

## Panel 4 Q&A and Group Discussion

*(The following is an unedited transcript.)*

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: I'd like to kick off the question period to our panels, panel members, by raising a couple of questions that I didn't raise earlier because I wanted to see if somebody else gave an answer before I raised the question. Let me ask the panelists if they would comment on what value you might see in an organization like the Eisenhower Foundation, maybe in collaboration with some other race and poverty focus non-profit organizations calling for, or arranging for Congressional hearings on some of the issues having to do with race and poverty from the perspective of the working press, the media -- to have hearings to give a larger forum to the kind of discussion that has gone on here.

The first question is -- would it be seen as an attack on the media? And the second question is -- do you think it would do any good?

Kevin Merida: Well, the answer is yes, it would be seen as an attack on the media, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't do it. Because if they don't have the answers, they should be attacked.

I can recall, again, going back to the Kerner Commission era, this was a time of Federal power. And attending hearings -- not Congressional hearings -- but hearings held by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, the Federal Communications Commission -- these were agencies that had some regulatory or oversight power over a variety of institutions, and they did not exempt the media because of the First Amendment, from having to answer questions.

I think it's one thing if you tell them what to do. And I would not advise you to say, Do this, or you're going to be out of business, but I would advise you to put issues like this on the table and get their explanations. Because we have not had people who are really at the highest levels of media leadership here today. And they do deserve to be heard, and I think we've raised some good questions here today that deserve to be addressed.

Barbara Reynolds: When you think about it, there has not been a good effort to even raise the issues of race and poverty in this country for a long time. And that's why the work of this Foundation is so exemplary.

It does take time. I can remember when I first started writing against the war. And, the browbeating that I took, this was when the first George Bush was in office. And sometimes you're awful, you feel very isolated being alone doing the right thing. But when I look at the Post now, and they say 67 percent of Americans are against the war, I say, well, it took them long enough, but you know, finally they are here. So, just because there's not crowds of people saying

we should say something about poverty, you'd be surprised at how many people are just waiting for the ball to get started, and somebody has to start.

And I think with the intensity and passion and the level of the people that are involved in this institution, why not you? And why not now?

Ellis Cose: Yeah, as one who used to cover Washington and occasionally still does, my first reaction is during the season there are a thousand hearings going on in Congress pretty much any day, and so one reaction is, what are you going to do so you won't get lost in that morass of hearings that go on on the Hill all the time?

But my other answer is that, I think -- well, I have three answers, I guess -- I mean, my second sort of takes off of something that Felix said, I mean, I don't think it would necessarily been seen as an attack, I think it depends on how it is framed. And I think if it is framed as an attack, and if it comes with either implied or direct threat that some action is going to be taken against the media if they're not living up to some sort of standards in some way then of course it becomes an attack on the media and an attack on the first amendment, and you get a particular reaction from that.

But I can certainly see a scenario where the Eisenhower Foundation -- as part of a larger strategy to shed some light on these issues -- first of all came up with something it wanted to say, meaning some kind of study/report or something that actually shed some light on it, and then brought together a number of significant media people to talk about these and to challenge coverage the way that it's going now, that could do some good.

So, my longwinded answer is yes, I think if properly done there could be a good payback from, a good payoff from doing a Congressional hearing.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Rochelle?

Rochelle Stanfield: Actually, during the Clinton Administration, the President launched a big -- supposed to be -- big conversation/dialogue on race that really fizzled. And, I mean, I went to Almont, I went to hearings, I went to meetings, I went -- I tried to cover, I wrote about it, and then nothing really happened. And this was, you know, I think that as everyone has said, framing hearings or conferences or something in a really good way, I think that, just because it hasn't worked in the past doesn't mean it's not going to work in the future, but I wouldn't have a really real high expectation for what it would do.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Anybody else? Okay, my second question. People have talked about, various panelists have talked, and this panel as well, have talked about journalism students, training journalism students. And you're professionals in the field, so my question is -- would this be most effectively done in collaboration with the few schools of journalism that remain, recognizing that that really does concentrate and target the effort because there really aren't that many -- and if not, what would be the vehicle for training, for sensitizing journalism students so they have the kind of eye to take the risks and to address

issues of race and poverty even as they try to climb up the ladder of the hierarchy?

Ellis Cose: I mean, as one who once was in the business of training journalism students, and as also one who has worked in the media for pretty much all of my adult life, I frankly don't think the Eisenhower Foundation has any expertise in that area. And I'm not quite sure what you could accomplish there.

