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BIRMINGHAM, 1963

“SOMETHING HAS GOT TO CHANGE”



By order of Bull Connor, Birmingham commissioner of public safety, fire fighters turn their hoses on demonstrators, slamming them into a building.

“I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny . . . and I say segregation now . . . segregation tomorrow . . . segregation forever.” These were the words of George C. Wallace when he was inaugurated governor of Alabama on January 14, 1963.

Many whites in Birmingham took heart. With a population of 350,000 in the 1960s, Birmingham was Alabama’s largest city and the

largest producer of iron and steel in the South. Some called the city's blue-collar roughnecks "millbillies." With its smokestack skyline and having been founded some six years after the end of the Civil War, Birmingham was not considered a typical southern town. But, in some quarters, it clung hard to the underside of what was considered the southern way of life. The Ku Klux Klan had sympathizers in the police department and local government. Birmingham's Eastview 13 Klavern of the Klan was believed to be one of the most violent in the South. One of its members was Robert Chambliss, known around town as Dynamite Bob. Since the end of World War II, as many as fifty bombings had rocked the city. Many black churches had been targets, and two synagogues. One black section of town was attacked so often people called it Dynamite Hill. The city itself was often referred to as Bombingham. So strong was the segregationist influence that the city had closed down its system of public parks and its professional baseball team rather than admit blacks.

Almost 40 percent of Birmingham's residents were black. Since the 1940s, several businessmen had attempted to establish a dialogue between blacks and whites but with little success. The city was run by a commission form of government and the three commissioners were in favor of the hard-line segregationist position. The Klan attack on the Freedom Riders at the Birmingham bus terminal in 1961, and the collusion that day between the Birmingham police, the Klan, and Public Safety Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor, pushed the city's moderates to action. In the 1963 election, voters threw out the old commission form of government, eliminating Bull Connor's power base. Connor also lost his bid for the newly created office of mayor. Albert Boutwell, formerly a leader in the white Citizens' Council but considered a relative moderate (for Birmingham) on racial issues, won that position in a runoff election.

Fred Shuttlesworth, the black civil rights activist and minister of Bethel Baptist Church, had fought the segregationist forces of the city for seven years. His own home had been bombed twice. When he had attempted to enroll his daughter in a white grammar school, he had been chain-whipped outside the school by angry whites. Shuttlesworth was the founder of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (ACMHR), established to replace the NAACP when that rights organization was banned by the state of Alabama during the Montgomery bus boycott. He was also one of the founders of SCLC.

From Shuttlesworth's embattled perspective, Birmingham segregationists made up "a three-tiered society. If the Klan didn't stop you, the police would stop you. And if the police didn't, the courts would." He felt Birmingham would be the ideal target for SCLC's next campaign.

FRED SHUTTLESWORTH

Coming out of Albany, which many people considered not a victory, Dr. King's image was slightly on the wane. The SCLC needed a victory.

In Birmingham, we'd been fighting for seven years. We had desegregated the buses and the terminals, and done many other things. Birmingham was suing me a lot, but also I was suing them—*Shuttlesworth versus Birmingham* got the parks desegregated, but then they closed the parks. So we won victories but we couldn't cash in on them. We needed something more than we were doing.

The SCLC needed something and we needed something, so I said, "Birmingham is where it's at, gentlemen. I assure you, if you come to Birmingham, we will not only gain prestige but really shake the country. If you win in Birmingham, as Birmingham goes, so goes the nation." So we invited Dr. King and the SCLC into Birmingham to confront segregation in a massively nonviolent way, with our bodies and our souls.

Wyatt Tee Walker was executive director of SCLC.

WYATT TEE WALKER

After Albany, Dr. King decided he wasn't going into any situation again where he was not in control. But the most valuable lesson we learned from Albany was that our targets were too numerous. We diluted our strength by going after everything that was segregated. Up to that time we had been trying to win the hearts of white southerners, and that was a mistake, a misjudgment. We realized that you had to hit them in the pocket.

When we started planning for Birmingham, I wrote a document, probably seven or eight typed pages, called "Project C"—it meant confrontation.

