

J: He flew the plane or chartered the plane or had a friend who had host of a plane and ah, so it's just a gruesome story is all it is and ah,
B: and he didn't remember in our accounts that they had a hell of a time locating the body.
J: Yeh I remember, that's on the tape I think.
B: Yeh right, that's right. That's where we got that from.
J: Yeh, but um, they wouldn't release it.
B: Right.
J: Have you tried to talk to the sheriffs deputy that shot him?
B: Coleman, no. We talked to the um, Sheriff Hullet who's not a sheriff down there, a black man, who was active organizing down there, and he said Coleman wont talk. But we have ah, we don't have it now but we have record of Coleman being interviewed on TV a year after the killing and ah,
L: He says he'd do it again.
B: He says he'd do it again.
L: He said, "If I had to do it all over, I'd do exactly the same thing."
J: But he was just an outside agitator as far as he was concerned.
B: Yeh right.
J: Down here makin' trouble.
L: He said on the tape, "Before these northerners came down our niggers in the south were good niggers, but the northerners came down and made them bad niggers."
J: His point of view is absolutely right (laughs).
B: Well in the eyes of Sheriff Hulett says, "Oh yeh, Tom's changed now. He gives things to the county and helps us get ah, pigs and machines.", so it was very strange.
J: The irony of it is, you know, it is much more calm, integrated, fair in the south now then it is in Detroit, Boston, New York.
B: Except for down there. That's the pressure we got. Into big cities like Burmingham and Atlanta was fine but you go down the south to Lownes county and it's tense.
J: That same son of a bitch is still there.
B: That's right, Smitherman there. Selma's not a nice place.
?: There still having a lot of racial problems.
J: Did you feel nervous, what kind of plates you got on your car?
B: Yeh.
J: Were you nervous?
B: You know those trooper, there weren't a thousand of them around so ah. Fact when we went to Fort Deposit we had an escort from the chief of police there around the town.
J: You're kidding!
B: Well I think if we went in there by ourselves we would be in trouble.
J: I went down to Fort Deposit right after, well six months after whatever, Stokley called me and said, "You know you sent money down," and whenever he came to Boston he stayed with us and uh, in Cambridge, and Bill, our youngest then you know, was a feisty little 16 year old I guess and ah, he kept saying that our phone was bugged and I said, "Oh bullshit, you're just imagining this thing." and so when

Stokely came back from Europe, when he was the black power bussiness and the state department and the FBI were shadowing him and he called me in Boston, he got off the plane in New York and a couple of days later he called. I picked up the phone and he said, "Dad can I come see you?". Well he always called me dad and her mama and because Francis met him the first time and she said, "OH you must call me Francis.", the best white liberal, and he said, "Mrs. Tilson, I was brought up in Jamaica and if my mama knew I was calling a lady your age by her first name she'd woop me." (laughing) and ah, so I said, "Where are you?" and he said, "I'm over in Jamaica Plain," and he said, "We'd like to come over." Well when he said they'd like to come over he meant they'd come for breakfast, and he'd never tell you how many, it could be one to ten. So Francis went right out and buy two dozen eggs or three dozen eggs and start scrambling and we lived right on Memorial Drive in one of those really nice apartments and ah, he came in, and as he walked in, threw his arms around Francis and he turned to me and said, "Your phone's bugged." and I said, "No it isn't. You sound like Bill." and he said, "Look out in front," and there was a little black Ford and a little guy in a trench coat walking up and down, just lookin', and ah, he said, "When we left New York, we did the show game. We had three identical cars come up in front of the apartment I was in and three of us ran out," and he said, "You know we all look alike," and he said, "I got in the car that got away." and they only, the cops only had two cars and so he said, "Then I drove up to Boston, I was in Jamaica Plain," and he said, "I went out and used a phone booth and there's the FBI." so he said, "It has to be your fault. Only number I've called and identified myself." So I guess we were bugged.

B: Wow.

J: and ah,

B: The FBI probably has a file on him.

J: Oh they've got one on him, they have one on me, but I can't imagine anything duller than reading all our telephone conversations in 1963.

L: We're going to try the freedom of information act. We've got instructions on how to do that and try to get John's file. We think it might be illuminating.

J: Try to get Stokely's too.

L: Yeh, we might as well.

B: Yeh, I was always interested in how that would work ah, he, Stokley, wouldn't be protected thinking of it from his angle, from anybody looking at his file. Is that true?

J: I don't think so. I think now, under the freedom of information act anybody can get it. Newspaper reporters are always getting. The ones I've seen are absolutely useless because anything of interest is blacked out and they say it's because of national safety or something, ah, you know, it will say How is Susie today? and the answer would be blacked out or (laughing) or say, you know, I think I have to go to the bathroom and then the next three paragraphs are blacked out ah,

B: Are you all set?

L: Yeh, do you want to get any coffee or use the bathroom, speaking of bathrooms.

B: I used the bathroom.

L: How about you, do you need to use the bathroom?

?: No, no.

L: Do you have to brush your teeth or anything?

J: Do you want something to sit on while you talk?

L: I wouldn't mind a cup of coffee.

