RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH STUART J. FREEDMAN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH
and
SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY
JUNE 13, 2006

TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Stuart J. Freedman on June 13, 2006, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth. Thank you very much for coming in today.

Stuart Freedman: My pleasure.

SI: To begin, can you tell me where and when you were born?

SF: Yes, in Brookline, Massachusetts, on October 14, 1939.

SI: Your father was born in Massachusetts. Can you tell me how your family came to settle in Massachusetts?

SF: Well, my grandparents, Zeva and Sarah Freedman, came over from Russia or Poland, as most Eastern European Jews did. … Instead of landing in Ellis Island, they evidently landed somewhere off of Boston and settled in a town called Chelsea, Massachusetts, which is mostly known for holding up the far end of the Mystic River Bridge now, if you're in Boston. My dad was one of five brothers and I think … these grandparents came over with … my Uncle Harry, as an infant, and then, four brothers were born here in the United States. The interesting thing, looking at them, they were just the right age, so, they were too young to serve in World War I and too old to serve in World War II. [laughter]

SI: Your father did work in a shipyard, which I want to ask you about.

SF: Yes, yes.

SI: Do you know anything more specific about where they were from in Eastern Europe?

SF: Yes. … I think one of my grandparents might have been from Lithuania. The other one was from, probably, in Minsk or Pinsk. They always talked about those Russian cities, but the Jews sometimes had to travel so much. … I never really got a chance to talk a great deal with … that grandparent, most of which was because he spoke a limited amount of English, although he was in business in the United States. … I was too young, really, to appreciate him. It was my other grandfather, David Ruby, who I did speak to a great deal, on my maternal side, the Canadian.

SI: There are no stories that came down on that side of the family about life in Russia, *pogroms*.

SF: No, no, no.

SI: Was your father basically raised in the Chelsea area?

SF: Yes, he was, yes.

SI: You mentioned that your grandfather had a business. Do you remember what he did?

SF: Oh, yes. … Well, I guess he started selling coal and ice, basically, he was a peddler with a pushcart, and it ended up, somehow; … well, the ice boxes were replaced by refrigeration, and then, it was coal, and then, it emerged into rags, which became a textile business, that my Uncle Harry went into with him. They would sell industrial wiping for tools. Just basically, they would collect old clothes, I guess, old rags, and reprocess them, so that industries could use them in cleaning, what they call industrial wiping. My dad was never in that business. My dad was fortunate. … They sent my dad to what is now Bentley College, and then, it was a two-year school, for accounting and finance, and I guess one other uncle graduated college. He was a pharmacist, so, he must have gone to college. My dad then took that accounting background and somehow got involved, I guess maybe it was his first job, in the building wrecking business. … He ended up owning his own company, which he wasn't very successful at, but that's the business that he chose. That's kind of his career path, but, then, later in life, he went back to accountancy. … To skip chronologically, when those businesses failed, that … kind of got us to New Jersey, because he kind of restarted in business as an accountant when we moved down from Boston.

SI: Do you know if your other uncles went into that business?

SF: Oh, just my Uncle Harry. I guess my Uncle Max, who we always used to call Moishe, which was the Hebrew variation of that, which means "Moses," he helped my grandfather. Uncle Harry and Max, they were both involved in the business. Uncle Jack was also a kind of an accountant and, in fact, my dad hired him at one point, when my dad had his own business. So, he was in and out of different jobs. Somewhere along the line, before I was born, there was a sister who didn't survive, maybe an infant death or so and so. So, they had one sister, and my grandfather was quite a character, because he was married three times. … My grandmother, Sarah, passed away before I was born. Then, he married some other woman who was basically known as "the second wife," and then, when she passed away, he was somewhere in his eighties and he felt no one should be single, so, there was this widow at the synagogue and he married the third time. … The Yiddish word for grandfather was *zayde*, which means "grandfather." That's all we used to call him and he was a classic guy. He always wore a *yarmulke*, of the old-fashioned kind, and was, I take it, very religious.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: You were telling me about your father's family and your grandfather, Zeva Freedman.

SF: Yes, and I think … I was a freshman or sophomore in law school when he passed away, because I remember going up and trying to help settle his estate and so forth. I have one little story. … One of the classic things we used to do, I was thinking about it when I was driving down here today. … We lived in Brighton at the time, which is actually a part of Boston, near Boston College, and, on Sunday afternoons, my dad and my mom and I would jump in the car and we would drive … for a Sunday afternoon visit to my grandfather and his second wife in Chelsea. … I have this vague recollection of a Sunday drive, and I must have been about; … it's hard to believe I have the impression, but I was two and something, I guess. … So, it would have been December of 1941, yes, and I remember the radio breaking in with word of the news of Pearl Harbor, and them trying to kind of explain. … My parents were shocked and I couldn't

quite make sense of it, but, kind of, I also remember growing up and the news used to come on, where people would listen to those radio newsmen like Gabriel Heater. … The news would come in at six or seven, while you were in dinner, and everybody would listen to the radio and it was all war news. It was, you know, "This was happening in the Pacific," and, "This was happening in Europe or Africa." … A classic thing, I kind of remember saying it, everybody said, "What a clever guy he was," because I must have been, like, … five, five-and-a-half. … They said, "The war's over," and I said, "What will they do with the news?" because I couldn't conceive that there could be other news, other than the war, because, in my mind, that was pretty much all that was happening. …

SI: Yes. The war had taken over the media.

SF: That, I remember doing. [laughter]

SI: Pearl Harbor was obviously a big event for everyone, regardless of age. To stay with that subject, do you remember anything else, like, if you were afraid of what might happen?

SF: … We had these air raid drills, and my dad had this white helmet. He was an air raid warden, and it was kind of silly. I remember, he ran out on the streets, … I guess with a flashlight and a fire extinguisher. [laughter] People had probably heard about what was going on in London at the time, and we were just the suburbs of Boston, and they would tell people, you know, "Shut your curtains," and that was basically it. … I think that's about all he'd do, but I remember because I thought it was great fun, because, when he was gone, I would put on this big, white helmet that he had. It was kind of like the old-fashion GI, World War I kind, not the kind that they actually used in the war, but, like, say, the Brits, you know, with the wide brim.

SI: The pie plate style.

SF: Because they were old surplus, I'm sure, helmets, and it was a white helmet with some kind of a symbol of Civil Defense on it and he did that for a while. … He was the youngest of the five sons and he was too old in the beginning of the war, because, I guess, he would have been somewhere in his thirties and was married and had a kid, but … I think the draft kind of crept up, because they needed more men. … I think that there came a point in time when the way to stay out of service was that you had to go into a defense industry, and that's when he worked in the shipyard. Bethlehem Steel had a shipyard in Hingham, Massachusetts, where they built destroyers and, subsequently, LSTs (landing ship tank), which they needed a lot of when they were going to do the landings, destroyer escorts in the beginning for convoys. … My dad, who was an accountant, really, and was the least handy guy around the house; [laughter] I always ended up fixing things, when I got to be older, you know. My mother used to say, "Thank God for you," because my dad was very mechanically unskilled, but, somehow, he was an electrician's helper. Oh, I guess he was a pipe fitter, whatever that is, on the destroyer escorts, and then, they switched over, because they must have known the invasions were coming, to LSTs, and he became an electrician's helper on these LSTs. … I remember, it was a long drive to Hingham, because … we lived in Newton, I think, at the time, which is next to Brighton, and he got a special gas ration, so, he could drive and they used to carpool, guys who worked at the shipyard, and I think he was on what they called a swing shift, which started, like, about one or

two o'clock in the afternoon, and then, he would work until, you know, eight hours passed, and then, come back late in the evening. … You didn't make enough money at the shipyard, because, I remember, he had a part-time job doing what his regular thing was in the mornings. So, he had a … pretty full day. I mean, he was pretty happy when the war ended and I think it was about that time, when he came back, then, he said, "Well, … I know enough about this business that I've been in," helping people and being their controller or internal accountant, that he started his own business in building wrecking and did that for about five or six years, until about '51, and then, the business really tanked. … Then, we came down to New Jersey and … moved to Fort Lee, New Jersey, and restarted. He had, initially, an accounting job in New York, but I think the reason we went to Fort Lee was, he got hired as controller of a business, … a family business. … Fort Lee was kind of, in those days, headquarters of organized crime. That was the residential bedroom for organized crime. We had Albert Anastasia and Joe Adonis and people like that, Joe Bananas [Giuseppe Bonanno]. They all lived in town, and there was a roadhouse, an old-fashioned, classic restaurant, high-end, that these guys used to populate … and was owned by a family who my dad served as their internal accountant. The other interesting business, and that I got involved in, they also owned something called the Englewood Cliffs Milk Farm, which was a "reducing farm," … what they call a "fat farm." All these overweight women would come for a week and they would go on a diet and they had pools and exercise classes and things like that. … Somewhere along the high school time, I got hired as a pool boy at the Englewood Cliffs Milk Farm, [laughter] which was an interesting experience. I probably heard more cursing from overweight women than I ever would have, because, … as a youngster, I kind of blended into the woodwork and … they didn't think there was a man present. So, I heard some interesting stories, [laughter] a piece of growing up.

SI: To go back, was the business that went under in 1951 the first business your father owned?

SF: Yes. That was the only business he was owner of. It was called Eastern Building Wreckers Salvage Corporation. … Labor was much cheaper in those days. … You'd look at a building like we're in now, and, sometimes, if the university wanted to take it down, many times, there would be enough piping and bricks and they could actually take the building apart, piece-by-piece, reuse the lumber, reuse the bricks. They had a lot of immigrant labor that would clean the bricks. … Pretty much, now, they just go in and demolish. That business has just become demolishing. So, there were some businesses, if the building offered enough opportunity, they would actually pay the university to take it down, … or they'd charge the university a much lower cost, and it was a bidding process. … In Boston, there were about seven or eight of these businesses that did that, and my dad started one and did pretty well in the beginning, and probably over-expanded it or whatever. … Not being a businessman myself, I'm never quite sure why, but that was the business that he was in.

SI: I was curious if it had something to do with the post war housing market and its fluctuations.

SF: Not really, … because I don't think it was driven by those factors. It was really driven by other factors. There was a lot of, again, pent-up, my supposition, you know, building momentum that was all put aside during the war, because nothing really happened that wasn't directed at the war effort then, but it wasn't directly related to that. He wasn't doing, you know, veterans' housing and those kinds of things. … At least, I wasn't conscious of it.

SI: Before we get too far away from your family history, can you tell me about your mother's family, where they came from?

SF: … They're probably roughly from the same areas of Eastern Europe. My grandfather was a little more literate and spoke better English. … My grandfather, they were the Rubys, David Ruby, came over from Eastern Europe … and settled in Montreal and was, again, some kind of peddler, but in soft goods, which was a classic business for Jewish immigrants. … That business evolved into, actually, a manufacturing company of ladies coats and suits, small, called Ruby Manufacturing, and I remember visiting the cutting room, where they would lay out twenty or thirty layers of fabric, and then, someone would come along with … what they called an electric scissors, on a pattern, and cut these things out. … I don't think they actually did the sewing. I think they must have sub-contracted out the sewing, but I know they did the cutting, and, for a while, I always had these special outfits. Well, they didn't make children's clothes and he would cut clothes special for me. So, I had, was the only kid on the block with camelhair sport jackets and coats and things like that, that he would make special, because … the cloth was much better, evidently, in Canada than it was in the United States. … I guess there was a woman called Annie Godinski, my maternal grandmother, probably of a similar background, and they married and had, I've got to think, four children. My mother was the oldest, two aunts in the middle, and then, they had a younger brother, who actually did serve in the service. He was in the Royal Canadian Air Force and just passed away last year. … I remember him visiting us in the United States, during the war, and he came down in his blue Canadian Air Force uniform and I was pretty proud, because I didn't really know anybody that was in the war, and I remember him pushing me in this kind of a stroller. … He told me he tried to fly and flunked out of the school and I assumed he was always an accountant, something like that, but, when he passed away, they came up with some records that said, … somehow, he was on a plane that got shot down over the Middle East somewhere. So, the Brits and the Canadians were fighting in El Alamein, in Egypt, yes, and I think, in those areas, there's something about his plane being shot down. We tried to get the records from the Canadian Air Force, just to see what it was, but that was my Uncle Arthur. He was quite successful. He was a major force in Canada. He ended up heading his own major accounting firm in Montreal, when he came back from service, and then, the firm got bought by one of these national accounting firms. You know, it was the "Big 8" age then, and then, eventually, when he retired, he went into building homes on land out in the suburbs of Montreal and was successful, and he was a great guy. I had a good relationship with him. I guess I was always closer to my mother's family than I was to my father's, because they kind of split up. The Boston people then kind of went in different directions as we grew up. Some of them went down to the Washington area, others into New York, and we just kind of lost touch, but the Canadians, I still keep in touch with. … As I said, there were three daughters of … the Ruby family, my mother, Lillian, my Aunt Ethel was the second, and my Aunt Dorothy was the third, and Dorothy's children, my cousins, I kept in touch with. … Just by circumstance, it turned out that my kids ended up going to the same summer camp, their Canadians and my Americans. They all ended up in Vermont, at the same summer camp. So, we kind of renewed … that relationship, I had always kept it up, but … it became much closer. We would see each other every summer for camp visitations and the kids went to each other's *bar* and *bat mitzvahs* and my kids knew those cousins. So, it was long distance. My dad had met my mother; he went up from Boston. They met kind of halfway. There was a resort area called Old Orchard Beach,

Maine, where Bostonians went and, evidently, Canadians came down, and they met on the beach and that was a long-distance romance. He driving, … before the era of interstates, up to Canada and her taking the train, I guess, because she never drove, down to Boston, and there was a courtship there. … They married in about 1937, I guess, because I was born in '39.

SI: Was your mother the only one of her family to really leave Canada?

SF: … Of that generation, yes, yes. Interestingly enough, most of my cousins have left Canada, for greater opportunities. Arthur's two sons, who I visited recently, one … just retired as a psychiatrist. He's at the, what's out in the Midwest? the Menninger Clinic, I guess, in Kansas or Iowa, wherever that is, … and his other son is a lawyer, works for the State of Hawaii. So, they got out of Canada. My Aunt Dorothy's two children, one didn't have children, but my cousin, Elyse, married in Canada, but she had three sons and two of them are in the United States. … One's an investment banker in New York … and another one is down working for, I think, Wachovia in North Carolina. I guess the Canadians view the opportunities in the United States as being far better than they were in … Canada, even now. They had, also, in Montreal, … that problem with the French/English, you know, business going on. So, there was a time when English-speaking businesses and professionals just said, "The opportunities were greater in New York; why fight it?"

SI: Were you the oldest child?

SF: No. I was an only child.

SI: Earlier, you mentioned that your grandfather, your father's father, was quite religious. Did that permeate throughout the family?

SF: No. … The best I can think is, it probably was a generation that tried to deny their heritage and assimilate. None of my … four uncles and my father were religious at all. I don't think, growing up, until it came time to be my *bar mitzvah* time, about when I was twelve, did we start kind of re-affiliating with a temple, so that … I could get a religious education, at least enough … to be *bar mitzvah*-ed. That whole generation seemed to run away. They wanted to be Americanized. The Canadians were all the same. Very rarely did I ever hear Yiddish spoken, although my mother said she could speak Yiddish, because I know she spoke to my grandfather's second wife, who had a limited amount of English, and my mother used to be able to speak Yiddish to her, but they weren't particularly religious. My Aunt Dorothy … had a childhood romance beginning in grammar school and her husband, my Uncle Milton, is still alive. He must be about in his nineties now. He became an attorney in Montreal, and then, went on to serve in Parliament, from one of the districts in Montreal. I think he became a major figure in Jewish philanthropies up there, heading a lot of those, but I'm not so sure how much of that was driven by real religious belief or political expediency or communal feeling, not so much religion. … Jews have a great feeling of community. If you serve the community, you may not necessarily have to be sitting, you know, in a house of worship.

SI: The idea of community.

SF: Yes. It's my kids; … my kids' generation seems to be going more back towards religion. … I guess religion takes swings, you know. It's not quite "born again," but they tend to be more aware of religion than, certainly, I was growing up.

SI: More of a spiritual aspect.

SF: Yes, yes. … When my kids were of age, we sent them to religious school, … I guess from the time they were about eight or nine. So, they were in the local temple and they went through, … I had two daughters, so, they both went through the girls' ceremony, which is *bat mitzvah*, and one of them, the one who ended up here, was a 2000 graduate from Douglass, she, in fact, took a trip to Israel as part of that religious training one summer.

SI: Birthright Israel?

SF: Yes, kind of go back. It was typical. My other daughter decided to take a trip, … one of these bus tours, through the Rocky Mountains, [laughter] but, you know, we let the kids make their own decision on what they wanted to do.

SI: Was the family involved in anything on the political or cultural side of Judaism? Were they aware of Zionism? Were they involved in community activities, like the YMHA?

SF: No, actually not. … I kind of remember, my grandfather always had this can, which is for charities, … one charity or another. This was a classic thing. I forget the name, there's a Yiddish word for it, but, anyways, in the house; … called a *pushka* [a charity or *tzedaka* box], I think. … There would always be coins and my dad would give me coins to put in, but it was over at my grandfather's house. It wasn't kept at my house. So, it was some kind of charity that they were doing. … I don't think they were ever aware of any of their relatives that were still left during the war, so, that was not a concern, you know. … They had all pretty much got out, in a broad sense, so, no one was aware of anybody that got caught in the Holocaust.

SI: Though this was before your time, I would guess that, since your mother's family had these strong ties with Canada, they were probably pro-British and pro-intervention in the war.

SF: Yes, we never talked about those kind of political things. My Uncle Milton, the one who was the lawyer and the politician in Canada, I guess he had served on the local city government, was a Montreal councilman before he was a member of Parliament, he was active in a lot of Zionist organizations. So, I remember that involvement, of, you know, supporting Israel when it was being founded, that coming from him, but … that was the only thing, I think it was, in my family, who was doing that.

SI: Did your parents ever tell you any stories about life during the Depression, if it was difficult, if it affected their careers?

SF: Well, no. … My dad probably was relatively privileged, because he went to college. I still have some graduation picture that we found from Bentley. … I think he got a job right away, and I never heard of any kind of suffering from, you know, during that time. … I remember that

he was driving a Buick in 1938. So, I'm assuming, even though he was an employee at the time, that … whatever he was doing in accounting, he did okay, and I don't believe, you know, the Canadians, because … the Depression was kind of, you know …

SI: Worldwide?

SF: Worldwide. I don't remember ever hearing of any particular suffering or any of those stories about the Depression. I mean, my poorness came from, [laughter] … you know, I'll tell you, not being poor, but, you know, a little bit struggling, typical Rutgers kid, trying to figure out, you know, how you're going to pay for college and meals and those kind of things. … I don't remember the real horror stories or the deprivation people talk about during the Depression.

SI: No waiting in breadlines, that sort of thing.

SF: No, no.

SI: I would like to ask you about growing up in the Boston area, particularly during World War II. Do you recall how it affected your everyday life? Do you remember things like rationing?

SF: I do remember rationing. In fact, I was somewhere recently and I saw that someone had ration coupons, which I remember. I remember these books of things coming out and I kind of helped my mother with them. You had books for everything, meat and dairy was one thing, and I remember collecting tin foil, you know, from chewing gum wrappers, used to … be two parts. There was tin foil on one side and kind of a wax paper on the other, and you'd peel the tin foil off. … The Boy Scouts or the Cub Scouts would run around and have tin foil, you know, scrap metal drives and things like that. Day-to-day, I was not in school. … When the war ended, I was just five. … As I said, I remember the blackouts and things, but … it seemed to me, like, you know, I was eating my meals normally and playing on the street, and other than Dad running out a couple nights, and doing his thing in the defense plant, I really don't think it altered much of my life, or not to my recollection.

SI: Do you remember waiting in long lines with your mother or hearing her complain about having to collect coupon points, something like that?

SF: Yes, a little about that. There was another thing called tokens, which you see around, sometimes, in these flea markets, which were like coins, in lieu of stamps or as part of stamps, not quite sure how it worked, but they had tokens. … Some things, you had to buy with tokens. … Now that you mention it, I remember, my dad got this special sticker on his car, so that he could buy gas to go to the shipyard, like where you put our inspection stickers now, which … gave that car permission to get so many gallons, or whatever it was, in any given month. I remember that a lot of toys were wood and paper. I kind of remember that. I remember them bringing home my toy machine guns and things like that to play with. They were all wood and we really didn't see metal, and plastic really wasn't big, and there was a lot of paper. I remember playing with paper toy soldiers, which were basically cutout kinds of things, and building little forts out of kits that were all cardboard things, because that kind of replaced, I guess, metal and things that were needed for the war.

SI: Do you remember if the games that you either played by yourself or with others were influenced by the war?

SF: Well, we played guns and hide-and-seek and, you know, that kind of thing. … I remember, my dad kept bringing me home bigger and bigger toy machine guns, made out of this wood. I don't know where they made them, but it was kind of funny. They were all khaki colored, and I later learned that, like, … it went from a thirty-caliber to a fifty-caliber, … it's quite a step up, but, you know, I was the only kid, probably, with a fifty-caliber toy machine gun. [laughter] I don't know where he got those.

SI: Can you tell me a little bit about the neighborhood that you grew up in? At that time, were you still in Chelsea or had you moved?

SF: No, I never lived in Chelsea. I was born in Brookline. Oh, my folks had moved to Brookline. In fact, … they lived about two or three blocks from the, if you've ever been in Brookline, the Kennedy birthplace, that section of Brookline, around Harvard Street and Coolidge Corner and Beacon Street, in that area, on a place called, get this for the record, my kids will read it, Naples Road, I believe, if you have to find it somewhere, … in an apartment, and then, they went in a series of residences. They never owned a home in Boston, as long as we were there. We always had two-family homes where we lived. We rented in the two-family home, usually on the top floor, and they had five or six rooms, so, I always had my own room, and we usually had an extra room, which was the den or the toy room or something like that, and they were pretty middle-class places. Best as I could see now, because I did a "roots" tour with my wife a few years ago; we had a family wedding up there, not from my Boston side, interestingly enough, but my wife's family. One of … her nephews settled in Boston after growing up here in New Jersey. So, we went up there for a wedding and I did a "roots" tour of all these houses, which were still standing, but a lot different. … They appear to be, still, pretty much, now maybe a little lower middle-class neighborhoods than they were then, but one of the neighborhoods I lived in was kind of privileged. The grammar school I went to, which was called the John Ward School, and I just flipped around on the website, is in Newton and it was a semi-experimental grammar school. It was using what they called the progressive school methodology, which was a little more free-flowing than the normal, locked-in curriculum, and I think most of the people there tended to be children of professional and business owners. … We weren't in the wealthier section of that neighborhood, but most of the people were in single-family homes … and they owned their businesses or they were professionals, and it was a pretty good education. I was there through the fifth grade, when we moved to New Jersey. … When I moved to New Jersey and entered the sixth grade in Fort Lee, I kind of took a step back, because, pretty much, I repeated everything that I'd done in Newton. So, evidently, they were like, basically, one year ahead in educational things than what I ran into when I went back to New Jersey.

SI: You said it was progressive. Do you remember anything in particular about their methods?

SF: I don't remember the methodology. I think they gave us a lot of freedom. I remember, we formed clubs and … kids would make reports about the news. … The Korean War was on then,

in '51. … We would do our own news show. Every morning, we would do public events, in about a half-hour. School would start, say, nine o'clock and the first half-hour of the day was, okay, we put on a public events program. … Your assignment was to, you know, listen to the radio or watch the television, because TV was out then, or read the newspapers, and one of my classmates did what was happening in Korea. … I always liked military things. I ended up doing the French-Indochina War, which was also in the news about the same time, and reporting on … what developments were happening elsewhere, you know, in the world. "General Marshall was doing this as Secretary of State," you know, … things that were occurring.

SI: Would you read this over the loudspeaker?

SF: No, it was just in class. … The school, I don't think then, ever had loudspeakers. I think they had bells. It was before that era. My daughter went through that in the modern era, when the high schools have loudspeakers. … So, that was kind of fun, and they would give you a lot more freedom. … The interesting thing, for some reason, … we never learned handwriting, until later. They thought that if you printed for the early grades, you would have better recognition of reading the printed word. I think they thought that. … So, my parents were always shocked by the fact that I was in the third grade and I still couldn't do handwriting, you know, and that came somewhat later. … If you're an education major, maybe someone can understand what that is, but I'm not sure where the progressive theory came in, you know, except that it was obviously a school of thought that was introduced into various educational institutions as an attempt to see whether they can improve grammar school education, elementary education.

SI: This was a public school.

SF: Yes, it was a public school, yes, yes.

SI: It is interesting that you were learning about international events so early on. Most people say that they had never even heard of Vietnam before it became a big news story in the mid-to-late 1960s.

SF: Yes, yes. Did I say Vietnam? I meant Korea. …

SI: You said French Indochina.

SF: Yes, yes, I was doing that. Yes, they were doing Korea. Yes, they were all interested in Korea at the time, yes.

SI: Do you recall anything else about the Korean War, anything that stands out in your memory?

SF: I got all charged up. I remember, I was … telling my dad, … I used to have toy soldiers, and I said, "I went through the manual of arms," which I really didn't learn until I went in high school, but, you know, I would do this … because I knew something about it. I had a book that showed different positions on how you hold a rifle. I remember drilling for my father, not that he … cared that much. He would sit there, read the newspaper, but I always liked playing with soldiers and recreating military things. … That was of interest to me, anyway, and I always liked

history. I later developed a love of history, … especially on the military side, but that, … you know, was my first kind of awakening, … in response to your question, of why these things interested me.

SI: Could you talk a little more about that? Do you think it came from the games you played as a child? Were there movies that you were watching?

SF: Hey, I don't remember being interested from the movies so much.

SI: Just growing up during World War II.

SF: Yes, maybe that was the influence. I'm not quite sure what it was, but you just kind of picked it up from kids playing. Playing soldier was more fun than playing cowboys and Indians, you know. … There wasn't a lot, … not a lot of media, that I remember being exposed to, because television, in those days, didn't show that much of war movies. I remember the series *Victory At Sea*, but I'm not quite sure where that fit in, in timing, but I think I was probably a teenager by that time.

SI: I think it came out in the 1950s.

SF: Yes, yes, I remember that being on television and watching that and being fascinated by that, but I don't remember, like, watching a lot of, you know …

SI: War movies.

SF: War movies, Robert Mitchum and, you know, Allan Ladd and those guys, going around, doing their thing. I see them now, you know, kind of find them interesting now, when they replay them on television.

SI: The Cold War was obviously a dominant theme in American life at that time. People were afraid of a nuclear war.

SF: Yes. We did these silly drills. I remember going in the hallway. … I guess it started in the John Ward School, because I was in grammar school, where we were doing stuff. You … went out in the halls and you had, you know, "duck-and-cover" and things like that. I remember just going out in the halls, which was the shelter area. I don't remember ducking underneath desks so much. I know my wife tells me about that. … It was big in New York, where she grew up, but everybody went in these inner hallways to be protected, and, you know, there was a fear of "the bomb" and Russia. … I don't remember people in the neighborhood doing bomb shelters in their backyard, but that, I remember. … You started to see, on office buildings or public buildings, these signs indicating where there were shelters and where there would be stored, you know, water and emergency food and that kind of thing going on, but, no, I don't have an overriding feeling of fear, you know. I don't remember the Russian threat. I wasn't looking over my shoulder at all, you know, looking for Commies or something like that.

SI: It was not on your mind.

SF: It wasn't on my mind too much. … I remember getting interested in politics. I remember the first election that I watched. I remember sitting in front of the TV, keeping score, as Eisenhower was going through the, … I guess it was the convention, which was fascinating to me. So, I remember sitting there with a little scorecard, like I used to sit through Red Sox games, and I was counting votes as the states were coming in, because I think Eisenhower had a big fight in 1952 for getting the nomination against Senator Bob Taft, and, somehow, I thought Eisenhower should win. I was an Eisenhower guy, maybe because he was a war hero or something like that. So, I was pulling for him, … but I remember that, and then, … subsequently, I remember some of the foolishness of the McCarthy hearings. … I'd come home, I must have been coming home from school, and watch some of the McCarthy hearings on the television. I also remember watching the crime hearing, the Kefauver Committee hearings [Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce] about organized crime, and television was a very, probably still is, influential thing in my life, yes. [laughter]

SI: Did your family have a TV early on?

SF: I don't think so, … because I remember going to other people's houses for the first TV shows. I remember, we had a Philco and I must have been in the; … I'm trying to remember by the house I had. I guess we had that TV before we left Boston in '51, so, it must have been, probably, around '48 or '49 that we got our TV. Yes, I know I was fascinated by it. I remember, I would sit with a baseball bat in front of Red Sox games, but I would see *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* and *Howdy Doody* and things like that that were also of interest to me, but, then, I remember, there was always … some things, … a little bit later on, that caught my interest and they tended to be, you know, current event kind of things.

SI: Growing up, would you mostly play with friends or did you have organized activities?

