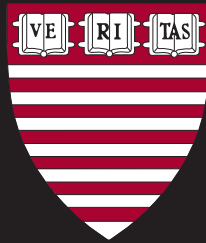


**THE THEODORE H. WHITE LECTURE  
ON PRESS AND POLITICS**

WITH

**THE HONORABLE JOHN LEWIS**

Joan Shorenstein Center  
**PRESS ▪ POLITICS**



**▪ PUBLIC POLICY ▪**

Harvard University  
John F. Kennedy School of Government

**2008**

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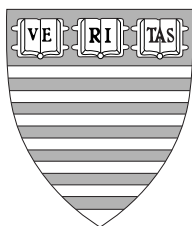
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The Theodore H. White Lecture commemorates the life of the reporter and historian who created the style and set the standard for contemporary political journalism and campaign coverage.

White, who began his journalism career delivering the *Boston Post*, entered Harvard College in 1932 on a newsboy's scholarship. He studied Chinese history and oriental languages. In 1939 he witnessed the bombing of Chungking while freelance reporting on a Sheldon Fellowship.

In 1959 White sought support for a twenty-year research project, a retrospective of presidential campaigns. After being advised by fellow reporters to drop this academic exercise, White took to the campaign trail, and, relegated to the "zoo plane," changed the course of American political journalism with the publication of *The Making of a President*, in 1960. The 1964, 1968, and 1972 editions of *The Making of a President*, along with *America in Search of Itself*, remain vital documents to the study of campaigns and the press.

Before his death in 1986, White also served on the Visiting Committee here at the Kennedy School of Government; he was one of the architects of what has become the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy.



JOHN LEWIS was born the son of sharecroppers on February 21, 1940, outside of Troy, Alabama. He grew up on his family's farm and attended segregated public schools in Pike County, Alabama. As a young boy, he was inspired by the activism surrounding the Montgomery bus boycott and the words of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., which he heard on radio broadcasts. As a student at Fisk University, John Lewis organized sit-in demonstrations at segregated lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1961, he volunteered to participate in the Freedom

Rides, which challenged segregation at interstate bus terminals across the South. Lewis risked his life on those Rides many times by simply sitting in seats reserved for white patrons. He was also beaten severely by angry mobs and arrested by police for challenging the injustice of Jim Crow segregation in the South.

During the height of the movement, from 1963 to 1966, Lewis was named chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which he helped form. SNCC was largely responsible for organizing student activism in the movement, including sit-ins and other activities.

While still a young man, John Lewis became a nationally recognized leader. By 1963, he was dubbed one of the Big Six leaders of the civil rights movement. (The others were Whitney Young, A. Phillip Randolph, Martin Luther King Jr., James Farmer, and Roy Wilkins.) At the age of 23, he was an architect of and a keynote speaker at the historic March on Washington in August 1963.

In 1964, Lewis coordinated SNCC efforts to organize voter registration drives and community action programs during the Mississippi Freedom Summer. The following year, Lewis helped spearhead one of the most seminal moments of the civil rights movement. Hosea Williams, another notable civil rights leader, and John Lewis led over 600 peaceful, orderly protestors across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama on March 7, 1965. They intended to march from Selma to Montgomery to demonstrate the need for voting rights in the state. The marchers were attacked by Alabama state troopers in a brutal confrontation that became known as "Bloody Sunday." News broadcasts and photographs revealing the senseless cruelty of the segregated South helped hasten the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Despite more than 40 arrests, physical attacks, and serious injuries, John Lewis remained a devoted advocate of the philosophy of nonviolence. After leaving SNCC in 1966, he continued his commitment to the civil rights movement as associate director of the Field Foundation and his participation in the Southern Regional Council's voter registration programs. Lewis went on to become the director of the Voter Education Project (VEP). Under his leadership, the VEP transformed the nation's political climate by adding nearly four million minorities to the voter rolls.

In 1977, Lewis was appointed by President Jimmy Carter to direct more than 250,000 volunteers of ACTION, the federal volunteer agency.

In 1981, he was elected to the Atlanta City Council. While serving on the Council, he was an advocate for ethics in government and neighborhood preservation. He was elected to Congress in November 1986 and has served as U.S. Representative of Georgia's Fifth Congressional District since then. That District includes the entire city of Atlanta, Georgia and parts of Fulton, DeKalb, and Clayton counties. He is senior chief deputy whip for the Democratic Party in leadership in the House, a member of the House Ways & Means Committee, a member of its Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, and chairman of its Subcommittee on Oversight.

Lewis holds a B.A. in Religion and Philosophy from Fisk University, and he is a graduate of the American Baptist Theological Seminary, both in Nashville, Tennessee. He has been awarded over 50 honorary degrees from colleges and universities throughout the United States.

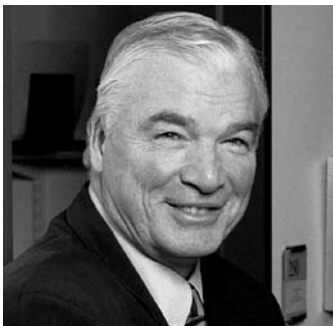






BOB HERBERT joined the *New York Times* as an op-ed columnist in 1993. His twice-a-week column comments on politics, urban affairs and social trends. Prior to joining the *Times*, Herbert was a national correspondent for NBC from 1991 to 1993, reporting regularly on “The Today Show” and “NBC Nightly News.” He had worked as a reporter and editor at the *Daily News* from 1976 until 1985, when he became a columnist and member of its editorial board. In 1990, Herbert was a

founding panelist of “Sunday Edition,” a weekly discussion program on WCBS-TV in New York, and the host of “Hotline,” a weekly issues program on New York public television. He began his career as a reporter with the *Star-Ledger* in Newark, New Jersey, in 1970. He became its night city editor in 1973. Herbert has won numerous awards, including the Meyer Berger Award for coverage of New York City and the American Society of Newspaper Editors award for distinguished newspaper writing. He was chairman of the Pulitzer Prize jury for spot news reporting in 1993. Born in Brooklyn on March 7, 1945, Herbert received a B.S. degree in journalism from the State University of New York (Empire State College) in 1988. He has taught journalism at Brooklyn College and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.



For thirty years DAVID NYHAN was a columnist and reporter at the *Boston Globe*. A graduate of Harvard College and a Shorenstein Fellow in the spring of 2001, Nyhan was a regular participant in Shorenstein Center activities before, during and after his Fellowship. Nyhan died unexpectedly in 2005. In his eulogy Senator Edward Kennedy said of Nyhan, “Dave was a man of amazing talent, but most of

all he was a man of the people who never forgot his roots. . . . In so many ways, but especially in the daily example of his own extraordinary life, Dave was the conscience of his community.” The hallmark of David Nyhan’s brand of journalism was the courage to champion unpopular causes and challenge the powerful with relentless reporting and brave eloquence. In his memory, the Shorenstein Center established the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.



# THE THEODORE H. WHITE LECTURE

## NOVEMBER 20, 2008

**Dean Ellwood:** Good evening, everyone, welcome to Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

This night, when we host the Teddy White Lecture and the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism, is always a special night. But somehow this one feels like the most special I can remember because we are here to celebrate some genuine American heroes at a time when there is much change and much drama afoot in the world.

I just want to say a couple of things here by way of introduction, the first is that we are joined by another American hero, Walter Shorenstein, who is here with us tonight.

(Applause)

You have no idea how important one single person can be in a country if you haven't listened and understood all the different things that Walter Shorenstein has done in his life. One vital part of that is the Shorenstein Center which has been so central in everything that we've done, and it's why we are here, in part, tonight.

Also with us today is David White, the son of Theodore H. White.

(Applause)

And David's wife Margaret is with us as well. It's a great honor to have you here, and this is a spectacular moment to celebrate the enormous contributions of your father and your father-in-law. I will leave Alex Jones to talk more about those, but this is the 19th annual Theodore H. White Lecture on Press and Politics.

Teddy White served on the Harvard Kennedy School Visiting Committee, and he was actually one of the early architects of what has become this remarkable place known as the Shorenstein Center.

We are joined by the Honorable John Lewis, someone who has seen a great deal in history and has created a great deal of history, and his remarks will undoubtedly inspire us yet again.

We are also here to honor Bob Herbert, who is here with us today.

(Applause)

As virtually everyone in this room will know, he is an op-ed columnist for the *New York Times* and he is going to be the recipient of the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

I want to say a couple of words about Alex Jones. He is the Laurence M. Lombard Lecturer on Press and Public Policy, he is the Director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy. He covered

the press for the *New York Times* between 1983 and '92, and he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1987.

In 1991 he coauthored with his wife, Susan Tifft, who is also here, and we are very, very happy to have you here, Susan, *The Patriarch: The Rise and Fall of the Bingham Dynasty*, and indeed, in 1992 he left the *Times* to work on *The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Times*, and again coauthored with Susan Tifft, which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. He's been a Nieman Fellow, he's been a host on National Public Radio's "On the Media" and host and executive editor of PBS "Media Matters."

He has done a great many remarkable things in his life, but for us, the remarkable thing he does is, number one, head the Joan Shorenstein Center, and number two, to introduce tonight's speaker.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, David.

This is indeed a great night for the Shorenstein Center, it is one we always look forward to, and as David said, I couldn't agree more, this one is extra, extra special.

As some of you already know, the Shorenstein Center was founded in 1986 as a memorial to Joan Shorenstein, a truly remarkable journalist, who died of breast cancer after a distinguished career with CBS. Her father, Walter Shorenstein, who you have heard praised tonight and will hear praised a little bit more now, endowed the Center as a place for a focused and searching examination of the intersection of press, politics and public policy.

He did it as a memorial to Joan. He not only made the center possible but he has remained vitally interested in what we do and has been our unstinting supporter and friend. He is here tonight with Joan's sister Carole.

And I ask that you join me in recognizing one more time this remarkable Shorenstein family.

Thank you.

(Applause)

A bit later you will hear from our Theodore White Lecturer for 2008, the Honorable John Lewis. But I first have another task to perform which is an honor but a bittersweet one. In 2005, we at the Shorenstein Center lost a great and much-admired friend, David Nyhan, when he died unexpectedly. Some of you did not know David and I want to speak of him briefly as we this year bestow the fourth annual David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

David Nyhan was a man of many parts, a devoted family man, a beloved friend and always a boon companion. He was a real Boston guy,

a big, handsome man with a killer smile, Irish eyes and the rare power to walk into a room and make the lights seem to come on, and I saw him do it again and again during his time as a fellow at the Shorenstein Center.

But tonight we honor David Nyhan the consummate reporter and political journalist, which is the role that occupied much of his life and at which he could not be bested. David was a reporter and then a columnist with the *Boston Globe*, and his work had both a theme and a character.

The theme was almost always power, political power, and also especially the abuse of political power by the big shots at the expense of the little guys. He liked politics, he also loved politicians as a group, he respected them, he felt they were often given a raw deal and judged by a standard that was smug and sanctimonious, two things David never was.

But if politics was the theme of David's work, the character of that work was a mixture of courage and righteous anger, leavened by a great sense of humor and the ability to write with grace and passion. He relished the fight with a political figure or perspective, yet had a knack of seeing beyond the surface of issues and the baloney at the heart of things, and especially to the reality of what was going on. He was a self-avowed liberal and not defensive about it.

As a columnist at the *Globe* he was a battler, a no-holds barred advocate, but he was always also surprising his readers with his take on things because most of all, David Nyhan was his own man and he called them as he saw them. Were he here, he would still be in a state of delirious joy that Barack Obama has been elected president of the United States.

(Applause)

In his memory and honor, the Nyhan family and many friends and admirers of David Nyhan have endowed the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism, to recognize the kind of gutsy, stylish and relentless journalism that David Nyhan embodied. David's wife Olivia, his children, many members of his family are here tonight and I would like to ask them all to please stand.

(Applause)

Olivia Nyhan told me just before we began that David's papers, his notebooks, his interviews, videos, tapes, whatever, have now been installed at the Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University where David Halberstam's, Frankie Fitzgerald's papers are as well, in other words, he is in very good company.

This year the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism goes to Bob Herbert of the *New York Times*.

(Applause)

The thing about Bob Herbert that David Nyhan would have liked best is his absolute determination to represent the interests of the powerless,

and David would have loved Bob Herbert's anger when the little guy is getting a raw deal. This is Bob Herbert in his column on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*: "The most important thing the Democrats and President-elect Obama can do with regard to the economy is bring back a sense of fairness and equity. The fat cats who placed the entire economy at risk with their greed and manic irresponsibility are trying to lay claim to every last dime in the national Treasury. Meanwhile, we're nowhere close to an economic recovery program that will help the people who are hurting most."

Or how about this from his election day column: "Right now the United States is a country in which wealth is funneled absurdly from the bottom to the top. The richest one percent of Americans now hold close to 40 percent of all the wealth in the nation and maintains an iron grip on the levers of government power. The U.S. is also a country in which blissful ignorance is celebrated and intellectual excellence is not given short shift, it's ridiculed."

That sounds a lot like David Nyhan in high dudgeon to me. But even more like David Nyhan is the other aspect of Bob Herbert's work, which is finding the person, the human being whose story makes the point and then telling that story. One of my favorites was in his column just after Barack Obama had won the Democratic presidential nomination. It was an incredible moment and an historic moment, one in and of itself.

Bob got at what it meant to African-Americans and to all Americans by telling the story of P.T. Cochran, an 88-year-old citizen of Detroit. Many years earlier Mr. Cochran had been a student at Wilberforce University, a black school in Ohio near the town of Xenia. He and a fellow student had gone into Xenia to see a movie and when they tried to buy a ticket, they were turned away. "The theater is closed," they were told, but of course it wasn't. So Mr. Cochran and his friend simply stood there to see if they would let anyone else in. As long as the two young black men stood there, the ticket taker wouldn't let anyone else in. They stood there for six hours.

