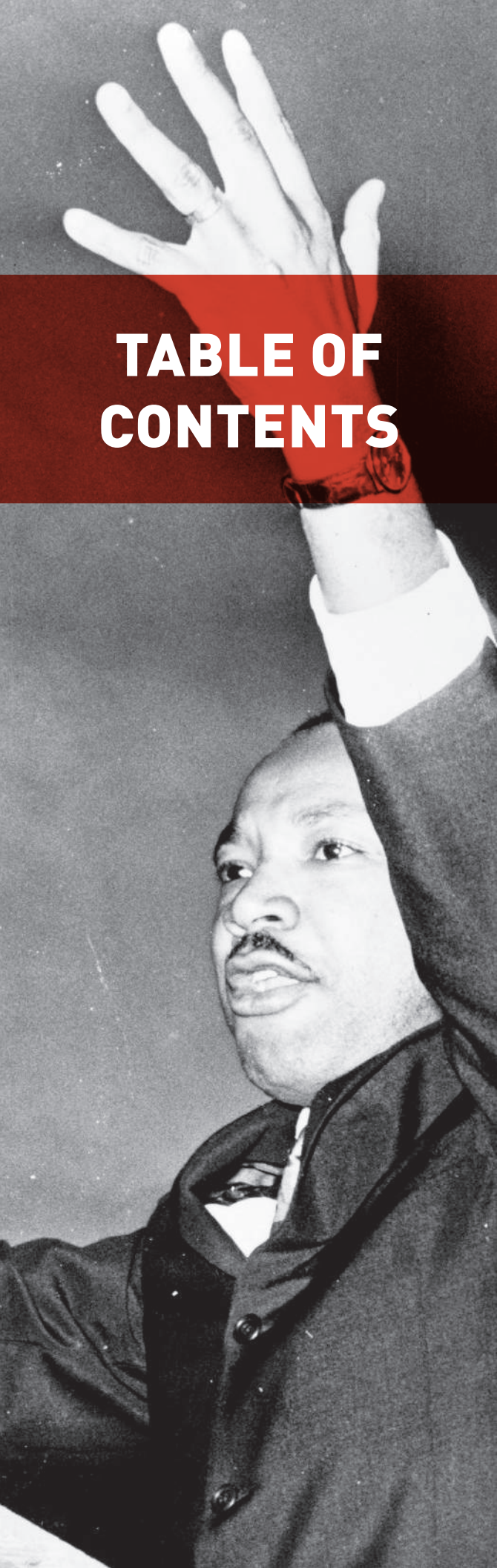
WHEN HIS DREAM FOR AMERICA BECAME A NIGHTMARE

KING IN THE WILDERNESS

SCREENING GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

This screening guide is a resource to engage audiences in informed and thoughtful discussion with *King in the Wilderness*. Community organizations, educators, and facilitators will discover helpful tips to organize a screening event, pre- and post-screening discussion questions and engagement strategies. These will include encouraging audiences to reflect upon the accomplishments and challenges Martin Luther King, Jr., faced in the last three years of his life.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In 2013 we first brought the idea of doing a film on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to HBO. The country was a year away from the unrest in Ferguson, and still reeling from the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the shooting of Trayvon Martin. It was during this period that I remember hearing Dr. King's name being invoked with more regularity across the political spectrum. "What would King say if he were alive today?" But all too often a wooden version of Dr. King emerged, rarely capturing the moral leader I could still recall from my youth.

2018 marked the 50th anniversary of Dr. King's assassination. As time moves on, he becomes less of a man and more of a myth upon which principles can be grafted to suit a narrative. As a filmmaker, I felt a mandate to go beyond the speeches and the sermons, to create a true personal portrait of Dr. King.

I work with two of my sons and and team of young filmmakers. We were fortunate that Taylor Branch, the brilliant author behind the Pulitzer Prize-winning trilogy of books on Dr. King and the Civil Rights movement agreed to meet with us. He came to New York and laid out what would become the foundation for our film:

"Most teachers and scholars cover Dr. King through the first 10 years of the movement—through Montgomery and Birmingham and Selma—because I think we're in an era that wants to pigeonhole Dr. King as someone who's about "I have a dream" and the end of segregation. And it's a shame because if you really want to know who Dr. King was beyond the fanfare, and who we are as a nation, it's all laid bare in those three years from 1965 to his assassination."

Taylor brought a new dimension to Dr. King, as a man desperately clinging onto nonviolence in the face of an unstable nation. A man who challenged housing segregation in the North, took on his government during a time of war, and tried to unite the poor. A man who seemed to know that he was soon going to die. As Taylor spoke, we were struck by the indifference, the violence, and by the sheer weight of history that came to rest upon the shoulders of King's "team of wild horses"—the handful of complicated men and women, most of whom were in their twenties, that fought alongside him, but grew weary of sacrifice as their idealism began to fade.

This film is about Dr. King, but it's also about the end of a movement. Those young activists who followed Dr. King into the darkest corners of the country, into the Mississippi Delta and the ghettos of Chicago, would become our storytellers. All of them continued the struggle for justice and equality after Dr. King's death, and many, like Marian Wright Edelman and Congressman John Lewis, are still fighting today. The voices that make up this film are living legends, each of them knows how to create real, lasting change because they've done it. For some of them it was likely their last time sitting down to share memories of their friend.

My hope is that our film will serve as a reminder of what leadership looks like at its best. In this regard, there is no better subject than Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who said, "Cowardice asks the question, 'Is it safe?' Expediency asks the question, 'Is it politic?' Vanity asks the question, 'Is it popular?' But conscience asks the question, 'Is it right? And there comes a time when we must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because it is right."

-Peter Kunhardt, Director

LETTER FROM TAYLOR BRANCH

"I am grateful to the Kunhardt Film Foundation and HBO for their partnership to disseminate "King in the Wilderness" complete with a study guide.

There is a great need for younger generations to engage our country's historic experiment in self-government, grounded in "We the People." This film dramatizes a citizens' movement led by Dr. King that addressed deep issues of freedom, and the study guide will help today's citizens understand how those issues remain urgent today.

We are all the stewards of free government. May this educational partnership spread widely among the teachers of history and students of freedom."

