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Obesity and the American Dream

Robot dogs on a mission

The East-West chef who loves sundaes

A black and white photograph of a hand holding a lit matchstick. The matchstick is lit, with a bright flame at the tip. The background is dark and out of focus, showing the faint outline of a person's face.

crisis of conscience

In the 1960s, Yale's chaplain turned the campus into a center of draft resistance and was indicted for conspiracy. But he never lost his job.



William Sloane Coffin Jr. (right),
chaplain of Yale, in 1970.



crisis . of conscience

Warren Goldstein '73, '83PhD

William Sloane Coffin Jr. turned Yale into a center of Vietnam draft resistance. Most remarkable was that the university let him do it.

In 1958, Yale president A. Whitney Griswold appointed a new university chaplain who was, by his pedigree, a thoroughgoing Old Blue. A third-generation Yale undergraduate and third-generation Bonesman, he had prepped at Andover, served in World War II, and studied at the Yale Divinity School. By all outward appearances, William Sloane Coffin Jr. '49, '56BDiv, should have slid



William Sloane Coffin Jr. (center) and playwright Arthur Miller (right) drew a crowd of 5,000 to the New Haven Green in March 1968 for a rally to protest the war in Vietnam and endorse Eugene McCarthy for the Democratic presidential nomination.

smoothly into office without rippling the surface of Yale culture. Instead, during his 17 years as chaplain, Coffin became the most controversial Yale figure of the twentieth century.

Coffin made aggressive, imaginative use of his position as university chaplain, turning the genteel Battell Chapel pulpit into a national platform for a deeply liberal, morally urgent religious commitment to civil rights and draft resistance. In television appearances and radio programs, at prep school lecterns and college pulpits, Coffin preached a witty, quotable, provocative, and joyful Christianity. His photogenic and, more importantly, telegenic good looks—his handsome, square-jawed face, horn-rimmed glasses, slightly receding hairline, and athletic build—became fixtures in American media during the 1960s. *Life* magazine called him one of the “Red Hot Hundred” in a special 1962 issue on “The Take-Over Generation”; the *New York Times Magazine* ran an admiring profile called “God and That Man at Yale.” With a knack for stirring up controversy, Coffin created news. He led a dangerous Freedom Ride in May 1961, the first to include Northern whites; he was arrested in civil rights protests at Baltimore in 1963 and St. Augustine, Florida, in 1964.

Many Yale graduates more conservative than Coffin found his willingness to plunge the university into

politics appalling. More than a few called for his ouster. Fortunately for Coffin, the two presidents he served during his tenure as chaplain—Griswold ’29, ’33PhD, and Kingman Brewster Jr. ’41—protected him despite their differences with him.

“You know, Bill,” Griswold once suggested to him, “you may well someday find that this place is just a little too dull for you.” It was a hint, but, Coffin said years later, he didn’t recognize it as a hint. (“I hastened to reassure him that I found it very interesting,” he remembered.) After Griswold’s death in 1963, Brewster’s tolerance allowed Coffin and his office to become one of the key centers of antiwar and antidraft protest in the country. Coffin and Yale attracted an enormous amount of attention, positive as well as negative, from politicians, the media, college students, clergy and laity nationwide, and, of course, Yale alumni.

THE DRAFT AND THE RESISTERS

Coffin became heavily involved in antiwar activity first in early 1966 through Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam (CALCAV), which he helped to create. For a year and a half he alternated between lament about the conduct of the Vietnam War (“we have resorted to indiscriminate killing”) and a growing anger at “the sickening syrup of the President’s [Johnson’s] pietistic self-righteousness.”

For Coffin and his religious colleagues, civil disobedience in opposition to the war came slowly at first. Draft law was federal law, and draft resistance could land violators in federal prison. Moreover, civil disobedience during wartime would expose protesters to the charge of treason and to the Communist label. Nevertheless, Coffin’s personal path and the choices of a growing sector of the antiwar movement were beginning to converge on the issue of the draft.

As the war widened, the Johnson administration expanded the draft dramatically. In 1963 the army inducted on average 10,000 men a month. By the second half of 1967 it was 34,000. As draft calls and inductions escalated, more and more potential draftees applied for conscientious objector status; some refused induction and went to jail; some left the country. In an only partially organized manner, a number began sending back their draft cards.

