

THE RULE OF LAW ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Stephen Soldz

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Stephen Soldz conducted by Mary Marshall Clark on May 24, 2012 and April 30, 2013. This interview is part of the Rule of Law Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

VJD

Session One

Interviewee: Stephen Soldz

Location: Brookline, MA

Interviewer: Mary Marshall Clark

Date: May 24, 2012

Q: Today is May 24, 2012. This is Mary Marshall Clark. I'm conducting the first session of an interview with Dr. Stephen Soldz in his office in Boston.

Soldz: Brookline.

Q: Brookline. I've learned all about Boston today, that it's all these neighborhoods combined.

Soldz: This is not part of Boston, though. Brookline is a separate city. We're a mile and a half from Boston.

Q: I'll have to correct my friend.

I'm so grateful for your time because you have done such an amazing job of helping the world learn about what's been going on within the APA [American Psychological Association], at Guantánamo, and other sites around the world. But as we always start, I'd like to start with you today by asking you about where you grew up, something about your early life, and your education.

Soldz: Where I grew up. I was born in St. Louis. We lived there for four years. Then my father got into graduate school at Harvard in philosophy and we moved up to the Boston area. We were

here for four years in three different places. Then, after four years, he had failed his preliminary exams three times and my mother said, "Enough," at which point my uncle got him a job with the federal government and NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration], so we went down to [Washington] D.C. and lived in northern Virginia until I was fifteen. I was a math prodigy and I went to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] in 1968, and dropped out almost immediately.

Q: Tell me about that. Does it have to do with 1968?

Soldz: Yes. Well, one, I had sort of decided by that point that I was brilliant at understanding mathematics. I was not really that creative. In retrospect, I think I was ill-served. It was the height of the cult of pure mathematics at the time. In pure mathematics it is sort of like either you're Nobel Prize-quality—well, there's no Nobel Prize in mathematics—or you're nobody. That sort of snot-status was there. So I didn't feel like I was real quality, plus I was suffering from depression at the time. The other thing was that when I went to MIT, I had two goals. One was to find a radical group to join and the other was to hear Noam Chomsky speak. As I say, I accomplished both the first week [laughs] so I didn't attend many classes.

Q: I so sympathize with that. As I said, my son went to Drew for seven weeks. The wrong environment.

Soldz: So I made it through the year. I failed a couple classes, including intro psychology. What I found very interesting is that when I applied to graduate school, no one ever asked me about my

record at that point. In between, I'd gotten a master's [degree] in counseling and been in the field, and was in psychoanalytic training already. But I just found it flabbergasting that no one even asked me why I failed psychology. [Laughs]

Q: Tell me a little bit more about what was going on with you at that time. You mentioned that you had depression—how you moved into counseling psychology and what your path was after that.

Soldz: I actually was in history, interested in social theory—radical social history. There was this alternative school, Cambridge-Goddard Graduate School for Social Change, that gave master's degrees. I was one of the faculty one year when I was nineteen or so. After I was a college dropout, I managed to get a master's degree. This was in the early seventies.

Q: Tell me more about that school. How long did you have to go to get a master's?

Soldz: I didn't get a master's. I gave a master's degree. I was faculty in libertarian socialism and the workers' movement. Those were unusual times. Eventually, after that, my path became more normal. I enrolled in a University Without Walls program out of UMass [University of Massachusetts] Amherst, which had the advantage that I never had to go to Amherst. I was just in Amherst twice—once to be interviewed and once to register. I managed to do all the courses through independent study. Herb [Herbert] Gintis was a radical economist who lived in Cambridge and went up to Amherst for three days a week. Every semester I did six credits of independent study of economics with him, studying social theory and various things. He was

very helpful, and also kept me from some of my worst tendencies. When I gave him a paper where I was aping a continental writing style, he chewed me out. I never forgot it, but I never did that again. Herb was sort of a no-nonsense empiricist, which is my natural tendency, so it was very good to have somebody to keep from that style of trying to sound like you know something by writing impenetrable sentences. [Laughs]

Q: Well, your writing is completely the opposite. It's so clear.

Soldz: Some of my grad students who tend toward a post-modern lifestyle probably wish I hadn't learned that lesson. I always tell them, "The minimum criterion, if you want to cite the French psychoanalyst Jacques [-Marie-Émile] Lacan,"—who is one of the impenetrable people. I say, "If you want to cite Lacan, I have several conditions. One, you actually have to read Lacan. You can't just read what some English translator says Lacan says. Two, you have to write it in a language that I am capable of understanding. If you use lots of untranslatable French words, I won't understand it." So most students decide not to write about Lacan in that case.

Anyway. So my undergraduate degree was in social theory. You could just make up a title because it was a University Without Walls program. I was trying to decide what to do—to decide between history and psychology. The people I knew who went into history weren't getting jobs. At that point I couldn't drive because of my poor eyesight. That's changed since then. I would say, "I didn't have the qualifications to be a historian because every historian I knew was a taxi driver." [Laughter] I think I heard that there was something like two or three jobs for historians one year. I thought, "Oh, God, no. I can't do it." So I decided to go into psychology. I told my

therapist that it was because I thought I could get a job in psychology. She burst out laughing at the idea that you could get a job in psychology. She actually reappeared in this story in a slightly odd way years later. Maybe we'll get to that.

Q: Sure.

Soldz: I then started being more normal. Well, actually, not completely. I finished my bachelor's degree in January. I was waiting for fall to start a counseling program. I applied to BU's [Boston University] clinical psych program, for which I was turned down at that point. Then I applied to counseling psych at Wesley [College], so I got into that. I don't think I quite realized that it was the second year of the program. So I had a semester in between. In those days, we had something called Boston State College. It doesn't exist anymore. It's merged into UMass. I decided to take a couple of courses there because they were cheap and I wanted to get some graduate credit out of the way. So I took one, Psychopathology, and the other was Psychopathology: Psychoanalytic Model, which, unbeknownst to me, was taught by people of what was becoming the school. At that point it was the Boston Center for Modern Psychoanalytic Studies, which became the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis. So that was my introduction to this school. They were all talking about "the Center," and I remember asking, "What is this Center you're talking about?" In modern psychoanalytic style, someone said, "Well, what do you think it is?"

Q: The historian side of you was cringing.

Soldz: Which led to an eruption. [Laughs] Anyway, I started enrolling here. I was in psychoanalytic training at the same time I was in my master's program. When I got out, it took many months to get a job. There was a budget freeze at the state level in Massachusetts, which meant that almost all the jobs were state-funded. Eventually, I got a job in a drug abuse clinic in Roslindale, working with teens and young adults twelve to twenty-five—drug addicts—which I was terrified to do but ended up loving. I did that for three and a half years or so, then went back. This time BU let me into their clinical program, and that's where I got my doctorate.

Q: What kind of psychoanalytic training were you taking?

Soldz: Well, the school had a particular school they called Modern Psychoanalysis, based on the ideas that psychoanalysis has—still, at this school—a cult stage, unfortunately, so every group has its charismatic leader. The theoretical charismatic leader was this guy Hyman Spotnitz, and the founder of the school was the charismatic leader Phyllis [W.] Meadow. One of the things about it was that the teaching—especially in those days but still true—was what we called process teaching. It was very much examining the process in the classroom rather than just the traditional discussion of ideas. That was very unusual, very addictive, and also quite irritating. I'm not the orthodox type for anything, so those of us who didn't buy all the ideas had a bit of a hard time. The negative side of the place is that people like us would have a hard time. But the strength is that you were still accepted, unlike other places. As long as you stuck it out and stuck to your guns. There aren't many places that have both of those and can actually, in the end, tolerate or even respect you for not buying into it, even though they find it irritating that you don't. In the end, it was good enough for me, sort of.

Q: How did your own thinking around practice and theory develop from that time?

Soldz: Well, I think the other factor, coming from a scientific background, is that I have a research orientation and I'm a skeptic by nature. The two go together. I became more involved in psychotherapy and related areas of research. I gradually moved to a lesser interest in the grand theories. I was more concerned with, say, the parts of psychoanalytic thinking that overlap, which don't depend on the more arcane forms of reasoning, and have some form of evidence other than or beyond "I once had a patient who—," which is a form of reasoning that drives me kind of crazy.

So I think I'm much more pragmatic, in a way. There are certain ideas in modern psychoanalysis that I think are very valuable and interesting that are put in a theoretical framework, which I think is a bit of nonsense. Unfortunately, most psychoanalytic schools have a bit of nonsense in their framework. On the other hand, there are schools of psychology that tend to be very boring and not to deal with the interesting human phenomenon. It's partly because we don't know very much. Psychology is in its infancy. We don't know very much, so a lot of the thinking is metaphorical. Different metaphors accomplish different goals. Eventually, the metaphors will hopefully get more precise, but they will probably be very different from the ones we are using today.

Q: Exactly. That's a good answer.

So from the point that you've graduated—how do you end up in Brookline?

Soldz: In Brookline?

Q: What comes next?

Soldz: Work.

Q: So you're working here?

Soldz: Well, when I graduated—where did I work? Oh, I got a research postdoc [postdoctoral position]. There was an NIMH-funded [National Institute of Mental Health] postdoc program at Harvard Medical School that Elliott [G.] Mishler ran, and picked a couple of people a year. Basically, you had to be affiliated with some lab at the medical school. It wasn't clear. My interest at that point was psychotherapy research. That was a little disappointing to Elliott, whose interests went beyond the clinical. He helped me find someone to work with, actually, because I tried some people and he wasn't happy. He didn't think the people who were agreeing to work with me were good enough researchers. He thought it would be a waste. I eventually ended up with Si [Simon] Budman, who at that point was at the Harvard Community Health Plan and was studying brief therapy, which at that point was rather irritating to me as I was primarily interested in long-term psychoanalytic treatment at the time. But it was an opportunity to do psychotherapy research and also work on personality disorders and a number of things.

So there was the two-year postdoc, and then we had money on some of the grants that we had gotten for a few more years, for at least part-time. Eventually, NIMH changed their funding priorities so that kind of work became un-fundable. Meanwhile, I had gotten involved in doing program evaluation, sort of by accident. A friend from grad school had called me up one Sunday and asked me to do him a favor. He said he was supposed to write an evaluation plan for a grant and it had to be due Wednesday. His mother-in-law had just died and he had to leave town, would I do it?

I said, "Well, I guess I will, but what is an evaluation? I've never heard of it."

He said, "It's just like research only not quite as rigorous."

So I said, "Well, I can do that." [Laughs]

So I went in on Monday and met with these people who were operators and politically connected, but they didn't know anything about it. I didn't know it, so I developed a plan that made the most sense to me. But I had no idea what the norms were. Obviously, in a day, I wasn't going to learn much about it. The boss didn't like how much I was charging—which wasn't very much compared to how much he charged, but I didn't know that then. So he basically made me a deal. He would either pay it and not use me again or he'd pay me less than it and then I could be written into the grant if they got it. So I said okay. They didn't get it the first time, but they resubmitted and did get it a year or two later. They called up and said, "Do you still want to be an evaluator?" So I was working for them part-time for, I think it must have been five years because

it was a five-year grant. Then we got a four-year grant the next year and a three-year grant the next year. So we had three grants, but they all came due the same day. We wrote a bunch of new ones but we didn't get any others. They kept me on for a while but it was no fun because the only real goal was to bring in money.

Then I was recruited to this nonprofit called Health and Addictions Research that did a lot of research and evaluation work for the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services and other parts of the Department of Public Health. One of my staff had gone to work for them, so he said, "Well, we're looking for a director of research." I said, "No, but I'll go meet with the director and see if there's any consulting opportunities." So I did. She asked me to consider the director of research, and I got talked into it. They promised that I wouldn't have to write tons of grants. Then the first day, after we agreed and hired, she said, "I need you to get in right away and start writing grants so we can stay alive."

Q: Of course.

Soldz: So I worked on twenty-three grants that year.

Anyway, I did that for a few years. Again, I don't do very well with those kinds of institutions. We had a coup d'état. One of the senior administrators kind of deposed the director and took over, and she used me to do it. Then she decided to replace me with more loyal staff. So I was deposed as director of research but they wanted to keep me on because they needed me for the research skills. But eventually I got another job. Then after a few more years I came here, where

I'm half time because the place can only afford that. I'm the only faculty member actually on salary here. There are a few people who are administrators, then the faculty teach on a per-course basis. I've been here now for ten years, and I mainly teach Research Methods. That's one of my strengths. They don't have anyone else who has the strength in that, so occasionally I get to teach more substantive courses. This fall I can teach Narrative Analysis, which I've taught a few times. At least half of it I do on the role of narrative in people's lives. The other half is on research methods and how to handle life narratives. At least it's a little not-pure research methods.

Q: I'd love to see your syllabus.

Soldz: Okay.

Q: So most of your life you've lived in this area.

Soldz: Yes. Since 1968.

Q: So are you married?

Soldz: Yes. I married the sister of a friend of mine since 1968, Stephen Shalom, whom I got to know when I went to MIT—he was a few years ahead of me—who is an old radical. I knew him and his wife, and I heard about his sister over the years but never met her. Then at his fortieth birthday surprise party, Evelyn, his wife, tried to fix Vivienne up with someone else and Vivienne wasn't buying. She said, "Well, Mark was okay, but Stephen looked nice and cute," so

they said, "Call him up." Their kids, who were teenagers then, really got a kick out of that whole story.

Q: And you have a son?

Soldz: I have a son, Isaac, who is now eighteen. His last day of high school is tomorrow.

Q: It's a big transition.

Soldz: A big transition, yes. He used to talk about how, "My dad's hobby is torture." He used to ask me, "What are the good torture techniques?" when he was younger. But this year he got kudos in his foreign policy class when his teacher discovered his dad was involved in this issue.

She said, "What does your dad think of Bradley [E.] Manning?"

He said, "Oh, he's writing something for the trial."

And she said, "Oh, my God."

Originally, it was going to be a brief—although the attorney is making a case that Manning suffered illegal, pretrial punishment when he was subjected to solitary confinement for six months. We were originally going to brief on it, but the judge seems to believe the rules forbid

her from accepting briefs. So instead the lawyer wants a statement that he can introduce as an appendix to a motion as a way of getting it in.

Q: I can't wait to hear more about that case, but to just ask you how you got into the subjects of torture—were you dealing with those before the post-9/11 period?

Soldz: Not explicitly. I was a radical going back to probably around age ten.

Q: You didn't tell me that story. What happened at age ten?

Soldz: Well, for various reasons I was always attracted to the underdog. I have an older brother, so there's that possible dynamic. I certainly was picked on a lot at school. I don't know what role that plays. It's very hard to piece together. But somewhere around fifth grade, I remember getting a book out of the library on famous naturalists. John Muir was interesting and [John James] Audubon was interesting, but Henry [D.] Thoreau—now that was something different. So he became my hero. Then over the next few years I read a lot about the civil rights movement and Mississippi Summer—the people who went South in 1964—and Dave [David T.] Dellinger's *Seeds of Liberation*. I know by 1965 or 1966 I was against the Vietnam War, but I didn't know anyone else who was.

Q: Interesting.

Soldz: I saw the analogy between that and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. I just couldn't understand how the Soviet invasion of Hungary was bad and why the U.S. invasion of Vietnam was acceptable. The interesting thing was, a couple of years later I discovered that my parents were against the war, but they kept it quiet. My parents are not very brave in that way.

This would have been seventh or eighth grade. I spent all year trying to force a debate on Vietnam in school, and right at the end of the year the teacher finally said, "Okay. Everyone gets one minute or two minutes."

Going around, everyone said, "I support the war because I support the war."

When they got to me, "I oppose the war because—."

"He's Communist!"

Q: That must have been kind of isolating.

Soldz: Oh, I was always isolated. So it was not that, per se. The next year the same kid who said "Communist" was running around the schoolyard saying, "You killed our Lord. You killed our Lord." I think it was ten or fifteen years later I figured out what he was referring to. I had no clue what that was about. I'm Jewish, if you haven't figured it out. But I had no idea.

Q: You just thought he was psychotic.

Soldz: I just didn't know what he was talking about. Then I got in trouble with peers, befriending a Cuban refugee kid. I didn't know you weren't supposed to do it. I have to say, I think, ultimately, I kind of pulled away from the kid, as far as I can remember, probably, subtly, because of it. I always felt guilty about that.

Anyway, as I said, when I went to MIT my goal was to find a radical group to join, and I found MIT Resistance. So I was involved in the anti-war movement in 1968 and later joined a small, left-wing—I hate to even call it a group. About ten of us put out a magazine called *Root and Branch*.

Q: I know that.

Soldz: You know *Root and Branch*? How do you know *Root and Branch*? You know Paul Mattick, Jr.?

Q: I don't remember how I know it.

Soldz: I'm still kind of proud of it. It was a Marxist magazine—journal—but unlike all the others it was written in English—

Q: That's what I remember about it.

Soldz: —not in jargonese, and not in that horrible neo-Stalinist/Leninist—. Well, we were anti-Leninist—libertarian, socialist, or council communist, or sympathetic to anarchism. But I was always proud of it. Our comrade in France wrote a review in which he said, "I would say that *Root and Branch* was the best magazine of its kind in the world, if it wasn't the only magazine of its kind in the world. I've never seen anything else like it."

Q: It was amazing, yes.

Soldz: So I was involved in that I think until we moved to Roslindale, a neighborhood of Boston. Well, Paul Mattick, Jr. was sort of the center of it. He had moved to New York, so the group wasn't meeting very often. I know when I moved to Roslindale, basically no one from Cambridge—one friend from Cambridge came out once, got lost, and never came again. I kept in touch for a number of years, going visiting, but I kind of got tired when I had a young kid, and she was never visiting. Gradually, we drifted apart.

So I'd been involved in that. We had a lot of fun arguments and debates. We were an irreverent group. That would have been to the nineties. I guess I really was really not active at all for the next ten years. Then came the lead-up to the Iraq War, and I just couldn't believe it was happening again, that the whole lesson of Vietnam—that we were just launching into this. Going back, it was bad enough at the time of the first [Persian] Gulf War. It felt like at the end of the Cold War the world had a chance to take a different path, and just instantly they were determined to return to the path of war and domination. The first Gulf War felt like a world historic disaster and immediately surrendered any possibility that a new way of doing things could be constructed

with the end of the Cold War. It was the first George [H.W.] Bush's new world order. Then comes the Iraq War. It was just unbelievable.

It wasn't until somewhere in 2002 when the Iraq War started that it really got to me. After 9/11, I was against the invasion of Afghanistan but I knew it was inevitable. I just wasn't motivated to go out and join the twenty people protesting it. In retrospect, I'm very proud of them, but it just felt like there wasn't any audience who was going to hear it. But the Iraq War—then I became very involved. There was that huge demonstration in New York City, which for me was big because I don't like going to these out-of-town demonstrations.

Q: The one in February.

Soldz: Yes, the one in February. The cold one.

Q: It *was* cold that day.

Soldz: We left Isaac with our in-laws and went down. Vivienne came with me.

So I started on a few things. First, I had been wanting for a few years to learn how to code HTML [hypertext markup language]. It's just one of these skills one should have, but I'd never gotten around to it. We'd just gotten cable TV because Isaac was pestering and Vivienne wanted it, but I did not. So we got high-speed internet and it came with a web thing. So that was an okay excuse. I had just started playing with it, and then I decided to construct an anti-war website—

The Iraq Occupation and Resistance Report, I called it—as a way of teaching myself. It's like you need a task to do in order to actually learn this stuff. Then came the night of the war starting. Vivienne turns on CNN [Cable News Network], and I could not stand the idea of watching what's-his-name. I can't remember—the correspondent going with—.

Q: I didn't have TV during that time.

Soldz: So I ran up to the computer and started furiously posting articles online. It was like, "I can do something. At least I feel like I'm active, rather than just sitting there watching shock-and-awe." Meanwhile, at the school I started something on psychoanalysts. I've taken it down. I used to have a poster up—*Psychoanalysts for Peace and Justice*. A little thing that, somewhat to my surprise, the school allowed to meet here. The school was not traditional. It's actually changed over the years some, under my influence. They'd never been that sympathetic to activist stuff. But they felt, "Well, he's one of the family, but we don't really agree with his activism." But what I was shocked by was how a lot of the faculty became involved, briefly.

So they let me hold meetings, which took a little bit of debate as to whether it would be okay. We held a few meetings and we had twenty or thirty people, including maybe five or six faculty, and a number of students. We just would discuss what was happening. Actually, about twenty people, including members of the faculty, went to demonstrations for the first month or so of the war. Then it was just me again. It's like, "Well, I can't read that news anymore." So I was furiously involved. I started many websites through the *Psychoanalysts for Peace and Justice* website, but the Iraq one was the main one. I updated it many times a day. It was quite a lesson

in history unfolding. I read almost everything in English on the war for a few years. To see the lies unfolding in such detail was really—I knew that governments lie, but I came to the conclusion that governments never tell the truth if they can avoid it. Just the massiveness of how almost everything uttered by a government spokesperson was false. How, over and over again, this would be corrected days, weeks, or months later, and how the press didn't care. They always reported the next lie, and to see this in such detail—it was very consuming, as one might imagine. My psychology research took a back seat.

But, as I said, my choice had been between psychology and history. Partly, it's allowed me to do a bit of history. When Abu Ghraib hit the weekend after, I wrote an article. I guess it was the second piece of mine that got some serious attention. I had written an earlier piece on Iraq—"What Went Wrong?"—that was quoted by *Asia Times* online in a paragraph where they say, "President [William J.] Clinton doesn't get it, but psychoanalyst Stephen Soldz in Boston gets it." They quoted my concluding sentence or paragraph, which had been something like, "Imagine you're an Iraqi and these things have happened to you. What would you do?" That one was quoted all over the blogosphere. It was my first experience with that. It was actually a talk to my local anti-war group, all fifteen people.

Anyway, Abu Ghraib was the second one. Having followed the war so closely, I knew that something was going on at Abu Ghraib. I didn't know what, but there were reports. The Iraqi blogger Riverbend had published a piece about a woman who was released from Abu Ghraib, who was clearly emotionally devastated, and who said, "I'm one of the lucky ones." I quoted this, and, again, I concluded that article by saying, "If I, an ordinary U.S. citizen, knew something was

going on there, surely our leaders knew." Again, this got a fair amount of attention. I got my first radio interview—which was a disaster—on Tom Hartman's show.

Q: Why was it a disaster?

Soldz: I had never listened to the show. I listened once beforehand, and I think he interviewed Bernie [Bernard] Sanders, and it was a very low-key thing. I was not prepared for the talk-radio style, throwing the questions, when he was not interested in allowing me any time to answer. I was just totally unskilled in how to formulate quick answers. I've learned a lot since then. I can do it now. But that's a skill. He's never had me back.

Q: His loss.

Soldz: You learn by fire.

Q: Absolutely.

Soldz: So that was the beginning. But I wasn't really identifying torture as a distinct issue. Then in June 2005 was the APA's PENS [Psychological Ethics and National Security] report. As far as I can remember—we all know memory is fallible. Historians and psychologists both know this. It's hard to remember, but I don't think I followed closely. I just assumed the APA was doing its old bowing down to the military, so it wasn't actually that surprising in a certain kind of way. There was a group, Psychoanalysts for Social Responsibility, which is Division 39 of the APA.

That's the division—the psychoanalysis Section IX—of social responsibility. I was a member on the list. I was one of two who were the radicals—"Oh, the APA has been in bed with the military for a long time"—and no one was interested. I had lost the taste to be this radical gadfly that no one pays attention to, so I had shut up on the issue.

Then June of 2006 was really the crucial moment when the *New York Times* published Neil [A.] Lewis's piece ["Military Alters the Makeup of Interrogation Advisers," *New York Times*, June 7, 2006]. I'm not sure if it was with the Army Surgeon General [Kevin C.] Kiley or if it was with [William] Winkenwerder [Jr.] of the Defense Department, [assistant secretary of defense for health affairs in the U.S. Department of Defense, October 31, 2001-April, 2007] [Note from MMC: it was Winkenwerder]. He said that the military now preferred psychologists to psychiatrists for the BSCTs [Behavioral Science Consultation Teams] because of the respective ethical positions of their professional associations. The psychiatrists had said that their members should not be members of BSCT teams.

This galvanized people in Section IX. They were very upset, so they said, "The APA's board is meeting this weekend. Let's write Gerry [Gerald P.] Koocher, the president." So we wrote emails, and what was striking was the viciousness of the response that we got back. Gerry Koocher's one email to me, which is essentially what he sent to most people, began with, "You're dead wrong!" In the case of one of the members who asked him to "Respectfully reconsider," he said, "After hell freezes over." Then people started to say, "You know, Stephen and Gary must be right. There's something other than a policy disagreement here. This is fishy. Something's not right." I was in shock—not at the response, particularly, but that someone who

could become president would not have the political skill to say, "Oh, we're so glad to hear your opinion." It was the most helpful thing to get a movement started that ever happened. It just enraged people who weren't prone to be enraged or mobilized about it particularly.

So that was the beginning. I immediately wrote a petition, I put it online, and I told the people in Section IX, "Oh, we were going to have Steven Reisner to do that, but you beat us to it."

Q: Did you know Steven at that time?

Soldz: No, just from the list. I'd seen his name a couple of times. So I said, "Well, what I can do that no one else here can do is write." I'd been writing blog pieces for left-wing sources, initially. *Z-Net*—where my brother-in-law was an editor so he could consider my pieces, though he didn't always accept them. We had a deal. He'd feel free to reject and he's done it many times—including this week—if he doesn't think they're appropriate or whatever.

Q: Sure. That's a fair relationship.

Soldz: That's what you want. He's also a great editor. I've learned a lot about writing from him. I said, "I can write." So I started writing an article. I wrote it and I sent it to Steven Reisner for comment, who suggested totally reorganizing it. I kind of lost energy so I didn't get it done. Then I went off to Australia. I was a visiting professor there that summer at the University of Wollongong. It's about an hour south of Sydney. The APA convention was coming up in August

and I said, "If I don't get this out by the convention, it's wasted." So I sat down and got myself to rewrite it. I hate rewriting.

Q: I do too.

A: I write pretty good first drafts, much better than most people's first drafts, but I don't like rewriting and reworking.

I sent it out and I got into *Counterpunch*, in addition to *Z-Net*. Then I started getting phone calls from a couple of reporters. I think a *Newsweek* reporter. I don't remember. But most importantly, someone named Nathaniel [Natty] Raymond of Physicians for Human Rights [PHR]. I didn't know it but Natty, as we know him, was trying to put together a group of psychologists to become active on this. Natty and I talked for a few hours. I told him that I had a theory about why the APA was doing it, which no one else had thought of. Initially he said, "No, that's not it." But as we talked, he said, "You know, that's worth looking into. I'm going to get a reporter on it." The theory—which, in retrospect, was a bit naïve about how things worked, but I think not totally wrong. The APA's biggest legislative priority—policy priority—in the last twenty years has been what's called prescription drug privileges. They want psychologists to be able to prescribe drugs, to compete with psychiatrists. The biggest single thing they had going for them was that the military sponsored the PDP—Psychopharmacology Demonstration Program—in the early nineties, in which ten military psychologists were trained to prescribe medications. Then there were several evaluations. The military did two evaluations that concluded that this was safe but it was not cost-effective. So the APA sponsored their own evaluation and lo and behold,

decided it was cost effective. Not only that, they then had these ten military psychologists to go testify to state legislators, in uniform, from then on.

