

S: So you're, are you comfortable there with those lights?  
It's take a minute or two to get used to it.

J: No it's fine.

L: We should ah, give a name.

S: Yeh, maybe you can just give us your name and a little background?

J: What kind of background?

S: When you got involved with the episcopal church um, your training as a seminarian, experiences. And then I can get into the Daniels business.

J: Okay ah, when to start?

S: Anytime, it just tapes stuff so,

J: Okay, my name is Shannon Johnston, I;m the curette, that is, sort of the assisting priest in St. Paul's Parish. I ah, am a life long episcopalian from Alabama, grew up in a parish not unlike this one in antown not unlike this one um, though its cultural and therefore racial history is quite different from Selma. Florence is my hometown. Went to the University of the South as an undergraduate in Swaney, Tennessee and eventually went to seminary at Seabury Western Theological Seminary in Evinston, Illinois and that included one, well not one year but ah, about 7 months of study at Cambridge University in England. So the diversity of anglecanism and the different things that pole at the anglecan ethos today are of great interest to me and I've always been interested in observing how that works out throughout the world. Particularly now that anglecanism is....is a church, the majority of which is black and does not speak english which is a tremendous ah, tremendously interesting ah, counter weight to the stereotype of anglecanism or the episcopal church in the United States especially.

S: But your seen as....how are you seen?

J: Oh, well, the episcopal church has always sort of been referred to as the republican party at prayer and the church of great wealth and landed gentry and all of that and that may have, at one point, been true. It is certainly true to some extent now although I don't think as inordinantly true in comparison to other churches as once was true. We have put a great deal of emphasis lately on inner city missions and um, evangelical activity that reaches out beyond the sort of self imposed boundaries we've had in the episcopal church. And people now are the grass roots of the church, the person in the pew, so to speak, is complaining that the national leadership looks more like George McGovern's platform that any republican party at prayer. And it is true. The national leadership has been quite, quite liberal I think ah, or what would be perceived as liberal in the general social perception for the last 20 years or more, it was certainly true in the ah, 1960's. The national leadership was certainly liberal and often was considered to be radically liberal.

S: Some of the names that came up ah, in Jonathan's writings, I don't know if you're familiar with them, ah, William Stringfellow?

J: Umhm, yes

S: What's that about, do you know?

J: Stringfellows work?

S: Yeh

J: He was known as a radical commenting, or a priest as a commentator on the church and society um, ....very articulate, often very angry um, but always had the respectability because he was a very forceful advocate of what he saw, and ah, he did a lot of his, as I understand it, Stringfellow had a lot of work in the south ah, for some reason I think Atlanta. I associate him with something in Atlanta but maybe I'm just,

S: ESCRU, maybe

J: So ah, Stringfellow was one very noted social commentator on the work of the church at that time.

S: But Jonathan when he was here used to pass out copies of Stringfellows writings to the parishoners. I wonder how that would go over?

J: I can only imagine. When ah, I like ready, sort of, church radicals. I enjoy that because they are challenging. They may be lots of things but they are challenging and I find that that's usually one of the most helpful things for me spiritually is to be challenged rather than to be confirmed with just exactly where I am. So I did a lot of reading of Bishop Pike, the famous heratic, so to speak, of the 50s and 60s and um, John Robinson from England who wrote the Honest To God book ah, and the follow up on that debate ah, and now I'm very much in disagreement with a lot of the positions he holds, John Spong, the bishop of Newark ah, I do enjoy reading people who have such a radical challenge to the, to the generally accepted norms and boundaries, both theological and social.

S: Another name was Malcolm Boyd.

J: Yes yes, Malcolm Boyd, I've got a book of prayers of his called Are You Running With Me Jesus and it's just prayers by Malcolm Boyd and they are very affecting and extremely moving things, very un, well it's a collection of prayers that seem like traditional collic such as you might find in the book of common prayer, but most of them, the ones you remember, are meditation type prayers that are his own words and very, um, very sharp and angry and blunt and to the point and doesn't just tell god what you think god wants to here and that kind of thing, and I read several of them to my youth group here in Selma when we were having this latest round of trouble and they were very captivated by it. Especially by how very prevalent now, the very same themes are coming back.

S: What would be some of the ones that you've read. It's kind of interesting.

J: Some of the prayers?

S: Well, yeh, yeh particualary.

