

- Larry: Test, test, Richard.
- RM: Whatever you want to talk about, that's why we're here.
 - Larry: OK, got it.
 - RM: We're looking at JD's life,
 - Larry: 25 yrs later
 - RM: 25 yrs later.
 - Larry: we're rolling. Go ahead, Bill:
 - Bill: Why don't you tell us as the others did, how you got involved in the Lowndes County movement.
 - RM: Well, you have to go back to Chicago, where I had been working, ah, I had spent a little over a year in a black Catholic parish on Chicago's south side. A number of the parishioners had roots in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and, Louisiana, there are a number of black Catholic communities in Louisiana that go back to the French and Spanish presence, before Thomas Jefferson and the Louisiana purchase. Ah, the parish where I was had a number of very articulate ah, black parishioners, among them alderman A. A. Raynor, who, was buried about a month ago in Chicago, who was one of the first independent black elected officials in Chicago, in-in 67. Ah, David Lorenz was a very gifted young black writer who lived in the community and who I had met through Reynar, who had spent some time with the Mississippi summer project of 64, working in WestPoint, Mississippi, came back to Chicago, was a writer for a neighborhood newspapers, and later for Black Digest and Ebony magazine. Marie Leyner was a young black Catholic woman who had graduated from Loyola University, ah, was very much a bridge person in that she got along well within the white community but also had an understanding of what was going on in the black community that was very well developed because of the kinds of activity she had been at Loyola University in 1963 was the object of demonstrations which made Time magazine because Marie and some of her friends wanted to go swimming in the pool which was owned by ah a group of Catholic women who shut down the pool rather than allow Marie and other black students to swim there. Ah, the network of people that I met and worked with were part of my then-growing ---actually January and February of 65, to know the the friends of SNCC, ah, the student non-violent co-ordinating committee, kind of a support group, developed and worked with a Fanny Rushing, who, ah, did and still works in Chicago, she now works at the University of Chicago, but--through people like Fanny Rushing, through the demonstrations that were part of the summer of Chicago, over the quality of Chicago schools, an effort to remove a superintendent who the community viewed to be, ah, patently racist, putting black schools on double shifts when meanwhile a half mile away from the overcrowded black community there were schools with empty classrooms. Ah, those two kinds of currents in Chicago one the struggle for bettering the public schools in Chicago, the other, people such as ah Rushing and Lorenz, Leaner, Reynar, were trying to support activities in the south, activated me I guess to

the point where as a young impressionable Catholic priest I became involved not only in the Catholic parish but in a lot of movements that were occurring.

Bill: I was going to ask you, how old were you?

RM: I was ah, I was, 26 at the time we were shot. I had been ordained at age 25, in April of 64. I was assigned to work at St. Columbanus black Catholic church in June of 64. Ah, I chose to work, to, asked to work in the black community in that I had ah, spent three summers working construction in Chicago, working as an iron worker, and, having the the experience of working with Eddie Cameron who was a black laborer--Eddie Cameron would would teach recent immigrants from Ireland how to become iron workers. How to set out steel, how to tie steel how to be part of ofah, reinforcing the walls of what later became the Henry Horner low-rent housing project where ah George Jackson and his brothers were reared some time later. Ah, Eddie Cameron could not be an iron worker, but he could teach iron workers their skill. And yet a young man could get off the plane from Ireland buy a book in the state of Mississippi and transfer to a Chicago local and and be making four and a half to five dollars an hour whereas Eddie Cameron could make three-fifty, three-seventy-five, which was the laborers' scale, and, ah, as a son of Irish immigrants I was very proud that ah, the Gillespie brothers, for example, could come here and do well in setting steel. But, it just seemed very unfair that Cameron would be in the position of knowing the trade better but that local one, for another two, or three, or four years after that would not allow any, any blacks to become iron workers, to receive books, to go through the apprentice program. Ah, that, and what was happening, ah, the seminary I went to in, in the Chicago area, St. Mary of the Lake, was a pre-Vatican II monastic kind of seminary, but ah, all during Lent and other times we would have readings and, I recall being read Dr. King's letter from a Birmingham Jail, when we were in our last year in the Seminary, and, um, I think the mix of kind of a general knowledge of what was going on in the black civil rights movement ah, the experience in the labor force, working with blacks, ah, made me, ah, somehow prompted me to ask to work in the black community.

Bill: How did you get down south?