B: Okay, before we begin or

L: Yeh, is that alright? How about you?

J: No I don't want anything.

Tape goes off.

J: Shot at and she got,

B: Was she ah, daughter of registration project?

J: Under Snick.

B: She was snick.

J: And, and ah, SCLC. She stayed in black houses and ah, red necks rode by and shot at the house. She couldn't understand why the lady of the house always gave her the front bedroom and ah,

B: (laughs) Act of generosity.

J: (Coughs) Whoever's the keeper of the records, we're moving August first, there's an address but we don't have a phone number yet.

B: Okay and while I remember, if you have any, do you have any old photos of you back in that time in the 60's?

L: We brought a copy stand but we could, if you wouldn't mind photographs, right here. We wouldn't take them with us.

J: I don't think I have any.....A lot of war pictures but that's all.

B: Uhuh, any, do you remember any pictures that might have been down at seminary or something or in the dioceses?

J: I didn't take a camera with me when I went down to, and Francis never has taken a camera so, ah,

B: I was just thinking, some official, if there were a book or something. Some official photo of you or?

J: I got a picture of me and Bishop Lichtenberger.

B: That's alright, that would be great.

L: Lost photograph.

J: It's in the garage. I'll get it.

B: Your favorite photograph?

J: No, it isn't that, it's just not one I'd have in the living room, you know.

B: Ahuh. Okay, so we ready?

L: I'm all set.

B: Is that going?

L: Certainly is.

B: Okay. Well maybe we just ask you to describe your relationship with the a, Cambridge dioceses and with,

J: Well in the 1960's I was treasurer of the dioceses and business manager for the dioceses of Massachusetts, episcopal dioceses of Massachusetts, which is basically the eastern part of the state, east of Worcester, and a.....it was during the whole civil rights thing and we had a wonderful understanding bishop named Anson Stokes and he let

everybody get involved.

B: In ah, before Johnathan, what sort of things would he do. Before he met Johnathan, what he might be...

J: Well, I had become, for lack of a better phrase, the pay master. I never went south and got involved at that stage of the game, but I was always the contact man for the people that were in the field in the south and I would raise money for bail and raise money for, I told you earlier the story of getting on the radio and..

B: Why don't you tell us that story.

J: Alright. When the last day of the march from Montgomery to Selma came, A lot of people suggested that we charter planes and go down to Burmingham to join the last day. So I called our PR man and said, "How can we get an announcement on the radio?" and he called me back and said, "Get a little speech that says you want money and what it's for, who you are and all the radio stations will call you within the next hour, but they only, they'll record less than a minute and if you're still talking it will just wander off." So I wrote a little speech and they all did call me and I said, "I'm John Tillson, I'm treasurer of the dioceses, we are trying to raise enough money to fill, charter a plane to go and represent us. You're welcome to come along," and the tickets were 90 dollars or something, "or you could send the money and somebody could go in your place." and by noon the next day, we had enough people and enough money to charter two planes. One from Northeast and one from TWA and Eastern had the only terminal in Montgomery and they wouldn't let us use any of their facilities 'cause we're in competitors airplanes. We had to crawl down out of the planes, which were DC 4's, on mechanics ladders that the mechanics loaned us.

B: So were you on that flight too?

J: Yeh

B: To go down.

J: I went down, two of our three sons went with me and um, we had people organized in groups of 8 or 10 and we gathered at the catholic cemetary, seminary, I think it was a school.

B: St Jude's?

J: Yeh St. Jude's and, like everything else, you know, hurry up and wait and ah, I remember having been trained in the army, I just put my raincoat on the ground and lay down and went to sleep and was rudely awakened by a friend from California who'd flown from San Francisco on a chartered plane, he kicked me awake. I never did see the front of the parade, I never saw Martin Luther King ah. We finally joined and we marched, oh 12 or 14 abreast I guess, and we went through the black section of Montgomery and then the red neck section of Montgomery and our youngest son Bill, who was then...I would guess 14 or so, and his brother Chris and Chris was more naive than Bill and Chris was walking along hand in hand with a little black girl on the outer ranks of the march and Bill come over to me and he said, "You and I got to push them toward the middle." which we did, because the streets, by this time, were lined with people with baseball bats and ah, we walked silently, we didn't sing or

nything and we went up and gathered in the great big plots in front of where the speeches were all made endlessly and ah, then there were busses to take us back, the police had insisted on this, and they had commandeered enough busses and ah, Neil Hasty, who is still a clergyman in Boston, was down there and he was our contact person and he came and I told all the captains of the groups, most of them were clergymen, ah that immediately when the crowd broke up, they were to go down two streets and the busses would be lined up and they would get in the busses and we'd go right back to the airport. Only one man decided he and his group would go sight seeing and they walked out behind the capitol building and got into a real red neck area, got harassed, got lost, the busses were gone. They finally got someone to drive them out to the airport and they were almost at the point where Mrs. Resso was shot, when she was shot.

L: Mrs. Arusso you mean?

B: The woman from Detroit.

