



Interview with **Steve Dunkley**

Date: April 30, 1989

Interviewer: Sam Pollard

Camera Rolls: 2124-2125

Sound Rolls: 258-259

Team: B

Interview gathered as part of ***Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads, 1965-mid 1980s***. Produced by Blackside, Inc. Housed at the Washington University Film and Media Archive, Henry Hampton Collection.

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**Note:** These transcripts contain material that did not appear in the final program. Only text appearing in ***bold italics*** was used in the final version of *Eyes on the Prize II*.

[camera roll #2124]

[sound roll #258]

[wild sound]

00:00:13:00

Interviewer:

Short answers, short and—

Steve Dunkley:

Short, concise answers.

Interviewer:

Correct.

Steve Dunkley:

OK.

[picture resumes]

00:00:15:00

Camera Crew Member #1:

[unintelligible]

Interviewer:

Let's take a deep breath.

[slate]

00:00:29:00

Interviewer:

OK, Steven, tell me what a normal day was usually like at the Houston Induction Center, and what was different about that day when you expected Muhammad Ali to be inducted.

Steve Dunkley:

Well, a typical day would be the arrival of the—

Interviewer:

Sorry, you have to say a typical day at the Houston Induction Center.

00:00:40:00

Steve Dunkley:

A typical day at the Houston Induction Center would be the arrival of the inductees who were gonna be inducted in the Army that day, or the Navy, or the Air Force, or the Marine Corps. They would arrive, and they would be processed through either the testing and the physical area, and also the psychological area. And then they would, depending on their test scores and everything like that, if they were qualified then they would be, the last thing would be the induction ceremony into the armed forces. Then they would leave on their bus and go to Fort Polk, Louisiana or wherever, whichever station that they had been assigned to.

00:01:21:00

Interviewer:

What was different about the day that Ali was gonna come?

00:01:25:00

Steve Dunkley:

Well, the day that Ali came was supposed to be the same, but it turned out to be quite different. It started earlier in the morning. We usually arrive at eight o'clock, but we have to be in the building by six o'clock that day. Colonel McKee asked that we all be in that day. There were several factions that were demonstrating outside the building. There were, the draft card burners, the people, those people, there were the Black Muslims, and there were Ma and Pa Kettle type people whose sons were already in Vietnam. They wanted to have their say. So, you had three factions in front of the building doing what they were, putting forth their beliefs of what they wanted. Then the inductees arrived, and things were different in that we had, since Muhammad Ali had come, was coming that day, we had to set up a press center because the press had descended on the building. Of course it was a, an exciting event. And the, the Department of the Army was watching, and also the, you know, the news media, and magazines, and everybody really wanted to know what was going to happen that day. So, they were all put in a press room. And Muhammad Ali had gone through his pre-induction physical in Memphis and then had transferred to Houston, so he had been totally qualified for induction. He had passed the physical, the testing, the mental testing, and also the psychological testing. He had passed all of those areas, so it was basically he was arriving to go in the service that day. So, he, he arrived. He was very pleasant. Everybody enjoyed working with him. He did exactly as he was asked to do with the group. And first thing he went, was to the testing, and, and we just reviewed his test scores to make sure that nothing had changed there. Then he went to the facility where they do the physicals, and basically all they do is just ask 'em if there's been any change in their physical status from the time that they had their full physical. And of course there was no change there. So, and then they take him to another section, which is psychological testing. That's—be if he had joined, like, you know, the Communist Party or something like that since he had been. Well, he passed all that with flying colors, so then the last part was the induction ceremony. The induction ceremony was held as usual. It was monitored the whole day. There was a direct hotline to the Pentagon USAREC which, every time he would pass a different step then we would, you know, tell the Pentagon where he was in the, in the process. We also told the, the press in the press room that, OK, he had passed the physical part. He had passed this part, etc. So, he was put in a room with all the other inductees. The, and I was the induction officer in that I call their name and ask them to step forward. That step that they take forward constitutes the induction into the US Army.

00:04:35:00

Interviewer:

Can we cut a second? That was good.