RM: Got south? Ah, along with many who came from Chicago at the time of Selma in March of 85 (sic), spent about ten days in Selma, in march of 85, was actually there before the large march took off, there was a lot of activity in the federal courts over who would march and under what conditions, so the Pettus Bridge incident was ah, was Sunday, around the ninth of March, and, or the 7th of Mrch, by that Friday night, I was one of a busload of people who came from Chicago --Dr. King had asked for support from around the country, the particular group that I went with, Chicago's Catholic interracial council,1 ah, John McDermott, the Executive Director, had a long history of

supporting ah, various black groups and father Dan Cantwell who had been an influence on my life for five or six years before that, chaplain of the Catholic interracial council, ah, managed to convince my pastor that my desire to go down, that it did make sense and that I should be allowed to go. Then, ah, I was, as I say, back 8 or 10 days later.

Bill: Did you meet Jonathan at that point?

RM: No, I only met Jonathan, ah, in August of 65 at the southern Christian leadership conference meeting, which was being held in Birmingham, and was being held at the same 16th street Baptist church where the four young girls had been bombed to their deaths two years before that.

Bill: Was that your next trip down?

RM: My next trip down was ah, along with, ah, Sammy Raynor, his son, some college students from Chicago State University who had also been part of, ah, the demonstrations in Chicago. Chicago had had, for well over a hundred days, daily demonstrations, um, to try to get Superintendent Ben Willis, and to try to get some, addressing some of the racial problems in the public schools. Ah, I had been in a number of those demonstrations, had spent at least one night in the Chicago jail in June of 65, and and so being aware of demonstrations or, ah, taking part in them was not strange to me because of having done so in Chicago.

Bill: So then you came down, back down in August--

RM: Came back in the beginning of the second week of August. The meeting began that Sunday night, thru Sammy Raynor, we stayed with a black family, ah, went to meetings, ah, recall Dr. King if I recall that the SCLC meeting was one of the first times in which he seriously questioned our involvement in Viet Nam, and was getting a lot of questions even within his own supporters over whether he should be taking on an international issue and whether that wasn't to distract from the movement and what his agenda should be. Ah, I had met John Lewis who was coordinator of SNCC. John had spoken a couple of times at the black church where I worked in Chicago through Fanny Rushing, the friends of SNC group, the coordinating group; I had also worked with, some 20-25 students from throughout the south who were brought together for a one-month workshop in Chicago. Ah housed in Monumental Baptist Church. And I worked with that group along with David Lorenz, ah, Fanny Rushing, John Love, who had spent some time in the south with SNCC, ah, Sharon Jackson, who had worked with SNCC both in NYC and in the south. And I had the advantage of VW van that a friend of mine would let me use from time to time, picking up people at bus stations, driving them to the program, taking them to the beach-- dunes, ah, national lake shore on the 4th of July and doing some of those kinds of activities.

Bill: Why was John at this conference?

RM: John, I think, with Ruby, had come up from Selma, ah, I think a number of SNC people came, at least for a day or so, and ah,

Bill: --to hear King speak, primarily, or--?

RM: I think because the issues were being raised, the issues of jobs and voting rights ah, education, perhaps just for a change of pace. I suppose Ruby could give us more insight as to what their rationale was in coming there. That that'd be my hunch. All I knew was that they were there, ah, that we met through John Lewis and Stokeley Carmichael, that, we stopped to eat that night in the Birmingham Bus station which was ah, a source of many memories for, ah, for both John and jRuby to tell what the history of that bus depot had been over the previous two to five years. And then went back to Selma where I stayed with the West family, the the Thursday night, ah, which was actually a day and a half before we went to jail in Lowndes County.

Bill: And when you came to Selma did --had you planned to stay in Selma, were you visiting, or---?

RM: I intended--I had another week of my two week vacation, and intended to stay in Selma and the surrounding area just to to get to better know a southern community, and to better know what the ah, what's going on in the Movement, in that part of the south.

Bill: John then probably invited you to stay with the Wests?

RM: Well, I think when--when John Lewis-- I may have been in a similar position to Mark as far as whether John wanted another Albatross or not. UM, but I think John was at least by that time reasonably willing to to take some one to help him find a place to stay and then to spend time with him.

Bill: How did you get involved with the Fort Deposit--

RM: Sometime the next day--Friday. Late morning, early afternoon, John, Ruby, to the best of my recollection, Gloria, and I, went to Lowndes County, ah, we spent some time at the Freedom House, we stayed at the Freedom House, the night before the demonstration, Jonathan introduced me somehow to a black baptist congregation which was having a revival meeting; I think I mentioned earlier the opportunity to ah, to both speak in a black church and to be aware that Watts was beginning to start in, ah, in California, I--I was aware of Watts being a troubled place and that ah, Father Caulfield had tried very much to involve the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in addressing the needs of the black community, and then the Cardinal at the time, Cardinal MacIntire, was relatively negative, and exiled Caulfield for a while, and he stayed in Chicago and among the people who I had had known, ah, was one black priest, Father George Clemons, who was at a neighboring parish. Father Clemons has done a lot in the last 25 years, adopting black children, helping raising many social welfare issues ah, a classmate of his, Father Dan Willette, was also a great influence as far as my getting down there. I'm drifting a little bit but I was trying to say that that the day in Lowndes County, and the evening, the Baptist revival, gave me a sense that ah, what I had come to Selma for was basically happening. I was getting some sense of what the life of the community was in ways that I could not simply by reading. Later when we were in jail as an example

Mr. R. B. ROE

I it became very obvious to me that for many young people the music of James Brown was as important as the eloquence of Dr. King. Because and I suppose I understand it through my own son and daughter today, that it takes a lot to distract young people from their primary interest or frame of reference, to take on such things as movements and right to vote, and freedom of speech, and--it almost has to be done by indirection rather than by direct ideological conventions.

