

S: And the guys driving through this province in Scotland and he stops at the pub and they have a package for him of something or other. And everybody says you do. This goes on and on and on.

A: (Laughing) I'm sure that MacDonald is probably the smittin of Jones and,

S: Yeh right. He could very well have been MacDonald. I can't remember.

Talking about something that John wrote when he was 15. Saying it should be photographed.

L: Well we're all set um,

S: Why don't we all sit down. You want to sit down with us Caroline? Might make Abby feel less,

C: Okay, want me to hold your hand Abby? (Laughing)

S: Well Abby, maybe you can just give us some background ah, relationships with Johnathan, when you knew him, how you got to be here.

A: I'm not sure what you mean by, well I met him, and I'm going to have to go back and think um, I want to say '56, '57, and I had come in one evening with a friend. Our two brothers had gone off to the stock car races and ah, we came into a movie, to see a movie and as we, as we went into the theater Gail said, "Oh there Jean's car." and she said, "I wonder if their," and it was a film on the Bolchet Ballet and she said, when they finished we still had a good half hour before the movie was over, a half hour 45 minutes before our respective brothers were going to come back and pick us up, and ah, so she said, "Let's see if we can find Jean."

S: Jean Felch?

A: Jean Felch, and sort of as the theater emptied, we didn't see anyone, and I think at that point we then went to, it was the Crystal Restaurant for a cup of coffee and who was there but Jean and John, and that was literally where I met him. Ah, and I,

S: Were you from Keene, an active high school student?

A: No, no I, again summering. I had been coming to the Keene area, Marlborough, from, since the early 50's. At that point we were living in New Jersey ah, but we have a lot of relatives that summer in Marlborough and we also have property ah, at Silver Lake. So it was Gail Gurnsey, who was very near to where we have a cottage and a boat house um, and I was just, you know, I was part of the lake group over there and that was how I knew Gail and it was her,

S: Gail...

A: Gurnsey, and it was her brother Bob who went out with my brother Tony and we decided we had no interest in going to the stock car races so we came into the movie.

S: How did you know Felcher?

A: I didn't, Gail knew Jean at that point.

S: How old were you at this time?

A: I want to say 14, 15.

A: So you were younger than John?

A: Oh yeh, I'm about 3 years younger. He was ah, I think I was probably into my sophomore year in high school and he was going into his sophomore year at VMI. Um, and, I'm not even sure, we might have double dated originally with Jean

and I don't know if he took Gail out, but I can't say now that I saw a lot of John, um, we dated over the summer, on and off, over the next 4 or 5 years.

S: This is while he was at VMI?

A: This is while he was at VMI ah, and then after his graduation and a few letters, you know, during the winter um, and I think, as I said to Caroline, I.....in looking back, in some ways it was a very special relationship for me and yet a very casual one um, I think John showed me, or was just very conscious of where I was in my own growth and development and I think, showed that he was a very kind, conscientious person ah, and whether it was our possible similar interest in religion, I think that it was also, probably, a strong drawing card. Our interest in classical music um....being after 20, 25 years you only have a residue of feelings and memories because I'm afraid i don't have anything the way Caroline does.

S: How did you move from when you first met, ah, now you said that was '57, it must have been '59 you were at VMI as a sophomore.

A: '59, well I do have one picture of him back home with the date on it. Maybe it was '59.

S: When did you move into a more of dating, did that happen right away or,

A: Pretty much ah, but again it was....I didn't see him regularly or really often. I think one being out in Marlborough and not being in Keene and whether or not he had a summer job I don't remember. Um, you know, if I saw him maybe 4 or 5 times a summer. You know it wasn't a regular, weekly thing that I saw him.

S: The age difference, did it make any difference, he would have been about 20 and you would have been about 14. Is that right?

A: I was probably 15, because I had stayed back here, I think there was 3 years difference in our ages. Um, and again, I wasn't a social bell of the ball. I didn't do a lot of dating myself. I just found him a very interesting, and again, he wasn't your normal um, how can I put it,.....his interests, I think were probably a lot more mature. Now maybe to some extent my interest were not of the typical 14, 15 year old, because I wasn't the popular um, you know, in a lot of groups and doing what a lot of what 14, 15, 16 year olds were doing.

S: Instead you were...

A: (Sigh) I was probably pretty much of a loner in my own way, um, and I know that John did comment to me once that I was extremely well read which I had to laugh at the time because school and studying were not my strong points. As a matter of fact, I found school very, very difficult, um, and having found out since then that I'm probably dyslexic, but I've always loved learning um, and I think I probably just enjoyed being around a more serious, intellectual ah, person such as John, and I certainly did find him, not frivolous, and if anything, I know when I ah, went to the service in '85 that they had for John at ah, St. James, and when I heard some of the stories of what a cut up and a card he could be, I really wondered if this was the same person I

knew. Because when I knew him, he was a very serious um, person, that I would not say had, that I could see, a deep sense of humor. that everything seemed really, pretty serious. But then again, we dated on a one to one basis and we were not part of a large group, which you know, made it difficult because I was not aware of his other traits and personalities.

S: He was a bit older too, so he wasn't in high school and you might have changed that. You said religion drew you together, automatically/

A: Um, well again I would say in high school, church was very important to me, um, and exactly why I, I've thought about this often because my parents weren't religious. But I would say from the third fourth grade on, I took myself to church ah, and again it was episcopal, and I just got,

S: Were your parents episcopal?