Like most of the adults who helped young men grappling with the draft, Coffin became enmeshed in their struggle out of admiration for their courage and a sense of obligation to the younger generation. By virtue of his chaplaincy, he also became their unofficial pastor—the country’s key religious figure on the draft and the one most trusted by young men opposed to the war. Critics called him a Pied Piper, leading youth to legal slaugh-

ter; but it is more accurate, as journalist Jessica Mitford argued a quarter of a century ago, to think of Coffin and fellow adult antiwar activists as led by the young.

In March 1967, leaders of the loose-knit network of draft resisters becoming known as “the Resistance” had begun organizing toward a national antidraft action on October 16. In Boston, for instance, Harvard graduate students Michael Ferber and Bill Dowling got together with Alex Jack, a graduate student at Boston University, and began talking about a local action then. Their little band grew to seven or eight, and their organizing efforts took off. As Ferber (who taught English at Yale from 1975 to 1982) reflected several years later, “Proof that individuals make history only when history is ready to be made seemed to grow daily, as only half a dozen of us easily galvanized a dozen organizations and five thousand people into action for October 16.”

As student activists organized, their elders wrote declarations. “Throughout the country that spring, a thousand statements bloomed,” according to Ferber and Yale professor Staughton Lynd in a 1975 book, “declarations, manifestoes, calls for support, confessions of ‘complicity,’ and appendices to We Won’t Go Statements.... Everyone was confused, not least the resisters who were the intended beneficiaries of all the verbiage: there seemed to be as many drafts as draftees.” By the summer, Coffin and his CALCAV colleague, Lutheran minister Richard Neuhaus, had outlined a statement of their own supporting the resisters and pledging their own violation the selective service law: “We hereby counsel, aid, and abet these men in their decision to refuse service in the armed forces,” the statement read, “knowingly violating Section 12 of the Selective Service Act of 1967, and thereby risk the same penalties they risk. If these men are arrested for failing to comply with the law that violates their consciences, we too must be arrested, for in the sight of that law we are now as guilty as they.”

Hunting for adult supporters of the Resistance, writer Mitchell Goodman visited Coffin in late September. Coffin had already suggested in a televised debate that young men resisting the draft hold a mass rally to turn in their draft cards. Now, he came up with the idea of collecting the draft cards turned in on October 16 and handing them over to the Justice Department around the time of a big march on the Pentagon scheduled for October 21. Goodman took on the organizing work.

On October 2 Coffin chaired the press conference at the New York Hilton that formally released the one draft resistance manifesto that had emerged pre-eminent from all the rest: “A Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority,” drafted at the Institute for Policy Studies, a liberal think tank. With its 320 signatures of emi-

nent intellectuals and a press conference speakers’ list that included Noam Chomsky, Robert Lowell, and Benjamin Spock ’25, the “Call” made a national splash in the media. Coffin made his own splash—for Yale, it was more like exploding a bombshell—when he offered Battell Chapel “as a sanctuary from police action for any Yale student conscientiously resisting the draft.”

Brewster quickly summoned Coffin to explain himself to the Yale Corporation. (Later, Coffin vaguely recalled meeting with some Corporation and alumni types “and letting them blow off some steam before they went over to Mory’s” and congratulated themselves on having “told off” the chaplain.) Brewster’s follow-up letter on behalf of the Corporation went through four drafts by the next day, gradually becoming more critical. Aghast at the idea of Battell becoming a resisters’ sanctuary (a term that had had no legal standing since the twelfth century), Brewster noted pointedly that

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“Battell Chapel as a University building is ultimately the responsibility of the President and Fellows [of the Corporation].” Deeply skeptical of the “propriety” of an older person urging draft resistance on younger men, Brewster added his “very real doubt about the propriety of urging or exploiting conscientious objection for political ends,” and repeatedly attacked Coffin’s interest in “dramatic potentialities for public effect.”

As October rolled on, Coffin was constantly in the press. He made news on October 13 by meeting with undergraduate leaders and Yale divinity students and asking them to consider turning in their draft cards in Boston. “This was no pressure I put on them,” the *Times* quoted him. “It’s my job as chaplain to raise issues that are issues. I called them in simply to point out that civil disobedience is a possibility they must face.” That his

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remarks could be considered disingenuous evidently did not occur to Coffin.

