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Why don't we start with how did you end up in Alabama. Were you taking picture just for the *National Guardian* at the time? For other newspapers?

No. I was working with the *National Guardian*. They paid expenses down and back. And they published the pictures. Some of the pictures were also published elsewhere but they came from the *Guardian* files. Like that one I think that you saw there, the Mississippi labormen, those were all *Guardian* photographs that I had taken but that's used by a trade union here in New York. Hotel workers or restaurant workers I don't know which. They are talking about what seemed to be at the time an impossible thing to do which is to a trade union among the rural black families in Mississippi.

That would have fulfilled Hoover's greatest fears. I saw a done by the White Citizen's Council of Alabama of it showed Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia united in the Communist Negro Nation on this film. They have it in archives. It was amazing. That was what... Had you been South then, at what point did you go down there? You were down in March of '65 and saw the Montgomery march or?

They were two events there that I can remember: the Selma to Montgomery march and then the Meredith march which was two years later, one year later? This all would have been between 1965 and 1967. I went down, the *Guardian* didn't have much money so I usually stayed at where just where all other folks stayed sometimes on the ground in tents in the Selma to Montgomery march. The Meredith march had huge tents like circus tents. And we had a sleeping bag you just hold up on the ground.

How did you, you weren't there for Bloody Sunday?

No.

You came down after?

Yes

So the *Guardian* would pick up an item significant to social change and they would send you down to cover that and you stayed. Is that kind of the way it worked?

Yes. It was kind of informal. I mean they there was usually some event that motivated them to get the coverage because they were doing everything else. It was like a lot of coverage on campuses of the student movement and of course the thing about the Mississippi summer and all that was the student movement doing it. And so the two things tied together and made it a natural for that newspaper to deal with. But it was also the paper had a very strong position on civil rights and so youth or not we were there, we would cover it. I was there when Stokely made his first black power speech from the back of a truck standing on the flat bed truck.

That was in '66 on the Meredith march?

I don't know when it was. We're talking about like seventy years ago.

I know.

You can see that I've kept really good notes and I was amazed that I could find them today. But fortunately

So could you talk a little about the Fort Deposit demonstration? How did you know that that was going to be happening and how did you get involved?

I went down with two other people Patricia Brooks who worked for the paper and a woman named Elizabeth Sutherland, who has since changed her name she is now Elizabeth Martinez. I never knew what happened to Pat Brooks but with Elizabeth she is still has kept very much involved in the movement. She's out in the southwest some place working with Chicanos she herself is Hispanic of some kind. And so we Pat and I went down for the Guardian and Liz who did work for the Guardian came along for the ride and was like we pooled our resources and it was good thing. Well Liz had a lot of contacts and she would hear about things and so she talked to somebody who said there's going to be a demonstration of some kind at Fort Deposit. You better get over there. Okay let's go. Like that. I'm not quite sure what her source was but we went and had a little episode there.

You said that you met Jonathan two days before the Fort Deposit.

I can't remember exactly when.

Somewhere along there.

But we ended up. It's amazing how well those things were organized. They had when we went over there we went there the day before and we needed a place to stay. There's what is known as a freedom house. Everything had the name freedom there. Like this is a Mississippi freedom play reunion and there was a Mississippi Freeman Democratic Party and a Mississippi Freedom Information Service. Everything had the word freedom in it. And then it was "We shall overcome." And this was, you've seen some photographs over there about a typical kind of farm shack. It was a adequate home. It was frame, one-story framed, couple rooms inside. I think an outhouse, but it had a fairly ample porch and so I was one of the people who slept on the porch so did Jonathan Daniels. And so did Robert Richard Morrisroe. So we talked a little and went to sleep and left the next morning and went into I forget what time the demonstration was but I think it was late in the morning, 11:00 something like that, and we were well you can see what photographs we got from that Fort Deposit ahead of time. I think that was the same day as the demonstration. It might have been the day before. And the demonstration was it was also amazing for an outsider to go to a little place and the demonstration going to be here. Where? People just walking by and nothing happening. Small town. And no police lines, no preparation, didn't seem and all of a sudden, you hardly knew it, but people began to show up, down that sidewalk or up that street, so all of a sudden there's people getting in line and started to march. There it was. The genius of organizing it was something and SNCC was organized out of Georgia but they had a field secretaries and it was fantastic. These people were great.

Did you know a man named James Rogers who was field secretary for. He was arrested as well? James Rogers, what's the name of that young man who was arrested with them?

