

Sull:What part of New Jersey is across the river?

B:I don't know. It's a..I really don't know what that..particular area is over there. I mean Hackensack was down there a little ways and um.. I'm just not very familiar with New Jersey(laugh).

Sull:Once you're on this side of the state or so(Laughing).

B:I mean there's a lot of little towns.

Sull:Yeah

L:Didn't there used to be an amusement park over there?

B:Pals, Pals St.Fear. Yeah.....Well anyway the way the book came about is that..after John was killed uh it was felt that something needed to be done quite immediately for the record and that's basically what I was asked to do. To get something together um...as reasonably quickly as I possibly could. And um...John Cobern asked me to do it because I guess at the time I was one of the closest people relationally to John in Cambridge...and I had met him shortly after I had moved to Cambridge 'cause I had been chapeling to Washington only in VMI prior to going to Harvard and... I had been told by a number of people in Lexington that when I had gotten to Cambridge I must look up Johnathan Daniels.

Sull:So you chapeling after him...

B:Yes.And um so as soon as I got to Cambridge, with in a matter of, I guess a few weeks I called and ff..and located him and we got together and we became rather fast friends(pause for crunching on food).So that's

Sull:What year was that?

B:It must have been ah...well I went to Cambridge in 1963.

Sull: '63, so that was his first year at ETS.

B:ahuh....He had been doing graduate work in English um prior to that...

Sull:Yeah, we've... there's that one spot where he some sort of religious conversion. I guess that April something...I guess it would be '63.

B:ahuh

Sull:yeah. We don't know much about that.

L:We asked Emily ? about that and uh she said that the family needed money for her medical bill, medical bill(Clears throat), which came as a surprise to us, we assumed all along that this was a metaphysical not physical reason.

Sull:A psychological reason too having problems with...we can understand. Some theory I think is in your book to a, some delayed grief for the father. I guess the family was, Emily herself was having problems, they were financial problems. She wasn't sure that ah..midieval literature was the way to go.

L:Did I mention to you on the that we found Philip Danieal's, Dr. Daniel's diary from the war in an antique shop in Putney, Vermont.

B:No you didn't.

L:And ah we picked it up along with some other things that belonged to Jonhathan and had them transcribed. I don't know if a copy of that would be of interest to you but..

B: Hum. Fascinating.

L: It describes his experiences in Germany during the war(?)

B: How did it ever get to Putney, Vermont? Would it be when

the state was broken up or something?

Sull: Yes.

B: But...

L: This man who owns the antique shop in Putney was a conscientious objector in the early 60's... and he uh followed with interest Johnathan's story after Johnathan was killed and what happened after. When he heard that Johnathan Daniel's had died, he kept his eye out in the market for objects that might have surfaced from her estate and so he actually went to auctions where her goods had been sold found out who had purchased them and bought them back to assemble a Johnathan Daniels collection. But I got a postcard from her a few months ago and the Cheshire County Historical Society actually ponied up the money to buy the whole collection. And it helped to us that, to see the orders of the farmer and listen to Johnathan's voice and have that information that we didn't have before. Just try and understand. That whole idea of commitment to Johnathan is so clear that it's...clarified for us it's process(?).

B: umhuh

Sull: So you were the chaplin at ETS when Johnathan...

B: No, I was.

Sull: You were at Harvard.

B: I was at Harvard Yea.

Sull: And he had already left Harvard though by the yea.....and then he had spent some time in Keene..(?)

B: umhuh, Yeah I mean I think you, I mean by this time you must know so much of the story that I don't want to just repeat..

Sull: Right, yah

B: ...stuff that

Sull: i thought that if you knew anything about that period. Two things we don't really understand. One would be the political conversion of Johnathan it was said by 1963 he um joined the AACP, in '64 he's talking about Kennedy and Johnson. We know parental background is pretty much republican.....Patrician, kind of republican background. We can't quite, even after going to VMI, we can't quite see when and how um by the early 60's he had been caught in the kind of Kennedy/Johnson kind of social vision, ...how he got involved initially in things like the racial questionings. How all that came about still isn't clear to us. uh, and then the second question, the religious conversion thing. You know we've read about it but we don't really know the sort of ah, tactile feel for what actually took place...so it kind of gaps in that we are worried about. It would be helpful...

B: Do you have any ideas?

Sull: About what took place or...

B: umhum, about what was going on... any...

Sull: Not really, not really I mean it would all be surmised on the thought about, we don't have any evidence that can

clearly point to where..

B: No but I mean does it, have you drawn any sort of thoughts on it even though you may not have evidence?

Sull: Well we kind of speculated on the conversion bit that he had been, that is a thesis at VMI which was on existentialism and seemingly had come to some sort of feeling that uh.. um, there was a crisis that we believe that he had perhaps become, question is calling to be religious and, and uh and then perhaps enough problems have uh transcribed in his own experience that he checked out (?) God in a weaker faith finally in '62. um, politically I can't say that we have much except maybe we interviewed a ah,ah,ah,ah somebody just a year behind him at EMI, we talked about the kind of Kennedy idealism that was kind of catching on during those years um..

B: yeah..

