

L: This is just a clip on microphone, Jen, you can just it on your shirt and kind of aim it up at you. Let me turn, I'll turn it around so it functions better

Lots of noise

L: There and it can just go on like this, through your material.

S: That's good yeh, why don't we do a sound check.

L: Let me do a test. Bill why don't you turn on just one thing of lights and I'll just pull the video....

Tape goes off

S: Ok

B: umhm

S: and then I'm going to turn off this,

L: Oh the air conditioner so we can get better sound.

S: so

L: We've been lugging this stuff around the country for 3 years now. We're kind of used to it.

B: You're turning on the camera now?

S: No, this is just the video,

B: Oh,

L: This is only, if everything else fails then we've got video, um, I'm not even going to attempt to at all it's just running.

S: Ok, so you were telling us there's this organization, what was the name of it again, so we get it straight?

B: The Medical Committee for Human Rights

S: Ok, and they were doing what and how did you get involved?

B: Um, TAPE GOES OFF

S: In new York, where were you?

B: I was a staff nurse in the emergency ward at Belview.

S: At Belview, ok

B: Um, I was graduated maybe a year before from Belview and my first choice was to work in the emergency ward and I was working there, um, (TAPE GOES OFF)

S: She was a very nice woman.

B: Yeh she and John, I mean I felt close even to Emily um, I don't know, she sent me really something, others. What are these boys names?

L: That's got to be Roderick and um, they called him Bo Diddly. Roger would be the older.

B: That's John's room, the room obviously belonged to these boys.

L: We filmed that room.

B: Yeh,

L: Yeh we spent several hours with the West family.

B: I know I visited him there. I don't um,

S: Now have you been back down there at all or?

B: Have I been back to Alabama?

S: Or Mississippi, do you go down there at all?

B: No, No, I think I rode. This is just, in Belview we had chapel hall, catholic, protestant and jewish and I like the day afterwards, I went and spoke with the priest, he knew of the incident anyway and I just discussed it with him and, enrolled him in this.

L: Now what is the Pergatorial Society, I'm not,

B: Who's catholic, you are?

S: We're both brought up to be.

L: Haven't been a while.

B: No, you know, when someone dies, you might send a prayer card, or you enroll them in masses, well this is it. I

enrolled him in, um....

L: This society?

B: Yeh, he has daily masses and there are times when I call on John in prayer um,

L: That's beautiful.

Lots of talking

S: Now did you know Judith Upman?

B: She had just left. I knew of her um, and I knew of her from John and from the people um,.....the Wests and what not, I don't know. Was she ordained eventually.?

S: Yeh, she's a minister in Syracuse.

B: Really

L: Judith Upman, yeh. She's the one who gave us those tapes of Johnathan um, interviewing people in his house. And the original negatives are mostly Johnathan's pictures and tapes, what else....some other tapes she gave us. She's really been helpful. We had a 25th anniversary reunion, wish we had known of your existence at the time, we certainly would have invited you, in November, early November in Keene, and we had many many friends of Johnathan's come to the college to a big event that we had. Ruby, we invited Ruby Sayles and Gloria, and um, Mark Oliver um, oh Richard Morrisroe came,

B: The priest?

L: Yeh, he's not a priest anymore.

B: He isn't?

L: No he's married and has, to a lady from Puerto Rico and has 3 children.

S: I wanted to ask you,

L: He's a lawyer.

S: did Johnathan ever mention who he wanted to marry. Did he have anyone in mind. You said at one point that he didn't want to commit himself to celibacy. (LONG PAUSE)

I Was just wondering if he had anybody in mind

B: No

S: We've always wondered because we found out he had a number of girlfriends, um

B: No, um, is that on? Is that tape on.

S: Shut it off

TAPE GOES OFF

L: I mean did he tell jokes, did he,

B: I can't remember one but yes, he was realxed, he could relax and it was cordial and ah, fun. Um,fun did be with.

L: did he ever get involved in any theological or ideological debates, that you can remember.

B: Not in my presence, um, I'm sure that, see he knew Stokely before I even arrived on the scene.

L: Oh that's true, that's true, so you wouldn't have

B: So um, they were already connected and um, I don't remember any of our um, discussions. I was, you know.....

L: That's a pretty book, I read the first few pages

B: Like she's sitting across from you, talking to you.

L: She later joined some group in the catholic church. In fact, it was probably this part of,

B: Really

S: you would call that ???? the first peace movement during

the 70's, David Battenphillip was in it too.

L: Yeh Packs ?????was

S: A lot of catholics

L: Yeh, the catholics finally. We think Johnathan was moving towards catholicism. There's seems to be a lot of evidence of that.

B: He had respect for it um, it's just the celibacy that he wasn't going to buy, but um

L: He was brought up a congregationalist, you know

B: No I didn't

L: At the age of 17, we found his baptismal certificate in an episcopal church. It shows at the age of 17, he became an episcopal, episcopalian.

B: But what was his mother and Emily?

S: Congregationalists.

B: And father?

L: Congregational, they both were. That was pretty church at the head of the square in Keene, the big white church. So for a Dr. in Keene, that would make sense.

B: So the church, ok the church where he had his funeral, what kind of church was that?

B: Episcopal.

B: Ok, I remember meeting episcopal ministers on their way to his funeral. Someone, on my way to his funeral, um, as I said now, I'm young, practicing catholic, um, I wanted to receive at the mass. So I wanted to get permission. I wanted to get a dispensation, ok, to receive in this episcopal church and I had already, I was already enrued. It had not occurred to me to call my parish and talk to the priest or whatever. So.....how was it, I don't know who suggested it to me, that in Kennedy airport, there is someone for travelers, there is a priest available for travelers and there must be a minister or. So, they said talk to this, talk to someone directed me how to be in touch with this person and I was, and um, I told, I said I was going to this funeral of this young man, a seminarian that was just killed, I told him the circumstances whatever, and um, that I wanted dispensation to receive communion. This guy was furious. He was a tall, gray haired, burly, I don't know. I don't remember his name. So I don't want to pick on any particular ethnicity. But he said, um

S: As long as he wasn't Irish.

