

TAPE 36 SIDE A

N: I forgot where I was but I'm going to keep on going anyway.

R: Who really runs the Navy is what you were talking about.

N: Yes. We put all these people there and we would have weekly meetings. And then I'd say what's happening in training and development? And we'd come together and all of us would talk about where the problems were. And they'd say to me, and my interaction with them was this way and that's the way to do it; they'd discover the problems and they would try to get it solved in their areas and when they couldn't get it solved they came to me. And so each of those weekly meetings that I had I made the point, I'd have them all to breakfast, because that's the one time I could meet with them and have his ear and his ear only.

R: You did have breakfast with him once a week?

N: Yes, that use to be my Tuesday morning breakfast with him, when no one was around but the two of us.

R: At his house?

N: At his house. I'd drive over early in the morning, have breakfast with him right after he finished running, and then we'd drive into work. At that time, as he will tell you, in those early days there was not a second that I wasn't talking. I don't know why we called it breakfast. I never ate anything even though all the food was there. But that was where my time I knew I would be alone with him and get my points and He'd have to accept or reject it on its individual merit and not have to worry about all those people around who were worried about the political implications of what was being done. In the process, I bet you there must have been close to, in that time if I count them out, maybe close to five or six hundred programs that he approved. And I tell you something I never took it to anyone and said Admiral Zumwalt approved this. But what it is is I always knew that I had his acquiescence to what it is I

was trying to do and then what I tried to do was to make the system do it by ~~trying to make them believe~~^{believing} they wanted to do it, always knowing that I had his signature to prove it if I had to get it done.

/R: Were~~x~~^{breakfast} these discussions strictly action sessions or were you able to administer a little education on the ~~side~~ subject to him?

N: I made it a point that everytime I took an issue and the way in which I would do it was that I was explaining what was happening and I made it a point that for that particular time in his life for that period that he understood what was happening to blacks and other minorities in the Navy. They were poignant meetings and I used it as an educational tool as well as anything ~~se~~ else. The thing that made it so good is that he understood it. And the second thing is that I ~~xxx~~ think that his big moment came at which the National Association of Newspaper Publishers--the National Newspaper^{Publishers} Association--at which we arranged that this was his first time that he was going to go public. And in this particular meeting, we made it a point that he was going to go down there and give a major speech on his concepts and feelings ^{about} ~~on~~ the total problem in the Navy. This was down in Atlanta, Georgia. I Blew down there before. We had more minority officers down there at that meeting. And we spent time, there were all kinds of people like George ~~Da~~ Davila and Bob Tony and you name minority officers that I can think about and we had them all down there. Making all the point that most of these people had served in World War II and immediately thereafter, during that period ~~xxx~~^{where} I told you that all they could have to do was a steward, and they know what they went through. And they could see no evidence that the Navy had changed, because all they could see was the black faces replaced by the brown faces~~xx~~ of the Filipino, and blacks still were in demeaning jobs, and they hardly had any officers compared to the other services. So they

couldn't believe that anything had changed. So we were up the halls, down the halls, I was up all night long for 2 nights getting across to the people, let's give ~~them~~^{him} a chance let's hear what ~~they have~~^{he has} to say; the guy is really all right. I mean, we sold him as he as never been sold before in his life, and I was saying, you've got to trust me as a brother, and you know ~~we were~~ everybody who could have something in there. So by the time he came there for that luncheon, if he didn't walk on water he wasn't going to have a chance. Well, he flew down and I met him at the airport, and by the way we were not as close friends at that time as we are now, it was strictly and 100% business. We never had had a conversation because I wouldn't waste it on something personal it was all business and taking care of this kind of issue. And he came down there and he was nervous as hell. Becuase there had never been in the Navy's history where a CNO had gone to talk to, we call them predominantly black groups but this was predominantly minority, I guess there were at that time about 2-300 people there.

R: How can you tell he was nervous, he ~~doesn't~~ doesn't show it too readily ~~it~~ doesn't he?

