had a sign that said, Jimmy the rat has the kitchen; go in at your peril. And I'm reading these manuscripts. And I find this one from Eloise Greenfield and it is such a wonderful story. I call her that night and I said, "I'm

calling from Drum and Spear Press and we want to do your book." Now this is the book that we did. It was called Bubbles. Oh, it was so wonderful. It had all these illustrations. Okay. So natural extension, I'm going quickly, natural extension from our interest in children's literature is to our radio program, Sia Watoto. So Dewey Hughes was the program director at WOL here in DC. And he offered us time for a weekly children's program. I became BB Amina and I was the host, right? So I opened it saying, "Jumbo, my young brothers and sisters. This is BB Amina bringing you Sia Watoto, which is The Children's Hour in the African language of Swahili." I knew no Swahili. I learned how to say Sia Watoto from Jennifer. Okay, and so all these children would plug in and their parents would plug in. So Mimi Hayes and I, another SNCC person, developed the scripts from African folktales. Jennifer, Tony, Courtland, others, all became characters in our taping of these folktales. So they were Mr. Rabbit and Miss Elephant. And drumming was provided by Topper Carew's New Thing Art and Architecture Center which was down 18th street. And this was a black-oriented arts organization. And so one of their guys would drum and he would provide the music while we did Sia Watoto. I also did visits as BB Amina in African dress and the gala and I'm reading from the children's book. Then, and this is the end, we had Malazo Bookstore. So black employees of what was then the HEW building that becomes HHS, they wanted a satellite. They were offered a store in the HEW building. Elliot Richardson, then the director of HEW, said, "Oh, they'll probably want a clothing store." No, they wanted a satellite of Drum and Spear Bookstore. So we then -- I organized this new bookstore, again going to Jennifer. "What is a name for a store that has books?" So we came up with Malazo, which of course nobody could find because you know, this is before Google, and how would you remember Malazo? Anyway, so we started the store and it became really a wonderful area where a lot of the black employees and white employees could find out about all this literature about black people. Now, last story is I'm sitting there and somebody, a salesperson from Scholastic Books comes in. Now Scholastic was then and is still now the largest publisher of children's books, right? Oh, okay, I thought -- okay, fine.

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This is my last story. So he comes in, Scholastic books, and he opens his -- now by the way, there are African masks all over. I'm in a gala, okay? And he opens his catalog, you know, his book, and it's all white books. And so I said, "But what about" -- it was one of my favorite children's books, Sunflowers for Tina. And I said, "Oh, but what about Sunflowers for Tina?" And he says, "Oh, I didn't know this was a black bookstore." Now, what that meant is like -- okay, you're only going to sell these black-oriented books to the black bookstores. And so the white folks and Latino folks and anybody else is not going to have the benefit of these wonderful stories, not to mention the fact that black kids will not be able to see themselves in these stories. So luckily, some of that has changed, but Debra knows how difficult the road still is. And so I'm going to stop there and that goes over to you, Tony.

>> Guha Shenkar: Thank you, thank you. Tony?

>> Tony Gittens: When we were doing all this, and Judy, I forgot half of this stuff and how we met. But when we were doing all this, you've got to think we were like 25, 26, you know, we thought we could do anything. We thought we could do anything. And when I met Charlie, Courtland and some other folks from SNCC and Judy, back in '68, as Judy mentioned I had just come out of Howard with no real plan to do anything else after that. What to do, I don't know. I just knew I wasn't going into the army. We took care of that. But then I

remember being up at Charlie's apartment and Charlie talking about the bookstore. And saying, "You know, we really need a manager for the bookstore." So I said, "You know, I'll do it." And I remember Charlie throwing me the keys -- throwing me the keys and sort of leaving me to figure out what to do next with a lot of help. So that's how I got involved with Drum and Spear. I was the first manager. I think I did it for about a year until Ralph Featherstone took over. But when folks asked that we talk about the past, I try to do my best to be as honest about it as possible. Why? Because they're young people who are involved in organizing, setting up institutions and such. And sometimes folks can get taken away by the romance of what happened in '68 and earlier. And so I'm here to break up all that romance to give them -- I mean really to give folks some sense of when things don't go the way you want them to go. That you're not doing anything wrong. It's the nature of it. You're pushing against the culture. You're pushing against in our case a lot of folks who have been so much more powerful than we were. And sometimes things didn't work out. So I really appreciate so much of what Judy had to say because I just really didn't recall it. My recollection of Drum and Spear was hard work. My recollection was sometimes, most of the time, seven days a week, long hours. Not only me, but the other folks who were working on it, Jennifer, Courtland, Judy, that it was long, it was hard work. And that's my recollection of it. There were high points [laughs], but somehow they don't come immediately to mind, at least they're not visceral. [Laughs] You know, the other folks on the panel I'm sure will talk about them. So I was trying to think about a way to sort of present at least my point of view on it. And I think the best way for me to do it is like, "What did we learn? What have we learned from going through that experience?" And so I think one thing we learned -- we sort of knew this going in -- is that racism lives in and is maintained by institutions. That can only be combated by building counter institutions. And the folks at African American Resources, Courtland can talk I'm sure more about this, and I was part of it. I was on the board, had some say, even though I just got out of school. The idea was to build an institution that would counteract the racist information. And we wanted to build educational institutions that were communication institutions.

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And so we had the bookstores. We had two bookstores to present that information in written form. We also had the press which Judy mentioned, and folks down the way will talk about that a bit more. And we had the children's show which I had forgotten. The other person who was a character on that show was Kojo Nnambi.

>> Judy Richardson: Yes.

>> Tony Gittens: We would gather up in that studio once a week. Who wrote the script? Mimi wrote the script.

>> Judy Richardson: Yeah, that's right.

>> Tony Gittens: Mimi wrote the scripts and we would read these things cold and sort of make it up almost as we were going along. It was great fun. I remember that as a highlight. And we had a school. And we had all of these satellite things around African American resources that were attempts to build an institution to counteract all the other information, negative, racist information that was being put forth by the larger society. And so that was very intentional, very purposeful. That's why we did it. What we learned is you've got to have that kind of focus or you're just going to be floating out there. Any old idea that would pop up, you would be attracted to it, but it wasn't in keeping, it wasn't viable in some way. It was passed on. We learned that there are unavoidable contradictions in conducting a capitalist enterprise like Drum and Spear while we practice progressive politics that oppose

capitalist enterprises. In other words, we were -- and Josh does a great job in his book which I would refer to anybody who's here and interested in this subject at all. He does a great job about describing not only in our case -- get out of here.