↓: Simpathy for the child who is having to live in abject poverty. I remember one image was a child who has to sleep in a room where the rain blows in through the broken windows and no heat in the house and um, the person who has to endure incredible indignity on the street either just because of the situation, his appearance, and his life situation being unemployed and poor and destitute and often transiant. Often because of that or because his personal dignity is directly assaulted by someone who would exercise



power over him. That was a lot that Malcolm Boyd was very strong on pointing out. Um, also his own anger at what he was, how he was part of that system and often powerless to do anything about it.

S: Larry can you turn the lights on, I think we're ready to shoot

L: Oh you are okay.....I'm going to need another mag after this because.

S: You want to load it now?

L: No the other magazine is empty and this one we've got 3½-4 minutes of film on it, so

S: Okay, well maybe we can stop in a minute and then lead on. I was going to ask you about Daniels. Let's say Daniels read Stringfield and,

J: Stringfellow

S: Stringfellow, excuse me, and Boyd and wanted to, in a sense, bring that kind of theology into Selma. What kind of a minister would he be? How would you describe him ah, in your concept?

J: If he came into Selma with Stringfellow,

S: With Stringfellow's,

J: Stringfellow and Boyd and he came into Selma in order to begin his ministry, what kind of minister would he be?

S: Just a minute, Larry...are you ready to shoot?

L: All set

S: Okay, I think we're ready to shoot,

L: Okay, Terry was just telling me, we're taping it right. So do you have a part that you're ready to go on?

S: Yeh

L: Let me just,

S: Just hold it a minute. We're just going to talk about, see we're trying to understand what he came in here with as a theology and you've obviously read some of the same works and it's kind of interesting using, at least in the case of Boyd, some of the same materials. It seems to me you'd have an idea of what kind of concept of ministry that he might be coming to Selma with and why he might be coming to Selma and what he might be hoping to accomplish in his mission to Selma. That sort of thing, if you were to speculate on it.

J: Okay, we;; the first thing I would be,

L: Want me to start?

S: Yeh

L: Okay hang on everybody. Don't feel, please don't feel self conscious about this. (BEEP)

J: First of all, I'd be very reluctant to over state how highly developed Jonathan Daniels' concept of ministry would be. He was after all, a seminary student, um, I don't know how far along he was in seminary when he came here but seminary's a 3 year course typically. I know I was not in seminary all that long ago and my concept of ministry after 2 years of being a priest has developed leaps and bounds. So I wouldn't want to over state how developed his consciousness was about what he was trying to accomplish or what theology he was bringing in. BUT at the same time I would never understate his sense of call and his sense of motivation and very often, I guess all the time, we don't really understand what it is the holy spirit is asking us to

do when we're in the work of the church. So we just know we have to do it and if you ask about the works that he was reading such as William Stringfellow and Malcolm Boyd, if he came in armed with that to do ministry, um, he would be approaching ministry wrong. People, you cannot lead people if they cannot see where you are. You cannot be a bench mark for them unless they can actually see you and if he came in with Stringfellow and Boyd and people like that, ah, as I said, I enjoy reading them very much, but they would be very ineffectual ministry. I've always sort of liked the Trojan Horse theory of ministry, especially when there is change to happen, um, you gain trust

S: Cut

L: Just say cut, cut, that's a signal for me. That's, that'll give us a hand. We have more film, you can continue.

S: Why don't we just change, how much time you got?

L: How much do I have left?

S: Yeh

L: I still have a lot

S: Oh, okay

L: So you just let me know.

S: Yeh, well we'll just chat. So when did you ah, when did you first learn of Daniels?

J: First learn of him?

S: Yeh

J: Well it was long before I became a seminary student.

S: Ahha, oh is that right

J: Um, because growing up in Florence in the 60s, we were aware and my parents were very much aware of what was going on and, I was a little boy then of course and I didn't know, but we knew things like that were happening and then when I became old enough to explore some of these things myself, that's I guess when I ran into the name and what had happened to him and knowing from the 9th grade on that I wanted to be a seminarian, he would have caught my imagination and indeed did catch my imagination.....

S: Did you ah, look at his writings or just, how did you get to know the story?

J: Just by people repeating the story. The first things I ever read of his were when I came here and I asked Kay Gambell what she had and she brought me this file of reports he was sending back to the seminary in Massachusetts and his own ah, perspectives of what was happening. Those were the first things and indeed were the only things of his I read.