Then, on October 16, came the Resistance rally—5,000 strong—on the Boston Common. After the speeches, clergy and Resistance members led the crowd into the Arlington Street Church, where 214 resisters handed their cards to Coffin and other clergy and 67 burned them. (Coffin himself opposed card burning, considering it “an unnecessarily hostile act.”) That night on NBC’s evening news, as Coffin remembered it, anchor John Chancellor remarked, “If men like this are beginning to say things like this, I guess we had all better start paying attention.”

On the morning of Friday, October 20, Coffin, Mitchell Goodman, and hundreds of protesters from all over the country gathered in front of the Justice Department to turn in the cards. Norman Mailer was at the rally that took place beforehand; he saw in Coffin the young executive’s “flint of the eye, single-mindedness in purpose, courage to bear responsibility, that same hard humor about the details in the program under consideration, that same suggestion of an abso-

Coffin turned in 214 draft cards to the Justice Department. He opposed draft card burning, considering it “an unnecessarily hostile act.”

lute lack of humor once the line which enclosed his true WASP temper had been breached.” But Mailer also gave Coffin the highest praise he could offer, calling him “one full example of the masculine principle at work in the cloth.”

Coffin’s speech was as good as any he had given in a secular setting. He had worked on his rhetorical flourishes—“in our view it is not wild-eyed idealism but clear-eyed revulsion that brings us here”—but stayed focused on the consciences of the resisters: “We admire the way these young men who could safely have hidden behind exemptions and deferments have elected instead to risk something big for something good. We admire them and believe theirs is the true voice of America, the vision that will prevail beyond the distortions of the moment.” Almost parentally, he confessed, “We cannot shield them. We can only expose ourselves as they have done.”

Then Coffin and ten others (including the late R.W.B. Lewis of Yale) entered the Justice Department to turn over the cards: the culmination of a series of public acts of civil disobedience through “aiding and abetting.”

Saturday brought events planned by other organizers—a demonstration by 50,000 people at the Lincoln Memorial and, later, 30,000 for Abbie Hoffman’s “levitation of the Pentagon,” in which police and protesters clashed violently. (Coffin had left for New Haven by then.) Activist David Dellinger ’36 said at the rally: “This is the beginning of a new stage in the American peace movement in which the cutting edge becomes active resistance.”

BREWSTER AND COFFIN AT YALE

The largest single group of draft cards Coffin had brought to the Justice Department came from Yale: approximately 25 from divinity students, 16 from other students, and 6 from faculty. FBI agents were on the campus by Monday, interviewing students who had turned in their cards and stirring the indignation of others. At the Divinity School, students posted a sign quoting Proverbs 25:17. “Dear FBI,” it said, “Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor’s house, lest he become weary of you and despise you.” Divinity dean Robert Clyde Johnson promised to tell agents that they were trespassing on school grounds and invite them to leave. Law professors, including Dean Louis Pollak ’48LLB, advised students they were “under no obligation to say anything to the FBI agents.” Now the Yale campus joined Coffin on the national news.