So that was really the thing that made it a real movement—the fact that they could get the imprimatur of the military behind it. I was wondering if PENS was a payback to the military for support on PDP. The reason I say "in retrospect I think it was a bit naïve" is that I don't think things probably work one-on-one in terms of payback. But it started us thinking in a different way. I think everyone had been thinking only about policy in very broad terms and I think it started us thinking much more carefully about what is the nature of the ties between the APA and the military? So Natty started to try to get a reporter active, to look into this, and it was harder than one might suspect. I know he talked to Jane [M.] Mayer at *The New Yorker*. Jane was busy working on her book, which became *The Dark Side*, and didn't have the time for this. Eventually he got Katherine Eban, who, unfortunately, knew nothing about national security. She had studied the pharmacology industry. I think that was a bit of a problem because I think at some level she was snookered by National Security—by some of the people.

So Katherine had started working on that. Then Natty had gotten together—Jean Maria Arrigo had been a member of the PENS task force, and unbeknownst to them had downloaded the PENS listserv. It was unknown that she had downloaded it. She had archived it in an archive at Stanford University, which she had notified them of, which enraged them, because they had tried to keep everything about PENS secret. They had refused to give any documents to the APA archive, according to the APA archivist. They wouldn't give him anything, not even drafts of the PENS report, which in itself shows that they knew they were doing something illicit.

So she showed a copy of this listserv to Steven Reisner and Nathaniel Raymond, then they took it to Katherine Eban. They showed it to Katherine Eban. I have to say, every time I read it I have no doubt that it shows that there was collusion between the military and APA, and the reporters don't get it. Katherine Eban just never got it. Now I suspect she never read it carefully, for one thing. It's one hundred eighty pages, and that's with Jean Maria's editing—editing in the sense of removing the redundant parts of emails. I don't know if it was Jean Maria or Steven who did that. I don't mean editing and actually changing the text. You have to read a little bit beneath the text. These were not idiots. They didn't say, "Aha! Let's manipulate everything." But you have to keep in mind who these people are. Six of them are from the military intelligence establishment. Four of them were active duty. The fifth one was active with the Navy Criminal Investigative Service, and the sixth one was a paid consultant. Five of them—the phrase we've come up with over the years, trying to be very careful—have "served in chains of command that had been accused of abuses." It's the people who had been at Abu Ghraib, and been at Guantánamo, and been at Bagram [Theater Internment Facility]. They had been at ground zero of the torture program and one of them had been at the black sites. These were the people who knew.

Q: More than you knew at the time, probably.

Soldz: More than we knew at the time, though it was known that five of them had served in chains of command that were accused of abuses at the time. Though the details of what had occurred there we didn't know. The timings were different. But that was known. One of them, Michael Gelles, had been accused of detainee abuse in the APA for allegedly mistreating a U.S.

serviceman and an ethics complaint had been filed by an attorney against him. So this was known to them—to APA—and the people who appointed him. Also, Michael Gelles had a 2003 article published in a major journal—so they could not have not known it—in which he argued that national security psychologists and psychiatrists should not be subject to ethics codes because the professional association didn't understand what they needed to do. This is the guy you point to, to decide if this stuff is ethical?

So you read this thing, and you realize that these are the people who are at ground zero and there's not one mention of any abuses. Any reasonable discussion would start from the point of what happened. What did psychologists do? How could you possibly begin a discussion of the ethics of this without looking at what's alleged and what people were supposed to have done?

Q: The erasure of history.

Soldz: I can't understand how one could read it and not understand that this was a put-up job. That you have five or six people—at least five—who knew the details of what had happened and there's no discussion of it. Now you could say it's classified. Well, that may be. But if these people can't talk about what they know, then what the fuck are they doing on the task force? Of course, they should never have been on the task force. The APA says their expertise was needed. Fine. They should have been witnesses. But you don't have the people directly involved making the policy. If you need their expertise, that's fine. You bring them in. You use their expertise. But you don't have them make the policies, especially when they're on the payroll. The idea that people on the Defense Department payroll could possibly come up with a policy that didn't

support DOD [Department of Defense] administration policy, without destroying their careers, is ridiculous. It's equivalent to appointing the tobacco company physicians to formulate the ethics policy on tobacco use.

Q: I just have a really simple question here that I've been wrestling with. I've read the bullet-point code of ethics for the APA, but I'm interested in how did it become so weak? Was it historically weak? Or are there any underlining factors that would allow even these appointments to be made to an ethics committee? Or was this just the whim of this president? How do you see—?

Soldz: Well, this was a presidential task force. First, the history of psychology in this country is totally intertwined with the military and the intelligence establishment. The psychologists performed many different services in World War I and World War II. It's not by accident that the first professional license in the state was in 1946—payback for World War II services. So those relations bode. The other thing is that psychology has never had a real ethical foundation.

Q: That's what I was asking.

Soldz: Unlike medicine, for all the problems that there are in medicine, there is an ethical foundation that goes back thousands of years that at least many physicians absorb. Not all. Obviously, we know there are major problems with the intertwining with the drug companies. But there is at least this do-no-harm ethic and this commitment to the welfare of the patient. It's taught so that at least a real percentage of physicians absorb it. This has been true in the military

too. There are many cases of military physicians who take risks with their careers and even disobey orders to follow their ethics. Like the ethics say that patients are to be treated in the order of need, not to treat Americans before prisoners of war. Now it doesn't mean it always happens. I don't even know how often it happens, but I do know that military physicians have refused direct orders to treat American soldiers first and say that that's not ethical. You know you risk professional suicide and possible court martial when you do that, but they also know that the medical chain of command supports them and they won't be at least totally let out to dry if they do that. Psychology just has never had that.

I'm a clinical psychologist, and we had ethics training. Ethics training was never anything other than risk-management. Nothing else. We had a course in grad school by a radical African psychologist. I don't remember what the title was, but it was sort of on human rights. But that was just because he was on the faculty there. I'm sure when he left the course was not kept. Other than that, there has been nothing. It's all risk-management. If you do this, you'll be safe. The board won't go after you. There was never any discussion about, first of all, first principles. I never even thought of it. It's just never been discussed, at least in my presence. Any thought of how you would deal with conflicting loyalties—I've never had any discussion of that except, again, under risk-management—of how to do things. The most important thing in most ethic advice is documenting things so that you're safe.

So you document that you did the suicide assessment. That's what's taught as ethics. If you don't know what to do, you go talk to someone from your state ethics board and document that you did that, so you're safe. It was all that. And when I talk to other people I hear the same thing, that

there's just no—so the ethics code, parts of it, sounds really nice. But I don't feel that it's inculcated in the profession in any deep way.

Q: That's what I was trying to get to.

Soldz: The APA is a totally corrupt institution. Its internal functioning is beyond belief. Terrible. And it's just accepted. Partly, I think, psychologists—social service workers are not the world's best at standing up and taking principled stands anyway, for various reasons. Probably mental health is a bit worse. We tend to just like to do our jobs, treat our patients, and kind of just ignore this stuff. And we like to get along with others, which makes a principled stand difficult. So I think there is just not a great tradition of standing up for principle at all. I think that happens within APA, too. People just accept the corruption that goes on.

Then we have the fact that the ethics code was rewritten in 2001 and 2002. Now the process was underway before 9/11. One of the most problematic elements of the code, the Nuremburg defense, was allegedly in the works before 9/11, supposedly for innocuous reasons. I personally don't believe it. My theory, which I have no direct evidence of, is that it's a result of what happened with Michael Gelles and the [Daniel] King case, that when that ethics complaint was filed, they said, "We've got to do something to get these national security folks out and we've got to make it look innocent," so they made up an excuse. They rewrote it to say, in the case of conflicts between law and the ethics code that psychologists can follow, they make known their loyalty to the ethics code, but then they can follow the law or regulation. They said this is about court orders to reveal records. But if that's what it was about, as Ken Pope—who was former

chair of the ethics committee—has said, you would then write a clause. There is actually a clause about releasing medical records. They didn't need a separate clause. But if that was the issue, then you would write that. You wouldn't write this over-arching—and, also, as Ken points out, it doesn't matter, the origin of it. I think the origin was national security, despite what they claim, but even if I'm wrong, they still continued with it after 9/11 when it became clear it had other meanings.

The other clause, 8.05, which basically says that psychologists can dispense with the requirement for informed consent for research if the research is likely to cause harm, or pain, or suffering, or where otherwise consistent with law or institutional regulation. It basically throws out the Nuremburg code.

Q: So this was what was rewritten in 2001?

Soldz: Yes. As far as we can tell, that was introduced into the ethics code in mid-November of 2001, the first clause was introduced. Now the reports are that, already, by that point, there were the beginnings of a special access plan at Guantánamo on research on deception detection on the detainees. The reports are that Senator [Daniel K.] Inouye and his Chief of Staff Patrick [H.] DeLeon—former APA president/psychologist—had been briefed on this special access plan right around that time. Now my thinking is that something was being thought about probably before 9/11, and there is some evidence of that.

Joe [Joseph D.] Matarazzo—again, psychologist, former APA president, and long-term CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] connected guy—we later learned was on the board of Mitchell Jessen & Associates, a CIA torture firm, and was on the CIA's professional standards committee at the time of 9/11. Well, Bryce [E.] Lefever—one of the members of the PENS task force, a military psychologist—reports that Joe Matarazzo was recruiting SERE [Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape] psychologists for the CIA before 9/11, in the summer of 2001. Now what this was about we don't know.

Q: What do you speculate?

Soldz: Well, the rendition program. It's a speculation. I have a source who was recruited by Matarazzo very soon after 9/11—or was attempted to be recruited—in which Matarazzo said, "You know, psychologists are going to have to do some dirty things now." This guy wasn't very interested and Matarazzo moved on to others. So it looks like there was something up beforehand. As they say, the rendition program is what we know, or something we don't know, that was going on.

Q: It's so upsetting.

Soldz: Yes. So I think one of the little-told parts of it is the research part of the whole torture program—

Q: I'm very interested in that.

Soldz: —which we don't know very much about.

[INTERRUPTION]

I was just saying there is another aspect to this, which is it made it hard for those few of us who had been involved in investigations, as well as the public campaign, is that we always know much more than is publicly available and we always suspect much more than we know. So it's also difficult, when you actually know certain things, how to make statements that aren't factually false while sounding reasonable based on the current public record. It's tough. I think I talked some about Katherine Eban. First, one of Natty's weaknesses—like many charismatic go-getter types, he's so optimistic. Something's always going to happen immediately. So Katherine Eban's article came out [“Rorschach and Awe,” July 17, 2007, *Vanity Fair*]. Then Natty is quite irritated if you're disappointed or even point out that it didn't come out when you promised it would or if it doesn't say what he said it would. He never says it with caution, "I think it might" or something. It's always, "It's going to—."

The PENS listserv, when we finally released it—which is a whole story in itself—and we were having a hell of a time getting reporters to cover it. No one really understood it, unfortunately, which was totally disappointing because we always assumed that they would get it—so the Associated Press reporter did actually get it, but she couldn't get her editor [to publish it]. He kept on saying, "Nothing new." So we spent a good part of a day on emails, Natty and I. I forget her name. She was their top national security correspondent at the time. We were testing

different angles. Then she said, "Well, let me try it with my editor." Nope. Won't buy it. A couple days later Natty calls me up and says, "They're releasing the story in an hour." So I called a couple of contacts and said, "Be ready, the story—." It never came out, and Natty never said a word about it not coming out. [Laughs] It was just like the message was, "Don't mention it." So it was really tough.

So the Eban article. We were just starting the business. We had no experience with reporters. We didn't know Natty's style or anything at the time, so we had no defenses. He was getting very frustrated. I didn't realize—I think Steven Reisner did—that Natty was drinking a lot and was very depressed. He kind of hid it from me. I knew he was having some problems, emotional problems, but it wasn't clear what the nature was. Eban clearly moved away from the PENS, but the result was that the article—thanks to Natty really—revealed the Mitchell-Jessen story. In the end, she was not the first reporter to publish the names—that was Mark Benjamin. We learned something about how reporters work. When Benjamin called Reisner—I don't know. They were talking, and he said something about, "Oh, I've got Mitchell Jessen. I know Katherine's working on it and I don't want to rain on her parade." So Steven told Eban and she said, "Ah. Then he's got nothing because he'd publish instantly if he had something." Then a few weeks later Benjamin calls up and says, "I got a second confirmation. I'm publishing at midnight." That's how we learned how the press worked. We were naïve.

Q: Very complicated.

Soldz: Yes. So he got the names but he didn't know the details of what they'd done. So he published the names. Then Eban rushed the article. As Natty told the story, it got cut dramatically by the legal team at *Vanity Fair* because they couldn't vet it all in time. I don't know. All I know is that—because she actually began the article with an attack on us, which I have never seen in any other article. The beginning is how these people, Jean Maria Arrigo and Nathaniel Raymond of PHR, came in and brought her this supposed documentation of nefarious APA stuff, but as she looked into it there was nothing there. However, a different story came out—the Mitchell Jessen story. It was like, "You fucking bitch."

One, she's wrong. She's just wrong.

[SECTION CLOSED]

Okay. Now we can get back to the main story, which doesn't have to be edited.

It's like, why did she have to take that slap that embarrassed us? Doing that to your sources is not a good idea.

Anyway, we were all awaiting the article. It was supposed to be released at midnight, I think it was. I don't know. We were all at our various computers. Then it came out forty-five minutes late. Then we quickly read it, and we were devastated. Natty was furious at us for being disappointed in it—and partly he was right. In the end, the Mitchell Jessen story was, of course, extraordinarily important. But there was nothing we could do directly with that. We had expected

the APA's complicity to be revealed and instead this sort of exonerated them and bought the line, which others have bought, that the PENS task force was composed of people who tried to stop torture—which was at least largely BS. It doesn't make sense with what was going on, if the origin came from the CIA. It is possible that they were trying to temper the worst of things at some point, but there's no real evidence of that.

Michael Gelles, Larry [C.] James, and [R.] Scott Shumate all claim to be anti-torture. Scott Shumate claims that he was distraught at what was done to Abu Zubaydah when he was there and left. It's not clear. Scott Shane in the *New York Times* quoted people as saying, "Some people protest too much," and Gregory Block also quotes Kirk [M.] Hubbard—I think it was Kirk Hubbard—basically saying he was more upset about his unit losing control of the enhanced interrogation program than what the program was doing. So I don't know. But I do know that after he left the government a few years later—because he stayed at the CIA at the counterterrorism center for another year, so he wasn't discussing it. Then he went to the Counterintelligence Field Activity [CIFA] in the Defense Department for a couple of years. But when he left the government he was doing consulting, and I found online that he was consulting at some national security conference, and his bio said that he was "present with many of the high-value detainees." A few days later that disappeared from the web. I've got screen shots, one where it says he consulted with high-value detainees. The next one says that his bio has been removed for national security purposes. The third one is his bio is just gone. There's no sign he's speaking. I've got screen shots of all of these.

Because he clearly wasn't ashamed of it. He bragged about it to make money. So I don't buy his disgust. The same with Larry James. His story just doesn't add up. As I showed, he was at Guantánamo from January through early May of 2003. Not that much is documented going on during that period.

Q: I know.

Soldz: But they wrote the standard operating procedures for Camp Delta, which mandated mandatory four weeks of isolation for all new detainees in order to break them and make them dependent on their interrogator. WikiLeaks released that. That's a whole other—my WikiLeaks sort of—.

Q: We'll get to that eventually.

Soldz: I got that from Julian [P.] Assange. I just got an email. I had never heard of this guy and I got an email. It just said, "Enjoy." It's like, "What is this?" Do I click on this link? Is this spam? Is it going to blow the computer? To be honest, what I did was I went into the computer lab and said, "Well, if it blows, it won't be mine." [Laughter]

Q: That's the advantage of working in an institution. [Laughter]

Soldz: Then it's like, oh my God. This is it. I remember running downstairs and telling someone, "You won't believe what I just got."

But this is a case where several people got it and it was written up, but I think that the main emphasis in reporting was on hiding detainees from the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross]. Other reporters—I don't think they realized the relevance of the isolation business. The SOP [standard operating procedure] was released April 15 of 2003, exactly during James's tenure. He was the chief intelligence psychologist for the Joint Intelligence Task Force—Joint Intelligence Group, I think it is. I can't remember which. Anyway. There is no possible way he could not have known what was happening. He probably helped write it. Now he couldn't have written it because James can't write an English sentence, so he couldn't have actually written it. Though there are parts of the thing that read like James might have written them because all of a sudden, the language didn't make any sense. To our amusement, James became dean of the School of Psychology at Wright State University. The CV [curriculum vitae] he sent them had typos, like twenty typos on the page. It had wrong dates—

Q: It didn't matter.

Soldz: —wrong dates for publications. It listed him as having eight jobs at the same time. It listed all kinds of bizarre things. They gave him the job—partly because he's black. The president came in and basically said, "We're going to have a black dean, and that's it." Partly because Wright State is near Wright [Patterson] Air Force Base and tied to the military. It has a lot of students from there. But I hear he's been an awful, awful dean. He doesn't show up for work. He basically doesn't do anything. But anyway.

Phil [Philip G.] Zimbardo actually sent my article to James. Phil, for some reason he's close with James. I don't get it. James wrote back a vehement denial. He knew nothing about isolation. The only thing he knew about was medical isolation because they came from tropical countries. Also, I had made a mistake on a date. I had thought he went from Guantánamo to Abu Ghraib because of the way his bio was written. I didn't realize he'd gone back to Walter Reed [Army Medical Center] for a year or something. So I wrote to James and apologized for getting the date wrong. Then I framed a long list of questions, which he said he wouldn't respond to because he's dyslexic, but he'd be glad to meet with me when he's at the APA convention when he would be off duty. He was retiring. Which I did not take him up on. Phil wrote me and said, "You're getting everything wrong. You're going to blow everything if you make these mistakes." Then he wasn't very happy with Larry's response to me. It was kind of weird, playing a bit of both sides. He said, "Well, he's going to have to answer these questions someday." But I know Phil Zimbardo wrote the preface to Larry James's fictional book. Fictional is my term for it, not—so-called memoir on Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib. As someone pointed out, none of it is redacted because fiction doesn't have to be redacted.

Q: I'm going to use that line.

Soldz: It doesn't actually come from me. It's being used with regard to why José Rodriguez's memoir has no redactions when he writes about the torture of Abu Zubaydah, etc. Whereas Ali [H.] Soufan—the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agent's book—it's crippled with CIA redactions. So it's being said that the reason is because Soufan is telling the truth, and since Rodriguez's is fiction, he can say anything he wants.

Q: Gosh. Sinister.

Soldz: Actually, he can say what the CIA wants him to say. So that is one thing to look at. If something isn't redacted, it's probably missing a lot.

What was I saying? I lost the narrative thread here so I'm not sure where to go.

Q: You were talking about—okay, so we're back in 2006 and 2007.

Soldz: Okay. The Katherine Eban *Vanity Fair* article, which only appeared online, as a result of their rushing it into print—they were rushing also because they got word that Jane Mayer had the story and was going to publish. She would have had a lot of the story. She probably had a little bit more than Eban did, so Eban had to get it out before Mayer. It turned out to be fairly good, because they were two weeks apart or so. So it was a one-two punch with the story.

Q: This was her piece in *The New Yorker*.

Soldz: Probably—*The Black Sites*.

Q: I forget.

Soldz: The one on Mitchell Jessen. Yes. So she came out in early August of 2007, so Eban must have been July. Maybe Benjamin was late June. It was a real experience seeing how the press works.

Q: So just to ask for a clarification question, they were not members of the APA?

Soldz: Who?

Q: [James E.] Mitchell and [John B.] Jessen.

Soldz: No, they were not. Mitchell and Jessen were not members. Joe Matarazzo, who is on their board, was. Somehow the APA had no interest whatsoever in that a member of their board, a former president, and a person who played major roles in their nonprofit foundation is on the board of a torture foundation. [Laughs]

Q: How do you explain this to a ten-year-old?

Soldz: But it's important on Mitchell Jessen—to keep in mind. I've been trying to hit this over and over again. The level of APA—. Stanley Cohen has a book on social denial, a great book. I don't remember the exact phrase. I quote it in my article. He's talking about people who were downwind from the concentration camps, had smelled it every day, and said, "We had no idea what was going on there." He writes something about the lack of curiosity, and then he writes

something like, "Many organizations are filled with people who lack curiosity." Which is such a beautiful description of the APA.

The APA had a long relationship with Mitchell and Jessen, whether or not they are members.

Q: What was that relationship?

Soldz: Well, from 2002 for several years they had the series of conferences on national security with the FBI and the CIA in which Mitchell and Jessen were present, brought by CIA psychologist Kirk Hubbard. So one of them—I think it was the 2003 that was held by the Rand Corporation, funded by the CIA—was on the science of deception. We have the report written by Susan [E.] Brandon. It discussed enhanced interrogation techniques. It discussed, for example, the use of drugs in interrogation and it discussed how you can overwhelm the senses, which is part of the classic—you know, the loud music, etc. Mitchell and Jessen were there, as was Kirk Hubbard, at several of these conferences. There was a meeting at [Martin P.] Marty Seligman's—former APA president—house, I think it was in January of 2002, at which Mitchell was present.

If this was in the slightest an ethical organization, when Mitchell and Jessen's names were published, they would have been saying, "How did we have these guys at our meeting? What was going on there? Who invited them?" etc. The fact that they have never accounted at all, never shown any curiosity about it, shows that they're hiding something. I can't even imagine—it could have happened but, certainly, if you had [Josef R.] Mengele at your medical conference, you would wonder how did he get there? What did we talk about? Did he say anything?

Q: Well, this is part of the whole zeitgeist that you're in now, the [George W.] Bush zeitgeist, where you wrote about their policies of non-torture torture. Historically speaking, how did the paradigm change with the Bush administration effect? To allow the APA to move to the extent that they—looking back a little?

Soldz: Well, when you look at the Senate Armed Services Committee report on the interrogation program—which we were disappointed in, again—

Q: This was what year? I can look it up.

Soldz: Probably 2008. Natty had been helping them with it and we had expected more on the BSCT program. Instead, [L.] Morgan Banks was quoted approvingly in Carl Evans' press release with his statement against torture. But when you read it carefully, there's something totally missing from that report, which, I have a suspicion, is because of Senator Inouye. Senator Inouye is one of the key figures behind all of this. He's always been a great APA and psychology supporter. His chief of staff, a former APA president, is, according to our sources, the go-to person between APA and the military intelligence establishment—Patrick DeLeon. So my guess is that Inouye got them to take most of this out. But I can't prove that.

In any case, it doesn't add up. BSCTs are just missing many points, except for where it's already mostly public.

Q: Say more of what you mean by that.

Soldz: Well, the case of John Leso. John Leso is clearly in there, although he's not named. I forget how they referred to him, but there's no question of who he is. It's possible he was kept out so it couldn't be used as evidence in the ethics complaints against him. Because even though it's clear, a board could reasonably say, "We can't prove it's Leso." So this may have been one of the compromises to protect him. What's strange is, he was not yet named the top psychiatrist BSCT at the time—oh, God, I'm blocking on his name. So how come the psychiatrist, who probably played a somewhat lesser role and who was more of a whistleblower from what's presented there, is named and Leso is protected? Leso is listed as just a BSCT psychologist or something like that. So that happens. It's at least there. But then the BSCTs disappear. So there's no BSCT. There's nothing on the Larry James business.

But one of the points is, the way the thing was framed and the thing that allowed them to use Banks in that way—which is also part of what you're getting at—is, the report makes a distinction and says that there was a major distinction between so-called physical techniques and psychological techniques. They say that Banks opposed physical techniques but they don't say he opposed psychological techniques—sleep deprivation, sensory deprivation, exploitation of phobias, and sensory overload. Only the physical techniques. Then they do say that when the BSCTs and other Guantánamo staff went to Fort Bragg in September of 2002 for training, that he taught them in both physical and psychological techniques because he was instructed to. So he certainly doesn't sound like any hero.

The point is he was an advocate of psychological torture techniques. Now what's striking about the report is there is no list of the two types of techniques. You read the whole report—this is a fundamental distinction that goes through their report, yet there is no discussion about what falls in one or the other. It can't be missing by accident. It had to be deliberate.

So there's no discussion of sleep deprivation per se. There's no discussion of isolation. Isolation and sleep deprivation are the two most prototypic psychological techniques. They're the essence of all of them. With those two you don't need all the other torture techniques. Isolation and sleep deprivation will do all you need. You can get someone to confess to having murdered their truly, dearly beloved spouse with forty-eight hours of sleep deprivation. It's happened many times.

Q: Again, on the relationship between the government and the psychologists and all this—have you uncovered any direct evidence of pressure that the executive branch was putting on any of these guys—the APA, the military psychologists—to produce so-called evidence?

Soldz: Only rumor. This is one interesting story that's never been told publicly. In—I believe it was March of 2007—I spoke in California at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California. They had a forum on torture and I spoke. I think it was two weeks before that Alfred [W.] McCoy, author of *A Question of Torture*, had spoken at the Wright Institute—the psychology graduate school there. At the last minute the Wright Institute felt a need to be balanced and had invited Stephen [H.] Behnke, the APA's ethics director—who was the front man at that point for the APA's pro-interrogation position—to be a discussant of McCoy.

So when I spoke, these two—this is not irrelevant—lovely, young, female graduate students came up to me and said, "We were at Dr. McCoy's talk a couple weeks ago and afterwards we were sitting out on the curb. Dr. Behnke came over and sat with us, and he was saying, 'People don't understand how much pressure we're getting from the White House, and we can't change the policy.'" I went over this. I said, "You're saying this," and they confirmed it. Unfortunately, I was exhausted and I didn't get their emails. I asked them to email me. They never did. So this was one of our—we used to try to spook Behnke, hoping to get some information out of him. A few weeks later I sent Behnke an email. It was entitled something like, "Two lovely graduate students in San Francisco." I briefly recounted the story and said, "Oh, Steve, now I understand what great pressure you've been under. No wonder you pursue this ridiculous policy, with the White House on your back."

Q: What was the response?

Soldz: Fifteen minutes later I got back a somewhat furious, frenzied response, that CC'd [carbon copied] the director of the Wright Institute and someone else there that basically admitted that he had had this delightful conversation with these graduate students—that the White House had not come up! And asking the director of the Wright Institute to try to identify them and basically get them to stop spreading false rumors. A month later, whoever from the Wright Institute wrote and said, "I can't find out who they are, so this is the end of it." I have at least confirmation that he did have that meeting or discussion.

Now what's relevant there is—okay. Here's another time we tried to spook Behnke. This was my first experience of this. These are part of the fun stories—which, I have to say, it shocks the hell out of me that I was able to do this. You have to understand, psychologically, I hate feeling on the spot. My wife and I have this repetitive pattern. She asks me questions and I freeze up, and she gets livid and this and that. But if I talk about what's on—she asks, "How was your day?" and I say what I did today, she doesn't listen. But I hate being on the spot. So I'm amazed at myself that I pulled this off.

So in December of 2006, after I'd written two articles on the APA in *CounterPunch*, which were very hard-hitting, Behnke wrote me and asked to meet with me. He basically said, "Just tell me when and where, and I'll fly up and meet any time." So I got a bit spooked. I'm a bit timid, actually. It's surprising, given my writings. So I brought a colleague, David Sloan-Rossiter. I wanted someone there as a witness, for one thing. I didn't know what was up. I didn't know if I was going to be threatened. If I was going to be tempted—bribed. I didn't know what, so I wanted to make sure there was a witness there so it wouldn't be just a he-said/she-said situation. I also bought a tape recorder—an Olympus—and I was planning on asking him to allow me to record it. But something happened at the beginning—I'll tell you in a minute—which threw me off and I lost the nerve to do it.

