

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH SCHENKEL

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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Molly Graham: This begins a second interview session with Joseph Schenkel for the Rutgers Oral History Archives. The interview is taking place on July 20, 2016, in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, and the interviewer is Molly Graham. We will pick up from where we left off last time, with your career at Rutgers. I know you studied psychology. What got you interested in psychology. Did you know always know you were going to study that?

Joseph Schenkel: I wanted to be an English major. Let's say I didn't have the greatest work habits in the world ... I didn't have the greatest guidance in the world. So, don't forget Rutgers was a different place. We carried twenty-one hours as I recall. You had five-credit chemistry, five-credit biology. I've forgotten what English was, but at any rate, I was doing very poorly in English. So, I went up to the fellow teaching it, and I think he was a graduate student, and I said, "I want to become an English major." He looked at me cross-eyed. He said, "Well, I'll tell you what. We're going to have an in-class theme." You had to write a theme a week, or a theme every few days. I did terribly on them. So, we have this in-class theme and I got an A on it. I went to see him. He said, "How did you do this?" I said, "I don't know." No one was listening. No one was paying attention. I said, "I think I still want to be an English major." To make a long story short, that repeated itself. I immediately went back to these miserable weekly themes and did poorly, came to the final exam and I got an A. What it amounted to was, I could write. What I couldn't do, and no one ever taught me how to do, was to edit. So, my buddies were putting out these themes and getting good grades, but they were spending hours. I didn't know to spend hours. So, I'd hand these things in with grammatical errors in them and everything, which didn't count as much in class. So, somewhere along the line, I decided that English was a bad idea and I had won a prize in high school for writing a paper on psychiatry. Well, I really didn't know. I didn't want to go to medical school and I didn't know how any of that translated, but, somehow, I came up with psychology. I guess I just took the introductory course and found it interesting, and that was it. I became a psychology major, very much invested in experimental psychology. There was a laboratory out on Easton Avenue. The building is still there, a rat lab, and I worked in that my junior year, and then, became head caretaker of the animals, I guess, my senior year. Bill Pavlick was the professor associated with that. I took every psychology course I could.

MG: Were you doing those classic experiments with rats and mazes?

JS: Yes. I had applied to all experimental programs for graduate school, and then, suddenly--I just read a book on this. I have always contended that the concept of a self-made person is a lot nonsense. Now, in this sense, I'm not saying that people don't work hard. I'm not suggesting that at all, but if you look at it, for every you, someone out there, there are forty thousand you's, but you're the only one that got this CEO job. Do you really think that's because you did that on your own? Maybe it's because something like, you happened to interview for the job and the person interviewing you was a Rutgers graduate. That's luck. Maybe it's because you were born with the right genes, and so forth. So, luck plays an extraordinary part in this. I just completed a book, it's a brand new book, the first time I've ever seen that, and he talks about, bringing up some research that I knew nothing about. He's an economist and he talks about the vagaries of luck and how they get in there. So, dumb luck. I decide that I really like the idea--I found out there was such an animal as a school psychologist. Now, what do I like about this? What I like is, they work ten months out of the year. That's a dumb reason for doing anything. So, it's late in

the year and I jump around. I find out that City College, NYU [New York University]--I think there was a third program, I can't even remember what it was. Oh, Rutgers--had programs. So, I apply to all of them. Ultimately, I'm accepted at all, but at NYU the fellow said, "If you can get into City's program, go there. It's exceptional." So, I did and it was. Turned out that the school psychology program was a school psychology program sort of in name only. It was the clinical program, whereas if you went directly into the clinical program, it was strictly research. So, there I am at this thing, find out I don't want to be a school psychologist anyway, and I meet a guy. We hit it off and we had something in common. He was a year ahead of me. He was getting married and he was going off to a doctoral program. I was getting married shortly thereafter. So, we had this thing in common. Well, all right, I finish up at City. It's time to apply--well, before I finished--for doctoral programs, and I sent my applications out. Then, I remembered he went to Utah. So, I sent for information. To make a long story short--well, I guess I was accepted. No, actually, listen to this one, it gets crazier. I apply. I'm accepted. So, what do you think the first question I ask is, "Where the hell is Utah?" I didn't know a thing about Utah. This is not the way you do things. So, I looked it up and it's far away from New Jersey; I'm going. Barbara and I decide to go. Then, I get a letter of rejection from Utah. Now, what do you do with that? So, I call out there and I'm told not to worry about it, but to come out. I'm accepted. We go out there and the first thing--oh, I go see the head of the program, and I think he said go over to the graduate office and do something. I don't know what it was. So, I go over and I said, "Listen, I'm very confused." I told him what happened. I could see my folder and there are big red marks on it. I said, "What's all that?" He said, "Well, you know that you have to be accepted by the graduate school and the department." He said, "Normally you wind up getting accepted by the department, and then the graduate school follows suit." No. You get accepted by the graduate school I think. At any rate, I was accepted by one and rejected by the other. But in red it said Dr. Merrill says to accept this guy. That's how I got to Utah. Isn't that weird? It was one of the best things to ever happen. Dumb luck, really just dumb luck. I was so scared I didn't even apply for a grant and in those days everyone got grants. I did get a job in the counseling center and while I'm there--for a kid from New Jersey I was very naïve--someone says that there is a note up on the blackboard, you are to go see Dr. Samuelson. So, I go see Dr. Samuelson. He said, "I understand you're interested in vocational rehabilitation." Being a sophisticate from New Jersey, I said, "What's vocational rehabilitation?" Then, he tells me about the grant. I said, "I don't know what to do." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, I'm here for clinical psychology, not vocational rehabilitation." Dr. Samuelson was a bishop in a church, very nice man, and he is not going to appear to commit any improprieties. So, he's not going to tell me the whole story. So, I go back. I'd made some friends by this time and I told them what happened. They looked at me and they said, "Will you play the game?" I said, "What game?" They said, "Your degree is going to be in clinical psychology. Take the bloody money. You're going to have to take a couple of courses. Play the damn game." So, I don't believe anyone. That's the part of New Jersey, that really I'm paranoid. I accept the money and I graduate in clinical psychology, and they bend over backwards for me. For example, I'm supposed to do an externship in vocational rehab. By then I knew what it was and I knew darn well I wasn't about to go do that. Samuelson said, "Well, find something you want to do." So, I'm wandering around the medical school and I wound up on a rehab ward, physical medicine. I came back and asked will they approve this? There was no question. Sure. No big deal. These were two year grants that the government, because they were trying to encourage doctoral level people into vocational rehab, they lasted about four or six years, because everyone was playing

the game and no one was going into vocational rehab. How did I get it? Dumb luck, it was nothing else.

MG: What is the connection between psychology and vocational rehab?

JS: Well, first, testing. Others are people's goals, aspirations, motivations, people's skill level, and counseling. So, there's a connection there.

MG: I want to come back to your graduate work, but have some more questions about your Rutgers experience. Today, you support Rutgers and you're involved in advisory boards for the university. What about Rutgers or your experience there has motivated you to support the school?

JS: I'd love to give you a very insightful answer to that. I don't know. I really don't know. I think I mentioned to you that I feel very fortunate that I came of age in a very nice period. You went to college. There wasn't much of a question that you'd get a job. The world was fine. Korea was over. [Editor's Note: The armistice that ended the Korean War went into effect on July 27, 1953.] We played at ROTC. I mean, there were a couple of guys that took it seriously. We had fraternity parties. If people could see, at least in my head, what it looks like, they wouldn't believe it. If you would go to a Rutgers-Princeton football game, dates were dressed and they were dates. Fellows from the college [wore] ties and jackets. Cocktail parties afterwards. It was really very much different, very much different. I did not even experience-- some of the fraternities were known for a fair amount of drinking. In four years I never experienced that, never saw it. I think every guy that lived in the fraternity, not everyone, but a lot of guys took great pride in the bars that they had and their rooms. It was more for show than anything else. It was the heyday of the fraternity movement. Well, there were 2800 students and twenty-six fraternities, something like that. We had rushing. I remember feeling a lot of pressure, but for other reasons. There's an old TV show. It's a family. I can't think of the name, but it is this glorified, everything is rosy in the world.

MG: *Leave it to Beaver?*

JS: *Leave it to Beaver.* That's what it was. We wore beanies in our first year, can you imagine that? And a tie. It just was a different world. My wife was brought in front of the honor board. There was a man in the room with his feet off the floor. Her father fell asleep on her bed. [laughter] They had to be in by ten o'clock otherwise the dorm was locked and you were locked out. It was a different world. Then, Vietnam hit. That was the end of it.

MG: Remind me what fraternity you joined.

JS: Phi Epsilon Phi, which doesn't exist anymore, but if you go to the library and you walk in and go to the right, you'll see a display cabinet, which was put there by Phi Ep. There's some memorabilia in it.

MG: Tell me a little bit more about the courses you were taking, the professors you had.

JS: I don't remember all that many. I remember a fellow named Peter Charanis, who taught western civilization who was extraordinary. Taught it all with a heavy Greek accent. I remember an Italian professor. I don't know what to tell you. I failed Italian of all damn things, again, because I had no study habits. I was in a class at summer school, about twenty-six guys. We were all in academic trouble. The course ended, I went off to my job. In those days, I don't how it started. You left a post card and the professor would return the card with your grade on it. I'm up at camp. Now, I had to pass. There was no question about that. The card arrives and there's a big C on it. Then, it says, "Congratulations, you got the highest grade in the class." Those guys failed out. How it did happen? I don't know, but I remember him. Bill Pavelic I remember very well. Visualizing someone else in the psychology department. I can't bring a name back. I remember isolated classes better than the professors. I remember needing to fulfill a requirement in my senior year due to a class cancellation. It sounds crazy in psychology, but I needed a course, I think it was social science or something. I wound up at Douglass sitting--this is funny, really--sitting in a classroom with I don't know how many women. It was an auditorium. On the top of this auditorium sit two guys, myself and the coxswain of the heavyweight crew. He needed to fill a requirement also. The fellow teaching was a graduate student. I don't remember his ethnic background, but I couldn't understand a word he said. I graduated, so I guess I passed. But I don't remember specifics other than Bill Pavelic, and I ran into him at an American Psychological Convention maybe ten years later, something like that. He had gone to a Midwestern university. Oh, Dean Boocock, how could I forget him? I lost my scholarship and I went to him and I asked him what I have to do to get it back. He, again, looked at me not encouragingly, but told me to come and see him in six months and I did.

[Tape paused.]

MG: You were telling me about Dean Boocock.

JS: So, he pulls out his book. I'm looking at this book and I'm wide eyed. It says "Drop, drop, drop. Removed from probation." [inaudible] "How did you do this?" Dean Boocock asked. I shrugged my shoulders. To this day, I am convinced that what got me into Utah and what Dr. Merrill saw were two things. One is my first two years were lousy. My second two years were just the opposite. I went to City College and that was City College in its heyday. He saw that and he said, "I'm going to discount those first two years."

MG: What made you pull yourself out of academic trouble?

JS: Pure fear. [laughter] I don't know why. I think pure fear. I wanted to do it.

MG: Were you also finding that what you were studying in psychology was more enjoyable or relevant?

JS: Probably. Well, certainly in psychology it was. I had a clear cut goal. It's really hard to--I had no real guidance along the way. I came out of a high school where I didn't do anything and I was always winning stuff. I mentioned that paper that I wrote. No big deal. I did it the last moment. Grade-wise it was the same sort of thing. I have never obsessed over a standardized test, GRE, SAT, MAT. I'm usually done when I'm done and I can't sit there and go over it. I

just don't have that. Well, that's not true. I mean, I sit at the piano, but that wasn't there in those first two years. There was no one to say essentially this guy's not stupid. That might have made a difference. I don't know. I was also conflicted whether--somehow, in my mind, I did not know whether I was an athlete or a scholar. Somehow, you couldn't be both. Again, I didn't come out of a background that would do that. Whereas our son, he was a lousy athlete. [laughter] That only left him with one thing and he was sparkling scholar--is a sparkling scholar.

MG: I only have a vague idea of the history of psychology, but I feel like there were a lot of landmark cases and discoveries in the 1960s like the Bobo Doll experiments and what B.F. Skinner was doing with behavioral psychology. Was that around that time? Were you studying those experiments?