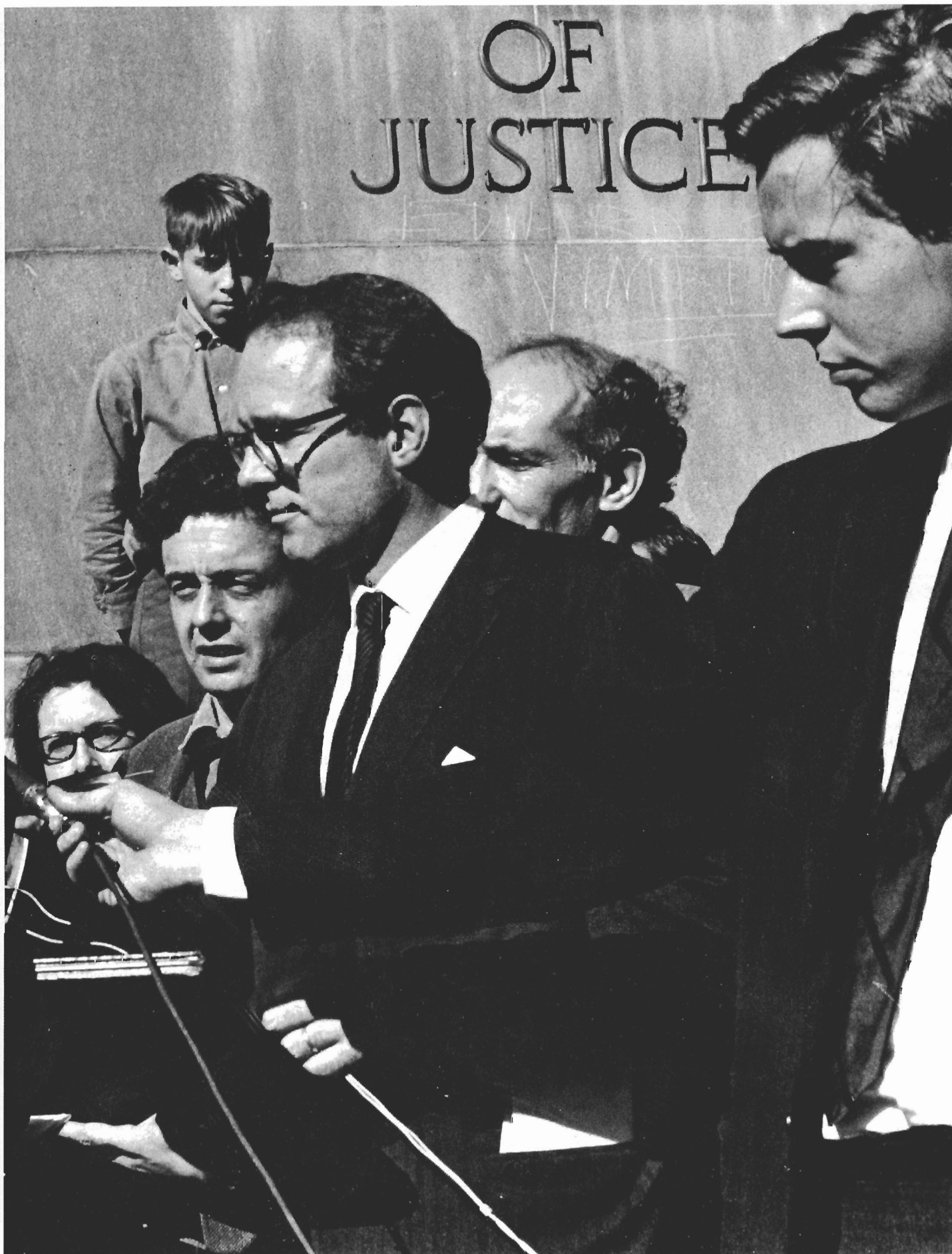
To top it all off, Yale’s annual Parents Weekend began that Saturday. Kingman Brewster knew he had to address recent events; he also knew that he could not afford to alienate this most important constituency.

So, giving Coffin no advance warning, when Brewster spoke to the parents on Saturday he freely criticized the “strident voices which urge draft resistance as a political tactic.” He made it clear that he would not forbid Coffin’s actions—Yale students were capable of making up their own minds, he said—and praised Coffin’s religious and moral energy. But Coffin (in attendance but not on the podium) winced as Brewster criticized the chaplain’s “efforts to devise ‘confrontations’ and ‘sanctuaries’ in order to gain spot news coverage,” which seemed “unworthy of and to detract from the true trial of conscience which touches so many of your sons.” He disagreed with Coffin’s position and—in a phrase that stuck in Coffin’s craw for years—“in this instance deplore his style.”

A decade later, Coffin remained stung by the surprise attack and, as he put it in his 1977 memoir, *Once to Every Man*, the fact that “Kingman had not been totally wrong in what he said about my style.” His substantive disagreement lay in Brewster’s insistence that draft resistance remain a personal matter: for Coffin, the personal violation of selective service law had public

Opposite:
On October 20, 1967,
Coffin and other draft protesters gathered in front of the Justice Department. “It is not wild-eyed idealism but clear-eyed revulsion that brings us here,” Coffin said in his speech.

OF JUSTICE



JONATHAN LEAR '70, YALE ALUMNI MAGAZINE/MANUSCRIPTS AND ARCHIVES



Yale president **Kingman Brewster** often found himself defending Coffin's actions to the university's Corporation and alumni. But Brewster (shown here at a press conference in 1970) valued Coffin as a lightning rod for dissent.

consequences and therefore needed to be drawn into the light of the public world.

But Coffin got his turn the following weekend—and also showed that however much he appeared to have taken up residence in the world of the press conference, he lived, thought, and felt most deeply when he stepped into the pulpit. He took great pleasure in being able to preach about Martin Luther on the 450th anniversary of the Reformation and offered, with varying degrees of indirection, an analogy between his own activities and Martin Luther's, and therefore between Brewster's and the pope's.

