

11. *PARADISE* 1/6/11

L. So, we have plenty of tape.

B. So, when did you get to know, Jonathan?

H. Back in the early fifties, through Keene Children's Theater, and he was in my aunt's junior choir in the local church, and, that was about it.

B. Were you a Keene resident at the time?

H. Yes, I was born in Keene. And,

B., Younger, or older---

H. I think' I'm about 4 or 5 years older than Jon. But through the theater, we were able to make the connection. That was very comfortable.

B. So he was in--what--highschool, or--

H. Oh, yes, he was in high school. No, couldn't have been, couldn't have been, roll that back. I think I probably met Jon around 1952, in that area, because of the theater, and um, I (unintelligible) that would be about right.

B. Yeah, so he's 7th or 8th grade, 1952,, about 15, maybe?

H. Yeah, right, right. And we were all jr high and high school, in the little theater, the Keene Children's Theater. And we remained friends right up to the end.

L. You were from his neighborhood, weren't you.

H. No, not really. Ah, not that terribly far away, but his was from a different social class than I--I was from the millworkers, and he from the professionals, you know, and Keene had, and still does, have that set-up. Keene is, as far as I'm concerned, extremely caste-class conscious, and one does not very often break up--you can come down, but not up.

B. Did that bother your relationship with Jon?

H. Nooo. I didn't know he had money and he didn't know I didn't have money. (laughs) We were just, you know, two kids, in theater together. and uh

B. What were they doing? What plays, do you remember, or...

H. We used to do complete 3-act plays, Wizard of Oz, I was the Cowardly Lion of course, we did Rip van Winkle, and um, the Princess and the Swineherd, uh, and I don't think Jon was quite involved fully at that point, and that would have been around 1950-51. I think before he got fully involved.

L. Do you remember Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp as one I was going to ask you about.

H. Yeah, Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp, ah, Jonathan played the wicked magician, and another friend, kGene Felch, played the ah, the Caliph, and I played the ah, leader of the mob! (laughs). The rabble-rouser.

B. What are your impressions of Jonathan back then?

H. Ah, just another good happy go lucky, having fun, raising hell, ah, the three of us would get told "sit down," you know, get off the stage, or you're disrupting rehearsals, and ah, he was always a perfect gentleman, would say thank you, and, I'm sure we did to, ah, I never thought of him as the leader, just as another one of us. I didn't look up to Jon, and he didn't look up to me. We just did our thing.

B. You ever get to talk about anything with him, or, was it just, a kind of ah--

H. As young kids?

B. Yeah.

H. Not terribly. Passing once in a while, but in later years, we used to sit and talk. And not a great deal, cause he--once he became involved with the church, and everything, and school, and everything, and went south, he wasn't around that much, and I was gone for quite a few years. But when we'd get together we'd talk about some deep things, and--I'm a great talker, but with Jonathan I became a great listener. And he had that ability to say, "Henry, without saying you know,

shut up, ah, he never had any abrasiveness about anything that I knew of. Ah, I one time I sang in st James choir, and it was Missionary Sunday and Jon had to deliver the sermon and of course it was a thing for Keene too that his folks were pillars of the congregational church, at the head of the square, and he became, around the corner to the episcopal church, st James, and that was sort of like what's happening.

B. Do you remember when he did that? Were you familiar with him then?

H. No, that was the strange part, I don't recall when he did that, all I remember is you know, somebody said Jon is going to be a minister and and to me I mean, they said minister but our church its a priest ah, and it was Theology Sunday, that's when it was, and he was going to preach and I was in the choir, and I he and I went downstairs and in the undercroft--the basement rather, and gassing and having our own little private jokes and things and everything, and ah, we were late, we went flying up those back stairs and (laughs) and he said, "OH, these robes, they get me every time," you know, and we were flying up and he was going to deliver the sermon and I'm gonna sing in the choir, and it's just like--we're back in the children's theater again, you know, two kids hacking around, late, you know, I expect the other bishop to say "go sit over there," but

B. Do you remember the sermon?

H. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. Am, I couldn't tell you,--I think I was more involved in my singing, my music, than what he was saying, which happens in many, you know--all I know is that when he spoke, you know, naturally everybody was very polite and very nice and I think there were those who were trying to say "What's that little Congregational boy going to say?" you know, I think, others were saying, Well, what is a missionary? So it was--you know, I don't recall it that well.

B. I think the sermon was the one where he actually said here am I send me, I don't know. if you remember that. We have a copy of it. Did you know him when he was at VMI?

H. He'd come home on leave, school vacations and things, but very very --see when Jon came back and here again, the class consciousness of Keene, New Hampshire. When Jon came back he visited with this doctor's family, that dentist's family, this lawyer's--you know. And those others of us

that were around if we ran into each other fine. He didn't come looking for us, and we didn't go looking for him. And when we got together it was wonderful. But it was--and I'm sure that when he was coming home that his dear mother Connie would say "Now Jon, on Friday night we're playing bridge with the so and so's, and Saturday we're going to dinner with you know, and that's the way it is, and I think that was one thing that Jon enjoyed because he was born to it, but I think he also enjoyed the freedom of not having to do it when he was on the road and was able to say "I'll make my own schedule. Where my feet take me that's where I'll be." I always felt that Jon was that way.

B. Some stories about-- you know, he didn't abide by those structures--that--you you have any stories like that? you know, that he hanged around with guys that got in trouble and weren't too bright and--

H. Well, see, I was trying to think, um I can't think of the man's name, but there was one, he was called like, not the hoodlum priest, but the --it about the story of a priest who was always down with you know with the--

B. I know who you mean, --Audie Murphy story--

H. It very well could be--and Jon was like that, I mean, Jon was--(laughs) I don't know why I say this but--ah, sorta like Pope John the XXIIIrd, who would rather--instead of sitting on the Papal throne being carried he would rather sit at a table with some friends under a Cinzano umbrella with a cigar and have a good glass of port, you know. And Jon was like that. I don't think Jon really cared that much for the puff and the flummery and all that, you know. In the Church rituals, yes, cause that was part of the Church ritual, but other than that --he would just have soon put his shirt over there you know and go walking over here-- he didn't have to have a shirt and a tie. He was a down to earth guy he really was.

B. You knew him again in theater? He came back from VMI in the summer and did some theater?

H. In the summer of 1960, I believe, was Keene Summer theater. And, we had a house that some of us lived in, and it was sort of like (laughs) you know, until you've suffered in the theater, you know, you've never really --whatever? And so there was a great house at 550 West St, which we lived at--he did not--he lived at home of course, but we did Christopher Fry's, ah, The Lady's Not for Burning--it was a wonderful play. And Jonathan played with Larry Benedict of television fame now, one of the three wise judges, whatever--it just brought back a lot of things, like we had when we were in children's theater you know. It was hacking around, so that the director said, "Henry, shut up, Jon, get on stage, 1" you know, "Larry, put on your robe," or whatever, I mean, seriousness just never --when he had to be serious he was the very serious person, and I'm sure that in his last moments he could have said to Tom Coleman, "I don't believe you did that," you know, Jon would never say, "You shouldn't have done it." I think he would have said, you know, "I don't believe you did that," you know.