JS: Oh, yes. What was his name? Am I going to conflate this with Utah? No. What occurred, occurred at Utah. It was a fellow named Ogden Lindsey. He followed Skinnerian principles; he was a student of Skinner's. Ultimately got a position with the University of Kansas, but also with the Kansas City School System, and they gave him control of classrooms. So, he was conducting operant conditioning experiments with kids in the school, and there was something about a bug in the ear. What they would do is they would have someone outside the classroom. They could see into the classroom. They had a speaker and a headphone, and the teacher would have something. Then, they would do things like look at the third kid in the second aisle. Now, reward what they're doing, that sort of thing. The reason I remember him, he was invited to speak at the University of Utah and they took him to the faculty club for dinner. So, by the time he came to speak he was just as stewed as can be. He could hardly walk to the podium. He got up at the podium and gave an absolutely brilliant lecture, answered questions completely logically and whatever. As soon as it was over, he was drunk again without drinking. It was as if he were on topic, nothing could stand in his [way]. I've never seen anyone do anything like that. I went to visit him, because I was stationed in Kansas at Fort Leavenworth. I went to visit there just to talk one day.

MG: When you were at Leavenworth during the Vietnam War?

JS: Oh, you didn't know that. I was finishing up at Utah and the Army was very good to me. They let me have my delays. I needed a month, two months, I don't know. So, I wrote. They said, "Fine, you've got a year." What can I do with a year? So, I defend my dissertation. I get a job down at Provo State Hospital. Six months later, Barbara calls and says there is a letter here from the Army. It's rather thick. I said, "Oh, crap. What is it?" She says, "I can't read this thing. I don't know" I said, "Give me an idea, just talk me through it. I think I'll be able to tell you." I said, "Okay, the first thing you're telling me is that those are my orders. I'm going on duty." She said, "Yes." I said, "Read the next piece. That makes sense, too. We're going down to Fort Sam Houston; we're going for eighteen weeks. Okay. Tell me the next thing." She does and I uttered an expletive. She said, "What is it?" I said, "Well, relax. I'm not going to Vietnam." She said, "Okay." I said I'm not going to--in those days--Walter Reed either. She said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going to the bloody prison in Fort Leavenworth." She said, "You've got to be kidding." I said, "No, that's where we're going, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas." [laughter] That's how I got to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

MG: Well, before we get there tell me a little bit more about your ROTC experience and what that was like for you?

JS: There seems to be a constant theme--it is in my life. You do know that you had to take ROTC for two years?

MG: Right.

JS: So, being a smart kid from New Jersey, I decide--well, I learned that Air Force is easier in the first two years, then Army. So, I don't give a damn about this military stuff. I'm going into Air Force ROTC, which I did--you don't have a choice--never expecting that I'm going to stay with it. To this day, I don't know why I stayed with it, but, then, of course, Army is easier in the second two years. I don't even know if it's true. I switch over to the Army and the two most significant events were--one was I wound up as what's called the tactical officer, which is the third highest ranking in the cadet battalion. That's an important position in a war. If you're marching around Buccleuch Park, my job was to make sure that people were marching around Buccleuch Park, which meant a I stood around a lot. Then, a funny thing occurred when we went to basic training at Fort Devens.

MG: When was that?

JS: When? Between junior and senior year.

MG: It was just a summer training camp.

JS: Yes, eight weeks. Somewhere along the line, there was training, map reading, and all the things you have in class, except you have them in the first two years. I was in the Air Force for the first two years. So, I get called in by the captain, real captain. He said, "You did very poorly on the map reading course." I said, "Really? What did I get?" He said, "Well, a C+." I start laughing. He says, "What are you laughing about?" I said, "I was in the Air Force for two years. I've never even read a map," and he said, being a great guidance person, "Get out of here." He threw me out of the office." So, those are the two things I remember. No, I remember other things. I remember vividly bayonet training and the man next to me, who was a Rutgers guy, and I thought, "These people really take this stuff seriously. This frightens me." I said something to him. Well, he went to medical school through the Army, came out a full colonel or something. I forgot his name. Actually, I saw him, I think it was him, at the reunion. He frightened me. I guess my leanings were already what they are now. They had us sit in bleachers and they had what was called a nuclear something or other, platoon or something, in the attack. You were looking--like an amphitheater--and suddenly, out the bushes, you hear rifle fire coming into the middle. Make a long story short, it all builds and you see people crawling, you see tanks coming in, and there's a nuclear explosion. I'm thinking to myself, "Gee, someone could get killed out there. This is nuts." Everybody else around me is shouting. Their adrenaline is running and I'm getting sick to my stomach. Afterwards, they told us how much they had spent on this exhibit for our benefit, that sort of thing, but other parts of it were fine.

MG: Was the Camp Devens thing part of your ROTC experience?

JS: Yes.

MG: Was it just other Rutgers guys there?

JS: No, other universities also. Everyone had to go. It's basic training is what it was. I was fortunate, because of the screwy way I did things, I went through basic training twice. Except the second time, that's where Fort Sam Houston comes in. First off it was not post-Vietnam, it was Vietnam, and it was all medical service corps, and that was a joke. We were out in the field very little and there is a hilarious story with that one. We were made up of second lieutenants who were all going to Vietnam as battalion surgical assistants, clerks, and a bunch of captains--oh, first lieutenants, social workers and a number of captains, couple of psychologists, very few, biochemists, people like this. Our primary cadre were medevac pilots returned from Vietnam. These guys are a little crazy and they don't take anything seriously. I mean, they had been through hell. So, things happen. Our cadet commander, although we're all commissioned officers--there's a guy that was in the Marines and enlisted in the Army. He was an audiologist and I was a platoon leader, and he's going to shape us up. We're going to be a crack unit. I'm looking at him thinking to myself, "What are you crazy?" So, the first day he brings us together and giving the order to march our platoons to class. I've got a bunch of social workers. So, being the democratic type of person I am, I go back--there's a little hitch to this--and I look at the guys and I said, "He wants us to march. Let's take a vote. You want to saunter or you want to march?" The guys voted to saunter and I said, "Okay, let's go." And we did. That may have been the first assault on his dignity. It resulted when he brought a--no, the second one was we had a meeting and in the midst of this, a little guy, biochemist says, "I don't want to be an assistant platoon leader." Well, he didn't know what to do with this. The guys, the real guys, medevac pilots, they're laughing their heads off at all of this stuff. A fellow, big black man, who was a social worker, he stands up, [and] in this beautiful voice, he said, "I thought this was supposed to be an academic endeavor. What is it with all this physical horseshit?" [laughter] Everyone is roaring. This guy in front is taking it. Vietnam is going on. No one takes anything seriously, except for him. At one point, something happened with the little biochemist. He never got off being platoon leader. The company commander brings him in to the real colonel to be reprimanded for something. So, the colonel was a savvy guy. So, they go in. He presents the case and the colonel said, "Thank you. Would you step outside and I will speak with captain so and so about this indiscretion?" The guy leaves and he turns to him, and he says, "Will you guys quit doing this to him? You're driving me nuts." They laugh and he brings the other guy back, tells him everything was taken care of, he's fully reprimanded, and they go on. That's what that was like. It was a lot of fun actually. [laughter] Again, I was fortunate. There were only a handful of clinical psychologists in the Army at the time. There were two in Vietnam. They were on rotation, so you had to come up at the proper time. I was not at the proper time and they were taking on married men first. I was married. Oh, yes--I did another thing. We got to Fort Leavenworth and you're assigned housing. Oh, the commanding general staff college is there, which is a major stepping ground for career officers. It's a busy post. So, we look at this, where they want to put us and we've been married for a while and we thought--well, the way I presented it to the major in charge of housing was that either the furniture goes in or we go in, but there ain't room for both of us. He said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "I want to live off post." He said, "Okay." I said, "But I want a letter from you saying that if you need me to

come back to fill some quota, you won't do it." He said, "I'll give you that." When the colonel at the prison found out I had pulled this one off, he said, "No one has ever done anything like that. How are you going to be officer of the day?" I said, "You've got a bachelor officer's quarters. I'm going to stay on post." We got off on the right foot with that one, you might imagine.

MG: You were commissioned at graduation in to the Army. Is that correct?

JS: Yes.

MG: Then went active duty in '68?

JS: Yes, you're right.

MG: I want hear about those years in between. Kennedy was assassinated, I think, during your first year at City College. The Civil Rights Movement was going on. Vietnam was ramping up. Were you anticipating getting into the war eventually?

JS: Yes. What was it like? I think it's a combination of things. One is, in terms of the assassination, just disbelief, because Kennedy, especially if you were lower middle class, middle class, you looked at Kennedy--the Camelot business, the beautiful people. Suddenly, that was the story. The Civil Right Movement--if you go into Newark, you go up to Springfield Avenue, around Springfield and [inaudible], you're going to find wide open space. If you were there when I grew up--I didn't grow up in Newark; I was there every Saturday. You went up there and you went up store-lined avenues, Springfield Avenue. At one point on the left hand side there's my uncle's store, which he moved out of. Moved over to the right upper part. That was the epicenter of the Newark Riots. In the middle of that, my uncle went to the store. Working for my uncle at the time was a fellow named Ralph. This is critical and this is why I mention this. He's black, about 6 foot, 4. Ralph is the baby of the family. In the middle of the riots, Ralph and one of his brothers came to the store. Their plan was they had a truck and they were going to throw all the goods in the truck, just get out of there with them. They found my uncle, locked him in the bathroom, emptied the store as best they could. [Then] grabbed my uncle, threw him in [the truck] and drove my uncle home. Imagine two big black men unloading my white uncle in Weequahic. Can you imagine? This is followed by a year or so later, I'm going to Newark to see Ralph. I hadn't been there after the riots. The tenements are burned out. I think the stores were there, because I know damn well my uncle's store was there. Ralph has bought it by this time. I park on the other side. I found a place to park. Never been frightened in Newark. [As a] little boy, I'd run through the neighborhoods, people took care of you. Show you was it was like: one day when my Uncle Joe was there, I used to go and sit on his lap. Uncle Joe was a portly man. Come in to the store and plop himself down, black fellow. I asked my father. I was a little boy. I said, "Uncle Joe has a scar on his neck." My father said, "Yes." I said, "What is that?" He said, "Do you know what the numbers are?" I said, "No." My father explained it. Of course, it was completely illegal. He said, "Your Uncle Joe was one of the biggest number runners in all of Newark." [laughter] So, I'm on the other side of the street and this time I'm scared. Old fashioned store, I don't know if you've ever seen these. They still exist in New York. They have two windows, and then, there's a hallway of glass so you can look, and you go in. I figure I'm going to run across the street. I'll open the door. If Ralph's there, fine. If not,

I'm a dead man, but I'm going. So, I jump out of the car, my head goes down, I run across, boom. I ran into something. Well, what I ran into was Ralph. He saw me and he stepped out of the store. What you would have seen, and I didn't really put it together until later, was a six-foot-four black man and a five-foot-eight white guy, and they're hugging each other in the middle of Newark. What a scene that would've been. That was the last time I ever saw Ralph. Anyway, so there was a lot of emotion. I don't remember, and maybe it has to do with self-involvement of youth and really being so focused with trying to go wherever you're trying to go, I don't remember the fear that I'm experiencing now. What I'm experiencing now is not fear for myself, for others in general and certainly our family. We have a mixed race family. My grandkids, they don't look like they came from me. I don't remember. Maybe because everyone else was so stunned. You had outliers. You always have idiots and you could honestly say this is not a reflection of, and it was true I think--this is not a reflection of the society. It's one nut. That isn't the case nowadays. It's much different.

MG: Did you meet your wife while in you were in college?

JS: Yes.

MG: Can you tell me how that happened?

