

THE RULE OF LAW ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Ghislaine Boulanger

Columbia Center for Oral History

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Ghislaine Boulanger conducted by Mary Marshall Clark on October 16, 2012. 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: Ghislaine Boulanger

Location: New York, NY

Interviewer: Mary Marshall Clark

Date: October 16, 2012

Q: This is October 16, 2012. My name is Mary Marshall Clark. I have the great pleasure of interviewing Dr. Ghislaine Boulanger, who, I will say for the record, I know as a colleague and a friend. I'm grateful to her today for being willing to talk to us about her involvement protesting the uses of psychologists at Guantánamo Bay, and other matters.

Boulanger: Thank you. I'm glad to be here.

Q: I want to ask you before we begin just to state who you are, what you do, the kind of work you have done over your lifetime, and how you came to be involved in this particular period of history that we're recording.

Boulanger: My name is Ghislaine Boulanger. I'm a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst. When I think back to how it was that this particular time in history grabbed me, as it has done many people, I guess I have to say that—as I was getting my PhD—my dissertation was about Vietnam veterans. I was fortunate to be part of what was the first epidemiological study of the social readjustment to Vietnam veterans. Actually, I was one of the two clinical psychologists on that study. The other one was not interested, for reasons that confused me, in the veterans' post-war adjustment. This was in 1976 and we had no diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD]. We knew, however, that veterans were coming back and developing what folks were

calling post-Vietnam syndrome. I made a scale. We actually had the working papers for post-traumatic stress disorder of DSM-III [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders], as it was going to be, which laid out PTSD or their understanding of it. I had also read a lot of the combat histories from psychiatrists from World War I and World War II, so I had a whole range of symptoms. I also realized that no one was looking, actually, at the combat involvement of the people who were coming back and then claiming to have this post-Vietnam syndrome.

I made up a combat scale as well with an ex-Marine who was on our project. As I went through this combat scale, my findings aside, what really impressed me were these quite dreadful situations.

[INTERRUPTION]

I was thinking to myself, as a budding clinical psychologist, how in the hell would you feel if you thought you were about to be killed at any moment? How would you feel if you had to kill someone? How would you feel if you saw your buddy's head blown off? Things that, I guess, until that moment, I had not really thought about very carefully. Through that work—this was actually a survey. I was not one of the survey interviewers but it was my job to call the vets afterwards and ask how they were doing—I just became really sensitized to the issues of facing terror, facing horror, as an adult.

Again, this was in the mid-seventies, in the heyday of classical psychoanalysis, in many ways. Certainly, its hegemony had not yet waned. There was no way of understanding what I have

come to call adult-onset trauma, as a psychoanalyst. I found the ways that psychologists and mental-health professionals generally understood it was superficial, I would say. But psychoanalysts kept conflating it with what had happened to people in their childhood and I would say, "For god's sake, you can't make this equation." Obviously, there can be an impact from what happened in the childhood but this has to be overlaid with what happens to you in adulthood.

I became, as I said, very aware of these issues for adults. In my practice, I worked for a while in the inner-city, where, of course, there is tremendous violence and horror, both for adults and for children. I'm talking, of course, about external reality. In my private practice, I was being sent people to evaluate—cops who had seen people killed. Once a garbage collector who had squashed his assistant—the guy who was driving the truck with him—in the garbage compactor and was in terrible shape, as you can imagine. It's an awful thing to have done. I was evaluating these cases. I became highly sensitive to the reactions of adults after this kind of massive trauma. I found that their reactions were very long-lasting; I found that they were very similar, independent of character type. They were very similar. As psychoanalysis began to become more sensible, I would say—more attuned to everyday life and less focused on the internal world of fantasies—I began a psychoanalytic training and with that training I was able to make sense of these things psychodynamically, for myself. I wrote a book about them and a series of articles.

So my book, which was called *Wounded by Reality*, I think appropriately enough, since that's exactly what we're talking about, was published in 2007. Of course, I was working on it for a number of years before that and during the years I was working on the book—let's say from

about 2002 onwards—I became aware of—. I'm going to back off for a moment and I'm going to talk about the American Psychological Association [APA] and the various official branches of it because this story involves several of those branches.

The American Psychological Association is, as it says, the group that represents American psychologists. You do not have to be a member of the American Psychological Association to practice. You don't get your license through them; you get your license through the state. You take an exam. But, of course, you expect to find colleagues; you expect that your professional association will have a standard of ethics to which, if you are a member of the American Psychological Association, only, you will be held to account. Again, that's separate from the ethics in your state, which is always interesting.