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B. Did he ever bitch about VMI or anything?

H. Never heard him bitch about anything. Ah, I never heard Jon complain. I never really heard Jonathan Daniels complain. One of the last times I saw Jon, he and I were at a local restaurant on a Sunday morning before noon, and it was just before he went back down south, this was his last trip, and it was here, and I couldn't tell you when it was, it was in the spring, and ah, it was after church, and ah, it well could have been that very same Sunday, I'm not sure, but we were at a local restaurant, and he said--and we never had before, because we --he said, "Let's have coffee royale together." And you know, when I look back on it, he insisted, and I didn't know what in the hell it was, kreally. And so he said to the proprietor what we'd like and he said, "OHJohn,"you know,"you know I can't-- we can't have that." At that time we were't 21, but he said it was Sunday before noon in New Hampshire you couldn't have alcohol, plus you had to have a meal, and he said, "Well, it might be mylast time I have coffee with Henry.", or some--words to that effect,or whatever, you know, and it was almost prophetic,as I look back on it, it was almost likeour communion together, and we were brought coffee--nobody knew what was in it, ah, and I think we had cheese and crackers tocover the dollar twenty law whatever it was?And it was, if you think of it, it was Jon and Henry having communion together. And ah, it was never planned that way.And I;m sure Jon would say, "Oh, you know, that's what he's dreaming up, that isn't what it was"--it was just that he wanted whiskey and coffee on a Sunday morning. And so we had it.And no problem,no problem at all. But we broke the law royally,,I mean, and theproprietor could have gotten his license lifted, but see, that was the charm that Jon had. He could have that man actually break the law, knowingly.

B. How any serious stuff with Jon? You said you had some conversations, ah--

H. Serious conversations? There werethings that Jon liked in life and there were people that Jon liked in life and those that he liked he talked about, and those he didn't, their names didn't pass his lips. That I ever heard. He never was cruel ah, he could get angry, but it was always in a very kind way, such as saying you know, "I prefer not to speak of that person any more." If it were me, I'd say it in a different way. You know. Plus he would um, there were a couple of people I'd--Iknow he was rather repulsed by, um, who had done somethings toward him that he felt he did not wish to be involved in. And he let them know this is not what at all he was interested in. But he didn't down the person, and um, he'd talk to me about it.

B. Can you be specific about that?

L. Sum bothering you guys?

H. No, not me.

L. We can always move in the shade.

H. Oh, it's wonderful. Um, I Jon was a --I don';t like the word plain, I don't like the word simple, but Jon had sharp

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features, Jon was a person that--when he walked in the room you would look, whether you were a man or a woman. And, he was just one of those attention-getters, you know. And I just think with some people it just sort of ah, they weren't sure when he walked in ah, who he was or what he was or why he was there, whatever, ah, and Jon would just say, you know. "Nice to see you," and walk away. Jon didn't hold truck with people he didn't wish to. Which is good. He and I never had an argument, that I know of, ah, he, I must, ahem, I think I told Larry about it--that he did put a curse on me, and I always said, never curse anyone, it's not good to mess around with curses, um, I was jumping up and down on his stomach one day during a theater rehearsal, and Jon in his great black robe, red-lined, I think we agree that he might have been in black face for that play, I don't know, anyway,--

B, The Aladdin Play?

H. The Aladdin play. You know, and again, this is strange, and and I probably go back in my mind, at times, but--I can see him standing on that stage of the old Keene city hall which used to have a third floor to it, where the theater was-- and I'm hopping up and down on Gene Felch's belly, just jumping, his face was purple and blue and I loved it, and Jon, in this great dramatic pose, says, you know, "A curse on thee! Henry Parkhurst.!" Well, upon that moment, I guess, the director came out and put a curse on the whole bunch of us, sent us home.. And yet, we're still here. And Jon isn't. And I've often wondered if--he should have done that. I just wonder, I don't know--if he shouldn't have done that.

B. Did he ever discuss any social things with you, like class differences, or--

H. Well, as I was saying earlier, you know, he'd say, "I've got to go that country club, and I'd rather be going here" or whatever, um, again, Dr. and Mrs. Daniels were wonderful people, ah, but they were you know, up here, and Jon was their son, I think this may have led to some rather unpleasantness at home. At times.

B. What is it you think, that attracted him to people who weren't of that class?

H. I think Jon --well, because he was a person-- I mean, you know, he was an everyday Joe He was like you and me he was like everybody. We work, we've got professions, right? But--I always feel I can walk in any area, and Jon was able to do that also. With me it is because I've always felt that which way I go is always up. Because being born the son of very plain wonderful parents, millworker and a housewife, my mother never worked except in the home, you know and I know that's work, ah, but she was always there. Jon's mother was a professional woman, you know, off here and off there, social clubs, social engagements, and I think, I think Jon may actually have felt a little bit --I don't want to use the word abandoned, or put aside, and I know that they had family dinners, and Sunday was a family day-- but I

don't think Jon at times really felt that it was a whole family unit. You know-- like ours. And I really feel that way. And I think that because he would reach out into places where they'd say "Jon, come in!" you know, "How are you, it's nice to see you," "take off your shoes, sit down," you know, "Have a hot dog." Oh, not a filet mignon, you know? (laughs) And then I think ah, I think he loved to do that with people, you know, he knew all the social amenities, he was brought up, you know with the proper marrow spoons, you know, and strawberry forks, and we had a fork, knife and a spoon, and I think Jon liked to be able to sit at a table and eat hot dogs and beans, and not worry if you had a bread and butter plate and a butter knife. Nobody cared, nobody was looking to say, "Put your glass a little bit more to the right," you know, or "Your napkin goes to the left." I think Jon walked, would like to walk bare feet. When we all did. But had to wear shophouse (?) socks and shoes, and when we were wearing cutoffs, you know, he had tailored britches. And I think he'd had liked to have had the cutoffs. But where he lived he couldn't. Today he might be able to. But in those fifties, Keene was very conscious of that, very aware. And you'd see us at the end of school year, getting our hair cut--pared right off, shorter than now, a new polo shirt, a pair of shorts, and high-topped sneakers for the summer. That was our uniform. Jon's may have been tennis shorts, you know, little shirt, nice little shoes, leather of course, and I don't begrudge that at all, and I think it's wonderful that Dr. Daniels were his parents, and ah, I don't begrudge my lot, because my mother and father had nothing to do with Jonathan Daniels, and his mother and father had nothing to do with me. And our friendship was because we had a friendship.