Then they called their school and told their friends what they were doing, and those friends alerted students at nearby Antioch College, which was essentially white. More than 100 students from both schools converged on the theater to back the two boys up. "They stood there with us to back us up," Mr. Cochran remembered, his voice breaking, "we stayed there until the theater closed that night and then we came back the next day, which was Sunday, and stood there until 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon, when they finally decided to let us in."

Telling that story was how Bob Herbert explained what it meant for a national political party representing Americans of every ethnicity to nominate an African-American for president, which is exactly the kind

of journalism the David Nyhan Prize is intended to honor. Bob was born in Brooklyn, got his degree in journalism from State University of New York and began his career as a reporter at the *Newark Star Ledger*. He was a reporter, editor and columnist for the *New York Daily News*, and then a national correspondent for NBC News. In 1993 he joined the *New York Times* as an op-ed columnist writing on politics, urban affairs and social trends, but always with an eye out for the little guy.

His writing has earned him many awards, including the Meyer Berger Award for coverage of New York City and the American Society of Newspaper Editors Award for Distinguished Newspaper Writing. His work would have won David Nyhan's respect, and that is a mark of great distinction.

It is my honor to present this year's David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism to Bob Herbert.

(Applause)

**Mr. Herbert:** It is obviously a great honor, a tremendous honor to receive this award. And I want to give a special thanks to the Shorenstein family here today, the Nyhan family here today, Dean Ellwood, Alex Jones, thank you so much, and everyone else who is a part of this and everyone for coming here this evening.

If I begin to tear up during my remarks it's because someone mentioned where the *Times'* stock closed today.

(Laughter)

So I may just break out weeping at any moment.

(Laughter)

It's especially gratifying to receive this award at the end of such a fantastically exciting and historic campaign season. And I remember a campaign year long ago, 1968, which began with a tremendous amount of excitement and enthusiasm and optimism, especially among young people, and of course we all know that that year was a year of great tragedy. It's the year we lost Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, it's the year we lost Bobby Kennedy, and at the Democratic Convention there was rioting and chaos.

And this, I think, is the most exciting year since '68 for presidential politics. Once again, young people especially were fired up, exuberant, optimistic, and the campaign ended on what I think was such a wonderful note for so many reasons that you all understand.

I have thought, since election day, of so many people who are no longer with us who I wish could have seen what happened this year. One of the people was Dr. Carolyn Goodman, who had become a pretty good friend of mine, and whose son Andrew Goodman was one of the three civil rights workers killed in Mississippi in 1964.



And I can't mention all the others obviously but two that I would like to mention were my parents, Chester and Adelaide Herbert from Montclair, New Jersey, who ran upholstery shops there, and even at my advanced age I still miss them every day. And I wish they could have seen what happened this election year and could have witnessed election night and seen Barack Obama become elected president, and I wish they could have been here tonight to see me win this fabulous award. So thank you very, very much.

(Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Theodore H. White was also a consummate reporter whose passion was politics. He came to Harvard on a newsboy scholarship and went on to a very distinguished career as a journalist and also a historian. Indeed, Teddy White, as he was universally known, changed both political journalism and politics when he wrote *The Making of the President, 1960*, about the Kennedy/Nixon campaign. For the first time he raised the curtain on the warts and all sides of presidential campaigns and changed forever the level of candor about decision making and the human drama that is now at the heart of campaign coverage.

He followed that first book with three more *Making of the President* books in '64, '68 and '72. No doubt the *Making of the President, 2008*, will not be a book but an industry. Yet no one has matched those smart and groundbreaking examinations of what happens and why in the maelstrom of a political campaign. And it is fair to say that Teddy White's heirs are the journalists of today who try to pierce the veil of politics, to understand what is happening and then to analyze and deliver the goods to those of us who are trying to understand.

Tonight we are joined by Teddy White's son David and David's wife Margaret, as David Ellwood introduced. And I just wanted to say we are very glad that you are with us tonight on this occasion that means so much to us.

Before his death in 1986, Teddy White was one of the architects of what became the Shorenstein Center, and one of the first moves of Marvin Kalb, the Center's founding director, was to raise the funds and establish the Theodore H. White Lecture on the Press and Politics in Teddy White's honor.

This year the Theodore White Lecture is to be delivered by the Honorable John Lewis. Two months ago the intense and historic presidential campaign we witnessed was electrified by the words of John Lewis. Representative Lewis had grown increasingly concerned by what he viewed as the dangerous race-baiting language used by the McCain/Palin campaign at their rallies. Bear in mind, John McCain and John Lewis are longtime friends. McCain has praised Lewis for something McCain himself has

emblemized, courage in action, and so what John Lewis said had extra weight and special impact.

He said that McCain and Palin were “sowing the seeds of hatred and division.” “What I’m seeing today,” he said, “reminds me too much of another destructive period in American history.” George Wallace had not fired a gun, he said, but when he ran for president, “he created the climate and the conditions that encouraged vicious attacks against innocent Americans who were simply trying to exercise their constitutional rights.” “Senator McCain and Governor Palin are playing with fire,” he warned, “and if they are not careful, that fire will consume us all.”

I was struck as I walked by one of our posters announcing tonight’s Teddy White Lecture that our speaker was identified as the Honorable John Lewis, and if ever there were a title that suited the man, that is it. He has embodied the concept of honor and courage for decades, and when he spoke those harsh words about John McCain, the effect was thunderous. John Lewis had the moral authority to intervene at such a moment because of a lifetime of willingness to step into the center of racism and face it down.

He grew up in segregation in Alabama, the son of sharecroppers, and became inspired by Martin Luther King’s voice on the radio. In 1961 he was a freedom rider, traveling across the South and putting his life on the line by simply sitting in white-only seats in buses. He was beaten and arrested and was not at all deterred.

At the height of the civil rights movement, from 1963 to 1966, he was a young chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC, and at 23 he was considered one of the movement’s most important figures, along with Dr. King. He was one of the architects and keynote speakers for the March on Washington and was particularly focused on registering African-Americans to vote, as he believed Dr. King was right that nonviolence was the way to change America.

On Sunday, March 7, 1965, John Lewis led 600 peaceful protesters across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama on their way to Montgomery to demonstrate the need for voting rights. Alabama state troopers brutally attacked the marchers, and what became known as Bloody Sunday proved to be a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement because reporters were there to tell the story in pictures and words.

By his count, and he should know, John Lewis has been physically attacked, seriously injured and arrested a total of more than 40 times. In other words, he has walked the walk in the most powerful sense, and this has given power to his warning about the dangers he saw in the McCain campaign. Did his words have an effect? I think so. I think ultimately the presidential election turned out to be not about race for the vast majority

of Americans; it turned out to be who was the best person for the job. And the result was the election of a black man to the Presidency of the United States, virtually without violence.

As Congressman Lewis said on CNN following Barack Obama's election, "Our nation has witnessed a nonviolent revolution." That would not,

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**I've often said that without the press, the civil rights movement would have been like a bird without wings.**

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could not have happened without the persistence, the determination and the guts of a small handful of people like John Lewis. He has served in Congress representing Atlanta for more than twenty years, he is the holder of more than fifty honorary degrees and received scores of awards.

One that is of particular importance tonight is his distinction of being the only person to win the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award for Lifetime Achievement. The point is that this coveted award is given for a single instance of great courage. John Lewis is the only person to ever receive it for a *lifetime* of courage.

I am proud to present the 2008 Theodore White Lecturer, the Honorable John Lewis.

(Applause)

**Congressman Lewis:** Thank you very much for those kind words of introduction. I am delighted and very pleased to be here tonight, to get out of Washington, just to get out and come to another part of the country. It's a little cold, but it's okay.

(Laughter)

To see and honor three wonderful families that contributed so much to journalism. I've often said that without the press, the civil rights movement

would have been like a bird without wings. The American press has been a sympathetic referee in the struggle for social justice, for change.

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Now, I see the editor of my paper here, Cynthia Tucker, from the *Atlanta Constitution*, and I probably should be very careful about anything I may say.

(Laughter)

Because any and everything I say tonight I believe is on the record, right?

(Laughter)

I know that I am supposed to deliver a lecture, but I think what I have to say tonight will be more like a testimony.

Bob, congratulations. I read you, I'm inspired by you, keep it up, keep writing, keep using the pen. I want to be calm, I know I'm in an academic setting.

(Laughter)

And I want to be cool and steady and pick up some of those attributes of Barack Obama.

(Laughter)

But I must tell you it's going to be very hard.

(Laughter)

It's going to be very difficult. You know, Barack Obama was born in 1961, the year of the Freedom Ride. In 1961, I was 21 years old, had all my hair and was a few pounds lighter.

(Laughter)

As a nation and as a people we have come a distance, and I must tell you that I'm so deeply touched to be invited to be here. For Teddy White, who was a writer that I knew, I remember seeing him on the last and final campaign of Robert Kennedy, forty years ago. We were sitting in a hotel, on the fifth floor of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, in Bobby Kennedy's suite, when he told us to remain there, he was going downstairs to make his victory statement and he will be returning, but he never returned.

Teddy White was a gifted writer. I know he wrote a series of books called *The Making of a President* and about the election in 1960 when a young, vibrant man named John

F. Kennedy became president of the United States. If Teddy White were here tonight to tell the story, he would enjoy writing about Senator Barack Obama's road to the presidency. What would he say? I think he would say that the struggle, the desire, the urge to create a more perfect union or to build what we in the civil rights movement call a beloved community did not start with this election and it will not end here today.

From the very founding of New England, by a people who wanted to build a new world to free themselves from religious persecution, from the Boston Tea Party and the outcry against taxation without representation, from the Revolutionary War, the Declaration of Independence and the creation of a United States of America as a republic, from the early days

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of slavery and the slave revolts, from the beginning of the Abolitionists movement and the Underground Railroad, from the Dred Scott decision of the Supreme Court to the Civil War and the Reconstruction period, from the emergence of the Niagara Movement and the founding of the NAACP. From the Jim Crow period and the government's sanction of legalized segregation and racial discrimination, from the Supreme Court decision of 1954 and the advent of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955.

For hundreds of years there has been a people struggling and believing, pressing and praying, sacrificing and dying in the hopes that they could bring this nation to this moment and beyond. After Rosa Parks decided to sit down on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama in December, 1955,

other people decided to stand up for justice all over our country.

The protests and marches, sit-ins, boycotts were the beginning of a non-violent movement, a mass movement under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. "I have a dream," was not this young man's first speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Five years earlier the NAACP celebrated its third anniversary, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision with a prayer pilgrim-

age for freedom on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Martin Luther King Jr., then a young minister, only 28 years old, would become the voice of a mass movement in America that inspired people around the world.

He gave another speech, a real-life prophecy. He said, "Give us the ballot and we will fill our legislative halls with men of goodwill. Give us the ballot and we will play dirges on the benches of the South, who would do justly and of mercy. Give us the ballot and we will quietly and nonviolently, without rancor or bitterness, implement the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954." Hundreds and thousands of young people, primarily black college students, were deeply inspired by Martin Luther King Jr., and they were inspired by the winds of change they saw blowing in Africa.

Because of King's words and his example, they were inspired to answer a call that was ringing in their souls, a cry for justice, a cry for freedom, a cry for equal rights. In those days, in order to register to vote, many of our citizens had to pass a so-called literacy test, pay a poll tax and recite certain sections of the Constitution. But in the spring of 1960, because of the inspiration of Martin Luther King Jr., we started sitting in, sitting down, and some say by sitting down we were really standing up.

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In North Carolina, in Tennessee, in Georgia, in Alabama, in Mississippi, and all across the South you saw these young, well-dressed college students sitting there in an orderly, peaceful, nonviolent fashion waiting to be served. And the American press took those symbols and signs to the American people. These young people were attacked; some had lighted cigarettes put out in their hair, down their backs, people would spit on them. Some were just sitting there doing their homework, working on a paper, reading a book. But they didn't give up, they didn't give in, they didn't become bitter, they didn't become hostile.

Many were arrested and jailed. Just think, a few short years ago in Montgomery, Alabama, in Jackson, Mississippi and other parts of the South, blacks and whites could not stay in the same hotel, ride in the same taxi cab. Yes, we saw those signs that said white men, colored men, white women and colored women, white waiting and colored waiting, but it took a mass, nonviolent movement to bring those signs down.

Those signs inspired a president like John F. Kennedy, that movement, that protest, to make a speech in May of 1963, after Medgar Evers had been assassinated in Mississippi. After hundreds and thousands of young people had been arrested and jailed in Birmingham, after Police Commissioner Bull Connor had used police dogs and fire hoses on young children and old men.

I remember, in June of 1963, a small group of us were invited to the White House to meet with President Kennedy. And it was in that meeting that Martin Luther King Jr. would welcome to the NAACP Whitney Young of the National Urban League; James Farmer of CORE; and a wonderful leader, the dean of black leadership at the time, A. Philip Randolph.

When Mr. Randolph spoke up in that meeting with President Kennedy and said, "Mr. President, the black masses are restless and we are going to march on Washington," you could tell by the body language of President Kennedy he didn't like what he heard. He said, "Mr. Randolph, if you bring all these people to Washington, won't there be violence and chaos and disorder, and we will never get a civil rights bill through the Congress?" Mr. Randolph responded and said, "Mr. President, this will be an orderly, peaceful, nonviolent protest."