But I also believe that training students to be sensitive to these stories is not really much of the issue. The issue is what are the incentives once they get to their job? It's what are the important beats that add up to a celebrated career, is what do they think their editors are going to want them to go out and do? So, I think the question is not -- because I think there are lots and lots of students and I see them all of the time and they are really gung-ho about covering all of these exciting things, then they get to the newspaper and they're at the Cop Shop or they're somewhere else, and there's little opportunity for them to do these exciting things that they thought they were being trained to do.

So, I frankly think that would be a waste of your time and your efforts to focus on training students. I think you have to come at it from another direction.

Barbara Reynolds: As a person who is a professor at Howard University I do think that students need to be trained, one thing I push is courage, because you have to have courage to stand up for what you believe. If a student just wants a paycheck, I try to change that scenario to having purpose in their life, and meaning. I try to help them build character.

Also, you just do different things. You don't get discouraged, first of all, and say, Well, nothing will happen. I never will forget, I came to class and one of my students said, You're always talking about the war, I don't see anything, why I should be concerned about the war. And I went home, and I was so discouraged and something set, Well this is a teaching moment. And so I got young people who were like the Moose Smith and people like that, who really were, could talk about the war, and it just so happened the Washington Post had done a wonderful article -- not a wonderful article, in it was terrible in what it stood for -- of all of the young people who had died in the war, and I just laid it out in front of them, they came in they had to walk past it, and it was just silence, because they could see that was them.

And so, you know, I just think it's up to us to find creative ways to show young people a different scenario. And if the Eisenhower Institution can do that, I think that it is worth a try to teach profiles of courage, to teach character, it can be taught because --

Ellis Cose: I think we're all for teaching, Barbara, I'm just saying that I don't think the Eisenhower has any particular expertise in teaching --

Leila McDowell: Just to contextualize the question real quick, Yvonne, because I think these questions are less about what the Foundation should do, because obviously it's a limited, finite institution with some real focus -- but I think what we're ultimately hoping to do by 2008 with the Kerner Commission is come

up with some comprehensive recommendations, so for example, if one of the recommendations that emerge from this panel, these panel discussions, is we've got to find a way to encourage journalism schools to do a better job of training journalists around investigative journalism, we've also got to incentivize newsrooms to create spaces for this kind of coverage -- then what we might do is, you know, retain or find experts such as yourselves to dig in a little deeper on these questions and really come up with some comprehensive recommendations that hopefully -- through various ways -- we can give some spotlight go. It won't be for us to implement everything, we'll implement some of the things, obviously, we won't start journalism schools, but - -

Ellis Cose: How much money you got, Leila?

Leila McDowell: We're not going to start the journal --

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: You have to get the money.

Leila McDowell: We're not going to start the journalism schools, but hopefully and the Kerner Commission played that role, you know, initially, in that it led a way forward and it put forth a host of recommendations, many of which were absolutely not accepted by even the Johnson Administration -- as we all know, Johnson would be considered a socialist in today's climate, Nixon would be a liberal, that's how far the debate has swung to the right - #NAME? down for what policy should look like. And therefore it began to shift the debate in a different direction around poverty, race, and inequality.

So, to some extent that's what we're hoping to do. So when you answer these questions, don't feel that you're confined to what the Foundation should do, but what -- if you were able to make recommendations about how we could redress the problems that we've all recognized -- you know, how you would answer that.

And one last thing, to dovetail on the question that Yvonne answered, something that's come up a lot by panelists is getting more working class journalists -- you mentioned that as well, Rochelle, in the mix. Because even now, the barriers to college are great, so that even when you get people of color that come through that route, you know, do their life experiences allow them to bring some of the nuances that Colby King was talking about earlier to the coverage that really deepen it and give it more a level of profound reality that otherwise wouldn't be there?

So, in answering the question that Yvonne answered, if you have any thoughts as well on, you know, should there be a different trajectory for getting kids who come out of the criminal justice system to begin to be able to tell their stories? Some of what Eisenhower is actually experimenting with, but is there a way to do that more efficiently.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Rochelle, I think, had her hand up?

Rochelle Stanfield: No, it was Kevin.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Kevin, I'm sorry.