A: Um-hum, um, why I started I going to the episcopal church in New Jersey in Inglewood, in thinking about it, may have been that we did have some ties there, but I know also in the second grade I had gone to Brownies at St. Paul's. But there was something that drew me to the church at a very early age ah, and I think this was something that I could talk to John about because not many people had that interest. Now the school that I went to was a private school and they did have bible, ah, first and second year bible um, so I had it continued learning through that ah, and I was involved in the church as a teenager, and I would say, it probably wasn't until I was in college, that I started falling away from church um, and I suppose one of my fondest memories of John was one of the last times I saw him. Um, I was a sophomore um, I want to say the spring of my sophomore year at college.

S: What year would that be?

A: Ah, '64 ah. '63

S: And you were attending college?

A: At Wheelock, in Boston...and I want to say my sophomore year because I had not been attending church regularly. I had not really found one that I felt comfortable with in Boston, and yet part of me really missed it and it was during Lent of my sophomore year that I was going to very early, like 7:00 communion service in the middle of the week, and I went and I was so bitterly disappointed because I was just getting nothing out of it. And I felt lost and confused and angry because I really didn't understand what was happening, um, and I thin it was probably then the following fall of my junior year that I saw John, met him in Cambridge because at that point he would have been at ETS, and ah, we had been walking around Cambridge and we stopped someplace for a cup of coffee and I thought, you know, now that he's in seminary and I know this has been a struggle for him for quite awhile. I mean he wanted to go into the ministry, then he had some real serious doubts about it and I think had to work through that, and then having decided that yes, this was his calling and was in seminary, I thought, how do I tell him that religion was just nothing. Um, but I sort of said, "I'm disappointed in myself, I'm hurt, but I've been to church and it's just out the window,

you know, nothing, zippo." And he had the most wonderful smile, and he just sort of looked at me and said, "Abby, that's great," or similar things and he said, "What you had before wasn't real. When you come back to it, it will be." And it's taken 20 years but he's right (laughing), and I've often thought that if he were to come back, or if I could see him for two minutes, I'd want to say thanks and you were right. He was just, in his own quiet way, a very supportive person who, I think, could see through to people and he knew, sort of what I needed in growing up and he wasn't...the aggressive, pushy person who wanted to be recognized. He was just always there, and he sort of knew instinctively what people, well I can't say people, what I needed and could give it.

S: Would you characterize your relationship like a brother-sister or was there romance in it or,

A: Yes there was romance up to a point. Again, as I say, I dated very, very little and I think because he was aware of our age difference, and there may have been 3 years physical difference and a huge gulp emotionally. And I think he realized that I really wasn't ready for any serious commitment and yet, he must have seen or known something within me that was worth waiting for ah, but again, I think because we didn't see each other a tremendous amount it really didn't have a chance to get anywhere.....and I suppose part of me, in going back and thinking about a lot of this, I'm not sure if it was, if that's not what was supposed to happen. He was put in my life for a certain purpose and I was put in his life for something special. I wish I had a clearer understanding of what those two reasons were all about um,but I think that I would have to say that I think where John went and what he did, he was meant to do, um, and I only say this again, and I have done a fair amount of soul searching in my relationship with John because I think, on one of those last times that I saw him, I was ready to pick up the reigns of serious dating and I think, at that point, that he had moved on and it just, it wasn't meant to be. So I have lived with....um, had I grown up quicker, had I been a different person would things have been different. And I suppose that happens with any unfinished relationship, unresolved relationship. In a way that's what it was, and yet he continued, i did hear from him by telephone and with letters several times after that last encounter. But it wasn't until about 3 or 4 years ago, again I have come back to the church very strongly, and I have just finished up a 4 year study program through the episcopal church of EFM, Education For Ministry, which is not, in any sense, an ordain ministry. It's just our own lay minstry of what we have to offer and it's something I'm still struggling with. But part of that program was doing an autobiography every year of our own spiritual growth and development and people and events in or lives that have brought us to where we are at that point and how they have influenced us. You know, and john just kept coming back, um, and at times it was very painful to have to work through that um, and so yes I can say he is, and he still is a part of my life and I think he always will be, but I gather he's

been a very big part of a lot of people's lives um, and so this is why....I can let go and I can say what I had experienced with John was wonderful and beautiful because I think he was a very special person and i feel very fortunate to have had him as part of my life.

S: It's kind of interesting, he had so many relationships with woman that sometimes you get the feeling that he was drawn more to women for companionship than to ?. That's what we're thinking, people they didn't always have to be with him but,

A: But again, he was not your typical male, and I think because of his compassion and his insight into people and particularly 20, 25 years ago, in many ways, I think that was a very unusual trait in a man, and to have had that compassion and that tenderness, that he probably did feel a lot more at ease with women who, I think, naturally have a more nurturing um, tendencies and personalities and...even to, again, what I have read of the book from Caroline on the Johnathan Danial's story....the very fact that he made himself go to VMI, that he was not cut of that cloth, but he did it strictly for his own discipline. Again, how many people of that age would have done something so totally opposite of their own personality because they knew it was something that they needed to do to obtain what they needed to get. I mean that in itself I think is absolutely remarkable, and to, in his own way, probably have suffered for 4 years, and to have,

S: Did he love VMI?