Sull: Those are kind of loose threads that we've been looking at. We think the father figure plays an important role, uh..but again tactfully..

B: yeah

Sull: by a way we can't quite put our fingers on, so it's, we kind of hesitate becoming amateur ah, you know...

B: Yeah

Sull: a psychiatrist

B: right... but the thing is um, it's almost what you have to be and it's almost what it takes i think um, I mean there was a lot of sort of... elements that converged it seems to me uh some of them were circumstantial in the environment in the, in the society, and some of them were inside John himself. He um, I think he was a person in crisis I mean I think he was, I think John was having, very much an identity crisis uh, during the period of Harvard um, probably started at VMI but, leaving there and coming into a really radically different environment, and I can speak for having gone, come from VMI into, though I had lived in Cambridge before and gone to EDS myself, ah, I had been away from it for awhile and I'd been in Lexington ah, the parish I was connected to in Lexington was going through the tortures of becoming intergrated. During the period I was there, there was enormous hostility, terrible resistinces, the Aramie Memorial Church in Lexington, Virginia and ah...

L: Where was that. We loved Lexington..

B: It's on the campus practically of Washington and Lee.

Sull: We went to that...(Schneider clears his throat)

L: oh yes, yes...

Sull: We filmed windows in there.

L: yes

B: The red house on the campus right behind it is the house I lived in.

Sull: uhhuh

L: So you went up to VMI as well?

B: No I didn't go there as a student. I was chaplin at WL in VMI for two years. So um, these were almost ah, intransigent

institutions(laughs). uh, in most every way ah, in VMI I think VMI is still kicking and screaming until the 20th century in terms of admitting women. Just tremendous resistance to every, anything that meant any kind of change. L: They had blacks..

B: That I, yes, I do know that. But Washington Lee was very similar but Washington Lee was the southern gentry largely ah, ah the aristocracy of the south, the sons of the aristocracy of the south, and they had alot, or felt they had a lot to preserve ah, in terms of their holdings and their history and VMI was sort of the Virginia militia kind of crowd. So that combination was pretty ah, resistant to what was really happening in the country um, and coming from there into Cambridge where ideas were really ah, moving pretty fast, a lot was going on in the, in the social sphere people were really talking in a way that they were not talking in Lexington at all, and John was smart. I mean if there is one thing I can really say is he, he was really intelligent. He had a very quick mind and uh, he would pick up on things like that. He was enormously sensitive ah, person ah, even though he went to VMI and even though he went south and even though he went through all that he went through showing enormous strength, there was, a word that always comes up with me is he was very fragile um, in many, many ways, and uh, he would pick up on the, the ah, ah pain or the ah injustice that, and identify with it in terms of others. I mean, I think he just feelingly connected and was smart enough to be able to understand and interpret that in some kind of meaningful way. um, I think that was going, I think that was part of what was happening. Uh, I think that uh, as I say, I think that he was also himself going through a personal identity crisis, um..and maybe that, that is concomitant with these other things that one would almost of necessity have to be harmed through one(laughs). But ah...but he was very um, tortured about a lot of things, I mean he agonized a lot in trying to work through what, what he was about and who he was and what he was trying to do. It may seem very clear and focused in, in, in, an historical expression, but underneath that there was an awful lot of turmoil and, and I mean I talked, we'd sit and talk and drink scotch. We'd put a bottle of scotch in the middle of the floor at eleven o'clock at night and five o'clock in the morning we would still be talking and the bottle would be empty. ah, and...

Sull: The wine is working it's way through my system. Do you mind if I use your bathroom?

B: No, you want to turn this off or.

L: No, unless you want to.

B: It's up to you, we'll just keep going.

Sull: To the right?

B:ah it's the, just straight through. Just straight.

Um.....a lot of people, I think were attracted to and loved John..um, I don't think John loved, was in love with anyone.

at least in our conversations he never was. Ah, he had a love of humanity. He...

Sull: In the agregan.

B: Yes and he was, he was genuinely kind and loving to people. I think he was extremely sensitive. But.. I mean I talked with him about (laughs) just about everything and ah, as far as I ever knew John was never in love with anyone.

Sull: And yet one of the things we found out was that a lot of women loved John.

B: Oh I'm sure of it. I'm sure of that, but ah, that's not where he was at and ah, frankly ah, sexually I don't know where he was at I don't think he did. I think that was unresolved with him. That he, first of all it was, he was on another course. It wasn't that course um.. as far as, I mean this is my...

SULL: uhuh, right.

B: ...impression and, and, and recollection and um, and it wasn't though we didn't talk about that kind of thing because we did, and I never got the sense from him that um... a romantic relationship was even anything imparticularly he was interested in having, at least not during this period in his life. Whether that would have happened sometime down the road, I don't know. But um, I mean, unlike so many, 'cause I work with graduate students all the time and I worked with and, and, have worked with and I've been teaching, I teach even now I mean I've, one of the main kind of focuses and interests at that age is a relationship and, you know, being involved and going through the tortures of the damby and these in and out relationships, John didn't have any of that.... John was not a ro.. it was romantic as far as I ever, ever saw it, And ah..... as I say, I think this was an unresolved area in his life. Whether it would have become resolved, I don't know.