JS: Yes. I'm trying to think of which--I had been dating someone and that ended. A guy named Joel Shane, walking along the street--people were very formalized about it in those days, depending where you were. If you were really clever--none of us had much money--you had a library date on a Friday night, and then you decided whether you wanted to spend money, so you could have a real date on a Saturday. [laughter] At any rate, a guy named Joel Shane said, "I have someone you ought to meet." I think I called her and she was busy. Then, she encouraged me to call again. I don't really remember what happened. It was just a blind date, standard, sort of uneventful things, and it just took off from there. Oh, I did come back--my roommate at the time--I was living over on Mine Street? Union? There's a story there too. He said, "How did it go?" I said, "Well, not as bad as the others." [laughter] There's a story. I'm amazed that I can't think of the story. I somehow met a fellow, who invited me to live with him in a small ramshackle house with a garage outside, dirt floor. He was a friend of Bacardi, the rum guy. His son went to Rutgers. I don't know if he was living there, but at any rate, I said, "Yes." The woman that lived there, Mrs. Albert, very nice, somewhat rotund woman. Well, I continued to live there for a few years, couple of roommates, and then get passed on to the fraternity. Mrs. Albert was a significant figure. She would cook for us on occasion. She liked Barbara. She would leave on weekends to go to her daughter's. Many years later, it may have been the first visit I paid to Rutgers. I don't know. I wanted to see the house. So, I went over there and the house wasn't there. It was a much larger house. Obviously it was new. There was a real garage with pavement. There were four mailboxes. So, I don't know why--they tore the other thing down, built these apartments--but I went up to the mailbox, and the name was there. So, I knocked on the door. The door is answered by a woman who I didn't recognize. I began to explain. She said, "I know who you are. You're Joe Schenkel. Mrs. Albert always talks about you, my mother." I said "Wow." She said, "In case you're afraid to ask, she's in the back room. Would you like to see her?" So, I went and talked to Mrs. Albert. Back to luck, again. Six months later they wrote me that she was dead. The probability of that is extraordinary,

absolutely extraordinary. I still, to this day, go by the house. Still don't recognize the damn place. That's okay.

MG: Tell me what you and Barbara would do for dates during college?

JS: Oh, anything from study dates to--well, very quickly, they weren't even dates. The first time I was being sophisticated. We went to a movie theater somewhere out there and they had an art exhibit. That would be kind of a date. Whenever we had any money we'd go to a place--there was a restaurant called Manny's Den. It was a long, slender restaurant. You had to go by the bar and Mrs. Mack, the Mack's owned it, was lovely too. If any of us had a birthday, she baked a cake. It was a very sophisticated place. When you walked by the bar it was always very crowded. I'm telling you, I was not very sophisticated. I did not know it was a gay bar, but it was.

MG: I was going to say, the Den comes up quite a bit in other interviews.

JS: Really?

MG: Yes, and we've interviewed Richard Mack, who was not gay himself, but had this place that was supportive to gays.

JS: Oh, I'll be damned.

MG: I think it is still a popular gay bar.

JS: It's not there. I went searching for it.

MG: I think it is in Somerset now.

JS: Oh, that's why I didn't find it. That may be. I went searching for it as I returned to Rutgers. I just wanted to re-experience the place. Couldn't find it. That's interesting. It's not a complete figment of my imagination.

MG: No, no.

JS: Oh, Mrs. Mack was wonderful to us. We thought we were really sophisticated. A lot of it was that naivety. I can remember one of my roommates had a new Volkswagen, and in those days the sunroof was just a canvas that you pulled back. Two o'clock in the morning, he's driving, I'm standing, sticking out of this thing. Where are we? Manhattan. It was as quiet as can be. Who'd a thunk? But somehow that sticks with me. I can remember dumb things. I can remember I had an old Studebaker--two things simultaneously--Allen was with his girlfriend; I was with Barbara. We misplaced the automobile. We couldn't find the car. We just parked it somewhere, left, and went somewhere. None of us knew. We should've known because Allen somehow left his umbrella hanging from a tree. That's where the car was. Dumb things that you remember like that. So, dating could be: McDonald's had just started. That was a cheap date, believe me, in those days. We'd go out there for dinner. Nothing spectacular. I mean any of the

dances, of course. Movies, I suppose. None of us had much money. Oh, fraternity parties. That was another thing.

MG: You got married a year into your graduate program?

JS: I had one year. What we were doing was waiting for Barbara to graduate.

MG: Where were you living at the time when you went to City College?

JS: With my parents. Not a good idea. Actually, it apparently worked out fairly well. I mean, I don't remember any shrieks. No one threw me out. Actually, they were probably pretty darn tolerant, which I didn't realize at the time, of course; I was self-absorbed. But that's where I was.

MG: For both years?

JS: Oh, no. We moved to the Elmwood Park area apartments, older apartment. I knocked my brains out sanding floors and doing that sort of thing, but only lived there for a year, and then, off we went to wherever we went.

MG: Utah.

JS: Well, I know it's Utah, but at the time I'm not sure where it was. I knew the route, but I didn't know what to expect. [laughter] I didn't even know what Utah--I remember questioning: why does anyone know about Utah? I didn't know about Mormons. I didn't know. Silly.

MG: Was there anything that stands out about your time at City College?

JS: No, not particularly. No. Well, I don't know his name. The fellow that taught psychotherapy and personality theory, he was really old world. He used to sit there with a cigarette dangling out of his lips and really involved in what he was doing, but I can't remember his name. Because this was supposed to be this school psychology business, I had this course, and it's amazing how important it's been to me in remedial reading. Now, I don't remember a damn thing about remedial reading except take a person from where they are. Barbara came home and she said a little boy--oh, do you know that Winston is a therapy dog? [Editor's Note: Winston is Dr. Schenkel's family dog, who is also present for the interview.]

MG: Oh, I did not know that.

JS: Yes, kids read to him. [She said], "He won't read." I thought about it.

MG: What little boy was she talking about?

JS: One of the little boys that parents bring to read to Winston. He won't get involved. I said "You know what? Get rid of the book and either ask him to tell the dog a story or write a story." She comes home, she says, "I did. He wrote the story." I said. "Okay. Just keep repeating it and you ask him to tell you about the story that he wrote." Where did all that come from? City

College. Take them from where they are. You want to teach an adult how to read, don't give them *Dick and Jane*. They can read comic books, magazines, do whatever you have to do. Take them from where [they are]. I'm thoroughly impressed with them. I had a professor at Utah, it was Dr. Samuelson. I was somewhat filled with myself. I was going to change all the behavior in the world. He said, "Joe, if someone comes in and they don't have teeth in their mouth, what are you going to do?" I sat there. You'd think that I was solving a nuclear physics problem. I said, "You know, I think I might arrange for them to get teeth." He says, "Bingo. You got it and won." I never forgot that. These strange things. It's funny because now--well not now, but over the years in my teaching when I bring these things in, people look at me like I'm saying the most brilliant of things, and coming up with these creative ideas. [laughter] It's just a one-off that came out of nowhere.

MG: How did Barbara feel about moving to Utah?

JS: I'm pausing because she was delighted to leave New Jersey. I'll leave it at that.

MG: In Utah when you were earning your PhD, were staying on the school psychology track?

JS: Oh, no. I was clinical. That was the whole thing with the business with clinical and the voc. rehab.

MG: I saw on your CV that you had an internship with the Alcoholism Rehabilitation Clinic, and later on, you do a lot of work around alcoholism treatment and renal disease. Did that research and interest start in Utah?

JS: Yes. Oh, absolutely. Again, I fell in to it. You learn so much--I don't know if people teach it or maybe they teach it by anecdote or maybe I'm just lucky. I don't know. The first position was the rehab ward. Rehab ward was on the second or third floor of the hospital. One day I decided to walk down the stairway. It was a typical type of building. What would be the word? Commercial, factory-like. What made this different is two things. One was it was used by the physical therapists to walk patients. Number two, it was painted blood red. I remember I stepped out of this, I said, "Holy. This is terrible. It's like stepping into hell. You've got to do something. We've got to change the paint." Now, I'm a graduate student and I'm going to change the world. I didn't know what to do. Finally, I went to the head of the unit and I told them my reaction and experience, and he changed it. I discovered something that I think other people knew all along, but that is another role for psychologists to apply that kind of thing, and it's helped immensely ever since. Now, we certainly had people studying color and what have you. A guy named Cal Taylor, who studied creativity. I seemed to have a lot of those kinds of experiences. I recall a young lieutenant. Again, it's Vietnam, in prison. A lot of these people are not nice people. This guy decides--nice fellow, he was a social worker--he's going to teach a course on black history. Well, he teaches the first class, and all of the sudden the Colonel, who was an MP [Military Police] guy, says, "I can't have this liberal claptrap going on." So, again, I thought about this. Jesus. I said to the Colonel. I thought he didn't like me. I'm sure that wasn't true. I said, "Colonel, I'm really worried that if you stop this, there's going to be real problems." He said, "Well, what do you want to do? What do you propose?" I said, "Well, somehow allow him to keep teaching the class." The colonel said, "No. Come up with another idea." I said, "I

have no ideas. I just know damn well you're looking for trouble and I'm worried about it." He said, "Well," and then, I did what had to be one of the stupidest things I've ever done that worked out well. I said, "I'll teach it." He says, "Okay." Well, what do I know about black history? I'm going in to a room with a bunch of these guys, malcontents. What am I going to do? I thought back about a course, one of my psychotherapy courses, that dealt a lot with communication and the expectations people have and doing the unexpected and the effects. So, I just went in to it. They looked at me, this white guy in uniform, and they didn't know what to expect. We had these books. I looked at them. I said, "You guys know anything about black history?" "No." I said, "Good. Neither do I, but maybe we can learn this stuff together." It worked beautifully. I'll tell you something. I have a diploma upstairs. It's a handmade diploma. This is going to sound absolutely crazy to you. It's from those guys, making me an honorary soul brother. It probably has more meaning to me than any other diploma that I ever got. I was thinking about that the other day. I don't know what anyone would think if they saw it. [laughter]

MG: It must have meant a lot to both them and you to have that experience.

JS: I guess it did. It's funny. That was the first, but not the last time that I went to the Colonel and told him he shouldn't be doing stuff that he was doing. If you keep your eyes open, you learn so much. The Colonel decides: no moustaches. It's Vietnam. Guys are growing mustaches. The Army approved them. He decides no. There was an Air Force sergeant and he has this big, glorious mustache. I said, "Hey sergeant, what are you going to do?" He said, "Oh, I'm shaving it off." He's got twenty years. "My kids aren't going to recognize me." I said, "You can't be taking this lying down." He smiles. He says, "Captain, it comes off tonight" and starts growing it back tomorrow morning, after I've called the inspector general. Guy was smart. When I went on to my working life, I never had lessons like that. We all experienced them and with any bit of luck more people than not keep their eyes open and learn from that.

MG: I wanted ask if when you were in Utah if you got to work with Dr. Merrill.

JS: I didn't work with him, no. [laughter] He was my principle adviser, chairman, and he had a peculiar way of doing things, which ultimately makes a lot of sense. He was as supportive as can be when you came in, and then, as you were there longer and longer, he withdrew from you. Fly on your own, but he didn't tell you he was doing this. So, I've got my [dissertation] defense coming up. By this time, he's hardly talking to me. I am just a mess. Talk about a neurotic fool. I've decided that he doesn't like me and he's setting me up, that I fail, and rather than tell me this, he's going to really do it to me. Meanwhile my buddy's saying, "You're an ass. They don't let you in to your defense unless you're going to pass, because your Chair looks like a jerk if you can't pass." "No, no. He's out to get me." Well, of course what happens I go into the defense. It was the easiest defense in creation. What they do is afterwards you leave and they all vote. So, I leave. I was so stressed. They told me afterwards it took them twenty minutes to find me. I don't know where I was. They bring you back in the room. Congratulations all around. I had no reaction. I just was completely depleted. He was as friendly as can be and supportive. [laughter]

MG: What did you do your dissertation on?

JS: Alcoholism. What I was trying to do was change people's minds. It was a lousy dissertation. Well, there's nothing wrong with not getting results. I didn't, but it got done.

MG: At that point, what was people's thinking about alcoholism? Did most people consider it a behavioral issue or a disease? How were they talking about it?