SF: No, nobody had organized activities. [laughter] You know, I laugh at my kids; they're so organized. No, it was just … that there were kids on the street. You would walk out and play, you know, when school was over, or the summer. We didn't go to camp. That was really for rich kids. I mean, I heard about camp, but I never knew what that was, and there was always kids on the street and they would be, you know, a couple of years younger or you're a couple years older. … You know, in a four or five-year span, the kids would all get together and do things, or you'd have a best friend and you would go over and play with his toys, or one guy would have electric trains and, you know, you'd do the various things. … I remember building forts in the back and, you know, just playing whatever the games were, but, basically, staying on your street. We knew; it was kind of an implicit thing. I never remember roaming. In Boston, I lived on, it was a street that was actually a U-shaped street. … All my friends were on my side of the "U," but it was pretty nice. It was called Undine, U-N-D-I-N-E, Road and it bordered, where the "U" emptied was, a street called Lake Street. Across the Lake Street was the Archbishop's home, it was Cardinal Richard James Cushing then, of Boston, his estate, which is still there. So, it was a pretty safe neighborhood. … It was all this massive Catholic operation. There were seminaries and the Cardinal's residential area and just acres and acres of this. There was a stone wall that was behind us. So, that was on one side of the street and there was this residential section on the other, and, on my side of the "U," … maybe we had six kids, one of

which was actually one of my classmates at the John Ward School. By that time, actually, we started living in Newton and I started at John Ward School. My folks then moved, not but a half a mile, but they were just on the other side of the town line, into Brighton, which would have meant I would have gone to the Boston public schools, … which was a good distance from my home, but, plus, it didn't have as good a reputation. … Since Newton was better, they actually paid to send me to the Newton district, you know. I guess, like, you know, it's a sending district. If you … don't live there, you have to pay the tuition. They thought that was important enough. So, for about two years, I guess, they paid for the tuition, as well as the bus, it was not a public bus, it was a private bus line, to send me to the Ward School.

SI: In this neighborhood, was there a mix of Catholic kids and Jewish kids?

SF: I think so, yes.

SI: There was not one dominating ethnic group.

SF: I think most of my friends; … you know, the street was probably about at least half Jewish, I would think, in that area. That part of Newton and Brookline. The Jews from Boston had had an immigration kind of a thing, … as they moved west and out of the city, and … Newton's a very big city in and of itself. It had about six smaller neighborhoods within it, which all had their own post office, and the Newton Center area, where we lived in, had a heavy proportion of Jews, I think, who'd done well; Brighton, maybe less so. When we moved back into the Brighton area, it was a less wealthy area, but, … yes, it wasn't just one group. We didn't see any black kids. I mean, you know, I don't think I really was ever exposed to blacks until my freshman year at Rutgers. That includes growing up in Northern New Jersey. … In that degree, it wasn't really a mixed neighborhood.

SI: You mentioned that you pretty much hung around your neighborhood. Did you ever go into the more touristy areas of Boston?

SF: Oh, my mother would take me down shopping. We would go to Jordan Marsh or Filene's, which were the downtown stores, and, you know, maybe my dad took me places. … I would see Bunker Hill, because that was on the way to my grandfather's house, when you went to Chelsea. I remember him taking me to the Boston Museum of Science, which was a brand-new thing that had just opened up, and into the circus at Boston Gardens …

----------END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE----------

SI: We probably cut off the last part.

SF: Okay.

SI: You were saying.

SF: No, I was saying we went to baseball games and there were two teams in Boston, the Braves and the Red Sox, then. The Braves subsequently moved to Milwaukee and, you know, then

Atlanta, but there was Braves Field and Fenway Park. … I think I remember going to both, and I remember the Red Sox always, as they still have the problem, getting beaten by the Yankees, when crunch time came, even though we had Ted Williams and Dom DiMaggio, and then, the Braves actually went to a World Series in 1948. I kind of remember that. Now, I guess I would have been about eight years old, and they played the Cleveland Indians and, I think, they lost. … [Editor's Note: The Boston Braves lost the 1948 World Series in Game 6 to the Cleveland Indians.]

SI: In the New York area, you were either a diehard Dodgers, Giants or Yankees fan. Was it that way with the Braves and the Red Sox?

SF: I think so. I rooted for both, but I think I ended up, still, even today, being more of a Red Sox fan than a Braves fan, yes. Although I remember having a Braves jacket. That was one jacket for Ted Williams and another jacket for somebody we called Sam Jethro, who was a centerfielder, who stole bases like crazy for the Braves. … I still remember, if you're a baseball fan, "Spahn and Sain and Pray for Rain," because, in '48, the Braves only had two pitchers that were any good and the only way they could get through a series was to pitch the two pitchers. So, it was … Warren Spahn, Johnny Sain and pray for rain, that would give them a day off, and then, they could start the rotation again. [laughter]

SI: You were in the fifth grade when you moved to New Jersey.

SF: Yes. We finished the fifth grade in Boston. Dad went down to get relocated and get a new business. We went up that summer to Canada, while he was in New Jersey, visited my Canadian relatives; came down in the fall to start school. He'd found a job, as I said, in Englewood Cliffs, with this roadhouse/fat farm operation, and found an apartment for us in Fort Lee, which was next to Englewood Cliffs, if you know Bergen County, right at the base of the George Washington Bridge. … I started sixth grade in what was then called PS, or, I guess, School #1. They didn't have PS abbreviations, School #1, in Fort Lee, New Jersey. So, I did sixth grade there.

SI: Was it a shock for you to go from Massachusetts to New Jersey?

SF: Well, I was a little boy. I think the more significant shock is you're "the new kid." It's always hard being the new kid who … moves in. You know, kids can be kind of cruel. As I said, I think I was pretty well prepared, because a lot of the stuff was repeating what I had done in Massachusetts, and so, I emerged as, not only was I "the new kid," but I was "the smart kid," you know, so that, sometimes, that doesn't work in your favor, … but I made new friends. In a sense, Fort Lee was a more interesting town, because it certainly was a more diverse town. Well, while it was white, it was ethnically very diverse. It had been, at the time we moved in, maybe half Italian.

SI: Let me pause the tape.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SF: Yes, I was telling you about Fort Lee.

SI: Yes.

SF: Fort Lee, in the '50s, was an interesting place. … In some sense, it was the bedroom for organized crime. Joe Adonis, Albert Anastasia, Joe Bananas, those people lived there. We never quite knew their children. A lot of them went to Catholic school, or a lot of them actually went under names which we didn't know. … I remember watching the Kefauver hearing and they were focusing on things that happened around Fort Lee. … There was an infamous nightclub called Bill Miller's Riviera, which overlooked the George Washington Bridge, which, evidently, had gambling and prostitution, well, everything that you might imagine. It was "Vegas East" going on there, and there … was something called the; it was an abandoned baby carriage factory which was supposedly a place for gambling. I remember hearing about that. I mean, we passed the buildings or something. My dad kind of got to meet some of these people, you know, they would come in for food, [laughter] … in working at the restaurant. … The town was, … about fifty percent of … my classmates, I guess, were Italian, middle-class, professional, just everything. … They had just started to build apartments in Fort Lee. The Linwood Park Apartments had gone up, which were the first ones, and they got an influx of New Yorkers, but, basically, Fort Lee, mostly, were older families. We lived in a garden apartment, which was also a new thing that was coming to Fort Lee at the time, but the older families had been there, quite a lot, most of my friends, had single-family homes. In fact, I think, at School #1, I was the only Jewish kid in the class, which was a shock, from earlier. … Now that you asked me, in Newton, the John Ward School, I think, in some of my classes, … it may have been, like, twenty Jews and one non-Jewish kid, or twenty-eight Jews and, you know, two or three non-Jews. The neighborhood was that heavily oriented. There wasn't a synagogue at all in Fort Lee when I came down and they were just starting one. They'd brought a rabbi in and they … were meeting in the Episcopal church. I remember, because that's how I started taking the Hebrew lessons, as I was getting near *bar mitzvah* age. So, it was an interesting, you know, adaptation, to me, to other people. … Some of the people I grew up with, and some of them, one of the other Vietnam vets, who I grew up with, who became a physician, is Lou Angioletti, whose family had been there for a long time, … we became friends, you know. Once we got over, I guess, their shock, or just lack of acquaintance, it never really proved to be much of a barrier. I do remember getting beat up by Catholic kids from Catholic school. … There was a Catholic school, up to about the eighth grade, and I think he, for some reason, just made some anti-Semitic remark. … That's the only thing I kind of remember being a racial epithet, and he beat me up on a playground, or so and so. Wouldn't you know it? He went into the service at some point, became an MP [military police], and then, became a cop. So, it always tells me to be careful. I was always dubious about who ends up in the police department, [laughter] many times, and, later, when I worked in a prosecutor's office, I found out some of it is true. … Anyways, I remember that fellow, but, generally, … the integration, … on that level, was not bad. … As I said, Fort Lee never had blacks, which was interesting. If you went to Englewood, there was a major concentration of blacks. There were a few middle-class blacks in Teaneck, but, I mean, it was almost all white. … We played sports in a high school league, I remember. I got involved in doing that. I was not athletic, but I got involved, in that I was the football team manager, and then, I kind of evolved as being a sports newspaper stringer, a sports reporter, for the local newspapers, the *Bergen Record*, up there, and the *Hudson Dispatch*, which was down in Union City. … I traveled with

the teams and I got my first taste of doing some writing, … which was like my second love during that period in my life, and we would play in leagues where African-American athletes played. Englewood was in a different league. They were in the league that played against Hackensack, and there were blacks in those leagues, but, in the Bergen County Scholastic League (BCSL), we played Leonia and Dumont and Westwood and Park Ridge and those towns. I mean, everybody was shocked when Westwood got a, there was, like, a seven-foot, well, maybe he was only six-five, he seemed big, anyway, black center, came in, and no one ever knew what to do. You know, no one knew how to relate. It was kind of interesting, but, through my whole time to graduation in Fort Lee, there was never a black kid in that public school. Now, Fort Lee is, interestingly enough, a major, fifty percent, Asian town, I guess, or something like that, but towns evolve. … Then, there was an influx, again, of Jews that came from New York when the apartments went up, and the Horizon House and all of those other things that occurred. … My high school years weren't bad. I kind of got adopted, through a lot of avenues. As I said, I used the sports thing to get involved with … kind of the athletic guys and I got off to a good footing, and I was pretty well entrenched academically, you know. I was always near the top of my class academically. So, I had both things going for me and I was accepted, you know, by most of the crowd. I was a little too smart for some kids, but that's, you know, something I've lived with throughout life, even in the practice of law. [laughter]

SI: What were your interests in high school? When you came to Rutgers, you were interested in the sciences. You wanted to be an engineer.

SF: I was interested, yes, but … you have to remember the time. … We'll get back to that, but the reason I was an engineer major was, one, we didn't have a lot of money and, two, the *Sputnik* thing had just happened, and that if you didn't have any money, the quickest way and a sure job, was to get into engineering and all the "Space Race" and all kind of stuff like that. So, that drove me there. I think, the reality was, I had a lot of love for doing history. I always liked history. … It was in all my reports, I guess. I used to buy these history books. The National Park Service had all these battlefield things, as a small book. So, I remember all these reports and my teachers used to say, "Well, gee, can we do one that isn't the Battle of Gettysburg or the Battle of, you know, Bunker Hill?" or something like that, because, you know, those were my book reports that I would do, … my history reports. Also, I was a fast reader. I used to read history and I remember going to the New York Public Library to get books. … I forget how I did it, but I was able to get books, like, maybe through some school thing, like I had privileges. I remember going to Fifth Avenue to get history books, or … maybe we just went for research, and got the Park Service pamphlets that were on file there, to do some of the research, when I found out about them, you know. As kids, we were pretty mobile. From Fort Lee, we would get on a bus, go across the George Washington Bridge, and then, take the subway, and hope we didn't get lost, but we could probably get down to 34th Street to go to Macy's, or … knew how to get to Fifth Avenue, anyway. …

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Did you travel alone?

SF: … No, no, actually, I'd say, when I went to New York, a lot of times, I traveled alone. It was pretty safe then, you know. I guess I was; I don't know. At the time I was about fifteen, sixteen, I started traveling alone. It seemed reasonably safe. … We didn't seem to worry about

those kind of things. It was more difficult, in many instances, to get to Hackensack. … It was before Bergen County had shopping centers, so, you used to have to take a bus, which wasn't that convenient. We lived in Fort Lee, so, … I could just walk to the bridge, and then, I had access to, you know, a lot of different ways of transportation to New York. …

SH: Were your social activities centered in Fort Lee or in the city?

SF: No, no. … The city was for shopping and researching, and it was interesting to go, but anything social that I did, as a youngster, was, again, the street kind of culture that I described, being kids of a broader span of years, and we had a little bit of mix, because there were kids who went to other schools. I remember, one of the guys next-door went to St. Cecilia's, which was the Catholic school in Englewood. … I lived about two blocks from the high school, … which was a pretty good location, which was also about two blocks from the bridge. So, it was a location that was pretty handy. So, there were always people around and there was the kids from the garden apartment setting, three or four kids, about, in my age group, and a couple kids from down the street. So, that was my summers. It wasn't camp. It was finding things to do. I also got involved; I had some jobs. … As I said, I used to like to sit in front of the TV and keep score of the Red Sox games, or whatever else. … One day, I just took my little scorebook and I wandered down to, it was a Little League game. I didn't play Little League. … Someone saw me doing this and the guy said, "Well, do you know how to score? Can you score the games for us?" … I guess they were twelve, thirteen, or something, I was about the same age, and I said, "Yes," and he said, "Well, I'll pay you a dollar a game to do this," and so, I would go every night during the summer, when there wasn't school, and it was either Babe Ruth or Little League, and I would score. … That was my job, and then, I would get the score, then, he told me, "Well, you call this number and they'll put the scores in the *Bergen Record*." So, then, I got to know the people at the *Record*, from doing that, and then, … as I said, I kind of got involved. … In a couple of years, I was the football team manager, but, then, I started just being the scorekeeper. … Then, I found out the newspapers paid five bucks for you to cover a game and the school would, you know, you could get a free ride up to a game on the team bus, because they were one of the things, so, I became the official scorer for all of the three sports. So, that kind of integrated me into the sports world, even though I wasn't an athlete. … I had a couple summer jobs. … I actually got a summer job in the *Hudson Dispatch*, which I think is now defunct. I think it was bought by the *Jersey Journal*, but it was interesting. … I guess it was my junior or my sophomore year in high school. I couldn't drive, so, I used to take the "Orange and Black" bus from Fort Lee down to Union City, down Bergenline Avenue, and get off and the *Hudson Dispatch* was located in an interesting place. It was right next-door to the Hudson Theater. You wouldn't know this, but the Hudson Theater was the last burlesque show in New Jersey. … The newspaper, this was a morning newspaper, and the reporters come in at six PM, but things happened during the day. During the summer, my job was to read the tickertape and get the horse races from around the country. So, I had to prepare those box scores and I would rip off the tickertape and paste it up, because they come up as each race, game, gets done. … I would paste these things up in sequence, and then, when the reporters came in, they would have these things, you know, all lined up, everything that happened. … Nobody was really around in the afternoon, except that they were rehearsing next-door at the burlesque theater. So, I would be doing this and you'd hear this big bass drum, and it was only a couple years later until I finally kind of, underage, sneaked in, at seventeen or eighteen, to find out what was going on next-door,

at the burlesque theater, but it was a colorful beginning. … Little, strange guys from *Guys & Dolls* would come, in the afternoon, guys like, "What's new at Pimlico, kid?" [Mr. Freedman imitates a creepy voice] you know, because they wouldn't have the race results. You can't get that stuff off the radio. So, we would have the wire service. These guys were, I guess, bookies or bettors or something like that. An interesting education, I remember.

SI: Earlier, we talked about how you were very interested in military affairs, soldiering, that sort of thing. Did you find any activities that fostered that interest, like the Boy Scouts?

SF: Well, strangely enough, we had a high school gym teacher, I guess, who believed that; a Mr. Spence. … He ended up being director of athletics. He'd been there since the '20s, they told about, his stories, at Fort Lee, and he believed that everybody should be prepared to be drafted, because he had lived through the Korean War, you know, and these other things, and so, he always made us march. Part of our physical education curriculum was that you had to learn how to march and learn how to do right-face, left-face, and with broomsticks, literally. He had these sticks and we had to know the manual of arms, which I thought was fun, you know. I mean, other than that, … and other than my love of history, that was about the only involvement I had with the military, at that stage. That kind of served me well when I entered ROTC here at Rutgers, because it was, you know, "Oh, gee, this is familiar," because a lot of guys here didn't know anything. It was kind of a foreign thing, what do you do unless you were in a marching band, I suppose, you wouldn't know how to make those turns and do those other things, but that was the only thing, like, I kind of remember from that period of my years.

SI: When did you realize that you were going to go on to college?

SF: Oh, I don't think it was an option. I mean, my folks said, "You're going to go to college." The real question was, "Which college should I go to and how could I afford it?" and, as I said, … I either finished first or second in my high school class. I don't think my test scores were as high as that ranking may have been, but, anyway, I got a State University Scholarship to go to Rutgers. … I thought I was going to be an engineer, because, again, at the time, you know, my dad wasn't making a lot of money and it was just a job as, basically an in-house accountant, bookkeeper, controller, whatever, and we had no savings and my mother didn't work. … It was a question of how we are going to afford college, and I thought I was going to be an engineer, so, I applied to Stevens Institute of Technology and I applied to NYU, which had an engineering course then, I don't know if it still does, Rutgers, Lehigh, and I think that's about it. That's all I remember. Maybe I applied to Harvard and Yale, undergrad. No, I applied to Yale, maybe. … I didn't want to go to Harvard for some reason. … I applied to Princeton, also. Princeton actually had a strange engineering course. … Unless I got a big scholarship, I couldn't afford to do any of those things and, when we looked at it, … I think it cost, in those days, sixteen hundred dollars to go to Rutgers, would you believe? tuition, and so, the state paid for that. That was my State University Scholarship. So, then, we had to come up with just living expenses, which was about three hundred dollars a year, to live in the dorms and I don't know what, because I wasn't on the meal plan. … I ate on cash, I remember, and I had a couple of jobs. … I'd saved a little money, you know, from the scoring thing … and that kind of helped, but that wasn't really going to make a real dent in anything. … Somewhere along the line, I got involved in doing deliveries for a local pharmacy. The first one, I couldn't deliver and I worked just as a clerk, and then, when I

could drive, I could actually make deliveries, because I was seventeen, I guess, in the twelfth grade. So, I got this job in the summers and on weekends, working in a pharmacy, and so, I got to Rutgers and they let me keep my job on Sundays. I would work back at the pharmacy in Fort Lee. … I'd go out on … Exit 9, the New Jersey Turnpike entrance here, and hitchhike home, because I didn't have the money to take the bus. So, you'd stand at Exit 9. The good thing about living in Fort Lee is, you say, "George Washington Bridge," and there's always somebody, you know. I would stand … right down here on Hamilton or Somerset Street, by the J&J [Johnson & Johnson] Building, and say, "Exit 9," … I had a sign, "NJ Turnpike," and then, I had the other side say, "GW Bridge," so, I would always get home. On Saturday morning, I would go down and I would hitchhike home and I would work eight hours a day on Sunday and Sunday night you could never get back to New Brunswick. Sometimes, my dad would drive me to the "Orange and Black Bus" at the Port Authority Station, or we'd hear about families going down to New Brunswick. There were kids, once I got to know other people, that would go down Sunday night and there were some kids that actually commuted from Fort Lee. So, if I couldn't get anything, I remember, there was a guy called George Carras who lived in Fort Lee, and he was maybe a senior, and he … drove down Monday morning. So, I would call him and pay him a couple bucks gas money and he would take guys from Fort Lee back to Rutgers, who were living here, because the freshman and sophomore years, you know, we were living here. For some reason, my dad was able to afford to get me a car, not quite sure how he did the financing, but maybe that's not important. I had a Volkswagen Beetle in my; I'm trying to think. Certainly, I had it for my junior year. I don't know, maybe I got it the end of my sophomore year. So, that made life a lot easier. I was still going back, working, and a Beetle only cost about sixteen hundred bucks, you know, … and gas was twenty-three cents a gallon. … [laughter] Well, no, for a few bucks, you know, I could fill up, and the Beetle didn't take any gas, so, I could get back and, really, the gas bill was negligible. You know, I was putting gas in maybe once a week and I could get back and forth from Fort Lee and I was king of the hill down here, you know. I guess I had that my junior year. Maybe I had it in my junior year, but my sophomore year, I guess, I was still without a car, yes, because … I rushed the fraternity. … You're always thinking of ways to make money, I guess everybody tells the story, in Rutgers, in those days, so, I could join the fraternity and they told me I could work there. I joined Phi Epsilon Pi, which was on 4 Mine Street. It's now something else. … It's that brick building with the four white pillars and, oh, about a door in from College Avenue, and, anyways, the deal was; … I forget which one, I guess, I was a waiter the first year. One year, I was a waiter, one year, I was a dishwasher, so, that paid for my meals. So, that was the deal. You would do that stuff and that covered my meals and all I had to worry about was, then, you know, the dormitory charges, because they used to charge us living expenses. The University owned the fraternity house, so, we paid the same three hundred dollars for living there. I lived in the Quad, in Hegeman Hall, when I was a freshman, and then, I moved right in my sophomore year, over to the fraternity house. So, my meals were then paid for. So, that was a pretty good deal, and then, all I had to come up with was the three hundred bucks, because my education, … tuition, was paid for, and I had to worry about books and some other stuff, which was one of the things that got me into ROTC, because that was like, "Gee, why not?" you know. … Everybody had to take ROTC, remember, in the '60s and I was getting pretty good grades in that course. … You know, I was a good student and I guess I was getting "A's" in ROTC. So, I said, "Well, … I'm in a subject which sounded interesting." It was map reading and some other things. I never liked the marching and that kind of stuff, but it paid, like, twenty-seven dollars a month, which covered a lot of school expenses.

So, that was a pretty good deal. Now, … the light at the end of the tunnel wasn't so bad, either, because … you went in the Army Reserve; you did six months in the Reserves and you were an officer. … Everybody said it was a pretty good kind of thing, and nobody paid too much attention to something that was happening, you know, in the Far East at the time. We knew it was out there, I guess. This is, like, '60. I was Class of '62. So, we're talking, probably, about, you know, we're making this decision, you know, in '59 and '60, and the U.S. is just sending a handful of advisors over. Nobody's really paying a lot of attention to what's going on. … I did pretty well in ROTC, and then, towards the end, I guess, I was about the third-ranking cadet, not because I was the greatest rifle shot or marcher or anything else, [laughter] but they'd made me the operations officer, which is the guy that plans where they march and how they march. … So, I used to do the map and I ended up being, like, the third-ranking cadet. I guess I was a cadet major at the end. … Believe it or not, when I talk to the ROTC kids today, they were at one of the Henry Rutgers Scholar things, they came in when the general was here, … I said, "Yes, we had a brigade." They said, "You had a brigade?" [laughter] I said, "Yes, … there were a lot of people." I said, "We used to do military reviews," that, "it was part of the graduation. There was the Military Ball, and then, there was the big review the following Saturday, the following Saturday morning, and all the Air Force guys and all the Army guys marched, and there were, like, hundreds of people." I mean, there must have been; like, a company was about … eighty to a hundred cadets, we probably had about eight or nine companies, and just on the Army side. So, you know, I ended up being a staff officer, planning these kind of things, and then, I ended up marching, not very well, in the final review, I remember, because one of my friends was the colonel, [laughter] but that was my involvement, you know. … I used to do things to earn money. I would bring pharmaceutical products, … legitimate things, back to, you know, … sell, to make money. … In the summer, you could make a dent, also. You could get jobs that would really make a dent. One year, I delivered laundry, had to lie about that, had to tell them that … I had dropped out of school, you know. … This was going to be my new career, I'm thinking, because they never would have hired me. … So, I did that and that was pretty good money. One year, I was an armed guard at the Bendix Aviation plant in Teterboro. That one, I used my ROTC background. They said, "Well, do you know about firearms?" I said, "Yes, I've got this training, … know all about firearms." So, they said, "Oh, that's good, okay."

SH: Marksmanship.

SF: Yes, so, they hired me, not that we had to worry about it, but, up in Teterboro, there was a Bendix Aviation plant and they were making parts for B-52s, even in those days. So, it was always some kind of a job, you know, that you could get and you could manage. … You could make a dent or even cover most of your education expenses. In my senior year, I was a preceptor in what is; we called it Livingston, they now call it Campbell Hall. So, that covered my room and I moved out of the …

SI: The dorms.

SF: The river dorms, yes. It was Frelinghuysen, Hardenburgh, and Livingston. When they made Livingston College, they changed the name of that third building, the furthest, what was it? Campbell. I was the preceptor. … I don't know what they call them now, the RA's, I guess, … yes, the same thing.

SH: When did you change your major?

SF: End of my first semester. It was a disaster. I was telling Shaun, when I came over to Rutgers, I started to be this engineer, and I had pretty good grades in everything, across the board, you know, … as a high school kid. … I sat through a five-credit calculus course, in which I had no idea what was happening, and I flunked that course entirely, five credits, you know, I think it was. We had the reverse system then. … The numbers ran the other way, because the big deal was to get a "1.0." So, I got a "5," you know. In physics, which I told you the story about the physics, I got a "4." So, I got a "D" in physics. In English, I got an "A" and, in chemistry, I got an "A," and I think I had some mechanical drawing class or something. … I never got surveying, because I was always interested. I wanted to take surveying, had mechanical drawing. I think I got some decent grade in that. So, it came and … I remember walking to the Dean's office, because, again, everybody was poor, so, one of the great scams, or deals, was, at Christmastime, there were always jobs back home. You could work in the stores at the Christmas rush and the school had a policy that, … with permission of the Dean of Men's office, … Dean Cornelius B. Boocock was the Dean of Men, I'll never forget, you could go home. They would let you out of classes a week early, for the Christmas vacation, so that you could work the two weeks before Christmas to make money, and everybody did. … So, I walked in and this gray-haired gentleman looked at my transcript at the time, this is the engineering grades, and he laughed me out of the office. I mean, it was like that I should have the gall, you know, "With that academic record," he says, "You're lucky to, you know, … want to come back." So, he never let me go home. I got even with him at the end, but that's another story. … So, I didn't get off. I only had one week to work and get that money. I went home and I continued to study engineering, you know, but I went to; … I think it was in Geology Hall, or so and so, I had it. Professor Frank O'Connor was a freshmen English teacher. He was really a Shakespeare scholar, I believe, and I wrote well, because I'd been doing this newspaper thing, the sports reporting stuff. So, I liked him and I was getting an "A" in his class and we had some really thick kids. I mean, kids really … came unprepared. There's no doubt, freshmen came, like they still do now, without the ability to read, write or think. I get some young lawyers like that, too, and I complain about that, but, anyways, Frank O'Connor and I had this discussion, I remember, right out here on the green. … I said, "Professor O'Connor, I'm really stuck. … I've got to make some kind of a move here, because … I can't stay in engineering." … I said, "I'm an engineer. I can't stay in engineering. I'm going to flunk out. They're going to take away my scholarship." I said, "I've got to switch my major," and I said, "I'm thinking about going into journalism, because I did this stuff for the local newspapers. I was a stringer. I have an interest in this. I write pretty well." He says, "Yes, you do." I said, "I'll switch to journalism." He said, "Don't take journalism." I said, "Why?" He said, "They're trades people." He said, "They don't know any substance. They know how to put it down on paper, but, if you want to be a journalist," he said, "you've got to get substance." I said, "What does that mean?" He said, "Well, take history. Take English. Take a background. Take some liberal arts. Broaden yourself, do something." He said, "Take political science." I said, "Well, I have heard of that." I said, "What's political science?" I had no idea what that was. I knew what history was and I knew what English was. He said, "Oh, they'll teach you about government and you'll learn something about foreign affairs," and so on. So, I said, "That sounds interesting." So, I went, you know, to those little, old, blue-haired ladies that were sitting there, at what is now the

museum, [the Zimmerli Art Museum], the blue-haired ladies, and I said, "I want … my course cards. I want to switch my major to political science," and I called my parents, after it was over. I said, "I just switched my major to political science," and they went, "What?" [laughter] That is, "What is political science?" They said the same thing, "What is political science?" I said, "Don't worry. The only way I could stay in school is to switch into this." Well, I got in political science, and there was some scrambling around, because I had to make up all these liberal arts courses. … I remember taking, that summer, because I had no language, so, I had to take Italian. … You couldn't take any language that you'd taken in high school, … to begin. … If you had it in high school, you had to place in the higher level, go to the second year or beyond. Now, I'd taken two years of French and two years of Spanish. It was a struggle in high school. I got by, but it was a struggle. So, I said, "Oh, I'll take Italian, right? Because my town is speaking Italian, it's a Romance language, and it's got to be something, like, similar," and it was. So, I started. That summer, I took one semester of Italian and I think I took one semester of economics, to kind of catch up, because I had credit for English and I had credit, you know, for other courses. … I had switched directly into, I guess, in that semester, … liberal arts, but, then, that summer was catch up. So, I remember, it was tough, because it was tough finding a summer job. I had to fit my summer job around going down to New Brunswick, and we actually commuted down. There was some young lady from Tenafly who was also taking Italian, I found, and we carpooled down. My dad would take a bus to work a couple days a week, because Englewood Cliffs was nearby, and so, he lent me his car. We only had one car, and that was before I had a car. So, that was my switch, and then, I looked around. Once you start in political science, I found out half the guys were going to become lawyers. They said, "Oh, we're going to law school," which wasn't that common. I knew my uncle was a lawyer, by that time, in Canada. So, I thought that was interesting, but I didn't really know a lot about being a lawyer, and most of my political science courses evolved into my Henry Rutgers Scholar Thesis, and I ended up in the, not in the government phase, but on the international relations side. I took "Government of Foreign Nations," I remember taking "Governments of Western Europe" and "Governments of Eastern Europe," and I got an advisor, Frank Taschow, who was, basically, I think, a Soviet expert, but, anyways, he also taught the Middle East, and that's what I ended up doing my Henry Rutgers in. Can we take a break?

SH: Sure.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: You were just telling us about your Henry Rutgers Thesis. What was it on?