The American Psychological Association had, at that time, about, I believe—I'm talking about the early twenty-first century—130,000 members. You're talking about experimental psychologists; you're talking about clinical psychologists; you're talking about counseling psychologists; people who work in the community; and psychoanalytic psychologists—those who've gone on and done psychoanalytic training, as I had. Each of these different branches of psychologists has their own division within the APA. My relationship, from the time I got my analytic training, was really through Division 39, the Division of Psychoanalysis. Within the Division of Psychoanalysis there are several sections, again. The section that I'm going to be talking about most here is Psychoanalysts for Social Responsibility. As you know, there are Physicians for Social Responsibility, there are Psychologists for Social Responsibility but this—Section 9—was Psychoanalysts for Social Responsibility. As someone who was always

concerned about human rights—and certainly more so, as I've said, after my years in practice and my research—I was a member of Section 9, Psychoanalysts for Social Responsibility.

We had a very active listserv in Section 9 and I became aware, from maybe about 2005, that there was a lot of anger. I didn't post very much on the listserv. It still does make me rather anxious but at that time I was almost paralyzed at the idea of doing it because I had no idea who all these anonymous voices and eyes were that I would reach with a post. I became aware of a number of people—Steven [J.] Reisner, Stephen Soldz, Frank Summers—posting about how the American Psychological Association had placed psychologists in Guantánamo Bay and the other black sites and that these psychologists were involved in some way in the treatment and the maltreatment of detainees.

I want to say something, which I was less aware of the impact at that time but it has become a very, very central concern and continues to be a central concern. In 2002—in other words, just after the Twin Towers fell—the American Psychological Association changed their ethics. They had a clause that read, "If psychologists' ethical responsibilities conflict with law, regulations or other governing legal authority, psychologists make known their commitment to the ethics code and take steps to resolve this conflict." In other words, it was up to the psychologists to make sure that they alerted people that they felt that there was an ethical breach going on and then took responsibility for how this was resolved. To that clause, in 2002, they added the following sentence—"If the conflict is unresolvable via such means," in other words, via talking with the folks around you when you're concerned about the ethical breach, "psychologists may adhere to the requirements of the law, regulations or other governing legal authority." In other words, it

says, if you're told, "Do it," you do it. You put your ethics on hold—power trumps ethics. It's the Nuremberg defense. "Yes, I had all these Jews in the concentration camps but I was told to kill them. It wasn't my responsibility." It's an appalling piece of advice for a professional. However, I would say that none of us was very aware of that statement at that time. But what we were aware of was the psychologists' involvement in Guantánamo.

Then in June of 2006, something happened that galvanized a lot of us. In the *New York Times*—it was June 6, 2006—the director of ethics of the APA said that psychologists would be remaining in Guantánamo Bay—nobody talked about the black sites; they were just talking about Guantánamo Bay—after the American Psychiatric Association had determined that psychiatrists did not belong there. Most other professional health organizations were withdrawing their professionals, their members, but Stephen [H.] Behnke, who was the director of ethics of the APA—and when I say APA, I'm going to mean the American Psychological Association—emphasized that psychologists had "unique competencies" that they "brought to this role, in interrogations," that they could help the interrogators and therefore made a valuable contribution. Furthermore, he argued that "by their very presence they were playing a vital role in safeguarding the welfare of detainees." So you're putting the lives of the detainees in the psychologists' hands. You are allowing the psychologists to determine how the detainees should be interrogated. This idea that the detainees were being safeguarded by the psychologists' presence—I think it's Jane Mayer who has argued that, in fact, that allowed the people who were doing the interrogations to go further, because they could say, "Well, we've got doctors in the room. They'll tell us when to stop."

My part in this came in when I said, "That is absolutely unimaginable. I'm a psychologist and you're telling me that my professional organization says it's okay to condone these kinds of behaviors when every other health organization is pulling out?" Particularly, I have to say, psychologists always felt superior, in some ethical way, to psychiatrists. Clearly, we have no business feeling this way at this time.

I watched as people wrote more and more elegant and angry letters to one another on my listserv, saying, "This is outrageous. No, no, it's more than outrageous; it's a breach of our faith." I thought, "Well, I'm feeling absolutely helpless. We have to do something more. Why don't I suggest that rather than writing all these letters—we can certainly do that—we resign from the American Psychological Association en masse?" Steven Reisner was going to the American Psychological Association meetings at that time—this was in June and those meetings would have been in August—so we agreed on the listserv that Steven would take the letters to wherever that meeting was going to be—I think it was actually in New Orleans that year—and take it into the council of representatives meeting and say, "All these people are resigning because of your behavior in Guantánamo and we have to withdraw." We got three letters—Steven's, mine and Betsy [Elizabeth] Hegeman, who's a psychologist who's always been active in human rights.

