

The West Family June 1990

S: I was going to ask you a little bit about what was going on before Jonathan got here, how your family got involved and all of that. (A W) CH, IN THE MOVEMENT AND ALL?

AW: Well, as I remember, I was, we ??? before January 2nd, 1965, my husband and I, you know the rumors was going around in the neighborhood that Dr. King would be coming to Selma to get a lot of black people to register to vote because at the time I think we had only, I think it was 300 and we had this organization called the DCVL, Dallas County Voters League and Rev. Reeb didn't want to come over, which we didn't know much about. We had heard about it some but you know, very few black people knew about it and my husband and I, we knew a little something about it but we, we were not registered to vote or nothing like that. In fact we didn't try to become it because at that time my husband was just, he was an interior/exterior decorator for all the local white people. They wanted him to work and they all knew him. They knew me and they us from the Catholic church. So he didn't get too involved in it, but after Dr. King got here on the second, there was a lot of black people around in this area who was kind of reluctant about going out to Browns chapel. So I was doing my house work as usual and one of the neighbors said, "Come on Alice, let's go outside and see who at the church." So we peeked out the door several times, a lot of people was going around so I told my neighbor, I said, "I'm not going. I'm not getting into that because I don't want to get harrassed by any of these whites." She said, "Well if you're not going I'm not going either." I said, "In fact I'm kind of scared." So that afternoon my husband came home. He was telling me, he said, "As we went on to the church," and I told him, you know, there's a lot of people out there, he asked me if I'd seen Dr. King and I told him no I didn't go. So, after awhile we stood around talking, I was talking with one of my neighbors and we could hear all the loud talk in the church and the freedom songs and everybody was getting excited and it was just about over. So 2 more ladies, you know, ride in, and they told us, well if you go just walk down to the church anyway. So we walked on by and went on down to the church and she said, "I'm going in" So at that time I said, "I believe I go up and ask them but I'm not going to stay up in there" So we got up in the church, the church was just full of people singing and Dr. King was talking, Jose William and Bev and one or two others and ah, I saw a lot of the SNCC workers here which I knew from 63 because actually, they were the ones who came in and started the whole thing in 1963. ?????? one or two other workers and all. So we went in that time, it was on a Saturday if I remember, I think it was on a Saturday morning and then the next night, Sunday night, there was a big mayors meeting and I was ready to go then. I had got dressed and got to the ??? early and I went and everybody was getting ready to go into the

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church, so I didn't feel afraid. I enjoyed it and he was telling us about what was going on, how we should get the ballot and you know, put the different people out there, there was a mistreating of blacks and how we need to get equal employment and the schools need to be changed and we didn't have to sit in the back of the doctor's office and, we just have to be segregated against it and Dr. King was here to help us and don't be afraid. So after that, I just, my husband would go out every night and even ~~????~~ and I started going and we just actually took a part in it and so when the different people would come in we would make them all welcome and they would start coming to our house, it was something like a second freedom house. They would come and get water or use the bathroom or just come to relax from the church or just sit around and you know, other people's houses they would go to and get somewhere to stay. In fact Dr. King and his workers had asked all the people in the church that we was going to have to help the people get somewhere to stay because quite a few would be coming in quite often to try and help us out and for us to be nice to them and for us not to be afraid. So we started, just everybody around just started taking them in. But then somehow or another, they just felt more comfortable coming here. I guess because my husband was always out there, you know, around the church and doing what he could and that's how he first met Jon one night out there. They struck up a conversation somehow, I don't know, but anyway, he came in with my husband one night and that's how I first met Jon and he, you know, he said he was staying with us. He'd rather stay over here with us. He was staying right across the street with Rose Scott. So he came in and stayed and made friends with the children, like I say, I just, I didn't have too much to say because I didn't know him, I didn't know what his ~~????~~ was and he was a young white man and I didn't know, see there wasn't too many white people down here at the time. It was just a few coming here and I didn't know, just what was his purpose, you know. Although he was out there at the church trying to help out. But after, you know, I began to know him, a whole conversation with him, I found out that he was a nice person and he's the type of white person that I could trust around black people because I'm just used to, I was just used to being around black people all the time. Very few white people I had contact with. Maybe um, some of the nuns or the catholic priest, Father Ouelette or someone like that or, but none of the other people, see the black and the white people, they wasn't socializing together like they are now. They are more socialized, the races are, than what they were then.

L: Which is a good thing in my opinion, you know.
AW: Well (phone rings) well I don't know what ah, it was just so, I was brought up as a girl, you know, you know, my great grandma always told me "Stay on my side and let them stay on their side" although she was working for some white

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people you know. She had a white insurance man and it was all white policemen, all white farmers, just everything was white. So she just always told me "Stay on my side" So the only white people I knew or held a conversation with was the nuns and the the ah, you know, the catholic priest ah. Some of the white people call up for my husband to work, you know, and I would talk to them on the phone or they would come pick him up sometimes or something like that and that's the only contact I had with them. So Jon was so close and friendly that I just didn't know what his purpose was. I knew he was here to help us but you know, you just have to get used to ah, another person from another race and you have to get to know them to feel relaxed with them. I know that's the way I felt but right now it doesn't bother me because I know people are just people now. It doesn't matter, you know, the color of your skin, people are just people. But ah, black people, and I'm speaking for myself and some of my friends, we just have a tendency to just ah, settle with our own race, just like it is, I go to the catholic church that integrated, it's black and white. There are some whites that are very friendly and then there are some that are very, you know, cool towards you and when they come out of the church they ah, they don't smile, they don't say good morning, they don't say anything. Like the priest in the catholic church when he tell us to turn around and offer each other a sign of peace, they are somewhat reluctant about extending their hand to a black person and I know that for myself. But when we have our little fellowship socials like going to the ah, you know, suppers and things we have at church, most of the black people, we mostly sit in a group and most of the white people, they sit in their group then there are some white people that come over that's in our church that will sit down and start a conversation. It's all right with me and it's all right with the rest of my black lady friends but we just have a tendency to just be with our whole race. It's just a pattern we've set up and it's just, it's just there, you know, but ah, I get along all right with my white friends in the catholic church. It's just that some of them are so distant and I just feel like, well if they don't want to be bothered with me I'd rather not be bothered with them. We can go to church together, we can worship God together, we can take communion together but after that, it's all gone because ~~??????~~ church members I met em in the mall, I met em downtown and they turn their head the other way. Now that's the truth. So it's some, things are somewhat better here in Selma but they could be better. We've come a long ways ^{now} in Selma. We have black police and black firemen, black ~~??????~~ you know, what have you. We have a lot of good jobs, you know, we have a whole black commission here now. Black city councilor but there's still a lot of improvement could be. But I don't think it would ever, would ever, just be equal basis for the black and white. It's just not going to be. You know, but I know everybodys got the same amount

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of prejudice, there are some blacks that I wouldn't just associate with, you know, I don't, maybe I don't like their conduct, you know? But, you know, if I just want to visit Mrs. Ed because she's white or ~~?????~~ I don't want that, just make things equal for me and give my children a chance just like her children.

L: Mrs. West, how did Jonathan cut through that? You know, in 1965, how did he, it didn't seem to matter in his case.

AW: No I guess not, like I say, Jon was friendly with everybody but the whites, they didn't care for him, you know, he went down to the episcopal church once or twice with ah, Gloria House, she's in Detroit now, did you all hear about her?

S: Yes we've talked to her.

AW: Oh, he went down to the church with her and the whites didn't want them down there. Did she tell you what, you know, have you talked to her about when they went down there?

S: We don't know the kids that went to church with them. Do you know who they were? My understanding is that they, you know, they wanted to integrate St. Pauls and so they started showing up on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday,

AW: Yeh, well I know Gloria House was one of them and ah, I don't know what, I don't think any of my kids went with them because I think, he went to our church with my kids, ahha, but I think it was another young man who's name is Willy ah,

S: Vaughn?

AW: Yeh, I think he was one of them, but ah, I don't even know where he is now. He might be back in Mississippi. I haven't heard anything from him since he left. But all the other workers, the SNCC workers that knew me would always come back, you know and speak to me and spend some time with me. But I haven't heard anything from Willy Vaughn, have you all heard anything?

S: No

L: Or Joyce Bailey we'd like to talk to,

AW: Who?

L: A lady named Joyce Bailey, she was in jail with Jonathan.

AW: Oh yeh, JOyce Bailey yeh. I don't know where she is either. Last time I heard she was in Birmingham.