SULL: And what kept him away was it... graded more towards things in the abstract or... uh..

B: I don't know.

SULL: ...issues.

B: uh, maybe..

SULL: something more personal.

B: Maybe fear.

SULL: Fear...

L: The women were tremendously attracted to John.

B: Yeah. That's what I was saying, I don't think John was ever attracted to them.

SULL: Not in any..

B: romantic way at all.

L: I don't think so either.

B: They, I mean, that, that was a ah, ah, you know, I know that. I mean I know how many people...

Sull: I think we do too in some way, you know..

B: But, but, as I said, John loved people. There was no question in my mind about that. He was very, he was very,

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very in touch with, with people uh, that's why it didn't surprise me. I mean for example, in our last conversation, one of the most, 'cause the last time when I talked with John was one of these long marathon talks and, to be honest with you, I was doing everything I could to persuade him not to go back to ah, Selma and um, we left it unresolved um, at about 4:30 or so in the morning and I said well, I'll stop by and see ya tomorrow.; and I went by, it must have been around eleven o'clock in the morning I knocked on his door, and he was still in bed and um, he said uh, well he had said in the conversation that night, he said No I really feel I have to go back,' and he said because, he said I've made promises to those people and if I don't keep those promises it's just one more white person whose kind of renigged.', and he didn't word but that is what he meant, and uh, he couldn't do that. I mean he had ah, commitment ah, but a love for those people and ah he wasn't going to let them down, even if it meant his life. And he knew, full well that he ah, could be killed down there. He had been shot at and he was not um, oblivious to the dangers at all, aaa, quite frankly about them, and I was so persuaded that it would, was going to happen that I really said John, you know, my attack was Look, ah, you have a real...potential to be a major leader in this whole movement and you're needed here and to get yourself fully grounded, finish your education. You're letting it go right now. Finish it up and in the meantime cultivate more your, your ah role and ah, '. Anyway he obviously didn't listen to me and ah there was no reason in the world why he should, but we were friends and I was sharing my opinions. And ah maybe he made the only choice, he did make the only choice he could make for himself. So that was that. But um, when I went in in the morning, about eleven o'clock, woke him up, we started talking and he said, "You know, um, I really just have to go back.", and I said, "I understand.", I said, "I realize from what you said during the night that that was, you had made your decision.", but..

L: You were still a chaplin at Harvard?

B: Yeah and that was the last time I saw John.

SULL: So the motivation was less ideological and much more of a personal ah, sense of...

B: Well, I mean, I think Johnathan worked out a context ah, within which he was carrying on this work. I mean ah...justice and love all were conceptional, you know these were...but it wasn't for abstract, those, those reasons it was because they were living human beings that ah, to which all of that applied as far as he was concerned and ah, he wasn't on just a, he just wasn't on some ideological kick. I mean he was there to do fundamental...gutsy work and ah,...I think if he had only, if he had, if it had only been, you know, ideology, he could have given nice sermons and written good articles. I mean John was very clever and was verbally brilliant and ah, he could of protected himself from any dangers and still been heard. I mean, he could have gotten

his message out there 'cause he was awfully good. But that wasn't what it was about for him, it was really hands on stuff for him ah, that's why he went back. He had relationships, that mattered to him.

SULL: Why is it I wonder, I'm just curious, that he had gotten closer to black people in the south, than he had gotten to personal relationships?

B: Well, I mean, he wasn't romantically in love with these people, you know. He cared about them. I think he cared about people in Cambridge too. He cared about students in EDS. He cared about trying to get them involved in the movement. He, he cared about trying to get me involved in the movement. Ah, we were, I mean I, I felt the intensity of that ah, connectedness with him. Ah, so I don't think that just applied to black people in the south. I think that's, that was part of who this guy was...that capacity to be able to connect and attract. But it was on a different level than the romantic slash sexual level. And I'm not trying to say he couldn't have connected to anybody in that way, its just that I don't know personally of anybody he ever did, and he never told me, and I really think if he had, you know, fallen in love, he would have said something.

SULL: In some of the writings you get the sense of perhaps the love is more of a christian theological kind of love in the sense that ah, ah, there are a lot of passages in the, in the writing about ah, following ah, what Christ did in terms of serving people and being with the humble and the lone.

B: Yeah. Yes. I think there was a lot of that but I don't think that it was a laying of ah, you know, ah(laughs), of biblical texts upon his life and then living them out. I mean I don't think it worked that way for him, I think that happens with people, You know they, they, they think they have to live a certain way because that's what the bible says. I think John lived that, this way and it happened to coincide with that kind of approach to life so that it fit well. I really don't think that he was ah, superimposing christianity upon himself.

SULL: It came more out of the real personal world.

B: Yeah and ah, he was in a, he was not formed sort of fixed person. I mean if John were alive today and had he ah, continued, god knows where he would be. I mean he, um, I always think of him as, as being a person of more of a, had, had he remained in ah, in the formal institution of the church, he would have been more on the Bonhoferain edge than a the more sort of traditional conservative role of just, you know kind of a nice parish, clergyman type. I think he always would have been kind of edgy.