B. He ever eat with you at your house?

H. Yes. Absolutely, and um, he was a downright, you know, straight-of-the-mill guy, a run-of-the-mill guy, and if he wanted bread he didn't say, "Oh, excuse me, may I please have the--" he took a slice of bread. And I think when he was I'm sure that when he went down south and ah, and this is pure conjecture on my part, I'm sure when he went down south and was able to sit at a table, you know, and unmatched chairs and unmatched silver, and it didn't say Kirk Sterling, he ate just as much and just as well, and I think if he had to sit up proper he sat up the way he wanted to. I think Jon was a lonely kid. Many times I've thought he was lonely. And he was lonely for love, I think he was lonely for someone to hold him and hug him. For him, not for what he stood for. I think Jon was a person who never forgive me, but-- (whew)

L, Want to pause it for a minute?

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H. .Yep. Ah, the day that he went back?

B. Yeah.

H. (Sighs) I think we talked about his work, we talked about, ah, I can see where we sat, on the left hand side of the restaurant, the whole thing--ah, ah, let's see, I'm trying to think that was in 1960, I believe--

B. '65

H. '65, was it? I was back at Keene state, trying to finish up. and you know, ah, I think we talked about things I was doing where I'd been, my year on the reservation in South Dakota, for the Episcopal Church, um, . swapping notes, that type of thing, you know, and that he was going down, and that ah, I can honestly believe that he mentioned that he thought he was doing the right thing and doing, um, the work he wanted to do. We never, ever, ever talked race, we never talked white black green yellow, issues, he told me how bad it was, it had been, and so forth. I can't remember word for word of course, cause it's been so long, but I know we just had a good Henry Jon talk about you know, this is the way it is, this is where AI'm going, this is my work. And so forth, that type of thing.

B. Did he talk about living with black families?

H. Yeah, I don't know about living but having stayed with them. In fact, after he was killed, his mother gave me a wonderful picture, its a picture of , which has been printed, of him holding a little black child on his lap. But I've got the --she gave me the full picture, which shows the other child in the picture, and they folded it over, so that the publicity thing. And um, he liked it, and Jon was not above, ah, some jokes, at that point, black and white jokes, and so forth. And we we'd and howl, both being white anglo-saxon protestants from Keene, NH, ah, he brought me back some wonderful stories, that he said that the black people had told him, you know, they were great. But he would always, --we laughed with the jokes but not at the people they'd been told about. I think--I hope that's right. Who knows? I mean, I like a good joke. And I hope I'm laughing at the joke. But we swapped jokes like that.

B. Ever talk politics?

H. Never.

B. I assume he grew up as a Republican.

H. Jon?

B. Yeah.

I don't have any evidence of that, other than that the family went to visit Norris Cotton--

H. Right. I believe Jim Cleveland was a family acquaintance and so forth. I would suspect that Jon grew up in a Republican atmosphere, as far as his politics, I would be hard pressed to think he'd be anything but independent. He may have been a registered republican, I don't know. Cause I never got into politics myself until later on and I don't know what in hell I am. But I'm a registered Republican. But I used to be a registered Democrat, and so I (laughs) there again, you know, I'll wing it, I'll wing it, and I think Jon

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-- think I couldhonestly about Jon I think he did a lot of winging inlife. I think when he was down south he did a lot of winging, you know. If he pulled into a place that didn't look like he belonged there, I don't think he would stay. If he pulled into a place and had some people with him, and they were asked to leave, he would want to know why they had to leave and he didn't.

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L. By winging it, do you mean to trust his instincts better? Yes, absolutely,,I think Jon was an extremely highintellect--and was able to carve his own path many times, and I think maybe this is what led him to Tom Coleman's store that night, I really do. I don't think he had to go there. I think he went there with a purpose. There were other stores around.

L. If we was following an instinct, he wouldn't have gone in that store, right?

H. Well, do (unintelligible, "rule out"?) destinies?

L. Because the conclusion of that idea is that he knew what he was doing.

H. Well, that may be what I'm trying to--

L. Some people believe that, that he knew--

H. Yeah. I mean, I thnk very well that he may deep down have known that ah, the ah, this could happen. You know. He might have known this could happen. And he may have gone there with that knowledge, that it could happen. And I think they all were trained that this could happen because --weren't there three young men who were killed before Jonathan? Or were they after?

L. Um, a year before.

H. The ones in --

B. Mississippi?

H. Yeah. Right.

B. Out of all his background, is there anything you could allude to that explains why this guy who was the happy go lucky average non-leadership type who was njust doomed to end up the way he did? Becominga leader in the south in the civil rights movement? From quote unquote a class-structured family and a lily-white town in New Hampshire?

H. Yeah. Jon did, ah, I don't I wish I could remember where I read it but sort of a he referred to Martin Luther King as "Mister King." I never heard him say Doctor King or the Reverend King, you know, it was always Mister.Mister King. And if I (unintellilgible) back, I think that was what we were talking about back in that that restaurant was what he was going to do"Mister King's " work. And if Jon Daniels felt that he could help this Mister King with whatever it was, marching, in front of buses or behind buses or in buses, whatever--um, Jon, I don't recall him being much of a joiner. And I think he may have found --I don't even know why he became an Episcopal seminarian, I really don't--but I think if Jon f-- it would not be for glory, because I'm sure Jon would like to say "Would you please remove thatplaque off that building up there by St. James Church." The Jonathan Myrick Daniels building. "Take my name off that flowing water fountain down there," you know, "give the water to people that need it." I don't think Jon would ever do anything for personal gain.He'd do it for money. If you said I'll give you fifty dollars to do this I'm sure he'd do it, but I don't think he'd do it and say, "All right, I've done it, now I want \$500." I think Jon was again bursting out saying, "This is me, take it, take it." You know--"What can I do to help?" Um--

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B. Now you think that comes from a lack of being loved, is that---?

H. Well, now I don't want to be caught--don't pause it because I can say it, cause I feel it--I've I've always felt, you know, if a person goes from point A and is going to B and C and D and all that, and goes back here as a base, there's not a hell of a lot here, except as a base station. And so if he's always out everyplace else, he's looking for something--whatever it might be, I don't know. Jon Jon was always pleasant and always smiling but Jon was a cold-- he had a cold exterior to him. I don't care how warm people think he was--he could be warm in the heart, warm in your your thinking, but I still think Jon was a cold person. He was friendly, but he still was cold. And I don't think Jon Daniels ever ever warmed up I really don't. And I remember when he was lying in state, and I went in there, I was the only one in the church, just the two of us, and it was such a strange thing to walk down that aisle of that church, and that spotlight on him and his coffin, you know? and even that looked cold.

B. Some people are cold because they are afraid of being rejected.

H. Oh, absolutely. Oh, absolutely, O I'm I'm I think--J--if Jon was spurned by anybody, even a dog, he would would have crumpled. Um, I think Jon was, you know, "Come unto me, all ye who labor, heavy laden," you know--I think Jon was, um, as near as anybody I know of ah, could come to being Christlike. I don't think he was Christ. Ah, but Christ-like. I think he really filled, the bill, of of what he was doing. But he still had a cold exterior.

B. One of the things we're kind of interested in is, you know, his father was absent a lot because of his job, and then he died young.