Birmingham, Alabama but I don't know if she's still there or not. Like I say, I lost contact with a lot of those people ah, but Jon, he was just, he just wanted to make peace, you know, among everybody, you know. He tried going around to some of the churches like that and you know, he'd try and integrate them and make peace but the whites, they just

couldn't, they just didn't want to see, they might have accepted him although he was down here, but the fact that he brought some blacks with him I think that's what got more through them than anything. They didn't, because i remember him talling me he went one time and they called him the scum of the earth or something. Some kind of ugly statement they made to him and threatened him because I remember him coming here and telling me about it and he was looking all depressed all that day about it, you know. In fact that was, ah, I think that was the only time I saw him look that depressed, yeh, because all the other times he was always in a good mood and was always smiling and making friends and you know, telling little funny jokes and you know, teasing the kids about things and you know, he'd talk to me about the bible a lot. He led a good clean life ah, I don't think I heard him say one ugly word about no one. If he did he didn't say it in my presence and I didn't hear nobody else say he said anything. But everybody just gave him just a good reputation. He was just ah, whole- hearted, nice, out-going, young fella and you know, when he first got here he did tell me that ESCRU sent him down. That was this organization from Georgia. I think his name was Father Morris or something

S: We're going to talk to him
L: We're going to talk to him this weekend.

AW: Yeh he sent him down and sent Judy down as well.
S: You said that Jonathan was staying with the Scotts and they he came here and felt comfortable and then what did he ask you,

AW: He said he wanted to stay with us, he'd rather stay over here, and I told Alonso, that was my husband, if it was alright with him it was alright with me but I wasn't too cpomfortabl,e about it and my husband told me, "Oh he all right Alice. He be allright, he's allright" Then I got, you know after I got to know Jon, you know, ah, it just came easy. I didn't look at the color of his skin then, you know, he didn't act no different than us. He ate out of the same dishes we ate at, he ate the food we ate which was just common food. Cold drinks, fat back, baked sweet potatos, black-eyed peas, you know, rice, he ate grits in the morning like we ate and coffee, eggs, homemade pancakes. He ate what we ate and ate peanutbutter sandwiches for lunch. Didn't have no jelly to go with it all the time, but he ate that, he ate slices of watermelon. He just ate what we ate and eat homemade ~~teacakes~~ ^{cookies}, that's a type of cookie I make, he ate that right along with us. He drank the Kool-aid. So he just ate what we ate and he took bath in the same bathtub we took a bath in and he used the same comode, you know. So he was just like family. In fact he said, you know, he called me his ah, adopted, see I adopted him and a lot of neighbors was teasing me and saying to me, "Out of all the

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children you have Mrs. West you had to go and get a white one this time" (laughs). So I went to the big store around supper time, it was behind ?????? and stuff and he was just telling me ah, "Come on Mrs. West, get this, and get this, now this isn't very nutritious, we going to get this and this and that" and the white folks would turn around and look at him so hard and they'd look him up and down and ~~they's~~ look at me and look at him and look at my other little black kids and they's turn their nose up. they just didn't know what was going on. They just couldn't understand, you know, how I could, you know, he could just be, I guess so relaxed with a black family, you know and ah, I would tell him, "Jon be careful, look at that white man looking at you." And he would do his hand like that and wouldn't pay no attention. Sometimes I would pass people in the store and ?????????????? they wouldn't speak to him. they thought it was the worse thing to see him with a black family. They just couldn't see how he could be like that. They just, I don't know, they just couldn't see it, they couldn't accept it and they didn't accept it. But ah, Jon came out here and he lost his life. He went and came back and he got killed in August of 20 and it is just as hard as it is then as it is today and I was in the middle of my house, we were cooking and washing and cleaning as usual and the telephone rung and I answered. I think one of my kids answered first and said, "Mama, telephone" and I went to the telephone and I said hello and it was Eugene Prichard on the phone. He said, "Ms West, I know you're not ready for this, but Jon has been shot and Father Morrisroe too," this was the catholic priest that was hit. I said, "Father Morrisroe bee shot?" he said, "Yes and Jon is dead but Father Morrisroe is not dead." And I just couldn't say nothing for a minute, it just felt like I was going to faint and I finally caught a hold of myself and he said ah, "Father Morrisroe is being taken to the hospital but I don't believe he's going to live but I know Jon is dead." I said, "For real Gene, you got it straight?" he said, "Yeh, we just got there and went to this so and so and so and so store to get some refreshments, he shot Father Morrisroe," I think he said he shot him first and he shot Jon.

L: Other way around

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AW: And Jon died instantly, right? You know on the store grounds or whatever it was and then Eugene said, "I'll be in Selma in a few minutes," ?????????, he said, "Did you hear what I said?" I said, "~~Yeh-i'm~~ listening, I'm going to call Judy, I'm going to see how ??????" I felt like I was going to fall I had to catch myself and sit down. So I told my children and I called some of my neighbors, in fact they heard me crying and they rushed over to see what was the matter and I told them that Jon had been shot. By that time the house was full of people, some of the workers that were still around, in and out of the church, they came in. So we got together, I got Judy's address because she was back in ah, Missouri I think and I called her and she's all. "Are you sure Ms West?" I said, "Yeh, Jon is dead Judy" She said, "Well he just gone down there a few days" I said "Yeh but he went to Lowndes County, help some of the SNCC workers get some people registered to vote," I can't remember what she said but she said she was going to contact Father Morrisroe. So she did and she called me back the next day in the afternoon and Father Morrisroe called me also. He said ah, if I wanted I could go up to the funeral and I told him I think I could arrange to go. So I went up, you know,some of the other workers are ministers, somebody was here and they helped me get the plane reservation and everything. So one of them told me he would stay at the house with the children. So ESCRU payed my way up and I met ah, Stokely Carmichael and ah, I guess Ruby Sales was there too and somebody else at Kennedy airport in New York and then we went on to ah, Keene, you know, to Ms. Daniels house. I had been, you know, I had talked with her several times on the phone but thois was my first time meeting her and it was a lot of people, you know, in the house sitting around and they was talking and going on and ah, she had a big ol, some kind of big dog. I don't know if he was a doberman pincher or a greyhound or what he was,

S: Mrs. Daniels?

AW: Yeh, Mrs. Daniels, I don't know what kind but he didn't like me and when I got there he threw his eyes right on me and he just stared at me and I was so afraid of him because I always have been, you know, afraid of dogs because I got dog bit when I was a girl. So I asked Ms Daniels, I said ah, "May I use your bathroom?" but I would like Judith to go with me because I was scared to pass the dog and I asked Ms Daniels where it was ah, I didn't see any black people other than the ones that came on the plane with me and she said there was only 5 black families there in Keene at the time. I said, "Oh, no wonder" I said, "I didn't see anybody but Stokely and the other black people that came in from the funeral and one of Jon's other friends, she came down from New York ah, she was a nurse but I can't remember her name, she came. But when we first got to Keene, got off the plane they carried us directly to the funeral home, you

know, to see Jon in the chapel. Not the funeral home, the chapel in the church I mean. When I got there we looked in the casket, Jon was lying there so peaceful. It seemed like he had the same smile on his face he had all the time. It looked like he was just, he was just at peace. He was so, he was just so peaceful and it was just so, the god was standing there over him. So Stokely and the rest of us came and we stood there and we looked at him, he was just so peaceful. It looked like he just.....just looked like he was a little innocent baby. He just it was just, my heart, I guess I had a good heart then because if I hadn't I would have had a heart attack. Just seeing him lying there, you know, such a good warm hearted person had to get killed so violently just because he wanted to buy some kind of refreshments from the store. Just looked like he was just killed for nothing. Looked like he just should have had a peaceful death. But you know god got destiny set for everybody for his own reason but I just couldn't understand why he had to be shot down like a dog, just like he was a dog. he hadn't done anything wrong, he was just trying to help people. Help people that needed help.

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L: You know Mrs. West, I was thinking, um, here we are 25 years later going to make a movie about him. Now if this is a good movie, a lot of people are going to see the story of Jonathan Daniels life and if we make a good movie and a lot of people see it than it's just a chance that the god influence he had in his life back then can jump over and continue now with a thousand more people learning about him. Right now a few thousand people know about him but the story of his life and how he committed himself, see that's what we want to do. See so, the answer to your question might be well, here we are, you know, we're going to try to do it and let people know.