JS: Depends who you talk to. You can go all the way to--well, you have to add another one in there. Religious people will talk spiritualism--not spiritualism, but a spiritual problem. If you are talking to the AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] people, they will tell you there's one way to deal with it. It's funny. There were some reports coming out of this, but if you know about the date, it goes back to the '60s. Controlled drinking, that this is behavioral and you can learn how to drink. I do not like--it's not even completely true with physical problems. With some it is. If I come to you and I say look, you have a spiral fracture of the tibia, well, I'm not going to look at your neck. I mean I know where to go. I know what to do. That's great. You come to me and you say, "You know what? I explode. I get angry." Well, okay. Now, I know, for example, that if you've had combat experience. Am I looking at a diagnosis of PTSD? Because that can be bad. Am I looking at a personality dysfunction? Am I looking at something physiological? I don't know and I've got to try and sort all that out. What I typically find is it's a combination. So, the one little diagnosis--if you were to walk in and say, "I'm an alcoholic," I'd say, "What do you mean by that?" It's interesting because I have seen people come in and say, "Well, I had a drink last week." "And that makes you an alcoholic?" "Well, that's how my mother defines it. You know she went to the twenty, thirty evangelicals and that's the way they defined it." Well, what would've happened if I didn't ask that question and said, "Oh, go to AA?" You show up at AA, announce, "I had a drink once," they'll laugh you out of there and you'll be mortified. Gross oversimplification, but that's why I have a problem with all kinds of diagnoses. Alcoholism is as political as it is psychological. A fellow named Bill Miller in New Mexico has produced more stuff on controlled drinking. It goes way back. It goes back into the '70s, a guy named [inaudible] in New South Wales was the first one that showed results with controlled drinking. What does AA say? Do they refute his research? No. They say he's stupid. The classic is this: if you drink a lot and you cut back, and let's say you're falling down drunk, you've been doing this for twenty years--I have a perfect example--and you say, "Okay enough of this. I'm just going to drink regularly," and you do, you were never an alcoholic, because a true alcoholic can't do that. I was seeing a man who has since left the state. He had terrible physical problems, liver transplant, pretty darn rare stuff. Pharmacist. Actually a pediatric, oncological pharmacist. He has his own company. Very bright man. As you know there are a lot of people concerned about opioid addiction. So, the primary care doc is talking about this fellow being addicted to opioids. He was taking them, there's no question about that, but he's telling me that if he can get rid of the pain, there would be no residual. He wouldn't take the drugs. I felt pretty certain this was true and I had discussions with the primary care doctor. We refer him to a pain clinic and in a conversation with the physician over there, he said, "You know, I've been looking in to your situation and you may not realize it, but the opioids that you are using are exacerbating your pain. He said, "Is that possible?" He said, "Yes, for a very small percentage of people." So, two weeks pass. The guy comes in to my office. I'm looking at him and thinking, "What in the hell has happened?" His walk is springier. His facial expressions--he sits down. I said, "Jesus, you look great. What's going on?" Then, he tells me the story. I said, "What did you do?" He said, "I stopped the opioids. I haven't had anything in two weeks." So, I wait. He has an appointment

with the primary care doc. He has the same reaction, "What happened?" and he tells him. So, then I go in and we talk about it. He said, "I didn't believe that could happen." [inaudible] Now, he's an outlier, but you don't make those clear cut kinds of statements. You don't put people in boxes. There's so many variables involved.

MG: Right. Your other post when you were at Utah was at a physical rehab facility.

JS: Yes.

MG: You would go on in a couple of years to be dealing with veterans from Vietnam and so I was curious if those two experiences, working on alcoholism and physical rehabilitation, would serve you well dealing with soldiers coming home from war, who maybe had addiction issues and physical injuries?

JS: Yes. Sure. My area of expertise is called health psychology nowadays, but in those days, we alluded to it as behavioral medicine. We didn't have formal training programs. It just struck me that because of my own interests, and since I was running the program, I was going to indulge myself. I wanted to focus on physical health--obviously psychological, but the physical part of this. And I did. So, when I was building a service, the first person I hired was a neuropsychologist. Then, I began to try to develop slots for people working with disabilities and what have you. I made the assumption that the traditional places within psychiatry--what I was going to do--the chief of psychiatry said, "Well, we need so-and so." I'd say, "Hey, I've got no more positions. Why don't you go talk to the director?" It worked out well. It was a good scheme. Anyway, that's what I did, but along the way, I developed programs. I don't know what else to say about that. That's what I did. It's not what I'm doing now because we were an outpatient clinic, but if someone were to come in, they would immediately be seen by me. I pushed for integrative care in the clinic, so that we're affecting the same. This is a big deal in the VA [Veterans Administration]: integrative care. Still involved in it, I guess is all I'm saying.

MG: Did you know that you would, in a couple years, be serving soldiers and those skills would come in handy?

JS: Oh, no. Luck. I could not have imagined working for the VA if my life depended on it. I wrote a letter to the University of New Mexico Medical School and they wrote back inviting me out. I don't know if I knew at the time they didn't have a position. But they had a position--oh, certain VA hospitals are what are called Deans Committee hospitals. The hospital and the medical school are integrally involved. The Deans Committee is made up of all service chiefs on both sides, hospital director of the VA, medical school dean and it's the dean that's running the show. If you are in one of those, number one, there's a great research arm going on. You never quite know who's getting paid what by whom. So, someone could be two thirds VA, one third medical school, and they go back and forth. So, I went out. Again, you're going to hear one of these bits of brilliance. I find out it's in the VA. I don't know the first thing about the VA, but they wined and dined us. Don't forget, I went to graduate school in Utah. I learned to ski in Utah. Outside of Albuquerque is a mountain with a ski area on it. That winter when I was interviewing they had loads of snow, and I'm thinking, "Whoa. I want to live here." On that we

based the decision to go to New Mexico. Guess what? They didn't have meaningful snow for the next twenty years.

MG: Snow.

JS: I wound up teaching skiing up in Colorado, traveling up there to do that. It was a good decision for the wrong reasons. I had opportunities I never would've had anywhere else. It was growing. The medical school was brand new. My service was tidy and the guy who the head of it didn't want to be the head anymore. We went to the chief of staff and said, "We want to change positions." He looked at us. He said, "No one has ever done anything like that." "We want to." He said, "Well, I'll check with central office." They said, "Fine." I became chief of nothing, but I was able to build a service. Who would've had that opportunity? I wouldn't have had the opportunity to be part of Purgatory ski area, which was a marvelous opportunity. I wouldn't have had the opportunity to go to Santa Fe Opera. I wouldn't have had the opportunity to love Maine so much.

MG: Yes, I am curious to know hear how you got from there to here, but I want to talk a little bit about your experience during the Vietnam War and at Fort Leavenworth.

JS: Well, the prison is part of Fort Leavenworth. It's a very strange base. The base consists primarily of the commanding general staff college. So, you have new people, officers, coming in and out all the time. The prison is--well, you can't say it's isolated, but it's in the middle of the base and is serviced by post personnel. The prison doesn't have a personnel service. Having said that, it's sort of a strange place. Very few enlisted people. I don't remember saluting. You'd be saluting all the time. It would be ridiculous.

MG: When were you assigned to Fort Leavenworth?

JS: Remember I was down at Provo at the state hospital. Barbara got the letter.

MG: Okay. So, in your orders it was to go to Fort Sam Houston and then to Leavenworth?

JS: Yes. There were all kinds of nutty stories that happened there. When you walk in, big gates clank open. You walk in and you're in a big area covered. Guards on the side in booths. Then, there are more gates to go through, and then, you go out, a big circular area. At the end is what's called the castle, which is the prison. Then, on the sides are office buildings, called directorates. Up on the walls are enlisted men with guns. It didn't bother me a whole hell of a lot. I mean, funny things happened. I was working late one night and I discovered I was locked in our building. So, I called up the front gate and the sergeant said, "I'll be right there, captain." He showed up about forty minutes later. He was just fooling around, seeing if I liked being locked in. My first haircut. I said to someone, "I need a haircut. Where do I go?" He said, "You want to go inside or outside?" I said, "What's the difference?" He said, "Twenty-five cents." Inside is a quarter, outside is half a dollar. They're prisoners. Well, I'm poor. Let's go inside. Guy cut my hair used a straight razor. He was there for murder; used a razor on someone. [laughter] You can be found guilty by a court-martial and not put right in to the population. This happens with officers. Well, it happened with a particular officer and they stationed him, billeted or whatever,

in our building upstairs. Now, his name was Captain Captain is a medical specialty. Captain decides he has about three months left to go of his military service and he's training special forces troops, medics, and he decides that morally he's against this. His commander, a West Pointer, rather than say, "Captain, see the closet over there? Go sit in the closet for three months, get out of my hair, and leave me alone?" Was does he do? He court-martials Well, this sets all kinds of things in action. Was does it mean for me personally? My commander comes to me and says, "Joe, we have a problem with upstairs." I said, "What? I don't even see the guy." He said, "I know. We are responsible for his mail." I said, "What does that mean?" He said, "It means you have to vet every piece of mail he gets." I said, "Why do I have to do that?" He says, "Because I said so." I said, "Jim, this is nonsense." He said, "You'll find a way around it." What does Captain get? Medical specialty textbooks and journals. That's what I'm supposed to read. I didn't, of course. Just scribbled a note on it and sent them on. I can remember one day the Colonel was--this was another haircutting. Most prisoners have their hair within regulation. Regulation is four inches. Well, we had a segment of the black population that worked in the laundry. These guys were immaculate. Their uniforms, they didn't look like prisoners--better soldiers than anyone--and they had afros to kill for. They were beautiful, but guess what? An afro grows straight out and that's what the colonel was talking about. Four inches to him meant laying down, not up. I went to the Colonel. I said, "Colonel, you do this you're going to have bloodshed. Please don't." "What the hell do you know?" So, after that, the next day or so, I look out the window and there are two guards holding up a third guard, who's holding his hand up and there's blood pouring down. That's weird to see walking through there. At that point we get a call from--lost his name--and he is the physician, medical physician, as against the psychiatrist, assigned to the prison, and he wants some help. So, my boss, who is a psychiatrist, wants me over to help him, and he's down in death row, which was not being used. I said "Okay. Why are you standing here?" He said, "What the hell am I going to do?" He said, "For God's sake, Jim. You're a physician." He says, "No, I'm not. I'm a psychiatrist." I said, "I'll go." So, I go into the castle and they dragged me in. What I witnessed--walk into one of the cells, and Less Nauer has a prisoner in front him. Someone's holding up a light. He has one foot up on the wall, straddling him, looking over this thing. The guy's got a surgical drape on his head, bloody, and Less is sewing him up. I said, "Less, is there anything I can do?" He said, "Yes, take this needle and sew him up." He was joking. I had never seen anything like that. There were other things. We were called upon, and this is purely within regulation, up to--there are three levels of court-martial--up to the top one. Any officer can serve as defense attorney or prosecuting attorney. For the mental health people, they made a special dispensation. We could only be called to defend. I was called to do that. It got bizarre. I didn't know what I was doing. One day one of the lawyers came up to me, a real lawyer, a JAG [Judge Advocate General] officer. He says, "You were defending so-and-so." I said, "Yes. I was pretty bad, wasn't I?" He said, "No, actually it was brilliant." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "You did something I had never seen done before, probably because it was illegal, but no one else knew it." I said, "What the hell did I do?" He said, "Well, you served simultaneously as a defense lawyer and a professional witness." I said, "How did I do that?" He explained it. I said, "Hey, that was pretty smart." So, that went on. I can remember another time, it was the second type of court material, I think you have five people, and they throw off people for whatever reason. Well, lo and behold, they threw off enough people. I became president of the board. I looked around and I said, "I don't know what to do." So, one of the attorneys, he would clue me in at certain points with what to do. There were funny things like that. I can tell you

that whenever you come on post or leave--this is true anywhere--the military is very good at this, about being family. They have these hail and farewell dinners. What they were doing there, what they instituted was if you have a number of people going, then your directorate put together the hail and farewell. So, I'm ready to leave and a couple of other people are leaving. I don't want to talk. I wouldn't be saying the things I said to you. So, there really wasn't much for me to talk about. I'm not good at saying sugary sorts of things. So, I said to Jim, "Just somehow pass me by. I'm not talking." So, we go to the dinner. We're up on the dais there. They pass me by. The next fellow, who I had worked for--I actually worked for him [and] he was mortified by it, because I should've been chief, but it had to do with date of rank. Marty gets up to speak, and the colonel's wife, who I'm sitting next to, said, "You didn't say anything." I said, "You know Marty talks a lot. People are getting tired. I thought I'd be the sacrificial lamb." She kind of smiled. Marty gets up there and what I hear is, "I want to thank three people for being here." "What are you doing, Marty? Oh, nuts. This is going to make me ..." "But first and foremost," and he goes on and on. I think, "Who the hell are you [talking about]? They were nice things. "Who are you talking about?" And then he says me, and I thought, "Oh, no." What he did--if you think about the community, I had snubbed this whole group of people, and he gave me permission to do it. By so doing, he's not allowing them to be angry. [laughter] You couldn't have orchestrated something like that. What was interesting was the dinner ends, [and the] Colonel won't let me go. He was as friendly as can be. I realized if the man had shown this human quality--I tried to do what I could for him. I gave him the benefit of what little I knew, but I would've felt completely different. I realized what happened. He was military. He was World War II, worked his way up from an enlisted position. This guy was good stuff. He saw he was in command of me, but underneath the thing, I guessed he liked me. Once the hail and farewell, he's done with me. He has no command responsibility. He can be himself. I felt so bad for him. To not have an understanding of that. It was a real growth experience, the whole thing. It was a good experience.

