

L: We'll just have to go by the clerk

L: Okay, just give me a test please

G: Give you a test of my voice, okay hello Larry Benaquist, I'm glad to see you and your cohorts here. We've been putting this off for a long time (Laughs) So is that okay? You got a level?

L: I do

G: Okay

L: Okay

S: So what we usually do Fay is ah, go through the interview, then we may, we'll video the whole thing but we'll just, I'll ask you some questions again at the end of it and then we'll film those. That's the way we usually

G: Okay, whatever, you tell me what you want me to do.

L: So I won't even be running this until we're done talking

G: Okay

S: And Larry can jump in any time

G: Okay

L: So, we're pretty informal about it

G: Well you know I'm very formal so (laughs)

S: So you came to Keene in ah, 57 and then ah Jonathan's father was your doctor, your family doctor?

G: Yes

S: Could you talk about him a bit? Um, how you got to know him,

G: Well when we came as new people, people in the church said, "Oh, if Dr. Daniels will take you on, well he's the doctor and" and we met him and he did take us on and he was the doctor. He would come and visit in the home, he'd make house calls, and did on several occasions for us and ah, was really, in the real sense, the beloved physician. He really was but as I begin to think about this Bill, I realize what a short time really he was our doctor. It seemed like he was our doctor for a long time but we came in 57 and he died in late 59.

S: 59 right. And did you get to know the family as well?

G: Well it was ah, we didn't know Jonathan's mother really well. We had met her but we didn't know her as a personal friend really until after the tragedy, after the death of Jon ah, but of course the doctor we knew and I never got acquainted with Emily but ah, Jonathan, let's see, Jonathan was 16 I think, I think I figured it out once, 16 in 57 when we came.

S: He would have been a little older.

G: Is that right?

S: Yeh, he was born in March 39, so that 57, well probably 17.

G: Oh okay

S: Yeh, yeh

G: And ah, he graduated from high school that that, the spring of the same year we came. Ah, he already, I think now, I think he had already done his switching from the UCC church for which I think he grew up, to the episcopal and I

think was confirmed that same year. But, but the churches did some joint youth work at that time and I really met Jonathan first not through his father but through that joint youth work and Jonathan really did go back and forth between the two churches for quite a while, was active really both places but I think it was at that graduation year when he was 16 or so, that he really declared himself for ah, being ready for ah, or thinking about seminary. I think that sequence is correct.

S: Yeh, well he went to VMI right after,

G: Well that's right and that, we used to talk about that and sort of tease him. Ah, there was about Jonathan, he could be sort of ????? and punctual and proper and insistent on a point and we, we used to tease him about his choosing a military school and I, I never resolved that, I can't remember at all but he said, "I defended that or what" but there was a side of him that could be very very, like a, a saluting military man and almost wanted that from, if he had an opinion, he almost wanted you, sometimes, to salute and say, "That's right Jon" There was that side to him. When I first met Jon, to be very frank, I didn't dislike him, I'm sure that's fair, but I wasn't wanly drawn to him. He was a teenager after all and he was pretty darn sure of himself and pretty arbitrary about things and what was right and he had it all figured out and that's very difficult, I allow that but I didn't like that in him at first, but he, I maybe watched him grow and not do that so much, but he, my first impression of him was that, you know, he was very, sure a teenager, but he knew it all. But he changed later and conceded how, how you know, much he had to learn and there was a humble man in many ways but also very dedicated and very fixed in some of his feelings.

S: You don't know where that military kind of ah, came from?

G: I don't. I can just remember sort of teasing him about it and saying that we had, I had a hard time placing him in there. This was really later in our conversations because our real depth friendship conversations came when he was at seminary and then he would come home and we would ah, he would always call and we would get together and I think I told Larry this or somebody, we would go to the Crystal, or he sometimes came to our house, but usually we'd go to the Crystal and have coffee and martinis. He loved martinis (laughs) and ah,

S: So you didn't really see him much at VMI?

G: No, no not at all, no, not really. Maybe a time or two when he came home but I'm not recalling that at all.

S: Ah, was there any indication that he was interested, you said he might have gone, already made the decision about seminary in high school. What leads you to say that I wonder?

G: Well it just seems to me that, you know, when you, we need some episcopalians here, when you get confirmed in the episcopal church, that's really joining, you confirm what your parents took on at your baptism, it just seems to me, my memory is that he shared with me that it really was at that time, even though I think it wasn't a commitment, that the first idea came that he might like to go into the priesthood. I think that's fair. (pause) I'm quite sure of that.

S: Some things that we're exploring about the VMI would be his kind of admired his father's military background. Did he ever say anything about that?

G: Not to my recollection although that would be my guess but I can't tie that to any remembered conversation.

S: Some people says things like, "Well he needed a lot of discipline. He was kind was kind of liked in high school" That his mom or dad might have encouraged him, or he might have perceived it on his own that, you know, to try and prove himself or to show that he could shape up and that sort of thing.

G: Well if, to be very candid, ah, the Daniels never came over to me as ah, elitist, but after all, a doctor associates with the elite in a town and ah, among doctors and lawyers and other professional people, often it is just sort of an assumption that ah, the kid will go to a private school or perhaps a military school and, but I never discussed this with any of the Daniels and I don't recall Jonathan's ever saying anything, although Jonathan did admire his father very much and his father him, but ah, I remember calling him skinny, in a loving way and talking with me a little bit about kids and kids in the 60's and not the 60's, in the late 50's, but it was the beginning of the 60's thing, Jon was sort of in that ah, I think I said to you earlier Bill, my opinion is that his friends were sort of quote "different" (laughs) and I don't mean anything snide by that but they were sort of left of center people, sort of pre-hippies and Jonathan fit into that in many ways, I felt.