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[Laughter]

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I'm only up to two. [Laughs] Okay, I'll speak more quickly and more concisely. So Josh does a great description and real hard-hitting description about not only in our case and in the case of other black bookstores, but other what he calls activist enterprises that went through the same thing. So I'm just going to read one quote from him. Josh puts it in his excellent book, "Activist entrepreneurs who criticize capitalism could not totally ignore economic realities if they wanted their enterprise to survive in the long-term. Indeed, the greatest threat to activist entrepreneurs was not being co-opted, but simply going out of business. Many activist enterprises stayed in business for only a few years, and most of those that emerged in the 1960's and 1970's did not make it into the '80's." One other point about that, that when I became manager of the bookstore, I went to New York. I went to Michaux's bookstore which was the iconic, the granddaddy of all the black bookstores in the country. And I had an opportunity to talk to its owner and founder Lewis Michaux. And when I talked to him, what we talked about, I said, "Look, man, I'm trying to figure out how to do this." And he gave me some advice. And he said, "Always remember that you've got to pay the sales tax every quarter. Never overbuy, overstock the bookstore. Don't take on too much credit." We didn't talk about one of the books that he had on his shelves. The intellectual discourse was somebody else's concern. But he knew, and I learned a lot, I mean just in the time I was speaking with him, about what to do and what to avoid. And so that was my approach to it. Number three, I'll be quick. From the very beginning, we learned that Drum and Spear was about more than selling books. That my job was not just making the trains run on time, but the store had become this community gathering place that folks would come in to talk, to meet. A lot of the things that the programs that Judy had done, and then Courtland and Jennifer had done others and other people in our staff had done -- you know, all of that was expected to happen in the bookstore. So we had a responsibility to not only sell books, but also to serve the community in other ways. We learned that building an enterprise like Drum and Spear is continuous hard work, as I mentioned. It requires long hours and often days and weeks. It also included cantankerous disagreements among ourselves. Good intentions for the struggle do not eliminate hard-headed human nature. We had arguments among ourselves and pretty much we kept it to ourselves. That just comes with it, you guys who are planning to do a similar kind of project. You're not doing anything wrong. And finally we learned that our success would help lead to our own demise, as Judy pointed out. Drum and Spear showed that there was a market for black books. And the bigger bookstores like Brintano's and Barnes and Noble, they also saw that and they began to take our customers. They might have been limited, as Judy pointed out, to just a section in their bookstore. But they were selling books that they never would have touched before we showed that it was possible. They did book parties and book signings for black authors that they never would have bothered with until we showed that we had a line around the corner coming in to see Eloise Greenfield and people like that. Julius Lester. That we showed that that was possible. And like all good capitalists, they took from us and went on. And then that as true. I mean, if we were running a pure capitalist enterprise, what capitalists do is they take,

or so I understand, they take that money and they put it back into the business. Any profits we had, any excess cash we put into our activist activities. And then towards the end, you know, it wasn't possible for us to do both. We couldn't do both. You know, it was too late to be practical because we found ourselves in a financial hole and other things. Josh talks about what happened. When you relate it to a movement, then that interest in the movement will help people come and help fund your enterprise. When the movement becomes not as prominent, then people go away or move on to something else, then you don't have those people who will come, and over time you begin to fall apart, which is what happened to us. So I can go more into it, but I've got to move on. Thank you.

>> Guha Shenkar: So Courtland is going to be up next. Thank you.

>> Courtland Cox: All right, well Tony and Judy talked about what we did and how we did it. I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about why we did it. The reason we did it was that it was important to be able to have the power to define. When we were coming along in the '60's, one of the things that we faced was a narrative that said that Africans contributed nothing to civilization, they have never done anything and they will never do anything. And the sense of the narrative of superiority and inferiority was built on a whole discussion about our lack of contribution. And that existed you know, both in Ivy League colleges and existed in a number of institutions. But unfortunately, it also existed in our communities. And that one of the things that was particularly important was to be able to create a definition of ourselves that we could control and that we would be proud of. And I remember -- and it's just a very simple thing -- if you call somebody black in 1960, it was a high insult. If you call them a negro today, it's an insult. So the ability to define was particularly important. I think that probably when we looked at it, there were two or three lonely souls, Carnegie Woodson, J. A. Rogers and a couple of others, who tried to talk about the contributions of black people and the African people to civilization. But I think that we were very lucky because two years earlier, on June 16th 1966, our good friend Stokely Carmichael Aquame Toure put out the slogan of black power. And it spread like wildfire in terms of the black community. And basically at least at the cultural level and at the intellectual level, black people began to define themselves as not only beautiful in a physical sense, but beautiful in every sense of people who made contributions.

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So that when Drum and Spear Press and Drum and Spear Bookstore and the Center for Black Education and other entities that we created came into being, we brought it into an environment that black people were hungry to be able to assert themselves as people who made contributions to civilizations. I think that the purpose of Drum and Spear and all its aspects, which is the power to define, is still the situation that we have to deal with. I listened to the previous panel on Appalachia and one of the comments that was made about Appalachia, about black people -- I mean, and I look at what's going on and the discussion today about the Supreme Court and the question of sexual abuse of women. That if you don't have the power to define whether you're worthy in Appalachia or whether you should be listed to about sexual assault, or whether you've made contributions to civilization, you don't have the power to define that. And you're always trying to defend yourself. You will always be in a hole. So one of the things that's important that we tried to do at Drum and Spear then and we're trying to do now is trying to assert the power to define who we are, what's important and how we should move forward to make progress.

>> Guha Shenkar: Thank you, Courtland.