We left that meeting with President Kennedy, came out on the lawn of the White House and announced to the media that we had a productive and meaningful meeting with the president of the United States and we told him we were going to march on Washington. A few days later, on July 2, 1963, we met in downtown Manhattan at a local hotel and invited four major white religious and labor leaders to join us in issuing the call for the March on Washington. I wish all those leaders were here today. I wish

President Kennedy were here tonight. I wish Bobby Kennedy were here. I wish Lyndon Johnson could see what has happened in their America.

I know many of you are so young you were not even a dream, but we didn't get to the point that we are today simply because someone said let's end segregation and racial discrimination. It was a struggle, an unbelievable struggle. After the March on Washington, August 28, 1963, when Dr. King stood and said, "I have a dream today, a dream deeply rooted in American dreams," there was so much hope, so much optimism.

Eighteen days later, with the bombing of a little church in Birmingham, Alabama, where a poor little girl was killed on a Sunday morning, that was a sad and dark hour in the movement, but we didn't give up, we didn't give in, we didn't become bitter, we didn't become hostile. We kept the faith and we kept our eyes on the prize.

Many newspaper people, editors, wrote unbelievable articles, politicians made statements and condemned the violence, the bombing in Birmingham, Alabama. And because of what happened in Birmingham, Alabama on September 15, 1963, we made a decision that we would intensify our effort to gain the vote.

When I spoke at the March on Washington on August 28, 1963, I'd been reading a copy of the *New York Times*, and I saw a picture of a group of black women in southern Africa carrying signs saying one man/one vote. So in my March on Washington speech, I said something like one man/one vote is the African cry, it is ours too, it must be ours. And that became the rallying cry for the young people in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. We went to Selma, in the heart of the black belt, the majority black in Dallas County where Selma is the county seat, about 50 miles south of Montgomery, only 2.1 percent of African-Americans were registered to vote.

You could only attempt to register to vote on the first and third Monday of each month. You had to go down to the county courthouse, get a copy of the so-called literacy test and attempt to pass this test. People stood in unbelievable lines. A county called Lowndes County between Selma and Montgomery, more than 80 percent African-American, but there was not a single registered African-American voter in the county. In the state of Mississippi, the state had a black voting age population of more than 450,000, but only about 16,000 blacks were registered to vote.

A young man by the name of Bob Moses had attended Harvard, helped organize something called the Mississippi Summer Project, and he recruited more than 1,000 students, young people, lawyers, teachers, to come to Mississippi to work in freedom schools, preparing people to pass the so-called literacy test.

On a summer night of June 21, 1964, three young men that I knew, Andy Goodman; Michael Schwerner, from New York, white; James Cheney, an African-American from Mississippi, went up to investigate the burning of an African-American church. They were stopped by the sheriff, arrested, taken to jail. Later that same evening they were taken from the jail, turned over to the Klan, where they were beaten, shot and killed.

And I say tonight these three young men didn't die in the Middle East, they didn't die in Eastern Europe, they didn't die in Africa or Central or South America, they died right here in our own country, trying to get all of our citizens to become participants in the democratic process. I wish they were still here. It was a sad and dark hour for the movement.

President Lyndon Johnson ordered J. Edgar Hoover, the head of the FBI, to open an office of the FBI in Mississippi, to call up part of the military to search for the bodies, and six weeks later the bodies were discovered, buried under a mound of dirt, near Philadelphia, Mississippi.

President Johnson, on July 2, 1964, signed the Civil Rights Act; he won a landslide election in November, 1964. Martin Luther King Jr. received the Nobel Peace Prize. He came back to America, held a meeting at the White House with President Johnson and said, "Mr. President, we need a strong Voting Rights Act," and President Johnson told Dr. King, in so many words, "We don't have the votes in the Congress to get a Voting Rights Act, I just signed the Civil Rights Act." Martin Luther King Jr. came back to Atlanta, met with a group of us and made a decision to join us in Selma, Alabama, and he said we will write that act.

In Selma, Alabama they had a sheriff who guarded the courthouse like it was his own home. He wore a gun on one side, a nightstick on the other side. He carried an electric cattle prod in his hand and he didn't use it on cows. He wore a button on his left lapel that said "Never." And I remember when it was my day to lead a group of elderly black men and women to the courthouse, January 18, 1965.

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We got to the top of the steps, trying to go through a set of double doors, trying to get in to get copies of the literacy test; Sheriff Clark met me on the top of the steps and he said, “John Lewis, you are an outside agitator, you are the lowest form of humanity.” I looked at the sheriff and I said, “Sheriff Clark, I may be an agitator but I’m not an outsider. I grew up only 90 miles from here, and we are going to stay here until these people are allowed to register to vote,” and he said, “You are under arrest,” and he arrested about 60 of us, took us all to jail.

A few days later Martin Luther King Jr. and others came to Selma and marched on the courthouse, and more than 300 people were arrested. We

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filled the city jail, the city’s stockade, the county jail, and the American press told the story. And then about two weeks later, in a little town called Marion, Alabama—Perry County, Alabama is the home county of Mrs. Coretta Scott King, the home county of Mrs. Andrew Young, the late Jean Young, the home county of Mrs. Ralph Abernathy, Juanita Abernathy—there was a march that evening for the right to vote in this little county. A confrontation occurred, one young man by the name of Jimmy Lee Jackson tried to protect his mother; he was shot in the stomach by a state

trooper and a few days later he died at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma, and because of what happened to him, we decided to march from Selma to Montgomery.

So on Sunday, March 7, 1965, after church, about 600 of us, mostly elderly black men and women and a few young people, participated in a nonviolent workshop. We had a prayer, someone started singing and then it became a silent walk. We were walking in twos through the streets of Selma, exercising our constitutional rights, no one saying a word.

I was wearing a backpack, before it became fashionable to wear backpacks. I thought we were going to be arrested and that we were going to go to jail, so in this backpack I wanted to have something to read. I had two books, one was by a professor from Harvard, a political scientist, the other one by Thomas Merton. I wanted to have something to eat. I had an apple and I had an orange that wouldn’t last too long. And since I was going to be in jail with my friends, my colleagues and neighbors, I wanted to be able to brush my teeth. I had toothpaste and a toothbrush.

We got to the edge of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, crossing the Alabama River. A young man walking beside me named Hosea Williams said, "John, can you swim?" He saw all of this water down in the Alabama River, and I said, "No." I said, "Hosea, can you swim?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Well, there's too much water there, we are not going to jump, we are going straight ahead."

And we continued to walk and we came to the highest point on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, we saw a sea of blue down below, Alabama state troopers, and we continued to walk. We came within hearing distance of the state troopers; a man identified himself and said, "I am Major John Clyde of the Alabama State Troopers. This is an unlawful march, it will not be allowed to continue. I give you three minutes to disperse and return to your church."

And in less than a minute and a half the Major said, "Troopers advance." You saw these men putting on their gas masks, they came towards us, beating us with nightsticks and bullwhips, trampling us with horses, releasing the tear gas. I was hit in the head by a state trooper with a nightstick, had a concussion at the bridge; I thought I saw death, I thought I was going to die.

That Sunday became known as Bloody Sunday; 17 of us were hospitalized. There was a sense of righteous indignation during the next few days when the American people witnessed, by way of television, by way of newspapers and magazines, what had happened, and there were demonstrations in more than 80 American cities and American embassies around the world when people saw what had happened in Selma.

Because of Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama, President Lyndon Johnson invited Governor Wallace to come to Washington to meet with him, to try to get his assurance that he would be able to protect us. He could not assure the president, so Lyndon Johnson, on March 15, 1965, eight days after Bloody Sunday, made one of the most meaningful speeches that any American president had made in modern times on the whole question of voting rights and civil

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rights. Lyndon Johnson spoke to a joint session of the Congress, spoke to the American people.

He started that speech off that night by saying, "I speak tonight for the destiny of America." He went on to say that time, history and fate meet in a single place in an unending search for freedom. He said, "It was more than a century ago at Lexington and at Concord, so it was at Appomattox, so it was last week in Selma, Alabama." And before Lyndon Johnson concluded that speech, as he introduced the Voting Rights Act, he said, "And we shall overcome."

I was sitting next to Martin Luther King Jr. in the home of a local family in Selma, and I looked at Dr. King as tears came down his eyes, he started crying, and we all cried a little. And he said to me, "John, we will make it from Selma to Montgomery, and the Voting Rights Act will be passed." But we wouldn't have been able, we wouldn't have been successful if it

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**I think the media played a major role in helping to bring about this nonviolent revolution; it's a revolution of values, it's a revolution of ideals.**

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hadn't been for the press. It was very dangerous to have a camera, to have a pencil and a pad in Selma, Alabama in 1965, to be covering the Freedom Rides in 1961, to be in Mississippi at Ole Miss in 1962. Journalists were beaten, one photographer was shot and killed.

And tonight I salute these three unbelievable families. I salute all members of the media for the contribution you have made to bring us to

this point. I know you are supposed to be free and not show your hands, but you are human beings. I think the media played a major role in helping to bring about this nonviolent revolution; it's a revolution of values, it's a revolution of ideals. And I don't care what you say, we are a better country and we are a better people. Just think, those same hands that pick cotton, that pull the corn, that gather the peanuts, in the heart of the American South, with other hands helped elect Barack Obama as president of the United States.

(Applause)

If someone had told me when we were meeting with Lyndon Johnson, at the signing of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965, if someone had told me when I saw that copy of *Life Magazine*, when I saw that TV footage telling the story of what happened and how it happened, and that we would live to see the day when we would come to that point as a nation and as a people, we would take a significant step, a major step down the long road toward laying down the burden of race.

I used to tell young people, students, elementary school, high school, college students, "If you don't believe that we have changed, come and walk in my shoes." But now they can see it, I don't have to tell anybody. Since the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States of America something has happened to our very psyche.

Cynthia Tucker, I was on the streets of Atlanta a few days ago and a young white gentleman who grew up in rural Alabama, like I did, came up and hugged me and said, "Congressman, we are free at last, the Civil War is over, it is over, it is gone."

(Applause)

We should embrace it, we should celebrate. I told some of my colleagues in the Congress yesterday there's all these people coming to Washington for the inauguration. "What are we going to do?" I said, "Let it happen, enjoy, let it be." They said, "Oh, maybe there's going to be two million, three million," now today they are saying there may be four million people, but it's okay and it's all right. Barack Obama has created a movement, a movement for change that gives us all a sense of hope. People look different, they are speaking differently.

I tell young people, as Dr. King would say, "Straighten up your back." He said when you straighten up your back, no man can ride you. We have witnessed, a nonviolent revolution. Yes, we are in the process of building the beloved community. When I was growing up outside of Troy, Alabama, on that farm 50 miles from Montgomery, I had an aunt by the name of Seneva and my Aunt

Seneva lived in what we called a shotgun house. I know here, at the John F. Kennedy School, here in this city of learning you've never seen a shotgun house, you don't even know what I'm talking about.

But I know what I'm talking about because I was born in a shotgun house. For those of you who may not know what a shotgun house is, it's an old house, one way in and one way out. In the nonviolent sense, the house where you can bounce a basketball through the front door and it will go straight out the back door. Or, in the military sense, it's an old house where you can fire a shotgun through the front door and the bullets would go straight out the back door. My Aunt Seneva lived in a shotgun house.

Sometimes she would walk out into the woods and take branches from a dogwood tree and tie these branches together and make a broom, and she called that broom the dress broom. And from time to time she would

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walk out and sweep that yard very clean, sometimes two and three times a week, but especially on a Friday or Saturday because she wanted that yard to look very good during the weekend.

One Saturday afternoon a group of my brothers and sisters and a few of my first cousins, about 12 or 15 of us young children were out playing

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**. . . we all live in the same house and we all must have a place at the table . . . it doesn't matter whether we are black or white or Latino or Asian American or Native American, it doesn't matter whether we are gay or straight, Republican or Democrats or Independents, we are one people, we are one family . . . our foremothers and our forefathers all came to this great land in different ships, but we are all in the same boat now.**

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in my Aunt Seneva's dirt yard and an unbelievable storm came up. The wind started blowing, the thunder started rolling, the lightning started flashing, and the rain started beating on the tin roof of the old shotgun house. My aunt became terrified, started crying, she thought this old house was going to blow away, so she got all of us children together and told us to hold hands, and we did as we were told. The wind continued to blow, the thunder continued to roll, the lightning continued to flash and the rain continued to beat on the tin roof of this old shotgun house, and we cried and we cried, we thought the house was going to blow away.

And the one corner of this old house appeared to be lifting—she had us walk over to that corner to try to hold the house down with our little bodies. When the other corner appeared to be lifting, she had us walk to that side to try to hold the

house down with our little bodies. We were little children walking with the wind but we never left the house. The struggle in America, whether for women's rights or civil rights, for peace, for gay rights, for workers rights—it's part of an effort to hold the American house together.

The Barack Obama campaign was saying, in effect, that we all live in the same house and we all must have a place at the table. That it doesn't matter whether we are black or white or Latino or Asian American or Native American, it doesn't matter whether we are gay or straight, Republican or Democrats or Independents, we are one people, we are one family, we all live in the same house, saying to us just maybe our foremothers and our forefathers all came to this great land in different ships, but we are all in the same boat now.

So I say to you tonight continue, hang in there, keep the faith, walk with the wind and embrace the change that we all will enjoy, not just for our generation but for generations yet unborn.

Thank you very much.

(Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Congressman Lewis has agreed to answer some questions, which is our tradition.

**Mr. Goldstein:** Hello. My name is Aaron Goldstein, I'm a private citizen. By likening the words of Senator McCain and Governor Palin to be incendiary hatred or segregation, haven't you, even unintentionally, diminished the meaning of racism?

**Congressman Lewis:** My friend, my brother, what I was simply trying to suggest or state, was that at some of the rallies, the gatherings of Senator McCain and Governor Palin, I heard words and language that I saw and witnessed during another period in our history. At some of those rallies that I saw by way of television and read about in newspapers, I heard things like, "Off him. Terrorist. Kill him." Those are toxic words. I never suggested that either Senator McCain or Governor Palin was for segregation or racist. And I stand by my statement.