S: Did he, did you know him as a, you said he was completely self assured. He never expressed any self doubt?

G: Later, this was his first teenager pressure, which I think is very typical of a teenager that he just knew everything and ah, he was at those early times that he was really quite sure that the episcopal way was the way and we used to sort of argue in a friendly way about that, that was the early impressions that I had, that he was so sure and that's okay but I wasn't so sure (laughs) but ah

S: How about if we get back to the dad ah, his father a little bit um, do you remember what happened in the sense of Dr. Daniels getting ill, when that happened and any of the details of that?

G: Not really, I wouldn't know the diagnosis, I remember, I know the feeling was that he had just worked himself to

death and there's some truth in that. He would be going until 11:00 at night and in fact, and I think my wife could verify this, I think at 10:00 or 11:00 at night on more than one occasion, a couple occasions anyway, he would come, he would have to see one of our kids. See this was his last call for the night. So the talk of the town, in great appreciation was that he just had overdone, tired himself out. How much truth there is to that I don't know.

S: Yeh, well he had a, I guess the real diagnosis was, that probably contributed to it, but he had a shrapnel wound from WWII that affected his kidney and his kidney was not functional.

G: I had forgotten that but I'm remembering that now, yeh. I went to see him on one occasion in the hospital and I can't recall now whether he had more than one hospitalization and then was home, I think so but I'm not sure about that. I just wrote caring about the visiting and,

S: I remember the title of your article is something about there's not much difference between the hospital and the church.

G: Is that what, see the writer doesn't title articles so

S: Was that a point in the essay?

G: Well, it seems I should have read that before I, I can't recall.

S: Why did you go see him?

G: Oh just out of love. I took presents and little gifts and candy and things from people. I went down to the clinic and they had sent him a whole bunch of empty pill jars, empty bottles, filled with love they said. So I delivered that and some candy and ah, visited really briefly with him, he was quite ill. I had a little bit of an argument with the nurse to get in and pull my preacher parts and said I was a reverend and sent as an invoy from Keene which was partly true. And then ah, there was a young man there that I had known too in Keen and ah, Dr, Daniels was very um, anxious to have me know that he had delivered that boy and ah, he was always very in touch with with the common people of his patients. He was very much loved.

S: Were you there for Dr. Daniels funeral?

G: This is interesting. I'm sure I was but I didn't take any pardon as I did later in Mrs. Daniels funeral but ah, I'm sure I attended the funeral but I'm not recalling much about it.

S: Do you remember Jon at all coming to the funeral or anything like that.

G: I don't

S: You didn't talk to Jon?

G: I don't think so, I don't think so, no

S: Do you have any knowledge of him during the VMI years at all?

G: No, no, no I didn't

S: So when did that relationship pick up again?

G: Well see, I had met him as this teenager and then he graduated and went to the military school and then it was later that the friendship was picked up and just what year and just how, the real friendship or the real conversations were when he was a seminarian.

S: Yeh, do you remember the time, well what happened I guess, he graduated in June 61, he spent a summer working in Washington D.C. and served in Norris Cottons office.

G: Yes, I just know that as a fact, I don't know, certainly I'm not recalling conversations about that, I'm sure that we, in passing, mentioned that but I didn't ah,

S: Then he went to Harvard that September of 61 and this was the year that Emily was having all her problems and he wasn't sure whether he wanted to be a student of literature and he was having all kinds of theological problems. Do you remember that at all?

G: Yes, this is what I, I was not being very clear about it a while ago when I said that sureness of the teenager was very definitely changed later to very open sharing of confusion and questions um, by the way, we never talked about Emily, we never did and I just, I would have if he had brought up the subject. I never brought up the subject and so I never knew very detailed information about Emily's problems.

L: Robert Ferrow said the same thing. HE sat next to Jonathan for almost a year and he never mentioned Emily. Apparently he didn't talk about it.

G: No, he certainly never initiated it and I wouldn't, I mean ah, so um

S: So were you talking about this when he was living in Keene because he didn't complete that year at Harvard he just got, he himself had to go for counseling and that just....

G: Well see there, also, see now Bill in getting ready to talk with you, I did not try to get a chronological picture here. I never talked to Jonathan about his therapy. I did know because I'm quite sure he told me but I did know that he had been in therapy but that was also talk of the past when we were doing our bigger amount of talking.

S: So it must have been when he finally made the decision. Do you remember any of that, when he was applying for entry into the seminary and all that?

G: Not ah, except that ah, no problems or anything like that, I just know that he, that after some real turmoil of being not nearly such a sure person, that ah, that he had made the decision but, you see, Jonathan and I, the friendship was deep I think, but it was real sporadic I mean, to really talk at length and, usually I think 2 or 3 times a year at most, we probably spent ah, 2 or 3 hours together. Catch up, have fun and drink martinis and (laughs) and talk about religion and theology and then later Martin Luther King and the movement, we began to talk about things like that.

S: But your memory thinks its when he was at seminary and then would come home or something?

G: That was the bigger part of our conversational friendship yeh.