SF: … Very interesting. The thesis was on Iraq being the linchpin of the redevelopment and the pacification of the Middle East. The timing is ironic. I swear to God, I don't believe Mr. Wolfowitz and Mr. Rumsfeld have read my thesis. … If you look down in the library, which, to my dismay, I now learned that those theses are now … on microfiche, but I used to go and see if anybody read it, and nobody ever signed it out, [laughter] but, anyways, … I had taken Taschow's Middle East course. … I looked around and I came to the conclusion, after looking around at what was happening in the Middle East, … and I think it was, if I remember correctly, … just the beginning of the Baath Party in Iraq, but Iraq had the potential, because they were not dramatically religious, fanatic. They were more secular. They had this natural, historical valley

of Mesopotamia, which would, could, serve as a fertile field to start, and that since the major problems at that time were the Arab-Israeli conflict, that if the world focused more on the redevelopment of the Middle East and … spreading the wealth around, they could, incidentally, I believe, solve the Arab-Israeli conflict, because, … one, there were places for the Arabs to go, but there was also economic well-being that could support them and do other kind of things. So, it was an interesting premise, based upon what we see today in the world, [laughter] but that was it; it was Iraq as being the cornerstone of a redevelopment plan for the Middle East.

SH: Do you remember who your advisor was?

SF: Yes, it was Frank Taschow.

SH: He was.

SF: Yes.

SH: Did you have a second reader, like they do now?

SF: I don't think so. I remember going before the three people, … you know, the challenge round on my documentation. I think they were far less organized, because, I remember, I laughed, because a couple of years ago, when Carl Kirschner had started the Henry Rutgers Scholar Lectures, … I guess we went to lunch. [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman is referring to a series of initiatives started by Dean Kirschner to augment the thesis program and offer a series of lectures to a wider audience.] … He said, "What could we do?" and I said, "I don't have a lot," I still don't have a lot of money, "but I'd like to participate and do those other kinds of things." … I started giving my annual University donation to the specific Henry Rutgers project, because he told me they were sending kids on trips and whatever else. All I remember is, economically, my Henry Rutgers project, I couldn't type well, … it cost me fifty bucks. I had to hire a typist, over here in Somerset, to get my thesis done, and it was like so much a page, and that was a major expense. You know, fifty bucks was a lot of money, and that I remember as being the major obstacles, you know, as well, and I was probably a little bit deficient in; I mean, senior year was a good time, you know. We get six credits for Henry Rutgers, both semesters, and maybe I took that physics course that I told you about. … You know, by that time, I was mature and I was doing pretty well, maybe something else, and I had ROTC, and so, it wasn't tough, you know. Senior year was a lot of fun and I was a dorm preceptor, and I remember sitting on the balcony, overlooking the river, I think it was in the spring, and saying to one of my classmates, "It ain't gonna be this good ever again." I mean, it was the most, probably, relaxed time of my life that I ever had, was my senior year at Rutgers, even with, you know, … all those other kind of things, because it was just, really, a good year. I mean, I had my act together, you know. The only thing I wasn't sure of, at the end, was what I was going to do for a living, because the interesting wrinkle was, … again, I applied to law school. I was in pretty good shape academically. I did very well on the LSATs and I was Phi Beta Kappa and I think I won the Theodore Frelinghuysen Vail Prize. So, I must have been about first or second in my class, … although we shared the Vail, I think, for grades. … The Vail Prize was for the best grades in your senior year; I don't know. There were a lot of "1.0s." … For two years in a row, I guess I'd got a "1.0," which was the equivalent of a "4.0," and pretty close to it in my sophomore year, after I made the change.

So, I was in pretty good shape and I was getting recruited by a lot of law schools, but I still wasn't sure about it. The law schools put together the financial package, but money still was tight. The CIA and the NSA recruited on campus, so, as a fallback, I had taken their exams. Also, my advisor, Dr. Taschow, had convinced me. He said, "Well, you might want to go to graduate school, if the law school thing doesn't come in, because you can maybe get a fellowship, you know." So, I took … the graduate school tests in political science, and the achievement test and whatever the aptitude test is for graduate school, GRATS or whatever they called it, [the GRE]. Well, the CIA and the NSA came to campus to recruit, and they gave you; the first step was, you took a test, which was administered by the Educational Testing Service, the same people that do the Graduate Record thing. Well, I've got to tell you, there's a lot of overlap. So, I took this test and I must have done well, because, you never know what you get, and then, they started. … They both called me back, said, "Well, we're very interested. We want you to be a so-and-so," and I said, "Well, until I know … how I'm going to finance law school or graduate school or what's going on here;" I took these interviews. The NSA was described to me as a place in Fort Meade where everybody went into this gigantic, windowless building, listened to radios and didn't come out until the end of the day, and it didn't really sound very good. So, I said, "Thank you very much. You know, I don't think I'm interested in doing that," but the CIA sounded a little bit glamorous. They had this great reputation. The CIA was dominated by a lot of white "WASPs," as the administration, and they said, "We'll have your first interview in Nassau Hall in Princeton, in the Princeton Dean's office," because they were all graduates of Princeton. … I remember going to Nassau Hall, driving down Route 27 and going to Princeton and showing up at the Dean's office, and I said, "I want to see Mr. So-and-So," and they go, "Oh, you're here to see Mr. So-and-So." There was a back room that they ushered you into and there was this very "WASPy" guy, with the glasses and, you know, … the Ivy League haircut kind of thing. … We had this interview and he said, "What are you studying?" I told him about my Henry Rutgers paper and he said, "Interesting." … The deal was, with the NSA and the CIA, if you had an ROTC commitment and you knew you had to go in service, you would serve two years with the CIA or NSA, as an employee, but that would count as your military obligation. You would actually get military pay and the military would assign you to those agencies, and then, when you'd finish your two years, you'd go on civilian status, but you'd already worked there. So, it was interesting. It was not a bad opportunity, I mean, one way to take care of your military obligation, and I was dating a girl I had met from Philadelphia whose brother was in the CIA. … It sounded like an interesting thing and the guy said, "Well, you're not going to;" he looked at me and he said, "We're not going to send you out in the field, you know, cloak and dagger, and kill people and that kind of stuff." He says, "You're going to be an analyst." He said, "I think, based on your background, we'd like you to do analysis. What do you study?" and I said, "I've got this paper on Iraq and the Middle East," and that was the only other time I really felt prejudice, because he said, "We don't permit people of the Hebrew faith to work in our Middle Eastern desk." … I was a little turned off by that, you know, because I thought he was telling me, you know, "No Jews in that section," basically, was a nice way of putting it. Probably much to their dismay, they probably would have done a lot better at the CIA if they would have had Middle Eastern people, … instead of a lot of WASPs that went to Princeton and, you know, never got out of prep school. … I went on; I went down to Langley, Virginia. I took the lie detector test and I took the psychiatrist interview and I was all lined up … to take the job, and then, my law school scholarships came through. When I put them all together, the best deal was to go to Columbia, because … I got a scholarship that paid all my tuition to Columbia Law

School. They picked thirteen kids each year, one kid from each geographic area in the United States. This was funded by a guy by the name of Larry Wien, who was a lawyer, who also owned the Empire State Building at the time, and that was his payback. … They said, "You've got a three-year scholarship, … tuition paid," and I didn't know how to turn that one down. I got into Harvard and all, but they weren't giving me as much money, and I could live home, in Fort Lee, and cross the bridge to go to Columbia, and it was really, again, a money-driven kind of a thing, but, you know, that got me into law school. So, that was my adventure in my papers and what was I going to do. Meanwhile, … I went to law school and I put the CIA stuff behind me and, when you go to law school, you get deferred from military service. So, that sounded like a good idea, I started law school. … I remember, I guess it was my freshman year, or my second year, I mean, everybody remembers when Kennedy was shot, and, I remember, we were in some class, and then, everybody walked out on Broadway. Like, people just were shaken. Some professors got upset, but some people just walked away from their desk, or the lecture hall, walked out. … Things kept getting more interesting, you know, in the world, as I was getting out of law school. Vietnam got to be a little more important. People were a little more aware of it in '62 through '65, is when I got out, but my move, one of my summers, I had worked at Bendix, I told you, I met a lot of policemen. … My first summer, I went back, by the way, because, again, I was short on money, … I didn't get a legal job, I went back to Bendix, my second year, and I was the armed guard again, [laughter] the ROTC veteran armed guard. … My second year, though, I really felt I had to get a legal job. So, I got a job being a summer intern at the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office, and then, I interfaced with a lot of police and prosecutors and it was a good experience, because I got around the courthouse and met a lot of judges. … When I went back to law school, it put, kind of, that whole process in order for me and I hadn't paid much attention to the military. The Army kept writing to me and they said, "As long as you stay in school and do whatever you wanted, you are deferred," and I got out of law school and I …

----------END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO----------

SI: This continues an interview with Stuart J. Freedman on June 13, 2006, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and …

SH: … Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SI: Please, continue. You were telling us about your clerkship with the Appellate Division.

SF: Yes. … I live a charmed life. [laughter] We'll talk about that when it comes to Vietnam. Crazy things happened. … I built up a good relationship, in the summer before, as a prosecutor's intern, with a great jurist called Morris Pashman, who was then with the Chancery Division, the Chancery judge in Bergen County, and he was later to be in the Appellate Division and, at some time, temporarily appointed to the New Jersey Supreme Court, but considered, today, to be a great jurist, and a nice guy. He was a really interesting guy, Harvard graduate, and we just hit it off. I was the kid sitting in the back of the courtroom, interested. I introduced myself and told him I was going to Columbia Law School and he told me about what was happening, and he was doing non-criminal things, which I really was interested in. … I wasn't that interested in the criminal thing, but that was the only job I had, and so, I watched and the good civil and

commercial cases were in his court, because that's what Chancery does, … even today, in our New Jersey court system. So, I was pretty much sure I wanted to clerk for him. … We talked about that and he said he had an obligation to one of his classmates, to interview a son who was a Harvard graduate, but, once he went through the motions, … he was pretty sure, you know, I could count on working for him. … We had this relationship, … but he said, "But, I don't want to hold you back, in case something better comes along." So, I was interviewing with another Chancery judge in Passaic County. I went to an interview there, and I guess; no, maybe it was in Pashman's office. I was sitting, interviewing with another judge, and … a call comes in to that judge. It was either Pashman or Kolofsky, I guess, who were the two Chancery Division judges, and the Chancery is; you know, New Jersey has three levels of courts. There's the Superior Court, the Appellate Division, and then, the Supreme Court, you know, and a call comes in and I remember the judge saying, "Well, he's here now. Yes, he's a nice young man. Yes, I'm pretty impressed, yes," … blah, blah, blah. I don't know who he's talking to. He said, "This is for you." I said, "Who's on the phone?" He said, "It's Judge Sidney Goldmann." … He said, "You know, Sidney Goldmann. He's Chief of the Appellate Division." I said, "Oh, that Sidney Goldmann," you know, … because I had not sent him a resume, and Judge Goldmann got on the phone and said, "Stuart, I read your resume," and he said, … "I've been late in the process, because I've been ill, and … you sent it into the central clearing agency." New Jersey's courts had a central clearing agency. You sent it to the administrator of courts and any judge who needed a clerk would go into that. … You could also send it directly, but I had not sent my thing directly to Judge Goldmann. So, he said, "Have you accepted anything?" and I said, "No." I said, "I'm just still talking. In fact, Judge Pashman says he thinks he wants me. I'm pretty sure I'm going to take that." He said, "Don't do anything until you come down to Trenton and see me." He talked like that, so, I said, "Okay," you know, and I hung up. I said, "When can you see me?" I said, "Well, it's," whenever it was, the time. … He said, "How about, you know, a couple of days from now? Come down in the afternoon," and I hung up and I looked at the judge who I was sitting with and he said, "You know," he said, "he's a great jurist." He said, "I think I'm going to the Appellate Division, but he's been there and is head of it." … He said, "You won't find a better jurist in the system, so, if he's interested," he said, "no hard feelings, go down and talk to him." So, I did, and it must have been Pashman … who did it for me, because he would probably talk that way, and he was interested in my career. One of the things I'd done in the prosecutor's office was work on the case where we prosecuted *Fanny Hill* by John Cleland, which was an obscene, allegedly obscene, book at the time. … I'd worked on the prosecution team, counting sexual references and doing charts and all kind of … stuff, which, today, would be ridiculous, but, anyways, we prosecuted it, were trying to ban the sale of the book … in New Jersey, and he [Sidney Goldmann] had done some opinion on pornographic books, called Bantam Books, and he was very interested in that and we talked about that. … Basically, he pretty much, I think, pretty much offered me the job. … He called me back the next day and offered me the job and it meant going south, because I was planning to live home and it would have been in Hackensack or Paterson or in those courts. He said, "No, no, this is the thing," and … it wasn't a bad paying job. It paid seven thousand dollars, seventy-two hundred bucks, which was pretty good. … It was a little less than the starting salary if you went into private practice, but it was a prestigious kind of thing. So, I took that. Meanwhile, you could also get deferred from military service if you go into a clerkship. That was a recognized part of, like, graduate school, so, you got deferred. Well, this is 1965-'66. Well, you know, things are stirring around. The pot's stirring around. What's happened in the meanwhile is, that whole light at the end of the

tunnel, … the six-month Reserve time in the Army, is all off. The young officers are all going, you know, into service. Maybe half go to Germany, but the other half all go to Vietnam, and you figure, "Well, the war's got to end. This is kind of silly. It's going to be over pretty soon, so, why don't I forestall it, you know?" It's 1966, so, I'm twenty-six already. … You know, I'm not that young. I do the clerkship and it was a wonderful clerkship and Judge Goldmann was a true Renaissance guy … and just a wonderful man to work for. … That's over, and then, I've got to face the reality, I guess. The war keeps building up and I get orders to report to service in September. I go down to Washington. … They go through a little process, more of a charade than anything else, to say, … "What kind of job do you want in the military?" and they said, "Well, you're a law school graduate and you've clerked. We'd love to have you in the Judge Advocate General's Corps, but, if you do that," he said, "that's a five-year commitment. We won't let just anybody in. You have an ROTC commitment for two years, but JAG is … considered a premium job, so, if you go into JAG, it's a five-year commitment." I said, "That's a long time," … and they leveled, "Not only that, but, if you're single," and which I was, "what we're doing with our JAG officers is, … we train them for a year, we send them to Vietnam for a year, they come home for a year, and then, we send them back to Vietnam after the year. So, you get to go to Vietnam twice, because we're not sending our married officers, JAG officers, we're only sending our single officers over, because, you know, that's the way it is." I said, "That doesn't sound like a very good deal. Why don't I stay in the Signal Corps?" I had been assigned to the Signal Corps, as a random thing. I said, "What do you have for a Signal Corps job?" and they said, "Well, in your case, we have this wonderful job in procurement. You can do contracting for the Signal Corps, dealing with civilian contractors." I said, "Oh, I used to work at Bendix. … That sounds like an interesting thing," and he said, "We've got a base in Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, which is just on Route 80, on the other side of the Delaware Water Gap." I said, "That's pretty good." … "Report in September to training." They said, "You're going to Tobyhanna, but we're going to send you to these schools first. September, you had to … report to Fort Gordon, Georgia, for basic Signal Officers' School. It's about an eight-week course." My exposure to the Army before then had been, I guess … it was the ROTC summer camp. Normally, Rutgers guys go to places like Fort Dix, or Fort Devens in Massachusetts, or Camp Drum in New York.

SH: Plattsburgh?

SF: No, that was the Air Force, I think. For some reason, my year (1961), they sent Rutgers, and Seton Hall … and NYU, they took some Northeastern schools and sent them to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which was the home of the 82nd Airborne. So, I'd done my six weeks summer in Fort Bragg and I'd kind of been exposed to the Army. That was my real exposure to the real Army, and you get treated almost like basic training, KP and everything. I mean, I, you know, cleaned up a mess hall and peeled potatoes and washed dishes. Of course, I was experienced at washing dishes from Phi Epsilon Pi Fraternity, [laughter] and so, you know, I knew how to do that, and dig a hole and do all those kind of things that basic soldiering is supposed to do, when these guys go through basic training, except that they call you a cadet and whatever else. My most noticeable thing about that was, I had a black commanding officer, a captain, who was our chief instructor. I forget, his first name was Andy. We used to call him "Captain Andy," from that movie, the *Showboat*. [laughter] … I remember, in Fort Bragg, Fayetteville, North Carolina, it was still segregated and I remember that we did stuff, like, we would go into town; well, the

white guys, anyways. … Because of the cadet unit, they were from all different schools, mixed together, and so, there were kids from Virginia and VMI. There were also some Southern state schools, which were predominantly Negro schools. So, we had Negro officers, Negro cadets, in our unit, but they couldn't go into town, but I remember us going into town, places, in, like, a laundry. … Captain Andy couldn't get his laundry done at the same laundromats that we could, but we actually took his laundry in separate bags … and did it for him, because he would have had to have gone into the black neighborhoods and it was, like, inconvenient, you know. I mean, it was, like, a little bit strange. That was the old Army, you know, old, Southern, and the Army is, in those days, and probably is today, still, primarily, a Southern institution. You come out talking Southern in the Army, but, anyways, when I came back, and that was … my experience in the South. … Then, I go back down to the South, into Fort Gordon, Georgia, which is even further south than Fort Bragg. You drive right through Fayetteville to get to Fort Gordon. … Man, I've got to tell you, the country is then, pretty much, … on a war footing, because Fort Gordon was doing two things. They had a lot of pure recruits, draftee types that they were training there. They had the Signal Officers' School, but they also had some cadets for OCS, which is officer candidate school, which are usually people in the Army or draftees who want to be an officer, or they think can be an officer, and they really went through a much more strenuous course than we did and they were running all around the post all the time. I mean, my unit, it was the Signal Corps. By definition, it's not necessarily the most *gung ho* group of guys in the world and they're teaching you technical subjects, how to set up radio communications, primarily radio communications, and teletype and some other kinds of things, and so, I got instilled with that. … Because I was the oldest, by that time, you've got to figure, which meant I had more time in grade than anyone else in the class, I was already a first lieutenant, … without doing anything. You started as a second lieutenant, in 1962, I think you can only be four years in that grade, you got automatically promoted to first lieutenant, without doing anything. So, I was a first lieutenant. So, they said, "You're in charge of the class. You're class leader," you know. So, I had to lead these guys, who couldn't march very well to begin with, and I certainly couldn't do very well, but that was the job I had at the Southeast Signal School in Fort Gordon. … For some reason, … there were a couple other people with graduate school educations, but they were a couple of other first lieutenants, like me. Nobody was a lawyer, a couple of business school graduates, but most of them were just college graduates. So, we were older and I did very well in the course. The coursework was pretty much theory kind of stuff, not that practical. So, I did pretty well down there, and then, … they decided, because I was supposed to go to Tobyhanna, … they would teach me all about the Army supply system. First, they taught me to be a Signal Corps officer. Then, they wanted to teach me how to buy things for the Signal Corps. So, I went to Fort Lee, Virginia, which is the Quartermaster school, and they had a course called Army Supply Officer School and all the branches are there, because Infantry, Artillery, everybody, has a supply officer, all kind of units. So, they train everybody's units there, as well as training guys that just spend their whole life in the Quartermaster Corps. … I recently went back. … Fort Lee, Virginia, is more like a college campus. It was a radical change from being in Fort Gordon, which was really, like, a traditional military installation. … Fort Gordon was a lot like Fort Bragg. It was a rough, ready, kind of active, macho kind of place. Everybody was in fatigues, you know. People were saluting like crazy. A friend of mine, who I had met from Bergenfield, New Jersey, who was a business school graduate, in my unit, and I were both assigned to Fort Lee. We were two supply officers from that … signal class of about twenty. We drove up together with our cars. We followed each other up and we pulled into Fort Lee and we were

wearing the dress uniforms, the tie and everything, and, like, everybody's walking around in a tie, I mean, and there were kind of sloppy salutes, and we made jokes about it. "This is, like, pretty relaxed. It's Quartermaster Corps." They also taught people how to be club officers. I mean, if you wanted to, there's a course, an eight-week course, in how to run a PX, how to run an officers' club, run a golf course, how to run an enlisted men's club, … you know, how to pack jams and jellies. I mean, there were courses in this, like, unbelievable. … I guess it was around Christmas break and the Quartermaster school closed down for a week or so, and so, we got temporarily assigned. Because I didn't want to use my vacation time or leave time, I got assigned to the local Signal Corps unit, which … maintained the communications, the telephones. It's "AT&T for the Army," the Signal Corps, and they didn't have much for us to do, but they were happy to have Signal Corps guys that were just sitting around. … You know, we ran a few messages and, one day, it was before Christmas, and I got a call from the signal company commander. He said, "There's orders came down. A bulletin's come down for you, Lieutenant Freedman," and I looked at the orders and the orders said, "Change of orders," no more Tobyhanna Military Depot, Pennsylvania, "Qui Nhon, RVN." So, I said, "Whoa, [laughter] that's a change in life, yes." … I went home, and the girl I was dating, I told her right away, because … I needed somebody to talk to, but I didn't quite know how to break it to my folks, because they'd been thinking, "Oh, he's in the Army, but he's going to be, you know, eighty miles away. … He's going to come home and it's not such a big deal." I didn't know how to break it to my folks. … This was, like, in December and I was to report to Vietnam in February; school was probably over at Fort Lee, maybe the first week in January. We went back after [Christmas], and then, I had leave. I was going to take leave, maybe mid January to; I think I had to be in Vietnam on the 22nd of February, something like that.

SI: That would be 1967.

SF: Yes, it would have been '67, yes, '67, and, actually, I can tell you exactly, I think. Here, you [Sandra] missed the pictures. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman goes through his papers.] … I thought I could find it on the military records. … Anyways, it was the end of February. … I had made arrangements to have the Army pick up my trunk. … Yes, I had made arrangements to pick up my trunk, or something like that, and I still hadn't had the guts to tell my folks. You know, I figured, "Gee, they've got to worry for a year, why make them worry for fourteen months?" So, it was getting down to the wire and, unfortunately, the Navy, who was going to send my trunk over, or pick up my furniture; they were going to store my furniture. When I'd clerked, I'd had an apartment and I lived in Philadelphia while I was working in Trenton, because Trenton's kind of dull, and I commuted that year and I had a little bit of furniture. So, the Army would put your furniture in storage. So, I moved my furniture, though, first, into my father's garage, and I had my trunk and the Navy was going to store it, the Bayonne Navy Yard, for some reason. So, I'd gone down and had made all these arrangements. Well, the Navy got to my mother before I did. She gets a call from the Navy Department and they say, … the movers, "We're going to come and pick up Lieutenant Freedman's trunk. Is this … Lieutenant Freedman's so-and-so?" "Yes, this is his mother, so-and-so." "Well, we're coming to pick up his trunk for Vietnam, and his furniture." "No, no, you've got it wrong. His furniture's going to Pennsylvania." The guy says, "No, no, I got it right," you know. So, in the meanwhile, I had had a part-time job between … when my clerkship ended and my active duty, the summer before, with a law firm in Newark, which is now one of the big ones, and it's called Sills Cummis

[Zuckerman, Radin, Tischman, Epstein & Gross, P.A.]. It has about 150 lawyers. In those days, it had twelve. So, I'd had a summer job from when my clerkship ended until I went on active duty in September, down to Fort Gordon and I came back, and that thirty days that I was off, I wanted to do something. So, they hired me back and, you know, I just hung around the law firm, did some research and some other things. So, my mother calls me at the law firm, said, "What the hell's going on? … These guys are here to pick up your trunk for Vietnam," you know. So, I said, "I'll come home, Mom. I'll explain it to you." So, that was a little bit shocking for them.

… Yes, I kind of made up a list of, I guess, my odyssey of how to get there. … I had no idea what was going to await me, other than, you know, the fact that it was just, "Report to this unit … at Qui Nhon." It was the 21st Signal Group, I believe, which I didn't even know what that meant at the time. Qui Nhon is on the coast of Vietnam. It's about, oh, halfway between Saigon … and the DMZ. Yes, here it is. The DMZ's up here and there is Saigon, as we look at a map, yes, yes. Well, in the military, you know, you had to call an office and they arranged transportation and they said, "Report to Travis Air Force Base in California and, from there, we'll get you to Vietnam. Don't worry about it. You have these orders." … Travis is right outside of San Francisco and I have a friend who'd been practicing law for about a year in San Francisco and he was lawyer to the hippie, the Haight-Ashbury, crowd. He developed a whole practice of representing kids who got in trouble with drugs, and he came from Englewood Cliffs and we'd gone to high school together and we'd kind of clerked together, at the same time, and he's a real character. … He developed a practice representing, you know, these kind of kids. He also was with the law firm that represented communists. … They represented these labor unions and, in fact, they sent them over when Gary Powers was shot down, in the U-2, because they wanted the Russians to have somebody who they felt was not just an American lawyer, would have some feeling for them. So, he was with this firm, whose name I forget. I show up. He says, "Well, stay at my apartment for a couple of days. I'll show you around San Francisco, before you go to Vietnam." I show up at his office and the receptionist looks at me, and I'm in uniform, and she says, "Gee, we get a lot of you guys here," she said, "but not a friend of Mike's." I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Well, there's a lot of guys that are trying to get out of the military. You know, they're either evading or they're going to Canada." … So, Mike says, "No, no." He comes out. He says, "No, no, this is my friend. No, he's going to Vietnam." He says, "He's going to be a hero." … He takes me around to introduce me to all the judges in San Francisco. He says, "See, I have real, legitimate friends." … He said, "This guy went to Columbia. … He's a lieutenant. He is going to Vietnam," he says, and they said, "Yes, Mike, we never thought," you know. [laughter] So, he's quite a character. He was in a movie. What's the author's name? Hunter Thompson, the story of Hunter Thompson's life. Mike represented Hunter Thompson. He was a friend of his in San Francisco and Mike appeared in the movie called *Where the Buffalo Roam,* playing … a lawyer who's somewhat like himself, but the role of Michael was actually played by; who's the guy on *Everybody Loves Raymond,* played the father on that? Yes, well, he played Michael as the mad lawyer. Picture him as a younger guy. So, this was a movie done by …

SI: Peter Boyle.

SF: Peter Boyle. Peter Boyle played Michael. Michael played some other lawyer. … So, Michael was a real character, still is.

SI: Was he the one that Benicio Del Toro played in the other movie that they made, the more recent one?

SF: I don't know. There's a question about whether it was Michael, yes, … and then, he remembered, taking me around, I met the comedian Professor Irwin Corey in the back of one of these places. I mean, these were all people that Michael knew in what was the Haight-Ashbury world in San Francisco. It was a whole different world. That was one week. It was a very strange interlude in my life, and then, I'm on a plane and I remember …

SH: To Vietnam.