S: What did you think of the reports? We asked you if he was armed with Stringfellow and Boyd,

J: I did not see him imposing a model of say, Malcolm Boyd, on this place. I saw him....very much....just....he just called it like he saw it. He (BEEP BEEP) he was, from what I read in his work that he was sending back for his seminary magazine and reports, he didn't have so much a preconception or something that he was going to impose or hold up certain works of social commentators and say Look at this can't you conform to that. He observed what he saw and he did it point blank and he reported it point blank and the force was point blank. Ah, he did not pull punches and um, but it



was, it was passionate and committed certainly, but it was not, it did not lack objectivity and he had a great deal of personal connection with many of the people in this parish and he knew that and appreciated that and he knew the, the companionship in his own calls that he had in this congregation with several people who were quick to embrace him because they knew he was also paying a terrible cost in this community as well as within the church, as I understand it.

S: What do you think his goal was in the work of ah, at St. Paul's? Would you get a sense?

J: I really don't know and I'm not, again I wouldn't be quick to assume that he knew what his goal was for St. Paul's. Obviously the immediate goal was to have an explicit ah, understanding within the congregation that any person of any color is readily to be welcomed in the congregation. And that's a pretty hard thing to deny any congregation that pays any attention to Jesus gospel at all would have a hard time denying that. But of course there were many more things involved in the life of the congregation, living, you know, you don't live in a vacuum. You live in this community which was terribly disrupted and I think he wanted them to keep in mind what the call of the gospel was and keep that up front and sadly then as now, he saw that, he saw then as you would often see now that that's often not done with complete success. But he was going keep it in front of them.

S: A constant reminder

J: Yes, yeh

S: So there's a kind of ah, insistence in living out the gospel and one's entire life is, as well as attending church, is it that sort of thing?

J: Oh absolutely, and now that's one of my soap boxes too and I would certainly assume that it would be Jonathan Daniels and that would be that, you know, attending church is the easy part, I mean you know, an hour a week, that kind of thing. But the gospel is where it makes a difference is Monday to Saturday um, and how you appropriate what you hear on Sunday. You know, ah, this once a week thing is very unsatisfactory and he was going to have them, he was certainly going to see how the gospel impacted a difference during the weekday so to speak.

S: How would that work, you know, how would you, in trying to get some specifics, how would that work out in one's life in Selma, let's say. Let's say ah, in your vision or in Jonathan's, how does one conduct one's self in Selma if one lives the gospel kind of thing? In practical terms.

J: In practical terms? Well of course that's a very hard question to answer um, on any given moment but there are specific things um, one is simply to take any opportunity for um, biracial cooperation that you can, regardless of the front that it's on. But um, joint services of worship, um, pulpit exchanges, I've been to the Brown Chapel AME church here and I was the only white person the stage ah, we've had um, we've had the pastor of that church here, come here and take our pulpit and take part in special services of worship. We've had their choir members come and sing, you

know, part of our evening song services and they really enjoyed that. I brought my youth group over to Brown chapel to take part in a service honoring Dr. King or just to see that. So there are churchy kinds of things you can do. But there are social, social justice things, feeding people, clothing people, responding to disasters, the tornados and floods we've had in Selma in the past 2 years. Black and white ministers, lai people, all, all people working side by side regardless of the context of it. Just getting something done because it needs to be done. Um, acknowledging wach other as important to each other in any way that you can. I make a very big point out of simply making eye contact with people on the street and I guess you could say, well that's important for you, you knowing, wearing this thing. Well, really quite the reverse is true. It's less important wearing this thing, because if I do this, and I do, people just sort of assume, well that's your job, that's what you're supposed to do and they don't particularly know, this already has a great deal of trust in the black community. A white person in a collar has a great deal of, of entry into the black community, as I have found. I have been very much welcomed by the black community here as an episcopal priest. They trust the episcopal church, as I have found anyway. Um, it's more important that, as sort of an ordinary Joe on the street though, that I make that eye contact and speak to them and smile because then they don't know me from Adam and they don;t know what I;m doing, and it's amazing how many people will try to avoid that, that kind of intensity. An eye contact that is quite intentional can be very intense.

S: I always wondered going down the streets myself that, I'm always wondering if I'm starring or if I'm making eye contact. It's an interesting,

J: Well it also has to do with the affect of it. If you're smiling um, how you're walking, how you're holding you're head to them. their body language sayings and I'm very conscious of that.

S: Yeh, and I don't know quite, as a northener coming down, it's interesting, obviously I don't know the signals, the proper signals ah, a smile could be for me, or an eye contact for me, could be, I could be doing it incorrectly, you know

?: there's very few blacks in New Hampshire.

J: Yeh

?: And so when you're wondering how to communicate on that level on this, passing the students and so on, it's no experience.



J: Well

S: I can see how it would be different here.

