

TAMMY + LARRY
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Interview with Major Tom Davis, VMI 5/26/89

Interviewer, Bill Sullivan

TD: Yes, she's ah, her picture on the back shows she's a very glamorous person.

Bill: Yeah.

TD: Very articulate.

LB: yeah, we thought maybe she'd be worth interviewing.

TD: She would be.

LB: Testing, one-two.

TD: This was the superintendent's office, by the way, when I was a cadet, so this room always is a little tricky for me. General Shell's desk was right down there and you walked in, past the few intermediate desks, and there he was at the end.

Bill: He had this whole big room?

TD: Yeah, yeah. It was--yeah, there was an outer office here, but his office was right--and his desk was right underneath that window. So I'm always--General Shell has retired and living in Lexington, he's I'm very much taken with him now, but at the time he was ah, rather ah, aloof and distant and formal Marine Corps General, but he knew he mean business, he was a, a good superintendent. We've only had about ten. He was a good one.

Bill: Is that right? How do long do they last?

TD: About ten years. A little more, obviously, since we've had a hundred and fifty years, but the first one lasted a hundred and fifty-- I mean, fifty years. He was fifty years. Eighteen-thirty-nine to 1889.

Bill: That's amazing. You graduated two years after Jonathan?

TD: Three years. I was--'64, he was '61. So I was--we were--

LB: : So you came back to teach after you---

TD: I went to chapel Hill for all my graduate work, and did--went into the military for two years, as most of us d--

LB: Did you know Joseph Bryant

TD: Joseph Bryant?

LB: Bryant? He was a Shakespearean scholar?

TD: Hah--I-ah, you know, how graduate school is, I did all my work in um, history. British history, but --I-I didn't --there were some real luminaries over there, in English.

LB: he was my dissertation adviser at Syracuse, and chairman of the English department at Chapel Hill.

TD: Ah. Who was their real star in 18th century literature? I'm trying to think of his name, he was really well known, I wanna say--

Bill: Mack?

TD: I want to say Mackinnon or Mack, mack something. Mack, is it mack? OK.

LB: Maynard Mack?

TD: They were very strong in English.

Bill: Yeah, yeah, still are.

TD: I--I imagine they still are, yeah.

LB: What made you decide to come back?

TD: Well, I think of the football coach who came in '53 and said he came back because he was looking for a job, and went on to become one of the great coaches here. But, ah, (laughs) Well, my pop is an alumnus and I'm an alumnus and I I felt ah, pretty strongly about the the value of the school. I like --I'm not a big city person. Ah, this, this was the feeling. And--in '72, when I came, you know, jobs weren't exactly plentiful--this was attractive to me --I had no idea I'd be here 17 years later.

Bill: Um-hum.

LB: This sounds like our conversations, because the jobs closed down right in the early '70's.

Bill: Well, you couldn't move, like you used to.

TD. Um, that's right, the mobility is really, ended.

LB: So we've been at Keene 20 years.

TD: Really?

LB: Same kind of thing.

Bill: Just had our ceremony, we got our twenty year pins.

TD: Oh, yes, yes.

LB: Should have given us a bottle (?) of preparation H.

Bill, TD: (laugh) Bill: It was a long ceremony. TD: Laughs.

Bill: Well, why don't you tell us a little bit about, ah, as I see it, Jon--I don't know about you, but, Jonathan, when he was a high school kid, he was kind of a bit rowdy. He drank, he tended to get into a few prankish things; he wasn't the best behaved high school student, ah, then he'd--not that he was a juvenile delinquent, but he he liked to party, he liked to be rowdy sometimes and prankish and--so I'm thinking, what would it be like for Jonathan or any kid to come in and hit this place after living that kind of an existence?