MG: You brought up the death row wing. Were there any executions while you were there?

JS: No. [laughter] But what I was told--I was fortunate, because in the past they hung people. The psychologist was usually responsible for holding the stopwatch from the time they dropped to the time they were dead. So, I didn't have to do that. No, there were no executions. That had stopped.

MG: There were a couple people there who were pretty notorious during the Vietnam era. I do not know if you encountered them. One guy was Johnathan Wells. He was an author. He wrote *Icons of Evolution*. He had an eighteen-month sentence.

JS: Oh, that I didn't know.

MG: The other guy was William Calley. [Editor's Note: Editor's Note: On March 16, 1968 Army soldiers from Company C of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 11th Brigade of the 23rd Infantry Division killed more than three hundred civilians in the South Vietnamese hamlet of My Lai. Of the twenty-six soldiers charged in the incident, only Lieutenant William Calley was convicted.]

JS: Yes, Lieutenant Calley.

MG: Yes.

JS: That was after me. We had--god, you should've seen this--the something-five. Now, these five guys, I don't know all the charges against them, but it had to do with cutting up bodies and putting them in freezers. These were nasty guys, I guess. We knew well in advance we were getting them and everyone was prepared for this. By the time they got to the prison, they were the most bedraggled sad sacks you've ever seen. They were as meek as lambs. I guess it brings back Hannah Arendt and *Banality of Evil*. You look at a lot of these people. I don't know what we expected, that they would be breathing fire or some darn thing. Calley? Calley is a little kid. The guys I deal with, some of them, because of their physical stature, they would be imposing figures. I can think of a couple of them, that even today--and they're Afghanistan and Iraq vets. I remember walking behind one of them thinking, "He's got shoulders that are out like this." When he was there he was bulked up. What did he look like? Then, you put all the armor on and I'd be scared to death of these people. But he's a perfectly nice fellow. I don't know what we expected. I've heard horror stories. I've heard things they've been involved in, but you're sitting in an office. Listen, this is in New Mexico. A patient, I don't know how we got him, a Vietnam vet, big man. Comes in and he's wearing leathers. I found out he is the enforcer. So, if anyone is out of line, he comes in. I'm thinking, "Am I safe with him?" He has a problem. It's twofold and he tries not to let anyone know. I'm thinking, "Oh, what do we have here?" He said, "I read and write poetry." I said, "Oh, what's the second?" He said, "When I'm on my bike I put on opera." [laughter] You don't expect this sort of thing and, in a way, it's wonderful. People are so diverse, but you had this kind of thing. It's the ones that are flat that I have problems with.

MG: Was your job to counsel people who had been court-martialed or who had returned from war and were impacted by it? Who were you dealing with?

JS: You mean in the prison?

MG: Yes.

JS: Yes. There were a couple of roles for us. One was, across the board, any kind of psychological problem if they wanted help with it. The second was diagnosis. They were big on diagnosis. Everyone who comes in to the prison has to have a diagnosis, because if you don't have a diagnosis how could you commit a crime. So, we were involved in that. We were involved in reports for parole. That was it. Those were the three things that we did. I recall using some hypnosis when I was in the prison, only because of a very funny thing that happened. We were doing some group therapy. I've got a picture upstairs of myself with one--I'm in uniform [with] one of the techs. I had managed to get this newfangled thing called video tape. Oh, big stuff. We were using that as a feedback mechanism. That's pretty much what it was.

MG: Who were your patients?

JS: Same people.

MG: Right. Had they served in Vietnam? Were they all military?

JS: Oh, no. There's Fort Leavenworth Penitentiary. That's across the street. This place is fantastic. Down the street is the women's penitentiary. There's another one. Then, I also taught at St. Xavier's College, which was--I called it a little girls school. They weren't little girls. It was a small school for women, but it was lovely. I would take off my uniform, put on my tweeds, and walk down the street. [laughter] This is all military. It could be, if I recall, all branches. It was where you were sent if you were court-martialed. If it's a very short duration you could be kept at the local stockade. But these were people with significant prison terms, but they were all soldiers.

MG: What had they done to get them sent there?

JS: Anything. Murder, robbery. Every crime that you're going to see in the civilian world, you'll find in the military. I don't know what happens with things like insubordination. I imagine it's the local stockade where they wind up. No, it's like any prison. It looks like it, smells like it.

MG: I am trying to figure out how big a role the trauma of the Vietnam War played in sending these guys to Leavenworth. Were you seeing the psychological impact of combat?

JS: If you're looking at PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] resultant to Vietnam, they would not wind up in prison. If they're discharged, they're going to be in the VAs. If not, they would've been at Walter Reed or one of the other hospitals. Yes, they would not be in the prison. We did get--and this was odd--we had conscientious objectors. There seemed to be two kinds of conscientious objectors, because I visited a post where there was a company or a couple of companies of conscientious objectors. I think they were trained as medics. I remember talking with their commanding officer, West Point captain, and him saying, "When I got this assignment, I thought, 'You got to be kidding me. I'm going to deal with a bunch of these ...'" He said, "They are the hardest working guys. They're great. They just won't kill anyone." Somehow, there was that, and then there were guys we got, who were also very, very nice fellows. We usually managed to get them working on the farms so they were outside the prison. They were conscientious objectors. In fact, I was at an American Psychological Association convention once and talking with someone. They asked me, "Where were you in the Army?" I said, "Fort Leavenworth." He said, "Oh, I was there too." I said, "Gee, I didn't know they had psychologists then." He was older. He said, "No, no. I was a conscientious objector." So, he spent his wartime in the prison.

MG: Right. That was an alternative to service. Were they treated any differently in the prison?

JS: The conscientious objectors?

MG: Yes. I'm thinking about conscientious objectors during World War II who were spit on and called "yellow belly."

JS: Oh, that always went on. I don't know the answer to that. I don't know. As I say, I don't know how many were court-martialed as conscientious objectors, wound up in the prison, versus these guys--maybe these guys that we had refused to do anything. I don't know. We didn't have much to do with them. We knew them. They minded their own business. So, there would be no call for it.

MG: How many psychologists were employed there?

JS: Two.

MG: For about how many inmates?

JS: For how many inmates? I really don't remember what the population was. It was big. was the other one. had a master's degree and was there by himself. When I was assigned, went to the colonel and said, "Colonel, this fellow is trained at the doctoral level. He should be the chief psychologist." So, what does the colonel say? Remember, self-made man. He says, "Who's got date of rank?" Well, the funny part about it is, and I never really thought about this, I think I had date of rank, but what he meant was when did you come on duty, because my date of rank went all the way back to '63. But felt terrible. I said, "Who the hell cares?" cared. He was terribly heartbroken about getting out of the Army. I was delighted.

MG: Your tour of duty was the two-year assignment at Fort Leavenworth.

JS: Yes. When you signed up, you signed up for, I'm going to say, seven and a half years. That was two years active duty, then three years active reserve, and two and half years inactive reserve, and then you were done. Inactive meant you didn't do anything. So, I'm coming up to my tour's end. My two years are about up. I called down on base. A young fellow answers the phone and I said, "I have a question for you. What happens if I go out to New Mexico and they have no place for me in the Reserves unit?" He said, "Captain, please tell me your date of rank." I said, "No, I'd like you to answer my question, please." He says, "Captain, tell me your date of rank please." Well, this goes back and forth. I'm getting hot. He's unhappy. I said, "All right. It's May-something." He said, "Captain, you do not have any reserve duty." I said, "Say that again." He said, "You do not have any reserve duty." I said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "I don't know how else to say it. You don't have any reserve duty." I said, "Well, let me translate. You're telling me that I leave here with a discharge in my hand." He said, "That's what I'm telling you." I said, "Sergeant, if I find out that this is not true, I am coming down there and I am going to beat the living hell out of you." He said, "Captain, believe me. I know my job." Well, the first thing they had to do was tie me down. I went skipping down the hall, screaming. I literally did. What had happened, I was on duty--I didn't even know it--all that time I was in graduate school, and that was counted as my active [duty]. I knew that somewhere along the line--in Utah, there was the same sort of thing. In Utah, there was a base, Fort Douglas. It's still there. There were a couple of administrative offices and an officer's club. So, I received a letter. I'm ordered to go up to Fort Douglas for a physical exam, and I do. I ask the physician what it's about. He said, "I don't know. They told me to do this." About a month later, I become a first lieutenant. How the hell did that happen? I'm really a dimwit. The other thing was, we had in an allied program an Army nurse. We were a little bit friendly. She said, "Why don't you--"

Oh, you could not drink legally in Utah. She said, "Why don't you come up to happy hour at the officer's club?" I said, "Boy, that's a nice idea." So, off we go. As I recall, it was dirt cheap, nice place. The hors d'oeuvres were plentiful, and I sit there and said, "Gee, I'd love to belong to a place like this." She looked at me and she said, "And why can't you?" I said, "That's a dumb question. You're supposed to be in the Army for the officer's club." She said, "And what are you?" I said, "What do you mean 'What am I?'" She said, "What happened at Rutgers?" I said, "Well, I was commissioned at graduation, but that's not really real because of all the school ..." She looked at me, she sighed, and said, "Sergeant," who ran the club. "Joe, give him twenty bucks. You're now a member of the officer's club." [laughter] It never dawned on me that I was really on duty, and there was no question, except by me. So, I didn't have to do all those things. I was delighted to leave.

MG: I'm curious about the cases you dealt with at Fort Leavenworth. A prison can be a tense place.

JS: The things I described, yes. I felt comfortable most of the time, as I recall. I certainly didn't walk around looking behind me. I know that there were times--I remember one time vividly I was supposed to defend a prisoner and the guards brought him in handcuffs. He's a prisoner who's committed something, hit someone or something. I said to the guards, "Take the handcuffs off." They said, "What?" I said, "What's the matter with you? Take the handcuffs off. Take them off." "Well, he may do something." In my ornery way, I looked at the guy and said, "You going to do anything?" They said, "What's he going to say, yes, and beat the hell out of you." He said, "No." I said, "Take the handcuffs off." Maybe I was too stupid. I don't know. There was occasion--I wasn't there--it came from the police. It was a kidney transplant. He had locked himself in with a gun. They called me. I knew the man. I knew him fairly well. I said, "Okay, I'll come." I was a little nervous, especially when I drove up and there are police cars all over the place. A cop comes up to me. "Who are you?" I said, "I'm so-and-so." Now I'm really getting nervous. At that point, they opened everything. "Here. He's here." What the heck am I going to do? I took care of him. Sometimes I think I was just too dumb. I don't know. He had a gun. This happened on a number of occasions. I've probably just been lucky.

MG: Maybe you had an instinct or sense of who you were dealing with.

JS: I don't know. I have no idea. You wouldn't believe this. Everything instinctually told me that this could be a problem. A guy calls. The clerk tells me, "Your next appointment is sitting out in his truck. He doesn't want to leave his gun."

MG: Is this at Leavenworth?

JS: No, it was here. I said, "Oh, does he sound drunk?" She said, "I'm not sure." "Okay." Then, I did what you never in a million years are supposed to do. I went out, stuck my head in the truck and I said, "Where do you have the gun?" He said, "Under the seat. I didn't want to carry it inside. You're not supposed to do that." [laughter] So, we had a curbside conversation. As soon as I saw him, I wasn't worried.

MG: What else about your experience at Leavenworth have we not talked about?