J: Woman from Detroit and they were pretty shook up at the time. Then they let, they conned me, this was a great mistake on my part, but one plane was ready to go and instead of taking people from the second plane and filling it up, I let a couple of people that had already been down there, take their seats. So then when the people arrived that had been lost, we were over booked and I did get two men to, who were white, Boston businessmen and could afford it, to drop out and mingle with the crowd in the airport and take commercial flights home and we'd reimburse them. We had to be very careful who we picked because, and they had to sneak through the men's room and then back out and look as if they were just traveling and were nothing to do with that bunch of ramble out there and ah,

B: That's great. We have a lot of, we found the filmed commissioned by, merely the white citizen's council, ah that has documented the march from Selma to Montgomery and it's an awful film but there is some great footage. A lot of it is the crowd coming through the streets of Montgomery, so ah,

J: and course the state believes and the FBI all have their cameras trained on us so I'm sure we were photographed and rephotographed and identified and everything else and ah,

B: Can you recall ah Bill's and Chris' reaction to that?

J: Well it was a very heavy trip for them and it, and it gave a bond between father and two sons that is, you know, something very precious. Bill later went down...he went to a prep school in Danbury, Connecticut and came home and announced that he was not going to go back to school. No first he announced that he was going to go down and spend the summer ah, tutoring black kids. He was then 14 years old and ah, there was a place outside of Jackson that had been a black college, you may,

B: Jackson State?

J: No. Ah, the SCLC had taken it over as ah, a staging area for people and it was managed by a methodist or a presbyterian minister and his wife from Michigan, and because of the position I had and under the pretense of going down to make sure our money was being used properly I

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flew down to Jackson and went out to the, whatever this college was, and met the couple and satisfied myself that it was safe for a 14 year old kid to be there and he was nothing but a little gopher basically. All summer long, well in about the middle of July, I got a phone call in my office from this clergyman and he said, "Do you and Francis look at the Hunckly-Brinkly Report?" and I said, "Every bloody night," and he said, "Well I better warn you. On tonight's show you're gonna' see your son shot." and I said, "I beg your pardon?" he said, "I'll put him on the phone and, he's all right. They missed him but he said before you see the film, I wanted you to know." So I said, "All right," and I went home and told Francis, but before that I said, "After the news tonight, I want you to have Bill phone us immediately after that footage so his mother will believe that he's alive." Well it showed a little cottage, which would have been a faculty house I guess, on this campus and a car pulled up, and why it happened to have been filmed I'll never know but anyway, Bill walked out of a door of the cottage and walked up to the car and you couldn't hear him but he obviously said, "Can I help you?" or words to that effect and with that a rifle barrel appeared right here and he turned around and ran like hell and as the screen door closed the bullet hit the frame of the door and ah, why Hunckly and Brinkly of NBC news that day filming I don't know, but ah,

B: Now is this Jackson, Mississippi or Jackson,

J: Outside of Jackson, Mississippi yeh. Mt. Bewla, Mt. Bewla was the name of the college and it had been a small black college that the civil rights movement had just taken over.

B: Now you got back to Cambridge and before you met Daniels were there any other events that you can think of?

J: Well there were endless events and endless phone calls, you know, we need money for this we need money for that and money was really pouring in. The churches were giving us money and um, you could always appeal and I could call key clergy in the dioceses and say we've got people in trouble and they all knew that the seminarians were going down there and ah, it really separated the sheep from the goats because even in proper Boston, liberal Boston, the vast majority thought it was a wonderful thing to do but there were a lot that that was none of our business, you know, our business was to pray and not go, take the gospel anywhere else and ah...so the next, my first and only direct involvement with Johnathan was I got a phone call from Bishop Lichtenberger who had retired as presiding bishop and was living and visiting distinguished professors helping at the seminary in Cambridge and he said, "I have control over small fund and I wanted Johnathan Daniels who is here from having come back from the seminary briefly, and I want him to have some money," for reasons that escape me. It probably had something to do with taxes or something. He wanted to give the dioceses the money and then I, as treasurer of the dioceses, gave the check to Johnathan and Johnathan called and said he would come in and I said to come in at three o'clock and our offices were then at 1 Joy St., Beacon Hill,

and he got there about three o'clock and he and I started talking and it wasn't until five o'clock that I realized that somebody was sitting out in the car waiting for him. It may have been Judy Uppon, I don't know who, and I've never been so smitten with a young man in my life. He was, had his head screwed on right, I felt that what he was doing was practical. He was dogmatic, he was blunt, he said he had a terrible time with some of the dogooders who came and all he wanted to do was pray. He said it was perfectly all right to pray but there was an awful lot of work to be done too and ah, then I gave him the check, he was leaving the next morning. He and Judy were driving back to Lownes County.

B: Now Judy didn't actually return with him.

J: and ah, so I gave him the check for whatever amount of money Bishop Lichtenberger had sent us and then I gave him a check of ours for a hundred bucks and I know that when he was shot and they took his clothes off, that our check was still in his pocket. He'd never cashed it and,

B: Do you remember any more about the two hour conversation, what he told you and any specifics about that. Any details you can fill in?

