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REVEREND ALVIN LOVE INTERVIEW
OBAMA: IN PURSUIT OF A MORE PERFECT UNION
KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE
Reverend Alvin Love Original Interview
October 23, 2008
Interviewed by Peter Kunhardt
Total Running Time: 35 minutes and 55 seconds

START TC: 01:00:00:00

MATTHEW HENDERSON:

Reverend Alvin Love interview, take one. Marker

ON-SCREEN TEXT:

Alvin Love

Pastor, Lilydale Baptist Church

Meeting Obama

01:00:14:05

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Well, the day I first met Barack Obama, I was sitting in my office all by myself. There was absolutely no one in this building but me, and I was a relatively young pastor. I kept getting flooded by people knocking on the door asking, you know, for help or a sandwich or something. And so a few of them I gave them some money, sent them to the corner and get a sandwich. About the third time, I see this young skinny guy walking underneath my window

coming to the same door and I said, “Here’s someone else getting ready to ya know, ask me for a sandwich.” And I almost didn’t let him in. And I—I decided to go ahead, I’d open the door and he opened—he came in and said, “Well, you know, my name is Barack Obama.” Gave me that famous speal, ya know, I guess he’d been working on it a long time. “Some folks call me Alabama, some say you’re momma,” all of that. And he just asked if he could have about 15 minutes of my time to talk about working in the community, which was really right up my alley. It was what I was looking for, so I invited him in. And we sat down and started talking about our shared backgrounds or our different backgrounds really. Him in Hawaii and Thailand and Kansas and all that, and I talked to him about my—my being born here in Chicago, moving to Mississippi during segregation, and then moving back to Chicago during the riots and all of that. Our 15 minutes turned into about an hour and a half conversation and he asked if I’d be willing to come to a meeting with other like-minded ministers around the same topics and I said, “Sure, love to.” He had just really been hired quite recently as an organizer for a group called Developing Communities Project. The group, at that time, was composed of basically six Catholic parishes, and he found it difficult to organize in the African American community with those six Catholic parishes only and he wanted to brand—expand out beyond that, so he started walking the streets, just knocking on church doors trying to meet the local ministers in the community and I just happened to be one of those.

Shared experience

01:02:35:04

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

When he came into the office and began talking about his background, he started talking about his accent. He said, “You know, I’ve got this funny accent. My mom was born in Kansas and my dad’s from Kenya.” And so he shared with me of how he was born, you know, in Hawaii and lived in Thailand and of course in the United States and just kind of had this nomadic childhood, and I shared with him that mine was pretty much the same. I was born here in Chicago and—and probably about the age of six or seven, my dad moved with the whole family down to Mississippi, little town called DeKalb or outside of that, really in a rural area, and talked about you know, how I had been bussed 14 miles to a segregated school. Little schoolhouse just one level, four or five rooms just sitting up on cinder blocks. Once the Civil Rights or the struggle for that began—I guess it was just so bad down there, my mom just basically told my dad, “We’ve got to come back to Chicago.” Maybe after about four years or so, they moved us back to Chicago. And I got here just in time for the riots and—and the, you know, the violence that began following the assassination of Dr. King. And so—so both of us, I think the one thing we had in common was that kind of shared feeling that we had moved around a lot, but also that those-- that movement made us-- gave us some experiences on both sides of the equation. You know, I understood the city and the rural, I understood the—you know, segregation, but also—and the civil rights struggle. And so it kind of connected us, I think, in a way—not to mention the fact that I probably was the only pastor in the area that was anywhere near his age at the time. So, we kind of connected well because of that.

Obama's challenges organizing in Chicago's Black community

01:04:36:11

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

He recognized the divisiveness in Chicago just trying to organize in the Catholic parishes because even though he was in the African American community, all those parish priests were white and did not really have a sense of connection to the neighborhoods that they served. And—and so he felt the tension right away of trying to organize African American communities through a leadership that was disconnected from that community, and so coming into Chicago and beginning an organizing project, this was, you know, really after the election of Harold Washington and so kind of—that same kind of feeling, that tension—ya know, we were getting into the, you know, the wars, council wars and all that. So the pressure of, you know, trying to deal with this underlying segregation that was prevalent in Chicago—you know, everybody has their own neighborhood, their own culture and—and would be comfortable just living in that and not knowing anybody else. And I think it would have been ok except for the fact that if one culture has it and the other one is excluded, then it really made life in Chicago difficult. And so I—I think that's the kind of melting pot that Obama was thrust into.