L: Looking towards a more of a, in terms of social change.

B: Yeah, yeah I think he would have continued to have those kind of concerns. I think that was really part of, of him. Now, I can't, I honestly can't tell you why...ah...that's..

and I don't think that's why, probably there's nobody that can, I mean that would take a lot of analysis to, to ah, a lot of analysis he would have had to get into himself because I'm not sure he really knew why. But I think you've touched on some of it. There was a lot of father stuff going on. I think there was a lot of, you know, ambivalence about himself ah...um...maybe there was a, this was a certain compensation for some, you know, other things that he..I mean that's all speculation. There's no way of knowing it's, and but, but I guess what I'm trying to get across to you is..that on one level it all looks very, sort of straight forward, everything kind of moving in a direction. But underneath it wasn't like that....This was a guy that was.. always, I think, a tortured person.

L: Well that, I think we've gotten some inklings of that.

When you first met him he was a student at Harvard and ah,

B: He actually wa..was at EDS. He had just gone into EDS. I think that's right. He had been at Harvard and gone into EDS.

SULL: I see. So he was at Harvard '61, '62.

B: Yeah.

L: Did he ever mention to you why, we know that he became an episcopalian when he was 18 in 1957, we found his baptismal search. UM, did he ever discuss why he wanted to become an episcopalian?

B: I don't remember.

L: But that's an interesting question...um..gone from VMI, and I would do what he did and take advantage of the scholarships, but then that would be a chance to think things over. Then take a year off and go back to Keene...and work at, these average jobs, and at the same hospital where his father was working, then go back to Cambridge. I wonder if he met people from ETS when he was at Harvard or...

B: You know, I mean, I know something but I can't remember it. It just, it's been a long time, but I, I mean, I can remember....I don't know if I can drag it back, I can remember though that we talked about it, about why he left Harvard....

L: You know Bill and I were talking as we were walking down the street, um, maybe we could....

B: Think.....

L:...you know, see this as an opportunity, you could see what our project is and get an idea of what we're interested in, and maybe you could schedule a (?) sometime later this summer, and it might give you a chance to.....because what I hear is this is a long project.

B: Oh, it, it is honestly and it's not something I've dwelled on to be honest with you ah.....

L: Just because we have doesn't mean everybody else has(laughs).....

B: I got to know Connie very well you know, we became very close friends as a result of the book and we continued to be friends. She came here many times and.....why he became an

episcopalian um..because Connie did too I believe. I think she finally left the congregational church and became and episcopalian. um.

L: Then she joined a catholic organization in the last year or two.

B: yes, well...some of that ah, I mean there's something about....ah...the catholicity, the ah, had an appeal to John and I think Connie really, she, her involvements followed his...

SULL: She says she had taken his path.

B: Well she idealized when ah...after John died, I mean Connie's life...lost a lot of it;s meaning.(PAUSE)

SULL: Did he get, when he was at VMI, did he get engaged at all?

B: I don't believe so. I never heard about any.

SULL: He was coming in cold to Cambridge and all of a sudden.

B: I think it was like coming into Cambridge and being, and having cold water thrown in your face. You know, wake up boy and, and ah, and he did. I mean, he would of, John was quick to pick up on things...and he would think about them and he, he couldn't let things go. I mean he, that's why I say he was honest. You know something would get in his craw and it would, it would be there and he would have to work at it and, and ah his own ideas would be challenged and ah he'd have to rethink them you know and come out at a different place, and he would. To me that's the sign of a very intelligent person, because he was very ah, ah... ready if he saw through one of his own preconceived notions ah, to let it go. I mean he would come up with it at a different place and that was okay. And I think that's what happened, I mean I think that's at least one of the things that happened when he came to Cambridge because you realize, I mean, Kennedy was killed in 1963 ah, I cannot tell you what that was like in Cambridge, I mean the impact of that um, was, was incredible. You couldn't escape it, it was in, you know, John Kennedy walked the paths of Harvard, I mean he, he, the whole place was in a state of incredible grief ah, and I remember that very well. I mean those, I'll never forget the force of, about, and it wasn't just that the president had died, but a son of Harvard had died, a son of a prominent, important, Massachusetts family had died, I mean the impact was great enough on the country but... and I mean John was...part, you know, participating in that and um and also a lot of other ideas were already in ferment in terms of social change. A lot of those were really being initiated and fueled ah, in that area, so that he was privy to the thinking that was going on. And I was too. I mean I can't tell you how much my ah, social views changed within a very short time of having arrived in Cambridge. I mean I had been, you know, sort of in this nice comfortable position in Lexington, Virginia and it wasn't, you know, I mean I was confronted with ah, for the first time, segregation and I was with an absolutely fantastic guy there who ah was the

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director of the parish and who held the fort and insisted that this parish be integrated over, I mean I was in meetings like you could never imagine being in, with vestrymen..saying things that I never thought (laughs) I'd hear. Ah, so I was exposed initially there, that was exposure number one. But then to come to Cambridge and foom, I mean a whole intellectual context was provided for what was going on and that this was not just a, you know, poverty and racism and ah, ah, um, the assassination of the president and others to follow and, I mean (sigh) everything. And we were, there was also this feeling of being swept up into something, ah, I was definitely, I mean I was in all the marches, I was with King down there, you know and marching along and, the United Ministry of Harvard became very involved and Bill Coffin was, you know, leading the vanguard out of Yale and ah...Vietnam was, you know to come in and further complicate the picture and it was foment, foment. And when John and I, that was all in its... you know, happenings.