J: Yeh, I can remember him being very bitter about the, the people that forever wanted to have communion and have circles and prayer meetings and so forth and so on, and he said, as far as he was concerned, they were about as useless as jern circles, and he said there was all this work to be done and all these people to be taken care of and all these people to be loved and nourished and everything else and he thought it was criminal for the church to come there at prayer meetings endlessly and ah, he was quite bitter about that. He was an activist. He was living with that family, living with two or three other families and (coughs) um... he would have made a hell of a good clergyman, my kind of clergyman that, you know, gets his hands dirty and does something.

B: Did he talk at all, at this time, about snick or ah...

J: Not very much, no. He was very fascinated that we already knew, no I didn't know Stokely then. So no, we didn't talk very much about snick ah, he was, he'd committed himself to the SCLC and ah, the Mississippi ministry and ah, he, I think, probably was very sympathetic towards snick then, which was not near as a, militant as Stokely led it to be later. They hadn't invented black power yet.

B: Yeh, one of the things we found out about Johnathan, we don't know how it came about, but in 1963 he had joined NAACP. We found his card um, so, he was thinking along those lines a couple of years before, we just don't know any, whether it was because of his move to Cambridge ah,

J: We talked about the mechanics of, you know...being... keeping up with his academic work by mail so to speak, and occasional trips. We talked about, he was very impressed with the generosity of everybody and yet when you figured out how little money he had and surviving on, it would be mind blowing today, but he was just terribly impressed that everybody was proving money and ah.....I don't think that he had any doubts, he had fears, we talked about fears, we

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talked about the fear of being killed. He was well aware of that and had made up his mind that if he was going to do this it was, it was reminiscent to me of being in combat in the war. I mean if you're there, you're going to risk getting shot and if you believe in what you're doing you do it and ah, I, you know, I don't know how much I glamorize it because he martyred and I only met him once and spent two hours with him. But I do know somebody that came, a young kid that came in to pick up a check, ordinarily I would have told the secretary, "When this kid comes in, give him that envelope, his check is in it," um, got me after hours in the office and some poor clown out in the car on Joy Street on Beacon Hill waiting for him, and we planned to see each other again you know.

B: and then you, the I guess the next thing you heard was that he had been,

J: The next word I knew about him was, I was at home and, when was he killed?

B: August 20th 1965

J: It was right in the middle of the summer, and the church is not usually working very hard in the summer, and the national church in New York called me and wanted to know if I knew anything about a black seminarian who might be an episcopalian and came from Keene, NH and I said, well a, could be black and come from Keene, NH, ah, I said, "Have you got a name?" and they said, "Yes, but we have no records of him," and I said, "What's the name?" and they said, "Johnathan Daniels" and I said, "Well his seminarian at ETS right over here in ah, Cambridge" and I said, "He comes from the dioceses of New Hampshire. His home is in Keene" and I said, "He was in my office a week ago" or whatever it was "What happened?" and they said, "He's been killed" and so I called the seminary and Dr. Joseph Fletcher was the only one there and he had gone and gotten somebody, a student that was hanging around, open the switchboard and he'd called when I called and Joe said, "Get the hell up here" and the press had arrived and, the Dean of the seminary, who later became Bishop Cobern, was in Europe on sabbatical, and there are many of us who don't believe that if Dean Cobern had been on the job that the students would have been allowed to go south. I don't think Cobern's commitment to civil rights was ever too deep and ah.....then...we, Dr. Fletcher coped with all the newspaper people and was the spokesman for the seminary and ah, had a collar on and did all that, and then Cobern flew back ah, from Europe, or wherever he was and then the next thing I knew, all my contacts in the civil rights movement which were not snick at that point, they were SCLC, and the Mississippi ministry, ah, and the Escrue, the episcopal organization and they said we will need your help at the funeral in Keene and ah. So I rented a station wagon, somehow it seemed terribly prudent and there was a woman, and she still lives in Cambridge, who used to work for the Harvard Press and doesn't anymore, but she was a fairly unstable lady and she got a hold of me and she wanted to go with me and she did, and we got to Keene and the first thing, in civil rights there was always someplace

where you could go to a headquarters and somebody vaguely knew what the hell was going on, and I went there and told them who I was and said, "What can I do?" and they said, "Here's the schedule of everybody arriving at the Keene airport", which was then a small hanger and one strip, and "would you please meet them and bring into town" and I met a lot of them and among them was Malcolm Boyd, who was then beginning to be famous, and ah I remember his, do you want me to tell you the whole story?

B: umhuh

J: I remember his getting off the plane, and they were small 8 seater commuter planes that came out of Laguardia, and um, he was in clerical collar and we got inside and a whole group of civil rights hangers on, young kids had ridden out with me, and they greeted Malcolm and Malcolm told them, in a loud clear voice for the citizens of Keene to hear, some story about being in a black church in New York the week before and in the lobby of the church they had a gastly picture of Christ crucified, but of course he was a white man and Malcolm said, "I just pulled out my cock and pissed on it" and I can remember thinking, you know, the good burgers of Keene don't really need to hear that from a clergyman in a collar, and,

L: I've got a whole new light on the civil rights movement.

J: Yeh, it certainly did. Put a damper on it anyway (laughs).