(Applause)

**Mr. Goshu:** It's a pleasure to meet you. My name is Leoule Goshu, I'm an MPP2. What words of hope do you have to offer to the Kennedy School students for the future?

**Congressman Lewis:** For the future, is to stay here, and study hard and learn as much as you can, and get out and see the world and believe, believe that we can do better as a nation and as a people and as part of the community of nations. We cannot stand on the sidelines, we all must be in the arena, we must be doing something. And people should study, it would be a wonderful thing if someone somewhere, maybe at the Kennedy School, and I know somebody is working on it right now, just analyzed what happened. This was a brilliant campaign. I have never, ever seen anything like it, never. It was a movement.

The other day, in my own district in Atlanta, I was standing at the polls. I waited until November 4th to vote, I didn't do early voting, I didn't

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do advanced voting, I wanted to be there, I wanted to stand in line on the day, I just wanted to be there. I wanted to have a feeling and I stood in line, I didn't get in front of anyone, I stood in line for about an hour and a half. But several weeks ago I stopped at a filling station near the Atlanta airport

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**. . . people suffered,  
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to fill up my car with gas, and you know, the prices are coming down now, so I can fill it up.

(Laughter)

And there was a young man in front of me who said, "I never registered, I don't believe in voting." He was about 32 years old, and I kept talking to this young man and I said, "Sir, you must register, you must vote.

Isn't it time?" I said, "People suffered, some people died, some people went to their grave never having an opportunity to register to vote, and you have to." And the day I went to the polls, the precinct was at a high school, in front of me was this young man, who got registered and was voting.

And, Cynthia, your paper had a picture of him in the paper, and he voted.

You have to get people to believe that change is possible, and Barack Obama convinced the American people that change is possible, yes we can. And people only believe, you have to have hope, you have to have faith that nothing else will do, you have to believe that it can be done. People told us that we wouldn't make it from Selma to Montgomery, that we

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wouldn't get our Voting Rights Act passed, that we wouldn't get a Civil Rights Act, but we didn't give up, and we must never, ever give up. There may be some disappointments, some interruptions, some setbacks, but you keep pushing, you keep moving, and that's what people must do, and not just for ourselves.

The sad thing about this period that we live in, because our economy is in the tank and we don't have many resources, it's going to be tough, it's going to be hard, it's going to be difficult. But Barack Obama, paraphrasing

the words of Dr. King, there are some difficult days ahead but as a people and as a nation we will get there, and I believe we will.

(Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Hi, Congressman. Jake Jones, a private citizen. David Nyhan's son-in-law as well. I run a government affairs group in Washington. I just want to ask a follow-up question. There is lots of euphoria about President-elect Obama, and given the conditions and expectations, how can he live up to the expectations? How can he not disappoint?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, we all must help the president. I am convinced that this young man is going to be a good and great president. He has a vision and I think he will lead the American people and will lead the community of nations on a great journey, and we should be prepared to go with him on this journey. It's not to say anything bad about the present administration, but we haven't been called upon to do anything in the past eight years. The only people that have been sacrificing are our young men and young women in uniform. For the rest of us, it's just been sort of oh, well.

But I think Barack Obama is going to challenge the best in all of us to go out and do something, not only here at home but also abroad, and that we will answer the call. I am very hopeful and very optimistic that we won't be disappointed.

**Mr. Ruffins:** My name is Robert Ruffins, I'm from Washington, D.C., and I grew up within sight of the Capitol. And when I saw Barack Obama get elected, I called my grandfather, who is 89, and told him what happened, I could hear that he was crying. The one thing he posed to me is, what do we do when you go back to your dorm room, when I go back to D.C.? When we go back and the excitement and the euphoria has worn off, what then? I'm not sure if this is a question that can be answered in a few words or a few minutes or even a few years, but where do we go from here?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, I think each one of us must take it upon ourselves to pass it on, that we've been blessed, that more than likely we are blessed to have an opportunity here to get an education, to learn as much as possible. We have to reach back and bring others along. We all should find a way to make things better for all of the citizens that dwell on this little piece of real estate that we call America.

**Mr. Passan:** My name is Shrida Passan, I'm a JD MBA student here. Congressman, thank you for your humanity, most of all. There seems to be a genuine lack of courage and leadership in public life. As someone with a healthy amount of both, why do you see that as being such, and what are some of the causes behind it and how do we move beyond that to have the sort of leaders that we read about in history books?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, we have to convince and tell people. We had an election of committee chairs today and I was supporting a particular



person, that's why my voice sounds so, I preached today to the Democratic Caucus and I don't know how many people I converted, but I did.

(Laughter)

But I said, before we cast our vote, each of us should have an executive session with ourselves. And I said, some place I heard that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Too many of us in government, in business and private, we operate by polls, we don't go with our guts, with our soul, with our heart. We tend to put our fingers in the air to see which way the wind is blowing. But if you believe in something, you have to go for it.

When I was growing up and would visit the little town of Troy or visit Montgomery or Tuskegee and I saw those signs, and I would ask my mother, my father, my grandparents and my great-grandparents and they would say that's the way it is, don't get in the way, don't get in trouble.

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**One day I heard Martin Luther King, Jr. on the old radio when I was 15 years old, and he inspired me to get in the way, to get in trouble, and I've been getting in trouble ever since.**

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Well, one day I heard Martin Luther King Jr. on the old radio when I was 15 years old, and he inspired me to get in the way, to get in trouble, and I've been getting in trouble ever since.

(Applause)

**Mr. Merrifield:** My name is Ian Merrifield and I'm a freshman here at the college. And, Congressman Lewis, thank you so much for being here tonight and your words were deeply inspiring, I will never forget them.

I believe it was Newton who once said if I've seen farther than others it's because I stood on the shoulders of

giants. On whose shoulders is Barack Obama standing? And more importantly, sir, do your shoulders hurt?

(Laughter)

**Congressman Lewis:** You know, no. I think Barack Obama is standing on the shoulders of many, many, countless, nameless individuals and it would take me too long to call the roll. And when I think about it sometimes, I've cried a great deal in the past few days. A young reporter interviewed me a few days ago, I cried and the reporter cried also. We had to stop the camera, just stop, because it's amazing, it's unreal, it's unbelievable. But leading up to the campaign, to the election itself, for several days I couldn't sleep. I would get up in the morning and whether in Washington or in Atlanta, to try to get the news at like 3:00 in the morning.

Who is that, ABC with the morning news starting around 3:00? And you get up and you watch a little news or you get CBS "Up to the Minute," NBC "Today," whatever they call it, and you get the early edition of the newspapers and you go online, you just want to know what's happening, what's going on.

I love current events. From a young child, when I was growing up very, very young, my family was too poor to have a subscription to the *Montgomery Advertiser*, so my grandfather had one and every day when he would finish reading his newspaper we would get his newspaper and we would read it. And I think it made me a better person and informed me of what was happening in Alabama, in America and around the world and then came television.

I don't want to say anything, but in Barack Obama's book, *Audacity of Hope*, he said he had three heroes, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. and John Lewis. I am flattered that he would say something like that. I don't consider myself a hero, but other people like Fannie Lou Hamer, this brave and courageous black woman in the delta of Mississippi, countless individuals that never, never, ever lived to register to vote, but they tried to get registered, they tried to vote, and many of them went to their death. And I would like to think they must be looking down from someplace rejoicing with this unbelievable victory.

So I think he stands on the shoulders of generations of warriors, generations of fighters. Many individuals went to create the climate and the environment that made it happen.

**Mr. Benson:** Congressman Lewis, thank you very much for coming. My name is Earl Benson. I'm a student at the Law School and the Business School. And in your book, in 1998, at the end of it, you talk about the fact that there needs to be a new movement, an economic movement, and obviously those words were prescient, given the current state of the economy. What do we need to do now and what steps do we take to create this movement now, a new economic development movement?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, I really believe that Barack Obama's campaign is the essence of that movement. I'm not saying that I was predicting anything or that I saw something coming along, but, I'll tell you, to see hundreds and thousands of people, people leaving Georgia, going to Florida, saying we can't win in Georgia, let's go and help in Florida, that's a possibility. People leaving Virginia and going to North Carolina, people leaving North Carolina and going to Virginia.

(Laughter)

Or people leaving Washington, D.C. and going to Pennsylvania and people traveling all over the country. People giving up a semester, people

taking their vacation time—that’s what you call a movement. I think the important thing is for the American people and all of the supporters of Barack Obama to stay engaged. I think they are going to put together a

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great cabinet, going to bring in the best and the brightest, and hopefully we get some resources. Then maybe you will see something akin to the New Deal or the Great Society, that we would get health care for all of our people.

I happen to believe and I think Barack Obama believes that health care is a right. Senator Kennedy strongly believes that, that it is a right, that it’s not a privilege and all of our people should have health care, we’ve

got to do that. Almost 50 million of our citizens are without any health insurance. We’ve got to have comprehensive, universal health care, that is one thing that we must do.

(Applause)

And I believe, under the leadership of Barack Obama and with our growing majority in the House and the Senate, we are going to do it.

(Applause)

**Mr. Jones:** Bob Herbert, congratulations.

(Applause)

John Lewis, thank you.

# THEODORE H. WHITE SEMINAR

## NOVEMBER 21, 2008

**Mr. Jones:** Good morning. I welcome you all to this second tier of our Theodore White Lecture moment, and what a moment it was last night. I think you all agree that last night we heard something very special, from an extraordinary man. And I know that when I left the room late last night people were still lined up to speak with you, Congressman, so I hope you got a little sleep. I know you met this morning with some folks as well.

We are here to have a conversation that will be about what Congressman Lewis was talking about last night, in the sense that the point of departure for our conversation this morning is going to be based on his comments. But we will then follow the trail that is forged by the conversation and see where it leads. It is certainly a complex time; there is plenty to talk about.

The panelists, in addition to Congressman Lewis, are a very distinguished and diverse group of people who have knowledge and expertise in a variety of areas. To the right is Lawrence D. Bobo, W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of the Social Sciences at Harvard, and one of the people at Harvard who is most thoughtful about social policy and what is happening in the world, in all kinds of ways.

Next to him is Maralee Schwartz, Visiting Edward R. Murrow Lecturer on the Practice of the Press and Public Policy at the Shorenstein Center. More importantly, she was a political reporter and editor at the *Washington Post* for over twenty years, and is now affiliated with the Shorenstein Center, teaching and focusing on what happened during this election.

Down the table is Cynthia Tucker, the editorial page editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, a Pulitzer Prize winning columnist, and as Congressman Lewis made special note to point out last night, the editorial page editor of the editorial page that probably matters more to him than any in the country.

(Laughter)

And last is Alex Castellanos. Alex is a Fellow at the Institute of Politics. He is a person who in the past several months has become a very familiar face to many of you. You've seen Alex Castellanos on CNN, as one of the people who was really trying to explain what was going on as it was happening. He distinguished himself, to my mind, by being both a Republican and also someone who looked at the situation with a kind of bipartisan sense, good sense, common sense, and an analytical approach that is the fruit of having been in this presidential campaign business for quite a while. He has been the media advisor to five presidential campaigns.

What I have told the panelists is that I want each of them to address the theme that was raised last night by Congressman Lewis, the theme of a nonviolent revolution that took place at the moment that Barack Obama became president.

I've thought about that in the hours since Congressman Lewis said that, and it struck me that there is kind of an interesting question here: did Barack Obama's election reflect a revolution that had already happened? Or was the very fact of Obama's election something that was in itself revolutionary, and turned a corner that would not have been turned if Barack Obama had decided not to run for president this year, and decided it was too soon?

What has changed and what has not, as we look forward? What is the significance of the Barack Obama election? Where are we, who are we as a country, as a society, and where do we go from here?

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Let me ask you, Lawrence Bobo, to start us off.

**Mr. Bobo:** Thank you very much, Alex. Good morning everyone. And thank you again, Congressman Lewis, for a quite uplifting and astounding testimonial last night.

We do live at a remarkable moment and a potentially, not merely transforming, but transcendent moment, if you will. As I think about Alex's charge to us to reflect on, in

part what really has changed, what does this moment portend for the future, but also to consider to some degree what has not changed as well.

I want to think quickly about just Congressman Lewis's remarks last night. One of these is the deepening sense of a common or shared vision for dealing with the urgent problems that face the nation today. That is, we look at the economy, if we look at our standing in the world on foreign policy issues, that we have to move out of the circumstances we've been in, we have to move forward in a strong fashion, we have to set a new sort of direction on both of these fronts. And I think there is a broad bipartisan spirit of optimism about the potential to do those things.

Kind of secondly, there is an extraordinary sense of the possible now, of a trajectory for the future that doesn't have us bogged down, that doesn't have us at each other in a petty or partisan way.

And thirdly, and I hate to fall back on a football analogy, but I think there is a big game this weekend, but we've got a quarterback—it's the key

thing you look for in one sport, it's the most difficult position to play, in a way. And we have a leader now that seems to have the poise, the equanimity, the character, the judgement, the intelligence, the communicative skill to make the most out of the extraordinary challenges of the times ahead.

I say that, mindful though, that some things aren't gone—partisanship, polarization, the kind of bickering that can bog things down in Washington—haven't been completely eliminated. It remains to be seen if Barack will have the capacity to really put that era behind us. I'm hopeful, but there are plenty of reasons to be worried that this might be a short honeymoon in some ways.