B: I think he was (Laughing) and he was, and I said, you know, like I wanted this dispensation, and he was furious with me. I said, "I am a practicing catholic" and I was trying to say that I wasn't somebody who was not educated in catholicism and ask him to do something ridiculous. I'm asking for dispensation because i believe that, this young man was a priest, and I'm going to a mass, I believed it was going to be a mass, and I wanted to receive. And I said, "I know that my priest, the priest who knew me all of my life and in my parish, would indeed give me this dispensation. Would understand and say yes." He says, "Give me their names and I'll report them to the bishop at once."

(Laughing) So there was no way I was going to say well, father so and so of such and such a parish, but I thought oooh. And again, that was another area in which I was

beginning to grow because i made the determination there that he could refuse me the permission, but I...could receive. I could give myself permission because I knew, I felt, oh he told me, he went so far as to say, and it's been said before, you know, that they don't have the true presence. That is the belief, that is the belief of the catholic church.

L: I know, we both know that.

B: and I, so you know what I'm talking about when he said that, and I said, "Well, if John didn't have the true presence I knew that I don't and I wouldn't accept that." So for me it was another area that I could grow and I made the decision, I was going to receive. But you know what happened? Someplace, and I met minister from his um, episcopal ministers, and one in particular was explaining to me how you do it, you know because at the time we were still sticking out our tongues for the communion,

S: Take forever to melt

B: So he was,

S: Do you chew it, do you swallow it, what do you do?

B: But he was, he taught me to cup my hands, because that's the way they did it in the episcopal church where john was going to be ordained. So I had made this determination, I'm going to receive and I was a little nervous because I didn't want to flub up and I was astounded when it was time for communion, but only the family was invited to receive.

S: Oh really.

B: And I said, John would not concur with that at all, um, and I was ignorant of protestant, you know, practices. I had only been told that episcopals are so much like the catholics whatever. I was scandalized and there were ministers there, I mean, I couldn't understand, I didn't know how they made that decision, but somebody announced, I guess, that only the family would receive and I was struck.

L: They could have brought everybody together....

S: Communion, the whole sense of communion.

B: I didn't understand that and I knew that John would not, you know, that somebody, who made that decision, didn't understand something very important about John.

L: Is it still necessary in the catholic church to go to confession. I haven't been in so long, I haven't been to church in so I don't know.

B: Once a year, you have to do your Easter duty.

L: And that's in the confessional with the priest?

B: Well face to face, anyway you like it. Once I learned of the face to face, I do not go, I will not go in the confession now.

L: What do you mean face to face?

B: You go in a room, you ask for face to face,

L: With the priest?

B: Yeh, in fact, let's see, I went um, I don't know, a week ago or something, oh the day before mother's day, and I went into a church that I like but never really go there an awful lot and um, they were hearing confessions because I saw the lights. So I went inside and, I've been in the church, this one is nice. They have the exposition of the blessed sacrament almost all day until they, you know, have mass.

It's 76 and Lexington, St. Jean Batise, and um, there's a priest there called um, Levillvier, taht has done some tapes, really spiritual tapes at the table of the lord, really.....really uplifting. So, but I didn't know him but I wanted, I went inside the confessional to say to the priest that wanted a face to face and I didn't know if he would come out of there or direct me, you know, because I didn't know where the rectory was, I knew where the church, and um, he really, he say, "Well you can see me" and I'm saying, wait a second. This is not what I want um, but he was sayingthat if you have um, like a problem, you can go to the rectory. I don't know maybe if he thought I was going to ask for money or something or whatever. So I said, okay. But I left the church and I went to the rectory and I told them that I wanted a face to face with whomever was on duty and um, that, you know, it was something personal for mother's day that um, I wanted and the pastor was there, very few minutes, but that's all that we needed and he was happy to speak with me and ah, I guess I started this just to say that you can, I mean, you can at any time ask to speak with him and it's not necessarily,

L: Nut you can't go to communion unless you've gone to confession. That's like the only thing

B: You can if it's not a mortal sin. If you have a mortal sin, you cannot.

L: I haven't gone to confession in 30 (?) years

B: Really

S: I thought you could confess before you went to communion.

L: We don't know what's going on

S: I think you can, it's ok in some cases

B: Well

S: Without a priest

B: Well, I mean, has to be dire circumstances, but um, they are different now.. I mean when that priest said to me that he would "give me their names and I'll report them to the bishop" I mean that was the beginning of a very long hiatus in the church for me because I did leave and I know a lot of it had to do with the civil rights ah, movement. I know it had to do, something with their criticism um, you know, the organized religion whatever. BUT I did leave for a number of years but then I returned. I knew that I would and I know that I'm well grounded in the church.

L: It's tough if you're a liberal or a woman or anything like that, being in the catholic church. We were talking about that earlier today. In the churches attitude towards social change and so forth is choice or is really tough.

Woman in the church are really third class citizens.

B: Indeed and if, yeh, I mean, for a hasidic woman, mercy, I mean really

L: I hadn't thought about that

B: I mean really. But if you allow that kind of thing here now, but I would no longer, I, I, there's some things, you know, I eman in the churchthat you um, you have to realize god gave you intelligence and when they are wrong,

S: There was a ceremony in which an icon to Johnathan was dedicated. That was at the episcopal church in Cambridge. We went down and filmed it and the assistant bishop, Barbara Harris, is a black woman and she was the minister for the

service and she gave communion. So I said, well I have to go to communion. I would never have a chance to receive communion from a black woman.

L: I filmed him doing it because i figured ???? (Laughing)

B: I would have too, no I would have too, I would ahve too, and, and if I had felt in my heart, I would ahve gone, and if I had felt in my heart that uhoh, I need to see the, to speak with a priest first, that's the kind of instance when you can say, spiritually, I would indeed um, go to confession first, but it's not, you don't have to get off the line, you can indeed receive and just speak to the priest afterwards, but I would have. Um, I didn't want to miss that, I wouldn't have wanted to miss that at all.

S: That's all right though. I don't know if I'm going to pay for that or not.

