



Smithsonian Institution

Archives Center - NMAH

Moses Moon Civil Rights Recordings 1963-1964: Washington, DC; after November 22, 1963(OT_N19)

Extracted on Apr-19-2024 07:51:57

The Smithsonian Institution thanks all digital volunteers that transcribed and reviewed this material. Your work enriches Smithsonian collections, making them available to anyone with an interest in using them.

The Smithsonian Institution (the "Smithsonian") provides the content on this website (transcription.si.edu), other Smithsonian websites, and third-party sites on which it maintains a presence ("SI Websites") in support of its mission for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." The Smithsonian invites visitors to use its online content for personal, educational and other non-commercial purposes. By using this website, you accept and agree to abide by the [following terms](#).

- If sharing the material in personal and educational contexts, please cite the Archives Center - NMAH as source of the content and the project title as provided at the top of the document. Include the accession number or collection name; when possible, link to the Archives Center - NMAH website.
- If you wish to use this material in a for-profit publication, exhibition, or online project, please contact Archives Center - NMAH or transcribe@si.edu

For more information on this project and related material, contact the Archives Center - NMAH. [See this project](#) and other collections in the Smithsonian Transcription Center.

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.



Smithsonian Institution

Archives Center - NMAH

The mission of the Smithsonian is the increase and diffusion of knowledge - shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing our resources with the world. Founded in 1846, the Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Become an active part of our mission through the Transcription Center. Together, we are discovering secrets hidden deep inside our collections that illuminate our history and our world.

Join us!

The Transcription Center: <https://transcription.si.edu>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SmithsonianTranscriptionCenter>

On Twitter: [@TranscribeSI](https://twitter.com/TranscribeSI)

Connect with the Smithsonian

Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Smithsonian>

On Twitter: [@smithsonian](https://twitter.com/smithsonian)