-Taylor Branch, Executive Producer / Historian

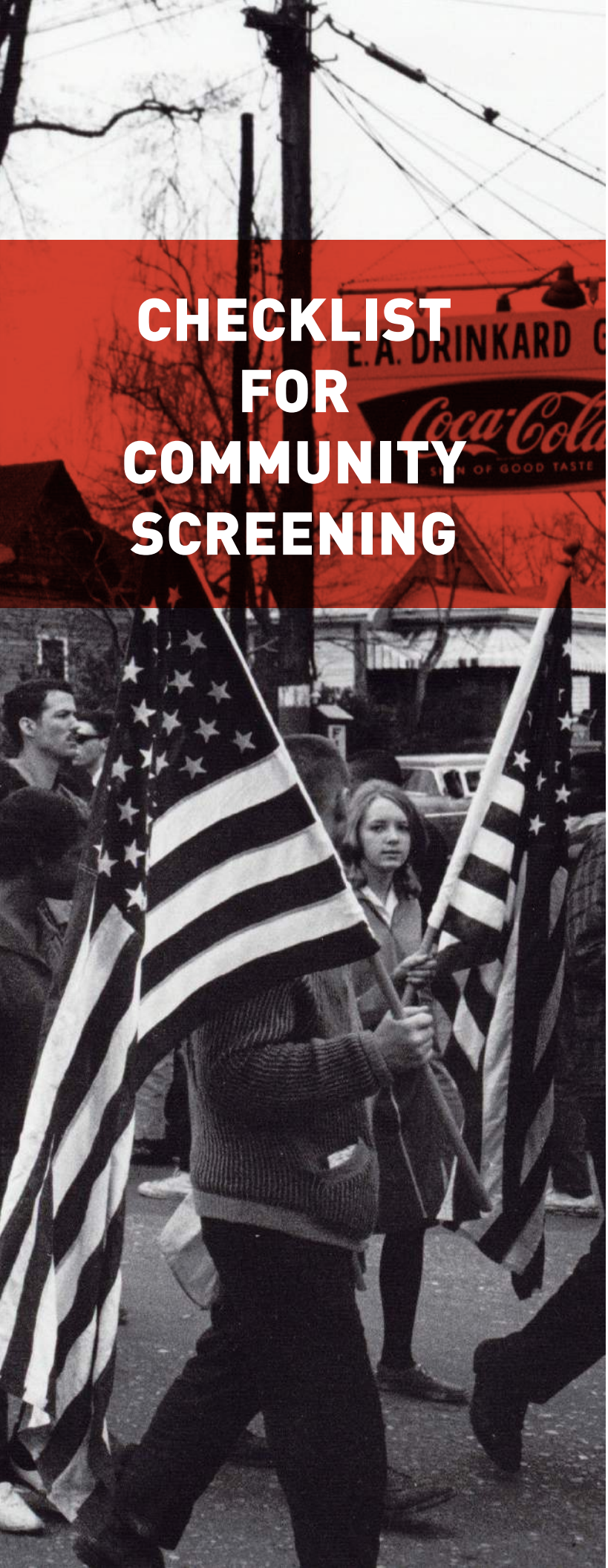
ABOUT THE FILM

Martin Luther King Jr.'s leadership during the Montgomery bus boycotts, the sit-ins, and the historic Selma-to-Montgomery marches is now considered the stuff of legend. But left out of many history books is much of what happened afterward, during the last three years of his life.

King in the Wilderness reveals a conflicted leader who, after the Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed, faced an onslaught of criticism from both sides of the political spectrum; the Black Power movement saw his nonviolence as weakness, and President Lyndon B. Johnson saw his anti–Vietnam War speeches as irresponsible. King's fervent belief in peaceful protest became a testing point for a nation on the brink of chaos.

Thanks to revelatory conversations with his inner circle of friends, *King in the Wilderness* unearths a stirring new perspective into Dr. King's character, his radical doctrine of nonviolence, and his internal philosophical struggles prior to his assassination in 1968.

HOSTING A SCREENING



CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNITY SCREENING

King in the Wilderness offers numerous opportunities to partner with community organizations. Here are recommended steps for planning a successful screening event.

SIX WEEKS TO TWO MONTHS PRIOR

_____ Brainstorm and prioritize a list of possible community partners to support Outreach.

_____ Set a time, date and location.

_____ Identify your guest list, secure community partners.

_____ Decide on the format for your screening and post-screening event
(eg: Will you have a panel and/or organize another engagement activity?).

ONE MONTH PRIOR

_____ Send out invitation with time, date, location and description of the film and the post-screening event.

DAY BEFORE

_____ Test all audio visual equipment

_____ Copy and assemble any discussion materials or promotional handouts.

DAY OF SCREENING

_____ Arrive at least one hour prior to set up the room for your audience.

CREATING A SPACE FOR ENGAGING DIALOGUE

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s work and struggles remain deeply relevant for the challenges our nation and world continue to confront. Dr. King's teachings on nonviolence and his leadership in dismantling the scourge of racial segregation in the United States are institutionalized in schools, universities, cultural and historical institutions across the globe. To ensure respectful and thoughtful screening events, consider these recommendations for creating an open space for learning:

Watch the Film Beforehand. This will both help you tailor the event to your audience and help you anticipate questions and responses that might come up during the post-screening discussion.

Be Knowledgeable. Reading this guide, watching the film, and exploring the recommended resources will help you be more conversant in the historical period covered in the film. You do not need to be an expert on Dr. King to facilitate a screening event, but it is helpful to invite religious leaders, scholars, or others from the community who are experts on this period of American history, especially if you are hosting a post-screening discussion.

Be Culturally Sensitive. ***King in the Wilderness*** is a film that touches many audiences and community issues such as economic and racial justice, human rights, gender and inclusion, and the role of moral leadership. Consider partnering with community groups and diverse leadership to ensure your event is inclusive.

Explain the Role of Interviews. Part of what makes ***King in the Wilderness*** unique is its use of first-person interviews with Dr. King's inner circle of friends and colleagues. Highlighting the importance of their storytelling and the relationship between memory and history is a compelling topic to introduce and integrate into your discussions of the film and in understanding the legacy of Dr. King.

Be Thoughtful with Your Language. It may be helpful to remind audiences who are new to the topics covered in ***King in the Wilderness*** of general parameters for engaging in respectful dialogue. For example, avoid generalizations, using "I" to explain a point, and refrain from interrupting while another is speaking.

RESOURCES FOR THE DISCUSSION

TIMELINE: 1965-1968

1965

- **January 2 until March 25:** The Selma Voting Rights Campaign.
- **March:** First U.S. Marine Corps combat units arrive in Vietnam.
- **March 7:** "Bloody Sunday" attack on non-violent civil rights activists occurs, Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, Alabama.
- **March 21-25:** Dr. King leads the final march from Selma to Montgomery.
- **August 6:** President Johnson signs the Voting Rights Act.
- **August 11 -16:** Watts Riots/rebellion in the Watts section of Los Angeles, California.

U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War escalates; U.S. troop levels increase from about 15,000 to 184,000.

1966

- **January:** Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) announce plans for Chicago Freedom Movement to expand their civil rights activities from the South to northern cities beginning in Chicago.
- **January 26**: Dr. King and Coretta Scott King move to Chicago and into a railroad flat on the corner of Hamlin Avenue and 16th Street.
- **June 6:** James Meredith shot in Mississippi during a March Against Fear.
- **June 16:** Stokely Carmichael, newly appointed chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), issues a call for Black Power.
- **Late June:** Carmichael and Dr. King debate Black Power versus nonviolence as they continue the Meredith March through Mississippi.
- **August 5:** Dr. King leads nonviolent march from Marquette Park to Gage Park, Chicago resulting in the Summit Agreement whereby Mayor Richard J. Daley and the Chicago Real Estate Board pledged to make housing open and fair and Dr. King agreed to stop marching.

1967

- **April 4:** Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam sponsor event at Riverside Church. Dr. King delivers "Beyond Vietnam" speech urging an end to the war.
- **May 17:** Coretta Scott King and Dr. Benjamin Spock lead anti-Vietnam War rally in front of the White House.
- Riots/rebellion in Newark, New Jersey (July 12-17) and Detroit, Michigan (July 23 - July 28).
- **December 4:** Dr. King announces launch of the Poor People's Campaign, a campaign to "dramatize the plight of America's poor of all races."

U.S. troop levels in Vietnam increase to 485,600.

1968

- **April 3:** Dr. King travels to Memphis, Tennessee to support striking sanitation workers.
- **April 4:** Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated at the Lorraine Motel, Memphis.
- **April 9:** Funeral for Dr. King, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia.
- **April 11:** President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1968.
- **May 12-June 19:** Poor People's Campaign, Washington, D.C.

U.S. ground troops in Vietnam increase to 536,100.