So we set up. I think it was the week after Christmas or somewhere right around there in 2006, at a little Italian restaurant in Coolidge Corner here in Brookline—Firenze. It's not there anymore, but I used to like it a lot. It was an eight-table place and I knew that on a week night it would be very private and quiet. So we set this up. Behnke arrived a little late, maybe fifteen or twenty

minutes late. What threw me off was that he started talking about how when he's in Boston—he used to be at Mass [Massachusetts] Mental Health Center some years ago. I had done my internship there. I had been in therapy with June [G.] Wolf, who was chief of psychology there for six years. Then I terminated. Several years later, when I was going for an internship, Mass Mental was one of the top internship sites in Boston. So I wrote June Wolf and basically said, "I'm thinking of applying for an internship. What do you think, if I apply there?" She said, "It doesn't seem to me fair that you should be excluded because you were in therapy with me, but I'll have other people conduct the interview and I'll basically keep out of whether you're accepted or not." So I was interviewed by a couple of people and I was accepted on the in-patient unit, which I didn't want. I wanted the out-patient. I was again devastated and ended up loving it. I was terrified, to be honest, and I ended up really liking it.

Anyway, so I was in her internship program as well, having little contact other than that she had a weekly seminar. But she made sure that I was supervised by others. At the end of the year, we discussed what it had been like for the two of us and what was interesting was that it was much harder for her than for me. She found it really stressful. In fact, there had been a party at her house at the end of the year, and I brought a girlfriend and I kind of introduced her, and June Wolf freaked out and ran away.

Q: Such interesting stories.

Soldz: But what I was, at some level, so impressed by was that she was willing to do it. She could easily have either said no, or killed me privately and not go through this. But the fact that she was willing to do it was—.

Anyway, so Behnke comes in and he says, oh, he was just coming from June's and—I forget her husband's name. He always stays with her when he's in town. I was so thrown by this and I'm suddenly paranoid. What does he know? Does he know that I—? Later, I realized that she probably said I was in the internship. There's nothing confidential about my being in the internship. My having been in therapy with her is something else, although even that I wouldn't argue is strongly confidential because she had to have told some of the staff there to explain the process of application. In any case, he was not there when I was there. He came later. But it threw me enough that by the time I recovered my equanimity, the moment when I should have asked to record was past. I was just too emotionally trying to readjust. I never asked and I've always regretted it.

So we went on and parried. It was a very interesting evening because he was field-testing arguments on me. He was giving me counter-arguments, I would counter them, and there were two or three arguments that I didn't have good counters to.

Q: Such as?

Soldz: Such as the American Psychiatric Association, who had said their members shouldn't be involved in interrogations, had, nonetheless, said that they wouldn't take ethics action against anyone who did participate. That was one. I forget what the other one was.

Q: That's okay.

Soldz: Anyway, what was striking was that both those arguments appeared for the first time from surrogates—from what I believe are surrogates—from people who had been in contact with him within the few weeks beforehand, from two other sources, on listservs—although what he didn't know was I had found out what the facts were on these cases and had counters by then. So I'm one hundred percent convinced he was field-testing arguments. So we parried back and forth.

What we had planned with Natty from PHR and also Paul Rocklin, who was then at PHR, who was the solid [one]. Natty tends to come up with schemes. So I insisted on running it by Paul to see if he thought it was okay before actually doing it, and Paul had given it an okay. He was a more sober figure than Natty. So I decided, what the hell?

After a couple of hours of that, as planned, I said, "Okay." What's the phrase? "Let's put our cards on the table. You and I know that the whole story changes when the *Vanity Fair* article comes out." We were still expecting it was going to be about PENS. Behnke kind of blanched. At first he said, "What *Vanity Fair* article?" Which means that I knew he was lying, because I knew that she had actually talked with him in the last few weeks. I said, "You know, the one Katherine Eban is working on." Oh, no. At first he looked down, and then he took a sip of water, and then he took a sip—I can't remember if it was coffee or Coke that he had. I've got notes on

all this because I took them the next day, in great detail, so I wouldn't forget. He took another sip of water and then he said, "What *Vanity Fair* article?" So I knew that he was calculating, trying to figure out how to respond to this.

Q: But wouldn't he know that you knew that he was lying?

Soldz: That's what's interesting. Why did he decide to choose—that's why he was quickly calculating what to do. So I said, "Come on. Let me tell you what we know." I don't remember exactly. Basically, the thing was, "We know that Russ Newman—" who was an observer. Russ Newman was head of the APA practice directorate. His wife, Debra [L.] Dunivin, was a BSCT at Guantánamo. If the whole thing wasn't corrupt from beginning to end, the fact that someone whose wife was a BSCT would even be allowed to have anything to do with it, much less be in the room and have any influence—which he did—on the proceedings. If they had said it was unethical to be there, his wife could have been in trouble. It was beyond belief. Instead, Debra Dunivin went with Morgan Banks and Larry James to the surgeon general of the Army afterwards and revised the BSCT protocols to match PENS. So she used it to advance her career. I mean, the level of corruption in this whole process is simply amazing.

So I said, "We know that Debra Dunivin was a BSCT." That was slightly risky because we only had it because Surgeon General Kiley told Brad Olson, because he felt Brad Olson was on their side. And we didn't have a second source at that point. I can prove she was at Guantánamo. We found a grant of hers where it says she was unable to file a report because she was at Guantánamo. We have other evidence, but we didn't have it yet. I said, "I know you guys were

working with the Defense Department." That's when, in retrospect, I knew something—because he looked up and he said, "Defense Department. I'd like to see your evidence on that." This is where I put it together with the statement about the White House. **We now know that the CIA was behind PENS, not the Defense Department.** So he knew then that I'd missed it—that we had missed it and he was safe.

Q: Wow. What a story.

Soldz: Then David, realizing things were over, tried to distract by asking about a friend's ethics issue or something. He was interested in hearing Behnke talk about it because every word was simply about, "If he does this, he can't be brought up on charges." It was all about risk. Nothing about ethics. Ethics was not mentioned. It was only about risk avoidance, and you saw Behnke's mind work. He's very good at it. But there was nothing about ethics. So that was another one of our famous Behnke ruffles—which never worked, by the way.

[INTERRUPTION]

[END OF SESSION]

VJD

Session Two

Interviewee: Stephen Soldz

Location: Brookline, MA

Interviewer: Mary Marshall Clark

Date: May 24, 2012

Soldz: It had its moments. This is why I want to do a memoir.

Q: This is session two. Yes, I think you should do a memoir.

Soldz: Because if I write it up—I want the book actually to be read. I don't want to do a scholarly book. I edited a scholarly book. Once is enough.

Q: Yes. Well, you want the world to know about this.

Soldz: So. Where do we go? Behnke—the Behnke episode. The dinner. Funny for me. I don't remember what I had for dinner. [Laughter]

Q: Well, you were so thrown.

Soldz: So it was fun, but it didn't prove—we tried a number of times to spook Behnke but never succeeded. I still have a fantasy of some major revelations coming out, of flying down to D.C. and saying, "Steve, this is your last chance. Tomorrow—blank—either you spill the beans now or you go down." But they've always weathered everything so I don't think it will work. It's amazing, the resilience of it. It's probably because of the social denial.

Q: Talk to me. That's what I wanted to ask you about next.

Soldz: There's a mixture of different things. Well, one thing they've always had going for them is the complexity of the issue. Behnke is a master at using this.

Q: That's interesting.

Soldz: Some people have written—for example, an APA division called SPSSI—the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues—did a special issue on the PENS report. Brad Olson and I have a paper in there. So they put out a position—Costanza is his name [David P. Costanza, George Washington University]. And [M.] Brinton Lykes, whom I like a whole lot—but it sort of concluded by saying that the APA should take a position against torture, and they have [www.psych.org/edu/other_res/lib_archives/198506.pdf]. So the response by Behnke and Gerry Koocher blew them out of the ballpark. I mean, how to deal with the fact that APA says they're against torture. So this is where, dealing with the media, I've gotten good. After a while, what I developed was the phrase, "The APA is against torture just like the Bush administration is always against torture. They've just never seen it. It's the same with the APA." That's where I talk about learning a skill. Learning how to give the sound bite that I think is not dishonest, but conveys the essence in a very quick, easy-to-understand way. It's really one of the many skills that we had to learn. I think that's been one of my particular ones.

So most people simply buy it. They can't understand why APA says it's against torture. The PENS report says psychologists can't participate in torture. What's the problem? So you have to

get into details to really explain why that doesn't work, and people's eyes kind of glaze over. Behnke loves detail, and Behnke's position has always been, "This is an issue on which reasonable people can disagree." So they fostered dialogue. In the 2007 convention they had sixteen hours of mini-convention on the issue.

Q: I really want to hear that story about the mini-convention. Don't let me interrupt you, but I think you've talked about how that became a staging place for organizing, actually.

Soldz: Well, first, when I had dinner with Behnke—this relates to the mini-convention. I'm wondering, "Is he going to try to bribe me?" And I'm thinking, "Well, I can use the money. How much would he have to offer me? \$100,000? No, no. But if he offered me \$10 million? I don't know how much the CIA has got." [Laughs] You know these things that go on in your mind. Of course, I have David—

Q: College funds.

Soldz: Yes, yes. But he is, in fact, dangling something in front of me. He's dangling in front of me the possibility of being appointed to the committee that's planning the mini-convention. I'm sitting here thinking, "Oh, my God! That's all he think it will take to bribe me? That I can donate my time on some stupid committee?"

Q: And here you were thinking millions!

Soldz: I was absolutely flabbergasted, and a bit insulted. But I realized that that works with most people. That's the sad thing—that so many people in APA who oppose them are given this tiny little thing, to be head of a task force, or sometimes they give them \$3,000 for their pet task force issue or something, and they shut up. We've seen over and over again how little [it takes]. That's been one thing. So the mini-convention—they didn't appoint me.

[INTERRUPTION]

At the end of the night, he had not offered it to me. He dangled it all evening, and he knew I wouldn't play ball. So there wasn't any point.

So they had the mini-convention with eight two-hour sessions. They had some difficulty getting the military people. Many of them wouldn't speak. I don't even remember the topics of the sessions. One would have to find the documents from those days. I was on the next-to-the-last one, the last day, so there was a small audience with Michael Gelles, [with] whom I was very nervous about what to do. Michael Gelles is a little different than the others because he criticized some of the worst things that went on there. At that point, actually, we didn't know what to make of him. It wasn't until Jeffrey Kaye revealed his role in the King case—which had been staring in front of us because it was in the PENS listserv—and only Jeffrey had had the idea of following up and seeing what that was. Because he referred to it there in a way to indicate that they all knew what it was about. Because he said, "As we saw in the King case," or something. I remember when Jeffrey contacted me and said, "I've got Gelles."

I met Mike Gelles and he kind of said, "I'm mad at you. My son has read your blog and doesn't like what you say about me." We kind of chatted and I kind of liked him. I actually wanted to stay in touch afterwards, though never did, after the convention. But then I found out later—I was glad I hadn't.

I think the first session was on what had happened at Guantánamo. Steven Reisner was on that session. I remember being surprised—Steven Reisner is an actor. He won an Obie award. He hadn't prepared. He was going to ad lib. We had dinner the night before and I thought, "Oh, my God." This was high profile for us. I had crib sheets. I had written my quotes from all the main newspaper articles. At that point it wasn't mainly documents; it was mostly what the *New York Times* had said about what the Red Cross had said about the BSCTs at Guantánamo, etc. So I gave him my notes the night before, and thank God I did because when it got to the question period, [Ronald F.] Ron Levant—who is an APA president who had appointed the PENS task force—got up there in a very arrogant and nasty way and said, "Dr. Reisner, our profession is one based on facts and evidence and you've made a lot of claims without any evidence or facts. Just what evidence is there that anything bad has happened at Guantánamo?" And Steven got up there. This is where he's acting—he said, "Dr. Levant, unfortunately I have the answer to that," and he read all the quotes from my crib sheet.

Q: What a great story.

Soldz: Levant never uttered another word during the whole thing. Thank God. I give Steven credit. I don't know what he would have done without my notes. He knew the basics, but he

wouldn't have had it as concrete as the quotes. So there was that. In one of the sessions there was a BSCT—we've never known who because they used a fake name—who told us all about how wonderful they were. Told us, for example, that the reason the BSCTs needed access to the medical records was in case someone had a peanut allergy. She liked to bake cookies for the detainees and she couldn't give them peanut cookies. The ICRC had reported that they were using their records to torture them, basically. If they had a phobia, you could use the phobia to help break them down. This was the cover story that was developed afterwards. Larry James has basically the identical claim in his book.

One thing that was interesting—they were trying to keep the press out, or minimize it. Amy Goodman was there with her team, and they were not happy about that. They tried to restrict their filming, but Amy's team was very good at surreptitious filming.

Q: That's what they do.

Soldz: There was no way that Amy and her crew were going to let them get away with this.

So there was the famous—probably the most riveting moment—that you won't hear about from her because she was in a fugue state. Jean Maria Arrigo, who was on a panel on the PENS report with Olivia Moorehead-Slaughter, the chair of the PENS report, with basically an "I Accuse" session. Jean Maria said, basically, how this was obviously a put-up job, and she had presented this story to two counterintelligence operatives and here is what they said. How they explained that this was as a classic legitimization process for a decision that had already been made at higher

levels. Moorehead-Slaughter was—you could see her veins, the rage. She's up on stage and Jean Maria is [also]. We were so proud of her. Afterwards, she got a standing ovation from about half the audience, and half the audience was not happy. She didn't even know it. She was so out of it, she didn't even know.

One of the things she said publicly for the first time was that there were all these observers there who were, among other things, very high-level psychologists, including the first psychologist in the National Security Agency, a Bush-Cheney White House official, Susan Brandon, and APA officials who lobby for money at very high levels in the Defense and National Security Agencies. The argument made by her and the counterintelligence people was that these people, because of their high-level ties, outrank the people in the room, which means that everyone there—they all know that their bosses will know everything that happens, so they had better stay on the reservation. It was a way of sending the message that you're being watched. So one of those APA lobbyists—I was not present but I heard about this—launched into Jean Maria, a vicious attack afterwards. "You've humiliated me in front of my family!"

Right after that session we had a demonstration, a first demonstration, that Ghislaine [Boulanger] was one of the organizers of. Many of us spoke. I spoke. Brad Spoke. Steven Reisner, Ghislaine. I know Jean Maria never made it because she was so thrown off by being attacked by this woman. I'm trying to think. Amy Goodman was there. Amy and her brother David were also interviewing us. Did you see their portrait of us? I don't know if I sent that. In her book with her brother, David, *Standing up to the Madness: Ordinary Heroes in Extraordinary Times*, there's a chapter on our little group—Jean Maria, Steven, Brad and myself. That was very moving. I

remember I read that on my way to a conference in New York where I was speaking. On the bus, I'm reading this.

Q: It was especially important to be acknowledged then.

Soldz: Yes. Yes. When Amy did a book tour in Boston, she had those of us from the book who were in town come up and speak and to make a point, which was also very nice. She's a wonderful woman, Amy.

Q: So was that around the dues paying? What was the demonstration? You mentioned a demonstration. Many different things?

Soldz: Well, it was around protesting their interrogation policy. It was the people involved. The people involved in the dues-withholding were probably the core of that group, the so-called "Psychologists for an Ethical APA," which was Ghislaine's creation, out of the Withhold Dues, the steering committee of that, which was organizing a demonstration. At the end of the mini-convention, the APA insisted that the final thing be a town hall, sort of an open session where anyone could speak—and, obviously, they were expecting that the result of this would be to pull everyone together. This was after the vote. We had to go on the whole vote thing.

Q: Some of that I have.

Soldz: Neil [E.] Altman had been pushing a so-called moratorium on psychologists' involvement at Guantánamo and the black sites until the issue could be further explored. He proposed this the year before, and had gone through, and every official APA committee recommended against it, but I guess they got nervous it might pass anyway, or maybe it was just the bad publicity they were afraid of. So a month beforehand, thirty days—which is the minimum amount of time they can allow to introduce something—the APA board introduces a substitute motion. This is a parliamentary maneuver because by introducing a substitute motion, their motion gets voided on first and if it passes, the first motion never gets voted on. So it's a way of guaranteeing—and this motion would ban psychologists participation in, I believe it's twenty-one specific torture techniques, but would not ban participation in interrogations at the sites like Guantánamo. Another Behnke story—we'll get here.

We got quite upset. Now the Physicians for Human Rights had the idea of asking them to pass such a motion in addition to the moratorium, not as a substitute. We got upset at this parliamentary maneuver and we're hitting them on the listservs for this, as we always did. They eventually negotiated a compromise where Neil could introduce, basically, the moratorium as an amendment to this motion. So it would at least get a vote, though their amendment would provide the cover that they would need to defeat it. Among the things was—what APA always does in these motions is these late-night negotiations the night before and the wording magically changes to be consistent with what the CIA needs. So late night, around 2:00 AM, the motion to be voted on on the torture techniques had certain subtleties, like isolation was banned only as part of an interrogation process so that all they had to do was say it wasn't for the purpose of interrogation and you could do it, for example. A number of the psychological techniques were

only banned if they would cause significant harm, or something like that. I can't remember all the details of them.

Q: Those are documented.

Soldz: Yes. I remember Neil showed it to me in the morning. It was about 9:00. The meeting was starting at 9:00. He said, "Here's the text." All he cared about was moratorium. That was one of the problems, that all the people who are at these official negotiating meetings, none of them knew anything about the broader issues or cared. So I'm reading this and I go, "Oh, my God. They've pulled a fast one on us." So we're running around like crazy.

Are you likely to interview Steven Reisner?

Q: I hope to.

Soldz: Okay. Well, I'll tell my version, because his version might be different. He had been negotiating with Michael Gelles the night before to try to get a statement from Gelles supporting the moratorium. Gelles had said maybe. Gelles was having breakfast with Len [Leonard S.] Rubenstein, then of Physicians for Human Rights, that morning. Steven is going around like crazy, runs up to Gelles and goes, "Are you going to support it?" and Gelles said, "Will this end it?" and Steven says, "Yes." Gelles says okay, but Len was furious. Len later said, "I was working on him for an hour and you almost blew it. You shouldn't have done that. You had no business coming in here." It was like the kind of thing that Steven has done several times. He's

impulsive and he's gotten us into a lot of trouble with some of his impulsivity. What I hate is, I know he's wrong, but I'm not strong enough to stop him.

Q: Yes. He's charismatic.

Soldz: Yes. Well, he's both charismatic and he's very impulsive. He's so sure of himself. I'm not sure of myself. Therefore, I say, "I don't think that's a good idea." And he replies, "Well, that's okay. I'll do it anyway."

Anyway, so we were running around like crazy, just making copies of the motion to give out to a few people. That was taking us time. Steven, at least, is very good at thinking quickly. I'm trying to get copies made. He was running around while they're meeting—and we're not even allowed to be up there. He's sneaking up and talking to a few of our allies, trying to find someone who will introduce an amendment to their thing that would remove the problematic clauses. So he finds Bert Karon, an old psychoanalyst in the division of psychoanalysis [39] and he says he'll introduce an amendment for us, but Bert doesn't really understand. He hasn't a clue what it is—what he's introducing. Of course, he doesn't do a good job. We managed, at least, to get it introduced. It got defeated with like three votes or so because Bert couldn't explain what the issues were—quite naturally.

So they got that in, then the moratorium went down with somewhere between fifteen—depending upon who you ask. I think it was more like fifteen percent, fifteen to twenty-five percent of the vote. They had flown in Larry James from Guantánamo to introduce their anti-

torture motion, in uniform. Larry James told the *Guantánamo Newsletter* that he was representing the Defense Department at the APA. Whether that's true or not I don't know because Larry James is a fantasist. But that's the kind of thing they do. And he says, "If psychologists are pulled from Guantánamo, people will die." Fortunately, [Laurel B.] Laurie Wagner from the Division of Psychoanalysis had the presence of mind to say, "Well, if it's true that if psychologists are pulled people will die, then this is a place that no one should be at, psychologist or not." But we lost. It was always fore-ordained that we would lose because the board was never going to be defeated.

Okay. So Mark Benjamin, of *Salon* at the time—Mark asked Behnke the next day, "Where did you get this revision, these clauses you put in?" He said, "Oh. From PHR and from Soldz's blog."

So Mark told us that. We were hanging out. Mark said, "Oh, that's very interesting because I have here a letter from PHR to you that explicitly asks that you remove them." At which point Behnke ended the interview. Mark published that but he didn't publish the Soldz's blog part because—"Soldz's blog. What's that?" [Laughter] It just shows what a blatant liar this so-called ethics director is. It's interesting—Mark Benjamin, before the convention, had published a piece, something like, "Are Psychologists Prepared to Condemn CIA Torture?" His article after the convention was something like, "Are Psychologists Still Abetting CIA Torture?"

So they won their vote. Then there was this public meeting that I'll have to go into, a town hall meeting. Speaker after speaker is going up there, denouncing them. Doug [Douglas C.] Haldeman and I forget who—a woman—were chairing this meeting. Doug Haldeman is running for president. He'll be elected this year. [He lost - SS] Surprisingly, he lost last year. But we had

heard him talking to the press right after the vote about how we only had a few bad apples, as psychologists, were involved in this—despicable guy.

But anyway, speaker after speaker is denouncing the APA, which is not what they had expected. They had expected everyone to come together. It had been their idea to have this town meeting. Then Amy Goodman goes up, grabs the mic and says, "They're threatening to call the police to kick us out of here. They've told us we can't record and we won't stop. So what are you going to do about it?" [Laughter] The place erupts, we have a quick vote, basically, and Haldeman turns red. Stephen Behnke comes up and says, basically, "A mistake has been made. They can record." But I saw Amy at her best. She wasn't going to let those bastards intimidate them. And you see their usual lying. They make up some excuse about, "Oh, we're afraid about being overwhelmed by the press so we have to allow different reporters in." Well, Amy's crew were the only ones there. They just lie. The whole APA apparatus is just—. That was one for our side, and Amy got some great footage there. She also got Jean Maria's talk and posted it on *Democracy Now*.

Right after the convention, we were actually very down because of the passing of the motion, the loopholes that they'd gotten in which we thought were just—. We had lunch after the vote and we were so depressed. Natty was convinced the CIA had written these clauses. Len wasn't so convinced, but Len's never—at some level, he's never gotten it. Len's always believed it's mainly about sort of understandings of ethics and has not really understood it as corruption—as collusion in a direct way. I think he may be getting it now. I have the most respect for Len. I love him. I want to make it completely clear. But I think, at this level, he never got it—and it's very

hard to get. I think so many people in the APA just don't get it because they can't believe that these people are actually, directly, complicit in torture.

Q: Well, we started this session talking about denial.

Soldz: So in some sense, to get through the denial, you have to believe that senior APA officials were complicit in torture. You have to believe it's a possibility, at least. Let's put it that way. Obviously, it's not rational to start out believing that they're complicit in torture, but you have to entertain that possibility. You have to also be willing to spend time with the evidence. Very, very few people are willing to do that. We've raised questions about Larry James. He was at Guantánamo when the SOPs were written, for example. He was at Guantánamo only a couple of months before the ICRC visited and said they found the system tantamount to torture, and the BSCTs as central in that system. So a bunch of APA insiders—I think initially all women, many of whom known for their social justice positions—wrote a letter of apology to Larry James, apologizing for the misguided actions of their colleagues.

Q: Are these the peace psychologists you were talking about?

Soldz: These were not actually the peace psychologists. These were another group, including the immediate past president, now, Melba [J.] Vasquez, who was a good friend of Ken Pope's. She's written books with Ken on ethics. But they're APA insiders, so they know all these people. They also threw race in there. They threw in the subtle implication that we did it because Larry James is African-American and we want to destroy senior African-American psychologists. I literally

had no clue Larry James was African-American until that moment. I'd never met him, never seen a picture. Brad knew him because Brad had been threatened by him. He tried to hit Brad once, which he brags about in his book. He doesn't name Brad by name. But when Brad raised the issue of John Leso, James got up and started to attack him. "How dare you attack that fine young lad," or something. James brags about it and gives exactly the same version that Brad does. James gives, in his book, saying, "People tell me it was the most exciting moment at an APA convention."

I'm winding around the denial. So when Natty tried to get—and PHR, because it wasn't just Natty—tried to get his group together, they naturally turned to Division 48, the Peace Psychology Division. At that point, two of their leaders, Linda [M.] Woolf and Judy [Judith L.] Van Hoorn, invited them on phone calls. They got on one phone call and basically never returned—they just didn't respond anymore. A lot of it was around strategizing for what to do about the moratorium. Now they were pissed at us because—I've never known what happened. In the 2006 convention, which I wasn't at—I was in Australia and I wouldn't have been at it anyway because I don't usually go to them. At the 2006 convention, Division 48 had written this anti-torture resolution—very high-sounding—against torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment—punishments, CIDT [Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment]. During the debate on it, the question came up of defining CIDT. There was a fifteen-minute break and they rewrote it, defining CIDT based on the U.S. reservations to the UN [United Nations] Convention on Torture and the McCain Amendment, which also uses the U.S. reservations. They didn't tell anyone what they had done. When he was coming home from the convention, Steven Reisner was reading it, saw that, and blew his lid because the U.S. reservations are specifically designed to protect

psychological torture, to weaken the definition of CIDT and psychological torture, too, so that it doesn't apply to almost anything in the CIA or the traditional U.S. torture techniques—isolation, sleep deprivation, stress positions, etc.

They got very defensive. That's what my second article was on, some of these actions. We criticized them, they defended themselves in I now know as Linda's endless legal style, where she never actually answers anything and goes on, and on, and on. Judy told me a couple years later—when we had a brief attempt at a reconciliation when I became president of Psychologists for Social Responsibility [PsySR]—she told me that they had gotten this from Paul Rocklin of PHR. I know Natty was enraged about it, but it's not impossible that Judy is correct because I had once been at the PHR office and I said something to Paul about this, and he said something that didn't make sense to me at the time. He said something about, "Well, how could the APA take a position stronger than U.S. law?" Or something like that that didn't make any sense. I didn't understand it. It made me wonder if it's possibly true that he was the source.

But one of our beefs with these Division 48 folks was, as I told Judy—I said, "If they had said, 'Look, we know this definition is problematic. We were in a tight spot. We felt if we didn't have a definition ASAP [as soon as possible], the thing would go down. It was the best we could come up with,' I would have said okay." I don't believe people are perfect. You make mistakes and you use imperfect things, but the point is, they would never acknowledge that. We would write pages and pages explaining. David [J.] Luban—a Georgetown Law School attorney and great international law scholar—had written extensively, explicitly on the U.S. reservations and what the problem is. We sent this to them. David explains exactly why this caused—and he wrote a

piece for my blog on exactly why this cause was a disaster. If they had said, "We wish that wasn't it," if they had done anything to acknowledge it, but they could never do that. So, in some sense, partially, I don't care where they got it from. If you don't want to acknowledge that it's problematic, you own it.