TD: Of course my memories of him go back to the fall of 1960, when I was a rat, or freshman at VMI, and he was a senior, so he was here for three years when I wasn't here, and that characteristic or description of him doesn't ring true to me because I didn't see that aspect of his personality. When you're a rat at VMI, you tend to be in awe of seniors or first classmen anyway, and as I said before, this was a particularly strong class in terms of leadership. With a Rhodes Scholar, with a man who went on to a distinguished political career, ah, a number of strong leaders, and Jonathan Daniels stood out as a strong leader in that group. But in an entirely different way. He wasn't flashy, he wasn't dramatic, he wasn't flamboyant, but, for a rat, thinking of Jonathan Daniels I remember someone of, of um, of great dignity, of a man who ran deep, it appeared to me, ah, a man who commanded respect, just in his quiet, contemplative thoughtful way of conducting himself. And I had one other thought--and I hope I haven't read this into what happened later, but--to me, there was an element of sadness about him-- I don't know exactly how to describe it. He wasn't--you would never use the word flippant or frivolous about him; I'm not saying he didn't have a sense of humor, but to me he was always a quiet, dignified person with this aura of, of sadness, as if things would not work out as he'd hoped they would. Again, I'm not sure, I don't want to read history backwards, but, ah, I I would recall that as an element of Jonathan Daniels in retrospect. But a serious person--the fact that he was elected valedictorian by his classmates an honor that does not go automatically to the highest grade point average person, also showed that --ah, the respect he --engendered among many was not restricted to just a few, that many people respected his qualities and thought he should be the one to speak for that class at graduation, ah, in a class of strong leaders, he should be the one to express the sentiments and thoughts of that class upon leaving this unusual place.

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Bill: Well, let's go back to your own experiences for a minute, I mean-- let's try and take a a a person who's lived a pretty free life and comes to VMI--what would it like to be--in some detail--what--what it --would it be like to live the life of a rat?

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129- TD: Well, the sort of ah, carefree, happy-go-lucky, um, person in high school is going to have to make some real adjustments here, because there are obviously some external restrictions you have to adapt to, ah, one has to accommodate himself to a certain amount of self-discipline in order to survive here. It doesn't you can't have fun, it doesn't mean there aren't ways one skirts the rules --if one gets caught, one pays the penalty--but we have a phrase at VMI, that every cadet has known for generations, called "running the block." Unlike most college campuses, you are restricted here, after eleven o'clock at night, you are not allowed to be off post, or off the campus, but it happens, but if one is caught in that situation, one, ah, pays the piper, so to speak. But, ah, I can imagine him, perhaps, ah, doing that sort of thing, I don't know it from personal experience, but--you--you have to ah, --you have to obviously adjust to this discipline and those who can't, those who continue to live in the high school vein, ah, would have real problems here. So, if Jonathan was like that in high school, he'd have to make some real adjustments here, because of the external demands of conformity.

Bill: Yeah, what would some of those things be, like in dress, and --

145- TD: Well, you're told when to get up in the morning, you're told when to go to class, you're told what clothes to wear, you're told when to have supper, ah, for instance, some students have problems in an academic sense, of being immersed in a term paper topic at 5:45 in the evening in the library where we're sitting, and realizing in fifteen minutes he has to stand supper formation, and he can't just say, "I've discovered the essence of Plato and I want to stay here and write it out." He's got to go stand supper formation, in the hopes that the great truth about Plato will come back to him after supper. So there are a lot of external requirements that one must conform to."

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Bill: Do you have to stand, um, inspection?

TD: Oh, yes. Personal inspection was a matter of really daily daily occurrence. There were formal personal inspections, but you were always sort of in the public eye here, in terms of institute authorities, if you chose not to shave one day, or let your hair grow very long you would be placed on report prior to a formal inspection, if you happened to encounter someone who felt you had neglected these obligations.

Bill: Whose role was that, the upper classman's role?

TD: Well, more of the people we call the tack officers, the captains who are here in ROTC, and in those days a certain number of faculty who also wore two hats, one hat being the teacher and one hat being what we'd call the tactical officer in the barracks, where they are involved, and get to know cadets quite well by being part of that barrack's life, and as part of their duties would conduct room inspections, or ah, personal inspections. So sometimes faculty members in those days wore two hats. But, there's no question a certain amount of self-denial would have to come about, in order to survive, and to thrive as he did at VMI.

Bill: Howah, what was the relationship between rats and upperclassmen? How did they--

TD: I think in terms of vernacular we'd call it a big brother relationship. The senior or first classman expected his dyke, as we call him, or freshman, to do certain duties, he wakes him up in the morning, he puts the bed up in this strange barracks atmosphere. And in return for that the first classman is expected to help the freshman adjust to this unique environment. Either by learning the vocabulary and the way things are done here, helping to remind him that academics come first, um, perhaps interceding on his behalf if he gets over his head in difficulty or trouble with some other upperclassman who might be persecuting him, something to that effect. What I'm trying to say is, it's a mutually reciprocal relationship. It's not just the freshman doing everything for the senior. The senior has obligations and responsibilities to help the freshman adjust too.