KEY INTERVIEWS AND ROLES

Andrew Young
'65-'68: Executive Director, SCLC

Bernard Lafayette
'65-'68: Staff Leader, SCLC

Clarence Jones
'65-'68: Advisor, Personal Lawyer and Speechwriter for Dr. King

Cleveland Sellers
'65-'68: Program Director, SNCC

Clifford Alexander, Jr.
'65-'68: Chairman, U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission

C.T. Vivian
'65-'68: Director of Affiliates, SCLC

Diane Nash
'65-'68: Field Organizer, SCLC and SNCC

Dorothy Cotton
'65-'68: Education Director, SCLC

Harry Belafonte
'65-'68: Friend and Artist

Jesse Jackson
'65-'68: Director, SCLC Operation Breadbasket

Joan Baez
'65-'68: Musician and Activist

Joseph Califano, Jr.
'65-'68: Special Assistant to President Lyndon Johnson

John Lewis
'65-'68: Board Member, SCLC

Marian Wright Edelman
'65-'68: Mississippi Director, NAACP

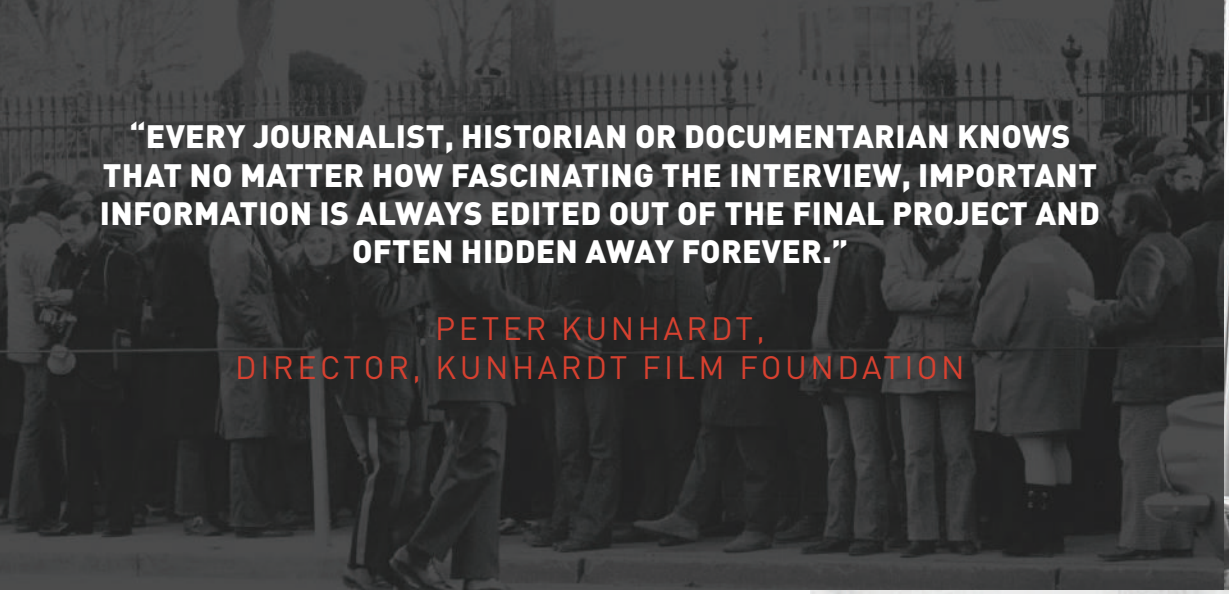
Mary Lou Finley
'65-'68: Staff Member, SCLC

Rev. Richard Fernandez
'65'-68: Church Activist

Samuel Massell, Jr.
'65-'68

Tom Houck
'65-'68: Organizer, SCLC

Xernona Clayton
'65-'68: Friend and Organizer, SCLC



"EVERY JOURNALIST, HISTORIAN OR DOCUMENTARIAN KNOWS THAT NO MATTER HOW FASCINATING THE INTERVIEW, IMPORTANT INFORMATION IS ALWAYS EDITED OUT OF THE FINAL PROJECT AND OFTEN HIDDEN AWAY FOREVER."

PETER KUNHARDT,
DIRECTOR, KUNHARDT FILM FOUNDATION

KING IN THE WILDERNESS AND THE INTERVIEW ARCHIVE

The Interview Archive is a dynamic website providing access to a collection of first-person interviews so that students, historians and other researchers can access and explore the historical richness of first-hand accounts. An interview opens up new opportunities for discovery and can raise the level of a discussion rather than reinforce a monolithic view.

The Interview Archive for *King in the Wilderness* comprises 19 full-length interviews of Dr. King's closest friends and colleagues conducted by Pulitzer-Prize winning historian Taylor Branch and Peabody Award-winning screenwriter Trey Ellis. Each interview is accompanied by supporting educational resources for classrooms to use and researchers to mine.

In this Screening Guide, excerpts from The Interview Archive are paired with sample quotes from select topics in *King in the Wilderness*, offering audiences new perspectives and historical insights 50 years after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

"SO THINGS WE NOW TAKE FOR GRANTED IN MY LIFETIME IT HAPPENED, AND SO MUCH OF IT WAS ATTRIBUTED TO DR. KING'S VISION. ... THE VISION OF THE POWER OF NONVIOLENCE, THE POWER OF LOVE. THE POWER OF REDEMPTION. THE POWER OF RECONCILIATION. THE POWER OF PREPARATION... IF YOU HAVE NO WEAPONS AND NO MONEY, JUST TO BE MORALLY RIGHT IS LIKE A LIGHT IN DARKNESS."

JESSE JACKSON, THE INTERVIEW ARCHIVE

THE MORAL CLARITY OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The moral compass of Martin Luther King, Jr. was consistently directed towards the practice and philosophy of nonviolence. Inspired by Gandhi and mentored by many others such as James Lawson and Septima Clark, Dr. King led the movement for economic and social justice by applying the values and principles of nonviolence to his organizing work. While acting as a beacon of strength for many, this path was not without personal consequences.

'I'm sick and tired of violence. I'm tired of shooting, I'm tired of hate, I'm tired of selfishness, I'm tired of evil! I'm not gonna use violence no matter who says it."
- Martin Luther King, Jr., King in the Wilderness