S: Discuss his religious views, do you see any changes in the, specific ones during those years? He began in 63 at the seminary.

G: Well, you know, I'm sort of at a looser methodist and ah, we used to have discussion about ritual and then the ceremony at church and all I can say is that he loved it. HE just adored it, it just said something to him and I never questioned that, I mean that's Jonathan. I don't quite go that route but I have real respect for people who do and Jonathan just seemed to ah, vibe to the ritual and the drama of the church and I can see that. Um, and then.....and also in my non-episcopal knowledge, I think the episcopal church has had a real social conscience and this appealed to Jon a great deal except that I think he thought it should have even more.

S: Do you remember any particular things that.....was that always the case or was that an involving position?

G: Now what, that ah

S: That the episcopal church had more of a social rule.

G: Well, see Bill, when I say these things I really mean it, but then I wonder do I mistate. I certainly think he thought that his episcopalianism was going to be more social action. But ah, I would not really equate it with the episcopal church and the leaders at that time particularly who may have had already some real social action history ah, but Jonathan was very appealed to by that, but I think even, well which is, but he was very much appealed to by the historical validity of the anglican church and it's a tradition, it's history, it's ritual, it's discipline, it's book of common prayer he loved.

S: He talks about becoming a catholic sometimes too.

G: Yes, but I never talked in details with him about that but yes, I had heard him say that.

S: That's kind of interesting. How does he ah, see one of the things we're kind of interested in, if you're into ritual and the common book and all of that, isn't that going to keep you away from the social or how does, how did he work that out?

G: Well see, I'm trying Bill, to be very fair to, not to be unfair to him, but I think that was what he was trying to work. I think that's what I'm saying. He was so appealed to by the ritual and history, it was my feeling that he wanted the church and thought that maybe he could exemplify that to be more social action centered but rooted, not the less unritualistic, but rooted in the ritual and the history to be more social active. I think that's fair to him.

S: Do you remember him commenting on any of his experiences in field work, um, he was down in Providence for awhile with that Willard State.

G: I just know these things, Bill, but I'm not recalling comments that he may have made.

L: Can we take a break for one minute?

G: Yeh

L: I think I've got a dead battery here. Bill could you press pause on that, it's the one nearest you.

LONG PAUSE

L: Changing the battery doesn't do anything..... But I got a click on the track so that's good. Why don't you continue.

S: You got it running?

L: Yeh, all set

S: Okay, so we were talking about Jon's attempt to bring in the social a bit more and ah, what was his temperament in those years? Was he still troubled or, it's our understanding he had kind of a reconversion in 62 and then he came to Keene and prepared to continue to the seminary and at least his faith was growing at that point, but was he, would you say he was on track by then or were other things bothering him then?

G: Well see I really cared for this guy but I never really wanted to make him a saint or a martyr. I think he was always unsure. But with me that's alright. I mean, unsureness is accepted but this damn sureness of people is what upsets me. MAYbe it's because I'm not sure, I'm willing to say I don't know. But I'm thinking now of a feeling I had as I kind of prepared some things that I might say here, Jonathan sometimes seemed old to me. He sometimes seemed older than I and I don't mean old old because I wasn't old old then either, but the point is, he was fun, he was boy like in one minute and um, old. Now I really, I only, Bill, share a feeling with you, I can't illustrate that and I, this candidness on this thing worries me. But Jon could be mildly schitzy. He could be so different, so sure, not only one time in his life and then a later time, but so sure one day and then again so unsure the next and so fun and boyish one moment and so old and over serious the next. This is all said lovingly but it's feelings that I have run through my head even as I sat and talked with him. Then, I'm an old methodist and I had gotten over long ago thinking it was an absolute sin to take a drink, but I, and Jonathan would get a little inebriated if I let him, sitting at the Crystal and I was usually the one that started ordering the black coffee and said well I think we should quit, and again that's said very lovingly. But I think there was, there was something about Jonathan which I think was, but my defense of Jonathan always was but wouldn't one be uncertain if somewhere in the gut one knew the destiny, and I kind of think people do know. When the chips are down, I would go that last mile. I think Jonathan knew that and that gives me, his friend, an opening to say I could accept his uncertainty. I would be uncertain too. I think he had a debate of soul and leaving theology out of it, which I can do easily, I think he was an ardent searcher for truth, religious or otherwise, just, just capital 't' Truth and when he felt that he had it, he declared it. But when he was uncertain, he may have been defensive, but he either didn't hide it or didn't try to hide it. He would let you

see turmoil or let me see turmoil although I'm sure I was not as close to him as many. So I admired him but took him as a um, troubled soul in a way.

S: What's the ah, origins of the trouble? I mean what was really

G: I have no idea Bill, ah

S: Well I mean, what topics came up. At least bring the,

G: Well about god, and about the truth and about theology and about ah, about christ and about, just all the theological issues.

S: How about social issues, did they come up?

G: I didn't feel, I didn't see in Jonathan the great debate of soul that he ought to work towards some social conviction and some social action. The debate of soul was, ah, what's the foundation, what are the roots of that and, well he remained ardent all the time about his episcopal church, which was fine with me, it seemed to me sometimes that he wondered, is even this enough in which to root what I still think he knew he was going to do. Now I don't mean like a prediction, I think his gut knew maybe. Now don't put me on trial about this but I believe this. I think he may have known, unconsciously, his destiny, may have chosen it, may have wanted to die. I don't know this.