And secondly, of course, even though this is a remarkable revolutionary moment, to have the first African-American president of the United States, we have not ended the racial divide in America. Inequality, disproportionate black poverty and unemployment and incarceration have not disappeared overnight. Residential segregation, segregation of our schools, have not disappeared. Misunderstanding and tension along the racial divide are not gone. But again, there are remarkable grounds to be hopeful.

In his speech, Barack Obama talked about one of Congressman Lewis's constituents, Ann Nixon Cooper, a 106-year-old African-American woman who had cast her ballot for the first time for a black president. Well, that is my grandmother, and to have—

(Applause)

**Mr. Bobo:** Applaud her, not me.

**Mr. Jones:** You can see just how shrewd we are at inviting people.

(Laughter)

**Mr. Bobo:** That's right, and I first met Congressman Lewis at her one-hundredth birthday party, back in Atlanta, some years ago. And she has witnessed, in her lifespan, remarkable transformations. And so one of the key messages in his speech, and I think it will probably be the take-home message of the day, which is that if you keep struggling, keep working, remain committed, remarkable things will happen if you stay in the struggle. We are at a great, potentially, absolutely transformative moment. So, some things haven't changed, we've got a lot to work on, but I am extraordinarily optimistic about this coming presidency.

**Mr. Jones:** Maralee?

**Ms. Schwartz:** I'm going to talk on a more narrow and a bit anecdotal level about change. I was really struck by a couple things, listening to Congressman Lewis last night. I was in the newsroom when the race first started, when Obama got in. And I was not covering politics then, I was on the financial staff, and I would hear things from the national staff about how many resources were going to be put into different primary candidates, and that the editor at that time thought that a black man is never

going to be elected president, so we can't just put a lot of resources into that. That person is no longer running the staff.

(Laughter)

And then I came to Harvard in the fall of 2007, and there was this sense of such excitement among the students for Obama. And it was this colorblind excitement, it's a generational thing of not seeing—I'm sounding like Stephen Colbert, I don't see color. But it's really true. And in fact, after the election I was having dinner with one of these undergraduates when I said what a big deal this was, how profound this was, how transformational, and he just kind of looked at me and he said, "Really?" And I went, "Yeah." And he said, "I've been hearing that from my parents and everybody, but he is just the man that was supposed to have this. I just think that a multitude of factors went on about change."

And I was also last night struck with all the questions from the students actually, almost begging Congressman Lewis to tell them that it's going to be okay, that they are not going to be disappointed, that they can still hope. And I do think that, and are expectations too high? And I think patience is going to count for a lot, and I think President-elect Obama is counseling patience.

But I also think that there is going to have to be some understanding of tradeoffs, and I am going to call on a lesson I learned from Congressman Lewis, and I doubt if he even remembers this conversation. In 1991, there was an affirmative action bill in Congress that the first President Bush did

not want passed, and it was really a tough vote for Democrats. And a congressman that Congressman Lewis was quite good friends with, a white congressman, a Democrat from the suburbs of Chicago, voted against the bill, and they needed every Democrat. And I interviewed Congressman Lewis about this and he said to me—this is Congressman Marty Russo, who is no longer in Congress, it was

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redistricted out a number of years later. But he said to me, "I understand this vote, he had to make this vote, he had to vote against it so he could get reelected to do even more important things for us." And I keep that in mind, thinking about the people who may be disappointed by some of the choices and decisions that President Obama has to make, to do the greater change.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you.

**Ms. Tucker:** Well, on a personal level it is just a little bit ironic for me to be talking about what has changed and what hasn't because unfortunately,

I would have been a lot like that editor at the *Washington Post*. Up until about mid September, I simply was not prepared to believe that Barack Obama could be elected president of the United States. Which is not to say I didn't support him—I voted for him, my editorial page endorsed him way back in the primaries in December, we endorsed him before Super Tuesday because I thought he was an excellent candidate, and the one distinction that I felt was important between him and Senator Clinton was his opposition to the war in Iraq, early on.

But we have a long tradition on the *Journal-Constitution's* editorial page of endorsing the candidate we think is best, whether we think he will win or not. In 1986, when Congressman Lewis ran in Atlanta—and he is my congressman by the way—the white establishment thought he would likely lose to Julian Bond, but we endorsed him anyway because we thought he would be the better congressman. Lo and behold, he won. Same with Barack Obama.

So, I find myself talking to many, many black Americans my age about what has changed and what hasn't, and I'm not sure that I know the answer to the question even now. But I will venture to say that things have changed even more than I understood.

I think that, to go back to something Professor Bobo said, I think that you had a confluence of many, many, many different currents that led to Obama's election. You had a guy who ran one of the best campaigns I've seen a Democrat run in a very, very long time—disciplined, very smart, very strategic. In many ways it was the culmination of the civil rights movement and all the work that had gone on before, not just by leaders whose names you know, but work that had gone on generations earlier, at least back to the Niagara Movement, which became the NAACP.

But I also think external events, over which I think Obama had no control, gave him the opportunity to win. I give him credit for extraordinary vision, for seeing a hunger for change that Senator Clinton did not see, and that most of the political establishment, Democratic and Republican, did not see. But I do not believe for one moment that he forecast the utter economic calamity that started in about late August or early September, because that's when his poll numbers began to rise over John McCain's.

I will add one last thought to what I hope to see during President Obama's tenure. There were so many young people who were active in his campaign, and so many young people asking questions last night. I hope that among other things this is a movement that will make public service cool again. One of the things that struck me when I was a Nieman Fellow in '88-'89, was how different the college students seem from my generation, in terms of their issues and concerns. They were all about, and this is



a generalization, forgive me for that, but they were all, as a professor put it to me, pre-wealth majors.

(Laughter)

They were all going to Wall Street or going to law school, big firms, they were going to make really big bucks because through the '80s and the

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'90s, those were the figures that we came to celebrate in popular culture, business tycoons and celebrities who made a lot of money. And I know so many young people, white, black and brown, who would not have thought of going into public service because after all, we had been taught, Alex, that government was the problem, not the answer.

(Laughter)

So I am hoping that among other things, President Obama's tenure will make public service cool again for all of these young folks who want to make a difference.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Cynthia.

**Mr. Castellanos:** Well, I'm honored to be here on this distinguished panel, Congressman Lewis.

Has there been a nonviolent revolution in this country? Gee, Republicans are not the party with the most money, so I guess there has been.

(Laughter)

I don't think there is any doubt about that.

I worked for Mitt Romney in the last election, and only because I knew that campaign would end early and I could come here.

(Laughter)

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And I told Governor Romney, almost two years ago now, that I thought he would end up running against Barack Obama. I was half right. And the reason I think is this, if you were going to do Mt. Rushmore today, a modern Mt. Rushmore of the modern presidents, who would you see on it, who are the great modern presidents of the communications era? Certainly you would start with

FDR, you would see John F. Kennedy on there, I think you would put Reagan on there. And we could debate about Bill Clinton, work in progress,

but certainly he is still held in tremendously high esteem by the American people.

And when you look at these presidents, in a way they are really all the same president, embodied in I think different presidencies, but there is a lot of research that's been done about the American presidency. We look at our president almost as a Moses-like figure, somebody who is going to lead us to what is next.

This is a country of the never-ending frontier. Roosevelt, the world around us collapses and the structure of the world as we know it disappears, banks crumble, unemployment 20 percent, gee that sounds familiar. And then all of a sudden someone comes along and says a New Deal, nothing to fear but fear itself. Kennedy, *Sputnik*, all of a sudden is America the great power it was, or is there something else, how will this all end? A new frontier, somebody who says America can go to the moon and achieve anything. Reagan, we had a rendezvous with destiny, again, the cold war. So these transformational times, where the structure of the world around them just kind of collapses, and we look for that visionary leader to take us to the next place.

Well that was this election. And certainly in terms of our national security, the curtain dropped on 9/11 and we backed up and said, "Oh my God, is this the world we live in, a world of uncertainty?" Are we a nation ever strong, or are we on the decline? New global economic challenges we had never imagined or envisioned? And in that time, do we turn to that same president again, and I think Barack Obama was a new frontier candidacy who transformed us in that way. And I think that is one of the ways the world has changed.

The other thing that I think is significant, maybe old industrial-age government is still a little bit of a problem, and there is a new and better way to govern.

One of the powerful things that I think changed this election, and Cynthia, you mentioned it, the enthusiasm of young folks in this election. If you go to Barack Obama's website from the campaign, the first thing you saw was, "I'm not asking you to have faith that I can change Washington, I'm asking you to believe we can." Wow, that is unusual stuff, that is not the way Washington has worked, Democrat or Republican. It has not been a bottom-up place, it has been top-down industrial-age government. And he empowered a lot of people with the idea that they have a role to play in all of this.

Just quickly, there is a book called *Predictably Irrational*, by Dan Ariely— (Laughter)

—and in there he says, make a little experiment. AARP needed some attorneys to help seniors with minor legal matters, it's expensive, these

attorneys are, which is why people become attorneys, I guess. And asking for volunteers, \$30 to \$40 an hour, that's all we can give them, ask them to volunteer, well no attorneys signed up. Of course you would think, maybe we have to give them more money. Somebody said no, ask them to do it for free, and nearly all the attorneys signed up.

The point being there is something more important than your economic worth in this world, something more important than I can buy your vote with a tax cut or health care plan. But there is something bigger than that, more empowering than that, your social worth, there is a reason people charge the machine gun nest when they know they're going to die, it's not for a dollar, it's for a purpose larger than themselves. And in this campaign when Barack Obama said "We are the change we have been waiting for," that lifted a nation uncertain about its future and where it was going.

And I think that kind of bottom-up governing is a marked change from the top-down, broken old world that we had—can he do that in government? He did it in politics. Will he become a communications-age liberal, as opposed to an industrial-age liberal? I think we are seeing the birth of something new and interesting and optimistic.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you, Alex. Congressman Lewis, I would like to get your response to that same question, what has changed, what has not?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, I still feel and believe deeply that we have witnessed what I like to call a nonviolent revolution. A revolution of val-

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ues, a revolution of ideas. I don't care how you put it, something is happening in the very psyche of the American people. I think Barack Obama will emerge, or is emerging in a religious sense as a modern-day Moses, not just to the American people but to the people of the world. Never before have so many historians and political scientists, and maybe being in the academic community you understand it better, I don't think we have had in recent history, or maybe never before in American history, that the people

of the world followed this campaign. They followed it, they were pulling for Barack Obama from the outset.

During the latter part of last year and the first part of this year, a group of us from the House, Democrats and Republicans, traveled to Vietnam. It was during the Iowa and New Hampshire primaries, we were in Australia and New Zealand, and it was front page of the paper.

People were asking, that's all they wanted to know about, whether Barack Obama was going to fail? I think this young president, this young political leader is going to bring together a force, and the force is there—I call it the spirit of history, that something is intervening, they are going to take us on a great ride.

And in America we are going to lay down the burden of race and we are going to emerge as a model for the rest of the world, I think it's going to happen. It is a movement, it is a crusade, and we've got to make it work in Washington, and the American people have got to help us make it work.

**Mr. Jones:** Congressman, do you think that the symbolism of a black man being elected president—does it reflect something that had changed or something that did change when he was elected? Is the very fact that he was elected something then that is sort of like a tipping point in the American value system that you described? Is this something that reflects a society that is not something that it was twenty years ago? Or did the very fact of his election act like a catalyst that quickens it?

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**Congressman Lewis:** I think his election is the embodiment, it is the result, it's not that we are there yet, we are not there yet. But it is what I call a major down payment on getting us there.

**Mr. Jones:** Professor Bobo, when you look at the headlines in the *Wall Street Journal* this morning, they were about as scary as you could imagine. And yet I absolutely agree with you, maybe it's Cambridge, I don't know, but there is an astonishing optimism and excitement; there seems to be an incredible ability to brush off what obviously is one of the worst economic moments that we've ever had, in favor of a kind of giddy optimism. What do you make of this?

**Mr. Bobo:** Well, I hope it's not just euphoria winding us to the ground giving way beneath us, I mean I hope it's not that bad. There is a sense in which this is a really risky moment, and I think the economist Paul Krugman wrote about it in his column today in the *New York Times*. We are in this moment when we have a lame duck president, who in a way no longer has the authority to act in a moment of crisis, and a new president, or president-elect, who does not have the authority to act, even though everyone is ready in effect to begin a sort of new agenda, to hand over the reins of power and leadership to someone who hopefully can begin to point us out of this troubled, sort of frightening dark moment.

One of my great hopes here, and it links some of this concern with the economic crisis that looms in the moment with the long-term struggle to lay down the burden of race, for me is the question of whether President-elect Obama, the coming Congress, will be able to truly launch something like a major New Deal intervention, and will it be done in a way and of a scale that it brings back into the economy some sectors of our society that have been left behind, parts of South Side Chicago, parts of Atlanta even or South Atlanta, or whatever it might be. Are we going to get an economic agenda that brings in everyone who is in the house back into this economy in a serious productive way? That is one of the questions and challenges that I think Barack Obama will have to address early on in his administration. And I am hopeful that we are going to see some big meaningful initiatives there.

**Mr. Jones:** Maralee, let's bore down on the political dimension of this, if we may. You are an old hand in Washington, you know that people have come to Washington perhaps not with the kind of excitement and momentum that Barack Obama is going to bring, but still, with a set of values and a lot of good hope for making changes and so forth. What do you see as the political realities that Barack Obama and his administration are going to run into?

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David Brooks, in the *New York Times* this morning was talking about how the pedigrees of the new Barack Obama administration look an awful lot like the pedigrees of the former Bush administration, hopefully they got better grades at Harvard and Yale than the Bush folks did. I don't know.

But anyway, the point is that it is going to be, in a way more than anything else, it is a return of the best

and the brightest, that moment of euphoria when Jack Kennedy came into office and brought with him a lot of people from Harvard and Yale and places like that. And the Bay of Pigs followed almost immediately. So, what do you see looming?