I was stunned. I was humiliated and I was stunned. I stewed on this for a while. It also turned out that at that 2006 council of representatives meeting—these council of representatives meetings are actually open. I think they're open. There's a meeting that's open to everybody to come in and talk and have their say before the representatives vote on various things. They had said that they would stop this kind of torture and that kind of torture and the other kind of torture; that they

would no longer endorse these kinds of tortures. Where are we even in the business of talking about—parsing out which torture is acceptable for a psychologist to be present at and which isn't? It was outrageous.

There was a man who was acting very much on our behalf but on his own, not writing much on the listserv. He went to these meetings and felt that he had won a big concession from the council of representatives until he discovered that this Clause 1.02, which I mentioned to you, basically said that psychologists would do anything because they could be ordered to do it and they had to follow the orders. So all that work was for naught. I stewed on the fact of his having been reduced to a sense of impotence by this and all these people feeling so helpless about what to do. I thought, "We have to continue with this business of resigning. Maybe we won't resign. Maybe we'll withhold our dues." Little did I know that, in fact, you would have thought the APA was giving me a gift. They said in their by-laws at that time—which they've since changed—that members could withhold their dues for up to two years and during that time they could vote in elections and they could attend meetings at the members'—what is it now? Fifteen percent discount or something, to attend the meetings. It was the vote that was so important, that we had. At the end of those two years, you could just resume paying all over again or you could pay your back dues. There are reasons why that was an issue but it's not worth going into here. At the point at which I said, "Let's withhold our dues," I didn't even know that that by-law had been written or was there.

I went on the Section 9 listserv and said, "I'm going to propose that we withhold our dues." I felt mortified because everything that I had feared most in speaking up on the listserv, once again,

turned out to be true. Firstly, we got those three letters for the APA meetings and now I go up there and I say, "We should withhold our dues en masse," and people were saying, "Oh, you don't want to do that. You don't want to fool with the APA." Psychologists for Social Responsibility, another group to which I belonged which is independent of the APA—a number of people were horrified that I made this suggestion.

Q: Why? What was their reason?

Boulanger: The reason always was that, actually, Psychologists for Social Responsibility [PsySR]—their reason was—what?

Q: That's what I was asking.

Boulanger: Their reason—I'll go back to Section 9's reason in a moment. I've never been quite clear but there were a lot of people in Psychologists for Social Responsibility at that time who were hard-and-fast members of the APA, even though there was a separation between the APA and PsySR, many of them on the council of representatives. Even though they felt that they were representing human rights, they didn't understand the complexity of the situation they'd gotten themselves into. Actually, at that time, PsySR was more concerned with nuclear proliferation than they were with torture.

The people in the Section 9 listserv who didn't want me to do this or didn't want this to happen were the people who said, "We don't want to antagonize the APA." The APA is this kind of

parent figure. Psychoanalysts are not very popular in the APA, as time has evolved. Why is that? Because our practices were considered, I would say, elitist; because they don't fit the contemporary mode of doing evidence-based therapy, which is basically cognitive behavioral; because the dominant mode within the APA is cognitive behavioral. It was clear that we were already being cast aside by the APA. I don't quite understand what the concern was with Section 9 in thinking we would upset our masters, our parents, since they were clearly already upset with us. That story will take on more importance at the very end of what I'm saying here.

I thought, "I'm going to do it anyway," again with my heart in my mouth, because I felt I was really sticking my neck out and did I really understand everything that the APA was up to? But it was so important to protest that I started a Yahoo listserv. It was amazing to me that I was able to master the technicality of all that.

Q: I was just thinking how wonderful it is that you were able to do that.

Boulanger: Oh, my god, I don't know how I did it but I followed their steps. So it was up and running and what I said on the listserv was—because when you go to the Yahoo place where it says, "Do you want to join this group?"—and I don't have the exact wording—but, basically, "This is a group of psychologists who wish to protest the American Psychological Association's involvement," collusion, I think, was the word I used, "in Guantánamo Bay and the black sites and wish to have a forum in which to discuss the steps that we might take."