SF: Yes. It's February, I'm flying to Vietnam and we go to a place called Bien Hoa, which was right outside of Tan Son Nhut in Saigon. There's two airports outside of Saigon in fact, Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut, and Bien Hoa was a major reception area. I remember, I get off the plane and I guess I'm wearing khakis. We were traveling in khakis. We had these pants like this, basically khakis, and short-sleeved shirts. I got off the plane and the impression I remember was hot. I had never felt that hot before. … They opened the door, you walked down, you know, it was an old-fashioned airfield. You walked down the steps from this transport; it was a commercial plane, World Airways. I'd always remember, they flew us over and they flew us back, a charter line, and it was so hot. I just couldn't get over how hot it was, and we went to some barracks. They took away all your money, because you weren't allowed to have greenbacks, which I didn't know. … We converted it to traveler's checks, I guess. No, I had traveler's checks. That's what I had. I had traveler's checks and some greenbacks, but you weren't allowed to carry that in-country. They were worried about currency. Don't ask me why. So, I bought postal money orders. … Somehow, I got money orders. I went to the post office. They told me to convert all my money to money orders. "You can either send them home or keep them yourself, but you couldn't carry money, which would destroy the Vietnamese economy." They had military scrip or Vietnamese money. That was the only thing you were allowed to use over there. I remember doing that, and then, sitting around, waiting, and they said, "Well, here's your orders," and they interpreted the orders to tell me that the 21st Signal Group Headquarters was in a place called Nha Trang. I had to get there, but, first, the hierarchy of this thing was, in the Signal Corps, in Vietnam, was set up two ways. There was what's called "the AT&T component." That was the people that basically put in all of the communications throughout the whole country. They had local offices everywhere and that was called the First Signal Brigade. The First Signal Brigade had a number of groups, who would be, like, regional companies. The 21st Regional Group was … kind of in the middle, central, … the shore to the Central Highlands, and below those … groups, they had individual signal battalions, which were, actually, each city or base camp would have a battalion which would supply it. They also had another component. Signal Corps was doing something else. Each maneuver unit itself, the First Cavalry Division, the Americal Division, which I ended up in, the First Infantry, … each division had its own signal company, or signal battalion, in it. So, when they traveled, they traveled with some communications with them. So, they would set up somewhere and their signal battalion would then, kind of, make contact with the people who are already on the ground, geographically, and that was kind of how they linked up. Well, I was to be with the "AT&T Telephone" component, the static people, First Signal Brigade. They said, "Okay." … I

remember going to the headquarters of First Signal Brigade in Saigon. I went from Bien Hoa, I forget how, maybe staff car, maybe bus, I mean military bus, and I reported to headquarters, and it was kind of like these movies that you see, … Saigon's, I'd later learn more about it, later on in my career, but old, French-style colonial buildings, like you see in Martinique or Guadalupe, if you go down on vacation. They all look the same, French colonial architecture, and The First Signal Brigade was set up in one of these places where you walk through the gate. It was a gated entry, had a path, you know, a courtyard kind of a thing you walk through. They gave me some orientation films, and then, they said, "Okay, you go to the airport," the next day, and I probably was two or three days in-country by that time. "You're going to go up to Nha Trang, which is 21st Signal Group, and they'll tell you how to get to Qui Nhon," which was something else. So, I went to Nha Trang and it was a lovely place on the coast, later spent some few days there. It was basically a Vietnamese beach resort. There was the 21st Signal Group and some helicopter unit. … They had a lovely little "O" club, officers' club, that was run by, I remember, the helicopter guys. … They gave me some chits or something (military money), you know, "Entertain yourself and spend the day here," and they said, "Well, we don't need you at Qui Nhon anymore." This always happens. He says, … "Now, where we need you is at a place called An Khe." That's A-N-K-H-E. An Khe is in the Central Highlands, between Qui Nhon and Pleiku. Pleiku's really up in the mountains and An Khe's kind of halfway. Yes, here on the map is An Khe in the middle and Pleiku's up here, which is pretty well known for the fact that a lot of action happened at Pleiku, and Qui Nhon's down at the coast. It's a port city. They said, "We really need you at An Khe. There's a unit called the 509th Signal Battalion, which supplies the communications to that base camp, and in the base camp right now is the First Air Cavalry Division." I said, "Oh, that's something. [laughter] Yes, I heard about those guys. They do a lot." They said, "You're going up there. You're going to be the battalion S-4," which I knew was the battalion signal supply and maintenance officer. … Getting around Vietnam, … there were two ways, one of which was; no, you … didn't ever travel on the ground, two ways by air. You went by helicopter or you went by C-123s, which were smaller versions of these flying boxes (C-130s), you know, where the ramp comes down in the back. You've seen those planes. They were smaller. I think it was C-130s, which were bigger ones, I think, and the 123s were the smaller ones, and I forget which one it was, but I was on one of those, and I think I got to Qui Nhon that way. … Then, I took a helicopter to An Khe and there was a road from Qui Nhon that went to Pleiku and halfway through was An Khe (Route 19), and the helicopter flew over the road. It was following the road. It was pretty high up. Again, first impressions, up until that time, it was hot, you know. I told you it was hot in Saigon. I kind of got used to that. It was guys living on the beach at Qui Nhon. … Nothing was happening and I'm in the helicopter and I'm flying in and it was the morning, probably about; I don't know. Time is a little strange, because you start a lot earlier in the Army than you do in civilian life, so, maybe it was eight, nine o'clock in the morning. … I looked down at An Khe from the helicopter and there were all these fires. I mean, there were, like, a lot of small fires. It looks like, in my mind, I'm saying, "Oh, my God, they're under mortar attack or artillery attack," because you could see the base camp. … The base camp is basically a big circle, you know, with a fence perimeter and guard posts and trenching, mostly, and then, a lot of, basically, tents or some tropical buildings set up, … but you see all these fires. … I go, "Oh, my God, what am I getting involved in?" … So, I said something to the guy. He said, "Oh, those are the honey pots." I said, "Honey pots?" He says, "Yes." See, you know what honey pots are. You're laughing. Honey pots is what they pull out of the outhouses. They bring the Vietnamese in, or the troops themselves, and they burn off

the waste product, the feces, in the morning, and what I thought was being under attack turned out to be, you know, that was it.

SI: Every day.

SF: Every day, yes. It was an everyday event. … So, that was not so bad. … It was not a bad time to be in An Khe. I mean, I met the guy I was replacing. The unit I'd been with had been together in the United States. They'd started at a place called Fort Huachuca, Arizona. They'd all been peacetime Army guys. I mean, their wives had gone together and the unit had shipped out by boat and they'd pretty much been there just about a year when I got there. … What was happening was, at various times, as their individual service in Vietnam, or as in their own military obligations, let out, they were being replaced by people from the States. … Vietnam was a system of one-year individual rotations, whereas, today, they send entire units over, and they did in World War II. Vietnam was, you went in individually for one year. Remember, you served one year in-country, and everybody counted days, very much so. You knew you were going to be there for one year and you were going to get plugged into some unit. … I was not the first, but I was pretty much near the first round of people that were starting to come into this unit that had all been together in the past, and they were pretty low-key. It was a pretty low-key kind of operation. They'd been there a long time. The challenges weren't very bad, once I got to know what the deal was. I had a wonderful warrant officer. In the supply system, as well as some other technical services in the service, you'd put an officer in charge, but they assume that he's going to be some young lieutenant or captain who's not going to know a lot, and there's usually a career NCO, a sergeant of, you know, twenty years, or a warrant officer, who guides him. … I had a warrant officer, who was a supply guy, who was really running it in my absence, until knowing I was going to come in. … He stayed there for about two or three months while I was in An Khe. So, it was pretty simple. I showed up for work every day. The biggest thing we had going was, we were trying to make our living quarters permanent. When I first got there, I was living in a tent and they had, fortunately, been able to pour some concrete, … a concrete pad, and so, the tent was based on that, which was good, because the ground is always wet, you know. In the rains, it's much better to be on a concrete slab. They were also in the process of; they poured a big concrete slab and they were building what we called "hootches," which were tropical buildings, on the concrete slabs. So, the officers' quarters were going to be there, … we were building, like, room next to room, kind of a motel thing. Now, I was talking about a motel. I think, this is an oral history, but, anyway, you've got to remember, we're building this made out of scrap material. The Army did not supply building materials. The Army supplied tents for living over there, and everything else was scrounged, and what you were always trying to do, throughout the whole year that I was over there, was to improve your living conditions, to get them to be more like home. So, we were building these two-man rooms next to each other, … on this concrete slab. … We'd take shipping cartons, use the lumber. We would get; a lot of the communications equipment would come in these big boxes, huge, and so, you'd have plywood. We'd build, and they would get screens. Screening was available. So, what you had was plywood up to about table height, and then, you had screening, and then, you built a roof. In the beginning, you just took your tents and used those as the roof and, eventually, you tried to get tin, you know, classic, corrugated iron, to do it, and everybody helped. The first guys were there. The Colonel was on the end of the road. … People had helped him build his room first. He lived alone, but … every other officer shared a hootch with another officer. So, I got in there and

… a very heavy-set lieutenant came, and he was to be the commander of the troops of the battalion. The Colonel runs the unit, but there's something, what they call the headquarters company commander, that just runs the troops, and his name was Johnson, but he was a heavy-set guy. We called him "Puff." … I'm terrible with giving out nicknames, so, I called him Puff, because he would run up a hill and get out of breath, and the name stuck. So, for a year, he was known, because of me, as Puff. [laughter] He and I shared a hootch. We had these camp beds, and maybe air mattresses, and we would keep trying to get things better. So, most of the time I remember being at An Khe was spent trying to improve my living conditions, because my day-to-day job, I can't tell you, really, what I did. I would fill out requisitions, mostly under the supervision of the warrant officer. We'd go to inspect some things, because we were also in charge of the motor pool. A signal unit has a lot of trucks. So, we probably had, maybe, about eighty vehicles, big trucks, jeeps, everything, all varieties, because all the communications equipment is mounted on these trucks. So, there's a big motor pool. The good thing is, I don't know much about vehicles. I never was a guy who was good with automotive stuff, but there was a warrant officer who ran the motor pool. … He, in theory, reported to me, but we rapidly came to an understanding that, if I left him alone, he would run the motor pool, and I would never get any black marks on my record, because he'd been running the motor pool for eighteen years. … I remember, he was a Korean War veteran, Jack Ditweiler, I remember, and Mr. Jack, … for the year I was over there, I never worried about the motor pool. I mean, Jack took care of that. "Here, sign here, Lieutenant Freedman. We need some…" "Sure, Jack." [laughter] The big thing we had a major concern for was, we had to have electric power, because everything is communications, and the electric power is on portable generators, which means you have to have fuel, and there's always generators going. The good news is, every Signal Corps unit has no problem, because we always have lights and, in my case, electric razors and radios and things plugged in. We always have power, but the big battle we faced, I always remember, was generators breaking down, because they were 10K generators, that's kilowatt, twenty, fifty kilo watts. I mean, in the end, we were bringing in 150 kilowatt-units, big, huge generators, which are almost the size of a truck, in and of itself, and Jack's job, pretty much, … when we were in a static condition, like at base camp, was to keep the generators going. So, he really had to be a master of that and we were always faced with shortages. The classic problem was, I'll talk about the troops in Iraq, … we always were short on parts. It was always a struggle to get replacement parts. … You would cannibalize some things to get other pieces. We would always try to trade with other units, Air Force units, Navy units. At An Khe, we had Air Force units, but, when I was later in Chu Lai, we had Navy units. Try to get parts, it was always a battle, back and forth, because, no matter what the system was, you know, it was always tough. Now, that was, in theory, one of the things I was trained in doing, because I'd gone to Fort Lee and I'd learned all about the system. … The system, really, they actually had a system; the system was punch cards. It was the early days of computers and, if you wanted to order anything in the service, you took an IBM punch card; it was just like, by the way, … we registered for courses here at Rutgers, because the game in Rutgers used to be, "Grab." There were thirty spaces for that English course. You had to be in line early, grab the cards. You got all your courses, then, you ran over to the Registrar, handed the course cards in, and then, they would produce a class roster and your schedule. Well, the system over in Vietnam was, if you want to order anything, you had to get the cards punched, and then, process through those units. It turned out to be; if you remember, Robert McNamara was Secretary of Defense. McNamara, prior to that, had been, I think, president of Ford Motor Company, yes, Ford, not GM, I believe. My friend, … I talked

about Steve, who'd been at Signal School with me and we both went to Fort Lee to learn Quartermaster systems, his dad happened to be the parts manager at a Ford dealership. He worked there in the summer. When we learned the Army system, Steve said, "My God, it's the Ford system. They're using the Ford system of control." … You would process these cards and there would always be an air-conditioned unit. Computers were big in those days, so, we had, like, a forty-foot trailer, which was air-conditioned, which was the computer, which would run it through, and then, there was, supposedly, other big computers. Now, in the beginning, just before I got there, the whole system … would have worked great, except the following happened. The big computer that was supposed to run supplies for all Vietnam came by boat, was at a pier in Vietnam, and the VC blew it up. So, sitting in the middle of Saigon Harbor was the, … call it the mainframe. So, for a while, we were pretty much back to basics.

SH: Requisitioning.

SF: Yes, requisitioning, and a lot of more … portable, kinds of makeshift devices that we were doing on supplies. I was just learning about that and most of the struggle was taken up by this guy, Mr. Ed, the warrant officer, who was great at doing that. There came a point in time when I finished the An Khe hootch. I moved out of the tent. … We had a chaplain. The battalion had a chaplain. I think our chaplain was, he was a Southern guy, very lovely. Most chaplains are lovely, and he was some Baptist denomination or some Methodist denomination. … He never had met a Jew before, I don't think, but he offered his services and he wanted to know if I needed anything special because I was Jewish. … You know, he said, "So-and-so," and I said, "No, no, I really didn't," and I think I may have been the only Jew in the battalion. I'm pretty sure about it, yes, and there was a time I felt I was sometimes the only Jew in Vietnam, but I later learned that wasn't true. … I guess I shared his tent for a while, and then, we all moved up to this hootch, and then, … it was relatively quiet. I do remember one thing. In our division, we had a young officer, another lieutenant. His name was Warren Ho. Warren Ho was from Hawaii, had taken ROTC, I think, or officer candidate school, and, I remember, his claim to fame was, he was Don Ho's nephew, Don Ho the entertainer. … We also had a number of Guamanian citizens, who get, evidently, drafted into the United States Army, the problem being that, from time to time, we would go on night alert. Now, the Air Cavalry Division used this as a base. If you read the literature, most of the time, they're out in the jungles doing things, but, then, they would come back …

----------END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE----------

SF: Like any base camp, it's a base camp, but most of the action is happening out somewhere, where they're on patrol or out … doing actions, and they're just coming back to rest, to re-supply themselves, to get medical attention or whatever, in the base camp. … My unit didn't have anything to do with the forward things. We were just maintaining the communications in the base camp. There was a huge mountain outside the base camp where we had set up our antennas and one of the things I thought I should do was, since it was part of my unit responsibilities, to a degree, I remember, I made them take me, by helicopter, up to the mountain antennas. We went up every so often. There was a small group up there, what they call an isolated signal site. This one wasn't as isolated as most. That usually meant two or three guys would be sitting on the top of a mountain by an antenna, by themselves, which generally wasn't that dangerous. This one

wasn't particularly dangerous, certainly in the daytime, because right below them was the base camp. They weren't in the base camp, but they were pretty much near it, and it was on the side of the mountain painted with, I remember, this big, yellow patch for the First Cavalry Division, with the horse. If you don't remember; the First Cavalry, … historically, traces themselves back to Custer, because the Seventh Cavalry Regiment is part of the division. So, they go through a lot of that business … and they were very *gung ho*. Well, there was this big mountain, it had the patch on it and we had the antennas on top. It was two or three little buildings, some were mechanical, one was for living, and we were flying up there and had some great views. You could see the base camp. … There wasn't a lot of war happening right in my bailiwick, except we would do some things. Every night, we had artillery units inside the perimeter and they would fire outside, what they call "H&I," harassment and interdiction fire. That meant, "We don't know where they are, but we'll just shoot a few rounds out there to keep them off balance," and … they would fire at random times at night. Some of those random rounds were, they would fire flares, some of the shells. It's a little shell, goes up in the air, a little parachute opens up, the flare lights up and it's like starlight. It's really like daylight. You can see. You've seen them in the war movies, you know. They would fire those things just to make sure if there was anybody outside the wire, because it wasn't necessarily a safe area. … You had to get used to that. … That's outgoing. What you didn't want to hear was somebody yell, "Incoming," because that meant they were shooting at you. We had, I remember, two or three alerts. I think they may have put two or three rounds, probably mortars or rockets, into the perimeter at that time, just to bother us, but, then, the whole unit, the whole base camp, would go on alert. The reason I brought it up, about Warren Ho and the Guamanians, it's the middle of the night, everybody is running out, it's hot as hell. Everybody's sleeping in their underwear. … What you do is, under alert, you grab your helmet, you grab your rifle and you're standing there, you know, in, that was called "GI skivvies," you know, your boxer shorts. … We had to tell Warren and the Guamanians, "Don't run around. When that alert goes off, you don't go out," because, if you saw an Asian inside the wire with a gun, you were not, probably, going to ask questions, you know. … I remember that being a major problem. … I guess in about spring of that year, 1967, again, not much is happening, I get sent on some assignments. … I guess one interesting thing was weapons. I talked about the shortage of supplies. I arrived there and they hand me an M-14 rifle. Well, I'm a lieutenant and I'm doing office work. An M-14 rifle is almost Korean War vintage, basically. … It's a very long, heavy kind of weapon. M-16s, which is what most of you picture in the war and which, kind of, most of the Army has today, still, was just coming out and the Army was converting. So, the combat units got M-16s, which were about two or three pounds lighter than the M-14 and a lot shorter and handier. … I said, "Well, shouldn't I get a pistol? I'm an officer; I'm supposed to get a .45 pistol." They didn't have that or somebody else had it, you know. … So, "Here's your M-14." So, Mr. Ed said, "Well, wait a minute, that's not right." … You had to carry a weapon around when you went on convoy or outside the base or something. I said, "I want a .45." He said, "No, no." He says, "Pistols are hard to get. I can't get you a pistol," he said, "but let's go talk to the Vietnamese Army, the ARVNs." We used to call them "gooks," because they were all the same to us. There was no distinction made in our mind between, quite frankly, the guys that were fighting us and the guys who were on our side. … We went to a local ARVN unit. He takes me outside the fence and there was a local ARVN unit camp and, I think, for about thirty bucks, we bought … an M-1 .30-caliber carbine, which is something a lot of folks back in the United States hunt with. It's a little, short, nice weapon, light. … It was probably the only weapon I'd done very well with when I qualified as a basic

officer, because it was light and it was easy to shoot, and I bought some ammunition, because that wasn't even in the US Army's arsenal. By that time, we'd phased them out entirely, but we gave them to the Vietnamese Army, because … the Vietnamese Army was much smaller, physically. The Vietnamese people are very small. Even among Asians, they're small of stature. The Montagnards were big, but the native Vietnamese were very small. You'd be on a plane with the Vietnamese, I used to think I was with a Boy Scout troop. … I mean, they're actually little people, up to your shoulder, … and that was the Army. So, I got myself an M-1 carbine and a couple of these clips of ammunition and I used that as my sidearm, for a long time. … We had to go to Qui Nhon once to get supplies. It was a major supply port, so, … we drove down the road in the daytime, because you only drove that route, I think it was Route 19, during the day. … I have a map that shows it, but I'm not sure where it is. It was the route that went from Pleiku through An Khe down to Qui Nhon. We drove down that road and there's been a lot written about this and I've read some stories about helicopters going down, in the literature of the war, … left and right of that road, and they showed us one place. There was a pass that the French Army had been terribly beaten up in during their war. They'd been ambushed and we went through that pass and they said, "Well, you've got to be careful going through." Now, there's a lot of traffic on the road during the daytime and I was also interested in the pipeline. We're going down the road. … Maybe Mr. Ed was driving and I was there, and maybe one sergeant. We were going down to do some kind of a deal at Qui Nhon, or check on something that had to be shipped up to our unit, and I was fascinated by the road, because running alongside the road was a pipe and it's marked, the Army marks everything, with a label, "POL," "Petroleum and Other Lubricant." It was the fuel pipe that went up from Qui Nhon, where the tankers landed, and it would pump the fuel up to An Khe, … because they need a lot of fuel for the helicopter, and, to me, it was funny. So, I asked the dumb question, which is, "Gee, there's a war on. You're looking at the same things." I said, … "Isn't that pipe going to be, you know, a number one target at night?" and they said, "No, no, you don't understand." Ed said, "Charlie taps into the pipe and gets his gasoline out of it, so, he's not going to destroy the pipe, because it serves him as well as it serves us." So, I thought, "Oh, that was an interesting thing I learned." We later learned that one of the reasons that they never bothered a lot of the isolated signal sites that our guys were manning was, which were like relay stations, you know, because we didn't run wire from base camp to base camp, it was a microwave on top of one mountain that would shoot to another mountain, they'd never bothered those guys because … Charlie was talking on the same telephone systems that we were talking on, many times. So, you know, because we were carrying, quote, "civilian" traffic on the same lines all along, … they had access, … since they had infiltrated the local natives. … I mean, the classic was, not in Qui Nhon, but later, in Chu Lai, we found out that the guy who was the barber in town, who was straight razoring the guys in the daytime and who people were going to for haircuts and things, was also the guy that, around the time of Tet, they found the mortar buried in his basement. So, it was that they lived two lives, so, you never knew who you were dealing with.

SI: It was an actual barber who was later found out to be VC.

SF: Oh, yes.

SI: I have heard that story a number of times, where guys talk about how the barber has the razor right next to their head.

SF: Yes, but, in the daytime, they wouldn't do it, because, you know; well, either that or that he was holding the mortar for the VC. I mean, his story probably was that he was holding it for the VC. I didn't get involved in that end of the case, but, I mean, it was no doubt that the barber was holding it, you know, the stuff was found in his place. …

SH: As far as the antenna and the communications go, was there anyone trying to listen in on that from the American side?

SF: I don't know. I don't know the answer to that. I mean, in theory, we had people that were monitoring communications. There was something, an outfit which I tried to join at one time, because I thought I had this great, you know, intelligence background, I was recruited by the CIA and the NSA, somebody called … the ASA, the Army Security Agency, who, in fact, were the listeners for the Army and were attached to our unit. These were secret guys who never talked to us about what they did, but there was always, inside our base, a special barbed wire compound with those guys, who should have been listening to the traffic, and maybe they were, or maybe they felt it was just as good to listen at the same time. I don't know the answer to that question, but we were told, again, in the same way they were using the oil line, they were using our telephone lines and our communications for many of the same purposes. So, a lot of those isolated units were left alone, much to our surprise and benefit, in some respect.

SH: How much of your supplies were shared with the ARVN?

SF: [laughter] Interesting you should ask. One of my great banes, why … I never loved the Vietnamese people, to this day, is, there were two separate, entirely separate, supply lines. … We got our supplies dedicated to us, as far as I knew, came by boat, came into piers I later toured, later in the story, I toured these piers, … Port Saigon, primarily. The boats came in and the stuff was marked for us. Some of it must have been marked to the Vietnamese Army and it went through the Military Assistance Group, which was MACV, Military Assistance Group, Vietnam. Military Assistance Command would dispense it to the Vietnamese. I ran into that issue once … later, in Chu Lai, when I was on my own and we ran out of wire and there was a comparable unit of the Vietnamese Army Signal Corps in town. So, I said, "Well, let's go down and we'll get some of this gauge wire, because we're out," and it was a case where we don't know when the boat's coming in and we need some of the wire, and they said, you know, … through interpreters or whatever else, and enough English, they said, "Oh, no." … Yes, they had the wire, but they wouldn't give it to us. They said, "Well, you've got to sign here and pay for the wire," and I'm thinking, "Well, wait a minute, we gave you the wire in the first place, you know. I'll sign that I borrowed it from you, but I'm not going to sign, basically, a government IOU." … They had a price tag, that they were going to take that chit, that they were going to take it down either to Saigon or somewhere and get paid cash. So, my own impression of that was, plus some other dealings; I'll give you the flipside of that. That same Vietnamese unit, this is in the Chu Lai area, which is, again, later in my career in Vietnam, there was a commander, or village chieftain, or some kind of a colonel, Vietnamese colonel, who had a Peugeot, and that's, you know, a fancy car. … He drove it into our perimeter at Chu Lai and he came to my motor pool and Jack Ditweiler calls me. He says, "There's a guy down here with a Peugeot and he's with a Civil Affairs officer." Well, Civil Affairs officers were the Americans who were charged with,

basically, maintaining relations with the Vietnamese and the Vietnamese Army. He said, "He … just wants to fill up. I just wanted to check with you." I said, "Well, wait a minute," I said "what's the deal?" I said, "We're going to fill his Peugeot with gasoline?" It wasn't even a jeep or a truck, we're going to fill his Peugeot, and this is the same guy who said I couldn't have wire, you know? That was the kind of mentality that I got from the Vietnamese Army, or … the class of people that were running Vietnam at the time. So, I never really held any great respect for them. I mean, they were always cutting a deal. … The stories I heard from the combat units were that very few of them, really, when the time came, would fight. They would deliberately make noises on patrol, so that, you know, they wouldn't have the encounter, if they were chasing Vietnamese, the Vietnamese would run away, you know. I wasn't on those patrols, I don't know, but those are my face-to-face experiences about the chiseling and the dealing. … They didn't seem to relate pretty much to the poor guy that was sitting in the rice paddy, who'd seen the French and the Japanese and the Americans come through. … He could care less, with his water buffalo, who was going to, you know, blow up his rice paddy at that particular time. … These guys were Vietnamese entrepreneurs and going to make it for themselves at the time, so, I never really held a great deal of sympathy for the Vietnamese ruling class itself, you know. We were pretty much out there fighting for ourselves. We had a Signal Corps officer, who had been a Civil Affairs guy in an earlier tour, and he was a great believer in these great experiences he'd had with the Vietnamese … on an earlier tour, you know. He was, like, an exception. I always took it with a grain of salt. I figured he probably had a good thing going, one way or another, [laughter] because there was a lot of; it wasn't like London in World War II, where these guys had these terrific rear area things, but there were a lot of characters who were living very well, even in the service, in some of the areas. I mean, Saigon was; I'm living in a tent, or in, you know, a place that's made out of tin and plywood, right? When I go to Saigon, they're living in things that had been French hotels, with swimming pools and air-conditioning, you know. It was like a different war. I mean, I asked that question. They're all wearing khakis and … I would trudge in from Chu Lai, to Saigon, occasionally, on business, and say, you know, "Are you guys in the same war?" I got picked up once, I remember, in an air-conditioned staff car, you know, one of these green Chevrolets with air-conditioning. I'm used to driving around in a jeep, and that's Saigon. So, there was a whole different world even there. I mean, they would take you to restaurants. They would be dating Red Cross girls and USAID girls and correspondents and going to restaurants. … There were rooftop restaurants, where you could sit and watch the H&I fire around Saigon. I remember doing that a couple of trips. They'd, oh, have a good steak, and so and so, you know. Oh, steak dinners and beers were sometimes a whole story. … Fresh meat was a tough thing to get in the field. The Navy always had it … and one of my jobs was to go down, barter some stuff that we had with the Navy, which was when I was at Chu Lai, not at An Khe. We didn't have that then. Get meat, then, we would have a barbecue, try to swap beer, because most of the beer that was coming over at the time wasn't American and it was, like, Korean beer, which was awful. It wasn't even the good Korean beer, or Philippine beer, it was terrible. Some of the beer was terrible, but, in Saigon, you never had those problems. … Guys would spend a year there, you know. They were truly "Saigon warriors." They used to make jokes about those guys. They never got outside town. There were different ways you could fight that war. …

SH: How long were you at An Khe?

SF: An Khe, I was just getting to that point. … The answer is, about the spring and summer of that year, so, I was in An Khe about four months or so, or five months. What had happened was, strategically, they had decided to move all the Marine forces up to the DMZ. The Marines had occupied; there were four corps areas, I [eye] Corps, I [one] Corps, was the northernmost, and they kind of went down the corps. An Khe was in the II Corps area, I believe. The Marines were all going to go up through to the DMZ, and there was some master plan about Khe Sahn and all that kind of stuff, … operation something or other, that some genius had come up with, probably Westmoreland, … who I saw a couple of times, who'd fly in, impress everybody.

SH: Really?

SF: Yes, … and do a few ceremonies, and then, fly out, but, with the Marines leaving I Corps, they were going to replace that area with Army troops. The only problem was that they didn't have a unit to replace the Marines. In other words, it needed an Army division up there. So, they came up with the idea that, what you could do was, some of the divisions were particularly fat. A division fights, normally, with about three brigades, three maneuver brigades, and then, all the supporting units. Some of the divisions had four brigades. … There were some independent brigades that were just there, like the 198th and the 196th. They were just there alone. They'd just come as a brigade unit, not part of a division, and they were in different base camps around Vietnam. They came up with the idea, "Well, we can't get a division over in Vietnam fast enough to do this maneuver, so, we will create a division, by taking odds and ends, we'll borrow from each of the other units," which was the making of the Americal Division. Now, what they called it at first was "Task Force Oregon." Oregon was the home state of the general who was to command it, General William B. Rosson. That's why they called it Task Force Oregon, and the initial patch that they had said, "TF Oregon," but it had below it the blue and the Southern Cross and the stars of the Americal Division. Americal Division, … it was from "Americans in New Caledonia" in World War II. That was the history of that division. So, they said, the idea was, eventually, it would be called the Americal Division (23rd Infantry Division), but this codename was Task Force Oregon, and they were bringing in other units. I think, they brought in the 196th and they brought in one of the brigades from the 101st Airborne that was over there alone, they didn't have the whole division over there, and … one of the brigades from the 25th Infantry Division, which had just come over from Hawaii. … From time-to-time, they assigned other units to it and they would build a base camp structure, because you had to put in Engineers, Signal, Medical, Aviation; same way, they borrowed it. Well, the idea was, things had quieted down a little bit at An Khe, and, they were going to take the 509th Signal Battalion and make that the signal battalion for this new division. Now, that worked fine, except for this: the problem was, "Do we have the people?" and they could replace the people easily enough, but all of our equipment was literally plugged in, into the base. So, what it meant was, we had people, but we had no equipment. So, they gave Freedman the job. "You're the supply officer." So, they gave me a set of orders and they said, "Go down and report to," it was, "USARV," US Army Command Vietnam, "in Tan Son Nhut. We're forming, go there, you know, Task Force Oregon. Tell them you're an Oregon guy," or so and so. Well, I packed up my stuff from An Khe, and, as I said, made one of Freedman's lucky moves. … Say I go on a Wednesday, it turns out that that Friday or Saturday, the Vietnamese decide to hit An Khe with a little more than they've ever hit them with before, mortars, some probing raids, and some other stuff, enough that it makes the newspapers. My only problem is, I don't find out about that right

away. I'm in Saigon. Because you don't have the big picture, when you're in the service, maybe they do now, because they have Internet, you know, in Iraq, you know, you can get the news shows and you can get satellite. … We had no idea what was happening on the big picture. We read *Stars and Stripes* and they told us generally, but they didn't put out a lot of core information, because it was, "You're not going to give it to the enemy, who is floating around." You hear it after the fact. So, we didn't know and, at my rank, I didn't get to go to those division briefings where everybody had the big picture. I just did my job every day. So, I don't know what's going on. I'm in Saigon and I read in the paper that An Khe got hit with a big raid. So, if I know it's in the paper, I'm thinking, "Oh, my God, my folks think I'm in An Khe, but I'm really in Saigon." That's the good news, right, because Saigon is pretty quiet, and it's before Tet and everything. Everybody's walking around Saigon and I had a great deal of trouble trying to get word to them. You could make phone calls if you went to the post office and you could do these long-distance phone calls, that kind of stuff, eventually. I'm not so sure, I forget, whether my folks had ever, you know, followed the news that closely, but I was pretty much worried about them getting scared about that.