Bill: Where did the term "dyke" come from?

TD: "Dyke" is a word, obviously, with um, multiple meanings, in this society, but here ah, the origin has to do with what are called crossdykes. These are white pieces of ah cloth that you wear ah in your uniform in a dress parade that go back to Napoleonic days; it was part of the French military dress uniform. So the dykes are these strips of white cotton cloth that you ah, put on when you attend a formal parade.

Bill: They were punning, I imagine, when they used the term, don't you think?

TD: Well in, what happened, I think, years ago, is that freshmen would help the upperclassmen "dyke out" and "dyking out" means to help adjust and put on these white straps and therefore, since he's helping do that, the term went on to the other sorts of help the freshman gives the upperclassman, that goes far beyond just getting ready for parade.

Bill: So what else--what--they make their beds, uh--?

TD: Yes--here, because of the restricted nature of the cadet rooms, the , the beds do not stay down, they're put up every morning, and so one of the freshman's or rat's duties is to wake up his senior and then when he gets out of the bed put the bed up, "roll up the hay," as we call it, roll up the mattress and put the rack against the wall.

Bill: What else might they do, for the upperclassman?

TD: Ah, pick up his laundry, there's a laundry bag, there's a laundry at VMI, and everybody has a laundry bag with their number on it, and the, the freshman would be expected or the rat to pick up the upperclassman's clean laundry when its ready and bring it back to the room.

Bill: What was life like in the barracks? Typically. I--I mean, we, we were kind of surprised at this great big singular structure--I think we all had preconceptions that there'd be different dorms and that. Pretty imposing building.

TD: It's sort of--it's been called the biggest fraternity, of course, in the country, all twelve or thirteen hundred cadets--when he and I were here there were about twelve hundred cadets, or eleven-fifty, now there are thirteen-fifty. Same sized barracks; so it's ah, rather--let's put it this way: there's not a great deal of privacy in that environment. All twelve or thirteen hundred cadets are living in that barracks. The seniors are on the ground level, the rats or freshmen are on the top level; you work your way down, as you proceed through your years here, but it's three, four, sometimes five--not very often--cadets in a room. And there's not a whole lot of space. You get to know people pretty well, and ah, um, learning to adjust to people's differences is an important part of blending in here. For instance, that first year --I don't know who Jonathan's roommates were, but you don't pick those people, they are arbitrarily--"You four go in this room, you four go in this room," and part of the rationale is, you have to learn to get together with people, whether they're the same, or quite different from you. After that first year you pick your own roommates, but the first year among the many other adjustments, is learning to live with people you have no choice over. In terms of roommates.

Bill: You said, ah, you had no privacy there, so where would students tend to go to get privacy, ---?

TD: I--I found the library a--a retreat, I found the Timmons Room, I was a member of the Timmons Society like he was and I found that the Timmons Room was a great place to retreat and get away from it all. Um, the academic buildings, but

really---the opportunities were not as great as as another college because ah, you couldn't go in town to see a movie if you felt like it any time you wanted to , there were certain restrictions that governed your going and your coming. So,um,--there pl--this is a large campus though actually, I also found places to walk, ah, behind the barracks, towards the rifle range,ah, there were places even wooded that you could walk to and still be considered "all right" in a legitimate status even though you were still on post but not off the grounds, and could be alone and, and walk and contemplate, but those moments were fairly infrequent. At VMI, I'm afraid we tend to give these cadets then and now, about 26 hrs of stuff to do in a 24 hr day. They are very--they are over-scheduled. So those moments of privacy were rare. I guess you didn't feel the absence of it that much because with so much to do you didn't have a whole lot of time to sit around thinking about what you were missing; there was always something more that needed doing.

Bill: Did they spend any time with people from Washington and Lee, or in the town at all?

TD: That, on a personal basis, perhaps that could happen. On is often struck by the lack of contact between the school--two schools, actually. They are side by side ah, one called the Spartans, one the called the Athens, or the Sparta and the Athens; ah, individually I've known people who have had great friendships between the two colleges. But again, the fact that --again, when we were cadets, Jonathan Daniels and I --when were cadets, the only time we were really allowed off post or off campus would be four to six on Wednesday afternoon, one to six on Saturday afternoon, and Sunday afternoon. I don't remember leaving the post very much other than those times. One marched to church, church was mandatory, ah, there were times one left as a group, but one did not have the freedom to wander over to Double-U and Ell, just to see someone or inter-act.

