

WLBT/WJDX Radio Broadcast

A collection of telephone conversations
pertaining to the TV talk by
Medgar Evers, Field Secretary of the NAACP

May 20, 1963

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
Post Office Box 571
Jackson., Mississippi 39205

AU/MP 1980.01.119

Participant(s): McRaney, Bob

Title: A collection of telephone conversations pertaining to the TV talk by Medgar Evers, Field Secretary of the NAACP on May 20, 1963

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MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: There is one damn thing the Supreme Court can't make me do is look at that black son of a bitch. I just want to tell y'all I don't like him a damn bit.

MCRANEY: Alright, sir. Thank you very much for calling.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Is the Price is Right not going to be on?

MCRANEY: It'll be joined about 17 minutes after the hour.

WOMAN: Well, heck, you're going to put that nigger on then.

MCRANEY: Yes, ma'am.

WOMAN: Well, good evening.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Will you please get the damn nigger off the air?

MCRANEY: He'll be off in about 17 minutes, ma'am.

WOMAN: Well, I'm telling you I mean get him off of the air. I think that is terrible that we can't see a decent picture.

MCRANEY: Well, we'll have him off in about 17 minutes.

WOMAN: Well, I'll tell you that I live up in north Jackson, almost Tougaloo. That's where I live in South Tougaloo, and I don't even have a bus service. I don't even have nothing, and that's [inaudible] he's talking about. And I pay my city taxes.

MCRANEY: Well, the reason we put him on was due to policies of the Federal Communication Commission.

WOMAN: Well, I don't appreciate y'all having him on.

MCRANEY: Well, thank you very much for calling. I'll tell you what. We would

appreciate you putting your comments in writing if you would.

WOMAN: Well, I sure would.

MCRANEY: Well, if you'll send those to us, we would certainly appreciate it.

WOMAN: Well, thank you.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Who is the nigra speaking on WLBT now?

MCRANEY: He is Medgar Evers who's Field Secretary of the NAACP here.

WOMAN: Ok, thank you.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: I'd just like to call in and tell you that I think that's very horrible, this nigra on TV with all his lies that seem to be coming in.

MCRANEY: Well, we have been required by the Federal Communication Commission to make time available to this as a result of the broadcast we carried last week at this time.

MAN: Uh, huh. This, the Federal Communication. Ok, well, thank you very much.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: Why don't y'all get that damn nigger off the television?

MCRANEY: We're required by the FCC to make time available for this broadcast tonight.

MCRANEY: Good evening, Lamar Life Broadcasting.

WOMAN: Is this Channel Three?

MCRANEY: Yes, it is.

WOMAN: [Well, I wish somebody would shoot] that black son of a bitch up there and let him be, hear?

MCRANEY: This program is presented in accordance with the FCC regulations that require us to grant equal time to all parties in any controversial matter. This is...

WOMAN: [Shoot] that son of a bitch, and you'll have it made, hear?

MCRANEY: Good evening, Channel Three.

WOMAN: Would you mind telling me why that had to be on television?

MCRANEY: The preceding program was presented in accordance with FCC regulations that require us to offer equal time to all parties in any controversial matter.

WOMAN: It had to be.

MCRANEY: It was an FCC ruling.

WOMAN: Uh, huh. Well, I wished you'd [inaudible]. I just kept getting madder and madder.

MCRANEY: We'd appreciate your comments if you'd like to comment further in writing.

WOMAN: I would.

MCRANEY: If you'll just send us a letter to WLBT, we'd appreciate it very much.

WOMAN: You mean, if you get so many letters, something might could be done about it?

MCRANEY: Well, I wouldn't say about that, but we'd like, you know, have definite...

WOMAN: I mean, about it in the future.

MCRANEY: Right. Possibly. We'd like to have, you know, as many comments as we could in writing so we could have something to work with.

WOMAN: Well, I'm sure going to do it then.

MCRANEY: We appreciate it very much.

WOMAN: Well, I certainly do thank you. I know you're getting a lot of calls.

MCRANEY: And thank you for calling.

WOMAN: Ok, bye.

MCRANEY: Good night.

MCRANEY: Good evening, Channel Three.