N: Oh yes he does in some cases ~~he~~ like that, because I could tell by the kinds of questions he was asking me, the kind of insecurity that he had, who was there, what are we going to do next, what happens on the question and answer period, are you going to sit up on the podium with me, you know those kinds of things. And my response was, Admiral you ~~mm~~ just go there and do what you got to do and be honest about it. And so he had a speech that he had worked on and that I knew was the right kind of speech, I knew that it had all the kind of things there and that it was something he believed and was

right. I was not his ordinary kind of speech, and you've probably seen a copy of it, or ~~xxxxxx~~ I'll get you a copy of it. Anyway he went down there and he ~~xx~~ started off; he is a horrible speech-giver when he has to read it, because his best speeches are when he can stand up there and talk to the people, I mean he is unreal. But when he has to sit there and read something, that's not in his words and so on it's very difficult. So I made it a point that I used one of my breakfast ~~xxx~~ meetings to talk about the speech what was in it, he had read it coming down and when he got out and met those people, they were genuinely willing to give him a chance. And I don't know of any time ~~when~~ ^{that} anybody from the Navy, I mean you could tell, the people would come up they wanted to shake his ~~hand~~ hand. Because here was a guy who had issued Z-66, here was a ~~kguy~~ guy who was trying to bring about a humane way for the Navy by reputation and we had added on to it, and furthermore he heard all these black people who said the Navy isn't worth a damn, in private would say but we believe this guy is alright, and we need your support. And he gave it. When ~~he~~ gave that presentation he knew that he had done it because he gave a personal commitment at the end. And it was a story we had thought about, about Hannibal. He talked about Hannibal who had gone around he was getting ready to cross the mountains and he had obstacles on all sides, and he turned to his men, and you know the ~~xxx~~ story that he had, and he said, It is on this wind that we succeed or die, or something like ~~that~~ that. And we made an analogy as to what's happening in the world's ~~xxx~~ society around us. That we've got inequality on one side, and we've got discriminatory practices but we're talking about a Navy that's going to be one Navy and he's given his commitment that either he's going to succeed in

this kind of deal, he considered it as a kind of a do or die type atmosphere, and that's how important it ~~x~~ was to him. And he ~~meant~~^{meant} it, and they knew that he meant it. And it was a thunderous applause. So much so that all of a sudden there wasn't a black, it's kind of funny but I feel kind of choked about it now, and I know it's silly because I'm not usually an emotional kind of individual.

R: There weren't many white faces in the room were there?

N: There were hardly any, except for the whites who came around because the CNO was in town, ~~xxx~~ there were packets of white Naval officers from the local area who were down ~~xxx~~ visiting. And he sat ~~xxx~~ there, and for the firsttime in my life, I felt proud to be in the Navy. We had black officers with tears because it ~~xx~~ was the first time that they thought that they could remember that they felt proud. That they didn't feel they had to apologize for what was happening to the other blacks in the Navy, I mean there might not be many more moments, but that was it. So there was a question~~x~~ ~~xx~~ and answer period, in which some particular vicious questions always come, and by jove he got the carpet treatment because nobody was going to let them come through. In fact when one guy ~~x~~ asked a dirty ~~x~~ question, they asked him the ones that always is meant to trip whites, Admiral you're talking about all these things, but ~~what~~^{when} is true equality of opportunity really going to come to the Navy?- You can't answer that question. And he turned ~~as~~^{around} only the Admiral could do to the minister who had given the invocation and said, Perhaps that question could best be answered by the minister when he can tell us when the true spirit of Christianity is going to permeate this nation. I thought that was right on. And then they asked some others, and I went up there and answered some questions for them and so on.

R: But you didn't get the half a dozen say real militant. . .?

N: Nobody was going to do it because suddenly at that time as only could happen, there was Bob Brown from the President's office, there were all kinds of people, but nobody. . .he at that particular moment became a man that the black community could trust beyond some of the most influential ~~people~~ ~~in~~ people in the black community because they were the opinion makers in the ~~the~~ ~~the~~ minority newspapers. From that moment on that's when the myth and the ~~the~~ reality started getting mixed up, because Admiral Zumwalt ~~became~~ became a superman. And I tell you I did everything I could to try to make him that way, because we needed someone. . .the point that made it ~~difficult~~ difficult is that no one ever expected him to ever compromise on anything. He in effect became a spokesman that black people could believe in, I'm talking about in a limited sense, who was white, who led an institutional framework. So when we ~~we~~ started to increase the number of minorities that came into the Navy; when we started ~~again~~ opening up all the rates and ²waitings of the Navy to ~~manorities~~ ~~tomake~~ certain they were there. To provide greater opportunities. We started going to the predominantly black colleges and universities, we established NROTC units. . .