>> Jennifer Lawson: These issues for us were, as you can see, not purely about what we were doing in the sense of books or radio. But it was fueled by this why we're doing it. And in that sense I think we thought of ourselves as educators with a little e, that we saw ourselves as really being in the business of education. And it was no mistake that we were affiliated then with the Center for Black Education in that respect. And there were other places as well that we were connected to. And that it was no mistake that books would be sort of the focus of this initially. Courtland and Charlie and I had worked together in the movement with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee or SNCC in Mississippi and Alabama. And particularly in Alabama we had found that it was really helpful to this defining oneself, defining what you wanted to do, was really helpful. And that we started creating our own books there. We created comic books as a way of educating the would-be black voters and would-be politicians there about why complain about the sheriff? Why not be the sheriff? And then people would say, "But what's the sheriff's job? We don't know what the sheriff does." So we would then take the information and make it into a comic book about, here's the role of the sheriff. Here's the role of the tax assessor. And then over time, people ran for those positions and became the tax assessor and became the sheriff. So these rudimentary comics were very, very beneficial, and that that was sort of the beginning of our sort of working collaboration in that way. And I was an amateur artist. I never had any formal training. But one of the other things that I think was really so defining about all of us is a kind of can-do spirit. It wasn't a question of, "Well, I don't know how to do this." I mean, you've heard that all down the line, of Judy saying, "Well, I've never done this before." Tony, the same. The same was true of me. And then even after we had established Drum and Spear bookstore, the question was, what's missing? We need books. We need our own books, not just the books that are being sold by other publishers. We need our own books. And so we started creating them. And we had the good fortune to have CLR James around, and so we then published CLR James', A History of Pan-Africa Revolt. We said, "We need new children's books." So Courtland and a teacher, a DC school teacher, Daphne Mews, a group of us got together and started brainstorming about what is it that we would tell kids? And we created then the book, all right? We'd illustrate and we would write the text together. We did the same thing with our folk tales. And the people in Tanzania were visiting and found it quite impressive. And we found ourselves invited to Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania to help establish a publishing company there. And the publishing venture continues to this day. Our invitation to Tanzania came also in association with the Sixth Pan-African Congress which Courtland and several other people helped to establish. So it was this, the work that we were doing both in creating a publishing company or in creating the bookstore, were things that then continued to inspire other people. And it was wonderful to see them move on to do these things. Somebody sort of said, "Well, what would it look like today?" And one of the things that we are very clear about is that again, it's the why, not the what. And we all have been very active in the last few years in creating what is called the SNCC digital gateway, which is a website that tells then the story of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. And goes on to talk about what young activists are doing today. So that's the story of Drum and Spear Press, and I look forward to after Josh, to hearing questions from others too.

>> Joshua Davis: Okay. Yeah, I wanted to just thank Guha and thank John and thank Thea and everyone at the AFC for putting this together. Really great event. And I want to talk about Drum and Spear, but just emphasize that of course what we've been talking about grew out of the Civil Rights Movement. It

grew out of organizations like SNCC and also was very much a part of the Black Power Movement. And I think especially in years '66, '67, '68, there wasn't always necessarily a clear line between the two there, overlapping. And kind of the big point I wanted to make today -- and I wonder, do you think we could switch to the PowerPoint? Yeah. The point I was going to make is that I think there's a lot of discussion in recent years about how skewed Americans' understanding of the Civil Rights Movement is. And how the public's understanding has really lagged behind the participants' understanding. And I would say the scholarship has gotten much, much better. But most Americans, if they know anything about the Civil Rights Movement, they think of it as a movement for political change, for social change. But what I was going to say is one of the real neglected legacies is that Civil Rights and Black Power were movements for intellectual change. And I think Drum and Spear really epitomizes that. And so I wanted to start with a brief quote. It's from the New York Amsterdam News which most people will know as kind of one of the premier black newspapers in the country. The quote's from 1972. "Anyone who walks along 100 25th Street in Harlem today may be impressed by the market changes from the Harlem Street of yesterday. There are black-owned clothing stores, record shops, bookstores, African bazaars and other cultural happenings that now indicate a new pride and self-determination in the black community. These changes in the face of Harlem and other similar communities are largely the result of a black revolution of the mind, begun less than a decade ago." I think that's a quote that I think really -- this idea of the black revolution of the mind. I think that's a large part of what Drum and Spear was doing. And you know, I think a lot of different parts of the Black Freedom Struggle are doing this, the black arts movement for example. In SNCC for example, I'm sure a lot of people have heard of the Mississippi Freedom Summer, and one of the large parts of that effort in 1964 were the Freedom Schools. And the Freedom Schools which a lot of SNCC people were involved with, and Charlie Cobb was very involved with, I think there are seeds of Drum and Spear in the Freedom School. And so Drum and Spear, like I was saying, was not only part of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement, but also two movements that I talk about in my book called From Head Shops to Whole Foods: The Rise and Fall of Activist Entrepreneurs. Actually, let me see if -- okay, so here's a picture from 1968 of two of our esteemed panelists. And this is a wonderful photo. It was in the previous photo stream, but this was in the Washington Post. So the Post was covering it.

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Washington Afro-American was covering it, which was the sister paper of Baltimore Afro-American. Washington Star, you know, which was a major newspaper, was covering it. And here, actually this is a picture from the Washington Star. The Washington Star photo morgues are at the DCPL, the main branch. And so I was going through there and saw all of these. And this is just a day in the life of Drum and Spear. And then here is a neat picture of just one little corner in Drum and Spear Bookstore. And the posters, the drawings, I'm sure you can identify a lot of the people there, kind of the wall of fame, so to speak. So here's this really outstanding cover of one of the Drum and Spear catalogs, and we saw that in the previous slideshow too. But just the artwork to me is so powerful. And we were talking about it -- what was his first name again? Was it Robert cheeks?

>> Bruce.

>> Joshua Davis: Bruce Cheeks, okay, yeah. And it actually took a long time. I had a conversation with a lot of people about, "Who is this Cheeks person who did this work?" And Bruce Cheeks, it sounds like he's still around. Yeah, I'd