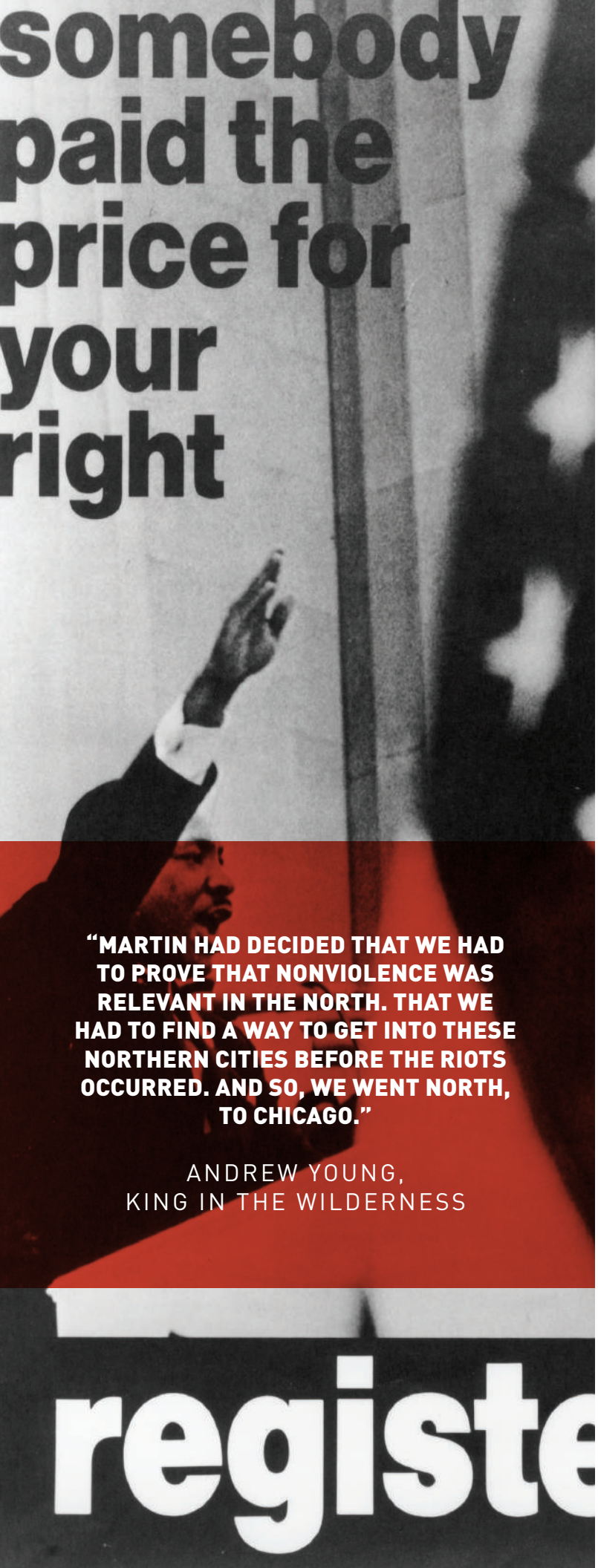
"I had not, before meeting Dr. King, ever taken the option of violence off the table. We are a minority living in the belly of the beast. When Dr. King stepped in, he methodically would look at violence and challenge those who would seek the gun as the solution, because morally, you cannot defeat the enemy by becoming the enemy."
-Harry Belafonte, King in the Wilderness

"Never, never, one iota one millionth of an inch did he ever shake or deviate from his commitment to nonviolence, never, never. His position was that if he had to be the only person standing alone, he would still be committed to nonviolence, never. And then the part of that came from something that I didn't have and don't have, it comes from a deep understanding that if he pursues his quest for justice nonviolently, that he is involved in a very noble, religiously redeeming, cause. That is Jesus Christ would applaud and protect him. And why would he want to besmirch, or in any way taint that possibility, since he knew that he was right? He knew that if you want to be morally consistent and politically effective you have to be committed to nonviolence as your form of social struggle. Otherwise, it is -- you are diminishing at best, and at worst, undermining the prospects of ever being successful in transforming society and in making any fundamental transforming-transformative social movement, you won't be able to do it."
-Clarence Jones, The Interview Archive

"Well, the whole issue of nonviolence is, it varies, and that's important for people to understand, that there's non-violence with the hyphen, which is really an adjective: "non-violence," that is without violence, the absence of violence. Okay? And that is a way that people might interpret nonviolence. And the whole concept [that] Martin Luther King was advocating was the same as Mahatma Gandhi, and that was a noun, that nonviolence is a name of a philosophy or a system of thought and also a way of life. So, Martin Luther King embodied nonviolence in his approach to dealing with issues. And one of the things that he realized in his goal was to bring about a peaceful reconciliation and not just resolution."
- Bernard Lafayette, The Interview Archive

"As much as he did, he always blamed himself for not doing enough. He was a kind of workaholic where he was never content. He was driven by a kind of a need for perfection. And he was always feeling that he wasn't doing his best. I think because of his feeling that somehow he wasn't good enough to be the leader. Those were periods when he was really just physically exhausted."
-Andrew Young, King in the Wilderness

"The night of April 4th, 1967 I believe that Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered probably one of the best, the most powerful speeches I ever heard him deliver. . . There was hundreds of ministers, religious leaders, nuns, rabbis and just plain everyday people. He said, in effect, that he was not going to butcher his conscience. He said as a nation we talk about nonviolence here in America and then we engage in violence abroad in Vietnam. He said, in effect, that the bombs that we're dropping in Vietnam, they will be shattered over America. He felt good. He knew he was getting over. He literally poured out his heart, the depth and essence of his soul. He felt very strongly. Dr. King believed in the way of peace, the way of love. He believed in the discipline and the philosophy of nonviolence."
-John Lewis, The Interview Archive



"MARTIN HAD DECIDED THAT WE HAD TO PROVE THAT NONVIOLENCE WAS RELEVANT IN THE NORTH. THAT WE HAD TO FIND A WAY TO GET INTO THESE NORTHERN CITIES BEFORE THE RIOTS OCCURRED. AND SO, WE WENT NORTH, TO CHICAGO."

ANDREW YOUNG,
KING IN THE WILDERNESS

THE STRATEGY OF MOVEMENT BUILDING, 1965-1968

The success and struggle of the Civil Rights Movement was not accomplished by one person or over a short period of time. Martin Luther King Jr. and the SCLC leadership were intentional and strategic in their activism, driven by their shared vision of equality, clear goals for their actions, and their commitment to nonviolence. Decisions like going to Chicago to demonstrate the power of nonviolence in the North were made with the intention of achieving the larger goal of extending racial equality and economic justice across the nation.

"Martin understood that as the people would win, that things would open up, little by little. He did not think that things were going to change all at once. And remember, as soon as he won in Montgomery, he left Montgomery and came to our city because he knew that victories had to keep coming or the people would be satisfied with what they had. And he was thinking far beyond it, both he and Coretta. And we certainly were. The actual victory was that he didn't have to stay in Montgomery in order to keep the movement moving."
- C.T. Vivian, The Interview Archive

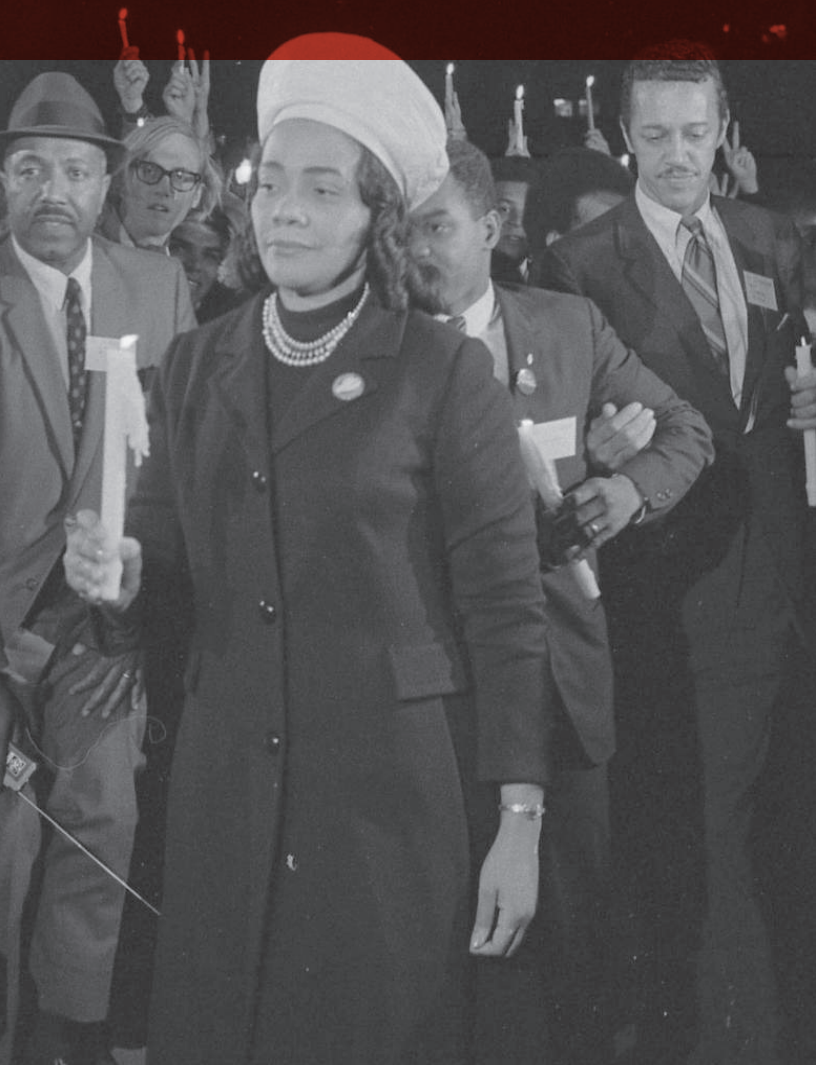
"He would say the most difficult part of the movement, when you -- when you leave the -- excitement of a march in Selma, where there's even violent reaction--that's not the difficult part. The difficult part is that when all that's over, you got to -- get people to register. And vote. The slow --what you call the slow and non-romantic dimension, when the lights are not there. The hardcore organized convention people, to change their minds, change their situation. 'Cause at the end of the day, change comes when people change their minds."
- Jesse Jackson, The Interview Archive