01:06:04:20

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

You know in his early days, he had some real difficulties in Chicago and particularly trying to organize. I remember our very first organizing meeting

with pastors. As I said before, he had invited me to come to a meeting and we talked about, you know, pulling other guys in and—and we got in that meeting and there were some African American pastors who said, “We don’t want you here with your Jewish money.” And you know, “You come representing other folks. We don’t need you to come tell us how—how to do things.” That meeting really fell apart. That was a failure from the—from the beginning. And so, we had to regroup and go back and begin to see how to engage folks and one of the things that—I think, challenges that Obama had was that he did not talk like you know, the regular guy on the street. And so I think even in that, that gave people some kind of suspicion of him as an outsider. You know, I—I was probably one of two Baptist pastors to endorse him when he ran against Bobby Rush. You know, the big thing with that was that he wasn’t Black enough and he lost that race because people thought that he was not—he did not have enough credibility in the African American community in his early days.

Language

01:07:29:23

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I think it’s a great communication skill to understand the language of the people that you’re trying to communicate with. In the church we would call this speaking in tongues, right? You learn to speak the language of the folk that you have. Even in ministry, that’s a cultural thing. I had an older congregation, other pastors had younger groups. You can’t talk to the older congregation the same ways you can communicate with the younger people.

And so you have to learn to communicate to the group that you're trying to reach, and I think he developed that skill very well and became an outstanding communicator.

Obama finding a church home

01:08:13:09

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Well, we always talked, during his organizing days, about the kind of disconnect and—and the—really the real challenge that he would have trying to get pastors to bring their churches into an organization to do church based organizing and the lead organizer wasn't involved in any church. It set up, really, a kind of almost an implied, you know, disingenuous nature about it. And so we always talked about the need for him to be involved in church and he had to—you know, we didn't push him for any particular church, but that he needed to be in church if he was going to lead—you know, church leaders. Again, it goes back to communication. How are you going to communicate with church people and understand their culture and you're not a part of it?

01:09:10:06

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

We often talked about, you know, his need for a personal relationship with the Lord and to find his space, the place where he could be most comfortable. One of the things that I—that I really encouraged him to do was to try to find a church that was outside of the organizing project. It was Reverend Curry that sent him to Trinity, and he began his relationship over there with Trinity. But we always talked about the need for him to be spiritually

grounded if he was going to do this kind of work in the church and then even if he wasn't, he needed to be spiritually grounded and he needed to make that decision for himself and by himself. Once he made his decision to join the church, you could see a marked difference in- in his groundedness. Prior to that, Barack was searching for himself; both himself in the African American community but also in the faith community and I think when he became a part of the church, that search was over and he—ya know, he delved into really building on that relationship and making that structure, that foundation strong in his life. I think it had real value and real meaning to him.

Obama's character

01:10:33:16

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I always knew that Barack was special. He had a way of communicating. He was unafraid. You know, there weren't too many people who'd just walk up and down the street knocking on church doors, alright? So, it took a lot of courage for him just to get out of his car and walk the neighborhoods-- neighborhoods that he was unfamiliar with. And then his ability again to communicate with people on all kinds of levels. He didn't seem to get bothered by a lot of the pushback that he got. I often thought that- that had I been in his position and heard some of the things that folks said to him, if it were said to me, I probably would have gotten angry and found another line of work. But—but he stayed with it and, you know, he seemed to get it, to bring it in, and then to evaluate it. The stuff that he couldn't use he got rid of

and that that he could he learned from it and moved forward so yeah, I always thought that he was a very special guy.