My theory was that if we mounted a strong nonviolent movement, the opposition would surely do something to attract the media, and in turn induce national sympathy and attention to the everyday segregated circumstance of a black person living in the Deep South. We targeted Birmingham because it was the

biggest and baddest city of the South. Dr. King's feeling was that if nonviolence wouldn't work in Birmingham then it wouldn't work anywhere.

Learning from the Albany circumstance, I targeted three downtown stores. Since the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church was going to be our headquarters, I had it timed as to how long it took a youngster to walk down there, how long it would take an older person, how long it would take a middle-aged person, and I picked out what would be the best routes. Under some subterfuge I visited all three of these stores and counted the stools, the tables, the chairs, et cetera, and determined what the best method of ingress and egress was. Now, it occurred to me that we might not get into the stores downtown. They might block us from getting to downtown, so we had to have secondary targets. I then targeted the federal installations, the Social Security office, the Veterans Administration, where there were some eating facilities. For our tertiary targets, I had gone out into the surrounding suburban areas and looked at variety stores in shopping centers. And I felt that with those primary, secondary, and tertiary targets we would be able to do something. In addition to that, I spent time with the lawyers, mainly Arthur Shores, to be absolutely familiar with the laws of the city of Birmingham, Jefferson County, and the state of Alabama, so that we could anticipate what the legal moves would be on the part of the law enforcement officials.

The Reverend Joseph Ellwanger was a white Lutheran minister supportive of the civil rights movement in Birmingham.

JOSEPH ELLWANGER

Birmingham in 1963 was about as segregated a city in the South as you can find. There were still signs over water fountains. There were no black clerks in downtown stores. There were no blacks in the police or fire department. And there were a lot of open threats on the part of the police commissioner, Bull Connor, against any attempt to gain some of these rights. There was not even a single forum where blacks and whites regularly came together except for the Birmingham Council on Human Relations, which was suspect as some kind of communist organization by virtue of the very fact that blacks and whites came

together. That group numbered about forty or fifty on paper, and when we actually met we were about fifteen to twenty-five.

There was not only the belief in the white community that blacks were inferior, but that belief was clearly articulated and was assumed as the basis for the segregation that had existed all these years. To break down the barriers of segregation is to permit, in that way of thinking, an inferior race to mix with a superior race, and the inevitable result would be—and this was a phrase that was even used in public—a mongrelization of and a pulling down of that white superior race. That underlay both the fears and the wild threats and the commitment that the KKK had to enforcing its viewpoints. Many members of the KKK had that as almost a religious belief in their hearts, that we've got to maintain that kind of purity of the race or otherwise we're dooming ourselves and our future generations.

As we think about what white people were afraid of in terms of the possibility of an integrated society, part of it was simply the fear of the unknown. Perhaps even deeper was the fear of the Ku Klux Klan and their threats becoming a reality. In Birmingham, we had had something like forty bombings in the previous ten years, so it was not an idle threat. And so among whites there was literally the fears for their lives and the kind of convulsions they expected in society if integration were attempted. There just would be open warfare in the streets.

My role in the Birmingham demonstrations was basically being part of a committee of twenty that met to do the planning. We met in the A. G. Gaston Motel, and I can still remember those sessions with Dr. King and Ralph Abernathy and Andrew Young, and it was an amazing experience of an openness towards everybody's ideas. There was no one who was not given the opportunity to help participate in the planning.

In contrast to Ellwanger's enthusiasm for King, many blacks and whites in the city's reform movement felt that progress could be made without forcing a racial confrontation. Meanwhile, in a last-ditch move to retain power, Bull Connor was challenging the legality of the new city government in the courts. White attorney David Vann and other members of the reform movement asked for just a little more time to deal with the city's problems. But King and SCLC would wait no longer. Project C began on April 3, 1963, with demonstrations downtown.

DAVID VANN

The day we swore in the new mayor and council, the headline said, "A New Day in Birmingham," and before the day was over, we discovered we had two mayors, two city governments, and Dr. Martin Luther King and the SCLC starting marches up and down the street. At first, there was a lot of resentment, both in the black community and the white community. I felt that I had set out to prove what you could do through the democratic process, and how you could bring substantial change even in tough things like race. Some of the black leadership had worked hard on electing a new mayor, defeating Connor. They felt they had commitments from the new government, and Dr. King was trying to pick up their crackers, you might say.