like to maybe talk to him at some point. But here's two pages from the catalog. And I just wanted to -- so here's an amazing illustration. And then the catalog, you know, the categories were not typical bookstore's categories, right? Like there's a whole page on African Nationalism. There's a whole bunch of different categories. So Drum and Spear was part of what I would call that activist business movement which is businesses growing out of not only the Black Power Movement, but feminist movement, antiwar movement, even the hippie movement, environmental movement. Activists who were starting businesses. They're thinking of businesses less as moneymaking ventures and more as organizing tools. They are interested in keeping the lights on, but that's what my book is about. And yeah, if anyone wants to check it out, I've got copies back there. But getting back to this idea of also I would say a black bookstore movement. So obviously there were black authors going back centuries. But in the United States, the kind of mainstream literary marketplace, other than people like Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, the real heavyweights -- they were just a few marquee authors who were getting any attention from the white-dominated literary marketplace in the early-'60's. And in the early-'60s, I think I found there was maybe a dozen what we could call black-owned and black-oriented bookstores in the whole United States. Roughly a dozen. But those numbers began booming in the middle and especially late-'60's. Really they're inseparable from the Black Power era. So what was a dozen stores in say the early-'60's became something like 75 stores ten years later. And it's a big jump from 12 to 75. In 1969, New York Times -- am I getting a warning? Two minutes, okay. 1969, New York Times did a story. This kind of goes to the point Judy was making, just the fact that the New York Times would do a story on the novelty of black people selling books to black people. That was a novel going-on. And the Times said, "A surge of book-buying is sweeping through black communities across the country." And the whole piece was about black-owned bookstores. And there were these old stalwarts like Lewis Michaux's Books in Harlem, his store. But there are stores popping up all over the countries in DC, in Atlanta. More in Harlem and Brooklyn. And there's a few that still even exist today. Marcus Books comes out of San Francisco and they still have a store in Oakland today. Vaughn's bookstore in Detroit. Okay, so black-owned bookstores are promoting self-education. They are promoting self-definition. They are in a sense information centers for the Black Power Movement. And they are, like I mentioned, part of a movement for intellectual change. If you just look at the books on this one page of this catalog, it's some of those exact same people. So I don't think J. A. Rogers is on this page. But I came across this document recently. I'm about to click to -- here we go. I'd never seen this until recently. It's a reading list from SNCC. And I think I estimated, looking at some of the titles I think it's from 1968. I think there's at least a Julius Wester title on here that is published in '68 I think. But I mean, it's DuBois, it's St. Clair, Drake, E. Franklin Fraser. Howard Zin is on there, right? Howard Zin having been the first person to write a book about SNCC I think, and had himself been involved in SNCC. And maybe Julius Wester is not on this page actually. But this is the dimension of the Civil Rights Movement that I think most Americans are not aware of, this movement for intellectual change. And it's been something that's been occurring to me. I'm just wrapping up very belatedly a Taylor Branch trilogy on MLK which if you put the books together and the type is tiny. But just really drove home for me also like Dr. King, remembered as a Civil Rights leader, as a master orator, as a minister, as a moral force, as a nonviolent force. But he really was an intellectual also and I think that's just been forgotten. But he was an intellectual. That was such a big part of who he was. And so I'll just end it on that, yeah.

>> Guha Shenkar: Thank you all very much. A hand for the panel, please.

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[Applause]

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So everybody here was handed a list of questions that they were going to talk about. But I want to pick up this and sort of go off script a little bit. Not only because Courtland is getting ready to leave, but I wanted to ask about this notion of intellectual production and representation which has come up again as you mentioned already between the previous panel and this one. And what does the future hold if you want to be a futurist in terms of how you control that? And you touched upon that briefly, but what are some logical outcomes perhaps that you might look towards?

>> Courtland Cox: I mean, I think the previous panel could have been this panel. Because I think one of the things that was said and I got was that the energy and the solutions come from the people who have the problem. That's where you have to look. And so you know, my sense is -- and I'm talking about King. And I agree King was an intellectual. You know, and when I first heard this, thought it was, "Well, this is not serious." But King used to say the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice. And I thought, "Well, that's not serious." I mean, it does seem to me what you have to look for. Because I mean, as you look at history, if you focus on what you're for, and that's I think the real critical piece -- not what you're against, but what you're for -- and organize that, that will get you to where you need to be across the board. And let me just say the reason I do have to go, and I have to excuse myself, is that I am working on a project which says that in six states that exist -- Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Ohio -- in 2018 we want to get the black vote to either equal or exceed the white vote. And people are on the ground organizing that. So we meet every Monday at 4:00 to have that discussion. So I mean, basically it's not -- I mean, I do have to think that being conscious of what you have to do, where you have to go and work on it on a daily basis is where you have to go. Sorry.

>> Guha Shenkar: Thank you, Courtland.

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[Applause]

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I actually wanted to pick up on something that Courtland touched on. Yes?

>> Judy Richardson: I wanted to mention something. Keep going. Don't worry.

You've got work to do. But it relates to something that we've been doing. And I just want to hold this up because this is -- I'm sorry -- an ad for our SNCC digital gateway. Yeah. And part of what we've been all talking about I think is how do you control how people portray you, how you see yourself, how the rest of the world sees you, so how your work is known. And luckily for us, we were younger then. Well, we were obviously younger then. But we were the youngest. SNCC was the only youth-led Civil Rights organization nationally. And so we were 15, 16, 17, 18 years old, which means that now we are more or less walking and talking and not just sitting and knitting baby booties. What that means is that for the last four years we've been working with Duke University. Thank you, Melon Foundation. And we have done an amazing SNCC website. And it's called SNCC digital, SNCCdigital.org. It is incredible. It has profiles not just of SNCC people but also of a lot of the people that we worked with because we wanted them to be known. So you don't only know Mrs. Hammer. You also know Mrs. Devine and you know M. C. Moore and you know all of the folks who grounded us, who taught us when we were working in those local communities. But you also have all these links. So for example, we linked to Debra. Debra links to us on

Teaching for Change. We have CRMVet, Civil Rights Movement Vet. And that's another website that is incredible because it has primary documents. So when Debra and I did a three-week teacher institute for NEH in July, we used both SNCC Digital -- and it was 30 teachers grade 7-12 from around the country. And for three weeks they used SNCC Digital and CRMVet as primary documents where they could go and share with their students. I'm saying that to say we are using -- and I have books so that you can see the actual copies of some of the books that you've been seeing. We have tried to frame ourselves so that others do not frame us. So that's it.

>> Guha Shenkar: Thank you.

>> Judy Richardson: And I have cards if people want them.

>> Guha Shenkar: There's something else which I wanted to talk about, the resonance between the previous panel and this one. I hope you all can address it in your own ways. As Josh touched upon, when you were at the Freedom Schools on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement back in Mississippi and places and back home here, you fought with the weapons in hand. There was something about strategy and tactics which is involved in this, which is replete with the language of SNCC and other Civil Rights activists. And so it seems to me today then that direct sort of action on the ground has shifted to another strategy which is take control of media representation, media ties representation, in film and books and radio programs and so on. Is that another -- where do you stand with that right now in this particular instance? Is that the way to go going forward in terms of advancing the cause of social justice and social movements?