AW: He had his whole life ahead of him. He didn't have to come down here and ah, get involved and get killed but he said he wanted to do it. He wanted to help people. He'd say, he just, it was something he wanted to do on his own. Later he told me, you know, after I got to know him, and of course I asked him, I said ah, "You come from a big rich family, went to a big school, something the average person don't get to be and I know blacks came through it," He said, "No, I'm not some big rich family just ah, middle-class family, my father was a doctor and I had one sister Emily," He had gained my confidence and he was telling me a lot of things saying he had problems like anybody else. He said ah, "She's been a lot of problems, she just had a baby out of wedlock" you know, just some things he would sit down and tell me and ah, he say, "I'm no big ah, I'm just a person like anybody else and I just want to help people." He'd tell me a lot of different things about him, you know, personal things and all.

S: Why did he, did he tell you why he did come down,

AW: He told me when he left that he was coming back and he did come back the first week in August, maybe the second but I know it was August the 20 when he got killed. I can never forget that day. I will never forget that day. It was just, the few days, the morning when he left, the strange thing about it is the morning that he left I remember just as good, I heard him run his water about five o'clock in the tub. I said, "Jon is that you, you up already?" because I thought it was one of my kids and he said "Yes Mrs. West I got to go to Lowndes County" I said, "You want something to eat?" He said, "Yes but I'm not going to have much time but you can fix something if you want to." So I fixed some grits that morning and some eggs and some toast and I made some Kool-aid because I didn't have any orange juice. So he came in and just ate a bite. So he ??????? and he said, "Mrs West, I'm going down here and I'm going to get some of these people registered" I said, "Whoo all going?" he said, "Stokely Carmichael and Ruby Sales" he named quite a few people and he said, "Well I'm going to be calling you back, I'll keep in contact with you. I'm going to call you the day before i come so you be sure to save some of whatever you cook because I like your cooking" I said, "It might not be what you want, you know there's not going to be no steak and shrimps" he said, "I'm not looking for that. I'm going, bye" So I went to the front door with him and I was looking out the window and he come back here, got half way down the sidewalk to his car, his little volkswagon and he come back and he said, "Bye Mrs. West" and I said, "Bye Jon" and he looked at me and smiled and he said, "You be a good girl all day here." And I said, "Okay" he said, "Don't work too hard" He went down the sidewalk and he was putting something in his pocket like some papers or something and he got to his car and he opened his little

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volkswagon door, he turned around again, he came back to the front window, he said, "Mrs. West, bye, bye" I said, "Bye Jon, you be good." He said, "I'm going to be good, bye bye"

He went on down the sidewalk waving me bye. Now there was something strange about that then but I never felt anything about until after I found out he was dead, yoiu know, I never thought anything about it. But 3 times, you know, he hadn't even got to his car and opening the door and turning around and come back to tell me bye. He must have ah, my great grandma used to tell me you could feel your death but I don't know, I never really ?????? but ah, he must have felt that he probably wouldn't see us again and he had been about 3 days, maybe 4 days before I got the call from Eugene Prichard that he was dead. So.....I just, i don't think it done anything to Mr. Coleman. I don't think he ever was convicted, I don't think.

S: No

AW: He just got off cold. I think the ???he put up that day was on his property.....well, you know, when a black person or a civil rights person be killed in the south, all the white people have a tendency to stick together and whether it's wrong or right they are going to be on each other's side. So I never hear anything more about it, but like I was saying, all I can say about Jonathan Daniels that he was well loved in this community by the blacks and all and ah, i was working in a preschool that we had named after him, worked there 18 years. They had a preschool named after Jonathan. The ah, episcopal church has sent a grant into Dallas county to build a preschool and Mrs. Daniels had also gotten up some money, I think it was \$3,000 to help with one of the schools. So the school was named after Jonathan when it was first built. It was just a preschool to teach the black children, don't imagine no white folks would come in, you know, just to help them out with their alphaebets and things they should know before they get into preschool because we didn't have any here. There was some kindergartens in the public school but they just took a few children at a time. So ah, I have a grandson named after Jon, he's named Jonathan Myrick and he will be in his senior year next year and ah, I sent Mrs. Daniels a picture of him a long time ago. He's named after Jon.

L: Did you have a spare picture of that boy.

AW: Yeh I've got some pictures that I'll give you one of.

L: Bill, that might be real nice.

AW: And ah, i hope he can grow up and be the type of person, you know, Jon was, but I know no 2 people are alike but I hope he can do some good things in life like Jon did. I hope he can follow in his footsteps, although he wasn't here

at the time but I hope he can follow in his footsteps and do some things like Jon would have done.

L: We've wondered occassionally Mrs. West, what Jon would have done had he survived that August. Did he ever tell you or discuss with you his plans for the future in September of 65 was he going to go back to school do you think?

AW: Yeh he said he had one more year in seminary school and ah, he was saying one day he was going to be a priest and maybe marry and ah, have a family. Now he was ah, this young lady that was here from New York, she was ???? and she came down with the, we had a medical committee also and she had come down to help the medical committee to help some of the black people that might get hurt or sick or need some kind of assistance and Jon met her. She was ah, puerto-rican but she had black skin like I have but her hair was different, you know, she was, you could tell she was mixed with something. But that was ah, his girlfriend.

S: She came to the funeral?

AW: Yeh, she came to the funeral but she wasn't on the same plane that Stokely and I was on, she came later.

S: You don't remember her name though?

AW: I can't remember her name, I'm going to have to think. I've been trying to think of the name because there was a friend I met just down in, he's that old mist, Charles Eagle, he's wqrting a textbook about Jon and I couldn't remember her name for him. I can't, it seemed to me like it was Theresa or, Theresa or Tomique or something. I can't remember exactly what her name was.

L: Eagles, he might finish that book. It would be nice if he did.

AW: Did you all talk with him?

S: A little bit yeh.

L: He was a little help, yeh. His projects a little different from ours so,

AW: Yeh becuase he's writing a textbook, that's right.

L: Yeh so we're making a movie and you don't use as meny words in a movie.

AW: No, no

L: But yeh

AW: Ah, well there was somebody else that came here ah, about 3 years ago and ah, he wanted some information about Jonathan Daniels. He was going to make a movie also.

L: Was it about the Eyes On the Prize?

AW: No, no i know all of those. This is ah, this was a young fella, he told me he was from California but he was on the way to Canada to visit his mother and father and he got a lot of ah, he got some pictures we had and, you know, a lot of information from a few people around here in Selma, but I never heard from him again.

L: He didn't keep your pictures did he?

AW: Yes he did and a little paperback book that was written about Jon,

You know this is the guy that Chayenne, Chayenne told us this morning of a guy from California, she trusted him and gave him her letters,

AW: I did too

L: And he took them

AW: He did and he didn't show back up. he look like he might be about your age.

L: Did he look like him?

AW: No he's not the one, he's not the one, but he called and he kept calling until he had someone to talk to. He took this book and just a lot of little paper clippings and scraps and things I had about Jon.

L: It's a wonder you trust anybody coming here at all any more.

AW: Well I, well you know, you can count, we got trust

L: Well we did the reverse, we gave you pictures instead.

AW: yeh and then he had ah, I had this little book on the Burning Bush about Jon, okay, and he took that and ah, he just convinced us taht he was going to mail this stuff back. In fact he said he would be back within a year after he got things sraightened out. But I think it's been about 3 years now. It's been about 2 or 3 years, about 3 years maybe 3½.

L: He didn't leave an address or anything?

AW: No, I don't have any address because i was, you know, i

trusted the guy, you know, he just, I don't know, he just, I guess he just took advantage of us but that wasn't right.

S: Well Mrs. West, maybe Jonathan here found a family that he really didn't have that much contact with in New Hampshire.

L: He had a lot of problems with his family back home. Dad had died 6 years before and his father was out all the time as a doctor in the middle of the night.

AW: Was he out drinking or just,

S: NO, no, just visiting, was busy

L: Delivered hundreds of babies and he'd be out at one in the morning and three in the morning. Jon never saw his father and his mother was a real strict kind of lady who, well she was more, you know, inside

AW: Yeh she was, I liked her the first time I met her and ther first time I saw her when we left the chapel where Jon's body was but I had talked to her several times on the phone and she would call and ask about Jon or asked to speak to Jon and ah, I liked her the first time I saw her and she kept in contact with me and I wrote to her which I hate writing letters but I wrote to her and ah, we talked some on the phone just until her death which was in ah, 85 and ah, that was another bad for me. But ah, see Jon felt, I felt about Jon ,like I would one of my own kids, you know, I guess if I should lose one of my kids I couldn't feel no worse than what I felt about Jon cause ah, I had got to know him and, you know, i just, he called me his mother so, the neighbors would tease me and say all the black children and I finally got a white one, where did I get him from. But you know, they liked him, they just, you know, they just joking. He'd visit with the neighbors and talk to them and all.