So that soured relations, but I think, in the end, another factor was that they were the appointed opposition. Behnke sort of appointed them the opposition, so they were the insiders and they relished the role. They were important people. I think they really resented us outside opposition, as did a number of others. We were sort of like the extra-parliamentary opposition, from either Ghislaine with Withhold Dues and those of us who became the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology who weren't insiders. We were fighting a very different kind of battle. We weren't on APA committees. We weren't polite. We were fighting it in the press. This is one of my major contributions, because my position—I think I was unique at this for quite a while—my position in the beginning was that the APA has been in bed with the military intelligence establishment. I didn't know how much. I said, "We're not going to win this by fighting this politely because there's a lot at stake." There's power, there's money, there's influence. So my strategy was to say that we can only win it if it becomes a public issue. One, if it goes way beyond APA, and two, if it goes way beyond psychology.

So for me, writing for non-psychology sources was always central. The other point was, the listservs we have access to had only a small minority of APA members, even. We had no access to the vast majority of members, who aren't on those listservs. Those listservs probably have ten percent.

Q: Why did you have no access?

Soldz: How would we have access? The only way of communicating was listservs. So the APA listservs—most members are not on any of them. Maybe only ten percent are on any of them, I think. I'm making that number up, but it's just not lots of people. The APA is something they pay dues to—you get your malpractice insurance. If you see that someone you know is running for president, maybe you vote. I don't know.

Q: It's a massive organization.

Soldz: Most professional organizations are sort of like that.

So we didn't have access, except through the press. Part of it was to make it a public issue, and part of it was to also make it the kind of issue where APA member Joe Schmo goes to a dinner party and his cousin says, "Hey, what is it with those psychologists?" So we come to that part. Rumor has it that—what is his name? One of the APA presidents. The guy after Alan [E.] Kazdin. I'm blocking on his name again—a particularly unpleasant character [James H. Bray].

Q: Not Zimbardo.

Soldz: No, no, no. Zimbardo was much earlier. It will probably come to me in a bit. He went to a dinner party, and he's introduced as president of the APA, and someone said, "Oh, you're the people who torture." Partially, we accomplished it.

Q: Yes. You made that happen.

Soldz: Also, it was to make it a human rights issue around the world. Partially, we did. Not anywhere near as much as we would have wished, but lots of people have heard about it. It's been very moving when we've had successes, like we passed the member-initiated referendum. We heard from human rights people in all kinds of places. We may have even heard from Burma about how inspiring it was to them that you could stand up to the powers.

Q: People need that.

Soldz: I think, initially, I take credit for this. This was my thinking. I don't think anyone else really had—everyone else was fighting it within the profession.

Q: Well, the story was bigger than the profession.

Soldz: Yes. The story was much bigger than the profession, and we couldn't win it within the profession. It wasn't a battle just for the profession. So a lot of the insiders resented deeply—partially, they don't feel you should go outside. It's like your family's dirty laundry. They view it as just a professional issue.

Q: Is that partly a result of the collusion? Meaning the opposite of openness and transparency to the polar opposite of hiddenness and secrecy.

Soldz: I think the culture in the APA is just a rotten one to its core. That's what Bryant [L.] Welch—who was head of the practice directorate in the nineties, who founded it—that's what he says. He says that Raymond [D.] Fowler, the former executive director, basically developed this style of rule by stealth and manipulation. He claims that he deliberately doubled the size of the council to make it a dysfunctional, non-deliberative body so that it couldn't actually be a counterweight to the staff, to him, which it isn't.

But you can just see—what was striking working with Bryant was that all the people we've mentioned he knew, and he had not been involved for over ten years. It's the same people. On council, they just move. They become president of one division, then they become council rep from another. Then they become this from that. It's the same hundred-and-so people. There are one hundred and eighty-or-so on council, but one hundred of them are the same people who had been insiders for decades. They just move from one division to another, one position to another. So you check who was on the finance committee—one of the famous scandals in APA history was the former executive director—

The former executive director—Ray Fowler—when he resigned halfway through his ten-year term and they gave him a multi-million-dollar buyout in secret—illegally—because it was done as an emergency measure by the board. Whereas the by-laws say that this wasn't an emergency;

you should have gone to council. So the only people who knew were the finance committee and the board.

Well, who was on the finance committee? Gerry Koocher, who was the board rep to the PENS report; Nina Thomas, who was on the PENS Committee. They're all the same people. Nina Thomas is another one of those insiders who's a human rights advocate. She's opposed torture in Bosnia. Yet, when we started on this—both Steven Reisner and I talked to her several times. I begged her to come forward, because Jean Maria—there are only three non-military, independent people, other than the chair on the committee—Jean Maria, Mike [Michael] Wessels—who had denounced the PENS process, afterwards—and Nina. So if Nina had done it, then all the non-military people would have done it. She refused. When Steven spoke to her, she couldn't remember that Russ Newman had been present there. Then a few days later, she suddenly remembered. We begged her to speak to Katherine Eban, and she wouldn't speak to her. But she's denounced the PENS report since then, and periodically tries to help her reputation. On the Section 9—Psychoanalysis and Social Justice list—she goes, "Oh, what can we do to help Steven Reisner's election as APA president?" Then someone said, "Well, then, how come you endorsed whoever his opponent is in a letter sent to the New Jersey Psych [Psychological] Association?"

Q: What was her answer?

Soldz: She didn't. That's one of the most amazing things in this whole thing—the fact that almost nobody ever answers when you score a point. The number of people we have dialogues with—

they throw question after question at us, which we answer in great detail. We frame a question to them—no response. Ever.

Q: No accountability.

Soldz: No accountability, and no sense of, "They responded to me. I should be willing to—" No reciprocity. Michael [B.] Donner is this guy in California who's an ethics guy. He's on the ethics committee. He's one of the people, the surrogates, I mentioned, who had a meeting in D.C. with Behnke. Within a week or two they were throwing one of Behnke's points that he tried with me out on the listserv. I don't know. Michael may sincerely believe. I think some of the people are just duplicitous. But he would throw questions at me. I would write pages trying to explain stuff in response. I would phrase a question to him, and there would be nothing. Steven had the same experience. Donner wrote a listserv [message] in which he attacked me strongly for saying, in an article, the exact opposite of what I had said. He said I don't understand that isolation is used in mental hospitals. However, I had written about isolation and mental hospitals in the article, and why that was different? So I wrote to him, and to his credit he said, "Can I distribute this on the list I distributed at?" And he did, but the dialogue didn't go anywhere past that. I tried to. But he did, at least, spontaneously circulate it. He had enough integrity to do that. Rare. It hasn't usually been there.

I mean, I think—how do you admit that your professional association, to which you've devoted years of your life, in which you're an insider and you identify with, is complicit in torture?

Q: It's mind-boggling, really.

Soldz: It's really mind-boggling. You know how many articles I've published.

Q: Can't count them all.

Soldz: It's striking how many people say, in the Division of Peace Psychology—you would think they would have read some of them. How many people claim to know none of the facts that are the basics here that I've written about maybe twenty-thirty times? At Psychologists for Social Responsibility, when I was president we held our first conference in years in Boston. So we had Natty Raymond as keynote speaker. It's a great—I don't know if you've seen it. It's on YouTube. He goes over our little group and our history. I had no idea he was going to do that. I was embarrassed. I was so proud and embarrassed, because I had invited him. I don't know if I'd have felt comfortable if I'd known he was going to do that. I should have guessed, because a day before or so I said something about, "I'm going to embarrass you when I introduce you." I call him one of the unheralded heroes of our time or something. And he said, "Wait until you hear how I embarrass you."

Q: Nice.

Soldz: But people in the audience would say, "Well, you should publish this."

I would say, "I have. Maybe thirty, forty, fifty times."

"Oh, I didn't know that. Why don't you circulate them?"

"I have."

"Every single one of them?"

"Thirty. Forty. Fifty times. On the listserv. What am I supposed to do? I've written thirty-forty-fifty articles. We've circulated every press article on this issue. If you don't know who Mitchell and Jessen are, I don't know what I'm supposed to do."

So there's that level. There's the fact that you have to understand the issue about the redefinition of torture. You have to entertain the possibility—at least—that maybe the APA is being a little duplicitous when they say they're against torture. Because the language sounds good.

Q: Except that they're still there, working at a torture site.

Soldz: Well, but, see, they claim—the cover story is that they're there to prevent torture. Psychologists have a vital role to play—

Q: Do they actually believe that most Americans believe that? How far does the denial go?

Soldz: Most APA members believe it.

Q: Right. But I'm saying, most Americans.

Soldz: Well, look. Most Americans, unfortunately, are not anti-torture.

Q: Most New Yorkers are.

Soldz: The cover story they framed, based on the instructions for the BSCTs, based on the OLC [Office of Legal Counsel] torture memos, is that psychologists have a vital role in keeping interrogations safe, legal, ethical, and effective. That's what the press release for the PENS report said. That's what Behnke said over and over and over again. So the position was that Larry James prevented torture at Guantánamo. Scott Shumate protested torture in the CIA. It's very hard. The latest thing was recently, about a year ago, we launched—well, it shows how deep all this stuff goes. Let me see. This would be winter a year ago, so it would be, I guess, 2010-2011 winter. I don't know exactly. The Peace Psychology Division 48 had its retreat—a strategic planning retreat. They have Stephen Behnke as the facilitator. They published this in their newsletter. We read it, and we went, "Oh, my God. Do you usually invite war criminals to facilitate your retreats? Is that what peace psychology is about? Rehabilitating war criminals?"

So Roy Eidelson, who knows Julie Levitt, who was then president of the division, called her—is friends with her—called her up and said, "What is this about?" She said, "Oh, Behnke is so helpful. He's a good facilitator. We weren't discussing interrogations, so what difference did it make?" Some of us who had been involved with them for years were so disgusted we didn't even

care—sort of. Fortunately, Roy hadn't been burned enough yet, so he got together a letter to them, which we got about fifteen senior members, and six or eight former presidents of the division, to sign it, along with a number of other senior members, basically saying, "What the fuck are you folks doing?" We gave them a fact sheet on what Behnke had done.

So they discussed it and discussed it forever, and then they said, "Well, we're going to appoint a committee and a task force to formulate whether it's okay for the division to be involved in public policy." But you're a Division of Peace Psychology, and isn't it automatic that you can be involved in policy? It's like I don't even know what peace psychology is. Is it just curricula on a topic called peace? I don't know. I really think that they think there is war psychology, which is okay. That's that field, because they love—

Q: It's the polar opposite, but within the same frame.

Soldz: Well, they talk all the time about how they love collaborating with the military psychology division. I don't understand what peace psychology is, frankly.

Q: Maybe psychology during peacetime.

Soldz: It's called something like the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence. So they appointed this committee, which Roy and Jean Maria agreed to be members of. Roy and Jean Maria proposed that the division call for annulling the PENS report. They spent six months—. A couple of leaders, Kathleen [Dockett] and Linda Woolf, did everything possible to

sabotage this. They would fire pages after pages of questions at Jean Maria and Roy, who would write pages, and again, of course, they would never respond to anything. It was only one way. They spent months doing this. Then it was clear that the annulment idea had a majority at the task force behind it, so Julie, the president, suspended discussion of the issue for several months, for a cooling-off period. So it took months to force them to take a vote, at which point the task force vote was never announced. Then it went to the Division Executive Committee.

You have to understand, Linda is a great advocate for democracy. She used to be the webmaster of the division, which is an appointed position, which got her onto the executive committee. Then they created a new position of division historian, which is appointed, and her position is that it was that they couldn't take the position unless it was unanimous. She's an appointed member, and has been an appointed member for a decade. This is how the APA works. It's like all this total corruption. This person is appointed and they're able to play a central role in obstructing everything by citing the need for "democracy." People won't call her on it and say, "What the fuck are you up to? You're not even elected by the membership," which is bad enough, because elections are hardly—unless there are a lot of candidates—but at least there's some nominal democratic accountability.

So they held it up for months and they didn't take action. Finally, Roy gave up on it, and Roy said, "Let the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology call for this and ask Division 48 to endorse it." That was a year ago that we finally got to that stage. Division 48 Executive Committee did endorse it, with Linda and Kathleen opposing it. Then, in February of this year—it's been signed by two thousand individuals. I insisted, this time, that it be open to everyone—not even U.S.

citizens—anyone around the world, and not just psychologists. I'm sure the majority of people are psychologists, but I insisted that we couldn't play that insider game anymore. This is not an issue for a profession, this is an issue of human rights, and we were not going to play that way. So it's open to anyone who has been endorsed by thirty-four organizations. It's the first time the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] has ever supported an initiative of ours; certainly, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, other human rights groups. I think it's nine either APA divisions or Section IX, the first time that anyone but Section IX in APA has ever supported any of our initiatives. So I think it's very threatening to them.

So in February, Roy and I were in D.C. We had just finished the Psychologists for Social Responsibility winter retreat. We didn't have Behnke facilitate it. Damn. We should have thought of that. [Laughter] Roy and I were actually staying over a day to meet with the Army on another project. We had written a critique of the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program [CSF], which was called "The Dark Side of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness," which led to congressional inquiries of the CSF program. This is a program to build resilience among soldiers that Marty Seligman was paid—or his organization, PENS—\$31 million—

Q: Yes. I'd like to bookmark a conversation about him.

Soldz: Yes. So we wrote this critique of it. Congress had inquiries. It got a lot of press. So the Army invited a number of us critics in for a day of discussion. So we were hanging over for that, and the morning of this we hear from Julie—we'd actually heard, I think, a day before from Kathleen, informally—that there was going to be an ad hoc task force with Linda, Julie, and

Kathleen from Division 48. [William J.] Bill Strickland is a CEO at Human Relations Research Organization, HumRRO, a major psychological defense contractor, who has just been asked onto the APA board—because who would you want on your board but defense contractors? He's always the APA go-to person whenever the APA wants to protect military interests. It's unbelievable that they're going to put defense contractors directly on the board. But, then again, the former CEO was the treasurer for a decade. Laura Brown, who had been one of the authors of that letter to Larry James apologizing for our actions, and who had publicly stated that our actions were akin to murder, because the Talmud says that gossip is worse than murder. She's a former supposed social activist, so she writes that to raise questions about Larry James is worse than murder. This is the kind of climate that we're dealing with. Who has also stated quite openly, on other listservs, that the goal of the task force is to make sure that psychologists stay involved in national security.

Q: By some definitions, old man [Robert] Spitzer might declare this insanity. [Laughter]

Soldz: Yes. It really fits in well with social denial. I can't remember—did I send you my chapter that goes over something like thirteen techniques of denial that the APA uses, or something?

Q: You might have, but I don't—

Soldz: It's from a book from the Harvard Law School.

Q: You know, when I downloaded it I only got the first page, so I'm sure I have it.

Soldz: I went over their—

Q: I have it. It failed to print, so I haven't—

Soldz: So this new task force is supposed to put together all the policies of APA—post-PENS—on the interrogations business, so they can have one, comprehensive policy. That doesn't sound bad, but the problem is, one—again, as you can tell, I'm getting tired of being polite—who the fuck are these people? They're a self-appointed bunch of insiders, namely. They're self-appointed and ratified by the APA board. It's the same old trick that the insiders—not one person on the task force supported the referendum. They represent the forty percent of members who voted against. No one on there represents the sixty percent of members who voted for the referendum. The peace psychology people moved actively to try to defeat the referendum by making up excuses why it was going to hurt human rights—Linda Woolf in particular.

Anyway, Julie did sign the PENS annulment statement. She was the only one on there that signed that. I believe Kathleen may have done so recently. But the problem is, one—this is an important point, which they studiously claim not to understand. We've stated it over and over and over again. There are two aspects of it. One is, PENS is the only time the participation in interrogations and other national security operations—because interrogations are not all. There is a whole growing field of what they call operational psychology. Jean Maria and Roy have just written a great article in which they distinguish what they call collaborative operational psychology, which we find non-problematic, like personnel selection. Adversarial operational

psychology, where the people you're acting on—you don't have, essentially, input or implicit consent, and you are acting against their interest. That, in our view, violates all professional ethics, and is also outside the purview of what ethics committees can regulate. Therefore, no psychologist should be involved in it. If you're involved, you're an intelligence officer, so you're not a psychologist and you need to surrender your license. We're leaving aside the issues of what are those are ethical to be, for the intelligence agents. Some are, some aren't. But that's a different profession than psychology. Psychology has a do-no-harm ethic, and an ethic of transparency.

But PENS is the only time this has ever been discussed. So if PENS is taken out, if PENS is annulled and taken out of the equation, there has never been any deliberation. So if Linda Woolf says over and over again, "The APA ethics code doesn't ban being involved in any setting," so, therefore, of course, psychologists can be involved in these settings. We say no, because it violates everything in the goddamn ethics code. At a minimum, it's never been discussed, so until it's discussed openly, and not just by the APA but by the entire profession, and with input from all the other stakeholders, human rights groups, military people, including intelligence and counterintelligence people, interrogators—because we've talked to many of them, many of whom don't want psychologists involved in any direct way. They think psychologists are harmful to their work. There are a lot of stakeholders, and it involves the whole profession, not just the APA as an organization. Until that discussion is held, no, there isn't an agreement. But the problem is, all of the post-PENS statements—because PENS was policy—are based on the presumption that psychologists can be present.

Therefore, you can't put them together without implicitly building PENS in, because they're all fruit of the poisoned tree. So you can't do it. Or, to do it is to accept PENS, regardless of whether you say—so then they say, "Well, then PENS will no longer be in effect." So it's a way of not annulling PENS but keeping the PENS policy. We point this out over and over again. So here are these three peace psychology people, and I just don't understand exactly. Linda, personally, I think is narcissistic, and I think it's all about her and her ego. I just think that's what it's about. She can't stand that anyone else is going to be the one who resolves the issue. Kathleen, Julie and I don't understand.

You have to understand—they did this without telling Gil Reyes, the president of the division. He found out at the same moment we did, when they made a public announcement. Gil Reyes was aghast. He published something on the division listserv, saying, "This is not a division initiative; this is not endorsed by the division. This is the action of three private individuals." But all the statements say that three people from Peace Psychology—from the leadership of Peace Psychology—because that's their claim to fame. Now Linda Woolf is a member of eight other divisions, so she could have claimed membership in any division. But only Peace Psychology would bring an imprimatur, so it's a way of cheating and claiming Peace Psychology is behind this thing that was designed to try to undercut the PENS annulment initiative. Now the problem is going to be—it's hard to explain all these details in public and have people listen. They glaze over. You start, and it's like, "He-said, she-said," and Linda writes ten pages in response. We've asked over and over and over again, basically, will the PENS policy statement that psychologists have a role to play in these sites be included in the common thing? Is there any way it cannot be,

given your mandate to put together all existing APA policies, given its APA policy? Linda will write five, six, seven pages in response and not answer it.

Roy will say, again, “Thank you. Please answer my question. Here's a question. It's a yes or no question.” And Linda will write another six or eight pages and not answer it. We've gone maybe ten rounds and finally Linda stops answering, and we've never gotten an answer. The other two members just refer to Linda. We've never gotten any answer to this question of how you can—

Q: So what is the total, in terms of those of you who are sticking your necks out?

Soldz: Oh, God. I have to say—on one level I feel very weird even talking about it when you think about the detainees at Guantánamo and what they've suffered for ten years.

Q: Well, I know.

Soldz: Or, even, say, the guards there, and the interrogators, and the horrors that they've suffered. I've talked to a number of them, and they're wrecks. I think of my colleagues—as you know, I've been involved in a few of the cases, but I haven't been like David Remes, going back and forth. What David has suffered and what he has given up—so I feel like, at some level, what I've given up is so little. I just want to say that it's a very weird feeling to know that, at some level, it's so little, and to feel like—

Q: Isn't that the way of, like, in this world, we're all so separated, and the struggles are so isolated, that the way of denying, in a sense—what it's cost you is different than what it's cost them.

Soldz: I'm not going to deny it. I'm going to go on to that, but I just want to sort of explain that background. It's always there.

Q: Of course.

Soldz: I think Aung San Suu Kyi, who missed her husband's death. But what it's cost—on many different levels. Professionally, certainly it's cost us financially, because I have a half-time position here at the school that pays peanuts. I'm supposed to be getting practice and research consulting, and I haven't had time to do any outreach in the last six years. So other than a few things that have come to me and a tiny amount of bucks for giving a few talks—once I was given a thousand bucks. Sometimes you're given \$200. We lost a lot of money. My wife has been relatively patient—not always—about that. It's been difficult. We've got a son going to college and we don't have any money in the bank, so it's going to be an issue, and your retirement.

Certainly, my family experienced distance. As I say, my son used to say, "My dad's hobby is torture," because it was clear—"Oh, I've got a conference call." Now, I'll say, on the other hand I've been very available. One of the things of having a part-time job is that I've been able to be home. I work at home the other days, most of the time, even when I'm doing research consulting or something. So I've been around as he's grown up and been there most days when he's been

home from school. So it's had pluses as well. But I've certainly been preoccupied, and there have been many, many times when, "You want to go to a movie?" "Oh, I can't. I've got to write a press release," or, "I've got to do this. I've got to edit this draft. It's got to get out tomorrow."

Because part of our strategy as the coalition was rapid response to every time the APA or something pulled something, that we would hit them. We would hit them hard, and we would hit them quick. Gerry Koocher launched a vicious personal attack on Jean Maria, and I called her up and I said, "Jean Maria, don't answer the phone. Don't respond to any emails. Don't talk to the press. I will deal with this. I promise you, it will be dealt with." We mobilized—we wrote a statement. I got other people to write open letters, and Gerry Koocher didn't utter another word for a couple of years. He got his facts wrong and we humiliated him. That was one. A general thing, also, very much we had this policy that Brad really articulated, initially, that we would defend each other. The three musketeers—four musketeers, when Jean Maria joined us—but it was usually Brad, Steven, and I.

We didn't know what we were up [against]. There are accounts of APA doing some very nasty things to critics on other issues. We don't know if they're true, but there are apocryphal accounts that people have criticized them, like on prescription drug privileges. They had new patients come in who then accused them of sex abuse, and things like that. We had no idea what we were going to be hit with—plus we were dealing with the intelligence establishment as well. We didn't know. In the end, it turned out okay, but we had to take this on not knowing how great the risks were going to be.

Q: It's a lot of worry.

Soldz: Yes. So it did help when we first started and Brad said, "We'll defend you." So there certainly was that personal level there—the family level because this was a lot of time and energy. For the first several years it was way over twenty hours a week that we were putting into this, week in and week out, and disappointment after disappointment, made worse by Natty, who was always promising and not delivering. I wish he had a different style—"This may happen"—which is my style. I'm always, "It's possible that this can happen." I hate being disappointed. And carrying the chronic fear for a while, but dealing with the dark side of human nature year in and year out—just seeing everyone turn away. At Abu Ghraib—I remember a good friend of mine here, who had come to those initial Psychoanalysts for Peace and Justice meetings and gone to a couple of demonstrations, came up and said, "You know, I just can't read about it. I can't think about it." For some reason—which is an interesting psychological question that I'd like to study sometime—there are those of us who can't look away. I've always been that way, and I don't quite understand it. I'm sure it's due to personal history, being an outsider, just like those who helped the Jews in World War II. We know that one of their characteristics is that they're all outsiders in some way. They have a way in which they have a minority sort of definition, of not being part of the mainstream. That seems to be critical, to see from the perspective of the victim. Also, just to be able to stand up the majority pressure; to be able to resist it.

My son goes crazy. I couldn't care less about fashion or whatever. I haven't a clue what it is. He says, "Oh, that's not fashionable." I'll say, "That's okay. I don't mind. I'm willing to wear something that's fashionable, if it happens to be." I wear whatever I like, and what's cheap and

on-sale. That's my two criteria. [Laughs] I've recently taken to liking certain pop music. My wife makes fun of me. I say, "Don't you understand? It's not that I'm against what's popular. I just don't care if it's popular or not. I like what I like." There are some popular movies that I actually like. I just couldn't care less if they're popular. So I think that provides some involvement.

But this has dragged on, and part of the problem is that a lot of people have kind of deserted us. They've moved on. We got certain successes, but at some level we lost the war so far. APA is still going strong. Most people are convinced that the issue is essentially dead, which is why we revived the PENS annulment campaign, and we're still hoping we can deal them the coup de grâce, that certain information will become public that will get through the denial about APA involvement. We're preparing for that. But Natty's moved on. He's into other human rights work now. That was a huge blow to us, because he was always a central—he was the one who had the investigations, and the insider. But I feel like, also, if we quit, they win. It's hard. There is only us. There is only a small group of us who are going to keep it going, and if we don't, no one will. It's basically the coalition. Ghislaine has basically moved on. It's basically the six of us. That's basically it, and if we stop, there will be no one raising the issue.

So it's tough. It's gotten so, in the last year or two, I've just felt worn out. As I mentioned in the break, there are other personal issues—parents, medical issues, my son's pending going to college. Those things get all mixed in together. But I've been so tired, or just not feeling—. It's been much harder to motivate myself. My writing productivity has been way down. We've been very lucky that Roy came along in the last couple of years. So he's new at this. He still has energy. He's starting to wear down a little bit, but he had a lot of energy and picked up the slack.

He was the big force behind PENS' annulment. We couldn't have done it without him because we were just too worn out, and we were too cynical. Only Roy was naïve enough to actually make it happen. We would never have asked those APA divisions because we'd been rejected so many times. This time they responded.

In that sense, it's been very tough. New blood occasionally, but it's scary now. We had a conference call this week and we had some great ideas. Then it's like, "Okay. Who's willing to write that press release?" and there is a resounding silence. None of us really feel the energy. Like William Strickland's getting onto the board of directors—appointing a defense contractor to the board of directors. It's outrageous. Yet, if we don't raise it, no one else is going to. What I should do is spend this holiday weekend writing something, but I just haven't had the energy recently, so I don't know.

Q: I'm interviewing Vartan Gregorian right now, who was head of Brown [University] for a while, UPenn [University of Pennsylvania], and various things, and he had some very wise advice for a friend of mine. "If there comes a time when you need to recharge your batteries, read great books."

Soldz: I understand the principle. I'm just not sure what to do. My goddamned grad students are producing hundreds and hundreds of pages of dissertations—things I have to read. It's great to see them writing and doing so much. I have like ten dissertation students. That's one problem with being the researcher in a small school like this. It's way too much, and they want me to read it.

Q: Yes. Unlike many professors in the world, you probably will.

Soldz: Every word, unfortunately.

Q: Every word. They know you'll make their writing and thinking better.

Soldz: There are a few people here who don't, I know. I won't name names.

Q: That must bring a certain kind of joy—teaching.

Soldz: Yes, it is. Being a psychoanalytic school, let's put it this way—very few of them are looking forward to doing research, and how many of them are so glad at the end. Really, we just had our graduation which we do every couple years. I was teary-eyed—as one of them said, "You used to bring candy to class, even wine," which is a real no-no at this school—

Q: We'll cut that out.

Soldz: This was in public, in front of everybody. I'd tell them, "I'm not following the rules. I'll do anything to get people to do research." And she said, "But you don't have to anymore, because now I love it. It's inside me."

Q: That's beautiful. What a compliment.