Obama as a father

01:11:39:03

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I think the fact that Barack was looking for himself, and part of that was that nomadic movement in his early childhood. He wanted to be rooted, he wanted to be grounded, have some sense of stability. And I think he wanted to give that sense of stability that he was missing in his life to his own children, and so—you see it, you saw it in the time that he was president, but I think you see it even now. You know, he's out of office but he—he decided to stay in DC to make sure that his daughter could, you know, finish school in one school. And so to be able to put your children in one spot, I think that's probably one of the things that we—we had in common as well. I put my son into school in Kindergarten and he stayed there through eighth grade, you know? Something that never did—never happened for me, and I think he had that same kind of mindset. Let's put some roots down, let's get settled, and let's give our children that kind of stability and consistency that we didn't have.

Michelle Obama

01:12:46:21

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I knew nothing about Michelle until they got married. He- he played it close to the vest, at least in the organizing arena. But once he got married, again, you saw this huge shift in his—in his stability. There was just a difference in his focus and the way when he made up his mind to do something, he stayed with it. I think she had that kind of centering effect on him. Kind of brought his scattering thoughts in and gave them a little bit more direction.

Spirituality

01:13:24:22

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Oh, I find Barack to be very spiritual. There have been a number of times when you know, we've just—he'll just say, "Pray for me." Or he's got some issues and he would stop by and say you know, "Rev," 'cause he never called me by my name, he just said Rev. He said, "remember me, pray for me." I'll never forget the day he was inaugurated as president. After the parade, they took Michelle back to the White House to change for the balls that evening. He came back to the White House for a meeting with several of us who had been friends with him across the years and he basically just came through, said, "I wanted to stop and say hello." And he met and talked to everybody, but as he got ready to go, he grabbed me and he said, "Rev, I'm in it now." And he said, "Pray for me. Don't forget—don't forget me. Pray for me." And I said, "Well I'll always pray for you. I won't forget." And so we embraced and he left and Secret Service was leading him out the door. He got to the door, stopped again and turned around and he pointed and he said, "Rev, I ain't playing, alright? Don't forget." And over the years during his presidency, those times

that I would have a chance to go to the White House, he always reminded me, you know, “You know, I need your prayers and I need you, thank you. Continue to pray for me. I need that kind of help in the White House.”

Obama’s inauguration

01:14:54:07

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

When Barack Obama was elected as president, he did send me an invitation—it’s interesting, even—all along the campaign, he always sent me invitations and passes to be present. You know, I was in Grant Park. They always included me in the family and friends group, and so when he was inaugurated as president, we had the opportunity, my wife and I and my son, in fact, we all went to the White House, went to DC to be a part of the inauguration, to witness it. He gave us some special passes to the home states ball and—and then he created that opportunity for us to just have that one on one, just to say we’re proud of you, from my point of view. And then for him to say, “Thank you,” you know, “I appreciate it. You’ve been with me all the way and I appreciate it.” Yeah, so that was a very special moment for us.

Reverend Jeremiah Wright

01:15:54:18

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I think the crisis around Reverend Wright and Trinity was very unfortunate. I think some of that is a cultural thing. It’s kind of misunderstanding sometimes the culture of the Black church and when it gets out into the

larger media like it did, I think some people misinterpreted that. However, I think candidate Obama did the best that he could do. Particularly his speech in Philly on race, I think, was outstanding. I really think that if it had just stayed there, the crisis would have died and there would have been nothing else said about that. Unfortunately, it didn't but I think, you know, he was in a bad place. He loved his church. His family loved being in the church, but when you get a disconnect between, you know, what's being said and then what you really feel, and particularly on the stage like the national press, or global press, I think he did the only thing he could have done.

Seeking guidance

01:17:07:07

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Well, he always called me to—to talk to me about his next move. You know, when he wanted to go to law school, he called and said, “Rev, I’m thinking about you know, giving this up and going to law school. I think I want to go, you know, and do something else.” And—and when he came back to do Project Vote, we worked together on that, he talked about it. And then when he decided to run for State Senate. I don’t know if he, you know, really needed my advice. But he would at least call me and say, “Rev, here’s what I’m thinking about doing.” You know, “I need you to pray with me about it and let me know what you think.” And so from the US Senate—you know, State Senate, US Senate and to the presidential run, all those things he ran by me, ya know, before he, you know, really made an announcement about it. I was his friend and as his friend, I would try to tell him what I thought, what