JS: The only thing that's almost comical--I can be very passive aggressive, but I'm aware of it when I do it. I don't do it naturally. My boss comes to me. Barbara is pregnant. Stephen is due. He says, "The Colonel's wife"--don't forget, it's a big family--"wants to have a shower." I said, "Jim, Barbara doesn't know these people. She's very uncomfortable, but I'll talk to her." She doesn't want a shower. So, I go to Jim. Jim says, "I'm getting pressure from everybody for the shower." It goes back and forth. Finally, we cave. I said, "Jim, have your goddamn shower, but only the colonel's wife and the people that Barbara knows." "How about Aunt who's-her-face?" I said, "Who is Aunt who's-her-face?" It's the colonel's wife's aunt. I said, "Have your goddamn shower. We don't give a goddamn." Well, the shower gets planned. The date is set. Three days before, Barbara goes in the hospital and has Stephen. So, the shower seems superfluous at that point. That, of course, was not planned that way, but one hell of a snub to this whole group because they knew the initial motivation. I'm sure some of them thought we had planned it. Well, it is traditional that a silver cup is given to the mother-to-be. Somehow, our cup was lost, never showed up. [laughter] We loved it only because of the hypocrisy. I understand why they do it, but I didn't want to be part of that. I did not receive medals. Well, I shouldn't say I didn't. I did receive them three months later. The adjutant kept coming to me and saying, "Joe, we want to have a ceremony to present you with [a medal]." I said, "Well, tell me what the medal is for." He told me. I said, "Yeah." Those are what's given to everyone. I said, "You know, I don't need medals. If the colonel thinks I did something special, that's another thing. Believe me. I'd be there, if nothing else to please him. If I were a bum, you'd give me these." I didn't think I was a bum. [He said], "You've got to go." This goes on and on. Finally, I leave. So, they showed up in the mail three months later. What's interesting is--and I did not know this until a week ago--I was downstairs looking through some files. Lo and behold, I came across the citations. I don't know if I had ever read it before, but one of them looked it was--the medal was [inaudible] the citation wasn't. It was special.

MG: What did it say?

JS: It talked about creativity and things like that, and taking responsibility. It was very nice. It was very nice. I don't know if I ever read the thing. They arrived in the mail and I stuck them away. I don't know. I have that. I'm not sure that I have the medals. I may have thrown them out. I've always been like this. I went to a party in New Mexico and it was a costume party. These were all primarily physicians; us; another fellow, who was a chemist at the university; maybe a couple of lawyers; educated group of people. Certainly, left-leaning. There were a lot comments about what's going on, real liberal stuff. Fine. I agreed with most of them. What I couldn't get my head around was--remember I said it was a costume party. So, I don't do costumes. So, what do I do? I dress as if I'm in college or something. One of the physicians is wearing his Army uniform and there's something negative written on the back. I thought, "Wait a second. If you are so against all of this, why do you still have your uniforms?" I thought it was pure hypocrisy and it really drove me crazy. Crazy enough that I remember it. The same thing is true of the [baby] shower. I don't deal with that kind of thing well.

MG: Before you got orders to go to Fort Leavenworth, were you fearful you would get orders to be sent to Vietnam?

JS: I wasn't particularly nervous. I may have known already about the rotation and being married. There were so few psychologists and their use in warzones, at that point, was really limited. That's much different than what happens now where they go out with the troops. I don't remember being terribly nervous.

MG: Because your experience at Fort Leavenworth was so soon after you got out of graduate school, did it shape the rest of your career?

JS: Yes and no. I can trace things back much further in terms of--remember, I said that I can be passive aggressive and manipulative? It's served me well, but it's not something I like in myself. I'm an iconoclast also. I was a junior in high school--football field, small high school. So, we didn't have two, three, four, five platoons of players. We had a new coach that year. We had our old coach, who was the head coach, Paul Kelley, whom we loved. This was a man--I think it was, but he was a third team center for Ohio State or Michigan in the Rose Bowl. So, even for third team, this is a good ball player. What some of the coaches would do is if the first team offense was working, they would play some of the defense positions. In this case, he was playing a linebacker, not in uniform. He'd hold a dummy up in front of him in pads. Well, lo and behold, as a pulling guard it became my goal, my job, to target him and block him. The probability of me moving this hunk of granite--but to this day, I remember hitting him and hitting and hitting him. He's screaming. This is great. This is motivation. This is all this, but I hear the whistle blow. I keep hitting. What's going through my mind? "You dope, do you think I didn't hear the whistle?" Think about that, a kind of idol and thinking, the frailties there, and in that case, not liking them. I was a kid. He could've tapped me on the back and said, "Good job." Why didn't he do that? It was silly. Was he so stupid that he believed I didn't hear the whistle and that this was pure motivation for doing that? I don't know. So, I trace a lot of the way that I interact way back. We all can do that. I'm not special.

MG: In terms of your career and going on to work in VA centers, do you think it was connected to your experience at Fort Leavenworth?

JS: Yes. Sure, in this sense that I very quickly became attuned to administrative functioning, dealing with people who were not psychologists, trying to get things done, being manipulative, learning absolutely direct parallel. I knew that all the captains and majors, they liked to think they were running things. They're not. The sergeant are. If you want your rear end protected, what do you do? You get a friend. I don't know how I learned that, but I learned very quickly, for example, when I was a duty officer, middle of the night, sergeant would wake me up. "We've got a problem." What's my response? "Hmm, a problem?" He says, "Yes, captain. We have a problem." I said, "Well, tell me something. If it were your problem, how would you handle it?" "Well, captain, I would blah, blah, blah." "Sounds like a good idea to me. Thank you." What am I going to tell them? These guys have been doing this job. I don't know how I learned that. So, let's translate that. I go on to a ward, walk around, find out who the head nurse is. I go make nice. I'm protected. Tell our son, you first start going on the wards, you find the head nurse, because if they don't like you they can eat you up alive. They're smart people. Be nice. They'll protect you. They'll say, "Doc, don't do that." So, yes, there are some direct parallels. There is the learning to talk. Somehow, people began to ask me, "How did you manage to get things done, say, from maintenance or engineering?" I said, "Well, I don't know. I pass it off." What it

amounted to was going over to the chief maybe once a week, having coffee, talking about stuff I thoroughly was not interested in. Just sitting there, listening to insipid jokes, coming out thinking, "Oh my god. How do I justify what I'm doing?" Then, I get something done. It's the same thing there, but how you act, what clues you into this, I don't know. There's nothing wrong with it. I mean everyone does it. Why alienate people? I'm trying to think. That really wasn't my first job. It was my first professional job. One summer, all of the sudden, the counselors at the camp where I was working were upset. They weren't being paid enough and they were threatening to walk off the job. The camp owner was very worried about all of this. My parents worked at camp too. I was a kid. I remember saying something to the effect of, "Wait a minute. I understand that suddenly you decide you're not getting paid enough, which would mean that I'm not getting paid enough too." So, it's the same scale or whatever. "But we signed a contract and you must live up to that." Somehow, that turned the tide. What does that come from? Is it even good? I don't know. Who knows? I mean certainly my parents didn't sit down and teach me that, not directly, probably indirectly. Is it right or wrong? I don't know. There's probably as many reasons that it's right as there are wrong. I don't know where all these things come from.

MG: You told me how you met Barbara, but tell me about her background.

JS: Well, my side, father, a school teacher, football coach, track coach, Jersey City.

MG: Right. We talked about that last time.

JS: Yes.

MG: Where is Barbara's family from?

JS: Her mother is [from] Perth Amboy, I think. Her father was born in one of the Slavic countries, came over as a youngster. I really don't know much about him. He was a dentist. She was a traditional stay-at-home mother, middle class, lived in East Paterson all her life, all Barbara's life, small house.

MG: What did Barbara study at Douglass?

JS: Psychology, as it turned out. [laughter]

MG: When she graduated, did she go on with her education?

JS: Let me see if I can remember. No. She worked for the War on Poverty, LBJ's [Lyndon B. Johnson] program in Utah. That was later. Yes. It was the War on Poverty there. What until you hear where this trajectory winds up. Then, we go to Fort Sam Houston. Fort Sam, she starts traveling around the country evaluating Head Start programs, nice liberal credentials. [Editor's Note: Head Start, a part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty, now run through the Department of Health and Human Services, provides multifaceted support for low-income families with young children.] Then, we go to New Mexico. She comes up with a brainstorm--this relates directly, believe it or not, to the computer upstairs. She's going to go back to school. Where is she going to go to school for? Oh, her liberal credentials continue. She is teaching and

became the head of a school at a psychiatric hospital. Now, she's going to go back to school. What is she going to go back for? MBA or public policy, but decides she's going to go the public policy route, but take coursework in accounting. Does this. Does exceedingly well in accounting. Gets right up to where she'd sit to take the CPA [Certified Public Accountant] exam and decides she doesn't like accounting. Goes out and winds up working for a real estate appraiser. Somewhere in there, also, she winds up writing grants for the College of Nursing, which was a job I got her. Her name is on a plaque for being so successful for a building they built. The next step--she doesn't want to sell houses. She somehow becomes a commercial real estate broker running her own firm of one; it's her. That's the trajectory, from liberal to that. Oh, with this business with being in school, they're constantly trying to get her over to the MBA program, but she couldn't figure out a reason to do it and didn't. She never became a CPA. That's her career trajectory. I guess, in ways it continues, of course. When she came here she didn't work, other than things we did for ourselves. She became a docent and trustee at the Portland Museum of Art, very much involved in that. No longer. I think that's the whole trajectory.

MG: Tell me about starting a family. You were still in the Army and at Leavenworth. What was that like for you?

JS: What was that like? I don't know. We had a baby. I don't even know how to respond to that. I just took it as that's what you do. [laughter] I certainly reacted when Stephen was born, but after that, we had a very traditional family. Grew up in traditional times. I've never changed a baby. Do you believe that? Her father and I sat around one day, Stephen needed changing. We decided we'll wait until they get home. [laughter] I've had my hands in all kinds of stuff, animals, but I've never changed a baby. We were very traditional. Different.

MG: Did you move right away to New Mexico after your experience at Leavenworth?

JS: Oh, yes. We took two weeks off. I actually did not leave with a discharge in hand. I took terminal leave and it caught up with me. No, in fact, what we did was we had an MG [Morris Garages]--I've got one now. So, yes, it was a direct trip and the first thing that happened was we needed money. So, I'm still in the Army and I've got a couple of days left. So, I go over to the PX [Post Exchange]. There's a booth there. It's a bank type of a thing. I announce who I am, give them an out of state check, and the woman looks at me--same thing. She says, "Excuse me, I'll be back." Oh, and I had pulled out my ID. Man comes over. He said, "Is there a problem?" I said, "Not with me." He said, "Can you give me more proof?" Well, at this point I had my orders. So, I pull out my orders and it's clear that I'm on terminal leave and I explain this. He turns to the woman, shrugs his shoulders and says, "Cash the check." So, that was our first experience in New Mexico, but it was direct.

MG: What was the job and how did you find it?

JS: Oh, as I had mentioned, I had applied to the University of New Mexico Medical School, but why there? I'm going to say I was at the American Psychological Association. I haven't been to a convention in years. There used to be a whole floor dedicated to employment. I very distinctly remember seeing a big sign for the VA and thinking, "Who in their right mind would work for

the VA?" I have a hunch I saw something about the New Mexico Medical School and it came back to me afterwards, but I had applied in the oddest places. I applied there. I applied to the University of Vermont and the medical school up in British Columbia. I don't know how I came up with that. I really don't. I remember flying into Vermont and it was terrible, knee-deep in mud. I called Barbara and said, "Don't come out." I told them I wasn't interested. I think I got the job in British Columbia, but turned it down. That's how I wound up in New Mexico. That's how we arrived, found a place to live.

MG: I wanted to ask you more about the teaching you did at the girls' college.

JS: Oh, yes. It was St. Xavier's. It was basic psychology. It was just fun for me. It's interesting. I now deal with a lot of men in transition, they retire from the military. It is a very difficult thing to do, because you live in this cocoon. When you come out you have this freeform mess we call society. I couldn't stand the cocoon. So, when I left to go teach, I was a human being again. We also used to go out--there was a good restaurant in the Kansas City Airport and we'd pretend we were tourists passing through town. [laughter]

MG: What was Albuquerque like? Can you describe the area and where you were living?