Bill: What about questions about women?

TD: Well, I think we were quite aware of the fact that there were five or six colleges within an hour's drive of Lexington. Ah, it was well known that many cadets had cars illegally stashed away in the county, and would ah, again, take their chances sometimes; I myself drove a car illegally several times, ah, on particular dance weekends; so there were a number of occasions where women came here for, what we'd call hop or dance weekends, and, they had informal mixers, that either brought Sweetbriar girls here, for instance, or we got on a bus and went over to Sweetbriar or Randolph-Macon and attended a mixer or dance over there. Ah but compared to today, the girls were more infrequently around here, now, because of more cars, I suppose, they're

around a lot more but in those days they were certainly here on dance weekends and one went out to the colleges when one could, but their presence was not, ah, and Double-U and Ell in those days of course was also all male so they weren't highly visible day in and day out as they are now. Southern Seminary being only five or six miles away, of course, meant that those who wanted to "run the block" for that purpose could find female companionship very close by.

Bill: Beer? Did beer get into the, uh-- I know Jonathan liked his beer.

TD: In those days it was a serious--you were taking a certain risk or chance, the rules in those days were that you could not even drink a beer in town even though the state law would allow you to do it, VMI law would not. So when you went in--and there were restaurants in town that had back rooms that most professors and authorities would not go into, knowing that, one, cadets would improperly dressed back there and would be having their beers. There was a great place called The College Inn that had a back room, and most people knew you don't go back there, ah, you'd find trouble, if you were looking for it. There were sort of unwritten rules, like --authorities did not go back there, but cadets would go into town; I think most cadets here did take beers in those days, but the the offense was dismissal. You could be dismissed for having--technically, if you had a beer uptown and were caught you could be dismissed from VMI. So you were taking that chance. There was also a practice in those days, and I'm sure his class went through this experience of "going on pledge." If a classmate of yours or "Brother Rat," as we say, was caught drinking, facing suspension or dismissal, ah, the class would go "On Pledge"; take an oath on their honor not to have a drink for the rest of the academic year to save their classmate from being expelled from the school.

Bill: Hm. I read an editorial about that; a class got praised because they, they did---

TD: Oh yes, that system, I'm afraid is-- well, "afraid" might be the wrong word, but it is faded away; they no longer have the pledge system; and now of course, cadets are allowed to drink, as the state law allows them two at age 21, in town, but no alcohol is allowed on campus. Now, as it was not allowed then. So the difference is, they can drink uptown, legally now, if they're 21; in those days, you could be 18 and drink legally in the eyes of the state, but not in the eyes of VMI. So--

Bill: Um-- I know, you have a background that connects you to the place, but --why do you think do you think, ah, kids would subject themselves to that, that don't have the family ties, or , or the background, like--we're trying to

understand why somebody like Jonathan would --subject himself to----

TD: I think people um, are attracted here for a wide variety of reasons. We all are aware of the external uniformity of cadets. They all look the same, they all wear the same uniform. But I find them remarkably diverse in their individual personalities. I don't think there's any such thing as a VMI type. The only thing you have to do in order to survive here is to submit yourself to a certain amount of externally-imposed discipline; and to develop some self-discipline, and you have to live with, what I would unabashedly call, they country's best honor system. The best in part because of the size of the place; ah, it --the great honor systems in this country cannot work when you have a large impersonal university I don't believe; they have to be smaller. Anyway, I--I find people coming here for many reasons. If you surveyed most cadets, what they would tell you was, they were here because of the good academic reputation of the school. Again, 85% of our graduates return to some civilian career; many of them have heard about the remarkably strong alumni support network; ah, they sometimes erroneously think that will take care of them the rest of their life but there is plenty of evidence to show that VMI Cadets,--when they've graduated--have gone on to remarkably successful careers, in a wide variety of fields, and so there is that body of alumni sons, only about ten to fifteen percent at the most, the other 85% come here for a variety of reasons, and I think academic is the leading one. One thing that's also true though, regardless of why one comes; if one is here because of external demands imposed by parents, one suffers a lot. This is not a place to come if it's some one else's decision. It's got to be your decision. In--what worked in his mind that led him here I don't know. Um--I wonder if ah, the sort of lifestyle you described of him in high school didn't lead him in certain moments to think that perhaps I would be well served in a place that had a certain amount of externally-imposed discipline. But the ah, the academic reputation is what attracts many people.