H. He died young, and plus he was in the war. Army doctor, and mother off teaching, and so forth, and and--I I I think I would say that Jon had everything he needed but not what he wanted. And I think sometimes I look back to a lot of us, you know, that were his friends, yeah, we had everything we--we needed, and not all that we wanted, and I think that might have been the that catalyst for our friendships is, you know, "Your family has a car. We walk. But we get there." You know, "You've got a hundred dollar suit, we've got a ten dollar suit, but we're not naked." And I think Jon was able to to to see when he got into other people's um, company, that we had to ask for things that we didn't always get, like that. At home, I'm sure Jon had an allowance. I didn't know what an allowance was. Um, Jon didn't lug in wood or shovel snow. I don't think Jon-- I'll bet Jon didn't wash dishes. And I think Jon needed that--that bit of common humanity.

L. Do you think that his growing class awareness might have come from the fact that he hung out with blue-collar kids in Keene?

H. Oh, absolutely! He didn't hang around much with the

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country-club kids. Even in school, and I was--younger than I, by far. Ah, but in the theater, you know, he always came--he gravitated toward us. And the other kids--I'm avoiding the certain word-- ah, I'm avoiding the word rich, because in Keene I don't know if anybody's rich, um-- B. Privileged.

H. Privileged, might be a better word, thank you. Um. But we all thought of Court Street as a millionaire's row, Washington Street as a little, you know, and the rest of us, are sort of the ballast, that keep the ship going. Jon Daniels was able to take and say, "I'm not ballast, and I'm not from millionaire's row, and I'm not from Washington Street, I'm just plain me, here I am."

L. So his behavior was a-class.

H. A-typical. Absolutely, yes. I think that'd probably be perfect.

L. That might explain why poverty-ridden blacks felt so--one reason--why they felt so incredibly comfortable with him. They knew his background and they never felt uncomfortable with him.

H. You know, and I like that, because for this reason, I think a lot of times, boy, this is, I don't care if I'm indicted or not--(laughs) but at times I feel like a lot of these people who have a lot of money and nothing to do, go into these areas and "Let me help you, poor little, you know, underprivileged, because I've got everything. I know everything." Jon would "Are those grits? Where's my plate?" you know what I'm saying? I think Jon was able to sit on a torn couch and be comfortable. Someone else would stand and say, "No, this is fine." And, you know, when ever you go in anyone's home, they they gauge you by the way you are in that home. If you're going to the bathroom, OK? You go to the bathroom. You don't care if it's been washed this week or this month. You go to the bathroom. And Jon I think was the type of guy who could just say, "Excuse me I'll be right back, I think it's over here." And no ceremony. I think Jon would go over to the sink and say "here, I'll help you with those dishes." That type of thing. Or "Let me let me lift that bag for you." You know what I'm saying?

B. You think that this closeness and this sharing was stuff that he didn't have at home.

H. No, I really don't. Sorry, Connie, sorry, Phil. But I really, I you know--

B. Well, we're going to work that rather softly.

L. It won't be the heart of the film. But you know, Bill, that's interesting that Henry brings up, I never thought about that. That knowledge of that a-class nature that he had --because Keene is a class-ridden society.

H. Oh--sure is, always was.

B. Well, some see it, some don't.

H. When I say I'm from south Keene, there are people still go, "Oh."

L. (laughs)

B. Now what street did you live on?

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H. I was born on Island Street. At 99 Island Street. And
I've lived on foundery street, and we lived on Manchester
Street,

L. Where's Manchester Street?

B. Near the garage, the service garage.

H. That's correct, down behind Sam's Army Navy.

H (cont) And there used to be the public city incinerator down there. And one winter night, they left the cover off and it burned my mother and father's home to the ground, and my mother and father saved us rescued us all. And we went to Westmoreland to the county farm, because nobody would take us in.

L. You didn't live in the Central Park West of Keene, did you?

H. You got it. We didn't live in Edgewood. We didn't live on Park Avenue. We didn't live on, you know.

B. How many other people would be in the theater from that class? Do you remember any other people in that like yourself from that class?

H. Oh--you mean the class of economic-- I mean, ah-- the nice part about that theater was, it started out --at first, I felt very out of place because it was almost--for these kids, up here, it was not for but what happened was, being extremely shy person as I am (said sarcastically), um, my 6th grade teacher had had talked about my nonsense and everything, and somebody mentioned this (show?) and she said, "Henry that's what you need." Well, I think she did and I love her ???99right now. I think she did it to sort of like say, you know, here's where you can burn off some energy, that he won't be using in school! Well, as it turned out it was the best thing that ever happened! Because I was able to start a career because of that. Turn that off just a second. Please. OK. '

L. Well, this is interesting, it opens up an area Bill don't know what to make of it, we haven't even thought about it. I mean--

B. Well we pursued it, other people denied it, you know? I've asked that same question about class structure to other people and --

L. You ask the doctors in Keene and they just look right through you

H. Well, that's like asking-- yeah but see, but, sure, but Bob and Mary would surely deny it. And I'd expect Bob and Mary to deny it.

L. People who benefit from it tend to be the ones to deny it. It's not that they're mean-hearted or anything like that they just --

B. they don't see it.

H. But not only that, but you see, but they were also, if I remember correctly, ah, social, socially connected with Connie and Phil, through their parents and so on, I mean You know? It's all that structure. Me, my father went to the Homestead Woolen Mills and came home tired at 3:30, cause he had to get a half hour's rest before he went as a special fireman, special policeman, then on weekend's he worked at Streeter's Friday nights he worked and weekends at Streeter's Store on Vernon Street, kStreeter's Market. And my father worked 7 days a week to bring us up and get us what we had to have in life, you know. Ah, there were no card games, there were no ball games, ah, very much, and it was a treat for us to go to the winter carnival at Wilson pond, ah,

L. Jonathan might or might not have had a distinct awareness of class at this level, at the surface conscious level. On the other hand, he was experiencing these -- a side of life in Keene that he certainly wasn't getting at home.

H. Well, not only that but I'm sure you've heard the story about why would a young man not go and say, "May I go out?" Why would he climb out of the second story window and take the risk of falling getting hurt, which he did, not on the way out but on the way back, he slipped on the apple tree and broke his leg. You know, I mean these types of things, kids do things like that, but he didn't have to. I shouldn't think he'd have to. But he felt he had to, you know.'