S: Well in high school, I don't know if you ever read it, but he wrote a short story in memorium about a slum priest whose was,

G: Yes, yes I have read that and I wasn't thinking of it right now at all and I admit I have read that. But this, you know, these things, I'm comfortable with you guys, but these things are not easy for me because I really loved this guy and ah, but I did question him, I did question him, because I questioned me and at least we traded real candid, honestly and struggle, and my older friends position was always, well Jonathan I don't know, and he was never asking me for authority but we, we really shared the search for authority and I just tried to model to him that I was comfortable with not knowing for sure a lot of things and thought that he needed to come to that, you know, older man's chief advice but,

S: Now there's talk i some of the letters of even dropping out of the episcopal church and going into psychiatry.

G: Yes, yes, we talked about psychology and what he thought, what I, what he wanted, what he wanted me to tell me what I thought I was getting out of my studies, it's like oh gee, and we exchanged that and talked a lot about Freud (laughs) not that I know a lot about Freud (laughs).

L: What did he have to say about Freud, do you recall?

G: Ah, let's see Larry, I wish I had known you were going to ask some of these questions, I need a minute to think ah, (sigh) oh dear...I think that we had an area of agreement on the fact that, so I don't want this to image me more than it should, I think that he appreciated Freud as a moral genius of his day. Strangely, and in the victorian age that he was, that he said some of the things he said and that

there was certain moral bravery in that. But I think he was very defensive about people who sort of thought now that Freud was god and that he did not and that he thought that ah, I'm quite sure this is fair because it just feels like conversations we had, but we did talk at length one day about Freud and the limited amount that I knew, but I think that's fair to his reaction. Um, I know that he was interested in dreams and that I was able to one day, to tell him a little bit about my feelings about the ah, moral bravery and sight of Freud's book on dreams which he himself said was the best thing he ever did and I think it was the most honest thing he ever did and, but ah, and Jonathan was interested in dreams from the standpoint of old testament history and new testament history and dreams. I remember we talked about dreams, I can't remember what we said. Now this is a long conversation one afternoon.

S: Did you ever talk about ah, theologians like Bonhoeffer and Phillick?

G: Yes we did, I think we just exchanged appreciation of, of those men at that time ah, Switzer too, Jonathan admired Switzer a great deal. We read once, we read once together together Oh Dear in Switzer's ah, Out of My Life and Thought, I think the closing paragraph is really a mystical paragraph ah, "he comes to you as one unknown" it starts and who the he is is very interesting but ah, Jonathan was greatly appealed to by that. Um, both ah, I was more appealed to it, Jonathan and I would have talks about this, I separate the Jesus of history and the christ of faith more than Jonathan did. To Jonathan, so Jesus Christ was more of a package. To me there is Atillic and Switzer, particularly in my life, helped me see the difference for me between the Jesus of history and the christ of faith and Jonathan and I would have, not arguments, but friendly, friendly debate about that. I think that his episcopal position was that the virgin birth or the mysteries of that might be, was the literal truth for him and those sorts of things.

L: He had a special affection for virgin Mary.

G: See I'm not recalling that he ever said that to me but, ah, I would feel that.

L: Maybe that didn't happen til later.

G: Okay, yes

S: On the other Jon understands, as you would too, he has a lot in his writings about Jesus being of a certain place and time and existentially manifesting his barriers through acts of passion and kindness. That's different from what you're,

G: Well it's just that I separate that Jesus from the christ of faith, of theologian, more than Jonathan did. See, I think, I think that this is fair, a lot of people, I think Jonathan would say, ah, Jesus did this miracle or christ did this miracle and I wouldn't. That's neither here or there what I would do but, in this interview, but Jonathan and I did talk about this quite at length about the Jesus of history and the christ of faith, the difference and I have, I have much more of a dualism there that Jonathan didn't.

And it's not out of lack of appreciation either for Mary and all that that might mean, the feminine and the god head.

S: Now would his theory of Jesus lead him to a social activist position?

G: I think so,

S: How would that work?

G: Well I think he saw Jesus as a political reality and, as a man who did some things and ah

L: Bill we can turn these lights off, we don't have to have them on right now.

G: No no I'm fine, no no I'm just trying to think here ah, tell me again, what did you,

S: Well I was trying to have you clarify for me, how his perception of Jesus which was different from yours, could or couldn't lead him to a position of being a civil rights worker.

G: Well here's the thing. Jonathan really thought that um, very very developly, that ah, I think that, you know, Jesus was god, god was Jesus. That didn't mean that he didn't believe in Jesus the man and he believed that Jesus the man had called people like him, like us, to do likewise and, and I'm not sure that these are Jonathan's words but they may be. I think his voice or his spirit really connoted to me, denoted to me before, more than once, that he sort of wished that the historic Jesus hadn't laid it on so because if you believed in him it was such a responsibility to believe, and I agree. I agree with that, but these are the kinds of things, Bill and Larry, that we talk about and I'm trying so hard to be fair and not to say things that, that I, that I'm not sure he thought, but I'm quite sure of these things.

S: That's consistent with what we know and he would think about Isaiah ???????

G: Yeh, he felt very, very, much more literalist than I do to about a calling, and I don't know,

S: Explain that a little bit.