Anyway I did not know.

Just to go back a moment to the night before, you had never met Jonathan Daniels before that time?

I don't think so. You know the funny thing is like you go to a strange situation and you're always surrounded by people you don't know who they are, you meet them, you talk to them, you see them, you say hello but like it was not like there were no formalities of introduction or anything. It was part the essence and success of the movement because people could just fit in without having to tell who they were or anything like that. I don't remember Jonathan until we went to bed that night on the porch and I don't even remember much about it. We chatted for a while.

Do you remember what you chatted about?

No I don't, because I talked more with Morrisroe because I was more interested I think at that point was doing there and the fact that he was Catholic. Because there was people wondered about where the different religious groups were in terms of support and I think my question was "Is the Catholic Church behind this kind of thing?" Like the Protestant Churches were active and supportive. So that's what I was interested in Morrisroe for and also Jonathan was I was introduced to him as a seminary student. Right? We chatted. I don't recall him as being a real talker very much.

He liked to talk. Maybe he was tired or something, because he loved to talk. But it could have been that night he was exhausted, nervous or..... So the three of you were on that porch that must have been Friday night before the demonstration.

Yes, it was.

So you say you drove into Fort Deposit. What shape did the protest take? Did it, how did you know where things were going to take place? How did that work?

We didn't. Well Liz Sutherland took us to the center of town. I was driving but she gave directions and says we'll go here. And there was nothing there. So we got out of the car hung out for a while and eventually people seemed to arrive. It wasn't like a band playing or anything like that. And it was not a big demonstration and I'm damned if I know why the hell it scared the cops but it did.

What happened exactly? You mentioned in your note something about the police overreacted. What did they do when they saw the people?

They, I'm not quite sure I remember the sequence, they before long, they had arrested every demonstrator. And Fort Deposit, I forget how many miles from Haynesville, the county seat, they had to transport all these prisoners over to Haysnesville where the jail was and so we got in our car and followed them. And that ended the demonstration. Actually it wasn't too unusual for this to happen. It was not like big thing with notice ahead of time and coverage. Certainly there was no TV

coverage not even any I think I was probably the only journalist there. Just a little hometown demonstration.

The issue was as far as we know local African American residents were being mistreated at the local stores. They weren't being hired, and when they went in to buy goods at this little market, they were mistreated sometimes even hit or slapped around. They were treated with tremendous discourtesy. The idea was to bring this to the attention of the town and try to get it to change. It's just a little farming community from what I can tell.

Have you been there?

Yes. There's not much to it. There's no hotels, just

And you didn't even have a freedom house to stay in.

Where was the freedom house that you stayed in? It wasn't in Fort Deposit though?

No it was in the countryside. Somewhere. They had these little places all over and it was ... If you were ever in a big Washington peace demonstration or something like that you know that things are mimeographed sheets and dates and schedules of when this is going to happen and so forth. That's not what happened there. Somebody knew how to do it and somebody did it. But there was nobody being the leader. The people who like emerged from that like Stokely really had did not emerge there, it wasn't even promoted there. As far as I can recall. But he was there, he was the kind of person who would, you know Stokely's history I guess, came out of Bronx High School here, rock science,

Born in the Caribbean originally. He was from the Caribbean.

Could be. I'm not sure.

I was looking through your notes here about how

My personal confrontation. But that was not at the demonstration.

That's in Haynesville and Lowndes County Jail shows a truck containing some of the negroes arrested at Fort Deposit. Brooks, Price and Sutherland have followed this truck and police squad car to Haynesville from Fort Deposit at speeds of 60-70 miles per hour. Another car carrying four persons working with the medical committee of human rights also followed the truck. When the medical committee's car broke down, they piled into ours. This photo was not sighted to the view finder due to tense conditions. That's photo number 8.

Let me interrupt you. You know what I mean when it is not found in the view finder.

You just grabbed the shot?

It's not quite that because I was using a roloflex and it's a double lense reflex. I, he looked down there and you take the picture that way but you can do, I can look right there and take a picture over in that corner of the room, I just turn the camera and

pretend I'm not taking pictures because I'm looking over there. So that's what I did so that makes them sort of accidental. Your not even sure that....

It's framed the way you might not normally frame it?

Yes. That was taken and also the picture of the cop in Fort Deposit was taken that way too.