Steve Dunkley:

OK.

Interviewer:

That was good. We're gonna break it down now, so you—

[cut]

[wild sound]

Interviewer:

All right. OK. Let's say both.

Steve Dunkley:

Well, there was also the demonstrations in the front.

Interviewer:

Yeah, let's hold off on that for a second. Let's leave that, let's leave that out of this version.

Steve Dunkley:

OK.

[picture resumes]

00:04:54:00

Camera Crew Member #1:

This is take twenty-three.

[slate]

Interviewer:

Are you ready, [unintelligible]?

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yes.

00:05:02:00

Interviewer:

You, you told me what a normal day was like in Houston—at the Houston Induction Center. What was different about the day when Muhammad Ali was gonna come?

Steve Dunkley:

The day that Muhammad Ali came was definitely different. There was a direct line set up—

Interviewer:

I need you to say, "Muhammad Ali, Muhammad Ali came to the induction center..."

00:05:17:00

Steve Dunkley:

The day that Muhammad Ali came to the induction center was different from other days in that there was a direct line set up from the Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Station in Houston to the Pentagon so that they could monitor his progression all the way through the induction ceremony. They, every time he would pass, like, the physical section or the psychological section then we would, it was a—the line was open the whole day, we would tell them what, what was going on. In addition to that, the press room, which had been set up, either Colonel McKee or one of the people would go in and say what status that he was in, during the day so that they would know what was going on. And then they could release news releases that he had passed his physical, and now he was moving into psychological testing or whatev—what it might be. And then just before he went into the, the ceremony, we told him that he was going in to do the ceremony. And then after the ceremony, he all, we also went in and told them that, too.

00:06:25:00

Interviewer:

What did you feel? How did you feel that day? I mean you must have been pretty excited. What was your, what was going on inside of you that day? I mean, you, you had said you got there at six o'clock in the morning. What was it like? How did you feel about that day?

00:06:36:00

Steve Dunkley:

Well, it was not the regular, you know, go to work day. It was a special day, and it was exciting because of the, the press and also the, the Pentagon looking on what was going on. We processed everything as usual. We went exactly by the book to make sure that ev—you know, all regulations were taken care of. We did have to take care of the press people, and of course there was some activity outside the building. We had to monitor that. The building was, like, guarded, and everybody who went in and out that day was checked very

thoroughly where usually it's, you know, quite open. You know? You can, you could come and go as you pleased. Not that day. Things were pretty well nailed down. It was an exciting day. It was, it was one of those special days in your life that, you know, you only have now and then.

00:07:26:00

Interviewer:

OK, let's cut. I want to try it again.

Steve Dunkley:

What, what was take one through twenty-two?

[cut]

Camera Crew Member #1:

Five, four, three, two, one.

Interviewer:

[laughs]

Camera Crew Member #1:

This is take twenty-four.

Interviewer:

Now, you see how they do it in movies.

Steve Dunkley:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

This is exactly how they do it.

Steve Dunkley:

Yeah, I've seen this part in Johnny Carson's show.

[slate]

Interviewer:

OK. Ready?

00:07:47:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yes.

00:07:51:00

Interviewer:

OK, Steven, tell me again about what was different about that day when Ali was gonna be inducted in the Houston Induction Center?

00:07:58:00

Steve Dunkley:

What was different about the day that Ali was gonna be inducted in the Houston Center was that we were asked to be there two hours early. We were, had to be in the building by six o'clock that morning. That was mainly for our protection, and also because of the factions that were expected to materialize, materialize outside, which they did. Then also we had to set up a press room to give releases on exactly what Muhammad Ali, where he was in the induction process. And also we had a direct line open to the Pentagon where we could give them the steps that he was going through toward induction.

00:08:40:00

Interviewer:

OK. And how'd you feel that day? What was the feeling?

Steve Dunkley:

Oh, it was a super exciting day.

Interviewer:

Start again. I ta—I jumped on top of you.