L: Well we wont use that in the film, that's for sure.

J: Then we went to the funeral, then we went back to the house.

B: Connie's house

J: Connie's house and it was there that I met Stokely, and he and I hit it off right away, I think I probably picked him up at the airport too, and ah....it may have been, no it was long after that that his picture was on the front page of Life, but he had become fairly well known and, Johnathan may well have told me about him but ah...I cannot recall who suggested that I pick up the six black kids that were all at the funeral and take them back to Cambridge, and then they eventually found their way back to Alabama. So I rounded them up and once the funeral was over, the reception was over at the house,

B: Do you remember anything about the atmosphere at the funeral, how Keene reacted to the funeral and the presence of,

J: I was unaware of Keene, completely unaware of Keene. the only reaction I had was, that it was a very big event, and what to was in a very small city, I didn't know it that well in those days. Um, I remember that all the blacks, because the black kids that I took home with me ah, the ones that had been with Johnathan, were absolutely awed to be celebrities in a city, and I remember one of them said, "Holy man, did you see that white cop. He stopped traffic so we could cross the street" and that was more then they could comprehend. I, my impression is that there were very few citizens of Kenne at the funeral itself, ah, Dr. Daniels had been a very prominent man, Connie was a prominent lady. But

I don't, I remember an awful lot of civil rights people being there, they would be the people I knew and the rest of the church could be full of native, Keene people, but I was unaware of it. Didn't know a sole in Keene in those days anyway and ah, then we loaded the kids into the station wagon and it took us hours to get back to Cambridge. They either had to stop at every watering place they could find, or they had to have a Coke, or they had to have a cigarette, or they had to have something to eat and we finally got 'em back and, my wife was in Mississippi Registry of Voters, so I had a large apartment by myself and Bill Tillson was with me, and then the ah, Emests, and he was then a, was an episcopal clergyman but was semi-retired, and he and his wife Marty lived right across the hall from us. There were two apartments on the floor and we basically opened up, thank god for Marty, she knew how to find the sheets and make the beds. We had three bedrooms and she had two. So we bedded everybody down on the couches and so forth and you never could get them all on their feet and ready to go anywhere at one time 'cause they, one would have a headache, one, they were having terrible reactions to what they'd been through, and after all they'd seen. They'd been in jail with him, they'd seen him shot, they'd seen Martin Morisroe shot and then they'd been hauled to Keene, NH, they'd been interviewed on national television. They were in a hell of a shape, and ah, but it was a full time job keepin' them all going, and then we took them up to the seminary and we went to the dean's house, Dean Cobern by that time, was back and it was the six kids and myself and I had a tape recorder and Joe Fletcher and I interviewed them and you've got copies of that tape.

B: Joe Fletcher was the ethics...

J: Joe Fletcher was the ethic's professor. Still alive, living in Charlottesville, Virginia. How well he is, I last talked to him six months ago and he's gotten quite feeble. His wife died, we were up there a year ago October for her memorial service, and um, he's well into his 80's, um, but Joe Fletcher was the logical man because way back in the 20's and 30's, Joe Fletcher was working to bust unions in Alabama and he has chain marks on his back from being beaten by the KKK in Alabama in the 20's and 30's.

L: By bust unions, you mean labor unions. You know, why would the KKK,

J: No he wasn't trying to bust them he was trying to get them into the south and ah, the unions people and the red necks and the KKK were, and he tells a wonderful story about going across the bridge from Mississippi to Alabama or whatever, I don't know my geography very well but, the state they were in was probably Alabama, the coal mines and so forth, and weekends they would try and cross the river and get some rest where they had a little ananimity and not become celebrities, and then coming back Sunday was when they met on the bridge and beat the shit out of them with tire chains. So he was a famous liberal along with Saul Olinski, who was another great hero when I, ah, and ah, we interviewed them and then I don't recall how they parted. I

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don't remember getting them tickets, they must have, I think they all had return tickets somehow and, but I don't remember them leaving at all, and ah, then about a week later, I got a call from the FBI saying that they understood that I had a tape of an interview with the six black kids that were with Johnathan Daniels when he was shot, and they would like to have it, and I said, "Well, it belongs to me" and they said, "No it's something that we're going to confiscate," So I called James Garfield, who was then senior partner of Choldholm Stuart in Boston and was chancellor of the diocese, which is lawyer of the dioceses, and he was also chairman of the board of the seminary and I said, "What'll I do?" and he said, "Bring it to my office immediately and I'll put in the safe, and you can tell the FBI you don't have it. It's none of there damn business." So the FBI dually came to the door and i said, "I'm terribly sorry, I don't have it" and they said, "Well where is it?" and I said, "I refuse to tell you" and they said, "Well we will have to go and get a warrant" and I said, "Go get a warrant" and I never heard from them again, and ah, then Bishop Cobern called me and asked me I would stop by to see him early the next morning on my way to work and I went by his office at the seminary which was three blocks from where I lived and ah, he was very upset. He had a terrible guilt trip because he felt that all of this had happened because he was not there running the seminary, he'd been off on sabbatical. A great many of us feel that, had he been there, he wouldn't have allowed it. He also asked me what he could do to play catch up and get involved in the civil rights movement, and I said, "The first thing you have to do is take off your collar, take off your pompocity and go to the south and get involved and risk your neck and put your arms around those kids that are down there doin' it. Black and white." and he said, "Oh, I'm not sure I could do that." and I said, "Well that's the only way," and I said, "You're going to be beaten up, you're going to be disillusioned, you're going to be hurt, you're going to be spat at and I'm not talking about the physical aspect, I'm talking about the emotional, mental aspects of it, and he said he wasn't sure he could do that and he was, was and is a very private, self controlled, ambitious man and I saw him weep and ah, our relationship was never the same because of that and I've always thought, you know, strong men don't like to be seen weeping. I may glamorize that, but anyway, um,