J: Well you don't communicate with black people any differently than white. I mean I do eye contact and that sort of thing with everybody that I try to find. But I do make a special effort, especially in the light of the terrible strife we've had in the last 2 years, of making some personal acknowledgement and exchange with a black person on the street and um, sometimes it's as if, as if it's made the biggest difference in their week. There's such an icy barrier that's thrown up between blacks and whites in Selma in times of crisis. Selma is not always in the kind of explicit crisis that you talk about in the 60s or with the school board crisis. It's like when you speak and smile and look into someone's eyes, they're so relieved and they are so happy about that and they will respond too and then you are 2 people again. You're not....fott soldiers on somebody else's battle. You're 2 people and that very important um,. Institutional things, United Way, churches, Red Cross, those are all important and probably impact the broadest number of blacks and whites working side by side, but they're still institutional and the world is still personal. The world has to be a personal place. So personal contact, just simple curtesy, is the way to make justice work eventually, I think.

S: So, I'll ask the question I wrapped it up with with Mrs. Joyce, ah, how would you like to see um, and in a sense, Selma become or be ah, in particularly thinking in a way Jonathan thought of things or the sense of the ministry, what concept of Selma would you like to see come about?

J: I would feel really presumptuous in answering that um, because I'm not, I've only lived in the town 2 years and it's very hard to get a hold of everything, even in a lifetime it's hard to get a hold of it. Um, I could answer it from the point of view of my work and that is my vision for Selma would be that it is a place where, where the pain of human life living in community is, is minimized. There are enough things insulting human life and human dignity now that, without these kinds of things, with the racial ah, confrontationalism and, hatred. It's not just confrontation, it's hatred that's going on. I would love to see that gone, exercised, and that's a carefully chosen word because what that word is evil. So my vision for Selma would be a place where that kind of burden is lifted and people can get along...in such a ways they can deal with than many other things that assault human life, and do it together instead of frantically trying to take care of their own little hobby horse and their own corner. But really be in a community um, where you didn't have to worry about the implications of what you do, of what someone might think, gosh.....the towns got such an inferiority complex because we're just almost the, the ah, personification of a troubled community. Worldwide, the priest, the other priest of this parish went to Saudi Arabia and Selma was one of the few places they knew in the United States that they recognized by word. When I was in Cambridge, England and I told them I was from the diocese of Alabama "Oh Selma", you know, gosh what that does,

S: Kind of a by word.

J: What that does for this town and so many things are therefore blown out of proportion that would never be given a second thought in other towns in Alabama or Mississippi let alone the north ah, so many things. I mean if a white motorcycle cop gives a black motorist a ticket, Sam Donaldson's down here, I mean so to speak. That's just so ludicrous. And I found it very interesting that, I think it was the mother of the then mayor of Boston in the 1960s, became very famous for getting herself put in prison for racial integration of schools in the 60s and 2 or 3 years ago, she got herself put in prison in Boston trying to keep the school her grandson goes to segregated. Hmm (laughs)

S: Good iron, Mrs. White ????????????

J: It is Mrs. White, that's the name. I don't have much time for that.

S: Well I think that will kind of wrap it up unless you, ??

J: Okay

S: Great, well we appreciate your time. Good luck down in Mississippi.

J: Well out of the frying pan and into the fire

S: Yeh

J: It will be a very different role but I'm looking forward to,

S: Is there less stress there?

J: Oh yes

S: We talked to a young black ah, not to long ago from Tuscaloosa, and he said, he lives in Selma, this black and has been here a few years and he says he's going back to Tuscaloosa because, he says not because it's free of problems but every day you're not under this terrible strain, you know?

J: It's really constant

?: Tension here

S: The tension, he says, you just feel it

?: feel it in your whole body

J: And there is, I have some real anger about that....(Somebody playing with the speaker so it's noisy) I've been watching it happen and it's been very intentionally cooked um, not from Selma and I'm leaving Selma and I'm really socially quite a subversive person ah, I like to have the order challenged but what, I've been watching Rose Sanders wait for an issue she could do this kind of thing for 2 years, it was just a question of what would it be and if she found it in herself. You can just see the venom drop from her mouth. She hates white people.

?: Is there anyone on the other side who plays off that, I mean the same, there's probably some whites who have been waiting for the same kind of thing, you know,

J: I don't know. I don't think they're going as public about it because even this latest movements, whites in Selma knew they were wrong in the 60s. He said they might not even admit it now but they know they're wrong and Selma's so embarrassed by it's negative name recognition, you would find whites who would privately say all kinds of horrible things, but they're not looking for a public forum to create a division, a defisive thing the way Rose has um,



S: We should get some more information on that

J: Her ah, her absolute um, chicanery in that hospitalization and all of that where she was caught by the reporter from the Montgomery Advertiser using the arms she said had been paralyzed and taping the IV to her arm for a CNN interview and she, the needle wasn't inserted and, and um, you know, doing an interview on some broken down horrible old house, very much implying but never saying it, that was her house when she lives in one of the finest houses in the county and drives a Jaguar, but CNN flimed her in a wheelchair on a little shack porch, that kind of stuff.