"No man," he led off, "does anything in this world for one reason alone." So if we wait for our motives to become pure, we will have a "good excuse to do nothing.... When we hope to avoid issues by criticizing the motives of those raising them we are engaging in an irrelevant and often brutal strategy."

Coffin now had some fun: "The Pope to say the least deplored Martin Luther's style, and the Pope was right." Battell erupted in laughter, and Coffin looked over at Brewster, sitting on the dais; the president grinned widely. ("If you could do it with wit," Coffin recalled, "Brewster took it well.") Then Coffin broadened his sights and insisted on the lesson the Reformation had to teach the present day: "Truth is always in danger of being sacrificed on the altars of good taste and social stability." Coffin quoted from Luther's letter to his confessor Staupitz, to whom "Luther lacked taste and

tact; also a concern for stability. But to Luther, Staupitz lacked courage." No one in Battell that day could have missed the allegory of Coffin and Brewster.

Coffin concluded with a ringing defense of his own prophetic role (on the edge of self-congratulation): "So what the Christian community needs to do above all else is to raise up men of thought and of conscience, adventuresome, imaginative men capable like Luther of both joy and suffering. And most of all they must be men of courage so that when the day goes hard and cowards steal from the field, like Luther they will be able to say 'My conscience is captive to the word of God ... to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me.'"

Though never close friends, Brewster and Coffin made a remarkable—and much remarked upon—duo. A proper, impeccably dressed Anglophile who had raced sailboats as a boy and specialized in antitrust law, Brewster enjoyed reasoned debate and quiet recreation. Coffin, the ebullient, sloppily dressed Russophile, played competitive squash and tennis, swearing so much that one alumnus still remembers his undergraduate ears burning at the chaplain's language.

While they socialized some, Brewster could not have been very comfortable at a Coffin dinner party, with the chaplain the center of attention, playing the piano and singing Russian folk songs. At the president's house, the hyperactive Coffin would naturally have taken over the relatively sedate gathering. Given their

differences, the two best-known Yale men in the country were almost necessarily competitive whenever they were in a room together.

By virtue of their competing styles and views of the world, and the unique historical moment they shared, these two proud men were also tremendously *useful* to one another, so much so that they could not truly admit the debt each owed the other, and certainly not face to face. Coffin described their relationship as “tiffy,” though their disagreements usually occurred in private. In one small meeting, however, Brewster lost his temper and shouted, “Your remarks are certainly ungrateful addressed as they are to one who spends an inordinate amount of his time defending you to Yale alumni.” Coffin replied, at the same volume, “The

Coffin winced as Brewster criticized the chaplain’s ‘efforts to devise ‘confrontations’ and ‘sanctuaries’ in order to gain spot news coverage.’

amount of time you spend defending me to the right, I spend and more defending you to the left, and I’d be more worried if I were in your shoes.” Brewster “stormed out of the room,” but returned minutes later, “as cool and collected as ever.”

Brewster may have backed his way into supporting Coffin. He found the experience of worship in Battell Chapel to be consistently satisfying. Moreover, according to his biographer, Geoffrey Kabaservice ’88, ’99PhD, he had been tutored to tolerate and value Coffin by his own mentor, ACLU founder Roger Baldwin. From Baldwin, Brewster had learned not only that “change—even far-reaching change—was possible to achieve through the system,” but also that “society was strengthened rather than weakened by the troublesome agitator.”

For Coffin, who had been cultivating Old Blues, and especially his presidents (and their wives) since he arrived as chaplain, Brewster’s usefulness was obvious. Not that Coffin’s approach to Brewster was entirely calculated, though his flattery verged on the fawning. Coffin had little anxiety about keeping his job, knew that Brewster liked what happened in Battell, and understood that a quick wit and seriousness of purpose went a long way toward calming his boss’s concerns about his notoriety.

Brewster was being brought to new insights by heading a great university in the midst of social turmoil, partly because one of the instigators of the turmoil worked on his own campus. Coffin did more to keep Yale close to its traditions of public, religiously based service than an entire alumni club full of lawyers and stockbrokers. Coffin also kept Yale closer to its students. As Brewster had written an irascible correspondent several years earlier, “I think he is the best chaplain I have known or have heard about. This is not because I agree or disagree with him, but because he has a capacity to communicate with the highly motivated members of the younger generation more effectively than almost anyone my age or older.”