B. What class would his friends like ah, well, there's Bob Perry, there's Tony Reddington, there's Gene Felch

H. Oh, Tony Reddington!

B. I mean, what are those guys all about?

H. They all, ah, they all came from back grounds that -- I don't like the word progressive cause I don't think I use it properly, but families who would say to the kids "ok, you know, here, here's ten bucks go and have a good time." ah, knowing that they would not be down to Louis' Pool Parlor, on Lamson Street, where I was, that was fun, ah, they would not go down to Church Street where you'd find Jetty's and um, those places, or the Star Cafe, but they might go to Emmond's Luncheonette, which was acceptable, at the head of the square, they might go to the country club for tennis or the pool, golf, so forth. They might go to the Keene Ice Creamery, which was out on Park Avenue, which is now the credit union area. But they didn't come over to the North end, they didn't come over to Roxbury Street and North Lincoln "Street, those places were, I mean, they were not for those people. Now those who lived in the nice farms and the nice homes and places in Stoddard and Nelson and those areas, um, those kids had cars, or they had access to cars, um, I remember at Keene High School, um, student cars, I mean there might have been forty, I (laughs) you know? Ah, we didn't know automobiles, those kids knew automobiles, or they knew to be driven from here to there, and so forth, and no problem. They knew, um, garage parties, we knew barn parties. They knew colored, fancy electric lights around you know a lawn party, we knew kerosene lanterns out in the backyard to keep out mosquitoes. Jonathan liked kerosene lanterns, I think Jonathan liked once in a while getting in the muddy end of the lake instead of the clean end of the pool. I think that's--

B. This--this group, if you look at them, could they have been the intellectual kind of--?

H. Absolutely. Oh, they were, they really were. Ah, Tony Reddington's ah, ah, mother Ruth Reddington ah, was ah, ah, radio broadcaster had her own show in Keene, on WHNE. called ah, Swappers' Club. and her second husband was Ozzie Wade who was another broadcaster, a wonderful man, headed up a German band, he was a big person in town, you know. The Shaw brothers of ah, the King Food Mart, um, even the

Perrons, because they were all proprietors of their own businesses, they worked for no one, you know, they owned their own businesses.

B. Wasn't it the Shaw family, they had ytwins?

H. Yes, um, I can't think of the names, I'm sorry. Byut, Henry Shaw and Che Shaw, and um, and they were the intellectual, group, I would say that, and then again maybe we could have been, maybe I was capable, kbecause Tony Reddington and I used to get along, ah, Bob Sturgis was older than I, and I wasn't in his crowd at all. But those guys would sit around and they would, you know, they were the ones who were, like at Keene High School they worked with Muriel Cooke, uh, who was head of audio visuals. Those were the guys who did the broadcasting, the school newspapers, you know? We, when school got out, we went home, to fill the wood box, to get water out of the well, you know, put away your school clothes, and put on your work clothes, play clothes. They went home, and it was laid out. Or they went off to Hi-Y, in fact, one of the most heartbreaking things that happened to me, I don't know if Jon belonged to Hi-Y. Hi-Y was a part of the YMCA program. And I, there used to be the YMCA on west st, it's now the bank across from Tilden's, whatever, kChase's book store. The YMCA used to be there. And, I was invited--you had to be invited, and I remember being invited to join Hi-Y. by my cousin Dennis. Whose mother was the choir director. for the church, at which Jon was a singer. And so I got, all, you know, freshly polished up, I had on a nice shirt and whatever, and I went, and ah, I signed in, one of the teachers, and he's now dead, ah, said, "Why, Henry, what are you doing here?" Well I was so happy I said, "Oh, I've come for Hi-Y," and he said, "Well, I don't think you'd ah, you'd enjoy ah, being in that group. Ah, and so forth." And I said, "Well, my cousin Dennis said that I should come," and he said, "Well, why don't you go after the meeting but, you know, this group isn't for you." I didn't know it at the time; what he meant was, I was not from the economic area, you know? I was from Carroll Street; my cousin was from 14 Forest St, hah! but, my aunt, had a position in the church! And that's where it came from., And if there's onething I have to admit, and I know it more and more, that the Puritan Church in New Hampshire is still, is on the prowl. And I think that the Congregational church, which I was a member for years, ah, is very strong in this state, and it wasn't till like 1887, something like that, before Roman Catholic was allowed to hold office, in this state, at the state level. I cannot but feel that Keene, NH, in the 50's, was extremely ah, influenced by the first congregational church. And I really believe that, I really do. I don't think St. Bernard's Roman Catholic Church had a heck of a lot to do with it, but the first congregational church, that's why they used to call it the first church, the church at the head of the square. And all these guys, practically, were some how or other, affiliated with it. Including the YMCA.

L. So, there wasn't any room for a blue collar kid like yourself.

H. From the Sturdevant Chapel.

TO THE
REVERSE

L. Jonathan may have never talked about this. But the idea is that he was observing. Do you think he had---?

B.--or not observing.

L. Well, I mean,

B. Seeing it, you mean.

L. Yeah, but, well, I was thinking of his buddies who were
(end of side A)

P That he was up here....that he tried to uplift us.

L: I'm wondering why, we can never answer this question, but why wasn't he influenced by the class pretensions of his family spirit.

P: Because I think he saw right through it. I think Johnathan say this facade,

S: Henry's saying too now, it didn't give him what he needed.

L: that's true

S: Tight family, if I heard you right.

P: You did, I mean Connie went to the beauty parlor, that hair had to be done and in later years, when she wore her wig, I mean it's all that venomous vanity, if you want to use a phrase. That's what it is.

S: Changed quite a bit.

P: Oh yeh, I mean she's a lovely person, I mean Connie was a marvelous person but Connie was Connie Daniels and nothing was going to take and soil that image. And Dr. Daniels, he was loved by everybody you know, and there were times I think she felt like she was in his shadow and she had to somehow, and I think down here, Emily, first time I've used her name in a long time, but.....I think there were times when I think a lot of Emily's stress came from home and I think Emily was suffocated by her mother and she's such a pretty girl but.....you know, Johnathan was not going to be a doctor. He was not going to mess around with guts and feces and all that nonsense. He wanted to do nothing but, you know.

L: Now he had a lot of admiration for his father.

P: Admiration, absolutely, but that doesn't mean that he would want to take and emulate him.

L: That would suggest to me, from everything I've heard about Phil Daniels, that he wasn't caught up in this class stuff down deep inside either, not as much so as Connie.

P: You got it

L: Connie might have been the one prodding to join the bridge club and the country club and do this and that and hang out with the right people. Phil, he liked to go out fishing,

P: You got it

L: So, by Johnathan hanging around with you guys, he might have been hanging around with a side of his father which was lightened and ?????

P: Well, I, yeh and I can totally agree with that and I think this is when arrangements were made, I think for the home it was usually made through Connie.

S: Well that was the ticket the woman's, doctor's wives role.

P: Absolutely, but the thing is, there are some cases, usually I say well I'll check with Phil or I'll check with Tom, you know. No, we will be there, it will be at 7:33, you know, Thursday evening, cocktails at 6:00 and so forth uh, and Connie never went out of the house and she looked absolutely, I mean, you see the magazines of the fifties right, women are standing, every, I mean if they had their veil, there was a veil and she carried it through to the tee and more power to her you know, and I think she was a good model, a good model, but I think Connie was a person who

um....you know and her uno was...

S: Do you have any other memories of outsiders in Keene, other than working class people, were there any blacks or minority people in the 50's?