A: He probably did up to a point. I was down there for ring figure which was the junior year where they get their rings um, and again, I went down as a very scared junior in high school and something, you know, this was something totally out of my world, um and I stayed with Captain Pierce and his family.

S: Captain Pierce.

A: He again, my brief memories of him were just wonderful and I think that, again this shows, I think John's concern knowing the family background, but he just didn't put me up in a hotel. He had me stay with a family of someone that he knew and trusted. Again, he was taking care of me um, and I think Captain Peirce meant a tremendous amount to him. I do remember John, and at this point I do think John was going through some of his real battles ah, and I, from what I have been through in a tiny, tiny way, I think, when it comes down to a matter of faith and religion, because it can make such a tremendous impact on your life. This isn't something that you enter into lightly or just say well I'll give it a try and if it doesn't work out I'll move on. It takes a lot of soul searching.

S: So your memories of VMI days are his having difficulty adjusting and this crisis of faith, I don't mean to put words in your mouth. I'm just trying to see what he discussed with you during this time.

A: I would, yeh. Well certainly during his junior year. I want to say that yes, he was going through putting the brakes on, you know, is this what I really want?

S: ?????

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A: No, no, with religion, with religion, whether or not to go into the ministry, um, presumably as I can remember, his whole reason for going to VMI was to gain an inner discipline that he felt he needed. I certainly didn't see this need for discipline (laughing) but again, you know, I saw such a very, very small facet of his personality....and again, how much of this, and I've often wondered when you go to interview people, if you put them under hypnosis. If you could take them back to that point and time, because there's so many other things in our lives that influence how we feel and think right now and whether or not our memories of 20, 25 years ago are correct or whether we're looking at them through rose colored glasses, um, they may be very thick rose colored glasses on this one, I don't know. Um, yes, I think John struggled a lot, um,

S: Did he talk to you about his father's illness which was about the same time?

A: I honestly don't recall a lot about his father. I know that he was very, I would have said I recall far more concern for his sister.

S: Oh really.

A: Um-hum, and maybe not just at this time but, you know, a couple of years earlier even. Um, and I think I only met Em once or twice um, and I can remember at one point feeling, almost, jealousy thinking, he's more concerned and likes her more than he likes me. Um, and I sort of smile at myself now, looking back at that. But there was a real, I think love and concern for his sister who, I suppose, in one way or another, had a, a lot of problems, um, (whispers "Is anyone else cold?").

L: Close the window.

A: I don't know if my voice is going to be shaking because I'm nervous or because I'm cold.

L: Emily told us that, we wondered why he dropped out of Harvard. We thought it was,

S: This was after VMI,

A: Yes, I thought he had finished. He didn't finish his master's program?

S: No, he dropped out in April.

A: Oh, now I don't think that I really realized that.

L: Well it was right after that she told us.

S: Yeh, the father had died um, Mrs. Daniel's was the soul support at that point.

L: I guess she thought that.....teacher's certification.

A: Well I do recall hearing, and I want to say more through letters, that there was a concern for money, and I want to say that Em may have been hospitalized in a private hospital in Connecticut um, that was very, very expensive, um...and again, I know also that when he was at Harvard, that he did have an apartment in the back bay area and I suppose he shared that with 2 or 3 other guys, I don't know.

S: We don't know that either. Did you see him that year. That would have been what, '61 I guess.

L: But he came back in '61, that's right, September of '61.

A: But he graduated, I mean that was right after graduation from,

S: You're right, then he started, he graduated summer '61 then he would have started Harvard September '61 and lasted April '62. Then he came back here up until September '63 and then went into ETS.

A: Again, I guess in a way it's remarkable that our

oops!

A: Again, I guess in a way it's ~~a~~ remarkable that our friendship did continue as long as it had because from my senior year in high school, I had summer jobs working, so I was in Keene very little um, I worked my summer after graduating from high school as a mother's helper in Pennsylvania and the next summer I was in Maine and the summer after that I did volunteer work at the local hospital in Inglewood and then I was ah, a counselor at a day camp - - - -

for children. So, I mean, I wasn't even in Keene a lot during those last 4 years, um, I think probably when I was here we saw each other and I know, and I would have to get out, I think we have, I think I have a program that he was in summer stock here in Keene and was in The Ladies Not For Burning um, Christopher Frye, does that,

L: We have some records that he was in ah, some photograph of Johnathan when he was about 14, playing Tom Sayer when he was in the junior high.

S: And he was in the drama club at VMI too.

A: A real thespian, I think he thoroughly enjoyed that. Now, I've asked my brother because it was ah, he who sort of said, "Let's go to the Keene summer theater." and we were not, we didn't go a great deal, and we were in sitting down and I was going through the program and, guess who's in it (laughing) and I mean, it was a total and udder surprise and I think Tony had either seen John on the street one day in Keene and John may have mentioned that he was in the summer stock, um, and then we saw him briefly after the performance because I don't think that he knew we were going to be there, but we waited to see him afterwards. So it was a very loose structured relationship and yet one that did continue as much through letters.....and I suppose, in some ways I would be very curious to know if he ever mentioned me, you know, to other people. I mean, because I saw him in such a narrow field and didn't know his other friends, um, I have, it's almost like being in a vacuum, that I had no feedback on his relationship with other people or how other people related to him. It's strictly one sided from where I am.

S: Now did you just meet Caroline or did you know Caroline?