B: Who was the acting dean just for the record?

J: While he was gone?

B: Yeh.

J: Um, Henry, Henry Shires, who is dead, um, and ah, then.....I either heard from Cobern himself or from other people, that he had been in touch with the rector of the episcopal church in Selma, and that was the church that refused to let Johnathan in when he brought black people with him, and...Cobern had decided that his mission at that point, he got himself invited by the rector, to come down as the dean of the seminary from which that agitator who had killed had come, and try to work reconciliation, was their

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wonderful phrase. He went and he delivered the sermon in which he tried to say that we were all in this together and that we must follow the will of god and the workings of the holy spirit and ultimately it would work itself out. He never took a militant position. I don't know if he ever saw it or not, but I got a copy of a letter that the rector sent to the entire congregation a week later apologizing for having this man there and he really didn't say anything anyway. But that, as far as I know was his only effort to get mixed up in it. Now he was later president of the house of deputies of the general convention and he was very instrumental in getting the episcopal to put a lot of money where it;s mouth was under the episcopal general convention special program that funded a lot of civil rights, but more modest civil rights work that Johnatha was doing, um,....

B: You might just talk a little bit about ah, how this led to a relationship with Stokely. We hopefully going to interview..

J: I had and have a very special place in my heart for Stokely. We met at the funeral and I think Stokely was smart enough to figure out that I was a bag man, at least a money man and I was worth cultivating, and he called one time and said he was going to be in Bcston, could he come and see me, and I said certainly, and we were living at 993 Memorial Drive right down on the river and Stokely appeared at the door, and I told Francis, my wife, who happened to back from her work in Mississippi, that he was coming and he appeared at the door and shook hands and Francis, then he said, " How do you do Mrs. Tillson?" and she said, "Oh no" in the best white liberal 1963 sense, we must all be first names. She said, "Oh no you must call me Francis" and he said, "Mam. I was brought up by a very strict mother in Jamaica and if she knew I called a lady old enough to be my mother, by her first name, she'd whop me." and after that he always called Francis mama and he called me papa, and every time he was in Boston, he would come to our apartment, usually on a Sunday morning and bring and unknown number of his entourage with him and Francis would prepare a gigantic scrambled egg breakfast, and we never knew whether there'd be two or 15 with him. But they could eat quantities of food, and I think it was that first visit that ah...he and I went off ny ourselves, no and the other boy that was with him, the Brown boy I think his name was, who was about a 16, 17 year old and some black boy, and was Stokely's gopher basically, and ah, we went over to the then Holiday Inn on Mass. Ave, it's closed now, and had breakfast and Stokely was beginning to get a bit paranoid and he said, "You know, they are out there to get me." And I said, "Who's out to get you?" and he said, "There's probably a price on my head, I'll be assassinated someday" and I said, "Stokely, knock it off." I said, "In the first place, I could probably have a gun in my lap!" we were in a booth and I said, "I could probably have a gun in my lap and shoot you now and not really be taken to trial right here in Cambridge...."

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J: had quite a rap session together and afterwards I said, "Well what did you think?" and he said, "Hell, I'd desert and go with him if he asked me. He was a very charismatic figure. I remember he came to Boston once and ah, they were going to have a rally in the basement of the parish house of the Lutheran Church in Cambridge which is right off Harvard Square, and ah, it was being put on by the local council of churches or something, of which I was not very active and ah, so I got a call from the chairman of the committee saying that Stokely wanted me to introduce him and they didn't think I was the proper person, they thought somebody from the committee, and I said, "Well that's fine with me" and they said, "But it isn't with Stokely. He said if you didn't introduce him, he won't come". So I said, "Fine I'll introduce him." Well we got there and we were talking and young Bill Tillson was running around, he said, "There's an FBI agent here" and I said, "Oh Bill, stop all these stories about the FBI" and he said, "Come on, I'll prove it to you". So we went outside and parked on one of those narrow streets of Cambridge, next to the hydrant was a little black sedan with the windshield visor down, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and I said, "Okay, show me which one it is". So he showed me some young 27 or 28 year old man in a trench coat, and ah, so when I got up to introduce Stokely, I said, "I have had experience enough to know that the dumbest thing a Master of Ceremonies can do is start pointing out distinguished people in the audience because there are oh so many that you forget the president of the United States and" who happened to be there too, or something like that. So I said, "I'm not going to recognize anyone in the audience except one person who I think is unique and I think should be distinguished. I have learned that there is an FBI agent here who is covering this event and reporting it to, I presume, Mr. Hoover" and I said, "Young man would you be kind enough to stand up please" and he could have killed me but he stood up (laughing). So, and it brought the house down of course because there weren't any conservatives there and I'm sure that I have a record with the FBI, and then after that, when Stokely became head of the Snick and started the black power thing and he was on the cover of Life magazine and he became a terrible threat, even to some of the weaker kneed liberals and um, and I'm not sure that he was off on the right track. I know why he was off on the right track because we were sitting around one evening ah, jumping ahead a little bit, I went down to Lownes County later but I'll get back to that ah, but I was sitting around in a car with Stokely...and we were waiting at a cross roads for the man that covered it all for the New York Times and we would all know his name if I could think of it, and ah, we, the only place that Stokely and he could meet was in the night after dark at a crossroads, some obscure road. So Stokely and I had an hour by ourselves talking and I said, "I'm so upset at your bitterness, I don't think that the answer is black power" and I said, "I certainly don't think separatism and going back to Africa and all that rigamarole is the answer to it" and he said, "Papa, I'm only 24 years old" or whatever he was, and he said, "I've been