"That's another way, for me, looking back [on] it. I can see, well, there was a really good reason to say, 'Okay. Maybe we've got as far as we can get this time.' Now that I'm more familiar with nonviolence, I know that ... That happened in a number of Gandhi's campaigns that his followers sometimes thought, 'Well, you got an agreement, but it was only half of what we wanted.' He said, 'Well, we got half and that's as far as we get in this campaign and then we'll work on the next campaign to take it the next step.'

That was a lesson that we didn't really know as young people at that time that sometimes you'll only win half a loaf at a certain point and then you have to keep pushing for the rest of it. It's interesting to me to try to help younger activists understand now some of the things that we didn't know when we were in our 20s."
-Mary Lou Finley, The Interview Archive

"HE'D BEEN IN MARKS, [MISSISSIPPI] FOR A FUNERAL AND HAD GONE TO A CENTER AND SAW CHILDREN WHO WERE--THE TEACHER HAD ONE APPLE FOR LUNCH, AND SHE CARVED UP THAT APPLE FOR FOUR KIDS. AND THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME RALPH ABERNATHY SAID HE SAW MARTIN CRY IN PUBLIC, HE HAD TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL BECAUSE HE COULDN'T BELIEVE THEY WERE EACH GETTING A FOURTH OF AN APPLE. AND THE HUNGER IN MARKS WAS PALPABLE. BUT ANY RATE, HE RESPONDED IMMEDIATELY, AND CALLED HIS STAFF TOGETHER WHO WAS NOT HAPPY ABOUT THIS. AND THERE WAS ROBUST DEBATE OVER THE ENSUING MONTHS OVER WHETHER VIETNAM SHOULD BE THE BIG ISSUE OR WHETHER IT SHOULD BE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND JOBS AND OBVIOUSLY IT WAS--OBVIOUS BY THEN THAT THE NEXT STEP THAT THE TALKING ABOUT CHANGING LAWS WAS TO GET PEOPLE JOBS. THEY HAD TO EAT, THEY HAD TO SURVIVE, THEY HAD TO WORK, THEY HAD TO HAVE AN INCOME. AND -- SO THAT WAS A VERY INTERESTING FOLLOW ON SET OF MONTHS, BUT HE STUCK WITH IT. AND COMMITTED HIMSELF TO DOING A POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN."

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN,
THE INTERVIEW ARCHIVE



WOMEN IN THE MOVEMENT

King in the Wilderness includes the voices and stories of many women who were strong leaders and influencers in the movement. In addition to their own contributions, these women were also mothers and wives who made it possible for the male leaders of the movement to do their work.

On Coretta Scott King
"Reporter Arnold Michaelis: 'Now, alright. This leads me to ask you, did you educate Mrs. King to become equal to you in terms of sharing this burden or did you research her before your marriage to see that she had the potential for this, or...?'

'I wish I could say, and satisfy my masculine ego, that I led her down this path, but I must say we went down together because she was as actively involved and concerned when we met as she is now.'"
- Martin Luther King Jr., King in the Wilderness

"Martin Luther King wrestled with coming out publicly taking a stand against the war in Vietnam. But Mrs. King was involved in the anti-war movement long before, so she had a lot of influence on Martin Luther King coming to that conclusion."
- Bernard Lafayette, King in the Wilderness

"Coretta believed in his cause so much that she was willing to pay the price, and she tried hard to have him spend as much time with the children as he could cause he wasn't home that much."
- Xernona Clayton, King in the Wilderness

"I mean there's always going to be a continuum of views and I had -- I mean I knew all my SNCC colleagues very well--didn't agree with them a lot. The role of women in the movement was always complicated and I wasn't somebody who was going to take a lot of guff off of any of them [the men]. And -- and it was-- you know, and they were my friends. Friends disagree, husbands and wives disagree, people in complicated situations disagree, and when some things are moving very slowly, it is the job of young people to be more impatient and to push it. And I remember what it was like to be a young person and to push it. And-- but my job is to get them out of jail, and try to keep them alive if I could, try to keep us all alive."
- Marian Wright Edelman, The Interview Archive

"One thing that's not widely understood is that the murder of those little girls [the four girls in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church] was horrible. And the only thing that would have been more horrible would have been if nothing positive came out of it. But the fact is that the right to vote for southern blacks

is a direct result of their deaths. That afternoon, [James Bevel] and I drafted the original strategy for what became the Selma right to vote movement. He was, my husband, was responsible for working on the voter registration project that was going on at the time in North Carolina. So, it became my job to present the draft of the strategy that we had written to Dr. King. My task was to ask him to call a meeting of SCLC and make a decision about what we were going to do in response to the murders. . .

So, I took the draft to Atlanta. . . We worked for the next four months to try to persuade Andy Young and Dr. King to go into Alabama on this voter registration. Andy was the executive director of SCLC at the time. And we were not successful in persuading them. So, Bevel was the director of direct action. And he and I decided that he should take a few of his direct-action staff and go into Alabama and start working. . .I was expecting our second child, and I had a toddler. And we lived kind of on the outskirts of Atlanta. And I made the supreme sacrifice of the family car for him, and his staff to go to Alabama. And I started writing pamphlets, and gathering statistics of, you know, how many blacks were in which counties and, you know, that type of thing. And so, they worked for a couple of months and the blacks in Alabama asked Martin to come in and that was the beginning of the Selma right to vote movement."
- Diane Nash ,The Interview Archive

"IF WE HAD NOT MARRIED THESE TWO LITTLE COUNTRY GIRLS, WHO HAD THE FIRE BUILT UP IN THEIR BONES TO FIGHT RACISM AND SEGREGATION, AND NOT TO FEAR DEATH OR WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH AND FEAR NO EVIL, THEY WERE SOME COURAGEOUS WOMEN WHO NEVER TRIED TO HOLD US BACK. IN FACT THEY WERE ALWAYS PUSHING US FORWARD. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU WOULD HAVE HEARD OF EITHER OF US IF WE HAD NOT MARRIED THESE TWO WOMEN."

ANDREW YOUNG,
THE INTERVIEW ARCHIVE

LEGACY

The legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.'s work and the Civil Rights Movement is apparent in the day-to-day life of every American. In the film, the surviving leaders, activists and eye witnesses remember the profound loss that resulted from his death and the ongoing need for his work. In The Interview Archive, they speak of their ongoing commitment to nonviolence, their ongoing work for equality and they exhort us to honor Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy by doing the same.