R: You never had recruited there before?

N: Oh, hell I ~~was~~ went around the campuses and most of the time the Navy was persona non grata, and when we did it ~~we~~ we did it as kind of an aside. Navy's just didn't go there to recruit. Oh they'd go there maybe just one time and look around, but not in a true recruiting. The overwhelming majority, they just never went. I'm talking about the late 1960's, this is where I'm trying to ~~to~~ tell you where the Navy was. And suddenly we had minority officers who had given up their

Navy careers. And I'm talking about right now and ~~they~~^{many of them} haven't had time to get the requisite experience and the history ~~xxx~~ should one day record what some of these people did. But in any event, they gave up their Navy career, and they worked with us and throughout the entire Navy we had minority affairs assistance, we had k people working in these areas, and later on in race relations in which all these people got a way out of the ship driving business, out of the airplane driving business and crammed there and started to work to try to make this Navy change. And I had ~~xxxxx~~ never seen such co-operation in my life.

R: What do you have to say about results in the four years?

N: I can say this much. That real changes took place. The fact is that people came in, that the ratings were open, that we monitored promotions, assignments, everything that was happening to minority officers.

R: Did you change many hearts and minds?

N: No, but the people realized that at the time that it became costly to discriminate, that in terms of promotions and assignments and all the other things. And furthermore they knew that when it came down to the final arbiter in the Navy, to Admiral Zumwalt, that he was going to be on the side of. . . and if we were going to err we were going to err on the side of improving conditions.

R: Do you ~~xxx~~ think you made some institutional changes that cannot be reversed?

N: I think we made some institutional changes that will never be reversed without the Navy being torn asunder. But let me tell you how some people said it fell apart. We always knew that by bringing in a large number of minorities, by getting people spread throughout the number of rates, by taking some chances in this environment.

by having these Minority Affairs Assistants.

R: Was it a question ~~partly~~ of finding Jackie Robinsons, the right kind of guy to break the ice as radar man, or whatever the ratings were that ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ wouldn't get into.

N: No we did that, but at the same time we said that if a person is qualified, we were not looking for supermen. We were looking for people like everyone else who could do the job and so what we started to do is to say that the criteria for minorities ~~in~~ coming into the Navy ~~was~~ no longer had to be that he or she had to be decidedly above the norm. That what they have to do is meet the same norms that other people meet. So we got people who no longer came from the elite sections of the black community ~~and~~ and other minority communities. They came from Watts, they came from the South Side of Chicago, they ~~x~~ came from 14th and U down here in Washington D.C., but you just go all away around from all these minority communities in Harlem and any place else, that's where you start coming from. And so what we started bringing to the Navy was a piece of real American life with all of its problems and everything else. We took whites from Appalachia, you know right across the board. Suddenly the Navy started to grow particularly with ~~Vietnam~~ Vietnam, and we needed manpower and womanpower and all these things to make the Navy very successful. We also knew that these kind of people coming into the Navy. . .
(end side A).

Tape #

Side B

~~the~~

N: That these kinds of men and woman were not going to tolerate the injustices and the prejudices ~~as~~ as people had before. Because now what they're saying is, look Admiral Zumwalt says that there's not going to be any discrimination. And every black knew Z-66 by heart, it was a symbol.

R: Well, but if get a few strict dudes, they're not going to put up with it in any case, regardless of what Z-66 says.

