

HAROLD DREW

KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

January 18, 1966

Mr. Drew: First, he graduated in 1957. He was 55th in a class of 181. Scholastic average of 84. He was rather unusual in the fact that his verbal IQ was very high, on a superior level. His non-verbal, which would include math and science, was only average. He was very strong in the literary field: Excellent in English, French, anything that was in the field of reading or writing or expression. Which I think is perhaps one of the reasons that headed him toward the ministry. He was at first inclined, I think, to follow his father's profession as a physician but realized that he wasn't up there in the field of science...this type of thing...neither in interests or his abilities. And he wavered for a time between going into the educational profession and going into the ministry and eventually decided upon the ministry. Fine speaker and I think his work in the dramatics realm, which was very high grade, gave some testimony to that. He was on the National Honor Society. He won the Veterans of Foreign Wars Essay Contest, writing on

which is one of our magazines at the school, the literary magazine. He was a member of the acapella choir for three years...had a fine singing voice. He was also a member of the band for three years. He did nothing in the field of athletics. He wasn't particularly keen on that,

although if I remember, he did do quite a bit of skiing... but was not in organized athletics. His attendance record was pretty good. His tardiness record was pretty bad. Jon had a little trouble getting up in the morning and getting to school on time. He lived only within a couple of blocks of the school, and this is characteristic. The kids who live closest to school are the ones who are most often tardy. The worst tardiness record we ever had was a minister's son who lived about fifty yards from the school. Jon was inclined to get a little delatory at times getting in, with the exception of one spell of about a month, he was in quite regularly. If I remember correctly, it was the time I think he had an accident...broken arm or leg...I remember the details of it...

(Details of accident left out)

In school he was often a nonconformist, mentally, not physically. He was a nice kid to have around. Very courteous, very pleasant, got along with everybody. The only time he was every in trouble with teachers was with those who recognized his abilities and insisted upon his performing up to them. And, like most kids of high school age, he wanted to get the job done in a hurry. But some of them, thank heavens, recognized the high ability of this boy and insisted that he really do the kind of a job that he was capable of and demanded of him much more than they did of most of the pupils...because he had it.

MR. DREW

But, a likeable kind of guy, most friendly, most courteous all the time. But in trying to a composition in writing, to think for himself. He never was inclined to accept the, may I use the expression, accept the gospel as it was. He had his own thoughts about it, and he usually used them. And I don't mean at all that he was non-conformist from the point of being difficult to get along with in school. He was anything but that. He was occasionally in the disciplinary office for one minor sin or another, mostly emanating out of his spirits which were high. Nothing of any serious consequence. He was full of fun and occasionally full of mischief...Now, I don't know what else I can tell you on an offhand presentation.

S: I was the Chaplain at the Virginia Military Institute, but I left...Jon left the year that I went there, so I didn't know him there. But it's always interested me...kind of almost puzzled me why he went to VMI and I wondered if you had anything on that?

Mrs. Drew: No, not particularly. I think that he had no particular aspirations at all. It was an unusual decision. I rather think that he looked upon it from the physical side more. The rigid military discipline would be good for him... would build him up physically. He was a wiry kid but never a

rugged boy. And I think the uniform impressed him and so on. I don't think he had any particular ideas of ever going into the engineering field. His interests were always in writing and in speaking and in people. He was intensely interested in people. I think this was one of the reasons why I strongly suggested to him....that his proper field was either the ministry...his ability to speak and his interest in people should make him a valuable person...or in the field of teaching. I think he eventually decided...even after he went to VMI his main target was in education. And only later did he finally decide that the probable place for him was in the ministry. There was nothing in his high school certainly that would have led one to think that he would ever head into the ministry, because this kid was not what I would call full of godliness in high school. He was very definitely full of the devil. He was an interesting youngster. But still with an ability to weave words into pictures. He would have made a fine teacher, and I suspect he would have made a very fine minister in his field in the course of this... and because of his interests in people. He was always a champion of the underdog and the underdog ideas...deep sympathy for them.

S: Can you give me any examples of that?

Mr. Drew: No, it's too far back...nine or ten years. It's difficult to recall specific incidents. I don't think that I could. But I recall his being interested. If some kid was in trouble for something, Jon was pleading for him...and trying to help out and occasionally sometimes not that he not only was trying to help out another person, that he was also a little bit troubled because he'd been into the same piece of mischief himself...

S: Would you say that he got along generally well with his peers or was he sort of removed from them? How did his peers respond to him?