A: Oh, talk about coincidences oh, yes I've only known Caroline 3 years, um, and again I was saying earlier that my daughter who is going to Deerfield is a real student and a lover of learning, and we used to spend days, every week in the library in Marlborough, the little Frost free library, and the librarian there was Pat Grover and one day I was, late August, we were within a week of going back home, and I was talking to Pat about something and somehow something came up and I mentioned John, and I started talking about him. She just sort of stood there staring at me and she said, "You knew John Daniel's?" and I said, "Yeh" and she said, "I Don't believe this," and she said, "There's another gal who's working part time here who dated John in high school and within the last 2 or 3 day she was standing exactly where you are standing and saying almost the identical thing about John." I mean that gives you the willies, I mean when we didn't even know each other. Then, within, I want to say 2 weeks of going back to Michigan um, one of the women in this group that I was in, the EFM group, um, because of the shared autobiography, knew about John and my involvement with him, and she was very active in the episcopal church and had gotten some publication through the episcopal church where there was the inquiry about ah, Professor Eagle's doing the book on John. I mean this was within a month, and she said, "Abby, I thought this would interest you," and I'm going "Wait a minute, this is too

much" (laughs) um, so at that point yes I did write, I didn't say right then, it took awhile to write Professor Eagles, and I want to say I also wrote Pat at the time and sent it on to Pat because I felt that she, and then I had met you briefly that summer just to say hello and then sent that information onto Caroline.

S: Who was the episcopal lady, was she a minister?

A: Oh no, no she,

S: Just sort of active in the church.

A: Yeh um, and you know there had just been a lot of little things that just sort of fit in to bringing John very much back into my life. And then, now you knew Norma Sanders, at the lake?

C: Um-hum

A: Again um, the property that we owned with other cousins at Silver Lake was between Norma Sanders, who has then since died, but she has a daughter, Jeannie, who is my age and is part of this lake group with Gail Gurnsey and,

C: and Jean Felcher

A: Yeh and Jean um, that, when Norma was sick, she died last spring um, and her daughter was coming down quite a bit from Canada to be with her, Jeannie, and again, one way or another I started talking about going, because I go to a little Emanuel church in Dublin which is basically a summer chapel, although I don't know if Dublin school uses it year round for their students. Um, and I said that I would be over to do something for Norma after church and she was very interested that I was going to church and she wanted to know where and so on and again we started talking about church and St James and different people and again was very interested, religion keeps coming up, you know, indirectly in my life um, and then through her daughter Jean, again, came into this conversation that we were talking and she knew about John, and she was the one that, last winter, sent me the clipping from the paper on what you all were doing, and I said, "Well, that's all very good and well but I'll send it out to Caroline" (laughing) and see what goes on. So there's just, I can't seem to shove it and put it down. It just keeps reoccurring.

S: That's interesting.

L: Did Eagles ever get back in touch with you?

A: Um, he sent me a basic questionnaire which I,

L: The basic questionnaire....

A: Ah, involvement and I made a tape that I sent. Again, probably pretty much what I've talked about here.

S: Did he get back to you after that?

A: Not a great deal um, whether or not I just, as I say, John was a very important part of my life. What kind of influence I had on his life, I'm really not sure. And I don't have ah, material things that can be shared. It really is a lot of memories and feelings that do probably get changed and if not distorted, either glorified or whatever, over a period of time. I just find it very interesting that, within the last 5 years, that he really has reentered my life so strongly um, it's interesting and I will, you know, if something comes of it fine and if not,

S: But you did say that you thought that not only did he play a role in your life but you played a role in his life. What did you mean by that?

A: Only in so far as our relationship never really developed

romantically and yet, he continued to keep in touch with me. The last time I heard from him was April of '64, '65, April of '65 just before he died, um, and I was a senior at Wheelock, I was engaged...and yet, and I'm, of all the letters that I've gotten from him, and he used to write long letters, I mean very long letters(laughs) um, I wish I had kept that note because again, it was probably one of the things....that has been etched so strongly on my mind. It was right after Easter and he was excited beyond belief about going down south. It was, basically I think, it was like a hallelujah! the lord has really truly risen. He said, "I know what I want to do," and that he wanted to go down south and work with the vote of registration and with the black people. You could have knocked me over with a feather at that point. What I knew of John as far more of an intellectual and not having seen anything of this social concern, I can remember feeling incredibly ambivalent. I mean, I was so incredibly happy for him that he knew what he wanted to do, even if I didn't understand it, his real joy and enthusiasm just exploded from the page, and yet part of me was just incredibly jealous. I thought, "Oh he knows what he wants to do. If only I could have that kind of burning goal and desire." I think, you know, that's what everyone wants out of life, to have something and be able to go forward and do it and that's it.

S: We have often used for that as a call.

A: Um-hum, very much. Um, as I say I...really couldn't picture him doing that but I know that it was very real and it was something that he, he, I'm not even really sure if he wanted to do it or if he had to do it um, something that struck me, again in reading the book on Johnathan, on John, was that he had had some kind of experience that he never discussed with anyone after going, I want to say to Trinity church in Boston.

C: Church of the Advent

A: Church of the Advent.....if, if something might not have happened to him then. That if that experience was fairly close to the time when he made this decision to go south, whether or not he experienced something that told him what to do...and whatever. Now, as I say, yes, he was in my life but I think his path was drawn um, I would like to think that I did play some sort of part in his life, even if i don't really know how or where I fitted in.