Bill: How many---do you know offhand how many New Englanders you might get?

TD: Not that many. Not that many --I--I could look that up in the register, but, ah, there's always a handful from Massachusetts, I suppose, more than any other New England state; ah, and then only a small--maybe three or four, five, from Vermont or New Hampshire. Not very many.

Bill: In a year, or--?

TD: In --in--I would say in a given corps, there probably aren't more than three or four, five cadets from New

Hampshire , or Vermont. And maybe there might be fifteen from Massachusetts in the corps at a given time.

Bill: The corps meaning 4 years?

TD: The corps of cadets being the group of 1200. I'll bet you out of the current corps or of his corps, of 1200 in 1960 there weren't more than twelve or fifteen from Massachusetts-- or maybe 25 from New England as a whole. Or 30. But--I'd have to look that up.

Bill: Yeah, that would be interesting. Um, OK, before we get to Dillard I was going to ask you about the presence of Jonathan? You had talked about that before.

TD: The presence?

Bill: Yeah, you'd mentioned something about he had a commanding presence.

TD: Yeah, again, it's hard to articulate that, ah, it is often said of great leaders that when they come into a room you feel their presence, not by any dramatic speech they might give, just by their physical presence, and, he had that impact on me, ah, I just felt like I was in the presence of someone to whom I should, certainly respect what he had to say, or listen, perhaps, more intently to what he would have to say, again, knowing that he would not be a frivolous or flippant sort of person. Serious in the best sense of the word. But not by--he wasn't an Adonis, he wasn't some sort of Greek god, he wasn't physically imposing; he --this sounds corny, he just exuded some sort of presence that elicited my respect, certainly. I was impressed with him. I didn't have long conversations with him, just, seeing and observing him in Scotship Hall and in English and history. I don't remember, and probably never had a class with him, being in freshman classes and he was a senior, but, I saw him a number of times and was just taken with his, persona.

Bill: This sadness, was that physical manifestation, or ah, what he talked about, how he talked---

TD: Not what he talked about, it just--it was an aura--about him, I don't know if it was in the eyes or what, there was, ah, maybe sadness---the seriousness and the sadness might overlap a bit, ah, ---he was a man who thought and felt deeply, I think. He wasn't superficial. And, there was that aura, I wouldn't use that word to describe it, without dwelling on that, I would not put that at the head of my list of characteristics that I'd remember him by, but, I would certainly add that in my list of ten adjectives or descriptions of him.

Bill: OK Maybe we can switch to Colonel Dillard for a little bit, and just--your sense of Colonel Dillard and --kind of role he played.

TD: I think in one's lifetime, one is lucky to come across --or most people may not perhaps come across one or two really gifted, exceptional teachers. I think there are a lot of good teachers, but there's just a handful of exceptionally gifted, great teachers. And he was one of those. He was a remarkably charismatic, dynamic individual who had the great gift, I think, above all, of inspiring you to do your best, and to reach beyond yourself. He was remarkably articulate, he had this remarkable voice, he was a Harvard Ph.D., but from Rocky Mount, rural, small-town Virginia, ah, my father roomed with him at VMI in the 30's and said that he was the only person he ever knew who read a dictionary in his spare time. Colonel Dillard would just pick up a dictionary as a cadet and read it. Now he had this great love of learning, and he had a way of turning any subject into a, sort of, a learning experience. He had a great ability to convince cadets that he was really interested in their personal development, whether they were a four point o students; he got a number of Rhoades Scholar candidates through here, and to successful Rhodes

Tom Davis

Interviewed at Virginia Military Institute
May 26, 1989

Continuation

WS: O.K., maybe we can switch to Colonel Dillard, just your sense of the Colonel and the kind of role he played.