COFFIN ON TRIAL

Because of Coffin, because of Battell Chapel, and because of Kingman Brewster’s principled respect for students’ trials of conscience, Yale became the key Northeastern university site for draft resistance. Then, on January 5, 1968, the U.S. government charged Coffin and four others—Dr. Benjamin Spock, Mitchell Goodman, Marcus Raskin, and Michael Ferber—with conspiracy to violate aspects of the draft law. The indictments were front-page news across the country. Already the most controversial, most admired, and most hated white minister in the country, Coffin found himself at the center of a political firestorm.

Before the indictment, Coffin had imagined going “straight to jail”—not challenging the legality of the war in a trial. When the reality hit, he thought at first that he and his “co-conspirators” would plead guilty and take up residence behind bars, “our silence more effective than our words.” Then he had second thoughts. As he wrote later, when “going to jail seemed very imminent—and inevitable if I pleaded guilty—I was suddenly assailed by feelings of guilt vis-à-vis my family.” He could not shake the feeling that he was deserting his wife and three young children, in part because I was suddenly beginning to wonder if I hadn’t already deserted them too often.”

Coffin sought legal advice, and soon found himself extolling the virtues of “packed jails” to a distinguished group of Yale Law School professors. They had little patience for these ideas. To a man they found the conspiracy charge—a conspiracy charge against people whose acts took place in public and who did not all know each other—so dangerous that they wanted Coffin to fight the charges as an act of citizenship. The eminent constitutional lawyer Alexander Bickel called it “a worn-out piece of tyranny that has to be resisted.” At their arraignment in Boston on January 29, the defendants all pleaded not guilty.



Coffin and several of his co-defendants join the singing at a teach-in on January 29, 1968, at the Arlington Street Church in Boston. Pictured are, right to left, Dr. Benjamin Spock '25, his wife Jane (who was not indicted), Coffin, Michael Ferber, and Mitchell Goodman.

A skeptic could argue that once Coffin brought in the lawyers he had made up his mind to plead not guilty. In later years Coffin reflected with chagrin about the “ease with which they persuaded me” to give up his initial impulse. “I wasn’t out to fight conspiracy laws no matter how evil; it was the war I opposed and on moral grounds.” Yet the trial proved an effective tactic against the war. The government’s strategy of intimidation backfired, and the case attracted enormous press attention, much of it sympathetic. “The five of us had become celebrities,” Coffin wrote later. “At universities, where before I had addressed hundreds, now there were thousands.”

Many of the Yale faculty and students also supported Coffin. Faculty members quickly circulated letters on his behalf. At one point during the trial, Coffin returned to Yale to take part in the baccalaureate service for the graduating seniors of 1968. “When he came to the rostrum to give the invocation,” recalled Brewster aide Charlie O’Hearn ’24, “the entire senior class, attired in their academic gowns, got up as one and applauded him. To my knowledge this has never happened to anyone at Baccalaureate where no one is applauded, even the President when he gives the main address.”

The alumni reaction was far more mixed. Because of Coffin’s notoriety, alumni faced questions, comments, and criticisms in their daily newspapers and from their friends and family. Dozens wrote to the *Yale Alumni*

Magazine, which printed many impassioned letters from supporters and detractors. (“I merely regret that Coffin has only one life to spend in jail,” wrote George E. Pierce Jr. ’22.) Hundreds of alumni wrote to Brewster. His correspondence just after the indictment clearly favored dismissing Coffin.

The alumni were already in revolt against changes Brewster had made to Yale’s admissions policies, rendering it harder for alumni children with mediocre academic records to get into the college. And Coffin’s five-year appointment was coming up for renewal that spring. He had caused Kingman Brewster the kind of problems presidents dislike intensely. With his chaplain awaiting trial on conspiracy charges, with the alumni fundraising effort in full swing, with Yale being featured frequently in news reports as a center of draft resistance activity, and with heavy negative mail, Brewster could have made his life much easier by firing Coffin.