S: Did he use you for a sounding board or,

A: He may well have. Again.....I don't know what kind of a teenager I was. Whether I came out with ideas, whether I listened, whether I gave my own ideas um.....but there was obviously something there. Also I will say, not that we dated a lot, but there were, I would say 2 or 3 times.....

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A: I don't know what kind of a teenager I was um, whether I came out with ideas, whether I listened, whether I gave my own ideas, um.....but there was obviously something there. Also I will say, not that we dated a lot, but there were, I would say 2 or 3 times that we went to church together. I have an uncle who lives, who summers in MAine and John was

visiting friends or whatever in Wells and um, where his uncle lives is Cape Metic, and he picked me up one morning when I was visiting Uncle Jim and we went to Little St. Peter's which is right down the road um...he also took me to, to church in Boston. Now I don't, I want to say it was the Trinity church, that's why I mentioned this other, which was a very, very high episcopal church.

S: What a beautiful church.

A: Um, and all I can remember was the incense and the bells and this was part of the episcopal church I had never seen before.

S: The Trinity Church is the one ah, next to the Prudential building. I don't know if the Prudential was there at that time but it's the brown, stone church with beautiful Gothic stained windows done by ?

A: Yeh I would (Tape stops).....You know, I think more by the ceremony than by the actual service.

S: Did he ever mention the Marion Norton to you? He was going with her in '65. In fact it's kind of interesting, he asked her at one point if she would like to go down to Selma with him.

A: If he had I honestly don't remember um.....and I must, there are times I wonder if I don't live in my own little world. I sort of see what's directly around me and my own awareness of other people and events, at the time, was probably in some ways very shallow.....um

S: He never asked you to go down with him and got you interested in civil rights?

A: No, really my first.....hearing that he was interested was that letter in April and that was sort of it.

S: Had he ever talked to you about his social work at ETS. He did some work in Boston and Providence and upstate New York.

A: As close as we were in proximity at that time, we didn't see each other that much um, and I think at that point the relationship probably had moved on to something more of a brother sister um, relationship because it hadn't really developed really romantically um.....

L: I have a question, what do you think is kind of, when you see Caroline, what do you think.....some people look for a basketball companion, or someone to drink with or for an episcopal relationship....spiritual sounding board or,

C: I think he found the same thing in Abby as he did in me. I think, in many ways, Abby and I are alike and um, and not like John. But I think we were probably good listeners and had an interest in him. It made him feel good. I think that was really important to John. He didn't always fit in where he wanted to and I think he was comfortable with us and since reading this book that I finished last night, Selma, Lord Selma, which is terrific, I know exactly why John was down there which I never really knew before. I mean I read so and so thought he was there for this reason and maybe it was this reason but, knowing John the way I did, he fit in down there and they loved him and they needed him. This was perfect for him. He was very comfortable in that situation and John wasn't always comfortable, never had been. I also received a letter this week from a mutual friend of ours,

and the thing that stands out in the whole 4 page letter, the one thing that stands out to me was that she said, "John was old before he was young" and that's good, she understood him. He tried to be young at times and that's why we think he was mischievous, one place I read he was wild, he wasn't reallwild, but I think he was trying to be young, to be like other teenagers and that's why he did these things that upset his mother and father and went out sometimes.

L: Well they say Caroline, that you had to go through a stage of development, and what was the matter with sticking with his image, you know.

A: I know, I, listening to that, I can relate to my older daughter so much, that she has always been a square peg in a round hole, again because of her interest in learning where she doesn't have a lot of friends and she is willing to stand off to the side and observe and it may take her 2 years to figure out who she wants to be with and where she fits in and I had one friend, and I think this probably would apply to John, when I was very concerned about Alice when she about 13 or 14 and she told me I was her best friend, and I just cringed. You know, you're mother, at that age, is not to be your best friend. That's what you need peers for, to sound off about you're mother, you know "She's really terrible" um,

L: Some kids don't know that, maybe their better off, my kids would agree with your child.

A: Well for whatever reason, but they do need peers to be able to know where they fit in to todays world and some, and a friend at home back in michigan said um, Allison will make a much happier adult because she wasn't fitting in, and even the teachers at school said, the girls really want to accept Allison, Allison doesn't want to accept them. And it's because they were doing the silly, crazy things that normal teenagers do and that she has skipped over that and that she thought it was dumb and stupid to have teenage singing idols and movie stars and things like this. She just, you know, there's something wrong with them.

L: But John was out there,

A: But he was trying to cover up. It was more important, obviously for him, to be accepted on that level where as Allison, I think,, and she said to me at one point when she was in the 5th grade, she said, "Mom, I am not accepted because I don't dress right" but she said, "I don't want to dress like that." You know, she was quite willing to be on the outside and not to be in the middle.

S: Well John....

A: I think John needed to be accepted.

L: It's like he would have dressed, follow the dress code even though,

A: Yeh.

C: He had the pink shirt and the white bucks and the black pants and the pink and black tie.

A: Just to be part of the group.

C: But he never really was. He always was a little off track.

A: He was trying to make himself the round peg rather than the square peg that he was.

S: I wonder, would he be more himself with a woman than a man?