In Saigon, I worked the piers with my orders. I met more characters on the piers of Saigon. As I said, I had a shopping list, and I had to get everything that a signal battalion needs and, as I said, you're talking about eighty vehicles, … microwave transmitters. You need … what they call troposcatter stuff, we used to scatter stuff off the satellites, telephone switchboards, just everything, anything. You name it, we needed it, because we didn't have anything. It was all staying at An Khe. We're going to leave with our packs and our beds, pretty much, and that was about it, and I went up and down the piers of Saigon, where most of these warehouses were, and they assigned me a driver. … I would say, you know, "Where do you get this?" and you'd meet these guys. They were, like, these old, classic Bilko types; some guy in an undershirt, you know, with a pair of Army pants, you know, he was in the Army. He was a redheaded guy, you know, he was about fifty or something, been in the Army for a lot of years, half-drunk, you know, "What do you need?" You know, "Okay," I said, "well, I need some of these, you know, track seven radios," or so and so. "Let me see, I think I've got some of them back here in the warehouse," and so and so, and, okay, you know, you'd put your name on it. I said, "Well, we'll get it later." We'd swap these IBM cards and their tickets and we would send people back for the communications material, and I did that, and then, the vehicles themselves, though, weren't on the piers. … I said, "Well, where do you get the vehicles?" and the guy said, "You've got to go outside of Saigon, where there's a valley," and I don't remember the name of the valley. We drive into this valley, and it was like you couldn't see anything until you got into the valley, and then, I drove into the valley. There were, in this valley, … I literally mean this, as far as the eye could see, parked wheel-to-wheel, rows and rows of vehicles. I had never seen so many, nothing like it. It just looked immense, it was this vast expanse of two-and-a-half-ton trucks, jeeps, the smaller version of three-quarter-ton trucks, anything that you wanted. The GI in charge says, "What do you need?" and I said, "Well, I need these eighty vehicles." He said, "Okay, you know, you get this stuff," he says. There was stuff like, well, I remember, once, we wanted a command jeep. The commanders were supposed to have a radio mounted in their jeep and you can't just take a radio and put it in a jeep. … It needs connections to get the electrical power, but the only radio we could find with the correct frequency was mounted, for some reason, in a two-and-a-half-ton truck. So, I remember, … we delivered it to one of our company commanders and he was very upset. He said, "How can I be a company commander and drive around in a

two-and-a-half-ton truck, [laughter] because that's my command vehicle?" … Most of the time, I got everything I needed. So, it was about a two-week exercise to get everything we needed, and then, we assembled, and I forget, my memory's a little bit sketchy, how we did this, where we assembled, because I was down there in Saigon pretty much alone and other people were doing similar things in their respective specialties, but not really, you know, in supply. … I remember the plane ride, I guess, because … I had packed up all of my goods, and it was on that trip to Saigon when I had this thing, "Are you guys fighting the same war?" That was the incident where I got off the plane, I had my rifle, my fatigues, and the guy picks me up in the air-conditioned car and takes me to this officers' quarters, … which was a … hotel with a pool, and I said, "Gee, what's going on?"

SH: Were you ever able to get a hold of your parents?

SF: Yes. … Oh, I wrote letters. … My primary means of communication was letters, which took about two weeks, but, a lot of times, I didn't really have time. We exchanged tapes, reel-to-reel, these small tapes, not cassette, that was before the era of cassette, but just open-reel stuff, and you could send those. … Of course, we got free postage. So, we would swap those back and forth and I think I may still have some. I remember, once, we really didn't have good communication with my folks until I got up to Chu Lai, because, then, we were able to develop a telephone methodology. We actually used the ham radio system. When I could, every two weeks or so, I could really get a hold of them. The Army had a system, not on the commercial system, but the Signal Corps ran the ham radio stations and the ham radio networks would connect to the United States. They basically put out, I guess, … what is it called? a CQ, [code for making a general call], I think they call it, and they get a ham radio operator in the States, and I think the telephone company, … I guess, they would reverse charges. … Somehow, the guy in the middle didn't get charged, but he was doing it as a favor, and he would relay. He had to actually sit there and flip the key, because … you really had to do this, you know, "over-and-out" kind of stuff. We had to go, "Over," and you couldn't both talk at the same time, because of the methodology of one-way ham radio. So, I could talk to my family. About every two weeks, I tried to get up to the radio station. It was a benefit of the Signal Corps. Most of the guys in the Signal Corps did it, you know. … We'd get other visitors from other units, but they didn't have it as a regular service. You know, they weren't as fortunate as us to call home. So, I did get to talk to my folks that way.

SH: You were in An Khe for three or four months, and you talked about being one of the first replacements in this unit, that had gone over as a unit. Did you notice any difference in morale at that point? As you said, it was relatively …

SF: Yes, they were close-knit. Yes, they all knew each other.

SH: Do you see that later in your tour?

SF: It was a little bit different. Yes, … we new guys developed a certain camaraderie. Well, the one thing that happened was, they took the whole unit and moved it to this Americal Division and moved it to Chu Lai, which was actually quite a distance. … What they didn't move was, we had this lovely colonel, I think I mentioned. He was a wonderful guy. He was, like, a low-

pressure guy. His tour was almost up and he was not coming with us from An Khe. The word was out that he was not a rough-and-ready combat kind of guy. So, we knew we were going to get a new colonel when we got to Chu Lai, a new colonel assigned to us, … and I think a new, what they called a Signal Officer. There were two new people joining the unit, at a rank higher than me, who were going to set the pace. It was a decidedly different unit. Even though we were the same kind of people, most of us were the same people, morale was a little bit different. One, we were a little bit scared, quite frankly, because of what was going on. It was in a new place. We were going to land and we didn't know what we were going to find. As it was, when we landed in Chu Lai, as opposed to my shock at An Khe, … Chu Lai is a peninsula. It is south of Da Nang. … Before we got there, … this map [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman is referring to a map] shows it a little after I left, because I pulled this off the Internet, but it was quite a base that had been set up by the Navy and the Marines. It had been a Marine/Navy base. So, there were a lot of naval ships up here at "LST Beach," and they had swift boats [Fast Patrol Craft] up here. The MARS station is the one I was telling you about. MARS is Military Amateur Radio Station. So, that's where we used to talk home. We ran that. … There's a gigantic airstrip. Today, by the way, Chu Lai is like a free-trade zone in Vietnam. They made it a commercial trade zone, because … there's a huge airport, which had Marine fighters on it then. When we landed at Chu Lai, the Marine fighters were still on the airport. They stayed there, inside the perimeter, but this is all secured area. Yes, yes, this was all secured. The black line is the equivalent of, like, Route 1, I believe. … No, I'm sorry, … the black line was the perimeter. So, everything outside of here, this is all base and this is, allegedly, civilians in here.

SH: Okay. They were not able to secure the area around this base.

SF: Well, I mean, when we say "secure," I mean, this was fence line and the people had to live here. The village was called An Tan, which was the local village, but this is the Chu Lai Peninsula.

SH: Did the Corps of Engineers carve out a no-man's land zone all along the perimeter?

SF: Well, no, you open up a little bit. You'd open up maybe fifty yards, or something like that, ahead of the wire, but it's … just to get a field of fire. While we weren't a fighting unit as such, since we lived, in this particular time, … right near the PX. Here's the Americal Headquarters, we lived over here in this green area, and we were charged with defending this portion of the line in the evening. In the daytime, you'd put out a certain number of guards, very few, on the fence line, but, in the evening, we would have to put out more, a certain amount of our signal men, who really would have to go on guard duty. There was a huge guard tower, oh, forty-five, fifty feet in the air. I always hated to climb up to check on that. Because we used to rotate duty, you know, as to who would be the duty officer that night, to watch the fence, and there were bunkers with machine guns, and just some riflemen in them, every so many yards along that fence line, and there weren't just infantry guards. I mean, normally, the support units, the artillery, the supply, the truckers, … aviation, they all had to send troops to guard the fence line.

SH: After the unit moved up to Chu Lai, was it replaced at An Khe?

SF: Yes, they must have. I'm not sure what happened behind me. I mean, obviously, someone had to man the communications. There were new communications units. We left our equipment, we pulled our people out, because the equipment was actually plugged in. So, it was like we've lost command of our equipment, which is what they do today in Iraq. They're telling the National Guards units they're going over, and then, having to leave their equipment. That's why they're short when they come home, you know, if it's employed. Ours was literally plugged in, so, … it wasn't like you could drive it away. … The trucks had to stay with it, because, … in theory, communications units are usually metal boxes which fit on the back of the vehicle and they're lifted on to it. They either travel when the Army's moving and you can communicate from the back of the truck, or, when you're in a more stable location, we lifted them off with a crane and we put them on the ground, and, sometimes, … like when we got to Chu Lai, we actually buried them in a mountain to keep them from being damaged, yes. Yes, and we air-conditioned the mountain. … We cut out the side of a mountain, a hill, and we just then backed up into the earth. So, you got into these facilities, the switchboard and the command post, by actually going through a tunnel, and then, they were sitting inside. Yes, well, you know, it was a pretty good idea. [laughter]

SH: You talked about the warrant officer with all the experience. Did he go with you?

SF: No, Ed had left before we made the move, or right after, but very close. Pretty much, when I was in Chu Lai, I was on my own, by that time. He pretty much taught me the ropes and … you get the feel of what it was … and you get a certain level of cooperation. … The guys who I met in Saigon, it turned out, the guys who were sitting in Saigon, behind the desks, helping with the supplies, ended up being the trucking officers and the quartermaster officers in the division, interestingly enough. So, I mean, there was a certain familiarity. You could see the same faces. It's still a small community, you know. It was only so many people and, if you knew your business, and I guess, you know, I was a fast learner. [laughter] You know, I was a law school graduate, I should; it wasn't that difficult. This stuff is not designed for geniuses. … You could learn the system, then, you'd learn what you need and you do a little politicking; you'd pretty much get what you needed for your unit, that was my principal job.

SH: You had confidence in the unit at Chu Lai.

SF: Yes. Well, Ditweiler was going to still run the motor pool. They assigned to me, when I landed; I met the other Jewish officer in the Signal Corps. They gave me Lieutenant Arthur Greenberg from New York. … Actually, you have to understand, when I say the 509th Signal Battalion, we were the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 509th Signal Battalion. That meant we were really the staff guys that provided the leadership and the overall planning. The guys who were actually plugging in the phones, they stayed at An Khe. … There was a supervisory level. What happened was, below us, and … we were only a group of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of the 509th, which later became the 523rd, they re-designated us when we joined the Americal Division, when they needed people. So, the people that they assigned, they did the same thing. They "robbed Peter to pay Paul." We got some people from the Delta, we got somebody from the Central Highlands, we got a unit from Pleiku, they all came with us. The 459th Signal Company came from Pleiku. Company A of the 36th Signal Battalion or other came from the "Iron Triangle," Captain Ron Sposato, I remember.

SH: Is this them? [Editor's Note: Mrs. Holyoak is referring to a photograph.]

SF: Yes, this is them. I mean, I could tell …

SI: Is that the entire Headquarters?

SF: Well, this is the Headquarters staff, yes, yes. This is the colonel, the new colonel, and this was the new signal officer. This guy, John O'Brien, the S-3, had been with me in An Khe, from the original group. He was one of the original guys. Bernie Melvin was his assistant. He's now deceased, because his son contacted me through the Internet. He died of, they think, complications of diabetes, and they were concerned that it was Agent Orange. … I told him I didn't think we were exposed to Agent Orange, but, you never know. This is me. That's Pete Dumbelton, who ran one of the companies, signal companies, that came from elsewhere, whom we borrowed. This guy, I forget. This is Ron Sposato. … He was the guy who had to ride around in the truck with the radio. He had a radio controlled, two-and-a-half-ton truck, [laughter] yes, and this guy ran another one of the companies. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SF: Talking about pictures, when I went to Vietnam, I didn't have a camera. I hadn't owned a camera in my whole life and I said, "Boy, I ought to get a camera," and I knew things were cheaper in the PX, so, … I got an Olympus, something called a half frame. The good thing about a half frame was, … you could take twice as many pictures. It only exposed half as much film as a normal camera. It was very light and I used to be able to carry it in the leg pocket of my jungle fatigue pants. You know, these jungle fatigues had many pockets, you know, like you always see the kids with the cargo pants, yes, in the cargo pocket. So, I carried a camera in one pocket. I had a first aid kit and a knife in the other. … That was my thing and I took slides, primarily, because … I knew they would stay longer and they would come back and, strangely enough, I ended up sending them to one of these mail-order companies, which I later ended up joining and being the general counsel of, but I never knew then. [laughter] Just, life is strange, isn't it? I never knew that the Perfect Film and Chemical Company, (Perfect Photo), where I sent them, was going to be the company that I later was with for fifteen years, but that was kind of a strange thing. I actually helped sell off the photo division in 1982, too. [laughter] Anyways, we were talking about, what was it, An Khe? … The signal battalion was about four hundred, four hundred-and-fifty men total. The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, which we were in, was only about, maybe about forty, forty-five, you know. It was about ten officers and the rest were enlisted men, and it was the troops that, say, Puff; Puff's not in the picture, for some reason. … Puff was in charge of the discipline of the troops, as a lieutenant. There's, like, a platoon of troops, so, he was in charge of those troops, but he didn't have any other job, functionally. You know, he would be in charge of placing those people out on the perimeter. That would fall under his jurisdiction. I think Puff may have been an infantry officer. I'm not sure he was a signal officer. I'm not sure, although, as I said, he was far from being a killer kind of a guy, so, … maybe they assigned him to us for that reason. I think he was an infantry officer, … because that would be a job that you didn't need signal skills for. You didn't need communication skills. … So, these three companies got assigned under us. So, we came in and … it was an interesting

command thing, because we knew ourselves as the staff officers, but we had not worked before with the Signal Companies that got assigned to us. So, we had to build a whole new relationship. Sposato was from New England, because I, later, was on a business trip, years later, and I ran into him on a plane coming out of Boston. … He was working for Tyco, which was then based up in New Hampshire. So, you'd see a couple of these people from time-to-time, you know, in strange kinds of places and ways, and, as I said, Bernie Melvin's son contacted me about a year ago. It was unfortunate, that he said his dad had died. He found me on the Internet and he wanted to know about Agent Orange. … I mean, fortunately, I came out of Vietnam with a bad fungus on my foot, which was about a ten-percent disability, but that's about all I can say, and I was able to come right back into civilian life without, I think, … stress, trauma or something. You know, a few bad dreams, occasionally, but nothing that stayed with me. … Evidently, he left the Army, got a job in the Department of Defense. He was working in Dayton, doing some kind of procurement, very similar work, and then, passed away. … I am contacted by the VA now, because, if you get type two diabetes, and there's a whole list of … diseases which, presumptively, are Agent Orange caused, so, if you were in Vietnam, you can apply. Well, knock on wood, … I don't have to worry about that for the moment. … The thing about Chu Lai, it was very interesting, because it had been a base that the Marines and the Navy had been in. It was set up, so, we didn't have to build, you know, we actually walked into hootches that were all built.

SH: This is at Chu Lai?

SF: Yes, yes.

SH: Not An Khe.

SF: No, no. An Khe was nothing, I'm told. An Khe, if you read the histories that are written of the First Air Cav, they just basically went in, took a field, leveled the field and built from scratch, you know. They built an airfield and built everything around it. It was just a forward place on the road that seemed like halfway to Pleiku and it was the right place to be. Chu Lai, … I don't know whether it had a history, I don't know the Vietnamese history, but, because of the nature of the geography, you can see it's a peninsula, it looked like it could be a fishing village. It … basically had a lot of protected inlets and the Navy had taken it. … We're about fifty, sixty miles south of Da Nang on that point. So, that had been an established base. The SeaBees had come in. They built the airstrip for the Marines. The Marine air wing stayed there. …

----------END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO----------

SI: This continues an interview with Stuart J. Freedman in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on June 13, 2006, with Shaun Illingworth and …

SH: Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SI: Please, continue.

SF: But, Chu Lai was pretty much established. I mean, … I told you the story about dickering for the steaks with the sailors. I used to go down here to "LST Beach." They didn't have piers, but they used to bring the LSTs [landing ships, tank] right in here and … you could drive on and drive off the ship, yes. It was shallow enough. Well, an LST is designed to hit a beach and it drops the front ramp on the sand. … They had Navy facilities here where, you know, we would wheel and deal with stuff, rain gear, food, beer… Another good thing about moving from An Khe to Chu Lai was seasonal. … There's a monsoon season in Vietnam. It's in the Highlands at one time and it's in the coast at another. Well, it so happened that I was in the Highlands at An Khe in the off season, and then, when it started to rain in An Khe, I went to Chu Lai, so, I missed most of it, which was a good thing. However, there was some amount of the rain, because I do remember days, when we were in Chu Lai, when I actually was wearing the fatigues and I had a sweater, and then, I would have a rubber jacket on top. So, we actually did get, strangely enough, some rain and cold. We caught a little end of the monsoon season. It actually got cold on the coast, which I was surprised at, you know, it was kind of, really, uncomfortable for a few days.

SH: It looks like a tropical paradise.

SF: Yes, well, on the beach it was. I mean, it was like night and day. I mean, we thought the beach was wonderful. … The Marines were up fighting north by that time. My friend, Lou Angioletti, who was a doctor, was stationed with the Marines south of Da Nang and I located him and we used to phone call. We could put phone calls through on the military system by getting connected through the Marine relays. So, we talked for about the four or five months while I was at Chu Lai, and he was a battalion surgeon. He ended up being a very famous eye surgeon. He took care of Sugar Ray Leonard's eyes when he got hit, but, in those days, he was doing thoracic surgery on wounds, because you don't do much eye surgery. [Editor's Note: Sugar Ray Leonard suffered a detached retina during a February 1982 boxing match with Bruce Finch.] I had a minor wound. [laughter] One of my war injuries … involved my eyes. On the jeeps, you've probably seen them or something, … we had these big antennas, these whip antennas, which were very high. Well, when you go, when you move, you transport, you bring down the whip antenna and you lock it. You fold it down and you lock it to the front of the hood with a little clamp, or we'd makeshift these things. They probably weren't made that way, but, you know, we would have makeshift things. Ditweiler or somebody would weld something that would hold these things down, and you're supposed to put a ball, we used to get a tennis ball or a ping-pong ball, on the end, because the antennas are sharp. I'm walking around the headquarters area … at Chu Lai, or running; something was happening. I run, whip around the corner, must have been a parked jeep and it didn't have the ball on the end, and I caught an antenna right in there, near the eye. … My eyeglasses were bigger in those days, but it slips off my eyeglasses and gets me somewhere along the side of the eye. You know, so, I don't know. Now, the Chu Lai base had everything in it, including the equivalent of a MASH [mobile Army surgical hospital] hospital. It was called the Second Surgical, Second Surg, which was a pretty good MASH hospital, and I had wandered over there, because you try to find educated people, you know, in your off hours, or whatever. You'd meet them in the "O" club, or so and so, and I made friends with dentists. I had lived with dentists, when I was clerking in the Appellate Division and I lived in Philadelphia, I happened to live with two friends of mine who were going to Temple Dental School. They were finishing their fourth year and I'd finished my third year of

law school. So, I knew a little about dentistry and I'd met a dentist from Highland Park, New Jersey, Mark Cooper, who was the oral surgeon, a major there at Second Surg, and we became good friends. … I would go to his officers' club and he would come to my officers' club and I actually got four wisdom teeth pulled while I was there, courtesy of the Army. I said, "Well, you know, they're going to pay for it," and, when I learned he was a competent dentist from New Jersey, I felt a lot better than just going to an Army dentist. [laughter] So, he took care of me, and then, there was a friend of his who, in fact, had been at Temple Dental School when I was there. I didn't know him, but … he was classmates of my friend's, … Paul Klein, and the other guy was called Mark Cooper. So, anyway, I was friendly with the guys at the Second Surg and with a few of the doctors and you would talk, because, you know, we were of a similar age and a similar educational background, which is not true with necessarily everybody in my own unit. So, I'm in the emergency room with a bleeding eye … and they I said, "Take me to the Second Surg," because I don't know what's going on. I can't see, blood is running down, and they take me in the equivalent of the emergency ward. … I'm still and I hear, over me, a guy laughing and it's Mark Cooper, the oral surgeon, and I said, "What are you doing?" He says, "Well," he said, "look, you've got a choice." He says, "You've got to be stitched here, because your eye's been cut open, but you either get the guys that stitch up these big wounds on the body, or you get me, I'm an oral surgeon, who does little stitches in the mouth." So, he ended up stitching up my eye. [laughter]

You know, so, strange things happened, but, … also, things were happening in the war, because … we had the usual H & I fire that was going on. We were keeping them away, but there wasn't a lot of activity. In fact, it was interesting, because the artillery people were outside the perimeter most of the time, just out. They would be out here, where it says, "80th Artillery." [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman is referring to the map.] They would be outside the perimeter, like an isolated signal site; well, they would be on a hilltop. … They would fire in support of the patrols that were going out, but, also, kind of protect our area. I guess the reason was, because of the airstrip, they didn't want to have artillery within the perimeter. It would, you know, interfere with the air traffic. … We did a couple things of note, I guess. … As I said, things were pretty much fixed up in that area, so, we didn't have to worry about that. We ended up installing TVs. Trying to bring home living to the field, one of the strange things about Vietnam was, we had television. … We had entertaining television. Out of Saigon, we would broadcast new television and we would also broadcast, I guess, kinescopes or videotapes of Stateside television, and so, you could go to the PX [post exchange], buy a TV and an antenna, set it up, and my unit was in charge of relaying this stuff from our installation. We didn't originate it, but it would come in from Saigon on the microwave and we would relay it. So, some of the strange sights would be, I would walk down and see, there would be, say, a Marine rest-and-relax area, just a Marine tent area, and, at the end of the guy's bunk, in a tent, in a camp, picture a TV set sitting on a box with an antenna up underneath and the guy's watching *The Johnny Carson Show*, [*The Tonight Show*], courtesy of us. The other thing I used to get was, … in the Army, you always know what a guy does by what it says on his chest or on his shoulder, because it says, if you're Signal Corps, you have little flags. I mean, when you're wearing the full dress uniform, you read the ribbons, you can tell where everybody's been. You know, you can tell what campaigns he's been in and what awards he's won, and you look on his shoulder, what unit he's with now, and what unit he was in combat. That's the two patches. … So, you can always tell. When we're in battle fatigues, walking around, so, you've got flags over here and this thing says that's the First

Signal Brigade patch. … It's a sword that looks like a lightning bolt, to be communications, electronics. So, we would get silly things. Now, you've got to know that … the Headquarters units had many air-conditioned trailers that they'd flown in. So, the generals and the full colonels of the division lived in an area that was overlooking the water, an ocean view, and they would all have the TVs and each guy had his own trailer. … By the way, when you got up to Da Nang, you found out that just, almost the rank-and-file Air Force officers were living that way, just the pilots, captains and above, you know, because that was just the way Air Force bases were set up. They didn't have as many men, but they had all this great equipment. … We never had that. We were still living in these hootches. … We were "air-conditioned," but it was the breeze coming in, you know, through the screens. There had even been, at one time, running water in Chu Lai, they had tried to put it in, and flush toilets. When we landed there, the SeaBees had actually built flush toilets and running water, none of which worked, by the way. It must have broken down for some reason, but they had … tried to set them up and they were actually there. … So, we used the same facilities that we used to use, you know, at An Khe, outhouses, you know, the honey pot method, and hot water came from, first, … the fifty-five-gallon drum is a universal thing. You can make anything with it. In the Army, you learned to make everything. You saw our barbecue, if you cut it in half, it was a grill. Well, if you put two of them together and you put in something called an emersion heater, which they used for heating dishwater, cooking water, put that in and you could get hot and cold water and you put it over, … like, an outhouse structure and you turned the things, you can get, either kind of water. … Later, we got a little more sophisticated, we got what they called bladders, which were rubber tanks that the Air Force originally used for fuel, but they're big, flat rubber, big, flat beach balls, huge, in which you can put five hundred gallons. Well, we got smaller ones, but you'd put water in that. So, we would have drinking water and things like that, and then, we would heat it. So, you got pretty creative, you know, … and huge generators. By the time we got to Chu Lai, Ditweiler and I had really stepped up our generators. I mean, we had gigantic generators. We had the communications stuff buried, as I told you, in the mountain. We did that when we came in. … You know, it was a different kind of operation, … but, anyway, I was talking about how … everybody knows what you are and your jeep says, when you drive, … "509th Signal, SIG, S-I-G, S-4." It tells you … whose jeep it is. … If you know the numbers, you can tell exactly. Well, I'd be driving down the road, you know, you picture it, the generals are here, or somewhere, I'd be just going on my business, and I'd get somebody, you know …

SI: Waiving you down.

SF: Waiving you down. I say, "Well, what have you got?" and he says, "Well, my telephone doesn't work." So, now, you've got to remember, … I took this basic signal course, but I'm, you know, basically, a supply officer. You know, I know how to get things, but I don't know how to fix them. Well, I … told you what I carried in my pocket, I had a camera, a first aid kit and a knife. The knife is a story, too, because what I always wanted was, … there's something called a lineman's knife. It's a US Army-issue knife, basically like a Swiss Army knife. It has a lot of different blades. So, I said, "That would be a good thing to have. Can you get me one of those?" because I saw our telephone guys had it, but they said, "No, these are, like, rare as hen's teeth. Where are you going to get one of those?" The guy said, "When you go down to Saigon," as I did, he said, "go down to Cholon," which was the market, and he said, "You go down to Cholon, you can get anything you want." Well, it was true. You wanted that thirty-caliber rifle; you

wanted, you know, a pistol; you wanted Army equipment, it was all there in Cholon. So, I bought myself a lineman's knife, which I have to this day, in my toolkit. So, that was my thing. So, I would get flagged down by some officer, who would say, "Well, you know, the General says this," "The Colonel says this," or so and so, and I'd come in, you know. … I said, "Well, I'm;" after a while, I learned you couldn't say, "You're not a repairer," because he says, "Well, you're a Signal Corps officer. Aren't you supposed to know this?" and, if I said, "I'm going to call back and send somebody," … well, you know they'll never come. So, I'd go in and I'd fiddle around, sometimes, and there was a trick. It was something you had to do. If you dialed a number, you can get a ring back, the system is set up as such, and you could still do it today on your phone, if you know how. The linemen do it, when they're alone and they want to check your line. So, what we would always do, would be, we would play with the phone. Sometimes, we'd fix it and, sometimes, we didn't, but there was always a way to get a little ring back. You'd get the guy at the switchboard, he'd give you a ring back, and then, you drove away as fast as you could. [laughter] "Yes, thank you very much, Captain," you know. [laughter] That was it. You just hope you didn't see those guys in the club again. That was the extent of it. I used to get pulled over.

… Our new colonel was a strange guy. Fortunately, I forget his name. He had been a prisoner of war in Korea and he had a demented version of, I thought, what everybody should do. He had lent out a lot of the signal officers to the infantry brigades that were out, the maneuver brigades, because he had a feeling that all officers, even signal, you would … be better with your customers if you had experienced the same things. Not a great job, because, I've got to tell you, you know, your life is a little more on the line when you're out there, you know, fighting mosquitoes and ducking shells and whatever else at night. Fortunately, I later found out, because, when you go home, you get to carry your own personnel files; for strange reasons, you go home with two files, your medical file and your personnel file, and you can read them. So, I'm sitting on the plane, it's a long ride home, and I'm reading the file, and I found out that he had actually requested me to not be sent out. He had never sent me out to that job, because the word had been, I guess, that I was going to do my job and he was afraid to lose me, but a request had come that they needed a legal officer for the 196th Infantry Brigade. There's one JAG [Judge Advocate General] assigned to that, because they do a lot of courts-martial and stuff. They didn't have a JAG officer and they ran through the computer, or whatever, and they found out that I was a lawyer and the request had come. They couldn't order it, but they said, "We request that you would transfer Freedman. Will you look favorably on transferring him?" and he wrote back, "Absolutely not. Freedman is vital to the functioning of the unit." [laughter] Never told me that, because I always had trouble with him, but … he said, "No. Unit cannot function without him." So, I later found out that. … The other strange incident, when we all met, we all landed at Chu Lai from different directions. … As I said, when we first got there in the summer, … we were still Task Force Oregon, [commanded by Major General William B. Rosson]. They hadn't renamed us, because I think Westmoreland flew in later and they re-flagged the unit and … everybody changed names. We became the 523rd, because the Americal was the 23rd Infantry Division, Americal, and so, all the other units changed. The engineers became the 423rd, we were the 523rd Signal, but, when we landed, we all met and a lot of us met for the first time. There was the group from An Khe, and then, they had these other guys, who'd come in from other areas, and a new colonel, new Signal Officer, and there was a new exec. … I got introduced and they said "Well," they said, "and when we come to the S-4, we shouldn't have

any problems, because we've got this Jewish lawyer from New York who's going to get you everything you need," and I don't think these guys really realized, they're Southerners, I don't think they really realized that you might take offense, you know? It was kind of strange. … When the 459th Signal Company came in, they had attached to them a lieutenant, Arthur Greenberg. … I'm not sure what Arthur did, maybe he was just a platoon leader. … The supply warrant officer I was supposed to get never came through. … It was supposed to be me and a warrant officer, and then, some sergeant, that was the supply operation, and Ditweiler was … still running the motor pool. I never got the warrant officer, never showed up, so, I was entitled to get an officer. … You know, I'd met Greenberg and I think Greenberg was a business school graduate from NYU and I said, "Arthur, listen, you ought to be able to do this work. What do you do?" You know, he was doing whatever he was doing. He was doing lieutenant's work. I said, "Why not come work for me?" Basically, the commanders talked, and so, Greenberg got assigned to me. … I had Ditweiler report to him, in the middle, and then, we had a battalion mess, which we never had before. … They took all the cooks from all the companies, because they all had separate cooks, and we had to have this big kitchen that fed the entire battalion. So, Greenberg took care of the mess. I figured he ran that pretty well, and he later went out and he was in charge of doing some general assisting. He went out in the field and checked some of these isolated signal sites for me and checked the supplies, which were going on, which was fine with me. I didn't want to do as much by then. As long as I could stay in base camp, it was reasonably quiet, … things were pretty good. … We could sit in that officers' club and there was another peninsula out here called the Binh Son Peninsula, where there was a Korean unit, who were our allies at the time, a Korean Marine unit, and some of our people. They were actively fighting out here, … but the VC had never come around to the base, so, they had them pretty much isolated over there. … You could actually see the firefights at night, and you could see what we called "Puff the Magic Dragon," which was a C-130 with these mini-guns firing. I mean, you've never seen millions of tracers. They still have them. They just would fly over and saturate these areas with fire. Then, you could watch the war long-distance. It wasn't a bad existence. The more interesting things, well, we'd have these parties. I was known as a pretty good acquirer of things and our colonel decided that he wanted to make friends with, get some favors from, the General. … Our colonel didn't eat in our mess, he ate at the colonels' mess, which is where the commanding general presides at the senior officers' mess, and he'd tell us about it, you know, which was okay. We never liked him anyway, but they had standard GI-issue cutlery. Now, the word was, around, that if you went to the right places, you could get a lot of stuff. The Colonel didn't like our office equipment. We had, by that time, I think we either inherited it or had flown it in, standard government-issued desks, you know, the gray, metal desks. … We actually had those desks, … beyond the camp thing. So, we actually had those desks that we had, because the S-4 office that I ran was, I actually sat at a desk, and there'd be a sergeant and a kid that I found, from University of Indiana, when I went into the replacement pool and said, "Anybody type?" you know. [laughter] … This kid raised his hand, Clements, and he said, "I can type," you know. I got Clements and some other kid to drive my jeep, Mahoney. … He wasn't too smart, but he could drive. So, those were the guys that would be assistants to me. The Colonel didn't like that furniture. … There were catalogs of government-issue equipment, and I've got to tell you, Vietnam had everything. So, the thing is, if you ordered the right things, you could get it. So, we put in requisitions for mahogany desks, nice, wooden, high-class desks, not like around here. Right, yes, like the one [Rutgers University President Richard L.] McCormick sits behind, over at Old Queens. [laughter] So, we put in for modern,

they weren't brand-new, but desks and bookcases, you know, lawyers' style, with glass fronts, and cutlery, and then, someone said he, the Colonel, said he wanted these. He says, "Can you get that?" … I got the stuff. That stuff came in; don't ask me why. [laughter] The plane would arrive and they'd unload these boxes and it would be the stuff, I'd order it and it would come in weeks later. … I don't know if it came back from the States, but you'd put it in the computer and it came back out. They were going to have this big dinner with the generals there. … He said, "I hear you can get stuff." I said, "Yes, maybe," and he said, "I want you to fly down and get us a set of service for twelve," or service for sixteen, or so and so. … I would have thought I would have been in a Huey, which was the small helicopter, but, for some reason, I went in a Chinook and I flew to Qui Nhon. … I think, subsequently, maybe I didn't go to Saigon, I guess, it was at Qui Nhon, and I flew to Qui Nhon to get, I think, the silverware. The Navy had it, you know. So, I got a service for the generals' mess. Now, I was sitting in the helicopter, calculating, "A Chinook takes a pilot, a copilot, I think there's … two door gunners and a tail gunner." That's the crew.