G: Well, you see I don't know what Jonathan may have, whether he sort of felt almost literally like a top on the shoulder or something, but he felt very much that a call would be ah, you could not miss its reality, that you would, he would know, and I think, I think that what he was saying and what I recall his saying to me and in his life, was that he was called to do what he did. I don't know whether he felt at the time we were talking that he was called to give his life. I don't know that, but I think he felt, see my calling, just to show you what ah, is like a weed growing up. It wasn't???? and so I can tell you 42 years ago today on July 14th is something like, you know, I saw the Lord, and nor would Jonathan do that. But I think he felt that you, that, that either if and when his call came or when his call came that he would no or knew and I think that's fair to him. And he was very practical I think, but he was mystical too. Now that, I don't know what I mean by that for sure but that's where I think that whole episcopalian stuff, for me and the way I look at it, fits Jonathan better than it fits me.

S: Now he gave a sermon, where his ideas were exploring, he gave a sermon ah, before going into the seminary. That would have been winter of 63. He went in that September.

At ETS they have an episcopal, what is it? A episcopal,

L: Orders of theological Sunday

S: In training seminarians give a sermon I guess. So he gave it up at St. James. Now he uses the Isaiah about calling and I get the sense from reading that, that it was a calling to preach the word of Jesus. That that was what he was interested in at that time. But then this other thing, the calling becomes doing the deeds of Jesus.

G: Well see Bill, I don't know, but to talk about the calling being to preach Jesus is what you would say in church.

L: (laughs)

G: That's the truth, Jonathan or Fay Gemmel or the bishop or whoever. You see, you're wise as a serpent and gentle as a dove. If you want to get driven out of town, you tell them that the calling is to go down south and they'll tell you you're wrong. They'll tell you don't do it in our name. I'm, you see I don't know those things but I do know those things. That's the kind of thing that you say. Jesus himself, who I just quote as a human being, said that he said some things or some people would understand this and some people wouldn't and I profoundly understand that. You can't be a minister and not say some things that you know certain people are getting and certain people are not and you mean that these people not get it. Because if they do, they'll drive you out of town. That's the way it is. And Jonathan was that kind of real, he was that kind of real about the church, the institutional church, in my opinion, anything we ever exchanged. We didn't have a disagreement about the difference between the institutional church and the church of the spirit or the mystical church, the body of christ is the way Jonathan would say it. See I wouldn't say it quite that way, they may mean something very similar, but he would say the body of christ and I might risk to say the mystical church but (laughs) but we're talking about something different than the institution. And we both knew that. His episcopalian didn't keep him apart from me because I was a methodist or visa versa. We were above that completely. We would pick back and forth for fun. He would tease me about the Jonathan, the John Wesley who formed the methodist church stayed an anglican all his life, didn't become a leftist (laughs). He liked to tease me.

L: Did he ever talk about the concept of witnessing?

G: Not that I recall Larry.

S: What about abstract um, academic theological verses the practical, the field training verses the theoretical theology?

G: You mean did we ever talk about that?

S: Talk about it, do you recall, a minister of studies these things or a minister does these things.

G: Ah, Bill, I just, just expressly, I don't recall the spirit of Jonathan that I feel, I think would, I think we had some common ground here too was that ah, seminary training really is very minimal and if you study church history and study the new testament and study the new testament and all that, then you get out into the parish reality and it's different and that ah, the field projects sort of, you know, get your feet wet, but are not really like it's going to be. Now there again, I'm not recalling such a conversation perse, but in the spirit of things that Jonathan and I had talked about, that type of thing would very much come up. I don't recall his ever like haranguing about ah, something that was not going right or something he disagreed with in some of his field experience. I don't think he ever did.

S: He normally did just the opposite. He seemed sort of

turned down by working with poor people, ah, people of color. Do you ever remember him talking at any point about race issues or, before going down there to Alabama?

G: Well not at length and not pounding the table or anything, no, I'm sure that injustice, racial injustice or racial prejudice came up, I'm sure, but ah, this was one of the reasons that even to me the, when he really then went, I was a little surprised. I was not, well that sounds awful mild, I was surprised. I wasn't opposed and thought that's fine Jonathan if that's the way you want to express yourself, but I didn't express myself that way and ah ?????? but I don't think he ever like, you know, got up on a soap box about that subject to me, I don't recall. But he was a man who had sensitivity about injustice of any color and any place, I feel.

S: Do you remember any, and again, I know it's a long time, but any particular incidents of that. I mean, what did bother him, I mean out of his experiences thus far before the south, what, did anything really inflame him in terms of social inequities.

L: Maybe Dr. Johnston, King or ??????

G: No, I.....I don't recall at all any talk about Dr. Johnston but ah,

S: VMI or anything from the past that, you know could,

G: No I think, I think that all, we did have a conversation once in which I felt that I was meant to be complimentary to him as an episcopalian because I think the episcopal church does do as well as any, maybe better, of different classes of people under the same roof, with reasonable peace and that had come up in my saying that because we had been talking about his sort of hurt heart about ah, some some kids right here in Keene, I have no idea who they were, some little kids that were poor and he was aware of them and he was ah, I'm not sure that they were in his church but they may have been, and he was just sensitive and hurt about them. I remember that when I, and my response to that was that I thought the episcopal church should be complimented in their mobility and the rich and the poor and they educated the uneducated and I think that true, which that ritual and that mystical stuff minds them in a way that cannot mind some other divergent people in some other churches.