A: Well I think this goes back to what I said, again, I think his own natural tendencies of having that simpathetic um, and there's another word that's floating around up here I can't pull out. I think just his own softer personality, that he wasn't the big macho, big man on campus, athlete. Now again, whether or not one would feed the other because his build was not of the athletic variety, maybe he also naturally developed a softer side to him, that had his built been different, would have his personality have followed, you know, had he been made for football field, would he have come out differently. He was also, I think the fact that he was intellectual, a reader, someone who also liked classical music, and again, those things make you mighty strange as a teenager. But again, he was ahead of his time and it's very lonely um, and for whatever reason of having that security, that maybe he really wasn't that sure of himself. That he couldn't trust his own feelings and instincts to go with, and there may not have been others around of his ilk, had he been in a different environment where others were intellectual or enjoyed classical music and where the football field, or being a jock, wasn't important. I mean there are all kinds of if, ands or buts, you know, a lot of variables.

C: I think he was liked by women better than he was liked by men or male students maybe um, at times he was even made fun of by male peers, much more so than female. Even in my own family, my mother thought he was terrific. My father didn't think he was so terrific (laughs). My older brother made wise remarks about him at times. My little brother liked him because he was 6 years younger than me so that made him 7 years younger than John, John did very well with young children. He related to them beautifully, as he did in Selma um,

S: What did the males find wanting, or comical?

C: I think his personality in that he was intellectual and he was, as Abby said, a more compassionate and he was emotional and more, these are women's traits more than they are mens, and I think, I think that's why he was made fun of and bad at times which was also, at times, hard for me. You know, you want to be proud of who you are going with and you want everyone to like who you're going with and this just wasn't the case all the time.

S: He would be the wimp or not do it or,

C: Wouldn't be a wimp but if there was, if he didn't get along with someone he wouldn't go out and fight with them physically, but instead he would sit down and talk with this person and try to reason with him and understand why the situation was as it is,

?: And that's not the way kids are.

L: Except for Thomas Coleman.

C: Oh really?

L: Just doing, just described laying on the ground.....

C: I thought he was killed instantly.

L: Well he shot right away but ah, ? told us he was trying to talk to him.

C: He would not have hated Coleman, no way. John would not have done that. I don't think he hated anyone. Even if he thought maybe he did, he'd look into it and find out, you know, why this feeling was there and do something about it.

S: He was capable of that, King's philosophy too.

A: But he was also willing to accept the fact that he could feel and not necessarily act. I think it takes, again, a certain amount of discipline that when you are angry, your first instinct may be to hit out....but that reason will take over and that he was beyond physical aggression, that he was on a different plane, and again, I think 25 years ago um, although certainly with Martin Luther King and, well and I guess Martin Luther King probably got a lot of this indirectly, I'm pulling rabbits out of the air here um, Mahammd Ma Ghandi and the passive resistance um, that you don't have to be a wild animal, there's a certain level of civilization and to go beyond being a barbarian and that you can leave yourself behind and think of the other person and who they are and where they are coming from, and again, I think henceforth, you know, someone of that age um, a tremendous amount of insight and maturity um, and it must have been very frustrating, I think for him to have been ahead of his time.

L: Were you ever...Selma, maybe they thought they were fighting.....he talked to the person. He doesn't sound like the kind of person....because I was the jerk in high school (laughing)....

A: I think that would have been water off of his back. I don't think that would have bothered him at all.

C: Yeh, he probably would have, eventually....he found pout why this person didn't like him or, you know, he might go home and think about it or whatever, I think at the time he would just walk away or he would say, "Gee it's a nice day isn't it?" to someone who might call him a wimp or something like that. He wouldn't be upset, he wouldn't be aggressive by any means. He would make the other person feel like the jerk that he is. He could do it with words.

S: But there must have been some male posturing going on.... he would just think that, I know wether you drink a lot or whether you drive fast or,

L: Well they have... you smoke cigarettes and through them on the curb, stuff like that. Now that's the so called male world, you know, what was going on.....

A: I think you would have to speak to his male friends on that, you know, how did, how did some of his male friends, but again, from what little I know of Jean Felch, that Jean again was in the intellectual realm um, but some of his other male friends um, either through high school, and I have got to believe that there was a tremendous change in John between high school and college um, that he was probably, again, more accepting of himself and not necessarily trying to fit in with what the norms and the standards were. That he was establishing his own norms and standards for himself and he was being true to himself and not those necessarily around him unless he believed and agreed with what he saw.

S: Well in some ways at VMI is a male model, that it's standard that he could interrelate with all the other cadets out there in the academy. In some ways you can get it both ways it's no longer posturing with your peers, now it's achieving ah, which he did at VMI.

A: But again, if that was such, and still is, a very, very strong male bastion, is that the right word um, to have put himself in to such an incredibly macho environment when he was not macho himself, you know, again, that takes an incredible amount of courage. He was using VMI in a sense, that they had something that he wanted: discipline. But there was an awful lot, outwardly, that he must have absolutely fought intellectually and to have been able to come out on top in that kind of a situation without having given in. I mean there's a tremendous amount of determination to have stuck it out um, and to have gotten what he wanted and to have walked away(laughs) tall and proud, you know, um,.....no, a very complex person. Quiet, simple um, like a river ah, very deep, flowing and moving silent but a tremendous amount of depth to him. Um, something else, another image that came through my mind recently, that we're all pebbles in the sea of life and we sort of make our own little waves. Some people are bigger pebbles and make bigger waves but how different people interact in our lives and that these circles are constantly coming into our sphere of being um, and that although John may have been, you don't think of him as a heavy weight, the fact that his ripples are still being felt, you know, made him a very incredible person.