Bill: Do you remember any discussions about the dangers of the Fort Deposit demonstration?

RM: I remember that -- I remember them from that night, uh, I remember Ruby discussing them, ah, Jonathan, there was some discussion the next morning, I think the meeting that Gloria referred to earlier under a tree of some kind as to whether or not we should demonstrate, whether it would take away from the black effort, to put that demonstration together, or whether by not being in the lead as I recall I think we deliberately went somewhere near the middle or the end of the demonstration to make --at least that it be clear to the blacks who were leading the demonstration that it was not of our doing but rather their doing.

Bill: Well, do you recall the demonstration per se?

RM: I recall walking a brief while, I remember being gathered in something like a, what might have been a holding area, as you refer to, I recall being on the truck but I suppose, ah, from working construction and other kinds of work the smell probably bothered me less than Gloria --it was a flat bed truck which had a number of purposes, at that time the federal government had not yet financed buying huge vans to carry prisoners to jail. I don't think there was any alternative as far as transportation.

Bill: Have your own feelings about being in that demonstration? Was like it Chicago demonstrations, similar or different, or--?

RM: Well, in the Chicago demonstrations --Chicago is larger and they would tend to be more personal and you might--impersonal, rather--and you might know the demonstra-- the demonstrators, but you didn't often know the the police and the people along the side of the road, as much, where, ah, in Lowndes County, other than myself, it seemd that everybody pretty well knew everybody. There was also a Unitarian minister who was with us when we went to Lowndes County, a John Rushkin Clark, if I recall the name correctly, who ah, was ten to twenty years older than John and I, and was ah, I think a faculty member at a Unitarian seminary at that time. I know he spent some time in Meadeville, which is the Unitarian seminary in Chicago. He decided not to march, I thought as long as I was there I might, might as well march, I don't think --I think by the time I was four or five days in jail I felt I had, um, frittered away my vacation time, that I knew about all I could know about the other people that I was in jail with, and, and, Jimmy Rogers, who was ah, Brooklyn-reared, I

MURRISON

probably had a lot more in common than , with some of the other people I was with in jail. John MacMeans, who was also part of that jail group, had been an iron worker, in Mobile, and I think elsewhere, so we were able to talk about that.

Bill: All the males?--Larry, we'll get going pretty soon, I think. How many were in your cells?

RM: Ah, my recollection is about seven, and I, in a cell that was --would comfortably have had four. You know, there were double bunk beds on each side of the cell.

Bill: So the women were in one and then, 2 cells for the males?

RM: Well, the women ah

Larry: Why don't we start that part again and I'll run it.

RM: My recollection of the cells is (synk beep) that we were on the second floor, there there were 3 cells, I was in the cell farthest away from the entrance, Jonathan was in a cells closest to the entrance and a stairway. Ah, we consciously chose not to go in the same cell, feeling that it, ah, that we wanted to be with the people we were with, rather than look like a caucus within the ministerial, white caucus, within the inmates. Ah, my , I would think there had to be 18 to 20 men in jail. I only learned through Gloria that there were only 3 women--somehow I I don't know what I had thoght otherwise, but I had met her, and I had met Ruby, Joyce Bailey, the third person, I I was in jail with, and ah, was near at the time we were shot but really don't recall haveing any discussions with Joyce.

Bill: How about the conditions? (stilll sync rolling)

RM: Well, we were talking earlier about food, and Jonathan takiing people ah, occasionally to the Holiday Inn to have ah, a different kind of meal. I I didn't eat a whole lot that week, ah, fat back, the part of bacon that is heavily fat, molasses, ah, beans, none of which turned me on very much, so I had a little bit of everything, but not much. It was just unfamiliar food to me. Apart from whether it was jail and adequate portions or well-cooked portions, ah, the bathroom, I think we had one toiled there, in the cell that we shared. We were never allowed out of the jail during that week. I recall somebody coming to speak with us, ah, Tuesday or Wednesday, at the time that Stokeley and and Scott Bee (?) were bailed out. I remember ah, discussion that somehow Peter Hall would come to save us, I only found out through ah, Attorney Chestnut's recent biography of ah, of his life as a black lawyer in Selma who peter hall was that he was one of the early black lawyers from Birmingham, what his skills were, and apparently his role in terms of bailing out people arrested in the movement and then also dealing later with charges or or trials.