I then sent this—by that time I had been talking to a lot of both psychoanalytic and psychology associations around the country about my book. I sent the letter to them; I put it on the listserv at my analytic institute; I had it put on the listserv of a number of the more progressive analytic institutes and got a few members. At first people were having difficulty getting on, and I always think it's kind of funny because I had a couple of people I knew I could really count on and one person, who was in Section 9, very much wanted to be on the listserv but seemed not to be able to find his way onto our listserv. Another person, who was not in Section 9 but had gotten onto the listserv—so my first post on that listserv was saying, "Tom, I'm glad. I can see you're on the listserv. Let me know that you've received this," and the message from him saying, "Yes, Ghislaine, thanks. I'm on the listserv. The children loved seeing you this weekend and they're playing with the glove puppets all the time." Very relevant to the torture story. [Laughter] This was great, because it meant we were up and going.

That was about November that that started and there were a number of people from Section 9 who already had gotten quite active on this very separate listserv. I thought, "Okay. I'm not going to make the mistake that I've seen people do with this movement in the past. I've given people a chance to feel involved in the protest, I hope—not by writing letters individually but by joining together on this listserv and we will think about what steps we can take. But I'm not going to do this on my own. I can't do it on my own." Frankly, my anxiety wouldn't tolerate it but I needed people with different ideas. There were two women from the West Coast, neither of whom I knew personally. One was Diane Ehrensaft, who is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst; and, actually, an expert on gender studies. The other was Ruth Fallenbaum, who is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalytic therapist and has done an enormous amount of work in human

rights. She's been an activist since the age of ten. Her mother had her out there. It was wonderful to have the two of them.

That was three of us. I knew it was also important to not just make this clinical psychology; I wanted it to go across all the separate divisions, not just Division 39 but the other divisions as well. I asked Martha Davis, who was a clinical psychologist and a forensic psychologist and also a very committed activist, to join us. So we were four women. Interesting, it's the women who get the work done. There was one man who had offered to help me. We decided that it was important to have a website in addition to the listserv, so the website could answer frequently asked questions about withholding your dues and why we're doing it and have a clear statement on there as to why we're doing it. There were templates of letters you might want to send to the APA and we were starting to have a timeline of what was going on with the APA and their collusion with the Department of Defense. I remember one guy saying to me, "Yeah, I'll withhold my dues. Yeah, I can help you write that opening statement. I'll probably pay my dues by next February." I said, "Thank you but we really need people who can commit to this for a while." It's bizarre.

Diane wrote a very good statement and it was just wonderful to have that support. We would talk, I think, every week on the phone—not by Skype in those days. Or maybe it was by Skype, I don't know—but it was just wonderful to have the support of one another. Also, people would get very hysterical on the listserv. Somebody was afraid that we would lose our practices because the APA would do something and they would file ethics charges. Just calming people's paranoia down; people love to have persecution fantasies. At that point, I wasn't feeling any at all.

Then I was invited to go and talk at the Psychoanalytic Institute of Northern California that was having a whole day on the APA and torture. That's an amazing thing for a psychoanalytic institute to do. They are very progressive, that institute; or, they have some very progressive elements there—people. Diane Ehrensaft was a member. It was going to be a big conference. I met Stephen Soldz at that conference; I met Ruth Fallenbaum and, of course, I met Diane. Who else talked? Nancy Hollander. I was taking stock of the whole withhold-dues situation at that point and we had, for all this talk, thirty members. There were only thirty people who actually signed up on the withhold-dues listserv. I knew there were other people monitoring things but there were only thirty people who had actually given me their names, to say, "We want our names to appear on the website."

What was so interesting about those names was that a good two-thirds of them and maybe a bit more were either immigrants or they were gay. So, really, people who were used to feeling somewhat on the outside, who could perhaps tolerate being on the outside. Obviously, I'm an immigrant. I don't know whether that made me more willing to stand up for these things but, certainly, perhaps, more able to tolerate feeling a little bit outside. In California, we had a wonderful meeting. There were a lot of people there and while I was there I suddenly remembered or realized that the APA meetings in 2007 would actually be in San Francisco. There were always big meetings in San Francisco, in August. I mean, not in San Francisco—there were always big meetings for the American Psychological Association. Their annual convention is in August—a very inconvenient time but anyway. They were going to be in San Francisco and I thought, "Oh, my god, this is a perfect storm. Here we have San Francisco,

where there are more people who are likely to demonstrate. We have sort of a groundswell of interest here now. We will have a demonstration at the APA meetings." Ruth kind of headed that up and it was the most exciting collaboration that we had. We had a somewhat different group of people. There were the four of us—Martha, Diane, Ruth and myself—but we also included some people from San Francisco. We called ourselves, in that instance—because we didn't want to scare people off with this "withhold dues," which already had a somewhat outlaw feeling to it. We called ourselves Psychologists for an Ethical APA—wonderful title—and that came from somebody on the listserv, I have to say. I still don't remember who but someone on the listserv said, "Why don't you call yourselves that?"