WOMAN: Good evening, Channel Three. Are you all going to show that nigra's speech again?

MCRANEY: No, ma'am. We don't have it scheduled again. Just tonight only.

WOMAN: Just tonight only. I didn't get to see it all.

MCRANEY: It was between eight and 8:17.

WOMAN: Yeah, I was just wondering if you we going to, maybe, do it sometime tomorrow or something. [I don't] guess you will.

MCRANEY: No, it'll just be one time.

WOMAN: Thank you.

MCRANEY: All right. Goodnight.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: Has this program with the nigger on it been discontinued yet?

MCRANEY: No, it's still on I believe.

MAN: It's still on?

MCRANEY: Yes.

MAN: All right. Is Joe [inaudible] in?

MCRANEY: No, I don't believe Joe's in the building.

MAN: How about Hewitt [inaudible]?

MCRANEY: No, Hewitt's not in the building.

MAN: Alright, thank you.

MCRANEY: Ok.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Who is that nigra that's speaking on Three?

MCRANEY: He is Medgar Evers who's Field Secretary of the NAACP here.

WOMAN: Oh, that old rascal. You know, I didn't know who he was. I thought it was that editor here.

MCRANEY: No, he's with the NAACP.

WOMAN: That rascal.

MCRANEY: Uh, huh.

WOMAN: Well, alright. Thank you.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: I'd like to talk to someone about the broadcast that you have now.

MCRANEY: This is Bob McRaney. May I help you?

MAN: I want to know why that a Negro should be given equal time with a city official.

MCRANEY: The Federal Communications Commission, which handles our license every three years under whom we have our license, has a provision under which we have to make equal time available to them through a policy that they have established where it concerns controversial matters. And equal time was requested of us last week, and, after the mayor talk, and we have put him on this evening as a result of that equal time policy of the FCC.

MAN: Well, I was under the impression that it only where you have political candidates or something like that rather than subversive or unofficial political organizations such as this.

MCRANEY: Well, the climate as it is has provided that we should make time for them on this particular occasion.

MAN: Uh, huh. Well, what are the relinquishments of...or what other ways...or is this particular station going to give in to the other element in Jackson?

MCRANEY: Well, I'm not at liberty to discuss it at this time. We're having quite a few calls that are coming in, but I would appreciate your comments being sent in to us in writing, if you would.

MAN: Send it in just to the station?

MCRANEY: Yes, uh huh. Post office box 2171.

MAN: Ok.

MCRANEY: Thank you very much.

MAN: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: I'm sorry, I didn't catch the beginning of this program. Could you, please, tell me who that is speaking right now on WLBT?

MCRANEY: He is Medgar Evers who's Field Secretary of the NAACP.

MAN: Could you tell me who bought his time?

MCRANEY: The time was not bought. It was provided under an equal time provision as established by the Federal Communications Commission which issues our license.

MAN: All right, thank you very much.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Who is that nigger speaking?

MCRANEY: Medgar Evers, Field Secretary of the NAACP.

WOMAN: Thank you a lot.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Go ahead.

MAN: [inaudible]?

MCRANEY: Yes.

MAN: Why are you allowing this junk to go on on television right now?

MCRANEY: We're required under equal time provisions of the Federal Communication Commission to make equal time available in circumstances of a controversial nature.

MAN: Well, I'll tell you, this is the most...Am I being tape recorded?

MCRANEY: Yes.

MAN: Well, I don't even want to...I won't say any more then.

MCRANEY: Well, I would appreciate very much your sending us your comments in writing.

MAN: Well, ok then. [inaudible] All right.

MCRANEY: Could you tell me where you're calling from?

MAN: Huh?

MCRANEY: Could you tell me from what city you're calling?

MAN: Louise, Mississippi.

MCRANEY: Well, we certainly would appreciate your comments being sent in to us. It would be of great assistance to us.

MAN: Well, this is most...the most display of ignorance I've ever heard in my life.

MCRANEY: Well, the...

MAN: I'm not being biased at all. But this is just...I can't take anymore of it.

MCRANEY: Well, we would certainly appreciate your comments being sent to us. It...we would like very much to have them for the record.