S: Yeh, he says that, when he decided to go, he ????? out Mary's song which talks about humble the, humble the bridge and... I forget the whole thing now, but that seemed, rather than in some ways this racism it to show fear of, maybe you could talk about that.

G: Yeh, yeh, well see, I just say Bill, that I do not recall any ardent talks about race, but I do recall some talks of sensitivity to human hurt. I particularly remember poorness, poverty hurt him and kids who didn't have mittens in the winter and this sort of thing. That hurt Jonathan almost to like teary eyed expression as he talked. But that would be the point, he would be talking like that and maybe

begin to feel just, I can't talk for him, but maybe began to feel a little more hurt or a little more threatened about his feelings than he was comfortable with and change and be sort of funny. I can just see this happening with him as I'm sitting here, I can just..... END SIDE ONE

G: and maybe even, you know, the candid honesty of letting another friend see a tear just trickle down your cheek because you were thinking about a kid who didn't have mittens. This is me, this is my conjecture, but I think it fits Jonathan.

S: During this period did he bring up anything about his family and resolving all those issues?

G: We almost never talked, we joked a little about his mother, who I loved (laughs) but she was disorganized par excellence and Jonathan used to sort of joke about his mother. I think, that I do not get the feeling that he and his father were close-close, but there was respect. I remember Dr. Daniels saying something to me about when, same time that he said Jon was skinny, he said that he's, what was it, he said that you had to let kids develop their way and it wasn't always the way the parents liked. This was sort of two fathers talking. But there was respect for Jonathan.

S: He said Jonathan was skinny, that was a wish that he wasn't skinny?

G: I don't know. He was. Jonathan....see I don't know anything about his health in fact, but somewhere in the beginning, when I, I remember my saying that he could look frail. He really could look weak and I don't think he was very strong physically. I never elbow wrestled or anything with him, but he certainly was not weak in, he had weak moments in this debate of soul but he was a resolver. But something about Jonathan could seem very frail. I recall that feeling. I relate it to something else which seems sort of different but I don't see it right here now, oh yeh....oh yes, Jonathan could appear frail and yet he was a bundle of exploding energy....he was quick in his movements ah, he ah, at the table if he reached for a cup of coffee; he ah, he didn't reach like this, he went BING (laughs) and he would sometimes knock things off the table because his hand motion was so fast ah, he was ah, just a bundle of some kind of energy. It was not natural for him in my presence and brief sampling of his presence, for him to sit calmly for a long time, and at the table, at the Crystal, he'd be helloing this one and running to the door to see that one and pounding on the window for this one and they'd be coming in to see because they saw Jonathan. So it was like holding court (laughs) with him.

S: How about when he did go down south. What chats did you have with him about that?

G: Well see, that was really ah, we really didn't have much chat after that. That was sort of it, what I've shared with you so far and then we didn't see each other much and ah,

S: Once he went down south?

G: Yeh, then he was dea.

S: Yeh, so you never got a chance to talk or, about him going down or what he learned?

G: NO, No I'm sorry, but I didn't. I don't think Bill and Larry, this is too important, but I think it's a rather poignant story in it all and I'll be brief about it, about being at summer camp the day he was killed and having this UPI person phone me and I had no idea who that was to this day. I was called from camp fire, it's sort of a poignant thing. I was called from camp fire, long distance call and I thought of course, something's wrong at home and I got there and it was this UPI person, male voice, who said that "We understand that you are a friend of a Reverend Jon Danielson and we're trying to locate next of kin" and I said, "Well I don't know any Reverend Jon Danielson but I do happen to know a Jonathan Daniels who is a seminary student" and this man said, "Oh, that's probably it." Well that's strange but he said that's probably it and ah, I said, "Well what's the situ, what's this?" and he said, "Well he's been shot. He's been shot down in ah (is it Alabama or Mississippi?) Alabama." Well this just seemed, I knew, it just seemed to me, I knew it's got to be Jonathan, you know Reverend Jon Danielson and you know, and Jonathan. It's got to be Jonathan and it fit and so I just felt, you know, how can I tell you how I felt and I went back to the campfire and they were singing We Shall Overcome.....

L: What did you do then? Did you call Connie?

G: No, because I had given her name to the man and besides that you see, did not know that there wasn't a Jon Danielson. But the next morning I confirmed with people in Keene and then saw Connie personally the next evening, I came home. I went to the house. I think it was the next evening....soon anyway, yeh I think it was the next evening. Some of these things get vague.

S: Now you wrote a piece about Jonathan didn't you?

G: Yes I did ah, in my ah, in my ah, Frontsy Popet. I wrote an article which ended that we ought to, that Keene ought to ah, Keene ought to ah make a Haineville gift of Memorial park to Jon. It never happened, but I don't know if ah, I'd be glad to give this to you guys or I can read some of it or,

S: At that point, you know, what was the essence of your ???