S: What's her position exactly?

J: Oh she's an attorney, yeh she's with Chestnut's firm. She is brilliant and she's now how to make it work. What I'm disappointed with in her is that she is in real power to do something about real issues here and not political power. I mean I wish she'd get away with the political power things to go about, I think the way to address the real issues of justice is not through the politics because that's just going to slow it down and screw it up. I think the way to do it is to motivate a community, the muscle of the community and the heart of the community and she's got power to do that and she won't do that and that's what I really dislike um, having her gynecologist put her in a neck brace for that interview was also a ????? um, because ?????????? I guess (laughing)

S: Would you be willing to ah, sign a release form for us and if you could print your name the way you would like it to appear in the titles

J: Alright.....sign it and then date it and then print my name?

S: Yeh that would be great.....well, you know, we're walking into something that we have no idea um, it's hard to try and understand it in a few days.

J: Yeh well

S: I was in the state legislature as a rep when the Martin Luther King holiday vote came up in 86, I guess, that was my, in New Hampshire that was the most intense racial incident that I can rememebr. In terms of what was said, not on the floor but in the corridors, got pretty ugly

J: What was, what I just wish, god if I could have any of that time back, would be that S.O.B. Jim Corrin(?), if, and I know a man who is in the state legislature who tryed so hard to get Gov. Wallace before the national embarassment. To get Wallace and Clark and just say, march, be our guest go on, nad do nothing more than that. I mean, provide the protection and let them go to Montgomery and do that. Why do what they did?

?: I've seen the same thing, when you drive from Montgomery to Selma there's nothing there, you knoe, it's fields and ah, no one probably would have noticed

J: Well even the most basic human psychology would tell you that if you want to avoid an impact, you want to avoid, you avoid the huge issue, and Clark was just such, such an asshole. He just had to assert his dominance, the guy was so insecure. And if he really, if he cared anything about what his values were, he would have just stepped aside and

sais "March on", you know, because then it would not ?????  
and he would have avoided the message.

S: You must have felt somehow that it was going to  
end.....what's he doing

?: He's a refilling the ah,

S: Okay

J:.....abbreviation

S: Oh yes

J: i guess you give up there

J: Well thank you

S: Thanks for all your time and commentaries

J: It was nice to meet you. I certainly wish you all the  
best of luck with this. How will I be able to follow this?

S: Well we put in for a small state grant to do a um,  
commemorative event in August, of Jonathan's death and we're  
going to get some people to come up and speak and show parts  
of this and we will send an invite down to that and then  
we'll um, we hope to have this ready for submission probably  
by the end of next summer. So we'll just let it be known  
when it's going to come along. What we're doing this summer  
is getting all the shooting interviewing done and then while  
we're teaching in the year, we'll work on the editing

J: You did hear about, I guess I told you, about Jonathan  
Daniels being enscribed and enrolled in the Chapel of  
Martyrs in Canterbury.

S: Canterbury yes and we're going to call up and try and get  
somebody to film that for us and send it over.

J: Well the person I think, the contact person there would  
be James B. Simpson, he's the dean of Canterbury Cathedral  
and he is a world hopper. He's a very media conscious  
person, he's ah, for good and for bad

S: What was that?

J: James B. Simpson

S: and his title is?

J: Dean, Canterbury Cathedral, and he's ah.... he's so much  
involved, he travels all over the world, he does lots of  
media things. He would be probably very quick to have  
sympathy for your request.

S: Okay great, that would be wonderful.....

J: Who else might be in Canterbury who would be helpful?

That's the only one I can think of, but enough, I mean, he's  
the dean so he,

S: Right, if he can't do it than who can?

J: The only other person there id Archbishop Bronsy and I  
think Simpson's more on the spot

S: Okay great, well that's a big help because we didn't have  
any clue

J: Well they are very good about responding to letters and  
that kind of thing, even though that's our, the Mother seed,  
I mean there is very little prima donna stuff going on  
there. They would certainly, you know, quickly answer your  
letter and do all they can to help you.

S: Okay great

J: You'll find very little bureaucracy running in,

S: Good

J: Okay

S: Thanks a lot

J: Glad to help.....

?: Shut this off first

END OF INTERVIEW