It was so seamless. One of the guys said, "I can do the music." Ruth said, "Well, I'll handle the organization of all the speakers and the placement of the speakers and I'll get the speakers." It happened that my son had just returned from living in San Francisco and had a friend who was in insurance. We found space where we were going to hold the demonstration right opposite the conference center—always a very tricky thing to do, if you're giving a demonstration, is getting a license to hold it, a permit to hold it, from the city. We got the permit but you need insurance for it. My son's friend was able to handle the insurance for the permit. We took in a little bit of money, opened a bank account so we could take in some money to handle the various expenses. We took in a lot from our members.

At the same time, at those meetings, Stephen Behnke also planned—this is the director of ethics at the APA whom I mentioned earlier—a kind of parallel conference, not on the APA catalogue of conference items but a parallel one, dealing with the APA and ethics, particularly with, of

course, the whole Guantánamo thing. I don't know the name of this little parallel thing but there was to be at least a session a day, starting, I think, on Friday and maybe starting on Thursday, because Friday was the official start of meetings. That was the day we had our demonstration.

We were aware of these two things going on. Meanwhile, there was a great deal of behind-the-scenes negotiations, trying to brush up on the ethics and make them more manageable and also trying—and this was the guy who had been doing so much work earlier—saying, "Psychologists should not be in Guantánamo Bay at all. Psychologists should be removed from Guantánamo Bay." But, again, he was doing this on his own.

There were three kinds of important things going on. Our demonstration was really very successful in terms of the media. I didn't think it was terribly well-attended. The whole area seemed full; we had good speakers. Amy Goodman was there.

Q: I heard from Stephen Soldz that they tried to kick her out and she refused.

Boulanger: That was later. That wasn't at the conference. That was at the end of it. She was there. Steven Reisner spoke; I spoke; we had an extraordinary man called Hector Aristizabel, who is a Colombian torture survivor, an actor and a psychologist, who can talk about the experience of being tortured in extraordinary ways. What he actually did was to drum. He also drums with people who have been tortured. He creates an extraordinary sense of catharsis with that drumming. He's great, Hector. Ruth spoke, of course.

Q: Did you speak?

Boulanger: Yes, I spoke twice. I guess I spoke to introduce Ruth, too. We had buttons. Martha had made wonderful fliers, wonderful banners. There were little ribbons that you'd wear that were blue with "Withhold APA Dues" on them that we gave to everybody who was withholding their dues and who were signing up—and more and more people were signing up, since this first thirty. We had coverage in Turkey, all through the—well, I guess Turkey is now in the European common market—but throughout Europe, throughout Australia, New Zealand. I don't know that there was any in Latin America—all the way through the United States—Washington, Boston, et cetera. Not in New York. It's a complete mystery to me how it didn't get covered in New York but it was pretty good coverage. The coverage on TV and the radio in San Francisco at that time was terrific and so important because the people who were attending the convention were tuned into the local stations. Many of them knew nothing about this torture issue, so they were hearing about it from the local media and quite shocked. That meant, of course, that some of them also found out about Stephen Behnke's—what turned out to be a really excellent series of panels, with people who were both on the side of the APA position, for staying, and so many people who were opposed—that series of sessions that they had.

That was on Friday. On the Saturday, we thought that all the changes we had asked to be made to the ethics—and when I say "we," I'm really talking about Reisner and Soldz—had impressed upon the people who were negotiating with Behnke—all the changes that would be safeguards, it looked as if they'd all been made. The question of taking psychologists out of Guantánamo completely had been put in a separate issue. I'm trying to remember what they called that

separate issue. Anyway, it was a separate clause to the other one. These changes were given to us—we got together on Saturday—and I judged by Reisner and Soldz that they felt that this was good; they were fine with that. This was very exciting. We knew that the next day there would be the meeting of the council of representatives and these changes would be voted on.

That Sunday morning of the council of representatives meeting, the changes come to us again and they have been changed from what we saw on Saturday. What has been changed is that CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] language has been put in there. You have those details, I think, from Stephen Soldz, so I'm going to leave him to spell them out. But it was, how did that happen? Who did it? It was astonishing.