JOSEPH ELLWANGER

With Albert Boutwell having just been elected as mayor of the city of Birmingham—he was supposed to be a more liberal, more progressive mayor—leaders in both the black community and the white community were saying, "Please give Boutwell a chance to make the changes and he'll do it. Why are you pressing the issue with these proposed demonstrations coming right after he was elected?" That was a real struggle, because Boutwell had made some promises about fairer government but they were all generalities, and most thinking people recognized that unless Albert Boutwell had some real help in making those changes, he would meet with the same resistance that had been shown down through the years.

FRED SHUTTLESWORTH

The only difference between Bull Connor and Albert Boutwell was that Bull was a bellowing bull and Boutwell might have been a crying, trembling bull. We didn't think that any system of government at that time would do what we needed to do. To the outside it looked like it meant change, but to us it had been superficial.

A. G. Gaston, a millionaire black businessman, was the owner of the Gaston Motel and a member of the Chamber of Commerce. He was not entirely pleased with the decision to go ahead with Project C, but he had over the years provided financial help to the local movement.

A. G. GASTON

My interest in the civil rights movement wasn't so much helping myself, it was helping the other fellow so we all could survive. It wasn't a selfish movement, it was for all of us. Arthur Shores did quite a bit of the legal work, but I was fortunate enough to have had a little money, and I did the financing, most of it.

We didn't anticipate the need for Martin King at that time. We had a fellow named Shuttlesworth that was raising sand around here. Shuttlesworth was a leader. I got him out of jail many a time. He was a brave young man. He was the one who led the organization that brought King over here from Atlanta. Them folks had no place to stay when they started coming from Atlanta and Montgomery, and that's when I put them up at the motel.

I was with the movement, but my idea of approaching it was somewhat different from some of the folks that you might call radical. My place on the chamber there got some of the leaders to move. They were willing to do some things for me that they wouldn't have done for Martin King or Shuttlesworth.

Birmingham's business establishment did not want to spark a confrontation between King and Connor. The downtown sit-ins soon fizzled because most department stores simply shut down their lunch counters instead of calling police and generating mass arrests.

Frustrated by the lack of headlines, SCLC strategists switched to phase two, calling for mass protest marches. But few blacks in Birmingham volunteered to fill Bull Connor's jails. And Connor obtained an Alabama court order that enjoined King and other leaders from taking part in more demonstrations.

King would violate the orders of a state judge if he had to. But with fewer than 150 demonstrators in jail, with the local and national media virtually ignoring the protests, Project C was in

serious trouble. On Good Friday, just nine days into the campaign, King and his advisers were confused, and facing defeat.

ANDREW YOUNG

We'd raised money. We had people in jail, but all of the money was gone and we couldn't get them out of jail. The black business community and some of the white clergy were pressuring us to call off the demonstrations and just get out of town. We didn't know what to do. Martin sat there in Room 30 in the Gaston Motel, and he didn't say anything. He listened to people talk for about two hours. And then finally he got up and he went in the bedroom and he came back with his blue jeans on and his jacket, and he said, "Look, I don't know what to do. I just know that something has got to change in Birmingham. I don't know whether I can raise money to get people out of jail. I do know that I can go into jail with them."

Not knowing how it was going to work out, he walked out of the room and went down to the church and led a demonstration and went to jail. That, I think, was the beginning of his true leadership, because that Sunday a group of white ministers published in the newspapers a diatribe against Martin, calling him a troublemaker and a communist, and saying that he was there stirring up trouble to get publicity. And he sat down and took that newspaper—he had no writing paper and he was in solitary confinement—and he started writing an answer to that one-page ad around the margins of the newspaper. By the time it came out three days later, it was what we now know as the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." He put in concise form exactly what the problems were, the moral dilemma of segregation and racism.

King addressed his letter to the eight white clergymen who had attacked him for "unwise and untimely" demonstrations. About the issue of timeliness, he wrote, "When you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading 'White' and 'Colored'; when your first name becomes 'nigger,' your middle name becomes 'boy' (however old you are) and your last name becomes 'John,' and when your wife and mother are never given the respected title 'Mrs.'; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at

tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next and plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of 'nobodiness'—then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait."

Despite its eloquence, King's letter did not receive much local or national attention when released, and worries continued to mount within SCLC about the campaign's impending failure. King accepted release on bond after spending eight days in jail.