JS: There was nothing there in the '40s. The bases were there. Then, gradually, it began to fill in. When we first moved there, it was beginning to grow. There were two intersecting highways that ran through town. One day, coming back from work, I saw a Hilton being built. I came home and said, "They're smart people. They know something is going to happen," and it did. I don't think there were any land use laws. The place took off. Cheap housing all over the place. What was it like? On one side it's mountains. The other side there are a couple of volcanoes you see. You have the Rio Grande Valley in the middle of it. The Rio Grande Valley is the only place where there is real green. Up in the mountains there are pine trees, of course. Now, I'm going to show you a picture in a minute. The predominant color is brown. If you saw the land that we're dealing with right now, you wouldn't believe it. It's as ugly as sin. When you fly over--put it this way: I did a fair amount of traveling and whenever I would come back there I'd be upset when I looked down. This is what I wanted. [Dr. Schenkel is referring to his home in Maine.] When I come home, I'm home. There's it's ... Having said that, a lot of people love it. The saying goes that [if] you move there and either of two things happen: you'll hate it and get out or you'll stay forever. Very few people do what we did, stay for twenty years and then leave. There were reasons for that. We moved in to an apartment, good friends with the managers, very comfortable. Good fortune. We want to build a house. I'm number one than a hake. We find a piece of land. First thing we're told is, "Well, I doubt you can buy it." The realtor goes and talks with the owner. The owner said, "I have to make some investments." This guy had money in the bank. He's going to sell a piece of land. Stupidest thing he could've done. Who was he going to sell it to? Us. So, we bought it. Got to have someone build. Oh, first thing that happened. "Where did you buy this land?" I said, "Down there on Rio Grande Boulevard." "You bought land on the Rio Grande Boulevard?" I said, "Yes. Why not?" "Whoa [inaudible]," he said. Big, big pieces of land. To get to our land you drove through two alfalfa fields. The next thing happened, we need a building. I'm looking at adobes. Someone said, and you're going to love this one, "Well, you ought to get Nat Kaplan to look at it. I said, "Nat Kaplan to build an adobe?" No. I want Pedro Rodriguez. I don't want a Nat Kaplan. He is the premier adobe

builder in New Mexico. So, next thing is, "Well, if he's so good he's not going to build for us. I can't afford this. I'm young." Well, finally, we're convinced, give Nat a call. He says, "Come over to my house." We talk. He said, "Where's the land." We tell him. He said, "Come back in a week." Go back in a week. He's sitting at the table. He takes a paper napkin and a felt tip, draws the outline of a house. He had asked how much money we had. He said, "I can put that together for you on that land, but if there are any additions it's got to be in a contract." We said, "Okay." We had never built anything. We had bought. I said, "What do I do now?" He said, "You go get a building loan." "How do I do that?" "Well, you go to the bank, you tell them what you want to do, you get this bridge loan." I said, "Don't I need plans?" He said, "Take the paper napkin. Tell them it's Nat." It worked. Meanwhile, a social worker, buddy of mine, he said, "Before I do this, you do realize that you can bargain." I said, "How do I do that?" He said, "Money is a commodity, you jerk." So, I go in and the guy gives me whatever he said. I said, "I'd really like the building loan to be six percent." He looks at me. He says, "Okay." I learned a big lesson. Now, I've got loads of pictures I'm going to show you.

MG: Okay.

JS: When the house was first built, the windows were cheap, aluminum frame windows. There were two sliding glass doors. Four years later, I had the lead carpenter come back, rip it all out, all handmade windows were put in. So, that's the entrance.

MG: Oh, wow. That is incredible.

JS: The way that came about (a picture of the house) was these folks down here had a photographer who, on several occasions--I left for work in the morning. He was hiding in the bushes because he wanted to get the proper lighting to take that. So, that's part of what happened. You can look around in here. It's dark. You talk about New Mexico. He has been conserved once. [Dr. Schenkel is referring to a piece of art.]

MG: Who is it?

JS: We don't know. We were on Canyon Road, Santa Fe. We were young. I saw him and I just loved it.

MG: Can you kind of describe for the tape? And I'm going to turn down the music, so it doesn't cover up what you're saying.

JS: It's the photograph of a man, oh, I would say well in to his sixties, seventies, showing life in his features, bearded. Almost Grecian, I would say. One has the feeling of wisdom of the ages as you look at him.

MG: Where did you find this print?

JS: Well, it was on Canyon Road in Santa Fe. We saw him in a gallery and talked with the owner. The owner said, "Why don't you just take him home and live with him for a period of time? If you want to keep him you'll pay me for it." We did that. That was the start of a lot

else. This is from Canyon Road of all things. That is also. There's some other New Mexico paintings, which I can show you. I'm supposed to remember where things are. Can you see that? That is a pot. It's about a thousand years old.

MG: Wow.

JS: Yes, I do know where that came from. I'm thinking just New Mexico. Okay. Maybe I can't show it to you.

MG: I do not want to make you rearrange everything.

JS: No, no. What it is, is an axe head. Heaven knows how old it is. It's here. It's not lost. I found it on our property in New Mexico. What you got to watch out for with me and here is that virtually everything has a story. There are pipes here that were given to my father by a man working in Jersey City, freeform pipes, and it's a collection that's over fifty years. Some of the pipes are older than I am.

MG: Those are beautiful.

JS: Yes. Throughout the house you've got stuff like that. This was a local bookseller. I found these bookends. This dumb little thing--I like dumb things too. We had no idea what that is.

MG: The dragon holding the book?

JS: Is that a dragon? I know he looks like that. It's a dog. We think it's off a Victorian lamp. There are a lot of collections, different things. There are bunch of them around. There's one. I came across sheet music. That's obviously Ozzie Nelson.

MG: Yes.

JS: Bing Crosby. There's a poster for a drama club at Princeton upstairs. That radio is Barbara's parents'. There's a TV downstairs. That was in a local newspaper. That's a one hundred and twenty foot sailboat. They allowed me to skipper for a while. Just dumb things, old pipe tobacco from LL Bean. They haven't sold anything like that in who knows how long. Why I have it, I don't know.

MG: Well, it seems like a good way to get connected to the areas where you were moving was to find artifacts of its past.

JS: I think so, and with life in general. Plus, I think they make a home.

MG: Yes.

JS: This is a winch off our first boat. Oh, these are outlines of our first boat.

MG: Wow.

JS: That's our second.

MG: That is wonderful.

JS: There's a picture. Well, here are better pictures, actually. That's me on the small boat off the coast of Maine. That's the last boat. That's the one we just sold.

MG: It looks like you're having a great time. Where would you go on that boat?

JS: Mainly in Maine. We have cruised the whole coast. I don't know if you know where--how do I explain this? If you go to Bar Harbor, Bar Harbor comes around like this, Frenchman Bay. Over here, seaward, is Winter Harbor and Schoodic Point. We've been about fifty, sixty miles north of Schoodic, east of Schoodic, and it's a place called Roche Harbor, which is an archipelago of islands with a mile and half sand beach. It's beautiful. If you fly into Maine, say from England, on a clear day, you can look right down and we can imagine our boat sitting right in the middle of it. Again, that was created by an artisan Barbara found having to do with books. She did the same thing for--it's Maimonides prayer, it's a medical prayer. This is a friend, just an Indian woman. This is done by a psychologist. That's a little church on the third largest ranch in New Mexico, which he owned. My mother did that bargello in the middle.

MG: That's amazing.

JS: I was president of the bibliophilic society. There were a bunch of presenters one night. I was president at the time, and I was talking with him. That was a show and tell item he brought. I fell in love with it. He said, "Take it." I said, "What do you mean, 'take it'?" He said, "I've had it for years."

MG: What kind of bird is it?

JS: A falcon. That one over there is Barbara's parents. That was an anniversary gift. This was painted on demand for us. We gave the artist a frame, believe it or not. I bought the frame somewhere. He was a fellow; we met up in Wiscasset, [Maine]. He painted that. The color is great. You can see all the colors when the light's on.

MG: Yes, you can see all the lupines pretty well.

JS: Yes. That one actually came from New Mexico. I remember going in to a gallery and complaining. I had had it. I was looking for a gift and saying to the woman, "I'm tired of all this New Mexico stuff. I don't like New Mexico art." She takes me by the hand, takes me in the back, and says, "Take a look at this." I said, "Well, why isn't that in the front?" She said, "That sells, this doesn't." It was a French artist. There's more of it here. In the bathroom, actually, there's one of his posters.

MG: Did you get this and the painting you just showed me before you moved to Maine?

JS: Oh, yes. A long time ago. My water roots. That's New Mexico pottery up on top. So, that stuff is around. Actually, that tiny little one is a marie pot, which is a very well-known name in those circles. It was given to us by a high school friend who had done an externship in New Mexico. So, that would have been--let's see. We graduated college in '63. Probably in 1965 or so. ... There's another one.

MG: It seemed like Maine was always in the cards.

JS: I'll tell you how weird it is. Remember how I told you the Commanding General Staff College was at Leavenworth. What would happen, because people rotate, schedules don't always work out well. So, they would have, periodically, officers come on the post, who were called snowbirds. They had several months with nothing to do. So, they brought them out to Leavenworth early for Commanding General Staff College. Well, one of these fellows, I don't know how I noticed him, but we'd see him at the gym, and I'll tell you why I say "we". He always looked different to me. Well, he was a returned medivac pilot. We're in the gym one day. My friend Andre, Andre. Andre was a French Canadian citizen in the American Army, a psychiatrist whose accent got heavier and heavier. I'm talking to Andre, I said, "I don't understand this guy. Something is not wrong, but out of sync here." So, Andre calls him over and says, "My friend is wondering what the devil you're doing here." He said, "You know, I'm wondering the same thing myself. I came into the Army to learn to fly. I have learned. I fly fix wing. I fly rotary wing. I spent a year in Vietnam." He said, "I just want to get out of here, go up to Maine, and get a lobster boat." I'm in the Army and I think to myself, "Okay." Where is Maine and what's a lobster boat? Go figure. We get out of the Army. My buddy Joe is a research psychologist. Joe, of all things, is from Boston. Where does he wind up stationed? Cape Neddick, there are labs there, fifty miles above Boston, testing Army uniforms. Anyway, we go to New Mexico. I announce one day, two weeks after we got there, we ought to go visit New England. I said, "You know, Joe is up there at a place called Cape Elizabeth. Why don't we go visit on the way?" That was what, 1971, '72? [From here], you walk a half a mile, you're on the water, and there's Joe's house.

MG: I never asked how you felt about the Vietnam War.

JS: I have a vague recollection of thinking the whole thing was wrong, but I certainly wasn't an activist. I was probably too self-involved with my profession and where we were going. Don't forget, we were too young and too old. We missed the whole business with the flower children and all. We didn't experience anything like that. So, in ways it was all very much removed. I would read about it. I'm embarrassed to say, this has changed of course, it would be much like people today read about Iraq and Afghanistan. Unless they know someone there, they're completely disassociated, they have no understanding at all. So, I don't remember tremendous feelings at all about it.

MG: Can you explain how you went from that convention where you said who would want to work for the Veterans Administration to working for the Veterans Administration in Albuquerque?

JS: Oh, it had to do with applying at the University of New Mexico, the job was really at the VA, and the ski area. [laughter] It was nutty. And the people were nice. The people were very, very nice. That's it.

MG: What was your experience working for the VA there?

JS: I think, by and large, very good. From a personal point of view--well, everything is personal. Professionally, it allowed me to grow as a practitioner, but also as an administrator, which was very important to me. If it's confined strictly to the VA, I had to confront some incredibly, for me, difficult situations and decisions, which really tested me.

MG: Can you give me an example?

JS: We had a director who took it upon himself to decide that anyone who was a service chief, because he didn't hire them, couldn't be loyal to him. Therefore, he was going to get rid of them, which is very difficult to do in the VA, but he accomplished it in months. In fact, the only three surviving people were myself, the chief of surgery, and the chief of medicine, for a whole variety of reasons. I had to deal with that the best I could. I found in the process, as a byproduct, a very strong allegiance on the part of my service. I found just how duplicitous other people could be. I learned. I learned a lot. I also learned that there are very good people--I think the VA, and this continues to this day, no matter what you read in the press--the people that are doing the real work are a dedicated bunch. They really are. They are nice people. They care about people. It's been years, but I travel around a fair amount looking to other VA hospitals, reviewing training programs. I'm always gratified when I see Service Chiefs greeting maintenance people in the hallway. They go out of their way to do so, even if it's a member of the janitorial staff. You see a lot of that. You only see that in the VA. You don't see that in private hospitals. I don't think. I see people when they are understaffed picking up a load that you wouldn't believe. I had a nice thing happen. You hear complaints about the VA. We went on a mystery tour sponsored by the Maine Historical [Society]. It's a fundraiser. Various sites are included. Anyway, one of them this year was a sailing vessel that's down in the harbor. I wanted to see it. So, we did. There's a fellow who was standing guard to help people, bearded, showing some wear and tear on his face. We asked him questions about the boat. He didn't know a whole heck of a lot about the boat. He was very nice. Something came up. Oh, I said, "How do you come to be doing this and working for the boatyard?" He said, "Well, I retired from the Coast Guard after thirty years." He was seagoing, which is why his face looked like it did. I don't know what was said, something about the VA, and he said, "That's the greatest organization in the world. I don't give a goddamn what they say in the newspaper," and he goes on. He talks about the nice people that he deals with over there. Boy, I thought why don't we have this as a poster child? Of course, I came home and told everyone at the clinic the whole story, but I think it's true. So, it was a good decision. I haven't regretted it. Not at all.