was on my heart and my mind and hopefully gave him some good advice. Throughout the campaign as he dealt with faith-based issues, he would always as I said before, he could call me and say, “Rev, what do you think about this?” And we would talk about it. I remember when he hired Joshua Dubois, who ended up being his director of faith-based operations, when he hired Joshua for the campaign, Joshua asked him, he said, “What’s the parameters of my job? What is it that you really want me to do?” Obama told Joshua, call Reverend Love up, invite him to lunch and whatever he tells you to do, that’s your job.” I think whenever he had a faith based issue and idea, he would call me up about it. Of course when he became president and Joshua took over faith-based offices, it was Joshua who would call me and so for every one of those events that would come in, as they began talking to people around the country, really getting to know those people came through some conversations with me. And he would say, “Well, Rev, who do you know?” And I would tell him to go talk to this person or that person and he kind of built that—that whole faith based department from that.

Continuing the work of the Civil Rights Movement

01:19:16:13

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Well, in recognition of the 50th anniversary, the March on Washington, we went to—to the White House for a couple of things, not just for the march, because it was a huge event. But also to have some conversations in the federal government about where do we go from here? How do we—how do we keep the momentum moving? How do we best honor the 1963 march and

movement? And so alongside of the outside events were meetings in the White House with, you know, the Justice Department and other things to talk about voting rights and strengthening those things, and while we were having those discussions, we had the opportunity, about six or seven of us to go into the Roosevelt room and then eventually into the Oval Office, and just to sit down and talk to the President about those—those ideas. Just walking into the Roosevelt room, Reverend Barbara Skinner asked me to be the representative to begin the conversations with him and so—so sitting across the table from him, I said to him we basically came as faith based leaders and advisors across the country to help him build a coalition of conscience in the nation around civil rights. I saw him reach in his vest pocket, pull his ink pen out and write in the margins. And we got to the reception that night and he called everybody together. And he says, “I want to thank you all for being here to help me build a coalition of conscience in America.” And then the next day, his speech on the Washington Monument, he said, “We need to build a coalition of conscience.” I said—I really wanted to ask him for my royalties for that speech, but I think, you know, just being there to be a part of the conversations, not just to honor the march but to look at the—the—the real—the needs to keep that movement going and—and how do we push civil rights further and really put some teeth into it. So it’s one thing to pass a bill, but it’s another thing to be able to enforce it, to make sure that it happens. And so, that’s really what those meetings were about, is to make sure that we honored the Civil Rights March on Washington from 1963 by putting some muscle behind it.

Reverend Al Sharpton

01:21:44:17

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I think Al Sharpton had a very significant role. He's probably one of the few pastors who—who could go in and out. He probably called President Obama a lot more than most of us would have dared to call him. We prob-- At least on my end, I would've waited until he called me. I'm sure that Reverend Sharpton had the ear of the president. He was able to go in and speak with him and I think the President valued Al Sharpton's opinion.

Navigating race

01:22:17:18

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Personally, I wasn't as frustrated by the lack of his voice in a lot of African American issues because I could see behind the scenes the actual work being done to get that accomplished. But I understood the frustration of—of people in the community. But I don't think that there was any way possible for Barack Obama as president to ever come up to the expectations of the African American community because they expected him really to undo 400 years of injustice with the stroke of a pen. You know, one of my challenges and one of my—I guess responsibilities that I took on myself was to make sure that in all the legislation that he passed and proposed, that we would pull that out—pull the talking points out and say, here's the benefit to the African American community so that they could see that he was actually accomplishing it, but he wasn't—he wasn't simply the president of the

African American community, he was the president of the United States and as such, he had to look out for the welfare of every citizen in the United States and not just the African American community.

Dreams Of My Father

01:23:32:14

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

When I read *Dreams of my Father* the first time, I had—what it really did for me was it give me a greater sense of his background, of how the man that I knew came to become the man that I knew. It was an interesting read for me because—particularly when you get into the organizing days, you know, to see him kind of make composite characters out of four or five different people around so you know, I got a kick out of trying to pick out who's who as I read that book. So sometimes I had to go back and read it again just—just for the face value of it.