Kevin Merida: Well, I mean, I think that, you know, the program that Ellis alluded to earlier, the summer program for minority journalists is probably, to my liking having been a graduate of it, probably the best reporting program that ever existed. You know, I mean, I learned more in that program, probably, then I did in the first three years of my career. I think that there has not been that kind of -- I mean, if there was a program on race and poverty coverage at University, there's an endowed chair at a number of prominent -- you know, at a place like, maybe there is, at Columbia or some of the high-profile journalism schools, that would definitely attract attention, a certain concentrated kind of focus on those issues and how to cover them that's directed.

In the same vein, if there were professional programs. I mean, I've always thought that the best thing that we could do, I mean, I always wanted to start a street reporting kind of a clinic and have it located someplace, you know, in the 'hood and start it. And really bring people in it to do what doesn't get done very much anymore in my experience.

And so I think there's a lot of things you could do, you could do that for professionals and you could do that for students, I mean, in the same vein I think you go out to places -- I don't see a lot of, I mean, I think it's fine to be in the Mayflower Hotel and the talk of things, I mean, I think it's nice to be in a place, someplace anchored where people are where there's this interaction, and I think so, you know, if I were thinking about hearings and stuff, I remember John Cohn you said that those police brutality hearings went around at places where the police brutality was, and that used to be the concept of field hearings, when you'd go out right to a place and deal with a problem. But those are my thoughts.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Well, there certainly is a street law clinic, so there's no reason why there couldn't be street journalism clinics. We have some questions over here and then we'll go to Leila, yeah, a colleague from North Carolina?

Jenny Amison: I'm Jenny Amison and I've, I've been sitting here all day and I feel very, very hopeful about what's come out of this session. Because I think we've heard over 15 or more journalists talk about media representation. And you are the voices that represent us, and I feel real hopeful because I think with you all, that's a start.

But one comment that I wanted to make and that I wanted to challenge other people that are in the media -- if you don't believe in or see the human problem or feel that it is a problem, or have the courage of like the Reverend said, to talk about those issues and deal with those issues, then your hard-pressed to entice other rising journalists and media professionals that are in college or whatever, to talk about those things because I think the people that are there in those seats now, they are the role models, they are the stirring faces for these people. And if you don't believe that there's still issues in poverty, race and inequality and you're sitting back and you're taking a back seat and it's not affecting you, then naturally, then, we're not going to hear about those issues. And I think we need to do more things like going out in the trenches, and having

media summits and things of that nature, and talking to the people that are out there in the streets, where this is truly affecting.

Because, I mean, it's real comfortable to be in a position to follow a comfortable story, but to go out there and really look at what's happening is your own back yard - - that's kind of hard to stomach, and deal with and like a lot of people have said today, people don't want to hear that. But if nothing changes, nothing changes. And we have to be the ones to make those changes and get out there and I'm glad all of you are here, because it appears to me that we do have allies that are willing to tell our story and help with this crusade to talk about race, poverty and inequality.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: A question over here?

Nkechi Taifa: Thank you, my name is Nkechi Taifa, I'm with the Open Society Institute on the Policy Side.

There's been a lot of talk here, this panel and previous panels about the whole refrain of doing no harm. And I guess my question is, what is the fix or is there a fix, what is the responsibility, what is the accountability for media when harm has, in fact, been done.

For example, in 1986 a young rising star basketball player died of a cocaine intoxication the day after he was drafted into the Boston Celtics, and that led to a spate of, a tirade of media sensationalism around the devastations of crack which is, and had been, devastating to communities.

But Congress picked up on that and inundated the Congressional record with these media sensationalist stories, in an act of draconian penalties which last to this day, 20 years later.

What can be done, if anything, I guess you could say, to -- in an attempt to reverse, okay, a lot of the sensationalism that came out at that time, much of which has now been found to have been incorrect and grossly exaggerated?

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Panel?

Kevin Merida: One thing you do is, those crack -- all those sentencing -- the generation that started going to prison for crack are coming out now. And that's probably one of the big untold stories in this country. And what that has wrought in communities, that's a way of calling attention to it.

I think at the time a lot of those -- if you go back and check the record of those who pushed for criminal penalties, a lot of those lawmakers have changed their tune, because they've seen what has happened. So, there are a lot of stories off of that. But that's, the idea is to take that and, I mean, we in journalism are notorious for having short memories. And you don't see a lot of history in stories, and so that's one of the things that groups -- I'm not sure which organization you're with -- but can bring attention to, those kind of subjects.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Can I just ask for a little bit more detail, because how do you, as journalists suggest that this kind of planting of a story can be most effectively done? Because it's not a rumor or anything, it's a

suggestion that there be investigative journalism, that there be focus, maybe not even just one news organ, but several on this whole issue, because it does have policy implications -- what's the best way to do that?