G: Well here's what I did. I was working on my own grief ah, I had gone to the ah, ah, I'm not sure if the word is wake in the episcopal church, where the body is laid out in state, but I went to that and I'm not a person that does that and again to be very candid, I'm not a corpse looker-atter. But I did look at Jonathan's body and sort of forgave my mother because my mother is always saying Oh I went to a funeral and she was so beautiful (laughs). I'd say, "Mother, for god sakes" (laughs). But Jonathan was beautiful and part of that was my emotional attachment to him but he just, he just looked beautiful and I had had some awful feelings, even though I had read, I think I read that he had been shot in the stomach and you know, wouldn't that be terrible to see him lay down with some scars or something. But he just looked beautiful. And I had promised my son Mark, who's now 39, he was a little boy then, and his friend, that we would climb the mountain that day. We had set it ahead and so I decided, I told Connie, I

decided that I would go to the mountain with the boys and so we, that's what the article's about. About sitting on the mountain and sitting down quietly at the very, at 1:00 I think it was, and talking to the boys about Jonathan and just remembering him on the mountain and ah, that was just working out when I owned my own grief.

S: Is there something special in that that you'd like to read?

G: Well I don't know, I just don't, it seems to me that ah, to be very frank, it's either read as a whole or isn't read and I don't know as that's worth the time. BUt I'll give you guys a copy if you like for your archives.

S: Has your view changed at all since then, I wonder, or you look at Jonathan the same way now as you did then?

G: Well no, my spiritual appreciation of the symbolism of his life remains the same. I, let's see, you know there's a play Go Tell Her on the Mountain, here, so the closing ah, paragraph is "As I read the accounts of, or as I read the accounts of Jonathan's memorial service, the one point at which I would have especially liked to have had a part was in the singing of We Shall Overcome. I'm humming it now and we will JOnathan." And I guess I still believe, in spite of the bad report about nothing much changed, I still have to believe that somehow, we will win this human hatred problem. If it were only so little as just between the blacks and the whites (laughs). But I don't know why, I'm a short term pessimist and a long time optimist I guess by nature.

S: You still go visit the grave you told me?

G: Yeh but ah, don't want to make to much of a fetish out of that. I'm not a grave visiter for any religious ritualistic reasons, but when I get low, to be very frank, there are other things I do, but one of the things I do is drive out and ah, stand a minute at Jonathan's grave and not try to talk to him or anything, I don't believe in that, but read greater love hath no man than this and he laid down his life for his friends and say to myself, Fay, get back to whatever you were trying to avoid and cut this out. You haven't paid a price for nothing yet and, I don't know, I think Jonathan, maybe I need to believe this, I believe he payed the price willingly. I think he knew that, I'm sure he read, in some of the stuff I've read and I think I've read that he wrote, I think he almost forsees it, it seems to me.

L: Well he accepts his death. IN one letter, a letter yo Mary MacNaughton, he says you have to be prepared to accept death. Stokely Carmichael says that.

S: I wonder if it's different, of all the people involved in the civil rights came to that necessity. Nine year olds, we have some quotes from 9 year old girls who were going into a march, at that age, had to confront death. But I'm wondering if it's the same way as Jonathan or different.

You know, I mean, that came out of a particular confrontation, but Jon seems to be somewhat different than that and to me....I don't quite understand it but,

L: It could be the Bonhoeffer quote, what Bonhoeffer says, "To truely accept christ one has to accept one's own death."

G: See I think it's one thing, one of the profoundest, well

I shouldn't say one, some of the profoundest experiences of my life were being with the dying when they die and so it's one thing to accept death just because you're lying in bed and the cancer is going to get you and you know it in the next hour or something. That's different than, say I'm going into something and the price may be my death. It seems to me that's different. But I think that Jonathan, see this is the thing that my analytical mind would play with and it's not a matter of accepting or forgiving or anything else. Some people wish to die way down deep and use ways to get that done and I'm not accusing Jonathan of doing that at all but I think he had a mystical, I can't think of a better word, forknowledge, not of a certain date or anything like that, that the price might be his life and I...knowing him before that and not having talked with him, ever hear him say that, my vision of him is that he had made peace with that. I really believe that.

S: I'm wondering if you believe so much in what Jesus did or if you believe the story you know the end of the story. I mean, can you conceivably make that as ah, you know, if you were to follow literally in his footsteps, I mean is that the ultimate end.

G: Weel you see, again I can't at all, speak for Jonathan. It seems to me that ah, nothing that I ever talked to Jonathan about or that I recall, was that he would have any these social conscious ideas or anything for a reward, like for a reward in heaven.

S: No, no I mean it would be if you were going to imitate his life, work in his footsteps, then

G: Yeh, you might expect okay

S: I don't know, I'm just kind of,

G: Well no, I think that fits Jonathan. I think that's what I mean, that although he had this mystical feeling about the christ that his determination to follow the way of jesus the man was the commitment. I just don't want to be unfair to what he thought but I think that's there.....just you can see, I didn't put that up there because you guys were coming (laughs) I've ah, and then my wife then, you see, taught for several years at Jonathan Daniel's School which became such an expereimental place and the brave new ideas which are now modified but never the less, the history is there and we both had the part in the dedication of that school and talked about Jonathan at that time and ah, if you guys wanted, I have that too and then I took part in Connie's funeral, Dr. Stone and I did, with all of the other clergy. If you guys want it for the archives, I'll go get you a copy of that.

S: Let me just ask one more, yeh that would be great, one other question, how many people, is that unusual for a seminarian or a theologian to do what Jonathan did. This idea that you're going to imitate christ even if it means dying?

G: I think it's unusual.