That is great. Well I was looking at picture number 8. I took this photo, one county official I believe is in the picture wears a tan shirt with a dark border on the edge of the collar. Wears a pistol in the belt, carries a billy club. No that's somebody else. Came directly at me shaking with anger the following took place: Officer: If you value your property (pointing at the cameras) you'll get out of here now. This is county property. I went to press then he took out his pistol, put the billy club in your face, I don't care nothing for your civil rights I'm going to put this between your eyes. It's you people down here exciting all this, causing all this trouble. That was in Haynesville.

Yes.

So the confrontation was for you.

It was in Haynesville, yes.

Let me bring this over.

Where's your microphone?

You're picking me up. I was wondering about that was the beginning of the demonstration #11. Those people.

Well I can rely on my memory for this. This is where they were 10, 11, 12 right? In line to register.

Those are the closeup of the two women I think.

It's one and two. Looking at the wrong page. Because this is one and two here, these were people who were geering.

Yes I thought so.

Five, Six, Seven, eight. There's another, did you find another crate of pictures from that? Because these were....if I had a

That's why I was having trouble with the numbers.

You're right. You should have trouble. I thought I before.

They're probably in there. I probably just missed it.

IRRELEVANT STUFF

What did you think of the demonstration as you were experiencing it, as you were taking pictures of it? Do you have any recollections of that, what it was like for you? As it shaped up and you started reacting to it? I know it's been a long time.

My recollection was that it was as I had mentioned before people just sort of appearing seemingly from nowhere but certainly by some kind of direction. And just started a small, little pick it line. Not many people. Not a huge thing like Martin Luther King might have brought to town but a few people. And then I'm going now by my recollection because it didn't take very long for the police to just see it and say okay that's enough. And those who kept on marching and they were just put in a truck and took them to Hayneville. It seemed like such an innocuous little thing that you would wonder why there were these great constitutional principles were enshrined in this sort of straggly little march. But there it was. These folks had as far as I knew from having talked with people there at that time and before, this was the first time that they had ever taken this kind of public action. At least since the reconstruction days one hundred years before. And it was it's funny how little events like that even though small in proportion, take on a major significance. And then you wonder like how many things of these like this have been done and how many things like this you have to do in order to get any change. And then what's the cost of it. In this case it cost the life of Jonathan Daniels and almost the life of Richard Morrisroe. And it was like a small thing and the trip that I was making with Patricia Brooks and Liz Sutherland and we didn't our little incident with the cop these at Hayneville when he came at me, and I had the audacity of a New Yorker and a reporter, nobody's going to attack me, and afterwards I became aware from that reason and from other things it's easy to be very close to arrogance and close to I like can assert my rights and get away with it under certain circumstances. In this case there was a lot of people around, we had two carloads of folks, civil rights workers, our own and the ones from the medical committee for human rights, medical people and so we got away with it. And they put the folks in jail and kept them there for about a week and it's when they let them out without letting, not telling people they were coming out because that was one of the things SNCC did was as soon as you were going to leave jail you let us know right away, we'll be there to pick you up. They wouldn't let them do that and that's when they went over to the cash store. Do you know that Hayneville didn't have any it was like it was hardly, it was a county seat and there was a courthouse there but no stores, few stores but not very many and even the whole square was not even filled up with buildings. And that's where Tom Coleman came with a shotgun and shot up both Jonathan and Morrisroe.

When you rode over to Hayneville was it with the intention of continuing to take pictures to keep record of the whole event?

Yes. I took an awful lot of pictures only a small segment which was ever used. And in this case there was I don't think we ever used any photographs in the paper from that event but right at the same time I did a story on language among the black civil rights workers in which Stokely Carmichael set up a way of trying to explain to people teaching English as a second language to people to kids in the south who were speaking with a heavy southern dialect and that story I did at the virtually on that occasion. But we left Fort Deposit and someplace in my notes I can find out where we spent that night but we were on our way to Louisiana at that point and didn't learn what had happened that two people had been shot and killed until they got out of jail a week later and we learned about it a few days after that. It was ten days before we knew about it.

YOu had seen a lot of violence down south, you covered Viola Liuzzo's death and so forth. Were you surprised when Jonathan was killed?

No. I'm surprised in the fact that it happens to somebody that you've met or know. And in that sense yes. That gets you into kind of an interesting discussion how you face possible violence and the meaning of death like I've been pretty lucky in my life. I've gone through 79 years and a lot of situations including World War II if it hadn't been for these things like Sacco Venzetti that wonderful letter if it had not been for these things, I'd have been dead as a doornail. I lucked out. That puts you in a different position which you figure how can I have all this stuff that has had meaning to me in my life together so that it's not just loss, I can so that other people understand that too.j

I envy you because you've been involved in some of the most major global or social issues at times. To my mind the civil rights movement is the most important domestic issue in this century in this country except with the possible exception of the Depression, that was more of a systemic problem. And then World War II and so you must have a perspective on these events that is different from other people cause you were there. Were you taking pictures in World War II as well?