>> Jennifer Lawson: I think that if we had had the resources -- I mean, for example, all of the things that we're talking about, Drum and Spear and then also doing Drum and Spear in Tanzania at the same time we were doing Drum and Spear in Washington, we were doing this pre-internet. So this was pre-internet. This was even pre-fax machine. So that I have letters where Judy is asking me about a cover for one of the publications here in Washington, and sort of saying, "How soon will it be before we get it?" And it's a question not just of when it will be created, but how long it takes to ship it, how long it takes to go by mail. So we are talking about this work taking place at a time that was pre-internet and when we talk about media, this was it. And radio was accessible to us. I think there is no question that we would have been dealing now -- if we were doing the same kind of thing now, we would be dealing with film and television. It's no mistake I think or no accident that three of us up here right now have had careers in media, that we moved from this work into film and television. And that public media was also very important because that again was the notion that these are our tax dollars. And that the kind of public forum, the sense of community that we've been talking about creating, that Apple Shop was doing, that the center was doing in New York with culture, that these places should exist and that they should exist for the benefit of us all. And that to me is one of the values of public media. And why it becomes so important to not only keep it in existence, but to keep it ours too, to keep it as a real benefit to the communities that it serves.

>> Tony Gittens: Yeah, I think that now folks are still trying to figure out what to do against the oppressive forces now. That there's a lot of opinion, there's a lot of analysis. There are marches and demonstrations, all of which are good and strong and such. There's a lot of opinion. But what to do, what do you do when you get up in the morning to combat this insanity that we're facing I think is still being developed. That there is the vote, you know. Folks can vote and put Republicans out and the Democrats in and that's all good. But there's a personal frustration that I have about what is there -- eventually

you get tired of hearing people talk. You know, I get tired of hearing people talk. I get tired of hearing myself talk, you know, much less others. And there's a difference between talking and doing. What happened around Drum and Spear was a lot of doing. There was a lot of doing. I mean, what it took to build and maintain back then was constant work. And I don't know of a place now -- I don't know of every place, obviously. There might be. I'm sure they're out there. Young people are doing all kinds of things. But it's what to do to make the difference that at least to me is not clear.

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>> Judy Richardson: See, it's interesting when Jennifer talks about how three of us have gone into media. I mean, Jennifer really was really major in PBS and CBB and some of the funding that Apple Shop talked about that was coming through Jennifer's shop. Tony all these years has been doing DC film festivals. And you know, when I worked on *Eyes on the Prize*, it was all 14 hours. And one of the things I wanted to do in that second series of eight hours -- because the first series is six hours and the second is eight hours -- we had a chance of doing -- we all talked as a team about what college takeover do you do. We could have done San Francisco State. We could have done Cornell. And I said to Henry Hampton, the head of Blackside which was the production company that did it -- I said, "You know, sometimes we're not talking to white folks. We're talking to each other." And so for me it was we need to do Howard University takeover. And that's why that Howard University takeover story is in *Eyes on the Prize*. By the way, all 14 hours of *Eyes on the Prize* is on YouTube. I have to just mention that. And I think part of the -- say what? You got it. I mean, given that PBS doesn't do diddly-squat with it, it's good that it's on YouTube. But I think that the other part of it though is how you organize. And I think we always understood that nothing replaces the door-to-door. Nothing replaces going to everybody so that -- I mean, one of the things that Beto O'Rourke in Texas understands is that he's gone through every one of those counties in Texas. That social media can be really helpful if you use it as a tool, but if you don't understand that people are going to put their lives on the line for you, or their economics or whatever it is, that they've got to know who you are. And they cannot know that through Twitter or whoever. They've got to see you and they've got to see you in action. And social media is not going to do that part of it for you I think.

>> Guha Shenkar: And I was struck by something on Josh's reading list that's there, and then looking at what you have in the table in front of you. Obviously these books are sort of for a high political theory, CLR James and Herbert Afthaker and so on, so there's that reaching people who have been educated to some extent or who have the capacity and the interest in hearing about these kinds of intellectual perspectives and rather high theoretical positions. But then the *Watoto* Africa and the children's books, you seem to be getting them from the sort of cradle to -- not quite grave, if you know what I mean.

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[Laughter]

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You know, sort of my age. Not sure if it's the grave or not, but can you speak about that just a little bit?

>> Jennifer Lawson: Well, it's interesting, one of the things that we at SNCC were known for was sort of telling our history from the inside out and from the bottom up. And so that in part relates to the notion that we believe that everybody that we work with was important, and that we didn't make distinctions

between the sharecroppers or the people who were the school principals in the areas that we worked with. And in some cases, like with the Freedom Schools that were mentioned, and some of the work that we subsequently did, we put a lot of emphasis on adult education and on literacy, because that was part of the legacy of the segregation and the horrors that people had lived through. And that it was the thirst for knowledge, the thirst for information. It's just incredible. And so the kinds of discussions that we would have in SNCC and with people with whom we were working in these rural areas was quite astonishing. Because people really wanted to learn. They wanted to talk about ideas. They wanted to talk about a range of things. And so that was what these works in part we were creating them for.

>> Tony Gittens: I'd like to step back a little bit from what I just said, that the folks who I think are really doing something are the teens from the high school where --

>> Judy Richardson: Yes, Parkland.

>> Tony Gittens: Parkland.

>> Judy Richardson: Yeah, honey.

>> Tony Gittens: Yes. That when we were watching them, they did remind us, the did remind me of some of the activity we've been talking about here today. That those kids are smart and they work hard and they're out there and they put their heart and their soul into doing something to change, to make that shift about defining that Courtland was talking about. The question with them is, do they -- and I'm sure they -- all right. Do they know -- and this is something we learned, it's a long-term struggle. That the enemy is dug in. The NRA in their case is dug in. Those guys and girls fight for every inch of holding onto those guns. And it's going to take a while to beat those folks back. But I would say that they're doing something, that those young kids are doing something.

>> Guha Shenkar: I want to shift gears slightly. Josh, did you have something to add to that?

>> Joshua Davis: Yeah, just briefly, I was going to say we just kind of can't overemphasize the point about this being pre-internet. I think we are all aware of that. But I always have to really emphasize that with students, what that meant. I mean, if you wanted to learn about political movements, you've basically learned about it either through books or more likely through people and the people around you, people you went to school with, people you went to church with. And these activist businesses, and Drum and Spear really epitomize this. They were focused on the three P's. First of all they wanted to put new products out. They wanted to put political products out there. Books by black authors that are almost unavailable in American society. Then they wanted to focus on the processes. So this wasn't just a book store, but Drum and Spear had a radio show, and the publishing press, and they're linking up with publishers in Tanzania, right? So they're reinventing processes. But place, place was really, really important and I think place is still very important, but I think especially then without people being able to connect through a thing like the internet, through a thing like Twitter, you needed to meet in person. And it was very hard to find a gateway into movements, into literature. And I remember Judy saying this before: the bookstore was for the community, and you know, DC was chocolate city. But there's still class segregation even within black DC. And so a place like Howard which is like the shining institution on the hill was very, very distant from a lot of people in the Columbia Heights neighborhood. You had people coming into the store who had never been to a bookstore before. And to have a public facing political institution that sold some of these books like these but had it kind of

mediated through people who could connect people on the ground to some of these books, that was hugely important in a way that is even more important than I think it would be today. Because people can self-educate online.