Soldz: Yes. And how many of them get excited by the end of their studies. So that is really great, to see the excitement. I wish, actually, I could teach a human rights course, because that would probably provide some energy. But in much of psychology, I'm persona non grata now. Most schools I go talk to, the psychology department will have nothing to do with it. When I spoke at UNC [University of North Carolina] in North Carolina, at a torture conference, the head of their human rights center, who invited me, was attacked by the head of psychology for having invited me without inviting Behnke to counter me. She told me this when I got there, and we had a little discussion about what to do. I said, "Look, I'll be glad to refer them to—tell them Behnke's perspective, and here's how you get his writings," and she was fine with that. The nice thing was—this was on the weekend. I go home, and Monday we get the vote on the referendum, and it's sixty-one percent in favor, thirty-nine percent against. Or something around fifty-nine/forty-one. So she wrote me to congratulate me, and I said, "I guess you did invite the representative of the majority after all," and she said, "We sure did." Then the Mass Psych [Massachusetts Psychological] Association had invited Behnke to talk on the ethics of interrogation involvement. So I wrote the head of the thing, "Oh, I see you've invited someone who represents the minority of entrenched APA insiders. Don't you think you should invite somebody who represents the overwhelming majority, as represented by the new vote?" She sent it to Behnke, who invited me to join him. But, actually, I didn't have to decide because I was on babysitting duty that day, so I didn't have the choice.

The problem with recharging of the batteries is that there's this very tiny group. It's been nice letting Roy pick up some of the slack in the past year, but that's about it. Trudy's joined us, also,

in the last couple years—Trudy Bond—but she's been at it as long as we have. She's been doing it independently. She's the one who's filed the ethics complaints against all these folks and had endless battles with courts, and with Behnke, who lost her complaints innumerable times. The number of ethics complaints that they lost in his office is, itself, a scandal. They've used every trick in the book.

Q: I understand. If you let this go, the language gets—they're even more successful.

Soldz: So it's hard. It's hard balancing, trying to figure out—I don't know. As I said, I want to write a memoir on it, but I just haven't had the energy. I want to start with the Behnke dinner.

Q: I think that's a good place to start. After that, it will become a film. [Laughter] Figure out who plays you. Your son will tell you.

Soldz: I'm disappointed. Major [David J.R.] Frakt—he claimed they were going to do a film about his defense of the [Mohammed] Jawad case, and I said, "Who plays me?" But that seems not to have happened.

Q: There will be one on this subject.

Soldz: There should be. Let me say something about the [John O.] Brennan case. It's a little tangential, but I think it's also on a positive note.

Q: I wanted to ask you about it.

Soldz: A very minor thing. John Brennan, during the transition to the Obama administration, the strong rumors were that he was tapped to head the CIA. So on the Section IX listserv there was moaning one morning. In particular, Frank Summers, who's now president of the division, was just like, "Oh, can you believe this?" It was a Saturday morning. It was sort of funny. I wasn't in the mood for moaning. I was about to explode.

I was like, "I just can't take one more day of moaning." So I said, "Okay. So let's do something." So I sat down, and in a couple hours I wrote an open letter, protesting it. It was Saturday. I said, "Look, I've written this open letter. Does someone want to take responsibility for gathering signatures?"

Someone I've never heard of before on the list—in fact, I've never seen her name since—said, "I will."

I said, "Okay. Fine. Great."

I just gave her some primers like thanking everybody, and acknowledging receipt, and how you had to get an affiliation. You know, the little things that you do. By Monday morning we had two hundred signatures of psychologists, so we released it Monday morning. Tuesday, I was at school. I remember I was talking to Lynn Perlman, whom you met downstairs, who's our dean, and I told her, "You know, I have this funny feeling that we're going to win this one." I'd never

said that before. The reason was, I had the idea that our letter—we weren't the first ones to raise the issue. Both Scott Horton, of *Harper's* and Andrew [M.] Sullivan had been hitting it. I took my stuff mainly from them. I'm not claiming any originality here. But our letter, I felt, was a different type of thing. It was sort of a warning shot to the transition team that they were going to have a battle if they went ahead with this, and a bruising battle that was going to be embarrassing. It was just that moment. So I left here. On Tuesday afternoons I go to my parents' house. I was at my parents', my cellphone rang, and it was the *Washington Post*, and they said, "Do you have any comment?"

I said, "On what?"

And they said, "Didn't you hear? Brennan's withdrawing."

Q: That was huge.

Soldz: We've never known for sure it was me but the AP [Associated Press] assumed it was me. Let's put it this way. A lot of people have reported—somebody who wrote for the *New York Times Magazine*, a year later, said it was me. He interviewed me about it when he was writing a piece on Brennan. So it was like a little victory that we had.

Q: A pretty big victory.

Soldz: Well, I would say little, because then Brennan goes on to be head of counterterrorism advisor and assassin-in-chief for Obama—the guy who picks those to be killed by the drone program. So it's not like we kept him out of intelligence in the new administration. Which is why I consider it to be little. As it turns out, [Leon E.] Panetta, whom we thought was going to be a lot better, was actually no better at all. But at least we had a victory. It was heady. There was a thing about that—I forget—I don't remember the exact quote, but one of these quotes about, "Never underestimate the power of a few people," or something. It was just one of those moments when we held leverage. What was striking—I was actually asked recently. Oh, Ray [J. Raymond] McGovern was protesting Brennan's giving a commencement address at his alma mater. So he was asking about this, and he said, "What organizations?" No organizations. I said, "It was just two hundred rank-and-file psychologists." That was its strength. It looked like here's just some people who are pissed, and do we really want to go ahead and start out our administration with this? That was a couple of days. It really was. I wanted to be active. I didn't want to whine. So in that sense, the same with the anti-war page—it may not be much. There are lots of websites. But at least I can do something.

Q: Well, it gave people like me hope.

Soldz: Yes, but mine was read by a couple hundred people a day, as opposed to those read by thousands a day.

Q: But, in general, the work that you all have done has helped those of us who care a lot, and don't know exactly what to do—except do oral histories.

Soldz: Yes, and we have shown—and that was sort of the theme of Amy Goodman's book—this idea of ordinary heroes. I feel very proud of that, in a way. That is, I think, who we are.

Q: People you can relate to, who seem human.

Soldz: Yes, we are. In our group, I think we do have a lot of talent. We've been very lucky. Maybe that's worth—both complementing talent and doing something. We developed the idea—it was originally Steven, Brad, and I. After a while, we invited in Jean Maria, and we've only invited three others—Bryant Welch, who's only rarely been consistently involved. You never know what he reads on the listserv, but sometimes he responds. Trudy Bond, and Roy. But one of our things has been that we deliberately kept it very small. Because, one, we want to be able to move very quickly, and we can't have a long approval process. Like all of us are involved in Psychologists for Social Responsibility, but things there have to be approved by a twenty-three-member steering committee. That can take days, and we can't go through it. There are different opinions and this and that, and you have to worry about the organization. Basically, the coalition is us, so we have no organization to defend. We're only speaking in our name, and if we're willing to speak in our name, we can say it. Also, we pick people who can write. We have our battles over writing, but we sort of learned when things work well. For a long while it was I would write the first draft, because I like writing first drafts. I can write them very quickly. Other people struggle forever. Like Steven can spend forever on a first draft, but he loves editing and refining. I don't. So if I write a first draft and give him the basic outline of the argument, he can

sit down and refine it. Whereas I don't care about the details. I care about the factual details, but not the details of the writing. If you want to move a sentence, fine.

So we developed a style that works. It's been a little more problematic because recently I have not had the energy to do all these first drafts. Roy has taken over a lot of it because he's had a lot of time and energy, but by keeping it small and active, and this sort of an action—the old movement was an affinity group or something—it's allowed us to do things that others, I think, can't do. Also, we complement each other. Like, I'm the skeptic. I'm not always, but I'm often the one to say, "Hey, are you sure of this fact? I don't trust this wording here, because when we read official documents—" Like Steven always jumps to interpretations in the documents, and I'm always saying, "I read that that it could mean this. You're ninety percent likely to be right. That's almost certainly what it does mean, but the wording is different. If I read it skeptically, I'm not convinced." So we really vet each other. Jean Maria tones us down and takes out some of our more angry tones and our more sarcastic tones—sometimes a bit too much, but in general she's pretty good at keeping us sober and responsible. So it's worked very well.

Q: I think it would be really worthwhile and we can talk about it afterwards. I can imagine one of my master's students doing an oral history of your group, because it's so interesting. Everything you're talking about, in terms of being able to act quickly, supporting each other, having a diversity of talents—it's worth studying.

Soldz: Plus another aspect, both in the movement and in our group, is the Internet.

Q: It's huge.

Soldz: It is a movement that could not have occurred in a pre-Internet era. So think about MKULTRA. When that was revealed, it made no influence in the profession.

Q: Because the Internet wasn't there.

Soldz: Yes, because there was no way for the activists—that was 1973. There were activists running around, but there was no way for them to coordinate. So *APA Monitor* had one article on the issue, and then it basically totally disappeared. No one's ever asked what was the APA's involvement? Many APA presidents were on the list of known people. It's hard to believe—from Carl Rogers on down—

Q: Unbelievable.

Soldz: —it's hard to believe that the APA was not involved in some way, but no one has even asked that. It wasn't asked at the time, as far as I can tell. So that's also a whole side of it. I think we were one of the earlier Internet movements. It's interesting also because we're sort of a community movement, but where the community is defined, not locally.

Q: That's fantastic. We'll talk about that more. Is there anything else you want to add?

Soldz: You want anything on the cases?

Q: Sure. As long as I'm not killing you.

Soldz: I'd better move my car again.

Q: Yes. Sure. So. The cases.

Soldz: The cases. The first one might have to be put away for a while. It was the case of Mohammed Jawad, and Major Frakt—David Frakt, the defense attorney. I guess I got a phone call. I've forgotten if I got an email asking me to speak. I think he just called me. I can't remember exactly. What I didn't realize until years later was that this was like his second or third day on the job. So I was speaking to him, and he hadn't a clue. He really didn't know anything, and it was sort of mysterious. I would mention things like Jane Mayer's book, and two days later there would be a motion based on Jane Mayer's book. Every time I would say something to him, there would be a new motion. I didn't realize that he didn't know this basic stuff. You haven't interviewed him, have you?

Q: No.

Soldz: He was a Harvard Law graduate. He'd been in the Air Force. Then he was in the reserves. They had a call for lawyers to return to active duty, to go to Guantánamo, because they needed lawyers. He volunteered, on condition he would be with the defense, so they agreed. So he left his law school—and I think probably a lucrative practice—for a year, and his family. Because in

order to do it you had to be basically in D.C. He had lived somewhere on the West Coast, and you had to be in D.C. All the documents are kept in a place in D.C., so you have to spend all your time there, because you can't take them out.

That's right. He initially wanted an opinion on Jawad's mental-health state. That's right. I said, "I'm certainly not an expert." He said he just wanted an opinion so he could know whether to pursue this. I remember we discussed it, and, obviously, Jawad wasn't doing well. But sometime later—this would have been the summer of 2007, I believe. Let me see. No, no. It would be 2008, because the APA convention was in Boston. The summer of 2007, or somewhere in the late spring—I don't know when it first started—I got this email from him with the subject "Bad BSCT."

Let me back up. I haven't thought about this in a while. Jawad was indicted in the military commissions for supposedly throwing a grenade at an American, which is a bizarre charge. As Frakt rightly pointed out, "What do you do in war but throw grenades at the enemy? So how can that be a war crime?" But the U.S. had nothing—now fortunately, the Bush administration was so stupid and incompetent that they just wanted cases to indict before the election. They didn't do any vetting—not a good job of vetting. Because it was a military commission, they had to release a lot more information about him than almost any other case. So we got details of the system that we don't have on any of the habeas cases, because the attorneys will never get it. That was, I think, part of the significance of the Jawad case—even though it was a totally trumped-up case and had no meaning. No one ever claimed he was involved with Al Qaeda or any other terrorist group, but we got a glimpse into the system.

So one of the things he got was time sheets for when they subjected Jawad to what they call the frequent-flyer program, which is when they move people from cell to cell all night long to keep them awake. But he actually got the spreadsheets for when these times were. I don't think that's ever been seen for anyone else. That may be the only one we've ever seen. He claimed "illegal torture" on this basis. That was torture. Then the email—"Bad BSCT."

Basically, the story was Jawad—first of all, an important context for Jawad is, unlike many of the others, almost all of his interrogations, after very early, were all around the criminal case. They weren't around intelligence. It had nothing to do with getting intelligence. Everyone knew he had no intelligence. It was all about getting a confession to make it easy to get a conviction. That shows how corrupt the system was. He was subjected to something like fifty-six interrogations, over many years, all to try to get a confession—as if a confession five years later could mean anything. Because the only evidence they had was a confession extracted immediately after the event when he was threatened with being killed and having his family killed. There was no other evidence of any kind, other than that he was sort of in the neighborhood of the bomb, whereas it looks like it was someone connected to a high Afghan official who did it. They needed someone to blame it on, so they just picked him out of the crowd.

The story is that the interrogator was upset that Jawad was falling apart, or he was concerned—we don't know exactly if the concern was concern about him or the concern was how to use Jawad's suffering. But in any case, he was concerned that Jawad was falling apart. That he was

talking to pictures on the wall. He was crying about missing his family. So the interrogator asked the BSCT to observe the next session. She did, and she then wrote her comments, which essentially were that "He's near breaking. If you first put him in linguistic isolation, make sure that no one—" I think he spoke Pashtun. "So if you surround him with Arabic, or other speakers, make sure no guard speaks with him. Make sure he has no contact with anybody. Then you ride him hard. You tell him his mother doesn't love him. She wants nothing more to do with him. He'll break." I remember I read it. I was here. I remember walking to Starbuck's up the street, and I remember crying. It was all of our fears, and it was the horror of the mundane. It was so mundane. This wasn't, "Throw him out a window." It wasn't, "Apply electric shocks." But it was exactly the horror of the whole BSCT program, of these little twerps trying to show off how important they were by basically saying how to make someone else as miserable as they can, so they'll break. That's what it was. It was no psychology. It was also the first direct evidence we had of abuse by a BSCT other than Leso. Before, all we had was ICRC reports of, etc., and James could claim that ICRC got it wrong, besides which—you haven't read his book, have you?

Q: No.

Soldz: He says, "All the ICRCs were all Birkenstock-wearing Europeans with long hair who hate Americans." That's the kind of thing written by a guy who these people write this defense of. He's a laughingstock. If you read his book, his book says that terrorists are a new breed of psychopathology, scarier than anything ever seen in human history before. You read all the good work by the other people—in the torture program, even—on terrorists, and they understand that these guys are not mentally ill, by and large. The complexity of it. Then you read James, and it's

a laughingstock. These people are writing letters defending this guy who, even if he hadn't done anything else, is an embarrassment to the profession, to write this nonsense.

Q: It makes no sense.

Soldz: So Frakt decides to subpoena this BSCT, and then asks me if I'll testify after her on the ethics of her actions. I said to him, "Look. I don't know if you know this. I'm a lefty. I'm from the anti-war world, and presumably the prosecutor will do their due diligence." He said, "I don't care." I said, "Okay, if you don't care, but I don't want you to be embarrassed when I'm up there. I want you to know what you're dealing with, and make sure there are no surprises." He said, "Frankly, there aren't too many conservatives who care about the guys down here." [Laughter]

Q: That was a real statement.

Soldz: So I said, "Good point."

Here's the other part of it, which is also about a previous topic we were having—which was the hearing was right in the middle of our one-week of vacation, prior to the convention. I already had to leave early to get to the convention. Our four or five days or something of camping on Cape Cod.

Q: It just kills you.

Soldz: I was leaving that morning. I was supposed to go to one of the Air Force bases and they were going to patch me in electronically. I had to go home, and shower, and put on a suit and things, and I left. I had been on the phone, planning the whole time, and preoccupied. Vivienne said, "It would have been better if you hadn't come."

Q: I've heard those words. [Laughter]

Soldz: Speaking of costs. So I left the Cape campgrounds and I went into town to the coffee shop. I left my cellphone in the car. I get back, I look at it, and there's a message from Frakt—I was kicking myself because I'd missed it—saying that the hearing is off because she had pled the military equivalent of the Fifth Amendment—the right against self-incrimination. Or, the prosecution had informed him that she would plead that. So the hearing and my testimony was cancelled.

I was very disappointed. I did not go back to the camp site. I was going to have to leave in a few hours anyway to get to the convention. I may have been terrified about doing it, but by that point I wanted to do it. One of the things that happened in there—we talked about it, and he sort of explained how there were these translations, so I would have to stop after each sentence. I said, "That will be hard for me because I talk fast, especially when I'm anxious." He said, "That's okay. Just talk like you're talking to a fifth-grader—which, in the case of the prosecution, you are." [Laughter] I said, "Can I quote you on that?" and he said, "Most definitely."

Now what was interesting was, Darrel J. Vandeveld, the prosecutor, soon thereafter quit the prosecution and wrote a famous piece in the *Washington Post* entitled, "I was Slow to Realize the Shame that was Guantánamo." In other words, he was going through this major crisis of conscience at the time, which was why he was behaving like a fifth-grader. He wasn't doing a good job. I think it started with the Jawad case, and when Frakt started requesting records, there weren't any. He writes that they hadn't even kept records. That it was a total mess. There were just piles and piles everywhere. Each attorney who came had piles; they just left and left their piles, and the next one left more piles. They didn't even have a central record system—which is what the Obama administration found. It took them a year to create a record system for this stuff. The Bush administration was beyond the level of just incompetence. Donald H. Rumsfeld total—the same thing—about not planning for the occupation of Iraq. It just seemed to be everywhere.

My brother works for the Navy, and before the Iraq War I said something about it being a disaster. I remember he said, "All the military does is plan. They've got contingency planning for everything." Who would have dreamed that they had no contingency plan for winning the war in Iraq, and having a country to run? In fact, there had been a two thousand page plan that the State Department had developed, and Rumsfeld said, "Throw it away." I had expected that the occupation would go bad, but I expected it to be a decade. I didn't expect it to be a couple of months. You expected a fundamental level of basic competence, at least, if you're going to run in and occupy another country. You'd think you're going to be at least a little bit competent, instead of making enemies within two months—like they did in Fallujah.

So it's the same thing here. Vandeveld's gradually getting records, and he's getting these things and seeing the frequent-flyer program. He's having a crisis, and the story evidently is that he contacted a Catholic priest back home, and the Catholic priest said, "If you're having this crisis, then you're obligated to quit, aren't you?" It's just interesting. I reminded Frakt of that a year later when he was speaking at Harvard. We met and had lunch, and I reminded him that he had said that about the prosecutor at the time—with whom he has become good friends since.

So anyway, with Frakt's permission, we issued a press release right when the APA convention was opening on the case. Basically, Frakt was happy because he took her Fifth Amendment basically as a confession—as good enough for his purposes. I think it's Article 31 that's the military clause. I wasn't, because I wanted her there. Then we had one of those things that opened up the press to us. I had meetings that night, and I kept having to go out in the hall to speak to reporters. We got the *New York Times*. Brad was in the *Times*. He got the quote of the day. I was envious of that one, but he deserved it. But it was a line he got from me, one of my famous lines that he used.

Q: What was the line?

Soldz: "It's really a fight for the soul of the profession" [*New York Times*, August 15, 2008].

Q: I'm going to go look it up.

Soldz: But I remembered, because I'd done most of the press work. Brad's just not as good at being succinct and clear, and I had developed the skill over time. Steven and I do it. Steven can be really good, but he can also be off because he wants to explain every detail. He doesn't get that this has been a constant source of fighting between us on basically every statement. He doesn't get that most people are not interested in the details, and you lose the battle if you go into all the details. We're always fighting about this, about how much detail to include.

Anyway, that week—I think it was Saturday—we had another demonstration at the convention, which was in Boston, which David Sloan-Rossiter and I organized with Linda Woolf of Peace Psychology. David was the one who had been with Behnke and me. Behnke came and watched. They were gabbing together as best buddies. At 12:00, as our demonstration was starting, Natty got on his BlackBerry a news thing that APA had issued a press release that raised concerns about the Jawad case and the BSCT's actions. Concerns. It, of course, never got expressed again. They were afraid there would be a lot of press on the demonstration and the case. It's funny. They issue these things, and of course, they never had any concern. The next day, or the day after, it never gets followed up. That was a transparent thing. It was very good press. Steven had very good video from that convention, from speaking, and I think mine is pretty good, when I heard it. Although, not the video. I've heard the audio. It's not embarrassing. I was a little afraid I'd gotten a little too riled up. But when I heard it I was like, "Oh, God. I didn't say anything outrageous."

Q: People respond well to passion.

Soldz: Yes. We have tried very hard to have passion, but to never go too far, and particularly to only say what we can prove. It's very difficult to have exactly that, especially when we know so much that we can't support with publicly available data. But that's why, when we get attacked for attacking James, we have vetted every line in our things. We've made two mistakes—which have been dates on James, actually. But given the amount of statements that we've issued and the amount of things I've written, I'm pretty proud. We've done pretty damned good. That's why I felt obligated to immediately apologize to James. I didn't want to be one of those who got defensive about it. But also, I didn't let him off. I issued a set of questions, which he had the opportunity to answer and chose not to.

So it's tough, but we've been pretty damned accurate. So we don't want the passion to carry us away.

Q: I understand.

Soldz: It's also hard because we don't want to oversimplify. This business that the APA is against torture is always—how do you express that clearly and succinctly?

The other case—just briefly—was involving the case of Muhammed Khan Tumani, on which I brought in by the Center for Constitutional Rights. They needed a psychologist. I was trying to get them someone. Kate—I can't remember Kate's name. She works with Allen Keller at the NYU Center.

Q: I know who she is. It will come to me in a minute. [Katherine] Porterfield.

Soldz: Yes, Porterfield. So Kate is wonderful. Kate had been involved in the Jawad case. So I tried to get Kate. Kate said, "I can't do it. I'm on vacation. If you do it, I'll consult to you." I said, "I don't know anything about forensics. I'm not credible." She said, "You're credible."

Q: So what did it involve?

Soldz: This was a habeas case. Basically, the guy was falling apart. He was smearing feces all over his cell. Clearly, he was in really bad shape. He was making suicide attempts up the yazoo.

Q: Did you actually meet him?

Soldz: No.

Q: You assessed the evidence.

Soldz: The problem was, because it was a habeas case, the judge couldn't interfere on conditions of confinement, so they were trying to make the argument that his mental state was interfering with his ability to cooperate with the attorneys, which is the only basis the judge would have to intervene. Basically, the attorneys wanted to get an assessment, and they wanted to get an independent mental health person to assess him because military mental health people were saying, "Oh, he's fine. No problem." So, initially, they wanted somebody, and they needed

someone pretty quick, because Kate couldn't do it and there just wasn't time. So I said, "Okay. I'll do it, if Kate will consult—as long as you know I've never done a court case. I can't claim expertise in forensics or anything."

So, initially, I wrote a declaration based on the attorney's statements of his thing, saying, "This is suggestive of some serious emotional problem, which need to be evaluated. This could be a problem that could interfere with his ability to cooperate with attorneys. We need, initially, access to the medical records, and, ultimately, to interview him." The judge gave us access to the medical records. The government—it was emotionally disturbing to read *Barack H. Obama v. Muhammed Khan Tumani* [*Khan Tumani, et al., v. Obama, et al.*]. It was fairly early, and it really drove into me the extent to which this was the Obama administration that owned this at this point.

So the judge granted medical records access. The government said, "You only need the past month's records because you only need to evaluate his current state." So we had to go back into court and explain why the medical history was relevant, so the judge gave us, I think, a year-and-a-half's worth—thereby excluding any possible torture, during the period he might have been tortured. But we also saw how disgusting it was. Every step of the way they're fighting to not let anything out. And this is the Obama administration. Clearly, if there was any integrity, they would have let us have access. They would have let us have access to the medical records and stuff, and how the Justice Department had no integrity whatsoever. They were just determined to prevent any disclosure.

So I got some of the medical records. This puts me in that small category of people who have seen medical records from the place. I don't know how many of us—ten, fifteen, I don't know. It's not a large number. We were talking at some point about having a gathering of us.

Q: That would be fascinating.

Soldz: Kate and Steve [Stephen] Xenakis—I think Vince [Vincent] Iacopino had been one of them. I don't know if Scott Allen did or not, from PHR. I don't even know if it's ten.

So I got to go over the medical records. This was a late period in the detention. My sense—I'm not a physician—was that this guy was clearly a disturbed guy. He had a rash, which was driving them kind of crazy because he was complaining about this rash, on and on, and the medical people seemed to take him seriously. The records were full of things like, "I gave him this. It doesn't seem to work. Are there any other ideas?" They didn't seem to be like, "Oh, this guy is driving me crazy. Why don't we just get him off my back?" It didn't seem to have that atmosphere—even though he clearly would have been pretty irritating. The mental health records, however, gave me a sense of awful treatment.

Q: How did you discern?

Soldz: Well, most of it was by mental health technicians. They do their mental assessment and every time he makes a suicide gesture, they're brought in again. All they do is they go through the routine, and it's clearly not working. As we've heard, apocryphally, from others—I read it in

the records—they come and he says, "I am not suicidal. I am not homicidal. I am not a threat to myself or anyone else. I am not thought-disordered. I am not having hallucinations or delusions. Go leave me alone." But what was striking was, occasionally, two or three times, a psychologist would come in—again, just doing their damned mental-health status assessment. But not once in this year and a half did they talk with him. Not once! I mean, I've worked on inpatient units. I can't imagine anyone in a decent unit behaving like that. Namely, he's complaining that someone whom he calls his father, who's not his biological father, whom he's got some intimate relationship with that was never clear to the attorneys, never clear to the staff there exactly what it was, whether it was a stepfather or an uncle or something. Anyway, this father has been moved off his unit, somewhere else, and he wants to see him, and he's going crazy. Now this is a kid. This is a teenager.

So never once—the rules forbid it. His “father” has actually been promoted for cooperation. First of all, what stupid rules. But leaving that aside, never once did a mental health person go in and sit down with him for a while and say, "Who is this man? What is he to you? Why is it so disturbing?" It's a mental health person. If anyone had sat down and taken him seriously, it would have made their lives much easier because he might have stopped smearing feces. You wouldn't have had crisis after crisis after crisis. He probably would have calmed down a bit.

So the level of just not taking him seriously—. Then there is a declaration from the head of the health clinic about how he's faking it all to get attention and manipulate the system. And you think, "You guys believe this?" I just could not believe that, for their own purposes, just to calm him down, they wouldn't just talk with him and see if that would work. I don't know if the rules

forbade it or if the military psychologists that they had there were just completely incompetent. Perhaps they're straight out of grad school and just don't know their ass from their elbow. Maybe they don't have any experience actually talking to people.

Q: They may be under a lot of supervision about what they should and shouldn't do.

Soldz: Maybe, but it is stupid supervision. Even from their own angle, it would have made the lives of so many of their staff easier if they could have calmed the guy down. But they never made any attempt. All they cared about was, was he suicidal? And it was a contrast with the medical treatment. "This guy is complaining a lot and rejecting help. Do we have anything else there?" That was my sense, but it really made me question what is going on with the mental health treatment. It just did not seem to meet decent standards. I can imagine some prisons being like that, but these are prisons where I think there's incompetent treatment. Any reasonable in-patient setting where you had people actually trying to help would have done something more than that.

So the declaration, in the end, never got filed. They kept on debating what to do because they were afraid—and this is sad—that if they filed it, the government would retaliate by putting him in the psych ward, which was his greatest fear. He was terrified of that. So there's this Catch-22. Eventually, there was starting to be motion to get him out of there. Eventually, he got released to Portugal, so they decided they didn't need to go ahead with his. The fear was that if they complain about his mental health, they'll retaliate by doing the worst to him, going from "He's got no mental health problem and he's just faking it," to "He must be deathly ill, and we'll put

him in there," and supposedly the inpatient unit is a pretty awful place to be. People were terrified of being in there.