L: We have the whole evening ahead of us, you probably want to get hom to your family, it's going on 7:00, but I was going to suggest a couple of things, we'll be done here in a few minutes. But maybe we could, we could walk Jenny back down towards the subway and stop for a cup of coffee someplace. But I was going to ask you if there's anything that you wanted to add, um, to, that you would like either us as researchers to know or that you want as a matter of a record about Johnathan or anything you wan to add at all to this tape, you know just a line, anything that you wanted to say. We've been asking you questions but if there's anything that you wanted to talk about say that you wantit

B: No, I would like the opportunity to, to, I would have liked the opportunity to speak to him these 20 years hence and say oh um, see what meshes now, you know, ah, I was honest when I told you I have very little to contribute. I remember very vividly um, our time together, our work together.

L: This has been the fastest 2 hours we've had in a long time.

B: Right yeh

L: You've taught us a lot

B: Well I don't know whether I taught you anything

L: We didn't know a lot of what you said. The freedom, the business of the car that ?????

B: The car

S: in fact that may be nice to get on tape.

B: What happened, somebody took his car up to, no Judith took the car or something like that.

S: Judith eventually got the car back. The volkswagon?

B: Yes

S: I forget, that was her car actually

L: Yeh it was

S: Yeh

B: Oh

S: She owned the car

1; She went back to St. Louis, leaving the car

S: She decided not to come back and johnathan came back.

L: Johnathan rented a red plymouth fury with powerful engines so he could do it, just as you were talking about. Probably rented it after you left.

B: Ahha

S: or else it was Stokely's car

L: Stokely did have a souped up car. Rabbi Saberstein sat

with us yesterday and told us that it was all rigged up with all these devices and he mentions he could escape the rednecks from catching him

B: How would he know that? How would,

L: Saberstein?

B: Yeh

L: I don't know, because he knew.

S: He went to some of these things too, after you I think

B: But whom else did he know?

S: Saberstein?

B: Yeh

S: He knew Gloria Larry, he knew Ruby Sayles

B: He did, but how did

L: He's was part of a religious group that went to Selma

S: I think he came right after you, he came

B: But he didn't wear a yamaka?

L: No, I don't think so

B: Ok

S: He came when Morrisroe came because he went to hear King speak at Burmingham which was August,

B: That's Richard Morrisroe, the one who, but he, he got shot the day he came.

S: Close to it

B: He came, well my understanding

S: The week before

B: was that he hurriedly left his belongings and went out to participate in the demonstrations

S: At Fort Deposit yeh, he got caught up with Johnathan

B: So this Rabbi had um, had come for this demonstration?

S: No he had come as, to, what a lot of priests did, and clergy, was to sign up for this interreligiouys group that, and they said, like you did, they spent some of their vacation time and Rabbi Saberstein came in August,

B: Ahha

S: And he got, he came and got mixed up with them. He also stayed in the ah, in the ah, project.

B: There's a synagogue though, in Alabama of all places.

S: Yes, he didn't like that, we had some

B: He didn't like it?

S: No, we got some notes and the rabbi was not a very good man in terms of interracial things.

B: No because, I mean, I guess they learn that they have to live, you know, I mean they are going to live there and yeh, I mean, that's, that's how that kind of stuff is propagated.

S: He had made his adjustments

B: Yes, and so did the catholic church you know.

S: Yeh, right everybody

B: I mean every institution, each, that's how they survived and that's how that stuff is propagated and you wonder how a kid comes along and want something different, but I don't know.

L: Did John ever take you to St. Paul's episcopal church?

B: No, I don't believe I would have gone to a service. At the time, what you have to understand to, we, at the time we did not have permission to go to, I was a practicing catholic and it was a big thing for me going into these noncatholic churches as it was. But that was the base for all the meetings and when I visited my family where I had grown up in New Orleans, I mean, they ribbed me about that, I mean, "Hi red how ya doing, are you going to convert now?" Ah, you know, it's like hey, the big thing to them is what were you doing, I had never really gone inside noncatholic churches. I had not seen, I had not seen this. So for me it was an education

L: Yeh well I remember when we were kids I couldn't hang around with my protestant buddies. All my friends were protestant and I couldn't go to any masonic things or, you know because it was supposed to be some pagan right or something.

B: Yeh, and you, I didn't have the idea that we were the only ones in heaven, but I mean, to tell you that, you know, you have the true presence and I'm there like, "Why me? Why should I?" I mean I know this guy and ah, until you begin to say, no, no, you know.

S: No ecumenical movement at that point.

L: So Johnathan, in your opinion, would have the true presence even though he wasn't a catholic?

B: Very definitely.

L: But you wouldn't say that then, you'd say that now?

B: Oh, I said it then. I said it, that's why I could make a decision to receive at his ah, services. To me John was a priest, um, as well as a person, um, he simply had it all together in, in um, all the areas, you know. I mean, he wasn't just saying mass, he wasn't, I'm sure he wasn't the priest who was going to say mass and then you wouldn't see again until the next Sunday, you know, which I think is some of the difficulty we have. You know, priests who I believe serve differently from sisters anyway. They have a different calling or a different dedication, you know, but the nuns are, the nuns are, I think, working for christ day in and day out and tirelessly in a way, you know, and the priest emphasis saying the mass and the social end of it, you know, is not um, doesn't have the same importance to them, you know.

S: We were talking about that, that was Johnathan's attempt, I think, to bring together social action and religion. They weren't separate.

N: Absolutely not, not if you knew him, no, and um, I would never have said, gee that's why I like this guy but yeh, with him um,he had, he had the program together in that regard there's absolutely no question.

S: We don't know how that came to be, because that's not true.

B: You may never, you may never. I mean, how, I don't know. He must have, in his writings, I wish I could read something, I wish I could read something of what he has written um,

S: Well there's some we can send you, we'll have to try and remember. In 1964, he was talking about how president Johnson is doing some of the things that the church should be doing, ie. the poverty programs, the good society, he thought that's where the church should be at.

B: I wonder if we did discuss that but indeed. Thoses were happier times. We were a kinder, gentler american those days, um, yeh, um, wait a minute, who was president in, in, 65? Was it Kennedy?

S: Kennedy was in 63 the Johnson after the assassination.

B: So it was Johnson?

S: Yeh it was Johnson til 68.