The Reverend James Bevel, an SCLC organizer and veteran of the Nashville sit-ins, had been called to Birmingham by King. It was Bevel who initiated the third and most controversial phase of Project C.

JAMES BEVEL

Up to this point, about five to ten, maybe twelve people would go and demonstrate each day. My position was you can't get the dialogues you need with a few. So the strategy was, Okay, let's use *thousands* of people who won't create an economic crisis because they're off the job: *the high school students*. Besides, most adults have bills to pay, house notes, rents, car notes, utility bills, but the young people—wherein they can think at the same level—are not hooked with all those responsibilities. A boy from high school, he can get the same effect in terms of being in jail, in terms of putting the pressure on the city, as his father—and yet there is no economic threat on the family because the father is still on the job.

We started organizing the prom queens of the high schools, the basketball stars, the football stars, to get the influence and power leaders involved. They in turn got all the other students involved. The black community as a whole did not have that kind of cohesion or camaraderie. But the students, they had a community they'd been in since elementary school, so they had bonded quite well. So if one would go to jail, that had a direct effect upon another because they were classmates.

We held workshops to help them overcome the crippling fears of dogs, and jails, and to help them start thinking through problems on their feet. We also showed the "NBC White Paper" [a network television documentary] about the Nashville sit-ins in all of the schools. Our approach to the students was that you are

responsible for segregation, you and your parents, because you have not stood up. In other words, according to the Bible and the Constitution, no one has the power to oppress you if you don't cooperate. So if you say you are oppressed, then you are also acknowledging that you are in league with the oppressor; now, it's your responsibility to break the league with him.

The first response was among the young women, about thirteen to eighteen. They're probably more responsive in terms of courage, confidence, and the ability to follow reasoning and logic. Nonviolence to them is logical: "You should love people, you shouldn't violate property. There's a way to solve all problems without violating. It's uncomfortable, it's inconvenient to have an immediate threat upon you; however, if you maintain your position, the threat goes away." Then the elementary students, they can comprehend that too. The last to get involved were the high school guys, because the brunt of the violence in the South was directed toward the black male. The females had not experienced that kind of negative violence, so they didn't have the kind of immediate fear of, say, white policemen, as the young men did. So their involvement was more spontaneous and up front than the guys'.

WYATT TEE WALKER

James Bevel had one of the best tactical minds in our movement, one of the best facilities for analyzing segregation as a system and what it does to black people. He is a native of Itta Bena, Mississippi, and anybody who grew up in Mississippi in his generation certainly had all of the emotional and psychological scars of what segregation does to them. So he was hypersensitive to it, and he drew very strong analogies as to how you had to fight the enemy. There was no one any better at mobilizing young people than James Bevel. Had it not been for him and the support of Dorothy Cotton with her leading skills and Andrew Young to some extent, the influx of the schoolchildren into the Birmingham equation might not have taken place. We knew we were right to use the children. One of the basic tenets of the nonviolent philosophy is that it is the kind of struggle in which everyone can participate— young, old, children, adults, blind, crippled, lame, whatever—

because it is a moral struggle. I think someone quoted me as saying six days in Jefferson County Jail would be more educational to these children than six months in the segregated Birmingham schools that they were attending.

Bevel and his colleagues launched the next phase of the campaign on May 2, dubbed D Day by SCLC. As the children marched out of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, Bull Connor arrested more than six hundred, ranging in age from six to eighteen. The next day, as another thousand children gathered at the church, an angry Connor called out the police canine units and ordered his firemen to rig high-pressure hoses. At one hundred pounds of pressure per square inch, the fire hoses were powerful enough to rip the bark off trees.

DAVID VANN

Bull Connor brought the police dogs to the scene of the marches. He was also the head of the fire department, and he had the firemen and their hoses come to the scene, and I remember I was talking to A. G. Gaston on the telephone, and he was expressing a great deal of resentment about King coming in and messing up the thing just when we were getting a new start, and then he said to me, "But, lawyer Vann, they've turned fire hoses on those black girls. They're rolling that little girl there, right there in the middle of the street now. I can't talk anymore." And there in a twinkling of an eye, the whole black community was instantaneously consolidated behind King.