L: You think you ever have an awareness of...

A: No, I don't, not really, and I think that's probably one of his greatneses. I think that's, to me as I understand humility, I think that's one of...the focal points of humility is to be great and not flaunt it or not understand it. I think he was aware that he had something to give and he was giving in the best way that he could um....whether or not he would have stayed there, in the south, um, speaking of humility that again rings, brings up.....something from the book on John. When he was in an argument in class, intellectually arguing a point and the whole class was against him and darn it all, he could see beyond where the rest of the class was and that he realized, or the teacher realized later on that he was intellectually arrogant and that he had to learn humility. So, you know, I think there's different areas of humility and yes, I thin John could be incredibly arrogant in certain areas um, but again, if he saw an area that needed working on, I think it probably would bother him enough until he could work it out and do something about it, and whether or not, if he realized that he was in a rarified atmosphere, in his own world intellectually, that in order to overcome this intellectual arrogance, that he had to work with the absolute opposite side of the coin. And working with uneducated people and being able to relate to them and work with them and not to put himself in a separate entity. You know, maybe this was his way of working out another area that needed work,

S: Easily like a lot of talented people become a star. That's an interesting conclusion. Are you doing that from things you said with Johnathan or your present meaning of Johnathan, I think it's an interesting point. I'm just wondering how you got to that theory.

A: I think it's one that just sort of , it's come to me. It's, again, having talked about John....and again, a lot of it is, you can't put your fingers on it, you can't hold it. It's a sense, it's a feeling of knowing John as I knew him, having read and heard bits and pieces about him in his development in working in the south with those kinds of people um, and just knowing him and again, piecing together parts of a puzzle and I'm sure that's exactly what you're doing. That you've got a lot of different pieces that you're trying to fit together to make a picture ah, and it's taking pieces and sort of turning them around and seeing if it will fit this way or if they belong over there, yeh um,

L: Do you remember when you heard about Johnathan's death?

A: Oh yes, again I was in Michigan.

L: Were you married then.

A: Yeh I was married, I had been married in June of that year and,

L: Did Johnathan know you were getting married?

A: I think, I think so but I wouldn't swear to it um,....I know in a way I felt, I think I must have told him because I know I felt, in a way, awkward about it, because, although we didn't have a romantic relationship, I didn't want to hurt him.

L: Do you think he would have...?

A: Oh absolutely, absolutely um,

L: ?

A: No, no, well I don't think he would have, I don't think grudges were part of his make up um, but yes, when I heard about it I hadn't started teaching yet. I was going to be teaching in Royal Oak, and I think Mac had gone to bed and I was watching the 11 o'clock news or the late news at night and there was just a flash, you know a bullet and "seminary student shot in Alabama" and it went through my mind: John and I really didn't think any more about it because I didn't even know if he was still down there and it was ah, it was Mac the next morning who got the paper and come in and said, "Abby, John has been shot." I was pretty devastated um,...I was terribly hurt, you know, I didn't know why. I think that's probably what everyone's question is...and I don't know if it's part of me, it wasn't until several years later that I realized I was never angry against the man who shot him. Again, anger to me...anger and hate are a fairly alien emotions. I don't understand hate and I have difficulty understanding anger um, but it was in thinking about him I thought, why wasn't I angry toward the man who had shot him? I think I was more concerned and focused on John and why and for someone who has so much to offer, why his life should have been taken um, and even to this day, I think I would probably feel more pity for the person who had done it and the fact that they would have to live with themselves, knowing what they had done um,.....although I will say, as I get older I'm far more capable of feeling anger and hate

(laughing).

S: Well that's an interesting emotion rather than, whether it's part of it, Johnathan ????

A: Yeh, well I'm beginning to realize that it's quite all right to be angry. I think this was probably something I hadn't given myself permission. That I had always viewed it as a negative and it can be very negative if it's not used in the right direction. But anger can certainly be a very strong impetus for getting things moving and for doing things.

L: Did you ah, ?????

A: No.

L: Were you in touch with anybody after you heard about it?

A: Well, I did write a note to his mom but never heard anything from her, and I suppose part of me, I was surprised, I guess I thought something probably would have been done at the time um, to be honest, I was a little hurt that I thought that I had been a part of John's life and yet no one seemed to know who I was or really care. And I thought, well you know, you know, put that one down. Maybe I wasn't, no I was a much smaller fish than I thought I was (laughing).

S: Did you know Mrs. Daniels?

A: Again I had met her once or twice, but I certainly was not any kind of a part of the family.

S: And you had met Emily a time or two.

A: Um-huh and that was all, and as I say, even whether or not John even talked about me with any of his friends um, and how he viewed our relationship. I honestly don't know. As I say, I feel as though I'm totally in a vacuum and so when I met Caroline, 3 years ago...I thought, you know, maybe John really did exist. There was someone else that I could talk to that knew who I was talking about.

C: You must have been important to him though also, to be invited to his big dance VMI.

L: You were the only one right? There wasn't other....