Bill: Do you remember --(Larry) that's it. Bill OK

Gloria: Richard, I do know who came to see (you) to bail you guys out earlier in the week that was Henri Stines of ESCRU. But he ah, but John --I think another reason why you were in

different cells because--I think Jon --felt that you guys represented security --some degree of security for that group.

RM: And until they would all be bailed out.

Bill: I understand that Jon refused to get bailed out.

Gloria: Correct.

Bill: Yeah.

RM: I don't recall even discussing whether or not we were to be bailed out. I don't recall it. And, we did a lot a reading, we had books, I --one of the studies that has a pretty good narration of what happened is Charles Morgan's studies on One Man One jVote, or one Person One Vote, in which he put in there the books which we were reading, Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man, Richard Wright's Native Son, Frederick Douglas' Autobiography, I had at least some of those books through one of the priests who I've mentioned a Father Bill Hogan who had worked by that time a dozen years in the black community, who was one of the first priests in the Chicago area to ever go to jail over school conditions. The difference in that was usually Catholic clergy focussed on keeping Catholic schools as a healthy, viable alternative, to the public schools, rather than attacking and questioning and trying to better the condition of public for the black community at large, and some of us who were getting out at that time, the time of the Vatican Council, which had been--was about to go into its final year, in '65, were just asking different questions than perhaps had traditionally been asked. Focussing on the public institutions, and that as citizens they should provide certain levels of education and service, rather than simply building quality alternatives and wooing people away into those alternatives.

Bill: OK, why don't you run through, ah, the release that seen that Gloria talked about and then you can tell us more about the specifics of approaching the Cash Store than anybody else, I think, so if you could that scene to us.

Larry: Want me to run this, Bill, or

When we get to the --when we get to the, ah, --

Larry: Let me just set off a burst, then, --

Bill: OK

RM: You might want to go through it and then go back over it whatever. It-it's not a, it's curious, there's not a whole lot of ah, detail, my-- should we continue now?

Bill: Yeah, continue, and I'll just signal Larry--

RM: Yeah. Ah-- I recall being let out of jail, I recall being searched as we were let out of jail, which is very ironic--

Bill: Say that again?

RM: We are searched as we were let out of jail.

Bill: Hum.

RM: Ah, as we had been searched when we were let in jail. I found that curious in the light that later I was supposed to have had a gun, that I was threatening Tom Coleman with. I recall being very hot, very humid, by this time I had a

IMAGINE
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seven or eight day growth, so that I was later identified as a--not only a Catholic priest but a bearded Catholic priest, as if some special sign of movement involvement and commitment. I recall walking down the gravel road along the side of the jail. We were very much aware that our jail was across (sync beep) across the way from from the prior jail, ours was a newer jail build perhaps sometime in the fifties or early sixties that across the way was a jail where blacks had been hung with ah, in some number-- ah, and we had always been in jail aware of this history of what the treatment of black prisoners had been. We went down the gravel road --ah, my recollection is that somebody had near the Cash Store, or was going near the Cash Store, and aware that somebody was standing in the door and telling us we couldn't go there. Ah, but Jon then with Ruby and with Joyce ah that we'd been with along the highway, ah--distance of half a block to a block, as as we approached the door, that, all of a sudden I I saw a man standing in the doorway with a gun saying, ah, "Get the hell out of here I'm going to blow your your heads off!" And, and I was not about to test his his resolve, and and I turned and started running. I heard the shot that killed Jonathan. I heard the shot and and recall flying perhaps somewhere between you know two and five feet from the impact. Ah, I recall being on the the road and being much more aware of the blood and the hurt from my elbow scraping the ground than than the pain in my back, which was clearly much more serious. I remember people talking that Jonathan was dead. Ah, I remember being very thirsty--we were going for a drink of pop in the first place. One of my doctor friends reminded me that that that was a very expensive Coke that that we had wanted that afternoon. After some time we were put what I later found was a vehicle that doubled as a hearse, and for Jonathan was a hearse. For me it was an ambulance. I was told later that Jonathan was was under --the two bodies were in the hearse, and that Jonathan was under whatever kind of stretcher that I was on. For some reason I stayed conscious, I never recall losing consciousness until they took me for surgery. I recall the pine trees along the side of the road, and recall getting to the hospital, a priest coming to to anoint me, an Irish priest by the name of Quigley or something very close to that, and ah, I remember joking with him about the fact that he was still anointing me in Latin when he could be doing it in English, that that change had occurred in the prior year, and giving him the notebook that I had kept in jail, which I'd tried to put some notes in every day, which I later got back from him. Quillisk, was his name.