00:08:46:00

Steve Dunkley:

Oh, it was a, it was an exciting day because he was a very, or he, you know, was a very famous guy coming up there. There was a lot of controversy. It was being monitored by the Pentagon. The press people were there. And of course the factions were demonstrating and doing their thing outside. So, it was not the typical day where you arrive at eight o'clock, and process the inductees, and put 'em on the bus, and go home. You know? It, it wasn't that type day.

00:09:14:00

Interviewer:

What was happening outside the induction center? Who was demonstrating? What kind of people were out there demonstrating?

00:09:19:00

Steve Dunkley:

Basically the building was sealed off so that they would have to stay outside. There were three groups outside. You had the Black Muslim people who were there. They were very concerned that, you know, he was a minister and what his status was going to be. You had the group of, I, I, I, you'd have to say draft card burners.

[rollout on camera roll]

[wild sound]

Steve Dunkley:

Those, those type people. Hippies, beatniks, et cetera like that.

00:09:48:00

Interviewer:

We gotta cut.

[cut]

[camera roll #2124]

Camera Crew Member #2:

OK.

[slate]

Interviewer:

You ready?

00:10:04:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Ready.

00:10:05:00

Interviewer:

OK, Steven, can you tell me, describe the scene outside the induction center the day of Ali's induction.

00:10:11:00

Steve Dunkley:

The day of Ali's induction, it was a special day. We arrived earlier, and there were three factions, we arrived early, around six o'clock. There were three factions outside. You had the Black Muslims, which were concerned with his religious beliefs and that they be respected and everything like that. And so they were doing their thing. Then you had the draft card burners, which we referred to as like the long-haired hippy dope fiends, and they were burning flags and draft cards, and demonstrating, yelling and everything out there, protesting the war in Vietnam. And then you had really kind of the mom and pops. These were basically parents of sons that were in Vietnam already, and they were there basically watching and seeing what was going on. And so all three factions were kind of intermixing, and they had, all had their specific territories staked out in front of the induction building.

00:11:08:00

Interviewer:

OK, good. Lets, take me through Ali's day at the induction center. What, what happened? What happened when he got there? What was the procedure?

Steve Dunkley:

He arrived with the other—

Interviewer:

Say, "Ali..."

00:11:20:00

Steve Dunkley:

Oh, Muhammad Ali arrived with the other pre-inductee people, and he, the first place he was taken into a room with the rest of 'em. And he was given an orientation on what was gonna happen that day. And then the first thing, they went up, and they, to the places, place where we give the physicals on the fourth floor. He was basically asked if there had been any change in his physical status from the last time that he had gotten his full physical. 'Cause, see, he was there to, to go in the Army, and they were just checking about that period from his, you know, pre-induction physical to where, where he was now. Then he went to psychological testing and to check and make sure that he hadn't joined any subversive groups at the time, which were available and operating. Then also the, they reviewed his test scores and everything. And after he completed all that part, then it was time for the induc— induction ceremony. And do you want me to go into the induction ceremony at the...?

00:12:19:00

Interviewer:

Yeah, tell me—

Steve Dunkley:

OK.

Interviewer:

—you were the induction officer.

00:12:22:00

Steve Dunkley:

I was the induction officer. We carried on just like it is always carried on, exactly by the book. There's Army regulations that say exactly how it's to be done. Basically they're all brought in, lined up in rows in, in the induction room. Then myself as the processing officer came in, and I te—would tell them that the, the induction ceremony consists of two parts. The first part is we call their name, and then they take a step forward. And that step forward constitutes their induction in the United States Army. Then after that, then they raise their right hand, and they're sworn in with the oath, oath of allegiance to the US Army, and the