L: You know, Bill, you might be right, this may have been his real family. I mean it really might have been.

AW: Oh yeh, he got along well with my husband, he had just, ??????? had more drinks and he got a little loud and Jon talked to him and he got all right because I could never see Jon taking anything but a beer. He never, and that wasn't awful, when ah, he had extra money to get hamburgers or something like that we just thought that was something great because most of the time we just had regular food. But he never snubbed his nose about anything he ?????? Like I said, the same dishes they was chipped and the same different forks and knives and spoons or something like that.

S: He really liked the kids I take it?

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AW: Yeh, he loved the kids Bonnie and the little ones and he would teach them right from wrong and you know, he disciplined them, you know, in a way where you wouldn't have to spank them, you know, when they do wrong. He was just like that in the house, you know, with the kids, he would get the apron sometimes and he kept his collar on, he would get the apron sometimes and put it around him and help dry the dishes off, you know, clean the tables off or whatever, you know, needed to be done. He'd help me get the clothes in off the line, you know, stuff like that. he just, he was just like that, he called us his black adopted family so he just pitched in and did what he had to. He'd make his own bed and if he had something to be washed he'd ask me if you're going to wash today I'll bring my dirty laundry down and you can wash it or something like that and he'd help fold the clothes. But most of the time he'd be picking up the other people and taking them down to Dr. Dumonts office or taking them to get their medicine or taking them to get their grocery store or just going to the store for me. he done his part down in the movement. He didn't just come and just play with the kids. He was helping the old people too when he could.

S: You know what ah, that project he and Eugene did down in Dallas County where they went around and interviewed people about what they needed, the services they needed.

AW: Jon told me something about it because when they used to be going and I'd asked him what they'd been doing, I can't tell you the name of it but he'd be going out on the ruls and I remember once or twice he carried some forewood out and ah, he carried ah, some type of vouchers out to the old people that they needed to have. you know there wasn't any food stamps out in Dallas County but there was some other kind of voucher they had to have for the doctor or some kind of medicine or something, he would always take that down or something like that. If it's warm in here you can crack the door some.

L: I'm okay thanks, would you rather I did, you want me to open the door a little bit for you two.

AW: Yeh, Diane turn the big fan on upstairs

S: You'd think too that ah, this is new to us, that he might have married this woman, this medical woman.

AW: I don't think it was that serious, but you know, we would tease him, oh I know her name now, Jeanette, that was her name, Jeanette but I don't remember her last name.

L: There were a lot of women who really liked Jonathan.

AW: Oh I know that

L: The reason I say that is that a lot of these women, at least 2 of them thought that they were going to get married to Jonathan.

AW: Well I, one of Ms Scotts daughters?

L: No um, Judith Upham

AW: Oh yeh, I knew about her. I didn't mention that because I thought you all knew that. I think she was a little jealous of Jeanette. They did have some kind of, Jon and her did have some kind of disagreement about her but you know, when they were arguing they kind of kept quiet, you know, they were arguing on the porch one time I know and ah, you know, Jon slept, I remember Judy slept upstairs with one of my daughters and I was upstairs in one of the back, see this is a 5 bedroom apartment. There's one bedroom downstairs and a half a bath. there's a whole bath upstairs and 4 bedrooms ahha, so there was plenty of room but Jon slept downstairs and there was another ah, white civil rights worker here from new York. He was with some kind of newspaper, with the New York Times. All I know is his name was JOn. I can't remember his name but this young lady was named Jeanette and Jusy and him did have some words or something about her but they always kept it kind of quiet but I could tell from the expression on his face and it looked like Judy had been crying one time. So I didn't question her as to what was the matter and I didn't ask him but I knew it was about Jeannette and I really wanted Jeanette to kind of stay away. you know, she wasn't living here but she would come in and out. But I wanted her to kind of stay away because i liked Judy and I liked Jon and i didn't want no kind of hard feelings, you know.

L. We hadn't heard about Jeannette.

Mrs. West: No, her name is Jeanette, Jeanette, that's her name.

L. We heard about Caroline, and--Abby--

B. He was writing to another young woman by the name of Mary McNaughton?

Mrs. W. I don't know her. Carolilne is the one I met --she was here in November.

L. She was his first girl friend.

Mrs. W. That's what she told me--in school. I met her after we had this thing over in Montgomery in November.

L. I wanted to come over, but by that time I had to get back to New Hampshire, I was here, too.

Mrs. W. Well, I hear from her all the time. Uh, huh, Caroline. But ah, I guess a lot of these young ladies was crazy about Jon but I really think he was, ah, he was more interested in Jeanette than he was in Judy, I think I think he took her as his co-worker.

Bill: What:

Mrs. W. Just took her as a co-worker.

B. Uh, huh. Judy, yeah.

Mrs. W. Uh huh. I think that what he mostly took her as, a co-worker.

L. She had problems with that, we think.

Mrs. W. Uh, huh, but ah,

L. She was hoping I think that he'd come back and they'd eventually get married.

Mrs. W. No, I don't-- I--I think Jon--he did say one day when he finished, you know, the priesthood, finished school, he was gonna marry you know, raise a family. But he never said who, (all laugh) so, I--I didn't ask him ---

L. There's sixty-five at least, here.

Mrs. W. Well, I didn't ask-- I didn't know Carol. This is my first knowin her, you know, in November, I didn't know anything about her, but, there were some more, there was one other white girl here from Mississippi that liked Jon too. She came here with SNCC, she liked Jon, but I don't know if he paid much attention to her nor not.

L. He was probably too busy with the other five.

Mrs. W. (laughs) We he had his choice of all of em, you know.

L. He was a good looking man.

Mrs. W. Yeah, Jon was--I I think he was down here really to do a job, you know, help people get registered to vote and help the people out that was in need, not financially wise, just you know, just doing just things in general. Cause he didn't have any money, he had a little spending money from ESCRU, when he he would take that and buy the popsicles and ice cream to treat the children for different things and buy a little something extra for the house when he could afford it, but other than that he didn't have a whole lot of money.

L. You don't see people nowadays in 1990 doing what Jonathan did in 1965--

Mrs. W. And a young person too.

L. That's right, now, they just get a car and get a job.

Mrs. West. Yeah, and get some junk to smoke or something.
L. That's right.
Mrs. West: You know--
L, 25 years ago you had a group of people who would do that.
Mrs. W. Yeah, yeah.
L. Do you think it'll ever happen again? The way it was back then?

Mrs. W: Very rare.
L. Think it could happen?
Mrs. W: No, I don't--it might happen, but I don't think so, cause the young people now, ah, they don't really care about helping old people some now, cause--
L. This weekend in Washington, DC, there's gonna be a meeting of young black college students, trying to do what SNCC did 30 yrs ago.
Mr.s W: Oh, really?

L. They want to start all over again.
Mrs. W. Oh, that'll be good.
L. Yeah, see, so that's --
Mrs. W: But I hope they have a non-violent approach to it, you know. You know, SNCC was all right, but see, they had some tactics that I just didn't really approve of. But I just, you know, I, you know, I didn't say anything, but they had some tactics I just didn't approve of. at all. Cause they just wanna get things done, right then and there. And see, that's not gonna solve anything.
B: How did Jonathan get to be a buddy with Stokely Carmichael, I wonder, we understand--
Mrs. W: They would all be here in the house, and I don't know how he met him, but Stokely was, he wasn't a non-violent person. You know, I knew Stokely well, and he visited me several times oh I haven't seen-- (end side A)

Side B discussion of the photographs we brought, Terry and jRoderick in background.

Mrs. W: When you think the film gonna be done?
B and L. One year.
Mrs. W: Well, I hope I'll be around so I can see it.
B: This august too, we're trying to put together we're not sure of its coming off yet, an event, 25th anniversary--
Mrs. W: Yeah.
Roderick: (something)
Mrs. W: Were you down here in March for the--were you down in Selma for the 25th anniversary ?
B: No, we weren't. We're gonna try and have something in Keene. In memory of Jonathan.
Mrs. W: Oh, that'll be good. Carol sent me some little clippings you know and things about what's going on there.
B: Right. They had a birthday party for him. Last year,
Mrs. W: You know, Rachel and Sheyanne, their book's supposed to be made a movie out of, but it hasn't materialized. I

don't know what's the holdup. Cause right now they're filming a movie in Selma, Blue Skies or something.