Bill: Did you know Jonathan was dead?

RM: I knew Jonathan was dead, from the very beginning, ah, people were saying, "This one's dead, this one's still moving." I I knew I was the one who was still moving. To the extent I reasoned about it I was a aware that that he was directly in the line of fire, he couldn't have been more

than a couple of feet from the first barrel of the shotgun. It was a 12 guage shotgun which I later learned is a ppretty heavy type of pellet, and as I say when I--one of the difficult things that I had to do along with what ah, Gloria was mentioning was aware that as a white I was getting triple-A medical treatment, and, on the one hand, feeling close to death and on the other feeling badly that I was being treated better and differently than had I been black. Larry: Why do you suppose Coleman didn't kill you-- why do you suppose he aimed a little bit low-- why didn't he aim at your head, your heart?

RM: Ah, I don't know that, other than that I was a moving target. He certainly had a reasonably good, ah, shot, and that he was probably --within 6 inches of my heart. You know, to hit me in that part of the spine. It was a blow that came across the right hip into the spine, and ah, --I was at an age where I was 26, I was about 140-145 pounds, I had been carrying on a summer program, ah, that summer, in one of the parks, near our Church, a day-care program, with baseball and track and other k kinds of events so that I was probably in as good a condition at that time in my life as as any. I remember the physician saying later that that my body was lean enough that there weren't a lot of ah, tissue that they might have had to work through if I weighed another 20 or 30 pounds . So that--that may have been part of what contributed to to survival.

Bill: Is it your memory that Coleman was aiming that gun at nobody in particular the group at large or anybody in particular?

RM: Well, I have a recollection of Jonathan pushing Ruby whether he needed to or not and whether Jonathan and I were the targets rather than kRuby and--and Joyce I--I can only speculate, I mean I wear a conspiracy hat at one time that we were let out when we were and as we were in order to be set up and shot, ah, at other times, I can wear the hat of a particularly southern enraged man who decided just that he was gonna stop all this --ah--the FBI, at least at that time did not have ah, sufficiently strong statute, I'm told, to establish that there was a conspiracy. Some of the amendments that were passed to the Civil Rights Act in -in sixty-eight would have made ah, conspiracy charges ah, probably conspiracy conviction a lot easier. Ah, --

Bill: You do remember Ruby being pushed down.

RM: Pushed--at least pushed out of the way, yeah. Ah, I'm sure she'll remember whether it was down or across, or--

Bill: Right; so when did you come out of surgery? So that you were conscious of what was going again.

RM: I recall coming out what was probably Saturday. Ah--by that time my parents had flown south, ah, with one of my classmates, ah, one of my classmates and his mother came down --the Archdiocese sent two priests, one of whom was a lawyer and a Catholic chaplain at the University of Chicago. ah, Thomas McDonough, who was a lawyer as well as a priest, ah, to deal both with issues of press and encouraging my

parents that bills would somehow be paid of dealing with the hospital administrators, and the other, Father John Curran, called "Lodge" Curran, after a famous newEngland preacher, who had worked by that time close to twenty years in the black community, who was a very sensitive pastoral man who who was kind of Mr. Inside as far as the the mission of these two men. They were sent down by Bishop Fleetus O'Donnell, the shooting occurred some four days or so before, ah, Archbishop John Cody came to Chicago from New Orleans. Later--

Bill: Now, during this time is being arranged, but you were kept from--

RM: I was in Baptist Hospital for about 3 weeks. I was already north when the trial was held some 5-6-7 wweeks after --ah, after the shooting. I was going over, the ah (two sync beeps) the dates, and the materials, that Mark had. The trial went on, the 29th and 30th of September. So we're talking 40 days or so afterwards. At that time I was in an intensive care unit in Chicago's Oak Park Hospital. Ah, at the time I was shot, a Dr. Lewis Rivers who I had never met before, volunteered his time and energy, flew down to Montgomery and made arrangements for me to be transferred when I would be ready, to ah, Chicago's Oak Park Hospital.

Bill: Was it an attempt to delay the trial until were able to testify?

RM: I am told that there were that there were motions to try to delay it, but I think my condition was such that ah, that the judge somehow decided in --for fairness and due process , and and to protect Mr. jColeman;s constitutional rights, that the trial should be a speedy trial and should go forward.As it did.

Bill: (laughs)

Larry: And guarded the constitutional rights with it. How's your tape, ?

RM: Now, now later, I don't know if you're aware, and again Morgan';s book points this out, the ah, the the trial of Jonathan provided the basis for an attack in the White V. Crook case, for an attack on the Alabama jury system. Now only sometilme after the trial did the fifthe circuit US court of a $\frac{1}{2}$ ppeals decide that case against the Alabama statute, which denied both blacks and women access to the jury

Bill: Our assumption--that there weren't either women or blacks is probably--

RM: Well, I think one of the newspaper articles says the same thing, one of the articles that Mark has.