P: You know that's strange, my growing up in Keene, and I lived in the north end, I lived in south Keene, I lived in the west side of Keene, I went to east side of Keene practically, um, the only minorities, to use a term, ah, we never knew the term black. We didn't call people black, if we called somebody black, it was a derogatory term, we were taught to call them negroes, um, today it's different um, but the Hocketts were probably the only ones, and George Miller and his family and the Johnston family, when the news broke um and that was no great big secret. In fact um, before this movie or this expose or exposure or whatever um, Paul Johnston, Mousie, came to my mother's, came to her home on Carol Street one afternoon with my brother Norman and my mother said point blank, "Norman, why did you bring a negro to our home?" My parents, we were always, we were taught that we were to respect everyone, you know and we never were allowed to use the wrong language um, and I didn't know that meant, what do you mean, that's Mousie Johnston, that's not a negro.

L: So why did she say that if she was open about it and indifferent to people's color,

P: Because we never had negroes in our neighborhood, I mean it wasn't a matter of why did you do it, I'm going to punish you, you know, just why did you bring a negro here, you know and all her, years later we all said to her, "Was there something wrong?" and she said, "No but there's never been a negro in our neighborhood" you know and then there was this great expose, why would my mother ever know that.

S: Did John ever talk, was he friendly with any of those kids?

P: See that I don't know. I really don't know if John, because, I suspect, I'm trying to think of when that happened and how old John would have been or if he were even born yet. But he must have been very young and I'm sure Dr. Daniels, after the war, and Dr. Johnston, they must have worked together at the hospital or before the war or whatever, I mean you know, they must have known each other whether it was just professionally or socially. I would almost suspect....it was not socially....but then they had that gorgeous big home on Washington Street and then the Daniels home over there on, where was it, Summer Street, on the corner of Summer st. and School St. um

L: The Johnstons played bridge.

P: And they played bridge, they may have, they may have but I mean I wouldn't be privy to that. John certainly never mentioned about any connection ah and we never discussed the movie that I can recall um, I don't ever recall that ever coming up.

S: The O'neills, did you know the O'neills another black family?

P: Who were the O'Neills, yes I do know the name O'neills but why would I know,

L: The baseball field in Wheelock Park is named after Mr.

O'Neill.

P: Yeh but I mean, that may be but

L: Large family in Westmoreland

P: Oh Westmoreland,

S: Not Chesterfield

P: Yes but you see, now, you know class, see for us a great treat for us, about every month or so every other month, my Uncle Harry took us down to the Fargle building in Boston to visit one of my cousins in the navy, because we didn't have automobile. John and Tony, those guys would have known Westmoreland and Chesterfield. We'd know it just in our geography books. I remembered one time, it was wonderful, when I was driven chapel group, took the what was called the Tunaville trolley which was a little railway car from Keene to Winchester for a sundae and that was a thrill. We were on the train to Winchester and I live here um, that's what I mean ah, I mean if anybody ever denies it, they are denying themselves. Keene

L: We live on a very circumscribed world.

P: Keene is stratified just like this, absolutely. Ah, the O'Neills, I know the name but I don't know why, but maybe that's why. The Hawcketts, and the only thing we knew about Tim and Jim Hawckett, I think it's because they ran either the junk yard or junk business. George Miller and of course his lovely wife ah, he was the manager of the Latches theater for many years and absolute perfect gentleman and we never knew that he was anything but Mr. Miller or George um, there never was any question, he was an adult who was in charge of the theater, you know and he was just ah, but John I believe, John and George Miller used to have conversations and talks. I think John used to go there and talk with him. Well then Geor, I mean John, you know, anybody walk in and John were here he would just say, "I'm John Daniels How are you? Be right with you." you know and uh, but I don't know of any other, I don't remember any orientals I don't remember anybody from the um.....what are some of the minorities, I'm so dumb. Keene was, for the most part, white, anglo saxons, protestant catholic I mean, lot of Greek. lot of Italian um, I don't think a lot of French but a lot of Greek, a lot of Italian but basically the rest of us, a good old mixed up um, die hard yankees um...

L: You don't remember the length of the conversations that Johnathan had with Mr. Miller

P: No, no, but I know they used to.

L: Well I'd like to know more about those.

P: No and I don't know if Mrs. Miller is still alive or not.

L: they have a daughter.

P: The daughter is I think.

L: The daughter and I had a couple of phone calls and I worked at her and worked at her to try to get her to agree to an interview but she was, she wouldn't talk, she wouldn't say anything.

P: Did you feel it was, your interviewing, sorry, sorry

S: That's fine

L: It was because of the um, she still has property in Keene over near Elm St.

P: Yeh on Elm St.

L: She still has connections in Keene and I think she's

afraid of,

P: You got it, the most beautiful white claborn house about 2 streets up from Mechanic, between Mechanic and Cross I think on the right hand side, just beautiful and immaculate. Beautiful, wonderful people. Another thing about growing up in Keene too I think is that as kids, whenever adults spoke, you did it, and I think that was one thing I think, it wasn't a matter of questioning authority, it was a matter of, if Mr. Karen said, "Henry, you don't get to ring the bell because you were misbehaving last week, you sit down here" you just sat down there and you still saw the movie and you had a good time, you know, and we weren't, it wasn't negotiable and I think, maybe with John, I can say to my mother and father, "Why can't I go to the movie?" I really think with John it was, "You are not going to the Country Club dance" and that's it, you know, no negotiating, but no explanation and I think that's what he was looking for. I think that's what he may have been looking for, explanations to a lot of his pain and I think if he found it in the south, I never knew John to travel very much. I don't know if John ever went to Europe, I don't know if he went to California I really don't know. But I think it's very strange that John went from little Keene to die in the south without much expansion. I know his years in Cambridge he had a wonderful time um, but I don't, see we all look at John as being such a fulfilled person and now, as I think about it now, I'm wondering who in the hell was cursed. I go back to that nonsense, you know. I don't think he was fulfilled, I really don't and ah, I remember at his funeral, a lot of the people from the civil rights movement and all that, going over after the, and placing buttons and things in the ground and so forth and I didn't know why they did it. And I thought later on, Hell don't put them in the ground, all they are going to do is rust away. Wear, if you believe that, you know, if you believe that's what John believed in then where it proudly and say this is John Daniels creed. Why bury it over there because that didn't help a thing. He was a good kid, he was a good kid and we had some good laughs and you know. but I guess now that I look at it and think about it, you know, this afternoon, I think I, awful, but I think I've had many more fulfillments.

S: And it was such a short life.

P: And he had such a short life. What was he 26, 25?

S: 26

P: Right uh,

L: This doesn't have to be our last talk, I mean

P: I still want to go and see about getting those, if I still have the teletype for you.

L: Yeh I mentioned that to Bill

S: Now did he talk about Cambridge? You said he had a lovely time in Cambridge.

P: Not a great, he was and he'd come home and he'd say he'd been to the show and he'd talk to these people and so forth and I think, I don't think, in all honestly, I guess I have to look at it carefully and say that I think John enjoyed saying goodbye to Keene. That's an awful thing to say isn't it?