>> Guha Shenkar: Right. So we were talking about the space of intellectual production. And I want to make sure that those of you who don't already know this story, even for those of us who do know the story, that intellectual production is dangerous. It brings about certain kinds of reprisals. It brings about certain kinds of attention. And I think the point that Tony is making about what the forces that are impinging upon you in the first place and keep coming down on you are very real. And maybe I'll get Josh to kick this off, because there's a really intricate part of this book, *From Head Shops to Whole Foods*, which is also excerpted in the *Atlantic Magazine* which I wanted all of you to talk about. But can you talk a little bit about exactly who it was and what were the kinds of outcomes and effects from people in positions of power against Drum and Spear and other kinds of entrepreneurs like that?

>> Joshua Davis: All right. So I think again to go back to this idea of these businesses, especially Drum and Spear being the public face of a movement, as Courtland said. Stokely was a dear friend and people like the FBI were very keenly interested in Stokely. I mean, they were deeply interested in SNCC and the movement and Dr. King and everyone. But in 1968, I think Stokely was really one of the people that they were almost obsessed with. And the dangers of him -- if you've ever heard of this memo that J. Edgar Hoover wrote about we've got to stop the possibility of a rise of a black messiah. And what I kind of came up with through my research was that as part of [inaudible], part of the FBI really focusing on trying to disrupt movements and especially trying to destroy Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, they became very, very interested in black-owned bookstores. And Hoover even issued a memo to every local field office in the country and it said, watch out for what he called African-type bookstores. "They're extremists, they're hateful, they're anti-white. And if there's one in your jurisdiction, you need to open a file on them immediately." And that's maybe six months after the black messiah memo of March 1968. But as it would just happen, Drum and Spear was conveniently located not even five miles from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's national headquarters.

>> Guha Shenkar: Strategy or tactics?

>> Joshua Davis: Yeah. And you can imagine the FBI agents were like, "Well, I guess we're the ones who only have to drive three miles." And so they had all kinds of interactions. And I think I found probably FBI agents in at least half a dozen cities doing surveillance and informing and spying on black-owned bookstores. But there's probably many more than that.

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[Inaudible]

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>> Guha Shenkar: Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

>> Judy Richardson: Okay, yeah. Okay.

>> Tony Gittens: Okay, so they used to come into the store. We found this out -- actually Josh dug this out. Josh is so talented. The man is a good man. Thank you, Josh, for all you do, really. Really.

>> Judy Richardson: Yes.

>> Tony Gittens: So Josh got the FBI records about their surveillance of us at Drum and Sphere, which is fascinating reading. I read it twice late one night when -- I forgot, I think Josh or Judy sent it to me. And it's just fascinating, but they would come in in plain clothes and engage us and buy books. And I think they had bought -- I think Josh, you said they had bought a

whole bunch of -- we were selling Mao's Little Red Book and they bought them all and sat in the car outside and read them.

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[Laughter]

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It got to the point of being silly. But there are files on everybody you see sitting up here, and many more, about our comings and goings. I was surprised what they knew about where I lived, who my social friends were. But they had a file on us. I mean, they were about to bring us down if they could.

>> Jennifer Lawson: At an earlier point too, when I was working with SNCC in Atlanta and we had some financial problems, I and a group of others -- SNCC people had opened a little store, a little boutique near the Atlanta University complex. And there are FBI records too that show -- in the records they talk about then people coming into the store, their agents coming into the store and overhearing things in the store about you know, whether Stokely or someone was coming to town. And it's really interesting because then you know, the conversations that they overheard helped us identify who then the agent was in that particular case. But it was fascinating to see this sort of trail of surveillance wherever we were in that respect. It used to take a lot of time to get back into the country when we traveled.

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[Laughter]

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>> Judy Richardson: Can I also say, I don't know why they thought that they could be undercover. At this point, you know, we were not gentrified. I mean, only black people came into Drum and Spear. And there were only white agents at this point, and they always looked like they used to in Greenwood, Mississippi. They had the funny little shoes and they always wore a button down, and they walk in and they think that we're not going to know that they're FBI agents. And you know, then they pull stuff off the shelves that they clearly don't even know what it is. You know, and then they pile it up. Now most people used to come into Drum and Spear and you'd have one or two books. They had piles of books that they're buying, and they're white. So you know, we kind of knew, yeah.

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[Laughter]

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>> Guha Shenkar: So I like the fact that your sustainability model is predicated on surveillance.

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[Laughter]

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Maybe the library's missing a few on our circulation. I'm not quite sure.

>> Tony Gittens: Bring them on. They also got into our bank accounts. They went to the bank where we did our banking and there were reports. There was some guy there who sent them everything we did, all of our statements, all of our activities, companies we were dealing with. I mean, all that's just recorded. They were after us. They were after us hard.

>> Guha Shenkar: So I think we're coming to unfortunately the end of the discussion. But I want to open it up to folks out there. I mean, I have tons more questions. I'm happy to keep talking up here, but I'd really like to make sure that we have this as a dialogue. And again we have the mics. So please, yes, Barry is right here in front.

>> I just had a question. In I guess '69 or '70 I drove out here from Missouri to attend the DC Blues Festival. You mentioned Topper Carew was the first person who put that together. It was one of maybe the first and only blues festival put together by an African American organization at that time. It seemed to me. Anyway, was that connected in any way to Drum and Spear or to your work?

>> Jennifer Lawson: No. I was not formally connected.

>> Yeah.

>> Jennifer Lawson: But there were some wonderful organizations in Washington DC at the time. And Karen Spellman and a group of other people are developing a collection of materials online that's called the Black Power Chronicles. And it's about some of the cultural activities that were taking place in Washington DC from like 1966 on up to present day. And that Topper Carew, and I've forgotten who else he was working with, had the new thing.

>> Judy Richardson: Alice Carew later.