N: But the fact is that you can't give a people who have been held back a little bit of hope and say we're just going to give you part of the pie ~~and~~ when ~~the~~ they know it's all there and belongs to them. And so wherein they might have stood back, Bob, and say, Gosh it's inaccessible; you give them a little ~~a~~ bit and they want all that belongs to them. And so when we started the practice of that the schools were not available in the fleet, or when we brought in some ~~new~~ people just as we brought in whites who came in and may not have been the ~~new~~ mental groups 1 or 2 whatever the Navy has, when we started finding a test like the SBTP that more closely evaluated what blacks were able to do and we started using that to get them into the Navy, suddenly on the ships in which the commanding officers now had a strain, and I admit that we created some strain, because suddenly now it was visible, that if a black was having a problem he was not going to go to his place and feel badly about ^{it} ~~he~~ was going to speak up about it. And not only was he going to speak up about it, he was ~~going~~ going to go to one of these minority affairs assistants and it was going to get out to it and it was going to reflect on the ship. And suddenly we started hearing. Minorities started

coming around and you know whenever you get a you get everything. So we started getting some backlash, and we started getting those other kinds of things. And on ~~thx~~ those ships, and. .

R: It was the bigger ships primarily, wasn't it/?

N: Yes the Navy has been having fights and problems ~~xxxxxx~~ throughout its history, on board ships and off~~xx~~ ships. But what happens is that when 2 whites are fighting on a ship they may do something maybe even one is killed, that's ~~fix~~ fights among drunks and among ~~ix~~ dissident individuals. ^{And} ~~but~~ when blacks do it against blacks, it's the same thing. But if a black does~~x~~ it against a white, or a white against a black it's a racial ~~inx~~ incident even if they were fighting against something as innocuous as someone stepped on his toe and you know those kind of things that happen. But then when you add on that in the Pacific ~~xxx~~ Fleet, the fact that ~~x~~ people were working ~~a~~ 18 hours a day, that they'd been deployed, that they'd been isolated, that tensions are ~~hx hx~~ high, that they aren't getting any time off, and suddenly blacks in particular - you pull into those areas ~~x~~ where they have drugs and all kind of stuff going on,--that we claim that people were not willing to admit. And suddenly you go in there and you've got go back out to sea, back to Vietnam, and most people don't realize that you're working around the ~~xxxxxx~~ clock and ~~kyou're~~ sleeping in ~~xx~~ cubicles wherever you can and suddenly a guy ~~whxxxx~~ who's realizing that all of the blacks are in one section, I mean

at this time on the deck force and so they start saying, look what's happening to me and because the rating system was not fully implemented by which people were spread throughout the ship, suddenly what started happening. . .

R: This was right after the DMZ invasion?

N: That's right and what was happening was that, even though it was happening to other people, it seemed more pronounced to the blacks because they were all relegated to the same sections. And so suddenly you've got these people, they go up to Captain's mast and a black may get a harsher punishment than a white and it builds up. And ~~secondly~~ secondly. . .

R: When people get all~~s~~ steamed up the ~~facts~~ facts don't get in their way an awful lot, is that right?

N: That's right. You've got the other kind in which you've got racist, we've ~~xx~~ still got racist officers in the Navy and so all it takes is one or two to do a number of insensitive things. And then what blacks have always realized, and maybe none have acted upon it, there is one ~~way~~ way that you can get the attention. That is, yell like hell and do something that's going to stop it. And so with these kinds of tensions, and the things that are going on, and by the way it didn't even have to be a racial incident and that's one thing~~s~~ Congressman Hicks never understood the entire time, is that suddenly with the fever and the pitch of everything going on you could have a Kitty Hawk or a Ha_____. But what was always lost in this was that the Navy had over 600 ships in this fleet operating, and given the pace of operation and ~~xx~~ everything that is happening, we had incidents on 3 ships. That's a miracle. I mean I don't think people really understand how miraculous that was that there were only 3 ships.

R: If it had happened right on the ^{dock} ~~xx~~ in San Diego right in front of everybody, probably nobody ever would have known it.

N: That's right, and believe me ~~was~~ what happened I think any logical

individual would call reprehensible. But the point is that you can't blow that and say the entire Navy was in rebellion because it wasn't happening. And I'll tell you what else happened, I'll tell you ~~xxxx~~ about this little network. The reason why it didn't get worse. . .

R: Talk for a minute, before you get to that the fellow I feel the sorriest for in the whole incident, that poor executive officer on the Kitty Hawk.