B: All I said was Johnson, did we discuss any of that, I don't know, um, I don't know what happened, um,to a letter, I know I sent him when I got back, I don't know. I don't know if it was lost at the West's or just never.

S: You did correspond with him when you returned?

B: Yes, sure and ah, I anticipated a response from him ah, as I said I knew he was coming to visit but, Yes, I think um, he was politically in tune, socially, religious, you know just well rounded um, sensitive individual, you know, and there wasn't a lot of anger a lot of stress, you know. I mean why.....no

S: Ok, we were hear a long time, we got to get going. You were great.

B: Yeh, um,

S: This is hard.

L: Todays they 17th?

S: um

B: Yes. today's the 17th, Malcolm's birthday I think.

L: Wait, wait, we should, I'd like to get part of that discussion about racing along in the car on film.

B: Oooh,

L: It'll be great, I mean here's a, what we hope is going to be a really good hour long documentary on Daniels and heres you r chance to take it, if you wouldn't mind. I mean, you really told a good story that we hadn't heard before about crouching down in that back seat. I'll just put the camera on and you can just forget about it. Just tell us the story again.

B: Oh, um, okay.....

L: Want to think about it for a minute?.....

B: Just begin with the um, well all right, the last ??? um,

S: You can just look at me and you know, you wont have to look at that.

L: Right
S: So you don't have to look at that, just look at me.
L: That's asking a lot (Laughing) Well people get camera shy. You know, who doesn't get camera shy. We interviewed um, people who are used to it like Lewis ah
S: Stokely
L: Stokely Carmichael, Lewis, they just kind of play to the camera.
B: John Lewis?
L: Yeh
B: you interviewed, yes
S: Yeh
L: So you'll be in good company with Stokely and John Lewis and ah, Emily
B: Emily,
L: His sister
B: Yeh
S: She wouldn't do it, she wouldn't go on camera
L: But she may change her mind.
S: She may, we are going to try and do it again with her.
L: Right
S: She's very shy
L: We have a taped interview with her.
S: We've got a voice and we have pictures so we can get her into the film but,
L: But she's reluctant to um,
B: I can understand that
L: Yeh it's funny, it's not easy, I don't know what it is. That's because people know that they are going to be um, they are looking at a future audience.
S: So why don't you just begin the story. You were leaving after the meeting right, on the way home
L: Not yet Bill
SL Yeh but she could start it and you can justL: I think I'm ready.
B: I don't know how I came to tell you.
S: In his caravan
L: Let's get a reading
S: Like tell us about the strategy of getting everybody home safe, like you could pick it up, from there, then what happened.
B: A lot of work went in, went in to preparing for that meeting um, the first mass meeting in ah, in Lownes County (BEEP) The work, the preparation, you know, I mean, the credit for that is certainly Quame's, Stokely's.....I was not a part of preparing it. I was there and I don't, I don't,...um. I remember the evening of the mass meeting and I don't remember very much, what happened the day before or anything but I know that um, certainly, we had all canvased the area. I had been in the company of Stokely, Quame, I'm not accustomed to talking him Stokely anymore, but I was in his company and in John's company as the canvased people in the area. Encouraged them to vote ah, to come out to the mass meeting, um, to discuss whatever issues and I don't know the date, but this was going to be the night of the first mass meeting in Lownes County, to be held at the church, I don't know, sometime in the evening, six or seven

o'clock. I don't remember the name of the church, I'm not remembering a lot and um, but I remember particular that there was a 20 car caravan. Some poeple I imagine, were close enogh that they could walk, um, but 20 cars, in a row-a lot of people, and um, the local whites were very much in evidence, you know. They um, were most often in pick up trucks that had um, shotguns hanging in the back window, um, and they woudl drive menacingly close to the church. they were on church property at some point, um, I don't remember seeing them before we went in. They were not on the property. The meeting um, must have lasted, maybe a couple of hours. I remember um, Flowers.....being one of the political speakers, General Flowers, um, I don't know whom else was a guest speaker that night, and for me his message was that we needed to be patient, needed to wait and I didn't receive the message too well um,I know that John was taking pictures of the event....um, I don't think we had any kind of discussion, um, I'm sure I said on a number of ocassions, you know, like un, I couldn't believe this guy saying to wait or something but, um.....in that hour or two, black poeple stood up and spoke very courageously and were determined to change their fate, regardless of the risk, any bodily harm or whatever, ah, risk to them. They meant to change things as they were in ah, in Alabama. That was the jist of it and afterwards, um, when we exited from the church, there were lots of white men.....men that would refer to then as crackers and I really don't have a problem, even today, calling them crackers. But um, I can hear the tire trucks on the gravel, um, near the church. They drove just that, just that close to the church. Just, you know, to menace the people there, to say ah, and ah, you could see them in the distance, maybe a block or so away um, a whole number of um, pick up trucks.....I would imagine that those that had the odacity to come almost to the entrance to the church, could do it knowing that those guys up on the hill had their shotguns if anything, anyone should be provoked, any harm come to them. They were there to retalliate so, you know, they could feel as arrogant as they wanted. Um, I remember we had to move out of their way. That's how they drove. But um, I can't re,member if there were words exchanged between the crowd and these guys, um, and I'm sure that ah, Quame instructed everybody to get i their cars, like, "Get in your cars and we'll go home" And um, because Quame was driving, um, we were at the end of the caravan because he had organized this meeting and um, it was his intention toi see everyone home safely. So one by one, the families turned off the road wherever it is they lived and at the end, um, when the car in front of us had turned off, and it's pitch black. There are no street lights, but when they had turned off and we were going to head back to the freedom house that night, um,those guys in their pick up trucks were rigt behind us and ah, a chase ensued. I know that there were words. I know um, Quame's, they said something, I don't remember what they said, but I did hear something out of Stokely's mouth and I was reproaching him for the use of his language (Laughing) which is so absurd to me now, you know, but um, he indeed