Mr. Drew: Jon was very well liked by everyone. His interests were not the interests of many...and he was interested in dramatics. He was interested in writing and so on and English. And few high school boys are interested in English. And relatively few of them were interested in dramatics, so that they're a group more or less by themselves in any school. And, because he was not in athletics or anything of that sort, he was not an outstanding musician or an outstanding singer... But Jon was well liked by all of the kids. I never knew anybody that disliked Jon. I think high school is a little bit broken up into groups: There's a literary group; there's a athletic group; there's a musical group. And then there's the group that's just going to school--you might say a Phi

Beta Kappa group, the scholars, and so on. Well, Jon was definitely in with the literary and musical groups--particularly the literary and dramatic groups, and there he was very much appreciated and very much liked. The rest of the kids--there would be many of them in a big school--probably didn't even know him. This is characteristic. You get up to 300 or more in a class, and many youngsters that are in the same class really don't know each other and don't know that they're in their class...too many...In your smaller schools it's a different thing. The bigger the school, the more it tends to move toward the fragmentation into groups that have certain interests...the commercial group, shop group, college group. And the college group tends to be broken up into the literary groups and the dramatic groups and the musical groups and the straight scholars. And maybe they will in association make a French club, etc. And they tend to know each other quite well within those groups. But beyond that, no.....

S: Did it surprise you when you knew that Jon was in Selma?

Mr. Drew: Not particularly, no. Because I think Jon was Oxford--"home of lost causes"--I think Jon was inclined to be a follower of lost causes. If in the school he felt that an injustice had been done somewhere possibly in thinking that disciplinary action was unjust or that a teacher was

unjust or that certain kids were unjust to other kids, he was perturbed about it and excited about it, very definitely so. And this is one of the things that I meant when I said that in his thinking he was quite a nonconformist. And I was not surprised to find that he would be there and be interested in this sort of thing. I did not know it. I didn't know he was down there. I caught a radio dispatch on it shortly after his murder in Haynesville. And then I was not surprised. I would certainly have expected him to write diatribes against the situation, and I don't know that I particularly expected to find him then, but I was not surprised

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S: He seemed to know so many people of various age groups.

Mr. Drew: Well, I think perhaps Jon was more at home with older people, with adults, than he was with people of his own age. ...He was an outgoing personality, an extrovert. I remember so well...and shaking hands, talking with me. He was always at home, and I say mentally, with all the people. I think many times liked to talk with elderly people and get their points of view...Not that he was shut off or shutting off contact with other people of his own age. But more than most youngsters, he was at ease with adults, very definitely so. He was naturally a most democratic person. He was not concerned just with meeting people in professions or scholars

or anything of that sort, He was equally interested in the 'man about town'...He had a tremendous liking for people in the generic terms...just plain people. And it never made any difference to him whether they came from the right side or the wrong side of the railroad tracks. And it never made any difference to him whether they were black, brown or white or what-have-you. I think religious creeds meant nothing to him. I don't think he made any distinction between any denominations or anything of the sort. Here again, this is a picture of a rather universal kind of man, a non-conforming man. He didn't fit them into patterns; he liked everybody. This was very characteristic of the boy.

S: I notice, just in supporting that statement, that the kinds of jobs he held were quite varied and different. He worked in the hospital at one time, worked for an electrical company another time...just moved around in all different... And I gather that's how he got to meet a good many people around town that he might not have otherwise known.

Mrs. Drew: Yes, I suspect so. And he would do one thing and another and never hesitated about how capable he was in the various jobs, but wherever he was, he was well-liked. You couldn't help liking Jon Daniels. A likeable kid.

S: I think that the more I hear I begin to see that he went on...I think that a lot of the personal difficulties that he

faced at a fairly young age--death of his father and his sister having her problems and having to pick up the ball--helped him mature.

Mr. Drew: Yes, that was quite obvious to those of us that knew him well...He was rather inclined to be on the immature side in school, and to get out of it in later years, he matured very rapidly because of developments in the family circle. He was very fine with his sister, Emily...very much concerned...willing to do anything he could to help her. She also was a very talented girl, particularly in the English field. She could write and she was excellent in dramatics...quite similar in this respect. I gather Emily has squared away pretty well. I saw her at the time...services here...She seemed to be completely herself. There was a time I was very fond of Emily. And this again was a nonconforming mind, very definitely. They possessed a certain liking for people and a certain dislike for anything that they thought was unjust or unfair...characteristic of both of them...and very alive...both kids generous.

S: If you recall any incidents, that would be most helpful?

Mr. Drew: He was into a lot of things. Quite a typical teenager in his days of school...their sophistication and at the same time, their being very adult one minute and down to about a fifth grade level of juvenility the next minute. That whole

process. It was quite nice in Jon. The thing that was particularly outstanding about the boy in his high school days that you remember was his effusive personality...would cut through everything. It was there. Even if some of his actions were immature and so on, here was a personality, definitely so. And these are the ones that you remember. So many go through school and they leave no footprints in the sands of time. They go through, finish, and that's it.And Jon would have been recalled in any school. Any teacher that ever had him would remember him for one reason or another....I suspect that society lost an individual who would have been quite newsworthy, and I suspect it's very likely would have accomplished a great deal of good. This boy had it. He had an outgoing personality that accomplishes things as a rule...shameful waste of a potentially valuable life.