N: Ben Cloud[?] is a good human being. Ben Cloud is a fine Naval officer. But what happened to Ben Cloud is that he caught that court in a way in which he was asked to be more than the executive officer of the ship. And so what he did is something that anybody can second guess.

R: It was more than asked, it was demanded of him, it was imperative.

N: But what~~the~~ ~~was~~ he was doing in my estimation was something the Navy has never understood. He tried to save a ship and to^{do} his job in the only way in which he knew how, and that was to do - he could have called up the Marines and shot everybody on sight but you know ~~xxx~~ what that would have done. But what Ben Cloud did was to show a ~~xxx~~ little bit of compassion, a little human feeling, and stretched it a little bit in order to save the situation, and it did to it.

R: Did it ruin him?

N: He just got selected for Captain. But for a while, there ~~was~~ were a lot of us who ~~xxx~~ fought ~~xx~~ like hell to save Ben Cloud. I don't think they would have canned him but there was a great deal of disrespect because what ~~x~~ we expect the common approach of the executive officer to be is to stand strong and ~~xx~~ defend the honor and ~~these~~ this sort of thing, but that was an extraordinary situation that ~~re~~

required an extraordinary response in my estimation.

R: The Captain k it all for ~~him~~ himself didn't he?

N: Yes, I think a number of people ~~of~~ did. But let~~me~~ me just say this much about those incidents. What was significant is that the word got out and we could have had a holocaust in the Navy, and I launched a plan called Operation ~~Blue~~ Cool[?]-it by which we got that network together. . .

R: Was that in immediate response to the Kitty Hawk?

N: Yes, and to ~~others~~ so many others, you know you get the word about what's going on on the ships you hear about it in the fleet, and somebody else says, look by~~the~~ jove let's show a solidarity, let's show that we're going to take it, ~~and~~ and all these other things, it doesn't take ~~me~~ much to get these things started.

kR: On the Constellation that was in part the brothers showing solidarity wasn't it?

N: Yes, except that it's unfair. If you look at the pictures of the Constellation and the number of people who fought, everyone started saying, it's the blacks who are doing it. But you look ~~a~~ very closely at what was happening and see if~~y~~ you ~~xx~~ think it was a true racial incident, I mean there were some, but there was a large amount of ineptness that took place there, that in the truer sense that really wasn't a racial incident. It became one because it was made one but it didn't start out that way.

R: You ~~km~~ know one of the funny ~~xxx~~ things that I thought about the reports of those incidents was the untransferrability of ~~a~~ certain kinds of knowledge. These were things that other ~~a~~ sections of the country had gone through almost identically five years before and had worked out techniques of dealing with it. And the Navy never heard of them.

N: That's right, and the Army had already had its ~~big~~ ~~big~~ riots, and the Marine Corps, but no one ever. . .

R: Also some of the ghetto stuff was very similar.

N: That's right, it was a break down of discipline in the Navy but not in the other services.

R: It was also the law enforcement didn't know how to handle it . . .
There were no ~~xxxx~~ techniques for riot control and all those different things that everyone else had gone through.

N: Yes, absolutely. And what I thought was sad ~~about~~ Bob is that ~~it~~ it was very easy to blame this all on Admiral Zumwalt. And they were out to ~~a~~ get him. In fact when ~~they~~^I launched Operation Cool-it, in terms of when I got the word out, and that was just what it was, cool-it. Be cool because there's something big that we can destroy. And it got all out, and people were literally going around ships and units, and I was calling everybody. . .

R: Minority affairs officers and they were going ~~around~~^{around} to the people.

N: That's right, cool-it. I mean, we kept it very quiet. No one knew, ~~it~~^{it} ~~it~~ did not go through one official communication, but there weren't many places around there that word wasn't going out, because it was important. And that was one of the main things that did it to stop it.

R: Did you do this with ~~A~~ Zumwalt's advice and consent too, or did you do this unofficially?