No. I was a pilot for the Navy. And later on a view from the air was something which I was fascinated with and started a project of photographing this whole country from sea to shining sea along one highway which intersects the middle route 40n the middle of all that strange things began to happen to me and I realized that something was happening and I wasn't going to complete that.

Looking back on that can you figure out what that was?

Well what it was in the 1955 I was subpoenaed by the Eastland Committee in the Senate. That was closed hearing, the open hearing in '56 I refused to cooperate and I was cited for contempt of Congress and tried for contempt of Congress. I won the first case in the Supreme Court but only on a technicality that the indictment had not been properly drawn. The government had an option to redo the case all over again. There was an Attorney General in the Justice Department at that time named Robert Kennedy and Bobby I guess he went to Jack or whatever and said "Get the bastard" or something but one thing was that this was written up by Jimmy Wexler who was editor of the New York Post and his idea about what had happened was that in the 1960 Democratic convention Kennedy made a deal with Eastland from Mississippi that if Eastland swung his votes to Kennedy at the convention and if Kennedy got elected president he would not send the troops in to enforce the segregation in Mississippi. That was the deal according to Jimmy Wexler. And so when Eastland wanted a favor from he had one up on Jack, and so Eastland was really angry, several of us I think there were six of us in the same position in the courts and the Supreme Court had told Eastland kind of to go to hell. So Eastland went back to Bobby and said Bobby I want those guys, you get them in there. Get them in jail.

But this was '55, '56 this was the near the end of the whole Red scare business.

Well it continued. It still continues today to a degree. It's kind of funny. Not as much as it did before but it wiped out a lot of folks.

Was the *National Guardian* still in existence then?

No. It closed down about three years ago. It was a victim of the internal pressures in the movement itself. That's one of the reasons one of the things that I went from the like civil rights to covering urban affairs which was tied in very much because that was through the years of the urban riots and my tendency was to go and find out is happening and maybe draw conclusions from that but not go in with a set scenario. However, I think there were other folks on the paper who were also looking for guidance from something or some evidence or some event and they were much behind SDS (Students for Democratic Society) and the folks who were essentially the white college student movement and they thought that was what was going to bring the revolution. I didn't quite share that optimism.

It might have happened in Europe that way but not in this country.

Well the students did a lot of stuff but they were not going to do it they were not going to make the revolution. And anyway even if that were true, they couldn't do it like dismissing what was happening in the urban ghettos. That was what everybody that what was really making news was tremendous revolts and riots in the cities. One summer it was 1965 or 66 I guess, when New York blew up.

The Watts Riots of '65 occurred just a few days before Jonathan was arrested. Did your newspaper cover the Watts Riot? Did they have somebody out on the West coast?

No. We covered what we could. At that point I covered the Newark riots. But we had to rely on other strangers to do most of that, because they were happening all over the country. There was Detroit, Los Angeles, where else, Newark.

I still can't get over when you were South you were taking the same risks as all those other men and women. Just because you had a camera in your hand didn't mean that you like that cop could have beat your brains in. Before you went south, you made up your mind that your injury or death were definitely it was a possibility?

I didn't really know. It's always possible. But I think that's the same thing with I was flying way out in the Pacific Ocean and I had to land at sea in the middle of the ocean, nowhere. Things like that happen. For some reason I was graced I guess with nonchalance put it that way that somebody was going to take care of me. Whatever.

I think Jonathan had it too but in his case it didn't work out.

Jonathan didn't have the thing, the advantage that I did. That's what I tried to mention before. We were at the moment of our confrontation with the police in Hayneville, there were two carloads of us white northerners all, me with a camera and a couple others with cameras too, me with press credentials, me with the arrogance that's not the word I want but at least the effrontery to give a damn about where they were coming from. And on the basis of what I understood to be whatever this country's about, and I could pull it off because I was surrounded by people and could invoke the freedom of the press although I'm not sure that impressed very much but at least it might have given them a tiny delay in making any threats.