MG: Did you have a degree of flexibility there? Because I know you did a number of other things as well, including consulting.

JS: Oh, I had tremendous flexibility both job-wise, doing a whole number of things. I was Chief of Service. I was associate chief of staff for education at one point. I was directing programs.

But I had another kind of flexibility. I actually worked the schedule for several years where I was there four days a week, which allowed me to go up and teach skiing three days a week. [laughter] So, I had that.

MG: You said private practice as well.

JS: Oh, yes. I forgot about that one too. A lot of psychologists have that.

MG: Was that an opportunity to see other kinds of patients?

JS: Yes, primarily women. I would see some adolescents. Different, much different.

MG: Do any of those cases stand out to you?

JS: Yes. Again, a lesson in humility. One of the psychiatrists in the office said--it was really flattering, but I think he wanted to get rid of her--"Would you be willing to see a sixteen-year-old girl?" I said, "Sure." Well, this young lady, very attractive, a lot of drug use, very hard. Her father was killed in a car accident. I saw her for a period of time. Mother dies. I had to call the relatives, I'm not sure on which side. Nice, nice people. They came up from the south and they're going to take her home with them. So, is leaving. We talk how we can do this. Fine. Everything goes the way it's supposed to go. She's off. That's all. Right? Not the end of the story. I'm feeling terrible, because I don't think I have been very helpful. Well, a year goes by. Suddenly, I get an invitation. She's getting married and, by this time, I guess she's eighteen or nineteen. She's getting married in Albuquerque and I'm invited to the wedding with Barbara. I think, "I don't want to do this." I'm not even sure that it's ethical, but I can't figure out what's unethical about it, and I talk to someone. They thought I was just being paranoid. So, we're going to the wedding. We show up at the wedding. The first thing that happens is the relatives see me. Everyone is saying, "Oh, we're so happy you're here." I said, "Gee, that's a nice thing to say." They said, "No, we're serious. You were the only person that she cared about being here." I was stunned. I didn't know what to say. It was a delightful wedding. She was marvelous. I kept thinking about it. Now, I'm thirty, thirty-two and I can't understand this. What did I do? I flailed. Then, finally, the most ridiculous thing came to me. I thought, "That can't be," but it's the only thing I've ever come up with, and that is, I was her surrogate father. Being the father for that period of time I was there, even if I didn't do anything, even if I was a lump of granite, I was there. That's what it was all about. I learned something. Thirty-two years old and I'm a father of a nineteen-year-old. Not easy to do. [laughter] Yes, that stands out. That stands out.

MG: You also were a consultant for an obesity and risk factor program, alcohol rehabilitation programs, renal dialysis programs. I'm curious about your experiences in all these fields.

JS: Well, alcoholism, that was obvious. The obesity and risk factor isn't. There is no question that there is a difference between, say, a neurologist and a cardiologist, but there is also something else that they are joined at the hip by, and that is a basic knowledge of human anatomy and what they're doing, and then they specialize. Well, contrary to a lot of what's going on in mental health today, especially with people who some of us don't think are all that well-grounded, is that there is a basic knowledge base that one brings to the field that is applicable.

So, it is not uncommon, for example, on a licensing exam or with graduates, I will ask them, "Tell me how a person gets from birth to life, even [inaudible] if you want, psychologically in a coherent way. I don't care what your frame of reference is, but do that for me." It's an incredibly hard thing for people to do, because they don't have one. A lot of their teaching is not that way. You're taught techniques. So, in partial answer to your question, if I look at an obesity and risk factor, I look at it and say, "Okay, what are we dealing with here? What do we know about obesity? What can I bring to it?" The rest of the truth is this, what happened was the nephrologists were approached by the sponsoring company. The parent company wanted to start to an obesity program. So, they contacted the nephrologists. They were internists. They wanted to become involved. They came to me and said, "We need a behavioral component. Can you do it?" I said, "Yes. I know something about eating patterns. My background was as a behaviorist. So, let me figure it out and we'll do it." That's how it came about. Plus, there was an exercise component also that was second nature to me. That's how I got to that.

MG: How long did you live in New Mexico for?

JS: Twenty years.

MG: What made you want to leave and come here?

JS: The better question is what made me want to go there? Where do I start? Number one, I was in New Mexico, which gets little rain, and I see a puddle. I'm like a two-year-old, I walk in the puddle. I wanted water. I thrived on it. Visually, this is heaven to me. I told you I literally got sick when I flew over and had to go down in that dessert. The feeling on my skin of the air, the aromas, the wind. I tried to describe what a light breeze in New England was like. Perceive rustling in the trees. I space out on it. This morning Winston (the dog) and I went walking. I encountered so many aromas. At one point, I stopped dead in my tracks. I said, "I thought I am back at camp in Pennsylvania." I don't know what it was. It was there. It's got to do with moisture. Another example: I walked out of the clinic one day and you'd say, "You enjoy that?" This will really sound weird. I did. I walked out. This was two summers ago. It was very hot, but I could smell the ocean, but more than that, I could smell the tar in the parking lot. I was back in Jersey and liking it. That's sick. [laughter] I'm just susceptible to that kind of thing. To this day, I'm at the water. I was at the water today, almost every day. I just go look at it, know it's there. I'm not sailing anymore, but we'll go out with friends a little bit. When we were planning our move--and I'm a great obsesser. One of the questions that kept coming up before this big move was what happens if we sell our boat and what if we stop sailing? Do you want to be in Maine? I kept saying, "Yes." I kept saying, "Yes, but are you really rationalizing, because you want the boat?" Well, it was enough of a yes to say, "Let's go." With or without the boat, I wouldn't think of leaving. All those things, I recognized. Oh, [the] four seasons, I forgot about that. To this day people will say, "Oh, we had a rough winter." I'll look at them and say, "We did?" I like the winter. I like the fall. Everyone should live in the dessert. Then, you really appreciate the seasons. That's why.

MG: So, you identified Maine first and then found work?

JS: No. Well, we identified Maine. Somewhere along the line I taught sailing, but I didn't know beans about offshore sailing. So, I said I want to learn to go offshore. We started going to San Diego. Next step was I got the idea, because of Joe I think, of sailing Maine. Fortunate again. I managed to contact a man in Boothbay Harbor, I told him where I was. He said, "I will charter you my boat, but our son has to go with you for a couple of days. This will be the expense." Fine. I was delighted. Old boat, Crocker, that was the name of the wooden boat. Lovely experience, terrible boat. Son gets terribly sick. He finds someone else to go out with us, but there's a little interlude there, and I decide, "I know how to sail." I did have this experience. So, we took the boat out by ourselves a little bit and were fine. One summer led to another summer, two weeks. Then, I said, "Gee, I wonder if I can push the VA to two and a half weeks, three weeks. "Then I started coming out for four and taking vacation without pay. This goes on and on and on. We buy our boat. Then, we decide I want to visit Maine in the winter. Seriously. We went to Mt. Desert. Oh, I remember this like it was yesterday, in Blue Hill, snow on the ground and there's an aroma. What is it? It's beautiful, absolutely. I ask someone. He looked at me like I was crazy. He said, "It's a fire coming out of the chimney." I said, "Oh, why does it smell so different?" He said, "Different than what?" I said, "Well, we have a couple of fireplaces at home in New Mexico." He says, "You're burning pine." He said, "This is hardwood." It's beautiful. Utterly beautiful. We did that a couple of times. My father dies. We buried him in New Jersey. We come up here to feel better. We start looking. It was evolutionary. I decided I wanted a piece of land in Maine. Don't know what I'm going to do with it. We look up in Camden, there's some fortuitous events. We come here, we see this, and we buy this land. Nothing but dirt roads are out there. Ultimately, we got serious and we made plans to leave. I'm quitting the VA and I've looked at a couple of jobs up here. Two things happen. One is I woke up one night and said, "We can't go." Barbara said, "What are you talking about." I said, "We can't go now. Stephen is coming home from college for Christmas, his first Christmas. We have to be home. This is his home. After that, he's gone. That's it." So, we stayed another year and I'm quitting again. Barbara said, "Can't you transfer your health insurance?" "No." "Can't you do something?" I said, "No." She said, "What if you work part-time?" I said, "Well, I'm not going up to Togus. I'm not going to make that drive and there's nothing in Portland other than a vet center. What's the probability of them taking me at fifteen hours a week when I want to show up?" "Does it hurt to try?" So, here I am, a service chief no longer, but I don't care. They're going to turn me down anyway. So, I call. They say, "Yes." I said, "I'm not even sure when I'm going to get there." "That's okay." Things were done a lot different in the VA in that day and age. Everything is fine. I'm not quitting. I'm transferring. We do this and the chief up in Togus, he knew me, he was one of the old guys. He wants me to come up there. Well, things didn't turn out well in the vet center. It had nothing to do with me. I could've stayed, but I decided, "All right, Phil. You want me up there, I'll come up there." So, I do. I'm there for a period of time. I'm getting much of my summers off. I'm sailing. Other than the snow in the winter or the ice, no big deal. Yet to drive, I want to get out.

MG: It is a long commute to Togus.

JS: Yes. So, there's a RIF nationally, a reduction in force. If I still was a service chief, they would say, "Great, here's twenty-five thousand extra bucks. Get out." I'm not. I'm a half-time clinician. So, they're not letting me go. Locally, they're going to have another reduction in force. I'm going sailing. So, I write them a letter, saying, "If anyone will consider, I want out if

this RIF comes through." In those days, there was no cell phone coverage, but you could patch in through Camden Marine Operator. It was a Maine-based company. They would patch through into your boat radio, but you have to be listening to your radio. So, we arrive in Bass Harbor. We kept our boat there. We arrive and go up to the office, just to say hello. Jim asked, "Did you get your phone call?" I said, "What?" She said, "Yes, Togus Hospital called you. Didn't you hear it on Camden Marine?" Every boat on the water hears the calls. I said, "No, I wasn't listening. I'll call them." So, I called, and personnel asked, "Do you still want out?" "Okay, we'll start the paperwork." Well, Phil, my boss, gets wind of this, of course, and asked me to stay an extra couple of weeks. I said, "Sure." I was gone. I was retired. Guess what you do in retirement? You keep your health insurance. Oh, I'm sitting there talking to Phil and I said, "I don't understand this whole thing. I understand you wanted me up here, that was great." We knew each other. That couldn't happen today. It's different today. That's how it all came about. Then, I did all kinds of other things, volunteer sorts of things, then went back. For example, I was president of the state psychological association, president of a bibliophilic society, president of the local land trust.

MG: What do you mean, "went back"?

JS: Back to the VA, where I am now. You didn't know that? Also, I began site visiting internship and post-doctoral residencies for the American Psychological Association and became Chair of our state licensing board.

MG: I thought as a volunteer.

JS: I am what is called a without compensation employee.

MG: Right. That I knew.

JS: So, I just don't get paid. Do you know what's interesting? I keep thinking this [oral history] is voluminous. You will be the only person, other than Barbara, that has ever heard all this, and the two or three people that have said, "You ought to write a book." The first time it happened I really didn't understand why. Has my life been so different than other people? I don't know. I know I have done a lot of things, but so have other people. I don't know, but it's happened two or three times. I could never do such a thing, but I think you're doing it. [laughter]

MG: This will be very useful.

JS: [laughter] Right.

MG: You'll have probably a hundred pages of transcription if you did want to make a book. This would lend itself well if you ever were up for it.

JS: Oh, I'm sure of that. No, if I could create--listen, I'm having a hell of a time with improvisation on the piano. I try to write. I didn't have the stick-to-it-iveness, the whole great American novel kind of thing. Didn't work.

MG: Well, maybe listening back to your CDs or seeing your transcript will inspire you to fill in some of the gaps. Your son will know so much about his parents.

JS: Yes.

MG: So, I am so glad you are sitting down with me and sharing all your stories.

JS: To my benefit.

MG: Well, mine too, because it is so enjoyable to be here.

JS: Oh, well thank you.

MG: It is really treat. I will look forward to coming back again.

JS: Yes, I do not think I have said anything that I will regret saying.

MG: I will turn this off for now.

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

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