TD: I think in one's lifetime, one is lucky to come across, or mostly perhaps come across one or two really gifted, exceptional teachers. I think there are a lot of good teachers, but there are just a handful of exceptionally gifted, great teachers, and he was one of those. He was a remarkably charismatic, dynamic individual who had the great gift of, I think, above all, of inspiring you to do your best and to reach beyond yourself. He was remarkably articulate; he had this remarkable voice. He was a Harvard Ph.d. but from Rocky Mountain, rural, small-town Virginia, uh, my father roomed with him at VMI in the thirties and said that he was the only person he ever knew who read a dictionary in his spare time. Colonel Dillard would just pick up a dictionary as a cadet and read it. He had this great love of learning and he had a way of turning any subject into a sort of learning experience. He had a great ability to convince cadets he was really interested in their personal development, whether they were a 4.0 student - he got a number of Rhodes Scholar candidates through here and into successful Rhodes Scholarship applications. He could inspire those people, but he could also inspire the 2.5 or the 2.2 GPA students also. Just a really - he was a real performer. He was an extrovert, uh, in the best sense of the word. In a classroom, he performed. It is said he used to get sick, uh, before going into class, and yet like many great actors, when the time came to perform, when the curtain went up, he was at his best. So he was marvelous in front of a class of 25 or 30, but he had endless cadets line up outside his office where he, and he would talk to them one-on-one. Uh, I remember the comments he would write on papers. Uh, I still have a paper he wrote comments on mine, about saying it was a good paper, but telling me so many ways I could improve and think of how far I could go in a certain direction, so he would really both stroke you in the best sense of the word, but also lead you on to want to reach beyond, and go further - a rare, rare gift that he had.

WS: Now, he taught Shakespeare, and....

TD: Shakespeare, uh, Romantic period, uh, he taught, uh, he taught freshman English - I had him for freshman English. But you're right; the Shakespeare course was his bread-and-

butter course that attracted many cadets beyond English and History majors - engineers that needed a humanistic course would take Dillard's Shakespeare course. That was his most famous one, but I thought he was a real inspiration in Freshman Composition.

WS: Actually he died in the Shakespeare class?

TD: Died in the classroom on a Saturday morning in 1976, January, '76, in the classroom, and I somehow think that's, uh, (pause) terribly almost fitting in his case. He lived for this place, he lived for cadets. He was over back at his office nine, ten, eleven o'clock at night frequently. He lived at VMI in faculty housing. He had an open door policy. Waves of cadets were in his house all the time, whether watching TV or just relaxing. This place is a pressure-cooker, and he always provided a haven for cadets to relax.

WS: You're talking about, uh, perhaps, uh, a sort of surrogate father?

TD: I think that could apply for, for people. He, he...you automatically looked up and if Colonel Dillard said to jump, you tended to say, "How high?" I mean, he, but not in a (??Martinesque??) sort of sense. He just inspired you to want to do well in his eyes. You wanted him to think favorably of you, but a great effect on the really good students, but more than that.

WS: Can you think of, uh, any stories about, not, not academic, uh, support, but emotional support? Any anecdotes that you recall, helping cadets out emotionally and giving them a little compassion and understanding?

TD: Well, I think he always had a good read on, on cadets. I mean, I think he knew when a pep talk would work, and when a little, uh, uh, and when a little sternness might work, too, about not feeling sorry for yourself. I'm at a loss right now to come up with a particular example, but I know his approach was not always uniform, and cadets can get really down around here, and I think he had a way of uh, uh, of peppering them up and making them feel really better about themselves and about sticking it out here. Uh, and he was just fun to be around. You would just feel better having been around him and listen to his jokes and his anecdotes and his humor and his uh....He was an outrageous man. He was outrageous, and again, when you're a sort of serious, contemplative person, that's probably good, a little healthy dose of good fun. I mean, he was remarkably learned, and he would correct people's English with that horrid, Rocky Mountain accent that was always sort of fun. He could be as serious as anyone, he certainly knew his material, but, uh, he made learning fun.

WS: Any outrageous incident that you remember?

TD: It's just his style, his dramatic gestures, everything was very histrionic with him, uh, so it's not so much particular incidents as a collage, uh, an assembly of incidents over the years that I knew him both as a student and, uh, as a colleague on the faculty.

WS: Okay, great, that helped us out because we like didn't have a sense of, uh, what it was like for that first year, but I can imagine that Jonathan...