L: What does it mean the, Bill and I were talking about this back in Syracuse. What does it mean when someone from the privileged class decides to help someone, some people call it the Roosevelt syndrome, that is FDR. That someone from a privileged class should decide to become involved with the downtrodden. It's not, I spoke to Charmical this, before, or Ruby Sayles came from a poor family and, or a poor person, someone from that class, that's just a lateral rule to join..to work. But John, and I imagine other people at Harvard or, I don't know this for a fact, and that would be.., What were they looking at, I mean what...

B: Well first of all that's, I mean, I think it's in the tradition of the American, ah of the upper classes, if you will ah, brahmans of Boston ah that's, that echelon of people ah, to I mean, part of one's responsibility as a citizen, was to ah, take care of those less fortunate than oneself that..

L: But not everybody agrees with that, I mean I agree with you, but I think it's just that there are a lot of rich people who don;t believe in that.

B: Well that's true, but I'm not talking about rich people. I'm talking people who they may not, they may have lost all their money but if they were the aristocracy, I'm talking about that mentality. Ah, no, I think you're right. There are a lot of rich people who couldn't care less, but within, there was ah, it was a kind of expectation ah, within certain, I think a certain....echelon of society that, that ah, this is what one did. If you were a Rockefeller, you know, took some of your wealth and you did something constructive with it in the society and ah, I think that, you know, the brahmans all had their settlement houses and their thises and their thats and you did those things because you were fortunate. ahh

L: I'm not saying John was of that group absolutely, but there seemed to be some of that... And I've listened to his voice now ask questions at Fort Lackman and...his culture, wonderful slightly yankee accent and do you happen to have any more children, have you considered the diaphragm, would you like to go on welfare. It's this, he's looking after them and not for the position of an equal it's something else. He's looking after for some other place that I can't identify. You haven't had a real chance to listen to his voice and when I listen to the prowlers trying to pin him up, and in the background noise and I hear this voice from someplace I'm not familiar with.

B: Well John was a very cultured person.

L: Well I'm not saying I don't understand (laugh).

B: No I mean that's part of his, I'm saying that's part of who he is too and in that..

L: But how did that work then?.....this is very difficult to imagine John going into Lowndes County, Alabama and doing what he did um...

SULL: Particularly, I guess you would say, on a personal level. Someone...someone gets into the nitty gritty of it, it's one thing to give money and to have houses built it's quite another thing...

L: to hit the streets.

Sull: To hit the streets. That's a problem....(?)... um, about ah what she considers to be ah, well intentioned white woman coming into the slums of Chicago and giving personally their money to the recipients. Of course once they come into the building they can't stand it. There's the smells, there's the noise, there's the clutter, there's the chaos. It's a world that they ah, they can't stand and at the end of the poem the women hurry out and say well next time, we'll send the money (laugh). But that kind of...

B: Yes but...

SULL: distance sort of thing it's alright, but ah, there's something else to dive in and live there.

B: But that's what makes it interesting. I mean...there are not too many that do that. There are thousands and thousands and thousands, myself included, that went down and marched in Selma, but we came back home and went back to our..jobs and our daily routines and all and very few said, you know, I'm going to give this up and I'm gonna stay down there and ah, do the gutsy work that has to be done and try to really get people registered to vote.

L: now that is amazing that out of the hundreds that went down there only a handful stayed and that Johnathan should be one of them. That's a kind of commitment that I couldn't do.

B: Well, most people couldn't make it.

L: Why did this guy do it?

B: Well (Laugh) that's a good question, I mean but, as I say I don't know as if anyone could answer it. Maybe, you know, statistics would say if you roll the dice or not there's gonna be one that's gonna go. So you can say, well, out of X number there are going to be so many that are gonna stay for whatever reasons, I don't know. I don't think that's the

reason but(laugh) but ah,

SULL: Then you could understand..

B: But why if you, yeah, ah and as I say I think that's it's probably a alot of things that converge um, that had to do with a particular, for him, a time in his life. ah, it provided a handle, maybe ah, to put a lot of things that he was thinking about ah, on to concrete ties, a lot of ideas that had been going through his mind. Here was, here was a place that he could really enact them ah,

L: Yes but, was it the geography of Did it have something to do with the south as a conflict. I mean, we know his father had been down there when he was training for the military and Johnathan would visit with him a few times. There's an experience Emily told us about in Washington where he was persecuted by some black kids. Was it the south that activated something maybe? I don't know

B:Ah, well, I, I don't you there.

Sull: So you could draw a lot of white, liberal young...

B: No

SULL: No. It's kind of an interesting question. why that's.

B: Some guilt.

SULL: Yes.