S: It's unusual

G: Well I think it's, I don't know, Bill, I think it's unusual in the world not just in seminary. I think people say they want to follow christ, including me, for whatever

that means and I'm not the theologian about it or the doctor or person or whatever. But very few people really, maybe ever get tested and I think some people, not having really meant it deeply, would pass the test. There are, you know, here I go in the historic context now, just the stories. Jesus the man, if the bible stories are even half true and I think some of them are reasonable reports because they talk about a kid trying to break away and pull his tunic off and why that got in there, somebody made it up, that's ridiculous but, at any rate, Jesus is walking down the road with James and John and they said, you know um, the rest of the jobs were hired and they said, "You know Jesus, these squares back there don't really catch on to you, you know, we do and since we're so smart um, when you do come into your kingdom, we'd like please for one of us to sit on your right and one on your left." I don't know what the heck that means but that was the concept there and the historians used to sit there and you guys don't know what you're talking about. He said, "Would you be willing to be baptized" see whatever that symbolic reason is. See the point is though, James was the first to die of the disciples. Some governor in some place said, "What's all this trouble down in this district" well it's one of these damn Christians called James and he said, "Get rid of him." So you see James who said "We'll follow you, just count on us. We'll follow you even to the death." He said, "Could you die the death I'm going to do?" and Jesus said, "James, oh sure, you can count on us" see, but in the end, he was the first. SO you see at the test, some of us might, some of us might meet the test of some sort of commitment that we, that if we had a minute to think rationally, oh gee, this is dangerous, we wouldn't. I don't know that but I have, who knows, who knows what might have gone through Jonathan's mind in one split second of dying.

L: You know it's funny Bill, that last letter that he wrote to his mom, it just struck me while???? was reading. He said um, "This damn pencil's an inch and a quarter long" and then I read Marshall Frasier's book Southerners and when they held up Jonathan's tunic in court, the dimension of the entry of the gun shot was exactly an inch and a quarter. That's just so weird to me. I mean that's not a figure that just comes to mind. I don't know, there's something going on. That doesn't go in the film, that doesn't go anyplace, but in utterance of coincidence, it's so strange. See, people had warned him you know, don't go back down there, you're surely going to die. Carmichael warned him, everybody warned him.

G: Yeh, see, at that the time, oh for like a year later and more later, I read everything I could too of these things that have been said about, even some of the things he wrote, in fact, a lot of it's in here and ah, but I didn't review that at all for you guys coming because I just was really, I was just remembering him for me and I'm very appreciative of your, I've told you over and over, I can't think of anything that I have said that could add really. It's just one man's loving experience of him without making a saint of

~~203~~ I lost a line.

and without disgrudging him in any way, just glad that I knew him as a human being and it was a very brief encounter. But he effected me as you can see (laughs)

S: Well he effected a lot of people. You want to film a couple of things?

L: Yeh let's. Why don't you push the pause button Bill. I think what I'm going to do, do my best to slate it with this thing, and Fay don't even worry about it, I'm going to be panning around,

G: No I'll just talk to Bill

L: Eventually I'm going to get to Fay but it may take a little while.

G: I'm just going to look at Bill. Okay see Bill, it's all right, you're going to be looked at. Now you, are we on how do we do this?

L: Yeh, we're on.

S: I'm just going to ask you to sort of go over again, that inner conflict that you talked to Jonathan about at the Crystal Restaurant. If you could give us an overall view of that.

G: It seems to me that there was a real conflict in Jonathan as how he was to relate the ah, historic authenticity of the anglican connection into the episcopal church, it's rituals, it's magnificent power of that, the acting out of that, of the mystery and to marry that, as it were, relate that, as it were, to social action to which, it seemed to me, he was ah, committed. Now when I say that, at first ah, I was not so aware that he was committed to social action and racial issues, but he was very sensitive as we talked earlier, about the poor and so forth. But he wanted to be able to root that ah, calling toward social action into, as I see it as a non-episcopalian, into the mystery of the church, the mysterium, so that there was a connection somehow between ah, things ah, sacred and thing secular, that's a little bit of me in that but because Jonathan and I used to talk about the dualisms that he believed in, and that was fine, in which I don't separate so much ah, secular and sacred.

S: Okay fine.

L: Great, you looked great. I started up there and I came down about 20 seconds in and got to your face and it was just as good as the first time.

G: My face was just as good as the first time (laughs)

S: We're all entering that period.

L: I just hope the speed gets on there.

S: One quick one, could you quickly tell that story about the um, the mittens and all that?

L: Now wait, this time I'm going to focus a little diferent.

S: I think the phrase you used was that business of earth heart crying.

G: Yes yes

L: Okay, ask the question Bill

S: Now, Jonathan's sensitivity to poverty was exemplified in this one example.

G: Yes, up here poverty, up here in New Hampshire, poverty would not necessarily be associated necessarily with black poverty and I recall once sitting in the Crystal with Jonathan and he was telling about a boy, little boy, that he

had seen, as I remember, without mittens and was cold and Jonathan sort of assumed hungry and ah, Jonathan ah, my expression was that that, it just looked like he had a hurt heart and ah, not a tear that just ran down his cheek, but moistness in his eyes that, underneath, showed up, and he made no apology about that but he sort of fought that and I sensed then, this ah, commitment to caring and was moved myself to getting moist eyes with just somebody who could take that little illustration right here and feel so deeply about that he caused me to feel too.

S: Okay cut. Thank you

L: Great. See how painless

G: Well

L: I'm going to have to mail that off and get it fixed.

G: Well I should think so. I appreciate.....

END OF INTERVIEW