**Ms. Schwartz:** I do think it's really going to be a very tough time. Everyone has to think differently, and in the last eight years no one in the public, no one in government, has been challenged to think differently. Even as obviously the worst has happened in the last six months, but this has been going downhill for quite some time. And you could just go back to 9/11, and the president has never asked anyone to change the way they

think. And I think Barack Obama's biggest challenge is to absolutely help us figure out how to think differently.

To have what Professor Bobo is saying, to bring everyone into the house, people have to recognize that they can't keep doing things the way they were doing them. And that includes legislating, it includes taxes, it includes public service. And what Obama has got going for him now, is 53 percent of the public voted for him, 71 percent of the public are optimistic.

Obama has got a real opportunity to try to bring people in, to say there is only so much we can do for this moment, for the next moment, for the next moment. He has to set his priorities really early, he is talking health care, he is talking about job creation, and I'm sure I am a little non-conformist, I suppose, on the tax issue. The exit polls show that 71 percent of the people think Barack Obama will raise their taxes, 61 percent thought John McCain would raise their taxes. I think Barack Obama should go ahead and raise their taxes.

**Mr. Jones:** Giving them the satisfaction of having been right.

(Laughter)

**Ms. Schwartz:** Then your expectations are fulfilled, you're not disappointed.

(Laughter)

I think we are at such a low point that whether it is health care, education, foreign relations, that any incremental moves will seem very large. And he has got the ability to communicate to people the importance of what seemingly are incremental moves. And I think he tried to do that with his speech at Grant Park, that sober speech, about this may take more than one term. It's really hard, I think people are ready to believe that some sort of fix is going on.

The last eight years have been such a disappointment for so many people that just the idea that there is a new government, even if some people suggest they are retreads, is a chance to begin anew and to rethink. But I do think people really have to change their frames of reference about how this comes about, that you may have to tax more, you may not be able to do the job you've always done, those jobs are not going to exist. And maybe it had to get this bad, and you had to get a candidate, a president this transformational, for those two forces to come together to make change happen.

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**Mr. Jones:** Congressman Lewis, you know Washington, of course, better than anyone at the table. Is he going to run into a buzz saw, can he make a mistake or two and get away with it, or is there going to be that Washington thing waiting for him that is eager to grind him up?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, I must agree that he must do something very early, to have the support in a bipartisan fashion of all of us. We must be there with him, encouraging him, saying to the American people, this is the thing to do, this is the right thing to do, he must have some early victories.

**Mr. Jones:** Should he raise taxes right away?

(Laughter)

**Congressman Lewis:** You're not going to get me there.

(Laughter)

**Ms. Tucker:** And I would just call the paper and say Congressman Lewis said —

(Laughter)

**Congressman Lewis:** I sit on the Ways and Means Committee, the tax-writing committee, and I don't think we are ready to go down that road right now.

**Mr. Jones:** But I take Maralee's point, it is so bad right now —

**Congressman Lewis:** For everybody.

**Mr. Jones:** — things are so bad that it has put us in a kind of a numb state, or something that will allow some things that might otherwise have prompted huge fights. I know there has been talk about it's an opportunity, a crisis is a good time to get things done. Do you have a hierarchy of priorities for Barack Obama?

**Congressman Lewis:** I would love for him, first thing to do, well two things, two firsts, take some real initiative for ending the war in Iraq, bringing our young men and women home. And stop spending billions of dollars on this war and invest in the American people.

**Mr. Jones:** Health care.

**Congressman Lewis:** Health care. It's a shame, it's a blight on our society to have almost 50 million of our citizens without health care.

**Mr. Jones:** Cynthia, do you have a list of priorities for him?

**Ms. Tucker:** My list is his list, in fact. We endorsed him in large part because the *Journal-Constitution's* editorial board's priorities were in sync with his or vice versa. I was extremely heartened when he was asked about a month before November 4, in light of the economic calamity, whether his priorities—he and McCain were both asked constantly whether their priorities would have to change. And by the way, I think that is one of the forces that he will have to resist.

I was sitting next to a good Keynesian economist last night at dinner, and therefore heartened in my belief, and I am at Harvard after all, that the government needs to ignore the deficit for the moment, and spend lots and lots of money, spend big, go long and deep, as Rahm Emanuel said the other day.

But Obama said very clearly, first the economy, he's got to do something to stimulate the economy obviously. But he also immediately laid out the environmental challenge. And I was heartened to hear that, because gas prices had dropped dramatically since the summer, people are not paying as much attention as they were at the beginning of the year. As it happens, it is extremely difficult to make a big push for energy independence when gas prices are low. But he has made it clear he is going to stand by that.

I don't think he'll have a hard time getting congressional support for his initiatives. After all, there will be at least 58 Democratic senators who will be happy to pass any major initiative he puts forward. And he will be joined by some Republican senators. There is a grumpy group of disaffected Republicans in the House, but they will continue to be grumpy, unless they come to the table with something productive. So I don't think he will have any problem finding political support for his initiatives.

**Mr. Jones:** Alex, you were talking earlier, just when we were walking in together, about the danger to the Republican side of the equation, that Barack Obama has somehow imprinted himself upon the vines of a whole generation of young people, which could be very damaging for the prospects of the Republicans going forward. From the Republican perspective, how do you view the situation and what their response to Barack Obama is apt to be?

**Mr. Castellanos:** The younger generation?

**Mr. Jones:** In Congress, and the younger generation in particular?

**Mr. Castellanos:** I do think the ducklings have seen the mama duckling for the first time, and that is for life. We are in for another Reagan-like period. We may not have just lost an election this time, we may have lost something substantially more important.

Maybe I can get at it this way, and allow me to turn back into a Republican for just a moment. I think Congress should be able to spend anything it wants, as long as Congressman, once a year you actually break into someone's home and take the money.

(Laughter)

And just actually go through the experience. Because if you ask the American people, even today, even after this election, if they think that raising taxes on anyone, even the rich is something we should do to get out of this period of uncertainty that we have here, the answer is no. America



fundamentally has not changed its beliefs. If I think President-elect Obama goes to the left, that is not where the country is on economics right now.

We have seen this movie before, this is the life raft in stormy seas, and we're sinking, this is the place in the movie where you throw stuff off the life raft, where you get as lean as possible. Look at the American

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people, the president of the United States went to even his own party and said, guys, the house is going to burn down unless we spend a whole bunch of money, the world is going to end, and the American people said no. Okay, we understand, we get it, we understand the perilous situation we're in, and we don't think you can do a thing about it, we don't trust you, you haven't gotten it right yet.

And if the Democratic answer to this is guess what, we're going to

teach the elephant to dance a little bit better, make it bigger, feed it more, I think to me that is the trap for the Democratic Party, that historically the current is going the other way. And I think what I am encouraged by is I started hearing Barack Obama use the g word: growth.

And as opposed to litigating this among ourselves, I am going to take from you, you're going to benefit from me, this is an issue of fairness first, he is turning our eyes forward to the world, how do we compete and win

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in a new global economic frontier?

And how do we all move forward together? That is the language I am starting to hear that I think is the most encouraging for me. How do you keep a young generation going?

The other thing I think that is important is what he opposes. I think at some point in the first hundred days he needs a moment of strength where he stands up to old industrial-age Washington—Democrats and

Republicans who have been more than willing to spend—and says, "No." What I meant in the campaign about bottom-up government, power, money, those things go back to the people, we are not going to do it the old way, we are going to try some new things. And if he finds one defining moment where he stands up, even especially to his own party, then I think

he will earn the trust and confidence of the American people, that he is not going to just go along with sixty Democratic senators and a strong majority in the House. He is going to put everyone's interests first.

**Mr. Jones:** Congressman Lewis, how do you respond to that?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, all of us have certain things that we want to do, and when we think the president is right we are going to be at the table to help him and we're going to support him. But when we think it's wrong, well, we're going to oppose him. And we have a constitutional right to do just that.

**Mr. Jones:** Do you think that President Obama though is going to need to have that moment of saying in a public symbolic way, to what is considered to be his own support system, I love you all but we're not going to do it this way?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, I think it's important for him to have the image and the need to just say, I am the president, the people elected me, I received a mandate, by the electoral votes I received. And come to the speaker, the majority leader and the other chairs of the committees, to the Republicans, as well as those of us on the Democratic side and say this is it. And I think the American people will like that, but they also would like to see us work together and do something for the good of the country.

**Mr. Jones:** I want to bore down a little bit also on the issue of race. This is something that, Cynthia, you were alluding to in your remarks. What is your sense of what this actually represents? And again, is it something that reflects what has changed, or is it something that has changed something profoundly?

**Ms. Tucker:** All of the above, I think. I don't believe for one moment that Barack Obama could have been elected president of the United States ten years ago, even if all the circumstances were the same. I think in terms of social and cultural change, things have changed just that quickly. And I think about all of the cultural moments, particularly pop-cultural moments, that have contributed to this.

There are no doubt social scientists in the room, so I will try not to sound too ridiculous. But I have read social research that talks about how pop culture contributes to cultural change, when life imitates art. So I think back to Morgan Freeman as the president in *Deep Impact*. I think back to the series "24," that when it launched had a black president. But I also give President Bush credit for Colin Powell and Condoleeza Rice, for having very highly qualified black Americans in very important prestigious jobs, that by the way, didn't have anything to do with race. When you saw them in public they were talking about extremely important matters of state, nothing to do with race. I think all of them helped prepare America for this moment.

Does that mean racism has ended? God no, read my e-mail. And I would also say that although John was very optimistic talking about the Deep South last night, we are the region that seems to still be holding on to the racial burden, more than much of the country. But I do think that Barack Obama's presidency both represents change that had already taken place, but I also think we will see a lot of racial progress happen much more quickly now. I think it will be viable, as social scientists often talk about, in both large ways and small ways. It doesn't mean the end of racism by any means; humankind's ability to single out the other is probably a primal instinct we may never get rid of.

But I do think there will be a lot of social progress now around race, a lot faster because not just the fact there is a black president, but a black first lady and those two adorable little brown children running around the White House. That is an extraordinarily powerful symbol.

**Congressman Lewis:** I'll tell you something else, Cynthia, that is happening, just a little thing. A day or so after the election you can see what I call spontaneous acts of kindness, just walking the streets, people stood up and they were just beaming, in downtown Atlanta, blacks and whites. Why did all these folks buy the newspaper, why did people go down to the *Washington Post*? Did you all run a—

**From the Floor:** 700,000 extra copies.

**Congressman Lewis:** And you ran?

**Ms. Tucker:** We did too.

**Congressman Lewis:** People wanted to hold on to something, they wanted a piece of history, and it didn't matter whether they were black or white or Latino or Asian American, they wanted it because something was happening. And that's why I believe you're going to see great changes in race relations in America.

**Mr. Jones:** I think even Republicans wanted to believe that they live in a country where a black man could be elected president of the United States. I think it basically said to them, this is the country we are from, this is our country, too. And we may not agree with you on some things, but the idea that a black man could be elected president is something that makes us feel good about who we are as Americans, period. It's an interesting phenomenon, I mean I don't think that it's shared universally, clearly. But Lawrence Bobo, what is your take on this question?

**Mr. Bobo:** I want to echo very much what Cynthia had to say, that it is both the culmination of changes we've slowly seen taking place for 30, 40, 50 years, but it is also kind of the magic of the transformational quality of Barack Obama to bring this potential that had been building to this new stage.

You could see, you could go back to the poll data, which began asking about Americans' willingness to vote for a qualified black candidate for president if nominated by your party. It was first asked in 1958. It was asked because they paired it with a question back then on voting for a Catholic candidate for president, if qualified and nominated by the party. And very few Americans, primarily white Americans, said yes to that back in 1958. So many people said yes by the mid 1990s that at least in social science the surveys dropped the question. No one asked it anymore because 98 percent said sure. Well, sure until we get to this moment, right.

(Laughter)

And this is the phenomenal character of Barack Obama, in that a man of his unquestionable ability to communicate, his poise, and then I think also the sense of performance through the debates. I think the economy was one thing, but the kind of steadiness and calm and directness of this man, through incredible onslaughts, in a way, reassured people who had said sure, in the abstract, in principle, of course I am willing to vote for a black president.

And now we are at this moment in the midst of a very deep national economic crisis and incredible foreign policy events, and it's like, maybe this is the guy? And it was his character and performance that helped bring us to, it's really a substantiation of why he is transformational.

And I think, forecasting way down the road, if he is successful as a two-term president, for example, that it will be such an amazing transformation of fundamental assumptions about race and whether that should have any bearing on a human being's capabilities, that that will come closer to washing away the legacy and culture of racism. If you can look back and go, this guy belongs on Mt. Rushmore, then that is it for this racial divide.

**Mr. Jones:** Maralee, this was also an election in which the rival to Barack Obama for the Democratic nomination was a woman, and which the Republican Party chose as the vice president a woman, something that would probably have been thought as very unlikely, in and of itself. Where does this election leave women? Is it as transformational in its own way for

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them, or is that yet a hurdle that can't be cleared until a woman is actually elected to the White House?

**Ms. Schwartz:** I see it differently. I think a woman will be, in my lifetime, nominated for president, I do. I think people have all along been getting more used to women in positions of power. When I first started covering politics, all you ever heard about was the glass ceiling, the glass ceiling, and well we can see them maybe as cast members, but we can't see them as governors because we don't see women as executives. And all of that has been changing, there has been a steady rise.

I think this election was very important, as different as Sarah Palin and Hillary Clinton are in every way you can think of except gender—

(Laughter)

—which maybe is a good thing, as I think about it, because it shows that women of incredibly different politics, personality, experience, can be on a national stage. And yes, Sarah Palin had a hard time, but so did Hillary Clinton, for different reasons. So I think we are getting more used to that.