Q: When you say "CIA language," what do you mean?

Boulanger: If you look at the language—maybe I should say DOD [Department of Defense]—the language that hedges the bets all the time, the hedging language—I think Soldz will do a better job of describing than I—it was in there. What we wanted wasn't there and we were devastated. They get voted on. They get passed unanimously by the council of representatives; they think they've done a very important thing. They've done nothing. They've done nothing. They've added a few more tortures that shouldn't happen but what about the ones that do? Then up comes this whole issue about whether or not psychologists should be in Guantánamo and it's a very heated topic. People come up from the floor and speak to this issue. I watch Behnke going back and forth. It was in the probably double or triple ballroom at the hotel—you know how these things at convention hotels are always at least three levels below the street and there is lots

of air-conditioning and there are hundreds of people in there because there are so many members on the council of representatives. And then all of us sitting around the wall and Behnke was just walking up and down as this is debated.

One man, Colonel Larry [C.] James, who had been at Guantánamo in 2006 or something, came up, with a sob in his voice, and said, "If psychologists leave—" he's a psychologist, "If psychologists leave Guantánamo Bay, people will die." We all screamed out, "People *are* dying!" The room was just so tense and so painful and the motion to remove psychologists from Guantánamo was soundly defeated. Then this bloodcurdling cheer went up. It was absolutely awful. It was that evening that there was a town meeting with psychologists that Stephen Soldz told you about where they tried to ban Amy Goodman. There, the entire tone was different. There, the psychologists who had been alerted by the various sessions of the sort of parallel ethical convention and by our demonstration all came to this town meeting and they were enraged. As time went on, the membership of Withhold Dues skyrocketed; we were up to 350-360. I couldn't keep up with the posts.

It was a very exciting time. There was a lot of confusion about what had happened because a lot of people said, "Yes, yes, but they voted against torture." [Laughter] Yes, but not in the ways that would really mean they were going to stop torture and stop facilitating the DOD. At those meetings—something I hadn't really given a moment's thought to when it happened because so many people were talking to me about withholding dues—but one young man came up to me and said, "Look, I'm a psychologist. I'm on your Withhold Dues listserv. I have been studying the APA by-laws and I think I know a way of using the by-laws to get around the council of

representatives and take a referendum direct to the membership for their vote that will have us out of Guantánamo." I said, "Write to me when I get back to New York."

He did and for a while we tried to debate this matter on the listserv. As is always the way with leftist listservs—probably any, really, political listservs—the ideology got in the way of pragmatism. It was clear to me that we were not going to get anything done if we kept it such a democratic process. By then I'd added two more people—I should say "we" had added two more people—to our steering committee for Withhold Dues. This was Brad [Bradley W.] Olson, who is a community psychologist-activist-organizer, a great man, from Chicago, and Frank Summers, also from Chicago, who's a long-time student of APA ethics and the military. Brad had just done a referendum for something else in Chicago, so I said, "Look, would you work with Dan [Aalbers]?" and Ruth worked with Dan. Ruth's a very good writer. The three of them produced a referendum. I would chime in sometimes and sometimes when they would lose the focus, because they were so intense, I could bring in a focus. But basically it was their work.

This was extraordinarily exciting. It resolved that psychologists may not work in settings where persons are held outside of or in violation of either international law—e.g., the UN [United Nations] Convention Against Torture and the Geneva Conventions—or, the U.S. Constitution, where that is appropriate, unless they are working directly for the persons being detained or for an independent third party working to protect human rights.

In other words, psychologists could go in who were working with lawyers or psychologists could work if they were in the military; they could work with other people in the service, with other

people in the military, who were having a hard time. They could not work with detainees. Why didn't we want them working with detainees? Well, I'm sure you've had this spoken about many, many times. We know that both psychologists and mental-health professionals who were working with detainees would leak to the BSCT teams—the Behavioral Science Consultation Teams, on which psychologists were also employed—particular items, particular phobias that a prisoner or a detainee might have; particular affections that they might have—if he's very, very attached to his mother; very attached to his children—so that things could be said to them about the children—"We'll get to your children"—whatever it was, to play to the person's greatest weakness. This is terribly unethical.

The other reason that we wanted psychologists out of there was that there was an absolute sham if you said that psychologists or any mental-health professionals in Guantánamo were working with the detainees. How can a psychologist who is from the Army—and in this case I'm thinking of somebody who was in the Navy—but he's actually detaining the detainees. They don't know when they're going to be released. They're being subjected to all kinds of overt and covert torture. How can somebody from the same side as the torturers actually really do any treatment at all? It's absolutely ridiculous.