responded to them appropriately, but um, at the time I didn't want to hear that kind of language and um, he gave me, he gave me just the attention that I needed. Anyway, we drove um, John and Stokely were in the front seat, Stokely was driving and Ruth Moskowitz and I were in the back seat um,we were the only car now, since everyone had gotten home safely and obviously we were being chased um, by these red necks and they um, they were in hot pursuit and it was, it was um, it was obvious to us that um, the danger was obvious and the possibility that, you know, we might die was certainly something we were aware of and I know that Stokely had said to, "Get down, get down on the floor" and um, I know that I had remarked to John something about hearing my last confession (laughs) and uh, certainly, you know, he was the priest there and uh, John had the kind of humility to say well, "You know, you would have to hear mine" um. At any rate, Stokely was driving.....his souped up car, I don't remember the make or whatever, but I know that ah, the tail lights had been turned off so as not to show these guys where we went and he didn't drive straight down the road, it was like a zig-zag and at break neck speed. It was frightening enough and to know that they were behind us with um, their shotguns um, he successfully evaded them.. They did not fire a shot. I don't know why. I don't know if it's because they didn't see us um, and wanted to get closer, I don't know. They probably, once we hit the freedom house, they probably knew that that was safe territory and I think it was understood, generally, that um, however unlawful, the men who remained in the freedom house were certainly going to protect us, you know. They would be armed if we were not, and um. I don't remember any discussion of it afterwards or anything, but

L: That was great

S: Yeh great

L: Thanks very much

B: Yeh

Tape goes off for a second then:

B: Mrs. Daniels makes a reference to a couple of people I don't remember any more, um, but maybe it the lady I stayed with. I remembered Mrs. Arther L. English, so I wouldn't remember what her first name was, that's obvious; y her husbands name.

L: ?????? The Englishs arean't in Keene anymore

B: I don't know, she somebody, Julie and Ann. Who's Julie and Ann? I don't know who they are. And obviously I knew when she wrote the letter um,

S: Must be daughters or something maybe, somebodies daughters.

END SIDE ONE

B: The wake, I remem, I'm, I don't, even today, I mean, as a nurse I dress bodies or I have dressed bodies, prepared them for the morgue or whatever, but um, I do not, as a rule, attend funerals or wakes. Even in my family, if I can get out of it I wont.

S: It's not one of the most pleasant things to go to, no

B: But I know that I went, um, I remember seeing John and that awful haircut that he had just gotten um, I remember, I remember his grandmother. I remember her, you know, what a waste, you know. I remember thinking "No you wouldn't think so" Um,

L: Why woudln't you think so ????????

B: Waste, you know, I think she was expressing her sorrow that this 25, 26 year old man with so much love and potential was killed and this is a waste of his life, you know. Um, but knowing him, I.....I know that um he would not have seen it as a waste of his life um, part of his generosity, I'm sure um, it was important enoiugh for him to risk it, you know and certainly ah, to push aside someone that he worked with, you know, had known, had come know and love. It would not, had he lost his life in another way, I mean, had he um,.....not been struck by a bullet that might have been intended for someone else. Had he been just standing in the door drinking the soda, um, he would have done it with the same generosity. He would have, you know, he wouldn't recklessly say, "Well you know, if I go over there I'm sure that ah, some crackers are going to be out and you know, aiming" no. We knew the danger and we, I wouldn't, John wouldn't flirt with danger but then you do what you need to do and take whatever safeguards. I mean like, we attented, one of the major things that I remember, we attented the, the first mass meeting that Stokely oraganized in Lownes county. There was like a 20 car caravan. I mean, these cars were filled with people that had the courage to come out um, no matter what risk, and like yes, we're going to the churhc, we're going to have a mass meeting, we are going to discuss the circumstances under which you live and, I mean, just see if we can find, what can we do about it, is there something that we can do. And um, that was risky, and ah, I believe that that's the night, I know that um,.....Stokely was driving, John sat beside him and um, Ruth and I were in the back seat and I, we were able to reach Ruth, but um, our lives were in jeapordy. But we would not, I'm sure, um, if somebody said, "You know thet'll be guys with shotguns um, you want to change your mind about going" that was never,

L: Here's some water (?) Want me to get rid of some of that stuff for you?

B: Um, you're welcome to read, to read her beautiful letter, she's

L: I can move the fan

B: Oh, I had that picture and I know it vcame from,

L: Oh this one?

B: Yes, I know it came from her but I don't know where it was, I looked.

S: Did anything happen that night?

B: Did anything happen? You bet, you bet. That church was filled to capacity. I could not give you a date.....maybe a week before John died.

L: Was that the time that John gave a sermon? We have a photograph of him giving a sermon in a black church and we have a letter of someone describing him giving a sermon in the cadences of a black minister and it was a wonderful letter.

B: Really, no I didn't, I didn't hear him ah, he did not give a sermon that night. But people participated that night. I want to tell you, I mean their courage, their, but there were speakers because um, Flowers, who would he be

S: ????

B: Yes

L: He was there?

B: Yes he was there

L: At Browns Chapel

S: No, ??????

L: I'm sorry, Flowers ended up in jail for ????

B: He ended up in jail?

L: They chopped off some charges and a couple of years later he was in prison for his liberal attitudes for segregation.

B: Well that night when I heard him I didn't think he was very liberal. I really didn't

L: For him it was

B: Maybe, you know, but I, I don't think I had any experience listening to a politician before then.

L: We think maybe the death of Johnathan turned him around. We heard him say ?????

B: Possibly

L: The awful manipulation of justice, the slaughter of it, he

S: ?????

B: Ahha We learn at different, it takes different, circumstance, you know, for different people but um, I hated, I mean, I was angry. John was there was his cameras(Laughs) I remember sitting next to him holding what, something um....oksomething, maybe he had a sophisticated camera and I had parts, I'm holding parts of it and he's taking pictures. Did you get them?