"Well, I never like to discuss Martin Luther King's influence. I'm just trying to do a job and I think it's a job that has to be done, and I'm not trying to do it merely for myself, or merely for my children, or merely for the Negro, but for America, because I think it's true that if this problem isn't solved, the soul of our nation will be lost. And the only way to redeem the soul of America is to remove or to eradicate racism in all of its dimensions."
- Martin Luther King Jr., King in the Wilderness

"From 1956 until April 4th, 1968 Martin Luther King Jr. may have done more to achieve political, social, economic justice than any other person in the journey of American history."
- Clarence Jones, King in the Wilderness

"We don't need to praise him and build statues to him, we need to follow him. Because he was not a perfect human being, he did not pretend to be a perfect human being. Was always struggling, was scared like the rest of us. But he was a man of God who had a message. And if you listened to that speech in his home, about -- midnight-- and not knowing where to go, but that we can all keep going and keep struggling, even when we don't know what that next step is, but we are people of faith and we will trust God and we will keep trying to do God's work on Earth. And we will-- let it go at our peril and so the chore between us, particularly now in this time, is to move us back toward community and toward decency and toward service and toward-- equality of opportunity. And-- and to make sure that every child has a level playing field. And so that -- the point of honoring him is to-- is to-- don't have a Martin Luther King day, you go out and do the work."
-Marian Wright Edelman, The Interview Archive

"That's the beautiful part about Martin. He made up his mind about things. He would be willing to go against the world about it. After all, here is a man whose life is built around non-violence, and that's what we can't forget. He wanted his life to be remembered by making the nation realize that non-violence is what we must, in the end, have. Now, I say that. Many other people that were with him would not necessarily say that, but I think most of them would. They knew that Martin King was hoping for a non-violent world for all of us. All of us, but that he didn't think we could have it without nonviolence."
- C.T. Vivian, The Interview Archive

"As older people, we've gone through those different periods, and we have suffered, and we have also made some progress. But this is what our lives were about. The question is the next generation, 'cause it's not what you've gained, it's what you can maintain. Martin Luther King went to the blackboard and taught us nonviolence, but nonviolence is not confined to any historical period."
-Bernard Lafayette, King in the Wilderness

"I'm going to quote my ex-husband on this question of how we should remember Martin Luther King. Bevel said, 'The Wright brothers were probably pretty good guys. Wouldn't it be a shame if we had a holiday once a year where we praised the Wright brothers and talked about how great they were instead of developing their contribution, instead of developing aviation?'

With Martin Luther King, we have the holiday and talk about how wonderful he was, but we really should develop his work, which was nonviolent social change. We should study nonviolence and apply it and develop it. Back in the 1960s we did not know if nonviolence would work. Now we know that it does. I think we should take advantage of it and indeed bring about the better society that we can."
-Diane Nash, The Interview Archive

"HE SPEAKS TO THIS GENERATION CLEARLY, AS IF HE'S IN YESTERDAY'S MORNING PAPER. HIS STRATEGIES, HIS PHILOSOPHY, HIS WORLDVIEW REMAIN REAL TODAY."

JESSE JACKSON, KING IN THE WILDERNESS

FACILITATING THE DISCUSSION

OPENING CONVERSATION

Engaging audiences by asking several opening questions before screening the film is a helpful strategy to transition people into the room, prepare them for active listening and viewing of the film, and focus their attention on specific topics for the post-screening discussion.

Here are some suggested pre-screening questions:

- What defines moral leadership? What qualities describe a moral leader?
- What do you know about the political and moral challenges Dr. King faced across the political spectrum and within his inner circle in the last three years of his life?
- Who were the women leaders working alongside Dr. King? What was their influence and what roles did they hold?

POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION

It is often helpful to give viewers a moment to reflect on the film before jumping into group dialogue. Some people respond well to having a minute to share with someone sitting next to them, writing down questions on notecards for a panel discussion, or reacting with a partner or small group before large-group sharing. Here are some suggested questions to spark dialogue after screening the film:

1. We hear in the film a great deal about Martin Luther King Jr. as a man, father, and husband. What is the value in coming to see such a beloved historical figure in a more personal light? How do the personal insights shared by his inner circle offer a new historical understanding of the Civil Rights Movement and of Dr. King?

2. Clarence Jones shares in the film, and more extensively in The Interview Archive, the following reflection: "Sometimes Andy and Martin would be like two boys, you know, jostling with one another. In Dr. King's case, I thought it was always a case of covering this 24/7 sense of fear, which he never talked about, but you could sense. And the most difficult time in his life was the 18 months before his assassination, very difficult time. He went through what somebody- what some could describe as very difficult emotional times."

   Does learning about the emotional struggles of Dr. King change your understanding of him as leader in the Civil Rights Movement? How?

3. Clarence Jones shares in the opening of *King in the Wilderness*: "I'm 86, and you know, there's an African proverb that says, "If the surviving lions don't tell their stories, the hunters will get all the credit."
   - What do you think he means?
   - In your education and experience, who has told these stories? How have they been told?

4. Xernona Clayton says in *King in the Wilderness*: "I tell the story of Martin Luther King and Coretta King as I knew it. I lived it. I value all of what they gave me now that I can remember."
   - What value and what questions does Xernona Clayton's statement raise about using first-person interviews as an historical record?

5. The historical record on this period of Martin Luther King Jr.'s life is less well known than the earlier part of his career leading up to the March on Washington. Why do you think this is so?

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

King in the Wilderness offers a rich opportunity for engagement and discussion on a range of topics that remain relevant today. Here are a few suggestions to consider when thinking of format, structure and content to focus on with your audience and, depending upon your goals and objectives, you may elect to use more than one during your event.

1

A Community Panel Discussion
A panel discussion followed by an audience Q & A is a reliable way to engage local leaders and community organizations with *King in the Wilderness.* Dr. King's intersectional approach and strategy for community organizing offers a rich opportunity to be intentional and inclusive and at the same time offers organizations an opportunity to enrich their membership base and broaden their reach. Consider inviting scholars from your local university, representatives from civil rights related non-profit organizations, or other experts in the field to participate in the panel.

2

Using the Content from The Interview Archive
The quotes from The Interview Archive selected for this Screening Guide can be used in a range of formats. Here are some suggested discussion questions to consider:

- Fifty years after the assassination of Dr. King, what insights do these first-person interviews offer that you were unaware of prior to seeing *King in the Wilderness*?
- What questions do they raise about his historical legacy?
- How does *King in the Wilderness* paired with The Interview Archive complicate the historical narrative of the Civil Rights Movement and Dr. King from 1965-1968?

Alternatively, read the quotes about your topic of interest to the group and ask people to choose an individual or perspective that stands out to them and discuss.

Alternatively, have participants write and then share with a partner, what that person's voice means to them.

3

Learning from Our Past: Intersectionality
King in the Wilderness may be used to inform a conversation about intersectionality in social movements today. Consider reading the following passage aloud and using it as a jumping off place for further discussion.