So that was the story of the *Khan Tumani* case. I never ended up going. I was both excited and terrified at the prospect that we would actually get our motion granted and I would get to go down and do an evaluation, since I'd never done such an evaluation. But Kate kept on telling me that I was qualified and that I could do it.

Q: I'm sure you are. There's no doubt about that.

Soldz: I don't know what's involved in forensics, and the idea of doing an evaluation through a translator—

Q: That's intimidating.

Soldz: —and I hadn't been trained in torture evaluation like Kate has. But it would have been quite an experience. I never had it, but there was the potential of doing so. Anyway, that's the story of the two cases.

Q: Have you followed the cases of people who are being resettled and their relations with their families, and the rest?

Soldz: Not directly. I hear a little bit. I had at PHR last week, and Sondra Crosby was talking about how she's evaluated two of them. They're thinking of starting a sort of restitution program, so she had interviewed a couple who were just total wrecks.

Q: In London, or Spain, or Chad, or—?

Soldz: No, somewhere in Africa.

Q: The Chad person?

Soldz: I don't know where he is. He's sort of isolated, in the middle of nowhere.

Q: Chad.

Soldz: Chad. Maybe. I know they were flying in a psychologist from somewhere else in Africa every other week, which was nowhere near enough. Then the ICRC had the brilliant idea of buying him a ticket to work on the docks in Japan. It was a total disaster. Sondra was pretty pissed about it, because he got there, and the living quarters are like a prison. No one speaks his language, so he's isolated again, and he freaks out, and then Sondra has got to go crazy trying to get him a ticket out of there. It just seems like the level of stupidity—even the ICRC doesn't get what these guys have been through.

Q: Yes, in terms of destruction of human capacity.

Soldz: It's so awful.

Q: It's so awful. The other side of you saying that you don't want to describe your own suffering, in light of theirs. I wonder, as you've gone through these years, do you think about them when you're doing your work late at night? How do you process what's happening to them, inside yourself?

Soldz: Actually, less, recently, because I've been more removed. In the first couple years, Brad used to always say, "Remember, it's for the detainees." Then I was involved in the trials and things. The battle we've been fighting with the APA is more removed from the details of what's going on. I think the last couple years—I had a reaction. When you talk about "Broken Laws, Broken Lives"—when the ICRC report on the high-value detainees came out, it took me weeks and weeks—it was embarrassing because I needed to post something on my blog, and I just couldn't read it.

Q: It's not embarrassing, it's human.

Soldz: It was the same thing with the CIA IG [Inspector General] report. These reports—I just can't sit down and read them the day they come out. It's horrific. Also, those reports are so weird because you know so many of the characters. This is Michael Gelles, and that's Scott Shumate and that's Mitchell, and this and that, and you know what's missing.

Q: There's an overwhelming amount of material.

Soldz: And there's [Mohammed al-] Qahtani. There was a possibility I was going to be a consultant on Qahtani. I was asked—I was kind of pissed. What's her name? At CCR? His attorney?

Q: Gita [Gitanjali S. Gutierrez]?

Soldz: She asked if I would be a consultant. She sent me an email. I said I would consider it, "Let's talk," and she never got back to me, which means she got someone who would be better than I was. I was pretty irritated that she didn't even bother to get back to me. It just felt like that's not reasonable. These attorneys—some of them get a little full of themselves. "What I'm doing is important work," or something. I think some of them. I don't know her, so I don't know—

Q: What year was that?

Soldz: Maybe three years ago. I don't know. I know she's really overwhelmed.

Q: Well, she's no longer with them.

Soldz: Where is she now?

Q: She has moved to Bermuda, I believe. Raising a baby. She had to be in bed for a year, having the baby. I'm wondering if it was that same time period.

Soldz: It still seems to me you could send an email, "Thanks, but—"

Q: Absolutely.

Soldz: "—I found somebody else." That doesn't exactly take a hell of a lot of time. But I know a lot of people don't. Natty doesn't do that kind of thing, and it irritates the hell out of me.

Q: It's just not fair.

Soldz: It's not fair, and it doesn't seem good strategy because you weave a bunch of irritated people who will probably do it next time, but will be a little less forthcoming. When I dealt with Pardiss [Kebriaei] on the *Khan Tumani* case, she was very good.

Q: We've interviewed her a couple of times. She's putting us in touch with some former detainees.

Soldz: She was very good, and, I thought, respectful.

One thing Katherine was very helpful with was fighting back against the attorneys—who were constantly pressuring me, or suggesting, could I say this or that? You feel a lot of pressure,

because the implicit message is, "Oh, it would help our case so much." And Katherine was very good at helping me to set a definite limit. "This is what I can say professionally," and we really shared the value that when I'm doing a professional assessment, I'm a psychologist. I'm not an advocate, in the sense that I can only say what my professional judgment as a psychologist says, and not one word past that. For my own integrity, I have to try to set that line. If it's not what your case needs, I'm sorry, but it's too bad. That was very important, and Kate was very helpful. I really appreciated her help a lot in coaching me on, "Yes, you're right. You cannot say that." Setting those lines with the attorneys, who are always trying to get you to go a little further and a little further. I guess that's their job.

Q: For their own purposes. Let me ask you—in this whole story, who are the people—other than the ones in your group—that you most admire? You've talked about Amy—for their willingness to speak out? Journalists are allowed to do that, right? It's what they're supposed to do. But it's not always easy.

Soldz: Certainly David Remes. I'm aware of what it's cost him, personally, so much. There's another group which we haven't talked about—which are the interrogators and counterintelligence folks. Jean Maria has worked with military and intelligence folks, largely around their moral reasoning. That's why they put her on the PENS task force, because they assumed she'd be a patsy. She had founded the Intelligence Ethics Associations, so they assumed that meant the no-intelligence/no-ethics association, and they made a mistake. That's why they had to cut her off at the knees—which Gerry Koocher did, because she asked questions that they weren't willing to deal with. She raised a question about what psychologists had been involved

in—which was in the instructions for the task force, given by counsel. And Gerry Koocher said, "If you want to deal with that, you should have stayed home."

In fact, she called her husband over the lunch break on the first day of the PENS and said, "I think I should leave." They discussed it, and he said—famous words—"Well, if you think that strongly that something is going wrong, then you're obligated to stay and betray."

Q: I love it.

Soldz: So she stayed. But it took her a year to really realize what had happened. It wasn't until she met with Steven and Natty that she realized what a put-up job it had been, and how much she had been snookered. She knew something was wrong, but she didn't know what the game was.

Anyway, I admire Jean Maria, though. She's never forgiven herself for signing the PENS report and not speaking out. I've talked to her endlessly, trying to explain that, "These were the top intelligence people in the world who pulled this game on you. They knew what they were doing. This is not your fault." But she feels she should have seen through them.

Q: I'm glad you said that—because I was wondering about that.

Soldz: It was really sad. She just can't forgive herself. Partly it's because—for various personal reasons. She wants the approval of strong men. So she was so snookered by Behnke and Banks—she's met with both of them. She wants them to apologize, even though she knows—

Q: She wants to change them.

Soldz: Yes. On some level she knows, of course, that they never will. But she still tries.

So she's put us in touch with some interrogators and counterintelligence that I would never had done. In fact, Jean Maria and I had what I thought was a strong discussion that she described as an argument. She was visiting her father-in-law at a retirement home in the suburbs around here, and I went over and we had brunch. We discussed it for a few hours. I didn't feel it was an argument, but she did. That's really changed me dramatically to get to know some of these folks. From my anti-war, radical perspective—well, some of these folks have become radical, like Ray McGovern. But others, like her friend Ray Bennett—it's a pseudonym he uses because he still works for a consulting company. Ray, who is a twenty-year veteran Army interrogator, made the best argument for why psychologists shouldn't be involved, ever. But he's like, "I want my white hat back." He was proud of his military career and felt that he'd always followed the Geneva Conventions to a T. Not even to a T. What he said about torture was, "We don't want to know where the boundary between torture and non-torture is. We don't even want to discuss it because if we get within even the gray zone of the boundary, we know we're way out of line, and we've lost control of the interrogation. So we don't discuss those issues because to discuss it is to precisely encourage people to go up to the boundary."

Q: So it has to be black and white.

Soldz: Well, it's not even black and white. You should be so far over—

Q: You shouldn't think that way.

Soldz: You should be so far that you're not even—so it's not a matter of black and white; it's a matter, in some sense, of if you start asking the question, you're lost. Because a good interrogator shouldn't get within a mile of that boundary. I cite Ray all the time when I speak to legislators and things like that. He said, "I wouldn't get anywhere near torture. Yet, I would never say that I never caused harm. Because interrogation, by its nature, can cause harm. That's why your profession is built on do-no-harm, and we, as a society, need your profession. So we cannot afford to have you anywhere near my interrogation booth because they're just incompatible, what we do and what you do." It's just been the clearest statement of why. I constantly get asked. My brother asks, my best friend asks, my brother-in-law, "Well, why should psychologists be unique?" And I explain, "Because there's a social compact. The helping professions have a social compact that we're allowed certain privileges." We're accorded certain status and certain other things. Like we're allowed to keep confidences, and this is based upon keeping our professional role. If we blur those boundaries, it's harmful to the profession and to the public, as well, to allow those boundaries—it's not just a matter of keeping the purity of psychologists.

Some of these interrogator folks, and counterintelligence folks, I've come to admire and become friends with. One of the things I always find in dealing with them—I always lead with my anti-war foot. It's like I don't want them to ever feel betrayed. I want them to know where I'm coming from, and it works really well. I did the same thing when we met with the Comprehensive

Fitness people. In my opening statement I said—they knew what I'd done. They'd done their opposition research, and they admitted they had a portfolio—I said, "Look, I'm from the anti-war world." I was the only one who began with that. I said, "You guys know that, but I also want you to know that I've come to know and admire all these military intelligence folks and realize that we can share a lot of values, even when we differ on things." Because I find they respect it—what they don't respect is if they feel you're trying to pull one over on them.

Q: We've had interesting discussions with Yvonne [R.] Bradley.

Soldz: Who's Yvonne Bradley?

Q: She was in Navy intelligence—who left, and spoke out very early.

Soldz: It's funny. I don't think I know her. We're having Ray McGovern on a panel with us at the Psychologists for Social Responsibility conference this summer.

I don't know. Major Frakt—I admired him. I think his closing motion in the defense of Jawad is one of the great classics of literature to come out of this time. I think it should be in freshman composition readers in the future. It's an amazing piece of work. I've read it, and I cry every time. It also says something about the complexity of our—which has been such a growth experience—of the military. I mean, here's a major. He went from Harvard Law School to the Air Force, which is not very common. So he obviously very much identifies with the military. He stayed in the reserves. Yet, he volunteered for active duty only on condition that he could be

with the defense. That motion—I don't know if you ever read it—it begins with that fateful day when our commander-in-chief signed a statement saying that the prisoners were not entitled to the Geneva Conventions, and, thereby, became a war criminal, and authorized war crimes. Then it goes to the treatment of Jawad and the war crimes committed in the commander-in-chief's name. Then it says to the judge, "Your honor, you have an opportunity here today. I've given you an opportunity. You can take a small step to right this wrong, begun by our commander-in-chief. You're not obligated to, but I've given you statutory authority that you can do this. You can legally do this. You can start setting things right, and it's up to you and your moral compass as to what you do today." It's amazing. But the fact that a member of the Air Force can call the commander-in-chief a war criminal—and he got promoted. He got promoted from major to lieutenant colonel after this. It showed the complexity of all of it. I couldn't believe that he would be promoted.

Q: We've interviewed a few of these kinds of people, and it's very important. One of our early advisors said that it's very important to get to some of those people for the full story.

Soldz: So you may want to get Frakt.

Q: That sounds like a good idea.

Have you and your son had conversations about what's been going on in the democracy? How much do you share with him?

Soldz: Oh, yes. He knows. At this point, he kind of knows all of it. It's kind of funny. He's always been proud of me, but he used to be more of—I don't know exactly the term. He wants to fit in more. On the other hand, not too much. He's been at Boston Latin School, which is a public exam school. An awful school. This is one of the top schools in the country. It's amazing how many poor teachers they have there. Just a rigid, awful place. I am so glad he's getting out of there, and he's alive. As he said, "I'm going to graduate from that place, and I'm going to have victory over a place that tried to destroy me every day for six years."

Q: That's sad.

Soldz: It makes me sick when I think of the place. There are a few good teachers, but there are a lot of really awful, rigid—they do so well because they cherry-pick the students, is what happens. But he had a lot of trouble. He has a learning disability, which really made learning languages, and to some degree math, very tough. He just couldn't memorize the languages. Of course, this is the classics. So he had five years of Latin and four years of Spanish, so it was like hell on earth.

Q: I know this problem.

Soldz: Well, they said, "No way. We don't exempt anybody, learning disability or not. You have to take the curriculum."

Q: His mother had to fight the school until they agreed to hire somebody. I'm just saying that these are horrible situations.

Soldz: So anyway, he describes himself as definitely not a radical, like his dad. He's decided he's probably liberal. But he is a bit of a contrarian. My wife always gets upset about him. He went for a period where he was only interested in guns. He would talk about guns.

Q: Of course. You're an activist.

Soldz: So for a year I wouldn't talk about it with him. Finally, I said to myself, "Look, that's what he's talking about." So I said, "Guns can be interesting." Everything's interesting. So I started talking about it. Vivienne got kind of mad. Then he hadn't read a single book that wasn't required. He hates reading books. He reads voraciously on the web. So Matthew Alexander—he's an interrogator. He was an Air Force colonel who headed the interrogation team that located Al Zarqawi, the head of Al Qaeda in Iraq. He wrote a book, *To Catch A Terrorist*. The central theme of which is basically that you don't need torture to catch a terrorist. Also, obviously, he wanted to make some money. There's a ghost writer. So there are a few guns in it and this and that. I read the book. I know Matthew—I've not met him personally, but in email and phone conversations—that's a pseudonym, as well. I'm not sure why he still has a pseudonym, since he's been publicly outed on the web by right-wing groups. They love the military, unless they disagree with them.

So I thought, "You know, he just might read this, but if I recommend it—" So I started leaving it around where he would see it.

Q: Oh, that's cute.

Soldz: He started asking about it and I said, "Even though you don't like books, you might like this one. It's got some scenes in it, and I know the guy." He read it, and that was the first book he read. But my Vivienne got furious at me. She wouldn't even speak to me for days because of it—and she didn't even know what the book was about—because it was about war. "Do you realize I just pulled off a coup? The first book he's read, voluntarily, in four years!" [Laughter]

Q: A great story. The story of our times.

Soldz: He borrowed Alexander's second book and never returned it. He claims he's returned it. He never finished it, and I never got to read it because it's lost somewhere in his room. I should get another copy.

So we've discussed a lot. He's not an activist. He's full of scorn for Occupy Boston and the Occupy movement. "I hate those hippies in my school who don't know what they're talking about and go down to Occupy Boston." We never got him down there. He actually was going to go once. He wanted to go once with his girlfriend, but she wouldn't go with him. If she had gone, he would have done it. But he actually said once, "I'll probably do it in college."

Q: Of course he will.

Soldz: We'll see what happens. I don't know. He's a bit torn. He's a bit contrarian, like he likes to argue for nuclear power. He wrote a good paper against recycling.

Q: Sounds like a researcher.

Soldz: There are many arguments against recycling. So I encourage him. Vivienne always argues with him. I'm like, "Vivienne, if you want to change his opinion, you're doing the stupidest thing on earth."

Q: Because he's a contrarian. You can't argue with a contrarian.

Soldz: Plus, it's a good trait to question even progressive orthodoxy. So I love it. Then he wrote something against gun control. I made some counter-arguments. He actually modified it, and it wasn't quite as anti-gun control. It was more nuanced than it originally was—because I didn't reject it. I'm very proud of him these days.

Q: Where is he going to college?

Soldz: He's going to UMass Dartmouth to start with. Because of Latin, he had a horrible GPA. He did well in his senior year, but that was [unclear]. He only applied to a few schools—UMass Dartmouth, UMass Amherst—which didn't accept him—and St. Lawrence University—which he

did get into. One of our students here is a faculty member there and she sponsored him. He went in and sat in classes, and he wowed the teachers. They said, "Oh, he knows more than my juniors on foreign policy and this and that." So they accepted him. But he decided—I don't quite know. He's got a girlfriend who's still at Latin for another year, and St. Lawrence—it's going to be hard to get home.

I don't know if it was that. It's partly that he felt they were sort of rich, suburban kids, and he wasn't going to fit in. There weren't any city kids he identified with. So I don't quite know what it was. It's hard and a little sad because UMass Dartmouth—the physical plant is awful, the environment and the weather. I don't know what's going to happen. I think it's a school which, if he's truly interested, because it does have small classes, and faculty, but he could also get sunk down by a lot of kids who aren't interested.

Q: These are all worries that are just ubiquitous.

Soldz: We wanted him at a school where he'd be a little more challenged. So we'll see.

Q: Well, there's always transfer.

Soldz: He's talking about that, but I don't think he quite realizes that it almost certainly will have to be two years, because to apply after one year, you only have one semester's grades, which isn't going to be enough. So we'll see. Oh, God.

Q: Have I worn you out?

Soldz: Now you have. But I thought, as long as you came, I sort of freed up the day. Frankly, the way I work, unfortunately, after several hours of it, I wouldn't have been that productive in the afternoon. So it doesn't matter too much. I wouldn't have been able to—I do better when I start work in the morning.

Q: Everybody has their own cycle, and it's very important to work with that.

Soldz: That's what I try to teach my students. "You've got to figure out what works for you. Some people can work in a half hour when they have a patient cancellation. For some people, it's a total waste." So you have to figure out your own stuff.

Q: Well, I can't tell you what an honor it has been to meet you.

Soldz: Well, thank you so much.

Q: I really rely on your testimony for our project on Guantánamo.

Soldz: It's a pleasure to get some of this recorded. Some of this is in writing.

Q: I hope it can be useful to you.

Soldz: Jean Maria would like a copy of the recording for our archives, as well as the transcript. I thought we'd just give her the transcript, but she wants the recording, too.

Q: Of course.

Soldz: Jean Maria gets anything she wants.

Q: Yes, I hear that. Absolutely.

Soldz: She drives us crazy with her archives.

Q: You can use it however you want. Giving it to her is one use.

Soldz: I just want to honor her.

Q: Absolutely. Anything we can share with her that would be useful, we will be happy to do.

Okay. Thank you.

[END OF SESSION]

VJD

Session Three

Interviewee: Stephen Soldz

Location: Brookline, MA

Interviewer: Mary Marshall Clark

Date: May 24, 2012

Q: Okay. We're back on. We'll call it session three.

Soldz: So the question of research is part of the torture program. This is clearly one of the most secret parts of what's going on. We know very little about it. We have all kinds of hints, and I suspect that there has been much more than we know publicly. There certainly are hints that a number of detainees—when they've been released—have described systematic data collection. We got the al Qahtani log that Steven Miles points out. It's a log of what was done to him and his responses. It's not a log of any intelligence they obtained from him. It makes no sense except as a research record of what was being done. There is also a question of the CIA tapes and why they were actually taping. Are those the only tapes, or are there other tapes still extant somewhere?

God, I forget the name of the British detainee who went to the High Court decision that they had to release accounts of the British intelligence meeting, which included the systematic collection of data on sleep deprivation, for example, as another element suggesting there is a research program. So with the Physicians for Human Rights a couple of years ago, we wrote a report, "Experiments in Torture," which documented that within the CIA black sites there was what we considered to be a research program, which was in the form of systematic monitoring in its observation and monitoring of the enhanced interrogations, with details on exactly how much saline was in the water that was administered and how people responded. That the data from this program was used to modify the treatment, which we argued meets the official Department of

Health and Human Services definition of research, thereby adding sort of a secondary crime of illegal, unethical research to the torture itself, and to the illegal detention crimes that were already present there.

But there had been repeated reports of much more systematic research. One whole vein of research is on deception detection. Now [the] Jason Leopold and Jeff Kaye report—I believe it was both of them. I think it was both together but I'm not recalling for sure—that there had been a special-access program. These are like the most secret programs in the U.S. government, the kind which if I told you I'd have to kill you type of programs—on deception detection at Guantánamo—and that this program was started as early as November or December of 2001. As I think I mentioned elsewhere, Senator Inouye and his chief of staff psychologist, Patrick DeLeon, were briefed on the report in late November or early December of 2001. So there was a question about what was going on there. How that was planned so quickly. Guantánamo wasn't even open yet, and yet they had this whole program going.

So there's that. Now I've documented, in a chapter for a book called *The CIA on Campus*, that throughout the Bush years there was a program of federal interest in research on deception detection. It basically followed one person—a psychologist, Susan Brandon. Susan was at APA at the time of 9/11 as something like a research scientist. She helped to organize the APA's response to 9/11. I think she went through some private company into the White House. She was a deputy director for the social and behavioral sciences for the White House in, I think, 2003 to mid-2005—somewhere around there—and went to a couple of the Beltway bandit corporations. I think the Mitre Corporation, if I recall—

Q: Mitre, yes.

Soldz: —and the National Institute of Mental Health. Ended up with the Defense Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Center, and is currently director of research for all of President Obama's high-value detainee interrogation group. Everywhere she is, they come out with RFPs [request for proposals] on deception detection research. Now these are non-classified programs, but you have to remember that under MKULTRA—and other CIA and related things—the vast majority of the research was unclassified. What was classified was the purpose to which it was going to be put.

So you've got this thread of deception detection research—which was obviously a high priority, because one summer—I'm not one hundred percent sure I'm recalling this correctly. I think it was the summer of 2006—they managed to organize four conferences with senior researchers in the social and behavioral sciences within a couple of months. Now as one who's worked with a lot of federal agencies and things, they can't move that quickly unless it's really important and authorized at the top. Just the federal process of authorizing a conference is immense. I had a meeting with the Army in February, and they still haven't managed to reimburse me \$300 in expenses, through the bureaucracy. They're still at a loss as to how to get that \$300 authorized. They just asked me to fill out a multi-page form from Health and Human Services—which I refused to do—and then they decided that they don't need this form. So how they got four conferences in two months or so on this topic and got them accomplished and everything is quite striking.

So it suggests a strong, high-level interest. Another little piece to put together with this is in the Jawad case we did find in his records that they used a device called a voice-stress analyzer on him, which is a so-called lie detector which, I believe, the DOD inspector general concluded was useless and didn't work. But the Defense Department spent a lot of money, in various contexts, and evidently Guantánamo was one of them. There have also been reports of the measurement of cortisol at Guantánamo—cortisol being a stress hormone.

So what does it all mean? We don't know. But the fear, one fear I have—and this may be fanciful, but I wouldn't rule it out—is the problem with torture, supposedly, that people under torture will say anything. Torture works, most people agree, if you have rapid feedback. So it worked in Argentina, where you torture someone, you go out and you arrest the people they named that night, and then you torture them. Also, if you don't care too much if you get a few false-positives—which they didn't, because the false positives were generally from the progressive circles and the people you'd want to do in anyway. So one of the fears is that enhanced interrogations may actually work if you had a way of going through the sieve, and seeing what was true and what wasn't true. Perhaps they were trying to accomplish that goal, trying to have a way of taking all this information and figuring out who was lying and who wasn't.

So that's one possibility. They're still clearly at it. Just recently the FBI issued this RFP for research. Now it's all above-board; individual projects are supposed to go through university IRBs [institutional review boards], but there's still always the question with this stuff, which is

always the problem in working with intelligence agencies—you have no sense of what the big picture is that it goes into. We should have learned that from MKULTRA. This is where if organizations like the APA—and in this case, not just the APA. The American Psychological Society, which deals with researchers, and, probably, organizations in other fields. At a minimum, if you're really concerned about this, you ought to be having workshops for people thinking about participating in intelligence research about pitfalls to avoid when you're dealing with these types of research. Is it ethical? How do you try to figure out where it fits into the big picture? How do you try to make sure you're not doing something that you wouldn't want to do if you knew the whole context? So, at a minimum, there ought to be a concerted effort to try to sensitize people to these dangers. Whereas, it seems to be the other way. Somebody who participated in some of the CIA/APA conferences said that she saw researchers basically salivating over ideas. Really over money—the potential for grant money. Researchers chase money, and basically they were willing to give any crap that they thought was fundable. So you have the researchers trying to exploit the intelligence community, in terms of basically giving them warmed-over, second-class ideas, because they think it'll be fundable, and the intelligence community trying to use the researchers in pursuit of their larger goals.

You also have, in various of these RFPs and conferences proposals, etc., there has been talk over and over again about building bridges. I forget the exact language they use, but building bridges between researchers and the intelligence community. The term they use is basically embedding researchers in intelligence agencies and embedding intelligence folks in universities. This is clearly happening. The APA has played a major part there. They're very proud of placing fellows each year in intelligence agencies, in the National Security Agency, and in the

Counterintelligence Field Activity, which was an agency that got closed down by Congress due to scandal and became the Defense Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Center [DCHC]. They regularly change the name to respond to scandal. So there is this whole current suggesting that something may be fishy—may be going on here.

Oh. One other little piece of information. In Afghanistan, at Bagram Air Base, there have been reports of this so-called black jail, which was very abusive. This was under Obama. It was reported in the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and the BBC. All of whom interviewed former inmates. I forget who in the *Atlantic*. A reporter in the *Atlantic* reported that this was run by—there was some question about—different reports have had it run either by JSOC—Joint Special Operations Command—or by DCHC. So it's not clear. They seem to both be involved in some way. But reports are that, inside, it was more like a laboratory, with scientists in lab coats making all kinds of recordings and things. I've also had a report from someone in the intelligence community of a similar site in Iraq. This person says that the research is all ethical research and not at all torture research, but there are some questions about whether any research on detainees is ethical. At a minimum, any such research ought to be very publicly discussed and disclosed, and ought to be outside the supervision of it. The HIG—High Value Detainee Interrogation Group—has said that they're going to conduct research on detainees. They've asked human rights groups on how to do it ethically. Some of the groups have declined; others may have contributed and said okay. There are reports of some conflicts among human rights groups around this—whether to respond to this or not. The HIG's director of research, Susan Brandon, was the White House psychologist/official who observed the PENS Task Force. She then served at CIFA and DCHC, among other agencies.

So it's not clear. It's just a co-opting of the human rights groups. Are they really concerned, to be above-board? It is, at least in minimum, very concerning. I know I talked in February, at my meeting with the Army—there was someone from—was it the National Academy of Sciences or the National Research Council? I'm not sure which one. We talked about Susan Brandon and the HIG research. She was talking about how wonderful it was, and I raised my concerns. I said, "If they want any credibility, it's got to be done publicly, through transparency, or we will never accept it." She said she would take the message back. That's all I know about that.

The point is that there are just so many little reports now. The fear is we're going to find out someday that there was a whole MKULTRA program going on, of some type. Maybe, maybe not. But there have been repeated reports of drugs being used at Guantánamo and possible research on drug use there—again, unverified. Many detainees report being given drugs against their will, so we don't know what the whole mess is there. A former guard confirmed extensive research went on there, including cortisol stress assays.

Q: So has there been, as far as you know, any pushback in terms of lawyers' groups looking at this particular issue?

Soldz: No. The sense I have is that because the evidence is very circumstantial, almost no one is interested. Basically, you need the smoking gun first. It's very hard. I find it very frustrating. I meet with human rights groups and I say this is very worrying, and I don't seem to get a response. I just feel like there are probably so many issues on their burner that, since they don't

know what to do it—I don't think they're actually totally uninterested. I just think that it's short of some good investigator getting—

Q: —taking this on.