beaten, I've been thrown in jail, I have seen 5 of my closest friends shot and murdered in front of my very eyes and nobody's been taken to justice" and he said, "I've had a belly full" and ah...that time when he came back to Cambridge, we had seen on the news that he had come back from Europe, he had been someplace in Africa, and came back and the FBI, he was under surveillance when he got off the plane, they lifted his passport and then they, newsreels showed him disappearing in a brownstone tenement in the, Harlem somewhere, and about 3 days later, Francis and I were very discouraged because we thought we'd never see from or hear from him again, and ah, oh about a week later the phone rang and he said, "Papa, how are you?" and I said, "Where the hell are you?" and he said, "I'm over in Jamaica Plain. I'm in a phone booth" and he said, "Could we come and see you" and I said, "Sure, how many will there be?" and he said, "Oh I don't know" and I said, "All right, we'll run out and get several dozen eggs" and young Bill Tillson, at that time, had his summer in Mississippi I guess and ah, he was very much into the movement, very distraught with his own education, 14,15,16 years old, and ah, he kept insisting our phone was tapped and I kept saying it was nonsense. Well, Stokely arrived with his entourage of 3 or 4 and walked in and said, "Your phone's tapped" and I said, "How the hell do you know?" and he said, "Well, when we left Harlem, we discovered there were two police cars. So we sent up 3 indential cars and 3 of us ran out" and he said, "Of course we were all look alike" and he said, "They chased the other 2 cars and I got away" and he said, "Then I drove up here and I'd been with friends in Jamaica Plain. Nobody knows I'm here except people in the movement and I went out on the corner and phoned you from a phone booth. They picked up in a car and drove me over here and the FBI is out in front of your apartment. So it had to be your phone". So we looked out and there was the inevitable black Ford sedan and the inevitable young man pacing up and down in a trench coat, and I said, "Why don't we go down and invite him in for breakfast" and ah, one of us went out and asked him and he denied who he was and said, "No, thank you very much." Got in the car but didn't drive off and ah, that was the last time we saw Stokely I guess and ah,

B: Do you recall, was that the time he went to ETS to give the speech? Do you know?

J: No he gave the speech at ETS in between those two stories. He gave it shortly after the tape and after the people. I would say probably, the seminary convened in late September and we had the interview in late to mid August, right after the funeral and as soon as the school opened ah, we invited the dean and invited Stokely and Stokely, I guess I probably invited him but the dean asked me too and ah, he came up and he probably stayed with us, and what they had was a memorial service for Johnathan. I played the tape of the interview during the service and then Stokely spoke and that was the speech, and it was a pretty militant speech then ah, I don't recall it and I don't know whether you've got a recording of it or not.

B: Yes we'll give you a copy.

J: and ah, ah, lots of the later tragedies spring to mind after Cobern left to become bishop, they appointed a man named Harvey Guthry who had been a very much a liberal, had been ah, ah, was a historian and, he took the strange position that the history of the school started the day he became dean, and there was a wonderful tradition at the seminary, there is a window ah, in what used to be the old library, which is now the student lounge or something, no it used to be the old factory, and 2 students, years and years and years ago in the 30's I guess, ah, made a parchment and buried it and soaked it in milk and soaked it in things and then discovered it, and they had done such a wonderful job that it took historians 4 or 5 weeks to discover it was a phony and ah, it was then always called the Partridge papers because one of the boys was named Partridge and he died early in life and his parents gave a stain glass window in his memory, and it's the Partridge window and in it is the...indication of this parchment. That story was always told by the senior professor at a convocation so that they know the history of their school and then for a couple of years, there's 2 or 3 years, I always played the tape at one of the openings, because I felt strongly that every success that had Johnathan at his school, should know about it. When I left in 1978 or whatever it was, oh no it was later than that in 198, well anyway, 10 years after this whole story, one of the last events I remember was, a student came up to me one day and he said, "John" or Mr. Tillson or whatever he called me, he said, "Did you know Johnathan Daniels?" and I said, "Of course I knew him." There is a statue, but it's buried behind a pine tree up against the wall of the chapel that Bill ah, Coolidge had commissioned by some sculptor and it's the figure of a kneeling, wailing man and the original is at St. Jude's and the copy is at EDS now, episcopal seminary in Cambridge, and, but, you know, you have to go find it. It's behind a bunch of evergreens that had grown up and ah, this kid had found it and wanted to know what it was, and then he said, "I don't understand" he said, "I know New Hampshire and I can't imagine there being a black person who would be middle class enough to become a seminarian in this seminary from Keene, NH" and I said, "It wasn't. He was white and there aren't any blacks who came, as far as I know" there weren't then, and you know, in those 7 years it had eroded from all of the folklore of both stories never being told again, and when I asked Dean Guthry, he said, "Oh, kids today don't want to hear all that trash from the old" which is a marvelous statement in my historian, you know, historian of ancient history and ah,