I remember one woman at Stephen Behnke's ethics conference that I was talking about earlier, talking about—it was outrageous—how she made chocolate chip cookies for the guy that she was counseling and she was so proud of the relationship they had with one another. It was mind-boggling to us. But also, what they were doing, these people who had access to the detainees, apart from the interrogation function, was that they would give them diagnoses. One particular

Naval psychologist, her name was Lieutenant Commander Carrie [H.] Kennedy, a very pretty, spruce little thing in her little white uniform and everything, up there talking about how, in the detention hospital in Guantánamo Bay, approximately fifty individuals in treatment, forty-three to forty-five percent were diagnosed with a personality disorder; seventeen to nineteen percent were diagnosed with a mood disorder. That means depressed. One-fifth of these people, only, were depressed? And fifteen to seventeen percent with an anxiety disorder. In other words, you put people in this unimaginably uncertain situation—you've arrested them; you've blindfolded them; you've dragged them to this place. Maybe they have been enemy combatants, maybe they aren't, but whatever—the situation is terribly uncertain. Their food is rationed, the toilet paper is rationed, dependent on whether they comply with what is asked of them or not. They are completely at the mercy of their captors and you say that only fifteen percent of them are anxious? Give me a break.

It was really important that psychologists not be in a position to make these diagnoses. Why did they make these diagnoses? Because this fits right in with the Department of Defense. The torture memos, which we now all know, said that it was only torture if there was long-term harm done. If you say only fifteen percent are anxious, only twenty percent are depressed, that's not long-term damage. You say, instead, that it's personality disorder. This doesn't amount to torture.

Q: At what time or when, I must ask, were you first aware of what was actually happening to people in Guantánamo?

Boulanger: Oh, that's a good question. I'm glad you reminded me because that's the paper that I gave at that meeting of Stephen Behnke's. I realized—just as you asked the question, I asked them the question myself. I have no idea what the experience is like for the detainees. I was able to go up to Boston and interview Robert [C.] Kirsch, an attorney whom I know you've interviewed, who was representing five men from Algeria who had been arrested in Bosnia. They'd all emigrated to Bosnia and they'd been arrested in Bosnia. One of them was [Lakhdar] Boumediene. This was actually subsequent to my interview with Rob but that was the habeas corpus—*Boumediene v. Bush* [2008].

Rob showered me with papers, giving me details. He talked a blue streak. He was clearly—the word "traumatized" is overused and I don't want to use it in this because I think he clearly was—but he was so committed to these five men. He was so galvanized by this work he was doing that the details just poured out of him. There was one case in particular that I wrote about. He told me about all of them but this one case in particular, where the man was quite a scholar and was interrogated/tortured many times. He was taken out of his cell; he was beaten; he was put in stress positions. But in the end, what was most devastating was that he was put in solitary confinement. He was quite—and I use the word a second time—a galvanizing figure. I think as a scholar and as a teacher, he was a leader in Guantánamo and he felt he had a good relationship with the man, [Michael] Bumgarner, who was head of Guantánamo at that time. I actually haven't looked at those notes recently but Bumgarner said to him, "Is there something I can do for you? I'm leaving. Is there something I can do?" I'm not entirely sure that I'm right about this, but he asked to be put in one cell block where he would have been with some of the other guys from Bosnia. Instead, he was put in solitary confinement and he was sure it was a mistake.

Rob went to visit him when he was there and he was allowed to visit with him. By this time, the guy had started to hallucinate. This happens when you're in solitary confinement. He wanted to kill himself. He talked about it. He was kept in confinement—and I have to find that article that I wrote about this—for many, many, months, far, far beyond what the Armed Forces Manual says is permitted and at some point, when Rob went back to interview him again, the man wouldn't speak to him. I think he may have gone back twice. At one point, the guy wouldn't speak to him. He was just lying on his bunk, without motion, without in any way acknowledging that Rob was there. The words that came to my mind when I thought about that were what Henry Krystal, one of the very few psychoanalysts to think about the adult-onset trauma of the Shoah, of the Holocaust, called psychic death.

I don't want to be overly dramatic in making this a parallel between Guantánamo and the Holocaust but solitary confinement is among the most terrible tortures. It leads to psychosis in the most healthy people and what frightened me most about this man is that I don't know how you come out the other side of psychic death. When Krystal writes about it, he's talking about the people who went on to just die. He calls them "Muselmans," who died—gave up and didn't survive the camps.