B: Ah,

SULL: As you say it did provide him an identity, a nitch and a role and a quality and ah, he probably had a psychological need for it, you know, I've got a job here(laugh). Ah, ah,

L: We'd like to suggest, just suggest something to try to point towards the motivation without being too obvious about it. What are some ideas just,

SULL: Do you know anything about that or in upstate New York. In Providence he worked with a lot of young people like, I think some of them were black.

B: Yeah that was (?) Yeah, and I don't have much of a recall of it.

SULL: Now somebody mentioned at one point, he might have encouraged the black students to right to the president, or something like this, to protest the treatment of blacks down in the south. Even at that time there was some sort of activity on his part and then he had the NAACP card already. So in '63 he had come around to becoming some what of an activist, and I know in the a, we saw his write up of his evaluation of his mentor during that experience and it talked about, on that, how he a, really was attracted to it that way you were talking about the actual nitty gritty of getting into the, into actually working with people and ah, away from the more abstract concerns of when he was learning at Cambridge. It seemed to be drawn to that, but I don't know what particularly happened in all of that.

B: No I don't, I don't either. I'm not sure that's anything I really knew very much about. Um...I mean EDS itself, well ETS in those days, was also a fairly liberal institution, so that he would have been introduced to a fairly liberal theology ah, right away and I'm sure that played into this too.

SULL: We are going to talk to Bill and Ruth and I guess

we'll talk about the students. Is that a good choice?

B: Yeah, he's a wonderful person. I've been, yeah...good choice. pause

SULL: In the father, could you add anything else to the father? You said that you thought that they were(?)

B: I can't really add much. I think that there was just a lot of unresolved...um.....issues. Ah, father/son ah, I don't think John would work that through. I think it was, but I think it had to do with, with his own search for, kind of an identity. His father was a kind of , you know, from what I had heard, was sort of a beloved, you know, doctor in town and um, Connie always, I mean if Connie spoke of him during his life like she spoke of him after his death, it would have been a lot for any kid to have lived up to, to have emulated this paragon of virtue.

L: We've both gotten hints of that too.

B: OH, I mean Connie just, he was obviously just the most wonderful human being that ever tread the face of the earth, Now I, I didn't know her before her husband died so I don't know whether she, because so many times people after somebody has died, they forget all the shadows and marbles and wonders of a person(laughing) But she certainly, I mean that was always something that she talked about, a lot. She talked with me about it a lot and, so I know that, that he cast along a kind of shadow and ah John was in it just somehow. But it's like, you know, to get into the analysis of that is something again it's, he might have done that at some point but, I don't think he had done that...

SULL: That's just what I was going to ask you, since you've talked to a lot of these people, how atypical would Johnathan be with each father, identity crisis, um, calling, confusion ah, Is that a '60's kind of thing or is that an individual thing from somebody lik John? I know you (Bill laughs) he was unusual in that romance wasn't the torturous part of his existence, but how about these other people?

B: (long pause)

SULL: I can turn off the tape recorder if you like.

B: No, I'm just sure exactly, I'm trying to figure out exactly what you are asking. I'm not, I guess I'm not answering the question.

SULL: I'm trying to get at how typical his crisis was for a person his age at that time and place. Was he a special case?

B: I think it was a little delayed. I mean, I think he was a little older. Most of the people that I have worked with that go through these kinds of identity crisis', usually go through them a little earlier um, but I saw plenty of students who were going through a lot fairly, you know, typical identity crisis, and a lot of them because, especially in the Cambridge community ah, they are the sons of generally, often times, very powerful fathers and even powerful mothers, in many instances. And they have been the

goody-goody girls and boys, most of them. They had been the nice kids, they had been the smart kids in their schools, they had gotten all the praise you know ah, and then moved along and found themselves a Harvard because they did all the nice, right things. They were all, you know, smart and were in all the clubs and all the right extracurricular activities and obviously, you know. And then they made it there and then they found out that they were just one among lots and they weren't so special anymore and who... I'll never forget one kid I went to see, he had slashed his wrists in his freshman year and ah, he had left a small school in the south. And he had told me that the band played, the school band played, when he left, to come up to Cambridge (laughs and Sullivan laughs) and ah, he said, and he said when I got, he was the only kid, the first kid from this town that had gotten into an ivy league school, and so it was, and he said, and he was really so sad, I'll never forget it, he looked up at me from his bed and he said "And when I got here there was no band playing." It was really sad, and that's the way it was. I mean it was like, Who am I?, you know. I knew who I was there. I had an identity there. Everybody had told me I was this, something special and then, all of a sudden I'm here in this mass pool of people, all of whom are the smartest, not smarter than I am, and who couldn't care less anyway, you know. There's affirmation and no praise and no nothin' coming. You even have a hard time getting anyone to talk to you sometimes (Laughing), you know, and so ah, the crisis came a little earlier. But I think, and I don't think John's crisis was precisely that kind of crisis, but I think his crisis was more in ah, having thought he had a handle or a tack he was on and realizing he didn't, that he wasn't going in the direction that he thought was his.

SULL: He had decided something in Keene, (B: Yeah), and Cambridge (B: Yeah) and that wasn't going to work.