"I feel that while believing firmly that power is necessary, that it would be difficult for me to use the phrase "Black Power" because of the connotative meaning that it has for many people, and the feeling that this may represent our desire to rise from a position of disadvantage to one of advantage, thereby subverting justice."
- Martin Luther King Jr. in King in the Wilderness

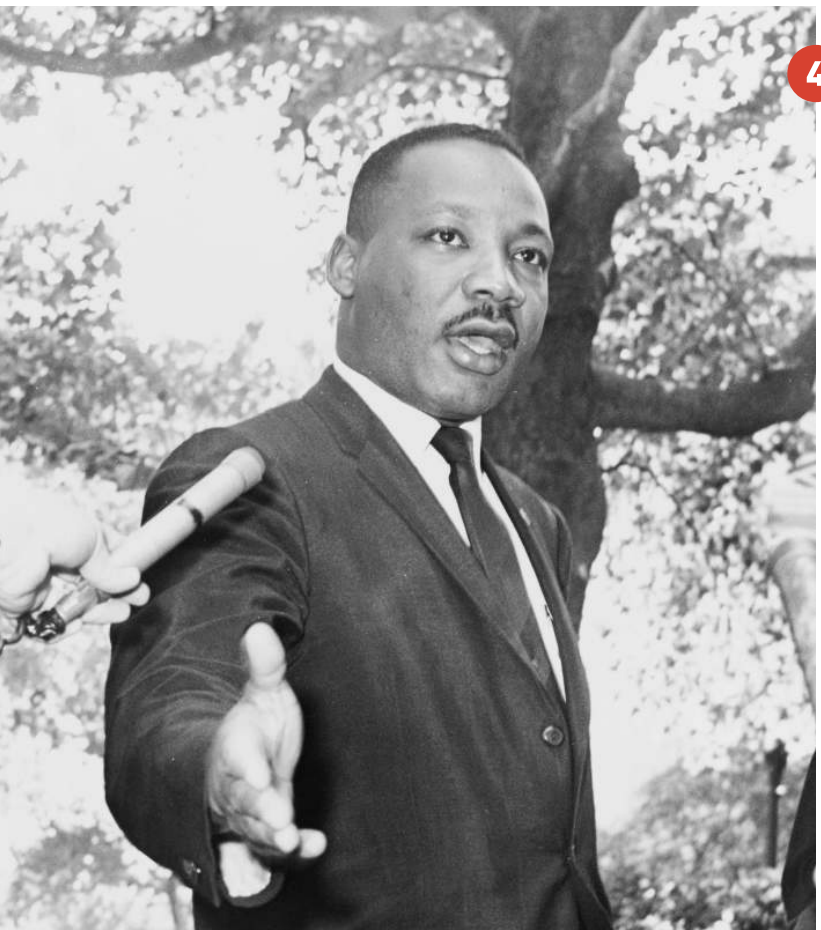
The Civil Rights Movement was led by African American people, yet the rights and understanding it engendered benefit every American. During the same period, other movements were also organizing, such as the United Farm Workers and other Latino groups, LGBT people, Native Americans and women -- all struggling for the same kind of freedoms and equalities. In many instances, the movements found themselves aligned around common goals, for example in the Poor People's Campaign.

"We assemble here together today with common problems—bringing together ethnic groups that maybe have not been together in this type of meeting in the past. I know I haven't been in a meeting like this and it's been one of my dreams that we would come together and realize our common problems. Black people, Mexican Americans, American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Appalachian Whites, all working together to solve the problem of poverty."
- Martin Luther King Jr., King in the Wilderness

Even when groups have aligned goals, working together across groups can be a challenge. One reason is that historical imbalance and injustices engender a need for previously oppressed groups to lead their own journey to freedom. As Mary Lou Finley remembers in the film, "There was some question about whether it was appropriate for white people to stay working with the movement. And I remember one of my black friends saying to me, 'We need to know we can do this ourselves.'"

Additionally, the experiences of oppression are different for different people. In 1989, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" to describe the way in which individuals with different identities come into contact with oppression and discrimination. Her work came out of the experience of black women who were overlooked by the feminist movement. She says, "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQ problem there. Many times that framework erases what happens to people who are subject to all of these things."

With this understanding in mind, how can the work and philosophy of Dr. King be applied to your current organizing work? What can we learn from his perspective about working across race, culture and other marginalized identities?

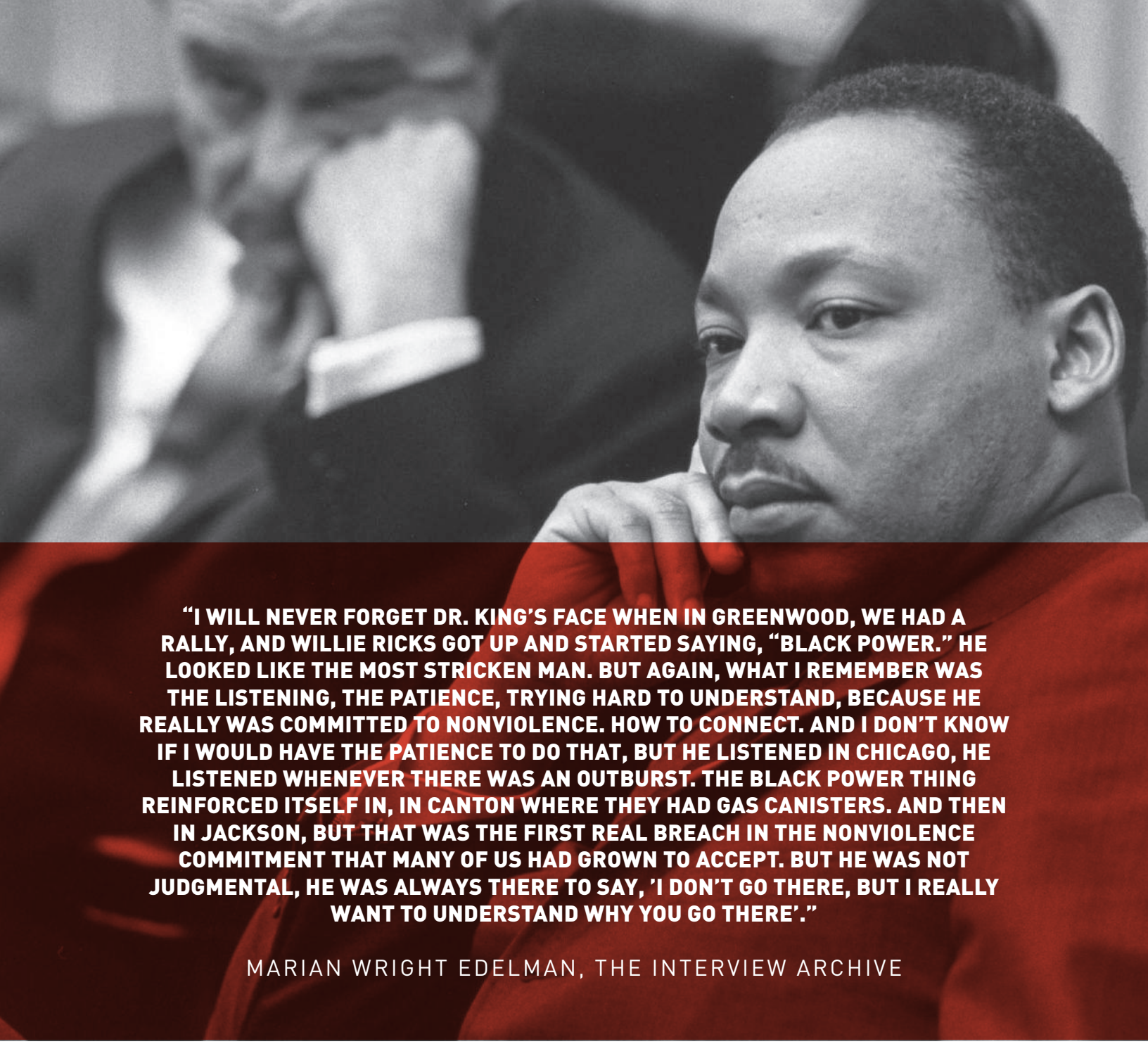


4

Using the Past to Understand the Present: Addressing Disagreements
Your group can use examples from *King in the Wilderness* to consider how Martin Luther King, Jr. and other leaders managed disagreements and conflicts in terms of the philosophy of nonviolence and the definition of success for the movement. Use these quotes as a jumping-off place for conversations about addressing the divisions in our society.

