

ALL THE WAY  
by  
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LBJ

Don't believe everything you hear, Judge; we're just two old friends talking over a glass of Cutty. Now, you've done a helluva job bottling up that Bill in Committee, and I reckon all the folks back home will know you for a man who stands up for his beliefs, but it's time to turn it loose now.

REP. JUDGE SMITH

In good conscience, I don't think I can do that, Mr. President.

LBJ

This is a popular Bill, Judge. It's bad for the Democratic party to be seen blocking it.

REP. JUDGE SMITH

Then you should get a Discharge Petition but if you had those votes in the House, I guess we wouldn't be having this conversation.

LBJ

Well, you're right about that. Which is why I've decided to move the Bill out on a *procedural* vote. I have 11 votes *from your Committee* to send the Bill to the floor.

A Moment.

REP. JUDGE SMITH

Bullshit.

LBJ hands him a piece of paper.

LBJ

You know what was surprisin'? It wasn't all that hard to line up the votes against you. Now, how is that gonna play back home, Judge, your own Committee over-ridin' its Chairman? Some people will no doubt be suggestin' that maybe you're gettin' too old for all this. The DNC was just on me the other day sayin' maybe we oughta start lookin' at some young blood in Virginia but I told them, no, I said, Judge Smith is a team player and he's gonna do the right thing. Isn't he? Freshen that drink for you?

**TALLY BOARD reads: "CIVIL RIGHTS BILL  
MOVES TO HOUSE!"**

LIGHTS UP on HOTEL ROOM and meeting of the Council for Federated Organizations (COFO). Present are MLK, RALPH ABERNATHY, BOB MOSES, STOKELY CARMICHAEL (SNCC), and ROY WILKINS (NAACP).

In a SPOT US, we see FBI AGENTS  
secretly tape-recording scene.

MLK

He said he'd get it out of Committee and by God, he did.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

And all it cost us was the Voting Rights section. Hell, let's  
just declare victory and go home!

ROY WILKINS

If you spent a little less time in the Mississippi backwoods  
and a little more time in the back halls of Congress, maybe  
you would understand how things work.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Oh, I understand how things work, Mista Wilkins. The House  
nigra always thinks he's better than the field nigra.

ROY WILKINS

Don't you get up on your hind legs with me. I was working for  
the Cause while your mother was still wiping your ass.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

And accomplishing what, exactly? I mean aside from getting  
yourself invited to the White House for tea.

ROY WILKINS

Every major legislative and  
Judicial victory of the last  
fifty years has been the work  
of the NAACP!

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

It wasn't until Negroes took  
to the streets, that we  
started to get things done in  
this country. SNCC did that!  
*SNCC did that!*

ROY WILKINS

Like the deaths of those four little girls in Birmingham.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Oh, I see, we gonna blame the victim for the lynching!

MLK

Gentlemen, this is not helpful! Given our success extracting  
the Bill from Judge Smith's committee, the President has  
asked for our continued assistance in lobbying Congress. I  
don't see what we have to lose in doing so. In fact, there is  
much to be gained, not just now but for the future.

BOB MOSES

Do we have to endorse his candidacy?

MLK

(smiling)

Are you leaning Republican this election, Bob? Goldwater came out against Civil Rights.

RALPH ABERNATHY

(deeply sarcastic)

Purely on Constitutional grounds, you understand - personally Goldwater deplores racism.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

I think asking for my vote while denying me the right to vote is bullshit.

ROY WILKINS

The Bill still gives us a lot.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Unless he gives that away, too.

MLK

I have his word there will be no more compromises.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

"His word?" Are you serious?

MLK

He knows that if he breaks his promise, there will be demonstrations all over the country.

ROY WILKINS

No, there will most certainly not be!

MLK

Until this Bill passes, Roy, we have to hold his feet to the fire! While he's running for election he doesn't want us in the street.

RALPH ABERNATHY

And that's the leverage we have.

BOB MOSES

(to MLK)

It's only a threat if you're willing to use it, Doc. If he doesn't deliver, will you support a public action?

MLK

I will be in the street myself. Now, will SNCC work with us?

A moment.

BOB MOSES

I can't support a Bill without Voting Rights.

MLK

I'm not asking you to. I'm asking you *not to work against it*. Look, the President is also planning new legislation that will bring a huge Federal intervention in Poverty, Hunger and Jobs. Think about what that would mean to our people.

ROY WILKINS

He said that to you?

MLK

He called it a "War on Poverty."

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Forty acres and a mule. What if he's just sweet talkin' you until the election.

MLK

What if he's serious?

STOKELY looks to MOSES.

BOB MOSES

OK. We won't campaign against the Bill. *For now*. But SNCC isn't gonna ring any doorbells for LBJ neither.

MLK

Fair enough.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

But we're not gonna sit on our hands.