TD: (Interrupts) Very demanding...yes, yes, you know a lot more about his background, but, uh, I mean, some people, some parents send their children here because they really feel like they need this discipline if they've had a wild, rowdy high school experience, but, and that works on some, but if the only motivation is to come because the parents recommend or want it, that's a problem.

WS: Oh, yeah, I was going to ask you, too, uh, is there difficulty for a Northerner coming here? What percentage of the students would be Southern, but....

TD: The majority would be Southern, certainly in those days. Uh, not serious trouble. I'm sure he was stopped in the Rat Line when he was a Rat, perhaps, and asked, uh, uh, who won the war, and one had to be careful how one, uh, answered that question. I'm trying to think now what the standard reply was in those days if you were a Northerner. I think, uh, something silly or insensible like "the South, with the help of the North," uh....You, of course, if you wanted to endear yourself and call it the War of Northern Aggression, that sort of thing. There was this North-South dichotomy, but it tended to be, it might have sounded serious, but it wasn't really when they stopped and asked such questions, uh, in the Rat Line. (Pause) I think someone with a pronounced Northern accent might have, get, a little extra attention. What you wanted to do at VMI when you're a Rat is to be invisible as possible. The more visible you are, the more attention you attract, and that's, uh, not to your benefit.

WS: Okay, great. How about, uh, racial? I know the (can't understand) the one year you were here, would you have any sense of, uh, racial, uh, separations at that point?

TD: Well, of course, the most obvious dichotomy I think of now is the first Black cadets did not enroll at VMI until 1968. They was all white male during the era I was here, and Jonathan Daniels was here. Uh, this was not an area in the fall of sixty...in which the Civil Rights movement had made much impact. It was still pretty early. But what did make an impact was the election of President Kennedy. I think there was a lot of interest, uh, and enthusiasm about

Kennedy's appeal kind of transcended just those traditional labels, so I think that, uh, as has often been said, he sort of captured the enthusiasm and interest of the young generation in 1960. It sort of goes with the element of idealism...certainly would have been taken up with that. I don't know about Jonathan Daniels in particular in that regard, but I certainly remember the atmosphere and the, uh, the upbeat sort of forward-looking New Frontier approach that resulted from Kennedy's election.

?: (Can't understand) I know he didn't get into town too often, but would he have gotten a sense of a segregated culture?

TD: I imagine he would have, uh, the Blacks of Lexington are very much restricted to one part of the city. They've traditionally lived in one part of the town. Uh, certainly the Blacks that we remember in those days were, uh, in the mess hall and as janitors in the barracks. That's where you would see them, day in and day out.

WS: Would he receive from his fellow cadets, um, a pretty good idea of (??) Southern attitudes towards race might have been at that time? Whatever they were, I don't know.

TD: Umm...possibly. I don't remember myself, and memories play tricks over the years. Any overt denigration of, of Blacks...it's almost as if they were sort of invisible more than they were objects of derision or, uh, animosity. They, they were there to clean the rooms and to serve in the mess hall and, and, uh, they were in the tailor shop and uh, but I don't remember, um, I mean, I remember very well when I was a Rat, there was a very, there was a real personality who ran the tailor impression (and pressing?) shop, and he called everybody "Honey," and I was told when I went down to take my first pair of trousers down to be cleaned and pressed not to take offense if this elderly Black man called me "Honey," and the implication seemed to be if there were some particularly unreconstructed people, they might get upset about hearing a Black man calling him "Honey." But Tom had been calling people "Honey" for thirty years, and he wasn't about to stop. It was just a tradition around here. Tom was, he'd call everybody "Honey." But anyway (at any rate?), I remember being told and warned about this, uh, as if some might take offense.

WS: (Can't understand) would there ever be a chance of developing a relationship with one (some?) of the Blacks?

TD: Well, most of them were so much older, I uh, um, don't remember seeing many 18 to 21 year old Blacks around at all. The ones who worked as janitors in the barracks and in the mess hall were certainly older. Or in the PX. Now, some of these people were real characters, and were fondly thought

of. Now there was this famous trainer that was on the athletic team that traveled with them for thirty or forty years. Uh, uh, Ding Dong Clark was another legend around here. Some of the Blacks that worked at VMI for literally three or four decades, and were remembered very fondly.

?: (Says something about taking a walk for a few minutes; will be back in a few minutes.) [Click] Well, we're all done. Well, it sounds like a lot of interesting information coming out of all this. I'll be back later.

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