B: We heard that.

Mrs. W: So I don't know what's the holdup. They hadn't got around to Rachel and Sheyanne's book.

L. I talked to Mr. Sikora a couple of weeks ago .

Mrs. W: Yes he is, nice southern man.

L. We're going to see him Friday. We're going up to Birmingham.

Mrs. W: Birmingham.

L. We figure we have another year of hard work on this --

Mrs. W: Yeah, to make it successful.

L. It's funny, all this work, for a 60 minute movie.

Mrs. W: and be sure and portray Jon as a --I I could call him a saint. Believe some people would. You know, all the good things he done, would outweigh any of the bad things he might have done, you know, maybe some things I don't know about. But all I could, you know, speak for, he was just, almost perfect.

B: Pretty hard to find any ah--

Mrs. W. Yeah. He's almost perfect. I don't have-- I can't-- say oneugly thing about him. I cannot. He just died a horrible death and I just regret it so much it made me sick for a while, but you know, I got over it, because --I guess he had to die that way. Ah you know, if he had gotten sick you know took a cold, pneumonia, maybe a automobile accident, that would be more than--just somebody just trying to shoot him down.

B: It makes no sense.

Mrs. W: It's hard. It's hard. You know, that the good people have to go like that. But now, ah, Father Morrisroe, that was with him, this Catholic priest, have you got a chance to talk to him?

B: We talked to him by phone, he's in Chicago.

Mrs. W: Yeah, I visited him, in his home, he married a Puerto Rican , he's no longer a Catholic priest now.

B. No.

Mrs. W: He has 2 beautiful children. Yeah, I was visiting my brother in Chicago and he come and took me and two of my grandkids out to his house. We spent a day, my ex-husband, we went out and spent the day with him and his wife. We had a cook-out and everything. I met Father Morrisroe with SCLC was havin their anniversary in Birmingham. And ah, Father Morrisroe was there in the church. And he was--you know, I introduced him to Jon. You know, cause Jon was on the other side helping some of the other people get seated, and I was talkin to this Catholic priest. I could recognize he was a priest. So Jon came up and i introduced him, to Jon.

B: When was that?

Mrs. W: That was in 65.

B: In August, or--?

Mrs. W: No, it ws before Jon came back, it was about--let me

see: I guess it was ah, I can't remember, but it was before Jon was--you know it was before he got killed. It might have been the end of July or something SCLC was having that conference.

B: Was that in Atlanta?

Mrs. W: No, it was in Birmingham.

B: In Birmingham.

Mrs. W: Uh huh. Father Morrisroe wanted to come back and go with Jon to work, so I told him he could come and stay in my house. And then I told Jon that night, I said, "Now, you sleep on the couch in the living room, and let Father Morrisroe sleep in the bed." So Jon said, "Oh, Mrs. West, you discriminating against me, you gonna let him sleep in the bed, let me sleep on the couch!" I said "That's right, Jon." And he just fell down laughing. But I didn't really mean it like that, you know. So he came on back to town with Jon. That's how he happened to be out there working with him, he had got out there and worked. But ah, Father Morrisroe, he walks with a limp, now.

B: He never recovered fully?

Mrs. W: No, he walks with a limp from that shotgun blast. And the shoe that has on looks like its kinda, ah, built a little higher, but I just wouldn't just stare at it, you know. When he found out I was in Chicago he came over to my brother's house and got me, got my ex-husband, we went out and spent the whole day with him. And before he got married he had come back to Selma, several times, and visited with us. But the shotgun blast hit him in the side. It's a wonder it didn't leave him paralyzed. But he does walk with a limp.

B: We hope to interview him, but it's a long way out there for one interview.

Mrs. W: But you talked with Gloria House on the phone?

B: Um--hum. Well, we met her at Dartmouth, she was up for a SNCC reunion meeting. We taped an interview with her.

Mrs. W: Her son was down in April, he's in Tuskegee. And ah, he's working with some kind of civil rights group. So he was down in April to talk with me. And her husband, they're separated now. I think she says he's in New Mexico. He did a lot of work with SNCC, too. SNCC was a good organization, they did initiation when they came in here, they initiated the whole plan in 1963. Cause they was the first one in here. Bernard Lafayette, have you ever heard of him?

B: Yeah.

Mrs. W: And several others. Now, he got ambushed one night, by 2 or 3 white men. They hit him in the back of his head and gave him a good beating. But just didn't like the way SNCC was going about --at that time John Lewis was with SNCC too. But now he led the Bloody Sunday march, but after he had, ah, I think, after, John Lewis started working on the Dr. King, heavily on him, cause he still had some of those SNCC ideas. Dr. King preached non-violence, all the time. But when they got across that bridge, and met violence, that day when they brought John Lewis back, I

didn't think he was gonna make it. Because they brought him back to the church, they had to get the ambulance right away cause those big bully state troopers had beat him on the side of the head and knocked him--you might have seen one of the films, and knocked him down, have you talked to Amelia Boynton?

B: Not yet.

Mrs. W: She was----bridge over troubled water. She was one that got beat on the bridge. My husband went on that march on Bloody Sunday. But he didn't get a lick on him. He got tear-gassed, he was running so fast, and Jose Williams and J. Bevel was first ones back to the church. Now Frank Sikorah in California, he was here for the 25th anniversary. Now he's the one that picked Rachel up, or the horses woulda ran over her. The posse. Cause they was trying to get the horses to trample--Frank Sikorah to death. See, he was one of the first white guys in with SNCC too. And the white people had it in for him. And I remember hearing hearing them say, "Kill that so and so and so and so." And he they was just tryin to make those horses trample him to death. And he grabbed Rachel who was standing out there on the sidewalk right up in my back door, dropped Rachel on the floor, he went straight up to the bathroom, cause he had--he had vomited, or a nose bleed, or something, from runnin. But anyway,

B: Now, that's the Frank Sikora who did the book?

Mrs. W: No, no, this is Frank Sirocco.

B: Oh, Sirocco.

Mrs. Sirocco. He's from California, he was here for the 25th anniversary. Now he had to leave town that night, because the white people was lookin for him to kill him. And he had to leave, get out of town, that night. And the first time I saw Frank again was the Saturday before the 25th anniversary of the march. I was so glad to see him. Cause now he saved Rachel's life. See, when the peoples was running back from downtown to the Church, and we was standin out there and he grabbed Rachel to keep the horsemen and things from running over her cause that was a TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE SUNDAY! It was cold, it was bleak, it was cloudy, it looked like the atmosphere, just somethin in the air. And they kept tellin everybody not to go across that bridge. But the people went anyway. And they got over there, George Wallace had all those state troopers, Al Lingo, he was the head man of the troopers. He gave everybody he could a whuppin on that bridge that Sunday. And the people was runnin and hollerin, the ambulance was haulin, and it was a terrible day! You could see a number of people runnin and hollering, blood all on their head, and, oh! it was a bad day. I wouldn't want to live that day again. I thought the world was comin to an end.

B: Now, were you close to the bridge then, or--?