MAN: Well, I won't...just don't even quote me, but this is the most [inaudible] display of ignorance I've ever heard in my life. I could quote you several instances [where I've helped] this morning [inaudible], but I cannot take anymore of this.

MCRANEY: Well, we certainly appreciate you calling.

MAN: Well, I thank you a lot. I'd turn it off if I were you.

MCRANEY: Well, thank you very much.

MAN: All right.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: [inaudible] long distance. 30 cents, please.

MAN: Hello?

MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: This is Thomas [Honen] in Crystal Springs.

MCRANEY: Yes?

MAN: Do y'all need the money for the time [inaudible] covering up there tonight?

MCRANEY: No, this was a program that was put on in compliance with FCC policies for equal time of controversial issues.

MAN: Uh huh. Well, it don't look too controversial to me.

MCRANEY: We would appreciate your comments if you would send them in to us in writing. We would certainly appreciate it.

MAN: Well, I tell you what. I'm going to do everything I can to get it in to you.

MCRANEY: Well, we certainly would appreciate it.

MAN: If you need the money for that time, I'll try to take up collections and send it to you.

MCRANEY: Well, there was no charges for this program this evening, but we're required by the Federal Communications Commission, who issue our license, to make this time available to them.

MAN: Uh, huh. Well, that wasn't worth a dern to me.

MCRANEY: Well, thank you very much for calling.

MAN: Yes, sir.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: About that thing that was just on the television.

MCRANEY: Yes, ma'am.

WOMAN: I think that was sort of...I didn't like it.

MCRANEY: Well, we would appreciate your comments if you would send them in to us in writing. It would be a great benefit to us.

WOMAN: It would? Well, I just don't like...I just hate to see something like that on television.

MCRANEY: Well, we are following compliances with policies established by the Federal Communications Commission...

WOMAN: I see.

MCRANEY: ...in making this time available, you see.

WOMAN: Sort of disturbing, isn't it? I just wanted to let you know.

MCRANEY: Well, thank you very much for calling.

WOMAN: Ok, thank you.

MCRANEY: Bye.

MAN: You know this black son of a bitch that's on television?

MCRANEY: Yes, uh huh.

MAN: He's been on more than god damn 17 minutes. They better get his black ass off or I'm going to come up there and take him off. I'll guaran...god damn...tee you one thing. I'm a radio man from now on if y'all put something like that on.

MCRANEY: Well, sir, we're required to...

MAN: Oh, no, this is in the South. This is below the Mason-Dixon line. You don't have to put these black jungle bunnies on TV.

MCRANEY: Well, we are regulated by the...

MAN: [inaudible] had three more minutes than Allen Thompson had. Allen Thompson just had a three minute rebuttal on this thing.

MCRANEY: No, he spoke for seven...approximately 17 minutes, I think. The thing is that we are required under license commitments in the FCC to grant equal time on a controversial issue if it's requested. We have no control over it. It's not our policy.

MAN: Well, don't you think it'd be best down South to close television stations before allowing something like this to get on it?

MCRANEY: Well, I'm not authorized to say any more than...

MAN: Well, Maurice Thompson's the program director, isn't he?

MCRANEY: That's right.

MAN: Well, I'll contact him tomorrow.

MCRANEY: Alrighty.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: We'd like for you to take that tape off of that nigra, please.

MCRANEY: Ma'am, we are required to run this under our license commitment with the FCC under their regulations that grant equal time.

WOMAN: What are you people of Mississippi going to do? Just stand by and let the nigras take over?

MCRANEY: Well, the thing is that we have no control over granting of equal time to him if it's requested. We're required under our commitments with the license and the FCC to grant equal time.

WOMAN: Well, isn't this a private-owned station?

MCRANEY: Yes, it is. Uh huh.

WOMAN: Well, why isn't the people of this station, I mean, that own the station have to do it? They don't have to do but one thing in this old world, and that's die when their time comes

MCRANEY: No, ma'am. We're regulated. Our broadcasts are regulated by the FCC even though it's privately owned.

WOMAN: Well, I mean, looks to me like it was privately owned where he could do what he wanted to and allot the time to who he wanted to allot it to.