country, and everything. So, I started down through the group. And it goes alphabetical. When I got down, I said, "Muhammad Ali," and he didn't do anything. And so then I said, "Cassius Clay," because we weren't really sure if he had changed his name legally. The draft board said that he had changed it, and his legal name was Muhammad Ali. But we weren't really sure, so we, we checked to make sure there wasn't a technical problem there. And he did not step forward. So, at that time, Lieutenant Hartman, who was the XO of the induction center, plus Captain Hall, they took him out. And they, into another room, and they advised him of his rights. That it was a ten-thousand dollar fine and five years in the federal penitentiary for refusing induction in the armed forces. And asked him if he was clear on this, and he said yes, he was. So, then in the meantime, I had finished the, the ceremony for the rest of 'em, and they had all been sworn, sworn in. And they left. Then we brought just him back in. It was Lieutenant Hartman, Colonel McKee, and myself doing this ceremony, and also Captain Hall, who was the psychologist. And I, again, called his name, and he did not step forward. And so we advised him that he had not stepped forward, and he, you know, had not taken induction in the Army that day and that he was free to go. Where the rest of 'em had got on the bus, and they were heading to Fort Polk, Louisiana. Then we advised him that we had set up a press room, which we told him earlier that day that we had set up a press room. We asked him, did he want to go to the press room and talk to those people, or did he want out of the induction station by a, a back-door where he wouldn't have to worry about any, any problems. And he said he wanted to go to the press room. So, then Colonel McKee went to the press room and told them that Muhammad Ali would be down there shortly and to, you know, get ready, and that he had in fact refused induction in the United States Army.

00:15:23:00

Interviewer:

Good. Let's cut. Very good. That was very good. Very good.

[cut]

[wild sound]

Steve Dunkley:

You tryin' to do stereo.

Camera Crew Member #1:

Take twenty-six.

Camera Crew Member #2:

Turned it down when he slammed the door outside.

Steve Dunkley:

There's only one microphone. How can you have a stereo?

Camera Crew Member #1:

[laughs] Hearing you from both tracks.

Steve Dunkley:

From both tracks with one microphone? [laughs]

Camera Crew Member #2:

[laughs]

Interviewer:

No. The tape itself has two.

Steve Dunkley:

Oh.

Camera Crew Member #1:

[laughs]

[cut]

[sound roll #259]

[slate]

00:15:58:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

[unintelligible]

00:16:00:00

Interviewer:

OK. Steven, as the inductees walked into the room, since you were the induction officer, and you saw Muhammad Ali coming in, what were your feelings about the fact that he might not step forward that day? What was going on in your mind?

Steve Dunkley:

Well, as the inductees walked into the room, in my mind I was thinking, Well, there's been a lot of rumors that he's not going to—

Interviewer:

Can you say, again, "As the inductees walked into the room, and Muhammad Ali was among them..."

00:16:21:00

Steve Dunkley:

Yeah, as the inductees walked into the room, and Muhammad Ali was among them, I thought about all the rumors that I had heard that he was not gonna do it, that he was gonna refuse based on that he was a religious, purposes that he was a Black Muslim minister. So, they, they came in. They all lined up and everything, and I called the names. I looked at him when I called Muhammad Ali, and I thought, Is he really going to do it? Is he really going to do it? So, I said, "Muhammad Ali." And I looked at him, and he just stood there. And then I said, "Cassius Clay." And he just stood there. And so then at that time, I, I decided, Well, he's serious about this. He's going to do it. So, at that time, Lieutenant Hartman and Captain Hall, you know, took him from the room. I went ahead and finished the ceremony for the rest of 'em. The other inductees that were, were doing it were intrigued by the fact that, you know, they had taken the step forward and said, "Yes, sir," is what they do. They have to take a step forward, "Yes, sir." And then that meant that they were in. You know, and, and they were all also wondering what, what was gonna happen that day, too.

00:17:36:00

Interviewer:

You had just said to me, I mean, when, before we started rolling, you had said you know, there's always that moment where a person could have just said, I was gonna do it. I mean, could you—

00:17:46:00

Steve Dunkley:

Yes, when it got down to that actual moment where it was just Mu—me calling his name, saying, "Muhammad Ali," I thought, you know, I thought, Is he, or is he not going to do it? You know, it was just, there was that moment of indecision. He could have stepped forward, and the whole thing would have been, you know, totally different. Everything would have

turned out different. But he had, evidently he had already made his decision, but I didn't know it until I actually called his name and looked him in the eye whether or not he was going to do it.