>> Jennifer Lawson: Alice. Then they had the New Thing. And also he had a background in architecture as well as in art. And there was Lou Stovall and Die Stovall and Lloyd O'Neal who had been the workshop which focused on printmaking and also graphic design and the arts. And Lou did the typography for it. He did the fonts and everything for this book, the coloring book called Children of Africa. But there were other -- the Center for Black Education, Gaston Neal was an incredible force. And Gaston considered himself the spy of Brintano's and places. He would go down and then come back to Drum and Spear and report what Brintano's was selling and what they were selling at 4:00.

>> Tony Gittens: He actually stole the books.

>> Judy Richardson: Yes, thank you. Thank you, I was about to say.

>> Tony Gittens: We're here to tell the truth.

>> Judy Richardson: Yes.

>> Tony Gittens: Gaston had skills and he would --

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[Laughter]

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And all of the sudden he'd show up and he'd have all these, the newest books that we could never afford to put. And he would make them available to us at real discount prices, and we'd put them on our shelves.

>> Judy Richardson: However, we got caught, let us remember.

>>TG: Yes, oh.

>> Judy Richardson: Remember when the woman came up? The woman from Brintano's. Now this is before we get to the story that you're saying. So we're still a small store right on 14th Street. And she walks in and she has a couple of the books. And she says -- oh, no, no. I'm sorry. She takes them off our shelves and she shows it to us and she says, "No, you'll see Brintano's" -- because they had Brintano's in them.

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[Laughter]

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And so she says, "Now, we will not prosecute." Because she knew who he was. She said, "We will not prosecute him, but you are not to buy any more books from him." And we didn't. But yeah, we called him Sticky Fingers. Yeah.

>> Didn't Topper Carew -- he was involved in media later. He went to LA, didn't he?

>> Judy Richardson: Yeah, because I worked with him.

>> Yeah.

>> Judy Richardson: Topper Carew also started the New Thing.

>> Rainbow Media.
>> Judy Richardson: Media Works.
>> Tony Gittens: Yeah.
>> Judy Richardson: So I went out after we started the first series of what became the 14 hours of Eyes on the Prize. And then I go out and I work with him in LA. And did you all at PBS, did you fund him?
>> Jennifer Lawson: Yes. Yes, we funded him.
>> Judy Richardson: That's right. Yeah.
>> Jennifer Lawson: We funded him. He did a series of children's programs, and he also did a series of other television programs and films. His best-known film was probably Car Wash.
>> Judy Richardson: No, no, DC Cabs.
>> Jennifer Lawson: DC Cabs.
>> Judy Richardson: Oh, it was a horrible film.
>> Jennifer Lawson: DC Cabs. And he then was the person who discovered Martin Lawrence.
>> Yeah.
>> Jennifer Lawson: And later became Martin's talent agent and then went on to become the agent for a number of sort of high-profile comedians in LA. And he is now at MIT.
>> Guha Shenkar: I just wanted to point out, just had to make sure that from the Library's perspective, stealing books is not a good thing. Sorry.
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[Laughter]
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We need to make sure that's on the record.
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[Laughter]
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Any other questions?
>> I just wondered about your relationship with libraries and outreach to libraries. I worked very briefly in the beginning of my career and they didn't know what to do with me because I was the new kid. And they put me in the library in the black neighborhood. It was an incredible lesson in the power of books. And we were like a place where the kids would come after school. And they'd all stream in and they were just so excited. And so I wondered how your interaction went with libraries.
>> Judy Richardson: I can say that there was at that point a black caucus of the ALA, the American Librarians Association. And so we would do conferences with them and we would present a display. As I said, we would take the exhibits other places outside the store. And so we would bring some of the children's books that we had, and they were very supportive of us. I don't know of any -- maybe you all do. I don't know of any direct relationship we had between the store and the librarians except to say that they would often come into the store and check out some of the titles. Because of course, they're not being shown the titles by the publishers. And we were. I mean, yeah.
>> Jennifer Lawson: But it's interesting too in our later lives. I think that our appreciation for education and you know, big E, small e, is just so profound that then that continues our relationship with organizations like Debra Mincart's Teaching for Change. And also with work that goes into the library. For example, whether it's Eyes on the Prize or some of the other documentary or other films that we did, we'd always make provisions that there would be what we call outreach or other extensions of this work so that it

would go then either on the internet or it would have materials that would go for use by community groups and for kids.

>> Guha Shenkar: Other questions?

>> Judy Richardson: But we love librarians, let me just say. We do.

>> Jennifer Lawson: Yes, librarians are very special.

>> Guha Shenkar: And librarians love you, thank you very much. Yes, sir?

>> Thank you for this panel. I don't necessarily know if I have a question or a comment. I'm sure it's going to morph into wanting, begging an answer. My father's from Greenwood, Mississippi.

>> Judy Richardson: Oh, okay.

>> And my name is Julius Rosenwald. And I just wonder -- I didn't know who Julius Rosenwald was until I became in my 30's. And so when I read about this symposium, I said, "Oh, well let me get down there." Because I just saw Fahrenheit 11/9.

>> Judy Richardson: How is it?

>> It was wonderful.

>> Judy Richardson: Okay.

>> And I want to say you were in it, but you were speaking about the kids.

>> Judy Richardson: Yes.

>> And that's my question. There are a lot of organizations. For years I was involved with AFL, CIO, NAACP. And so there are a lot of organizations now that have not usurped you but are doing pieces of what you're doing. Or pieces of what NAACP is doing. And some people would argue that they're doing it more efficiently. But I think that they're not doing everything that you're doing. See, you had to do everything. Now you have organizations that are just going to do a little bit of it, a little bit of it. So they can specialize. But I think one of the concerns is that students, when they want to get involved, and I see that you all -- I was reading your bios. And you know, you had successful careers, so how do students now that they want to get involved and they still have to be concerned about their livelihoods, how do they make that transition to that capitalism? How do they -- you know, you can't go through your life being an activist without being able to sustain yourself.

>> Judy Richardson: But I think there are times when we can do both.

>> But how do you do that?

>> Judy Richardson: Okay, let me just say that all of us have figured out ways to do both.

>> Tony Gittens: That's correct.

>> Right.

>> Judy Richardson: So I'm going to answer your question. One of the things that has been very helpful to me is that I knew nothing about filmmaking, right? Nothing. Diddly-squat. I go in and Henry says, "Okay, I'm starting what is going to be a one-hour documentary on the Civil Rights Movement." It becomes 14. Who knew?