Kevin Merida: I was giving my colleagues that one --

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Don't all speak at once.

Kevin Merida: -- but I'll come right back to it. I mean, you know, one way is I mean, studies -- when you see Celinda as she laid out and had -- that gets the mind, the journalistic mind churning. You know, when you have hard data that's on a macro level that then you can storifize, we would say, I mean, storytelling is still the great, you know, art in journalism. I mean, if you can, you have to have stories to tell. And we learned that through this series Being a Black Man that we've done, and we did it that way, they're all narrative stories and the response has been really -- we've been able to engage readers with it. And I think, though, you start with something. If somebody, you take that idea -- well, what has happened? Just a simple question. What has been the affects of all of the sentencing guidelines, the penalties, go back and look at when crack started ravaging communities and the laws that came into place and then what has happened, and the aftermath. Chart that, somebody produce a report on that, that'll get some attention.

Barbara Reynolds: Yeah, but you, you also --

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Ellis Cose, then we'll come back to you.

Ellis Cose: I'm going to agree, at least in part with what Kevin just said. I mean, I remember several years ago there was a story in the New York Times which was basically pretty much destroyed the reputation of an individual who had been accused of sexual harassment of a woman in his office.

And it later came out that the woman had a history of making up these kinds of stories, and there was not much to it.

And I remember I happened to have one of the editors at my home one day, and I said, Well what are you guys going to do about correcting this misperception of this guy because you've done some pretty serious damage to his reputation, it seems to me. And I'm not going to say who the guy was, but I was amazed because his answer was, Well, you know, it's no longer a story. And I was, frankly, amazed because I thought they had the responsibility to deal with that, but what it underscored for me is this sense, that what Kevin said -- what journalists are very bad at, even though practically every major paper now has some kind of corrections policy which is fairly strict in terms of specific errors of fact -- but there is no overall policy to say, We got a big story wrong, so let's go back and re-think this, unless you can tell another story.

And there are, in fact, in the issue that you're talking about, and you know you at OSI is doing a whole lot of work in this area, John Jay has done a whole lot of work in this area, there are a number of institutions, the Urban Institute -- there is a huge array of institutions now that are looking at the Sentencing Project, we just came out with a big study looking at the increase in the prison

population. There are a number of institutions now, which are looking at these related issues -- and some of this stuff is finding its way into the press -- I've written several of these stories. Some of this stuff is finding its way into the media, and I think eventually more and more of it is, because the fact of the matter is we cannot go forward as a society doing what we have been doing, in terms of this set of issues.

But there's no sort of, we're going to go back, we got it wrong back then, so now we're going to say we got it wrong. It becomes a story when you have somebody who goes into Baltimore and looks at the inter-generational affects of having all of these people in prison on the next generation, and they say, Wow, okay, that's something interesting, let's write about that.

It happens when you go into communities in Watts and see some of the devastation that this has wrought and you say, Okay, that's an interesting story, let's do something about that. But it doesn't happen in the way that you were kind of suggesting that it should happen, maybe it should happen, which it just happens that way, but it happens through another narrative that replaces the old narrative.

Barbara Reynolds: You can not control the narrative, because when you start talking about crack, everybody does not run to where you want to go. Because other people might see the drive-by shootings, the complete devastation of communities, of death, and people may not just take a public policy attitude about drugs when they see whole communities being devastated because of drugs, and of course want to go in this direction, but in this city that we're in, there's been poor leadership on this issue.

So, you know, you start talking about something, you can't control where the media are going to go with it once you start saying, Cover it, they may not always want to cover it the way you want to.

But I do want to say this about the editorial boards. Because I served on an editorial board for 13 years, and I was always disillusioned because of people who dealt with race and poverty did not come to these editorial board meetings, and didn't ask for a hearing, I mean, people who just had all kind of issues I didn't even think were important were sitting there talking to editors. Often, I would call community groups myself and say, Please call and get, and come up to the board and give your issues. But, you know, please hold media accountable. They have, we have a First Amendment that protects our rights, but we protect it because we hold a sacred trust for people, and if you don't hold them accountable, you don't ask and demand things from them, you won't get anything. So, I'd like to see more attention paid to these editorial boards in your respective cities.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Great, we have a question, my colleague in the blue shirt there, I'm sorry I didn't see your name.