Bill: Yeah, cause we did run across the one that said that thaere wasa black person on either the ah, the original trial--

BM: See, the grand jury that I went back to was ah , ah, Richmond Flowers as attorney general had hoped to ah, to get the Lowndes County Grand Jury to up the charges for my shooting. And, by that time, there may have been a black juror.

Bill: And what happened for the shooting?

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kBM: Ah, there was no trial, apparently for some reason the charges remained on a misdemeanor level and Flowers and or whoever the local prosecutors were decided it would be ludicrous to go through all of that perhaps partly ah wondering whether it would do that much for my health and clearly it wouldn't have done that much in terms of what kind of jeopardy ah, Coleman would have had.

Bill: Was there ever ah,--I forget, who was the attorney general, was it Katzenbach? I think at that time--was there a federal brief filed on the Daniels case?

RM: I have no--I have no knowledge of that. I__I do know that I tried in ah, '77 or '78 when Drew Days was the assistant attorney general for Civil Rights in Portsmouth, Drew Days is now on the Yale law school faculty ah, to find out what the history was of any investigation or charges and simply kind of received a one-page letter that Drew decided there wasn't enough evidence to try and (look at?) old charges. As to whether there was a federal brief, ah, its hard to know what a brief would have done--the brief might have been against the trial going forward--part of some motion, rather than during the trial itself, I can't quite envision what the role of the brief would have been for the trial --for Coleman's trial.

Lary: If you could dropo the cable. I feel like such a schoolteacher.

Bill: So then you came back to Chicago--

RM: The noise, rather than the sight?

Larry: Pardon:

RM: It was the noise? Or the--

Larry: It's all right. But you weren't doing that during the take, so we're all set.

Bill: Yeah. So, to finish up your story, you came back to Chicago--

RM: --Came back to Chicago, and in a Lear Medivacujet--ah, spent from late September through late February in Oak Park Hospital, had physical therapy daily, 5 days a week, and continued another 2 years at 3 days a week of physical therapy after--for a year and a half after being let out of the hospital. Wanted to go back and work in the black community where I had been, St. Columbanus, sthe cardinal decided I--partly he claimed health reasons, partly that I was overly involved in the political process, so I spent 4 years at Holy Name Cathedral, I learned to speak Spanish reasonably fluently, and eventually went to work in a heavily Puerto Rican community on Chicago's Northwest side. And then in 1972, some 2½ years after working in that community I submitted a letter of resignation and applied to be laicized, or for an honorable discharge, and received that in early '73.

Bill: Then you went to law school?

RM: Ah, worked as a--taught sociology at Indiana University Northwest, and Purdue University Calumet campus, ah, for a couple of years worked also as a city planner for the city of east Chicago, Indiana, which was near where I was

teaching and while city planner went to a number of hearings on transportation projects and state personnel policies and bus transit funding programs in Indianapolis and while working on some of these would always be told as a Democr--as a Republican Indiana administration was denying a Democratic city funds that it was the law department which had determined this was not feasible, and I met the law department one day, and he was all of 300 pounds good old boy who was taking 6 hours of night classes at Indiana University, Indianapolis, the alma mater of vice president Quayle, and decided that I was still young enough to to take on a new trade. And, went back to Northwester University which I had helped as a part-time chaplain to law students in the late sixties, and went full time from 75 through 78, and ah, was admitted to the bar in Indiana in 78 and then, ah, in early 86 came back to Chicago, and have worked for the Chicago Transit Authority since.

Bill: Could you add anything to that discussion of Jonathan's

RM: Giftedness?

Bill: Giftedness.

Larry: I was going to ask about that I thought that would be nice next to (unintelligible)

RM: Ah,

Larry: Well, I'll turn the tape over (end of side A)

Side B

Larry: Get some lunch, and--ok--

RM: You're back in business?

Larry: Yess.

Bill: We were going to ask you about what we were discussing with Gloria and Mark about the uniqueness of Jonathan in terms of the way he operated down south, his character.