00:18:20:00

Interviewer:

What happened after you called his name?

00:18:21:00

Steve Dunkley:

After I called his name, and I said, "Muhammad Ali," he did not step forward. Then I said, "Cassius Clay." He did not step forward. Then Captain Hall and Lieutenant Hartman took him from the room to the, an adjacent room and advised him of his rights. I went on and finished the rest of 'em because I was down to M's, Muhammad Ali, and it was in alphabetical order. I finished that, and then I swore in the other guys that were in the group. And then they were taken out to be held so that they could go on the bus to Fort Polk, Louisiana that night. Then we brought Muhammad Ali back in the room, and I went through the whole thing again, and called his name, and gave him a second chance. He did not step forward. I called "Cassius Clay," and he did not step forward. So, then I knew he was serious. So, then we counseled him that he was free to go and that a press room had been set up, and that we had been telling the press what was going on through the whole time. And we'd also been telling the Pentagon was going on at the, all the time during this. And we asked him at that time did he want to go to the press room and, and, and, and talk to the reporters, and do whatever he wanted to do there, or did he wanna be let out by a backdoor of the induction center where he could leave without having problems. And he elected to go to the press room.

00:19:47:00

Interviewer:

Let's cut. Yeah.

[cut]

[wild sound]

Interviewer:

'67. April '67. April 28th—

Steve Dunkley:

It's just a couple days, yeah.

Interviewer:

That's right.

Steve Dunkley:

A couple days, it was the anniversary of it.

[picture resumes]

00:20:03:00

Camera Crew Member #1:

This is take twenty-seven.

[slate]

00:20:17:00

Interviewer:

OK, Steven, tell me about how you felt that day, the day that Ali was expected to be inducted at the Houston Induction Center.

00:20:23:00

Steve Dunkley:

Well, the day—the way I felt the day that Muhammad Ali was coming up was that it was definitely gonna be a different day at, at work that day. We were asked to be there early at six o'clock in the morning to avoid any problems with the people we were expecting to demonstrate out front. So, we were all in. We fortified the, the induction center and monitored who came in and out. We knew that the whole thing was gonna be monitored from the Pentagon, a direct phone line the whole day of all of his activities. We were ba—a lot of the, the guys who worked at the center were fans of Muhammad Ali. You know? He was the heavyweight champion of the world, and he was coming that day. And it's not every day you get somebody like that come through the induction center, so we were excited about that.

[rollout on camera roll]

[wild sound]

Steve Dunkley:

We knew that the press—

00:21:11:00

Interviewer:

We ran out. Stop.

Steve Dunkley:

OK. I didn't get to the press part!

Interviewer:

Yeah.

[cut]

[camera roll #2026]

00:21:21:00

Camera Crew Member #1:

Take twenty-eight.

[slate]

00:21:33:00

Interviewer:

OK, Steven, what was Colonel McKee's instructions to you men the day, the day at the induction center?

00:21:39:00

Steve Dunkley:

Well, we had to, the instructions from Colonel McKee the, the day of the induction were that we had to arrive there at six o'clock. And shortly thereafter, we had a meeting that outlined the plans for the day. We were told that we were to do everything exactly by the book. In fact, we reviewed the documentation from the Department of the Army, exactly how things are to be done. And we made sure that everything was exactly by the book that day. No

deviation whatsoever because we knew that were definitely gonna be monitored by the Department of the Army, the Pentagon, and also the press. So, we didn't want any slip ups that day.

00:22:21:00

Interviewer:

Slip ups why?

00:22:23:00

Steve Dunkley:

Well, because there was so many people watching that we wanted everything exactly by the book, that there wouldn't be any technicalities. You know, that, that were wrong that we had done something wrong as far as the induction ceremony or the, or the processing, or whatever. So, we went exactly by the regulations as set down by the Selective Service System in the Department of the Army.