Racism

01:26:03:02

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

During the campaign for president and certainly during his first term as president and the second campaign, you could see the undertones of racism really beginning to come up and bubble up to the surface. I think we're really seeing it break through today, but as he went he was very careful not to do anything to kind of scratch that—to make it come up because then again, he would be fighting, you know, 400 years of stuff that he really couldn't do

anything about. I said before, I think his speech on race in Philadelphia was a powerful speech, but I—I think his candidacy brought people face to face with their feelings. You know, the things that were on the inside that they never really spoke out and it brought a lot of—I think the systemic things in politics, going all the way back to Barry Goldwater and the southern strategy. I—I—you begin to see the language and begin to understand that this isn't something new that just popped up because Barack Obama was a candidate for president. This was always under the surface in America and for really, probably for the first time, we were beginning to have honest discussions about it. I think the candidacy of Barack Obama scratched the surface and it gave opportunity for a bolder expression from other folks who have negative racial ideas to really express themselves. And we saw it quite a bit in both the first and second campaign.

Trayvon Martin

01:26:12:14

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Just his statement that Trayvon Martin could have been his son. If he had a son, it would—he would have looked a lot like Trayvon Martin. I think that statement alone and the empathy that he had, I think, for all that occurred in that moment really is what turned that into a transformative moment. Those kinds of moments were, you know, were in the African American community all along and President Obama had been responding to—to such moments all the time. I remember here in Chicago in 2009. The high school right across the street from this church, a young boy was killed, Darien Albert. Now, you

know, he wasn't killed by a vigilante. He was killed by a gang of teenagers but—but President Obama responded and he sent, you know, federal resources into the city of Chicago to help deal with those issues. Those kinds of things that he had been doing all along were going unreported, but when that big issue with Trayvon Martin came, you know, it grabbed the national spotlight. And so it became a transformative moment, but I really believe he had been doing transformative things all along.

Singing Amazing Grace

01:27:33:09

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

He almost, at that moment, became the pastor of the country. I think, in the traditional African American church, you will find, you know, many times a pastor if he has a talent to sing and he gets a good message and it goes over well, they might close it out with a song. But I think seeing that—over the years I think President Obama caught the cadence of African American preachers and I think it helped him in his speaking style but it also, I think at that moment, it touched him at the heart and he was able to connect with the folks who were mourning and all across the country who were hurt by that event, both Black and white. And I think when he just began to sing Amazing Grace, he touched everybody at the point of their spirituality.

Donald Trump

01:28:37:06

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I—I think after eight years of an Obama presidency and having the first African American president, yes I think that there's a sense of backlash from the country, again, that's—that just beneath the surface information, kind of divide and conquer mentality that some in this country have that would—would speak to people who are on the margins of society and say one disenfranchised group is going to take from another disenfranchised group if you don't do something about it and we end up making the wrong people the enemies. And I think they had eight years to— to set President Obama's term up as—as an evil to those who were not African Americans. You know, poor whites. And—and I think the reaction to that is a Donald Trump administration.

Obama's legacy

01:29:49:10

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I think the Obama presidency will have a lasting effect on—on the civility of America even though it doesn't look that way today. One of the—I think things that will come out of this Trump administration is to see the difference in the civility coming out of the White House now as opposed to how it was dealing with tough issues and global issues. I think that difference will be highlighted once this next administration is over and people have a greater sense of what a real diplomat Obama was. What a real, I think, personality—you know, someone who really understood people and who tried to do good for the country and not just for a select group of people who fit his own profile. That will never be undone. I think the sense of justice that he brought

to the presidency; the sense of decorum that he brought to the presidency will never—you know, you can't take that away. The sense of fairness. Now, we're going to have governments. Some will be fair. Some will be unfair. The farther away from the Obama Presidency we get, I think the more we'll see what a good man, what a good leader he was. And I don't think that will ever go away. We've talked about the Obama Presidential Center and what it will do really for not just his legacy but for the city of Chicago and for ya know, young people for years to come. But what I look at—look back at his presidency, you know, there are a couple of things. There can only be one first. So just simply being the first African American president leaves a legacy in itself. But I think that the legacy of justice that he brought to that office, really the statesmanship that he brought, his ability to listen. Even to those who did not agree with him and who would fight tooth and nail against him, he still respected them. That kind of civility I think in government is—is lacking today and so you know, I look back at his presidency and I say job well done. You know, you represented all of us, not just African Americans. You represented all of us well, and I think you did a great job.