RM: You've got to recall that I spent a day and a half with Jonathan out of jail, and 6 days with him in jail, but not in the same cell, and with another cell between the two of us. Jonathan in many ways was more articulate and knowing the people (beep beep) we were with for instance would challenge them to pray in ways that I know know the people I was in jail with so well would have been very hesitant to do. Jonathan wore his collar through the week we were in jail, I recall wearing kind of a K-mart Madras sportshirt, which was sort of my vacationwear; I did notice the giftedness, I noticed it through the West family, I came to know it later through the West family and through others; I came to know it through--going to a massmeeting in spring of 67 and in Lowndes County on a Sunday night at a time when people were trying to build up the enthusiasm and the interest in the organization to win to know through the eyes of people that Jonathan's death had meant a great deal to their being enough in the spotlight, the national spotlight, that blacks would not be killed with impunity as they have been done before, before 65. That there was some living presence of Jonathan. Gloria's ability to perceive Jonathan's rapport with the people of Lowndes County and of Selma is something I can appreciate, but can't personally testify to. It has to come from somebody it seems within the black community. I did know it, as I say, some, through the four or five times that I visited Keene and stayed with Mrs. Daniels. That's why perhaps some of my comments in terms of his father's public life, his father's giving of himself, his father's early death through through that same giving--I'm more aware of that dimension I think than of the his rapport with people in Lowndes County and Selma.

Larry: You know, because of the mythology that surrounds the events of August 20th might make one think that you and Daniels almost functioned as a team, but when you think about it, you really didn't know him that well. It's almost an accident of fate that you two were there which later is described in history and in mythology that Morrisroe and Daniels team getting blown away by Coleman.

RM: Yes. And I've been very much aware of that from ah, and ah, I at times not only felt guilt over getting the blue chip white honorary medical treatment but also the sense of perhaps but for my desire to be in Lowndes and to understand Lowndes, and to be --to offer to be part of the demonstration, Jonathan might have not, ah, chosen to be part of it. I would say from most of what Gloria said last night and today, I can almost rest more secure that he would have been part of it, but I think there are times when when

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not knowing all of that background --Ruby is the only one that I've communicated--well, Ruby and Stokely ---Stokelyl for maybe five or seven years after the occurrence I would see occasionally when he would be passing through Chicago. Ruby for a while then nothing until a couple of phone conversations three or four years ago; this week these days is an opportunity for me to --I was comparing it with ah, old time army guy who I work with whose about sixty who is very much into his military unit and what military organization has done for him and how he sees the world, so I was able in a way to explain what I was going to be doing these days, talking about--our unit was having a reunion --ah, we were, as often in a military unit, people came from very different worlds, ah, just happened to be together because of the particular issue, a particular problem a particular campaign, and even though most of my life has been ah, amilitaristic or even anti-militaristic, ah, there's something about the way in which those days and those people came together that perhaps can be more clearly analyzed or --interms of (three beeps) of a military type framework is is the way we usually look on it as a movement. Larry: so how is it military? Could you--?

RM: Well, I was mentioning ah, Jack Richard's--is an old army veteran who I work with at the Chicago Transit Authority, and Jack's always talking about his unit and their annual Pearl Harbor Day Reunion, and having lunch and doing things, and I, in trying to explain to him and a couple of others what I was doing, I said, our unit was meeting and we were going to Keene New Hampshire and to Cambridge, Massachusetts to to meet, and how it is often with the military unit, you have people who come from very different backgrounds, different, interests, different values, different socio-economic kinds of characteristics, and for a while they're part of a campaign, whether it be Anzio Beach or Iwo Jima or some of the kinds of stories I used to hear from my Navy cousins when I was growing up in the fifties in Chicago. Clearly, becoming part of the civil rights movement the last thing in my mind was that I was becoming part of a military campaign, but as I look back and try to understand it, with different historical analogues, it seems ah, some of the way in which people have come together, whether for the Spanish American War, the First World War, the Second World War, even Viet nam, the level of togetherness of the vietnam era war vets is something that is very precious--they only meet maybe once or twice a year but those meetings gives them a sense that what they were part of was not wholly nonsense. If not because of the loss of vietnam at least for the fact that they were significant other human beings, and that they share each other's lives for a very precious time.

Bill: Good, that's one of our themes.

Larry: Yeah, Alexander Kendrick on the CBS report from Keene talks about the battlefield.

kBill: Well, let's take one group kind of sequence, and--

RM: Do you want the mike here, there, anywhere, put it inbetween us?

Larry: How about just a follow shot of the group? (discussion of mike)

RM:Gloria, do you want to sit down? Does the lightingchange drastically--discussion of setting up.

RM: We never did get to the way I was impr--you know, I brought along TS Eliot's 4 quartets--

Gliria: You did?

RM: Yes, and I was reading part of it on the plane, to me the irony of the movement, the preciousness of it was seeing that Gloria not only was doing whatever she did but that she was editing her master's thesis on the--French literary Antecedents of TS Eliot's four quartets"

Gloria: YOU even remember that My goodness what a good memory you have French symbolism and TSEliot's style, yeah.That's it. Golly!

RM: Well, I mean, those were the --I sometimes don't remember major issue speeches as much as I remember people and part of their lives that are kind of unique, because you can always the heavy issue speech I mean those history records those. The sense of your bringing what probably would have been a very mainline academic life to Selma and then to later, that even though you did finish your dissertation that your life and your career were forever colored by the time you spent in Selma and Lowndes County.