ROY WILKINS

And what does the visionary Bob Moses propose? You got another "March" planned? Walking from nowhere to nowhere accomplishing nothing.

BOB MOSES

No marches. No demonstrations.

(glance at King)

I'm not sure that works anymore.

MLK

Instead...?

BOB MOSES

"Freedom Summer." We are going to send hundreds of student volunteers down to Mississippi, flood the state with our people, to educate and register Negro voters.

RALPH ABERNATHY

(stunned)

Mississippi?

ROY WILKINS

You are out of your ever-loving mind.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Not just black volunteers. White students, too.

ROY WILKINS

Worse and worse. If just one of your white volunteers gets hurt, you will do irreparable damage to the Cause.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

Whereas if one of our Negro volunteers gets hurt, who gives a fuck? Yeah, there may be trouble. *That's the point*, isn't it? When Dr. King talks about "surfacing evil for all the world to see" what he means is deliberately provoking some red-neck to bust my head on National TV.

RALPH ABERNATHY

That's an absurd reduction of Dr. King's philosophy!

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

The Birmingham campaign was dying until you put children on the street in harm's way. Dogs biting kids. Children being blasted with fire hoses. That got the press all excited, didn't it? That got the President's attention. If it takes some white kid getting smacked around to shed just a little light on the darkness that is Mississippi, well why not?

ROY WILKINS

Because people will die in Mississippi.

STOKELY CARMICHAEL

People are dying in Mississippi!

ROY WILKINS

Those deaths will be on your head! I cannot support this!

BOB MOSES

Nobody's asking for your permission, Roy.

MLK

Alright, alright! Let's calm down. I think we can all agree that nobody here is gonna have to do something they can't get behind, but there's nothing that says we can't move ahead on multiple fronts at the same time. We should respond to the elimination of voting rights, and Freedom Summer is a great way to do that. At the same time, Roy, you're right, the Bill still gives us a lot. Nobody in this room has your legislative experience. Clearly, you and the NAACP should take the lead on our lobbying effort in DC. Meanwhile, SCLC will mobilize religious leaders and our labor allies to bring pressure to bear at home. That way we're not gonna give them a moment's rest. Anywhere.

BOB MOSES

We need funding.

WILKINS laughs.

ROY WILKINS

Here it comes! Big talk, then both hands out!

MLK

We'll help.

RALPH ABERNATHY

...Martin...

MLK

(sharply)

...just arrange a few more speeches, Ralph! At this point what difference does it make?

(to MOSES)

All right?

A moment. MOSES nods. KING looks to WILKINS.

MLK (CONT'D)

All right?

WILKINS nods reluctantly. A moment.

RALPH ABERNATHY

Gentlemen?

MOSES, WILKINS and STOKELY leave.

RALPH ABERNATHY (CONT'D)

One of these days, Stokely and Wilkins are just gonna kill each other, right there in the middle of the room.

MLK

Well, in that case, we'll sell tickets and maybe I can stop giving speeches.

THEY both laugh; their momentary estrangement forgotten.

RALPH ABERNATHY

Your breakfast meeting tomorrow with the Catholic Interracial Council is at 8. Car will take you to the airport after for your speech in Cincinnati to the International Union of Laundry Workers. Afternoon flight to Cleveland and the United Synagogue of America dinner. Next morning is Western Michigan University. You need anything?

MLK  
I'm fine.

RALPH ABERNATHY  
Good night then.

ABERNATHY leaves. MLK pours a drink.  
The bedroom door opens. In the spill of  
light, a beautiful WOMAN stands there,  
smiling suggestively at MLK.

WOMAN  
Is the coast clear?

MLK smiles at her.

MLK  
Give me a minute?

WOMAN  
ONE minute.

SHE smiles and goes back into the room.  
MLK drinks; hesitates; puts his glass  
down and goes into the bedroom and  
closes the door behind him. We hear the  
woman's LAUGHTER. LIGHTS DOWN on room.  
SPOT lingers on FBI AGENT - SPOT UP on  
HOOVER/DE LOACH.

J. EDGAR HOOVER  
(Triumphant)  
This will kill the burr-head! I want a "highlights" tape sent  
over to Walter Jenkins at the White House immediately.  
There's no way the President can ignore this!

LIGHTS shift to OVAL OFFICE and LBJ  
walks in with headphones on listening  
to the tapes. HE laughs, takes off his  
headphones.

LBJ  
The sex-mad preacher.

J. EDGAR HOOVER  
His hypocrisy is disgusting! The man is a flagrant adulterer.

LBJ  
Oh my, a Southern preacher who fucks his choir. Who ever  
heard of that? Jay, if you arrested every politician and  
preacher who strayed from the marital bed wouldn't be nobody  
in Congress or the pulpit. Whatever a man gets up to in his  
privacy is his own business.