00:22:42:00

Interviewer:

If you can give me your answer again and just say, include because Muhammad Ali was gonna be inducted that day.

Steve Dunkley:

Yeah. Because Muhammad Ali was going to be inducted—

Interviewer:

No, if you could just say, "We would be doing everything exactly by the book because..."

00:22:55:00

Steve Dunkley:

Oh. That particular day, we were making sure that we did everything exactly by the book because Muhammad Ali was going to be inducted that day. We wanted to make sure that everything went exactly by the book and very smoothly, mainly 'cause we had a lot of people watching. We had the press watching. We had the direct line to the Department of the Army and to the Pentagon. So, we wanted to make sure everything went correctly that day.

00:23:22:00

Interviewer:

Great. Let's cut.

[cut]

[wild sound]

Steve Dunkley:

He had his religious beliefs.

Interviewer:

Yeah, so if you can s—

00:23:29:00

Steve Dunkley:

Don't roll this, but really—I'm not convinced today that he, that he really believed. I'm really not convinced. I think that the lawyers and the people used it to, to get out of that. And I think that if he had gone in—gosh, Elvis Presley made two movies while he was in there. You know?

00:23:47:00

Interviewer:

Why don't you give me that piece? Elvis Presley was—

Steve Dunkley:

[laughs]

Interviewer:

He could be in, he could have went to boot camp. He wouldn't have saw any, any, any, any service in Vietnam.

00:23:55:00

Steve Dunkley:

Well, see, but I can't, I can speak for me as a, as a person what I think. But I can't say what the Department of the Army would have, would have done with him. But I know that how those people are handled, you know. Presley, Presley, you know, went to Germany.

00:24:13:00

Interviewer:

That's right.

00:24:14:00

Steve Dunkley:

And, and he was in twenty-two months. During the, the time when he was on his month leave, you know, he, he made a, a movie. And then on his last one, he went over there to Hawaii and made another movie, you know, on his way back. And, and so I, I don't think he saw a lot of gunfire. I don't think Pre—he, he was, he wasn't in Vietnam or anything like that.

00:24:37:00

Interviewer:

No, he wasn't. He—

00:24:38:00

Steve Dunkley:

I think Elvis Presley would have, I mean Muhammad Ali would have been in Special Forces. And I think that he would have ended up being like the coach of the boxing team or something like that. They would have run him through boot camp and, and done all that. But he would have gotten a, a Germany assignment or something like that. They wouldn't send him to Vietnam or something like that.

00:24:56:00

Interviewer:

All right. Let's get that.

Camera Crew Member #1:

Special Services, not Special Forces.

Steve Dunkley:

Yeah, Special Services.

Camera Crew Member #1:

That branch is Special Services.

Interviewer:

That's right.

Steve Dunkley:

Special Services, yeah. Special Forces is, is—

Camera Crew Member #2:

He wasn't a green beret.

Steve Dunkley:

No. [laughs] No, [unintelligible] I said the wrong thing.

Camera Crew Member #2:

What that would've been was called special forces, was for—

Interviewer:

OK. Were you in the service?

Camera Crew Member #2:

Mm-hmm.

Camera Crew Member #1:

OK, we can roll?

Camera Crew Member #2:

Shall we?

[picture resumes]

00:25:19:00

Camera Crew Member #1:

Go do your, your countdown, we're ready. This is take twenty-nine.

[slate]

00:25:32:00

Interviewer:

As, as Ali walked out of the induction center, Steven, what was, what were your thoughts about what he had done? You know, in terms of refusing induction. What did—and if he had not refused induction, what, what did you think?

Steve Dunkley:

Well, as he walked out of the center, I, I was saddened because I—

Interviewer:

Say “Ali.” I’m sorry.