I was thinking as Professor Bobo was talking—and Alex had made this point in my class yesterday, in a different context—I think the fact that this was such a long campaign really helped Barack Obama, but I also think it helped the American people get used

to seeing a black man in this position, a black man displaying all the qualities that you were describing. And so, if it had been a much shorter campaign cycle, and he had gotten the nomination, I'm not sure that that many American people would have gotten to the comfort level that they got.

And you can say the same thing about Hillary Clinton, and a woman in that position, change over time. And so having a vice-presidential candidate, and almost presidential candidate, I think this has been a very important election in seeing women move to the next step.

**Mr. Jones:** Cynthia, do you have a thought on that subject?

**Ms. Tucker:** I think Maralee is right. I want to reiterate her point about how different Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin were because their exposure on the national stage helped remind Americans, if there were still those Americans who thought that any woman will do, how different two women, political women on the national stage, can be. And I think that

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each of them ultimately was judged on individual strengths and/or weaknesses. I think that was a very good thing.

I read a piece in the *New Yorker* a couple of days ago about women who thought that Senator Clinton's defeat and Governor Palin's defeat as part of a ticket, particularly Governor Palin's performance in this election season, were very bad for women. I disagree, I think that they were judged on their individual performances, and that that was a very good thing.

**Mr. Jones:** Alex, I have to ask you, what is the future of Sarah Palin?

(Laughter)

**Mr. Castellanos:** About a \$7 million book deal doesn't seem to be a bad start.

(Laughter)

You know, there is a trajectory that we follow after defeat, the mythic journey, this is the time when you retreat to the desert, isolation, introspection and you grow, you transform yourself and you come back renewed because if you come back as the same thing, if you remain the same way you just lost, that didn't work. And if anyone, I think, needs to grow, that would be Sarah Palin. Staying in the public eye the way she is right now is not necessarily indicating that she is making the best choices for her continued political longevity and exercising the best political judgement.

She does have a future in the Republican Party. You could drive forty-five minutes to a cornfield in Indianapolis, from any city, and she could draw 10,000 people. That says something. She transformed the McCain campaign. John McCain is supposed to be the maverick, you know, the mavericky guy, the original, and he couldn't even bring that message to his own campaign. It took Sarah Palin to make that campaign the outsiders who were going to change Washington. And for two brief weeks the McCain campaign actually had a message.

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**I think he picked Sarah Palin because we all love ourselves, and he picked John McCain in a skirt.**

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And it wasn't because she was a base pick, I don't think he picked her for that reason. I think he picked Sarah Palin because we all love ourselves, and he picked John McCain in a skirt. He picked an outsider, younger, it helped that she was a woman, but I think he thought he met Harry Truman who was going to transform Washington, as she had done in Alaska. Ordinarily you would like the doctor to have a little more surgical experience before he goes into surgery —

(Laughter)

We all kind of assumed that that was there. So does she have a future? I think if she demonstrates good judgement and renews and grows, that is

to be determined, to put it kindly. But if she comes back in a few months and gives a speech and the news media pokes her in the eye and says, by the way, don't you know you're supposed to be a joke? And then she will give another speech a month later and it will be twice the crowd, and she will get poked again and then it will be three times the crowd, and then in a year she will have a \$14 million book deal.

So she will be a fixture in the Republican Party, she will be, my guess is, in the primaries. Right now it appears she is going to become the next Pat Buchanan, a fixture on the right that divides the party, that can't progress beyond to success in the general election.

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**[Sarah Palin] will be a fixture in the Republican Party . . . that divides the party, that can't progress beyond to success in the general election.**

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**Mr. Jones:** Does anyone in your world of political operatives have her ear?

**Mr. Castellanos:** You know, apparently no one with any good judgement.

(Laughter)

I know there are some folks who are close to her who are in the middle of all this. But I think one of the stories

of the campaign is that she was isolated from the McCain campaign, that she was cut off, didn't have much help from Alaska, and she didn't get much help in the McCain campaign. She sat in that airplane going to seven speeches a day, alone. And, for example, the Katie Couric interview, they let her talk with Katie Couric for two hours on tape, you don't do that for a first time, you give them fifteen minutes, and don't you love John McCain, and isn't this a great country, next.

(Laughter)

They let her sit there for two hours. So she was poorly handled in that way, I don't think there is a lot of good advice around her.

**Mr. Jones:** She hasn't been sending you e-mail messages asking you for—

**Mr. Castellanos:** I'm turning my e-mail off.

(Laughter)

**Mr. Jones:** I want to open it up to the rest of you so you can join this conversation.

**Mr. Kalb:** Marvin Kalb. It's a fascinating discussion, and Alex, you said before that everyone seems to be infused with a sense of giddy optimism. And because I have spent most of my life covering foreign policy, that is a difficult mood for me to join. And I would like to have Congressman Lewis's opinion on this subject.

You said a moment ago that the first thing you would like to see President Obama do is get the people back from Iraq. But Obama did say repeatedly during the campaign that he is going to take some of them and put them into Afghanistan. If it is possible to reduce the American presence in Iraq to a non-combat level, but he has in mind finishing once and for all, as he said, the Osama bin Laden threat, which is largely housed in Pakistan, and you are going to begin to move people into Afghanistan, does he not open himself to the possibility of being sucked into another unwinnable situation, in a country like Afghanistan, whose history has not been kind to any kind of foreigner, Russian or American, or even Pakistan, for that matter?

So, are you worried that this man who comes in with such promise, and with a crying need to address economic domestic problems, may find himself slowly but inexorably being sucked into another kind of unwinnable, from a military point of view, situation in Afghanistan?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, I am deeply concerned about the future involvement of our country with getting stuck in some place that's not winnable, not any way out. That's why it is my hope and my prayer that as early as possible, we can get out of Iraq, and not go head on into Afghanistan. I have a feeling, just knowing Barack Obama a little bit, that he's going to be very cautious, more deliberate, and he's not going to play war games. He is not going to be quick to act, and I think he's going to listen to some level heads in the military establishment and members of Congress. I don't think he is going to rush on.

**Mr. Kalb:** But he has already said he is going to send more people to Afghanistan.

**Congressman Lewis:** Yeah, you know, we say a lot of things—  
(Laughter)

But when you come into the White House as president, and no longer as the candidate and no longer as the president-elect, I think you are going to have to make some hard and tough decisions.

**Mr. Jones:** It's an interesting question, especially given Barack Obama's sort of taste for being a student of history because I am sure the idea of being bogged down is one that will occur to him as a trap indeed. It's an interesting question, Marvin.

**Mr. Pooley:** Eric Pooley, I'm a Fellow here at the Shorenstein Center. And I have a question for the panel that takes off from something Congressman Lewis said in his remarks last night. It was a wonderful speech and I thank you for it. You talked about the role of the press in the civil rights struggle, and you used the phrase "sympathetic referee," which I thought was very interesting and apt, and I would argue, appropriate in a



moral struggle as clear as that of the civil rights movement. But one could raise a question about sympathetic referee as a role certainly in the election that has just passed. I think Alex and certainly members of the McCain campaign would use a different phrase: they would say, “in the tank for Obama.” And then you could go back to the early days of the Bush administration and say post-9/11 the press was a sympathetic referee for the march to Iraq, and was that appropriate?

So I guess what I am asking is now that we are moving into an administration, is sympathetic referee still a good model for reporters, *vis-à-vis* the Obama administration, or is it a slippery slope?

**Congressman Lewis:** I shouldn’t be the one to respond to it because as politicians, I think we love for the press to be a sympathetic referee.

(Laughter)

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**During the civil rights movement we needed the media, we needed those television cameras to put the spotlight on it. We needed those reporters with pens and pads and those photographers to make it real. I do think the press was too silent and too quiet going into Iraq. I don’t think the media did its job.**

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We love for the media to be on our side. I think maybe scholars and historians see it in a different light. During the civil rights movement we needed the media, we needed those television cameras to put the spotlight on it. We needed those reporters with pens and pads and those photographers to make it real. I do think the press was too silent and too quiet going into Iraq. I don’t think the media did its job. This may be a little generalization here, but I don’t think we would be where we are today. I think they maybe told part of the story, but didn’t tell the whole story.

**Mr. Jones:** Do you think the press was unfairly sympathetic to Barack Obama during this campaign in its coverage?

**Congressman Lewis:** I think many members of the media, as I tried to suggest last night, and even today, you know reporters, I have a lot of good friends that are reporters, and it’s not like saying some of my best friends are journalists.

(Laughter)

The media are human beings and you, I think some members of the media came to the idea of change, and they became engulfed in this need for change, and maybe they did go a little overboard again there.

**Mr. Jones:** Alex, comment?

**Mr. Castellanos:** I was speaking with a friend who was telling me he was talking to Jann Wenner of *Rolling Stone*, this is a '60s rock and roll magazine, facing a new generation of music and kids that are not reading *Rolling Stone*, how do they connect with the younger generation and get them to buy the magazine? You know what they figured out? Put Barack Obama on the cover, and they sell magazines.

Why is the news media, I believe they are so deep in the tank for Barack Obama they were growing gills.

(Laughter)

I think absolutely it was tilted that way, that's where the interest was, that's where the country was, that's where the optimism and interest was, and it is Republicans' jobs not to bitch and moan about it, but to do something compelling that helps you gain public attention and sell newspapers, that's the marketplace of ideas and candidacies.

**Ms. Tucker:** I can't resist reminding Alex that the news media were in the tank for John McCain in exactly the same way in 2000, for much the same reasons.

**Mr. Castellanos:** Only when he was running against another Republican.

**Ms. Tucker:** Well, but because John McCain's presidential campaign represented something new, he was running in a different way. I sat on the back of that bus for a little while, while he was campaigning in South Carolina—it was the most access you could imagine having to a legitimate presidential candidate, somebody aspiring to the nomination. Not like having access to say, Mike Huckabee, who was friendly and warm and charming, but clearly wasn't going anywhere. But to have that sort of access with a man contending for the Republican nomination, who would spend hours with you answering any question you asked him, was something new. So the press adored him; he referred to the press as "My base."

So I say all that, not to suggest John is absolutely right, journalists are human beings too, quiet as it's kept.

(Laughter)

But it is not partisan in the way that so many partisans tend to think it is. It's about where can we go that's new, where can we go that's exciting?

And if I might, one more historical note. John's reference last night to the press being a sympathetic referee, when Myrdal wrote *An American Dilemma*, he thought that the biggest thing that needed to change, to change the prospect of the negro in the South, was press coverage because black Americans basically weren't covered at all. So what the press did so differently in the civil rights movement was to cover that struggle, and that I think that made all the difference.

**Mr. Castellanos:** I just would like to note that McCain did start his campaign this year open again on the back of the bus, and I think this is a

story of once there was a guy named John McCain who had a hot girlfriend in a red dress named the news media, and they had a torrid affair, and then the hot girlfriend left him for a younger man.

(Laughter)

And he was jilted and scorned and got cranky about it.

(Laughter)

**Mr. Jones:** Maralee, the question that Eric posed about what the press coverage now should be, will be, is it going to be a bunch of people with gills wandering around, or is it going to be something very different you think?

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**... this is a story of once there was a guy named John McCain who had a hot girlfriend in a red dress named the news media, and they had a torrid affair, and then the hot girlfriend left him for a younger man.**

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**Ms. Schwartz:** I'm trying not to be defensive. But I think, look, this is a great story, reporters love good stories, they love stories about change, and maybe they wanted to keep it going a little more. The most disturbing quote I saw from a journalist during the whole campaign was from a reporter from NBC News, back in February, who was talking on camera to one of the anchors at NBC, and he

was covering Obama. And he said, "Well you know, it's just really hard not to be swept up by all of this." You know, that is your job not to be swept up about it. But who could believe these crowds, this enthusiasm, a black man. So it was very, very exciting; it was a great story.

I think the press does have to do some rethinking in how they cover women. I think that is more of a challenge for the press now than anything. I think covering race seemed to be less of a problem in this campaign than covering gender.

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I do think once he takes office the seriousness of the crisis in this country is going to demand coverage that reflects that. And I think Barack Obama may have a honeymoon, and I hope he does, with the American people. But I hope he doesn't with the press. I think the press needs to look clearly and strongly at the decisions

he will be making in light of the challenges that he is trying to address, and write about that in the most direct way in their true role as sort of an advocate for the public. And I think the times, the foreign policy environment

and the economic environment will demand that, and in fact will make it easier for them to do that role.

**Mr. Jones:** Walter Shorenstein?

**Mr. Shorenstein:** It appears to me that we are in a period before New Year's Eve, and we're on the *Titanic*, as far as the economy is concerned. And one of the first things that he'll have to address is how does he get Humpty Dumpty back together again and get the economy going. And how does he possibly address health care and all the other things that we expect to spend on, with our unwillingness to tax ourselves for anything the government spends. It seems like the whole idea of paying taxes is a horrible thing that started with Reaganomics and voodoo economics, and we're now experiencing the unwillingness of people to pay for anything they are spending.

You cannot keep existing with borrowed money. I spent my whole career borrowing money, but you always have to pay it back. And the day that you have to meet the banker and he says you cannot have any more money unless you pay us back. And our whole unwillingness to create a sound dollar and a sound foundation for everything we do is very detrimental, and I don't think we can move forward until we have a willingness to address this issue.

**Mr. Jones:** Congressman, how would you respond?

**Congressman Lewis:** I agree with you.

**Mr. Shorenstein:** I must say, paying taxes is a delightful problem because the only time you pay taxes is when you make money.

**Congressman Lewis:** I can't go back to Georgia and tell people that because Cynthia would have me out of office—

(Laughter)

And say it's a delightful thing.