B: Yeah and it wasn't working and, and so ah, when he had left for VMI he thought he was, you know, headed towards, he was on a track and I, I mean, then he discovered this wasn't him and this wasn't his track and what was he gonna' do? Who was he going to be?

SULL: Did he maybe fulfill some of these wishes at VMI or even initially into ETS?

B: It was pretty natural for him to want to go English, I mean he was so adapt, so fassle. I mean, John could have been a great writer, I think. He really had the, the ability with words and the..incredible vocabulary (laughs)

SULL: Did you know Colonel Billard very well?

B: yeah.

L: We wondered how much how much Colonel Billard filled the role of father role for Johnathan after Johnathan's father had died in the last year.

SULL: And often in a kind of role that would be different from his father's in that perhaps he could create his own kind of role...

B: But still, he would have had to have been the best, he would have been the most...lot of pressure. I mean he had talent um..

SULL: You get the sense of the mother from the very beginning that the father placed a lot of pressure on John to excell. (B: Oh yeah), To be... I wonder how many of the roles he adopted to were to sort of, fulfill their expectations ah, merge with theirs and perhaps clash with his a little.

B: Well she was a real influence in has life, there's no question about it and I'm sure, you know, she did the same thing to her husband. I mean Connie was a..... Connie was a wonderful person, but she had a rigidity a, that was a, you could just go so far and you'd hit it and.....she wasn't going to move. No way. And ah...she exerted her will. Not in an unkind way because she was a very kind person in many ways, but she was very firm and ah, she had very high expectations.

~~SULL: What part of New Jersey is across the river?~~

~~B: I don't know. It's a... I really don't know what~~

L: Many people told us, gosh, to bad you didn't start this film when Connie was alive, it's too bad she's not alive. But I wonder, I think we're having an easier at the Daniel's, and I...

B: Well she would have had her ideas. Let me tell you that(laughs).

L: Bill you knew her. I don't think I ever met her.

SULL: Yeah, well I knew her to speak to or chat with and she, I used to do some a humanities sessions at the public library and she always came. She was always gracious and really liked them, but I can't say that I really had a sense of her as a person.

B: Connie liked a lot of attention. She wanted to be well taken care of. You didn't just go to any old restaurant. You took her out and you took her to a very nice place and there was no question but that that was the way it was to be. Um, she was like that. Something that I didn't mind, I mean I'm very fond of her, I mean those are realities and um..

SULL: How did she respond to Johnathans getting involved?

B: Well, um.....she was in Keene and he was in Cambridge and I mean, though, you know, there's some backing and forthing and he was an adult and he was on his own and lots of people were doing it, and I don't really think that she thought all that much about it, you know. I mean this was,...I don't think she thought it was bad thing to do or anything, I just don't think she...until, as time went on and she realized he was getting pretty involved, then I think she was concerned. But ah, and of course after he was killed why.....it was the most marvelous thing anyone could have done, I mean he, she idolized him. Maybe in a similar way then what she did with her husband, you know.

L: Well we heard that it wasn't us who were so likely to doctor this....

B: No, I don;t think it was.

L: Emily talked about that.

B: I think Emily suffered a lot in that household (laughs).

L: A lot of fights at the table, a lot of arguments.

SULL: Well, he was gone a lot. She really led a kind of archaic life as the doctor's wife.

B: But you would never have known it after he died.

SULL: Is that right?

B: No, she had only the most wonderful things to say about it.

L: It must have been fun for you writing that book. By fun I mean, here's an opportunity to ah, to talk to the principles and this, right after the fact of...

B: It would have been a lot more satisfying if it could have been done the way you're doing this. But there was a lot of time pressure and so I didn't have the time to run around. I mean it was all I could do to get the interviews together, that I got together and get the thing written and ah, there was a lot more that could have been done ah, had there, had there been the time at the time. Also there were at the time a lot of people who really didn't want to talk. Things were very dangerous for some of those people then and ah, they were not happy about the thought of a book coming out with their names perhaps being in it. In fact the book is very circumspect in that way that, no names are published where it was felt that um, the individual might suffer um, some kind of recrimination on the part of the police or whatever down there. So um, in certain ways it was not satisfying for those kind of reasons, but on the other hand it was, I felt that it was important that something be done so,...

L: Did you approach the press with the idea?

B: No, I was asked, John Cobern in fact asked me if, if I would do it, and ah, he met with Connie and it was the two of them that made the decision.

L: You must have read that chapter in the book martyrs that John.....What's nice about yours is that it includes almost all of his writings.

B: Well it seemed to me that there, that's why it's a very small book for that, but, but, my feeling was that the most important thing was what he said. Nothing that I really had to say about was that important except to try and give a context for his own writings and that was really the...what you're doing, I think, maybe it could only be done some years later.

L: Well you know the funny thing is, that doing a film, we probably use one percent or less of the material that we get, you know 57 minutes, you can't reach it all. You can't overwhelm people with words so that's why I'm hoping Bill will accept the invitation (?) Massachusetts press to turn this information into...myself would like to go on to other films but. In other words, how much room will we have in our, this kind of investigation. Maybe what we are showing, seems to me, artifacts of his life, let people draw some of their own conclusions, which I think, probably makes it a stronger film. We don't want to be too didactic about it. So you can put suggestions in...