Obama as a role model

01:32:33:21

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

I think President Obama's role model—modeling as a father and a husband is something to be emulated and I think it made a— it's made a great difference in our country no matter what culture you're in, but especially in the African

American community where there's so many disjointed families, with so many families without fathers, I think his fatherhood initiative, you know, his My Brother's Keeper initiative, those kinds of things, those are things that— that will last long beyond the government's influence in it. They—they've been—it's been a great example I think to the community and there are more men I think who are stepping up or more young men who want to be the kind of father that Barack Obama has shown himself to be while carrying the burden of being perhaps the most powerful man on the planet earth.

Criticism

01:33:37:18

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

The kind of criticism that President Obama would be talking down to people about fatherhood and things like that on Father's day is—is unjustified. When he would speak about fatherhood on those special days, it comes as a culmination of all the things that he'd been doing all year long. Now, if you just walked in off the street and started talking about you know, responsible parents and responsible fathers and those kinds of things, yeah, then you would be talking down. But he backed it up with programs and- and with a genuine concern for families and for fathers and for children and so no, I don't think—I think that kind of discussion is unjustified but I don't believe it.

Hope vs. Fear

01:34:31:11

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

When you operate out of a sense of hope rather than a sense of fear, I really think it gives you a positive momentum to accomplish great things. I think when you—when you operate from a sense of fear, it really circumscribes you to a small area of success, if you can call it success. During our organizing days, one of the great things that Obama used to say, “It says that you walk—you drive through or you walk through Roselyn and you—somebody will come in and see you know, vacant lots, boarded up buildings, broken glass, and they say, “This is a terrible neighborhood.” But then someone else might walk through and say, “There’s a vacant lot that could be a garden. There’s an abandoned building that could be rehabbed and new families brought into the community.”” And said, “That kind of mindset strengthens the community. It gives it something to push forward to. The other one, even though it may accomplish some things, in the long term, it’s going to drive people away.” And so I think you can always get more accomplished operating out of hope than you can out of fear. Fear will always, I think, lock you into a box that’s going to be hard to break out of.

Moral leadership

01:36:00:18

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Moral leadership I think is—is really having the capacity and the courage to do what is right, what is good, even when it’s not expedient. I think in the years of the Obama presidency, what we saw was—was a leader who was willing to do what was right even if the majority of people did not agree with him. When he made the announcement of his support for gay marriage, he

knew that he was going to have a problem in the religious community upfront, but as president—and as a matter of fact, he said to me, “I’m not the pastor of the United States, I’m the president of the United States.” And so those kinds of things, ya know, he thought that was best for the whole country, he thought it was right for the whole country, he thought it was right morally for the whole country and so he had the courage to stand on his convictions, and I think that kind of leadership is a kind of leadership that will carry a nation of people, a community forward all of the time. You have to have the courage to do the right thing even when it may not be the most expedient thing.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

01:37:18:01

REVEREND ALVIN LOVE:

Obama and I used to talk about the—the Civil Rights movement because both of us had been really impacted by it, you know, me living in the segregated south and then coming back into the Civil Rights movement in Chicago. And we often talked about it and he often would say, you know, “I wish that I had been around during that time because I would have liked to have been doing what I’m doing now when Dr. King was alive.” And then he added to that the election of Harold Washington, I think, as Mayor in Chicago. You know, I didn’t live in Chicago when Harold Washington was elected mayor, but I lived out in the south suburbs. But I remember the day after that election, I was sitting in a car dealership waiting for my car to be repaired and I heard somebody in the office say, “Well, Chicago’s going to hell now, alright,

because they got a Black Mayor.” And I said, “Well, if that’s—I need to be in Chicago where the action is.” And so I moved my family back into the city. I think Barack had that same kind of feeling. You know, if I had only had the opportunity, I wish I had the opportunity to have been involved when it was happening, but since I didn’t have that opportunity, let me make the most of the opportunity that I have to effect positive change in- in civil rights and in the lives of the people that we serve.

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