A: Again, I never made any demands on John (laughing)...I can say this and it's going to come out sounding funny. I was there when he called and I went out with him when he wanted to go out. I think I was aware of financial difficulties and I'm not sure that he ever stressed it, but I was aware that I lived 5 miles outside of Keene and he had to come out to pick me up and back in to see a movie and coffee or whatever, and then back out to take me home and then back, I mean, I think at one point I asked if I might pay for gas or do something and he got very angry (laughs). He was not preventive, and again, he was a gentleman to his fingertips um, opening car doors and doors for buildings um, to the point where I got very spoiled and I was on a, I had a blind date when I was at college, and I could be very tongue in cheek about things at times, and this blind date, I think we were double dating, there was, I was with a blind date, and I stayed in the car and the 3 of them went walking. They were half way down the block before they realized that I wasn't going to move (laughing).

S: Did he catch on?

A: He came back and he was not amused and then, there's

obvious um, there was another time I was on a date, and it wasn't John. It was a blind date or a fraternity party or whatever, and someone made some comment about women talk too much, and I absolutely shut up for the rest of the evening and I didn't say a word and he couldn't quite understand what was going on um,

C: Did you go to a fraternity party with John or did you meet him at one?

A: Um, I went to a party, and I had forgotten about this, at the theological school, at the ETS, and again, there are times I can be so incredibly naive and innocent. I mean, I will take people at their word (laughing) did I tell you this story? Oh, oh all right you're (laughing). Um, he introduced me to one of his fellow students, who had a southern accent that you could cut with a knife, looking back on it, and, very politely, I said, "Oh, where are you from?" and either John or the other student said, "Alaska" and I bought it (laughing) hook, line and sinker. Ah well, and again, this would have been, you know, John must have thought, "Did she really believe us?" (laughing). However, you know, a number of little things like that.

S: What was he at the social events, whether it's VMI or a ring ceremony or an ETS social?

C: John's very sociable no matter what he went to. He could talk to anyone about anything.

A: Yeh.

S: ????

C: No, no.

A: Not, I think probably, I know that in one of the parties after the dance at VMI, um, because I didn't drink, I mean one I wasn't old enough and two I just wasn't into drinking and I think he liked Jack Daniels and I just thought that stuff was awful and I mean, I think he could go to a party and have a very good time, and I think in that respect I was very much 3, 4 years younger. Not only physically but emotionally and, I really did not fit in to the college scene at that point. I would have had a hard enough time fitting into a high school party much less a college party.

S: Well how did he ah, relate to that, I mean was he awkward or,

A: Oh no, I think, I was the one who felt awkward um,

S: But did you stay a couple throughout that party?

A: Pretty much so I think um, again, I just remember feeling kind of awkward about that um, but not to the point where I wanted to hide in the corner because he was no longer around. No he didn't leave me. I mean he didn't say, "Well if you can't take care of yourself that's" you know.

S: I think you were left by a lot of people if you say that.

L: Yeh, most people would be mad at a party and not stay.

C: I answered to myself, when you asked that question, I said, No, he didn't leave me at all because John never would. John, as you said, was a gentleman always. No matter what the situation was, and he was the same to his sister. If he took his sister he wouldn't leave her either. He treated all of us very well. You spoke of anger a while ago, John could make others very angry at him and did often, but if he believed in something he wouldn't back off because he

angered anyone, he would keep at it, and I think that I could see some of this when he was down in Selma there and he purposely wore his clerical collar um, he probably had New Hampshire plates.

L: He got rid those.

C: Did he finally. He knew these people were angry with him and he knew that they could harm him but that didn't change anything. I mean he wouldn't wear ordinary clothes because of it.

S: I think he did become circumspective for a while. I think he was ????

L: ???

S: When he first got there he wasn't going to modify his behavior at all.

C: That's the John I know.

A: A slight arrogance coming through.

S: Then when he got the lay of the land, he knew that people were following him and he'd been stopped a couple of times.

C: Wasn't he shot at once. I think I just read that recently, that he wasn't afraid even though he had been,

S: Well he knew other people that had been shot at including Louisa. He knew the violence was there and so he did become much more careful. Even Judy Upton said that too, I think that they cooled it off for awhile.

A: But it also sounds as if he had his own standards that he wasn't going to compromise, that he wasn't going to give in to something he felt was less than what he believed in. I think he, again, I think something that went through my mind, um,....headstrong....which um.....again, I think as part of the maturity process, this, I had a conversation earlier this summer in talking about early late teens, mid teens when kids just think they know all the answers and adults get out of the way because you're old faggots and you don't know anything. I think it's a very important process in growing up, to have that sense of assuredness um, even if you're wrong 75% of the time, that is what helps you drive and get ahead and cut the apron strings and to say, "I can do anything. I'm going to go and conquer the world. I can out and I can do it and get out of my way because here I come." Um, and I sort of sense that in what he was doing. That he had his own sort of blinders and rose colored glasses on but he had such high wonderful ideals that he was going to go out and do it regardless of what his elders, who probably knew better and were a little bit more circumspect about the whole thing um, but just go to it and here I am and I'm going to take the world by the horns and turn everything around.

Talking between Bill and Larry

S: I think we've had a good interview.

C: I do too. It was done very well.

L: If there's anything you want to say.

A: No, I always have these thoughts 12 hours from now or in the middle of the night.

L: Bill and I are going to be old men folk.

S: Do you have any pictures of yourself when you were going with John?

Interview ends.