S: We didn't get those. We have others that he took

B: Ok, Um, I remembre Flowers being there and certainly he wouldn't have been there alone but I remember being quite annoyed at being told, in essence, that we would have to wait that we should be patient, (gasp) I had not perhaps listened to a politician, as I said, and I thought it was an insult and I was, you know and when people stood up afterwards and clapped and whatever, oh, I wanted to boot him for sure and I can't remember whoever else but, you have to understand too that I was young and I was learning and I was becoming involved and um, and ah I should, letting what I should have known years before, some of that passion was in there, you know, oh

L: What should you have known that years before, I eman god

B: Well because I'm a citizen of these here United States. I am so changed by it um, I'm aware, yes, but um, things are different yet the same. I know you were very busy today. this is not the topic, but I know, yesterday, I happened to have flipped on um, Sally Jesse Raphael

L: We were watching, with the red necks members

B: Well of course, and I was, I listened because I feel, you know, it's important that you do listen, okay, otherwise you can't address the issues but I can become angry and frustrated and I cried and I said, "My god what is it, 20 some odd years" I mean we worked with such fervor and for what. But there are moments when I say that ah, and it isn't that I, I worked with the kind of fervor of Stokely Carmichael or Johnathan Daniels, you know. I mean um, yes, for a year I worked with the medical committee, I was ignorant enough to think we made, no, I knew we didn't make any changes, but I learned in that I had benefited more than the people there. But they had, they had like an ally in me. I was never going to be the ignorant person again. I damn ah, I couldn't be duped into thinking, you know, everything was equal justice and everything is fine and you can retire to do something else. But it um, is a very painful to think to hear the kind of things that I heard yesterday, you know, I mean, but reality tells me that that will exist until the end of, the end of the era um, ...and then today, I don't know if you listened today when suppos, well today's show was the panel, the family, um, today, she had resigned from the clan, you know

L: Who?

B: the family, the Ralston Family

L: Those overweight women

B: Yes, yes um, and she felt um well all men are equal and I'm like, agh, that was just unacceptable. But I was talking to my kids and what not and I was very much distracted, I didn't get to see the whole show, but um, it's sometimes very discouraging and one of the things that I often wonder for Stokely, I mean, how is it, I'm no longer accustomed to calling him Stokely, um, how does he continue to be so dedicated, you know, despite so many discouraging,

L: He gave a fire brand address for 2 hours to an audience at Keen State College a couple of months ago.

S: He still has that,

B: He has that dedication and ah

L: That was, he was preaching for the converted, but he was also preaching to the ignorant. I mean, by that I mean there were a lot of kids there for whom he was not even a memory. Because his ???day was 6 years before our student were born.

S: It was good that he spoke

L: Yeh

B: That, that's difficult

L: Well there were a lot of unreconstructed hippies from the hills of Vermont who came out to hear one of their folk heroes and um, a couple of people gave him a hassle, nothing serious. But he um, he's put his mind into this panafrican, united front party that he's working with and so that's where all his money and time and energy goes

B: Indeed but.....

L: I figured if he was still in the United States he'd be dead, probably. Something would have happened. He was too much of a threat. He wouldn't be with us.

B: I was fearful. I was fearful when he was in the south but even up here, when he comes, should he call, I don't ask

questions basically, you know, I mean like, "Are you going to drop in?" something like that or um, but I, you know, I generally, like "Where are you" or whatever. I have a way of being in touch with him but I don't use it unless I absolutely have to. But anyway,

S: I was going to ask you, do you, what was John's political awareness compared to your own. How would he react to all these things? You say you were kind of learning, was he learning or did, was he interested?

B: Well he was further ahead than I was. He was learning um, I don't know if John was one of the guys, we need each other to learn. Some of the guys actually did things like attended clan meetings, I'm not sure if John took off his collar and did it. He may have, or that was something he was planning to do because some of the guys had that kind of a connection, you know and would take that kind of a risk, um,.....he, he understood more than I did, John, he um,

S: What do you mean by that?

B: Well for me it was like an awakening but he had, he already had his awakening and I didn't say um, "Hey, you know, I mean, how do you know this or when did you learn" to bad. I anticipated when he came to New York, that's the kind of thing we're going to do. We're going to get to know each other um, and we'll talk. Sometimes we saw ourselves as northerners and often talked, compared ourselves to the different civil rights workers and ah, um, what it is that they were doing,

S: What would be the difference, would you say, between the two, or what made you different as northern civil rights workers?

B: Well the first thing, religion um, yeh, um, a practicing black catholic made me, made me a different, and it gave us a connection, it gave John and I a connection um, ...I think I mentioned to you, one of the things that John had said um, I knew, I think John was going to be ordained within months or something like that.

S: He had another year

B: A year, all right um, So I knew he was serious about it, I knew he was educated about religion and he knew, not just his, but something of the protestant, the different sects and he knew a lot about catholicism and um, ah, a lot of our discussion were the similarities between his level of episcopalian belief and the catholic church and um, I think I mentioned to you that John, John would have been a catholic priest had they allowed them to marry. BUT he was not um, interested in celibacy for the rest of his life ah, he felt, you know, "If it weren't for that, I'd be a catholic priest." So I knew he had respect and knowledge and catholicism that I didn't find in anyone else there. Um, there was some intolerance of religion among the um, what, the average civil rights worker, I mean, because some people could say, you know, I mean, that's, that's part of the problem here. These people are, are practically drugged by the church, you know. So there was intolerance and there was a little um, ah, but we had a kind of solace, you know, I mean, we could talk about it we could laugh about it and um, that was probably our, our greatest reason for

friendship. If we needed any reason um, and just to get to

know him, just to know him as ah, he's um,northern white but empathetic, you know, I mean ah, and very um, he understood. He was comfortable living in the West' home. He was very comfortable traveling um, in the um, in the black areas of the south. How he connected with the whites in the south I don't know. Like the Dumonts, I don't know. I'm not even sure if both ladies were named Dumont but um, I do believe that Isabelle Dumont was a physician and my being a nrse, I don't know if that's why um, he, I got the invitation,

S: They were probably episcopalians too, would be my guess.

B: Yes, I remember, I remember her discussing the fact, did you ever hear Jimmy Lee Jackson?

S: Yeh

B: Ok, for some reason or other, she had some information regarding his death that I had not heard and had reason to, to believe what she had to say about it, you know, I mean ah, he wasn't just....um, shot and killed um, there was so much anger um, after his death and there was so much hostility, you know like um, noone would have wanted a white physician to, to take care of him and ah, they, you know, like they wanted a black physician according to her, even if he weren't ah the surgeon there, you know um, and I listened and I said, "Well I can understand it" um,but there were, there are things liek that that I felt that um, that were discussed and they could feel that they could dicuss it honestly and say, well, in this instance, I might have selcted this ah, clan person if he had the qualifications, someone that's, no, I wouldn't and um, I think that my people wouldn't either, yooou know and sometimes ther was that kind of a discussion. But um,

S: Did you get into any scrapes and ah, have people chasing you at all in Lownes County or any dangerous,

B: The most dangerous one was the night of the mass meeting. I don't remember how many other speakers were there. I guess Flowers would know um, but I, afterwards um, actually you know, these people were bold enough, really, so arrogant that they, they drove in their pick up trucks to the church.