Soldz: —and getting somewhere with it. I know investigators have taken it on and not gotten—the implication is that this is one of the biggest secrets in the U.S. government. So far, it seems to have been successfully hidden. But there have to be a lot of people who were involved, probably in the hundreds. So one would hope that someone will speak someday.

Q: Talk a little bit about Seligman and what you know about him.

Soldz: Marty Seligman. Well, let's put it this way. There's enough, again, suggestive information there. It was revealed in Jane Mayer's book, *The Dark Side*, that Seligman had lectured to the Navy SERE school—I forget where in California, one of the "San" places, San Diego, probably—in probably March of 2002, which raised questions about why the founder of learned helplessness was lecturing at the SERE school at just the time that the torture program was being developed. Oh, and that this was arranged by Kirk Hubbard at the CIA, one of the psychologists who was one of those involved in developing the enhanced interrogation program, who later went to work for Mitchell Jessen Associates. So when this was revealed, Scott Horton went further in his blog and basically said that Seligman had been involved in the development of the enhanced interrogation program. I quoted Horton's piece on my blog. Seligman denied this. He said he didn't know anything about it. He said—and this was very disingenuous, an interesting

comment—he said, "I was told that we couldn't discuss the relevance to interrogation because I didn't have the requisite security clearance." So, oh, you're told that it is relevant to interrogation but you can't discuss that. But it didn't ring any bells? Even if not then, maybe a little bit later, when you found out that the U.S. was torturing people, that the CIA was torturing people, it didn't ring any bells? Later, when you found out that the SERE program was the basis of the torture program, it didn't ring any bells? It never occurred to you that the fact that they couldn't discuss—? So it was very bizarre.

Also, to be frank, Seligman's statement clearly read like it was written by an attorney, and it looked like it was the same attorney who wrote the statement that Mitchell and Jessen gave in response to Katherine Eban's article, in which they abhorred torture. And also the statement that Joe Matarazzo gave when it was revealed that he was on the board of Mitchell Jessen Associates, where he "abhorred torture." And Seligman, too, abhors torture. However, none of them ever referred to any actions of the U.S. government. They never referred to the enhanced interrogation program. They never said what torture meant. They never expressed any disquiet with any actions of the U.S. government.

So Seligman, however, in his statement he let out something new that Mayer hadn't known, which was that Mitchell and Jessen had been at his SERE lecture. That was the first time we got contact between Mitchell and Jessen. I actually got this from Seligman, asking me to post it on my blog, which I did. Maybe it was my unconscious, but it wasn't intentional—I left out his last line, where he says how he hates torture. He wrote back and asked me to put that line in.

[Laughter]

Q: The torture/non-torture debate.

Soldz: It was interesting, because I certainly didn't do it deliberately.

Then it was revealed—some months later, Scott Shane in the *New York Times* revealed that there had been a meeting in January of 2002 at Seligman's home, in his den—as people tell me—beneath the larger than life-size portrait of Martin Seligman, aka God, or something like that. Everyone says he's an extraordinarily narcissistic and self-centered guy. Kirk Hubbard was there. James Mitchell was there. I've got the attendance list for that. I believe someone from Mossad was there. One or two people from Mossad. I forget who else. James Mitchell raved about Seligman's work to him, there, according to Scott Shane. Then Gregory Block, in his book, reports a third meeting between Seligman and Mitchell, I believe in the spring of 2003. So the very fact that each of these meetings was dragged out of Seligman one at a time, also, to my mind, suggests that he has something to hide. Otherwise, if you really were shocked that you had been a meeting with Mitchell and Jessen, why wouldn't you say? Why wouldn't you mention the other ones and get it all out?

There are reports—my sources tell me that Seligman has a long-time CIA connection that isn't publicly verified, but people with deep intelligence connections tell me that. The same sources tell me that their intelligence connections tell them that the intelligence agencies control the APA, as well, and have for a long time. Again, third-hand. I can't do anything with it.

Another thing—Seligman was originally famous for this learned helplessness program, this concept of learned helplessness, that these dogs were given shocks and unable to escape, would become helpless, and essentially manic-depressive. It was used as a model for depression. When their harnesses were released and they were able to escape, they no longer tried. Now it has become clear that this is the basis of the enhanced interrogation program. We suspected it, initially, but when the torture memos came out, they had pages and pages, and explicitly state that the CIA—"You have told us that the program is based on the concept of learned helplessness." Also of interest here—in the CIA IG report, it also refers to how the CIA got independent experts in psychopathology to say that the enhanced interrogation techniques are not harmful, which makes you wonder if either Seligman or Matarazzo may be referred to here. Two psychologists reputed to have close CIA connections.

So then two other pieces here—the BSCT instructions in 2006 and 2008 have required competencies for the BSCTs. One of them is a competency in learned helplessness. This is kind of odd, because it's on a list of things like—cognition and emotion is one competency. Another is social psychology or something, and the third is learned helplessness. It's as if learned helplessness is one of the major areas of psychology. It also suggests that learned helplessness was being used as the basis of the DOD torture program, and the BSCTs were expected to help in this.

Then we come to another question that has been raised indirectly. The Army has this Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program—CSF—which is a \$140 million program in which all soldiers are supposed to be trained in increased resilience skills, based on positive psychology.

Now Marty Seligman's group at the University of Pennsylvania was given a \$31 million no-bid contract to develop this. The statement justifying a no-bid contract, by Brigadier General—I believe it is, [U.S. Army Brigadier General] Rhonda Cornum, states that the Penn Resiliency Program [PRP] is a well-validated program, which is the only one based on trainer-trainers. There's just nothing else the military can use. Now the research evidence for the PRP program—which is an interesting program. I was interested in it when I saw the first research. But it turns out that the meta-analysis, which combines all the studies, basically raises serious questions about whether it works. The meta-analysis says that it's weak. It's not clear that it works for anyone but those already at high risk for psycho-pathology. In other words, not as a general prevention technique, like the Army is using it. The long-term outcomes are not good, despite the fact that in an early study there had been some nice outcomes. But, evidently, these studies haven't been replicated, so it's not at all clear. This was mainly done with middle school students. So the relevance of a program mainly done with middle school students to soldiers—it's just not at all clear to anybody except for Rhonda Cornum. The rationale for a no-bid contract was two-page, little handwritten things—actually, I'm not sure if it was handwritten. That's my recollection, but that may not be right. But for \$31 million to be given out as a no-bid contract! There were two brief pages of documentation of claims. There is no real documentation. You would think you would need to submit much more documentation under Army/Pentagon rules.

So the suggestion has been made, implicitly by Mark Benjamin, that this might have been payback for help with the enhanced interrogation program. At this point it is unproven, but I would say that there is enough suggestive evidence and concerning evidence that Seligman was involved with the CIA torture program. As I say, every bit had to be dragged out of him, rather

than him coming forward. He expressed concern about the CIA's program, but it took two years of public criticism before he finally discovered that he had some concerns about what the CIA did. I wouldn't be surprised if Mitchell doesn't like the CIA program anymore.

Now one other striking feature of this is when the Seligman issue first came up, after Jane Mayer's book, and Scott Horton and I published on our blogs, within under twenty-four hours the APA issued a press release with a categorical denial that Seligman had anything to do with the torture program. They cited no evidence other than, "Seligman has told us he wasn't involved, so he couldn't have been." It was just a classic—what do you think? Do you think if he was, he's going to tell you? [Laughs] Anyhow, it suggests that the APA was covering something up. Why would they rush to something that they couldn't possibly know, because if he was involved he wouldn't tell you, and if he wasn't involved, he would say he wasn't. Of which they had no evidence. Instead of calling for these issues to be investigated, they categorically denied them when there was no way they could possibly know they were false. They could possibly know they were true. There are a number of reports that I've received from senior psychologists—close to APA leadership—that APA leadership was not at all surprised when people had CIA connections. When Joe Matarazzo's CIA connections were discussed in front of Ray Fowler, the CEO, he didn't blink an eye, raise a question, or anything. This suggests that this was well-known within the CIA, that some of these top people within APA—that some of these top people were CIA-connected.

One piece, which I can only say—which I can't go into this, at least not—

Q: Do you want me to turn it off?

Soldz: Either that, or you can put it in for long-term. It's up to you. But I can't—

Q: Okay. What I'm going to do in this case—I just want to say it on the recording—because we are vulnerable to subpoena—what I'm going to do, actually, is make a copy of this whole thing, send it to you before we have it transcribed, then you can decide if you want it transcribed. If you don't want it transcribed, then I'll take it out.

Soldz: Leave it off for now. I guess turn it off.

[INTERRUPTION]

I'm not sure there's much more to tell. Seligman has a rather odd role as the founder of positive psychology, since, as he would probably admit, he's a pretty unpleasant character. He doesn't seem very positive. Whatever.

Q: Thank you.

I wanted to ask you—unless you want to say something else on the research front—did I read in that same article that you or someone was calling for health professionals to have a TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission]?

Soldz: Yes. I've been calling for that for years.

Q: Can you talk about that? It's so interesting to me, as an oral historian—the use of narrative.

Soldz: We've been trying for years—accountability. Trudy Bond has filed ethics complaints. Steven Reisner filed one with the State Licensing Board, with the APA. Nothing has gotten anywhere. It's pretty clear now that that avenue is dead, and we know that the government is not going to do anything. If the architects of the torture program have gotten off scot-free, everyone else is going to, as well. **The Durham investigation is now closed. We had some hopes for that.**

[INTERRUPTION]

So I've had this idea that, at a minimum, if we could get enough of the profession and human rights groups to at least get what's in the public record—get one account in the public record—it would at least be something. Besides which, the other part of it is that we desperately need an independent investigation of the APA. The APA has been complicit in torture, we believe. You can't just go on—and the same people are there. So the profession desperately needs some mechanism to get fresh air, and come to terms with what's been done. Obviously, what happened after MKULTRA didn't protect us from future CIA collusion. If we don't do something, we'll repeat it next time. In fact, it's probably still going on.

So this TRC idea I have—I can't say I can get a lot of enthusiasm for it. I did lobby the people—was it the Constitution Foundation? Is that what it is? Century [Foundation]? There's a group

having hearings on the interrogation program in D.C. They've got a bi-partisan panel and stuff, investigating. I forget—in New York it's got funding for this. I can't remember the name of—

Q: I'll figure it out.

Soldz: What?

Q: I'll try to figure it out.

Soldz: I know Mort [Morton H.] Halperin of OSI [Open Society Institute] is someone involved. I did lobby them to include the psychologists. Now I've had contact with their investigator, and I spoke to her for a few hours and gave her a bunch of documents. But, on the other hand, their report is going to be about one hundred eighty pages, with appendices, for everything. So how much it's going to say about the psychologists is questionable. But, I tried, at least, to get it not ignored. I know I proposed it. There was a meeting at OSI of a group, mainly physicians, sponsored by their IMAP, Institute for Medicine as a Profession, that Len Rubenstein helped organize, to which I was invited once. I wasn't invited back. Steven Reisner has been back. I think they really didn't want the psychologists there. It was embarrassing. I was the only person they invited the first time for who they wouldn't pay my travel costs. I'm in this huge OSI building, obviously money running around, and they wouldn't pay my sixty bucks for my bus fare—it was really insulting. I think that might have been why I wasn't invited back. Maybe they felt like one psychologist was enough. That two would pollute their air. I don't know.

But anyway, Steven's been going. Nothing's going to happen with the Truth Commission idea. Len didn't like it. He thought we couldn't get enough press, enough attention for it. I just think it's better than nothing. I just don't have great hopes for other mechanisms. I still support that idea, but unless we can get some more major support from somebody, it's not going to happen. So I don't know. I am just terrified that the professions in the country—just like the country's basically going to go on and pretend this didn't happen, the profession even more so. And even if someday we get a certain level of reckoning, maybe thirty years down the road we get some apology—some president apologizes, and we get a little congressional report—it won't cover the psychologists in any great detail. One reason it won't is because of Senator Inouye—because he was instrumental in all of this—behind the BSCT program. He's a Democrat, so they'll protect him. We've been told by congressional sources that they understand about Inouye, but they're not going to undercut one of their senior people. It's a real problem. And DeLeon, who was central there. Since the BSCTs were largely funded out of Inouye's office, and he also had the special supervisory role on intelligence budgets at crucial times, I don't have great faith that we'll be able to get through that in Congress. It's a problem.

So I don't know. Most of the profession—even those who know something bad happened, it's just not a priority.

Q: I don't want to wear you out too much. You tell me when you're done.

Soldz: Don't you have any other questions or areas?

Q: I just wondered if you could talk a little bit about Bradley Manning, just to get that on the record.

Soldz: Okay. Well, our involvement is peripheral. I suspect we may have had a bit of a role. One of my regrets, under the can't-do-everything—I really wished a psychologist would focus more attention on exposing psychological torture, and countering the public misunderstandings of it, and trying to get a sense of how awful this is. But I've been so involved in the sort of tactical issues around the U.S. torture program; I just have not gotten there. I've tried to get some human rights groups involved. It's just not anyone's priority. I'm trying to get Physicians for Human Rights to focus more attention in that realm.

So when the Manning case came, in Psychologists for Social Responsibility there's a lot of sympathy for Manning and WikiLeaks. As I said, I had some peripheral involvement in WikiLeaks in the early days. Maybe I should get that in here.

Q: Yes, please do.

Soldz: So Julian Assange sent me the Guantánamo Standard Operating Procedures, when they were just being released, I guess. I don't know if it was the day before or if they'd been released yet or not. This was very early. It was the first big coup in WikiLeaks. He was frustrated at how they didn't get that much response. He was trying various things to try to get the press to pay attention, so for a bit he would have groups of reporters—and I was included in several of these—who would be given advance notice of two weeks or so of a certain document to give

people time to do background research. He reasoned that one of the reasons if something gets leaked it doesn't get much reporting is everyone's afraid that someone else will scoop it. They'll put time into doing the background work, and someone else will publish first, and then their story won't get published, so he figured if everyone gets it at the same time, then at least no one is scooping anyone. So he tried that, with limited success. There was a Fallujah document—I don't remember the details—that confirmed many of our fears about what had gone on. It was an Army report on Fallujah. I know I wrote about that because I'd followed Fallujah very intensively. But he also got a hold of the counterinsurgency manuals for the Special Forces, and that got no reporting. I didn't have the time. It was several hundred pages and it was going to take a lot of work to really understand it because you can't just read it. You have to look at other stuff, figure out what's new, to learn how to understand the military terminology—it takes a lot of work to understand military language. To make sure you are understanding a document correctly is a major undertaking.

So at one point he was thinking of starting a WikiLeaks journal. He asked me if I would edit it. I said, "I can't. I'm not a good editor. I just don't enjoy that kind of work. I'm not a fast reader; I'm a slow reader." I said I would be on the editorial board, but I couldn't be the editor. So that was one thing he was trying. The thing that's interesting, historically, what I saw from the inside is he was trying many different mechanisms to get attention for the documents WikiLeaks was releasing, and they weren't working. So at least in the early days he wasn't making himself the center of it. It wasn't about getting attention for him. I think he wandered into that, and I think it was very damaging in some ways, making him the story. But he didn't start out there. I saw no

sign in the early days that it was about ego. So that's the part that's worth getting on the record there.

I feel bad. I was intending on writing an article on how to use the WikiLeaks documents. As he pointed out, people write dozens of articles on the same stupid thing—criticizing Obama's escalation in Afghanistan. Everyone will write the same basic article. I know a number of my colleagues do this, and I find it very frustrating—with nothing new to say but they each want to get published. Here is this trove of material that, if you spent a little time working on it, you could have something totally original to say, and important, because no one else was writing about and analyzing it. Because these were the secrets—like the counterinsurgency manuals. No one has ever gone over them that I've seen. That's just what I wanted to say there.

So, Bradley Manning. Some were sympathetic to him. Some supported him. But we were all aghast at the treatment, when he was subjected to solitary and nakedness for two weeks and solitary for about six months. Three of us in Psychologists for Social Responsibility decided to write a statement—which became two because one of the group wanted to do what we thought would be a six-month academic study of the literature. We were, “No,” we needed a statement out this weekend, which is a very different style. So, he backed out. Trudy Bond and I wrote explicitly taking our position as psychologists on the use of solitary confinement, and how disturbing that was. But we also had a unique—at that point—tactical angle, which is that there had been open letters and things, and petitions, but they'd all been aimed at the Quantico commander. We wrote the first one that was aimed at Secretary of Defense Gates. Again, we were saying, "Secretary Gates, you're responsible." I think we were the first ones to really "up"

it, to get it beyond Quantico. I said, "I won't write it to the Quantico guy," because, obviously, he's not the one who's making decisions here. And if he is, there's a gross failure of command.

So I think that may have been a slight factor in challenging his conditions of confinement. In changing some of the focus, it got a fair amount of press attention. Then a second one, especially related to the nakedness—when that came out a couple months later—which we also then upped it by CCing the president. We wrote a second one to Gates, CCing the president. So it may have played some role. I have to say, there were lots of other people involved at that point. It was right around the time—I forget that senior State Department official [P.J. Crowley] talking at MIT, said how stupid the policy was, and allowed it to go public, when asked he said, "Is this all on the record?" He thought a moment and said yes. In other words, he made the conscious decision to sacrifice his career.

So there were a lot of people, and this is becoming a big international issue. Reporters were starting to ask White House—I think we played a little role. So David Coombs, Manning's attorney, contacted me a few months ago, and he wanted to—he's intending to file a motion, originally supposed to have been filed in May, claiming that PFC [Private First Class] Manning was subjected to illegal pretrial punishment and, therefore, the charges should be dropped. This solitary confinement was unjustified. It was, therefore, illegal pretrial punishment. He originally asked if I would write a declaration to that effect, and I explored with him would he rather come from me as an individual, or Psychologists for Social Responsibility? We agreed upon the latter—which was slightly complicated in PsySR because things are all supposed to be approved by the steering committee, which just doesn't work when you're dealing with things like

attorneys. Because every time I've ever done it with attorneys, we end up coming up with the final draft at the final hour. So, basically, I need to get pre-approval—which, fortunately, people gave me. But I insist on that. I can't play it the other way—I can't deal with freaking out about are we going to make a deadline. I can't stand that.

So we wrote a statement, meeting his deadline of May 1, but, unfortunately, it seems to have been delayed until August. So it's sitting there. Exactly how it will come out still needs to be figured.

Q: Fascinating.

Soldz: Now one of our colleagues wants to use the information in it because she says it's the best statement on the harm of solitary confinement—she's very active in the anti-solitary confinement campaign in California. The problem is that the statement's not public. Coombs says if we do another version—but we haven't had the energy yet to do another version. Trudy and I wrote this. It's sitting there. It's one of many things that should get done—to make another version that takes the information, but puts it out of the Manning context, so that the—

Q: For the general public, can you just boil down, in a safe paragraph, what it does do? That extensive kind of isolation?

Soldz: Well, isolation can be quite horrific. We're social animals. We live in a context of people, of relationships, and being isolated from that quickly causes psychological pain and frequently

disorganization. Frequently leading to the level of psychopathology, and in some cases—and not an insignificant number of cases—serious psychopathology. This can happen rapidly, within a matter of days. Some researchers—Craig Haney, who's one of the lead researchers on this, argues that there's not a single case in the literature where people who have been subjected to solitary for two weeks have not suffered serious psychological suffering from it. People obviously differ. Some are more resilient than others, so many recover to some degree, or to a fair degree. Some never recover. Then in some cases—in the Manning case—you've got the added thing of the forced nakedness for two weeks, which was designed to humiliate. You had the sensory deprivation, so not only isolation but he was denied books, and other ways of distracting himself—which is quite common, that this is combined, essentially, with forms of sensory deprivation.

Sensory deprivation was developed by the CIA as part of the MKULTRA program, and shown to rapidly lead to psychological disorganization. People lose their bearings. They start hallucinating in many cases. They become intensely anxious. They can start talking to themselves. One of the very sad things is that in prisons it's often used with mentally-ill prisoners because they can't handle them. But it exacerbates the mental illness. Therefore, they can't be released because they're more disturbed than you began with.

In the Bradley Manning case—well, it's hard to tell what the claims were. There were reports in the press that he was suicidal, but the argument we make is that this is the last thing you'd want to do to someone who's suicidal—to put them in isolation. If you want to get someone to commit suicide, you might do it. But it's not going to help them to recover from being suicidal, to be

isolated. It's only going to exacerbate depression and anxiety, and increase the chances of suicide, increase suicidal symptoms.

So there's this perverse logic. If you want to lock someone up forever you put them in isolation, drive them crazy, and then you've got an excuse that they're behaving so erratically that they can't be released. It made no sense. You also have the question of—he was interviewed many times, I think, by military psychiatrists, during that time. Now supposedly they did not go along with saying that he was suicidal and needed to be in isolation. On the other hand, they didn't report this as abuse either. There were questions about whether this was ethical malpractice, because guidelines and military regulations require abuse to be reported—for doctors to report abuse. I believe there was a psychologist who was involved in helping keep him in isolation.

So that's the basic argument. We've got extensive research and the vast majority—there are a few exceptions of research claims that solitary is harmful. That research finding the opposite seems to be flawed. Namely, that research that shows that solitary was not harmful—the people in it had already been subjected to severe solitary before the study started.

Q: They were so far down they couldn't go any lower.

Soldz: Possibly, but we don't know. You can't rule that out.

Q: Thank you. Thank you for everything.

Soldz: Sure.

[END OF SESSION]

3PM

Session Four

Interviewee: Stephen Soldz

Location: New York, NY

Interviewer: Mary Marshall Clark

Date: April 30, 2013

Q: Okay, it is April 30, 2013. This is Mary Marshall Clark. I'm very grateful to be with Stephen Soldz. I'd like to start this mini interview with the same question I always ask. Tell me something about your growing up life—where you were born and your early influences.

Soldz: I was born in St. Louis. I say, Missouri is the “Show Me State,” so I'm known for telling people to show me the evidence. Actually, my family left when I was four. My brother and I went back for a few years in summers, but basically had almost nothing to do with St. Louis and Missouri since then.

I lived for four years in the Boston area, then eight years in Virginia, and then returned to Boston, where I've been ever since. I was in science and mathematics initially. When we were in Boston, there was a physicist next door who was very influential at the time. Then we were in Virginia; the influences were from reading. I discovered Henry Thoreau somewhere around when I was eleven or twelve—*Civil Disobedience* and others of the nonviolent protesters, Dave Dellinger, the Mississippi Summer folks. They were my heroes at that point.

Then I went off to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] when I was fifteen, and I had—there were two things I wanted to accomplish. One was to hear Noam Chomsky speak and the

other was to find a radical group to join. This was 1968. I did both in the first week, and unfortunately didn't attend many classes. Dropped out after a year.

Q: Were there things that went on in your childhood or times that you realized also that you were this kind of person, an activist?

Soldz: Well, I was always sensitive to things just not quite being right. I mean, I was against the Vietnam War before—I don't know if I knew anyone else—I certainly didn't personally know—. Turned out my parents were but they never said anything about it until a couple of years later. No, actually much younger, I mean in fifth grade, I created a brouhaha because I wouldn't say the prayer—school still had school prayer—being an atheist. I also refused to say the Pledge of Allegiance because not only do you have “one nation under God,” but it said “indivisible.” It seemed that since the Civil War, and “with liberty and justice for all”—and I'd heard of Sacco and Vanzetti.

Fortunately, my parents backed me up and threatened to go to the [American] Civil Liberties Union. They sort of said, as long as he stands and he holds his hand or something, he can keep his mouth shut. We compromised, but it was a fairly individualistic thing. Then in junior high school or somewhere in there, I fought in social studies to have a debate on Vietnam. At the end of the year, the teacher finally let us have that. We all each got our chance to go around and have like two minutes or something like that to say, “I support the war because I—” and me, “I oppose the war because—.” And someone yelled out, “Communist!” Somewhat oddly, this year on my birthday, I got a phone call and someone said, “Happy birthday.” They said, “This is Jack Lane.”

I said, "Who?"

He said, "You don't know who I am?"

I said, "No."

He said, "I was in your fifth and sixth grade class," and he started describing how he was a very religious guy.

I said, "Oh, you were the guy on the playground. You used to say, 'You killed our lord, you killed our lord!'"

He said, "Well, I don't remember it, but I probably was."

I said, "And you're the one who called me a communist."

Then he said he was from a very fundamentalist Christian family, and he said, "By the way, I've joined you as an atheist now, if you're still an atheist." Evidently we had long conversations about how could there be a god, though I don't remember them.

Q: That's so interesting. It's a kind of full circle, unexpected moment. So you're a person who does stand up for other people and that's part of why I wanted you to tell that story. I'd love to

know, you also had your own way of seeking your educational path, which I think is unique and I'd like to hear a little bit about that.

Soldz: Well, learning—I was this math prodigy so learning in school, I didn't do very much of that. Some teachers just left me alone and others kind of resented it. There were experiences—I think it was fifth grade where my teacher was taking what they called modern math at that point and she couldn't figure it out, so I would stay after school and do her homework for her, which was kind of amusing because you thought, is this cheating? After eighth grade, I started taking graduate math courses at Georgetown [University]. One of those classes, a modern algebra class, there are four students, two of whom were eighth grade math teachers who spent the whole class passing notes around and giggling, and I was like, “This is what my teachers are like when they're off duty?”

Q: That's great. After MIT, then you created, again, your own educational path and eventually ended up in psychology. Could you talk a little bit about that? Another choice was history, you said.

Soldz: Yes. Well, actually, when I was about nineteen, I taught social history. There was this Cambridge-Goddard Graduate School for Social Change, and even though I was actually technically a high school dropout and a college dropout, I was able to teach a master's—in fact, give a master's degree to a student studying labor history. Those were the days in the early seventies. [Laughter]

Q: They're gone.

Soldz: You couldn't pull that off these days.

Then I went back to school. University of Massachusetts at Amherst had this University Without Walls program so I didn't actually have to go to classes. I was only in Amherst twice during my entire education there. I could do independent study with people in Boston. Then I started going more straight and narrow. When I graduated from that, I didn't get into a clinical psychology doctoral program so I went into a counseling program at Lesley. Then I worked in a drug abuse clinic for adolescents in what's now my community, Roslindale, for three or four years. Then I went back into a clinical psychology program, the one that rejected me the first time—so sort of straightened out a bit.

Q: Could you describe then your own professional evolution before we get to the story of Guantánamo and the APA?

Soldz: What aspect of it do you—

Q: Well, what branch of psychology do you work in? What are your job responsibilities?

Soldz: Okay. Well, again, I'm a little odd because I'm a psychoanalyst. I trained at what's now the Boston Graduate School of Psychoanalysis, where I teach. I'm also a researcher, both qualitative and quantitative, so in addition to seeing patients, I've had a number of jobs as

research director of both private consulting companies and non-profits and worked with the Department of Public Health and our Bureau of Substance Abuse Services in Massachusetts as the research director of one of these non-profits. I've had this dual research and clinical practice where I practice psychoanalysis. These days I do a lot of teaching as well.

Q: Let's now move to the story that we're here to talk about today, which is the post-9/11 designation of Guantánamo as a detention center and the involvements of the American Psychological Association and research on human subjects. However you'd like to begin telling that story is fine, whether you want to begin when you first heard about it and the public knew about it or whether you want to start with what you know was happening there from 2002 on.