MCRANEY: No, it's not that way unfortunately.

WOMAN: Well, we'd appreciate it very much if you'd take it off the TV.

MCRANEY: Thank you for calling. If you would, we'd like for you to have your comments in writing and mail it to the station.

WOMAN: Relay it to the station?

MCRANEY: Yes, in writing, if you would. We'd like to have your comments.

WOMAN: All right. Thank you very much. Will do. Bye.

MCRANEY: Good evening, Channel Three.

WOMAN: I would like to know whether or not you submitted to FCC pressure to show that Medgar Evers or whether it was a commercial thing.

MCRANEY: This program is in accordance with FCC regulations.

WOMAN: Oh, I know all that, but it hasn't been necessary heretofore. Why, all of a sudden, is it necessary now?

MCRANEY: They have definite regulations on any controversial situation known as the equal time provision.

WOMAN: Yes, sir. I'm familiar with that. But we've had this problem for some time and Mayor Thompson's speech was not the first time somebody's ever gotten on television and expressed Mississippi viewpoint. But this is the first time that Medgar Evers has ever been permitted to get on the air. So, I wondered what has changed.

MCRANEY: Ma'am, I'm not permitted to comment any further than that it's regulations of the FCC.

WOMAN: Yes, sir. I understand perfectly. Thank you very much.

MCRANEY: And we appreciate you calling. If you'd like to comment further in writing, we'd appreciate a letter from you.

WOMAN: Comment further? I'd like to blow my top in writing to somebody. Who can I do it to?

MCRANEY: I'll tell you, you can address your correspondence to Mr. Beard or Mr. Maurice Thompson.

WOMAN: All right.

MCRANEY: Here at WLBT.

WOMAN: All right. All I can do is hope he [makes] some members of the Citizens' Council.

MCRANEY: We'll look forward to hearing from you.

WOMAN: You will, indeed.

MCRANEY: Thank you, ma'am. Good night.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: Say, did y'all have to show that program?

MCRANEY: Yes, sir, we did. We're required under our license commitments through the Federal Communications Commission to grant equal time, when it's requested, on a controversial issue.

MAN: Well, look like they could've raised that where the...the...you know, the Mayor could have paid it or the city could have paid it where it wasn't given to them.

MCRANEY: Well, it wouldn't have made any difference. I think, when they speak on a controversial issue, equal time has to be granted.

MAN: Oh, good gracious. That's one of the stinkingest deals I ever heard of.

MCRANEY: I tell you what. We would appreciate it if you would write us your comments in writing and mail them to the station.

MAN: All right. I'll do that.

MCRANEY: Alrighty. Thank you for calling. Bye, bye.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

MAN: Where's that nigra live?

MCRANEY: I couldn't tell you. He's from Jackson.

MAN: Ok.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Hi.

MCRANEY: Hello.

WOMAN: Who was that [inaudible] you just put on the air?

MCRANEY: That was Medgar Evers, Field Secretary for the NAACP.

WOMAN: Who?

MCRANEY: Medgar Evers, Field Secretary for the NAACP.

WOMAN: Repeat that name again.

MCRANEY: Medgar Evers. M-E-D...

WOMAN: Medgar Evers.

MCRANEY: Uh huh.

WOMAN: Where is he from?

MCRANEY: He's from Jackson. He's a Jacksonian.

WOMAN: Is...thank you.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Could you tell me why the station didn't give the name of the man who just made the announcement for the NAACP?

MCRANEY: The name was given both in the front and the closing. His name is Medgar Evers.

WOMAN: Medgar Evers?

MCRANEY: Yes, ma'am.

WOMAN: I see. Thank you very much.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: Hi. Would you tell me the name of the [inaudible] you had on?

MCRANEY: Medgar Evers, Field Secre...

WOMAN: Medgar Evers.

MCRANEY: Yes, ma'am.

WOMAN: Medgar Evers?

MCRANEY: Uh, huh.

WOMAN: Thank you.

MCRANEY: Thank you.

MCRANEY: WLBT.

WOMAN: I got three radio sta...I mean, three radios in my house. I think, after that broadcast, I'll sell them all.

