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## **Moses Moon Civil Rights Recordings 1963-1964: Washington, DC; after November 22, 1963(OT\_N19)**

Extracted on Jan-29-2023 04:42:56

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WEBVTT

00:04:49.000 --> 00:04:59.000

<i>James Baldwin</i>: -- we all know that this country prides itself on something it calls 'upward mobility.'

00:04:59.000 --> 00:05:29.000

Upward mobility means, among other things, other rather sinister things, it means that if you were born a poor boy, -- say you're born in the ghetto, or in the backwoods someplace, or say you were born in Sicily, and you, and you can't speak English very good yet,

00:05:29.000 --> 00:05:37.000

It means that if you work hard and save your pennies and be a good boy, you'll get to be a junior executive by the time you're thirty.

00:05:37.000 --> 00:05:50.000

That's what 'upward mobility' means, and as far as I can tell, that's all it means. But this does not apply, of course, to one tenth of the population.

00:05:50.000 --> 00:06:00.000

Because any black boy born in the backwoods, any black boy born in the ghetto, knows very well that he's not going to get out of the backwoods or out of the ghetto by working hard and saving his pennies and being a nice boy.

00:06:00.000 --> 00:06:04.000

<i>Unknown Speaker</i>: Hear hear.

00:06:04.000 --> 00:06:13.000

<i>James Baldwin</i>: If this is true for me, if I am imprisoned in the ghetto, somebody's keeping me there.

00:06:13.000 --> 00:06:24.000

I would walk out if I could. If I can't walk out, it's because there's a warden someplace, and somebody put it many generations ago.

00:06:24.000 --> 00:06:46.000

Those are the two people you always find in prison: the man in prison, and the man who keeps him there. And I, of course in this context, have a terrible advantage since I understand, I have to understand by the time let's say I'm twelve, the nature of the prison, and your nature you my warden,

00:06:46.000 --> 00:06:50.206

and then I can figure out how to outwit you, and I do.



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