SH: It is at least five.

SF: Yes, and figure out the gasoline, you know, the petroleum that you're using. So, I was trying to figure out how much that cost the United States Government. … Then, again, I kept thinking of "The Valley of the Shadow of Trucks," you know, that they didn't know what to do with, but are still there, are probably rusting to this day, sitting out in the valley, because they just came and they unloaded them and sent them to that valley. So, there was everything that you wanted to go for. Well, things were pretty merry. It came about, during the war, I guess I took R&R. I got two R&Rs out of it, once we were in Chu Lai. One, I visited my friend, one of my friends who was the dentist, whose practice I'm helping him sell right now. He was stationed in Japan and we'd been corresponding. He was in Yokohama, and so, I took an R&R for five days to Yokohama in September. … At New Year's, I took an R&R to Thailand, another five days to Thailand, … because I knew I was getting pretty short, because I was going to go home in February, but, when I came back, … things started to get a little bit more uncomfortable in the war. …

SH: From the September R&R?

SF: Yes, yes. … Things were running pretty much on track. We'd had some incidents on the wire, but, basically, these operations at the base camp were pretty much it. One thing that was interesting that had come about, and I'll just interject, … just south of Chu Lai is a place called My Lai. The 25th Infantry Division had come over from Hawaii. … One of their brigades was temporarily attached to us, and I think the timing is such that I flew down to arrange for their integration of their communication and signal supplies, to see what they had, what they needed, … because they came with some signal equipment and we had to make sure. … So, that was my venture to My Lai and, I remember, I didn't like the flight, because you've probably heard about the tricks, but, if you're in a helicopter, in the daytime, you get random firing from the ground. So, what we used to do is take off our vests, put them on our seats. So, you'd sit on your flak vest and I remember flying to My Lai and, you know, coming back, and I was never too happy on the trip, because they tried to shoot you. If I was going on an R&R, it's one thing, but random helicopter trips, you just don't need, and I still don't need them to this day, because of the

malfunctions. So, I remember going down. No, I didn't meet Lieutenant Calley, but I did get to that area when they first came in, and they were, essentially, inexperienced troops for the war when these things happened, the infamous My Lai incident, because I think they happened right after Tet, [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman is referring to the Tet Offensive, a series of offensives conducted by the Viet Cong from January 30, 1968, to September 30, 1968], if I remember the incident, the timing and such, and I was out of the country. In fact, the general, [Samuel W.] Koster, who commanded the Americal Division and got the silverware that I brought up, through the Colonel, was subsequently demoted one grade because of the lack of supervision. They demoted him, or held up one thing star, because of My Lai. [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman is referring to the massacre of unarmed Vietnamese civilians by US soldiers under the command of Lieutenant William Calley in the hamlet of My Lai on March 16, 1968.]

SH: How long was it from the time that My Lai happened until it became general knowledge?

SF: I don't know. I don't know. …

SI: About a year?

SF: Yes. I think a lot of the …

SH: You were already back in the States.

SF: Yes, yes, yes. … My mind was really on some other things, including a whole change in my view of the war. …

SH: We will get to that.

SF: Yes, yes. … Greenberg had gone out once, on … a truck route, to one of our sites and, on the way back, they were picking up some fire … on the road. The next time, … we sent out a truck ourselves and they either got landmined or a rocket, we're not quite sure what, but the truck blew up. So, that was the first time I'd actually had casualties in men assigned to me. What they were building for was Tet, but we didn't know what to call it. … I knew when Tet broke out. It was an interesting story. I showed you the picture of the officers' club, and I'm standing by that wall.

SH: We should say that the officers' club had about a three-foot high wall.

SF: Yes, yes. It was about this high, right, came up this high. … I think that's either mud or stone or something like that, … and then, it's just wide-open and it's a thatched roof. It was actually … fairly big. … If you saw in the photograph, we would go in, there was a decorum, that you would have to take off your helmet, because it was like … Stateside, and you hung up your weapon, because we all carried pistols. By that time, I did have a pistol. I had two pistols, actually. The first pistol, I'll digress, the first pistol, I had my; actually, when Mr. Ed left, he bequeathed me his M-16. So, I had my carbine and I had his M-16, but, in Chu Lai, unlike An Khe, we were ordered to carry a weapon at all times. … At An Khe, when I was walking around, I didn't really carry the weapon until we're on alert, but Chu Lai was a base where they

said you had to wear a weapon all the time. … They were short on .45s, but you could buy anything. So, there was a guy, some enlisted man, don't ask me how, had a .38 revolver, which I purchased, with about, I don't know, … so many rounds in it. … Then, because of the heat, while you see me wearing a gun belt here, around, the way it's supposed to be worn, to kind of cinch in your waist, here's Pete Dumbleton, he's wearing, you can see, his gun underneath his arm, because it's cooler. … See his weapon, kind of sticking out, protruding? It's under his shirt. So, we would wear it like that. I got to wear my civilian .38, it was clearly a civilian, almost had a cowboy look, black, leather holster, just on my hip, underneath my arm, and, occasionally, the Colonel or someone'd say, "Are you armed, Captain?" you know, and I'd say, "Yes, sir." You know, "I got my .38." Nobody would question you about what it was, so long as you were armed, but, subsequently, I did get the Army .45 … and a shoulder holster and the whole business, but I inherited that. As people left, you picked up equipment. Anyway, … I'm at the officers' club, … it's some time in January 1968, and I'm more interested in the fact that I know I'm going to go home the end of February. I'm just waiting for the orders. As I said, decorum was that you took off your helmet or your hat, soft cap, we didn't even wear helmets all the time, and you hung them up, and then, you hung up your pistol, because I guess they didn't want people, you know, getting drunk or rowdy and things like that happening. … So, I was sitting there and we're drinking and, "Thump, thump, thump," and then, "Whoomph," you know. [laughter] … Probably, that barber that I'd been telling you about had uncovered his weapons and what they had done was, … among other things, they were … doing quite a lot of damage at the Marine airbase, but they had bracketed the officers' club, and one round exploded and landed behind us. We were on a hill, so, it … kind of deflected it, and one round landed about, I'm sitting here, well, if I sit here, say, … on the other side of the wall, but, like, where the wall is, you know …

SH: At the most, eight feet.

SF: Yes, something like that. A rocket came in, landed. I found out later, because I went the next day, and they had brought these rockets through the jungle to get them there and a lot of them got wet. So, this one got there, landed, made a big crater, but never exploded. The warhead never went off, which probably is why I'm either here today, or here today without a guide dog, because I was clearly looking right at the place where the rocket landed. You know, I was facing the place of explosion, because, the next day, we went back, we measured. We had this, you know, gigantic crater, bigger than this table, and … the EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] guys pulled out the charge. It's like sheer panic sets in, because nobody was thinking; we're not even in that mode anymore, and guys are running in all directions and there was one of those sandbag bunkers that I showed you. They have them all around the base. So, I run out of the club and we're running low on the ground. You could kind of grab your hat and your gun as you go by, and you don't know what's really going on. … All I remember yelling all night is, "When are they going to get the helicopter gunships up?" because you figure out, if they get the choppers up, they can suppress whatever's firing. I said, it's about ten, eleven o'clock at night. My wife always laughs, because I always tell the story; there weren't many women over there. There were some nurses assigned at the hospital units and there were some "Donut Dollies," Red Cross girls, and it so happened that on the other side of the quadrangle, away from the officers' club, was the "Donut Dolly" place, under MP guard, so that nobody would get too rambunctious and carried away. So, they came to the same bunker. So, I ended up, on the first night of Tet, in

the bunker with about, I don't know, eight or nine other officers, a few enlisted men and about three or four "Donut Dollies," you know, that was my first night at Tet. … Every night thereafter, we were shelled or rocketed, pretty much. … The airbase really took it. They got a lot of, a handful of fighters, maybe half a dozen of the Marine fighters, right in the revetments. Revetments are these metal/sandbag things, which are built up on three sides, and so, they must have had those zeroed in, is the only way they could have got them. So, we know it had to be the villagers, who were around all the time. … I remember, I spent the next couple of weeks walking that bunker line, to make sure that our guys who were on the line were awake. … Because, you know, you send these kids out there, … you know, it gets quiet, they'll just fall asleep on you. Well, things get dull and you can't have a radio; you know, you're just sitting looking into a jungle, … and getting scared. [laughter] … That was pretty much it. … I lived through the whole Tet thing and, about one day towards the end of that period, I called; I didn't have my orders. I don't know where they were, you know. It's one thing when it is a month to go, but, when it's down to a couple of weeks. I said, "Well, when am I going home, my DEROS?" which stood for the going home day, I forget, [date of estimated return from overseas], … but that was what we were looking for. … So, I made a government, an actual Army, telephone call at my desk. I got placed back to the Pentagon. … Well, it's not like the Secretary of Defense. You get the Signal Corps personnel guy, who there's guys sitting there in Washington. … Well, you get around, and I'm talking to a guy and he says, "Is this Captain Freedman?" I said, "This is Captain Stuart Freedman," I give my serial number, such-and-such, and he's humming. … I said, "I'm sitting over here in Vietnam and I've got no orders and, you know, I don't understand. I'm supposed to go home." He said, "Let me check." He says, "Were you at Fort Gordon in 1966?" I said, "Yes." I said, "What's your name?" It turned out to be one of the guys who was in my class at Signal Officer School at Fort Gordon. He had been the "dumb" one. So, we're talking. I said, "Well?" He said, "Yes, they lost you." He said, … "I can get you orders. Where do you want to go?" I said, "Where have you been?" He said, "I've been here at the Pentagon for two years." I said, "If you've been there for two years, and I'm over here, do me a favor." I said, … "I want Fort Monmouth." I said, "I'll take Tobyhanna, but I really would like Fort Monmouth, because I'm going to end up working in Newark," and the guy says, "No problem." He said, "What do you want to do?" He said, "Oh, I got a slot." He said, "We'll make you military law instructor at Fort Monmouth," you know, so, that's one of the breaks you get, and I said, "Okay," and, sure enough, some time subsequently, the orders came. Now, I've got to tell you that it didn't work out that way, because, when you get to Fort Monmouth, you find out, like they had when I got to Qui Nhon, that they'd already filled that position. … It was a cushy job and somebody else was teaching military law, so that I got to be a company commander for six months at Monmouth, but that was my going home. Now, the good thing … in going home was, and this was just, again, random, I went home through Cam Ranh Bay, where I'd only been once before, and Cam Ranh Bay … was not an area which was touched in Tet. So, if I would have gone through Da Nang or I would have gone through Tan Son Nhut in Saigon, those areas, … those airstrips were being rocketed and were under, you know, sapper attack and things like that. Cam Ranh Bay, that I flew out of, … was relatively quiet. … Although I remember, I slept the night in a tent, which had … just sand on the beach. It was really kind of a rugged kind of thing. I didn't mind, because you're going home. … As I said, my experiences were not a lot of heroic kinds of things which happened. … There was an interesting experiences in interpersonal relationships, which served me well when, I thought, I

went back into civilian life, because of dealing with a lot of different kinds of people, even people who'd never met a "New York Jewish lawyer" before, you know. …

SH: No sensitivity training at that point.

SF: Yes. … Well, you give up sensitivity. The Army's not … a sensitivity kind of a thing, … but you do learn a lot of things about life. … First, I went into private practice, but, very quickly, I went into the corporate world, and then, I later was able to understand what they were doing in the manufacturing end and in the distribution end a lot better because of the learning that I'd had in Vietnam, because I'd seen some of the stuff and some of the things in the Army. I mean, Fort Monmouth, coming back, was a little bit silly, because I'd been in the war and I've got six months more to do. I come in; philosophically, funny things happen. I remember, I report to Fort Monmouth, has to be February or March. I drive down. I don't have a car yet, so, … the dealer has lent me a Volkswagen, a little Beetle, because I said, "All right, I know how to drive," and I had ordered a Volvo overseas. The deals, if you were overseas, you could get these great deals on cars. They'd save you the taxes, and it was coming in, but it hadn't landed. I got it from some guy, was getting it from some guy, in Long Island. … I said, "Well, I need a car until this Volvo comes in." He says, "Well, I've got a Volkswagen." I said, "Fine." So, I'm driving the Volkswagen and I'm coming back … from Monmouth. I'd spent the day checking in and doing all the things I had to do and trying to find quarters and I got caught in a snowstorm. It started to snow and it really started to snow. I mean, snow hit, like, all of a sudden, and I'm driving back on the Garden State Parkway. I'm somewhere around Holmdel, I think, and … one of the windshield wipers goes off the car. The Beetles didn't have very strong windshield wipers, certainly in those days, and they're just attached by a flimsy arm and it just broke. It was pushing the snow; it couldn't do it. … I lost traction and I go off the road and I'm in a ditch on the Garden State Parkway in the middle of a snowstorm. Now, if this would have happened to me … today, or it would have happened to me before this experience in Vietnam, I probably would have gone crazy. … I'm wearing my uniform and maybe an Army-issue overcoat, which isn't that warm to begin with, but I'm sitting in this Volkswagen and I'm thinking, "You know, I've sat in a lot worse places the last couple of years." [laughter] … Philosophically, I said, "I'm just sitting here," and I turn on my dome light and I said, "It's either going to stop snowing or someone's going to come," and it didn't bother me. You talk about your mindset, … I realized that … the war experience had changed my whole way of looking at it. The joke was, you know, the Colonel would get mad at you, or something, and so, I would say, "Well, what are you going to do, send me to Vietnam?" [laughter] You know, it was kind of, that was the worst. That was the joke, you know, "What were they going to do?" … I'll finish the Monmouth thing, because it wasn't over; but Monmouth was only interesting in that some major events happened. I was the duty officer at Monmouth the night that Martin Luther King was assassinated, and there were a lot, at Monmouth, of black troops, and there was a lot of questioning of what we were going to do, you know, and people were unsure. … Later that week, I was dating a girl … in Washington, DC. I went down that weekend and I went down to Washington, DC to have a date with this girl, who was working for the government … like everybody in Washington, and I saw 82nd Airborne Division guys in sandbagged positions on the Anacostia Bridge, with machine guns. Now, that's a little strange, to have come back from Vietnam, even if you're at, you know, Monmouth. I mean, now, the entrances to military bases are guarded. The year when I went back to Fort Lee, … I went back, took my wife, and we saw the museum at Fort Lee, Virginia,

and I think, I guess, Monmouth, to some degree, has that now, after 9/11, [the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack], but, in those days, all of a sudden, the United States was militarized, to see troops in battle gear on American streets, and so, that was a kind of strange thing. We also did some strange stuff, because we had contingency units. It was after the Newark riots. The Newark riots were while I was overseas, and I heard about it, but it did not affect me then. … I don't know if people know about it, but the troops at Monmouth were backup troops in case Newark had rioted again. So, we had, actually, exercises while these troops trained. I don't know what good they would have done, because they were basically going through Signal School, enlisted men going through Signal School, but they were backups. We had a marshalling thing. We went to Allaire State Park and they left Monmouth and they marshaled at Allaire and they were to be trucked into Newark. We did these drills a couple of times. There were certain cellars in downtown Newark where we were supposed to set up communications headquarters.

SH: Really?

SF: Strange things were happening in the world that you, the civilians, never really knew about it.

SH: What did you do at Monmouth? Did you assign people to their quarters?

SF: Yes, well, I was like dean of men. The nice thing, … I've got something here, the nicest thing, I thought, … you think you make an impression; here it is. I was a company commander, training company commander, which meant I was just in charge of the barracking and things, I'm not training them, and the sergeants take care of it. There wasn't a heck of a lot to do and you march them out on Saturday morning, and then, I found out I couldn't march, because of the fungus disease. I can't stand on asphalt, because it was too hot. … The next company commander to me was another lawyer … who'd been in Vietnam and … was from Washington, DC, very bright, young, black captain, same, similar experience, and had gone to GW [George Washington University] or Georgetown. … We would talk and it was kind of a joke; we were just killing six months. We did a couple of court-martials for people and things like that, you know, because they found out we were lawyers. Anyways, I got a message. When did this come? This came in 2004, in March of 2004. … I get an email, out of the blue, "Captain Freedman, my name's Jack Williams. I was your company clerk, Company O at Fort Monmouth, during the spring of 1968. I went to Vietnam in July of '68 through '69."

----------END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE----------

SI: Good.

SF: Yes. This is almost nicer than getting the Bronze Star. He said, continuing, … this is Jack Williams's letter, "I knew you were an attorney and I put your name in search and there you were." He found me on the Internet. "I returned from Vietnam, went to the East Central University in Oklahoma, got a BA in sociology and an MA in counseling. I also attended a school administrator's certificate course. I've been a high school principal since 1980. I plan to retire in a couple of years," blah, blah. "I have sons, wives, a ranch," and so and so. "I just

wanted to say hello. You really did treat me well and the people I associated with in the company thought you were a decent man. One of the things I visit with young people about is, you never know when you might make an impression on someone and the impression should always be positive, hopefully, never negative. I did learn some real life lessons in the US Army and I apply those with students today. Thanks for the positive things you told me about getting an education. Have a great day. If you ever need to relax and ride horses or have a grilled steak, come by." [laughter]

SH: How nice.

SF: You know, I mean, it came out of the blue. … The Internet's funny, because, as I said, I got letters from Bernie Melvin's son saying, "Gee, Dad died and did you know him and can you tell me about the service?" but Jack Williams' email came through … and, trust me, to this day, I don't have any clear recollection of who Jack Williams was, but he probably worked in the orderly room, because … most of these guys just went off to school. So, if he worked for me and I told him about getting an education, … you know, I guess I did something that might be, you know, good for people; the equivalent of sending that Vietnamese colonel away from the base. "No, I'm not going to give you gasoline if you're going to treat us so lousy," you know. … It's a time in my life that just kind of … got compartmentalized, because, when I came back, supposedly, I was supposed to do Reserve duty, because you had to finish your obligation, but I had a lot of classmates and things and found out, like the guy who was at the Pentagon, that they never had been in the Reserves. … The units contacted me and I just said, "No, I'm not going," because, frankly, a couple of things had happened. One of which was, when I first got orders to go to Vietnam, I gave an interview. … I was friends with the courthouse reporter in Hackensack, because I'd been this intern, and so, I gave this interview and I talked about how it was giving back to America and society, which had provided my education through scholarships. The state had done it, and it was the right thing to do, to defend America, and so and so. The experience of the Army and some of the things that happened in it, and I'm not talking of individuals, because, you know, as an organization, it can get a lot of things done and do a lot of good things, but … structurally, and some of the problems of it, and then, relating to what little I observed of our relationship with the Vietnamese and the ruling class of the Vietnamese, who seemed to be … so corrupt, in all instances that I could see, turned me very much against the war. So, instead of giving this big, patriotic interview, which I did then, when I came back, I think, oh, within a month, … I remember, we met at Columbia University and there was a major peace event, you know, "Get the troops out of Vietnam." I kind of did the Jack [John] Kerry kind of a thing, "Get out of Vietnam," because, when I had been there, when I first went over, probably, we had a hundred-and-fifty, maybe two hundred thousand troops there. Right after Tet, I remember landing, I was on the flight coming home, on a flight out of Cam Ranh Bay, we refueled in Okinawa. So, we get off the plane to stretch our legs and I looked at Okinawa and … it was full of troops coming the other way. I mean, I started talking to some guy. He says, "Oh, I'm with the 82nd Airborne Division," and they were coming. I mean, … remember, they were jacking up to be half a million men, which still didn't do them any good once they were there, but they were coming the other way, you know. … I had already known, as I said, my image of Vietnam, because you would go down this route, … there's a highway that runs kind of right through, on the outside of the wire, but, anyway, you go down this route and you go off and you see the farmers sitting there, and they've seen them all. They've seen the Japanese; they've seen the

French; they've seen the Chinese come down; and they didn't care about the war, and we weren't fighting for them. There was nothing. I couldn't see that, you know, "the Domino Effect" or anything that was happening. Plus, you saw this colossal waste. I mean, "the Valley of the Shadow of Trucks," I mean mahogany furniture and cutlery that I was getting. … I had no choice, but, I mean, those kind of things were happening, sobered by when you would go to Second Surg Hospital, or go to Graves Registration and you could still see the body bags that were coming out from the field, and you try to make sense out of that? You know, we would; there's, I think it shows it here, an amphitheater, yes, amphitheater, … I think the Navy had built it before we got here. … They did the big amphitheater, outdoor, kind of a shell kind of a thing, and the USO shows were here. Well, the thing is, the amphitheater's here, but what they don't show you is, … well, by the time they did this, there was the two evacuation hospitals that are right behind the amphitheater. So, you can watch the show, and I remember Ann Margaret or something, whoever else, coming there. We'd be watching the show and watching the helicopters land with the casualties that were coming in from the field. It's very hard … to kind of make sense out of those kind of things. I mean, you saw it in *The Deer Hunter* or some of those movies, or what was the Marlon Brando thing?

SI: *Apocalypse Now*?

SF: Yes, *Apocalypse Now*. I mean, you see some of the contradictions and we saw all those contradictions and you lived through them. One of the funny incidents, what I didn't talk about, … I'm in the same officers' club before Tet and I'm drinking at the bar and a full colonel comes in, who I know to be the division chaplain, Father Flaherty; … we'll call it that. It was some great Irish name and he was a classic Irish priest, if you ever met one, and a gregarious guy. "Captain Freedman," he said. "Yes." He says, "You know, I'm hearing a lot about you," and I said, "Yes, Father?" … "Yes, sir," you know, he's a full colonel. … He said, … "You know, we've been expecting a Jewish chaplain to come up here," and there weren't enough Jews in the Army to have a Jewish chaplain for that division, but what they did was, they would assign a chaplain to serve one or more divisions and they would kind of ride circuit. … There had been a Jewish chaplain. I'd heard rumors about him, but I'd never met him, because the chaplain in my unit, when I landed, he wanted to talk to me about, "What could he do for me?" He says, "Well, I know there's a guy who comes, you know, there's a Jewish chaplain, lands in and they fly him out and he comes in," and so and so, but I never … got to meet the guy. He said, "Well, Captain Freedman," he said, "we've been searching the records and we find out that you are the senior non-medical Jewish officer in this division." There were people like my friend Mark Cooper, the dentist, who were majors, … but, in considering this thing, they were all doctors or dentists or something like that, but, in the world of regular soldiers, I was the senior Jew, and he said, "We would like you to take on, as an additional duty, the Jewish chaplaincy of the division." So, you know, it's a full colonel, you know, so, I said, "Well, what does that entail?" I said, "What about my regular duties?" He said, "No, no, it's an additional duty." He says, "You do your regular job," he said "but, you know, once a week," he said, "we want you to conduct services," he said, "because the Jewish chaplain is not coming. We just got word that he was supposed to come. He's supposed to be a naval officer, because Chu Lai is a Marine Airbase. He's supposed to serve two Marine divisions and our division." I Corps was a Marine thing and it was supposed to be a Navy Jewish chaplain coming. … I said, "Well, what do I need to do?" He said, "Come by my office tomorrow." So, I go by and they have, I called it the "instant rabbi kit," but you could

be an instant priest or a minister with the kit. They have these kits for all denominations. Do you ever see these pictures of the war where the chaplain sits on the end of the jeep and he opens up the little box? … Okay, they have one, you know, if you're Christian, … with a cross and they have Bibles and they have stuff, and the guy puts on the thing, okay. In the Jewish kit, they have two little *Torahs* and they have prayer books. You open up the box, you know. He says, "Here you are." He said, "Now, we've got a little chapel." The Marines had built one, … or the SeaBees. He said, "We use the chapel on Sundays and Saturdays for other Christian services, but you have Thursdays." He said, "Every Thursday afternoon, you have to conduct a Jewish service." He said, "I will spread the word among all the units out here," and he said, "Not only that," he said, "you get," this was the silliest thing, "for those who keep *kosher*, the Jewish Welfare Board," which is a charity, "sends over food packages and you'll be in charge of distributing those." Now, … obviously, you cannot keep *kosher* in Vietnam unless you're eating vegetables. There weren't that many fresh vegetables. … There was stuff that came, the Mogen David Wine came, cans of gefilte fish. Stuff would come, these packages, not a lot, and so, they said, "These'll come and we'll have them delivered to the chapel." So, every Thursday afternoon, for about four or five months, this was probably in the fall of 1967, I conducted the services. My wife laughs. Now, I have to tell the Colonel, as I said, we went through my religious background, … I'm not steeped in a lot of religious training. So, I told the Colonel, I said, "You know, I'm not a very religious guy. I haven't had a lot of training. I don't even speak Hebrew enough to do the services." I said, "I'm from a tradition of Reformed Jews, because Reformed Jews do their services in English." He said, "That'll be fine." … He said, "The books are in both languages." If you've ever been to a Jewish service, … one-half of the books are translated into English, so that you can follow the Hebrew. So, he said, "Just do it." I said, "Fine." So, I introduced myself when my congregation arrived on Thursday, the first Thursday afternoon, and there were about, I don't know, maybe twenty guys, about half of them were Marines. … I always felt bad for Marines, because, even today, the Marines are always … under equipped and some of them came in, literally, almost in rags, and … their standard weapon, still, at that time was M-14s. They didn't even have the M-16s, and the old story with the Marines was, they'd say, "Go charge up the hill," and they'd run up and get fire; whereas an Army unit, they'd say, "Okay, before you charge up the hill, we're going to get the Air Force to blast it, then, seven hours of artillery fire, and we're going to throw you in after all that," you know. So, there was always a different philosophy about doing it. … These Marines showed up and they were the Jewish Marines, but they showed up. … There were some enlisted men that came in from these other areas. Lieutenant Greenberg never came. I never understood that, but, you know, what are you going to do? … So, I said that, I said, "I'm not a real chaplain, you know. I'm here temporarily assigned and we'll just go through the services in English, because I can do it, but, if anyone feels like it, if anyone has better knowledge of Hebrew than I did, please, be my guest. I'll be happy to make you a lay leader." No one volunteered, so, I did that. I have one souvenir that came through that, in one of the packets they gave me was a *menorah,* for Hanukkah, and it was interesting, because … I don't think it was made in Vietnam, but probably made in the Far East somewhere, but it came with the kit and all the stuff, and I took it home as a souvenir. … It was just a round, wooden plaque. It has the main candle in the middle and the other eight candles were around it, and we still use it at the house. My wife gets a kick out of it, that I brought that back. So, we had a little bit of religion there. Most of the guys, I suspect, were less interested in religion than the handouts of the food, which I would distribute every Thursday, … and some guys even got some *kosher* wine, which is not very good, but, you know, they would

take that back to wherever they went, and I figured, "God bless them." If they were up in the frontlines, … you know, that was better than nothing. They needed it more than I did, because, you know, I had, … occasionally, access to even champagne.