SULL: Yeah, your commentary on a period I think is, is a good one. That little sense of being thrown into a, into

something that challenges ones preconceptions and kind of deconstructing the (laughs)...

B: No, see Lexington was such a, as a town, as...so set. VMI was set. It had it's rules, it's regulations, there was no variation from the way things were to be done. Washington and Lee was, had it's style. Everything was kind of set there. The only eruption in the town was the result of a black couple that came to the R.E.Lee memorial church one Sunday morning and they were not made welcome, and when John Fletcher, who was the rector, found out, he was not pleased. And ah, but, and that was like a thing that took place in isolation, you know, for quite a long time, of course then the whole thing began to effect the rest of the town, but, but that was because forces were coming out more from the outside rather than happening from the inside.

SULL: You must have talked about Johnathan, about that event

B: Oh yes, he knew all about that.

SULL: And then he went down and did the very same thing.

B: I mean we had talked about Lexington quite a bit because that was our, our original connection and and ah I talked to through the whole thing about the integration of the parish and, we talked about that on a number of occasions.

SULL: It was kind of ironic that he did that for awhile.

What was his attitude when he got about ah, VMI, after a distance?

b; He never, he never bad-mouthed it. It gave John structure. It gave John discipline. It gave him um..... order and.....you know John was not a terrible youth. You know physically he was not a big person ah, he wasn't muscle man, he wasn't ah.....big athelete or anything like that, so in a way, I mean, this, I should probably turn this off. I wouldn't want anyone to hear(Tape recorder goes off)..... front door of the house was open, the television was on, and for two, three days, people walked in and out. I mean the house had 25, 30 people in it all the time, constantly. No words were spoken. People came in and sat down in front of the television, they cried or they might have whispered something to somebody that they were with, they'd stay for an hour or two and they would leave, and it was like this parade of people in and out, in and out, and I'll never forget walking, I took a walk over to the yard myself and there were people just walking on the paths. I mean it was, it was an incredible experience and the thing I remeber most about it was silence. I remember the church bells tolling, but other, but I mean, there was a, you felt this in a way that was just uncanny. I can feel it today. I can relive it right now.

L: Did Johnathan talk about that at all?

B: (big sigh) Well, I mean I don't remember specific conversations about it, but I can't believe that he didn't. I mean it was, everybody was talking about it...Everybody was talking about it. and

SULL: The Burmingham, let's say the Burmingham business Dole Conner would come on the television, this would be a, everybody would be involved with what that was all about. So Boston, in a sense was very much in tune through the TV to

what was going on.

B: OH yeah, very much.

L: Where did you, where were you when you heard about Johnathan's death?

B: You don't really want to know, do you? I was (laughs) in my lawyer's office working on my will and the secretary buzzed in and said the presidents been shot and we broke up the meeting.

L: How about when Johnathan was killed?

B: I was in Maine at a home just outside of Damariscotta in Maine. I was there for the summer and.. I got called and told that he had died.

L: Would you have driven into Selma when Montgomery was found?

B: Yes, been to Montgomery, I wasn't to Selma.

L: Do you have any advice for us when we go down next week?

B: (pause) Yeah. I didn't stay down there, I went down for the march, the Selma to Montgomery march, um.....

L: You took part in Parlin(?) march didn't you? (B: uhuh)

SULL: Do you remember anything about that?

B: Ah I mean, I certainly remember the, the a, the feeling frightened. I remember going down this one street and thinking to myself, my god. What am I doing here? (laughs) How did I get here? (laughs), and yah, and then I remember feeling very exhilarated, especially when we got to the city hall in Montgomery, um.....(long pause), I mean, it was just....it's mainly a sea of, of ah, emotion and color and noise(laughs) that I remember now. There was some speeches but I don't remember what was said now, and

SULL: Was there contingent and a (?) from Boston?

B: Oh, yes, oh yes. I mean large plane loads of people went down. I mean there were people, there were plane loads that went down, there were busses, loads of people that went down. There was a lot of people that went down and participated in that.

SULL: How about when King first called, the first time Johnathan went down. Do you remember how many went down?

B: No.

SULL: We understand that James Reed was.....somebody put it in mythology, I'm not sure which. We could check but. I just wonder how many from ETS actually.....

B: I honestly don't remember. I don't think many. (pause), But that's something you could find out from EDS, they could tell you. Somebody ought to be able to tell you that.

(Pause) Did anyone ever put you in touch with a guy named John Tilson?

SULL: It sounds vaguely familiar but we never...

B: John was ah, well he was treasurer of the diocese of Massachusetts and he was also the treasurer of EDS, um, not simultaneously but became the treasurer of EDS um, he's retired. It was in North Carolina., knows Stokely very well, knew Stokely very well um...knew John. In fact, as I recall, it was John that got the group together and ah, Ruby and those who made the tape recording ah, dialogue in Cambridge. He would remember things about what was going on at that time and uh, the seminary.

SULL: Okay, what city in North Carolina?

B: He was in, ah, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I have his address. Let me get some things here, let me just get a couple things. (Tape recorder goes off)

End Of Interview