S: The whites?

B: Yes. They were there as if to say, "Yeh, we're watching you niggers and we had um, they always have their shotguns, you know, in the back of the pick up truck um, but they came, probably on church porperty because I remember the gravel under the tires um, they did not come inside the church but they were really lik too close for comfort and you could see them in the distance to that they were um,

S: Sort of leaning on the church

B: Yes, you know, like um, like the cowboys and indians, "we've got you surrounded" type of thing and they were very brason about it. But the black people were just as courageous and spoke, you know, I mean, to hear somebody, I mean, who would say, well I'm so aand so, they would give their names, "I'm so and so and I've lived here, I was born here and I've lived here X number of years and uh if it means that I'm going to be killed tomorrow um, it's all right with me, but I will be there. I will go out um, to register to vote and" I mean the courage you get from

people standing up and it's like, you simply have to give them the information, you know, a little direction, that's all they want from you. They don't want you to do it for them, you know, and um, you feed them there courage really, you know and um, I'll do it, and then someone else contributes and, you know, they tell their story and you hear that they are going to um, they want to participate and they do not want the civil rights workers hurt. They definitely take any measure to feed you, I mean, if they have, if they feast, you feast, you know um, to see that you're provided for um, um, and it's like "Don't risk your life for me but tell me, what is the law, is that right? We can do that? Oh I didn't know that. Are you sure? Okay, then I'll do it, you don't have to do it for me" and you have to take courage when people do that, you know, they are old and um,.....I don't know. I saw more in Mississippi in active, you know, following, you know, the demonstrations or the Merideth march, things like that, I mean.....a bent over old lady who comes out with a bucket, a kind of bucket, the same bucket you saw your mother use when she was mopping the, but this one, still silver, still new. You knew she never mopped a floor with it but she had cool water in it and a ladel and that was her contribution. That was her courage, I mean, and you knew the courage it took for her to do that because we were passing by and you know, maybe thirsty, but she was going to stay there and the onlookers knew the shack she lived in, so you knew the risk, you know. She knew it and she took it. So for me, you know I, I took back memories of people like this yeh, memories of people like John, willing to risk, I'm sure. And I started to say, the night of the mass meeting and that 20 car caravan, um, well Stokely had organized it so um, he was definitely going to make sure that everybody else got home safely, you know, I mean, this car would drive and turn off the road. That's where this, there going and so forth, so that we were at the end and um, when it became just our car, they were obviously chasing us. Um,and let you know it, however, what ever needed to be done to the car, you know, so like the um, the back lights would be turned off so that you can't see them, you know, the roads weren't lit. All of that to soup up a car, however you call it, he had done and, you know, I mean the civil rights workers knew this is what you do and um,certainly um, Stokely was a good driver but I was scared driving at break neck speed and knowing that the guys behind us intended to do us harm and wanted to let us know that. They did not shoot. They had their rifles, if they had guns, I don't know, they didn't actually shoot, but we weren't, I guess, an easy target because there's a, there's a way, you know. I mean you just don't drive like this and Stokely was all over the place and he said to get down and I remember being very worried that John, Ruth and I could get down but he certainly couldn't get down and drive, you know, and I said, "You guys have got to get something to protect your heads and your necks" I said, you know, "we're going to work on this, you know, because if he shoots you in the head, we're all going anyway." Um, but um, we did get on the floor and it was pitch black and he drove and out

drove them, you know, I mean out maneuvered them, but we, we talked about it, and I think we talked as we were on the floor and ah, expected to die and, I sure then there were times, other times too that we expected that we might be killed, and I do remember.....saying to John, my feeling was that John was a priest. I mean short of the ordination um, by a representative of god, for me, you know, the circumstances um, he was a priest, and um, I remember saying, "Oh boy, you know, I'm going to die here. This is going to be my last confession john, you know, um, I certainly want you to here my last confession here," and I remember him saying with the same sincerity that I would have to hear his and I was like, no (Laughs). Um, but we were very much aware of the possibility of death and in, you know, we didn't do anything to invite it but we did what we needed to do, you know um,

S: You were ready for that,

B: Right, right, um, that was the time that it happened when I, when John was there. BUT it happened at other times, you know. I mean on the march some um, it happened more often, well because I spent more time in Mississippi um, as I spent more time there and,

L: You were in the Selma march?

B: I beg you pardon?

L: You were on the Selma, what march

B: NO, oh no the Merideth March

S: In Mississippi

L: Oh sorry, ok

B: Yeh

S: IN your case in John, why were you ready to do that? Did you have similar motivations, I mean normally people don't do things like that, that's what interesting and really so courageous about,

B: But that's not what we were doing. That was a possible consequence of the work that you needed to do, you know.

But that, we were not,

S: But that wasn't a consequence story enough to stop you from doing what you were doing, I mean

B: Of course not

S: Why is that? I think I'm just trying to figure, tell me why, why, for a lot of people they wouldn't go down and then what they did, they wouldn't, they'd leave, and a lot of people did, they leave early and get out of there

B: So that was not, yeh, people who flew down for march or something, you know, I mean, they've been characterized as flying in and spending the weekend and going away you know but. I um, you couldn't do that if you, if you actually lived and worked, ah in these

S: ?????????? Why is it that you couldn't do that?

B: Um,

L: Because a lot of people did, they went down to the march and went home.