Soldz: Well, my path to involvement in this was—I've been an activist to some degree. Though I got married, had a kid, a career, activism had moved toward the back burner. Then in the lead up to the Iraq War, it just drove me crazy that we were going into this again. We saw the debacle of Vietnam. Millions dead, the tens of thousands of American troops killed, and that we were just going blindly into it again—so I became obsessed. I started an anti-war website that I spent hours a day updating for years.

At the time of Abu Ghraib, I wrote one of the first commentaries on it the first weekend it that came out because I had known something was going on there. Having followed the war, I'd read almost everything in English on the Iraq War and there was public indications that something was not right. What it was wasn't clear because the people released weren't talking. They were obviously too humiliated. But one woman who had come out said—about people who had died

inside—that they were the lucky ones, so you knew that something horrific was going on there. Then the scandal happens and everyone in the government, some denying it—“Oh, we never knew. Who would have guessed that such awful MPs [military police] would do such despicable things?” So I wrote a piece which concluded, it was something like if I, an ordinary citizen, could know, then surely our leaders knew. And this went viral.

Then came the issue of psychologists' and physicians' involvement in torture. I think I first heard about in either late 2004 or early 2005. Actually at first, I wasn't paying a lot of attention because in some ways I wasn't surprised. Then in June of 2006, Neil Lewis in the *New York Times* wrote a piece in which he said that the military was now preferring psychologists over psychiatrists for the so-called Behavioral Science Consultation Teams, the “Biscuit” teams [BSCT], because of the positions of their respective professional associations. This led colleagues of mine on a Psychoanalysts for Social Responsibility list to write the then-president of the APA. I joined in.

I had actually—when the issue had come up previously, I had sort of said, “Well, this is part of a long standing tradition of the APA's involvement with the military,” and people had kind of poo-pooed and weren't interested. I sort of shut up because I didn't want to be the gadfly who's always saying what no one wants to hear. But when the president of the APA wrote back this very nasty response, then my colleagues said something is wrong.

Q: And the then president was?

Soldz: Gerald Koocher. It was clear that they had something to hide because it was not acknowledging that there was any ambiguity in the issue. I remember the response I got said, “You are dead wrong!” Exclamation point. This was the very week that three of the detainees had died at Guantánamo, allegedly of suicide, though Scott Horton has since written that they were probably murdered. So it felt especially inappropriate that week to say, “You're dead wrong.” My colleague said, “There's something not right here.” Since I'd been writing for progressive websites, I figured, well, I can write an article on this because that's a skill I have. I've learned how to write popular articles on political themes and get them published and get attention for them.

I wrote something—actually sent it to Steven Reisner for comment and he made some strong criticisms of the way it was organized. I kind of put it aside. Then I was a visiting professor in Australia that summer. I said, “Well, the APA convention's coming up. If I don't publish it beforehand, then it'll be irrelevant.” I went back and revised it as he suggested and got it out a week or two before the convention. All of a sudden the phone in Australia started ringing. Reporters started calling and someone named Nathaniel Raymond, then of Physicians for Human Rights, started calling. Natty and I had about a three hour conversation and we're trying to understand, why is the APA doing this? I proposed a theory that I was wondering about at the time, which was that perhaps it was payback for help that the military had given the APA for what was then, and is still, their number one legislative priority—getting prescription drug privileges for psychologists.

That effort had been immeasurably helped by the military. In fact, it would have been dead in the water without them because they had created in the early 1990s a so-called psychopharmacology demonstration program, which trained ten military psychologists in prescribing medications, which the military would allow. No state would allow it, but military could do it within their system. Then the APA got to fund an evaluation that said that this was an effective program after two DOD evaluations said it was not effective. This was the evidence these people would then testify before all the state legislatures. That was the evidence that they would have that psychologists could be trained to prescribe.

The sense I had was, maybe the APA owed them. Natty and I talked. Initially, he said, “No, no, that's not it,” but then he said, “You know, this is worth looking into. Let's see if we can get a reporter to look into it.” That was the start of our investigative efforts, which largely through Natty's effort—but myself and colleagues played a role—led to one of the streams of investigation that led to identifying these psychologists, James Mitchell and Bruce Jessen, who were the psychologists that the CIA brought on board to create their so-called enhanced interrogation torture program. We were a part of the team that revealed that in Katherine Eban's *Vanity Fair* article in June of 2007. A few weeks later, Jane Mayer independently reported that Mark Benjamin had reported a little bit of the story in *Salon*.

We started trying to investigate and figure out what was going on, an effort that's still ongoing. It's been very difficult. Most of the documents are classified. Gradually some have been declassified, which have shown that the broad outlines of what we originally thought was the case was indeed exactly the case. The military and CIA had taken the so-called SERE program,

the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape program, which was for troops who are at danger of being captured by “a power” that does not respect the Geneva Conventions. In other words, a power that tortures. That was to train them.

The “resistance” part of that was to teach them how to resist being abused. Basically, how to resist breaking under torture through a brief period of being abused themselves. The idea was that this would help inoculate them. The belief of a number of us was that this had been reverse engineered by the CIA to develop their enhanced interrogation torture program. This was controversial at first. Steven Miles, bioethicist, who has written a lot about this, thought that the relation with SERE was more accidental—that people had gone through SERE and when they started interrogating people, they just adopted what they'd learned, rather than something more formal. It turned out that those of us who thought there was a more formal process were right, as revealed in official documents starting in 2007 and revealed in a number of years since then. That in fact, it had been very formal process, authorized, we learned, out of the White House. And so a small group—

Q: Can I just ask you what your reaction was when you learned that?

Soldz: At some level, it's so horrific that it's very hard to really come to terms with it, to really realize not—the U.S. has a long relationship with torture, unfortunately, but it's always been in the shadows, something to be denied, something to be embarrassed about, to pawn off on so-called rogue agents, though often they weren't rogue agents. The torture program that was developed in the top of the CIA and authorized at the White House, that actually had

demonstrations in the White House to top cabinet officials, including the vice president and the secretary of state, the secretary of defense, it's just—and that they can get away with it. It's just, it's hard to accept. It just kind of burns at you because it's such a danger to us, to everyone, I think, in the whole world, that the U.S. that professes to be this paragon of human rights can so blatantly ignore everything it preaches. Those who do it just get away with it and no one cares. This administration just gave them a blank check. “We're going to look forward, not back,” the president said. Well, every criminal—we have how many people, two million people in our criminal justice system? Every single one of which wishes the government would look forward, not look back. Only the people at the top get treatment like that, so any sort of pretense that this is a nation of laws is thrown out the door when you have that as official policy.

We also discovered—well, we suspected at the beginning that the APA was very intimately involved. In 2005, they had a task force on this issue, the so-called PENS task force. PENS—Psychological Ethics and National Security. It was a very odd task force because it only met over one weekend. The report had to be approved by the task force members within twenty-four hours of the end of the task force, during which time people were traveling home, sometimes across the country. Their time to review it was essentially not present and the membership of the task force was kept secret.

When APA members asked in the convention in August that year, “Who was on the task force?” They were told, “It's confidential.” What kind of a task force do you not know the membership of? A professional task force—its credibility all depends on who's on the task force. It wasn't until the next year, right before the APA convention, that Mark Benjamin published that the

members of the task force were in fact—a majority of them were from the military intelligence establishment. He said he got this from congressional sources. In fact, I believe we've discovered that five—I believe it's five of the six members in the intelligence establishment—there were ten total members—were from chains of command who had themselves been accused of detainee abuse, of prisoner abuse. Basically, you got the abusers to write the ethics policy or you've got those—let me be a little—we use that phrase, chains of command, because we can't prove what any individual did. But these people were there. They were present. They knew what happened. They may have participated. We can't know for sure. In any case, they knew the government had done horrific things, that the militaries had done horrific things, the CIA had done horrific things. Not a word of that was spoken to the task force, so this is simply not credible. It was like a put-up job.

Its prime finding was that it was ethical for psychologists to participate in national security interrogations. In fact they had “a vital role to play in keeping interrogations safe, legal, ethical, and effective.” It turns out that that very phrase—“safe, legal, ethical, and effective”—was taken from the instructions for these BSCT teams, the Behavioral Science Consultation Teams, which ultimately was taken from the torture memos written by the Department of Justice. They didn't use those exact words, but they used those exact concepts, that health professionals kept interrogations safe, legal, ethical, and effective. The memos kept them effective by figuring out the weaknesses of prisoners. They kept them safe, legal, and ethical because if a health profession was present and said the interrogation was safe, legal, and ethical, then it didn't matter what happened. You couldn't have intended to torture them, no matter how damaged they were,

because a health professional had said it was safe. One of their primary roles was to be a get out of jail free card, and the APA signed on to this.

You realize that something was really, really wrong. The APA started this process of denial and confusion, step after step. It would be, well, pseudo-scholars claim that there are abuses, but they haven't given us names and dates. If they give us names, then we'll bring them to justice within the APA. Well, when we gave them names, nothing happened. There's now a case which was first referred to them in August of 2006 that's now going on seven years later. It's still an open case. Other cases, they've refused to even open. They refuse to even investigate.

In fact, one of the people, Colonel Larry James, who was at Guantánamo in 2003—who brazenly lied in his book about it—they've given award after award to. He's proclaimed to be a hero, even though his book contradicts every official document, every independent source on what happened there. His book also includes many instances of unethical and even illegal behavior, and simply disturbing—like he talks there about how the prisoners at Guantánamo, they are terrorists that constitute a new sort of mental illness that is worse than anything I ever before seen. It's more horrific. He seems to have not missed that, as top CIA officials knew in the summer of 2002, that over half of them, if not the vast majority of them, were innocent or maybe foot soldiers. These were not the worst of the worst at all but Larry James seemed to have totally missed that. Instead they've got this new level of mental illness, completely missing that people who have been locked up unfairly may not love the United States for having kidnapped them, taken them thousands of miles under horrific conditions, abused them for years, and then kept them locked up. That, somehow, you may not like that too much. The APA thinks that this is

somebody they should be giving award after award to, and having him be speaker after speaker, honored speaker for division after division.

Q: It's very mysterious.

Soldz: Very mysterious, well, and very disturbing.

Q: I like your use of the word kidnapped, because it's very concrete. I'm thinking now of fifty years from now when this story's going to be read by and listened to by the American public. That's a very concrete way that people can understand what actually happened, aside from all the rhetoric.

Soldz: Yes. When you think about just the way everyone was taken to Guantánamo, that you had diapers put on you, a suppository put in you. You're put in an orange jumpsuit. Black goggles are put over your eyes. Ear muffs are put over your ears so that you can't hear a word. You're then chained up, stretched out for up to thirty-six hours in very painful positions. This is levels of abuse that kidnapers rarely resort to. This is what our government was doing and psychologists were helping them do it.

Q: So you organized—I mean, one response was not to shy away from it, but to really work with Natty on the Physicians for Human Rights report to organize your coalition. Could you talk about some of those efforts?

Soldz: Gradually, with the help of Nathaniel Raymond—Natty from Physicians for Human Rights—a group of psychologists, a very small group—I think we were three initially, then four. We're now up to about six. I think we had seven at one point—one person who's decided to get married and retire from our efforts for the time being—of activists came together. We were one strand of what was a very interesting sort of decentralized movement because psychologists from different organizations or not necessarily even formal organizations came together.

We had our little group, which we eventually named the Coalition for an Ethical Psychology, which I would say in some sense spearheaded a lot of the movement. There were others who'd withhold APA dues—that had the idea of withholding dues from the APA and got several hundred members to do that publicly. There was the Psychoanalysts for Public Responsibility. This decentralized movement, it was a nice example of decentralizing yet informally coordinated movement because we sort of worked together. We'd keep in touch but different groups would also do their own thing. There was not any formal structure. It worked very well. It was also an example of what's possible with the Internet that wouldn't have been possible before Internet days. In 2013, that doesn't seem that surprising, but when we started out in 2007, it was much newer—or 2006—it was much newer then than it is today, to be so coordinated over the Internet and conference calls. I worked with several people for a year before I even met them in person, having only had emails and conference calls. It was very moving. We burst in tears when we first met.

Q: Where did you first meet?

Soldz: At the APA convention in San Francisco.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about that convention?

Soldz: Well, just about the meetings. Steven Reisner had been in Russia, vacationing with his family. He returned early for the convention. He was totally exhausted. I remember he and I went to his hotel room. I think he'd been up for thirty-six hours or something like that. I just remember we hugged and burst out in tears. Then we had a nice drink.

That convention, we organized a—we, not the coalition, but the broader movement, largely through the withhold APA dues folks—a demonstration which about many of us spoke. Probably not the first demonstration at a convention, but we got a fair amount of press. We were running around at 4:00 in the morning to *Democracy Now* studios to be interviewed and things.

The APA had—one of their early strategies to try and mute this issue was to say, “This is an issue on which reasonable people can disagree.” They organized at the convention what they called a mini-convention of something like fifteen, twenty hours of programming on the issue, which had panels with people from both sides. It turned out they had trouble getting enough psychologists to defend the policy because most of them didn't want to be seen in public.

We were in the context of this whirlwind of these daily three-hour panels or something like that on this issue, as well as the demonstration, and there was also a vote at the convention. Neil Altman, representing the division of psychoanalysis, had proposed the year before—it was called a moratorium—that would have basically said psychologists can't serve at Guantánamo until this issue was really thought about much more deeply—that there'd be a moratorium on it.

The APA board, a month before the convention, tried to use a parliamentary trick to avoid a vote on the moratorium. Evidently, if the board proposes a substitute motion that gets voted on before the original motion and if it passes, the original motion would never be voted on. So they proposed that the APA adopt a motion condemning use by psychologists of certain torture techniques—which we weren't opposed to, but we didn't see as at all serving the purpose of the moratorium.

There was a brouhaha. Eventually, they partially backed down and agreed to allow the moratorium to be proposed as an amendment to their resolution. At least it would get a vote. In typical fashion with everything that happens at the APA, there's frenzied negotiations late at night the night before the vote, which those of us who were the most active weren't involved. We weren't on council.

Those who were involved only understood—they were only really concerned about the moratorium, not about the resolution condemning the torture techniques. The next morning, after the meeting's actually started, I run into Neil Altman, who's no longer in council. He's upstairs and he has a copy of the revised resolution. I start reading it and I realize that they changed the wording in such a way that it would significantly weaken the resolution and thereby create loopholes that would allow the CIA to continue exactly what it was doing. Downstairs the debate's going on. We're furiously trying to mobilize, but we're not even allowed to speak. We're not even supposed to speak to the councilors, but we sneak in—Steven Reisner sneaks in and sort of whispers and gets one councilor willing to introduce an amendment that would remove

the language that was introduced at midnight the night before. It only got like three or four votes because naturally, this person didn't really understand the implications. No one who was allowed to speak who was on council could understand because of the way this business happened.

Then the moratorium went down to defeat with maybe twenty percent to thirty percent of the votes. The APA got to proclaim that the APA opposes torture. In typical fashion they lied about things. Mark Benjamin of *Salon* asked Stephen Behnke, the APA Ethics Director, “Where did you get this revised language?”

Behnke said, “Oh, I got it from Physicians for Human Rights and from Soldz's blog.”

Mark Benjamin said, “Well, that's very interesting because I have here a letter from Physicians for Human Rights addressed to you, sent to you yesterday, requesting that the language be removed.” At which point Stephen Behnke ended the interview.

Mark Benjamin, who really understood the issues, before the convention had written a piece called “Psychologists Set to Condemn CIA Torture,” or something like that [“Psychologists to CIA: We Condemn Torture”]. I don't know the exact title. Afterwards he wrote a piece something like, “Did the APA Condone CIA Torture?” [“Will psychologists still abet torture?”]

There was a whirlwind afterwards, even though the APA council couldn't see through it.

The *Houston Chronicle* had an editorial that condemned the resolution. Mary Pipher, famous psychologist—author of *Reviving Ophelia*—returned a medal. She had been given a lifetime achievement medal by the APA a couple years earlier. She said, “I don't want a medal from an

organization that would condone CIA torture.” A lot of people saw through it, just not those on the APA council, unfortunately.

Q: Around the same time, the Supreme Court was hearing cases on habeas around—they'd got the information, or rather information came out via *Rasul v. Bush* [2004], via *Rasul*, via Gareth Peirce about what was actually happening there in 2004, 2005. In the lawyers' histories that we've taken, this was a time of great excitement in 2008—the election of the new president and so on and so forth. I'm wondering how you all felt about what you needed to address to the public at large, given what you were seeing, which was the APA was still—it was still going to happen. The public doesn't really understand. As an activist and as a writer, what were you thinking you needed to do at that time?

Soldz: Well, I would say my contribution was really—I was the one that really formulated the idea that this was not a battle in psychology. Most of my colleagues were fighting it as a battle within the profession in professional meetings. I figured we couldn't possibly win there.

I mean, I really believed the APA was in it for some serious reasons. They have had close ties to military and intelligence since World War I. They weren't going to give it up, basically. We weren't going to win it with votes on council.

My strategy was to make this a public issue—to make this a human rights issue around the world. My writing was all for public audiences—and trying to work with the press as much as we could to try and get the public to understand and exert, in some sense, indirect pressure. Supposedly, I've heard that one of the APA presidents who was very supportive of their policy

on this and somewhat nastily—several of them are just kind of nasty people, but—was asked at a cocktail party when he said he was president of the APA. He said, “Oh, you're the people who torture people.” That was sort of the strategy—was to make this a public issue. It would be embarrassing. I figured that was the only way we stood a chance.

It was a public issue already in other ways. For example, soldiers in Iraq, we've heard, were refusing to go to psychologists because they had heard of what psychologists were doing and they didn't trust them. There was a real danger of that coming home—that if psychology couldn't set a bright line against this kind of behavior, then there is a chance that elements of the public would say, you know, I'm not sure I want to see a psychologist. Who knows what they might have been doing, or what their colleagues might have been doing? The health professions are relatively unique. Law is another one, and the clergy—they rely on trust. If people don't trust you with their secrets, you can't do your job. You can't afford to have people having questions. As the case of the perhaps apocryphal stories of the soldiers in Iraq—if they didn't trust, you couldn't do it.

We tried, and I think were moderately successful to make this a public issue. In the United States, the whole torture issue has been very difficult. At least among those concerned about human rights, we made sure that they understood that psychologists were part of this and that they had been part of the problem, not part of the solution. This wouldn't be let go. Also around the world.

In 2008, we had a vote on a referendum, the first ever member initiated referendum, in which fifty-nine percent of the members of the APA voted to ban psychologists participating in any prison or detention site in violation of international law or the Constitution, like Guantánamo or the CIA black sites. The APA then said, “Well, this is now our policy. However, who knows what's in violation of international law? Every psychologist will have to decide for themselves.” So it had no effect. However, on the other hand, we heard from people around the world. I mean, it was amazing that you'd hear from people in developing countries where they have profound human rights things. They'd say, “You've given us hope because if you people can take on the APA, maybe we can take—.” It was amazing. I mean, that people from countries—you think, people who are being killed saw this as their struggle and took hope from our efforts. That was very moving.

Q: You've also mentioned to me in the past that it's been incredibly rewarding to have worked with the people with whom you have worked. The lawyers have also said that to us.

Soldz: Yes. The colleagues I've known who got involved in this, I mean, I think it's different than some of other—because almost none of us were people who for whom the APA had been part of our lives. Really, we were a grassroots movement. People who devoted incredible amounts of time and energy worked—I mean, we have worked really hard to understand and to get things right. We've tried hard. We've made a few minor factual errors in maybe one hundred pieces that we've written because we really valued getting the story right. In the process, we have become incredible friends. Some of my best friends in the world are the people who I originally started working with over email and who I only see once or twice a year at one of these meetings.

It's been one of the highlights of my life, though it's also been one of the most difficult times as well. I mean, dealing with torture is not something you do lightly. A few of us used to say that we're never going to be quite the same people again. That you just—in 2001, right after 9/11, Vice President [Richard B. “Dick”] Cheney said, “We're going to have to work on the dark side.” That meant that we've had to glimpse the dark side, and perhaps more of it than you ever want to glimpse. To read the torture memos and read them in detail over and over again, to catch all the nuances, is not something that most people want to do. Many of my colleagues, even my psychoanalyst colleagues who fancy themselves as able to hear whatever darkness there is in their patients say, “I can't listen to this. It's too awful.”

It's taken a real toll on us as well. Plus, just keeping up the energy year after year because we've also felt this responsibility. In the end, a lot of the force was borne—a lot of the burden was borne by a small group of us. While we had this large, decentralized movement, a lot of people kind of faded away. They're in support, but it stopped being one of their priorities, in a way. This became a smaller group of us who still put in the day to day energy. Keeping that energy up has been really tough. Fortunately, we've got some newer people joining who have had new energy when some of us have been a little less energetic.

Q: I guess framing another question would be—because we're sort of going to the end—not to be too journalistic, and I don't mean it in any way that way—but we're now at a very important historic moment with the hunger strike. I'm grateful from having learned everything I've learned

from you and others about why we should have been fighting this all these years. Now is the moment I think that the world could know. I just wondered what your thoughts about that are.

Soldz: It's really hard to understand what's going on with the hunger strike because the information sources are so limited. Basically, the information we have comes from attorneys who get it from their clients—but they have no direct access. They only have their reports from their clients.

As usual, throughout the Guantánamo experience, one thing we do know is that the accounts that we get from the prisoners there are more accurate than those from our government. The government initially was poo-pooing that there was any major hunger strike. The prisoners were saying that there was. Well, the government now admits that well over one hundred of the 160-odd people who are participating, which is what the prisoners were saying a while ago. It's just yet another case where the prisoners are more accurate than the government, which systematically has deceived—among the things that's very hard to tell, we're hearing from the lawyers that a lot of the prisoners have lost substantial amounts of weight.

Yet we also know that the government does engage in mass forced feeding. To be honest, I can't quite figure out exactly how many people are being force fed. Is it everyone who gets to a certain point? Are there people who are really in danger of dying or not? It's just very hard to tell. This is one of the problems of having a secret site like this. No place on earth should be like Guantánamo, not subject to independent observation. No place run by a democratic government

should be like that. No prison, I don't care if it's a supermax prison, should there not be independent people allowed access to give independent information.

It would make sense that this would be a mass thing. And we have eighty-six—more than half of the people there—have now been cleared for release for years, and are still kept prisoner because the U.S. government can't agree on where they're going to go. And Congress has barred their being released into the U.S.—the spineless guys in Congress.

I can't imagine putting myself in their shoes. I can't imagine having been in this horrific prison for perhaps a decade or over a decade, cleared for release years ago and yet still imprisoned in this place in which, sometimes, you're allowed to play soccer. Sometimes you're locked in a cell twenty-four hours a day for months on end at the whims of some official you have no say over. I wouldn't be surprised if this really goes on and people are at risk of death, or at least very serious health consequences. It's a very scary moment. It's hard to know what our government's going to do. This is an issue that the president just doesn't want to put political capital into. The Democrats in Congress who were critics of the Bush administration have spinelessly signed on to some of the Republican attempts to get propaganda out of this.

Whether someone's going to blink and change course, I don't know. It's a very scary thing. That said, we have the problem of the military sending in squads, another forty or so health providers to monitor and probably engage in force feeding. Force feeding is against medical ethics of the World Medical Association, the American Medical Association, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In these situations, as throughout, it is vitally important that there be independent health professionals. We simply can't trust government health professionals, those in the military—some of whom are very honorable—but all of whom are under incredible pressure from their commands to support government policy. All of whom are in a position that their medical ethics can be overridden by the commanders on the ground there.

We should have had from the beginning—and we desperately need now—to have independent health professionals who are not beholden to commanders, who can make independent judgments about the health status of people, about the mental health status. I mean, I myself was a consultant on a couple of the cases. In one of those cases, I saw the medical records.

On that single case, the physical treatment seemed decent. The doctor and the medical staff seemed to be trying with a somewhat difficult patient. The mental health staff and the psychologist seemed pretty awful. I mean really, as one who's worked in in-patient units, I couldn't believe the poor quality. All they seemed to care about was, was this person suicidal? They did endless suicide assessments. It was a kid, someone who was like sixteen or so when he was taken there. He was in despair because someone who he called his father, who probably wasn't his biological father but was a father figure, maybe an uncle, we never knew exactly, had been moved from his camp to another camp. He didn't see him anymore. What he wanted was to be in the same camp with him.

He was smearing feces on the walls, banging his head. All they did was provide—every time there was trouble—they would do a suicide assessment. You could tell that it meant nothing

because they would get close and he would say, as soon as he saw them, “I am not suicidal. I am not homicidal. I am sleeping well. I have good appetite. Now leave me alone.”

They all know the ritual. They get these suicide assessments every month. Occasionally—mostly this is done by mental health technicians who would then say, “I don't know.” And then a few times, a psychologist would just do another suicide assessment. Not once in the several years of records I was allowed to see—the government fought very hard to keep me from seeing records from the earlier years when he was allegedly abused—not once did anyone sit down and try just talking with him.

I mean, when you're in an in-patient unit and you've got someone who's being or causing a lot of trouble—if it's a decent unit—the first thing you do is you just sit down and talk. What's going on? What shocked me was they would have made their own lives so much easier because there was a good chance they could have calmed him down.

Q: Yes.

Soldz: I just couldn't understand how any qualified professional wouldn't realize. It's like, even if you're not even concerned about providing decent care, having these crises once or twice a week isn't in your benefit either.

Q: This is what you're talking about. The normal work of psychologists is not being done there and has never been done there.

Soldz: Yes. These were the mental health psychologists, the clinicians, not the interrogation folks. I just don't get it. We do know that a lot of these clinicians have hewed the line. I'm not saying all of them—I don't know. Some of them have published articles that are simply not credible. In professional journals, they've reported that the prisoners there have very high rates of so-called personality disorders. Personality disorders are longstanding conditions, which means that they antedated their being imprisoned. And yet, they found zero evidence for PTSD, post-traumatic stress [disorder]. This is simply not credible. Every time there's been an independent assessment, we found very high rates of PTSD symptoms. Physicians for Human Rights interviewed a number of released detainees. Every one had high rates of PTSD symptoms. Yet the military psychologists are publishing articles in professional journals—published by the APA, on which military psychologists are on the editorial board—in which they're saying there is no PTSD at Guantánamo. This is another form of professional malpractice going on.

Q: So Gareth Peirce gave testimony to this. She took the Tipton Three into her home for six months after they were released. She knows what symptoms they had. She told us in the video that we did with her that they didn't sleep. Their backs were gone. They couldn't eat. And so she's fairly credible in the legal profession. Her observations were haunting her still.

Soldz: Physicians who've interviewed released detainees say that—who are specialists in treatment of torture victims—say that these are the least functional survivors of torture that they've ever interviewed, perhaps because it was more scientific forms of abuse used to break them down.

Q: I hate to end on such a sad note. It is a very sad story. Thank you. Do you have any thoughts you'd like to add?

Soldz: Just one other point on that case that I was involved in. Both cases I was involved in, they were ultimately released by courts who ruled that there was absolutely no evidence that they had ever done anything against the United States. You could see the health professionals working hand in glove to deny the prisoners' account—to basically say that they were just faking it. I mean, having seen the medical records and seen this in black and white, seen affidavits from the health people there, that oh, this person's just faking it because they want to get our attention. It just confirmed that at least many of the health professionals there are more concerned about doing their duty to the government position than they are about their patients, which is what their ethical responsibility and their legal responsibility in the military. Military health professionals are obligated to follow a professional ethic to serve their patients first. Yet they don't. Okay.

Q: Thank you.

Soldz: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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