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But I brought the skills of the movement with me. That's what got me in the door. Because I knew nothing about filmmaking, right? I knew how to interview, because I had operated the 800 line for SNCC. So when people are calling in about church burnings or killings, I knew how to take the information and then give it to an FBI that did not care. The bottom line was though that the skills that you get you can take other places. The problem is you really have to be grounded in knowing why you're where you are. So I always -- even when I went into -- Blackside was easier. Even Northern Life Productions, I go into that, we do the Orangeburg Massacre and other films. I'm working now for the National Park Service. I and the team had done the Little Rock Nine Orientation films

for Little Rock Central High School. Now we're doing summer, right? But it's the skills of the movement that are bringing me in there. I think there are enough ways that you can do -- and sometimes it's not going into capitalism. I never think of myself as figuring out a way to become a capitalist, okay? It is how do I bring my values into whatever situation I'm in? And how am I able to pay the rent? And maybe that's something that others can talk about.

>> Tony Gittens: When we're born, we grow up, we're told that there are certain rules, that there's a certain track. That if you behave, you play by the rules, you don't bump into the walls too much, that you're going to be okay. And you find out -- we found out that those rules are made up by other people just like us. And we can therefore -- once you know that, you can pretty much do whatever. You know, there's no -- there aren't any rules. So you make up your own. I mean, at least it's my approach. I don't know about the folks down there. But I don't know anything about making movies. And I've spent a good part of my professional life putting on film festivals. You know? I don't know how to do any of that. I mean, Judy just talked about what she knows. The lady over there, I know she's bright as can be, you know. But you sort of -- once you sort of -- we spent a lot of the time with things we were talking about up here pushing against the rules, somebody else's rules. They said, "Look, don't do that. If you just go to school and get the master's degree and da-da-da-da-da, you know" [laughs], if you just do that, it's going to be okay.

>> Judy Richardson: And she's from Greenwood, by the way.

>> Tony Gittens: And she's from Greenwood.

>> Judy Richardson: Strong movement family in Greenwood, yes.

>> Tony Gittens: You know? And then you find out it's just somebody else who made the rules up. Well, if they make them up, we can make up our own rules too. We're going to start a bookstore. Hey, and then we're going to start a press over here. You know? What do we know about doing that stuff? What we knew is you know, we knew that we didn't like the things -- we didn't like the way that they're treating not only us, but other people, and we were going to do something about that. It bothered us to our core the way they would oppress people and us and our friends and people that we didn't even know. That we didn't even know. And that pissed us off, for sure. It pissed us off. And we said, "We're going to do something about that." That's what we knew. That's what we knew. I'm only saying that because all of us, we get young people coming to us. When they come to me, they ask advice, "Well, how do I do it?" And I have no answers for them. I don't know what to tell them.

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>> The reason I asked that question is because now I'm a member of 100 Black Men of Prince George County. And we have all these brown kids. And so we want -- I want to be able to have them know who you are, and to know -- I don't know if they should know that they'll be okay. But I do want them to have tools in their toolkit so that they can make that transition, so that they are not afraid to be true to who they are and be activists. In the 9/11 movie, most of the kids, those were white kids. And I'm not saying that -- well, they are privileged. And our kids are brown and black. And the target population may or may not go to college. And so I don't know if they're going to have those skills, but I want them to have those skills.

>> Judy Richardson: But there are other films about young people like them that you can show them.

>> Tony Gittens: Right.

>> Judy Richardson: And I don't know -- Debra, Jennifer, some suggestions?

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[Inaudible]

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I mean, part of the problem is that we only see the Parkland kids. There were kids organizing before them, there's kids organizing now.

>> Right.

>> Judy Richardson: Thankfully, they've often allied with and made sure those other -- there's the Dream Defenders which you can learn about them at the SNCC Gateway. There's the film Precious Knowledge about the young people in Tucson. There's other documentaries.

>> Jennifer Lawson: Yes.

>> Guha Shenkar: All right. We're just now going to wrap it up. But I want to get maybe the historian's perspective on this, not because it's the last one, but because it's the stepping back and looking at things from a broader perspective. These questions have all raised some interesting things. We could probably do another two panels on this. But what is your takeaway as a historian that might be interesting for all of us to share with us?

>> Joshua Davis: Maybe to connect it to the last question, to me what's really amazing is to see what all the people coming out of SNCC did in the rest of their lives. And I think that is really amazing to see that so many people coming out of SNCC, very creative and finding different ways to continue their work through different agencies, vehicles, organizations. I mean, it's really profound. If we just looked at these three people here, but then if you throw John Lewis in and [inaudible]. I mean, it's just endless. The list is just endless. You see what all the people did, yeah.

>> Tony Gittens: Stokely.

>> Joshua Davis: And I think that's part of the answer to your question, is looking at someone like Bob Moses who did Radical Equations.

>> Judy Richardson: Yes.

>> Joshua Davis: There are things that maybe our society doesn't think of as part of the Civil Rights Movement, a book about bringing math to underprivileged students.

>> Judy Richardson: And who has the Algebra Project.

>> Joshua Davis: Yeah.

>> Judy Richardson: Which is coming to DC public schools.

>> Joshua Davis: Yeah. That would be my main kind of answer to that, is that things take different forms. But the creativity is what allowed so many people coming out of SNCC and just the movement in general to continue doing what they're doing. Not necessarily get rich, but to survive and sustain and even prosper in the fullest sense of that word.

>> Guha Shenkar: And as long as we're talking about it, there are three other veterans of the Civil Rights Movement here with us. Charlene Kranz, [inaudible] right back there, all of whom have been introduced for the Civil Rights History Project. So if you're looking for models, that's one place to look. The SNCC Digital Gateway at Duke University is another place to look.

>> Judy Richardson: I have fliers for those who want them.

>> Guha Shenkar: And so if you're taking cards, you might as well take a copy of Josh Clark Davis's book with you. It's right out there in the lobby. It's actually in the gift shop now, sorry. So that's quite all right.

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[Inaudible]

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And I'm going to bring it to a close because I have the card which says two minutes and I've just given myself 30 seconds to say --

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[Laughter]

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>> Jennifer Lawson: Thank you, Guha.

>> Judy Richardson: Thank you.

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[Applause]

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>> Guha Shenkar: It's our privilege here at the Library of Congress American Folklife Center to have hosted this panel. So thank all of you, and thank all of you for coming. We'll see you the next time around.

>> Judy Richardson: Thank you very much.