Brewster prepared for the Corporation meeting on Coffin partly by asking Coffin’s faculty deacons, through historian Harry Rudin ’19, ’31PhD, whether Coffin “was fulfilling his obligations as chaplain.” The other chaplains, Rudin reported, “explained to me that he was a tremendous power in the religious life of the campus. Each one told me that Bill talked with more students, graduates and undergraduates, than they did.” Rudin was surprised that Coffin “adhered to a religious orthodoxy when chaplains on many

university campuses go for the newest thing to attract undergraduate attention." The deacons, too, despite some "very strong objections on religious grounds," all supported Coffin's reappointment on the grounds that "he is so great a religious asset to Yale that everything should be done to keep him."

As Brewster reported in a form letter after that meeting, the Corporation voted "by an overwhelming majority to reappoint the Chaplain." They reasoned first that Coffin was outstanding as a "preacher, and in his attention to the religious life of the University generally, and to his student parishioners in particular." Second, "to the majority there was no doubt that if the church and if religion were to be important to undergraduates ... it had to be actively involved in current social and moral issues." Third, Coffin was neither "exploiting" his Yale position nor using his counseling function to persuade students to follow his example. The letter noted that the Corporation might want to "review the appointment when the lawsuit was finally terminated, if it seemed that the final judgment or the factual basis for it had some bearing on the Chaplain's fitness for his duties." For all of Brewster's care in his letter, Corporation member Paul Moore Jr. '41 remembered the decision as a virtual rubber stamp: "There was never any doubt—I mean Kingman was behind him, and we were."

In retrospect, it is difficult to decide which is most remarkable: the fact that Coffin kept his job, the skill with which Brewster handled criticism of Coffin, or the principled stand taken by a politically cautious, personally reserved, liberal Republican Ivy League university president whose main political ambition was to be U.S. ambassador to Great Britain.

But in the end, Brewster's support for Coffin came out of his effort to make Yale a more dynamic source of leaders for American society. Brewster's biographer argues persuasively that he had undertaken to "redefine the purpose of first-rank national institutions like Yale." (As Brewster once put it, "I do not intend to preside over a finishing school on Long Island Sound.") Coffin figured prominently in these thoughts. Brewster saw him as an exemplar of the value he felt Yale should place on intellectual freedom and public service—as well as on national prominence. Back in 1964, when Brewster showed Coffin a speech he'd given to an alumni group, Coffin had criticized the president's defense of conservatism and reverence for Yale. Brewster wrote back, "You are my exhibit 'A': ...You are a distinctive product of this institution. You might have happened elsewhere, but not bloody likely. Now you are having an impact on your generation and those to follow which is precisely in the Yale tradition which I proclaim and

which you deny."

Judging from Brewster's files, his decision to reappoint Coffin drew much more support than disapproval, including the backing of such key donors and eminent alumni as William S. Beinecke '36 (who had earlier urged firing him) and Henry P. Becton '37. The president of Vassar reported on a speech Coffin gave "to a packed Chapel" in which he "said the nicest things about his chief. You should be very proud of him." The Dartmouth chaplain wrote his "personal appreciation" to Yale for Coffin "and the magnificent leadership he provides." The chief class agent of the Class of 1946, then working at *Newsweek*, offered his commendation, adding, "he is representative of Christianity in action and ... his active involvement in the problems of today does credit to Yale."

Brewster's strategy worked. Coffin, the dissenter whom the establishment could love, kept his job and his loyalty to Yale. After a long and winding judicial road, he also kept his freedom. Coffin, Spock, Ferber, and Goodman were at first found guilty of conspiring to aid and abet draft resistance. After they appealed, a

**At the 1968 baccalaureate,
"the entire senior class got up
as one and applauded."**

new court overturned the convictions but ordered new trials for Goodman and Coffin. Eight months later the government—finally recognizing, presumably, the failure of its tactic—dropped the charges.

For his part, Brewster kept an ally on his left who could help defuse the antiadministration sentiment that swept American college and university campuses. Yale never exploded during the 1960s and 1970s, as so many universities did. "The rebellious instinct which elsewhere expresses itself so often in sour withdrawal, cynical nihilism and disruption," Brewster once said, "is here more often than not both affirmative and constructive, thanks in considerable measure to the Chaplain's influence."

All over the country, Coffin touched Americans deeply. Soon after his conviction, Coffin received sympathy and an offer to contribute to his defense from Louis "Bo" Polk '54, then a vice president of General Mills. "I just want to tell you," he wrote, "how much I deeply admire your willingness to search deep within yourself as to what you really believe in and then commit yourself to a course of action in terms of that belief.... I don't feel I would have gone as far as you have gone, but by God we need Bill Coffins in this world." **Y**