B: I don't understand that, well, I don't know, I mean I flew to um, the commemoration in WASHINGTON and I knew I was going, I was flying for that day but I did it out of respect for Dr. King um, however had, had I made a commitment to work, if they said, okay now this is whats

going on and we need people to do so and so and so, if I made a commitment to stay, I would stay, I mean, um, you support, you support the agenda. I has to be important and the work was definitely important, um, you couldn't

L: You changed, you changed, disturbed your entire life's pattern,

B: I could do that. I mean I could do that, what I was, I, I could do that at that point in my life. NOW, with three children, like Mrs. Leasol, I don't know, I, I can't see and I don't criticize her, I understand her and I'm hurt when I hear people say, "Oh, well she should have stayed home with her kids, she was a mother." No, no, no, I don't see myself as doing that, putting my three boys aside and going to, I can see taking them. I can see involving them in something so important knowing, as people did, that their children were at risk. There were people, northerners, who had their babies with them and those kids were at risk, um, but you don't focus on the risk, you know. I mean you....you focused on the work. You focused on what it is you're there for. The risk, the risk is there, I mean, ah, but it's not um, you would do nothing, but I, my kids are ignorant of um.....racial, social injustice. They think it doesn't happen and um, part of it is because I try hard, first of all, to select the kind of school where they learn respect and tolerance for others. Where they can get it and they, they learn to give it um, and I feel that they really don't know and they don't believe and they put on these little skits about the MONTgomery boycott and the school is well integrated and in Harlem, in east Harlem and that's very unusual that you have whites pouring into Harlem, east or west, but um, it's a magnet school and when they do it, they'll have, they have some of the blond, blue eyed kids that got on the stage, you know, in this make believe bus and they say, they drop whatever the coin is, and they'll say, "black" you know, and you're going to laugh because you've got this blond, blue eyed kid who's black fro the even, for the day whatever. BUT um, the staff understands that, afterwards you have a discussion, you know. They discussed what actually happened. Why did Rosa Parks say that, what was going on, and the kids get the message. I mean how do you feel, I mean how would you feel if somebody said, um, "Sit in back of the bus or," you know. SO they have the discussion, they learn the lesson, you know, and it doesn't mean that injustice doesn't, you know, rear it's head on occasion. You think wow, my kid is safe, but your kid is never really safe. It has, it's an ongoing kind of thing and an on going commitment, you know

S: They would have to have the same education you had you know, they would have to go down or somewhere find it to see it

B: Well, when Jesse was running for president, um, I had my, I guess my youngest was not yet in school and my middle son had asthma that day, he was a little ill. Not so ill that we stayed at home or whatever. But we had the fortune, the good fortune to, to be in the right place at the right time. We knew his bus was coming by and we had been told that it would go to Harlem hospital or whatever. We did not plan it, we were out on another errand and um, we arrived at the

hospital moments after the bus. So there was a , we were walking home so there was no reason for us just to run, everyone said, "Hey that's Jesse's" and that's how we knew. They said, "Hey, you know come off that bus." He got off and I pushed my kids forward. I said, you know, this is Jesse Jackson, like they knew, okay, and I said, "You want to shake this man's hand, we'll talk about it" So I kind of like pushed them forward, they had changed their plans, they were an hour or more late

S:???????? kids

B: Right, so we came at the right time, it was not planned, we weren't standing there for hours looking for him or anything and I guess he opened the door, you know because he had people saying, "Get out of there, come out here, we're expecting you" And I pushed the children forward and wouldn't you know, he indeed picked up my middle one, my middle one not my youngest one, and gave him a hug and a kiss and you know, like later he said, "Mommy, he kissed me" (laughs) but it was a momentous kind of thing. We went to the state office building to hear him. I constantly had to redirect the attention of my oldest one, you know and say "look you don't get an opportunity to hear Jesse Jackson. When you're older, you're going to someday understand why. You should stop bugging me to go into Burger King here and listen to what's being said." You know, so it's sort of like, on one hand I say I want to put them on a shelf and I want to go enjoy myself, yet on the other hand, to give them a political awakening. But they are not yet ready. They are not, they've not experienced. I had not experienced some of the things, or I did not believe that I had experienced because I was comfortable, my family was comfortable but I still had a segregated life, education. I mean I went to a black church, black school um, I'm, I sat in the black, in the section of the black section bus, but ours was a little different. They had like holes in each seat, starting with the first seat. So we would get on the bus and take, they called it the sign, it said "For colored patrons only" A little wooden thing that had like nails that would sit, put in the holes. We would get on the bus and take it all the way up to the front of the bus and then if people, and the driver, I never remember having trouble. I mean we'd take it, not the first seat, but very far up in the front, so that whites would have to stand because they didn't want sit behind the seat and they certainly, you know, there were no seats. But no driver ever said to us, "Move that sign or get back" but as kids, we knew, I mean that's what you do to get to them, you know, or that's how you get around it. I mean that's something, that was a risky thing that somebody could have hurt us for but didn't, you know. So that I knew, I knew I wasn't white, that was for sure, and when I went to a theater I knew I had to climb the stairs to go upstairs and, at the time I didn't know that it was such a fire hazard, you know, but we had a grandmother to tell us you know, that's dangerous and you'll kill each other coming down those stairs. But um, we also knew that we could throw popcorn on the people sitting downstairs or whatever else, you know. So we knew that there were differences but.....our churches were

comfortable, our schools, you know, I mean we had the blessed sacrament ???? sure. I mean the holy ghost and we had a good education, you know, um, I don't know. No separate but equal. Anyway

S: Could we really impose on you just to get a picture of you? Just a little bit

L: You mean a movie?

S: Yeh, but I'm not sure what you'd like Jenny to go over

S: Anything she's comfortable with

L: Why don't we just take a break

S: yeh why don't we take a break

B: Would you like to read John's mother's letter

L: Let me stop this

B: Um, you'll need the light

S: This is the mother's letter

L: Yeh

B: Yeh, are you both from Keene

S: I grew up in Providence

L: I grew up in Buffalo

B: And you did not know John, but you did

S: No, I knew his mother

B: YOU did?

S: Yeh, but after all of this. I met his mother in about 1975, 77 something like that

B: And were you in touch with her?

S: Not

B: Not a lot

S: We were sort of acquaintances. I didn't really get to know her that well. But I never spoke to her at that time which is strange, about Johnathan. I knew her in other kinds of context

B: Oh

S: Yeh, so we never talked about it and ah, I know

End of Side Two