S: We'll talk about that a little bit more because Keene is, what did it mean to go to Cambridge for him? You know it was a different kind of world, particularly in the 60's

P: Well, I think one thing about it was ah, there was Widner library, you know there was um, there were shows, and there were things that he could choose and go and see. He could go to, shall we say um, Brattle theater and watch some off beat play instead of "Well we have tickets to Sabrina Fare at the Country Club" I think John probably was making decisions that he wasn't making before. I know that sounds inane but do you know what I mean. I think he was making decisions about what he was going to see. I think he was making decisions about with whom he would associate which I think is a big one and I think that's what John was looking for. One of the things he was looking for is, I'm going to sit here and have a beer in this smoke filled, foul smelling, wonderful place and I'm not going to go to the Ritz Carelton lounge and have a martini. I really think that John enjoyed the collar both ways, you know, the white starched collar of the young theologian and the turned around clooar of a man, you know, here I am. And um,

S: Of course there wer??? where his first years of reall freedom when he went to VMI when he was just.

P: At VMI where, locked right in that lock step you know, he, and I lost it and I've always regretted it, John wrote me one letter from VMI, but his writing was so, it was almost like an old monks handschrift. It was very difficult to read and I think I probably threw it out, you know, thinking, you know, until the next letter comes. Of course the next letter never came. I regret having thrown that out but I remember, and that was from VMI and it was just, and I think it was just the regimentation, the rigidity and I remember, there was sort of like, I wont say it in fact, so this is strictly in quotes, I think he said something to the fact of, "It's alomost like home." and I think back on it and I relly, but he enjoyed it, he enjoyed it. And then I think when he got out of there and he got that freedom again, shuuu, you know, "Never again am I going to have somebody tell me you eat at 5:30 and you're not having gravy, you're having," you know, whatever. And I think, see I'm one of those, I don't believe "If john had lived" because that's dumb, John didn't live. But I think John's short life was one of a lot of love to give and not much eching beck.. John was not a strong person as far as physical, brawny um character goes, but he had the mind to move the corner of that building. I migt go over and do it with my shoulder, ha ha, but John would figure out logistically on paper how to do it mechanically, that would be the difference. I thin John, John did not like to be dirty, but if he got dirty he could always get clean and I think that comes from, I'm sure, in all the sterile dadys at home of wipe your feet, wash your hands, blow your nose, you know, get a clean cup. I think a lot of it stems right back.

S: Another last one just in case you know, when he came back, when he dropped out of Harvard, did you know him then when he worked as a , at the electrical store at the hospital?

P: No I don't

S: I don't know where you were then. That would be ah, 60 ah, yeh spring of 62.

P: I was on the reservation out in South Dakota. See that winter, that was, see I had a um, I had a period of um, like from 1958 to 64 of being at Keene State for a while and then leaving, being at Keene summer theater, working up north, working all around.

S: We were at Keene State together, we must have known each other.

P: What year were you there?

S: Three semesters

P: Oh

S: 62, winter of 62 and the next year, 63 and then I went down to UMass and taught a course there.

P: Well see I, yeh, well see that's what John dropping out, you know, why did he drop out of Harvard? and I didn't even answer but why would anybody drop out of Harvard, I mean god, if you were in Harvard why would you drop out. Step out, yes fine, you know. But knowing John, if he said, like what it says over there, "This isn't for me, you know. I'm not getting this much out of it and I'm putting a lot into it" and you know John, he would put it all into it, I think John felt he would drop out. I think if John were ever doing anything and felt, "Well this is dumb" he'd stop doing it, no matter what it is, if he's preparing dinner.

"Well this spaghetti sure is not going to work" (Makes a noise like throwing something out), drag out something else.

I never knew John to be frustrated inum, in the theater, when we worked together. I never heard him complain, you know, "Why doesn't Henry learn his lines" or "She's not on time" if things happen they just (Laughs) I just thought of one thing though. Poor John. John had a weak stomach and ah....things bothered John and I'm off, I'm off in my mind now with all of these things that get brought up. I'm wondering if maybe all those years of being about the father going out for a while, then I'll, then I'll go

to a kid too. You know, dad's not here because he's off to a car, or Mrs. so-and-so is not going to make it through the night so dad's going to be with her. Well, why isn't dad going to be with me? I might not make it through the night, you know. So,

There's a lot of things that come out, that I'm thinking about, that

I never really thought about but I look at it now and I can see

that more and more um.... but I remember when ah, now Stan

and Aileen Richmond were friends with Connie and Phil Daniels.

Mr. Richmond taught um, Spanish at Keene High School. Mrs. Richmond was one of the Keene Public librarians and there again, those

aren't, and they played bridge around with uh, too bad you

couldn't talk to uh, I'll give the name afterward, Frank and Natalie Sears, they might be able to help you.

S: Where are they at?

P: They are in Nelson I believe. But Terru Roberts, who used to

be the proprietor of the Canine Kennels, they were all part of that whole Bridge circle. It was all, Connie and Phil, tremendous, you know, just

S: I think if they could let in the owner of the Cnine Kennels they couldn't be too snobbish.

P: The what?

L: Any group who would let in the owner of Canin Kennel as bridge people couldn't be too snobbish.

P: Oh, Terry Roberts and her son Frank was in the post office, well what it was was um, grooming and, she had dog obedience school, I mean, it wasn't just,

S: The mangy mutt

P: Not a poop and scoop operation it was, you know, a real thing and ah, Terry and John were very good friends so, plus she was our school librarian um, at Keene High School, before she started this when she retired. See there again, it's, I mean, talk about strata, 'it's there.

L: You kow as well as I do Henry, that teachers in Keene are not held in very high esteem.

P: Not in this day and age.

L: Yeh, we teach at the college and we're not up to the local realstate agent or dentist.

P: You got it.

L: that's the way it is.

P: You got it.

L: But see that's because of a general attitude against education.

P: But when I was growing up, those ivory tow..., I mean when you drove by a teacher's house, if you were catholic you'd genuflect, if you're protestant, you bowed your head. You know, I mean, in quotation marks. Those teachers were just, and the teachers those days were um, you know not to get off on the subject of teachers but, but we held them in the highest regard.

S: They were often from better families too, the teachers.

P: And usualyy of ah

S: ????

P: Yeh, certainly they were able to afford to go to teacher preparation schools and so forth. I remember when I went to Keene State, to um, I transferred from Linden, um, the lady who I had to talk to uh, looked at my transcript and everything, you know and then she read down through and she said, "Why do you want to finish college?" Well you know that's a good question. So I'm giving her all my textbook reasons and she said, "Well I don't know, none of your family's done very well in education, why would you think you'd want to?" and that determined me right then and there. I will go.

L: Higher education is linked with class structure in our culture.

P: Right. I mean, she was holding me down.

L: They stopped that in WWII, but now, Reagan and Bush are doing it again.

S: They wouldn't let me take college level english in high school

P: Is that right. Well I never took a college course in my life in high school. I mean, college was for thoses kids from Johnathan Daniels, and Tony Reddington and Bob Sturgess. They were the college kids. I was to get through high school so that could put on my flannel shirt and my dungarees and my boots and go down to Homestead Woolen Mills

and get a job running those...machines...and that was expected of you.