L: Well we disagree with that, you know, we think the story needs to be told.

B: Now this year, I don't know if you know it, but in November or so they are going to dedicate an icon to Daniels at the seminary.

J: They are?

B: So there must have been some kind of turnabout.

J: Well Guthry left for one thing and ah, the seminary went to hell in a basket. It's coming back. It's still March. The women took it over and ah, it's come see come sar as to whether it's going to survive I think. It was 2 years ago anyway.

B: That's interesting. Well any other, I can't think of too much else.

L: No,

B: It's been very, very helpful.

L: You've given us information we hadn't had before.

J: I'll just trust you with discretion of some of the nasty remarks I made. I don't give a damn if Cobern hears them or not but (laughs).

B: We had heard that Cobern may not have, I think it was Guthry who might have signed their release. I'm not sure. We'd have to go back and look. But we had heard that Cobern would not, probably wouldn't favor in what they were doing and it was lucky he wasn't around.

J: Well, you know, we still, we're not still..

L: Would you like it off?

J: I don't care, if you want (covers microphone) ah, you know, then Cobern announced at the annual alumni dinner, I don't know what year afterwards, that he'd resigned and he had built the seminary from a rather obscure seminary, he raised 10 million bucks and he was a big wheeler dealer and ah, this James Garfield that I spoke about, who had been the chairman of his board and became a great father figure in my life, um, but...Cobern didn't even tell him that he was going to announce his resignation. He announced it at a dinner. Then he took a year off, paid by the seminary, 'cause he was entitled a years sabbatical. He went and lived in New York and tried to tutor under educated kids and he went in the black area and they said, "Get out of here you honky son of a bitch". He'd finally managed to tutor a few spanish kids, but this great myth built up about this great sacrifice that this wonderful man had made. He was living without salary and I said, living without salary my ass. He not only is getting full salary from the seminary, which he was entitled to but, he maintained that he had control over the deanery, which is one of the better houses in Cambridge and he rented that to a visiting professor in Harvard and kept the rent. So he went high off the hog while he was making his great in the gutter sacrifice in New York and then the next fall it was announced he had been elected rector of St. James, which next to Trinity, is the richest church in New York.

L: I wanted to ask you um, best of your recollection, misdeals ah, when you were talking about bringing Johnathan's body back from Montgomery. That the body was flown into Keene.

J: I was always told, and I don;t know anything about this and John Marsh seems to have forgot, I suspect he's blacked it out. I think it was a very gruesome story,

B: Well he admitted that ah, he has a tendency to black out, J: The tape that you got of the interview with the kids will tell you that there was a hell of a time getting the body released. It never was, as far as I know, ever embalmed and treated by an undertaker. It was badly, almost cut in half by the blast of the shotgun and ah...the story I heard was that John Morris, who had access to money ah, finally got the body. Now whether it was spirited out of the undertaking place or they were glad to get rid of it, I don't know. But there were problems, and my understanding was that they got the body in a body bag, they chartered a small plane and that Morris and his friend, who I guess was the pilot, and the body bag flew to Keene, and then an undertaker took it over there. But I can't vouch for that, but that, that was a very current story at that point.

L: As I, we heard that the plane was so small that wasn't room for a coffin. That Morris had to carry the body across his lap the whole trip.

J: Well how small it was, now I'm sure they couldn't get a coffin in it.

B: Morris says that it was in a body bag but it was just somewhere on the plane.

L: In the back.

B: In the back.

J: Ah, my guess would been it was a 4 seater and that he and the pilot sat up front and the body bag was in the back seat. That would be my guess but it was an unembalmed, bloody body.

L: Yeh we heard that he ah, flew from Montgomery to Atlanta, Atlanta to Dallas airport, Dallas to Boston and then drove from Boston.

J: I haven't god's idea. I know nothing about that.

B: It must have been a terrible journey.

J: It would be something that a sensitive person would block out of their memory, I would think. And I think there was a very close bond between those two so it was, it was not just, just another civil rights worker that got killed.

B: No, Johnathan had stayed at his house with Judith a number of times I guess.

J: Turn that off a minute will you. (recorder goes off)