(Laughter)

Do we want to rebuild our country, our infrastructure, take care of the people in our cities and rural America, get the economy out of the ditch, take care of health care, protect the environment? Barack Obama and members of Congress must call upon the American people to give their share. All of us should be willing to sacrifice, to be willing to give up something.

I agree with Cynthia, we have got to spend a hundred million and billions of dollars, you can do what FDR did, you could do a Lyndon Johnson Great Society, but we have got to be brave and courageous and do it. And build a consensus. Barack Obama with Congress should say to the American people, I need one, two, three, I need A, B, C, and let's do it.

**Mr. Jones:** Walter?

**Mr. Shorenstein:** Just a further comment, in a book written about the situation in which God has lost his money and wanted to recoup his

money from people and restore heaven in a way that he wanted. So he decided to create a lottery in which people would pay for where they are born in the world. And he recouped his money by the mere fact that more people were willing to be born in the United States than any other country, and that's the way he recouped his money. So that we are all very fortunate to be in this country and to have all the opportunities that exist, and we should be willing to pay for it.

**Mr. Jones:** Thank you.

**Mr. Baum:** I'm Matt Baum with the Kennedy School. Professor Bobo earlier mentioned Krugman's article this morning, sort of the latest in a long line of frightening economic stories he's been telling. And the point that sort of jumped out at me from that article that I wanted to ask Congressman Lewis about was the fact that two months ago we were still debating whether or not there was going to be a recession, and in two months it has become, almost in every way, a different world economically. And he was expressing the concern that two months from now, if we don't act in the interim, the situation we are facing could be dramatically worse than it is today.

So I'm curious, I guess two questions, one would be what would you hope that you and the government and the Congress would be able to do between now and the time President-elect Obama becomes president? And secondly, what do you expect is likely to happen in that interim?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, it is my hope that Congress will come back in the first part of December, as a second lame duck session, and that we do something. I don't think the president and many of my Republican colleagues are prepared or willing to be supportive of doing something. But I think we've got to deal with Detroit, we must help the automobile companies.

Some people are suggesting that maybe they should just file for bankruptcy, and others are saying, Senator Reid said yesterday, some other leaders in the Senate and the House are saying come back with a plan and we will try to do something in December. I don't see how we can afford to allow these three companies to go under. We're talking about three million jobs, hundreds and thousands of people out of work, this would have a ripple effect. And I think we move far beyond a deep recession, we're in a depression and we will go down, down, down, and we cannot allow that to happen.

We're going to do something. And the president could veto it, it could be like President Ford said, drop dead Detroit, drop dead Michigan, drop dead Indiana, drop dead Ohio. We cannot allow that to happen. Then I think the Democrats will own Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

**Ms. Sanchez:** Hello, my name is Christina Sanchez, and I am a Kennedy School student. And I would like to thank the panel for joining us today, and thank you, Congressman Lewis, for your testimonial yesterday and for your heroic service.

My question is about a story you told yesterday during your comments. I was struck by the story of the young white gentleman who embraced you after the election and said that the Civil War was over. And it reminded me of a comment that I heard during the post-election euphoria, that racism is over, which I appreciated Ms. Tucker reminding us that it's not, and also Professor Bobo letting us know that we have not ended racial inequality.

So my question is—I am also hopeful that President Obama will accelerate us towards progress ending racial inequality—what are some markers that we can look for that indicate to us that we are in fact on our way towards that? What else can we do after this election to get to that place?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, I'm not so sure that I have the capacity to point out markers or steps or signs along the way. And I agree, in spite of all the changes, in spite of all the progress, in spite of having an African-American as president, the scars and stains of racism are still deeply embedded in American society. They were not created overnight and they will not be changed or blown away overnight.

But the very presence of a Barack Obama in the White House, the very presence of an African-American first lady, and as Cynthia Tucker said, these two beautiful younger children, it's a different image for America. In different ways it's going to move us along as a nation and as a people. But when we come to that point, and we've educated all of our children, get health care, take care of those who have been left out and left behind, whether they are black or white, Appalachian, Latino, Asian Americans, Native Americans, when we create that sense of community where we all have a place at the table, and where no one is left out and left behind because of the color of their skin, those will be great signs, great images that we are becoming closer to the beloved community.

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**Mr. Schumacher-Matos:** Congressman, Edward Schumacher-Matos. I'm a Shorenstein Fellow here.

I just want to ask you about immigration and the likelihood of immigration reform, with the current economic situation. If unemployment goes up to 8, 8.5 percent, what would you think we should do, and what would Congress support, for either legalizing or providing some pathway to citizenship for the 12 or 13 million immigrants who are here illegally, without any authorization? And what would the Black Caucus want when at that level on unemployment it becomes even more of a black-brown issue?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, it's my hope that when Senator McCain and President-elect Obama met a few days ago that maybe they had some discussion about the role Senator McCain would play in doing something about immigration. You will not see a fight between the Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus over immigration. We want to see immigration reform, but it's not going to be an issue of debate between the Hispanic Caucus and the Black Caucus. People that are here should be made legal. We should put people on a path to become citizens. I don't think any human being is illegal. We had the Immigrant Freedom Ride in California, through the South, to Washington, to New York. I rode that bus from Washington to New York City. I spoke at the rally in support of the immigrant workers.

I don't go for this business that we do not have resources to provide health care and education for people that are here illegally, or for people that live here in America, to be able to get the best possible health care and for all of their children to receive the best possible education.

**Ms. Icaza:** Good morning, Congressman Lewis. My name is Lorenza Icaza, and I am a student at the Kennedy School.

I grew up in Mexico, and as a child there is not a period of history that has touched me more than the civil rights movement here in the United States. Right now Mexico is going through a very important democratic transformation process, and I wanted to ask you, how do you plant the seed of change in the most crystallized minds? Because this is something that all societies can apply and need to think about from time to time, and you lived through this very important process here in the United States. What are your thoughts about that?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, I think it is important for students to come to a place like the John F. Kennedy School of Government, for young people from all over the world, from Mexico, all of our neighbors to the south, people from Eastern Europe, from Africa, all over, to come and learn about and study the American system, study the civil rights movement, how we organized.

You know, before we started sitting in or going on a Freedom Ride we didn't just wake up one day and have a dream and start sitting in, or get on a Greyhound bus and ride through the South. There was a whole group

of students that met in Nashville in the fall of '59, where we studied the philosophy of nonviolence, we studied the great religions of the world, we studied what they attempted to do in South Africa, what they accomplished in India. We studied the role of civil disobedience long before we went down to a lunch counter. And it's important to be prepared for what I call getting in the way.

You have to be anchored. That's what I like about Barack Obama, he prepared himself as an undergrad and at Harvard as a law student. He is a student of history; he's anchored. And when you are anchored, whatever comes you can take it, if you're solid as a rock. You may beat me, you may jail me, you may even try to kill me, but I am going to be solid, I'm going to stand my ground.

**Mr. Shubin:** My name is Thomas Shubin, and I'm a student here at the Kennedy School. And I just want to say it is a great honor to be in your presence, Congressman Lewis. And I want to thank you for your speech last night.

The election, that night when President Obama was elected, was a night I'll never forget for as long as I live. And it is largely due to the fact that it's a moment in history and a step forward for our country in realizing the beloved community of which you speak. But it wasn't a perfect night. I'm from California, and that was the day that Proposition 8 passed, and there was a rollback of civil rights, in part because civil rights was left up to the people to decide.

And my question to you is, you spoke about how the media was helpful in moving the civil rights movement forward, and I wanted to hear your thoughts on how the media and how Congress and indeed political leadership can help to shape public opinion, so people do believe it and frame it as a civil rights issue and not necessarily just reflect public opinion. What kind of leadership can you take in Congress?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, leaders must lead. Leaders must be a headlight rather than a taillight, I think as Dr. King once put it. And on the issue of gay rights, some of us have stood up and taken a strong stand. I've written articles, one for the *Boston Globe*, an op-ed piece. I think the leaders in Congress, whenever someone tries to introduce a defense of marriage act, you have to stand up and say this is wrong, this is not the right thing to do.

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**. . . before we started sitting in or going on a Freedom Ride . . . we studied the philosophy of nonviolence . . . we studied what they attempted to do in South Africa, what they accomplished in India. We studied the role of civil disobedience long before we went down to a lunch counter.**

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This is not something that we should put into the Constitution. We should try to get people more rights rather than taking rights from them and denying people certain basic rights.

And I think we have to lobby the leaders of Congress, the Speaker of the House, when these issues come up to say it's okay. The majority leadership of the Senate should lobby our Republican colleagues and friends, and some conservative members on the Democratic side, to do the right thing. Most members want to do the right thing, but they are afraid, they're afraid of their shadows, they are afraid of the voters back home. But

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**We should try to get people more rights rather than taking rights from them and denying people certain basic rights.**

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sometimes you have to tell them to go with their guts and lead.

**Mr. Jones:** Alex Castellanos asked me to ask you something. Last night you talked about that moment when you walked across the bridge in Selma, facing what you thought for sure was going to be an arrest, but it turned out to be considerably worse. And you talked about having two books in your backpack, among a few other things, and you mentioned in a kind of general way that one was by a Harvard professor and one was by Merton, what were the books?

(Laughter)

**Congressman Lewis:** One book was, I believe, a history of political traditions, by a Harvard professor and a book by Thomas Merton, it was the writings of Thomas Merton. I thought I was going to be in jail and I wanted to be able to read something.

(Laughter)

**Mr. Jones:** So you read them in the hospital?

**Congressman Lewis:** In the process, my book bag or backpack was lost, people asked of me, did you find the backpack? I don't know what happened to the backpack, I don't know what happened to the two books, I don't know what happened to my toothbrush.

(Laughter)

**Mr. Saacks:** My name is Dan Saaks; I'm a student here at the Kennedy School and at the Business School as well. Before coming to the Kennedy School I was down in Atlanta, living in your district.

**Congressman Lewis:** You're going to come back, right?

(Laughter)

**Mr. Sachs:** I think so. I plan on visiting in December, I think.

I was there during the time the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* endorsed Obama, and I want to talk about your endorsement decision, and if you

could walk us through what you were thinking and the whole endorsement process that you went through during the course of the election cycle?

**Congressman Lewis:** In the early part of the primary season, I endorsed Hillary Clinton. I've known President Clinton and Hillary Clinton for a very long time; we've been wonderful friends, President Clinton has been like a brother, and he always said to me, "I love you, John," and I said, "I love you too, Mr. President," long before he became president, he wasn't president, and I just said, "I love you."

Along the way, after that endorsement and after the South Carolina primary, and maybe even after the Georgia primary, I saw something happening that was akin to the civil rights movement. And as I said last night, when I used the term I had an executive session with myself, I said I wanted to be on the right side of history. And I made a decision, I called Mrs. Clinton and informed her that I was going to support Barack Obama.

I called Barack Obama before I endorsed Mrs. Clinton and told him that I was going to endorse her, and I won't tell you what he said, but it was very nice and warm. And it was hard, it was tough, it was difficult, it was very tough for me to do, but in my gut I felt it was the right thing to do. I remember almost two years ago, walking across the bridge in Selma—we take people back every year—and I believe Hillary Clinton was on my left, holding my left arm, and Barack Obama was holding my right arm as we walked across the bridge. And I knew then, I had made an endorsement, but I knew then that something was in the making. And in the long run I felt like I did the right thing, and I feel that I am now on the right side of history. But it was tough, it was very tough.

Cynthia has just reminded me that I said I was going to have a prayer meeting with myself, what we call a "Come to Jesus" meeting.

(Laughter)

**Ms. Tucker:** Exactly. You claimed, to give the Shorenstein Center audience a little of what he said at the time was more an Alabama Baptist kind of expression, he said he was going to have a Come to Jesus meeting with himself.

(Laughter)

**Mr. Jones:** Congressman, I would like for you to talk briefly about what you see as your own future in the Barack Obama administration time? What do you see as your role, given the iconic and very, very powerful symbolic role, as well as the tangible

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**... after the South Carolina primary, and maybe even after the Georgia primary, I saw something happening that was akin to the civil rights movement. And ... I wanted to be on the right side of history.**

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powers that go with your position and longevity in Congress, what do you want to do with your life and your time, in these years?

**Congressman Lewis:** Well, during my remaining years in the House of Representatives, I plan to remain there as long as the people of the Fifth District of Georgia will send me, I can get up every day and make a trip to Capitol Hill, I plan to be there. Don't tell Cynthia Tucker I said this—

(Laughter)

—but I plan to be there, I don't have any desire to retire, not even a dream about it, I want to help Barack Obama be the best possible president. I want to help him get health care passed. I serve on the Ways and Means Committee, they have a subcommittee on health, I'm going to fight for everything possible, and I want to be part of an effort to put an end to war and violence, to violence here at home, and war and military engagement abroad.

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**I think we've got to do what we can to lessen the influence of this military industrial complex on American society. And I will be a voice speaking up and speaking out . . . to create a world that is at peace with itself.**

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I think we've got to do what we can to lessen the influence of this military industrial complex on American society. And I will be a voice speaking up and speaking out. But during this administration I plan not just to be involved on the American scene, but I'm going to spend some time traveling around the world with some of my colleagues and friends, to see what we can do to create a world that is at peace with itself.

**Mr. Jones:** Well, I can honestly say that the only person I feel pity for is somebody who tried to run against you.

(Laughter)

We have come to the end of our time. This has been an extraordinary Theodore White event; last night I think will be memorable to many of us just as much as all of the other iconic astonishing moments in this last few weeks.

I want to thank all the members of the panel for being with us today, and of course especially I want to thank Congressman John Lewis, and I hope that you have a very long tenure to come in the Congress of the United States.

(Applause)

Thank you all.







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