N: I talked to him before I ~~was going to do it~~ did it and told him I was going to do it and that I was going to do it anyway. And I did not ask him I told him that I had already ~~a~~ started it. And I did that so that he could never be accused of having initiated it. But

I felt very strongly about it. Also it had gotten to the place then that I'd been around and all the rest of us had been around, and it wasn't just me I don't want to ~~to~~ tell you that it was me because I could never have done it unless I had all the ~~rest~~ ^{kind} of ~~the~~ people who ~~working~~ were working with me, this informal kind of group and I'll give you the names of those who helped make this ~~xx~~ ~~xx~~ thing happen.

R: There ~~were~~ were white folk in this too?

N: Yes there were whites & we actually had a group of ~~xx~~ whites, because what I'd do is go around the Navy and everytime I found someone who was in a headquarters unit ~~that~~ ^{that} was ^{being} underutilized, that was really bright we recruited them. And even though they're job was this, they ~~were~~ were working with us. And so you had these pockets that were all over everywhere who were working with us, and we'd have the meeting and there would be maybe 30,40,50 people in there and half of them were white.

~~NEW~~

R: How were you able to get through them if not through channels? This is a technical matter.

N: What you do, the informal communications in the Navy has always been more efficacious than anything else. And so the word gets around There's a young guy over here who's a friend, and look he's got him in a job where he is not being fully utilized.

R: No, I'm talking about Operation Cool-it now; how ~~would~~ would you get word of Cool-it out without going through channels?

N: Oh, that's simple. Every command has a Minority Affairs Assistant, so you'd call the Minority /Affairs Assistant on CINCPAC staff, CINCPAC fleet staff, or Atlantic fleet staff, who would in turn get it to those minority affairs assistants. It was through our kind of

channels, who'd telephone somebody else, who'd ~~te~~ telephone somebody else over in Naples who got on this particular ship because we always communicated back and forth every day. As I said, things would happen in the Navy on some particular ~~xx~~ ship, on some particular ~~xx~~ regular ~~day~~ day, in some particular place, and when the Naval investigative service didn't find out about it I could tell you what it was. And I never abused it because I would never compromise one of those individuals, but I could guarantee the authenticity of it. But in any event, that's how we got started and minorities knew that you could see Bill Norman or Norm Johnson or Reeves Taylor, you know all these people doing things but everybody knew that it was happening because it was the CNO. And ~~the~~ the one thing I made it a point, I never the entire time that I was Assistant went over and said the CNO wants this done. I never at any time was any thing else other than a Lieutenant Commander, but what we did was this. I believed in ^{him} ~~xx~~, and that was always important because I had to believe that Admiral Zumwalt was supporting me at all times. And suddenly ~~the~~ the breakfast meetings became other kinds of meetings. And out of this issue came other things and I started getting involved in a broader range of problems. But I always kept this central because even when I became the Assistant for Special Projects and work on the Hill and all these other ~~xx~~ kinds of things I always kept this central.

R: Was your network used at all in identifying the bad guys from the good guys from among the senior officers on this issue?

N: Yes, I knew ^{with} ~~regard~~ ~~xxxx~~ as to what the people would say, Admirals would write letters into Admiral Zumwalt and make all these recommendations, and yet what they actually were doing I'd have ~~xx~~ that kind of ~~message too~~ But what I did I was very careful ~~I never~~

of message too. But what I did, I was very careful. I never and said Admiral Zumwalt this person is a ~~big~~ ~~bigot~~ bigot. One ~~the~~ reason is that I spent half my time doing it that's how many were out there. But what I did after I got to know him very very well, is made it a point that; a). we were very candid with one another and if something comes up I ~~wk~~ would never hesitate to ~~xx~~ tell him simply because I knew that he would take it in the spirit in which I would give it, and that is neither one of us wanted to ~~xx~~ get rid of a person simply because he had these kinds of feelings, but if he was doing things that would limit the individual success, and movement, and promotion and capabilities of individuals than very definitely ~~that~~ that's something you have to ~~xxx~~ consider.

R: I was ~~xxx~~ ^{not} thinking of it in terms of getting rid of anybody I was thinking of in terms of what credibility to put into certain kinds of official's reports, and what kinds of actions ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx-~~ ~~xxxx~~to take to. . .(end side B).