Keith DeBlasio: Keith DeBlasio, and I'm with Advocare. I also do criminal justice work, and one of the things I see is that, whether we regard media

influencing politics, or politics influencing media, they both fall from the same stream of thought where they want the story - #NAME? what's going on. And one of the things we've started doing, we're actually working with Gamai & Shaft on now, is getting individuals who have been incarcerated to realize that they can be comfortable in participating in the political process. That they can be successful in contributing to the political debate.

And I think politicians and media both -- and we as the public, we want to put a face on an issue and we deal with two-fold -- one is there's a shame just as there is with individuals that have been involved in the criminal justice system, there's a shame when you are living in poverty and you can't provide for your family, there's a shame in that, and we have to have someone who's been there, who's overcome that, lead others in saying You don't have to be ashamed of this, you can come forward to the media, and also give them a way to facilitate them being part of the process. I think one of the recommendations has to be that organizations get involved with encouraging the people that are out there in the community that are affected by the poverty, by the racial discrimination to actually come forward and talk to the media, because it's the only way you get the personal face, it's the only way you get the story, that's the only way you get the involvement. And just from, from my perspective on dealing, how we deal with the political process, 99 percent of the time, the gentlemen who have been incarcerated are the ones that the legislators want to hear from more than the individuals sitting around the table that are with, you know, paid by an organization or paid by the State, part of social services, something like that, who have not been incarcerated.

So, we have the same dynamic for those who are in the poverty situations who quite honestly, there has to be a shame to you know, being, saying that you've been discriminated against, that you've been belittled in front of your children by the use of racial slurs. And it's not something we're comfortable with coming forward with, so I think the Eisenhower Foundation could possibly look at a recommendation that helps facilitate -- and we've heard from the media of not having the sources.

We don't, we live in a bottom-line, technology age where we're not out pounding the pavement and interacting with the community, so I think as organizations, we have to present them with those individuals. Because, I have media come to me all of the time that say, Do you know somebody who fits this criteria for this story? Because this is something we could cover right now, this is an issue, but I want a face, I want that family member, that individual that's been incarcerated who fits this criteria. If I can provide that to him, I've got a great story. If I can't, if I don't know who's willing to interact with that reporter, then the story goes untold.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Sorry, I know better. Are there other questions before I turn this to Leila? Right.

Emmett Folgert: Hi, I'm Emmett Folgert from Boston. I've got an example of a successful effort that happened last year where community organizations got

together to form, I guess what Jay Rosen would call a social movement to support young people who live in high-crime areas where there was a lot of gang homicides, wanted to support these young people.

And we got together with a friendly legislator who formulated some legislation which would both increase the protection of witnesses of murders -- including re- location, a statewide relocation program -- and provide them some diversionary activities during the high crime hours.

And we approached news sources, we approached you guys and the other thing we knew, sadly, was that there would be more killings in our neighborhoods where we worked -- we knew there were going to be an ongoing series of stories, and we were very transparent, but there always would be the question at the end of these stories, I've been doing them for 30 years, you know -- what could make things better? That's always the question that a police beat reporter would ask and I'd say, Nice that you should ask, because there's a group of us that have this movement, and we're supporting this specific piece of legislation and it's stuck, or it's having problems, would you help us? Would you look into it, and if you like this, would you help us? We went to the editorial board, and we had a sustained media campaign that lasted, it took about 10 months because there were some ridiculous political problems around this, but we were successful, and it did pass.

So there, that was, it had those elements that people can think about, you had a persistent problem, you know, of these young poor males primarily. But you knew there were going to also be specific stories that would come up, and you could tie it to a place and send it to advocate for the passage of this legislative remedy.

So, we might be able to do that on a national level, but I know that that could work on a statewide level, and I'd be glad to talk with anyone and consult with them if they wanted to engage or set up that kind of effort in their own states.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Great, thank you, is someone #NAME?

Luke Warren: First, I want to thank the panel for their great comments. As I said earlier I do kind of media consulting, online advocacy, etc., etc., I'm a blogger. There's been some talk by both of the panels that I've seen today about the use of the Internet as a way of getting these voices out that the mainstream media, won't touch or are not that interested in covering.