L: Well all 3 of us broke out of that.

P: Yes

L: It wasn't very easy.

P: Yes. Ah, there was a very lovely lady, you may remember her name, Mrs. Louise Dewetta from Edgewood. She and her husband, very well known, very wealthy people, and when she heard that I'd been, not readmitted academic standing, I couldn't have been readmitted. I did very poorly um, but then they said if I stayed out for a year, then I could come back and show earnest, you know, work. So she called right up, Roman Zonas, and now, "I want to talk to you about this, what's happening here?" you know and there was somebody from up here not lifting me up at all. She was up here saying, "Henry get over here" you know and she's saying to Zonas "Let's talk" And that's where I get back to John. I think John was up here and I don't think John reached down and pulled me up. I think John said, "Henry, let's do our act, you know let's do our part again." I don't think John ever looked down on me, I don't think he ever looked down on anybody unless they gave him a reason and then I think it was death, you know. I don't think if, if John had it for you, it's because you did something and that was the end of it. No big problem. John didn't lift you up, he didn't lift you up. He brought you with him and I think that's, I think that's what I really think of him.. I almost went home to bring you my mask, my little silver pin. Johnathan and I were the only 2 who ever won a theater pin, a drama award in 7th grade, and I got it first in Keene Children's theater and then he got it second, and that was a cool....because it would have been expected when they announced who the winner was. Everyone, I mean, before they announced, they said, you know, one person's earned the 25 points for having this role and that role and working on our newspaper and they said, "And the winner of 25 points" and almost everyone looked over there where he was sitting, and so did I and then she said, "It's Henry Parkhurst" and you know, not that it was a competition, you know, but it was an expectation that...

L: That went along with the promotions of the class standing.

P: Oh absolutely, but to go back what you asked quite a while ago um, about the make-up of the theater and so forth, yeh

L: Do you want to take a break for a minute and stretch or,

P: If you want, I mean I'm

L: okay, I'm all set

P: Sure, I think that um, as I look back on it, yeh, most of us that were in that little theater group, and as I look at the pictures and so forth and think back, the beginning of it, the most part were the kids from hat cloud. Then, when I think, oh and the people that helped us, David and Rosalind Putman, sewing costumes and painting; Dr. and Mrs. King, because their daughter Janice was in it...we always walked home, these kids were always picked up by cars. It was the old dancing school syndrome, you know, the kids are

picked up by momma and the chauffeur and little Tommy who won the scholarship because he's good, he puts his dancing shoes in a bag and walks home. You know, and I can really see it, but you see I've always known it. I've always known where I come from, um, and I have um, I have always been proud of the fact that I can fit in and when I can't, I don't go. Like when I went, when I was invited to that wonderful um, um, reception for Kate Phillips, you know, I was so pleased that I got that,

L: That wasn't a class thing at all.

P: You know, exactly

L: It was just a bunch of people.

P: Theater

L: Oh yeh, I see what you mean.

P: You see

L: Maybe that was in Johnathan too. I was going to ask you about that. Was he a good actor?

P: Wonderful

L: Was he?

P: Oh yes

L: Now how would you define that? What would he, I mean he memorizes lines, or he was animated or he got into character or what does he do?

P: He sure, all of a sudden he just ah...he played his part. He did a good job. Ah and of course the thing is, we were kids right? And the thing is that we all did a good job. When he did ah, In the Ladies Not for Burning, of course that's the only role I've ever known him in beyond the children's theater and of course after that, that was the summer of 1960, I still want to say 1960 Keene Summer Theater.

S: It was

P: It was? Oh thank god, I'm glad you did because I've got old timers disease here. Um, yeh, see and so, and then he was off to school and I was off here and there and everything uh...I think John would have made a good, a really good, fine actor if he had gone into it seriously. I think John would have been anything he wanted to be, fine, if he set his mind to it.

L: Why do you think he got interested in acting?

P: In the theater?

L: What was he getting out of it.

P: A diversion..."Oh John why don't you go out to the children's theater, you know, Ms. Art is there, you know and um, Patsy's there" the spanish teacher's daughter, the librarian's daughter you know, and then I could point out all these people. then we started coming in with people saying, "Well Henry's a good actor. He's got promise, he's a good actor" um....hmmm then the proliferation, you know, the coming in of these other children. Some of these others went off other places, fact, it's a fact.

L: Well the drama club acted in some ways as a leveling.

P: Now I believe John was with Ma Collins in Keene High School drama club. I don't know if Bob Sturgess was or not, um, have you looked through the Keene High School ????

S: Yeh, we've got pictures

P: Oh good, of the uh the drags club with Ma Collins? Yeh

I think he might have been involved with that.

S: I can't remember a Collins, which a name wouldn't have meant anything to me.

P: Edna, Edna May Collings, another example (laughs) this is awful, um, I was in Keene Children's Theater and I loved it and I was excellent. So when I was in high school I went to the meetings of the Drags club and Ma Collins said, "Well, I thought you were the Keene Children's Theater?" and I said, "Oh I am, I am. I am" and she said, "Well make a choice. Either the Keene High School drama club or the Keene children's theater." Now you know, I was lik 14 or 15 maybe, freshman or sophomre I guess. That was a decision I didn't really know how to handle and I was, I mean, not a decision, it was a challenge, and here I've just done you know, woderful things and my name in the newspaper, the Keene Sentinel, um, and so forth, um, and why can't I be both? you know, if I can be in this play I can have a part and this play I have to paint scenery. Why can't I do both? Well dammit, it was put upon another adult in a position to say, "You're going to make a choice" you know. I'd prefer it if you called my parents. We didn't have a telephone of course, but send a note to my parents and said, you know, we have a rule, you know, the drama club rules are such and such, would you explain to Henry that he must decide, we'd like to have him...which it sounded like that she was saying I could make the, I wish she said, "You know I'd like to have you but you can't be in both. It's just a rule" maybe I could have, you know. So I said, the hell with it, which I, I don;t regret many things but I wish I had been in the Keene High School Dramatic Club, I really do, you know. But I don't think I should have been made to make that decsion, with my parents knowing it but there again, I can't help but feel that that was, because at Keene high dramatic club for a long time, were the very same people for the very same economic status, or whatever you call it um, they were the doctors and the lawyers kids. I mean they were the ones who could be out until 8;30. 9:00 at night and get a ride home, we walked. It's a fact of life. I don't have any animosities towards any of these people, don't think I do, because they've all helped me where I am today um, positive or negative and um, however as I look back that anybody who is hearing or listening or seeing this, thinks of this when they are looking at poeple and take them for what they are and who they are, not where they come from or their address. I think john's a good example where a kid who had everything had very little and I who come from very little, I have everything and John ehlped me a great deal with that and I hope that somewhere along the line, I must have given him some kind of warmth and comfort for him to keep up our friendship as we did and to have that last day together, you know, as we did. Good kid, good kid.

S: Well I guess that's long enough

END OF INTERVIEW