Mrs. W: No, I I didn't go over there, I had to stay with my kids, my husband went. I didn't go on the Bloody Sunday

march, but I was out there at the church. You know, and the , um hum, and when ah, before they left out of the church, Jose Williams, he kept leading the song, "God Will Take Care of You." He led that song three or four times before they left out of the church. And they took care of him, cause he was the first one back in the church, he was runnin so fast, see, cause, they, the troopers and the white people and the Klansmen, too, they had the people, singled out, who they was gonna get. They was tryin to get Bevel, Jose Williams, they did get John Lewis, ah, ~~Mr~~ Ron Leobrook, all of the SNCC workers, young white girls I was tellin you about, Hattie, from Mississippi, they definitely was tryin to get her. They was tryin to get Frank Sirocco, and 2 or 3 other SNC workers, they had the people singled out that they was gonna kill. And they almost killed them. But they didn't kill anybody on Bloody Sunday when they was goin back and forth to Montgomery. They did kill Mrs. Viola Luizzo. And the young black man that was with her, he lived right across the street. He had to leave--they haad to rush him out, in something like a casket, to get him out of Selma. Cause they thought they had killed him when they killed her. But he laid down under the seat, and it was so dark, you know, he wouldn't move. The boy likely had a heart attack. He had to leave town, with nothin but what he had on. And where they had shot Mrs. Viola Luizzo, he was all bloody, and he was scared to death, we had to get outta here some kinda way. His mother was right across the street so some of the head workers and things --I don't know exactly how they shipped him out--but they got him out of town, cause some of those Klansmen has, started, you know, circlin this back street down her down from the Church and all around the Church, cause we had come in the house that night, they was trying to get anybody, and see, I didn't know if they had mypart in this thing ??? or not, so I hurried up and got in the house and bolted up all the doors and things, but I had, ah, it was two or three Unitarian ministers staying in here with me, and after that some of the SNCC workers came in. And some of, ah, this black man, this Muslim, what's his name? Malcolm X. He had been out to the church in February, and he was trying to get the SNCC workers with his group, to just have a confrontation, you know, it was two of his men were sitting in here that night, and I saw the guns they had. They were sawed-off shotguns, I saw those guns, and I was really scared. And the Unitarian ministers was sittin in here, they was white, but they didn't bother them. But they was intendin, it was gonna be some destruction here in Selma that night. And somebody else was definitely gonna get killed. But, they, somehow or another, --Reverend Anderson-- do you know Reverend Lauren Anderson? You never heard of him? You need to talk to him, if you're here in Selma, now he he one of the, he's one of the head leaders here Selma, too, you talk to Reese?

B: Not Reese, no. We're going to talk to Miss Foster.

Mrs. W. Yeah, Marie Foster.

B. Yeah, Yeah, we talked to Chestnut--

Mrs. W. Yeah. Well, he had just done the legal work, he didn't go on Bloody Sunday.

B: He was not a soldier.

Mrs. W. No, he wasn't a soldier, he was doin all the legal work, along with Pete Hall, from Birmingham. Peter Hall is dead, now, and Fred Grave, from Montgomery. They was just doin the legal work, we had to have somebody do the legal work, too. But now, ah, if you talked to F. D. Reese, you might have heard of him--

B: Yes, I have, yes.

Mrs. W: Did you talk to the mayor here in Selma?

B: Well, I went into his office, for a minute, I didn't really talk to him.

Mrs. W: What-- he didn't have time, or he didn't make time?

B: He wasn't really to interested, I don't think.

Mrs. W: Yeah, he'd been kinda upset by what's been goin on here in Selma, cause he said, "You people come here and print the wrong stories, that you don't tell the truth, especially the newsmen and all, you are not newsmen, but he think, all outside people come in they don't tell the truth, he say Selma and the black people satisfied, and they's nothin goin on, and he don't know why you'all have to come here and make an issue--and you'all worse off in the North than the people are down here. And that you all more ??? that the white people down here.

Terry: We get that feeling in Selma.

Mrs. W: (laughs) Oh, now don't get me wrong, now there--there's a few nice white people here. There's a few nice white people here. But see they's--they--they--they--they afraid. They afraid to be-- you know, speak out. Now, from what I can understand, they have donated a lot of money to the Movement, and things. They have helped out. Have you talked to Dr. Hodo? You heard of him? Hodo. He's ah, not a psychiatrist, what's the other word? He's ah-- he worked with mental--you know--people, but he's not a psychiatrist.

B" Psychologist?

Mrs. W: Yeah, psychologist. Well, he's ah, now he'd be a good person for you to talk to. He's a white man, and everything. He comes to church out here to Brown Chapel, he go to the Catholic Church, he does all he can to try to help the black people, even try to make peace, he and his wife, both. He tried to make peace on both sides. Now he would be a nice person for you to talk to.

B: How do you spell his name?

Mrs. W: H-U-D-O; Hudo.

B: Hudo.

Mrs. W: He's listed in the phone book. But he would be a very nice person for you to talk to. I like him and I like his family. Now he'd be glad to talk to you. Have you talked to Dr. Rouselle, the black principal they put out of the school, the school board ?

B: No.

Mrs. W: Oh, the poor man has lotsa problems. He's find out there's trackin in the black school and all.

B: Yeah.

Mrs. W: He's had a lot of problems. They have threatened him. H-U-D-O. Dr. Hodo. He's listed in ph--what is his first name? I can't remember, but he would be a good person for you to talk to. I like for you to talk to Reverend Reese. Cause he could give you a lot of information, and ah, Reverend Anderson, he could give you --Anderson, ANDERSON. Yeah, now, cause, actually, now, his church is the first church that SNCC and them set up operation in. And SNCC was here in 63. (phone rings) Where, SCLC and Dr. King came in in 65. Now, Barnard Lafayette, now, that's where they were set up at Reverend Anderson's church, that was Tabernacle Church on Boyle Street. Now he could tell you that, but everybody didn't know the history of the Movement. They can tell you, that's where it first started.

B: What was Father Ouellet's role?

Mrs. W: Well, he was out, trying to help the people, you know, the black people, and to help, you know, the civil rights people, he stood out there in line, and stood in the rain, and helped with the--we had Berlin Wall, you know. Mayor Smitherman and Captain Baker--he's dead now, on one side, and the Blacks was on the other side. And that, you know, it stayed up all night, so Father Ouellet was out doing everything he could to keep the peace and to help the people. And ah, there was some people in California and Colorado and

South Dakota, North Dakota, different places, far away as Texas. Sendin in truck loads of food. You know to help the people that was outta jobs, or was on account of they was takin part in a demonstration; see at that time, the white people put pressure on the black people by takin their jobs from them, if they got in line to demonstrate at the Courthouse. And so, there was a lot of people, that sent truckloads of food in here to help the people. Father Ouellet, he was helpin with that he was njust doin anyting that needed to be done. He got a lot of criticisms from the Whites; a lot of criticism from the Catholic Church, from my own Bishop, so I understood. About him helping, he did ~~NT~~ think as he bein a Bishop that he should be out here in that. But I think what he done was right. He's a man of God and he wanted to help the people that was in need. He wanted to try help keep the peace, he wanted to try to make it right for everybody, make it comfortable for every man to you know, to live comfortable. You know, just, not just 'cause a person is--this color or that color--they got to take--you know, less. If you qualify for a job, regardless of what color a person is, let that person get that job, don't try to hold em back just because they are black. That's not right. After all, we all are here, on--borrowed-- time. And whatever we have here, we gonna die leave it here one day. Whether it's money, boats, jewelry, anything you might have, you might--you gonna die and leave it here, one day. And all those material things, they don't worry me at all; I just want to be comfortable, have somewhere comfortable to stay like I'm livin now, 'cause it's not my house. I have food to eat, I'm comfortable, so I don't want no big cars, I always did want a car, I don't have a car, so I guess God just--it's just one things he don't intend for me to have. So I don't worry about it, because I'm gonna leave it here one day. I'm not gonna take it with me. So we just livin here on borrowed time; we just enjoy what we have and somebody else enjoy it until they go. And I don't see why there's all the fussin and fighting over land, and over money, and over prestige-- why raise all the fuss about it! Why can't everybody just enjoy a piece of the pie! And get along--but I guess people just human, and they have some kind of evil thoughts. One man is afraid the other man is going to have more. But I'm not like that. I'm used to bein' poor. And as long as I'm covered-- I don't care about being poor. It doesn't worry me. I'm glad I don't have a lot of money. Cause if I did, I'd take it and give it to someone that need it. You know, I believe I would. Because I don't worry about a lot of material things, just as long as I have something to eat, and my children's doin all right, and we have somewhere warm to stay. I don't have no big house on the hill. I'm just in a rented apartment, like any other poor person, and I'm comfortable, I'm just as satisfied as I can be. Cause a lotta people that has money and have everything, but they --you know, they don't have their health; they don't have

