

Tim Kendall Transcript

By the middle of my junior year I started thinking that the coursework that I was doing in these
2 philosophy of nonviolence courses was going to form the basis of an application for conscientious
objector status. That whole application process was, came to be, largely what I objected to myself. It
4 was wildly inequitable. But by the middle of junior year, yeah I knew that I was at least going to be a C.O.
I hadn't mentally followed it beyond that. And I hadn't looked very directly at the way the draft itself
6 worked and was working. And you may remember that before he died King (MLK) made a fair point out
of this that, you know, it's the poor it's the black people who are bearing the brunt of this and so on.
8 And it took me a while to figure out what he was talking about. But what he was really talking about was
that if you were of the right economic strata, and you had been fortunate enough to get an education to
10 the point where you were minimally articulate, you had a much better chance of "getting out of it"
(which was the phrase everybody used) than you did if you, you know, grew up on the rough streets of
12 some inner city and didn't have those opportunities. That turned out to be true in many more ways with
respect to the draft system itself. There was also, this was this was not ever a big deal to me, but for a
14 lot of people they reacted bitterly to ... General Hershey was the director of the ... they called it the
Selective Service System. Everybody else just called it the draft. So the draft director was General Lewis,
16 I think his name was Louis Hershey, and he talked about the draft as ... he wrote an essay that became
famous in a way he wouldn't have wanted it to, where he said that with the threat of the draft we
18 channel people into professions and occupations, in that way. Whereas in a communist country they
just do it directly by ordering you into it. Well, the word "channeling" became a dirty word after this
20 article of Hershey's got around. I don't think he knew he was creating a monster with that but a lot of
people reacted to that. That actually didn't bother me so much. I'm not entirely sure why but it just
22 wasn't one of the things that that I was, you know ... if I was upset about it I wasn't anywhere near as
upset about it as I was about the rest of the draft.

24 So I end junior year still thinking that I'll go the C.O. route. Do I end junior year? Oh, I got into
the second half of junior year at least with that in mind. Shortly after that, and certainly by the summer
26 after junior year I had begun to read about and think about the draft itself. And had come to see myself
as one of the privileged. And it was ... some of these people like Barragan, both of them really, they
28 weren't the only ones but they come to mind as having pointed out that conscientious objector status is
a way of silencing people who might otherwise vocally protest. Because as long as they get out of it then
30 they can say "pwew," you know and don't feel compelled to protest it any further.

... But in any case it was part privilege in part a roll of the dice. And that just seemed wildly amiss
32 to me. And the more I thought about it the worse it seemed. And you know I grew up in a place where,
to say the least, race consciousness was pretty universal. My family had at one point taken in
34 temporarily an exchange student from Cameroon. A very black African who had come to this country to
go to engineering school at Duke. And he lived with us for some few weeks before he went to college,
36 and my parents immediately lost all their friends and you know the backlash was horrendous. But the
point I'm making here is that the racial overtones were in many cases more than just overtones . You
38 had vast populations in inner cities for who it wasn't even an issue. Nobody is going to file for a C.O.
because it was just too much to contemplate. There were others who tried it. I don't know what the
40 percentage was of people who tried it and made it versus those who tried it and didn't make it. But
again it was also, geographically it was wildly unequal.

42 So the only universally available method of keeping from contributing to what I was increasingly
seeing as really an ethically untenable situation was to just refuse to do it. And that's where I ended up.
44 So by the time I ... oh, and I suppose I should mention, this is kind of ancillary but, for two of the
summers during college I had a temporary job in a funeral home in Richmond where I lived. And one of
46 them was quite large and handled I think more funerals than all the other establishments in town
combined. And by far the hardest cases to deal with ... you know I didn't mind the work, you know dead
48 bodies did not spook me in and of themselves. But the hardest cases to deal with by far were the
children who died of a disease or whatever or an accident that was really, really hard. But close on the

heels of that were the Vietnam cases. Because the guys would come back in bags and be sent to the funeral establishment of their family's choosing. And I don't know what the arrangements were like but there were quite a number of these military funerals of guys my age. And that, I will tell you, made an impression.

... [My] deferment ended before that because after I went back to ... remember you had to fill out a new form every year ... and when I went back after senior year I was a pretty committed non-cooperator by that time. So I did not take out a student deferment my senior year and they got around to noticing that about December. And I began to get mail from the draft board and sometimes I would write snarky things on the envelope and send it back unopened. Sometimes I would open it and then just throw it away. The first one that came was almost certainly an order to report for a physical. And that would have been in Richmond because that's where my board was. And as far as they knew that was my home address, which it was. My parent's address was my legal address at that point I since I was a college student .

These letters started coming. The first one was undoubtedly the order to report for the physical. I'm guessing that the next several and either I didn't open them or I just don't remember. But they were probably half threat and half reminder. You know, "you have another chance here coming up and you know you better get down here." As it happened, every violation of the draft law was a separate felony worth five years and ten thousand dollars if you got the max. So failure to appear for the physical was a separate crime all by itself. Failure to carry a draft card, which I had long since ceased to do, actually junior year I made a religious statement out of ... I didn't burn it because it was a windy day and I didn't want to start any fires, but I did tear it up in front of a crowd of people on Good Friday on the steps of the administration building at Notre Dame. Not too dramatic. But, so that ... the not having the card was theoretically a separate offense. The last one was almost certainly an order to report for induction itself because I was deemed by that point to have waived the physical. And I just didn't. And I'm sure I didn't even send that one back I just probably threw it away. But I didn't I didn't appear for it so they got around to noticing that I didn't have the deferment about December.

76 This was about oh, mid April or so when I declined to appear for induction. And then I
discovered that I had been indicted on federal charges when my mother read it in the Richmond
78 newspaper and called to let me know. And I said, "well, you know, we knew this was coming." So at that
time I had three weeks left between me and graduation. And I didn't really want to get pulled out of
80 school three weeks from the end because, again you know I had no money and I was already in debt for
the previous three years and finishing would have been very, very difficult if I hadn't finished at the
82 time. Not perhaps the loftiest of motivations but there it was.

 And so I was in a position to simply drop out of sight for those three weeks. I had a full load, in
84 fact I had more than a full load. At Notre Dame in those days a full load was fifteen hours I had eighteen.
But I didn't have any classes. All of my courses were, we called them directed readings. They were one
86 on one with a professor at your mutual convenient time. So I would meet with each one of them once or
twice a week and I don't think I ever read as much or wrote as much in my life as I did that semester.
88 And so I figured well I would just crash with friends and come out at night and slip my papers under the
professor's office doors and things like that. And just not appear in public.

90 Well it was around that time and, you know, I don't remember how it came about. There had to
be a conversation and I don't remember how it went. But one of my professors, not one of my
92 professors at the time if I'm recalling correctly. I had had his course the year before. He was a historian
named Carl Estabrook. And he basically offered to put me up and nominally hide me out. Not that
94 anybody couldn't have found me if they really wanted to. But enable my dropping out of sight for those
three weeks. And Carl and his wife Lee were really taking a very big risk at the time. This was you know
96 this was harboring a fugitive when you come right down to it. Because I was on the lamb from ... I knew
the F.B.I. would be looking for me. They had come to my parent's house and my parents wouldn't tell
98 them anything. They just said they didn't know where I was, which they didn't! They didn't have any
idea where I was since I was dropped out of sight. But I knew that it could only be a question of time
100 when they figured I might still be in South Bend and come looking for me there. As I say I had three

weeks to go. So Carl and Lee offered to put me up. They had three small kids. And as I say that was quite

102 a risk for them and I will be grateful to them for the rest of my life.