"I'm sick and tired of violence. I'm tired of shooting, I'm tired of hate, I'm tired of selfishness, I'm tired of evil! I'm not gonna use violence no matter who says it."
- Martin Luther King Jr., King in the Wilderness

"I grew up in the slums of New York and I learned there that the only way that one survived was to use his fists... It's time we stand up and take over. Every courthouse in Mississippi oughta be burned down tomorrow..."
- Stokely Carmichael, King in the Wilderness



"I WILL NEVER FORGET DR. KING'S FACE WHEN IN GREENWOOD, WE HAD A RALLY, AND WILLIE RICKS GOT UP AND STARTED SAYING, "BLACK POWER." HE LOOKED LIKE THE MOST STRICKEN MAN. BUT AGAIN, WHAT I REMEMBER WAS THE LISTENING, THE PATIENCE, TRYING HARD TO UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE HE REALLY WAS COMMITTED TO NONVIOLENCE. HOW TO CONNECT. AND I DON'T KNOW IF I WOULD HAVE THE PATIENCE TO DO THAT, BUT HE LISTENED IN CHICAGO, HE LISTENED WHENEVER THERE WAS AN OUTBURST. THE BLACK POWER THING REINFORCED ITSELF IN, IN CANTON WHERE THEY HAD GAS CANISTERS. AND THEN IN JACKSON, BUT THAT WAS THE FIRST REAL BREACH IN THE NONVIOLENCE COMMITMENT THAT MANY OF US HAD GROWN TO ACCEPT. BUT HE WAS NOT JUDGMENTAL, HE WAS ALWAYS THERE TO SAY, 'I DON'T GO THERE, BUT I REALLY WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY YOU GO THERE'."

MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, THE INTERVIEW ARCHIVE

"We were taught that there were good people and bad people and we never viewed this as black against white. We're taught that racism was a sickness and you don't get mad with sick people. They just don't know any better. They'd been taught that they are better than you."
- Andrew Young, King in the Wilderness

"And so that was the way nonviolence was supposed to work, that we were supposed to be able to disagree without being disagreeable. And throughout that entire movement, we met regularly with Mayor Daley, and we disagreed, but we always kind of came to a new understanding, and we remained friends, and even supporters, because in the Democratic Party, Daley was part of the liberal wing. I mean, after all, it was probably the Daley machine that helped produce Barack Obama. We never felt enemies, like we were different, but we didn't feel that way in the South either."
- Andrew Young, The Interview Archive

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

"REVEREND C.T. VIVIAN AND I WENT BY MISS BOYD'S HOUSE WHERE HE WAS STAYING. HE WAS LYING IN BED, HE HAD BY HIM *LOVE, POWER AND JUSTICE* BY PAUL TILLICH, *THE COURAGE* TO BE BY PAUL TILLICH. *THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN* BY [REINHOLD] NIEBUHR. AND THE BIBLE. I ASKED HIM ABOUT THE BOOKS, 'CAUSE I WAS IN THE SEMINARY AT THE TIME, HE SAID, 'WELL I READ ONE--ONE FICTION, ONE NONFICTION BOOK A WEEK.' HE WAS DEEPLY SCHOLARLY."

JESSE JACKSON,
THE INTERVIEW ARCHIVE

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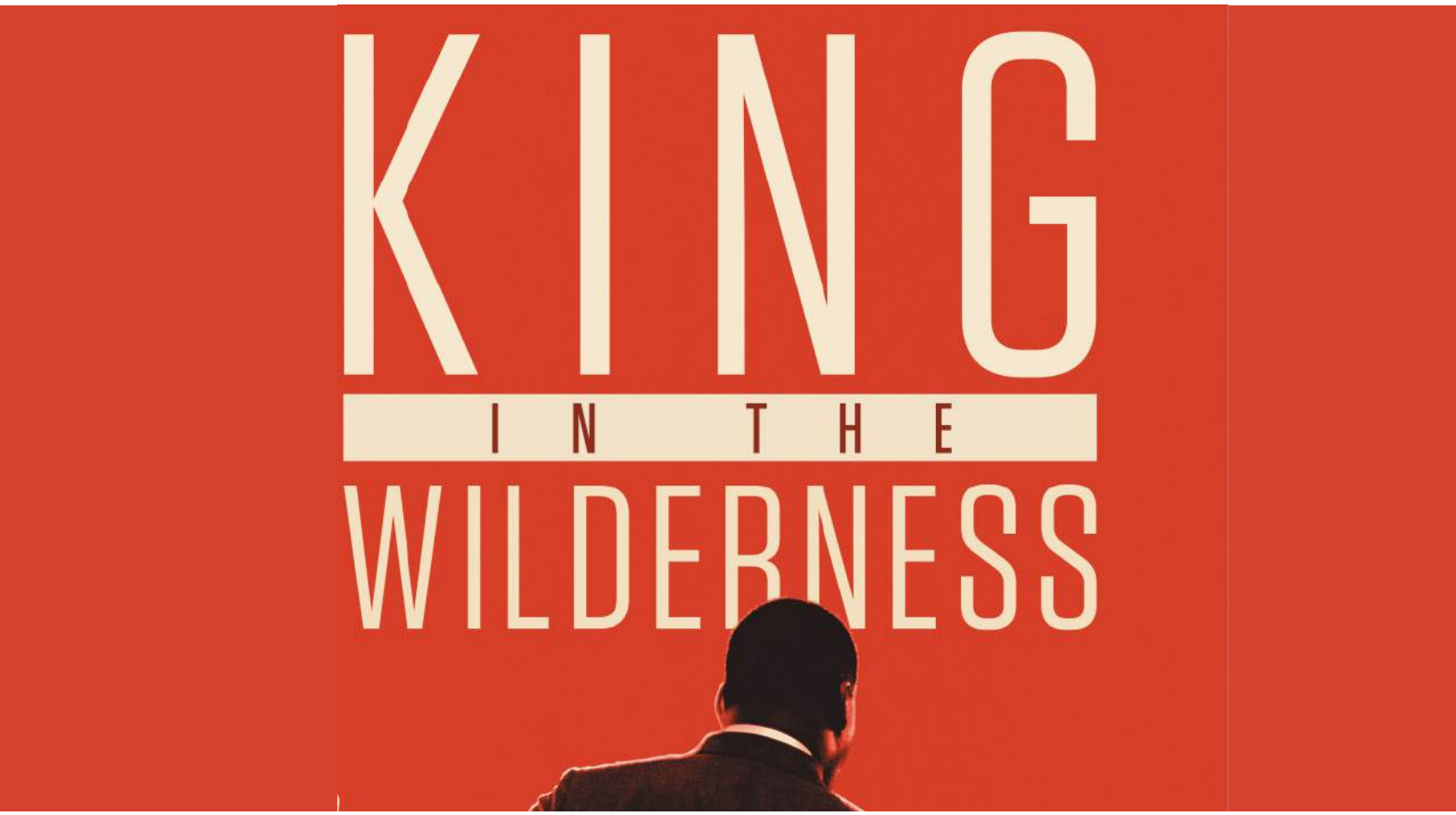

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We would like to dedicate this guide to Dorothy Cotton who in 2018 died at the age of 88.

Screening Guide developed and written by Blueshift Education.

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