the grace of God. And they're not happy. They uncomfortable. You take George Wallace's wife, Lurleen--she had plenty of money, and everything, she ran for governor, she won, but then she developed cancer, and all the money that they had, it didn't save her. No that poor George Wallace, I feel sorry for him. He done some evil things, now--cause he ordered those troopers and Al Lingo to beat those people up. He done some evil things. And he stood in the University of Alabama door, and on those same two legs that he stood in the door? They keep Figure Malone (?) and those other young black men out, and Autherine Lucy, those same two legs, he cannot stand on em today. And I always heard my great-grandmother say: "Be sure you're sayings will find you out. And mind how you're treating people, because what goes around, comes around." Now, he can't stand on those two legs. But he's alive! But he done some good things, but I think he done more bad things. Now take for instance, now he put ah-- we have this Junior College out here now. Is named after him. And I understand he initiated for it to be built, so people could have somewhere right here in Dallas County to go to college. Well, we glad he put that out here, cause my children got a start out there in college. Well, when I was a girl, my grandmother, which is the one that raised me, she had to run around and get second-hand textbooks for me. But now George Wallace, when he was in office, I understand he gave all the public schools free textbooks. So that was something good he done. He done some good things, but he's done a lot of evil things, too. So I think when he's not standing on those two legs, I really think God is punishing him. And that same building, over there at the Univesity of Alabama, where he stood in the doorway to keep the black people out, to keep them from gettin an education, I've been over there on that same campus, and spent the night insome of those same dormitories, back in 79 and 78, when I was workin out here, they had this little pre-school for Jonathan Daniels? I went went over there to take a coouple--few business courses, you know in the summertime. I've slept in those same dormitories, but I didn't think--that I would ever sleep in the University of Alabama. You see--see how things work around for you? But now, who shot him? It was one of his same, colored sickos(??) that shot him. I'm not saying it was right that he shot him, but just think, just see how things worked out. How he stood in the door to keep the blacks out, and he got shot, and now he can't stand on them two legs. See how things go around? Now, he's a pitiful man. (What you want to do? Go back outside and play. Go back outside and play.) It is a shame that he had to do all this. It is, it's a shame. Because now he's suffering, for it. And he has so many problems out of his second wife, he don't have anybody but just his son. And his brother and his --I think he still has a daughter, I think she's still living. But that poor man has put us through something. Yeah, but he got elected, ah, I think he won four times.

Three or four, I think it was four. But now, I I can really tell you why I believe he got elected, now I never gave him no vote of mine. Now, I don't hate him. I don't hate nobody. But I think the reason he got elected, is on account of Joe Reed and his crowd. Have you heard of Joe Reed?

/B: Yeah.

Mrs. W. And he's one of the black men over in Montgomery got this Alabama Democratic Party. And any time we have election, he got his gang of people on this side, where the white people done paid him off, to get the blacks to get to vote for this same candidate. You know, black people have a tendency to do a block vote. You know, we usually--we know the white people they vote white, and black people vote black; but then you got some of the black people that gonna come in and be paid off by the white man, to split the blacks up. To get this other white man in. See, George Wallace has paid other white people to pay certain type of blacks to get the other black people on their side to vote for him so he could get back in to office. We--everybody no fool, we understand how he got back in there. But I didn't vote for him. And it's still going on. But all that's in politics. You know, white people vote white, black people vote black. But I don't think it should be like that. I think, you should vote your conviction. You think that's the right man, regardless if he's blue, or purple. You vote for him. Now, that's the way I do. I've had a lot of candidates come up, "Mrs. West, you know a lot of people in the projects, I want them to vote for me, I want you to tell them, you know, to vote for me, and yet, you vote for me," I tell them, "Yes, sir, I sure will. I'll go right in there and vote for who I want." I don't try to tell nobody how to vote. They vote for who they want. Because that's their Constitutional right, is that right?

B: Um-hum.

Mrs. W: But that's how a lot of these people get elected into office so many terms. The same thing happened to Mayor Smitherman. He got some ???? here in Selma. And see, some people--I hate to say this, but some people in our race, they still uphold the white man. You know, for money, they gonna do what he says. And the white man just keeping him down. He's still got em in a form of slavery. Cause he's even gonna tell him how to vote. He'll give him a little money, he'll tell him --"Now, you vote for Mr. John Smith, and you get your people, I'm gonna pay you 600 dollars, maybe a thousand dollars, now you get as many of your black people as you can, and vote for Mr. John Smith, and we'll pay your mortgage off on your house, and we'll see that your daughter gets a job, your son get a job, and we'll see that you get another used car." That's the way that works. We know all about that. The white man uses the same strategy he's been using all the time. But see, they can't use it with me. I done turned sixty years old this past May, and I'm wiser now than I used to be. Lotta things I didn't

understand. But I understand better now. About what--you know--is going on. The longer you live, the more you learn. You can learn something every day. From somewhere. You can learn something. And I've learned a lot of things, you know, about what's going on in politics that I didn't know. I--you know--been to a lot of presets (precincts?) meeting. I know what's be going on a lot of times. But I don't, you know, say anything, I just go with somebody else, and, you know, as a friend or visitor, and I learn a lot of things about what's be going on. Politics is a dirty business. It's a dirty business. But now I-- next governor we get here in, ah, Alabama, which is, ah, had a run-off on the 26th-- is two men running against--there's two men's gonna be in the Democratic run-off, and that's on the 26th. And then--

Terry: Paul Hubert?

Mrs. W: No--Paul Herbert, I think they call him, and--Donald Siegelman. But now, ah, the general election got to come in against Guy Hunt. But I do think he's gonna be back in office, but I hope not. Where did the other gentlemen go? Roderick? Went out to get his camera.

Mrs. W: Cause Guy Hunt and ah,

B: What is he getting? Camera?

Mrs. W: Guy Hunt hadn't done anything too much in Alabama, for education for the black children, I don't think. And he's not going to do it. You know--cause one time ah, not too long ago here, when their dad had to buy books before we got free textbooks in the public schools? There was a drugstore down town where they sold the textbook, they had the white kids textbooks on one side, the black kids textbooks on the other side. It was different--we was getting an inferior education. While the white child was getting a superior education. See, that what was keeping us behind. All the time, but--black people waking up to some of those tactics they using now. They waked up for a lot of--it just--it just so much wrong going on here in Selma and Dallas County. I like Selma, it's a small town, and everything, but it's just, there's so much wrong and evil going on here in town, I'm tell you, it's just, God gonna just--throw His wrath down one of these times, a tornado, a hurricane, I might go long with it, He gonna do something to all of us, make us understand, that we got to live a better life, and the crack is about to take over the city. It's just--it's just--

Terry: Why haven't we heard that?

Mrs. West: Well, it's true, it's true! Cause, we had a little--crack city right across there by the Pettus Bridge. Ah--

Terry: On the other side?

Mrs. West: Yeah, across the bridge, it's about--it's about a mile and a half across the bridge. Well, they kind of broke that up, but it's --it's not all the way broken up, they just got in the--well, now, who --who--who bring all this stuff for the bright (?) people get? Where does it

come from? The black man don't have no boat, be down in a creek, in Key West, Florida, plane, bringing that stuff in here. Getting it from the white man, he gives it to the blacks to sell. You know, the blacks can't bring that stuff in in an airplane or nothing. We don't have that kind of authority. You see, everybody ain't no fool about nothing.

L. Boy, some of those guys are suspicious out there.

Mrs. West: Who?

L. Well, a couple guys stopped me as I was coming back from the car saying, "Where ya'all goin'?"

Mrs. West: Really:

L. Yeah, and I said, "I'm going to see Mrs. West."

Mrs. West: They asked you where you were going?

L. Yeah. They think--they are very protective, I think they thought, maybe, you know, there was going to be some problem, or something.

Mrs. West (chuckles)

L. There is a real big guy, I thought-- I better give him a good answer.

Mrs. West: Well now--Larry, you're name's Larry, isn't it?

L. Larry, yes.

Mrs. West: There's something you've got to understand. And I have to tell the truth. There's some prejudice on both sides.

L. I understand. But I'd just as soon keep my teeth.

Mrs. West: See, this is a black area in here. And they see a white person and they get suspicious.

L. Sure.

Mrs. West: I wouldn't advise you, being a stranger, just walking around here at night. Cause some one of them out there might give you a good whuppin. You know, they don't know what you want, and they just, they just ???the color of your skin the color it is. Although it's not your fault. Cause you could have been born black. You know, but, it--it's just--it's just some young black men around here, they just oppressed and de-pressed and they just--they just, they --they --they not be able to like you just cause you're white.

L. Well, I'd just as soon not have that happen.

Mrs. West: No. (chuckles). He was just askin you where you were goin. (laughs) Did it kinda scare you?

L. No, I'm all right. We agreed to just--leave each other alone. And that was it.

Mrs. West: yeah, was my son with you?

L. Pardon?

Mrs. West: Was my son walking along with you?

L. No, I was by myself.

Mrs. West: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Oh, yeah. Well, I guess that's the reason.