So, then that made me think, well, how do we get people in the poorer communities to get onto the Internet? How do we teach them, give them access to Broadband, give them access to wireless, give them access to computer, teach them the skills of how to set up a website, how to start blogging, etc., etc.

So, this was running through my mind, is this perhaps something that we might want to consider as some sort of program like this, instead of trying to go through the journalism schools or trying to change mainstream media, maybe do it from the ground up. Have these people go directly to the Internet, the people who are affected by this and start talking about this in their own communities.

Kind of do that pounding the pavement work that journalists don't do as much any more, that's actually being done on the Internet and the Blogosphere now.

So, that was just a suggestion I wanted to throw out there. My question for the panelist what would have to happen on the Internet regarding these stories of poverty and race and etc., for the mainstream media to pick it up?

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Panel?

Barbara Reynolds: That's an easy question, it has to be another riot.

(Laughter.)

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: We said earlier today we were going to something short of another riot.

Barbara Reynolds: Okay.

(Laughter.)

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Does somebody have a less revolutionary solution of this?

Ellis Cose: So, now we're going to have a story that I started a foundation that's funding riots.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Funding riots, right, right. Virtual riots.

Ellis Cose: If you look at the handful of blogs that get a lot of notice, they don't tend to be an individual in the community writing his or her little thing, they tend to be things that have really resources behind them. And are breaking stories, and are doing things that the mainstream media really can't ignore. And I think it's fine to empower people in the communities to use the Internet and to get on the Internet, but I think if you are talking about something that's really going to have impact, and that's really going to get some attention, you're talking about that model, not the first model of just getting people out there who can sit at their home and write their opinions. And I don't know whether that's something that - - and I'm certainly not in the position to advise you on how you construct that -- but I can point you to some people who have constructed similar things in other venues and have done quite well.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Let me just piggyback on that, I was thinking about this as my final intervention in turning this process back to Leila, but there - - 20 years ago, the Foundation community, meaning not the operating foundations like Eisenhower, but the larger grant-making foundations, explored for a while the concept of intermediaries. And the concept of intermediaries suggested that organizations would be supported in their highly targeted effort to build the bridge between grass roots efforts and the targets of such efforts -- either policy change institutions, or fenders or whoever they could not easily approach. And it may well be as we've listened today at many of these recommendations that the notion of intermediaries is once again going to have currency. And I can recall as I was doing, and Alan will remember this, when we did -- I didn't intend to plug my book --

(Laughter.)

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: Consensus, no, I really didn't, honest. My book -- over, okay -- there's one, well I plugged that one already.

(Laughter.)

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: When we were doing this National Urban Policy it was an open process. We had task forces that were intended to have everybody in the country come and address, and I was really struck by the fact that I would get calls which, at that time the White House would #NAME? would find you, wherever you were, dinner, didn't matter, they would call you.

I would get calls from all of the people who could access the White House on their own who were calling in to say, I'm sending you a draft, I'm sending you a paper that you should use for The Urban Policy, and at a point I reflected on where these calls were coming from. And there were only three, predominantly African-American organizations, or organizations that looked at issues from the perspective of people in poverty, and people of color who were sending in stuff.

And I said to my friends in these other organizations -- why aren't you sending stuff? Everybody's sending stuff? And their response was, Well, we didn't think anybody would pay any attention, because the pattern had been nobody would pay any attention, and there was a feeling of intimidation, about breaching this boundary of class and of power to get your views heard.

And that kind of idea was what, in fact, inspired the notion of the intermediary and I think we need to revisit that as a tool that we might use and might help others to use.

Because we certainly have the organization that have their grass roots, that we that the Foundation supports in a very active, and may of them have come into existence because of the Eisenhower Foundation. So, I think that's something we might want to consider.

And with that, it is my pleasure to thank this panel and to retire from the facilitation and turn this activity back to Leila so that you can go forward. Do you want to do, or Alan? Okay.

Alan Curtis: I just wanted to say as George Carlin says, We all need stuff.

(Laughter.)

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: We all need stuff.

Leila McDowell: Well, after that very profound remark from our great leader and teacher, Alan Lin Curtis, Lin Alan Curtis, I won't hold people because we have tequila shots and chicken satay out there, so I know priorities are priorities.