00:25:52:00

Steve Dunkley:

Muhammad Ali, as Muhammad Ali walked out of the center, my thoughts were that he had done the wrong thing. I felt that if he would have taken induction they would have put him in Special Services. He probably would have ended up like coaching the boxing team or something like that. Or like Elvis Presley was, assigned to a special unit in Germany or something like that. I believe, I’m not positive, but I think Elvis Presley made two movies while he was in the service. And so I think Muhammad Ali probably a couple of fights would have been arranged, and also he wouldn’t have been stripped of his title as heavyweight champion of the world. So, I felt that he should have taken induction and that he should have served his country, and that he should have, that he would have been treated fairly by the US Army. I really do. I think he made a mistake.

00:26:44:00

Interviewer:

Cut.

Camera Crew Member #1:

Did you want to ask him about why the Pentagon had that phone?

[cut]

Camera Crew Member #1:

This is take thirty.

[slate]

Interviewer:

You ready?

00:27:01:00

Camera Crew Member #2:

Yes.

00:27:03:00

Interviewer:

OK, Steven, take me through Ali's day at the induction center, beginning with, with when he arrived, where did he go, and what was happening.

00:27:11:00

Steve Dunkley:

Muhammad Ali arrived that day with all the other people that were set for induction that day. First place they went is to the physical section, which was upstairs. They went up there to check and see, they had been given previously a full physical and so from the time that the physical was to the, to, to today, the day that they were going to be inducted in the Army, we had to ascertain if there had been any changes in their physical status. There hadn't been any change in his. The next thing was the psychological testing section. He went in there, and Captain Hall checked, we had a DZ Form 214, I believe, which was basically have you joined any subversive organizations or anything. And he hadn't joined the Communist Party or anything since he had been checked on that before. And then the third thing that, where he went, his test scores were reviewed to make sure that he was qualified intellectually to serve in the armed forces. And he had passed the test before, so he was qualified, and there was no change, you know, in his status there. So, therefore passing all three of those categories then he was ready for the induction ceremony.

00:28:23:00

Interviewer:

What happened with the, the exact, we need the actual induction? Give me that story again, that he—

Steve Dunkley:

The actual induction—

Camera Crew Member #1:

Can you start over?

00:28:32:00

Steve Dunkley:

What happened at the actual induction ceremony was that *Muhammad Ali and the people who were to be inducted that day came in*. We had this induction ceremony room that had like a podium in it. They were lined up in front of the podium. And then I came in and got, stood up on the podium and basically told them that they were there for induction into the Armed Forces of the United States. *I explained to them that as I call their name, they would take a step forward, and that step forward would constitute their induction in the US Army. OK, so then I started down through the list starting with the A's. You know, the Army always starts with the A's and ends with the Z's. So, I started with the A's. And when I got down to the M's, Muhammad Ali, I said, "Muhammad Ali." I looked him in the eye, wondering if he was going to do it. And he didn't do anything. Then I called "Cassius Clay." And he didn't do anything, 'cause we wanted to make sure that the name was correct that we were calling.* At that time, Captain Hall and Lieutenant Hartman took him from the room to advise him of his rights. I continued on with the ceremony, and the rest of the gentlemen in the room took the step forward, became part of the US Army. Then I did the raise the right hand and swore, and swore them into the United States Army. And then they left. Then we brought Muhammad Ali back in after he had been advised of his rights, and then called his name again. I looked him in the eye again and said, "Muhammad Ali." And he stood there. And then I said, "Cassius Clay." And he stood there. And then we told him that we, he was free to go, that he had in fact refused induction in the United States Army, and he was free to go. At that time, we asked him if he wanted to go to the press room and talk to the press because we had a large room full of people that, movie cameras, and, and newspaper people that were, wanted to talk to him and, and get his thoughts, and his feelings, and why he had done what he had just done. Or if he wanted to quietly leave by a back entrance that we had. And he said that he wanted to go to the press room and talk to the press people. He had a prepared press release that was typed out that he had been carrying through all the, the processing. And he took it out of this briefcase and gave it out to all the, the people in the press room. And which basically gave his reasons for refusing induction. That, that he was a

Muslim minister, and therefore was not, was exempt from serving in the United States Army or the Armed Forces of the United States.

00:31:24:00

Interviewer:

Great. Cut. Good.

[cut]

[end of interview]

00:31:29:00

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