While many people probably think these marches took place over many blocks, very seldom did they march further than from Sixteenth Street to Seventeenth Street. It was a masterpiece of the use of media to explain a cause to the general public of the nation. In those days, you had fifteen minutes of national news and fifteen minutes of local news, and in marching only one block they could get enough news film to fill all of the newscasts of all of the television stations in the United States. And of course, when the police dogs arrived and they started the hoses, the water, that just created very dramatic pictures. There was no way Dr. King could have bought that kind of thing.

The ball game was all over, once the hoses and the dogs were brought on.

Patricia Harris was one of the youngsters involved in the demonstrations.

PATRICIA HARRIS

My mother and my brother, they were locked up, the dogs were put on 'em and water was skeeted on 'em, and this type thing. But at that time, I guess by me being so young, my mother just didn't want to get me off into it. The serious violence, I wasn't involved in that, just the verbal abuse is mainly what I came in contact with. But some of the times that we marched, some people would be out there and they would throw rocks and cans and different things at us. I was afraid of getting hurt, but still I was willing to march on to have justice done. I was really afraid, because I had seen and heard about the real bad things that could happen. I used to wonder if things really got out of hand, what would I do? Where would I run to? So many people and everybody tramping over everybody else. What would happen to me? And yet I was willing to continue and just go on and see what happened. I was really afraid, but I wasn't afraid enough to just say, "Well, I don't want to go on any longer," because actually I marched quite a bit.

On Saturday, May 4, more black children were knocked down by blasts from Connor's fire hoses. For adult onlookers at Kelly Ingram Park, this was too much—it was time to defend the kids. The crowd pelted the police with rocks and, as Bevel describes it, "began to organize their guns and knives and bricks." These were not the people schooled in nonviolence by SCLC organizers. In a surprise move, Bevel crossed the police lines, grabbed a bullhorn, and wheeled to face the crowd.

JAMES BEVEL

I took the bullhorn and I said, "Okay, get off the streets now, we're not going to have violence. If you're not going to respect policemen, you're not going to be in the movement." It's strange, I guess, for them: I'm with the police talking through the bullhorn and giving orders and everybody was obeying the orders. It was like, wow. But what was at stake was the possibility of a riot. In

the movement, once a riot breaks out, you have to stop, and it takes you four, five days to get reestablished. I was trying to avoid that kind of situation.

By May 6, two thousand demonstrators had been jailed. The next day, a serious confrontation erupted at Kelly Ingram Park when police again turned on the fire apparatus. Across the street, the hoses slammed Fred Shuttlesworth against the wall of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. He was hospitalized with injuries.

The following day, a truce was declared so that negotiations could continue between the movement and the white merchants. The goal of movement negotiators was the desegregation of downtown stores, the hiring of black sales clerks, and ultimately the desegregation of other areas of the city's daily life. Black leaders believed it was the businessmen and not the politicians who held the real power to change law and local custom.

BURKE MARSHALL

The demonstrations were over jobs and lunch counters, over private establishments; they weren't over voting rights, they weren't over school desegregation. They were over private business behavior. There wasn't any magic lawsuit we in the Justice Department could bring. I had a discussion with the attorney general. He said, "Do you think you should go down there?" and I said, "I think I should." So I went down there, not knowing quite what I was going to do, but that I was going to try to get in the middle of it and see if it couldn't be resolved. The negotiations were prolonged and, like labor negotiations, a lot depended on just stamina. The way the negotiations worked was that the white businessmen wouldn't meet with Martin King because they called him an outsider—some of them wouldn't meet with any blacks at all—so that there had to be a sequence of meetings. I participated in all of them, in order to try to get some kind of agreement between people that often wouldn't talk to each other at all. I don't mean that the blacks wouldn't talk to anybody, but I mean there were many whites that wouldn't talk to any blacks and there were many more whites that wouldn't talk to certain blacks, and there were no whites, I think, except for David Vann, who would talk to Martin King. Andy Young was Martin King's

closest aide during that period, and he was there at all of those meetings.

I remember an all-night session in which there was a disagreement, a very deep division of opinion, between Martin King and Fred Shuttlesworth about whether or not to accept the propositions that were then on the table from the white businessmen. It was a moment of difficulty and drama, but in the end, Dr. King exhibited enormous patience and enormous prudence, and he concluded that the movement should accept the agreement, which involved some lunch counters and some jobs by the white business establishment, and suspend the demonstrations to see if that worked.