… One of the terrible injuries in our unit was to Major Frost, who was in my picture Christmas card; silly things happened. … I told you about my injury. We're having a celebration and Major Frost is opening the champagne bottle in Chu Lai and, of course, the cork comes up. He wears glasses. His glasses shattered, the cork hit him, and he gets med-evaced to Qui Nhon, far worse injury than mine. I mean, in Qui Nhon, they really had real eye surgeons, not dentists, and, fortunately, he comes back. … The glass splinters had all been extracted, but, I mean, … until we hit Tet, those were the kind of injuries we suffered. … Before we had Tet, we had silly things. … After Tet, … I don't think we had anybody killed in Tet, in the unit, immediately, but we did have some unexploded shells and there were some people with shrapnel injuries and some similar injuries. So, I went to the hospital to visit the casualties and I'm at the hospital and I see one of the other officers, and the names are names. He was a rather robust transportation officer that I had met when I was working in the Saigon piers, because I had to get somebody to truck the equipment out, and his name was Captain Bodine and everybody called him "Tiny," Tiny Bodine. … Tiny Bodine is laid out in the hospital bed and they'd just gone through a ceremony and the commanding general had come through. … Everybody from the first night of Tet … who was in the hospital got a Purple Heart, and Tiny's got a Purple Heart on his pillow. He's got a head injury. I said, "Geez, Tiny, how did that happen?" He said, "I'm running to the bunker and I didn't duck, and so, I hit my head on the door beam going into the bunker." He said, "I get knocked out, they put me in the hospital. The next thing I know, I wake up and the General's pinning a medal on me." [laughter] I said, "Tiny, you're going to wear that?" You know, "You're going to wear that?" [laughter] He says, "Well, why not?" He says, "There's guys around here," he says, "they've got these pilots;" we had these young warrant officer helicopter pilots, with these big, bushy mustaches. He said, "They're collecting medals like … crazy for flying over the scene and waving hello," he said, "and so, I'm going to wear it." He said, "I'm a transportation officer. … How often do you think a transportation officer, … especially one tied to a desk, gets a chance to get a Purple Heart?" [laughter]

SH: There were women nurses on all the bases that you were at.

SF: Yes. The hospitals had nurses and, in the hospital, they had a lot of characters. There's a lot of *deja vu* when I hear about what's going on in Iraq, and my own political views, you probably guessed, you know, except that these poor bastards that are there now are getting re-assigned back there several times. [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman is referring to the ongoing United States military presence in Iraq in 2006.] It's not "one year and out," but they come home and they go back, and they go back and they go back. It's never-ending. So, I wouldn't know what it would be like. I mean, the one thing we had, we knew what we had to do and we had to do it, and, to some degree, although not all, because I think of my law school class; let me put it this way. Of my age in my law firm, I'm the only guy that's ever been in Vietnam, and we've got a hundred lawyers in my law firm.

SH: Really?

SF: Yes, and, in my law school class at Columbia, we had 280, of which, maybe, twenty, in those days, were a few women, before they did the big thing, [before female and male students reached roughly equal numbers in US law schools], and I think there's maybe three of us that went to Vietnam. So, it was not a rich man's, well-educated, war, because people used to get themselves out of the war, by education, by having babies, there were all kind of gimmicks, and then, with the lottery, you know, … there were still cushy jobs. Well, we know, like our President George W. Bush, you could get into a Reserve component and you … didn't have to go to war. So, what we got was a lot of kids who didn't know better. I mean, there were a lot of judges, literally, in the juvenile justice system that were sending kids to Vietnam. "You either go to jail or you sign up to the Army," that was the deal offered, and we got some of those. I mean, one of these kids, when I went down to … staff the office and I needed a driver and a typist, … the kid I got as a driver, Mahoney, was probably the dumbest kid in the world. I don't think he was in trouble with the law, but, I mean, you got a lot of kids that just didn't know anything. Now, they used to instruct the kids in stuff, where they had to learn something technical, like how to take apart a radio. You know what the textbook was? I don't know if they still use it, but it was comic books. They had done the instruction manuals as comic books, because they knew the kids could follow that. … Literally, whether they could read or not, they could follow the pictures. I mean, we had some of the dumbest guys in the world that were very good. One guy said, "I will take apart anything." They said, "Well, he doesn't know anything, but he knows how to take something apart and put it together and clean it," and half the time, with stuff in the war, if you take it apart and clean it and put it back together again, that's half the battle. So, we fixed a lot of equipment that way. I mean, there were guys who really knew it, you know, technically trained guys, that were over there, used to do stuff, but it was a strange group of soldiers. You know, it was a random group of people that you'd get that fought that war. I forget, I must've gone off on a sidetrack. What was the question?

SH: I was going to ask about the women and how they were treated.

SF: Oh, the women, the women. [laughter] … I never had the good fortune of having any kind of a relationship, … but there were guys that actually dated some of the women. They were told not to, but I think that the night that we were in the bunkers with the three Red Cross girls, they were looking for two of their buddies who they knew were out on dates with helicopter pilots. … They were worried about them, because they didn't know where they were and they didn't know if they were out in the open, or where they might be, because they kept saying, "Geez, where's Charlene and where's, you know, So-and-So?" So, there was that relationship. I mean, the silliest thing, I was going to say, was, like, … Halliburton, [an international oilfield, petrochemical, nuclear and construction service corporation], was in Vietnam. It wasn't Halliburton, it was the subsidiary, Kellogg, Brown and Root, whatever it is, KBR or something, which, for years, has been a government contractor. [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman is referring to Halliburton's subsidiary Brown and Root (BR), which later became the company Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR).] I needed something once and, on the airstrip, there was some kind of KBR facility, but I knew there was a lieutenant who was in charge of this facility. … So, I went down to the airstrip and I went to his place, and it was like a hangar building, but it was pretty much sealed, which is unusual. You didn't see buildings with closed doors in Vietnam. So, I walked in and I'm hit with a blast of cold air. … I walked in, the first thing I know, we have an air-conditioned building and there's, like, a waiting room, and then, an office, and there's this

guy, an Army lieutenant. He's sitting there and he's in charge of whatever, and I do my business, whatever, with him, and so and so. He said, "Let me show you around. Want a drink?" or so and so, and he has a thing, he says, "Honey." I guess he was a big city guy, maybe he was a New York guy or a Chicago guy, but he was talking and he said, "Let me show you around." I said, "Geez, you're living pretty well." … He said, "No, let me show you." So, he opens the door in back. He's got living quarters in the same building, and who's back there, but some Army nurse, who was in uniform, I remember. … I said, "What?" and he says, "Well, she stays here with me. She does her job in the daytime and she stays here with me." So, there were guys that had these girls, like Emily, or one of those other girls, I forget those wonderful "World War II in London" kind of movies, … guys with all kinds of rackets. Yes, the nurse or Red Cross units all had, classically, like in *China Beach*, if you saw the movies, the "mother hen," there'd always be a woman in charge. The Red Cross girls had an older woman that would be there, the nurses had, you know, officers at the Surg, well, at the surgical hospitals they were at. In Saigon, there were a lot of Americans, because there were the government, the Aid workers and the State Department, the US Information Agency girls. This guy, Major Sedgwick, who I hated, was our Signal Officer at Chu Lai. It was his second tour, he was the guy that had been a Civil Affairs guy on his first tour, and so, he thought great things about the Vietnamese. … When we met in Saigon, I remember, he introduced me, he was dating some woman and it was, "You say it, I believe."

SH: Did they have the same tour as you did, the same length of time?

SF: Yes. Everybody had year tours. I mean, you could extend, although a lot of these guys were what we called career guys; … they were glossing over their resumes, if you were a career guy. Sedgwick's thing was that his first tour as a Civil Affairs guy, evidently, that's not good in your career. So, he wanted to be assigned as a Division Signal Officer, which meant that he'd seen combat. So, he was really getting his spurs by getting assigned to us, and we all knew that. I mean, we knew that, so, we never liked him. I mean, he had his own thing going. So, you could kind of spot who the politicians were and what they were doing. I mean, you know, … I said that the Colonel was a little bit sick in the head about his whole thing, but you figure anybody who's done time as, you know, a prisoner of war, well, you know, that's a whole other thing. So, I don't know what's going on in his head. … Ditweiler had told me about Korea, because he would tell about Korea, and all he remembered was the brutal cold in the Korean winters and that they had summer uniforms and they never got the winter uniforms to them in time. Similar to, like I said, … we couldn't get jack knives and we couldn't get repair parts, but I could get cutlery and desks and stuff like that. You can't figure out what you can get.

SH: What were you awarded the Bronze Star for?

SF: My joke is that I was the only officer in my division … who didn't get venereal disease, but it's just a joke. [laughter] I tried to find my citation, where they listed where it really was for. … Your commanding officer has to justify giving you an award, because I used to write them for my men. I remember, I wrote up Greenberg's award. You could get the Bronze Star for, as Kerry [2004 Presidential candidate Senator John Kerry, who served in the Navy during the Vietnam War] did, for heroism under fire, or you could get it for, basically, doing a generally good job under fire, but not, you know, doing anything in particular heroic. … Basically, that's

what I got it for. I guess, they were impressed that we managed to, logistically, do what we did under circumstances, which had never been done before, because, … if you'd read some of the books and stuff, no one ever created a division, or parts thereof, in the field during a war. New units had always been staged in the United States or in some rear area and we did it, basically, under fire and kind of maneuvering. It was an interesting experience, so that there were a number of the officers of my unit who also, you know, received it and we were not in day-to-day combat. If you get the Bronze Star with a "V" on it, which is for valor, … that's a whole different level of respect. … Lieutenant Greenberg was to get a medal. The Colonel told me he never liked Greenberg. I don't know why, … and I said, "No, no, I think Lieutenant Greenberg deserves it." … As I told you, I used to send him on these kind of weird missions and things like that, and I said, "He exposed himself to a lot more even before I knew him." I found out what the background was, so, he said, "Well, you write up his citation and I'll tell you whether it's … justified," … and I got him the Bronze Star medal, because I didn't think he should go home without one. Well, I guess he went back before I did, … yes, because I wrote it over there. So, he must have been shorter than I was, I mean, short in time, because I remember writing his citation. … If the officers are honest with you, they will probably tell you that they were a little heavier on medals. It was a war that was, and I don't know what other wars are, a little heavier on medals than might normally have been, but it was an unusual kind of a war. … Maybe I don't know, but maybe that happens in any war, because, remember, I'm kind of a civilian that's just dropping in for two years. … There are some awards that I see on someone's chest, … like a Silver Star or, as I said, if I see a "V" for valor, or something like that, I can respect for absolute heroism. I think, like, Jack Jacobs [Colonel Jack Jacobs, RC '66, who received the Medal of Honor in the Vietnam War] did some of those things. … You can do some things which are not necessarily, you know, stuff that they make movies out of, but that you just kind of show up regularly and do, you know, a decent job. I maybe did a little better than decent. … I guess, they thought highly of me, because the Colonel didn't want to let go of me, as I said, which I didn't find out until I was on the plane flying back home, when I thumbed through my file.

SH: How often would there be a court-martial?

SF: … There were two things. … Fragging, [the murder of officers by men under them], started … pretty much after I left, which is in early 1968. There was a lot of drug cases in Vietnam. There were some drug offenses and I think, I forget, I think, I did one, maybe two, courts-martial. They would always prosecute them with JAG officers and, for the defense officers, they would try to find lawyers who were not, non-JAG, to defend them. … There were far more court-martials for drug offenses when I got back to Monmouth, maybe the timing or maybe the circumstances, or the availability, because I did get called on quite frequently, when I was in Monmouth, in my six months, to do defense work. … One of which, I almost got court-martialed myself for. … The circumstances are a little bit fuzzy in my mind, but what had happened was, … all of the evidence that was against the guy was on written statements.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SF: Military court-martials can be conducted without live witnesses, because of the exigencies of the situation, because people are transferred and moved. You can introduce evidence on affidavits or statements and that was the basic rule, although, usually, what happens is, you have

one or two real witnesses and one or two people that have left or been transferred to other units, or gone off to war.

SH: That is what I wondered.

SF: Yes.

SH: Did you have to bring them back?

SF: Well, so, you can't bring them back, and so, they'd permit you to do that. I was assigned to defend someone … in Fort Monmouth, who, the entire evidence against him was on these certificates, certifications and affidavits, which meant, as a defense lawyer, I had nobody to cross-examine. So, I didn't know how to defend him. There was no way in your right mind I could put in a defense, which, to me, … trained as a lawyer, not as a military lawyer, was just a terrible thing. So, they convicted him, but what you have to do is, … the conviction record has to be, if my recollection is correct, signed by both the prosecuting officer, the judge, who's another officer, and the defense lawyer, that that's a true record. Well, I refused to sign the record and I said, "The reason is," I said, "I think the guy ought to be able to preserve his right to a fair trial," and they said, "Well, look, the Supreme Court has ruled on this, that in times of war…" I said, "I know, but I don't want to be the guy that's passing this by. So, for my mind, I will say, 'I won't sign the record,' so that he will automatically have something to appeal, because I'm not going to certify that, in my mind, it's a correct trial, when you convict a guy entirely on sworn statements, … where I find it impossible to put out a defense. I have nothing. All I can do is put on the witness himself. He denies everything, and then, you know, I don't have anybody," and they said, "Well, you have to sign it," and I said, "No, I won't." He said, "Well, you're ordered to sign." I said, "No, you can't make me. … You can order me as an officer, but you can't make me do it as a lawyer." "Well, you're not going to get out of the Army until you sign," and I said, "Gee, you know," I said, well, I thought in my mind, I said, "I don't think you really mean that, because," I said, and I talked it over with someone, … "I've got a friend who's a judge." I said, "I'd clerked for this judge." I said, "I bet you I can get a writ of *habeas corpus* if they really want to hold me in. My time's up, you know." I was playing this game. I don't know what they did. They must have figured I was the biggest pain in the ass, so, they eventually … put the record in. You know, they let me get out of signing it. I didn't sign the record and it just went. I remember that very distinctly, because I was always offended by that. I was offended by it in Vietnam, when I had to do the defense, but, as I said, there was usually partial live evidence at least, where you got a right to cross-examine the witnesses. …

SH: Were both of these drug-related cases?

SF: Yes, they were all drug-related. … I mean, I might have felt differently if it was a more serious case, but, still, you know, you've got a kid convicted of a drug offense, there was hard time in Leavenworth. It would depend on what they were going to do.

SH: Really?

SF: Yes. …

SH: What was the standard?

SF: Well, it could have been a lot of things, but, anyways, … say he gets a dishonorable discharge, which is kind of "scarred for life;" try to get a job with a dishonorable discharge. They can do anything with some of these offenses. … I guess they were specials, not general court-martials. [Editor's Note: A special court-martial is the intermediate court level and carries with it lesser punishments while in a general court-martial the maximum punishment for each offense is previously established and may include death for certain offenses.] … To this day, I guess I'm not that sure about what the range of penalties were. A general court-martial is, you know, like anything. You can get up to death with that, but I think the drug offenses were specials, but they could have done just commanding officer proceedings, too. Some of those were "Article somethings" and where, … in my recollection, they didn't even get the right to counsel. … These had to be specials, because they had counsel. … They were odd, you know. I mean, I didn't have any great sympathy for the kind of clients you get, because it's like anywhere, you know, but they were kids, you know. They weren't any, probably, worse, or maybe some a little worse, because a lot of people, as I said, were sentenced to the Army by a civilian judge at that particular time.

SH: Did you ever have to court-martial anyone yourself?

SF: I never had to. We never really had discipline problems in my unit. That's not to say there might have been. If you run a good unit, the disciplinary problems are really handled by the non-commissioned officers. I mean, if it surfaces as a court-martial offense, if they're coming to the commanding officer; it wouldn't have come to me, actually, as a commanding officer, because I wasn't commanding officer. It would have been through, actually, Puff, who was their commanding officer, up through the Colonel, yes, because it would have come through the company, because, I, in theory, only had those people that directly reported to me for their jobs, but, for discipline purposes, it wouldn't have been through me. No, I never really had anybody that, you know, … really did things that were court-martial offenses. … Most people were fairly cooperative. There were guys cutting … corners and angles. I mean, do I think that guy with the nurse and the air-conditioning, and God knows anything else, and I don't know what else went on there, was on the up-and-up? … I'm sure he was skimming a lot of stuff from the Army, you know, probably went home a lot richer than he came over, in the end, and that's an Army guy, let alone the civilian contractors that were over there. …

SH: In your position, were you interacting with the civilian contractors as well?

SF: We didn't see that many. There were civilian contractors, but very few. In those zones, it wasn't like now, where they're heavily involved. I mean, the civilian contractors were back in the States. I would have been doing that all the time, if I would have gone to Tobyhanna, or even if I would have done something, you know, in Monmouth, … in non-troop command. No, … a lot of the contractors, what you would call civilian contractors; interestingly enough, you fight the war with your last war's enemies or friends. The civilian contractors in Vietnam, when you went to the on-base barbershops, tailor shops, things that were basic supply …

SH: PXes?

SF: Yes, they were being run by Koreans and being run by Filipinos and the reason was that they knew what the US Army wanted, from the prior two wars, so, they knew how to do business with us, you know. … They weren't at a level in which we were buying equipment from them, but we were buying some daily kind of things. So, on post, if you wanted to get your trousers tailored or shortened or something like that, because we didn't have an Army tailor shop, you went to a Korean-run, you know, sanctioned shop.

SH: Contractor.

SF: Contractor, yes, who was on base and supplying those things.

SH: Were there civilian Vietnamese working on the base?

SF: Yes, they came and we used to employ them. We did it a lot in An Khe. We did it less in Chu Lai, because, … in a sense, we brought in civilians. They brought in maids. We paid them a couple dollars a week to make the beds, to sweep.

SH: Is that a *mama-san*?

SF: Yes, that kind of stuff. Yes, they would come in. A truck would go into the village, come in with a load of women, usually, and they would wash your clothes, or so and so. … In An Khe, … we sent some African-American truck drivers, went into town, and African-Americans got on, sometimes, better with the natives and they had located "Linda's Laundry" and Linda's Laundry became the contractor for our unit, to do laundry. … You'd make a laundry bag and, … once a week or so and so, we'd throw them in the back of the truck. … These guys would drive into town and … would drop it off at Linda's and come back in one or two days and Linda would have all the laundry, neatly folded, back in your bags, with the names on it, and then, they'd come back and distribute it, and, you know, we would pay whatever the cash exchange was. That worked fine until, I'm embarrassed to say, [laughter] we found out what Linda's Laundry facilities were. We knew that because, all of a sudden, we all broke out with fungus disease, and I've got to tell you, in the heat, you do not want fungus disease. Well, Linda's Laundry facility, … not surprisingly, was, usually, they, you know, went into the river, or the streams, which are used over there for everything, including the bathrooms, sewer system. So, I, at one point, got a terrible case of fungus. I mean, it was really bad. I couldn't move. I couldn't walk. I was all chafed and I walked into my friends at the Second Surg and they said, "Are you lucky; we just got a shipment of a miracle drug." I said, "What is it?" "It's something called Tinactin," and they'd just discovered Tinactin and Tinactin, … we covered ourselves, our bodies, but, you know, it was made for athlete's foot, but it worked all over the body. … It was like a miracle, because we'd tried everything. We tried athlete's foot things and everything else, and powders and so and so. … It was just an awful thing and you couldn't get rid of it and they didn't really have anything for us, but, all of a sudden, I discovered Tinactin, which, to this day, I still carry around. Now, the bad part about Linda's Laundry was that, for about twenty years, I carried a recurring fungus. … I could not cure it. It did it topically. It cured me topically, but what happened was, when I developed asthma and some other things, I took prednisone and steroids,

which take out your basic immune system, when you take steroids. … So, all of a sudden, I was being treated for asthma and I'm on a business trip in the late 1980s, I remember, to Century City, California. I'm doing the mergers and acquisitions, big deal. I take a shower. I get out, in front of the mirror, and I look, and I'm taking these pills. I'm looking at my body, which is covered with the fungus that I hadn't seen since Vietnam, and I didn't know what the hell was happening. … It wasn't scratching that badly, but, all of a sudden, this stuff breaks out. I get so scared and it was a weekend, so, I didn't know where I was going to find a doctor. Well, I went down to a pharmacist who explained to me what it was. He figured out what it was, and it was only about ten years ago that they came out with some drug that my local doctor knew about. … They told me, when I got out of the Army, that they could never cure it, but asked, "Are you planning to live in South Florida or the Canal Zone?" … and I said, "No." … You know, they said, "Well, don't worry. It won't bother you that much, because you're not going to live in the Tropics."

SH: This was the thing on your foot.

SF: … No. Well, that was the foot fungus. … [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman motions all over his body.]

SH: Everywhere else.

SF: Everywhere else. [laughter] … Let's describe it, great, my midsection, you know, yes, which is front and back, so terribly uncomfortable. … Occasionally, this would happen, so, I'd have to warn people that I couldn't take drugs which contained fungicides, like penicillin, which would bring it out and … I'd have to be very careful with steroids. … About ten years ago, my general practitioner said, "They've got something," gave me a series of pills over a period of a week, and it actually drove the fungus out of my system. … I carried that a long time. … As I said, I think I get, it started as twenty-three dollars a month they sent me, that was my VA benefit, and I think they're up to $103 dollars a month, but I don't begrudge them, because I carried that. The real thing that bothered me, in other words, it really hurt, was that night that I went into the bunker, on the first night of Tet. … I sat there like this, hunched over, for an evening and, I guess, it was more crowded than I thought and, the next day, I could not straighten out. I mean, I really had bad back pains and I just couldn't straighten out. … They said, "Sit in the sun," … and some other things and, when I got out of the Army, I went to take a vacation. It kind of passed, and it was, like, two days after I'm out of the Army and I'm going up to visit my Canadian relatives. I go to pick up a suitcase and my back locks. I go to pick up a suitcase, you know, and I lock, and I'd never had back problems before. So, I traced it. I mean, I still had this government mindset. … I had gone to the VA hospital and said, "What are you going to do about my … back?" and then, I said; no, I took a shot at the VA and the VA told me, after a lot of proceedings, that, "No, it's developmental. You would have got it anyways, but … it just broke out while you happened to be in the bunker that night." Well, you know, I never really pursued it. I'm a lawyer, but I kind of never pursued it. That was at the same time that they told me, "but we can't cure the thing on your feet and the fungus," because, at that point, the only place the fungus was showing was on my foot. So, they said, "We can't cure that, so, we'll make you a ten-percent disability." So, I'm now a disabled American veteran. … I don't begrudge the

pension, because I say, "I'm not getting rich, but, you know, a hundred dollars a month is okay," you know, and now that I'm sixty-six, … Social Security's not giving me that much. [laughter]

SH: Other than Linda's Laundry, were there other civilian services that you used?

SF: No. No, no, no. [laughter] We were told, if you want to ask about that, … absolutely, that there were social diseases which they could not cure, and the myth was that if you got those diseases, they would not send you home, and there was some island off of Hawaii. They weren't going to let you back in the States, but they were going to, you know, … put you on this island … until you got better. So, we told these guys …

SH: A quarantine kind of thing.

SF: Yes, a quarantine kind of thing. So, we would lecture the troops and … they would give out condoms and they would do it anyway. It was, like, unbelievable, and they still wouldn't, you know. How much do you have to talk to these guys? They would still come back with gonorrhea and syphilis, and stuff that I'm not sure whether they could cure it. I mean, I never heard of anybody being afflicted with that one, … but they would still fraternize with the locals, because, yes, there were prostitutes. In An Khe, there was a whole street of brothels and, in Saigon, there were whole cafes that were really brothels. No, I never fraternized. Now, don't ask me about going to Bangkok, [laughter] which was, you know, a civilized country and a rear area, or Japan. … In fact, we told the guys, … we were telling them, "If you're going to wear condoms … to protect yourself, it's still not going to help, so, don't even get involved, because you don't know what kind of diseases are out there." Yes, there were just a lot of information sessions, but no matter what you told them, the guys would still come back infected.

SH: Are there any movies that you feel honestly portrayed what you saw or what you experienced?

SF: There's an interesting movie, that gets little play, *Go Tell the Spartans.* I think it's Kirk Douglas or Burt Lancaster who plays a Special Forces advisor, and he has interesting lines. … The thing I liked about that movie was the relationship with the Vietnamese officers who were no good and the relationship with some of the men. Yes, get that one on DVD, … plug in "Spartans" and you'll get it, but it's *Go Tell the Spartans*. There were parts of the absurdity of *Apocalypse Now* which were, you know, quite authentic.

SH: Are we talking First Cav?

SF: Yes, we're talking First Cav. … There's a certain kind of bravado about the First Cav which was well-portrayed, I thought. … Who played it, the great colonel?

SH: Robert Duval.

SF: Duval. I attended; I thought it was funny. Strangely enough, … I didn't get an invitation, I had to sneak in, to the Vietnam Monument, [New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial and Vietnam Era Educational Center], here in Holmdel, the dedication. I wanted to go and I figured

if I showed up, and … we all have the fatigues … left over from the war, that stuff, and I showed up in my fatigues and I said, you know, "Okay, I'm here," and … they said, "You got a ticket?" "No," you know. They said, "You can't go in," you know, and the Governor's up there … doing the thing in the show. … It hadn't started, but …

SH: You could not wear your fatigues in.

SF: No, no, no, no, no. You could wear your fatigues, but you had to … have a ticket. You still needed a ticket. So, you couldn't get in, … but, then, the guy pulls me aside, and the funny thing was, a guy in my town …

----------END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO----------

SI: This continues an interview with Stuart J. Freedman on June 13, 2006, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth and …

SH: … Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Please, continue. You were talking about the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans' Memorial dedication.

SF: Yes. So, it's dedication day and I go down. … I had to switch clothes. I remember, I had a meeting in my law office … in Somerville and I drive over to Holmdel, and so, I walk in and I'm there at the gates and, you know, "You've got to have a ticket." … I said, "Well, where do you get these tickets?" and, as I said, a guy in my town, in North Caldwell, … name evades me, but had been very instrumental, an Italian contractor, in getting the thing built. He donated stuff and I later saw him there on the grounds, but I … never thought to ask him. I just figured, "If you show, you know, you're a veteran and what the hell?" and so, they said, "No, you can't get in," and the State Police are there, and then, some guy pulls me aside, … some guy from the Vietnam Veterans. He says, "Go see those Navy guys over there." … He said, "They got extra tickets." So, I went over to the side and the Navy guy looks and he could see my fatigues, you know. He said, "Where were you?" and so and so. He said, "Well, you know Army guys;" he gave me the whole business. [laughter] "Yes, but here's a ticket. Yes, here's a ticket. We're glad you're here. We do have some extra tickets." They were like a SeaBee unit that had extra tickets. So, I go in and the people were sitting, … the people that didn't have seats, on the hill, you know, where you sit in the concert, and a lot of them were by unit. So, there's a big First Cavalry flag and, you know, those guys from that unit had come. Now, I'm not going to find my unit. You know, the Americal was kind of an in-and-out unit, so, it was unlikely that you're going to find anybody, but certainly not Signal Corps types. So, I sit near the Cavalry guys, but they were the same bravado kind of guys, which is "God bless," because they were doing stuff which was new doctrine. … You know, the whole concept of giving up parachutes and jumping out of helicopters was a difficult thing, as that whole new concept of war was. I mean, you didn't really see it before then. It's become the way to conduct a war. … I guess, in a sense, it's similar to what they have today. I mean, there are parallels. … Now, "We're turning the corner," and then, we were, "Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel." We never saw the light at the end of the tunnel, if you were in the field, but, you know, maybe they did in Saigon or in the Pentagon. … There are a lot of other parallels between Vietnam and Iraq, that I keep seeing, that you keep getting flashbacks, and so, was it Churchill or someone else who said, "If you can't learn from

history, you're doomed to keep repeating yourself?" Yes, the same war, the non-frontline. [Editor's Note: Philosopher George Santayana wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."] … My first visit in Saigon, I'm in one of these, they didn't have rickshaws, but the bicycle kind of, cyclos, they called them, and so, I'm driving. Now, I'm thinking, "Saigon," you know, we were told, "You stick out your hand, they steal your wristwatch. Yes, you're liable to get a hand grenade thrown in," you know. … I'm looking around like this. I didn't know. … None of those things happened while I was there, so, maybe that was overstated, but you're in what you think is, or your perception is, there may be a hostile environment and you've never really related …

SH: You do not know who the enemy is.

SF: … to the people. Yes, it's a little different, though, I would say, from what I know of Iraq. Pretty much, I think everybody hates us over in Iraq now. … Yes, and they're all willing to take potshots at you. Maybe there's some people sitting on the fence. Now, there were … a certain amount of Vietnamese people that were kind of happy to see you, in a sense, I mean, and they … were definitely not going to do anything. … There was, you know, call them the insurgents or the Viet Cong, they were there and those are the people you had to look out for, and you didn't know when they were mingled in, but I don't think you felt it was the whole populace. You know, … these guys were going to come out of the populace and do it, but you didn't feel that the whole environment was that way. One of the problems was, as I say, like the story with the barber, was you never knew how you were going to identify who it was. One other, maybe, quickie, … my dentist stories. [laughter] … I hear that there's a new dentist in Chu Lai and he went to Temple University. … As I said, I had my friends who went to the Temple Dental School, and then, there's a guy over in the Second Surg, Paul Klein, who was at the Temple Dental School. … They tell me Lester B. Friedman, I always remember because his name was similar to mine, although he spelled it differently, has just arrived and I had heard that Lester … was a character. So, Lester, they said, "He came with, he was attached to, I think, … the 101st Airborne Division dental section." I don't think he jumped out of airplanes, but he came over with them and they had just arrived in base camp and they said, "He set up a dental clinic. He's up in the old Navy officers' club." Now, you've got to know, the old Navy officers' club was down around here, [referring to map]. It wasn't like we were over here, he's over here. Now, they always set up officers' clubs in nice areas, right. You're up on the top of a hill, or so and so, but they had stopped using the club, and so, I go in and I asked around. I said, "Lester, remember me? I knew you from Philadelphia. I was in Mel and David's classes." "Oh, yes, vaguely," so and so and so. … I said, "Geez, what are you doing?" He said, "I got my chair set up here, right here," and he said, "Look at this, what a great view; I've got a 360-degree view," and I quickly … figure out what's going on. … I said, "Lester, let me ask you something. You've got a good view of the ocean, but you've also got a good view of the fence. Now, if you've got a good view of the fence, they've got a good view of you. Why do you think they abandoned the officers' club?" "Oh, I never thought of that." [laughter] So, I mean, there were, you know, silly moments that you kind of remember.