L. Maybe it will be a good experience for them, now to see that not all people are the way they thought they were.

Mrs. West: (laughs) Don't feel uneasy cause you a young white person. I wouldn't advise you to get real tight with them at night.

Terry: No.

Mrs. West: They think you were some kind of informer for the police, or think you're trying to find out something, you know. See, Guy Hunt put a lotta money in Dallas County, on account of drug traffic was so heavy? And he put a lot of money in here for a lot of informers that tell on the different people they find drugs, which is a very, very good thing.

L. Sure.

Mrs. West: Uh Huh. Because, you know, a drug addict will break in on ya, do anything, if they think you got money, but they-- you know, they see you hanging around at night or something they think you trying to find out something. And, I just warn you, they might give you a good beating.

Terry: No, we're staying in Montgomery.

L. Right. We're going back to Montgomery.

Mrs. West: Um-hum. Montgomery's all right, but they do their share over there, too. Yeah.

L. Well, you know, I--it might be a good idea if we turned this off. (end of non-sync portion of interview.)

L. Test, test, test. When I tell you, just go like this.

Bo Diddley: Yeah.

B: Think he'll join us, or he'd rather not? We don't want to push him. OK, so, any memories of, anything you want to say about Jonathan, at all, you know.

Mrs. West: No, I've done enough talking, but I can never stop talking about Jon, you know,

Bo Diddley: Ah, OK, OK, basically--

L. Wait, I got it, I got it.

Terry: Join in here?

Roderick: Join in, young man.

Bo Diddley: Old, old man.

B. Nice.

L. Wait, why don't you --we'll put this on the ground, take the chair.

Terry: This chair.

L. OK,

Terry: OK if I move this?

B: Yep.

L. In fact, why don't you put it right in front of the door, and have Bo Diddley sit on the other side of --

Terry: Oh, OK.

L. Kind of angle it towards me. Good. Tap slate, I'll tell you when.

Roderick: Yep.

L. You'll just go like this

Roderick: yep.

L. OK, tap slate it. (TAP SLATE HERE)

L. Take your time.

B. Memories of Jonathan.

Roderick: OK, basically, I saw Jonathan Daniels as a caring person, he ah, he took pride in his work and he spent a lot of time with kids, he spent a lot of time with--- back in the

TAKE 1

60's. Ah, a lot of times he would help us with our lesson, and play ball with us, and take us riding--more or less like a big brother. You know. He was just there when we needed him. And ah, he, ah, he was firm, but he was fair. And ah, you never could see any faults in him. You know, more or less, it just seemed like God just sent him here. You know, because, he seemed like he was so sincere in what what he was doing. And ah, to me he was a great person. Just a good person.

L. I have an idea. We have a lot more film. We shouldn't be so serious.

B: Right. (all laughs)

L. What you ought to do is just give them the microphone and let them pass it around, and in a minute I'm gonna need that other magazine. Let's use a lot of film on this. I think we should spend--two hundred dollars on this. (all laugh)

B: I'll get the other magazine.

L. It's not our money, it's the governor of NH's money. That other magazine, Bill, is in there.

B: OK

Terry: Guess just hold the mike down here.

L. Yeah just pass it back and forth.

Bo Diddley: OK

L. Just be relaxed, that's OK.

Mrs. W: Dianne, you wanna say something? You've been in the back--

(lot of unintelligible conversation and laughter)

L. OK. You guys just--talk among yourselves, and what I'm going to do, Bo Diddley, when I say slate it, just take your finger and go like that on the microphone.

Bo Diddley: OK. You going to ask me another question, now, or what.

L. Yeah, Bill, you wanna set this up a little bit?

B: Well, what we are just trying to do is ah, your one memory of Jonathan, that you would like us to remember.

L. Yeah, one thing from each person, that'd be nice.

Mrs. West: yeah, that'd be nice.

L. Just one thing, and take your time, we've got a lot of film.

B: Think about it.

Bo Diddley: OK.

L. If there's some way we could turn off that fan inside, that would knock down some of that--noise.

B: All right. I'll get it.

L. kRight inside the door--

Mrs. W: Right inside the door there.

L. Just hit that switch. Good, that will help a lot.

That'll help a lot.

Bo Diddley: Oh, I'm trying to think of something to say, but ah--(all laugh)

Mrs. W: it'll come back to you.

L. You know what you could do, you could start at this end and work --

Bo Diddley: OK, I'll go ahead and get mine over with.

L. That doesn't mean you can get up and leave, though, cause I'm gonna---camera.

B: You've got to stick it out to the bitter end.

L. Wait a second. Better if I could see what I'm doing. Gimme a second to focus, I'll focus on those pearls there.

Mrs. West: imitation.

L. They don't look imitation. OK, Bo Diddley, give me a tap slate, please. Just tap the microphone. (TAP SLATE FOR TAKE TWO) OK

Bo Diddley: Jonathan Daniels to me was a role model, for me, for my family, he was also a teacher, coach, a brother, and an et cetera. He was the best man you could ever meet. And ah, I still remember some of the principles he lived by, I try to base my life on the same. And I hope to continue living that way. He was-- still, he's a martyr to me right now. And ah, he did a lot for this town, but, if he had had more time, it would have been even better around here right now than what it is now.

Mrs. West: (gets handed microphone) I thought I've said everything. (people laugh) Tap?

L. No, we're all right.

B: We're all set, go ahead.

Mrs. West: Oh. To me, ah, Jonathan Daniels ah, was the almost perfect man. And now, I consider him as a saint.

Roderick: (as he is handed mike) Short and sweet.

Terry: You said something nice to me on the couch.

Roderick: OK, ah, I can remember one day when I was ah, when I was coming up and ah, Jonathan was staying here, and I think I had ah, had got behind on my lesson or something, and ah, and Jonathan was telling me about ah, ah, the good side of doing your homework, and paying attention in the classroom, and getting your work, and I think he he tapped me on the leg or something, I got upset and I went and told my father, and my father said, "Well, he's only trying to help you," and it kinda struck me, back then, cause first thing I thought about I said, well, ah, Why this white man so serious about us like this? You know, but, that night, when when he set me down and he scolded me, and talked to me and he told me why, why he did it because he cared about me, and he wanted me to make something out of myself. I think that kinda persuaded me to into the teaching profession and kind of helped me and made me work harder in school. Because Jonathan used to always buy paper and pencils for us, he used to take us, he used to take us riding, and play ball with us, out here in the yard. He was the -- he was there when we needed him. Always. And that night, made me realize that Jonathan was for real, and ah, by his actions, and by the time that he spent with us, and ah, I never will forget that day. And ah, we had a lot of good times together. A lot of good times. Because most time when with someone ah, gets on your case, when you know you're wrong, and you know that person, you can tell right then that that person

is for real about himself, that that person wants yo to succeed. And ah,that kindof, more or less, ah,geared me and guided me to think more positively aboutmyself and about life also. Cause he was always there.

L. Thanks a lot.

Roderick: Allright.

B:Anybody got a funny story about Jonathan?

L. Yeah.

Roderick:(laughs).

B: Anybody know one funny story?

Mrs. West: No; like I said, he was almost the perfect man. He was almost perfect.

L. He didn't tell any jokes or anything, did he?

Mrs. West: He would joke sometime. You know,nothin off-color. He was a Christian man.

Roderick: You know, whenever somebody was around Jonathan, he had to always remember that you had to be at your best behavior,because he would get you. He would always correct you. Just like, ah, any time he promised that he was going to ride us around in the Volkswagen, he used to remind us, "Didn't I tell you I was gonna do it,I told you I was gonna do it."

Mrs. West; He'd buy ya'allpopsicles and lollipops,

Roderick: =Just like Ruby's brother, -----He used to love to call you Bo Diddley, too.

Bo Diddley (laughs)

Mrs. West: "BoDiddley?" He'd call him! (laughs)

Roderick: Wake us up in the morning time... Whatever, he was--clean shaved, just all-American boy.

(after some conversation about the camera,Mrs. West talks about Jenny, the girl Jon dated)

Mrs. West: you remember that little old nurse was an RN like--named Jenny? Yeah,she was a Puerto Rican.

BoDiddley: I can't remember that.

Mrs. West:She was almost dark as we are,but she had the real straight hair. She was a Puerto Rican. You know, that beautifulnurse, she was RN--taken her, buyin hamburgers and things. Soft drinks, and Judith be mad,I don't want to tell her cause (laughs)

(end of side B; end of tape)