Jonathan wrote a postcard to his mother from jail. It's the last thing he wrote. It arrived on the 20th the day he died. Said it was her birthday and the postcard he said that he had been arrested and what happened

was he went up to a policeman in Fort Deposit and when the policeman said "What the hell are you doing here," and Jonathan said "Exercising our constitutional right to protest," and according to Jonathan, the policeman said back, "You don't have any constitutional rights in Fort Deposit."

You've got some colorful quotes with the other cop. I don't know if it's the same cop or not. This cop that went after me was not in uniform but he had a badge and so I in my effrontery said "Who the hell are you?" Me in Fort Deposit, Miss Alabama, and so I said I think I said, it's all written in there, I think I asked for his credentials. This is another thing that Stokely Carmichael was good at. He could always pull off some kind of a something like that to throw somebody off his beat. He talks about that I think in an interview I did with him whether it was driving a car or making a quick turn doing something just to get everybody, get the other fellow off his stride. In this case when I asked him, "Can I ask who you are?" something like that he said "####". So I said could I see your identification? So this really can only come from a secure white northerner I think. I don't know if anybody else would do it. But it had that quality that Carmichael had talked about. It through it off his base, that's when he pulled out the gun and gave and I thought that was very funny. It scared the hell out of me. And he gave to somebody else and he said he was going to beat me up with his nightstick. And I said I am the press. And then he comes on, we don't recognize I don't remember what it was but something like Daniels was told "You don't have any constitutional rights at Fort Deposit." It's the same but he didn't have any rights either.

Did you think he was going to hurt you?

I don't think so. I kind of float I think in this world of my own. I've had to do that a few times. I come from a very religious background and maybe I was raised as a Christian Scientist and I'm not now but there's a certain kind of whether you're arrogant or not.

Apparently when Jonathan was in jail. You don't mind if I talk about this to you? When Jonathan was in jail that Wednesday before he was let out, he was visited by two Episcopal priests who tried to talk him into accepting bail and he refused. His reason was that all 22 of us can't be bailed out and I don't think the two white prisoners should be bailed out. Stokely had already accepted bail because he was going to continue running the organization. And a couple of the women had been let out. Fathers came for the younger ones and just were scared. One man said that Jonathan was walking around in his cell acting like a child, this man's name is Francis Walters, Francis thought he was behaving totally inappropriately for the situation for which he found himself in. So later on I talked and found he was not, he was trying to keep people's spirits up and there was certain joy in him for what he was going through. I don't know, I don't think I'd want to be in a southern jail for a week or a day. It's a wonder they didn't arrest you. You were standing there with him.

Well I think it's a combination of the two other things. I've been wrestled a few times. I've been active in the housing movement up here and resisted people trying to evict other people against landlords and stuff like that. I have something of a jail record.

When you left Hayneville

Not down there.

No, but when you left Hayneville that day you watched the people being put into the Hayneville jail? Then you what?

We were at the jail where that truck was parked was in the back of the jail at the end of the driveway. I think that maybe why Jonathan Daniels is not in the photograph because some of them, I guess, were taken out of the truck.

I hope we can find that negative.

The truck you mean?

Yes.

Don't worry, we'll get it.

I saw that beautiful 8 x 10 that Charles Eagle had of it and I thought, oh boy, that's beautiful. You took those pictures and then you guys left for Louisiana?

I can check my notes but my recollection is that we were going from there to Bogalosa, Louisiana and that was another interesting time because that was where the Deacons for Defense and Justice were. And this is where like my concerns about the civil rights movement which is really a massive civil disobedience kind of thing tied with some of the more raucous colleagues on the paper who wanted to see people armed and shoot people. When they found that there was a black group in—I'm still calling them black, I've come from calling them colored to Negro to black to African American—

In between is was Afro American. We've all done that. Using the terms of the sixties is perhaps the right thing to do. That's what we're talking about, which would be black.

Where was I?

You were talking about the Boogalosa Defense.

They had decided that they had taken too much guff from people—the white population. All of them had guns. Somebody would have a pickup truck and there would be a gun rack behind them, above the front seat. And so there was a guy down there, a wonderful guy, I have pictures of him. I forget his name. He was head of the Deacon's for Defense and Justice and his idea was that blacks had to be armed. Else there going to mess us over. He built this organization and these guys got guns and whatever you think about guns these days, I'm worried about them too—I guess at that point the thrust of that was listen don't mess with us you know, we'll do to you what you've been doing to us right along. So we were on our way over there to and that was a breakthrough. I did the first interview with the head of that group and we published that. And that tied me in with radicals from the campus because they liked that. And I considered myself a revolutionary. I'm not much for guns.