Larry: What do you want to hdo here, Bill?

Bill: I'm just gonna ask a question or two, and just film part of it and--

Larry: Great. I'll just set this up, just take me a minute

Rm: Now you want this to stay here or? Yeah, ok. Mark, this is a mob scene.

Gloria (laughs)

Bill: got a lot of good information.

Gloiria: I love that shirt.

Bill: We'd rather have you get that one.

Gloria: Than the other one? Live free or die?

BM: I think even given the origin of it she, I think perhaps has a feel for what it should mean.Now we're to meet then? I was going to go back with, for a while with Mary Louise.

Bill: We're all done here and then ah--

RM: We should then show up at ah, at that same house on campus?

Where should webe on campusat about 5:00?

Bill: For the meal?

RM: Whatever--

Bill: About 6:00.

Larry: Just six, right.

Bill: The dinner and that's at Rhodes Hall. (noise)

End of Richard Morrisroe interview--a few minutes later, on the same side B, Bill and I conduct a group interview of Mark Oliver, Gloria House, and Richard Morrisroe, together, on the couch, for a sync shot.

TAKES

Mark: I couldn't resist putting my ESCRU button on.

Bill: OH, good.

Mark: That's an old-timer. I saw the one you got, the little black one that Jon used to wear.

(discussion among Bill Gloria and Larry about buttons, posters)

Mark: I do have a poster, want to see it?

Bill: Is it the one that's ah, the black and white at the cross?

Mark: I brought the poster I carried in the march. It's in that roller right there.

RM: You might want to show that, it would be a nice visual--

RM: Test, test.

(more discussion, with Marilyn joining in)

Bill: say sauerkraut. we only have a minute of film, so we'll just let it run, so you all should say something, and maybe we can just talk about what you were talking about --what it is that brings you together after 25 years, why you'd want that to take place, why you'd bother to spend the time coming here and what it means to do that so, so

Larry: So don't worry about wasting film, that's why God invented grants.

Gloria: Well, I can begin, I'm here to (beep beep) celebrate Jonathan's life, to remember the kind of human being he was, for me, he was someone who lived in the moment, and who had a clear enough sense of his own calling in life to be able to move and do the things that he wanted to do and, he gave everybody around him that same sense of you know the capacity to move the capacity to do, and I want that remembered. I remember it--the other reason I'm here is to see people who were there with with us. I haven't seen Father Morrisroe since then--65 is a long time, and I don't know if I will ever be able to express to him the fact that his lying there asking for help on that deserted road in Hayneville has been in my consciousness, and has been a part of why I do the things that I do to this day. So its very important to be here with him and to be here with others who were there.

Mark: Well, I had the feeling about this event the same kind of feeling I had about the march or about needing to be there that summer, ah, I just had to be here. I just --there was no ah, discussion. The people who shared ah that summer in Alabama we all have something in common that we can't share with anyone else but ourselves --its like two alcoholics recovering need to talk, two gamblers, two whatever. But there's no one else that I could share --or have been able to share-- my experience with these 25 years, and I needed that. There's been something bottled up in me that I wasn't able to share with anyone and part of it has to do with grieving for my pal Jon Daniels, and hearing other people express their feelings about him. I just couldn't get that anywhere but here, and I really wanna thank you guys for putting this on, for Richard coming, and for Gloria coming, and Ruby, and these hugs and remembrances are ah are

just necessary for me emotionally and spiritually ah I just had to be here.

Bill: Great.

RM: Just thank you for making it possible for us to be here. I look forward to receiving a copy of some of this to to share it with the black church where I worked at the time that all of this happened. It was beautiful this last January almost 25 years to go back there and to remind the people of that church that through their eyes and through their migration I moved perhaps a step farther as far as going back to Selma. I now know better as I try to pay my bills and creditors if not on time then a little bit after time how economic necessity would have kept many of the members of that more middle class black church from being able to step out but how important it was vicariously for them to have somebody who knew their lives, be there and take part and how badly many of them felt that I was hurt almost as if it was their fault. And as I sometimes have felt about Jonathan that ah but for the desire of this large (united stand?) person wanting to get a better sense of what was happening maybe Jonathan be alive and well and living in San Francisco today or teaching in Berkeley or living somewhere else. So to be here for --with his sister Emily, to be here with the people of Keene who have been kind to me on at least half a dozen prior occasions to visit Jonathan's grave and to to walk through the Jonathan Daniels Elementary School and to pass his home on Summer Street is kind of precious way during November which is for us Catholic Episcopal types is the month of the dead and the meaning of death. It is Election Day as well, just a terribly good time to be here.

Bill: Great, well thank you.

Mark: It is nice that this is around AllSaints Time. It seems appropriate.

END OF TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW