

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reverend Al Sharpton

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Sharpton, Al
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Al Sharpton,
Dates:	March 4, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:31:29).
Abstract:	Community activist, minister, and civil rights leader Reverend Al Sharpton (1954 -) started preaching at age four and became licensed and ordained at age nine. Sharpton formed the National Action Network in 1991 to fight for progressive, people-based social policies by providing extensive voter education and registration campaigns, economic support for small community businesses and by confronting corporate racism. Sharpton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 4, 2002, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_002
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on October 3, 1954, Reverend Alfred "Al" Sharpton has been preaching since age four. He was licensed and ordained at age nine. In 1971, he founded the National Youth Movement and for seventeen years he led the organization, registering young people to vote and giving them job opportunities. His direct-action and civil disobedience campaigns have brought

attention to injustice in many areas.

Sharpton has pursued other interests while continuing to preach: in his teens, he established a close bond with James Brown and developed a father-son relationship, eventually recording the record *God Smiled on Me* with him. In the 1970s and early 1980s, he worked as a youth organizer with boxing promoter Don King, while learning more about African American politics and entertainment.

However, Sharpton never strayed far from activism. He formed the National Action Network in 1991 to fight for progressive, people-based social policies by providing extensive voter education and registration campaigns, economic support for small community businesses and by confronting corporate racism. That same year, Sharpton was stabbed in a Bensonhurst school yard. This represented a turning point for him. Eventually, he met and reconciled with his attacker.

Sharpton has never hesitated to act in support of African Americans, from individuals seeking public offices to Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant brutalized by Brooklyn police in 1997. Now he is also seeking to build a national multi-cultural, multi-racial movement addressing a range of issues. To that end, in 1999 Sharpton, former New York City Mayor Ed Koch and Harvard Law School professor Charles Ogletree formed "Second Chance", a program to serve non-violent felony offenders after their release from prison. Sharpton also orchestrated a massive protest when police shot unarmed Amadou Diallo 42 times in 1999. In 2001, Sharpton protested the U.S. Navy's bombing of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. Attempting to fight injustice wherever he finds it, Sharpton is following in the footsteps of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr.

Bibliography:

Sharpton, Al. *Go and Tell the Pharaoh: The Autobiography of Reverend Al Sharpton*. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

Sharpton, Al. *Al on America*. New York: Kensington Pub Corp, 2002.

Marcovitz, Hal. *Al Sharpton (Black Americans of Achievement)*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Pub, 2001.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reverend Al Sharpton was conducted by

Julieanna L. Richardson on March 4, 2002, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Community activist, minister, and civil rights leader Reverend Al Sharpton (1954 -) started preaching at age four and became licensed and ordained at age nine. Sharpton formed the National Action Network in 1991 to fight for progressive, people-based social policies by providing extensive voter education and registration campaigns, economic support for small community businesses and by confronting corporate racism.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Sharpton, Al

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Sharpton, Al--Interviews

African American clergy--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

Community activists--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

Bronzeville (Chicago, Ill.)--Social conditions.

Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)--Social life and customs.

Harlem (New York, N.Y.)--Social life and customs.

Incest.

Fatherless families--New York (State)--New York.

Preaching.

United States. Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Jackson, Jesse, 1941-.

S.C.L.C. Operation Breadbasket.

Powell, Adam Clayton, 1908-1972.

Brown, James, 1933-2006.

King, Don, 1931-.

African American political activists--Interviews.

Elections--United States.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Community Activist

Minister

Civil Rights Leader

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|ReligionMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release

forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Al Sharpton, March 4, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Al Sharpton, Section A2002_002_001_001, TRT: 0:29:03 2002/03/04

Al Sharpton recalls his childhood growing up in Brooklyn and Queens, New York. He recalls beginning to preach at the age of ten at Bishop F. D. Washington's church in Brooklyn. Sharpton explains how his preaching helped him to deal with the difficulty of his father's incest and subsequent departure from his family. Sharpton also discusses the experience of preaching to a much older audience.

African American clergy--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--New York (State)--New

York--Interviews.

Community activists--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

Bronzeville (Chicago, Ill.)--Social conditions.

Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)--Social life and customs.

Harlem (New York, N.Y.)--Social life and customs.

Incest.

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Brown, James, 1933-2006.

King, Don, 1931-.

African American political activists--Interviews.

Elections--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Al Sharpton, Section
A2002_002_001_002, TRT: 0:29:50 2002/03/04

Al Sharpton discusses the major characters who influenced and mentored him as a child preacher and voting rights activist. He recounts meeting his idol, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. He also discusses meeting Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr., explaining how Jackson got him involved with Operation Breadbasket and voter registration drives. Sharpton then discusses his involvement with the National Youth Movement.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Al Sharpton, Section
A2002_002_001_003, TRT: 0:30:11 2002/03/04

Al Sharpton discusses his relationships with various celebrities, including a detailed account of his collaboration with James Brown in the early 1980s. Sharpton also discusses his relationship with promoter Don King. Sharpton then moves into a discussion of his career in political activism, starting with his advocacy work in the 1980s and also covering his run for the U.S. Senate, and his work with the National Youth Movement

and the National Action Network.

Video Oral History Interview with Reverend Al Sharpton, Section
A2002_002_001_004, TRT: 0:02:25 2002/03/04

Al Sharpton expresses his concerns for the black
community and considers his legacy.