But what I do want to do because we talked a little bit about the distance, I mean, we're talking about such critical, serious problems, what Nkechi brought up in terms of the harm that was done by the crack stories in terms of robbing young men of their lives, and young women who have been sentenced to jail for

25 years in some cases, 10 years and so on, is devastating. And what we're talking about in terms of poverty is devastating.

This is a very serious and critical question, what I'm going to do, I don't have butcher block, I'm just going to -- I won't summarize everything that was raised today, I'm just going to quickly go through some of the recommendations that we heard which is a beginning for a conversation for us to be able to dig in deeper to make more serious recommendations, more studied recommendations later on when we release the Kerner Commission Report.

What we will be doing at the Foundation following this is we're going to be having field hearings in many of the different cities that were the scene of the rebellions -- I don't call them riots -- the violent rebellions against repression and racism that took place in the sixties and was the genesis for the initial Kerner Commission, we will be going back there, and we will be going, you know, in the barber shops and holding, you know, the hearings in the places where the people are, not in the Mayflower Hotel and places like that. But we know how journalists are, and we knew, you know, cause ya'll are kinda like large like that that you all wouldn't have come if we had it in the barber shops, so we had to have it at the Mayflower. I'm sorry, Ellis, you're an exception, but some of those others, you know? So, you know, we figured we had to have it at the Mayflower and have the, you know, the fancy food and everything.

But the rest of these will actually be in the field, so we really invite you all to come with us in that journey to see what we discover.

So anyway, very quickly, if I've left recommendations out please share them with me. We talked a lot about journalism schools and about the training of journalists and about the kinds of journalists that are being graduated from journalism schools and that we need to look at that. We need to study, what are journalism schools really doing and perhaps make some recommendations and some analysis as to how this impacts on media coverage of poverty, race and inequality.

We looked at legislation and regulation, there were a couple of things that were brought up including the fact that in the 1932 Act says that the people own the airways, we don't always exercise that power, and we need to look at ways that we can begin to exercise that power a little bit more so that we can demand some space for our voices in the airways when right now we know that largely, the large corporate-owned media is answering to a different tune which is the tune of Wall Street.

That we also need to look at ways to subsidize working class and journalists that come from poor communities who aren't going to be able to survive on an internship salary at a paper, and then also the other ideas that came up included ways to also find voices and journalists who don't necessarily come through the college track, but who can bring another experience, another reality, another perspective to the coverage that is often missing in the newsrooms today.

Talked a lot about how do we use new media, we talked about funding internships at African-American press and Independent press -- both to support the paradigm of inculcating advocacy as a part of journalism, but also as a way to support and democratize media in this country which is becoming narrower and narrower both in terms of its ownership and also its constituency.

We also talked about your idea of training people on new media, street journalism, citizen journalism, are there ways to bring the people's voice into journalism, whether it's through blogs or other kinds of new media. Yvonne talked about intermediary, other people talked about coalescing people for power, media advocacy.

We talked about looking at ways to heighten the prestige of coverage of race, poverty and inequality through things like an endowed chair at a University like Columbia University. And ways to begin to hold reporters and newsrooms accountable.

Obviously diversity was raised quite a bit, it was talked about the importance of training programs at historically black colleges, and that, that's a problem -- talking about the timidity amongst journalists, but there wasn't really a solution to that.

Those are the main things that I have.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: We all --

Leila McDowell: We did a really good job, I think, of raising some, in a very profound and eloquent way a lot of the problems, and I think we got some wonderful guidance and direction in terms of some solutions to begin to dig in on. And we, of course, will put this all together and they'll be available to people if you want to have input on them.

Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich: We also talked about another vehicle for giving journalists a chance to focus on the issues by looking at hearings.

Leila McDowell: Yes, Congressional hearings, yes.

Male Speaker: Will they be available on the website?

Leila McDowell: I'm not sure, do you want to do that?

Alan Curtis: This has all been recorded, we'll have transcripts, every presenter will edit their own transcript and we'll go through a process of approval. We may publish in a hard copy, we'll certainly have this on the website. But this is just the start of the process, as we said this morning, we'll take us to a report that will be issued on March 1st, 2008, 40 years to the day after the original Kerner Commission.

Leila McDowell: So, with that, any other comments or input? Did I miss anything? And if I did, please feel free to email us, and this is a, as Alan said, an ongoing process, so we really want you thinking, we want you a part of this process as much as you can be to share with us your ideas and you know, keep abreast of this process as it moves forward.