MCRANEY: Well, we were required through policies of the FCC to make equal time.

WOMAN: I know you said that, but I'm telling you I think I'll sell all three of my TVs or give them away.

MCRANEY: We would appreciate you sending your comments to us in writing.

WOMAN: In writing.

MCRANEY: Yes, ma'am. We would appreciate very much your sending any of your comments to us at post office box 2171.

WOMAN: Wait just a minute. I'll be glad to.

MCRANEY: Um, umm.

WOMAN: 2...

MCRANEY: 171.

WOMAN: And I'm not ashamed of my name, either.

MCRANEY: That's quite alright.

WOMAN: 2171.

MCRANEY: Yes, ma'am.

WOMAN: Box 2171. I certainly will.

MCRANEY: Thank you very much

WOMAN: Ok.

MCRANEY: Hello.

MAN: Hello. I wanted to ask a question. This nigger who spoke [inaudible] station. Did they have to pay for that time? Or was it given to them?

MCRANEY: No, sir. That was under the...what they call the equal time provision. In other words, Mayor Thompson, they didn't have to pay for their time; therefore, this man didn't have to pay either.

MAN: They were given the time along with the other ones.

MCRANEY: Right.

MAN: Well, I just was curious about it, 'cause I didn't know the organization had an equal [inaudible]. Was that just in politics or is that an FCC ruling?

MCRANEY: It comes under an FCC ruling which requires equal time for all parties in any controversial situation that might come up.

MAN: Particularly for political.

MCRANEY: Yes, sir. But I think it is very broad and encompasses a great number of things.

MAN: I see. All right. Thank you so much.

MCRANEY: Yes, sir. And thank you for calling. Good night.

MCRANEY: Channel Three television.

MAN: Good evening. What was the name of the man who spoke tonight on the free recorded program?

MCRANEY: That was Medgar Evers.

MAN: Medgar Evers?

MCRANEY: Right.

MAN: Not Major Everett?

MCRANEY: No, sir, that was Medgar Evers who is Field Secretary for the NAACP.

MAN: All right. And we appreciate the opportunity he had of speaking there.

MCRANEY: All right. Thank you for calling. Good night.

MAN: Did Robert Kennedy tell you to put that [inaudible]?

MCRANEY: Sir, this program was in accordance with FCC regulations that require equal time.

MAN: Uh huh, I know the president of your company is a nigger, isn't he?

MCRANEY: No, sir. He's not.

MAN: NBC?

MCRANEY: I don't know anything about NBC. I don't think so.

MAN: [inaudible] he's president of your company. He tried to [inaudible]

MCRANEY: I'm sorry, sir. I can hardly hear you.

MCRANEY: Good evening, Channel Three.

MAN: Who's speaking?

MCRANEY: This is Channel Three television.

MAN: Channel Three?

MCRANEY: Right.

MAN: When [inaudible] the NAACP?

MCRANEY: Now, this program was presented in accordance with FCC regulations that require equal time for all parties.

MAN: Did you preview it?

MCRANEY: Yes sir. We did.

MAN: And you let it go?

MCRANEY: We had...it was an uncensored program.

MAN: You are just [inaudible] being cut off of my station right here.

MCRANEY: Let me explain how this thing works. See, all parties have a chance to get on and express their opinions on things, and this is in accordance with the equal time provision. In other words, all parties are supposed to get equal time. Mayor Thompson got 17 minutes and this man got 17.

MAN: I hear your beep. Is this being recorded, too, our conversation?

MCRANEY: Yes sir. It is.

MAN: I'll just start [thinking] from here on out.

MCRANEY: Sir, we appreciate you calling, and, if you'd like to comment further, we invite you to write us a letter and express your opinion in more detail.

MAN: I'll write it when you don't got the beeper on.

MCRANEY: All right sir, but the beeper is also a requirement that, anytime we record anyone, we have to have the beeper on to protect you. In other words...

MAN: I'll bet you the other station won't have it. Well, I thank you for your time.

MCRANEY: Yes sir. And I appreciate you calling.

MAN: [inaudible] I'm fixing to cut you off, and I won't turn you back on until the announcer is made...

END OF RECORDING