FRED SHUTTLESWORTH

Martin's position was, we got to call it off. "Well," I said, "why we got to call it off?"

"The merchants said they can't negotiate with the demonstrations going on."

I said, "Well, hell, they been negotiating with them going on." And they had. I said, "No, we can't call it off."

See, I had a disagreement to begin with. I never thought Burke Marshall should negotiate with us and then go and negotiate with the whites. I thought that the whites and blacks should do it together. You never know with somebody going and talking to somebody and then come talking to you, what they're really doin'. So I reminded King that I didn't agree to that at first, but my thing was that we were not gonna call it off, regardless. I said, "But I tell you what you do. You go ahead and call it off, and I know we've got around three thousand kids over there in the church. When I see it on TV, that you have called it off, I will get up out of this, my sickbed, with what little ounce of strength I have, and lead them back into the street. And your name'll be Mud, it won't be Dr. King anymore."

Burke Marshall said he had made promises. I said, "Burke, any promise you made that I did not agree to is not a promise." Then they all realized they had to get my consent before they called it off. See, I really think that the merchants were gonna use Burke Marshall to get us to call it off. If we had just called it off without an agreement, the merchants would've said, "Well, we

never agreed to anything." And we would not have gotten a victory. And King wouldn't've been immortal today, as simple as that sounds.

The two ministers did eventually reach agreement and jointly announced a desegregation settlement the next day, May 10. Also resolved was the release of the three thousand demonstrators still in jail. The following night, after one thousand Klansmen held a meeting to denounce Birmingham's businessmen for negotiating with blacks, the city was ripped by explosions—at the home of King's brother, A. D. King, and at the SCLC headquarters at the Gaston Motel.

Although no one was seriously hurt by the bombs, many were injured by Alabama state troopers under the command of Colonel Al Lingo. The troopers, ordered to disperse crowds gathering at the motel, were breaking heads as they moved in, and a full-scale riot ensued as blacks began to fight back. By morning, forty people had been injured, and seven stores set afire.

WYATT TEE WALKER

The night the Gaston Motel was bombed is a very ugly night in my memory. The agreement had been formally reached early Friday morning, and Dr. King and Shuttlesworth and Abernathy had issued a statement. This was the Friday before Mother's Day. The task then before me was to dismantle the Birmingham campaign. I had not been home to see my family in eleven or twelve weeks, and Martin, almost as an afterthought, said, "Wyatt, everybody's leaving, and somebody from the national staff needs to be here," and he asked me to stay.

I said, "I haven't seen Ann and the children in eleven weeks."

He said, "Well, I'll tell you what, SCLC will pay for them to come to Birmingham."

So my wife and four children were in Birmingham. My wife and the two youngest children were in the motel and the two eldest were staying with friends.

Saturday night, I heard this explosion and someone called and said it was A.D.'s house. While we were there, we heard another explosion, and I feared the worst. It was the motel. In the midst of that, the state troopers told the people to go to where

they lived, and my wife turned to go to her motel room and this state trooper hit her with a carbine, split her head open, sent her to the hospital. And of course they had been in the motel when it was bombed. I was there within a matter of minutes. A UPI reporter from Mississippi, Bob Gordon, who was a segregationist up to this time, saved my life, because I asked him which state trooper had hit my wife. He pointed him out, and I started for him. Then Gordon tackled me and threw me to the floor and held me down. Then it occurred to me that this guy would take this automatic rifle and shoot me as quickly as he had brained my wife. Well, if Bob Gordon had not wrestled me to the floor, I think aside from me probably losing my life or being seriously maimed or injured, it would have done irreparable harm to the nonviolent movement. Because here was Dr. King's top lieutenant, his chief of staff, attacking a police officer. And I certainly would have been the aggressor. That's the way it would have appeared. However, I just wasn't thinking about anything except that my wife had been injured and hit with the carbine and that was the man who did it.

Rocks had been thrown the year before in Albany, Georgia. Now, in Birmingham, Alabama, buildings were set afire, a signal that black anger would not be forever contained in orderly marches led by nonviolent ministers. In the spring and summer of 1963, civil disturbances in American cities created an angry prelude to long, hot summers still to come.