SH: A moment of clarity.

SF: Yes, yes, sometimes you remember the silly moments.

SH: You talked about coming back home. You finished your six months at Monmouth, then …

SF: Right back to practicing law.

SH: You said you had very few aftereffects, a few bad dreams, nightmares, that kind of thing. You talked about some of the ridiculous things that you saw. When did you start to become more politically active? After a year in-country, how has the world changed for you?

SF: Well, as I said, coming back and seeing the waste and putting it in context, when you come back, first, … coming back, and then, being exposed to the rhetoric that was around, and you see that the … body counts were one body, but that was one arm, you know, … each piece of body counted as a kill, you knew we couldn't have killed that many enemies. We would have killed the peninsula, you know, six times over if you would have believed some of the body counts you would have got, whereas, our body counts, … you know, those were real people. … It didn't make any sense to me at that point. I was mature enough to know and it didn't equate to any kind of patriotism that I'd misguidedly held or at least thought it was fitting in, because, you know, we all had this image of Korea, or we had this image of World War II and that was my image of what the fight would be.

SH: Over here, as you said, you had no doubt about doing your job.

SF: Yes, and then, you change, and I don't know if you changed there. I mean, it gets silly while you're there, because your daily aim is only to make it through the one year, and improve your lifestyle and, basically, stay alive, and see what you can do for your men and, you know, that is kind of the way it filters down, and do the job that they give you at the time, because you're not going to be in open rebellion. … That's not going to help anybody, but it was after coming back and it probably took a month, month-and-a-half. It probably also set-in to me; well, of course, I didn't do it … when I came back, because I had the six months in Fort Monmouth and that was, probably, also trying, seeing the Martin Luther King thing and seeing them place the troops … in the city and getting ready to go into the Newark riots … and seeing all of those things coming back in. … I want to make, you know, clear when I kind of went into an anti-war thing; I was really out of the Army, you know. … I don't know when those demonstrations were. I think, mostly, we marched in them to meet nice girls. … I was there with a couple of these dentists and doctors who had served in the Second Surgical. You know, we figured, "Well, you know, might as well meet some liberal people, you know, … meet some well-educated people." [laughter] … We tried to find the Columbia contingent, never could, and we ended up, it was the first time I had Szechwan Chinese food.

SH: Who were you marching with? Were you marching with a contingent?

SF: Well, we tried, we tried. It was supposed to be a march of professionals. … It was a massive demonstration in New York City for professionals and they were coming from all over. So, we were supposed to meet up with them. There were supposed to be young professionals, or something like that, meeting at Columbia University. We never found that group. So, we did a little bit of milling around and I think we ended going to a Chinese restaurant, then, we went

down to Fifth Avenue to see more. … That was probably the end of my organized anti-war activity, you know, kind of, against the war, but I always felt, after that point, I mean, it was absolutely silly. I said, … "If they ever called me back or if they ever wanted me to go into Reserve units, after what they had done, for what I thought was, had become, … purposeless, I was not going to do that." I was not going to go into another Reserve unit. They could do anything that they wanted. I just never joined a Reserve unit and, finally, I got a letter from the Army in the mail that said, "You're out of the Army," you know, "You're discharged, honorably discharged." … Guys kept calling me and they were from all these nifty Reserve units, which I guess I could have stayed in and really been in trouble, because, now, they're taking fifty … and fifty-eight-year-old guys, I see, in Reserve units going over to Iraq and Afghanistan. No, there was something, and I can't tell you what made it happen then, but it just kind of happened, you know. I maybe became more political, in that sense. I probably wasn't that political. I was probably, … like, an Eisenhower-Republican, and then, a Rockefeller-Republican, going over, and then, coming back, I was anti-war. I don't know what I was, and I was starting to relate to more people like Kerry, who I didn't know personally, I don't really remember the dialogue, but as a person. … I remember the anti-war dialogues happening, but I don't remember the individuals who were doing it, but they seemed to make more sense and they articulated many times … what I was feeling and what then tied to my Vietnam observations. [Editor's Note: Mr. Freedman may be referring to the "Winter Soldier Investigation," sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, a three-day event (January 31-February 2, 1971) in Detroit in which over one hundred veterans and more than a dozen civilians testified about their experiences in Vietnam from 1963-1970. The event was filmed and released as the documentary *Winter Soldier* in 1972.]

SH: Did you join that organization?

SF: No, no, no. I've been pretty non-political, as far as organized protests. The most organized thing was, my wife called me up last summer and told me that there was going to be … the Cindy Sheehan rally around the country, you know, that kind of generated from the death of her son in Iraq, … and that they were doing one in Caldwell. … I was coming home that night and … I said, "Okay, well, good, I'll have bail money." I always remember that, and then, I thought about it, and I have about an hour drive home, and I said, "You know, … if I don't say something now; I should have probably said it more then." So, I did. I put on my veteran's cap and I went down and stood with a lot of Quakers and we held candles. … They took our picture and it was in the front page of whatever the local paper is in the Caldwells and West Essex, and it turned out to be that our law office is involved in a related matter. You know, there were 1800 of those demonstrations, spontaneously, around the country and there was one in Flemington. It was only in Flemington that they arrested the organizer for demonstrating without a permit, and I've said it with credit to my law office, … we got assigned it by the American Civil Liberties Union. So, we're defending the guy that got arrested for doing it. … You know, it was kind of silly. We could have told him not to do it, but, I guess, you know, I kind of feel good about it. I was thinking about joining the Veterans for Kerry in the last campaign, because, I really was, you know, there's a point; … early on, it became apparent that we were doing this war [the 2003 war in Iraq] on a bundle of hot air, you know. … WMDs [weapons of mass destruction] and all that kind of stuff wasn't around and we'd been sold a bill of goods. I mean, I kind of, like a lot of Congressmen in the beginning, said, "Oh, my God, if they really have it," but, you know, then,

you figure they have it. But, as the stuff started to come out, it didn't turn up, and it didn't make any sense going in alone, either, because I'd watched carefully the last Gulf campaign. I was always interested in the Powell Doctrine and, in the First Gulf War, and it seemed to be a textbook example of how to do one of these things. I mean, go around the world, build this coalition, get massive troops, build up, you know, and produce an army in a short time, which shows you that you have the capabilities of doing it. I mean, we mustered all those National Guard and Army Reserve troops and managed to get, what? about more than 300,000 Americans over there in a matter of a couple months, and another 150,000, you know, extraneous Brits and Arabs and other people, and to not do it in this kind of, you know, situation, and then, … do it on the cheap, makes no sense at all. So, I mean, I'm no Jack Jacobs. He makes a lot of money going on television, commenting about, you know, what's wrong in the structure, but I know enough about it, from my history readings and from my little hands-on stuff, that … it's not a way to fight a war. It still isn't a way to fight a war.

SH: From the time you returned from Vietnam and the New York demonstrations, did you begin to reflect more about it over the years or did it only come to this point after the Iraq War began?

SF: Well, that brings it all back. It comes up, occasionally, I mean, when you see other things.

SH: What about when they dedicated the Vietnam Memorial in Washington?

SF: I didn't go down for that, but it's a kind of moving thing, when you visit there. You know, I've been there, a couple of visits, took my kids down. They have a wonderful traveling exhibit of that, by the way, that somebody has. It's one-third the size and they brought it around New Jersey last summer. It was in Livingston and a couple other towns. … You can walk, down in Holmdel, and look at the names of, you know, guys who, in theory, are all hometown kind of guys. As I said, I didn't have anyone under my direct command who died, thank God, during that time. I had a couple, you know, injuries and some other stuff. … Maybe, to some degree, my memory, as you could tell from today's episode, you remember the funnier, the easier things to remember. … Was it a terrible experience over all? It was something very, very different, that I don't know quite how to explain, that you're not really prepared to do, so, you try to fit it into neat, little bottles that you understand. You try to fit it into realms of what you know, and you try to … make a hootch into a home and you try to take your time off and play baseball on a, you know, rice paddy field. … There's really no way to kind of say, "What am I doing in a bunker when they're rocketing, shooting rockets at me?" which is a unique feeling [laughter] that you don't forget, you know, but I don't know how to duplicate that. … I think it was just part of, in my case, maturing, and I don't think it made, thank goodness, a major change in my life, which it has for a lot of people, and I thank the Lord for that. … A lot of that, as I said, was because I got out of An Khe the day before, you know, the rockets came … and the rocket that landed in front of me in Chu Lai was a dud and … not a live round, and it would have changed the whole course of what, you know, my perception of, you know, the war was in my own life. … I met my wife after the war, I raised my children after the war, so, they weren't a product of that era. They ask about it. They ask about how you relate it to current events. I think … the service and the time in the service is a maturing event. It's a worthwhile event, because you do get to see a great, far greater, cosmopolitan view of the world, different races, different … parts of the country, people, … how they view you and how you view them. It makes you a broader

person. It's probably a higher price to pay than you wanted to; [laughter] I probably could take a bus trip around the nation, you know, or go to summer camp, but I never went to summer camp. I always joke about that. I said, "So, that was my summer camp, you know. Fort Bragg was my first summer camp that they sent me to." … I just have difficulty saying what it did or what monumental changes it wrought in my life. It would be easy to say, "There were monumental things," and, "No, I changed my life because of that." It didn't. I knew I was going to be a lawyer. … I thought a little about politics, but I never bothered after that, frankly. I never thought the system was good. I'm becoming more political as I get older, I guess, only because I feel the country's heading in the wrong direction. … I'm not sure whether that's just this incumbent administration or not, but I worry about those things. I worry about the economic future of the country. I worry about my Social Security, but, more and more, I worry about your Social Security, [pointing to Shaun]. … I worry about my kids saddled with the debt of the Iraq War, and I'm not sure how they're going to fit into the world. … I do know, if anybody listens or gets any message out of this, that before you really commit this country and its young men, and now women, to be in a position where they're going to die or be maimed or even be psychologically changed, you had better think a lot harder than we're thinking now. Because, … to take that burden upon yourself, as an elected or appointed official, has got to be the greatest burden, you know, that you're going to face in the world, and … it is wrong to do it cavalierly, with an attitude of, "Oh, they're just dead-enders," or, you know, "To be the cornerstone of democracy in the Middle East, and we're going to do these kinds of things," or, "He's a bad person." … It is a monumental commitment that you take the burden of a whole country on, both in real life, as well as economics. We'll go down on an adventure now that we're going to be paying for in my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren's time. Vietnam had a little more participation, a little more participatory experience. Even Gulf I was a little more participatory. Guys, you know, they marched them out and they marched them back and they gave them a big parade, and so and so, which was nice; more than we got after Vietnam. Only now are people starting to honor the Vietnam veterans. … There is just too much at stake in making these decisions, and it makes me think far more politically. I've been thinking far more politically, and … feeling far more helpless in many respects, that you don't make that much of an influence on our government. You probably do have to organize. You probably do have to speak as united groups and get together. … I've been on a couple forums over in Eagleton, [a political science research center at Rutgers University] which I discovered, much to my dismay, only a few years ago, and they're wonderful. When I was a political science major, I never availed myself of it and there have been a couple of administration representatives or ex-administration representatives to appear there who talk about … their experiences of 9/11 and what that changed in their life, but, if you're sitting in Washington and you see 9/11, it doesn't really change your life. I mean, yes, it changed the life of some 9/11 widows. I mean, that's the prime example. These administration guys, that didn't change their life. They had the preconceived message, but it's a war where we're all very detached. I read about it, and I get upset by reading about it in the newspaper. My tax bill is probably lower now than it was. You know, I make a nice living, not a great living, but, for some strange reason, I probably pay less taxes than I did before, but I know it's wrong and I know people in the service. You can't commit those same people over and over who, unfortunately, just happened to be in the military services. My partner's son, he just took him down to enlist. He flunked out of college, or just dropped out, and he's twenty years old and decided that his next career move was that he wanted to be a combat medic. … His father had talked him out of it three times, enlisting, and, finally, he said he

couldn't talk him out of it. The kid is twenty. So, he took him down. He took him to sign the contract and, of course, you know, … you're never sure you're going to get the thing that they want, and I said, "Gee, how can you do that today?" … He says, "I feel that same kind of a way." … My sons-in-law and my daughters are all of an age now, are all in their thirties, so, they're beyond that kind of thing. I would feel terrible if my kids were subjected to that risk of service.

SH: What about a national required service?

SF: Oh, that's got to be one answer. I mean what I said to David Frum, … he was the famous speechwriter [for President George W. Bush] who wrote the, what, the "Triangle of Evil?" … What do they call that?

SI: "Axis of Evil."

SF: "Axis of Evil," yes. Supposedly, he wrote the speech. So, he was at Eagleton and I said, "You know, you're running this war on the cheap. I mean, if you're going to do this, let America participate; have a National Service, have 'the Draft.' Yes, a lot of guys ducked it in Vietnam, but at least everybody was aware of the war. It became a part of your life, if you were of that age. … If you were a parent or if you were a child or you were a grandparent, you were aware and you were participating and, now, … if you want to, you could throw this thing really aside and let the burden rest on a small number of people, and you're buying a lifetime on a credit card. You're doing foreign policy on a credit card, and not your credit card, your kids' credit cards and your grandkids' credit cards … and, worse than that, you're doing it on somebody else's life and somebody else's limb." So, it's probably the most undemocratic war we have fought. I'm not great for armies. Yes, there's a professional army. … That's fine, as a standing army, but, when you have to fight something like this and it's supposedly a national commitment, you know, but … they say it's politically inexpedient to do it. I don't know, maybe something like Israel has, "Everybody goes into service." If they don't go into the military, we've got enough things to do in teaching corps and things like that that you could send kids to do. … You don't need National Guard units to build a silly fence down in Arizona. You could have, like, the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps], if you remember history, that kind of stuff. So, kids will do that. Most kids get out of college at that age, it's not a huge burden, you know, one year or a year-and-a-half, eighteen months, of service or something, you know, Peace Corps kind of thing, some kind of national required service. At least everybody's in the same boat; it's a big, leveling, democratic kind of thing. I don't know any family; I mean, I really don't know any service families, other than, I mean, I know Guardsmen and Reservist families, but I don't know any professional service families now. So, I don't know how it's striking them, but, to me, it's just got to be an awful thing, because … you signed up and it was a five-year commitment. You're going to do three of them, three separate tours, over there? They don't even know when they're coming back in a year. They try to do them in a year, but they don't even know. So, I just don't understand that. Plus, I just don't see why. I see less justification. Well, in a way, Vietnam had, really, no purpose. I mean, we had a bad theory there. We thought it was a "Domino Theory" and it turned out not to be anything close to that. So, we lost Vietnam and the rest of Southeast Asia stood like a brick. So, you know, it didn't really matter, and now that we're doing tourist bus tours in Vietnam. You know, for some reason, I just can't get myself to go back. … I just

don't want to do that. I'm afraid it'll bring back too much, but eighty percent of the people there weren't even alive when we were there. So, to greet the Americans, they don't care, you know; it's just another tourist. … As I said, Chu Lai, I went on the website, if you go on their website, it's a free-trade zone. It's just like Dover, or something like that, Mount Olive, here in New Jersey, you know. It's a no-taxation kind of thing. So, it's a wonderful place.

SH: Were there any protests going on here at Rutgers yet about Vietnam before you left?

SF: No, I don't remember that. The silliest thing I remember in Rutgers was, we did an ROTC parade, I'll never forget that, and I said, "Who are we doing this for?" … They said, "It's this great democrat who just took over Cuba's brother," and it was Fidel's brother, Raul, who came to inspect the ROTC brigade, for some reason. … Yes, and we marched, because, remember, … he'd come out of the hills and he deposed General Ruben Fulgencio Batista, who was this terrible despot. … He came to observe ROTC and, I remember, … we had one of the great reviews, on a Wednesday or something. We all marched for that. The big riots when I was in school was, they didn't send us to the Rose Bowl, and a friend of mine, now, whose a well-known judge in New Jersey, was student body president, Ed Stern, led a panty raid across campus to Douglass to protest that we weren't in, that they wouldn't consider us for the Rose Bowl. So, that was the controversy. There was a little activity. The political activism, the conservatives were just starting to get active; the Democrats, never. I never really saw much, but there was some Young John Birch Society [an anti-communist organization] kind of things happening on campus and some things like that, but they never seemed to focus on foreign affairs. That was on a domestic policy kind of thing. They never really focused on, you know, an international kind of thing. I think the Kent State shootings and all of … those things happened either while I was over there in Vietnam or after I came back.

SI: What about at Columbia, while you were there? Were there some marches or …

SH: … Sit-ins?

SF: Yes. No, … actually, … the big Columbia sit-in was when I was already in service. I think the Columbia sit-in was '68. I think it's '67 or '68, and I went back and I just heard a lecture on that. … Mike Sovern, who was then dean of the law school, acted as the intermediary. They did terrible things. They defecated in the president's desk and, you know, Mark Rudd, who … now became a New Jersey lawyer, I guess, … was leading the riots, you know, but I don't think that really had a focus. Those kids were protesting the draft, in a sense, but they were also protesting a lot of other things that they felt in society. The professors there were admitting that, in the dialogue, there was that, I guess … it came a point in time where … you could keep your draft status as a student if you maintained a B average, and so, the professors related the story, at Columbia College, that the students would come to them and say, "My God, if I went to Mississippi State, you know, I would have a 'B.' Here, I'm getting a 'C.' You're going to put me in the draft." He says, "So, yes, we did." They admitted that they all upgraded all their kids, the students, to keep them out of the draft, you know, and they felt they were prostituting themselves, but they felt it was a worthwhile kind of cause. No, that was going on, … that they kind of admitted that they did that. … You know, the Columbia College faculty is … a pretty liberal faculty anyway, … but I think most college faculties are pretty liberal. Yes, there really

wasn't anything then. … The radicalization really happened after I went in the Army. … As I said, I missed the Newark riots and the radicalization of America was pretty much when I was in service. I kind of missed that.

SI: You started to tell us before about the night Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated.

SF: Yes.

SI: Was there any more to that? Was there any unrest, or was it just talk about what you were going to do?

SF: No, there really wasn't. I mean, I thought, we thought, there was going to be some great thing. … I was kind of on standby and they called me down and I said, "Oh," and, "Listen to this," and, "What's going on?" and, you know, my mind was smart enough to say, "Oh, my God, … this could be a terrible thing," but … I guess, the troops there at Fort Monmouth were not unruly. It was a relatively confined and disciplined, by definition, … a disciplined kind of thing, you know, and they didn't have access to weapons. … All those weapons are locked up, even though they're in a training facility. … We didn't feel any of that, although, you know, clearly, by that time, about half of the Army was black. … I guess it exhibited itself in the Washington riots. I mean, there was some burnings in Washington that occurred. When I went down that weekend and saw that stuff, I mean, I was really shocked, but … I didn't find anything and my recollection was that nothing really happened in New Jersey. Newark had been over by that time, right, and it was just a strange night. I said, "My luck, of all things, I get stuck, you know, being the duty officer." I mean, the other thing was, you know, we took a duty officer turn, and then, we had to do one burial. The toughest duty that you do is the burials. I got one of those, thank God, not many, and there was a young fellow in Belleville, Bloomfield or Belleville, I forget. … They just have a roster … of all the officers, who are in Monmouth, and it comes up that when somebody in New Jersey dies and, you know, they're shipping back the body … and the parents ask for a military funeral, which means the firing party and the flag and all of that stuff. … We took turns. … My turn came up and I remember going up and he was buried in a churchyard up there and … they had a firing team that had practiced. It wasn't, like, my team. You know, I just had to be the officer. You had to kind of relate and do whatever you kind of did, … but it's difficult, because … it was a "do not open" casket. … If I remember, I think he was in the 11th Armored Cavalry, the Black Horse Regiment, which was an armored cavalry unit and, usually, when those guys got hit by a mortar, the bodies were pretty much incinerated. So, sometimes, when they ship back bodies, they really were … maybe a couple pieces and a sandbag, to put weight in there. There really wasn't much of a body left, if it was, you know, a fire, because he'd be incinerated. These things, APCs, were, … basically, armored coffins if they got hit. So, I don't know what was in there and I explained to the woman, you know, "You get the burial and you get the veteran's, you know, ten-thousand-dollar service insurance policy," and I never quite understood; I guess it was because people do strange things when they're under great stress. The mother's greatest complaint was, or thing she wanted me to do, was to write to his commanding officer. … She'd sent him some kind of a portable radio and, when his effects came back, you know, there was no portable radio, maybe it was an expensive portable radio, and she wanted that portable radio. Now, you think about all the things, and I kind of think, I'm like, "Lady, you just lost your son." I mean, I knew what happened. I mean, obviously, it was a

good radio; someone grabbed it. It was in base camp and nobody showed up and something like that just goes. … No, she wanted that radio back. So, I remember, I had to write, you know, letters to the commanding officer, you know. … I don't know if they ever got it, but I did put them through channels … to try to do that. It was a Catholic ceremony and I remember going and it was … a relatively small church and it was on a weekday and we did the thing. … I always thought that the guys were not so great, because I'd seen drill teams. You know, the Scarlet Rifles or Queens Guard, whatever we have here, were better than some of our guys. These were, you know, signal men. … Monmouth didn't produce a lot of great, you know, soldiers, but, you know, the guys did what they were supposed to do and they folded the flag. I took the flag and I handed it to the lady and I looked solemn and had to shine my shoes and do everything, but it's a tough duty. You really don't want to do it. Fortunately, I didn't have to do; there was another list, where, you know, you come to the door, [makes a knocking sound to represent knocking on a door]. You don't want to do that, you know. That's really tough. By the time I got there, you know, she'd already been notified and everything else, yes. … I guess they still do that. The chaplain comes and they send an officer and a chaplain and they notify you. That's kind of a terrible thing, because … you've got to be; … my daughter who went to Douglass, you know, one more year and she'll be a doctor, a real psychologist, but you've got to be that to handle that kind of thing. I'm not equipped to do that. I could never handle matrimonial cases in the office, because there's too much dependency. … That is a very difficult thing.

SH: There is one question that I know we have not answered: how did you get even with the Dean of Men?

SF: Oh, yes, I think I got even with him, because I transferred to Arts and Sciences, and then, I started getting good grades, like really good grades, and, I mean, it got to be easy, and I didn't realize it. I said, "Oh, gee, it's like high school again." I was getting great grades. … The practice used to be that the fraternities would invite a professor to dinner. Once a week, you would have a visiting professor or the college president or some of the deans who would come on the circuit. So, once a week, at the house, we would have this thing, and I remember having Mason Gross here when one of my fraternity brothers slipped up and said, "Doctor Grace, would you mind saying Gross?" [laughter] … That moment lives on, because … I see him, he's still a lawyer in Morristown, who said that, but we had Dean Boocock [Dean of Men] to dinner. … I must have been a junior or so and so, or something like that, and they introduced him. You know, they talked about him and they said, I think, "And here's Stuart Freedman. He's…" I'd just been elected to Phi Beta Kappa, I'd just been selected to be a Henry Rutgers Scholar, or so and so, and I was "the brain." They pushed me at the fraternity, you know. There were some jocks and we had … the basketball team captain and everything, but … "Here's So-and-So, Mr. Freedman." He said, "Oh, yes, Mr. Freedman," and we had not had much interaction … between that time, and I said, "Yes, maybe you remember me, Dean Boocock." … "I'm sure there were many," I said, "I was the guy you laughed out of your office for not being good enough to go home early for a Christmas job," you know, and I got a "harrumph." That was all I got. [laughter] …

SI: Why did you join Phi Ep? Why did you choose them over any of the other fraternities?

SF: Well, we had segregated fraternities, you remember. … If you're Jewish, there were about five fraternities that were open to you, one of which was probably mixed. It's not to say we were entirely Jewish, because I think we had one Italian and one Asian, I think it was, you know, but, basically, the fraternities were segregated. … Delta Phi was something like, that was only Southern WASPS, if they could get it, or something like that, you know. It was far less democratic than you would hope. So, among those, there were a couple of people from my hometown that were in that fraternity and one of my best friends was for sure going to pledge that Phi Ep and it just seemed like, you know, it worked out. I mean, I went around … to some of the other places and I just fit in there. I can't say why. Also, in those days, … they were similar people and it was also a much better existence than the dorms. … All the fraternities had their own cooks. So, you could eat, and one thing I learned in the Army, that we used to say, … "That's why we built the battalion mess rather than the division mess," because the smaller … unit you cook for, the better the food is. You can put more care into it. So, by cooking for sixty people or forty-five people, it was a lot better than going over to the Commons, and, you know, we didn't have Brower Commons. … What is now where your post office is, or something like that, was the Commons, in those days, and it was not very good. … We used to go behind the gym to some of these little restaurants and the grease trucks (a food truck) used to be on the street, not located just in one place. So, lunch was from a grease truck. I think breakfast was on my windowsill, because I had a metal box and a container of orange juice and milk and maybe a bun, and lunch was a grease truck and dinner was, then, we'd walk somewhere around Easton Avenue or behind Sicard Street, around the gym. … So, that was for, like, you know, six, seven months, and then, … you started at the fraternity. So, it was a much better way of living. The rooms were a little bit crummier, actually. … In our fraternity house, the rooms were small. We had bigger rooms in the dormitory than we did there and, certainly, when I was a preceptor, you know, that was really luxury and I had a single room.

SH: Was there a housemother?

SF: Oh, yes, oh, yes, housemother. We had a black cook, a drunken housemother. It was a classic kind of thing, yes. … You had to have a housemother and, if you kept her; well, you know, sherry was a good kind of thing. … You could sneak girls upstairs, occasionally, you know. … Yes, you could, yes, … but not for long, because you had an eleven o'clock curfew, during the week, at Douglass, and maybe twelve o'clock on the weekends. So, there wasn't a lot of damage you could do, I mean, unless … if you were dating local people. It was very strict. … I think my senior year, they started letting women visit the dormitories officially. You can picture the time, you know, the door open business and the matchbook and one foot on the floor. You know, you had all those kind of rules, and I always get a kick out of this, since, now, our office represents the Rutgers University Police Department, among other things, we prosecute the underage drinking and traffic tickets. … Anyways, the first cop, no one will remember who it was, was a guy; we talked about Volkswagens. They gave him a red and black Beetle and he would go up and down College Avenue and George Street and give out traffic tickets, and that was the first Rutgers Police Department. So, that came while I was here in the '60s.

SH: Bob Ochs?

SF: No, no. … I don't think I recall. It was some "Charlie the Cop" or something like that. I mean, it was, like, you know, a Joe Bolton [a TV police officer who hosted kids shows in the New York area] kind of a thing. … Rutgers was going through some interesting times. … I guess Gross' inauguration was while I was here. I guess the first time I voted, while I was here, I voted for Nixon. Don't ask me why, but I did vote for him. I remember … the absentee ballot. I remember it being in Hegeman, I guess, or something like that, when I voted, voted for Nixon. I guess it was '60 and it was an interesting change. It was still a very manageable, small college. They did the one, "Look to the right and look to the next student." … They would admit far more than they knew they could graduate. So, the freshman class would be a thousand, maybe, but they would flunk out four hundred. So, it was not a good system. That was at the Rutgers side, and they hadn't built Livingston yet. That came later, … but it was small, and so, … people knew each other, and they were much smarter across town at Douglass. The women were much smarter, because it was far more selective, which I understand is the reverse, because, when my daughter applied and was accepted at both, she found, you know, I mean, the smarter kids were at the Rutgers College, unless you wanted a women's only education, you know. So, there were a lot of different things.

SH: Did they still have mandatory chapel?

SF: Freshman year, we had mandatory chapel. We had a terrible thing, mandatory chapel and mandatory phys. ed., and that included, in my case, eight o'clock in the morning, going to a swimming pool, [laughter] which was awful. … I hope no one's listening and they won't retroactively do this to me, but one of my great fears was, you had to pass a swimming test and I don't think I ever did. I'm pretty sure I never did. I went two years, my freshman and sophomore years. I had these phys. ed. classes and we had to go. … Modesty went asunder, because men had to go nude. There was no bathing suits. I was naked in the pool and I never passed the swimming test and I had this fear. We used to graduate in the stadium and, you know, as I said, I was getting the Vail Prize and … going to law school, and so and so, but I had this feeling that, when you walked up, … because they would let you march if you weren't going to graduate and they would give you the empty folder, you know, because your parents were there. … People would make it up in the summer. So, they would let you do that and I … couldn't wait until I got back to the stands, [laughter] because I thought there was going to be a note, "Not so fast. You didn't pass the swimming test," you know, but they never caught me. … I think we'd better stop there, don't you think that? … I mean, Carl Kirschner [Dean of Rutgers College] will come over here and take away my degree and everything else.

SH: Thank you so much for a delightful interview.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Steven Frank 10/22/06
Reviewed by Tom Deamus 10/22/06
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 11/9/07
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 11/13/07
Reviewed by Stuart Freedman 12/24/07