I don't know how this guy survived this situation. I do know he eventually got out of solitary confinement. Maybe you will have been able to pick that up with Rob Kirsch.

I could talk about this and I could also talk about the collateral damage of the work—the work!— that psychologists were potentiating in Guantánamo. Because, at some point, I said something to Rob Kirsch about his five clients and he said, "I have twenty-six clients. I have five men, six wives"—because they're Muslims and one of them had two wives—"and eleven," or however many it was, "children." His concern about the children and his communication with the children was also galvanizing to him.

Then there was Rob himself. I left his office—and I always find downtown Boston incredibly confusing in the best of times. I sat in a coffee shop and called the woman whom I was supposed to be meeting and said, "I can't get there. You're going to have to come and pick me up because I am so horrified by what I've heard and so concerned about the man I've just been speaking to who's doing such important work but who is, himself, so deeply affected by these interviews." He told me about one man who was redacting the interviews, who had to quit working for DOD because he, himself, was so traumatized. I just felt for a moment I had a taste of that experience, of the people who were doing the hands-on work with the detainees. I was able to convey that when I was talking to the APA, so I'm glad you asked me about that.

I should move forward and talk about the referendum.

Q: Sure.

Boulanger: One high spot in the referendum, and toward the passage of the referendum, was that there were a number of people that I admired very much—psychologists and psychoanalysts—

who were members of the APA and of Division 39 who said, "Look, I'm not going to withhold my dues. I'm going to work from the inside." And I understood that that was important. I understood that if you stayed on the inside you had more credibility than those of us on the outside. I was uncomfortable with my activism in some ways because I knew it put me on the outside and I knew that meant that I lost credibility, and yet I didn't know any other way to make my case. As Ruth Fallenbaum always said, "It's not rocket science. It's what you do." But I was also conscious of removing myself from the place of greatest responsibility.

So these people on the inside were really important. One of them was Laurie [Laurel Bass] Wagner. I said to Laurie, "We are writing a referendum that has us out of Guantánamo and all the other sites. Would you look at it?"

She said, "Well, how are you going to do it?"

I said, "We've got this way, through the by-laws." Laurie, who always knew she was our—what's the word? Oh, god, I don't know what the word is. Anyway, she knows APA lore back and forth. She didn't know this loophole. She said, "Why didn't I think of that myself?" But she read what I took to her—our draft—and she said, "I love it. It's great. I'll support it." That was a very important name to have from the inside at the APA because there would be people who would be worried about allying themselves with us—even voting for its passage—if there wasn't an imprimatur like from Laurie. It also meant that Division 39 gave its imprimatur to the referendum, which was very important for us. Many of the divisions did.

But the other thing was that Stephen Behnke—not Stephen Behnke. You have to be called Stephen to be a male activist.

Q: I've gathered that but spelled in very different ways.

Boulanger: Well, there's Steven Reisner and Stephen Soldz, who spell their names differently too. Ruth and I took this referendum to Soldz and Reisner and said, "Look, Laurie's going to go with it." They had been doing some of the hair-splitting and said, "That's it." And we all burst into tears. It was just such a high point because we knew it would go. Whether it was going to be voted on, that we didn't know, but we knew the APA had to take it. In fact, the APA did take it. That was in April. It was submitted to them in May. They futzed around with it in June and came up with a set of arguments against it. Then we had to produce the arguments for it because all these would go to the voting members of the American Psychological Association.

Finally, everything was assembled, and Dan Aalbers, who was masterminding most of this, who brought me the idea of the referendum in the first place and had the time, because he was actually writing his dissertation and also the deeply-felt commitment to get this carried through. It was really clear that there were people in the APA who very much supported the referendum, so that was very helpful to us. Then we really felt torpedoed when it was finally sent to the membership at the beginning of August. What a great time to send to psychologists the referendum [sarcasm]. Because we thought it would get lost in everybody's holiday mail. It was to be voted on by the middle of September. But we were able, at the 2008 convention in Boston, to have a small demonstration, to do some more talks about the American Psychological

Association and human rights. It was the fiftieth anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, which was an exciting time to talk about things, so Brad Olson put together a panel and I talked again about some of Rob's clients at that time. But mainly, I was talking and a lot of us were talking and handing out fliers about the referendum. I would talk to people on the bus, going to the convention center from the convention hotels and things and I would say, "Are you aware of this?"

"Oh, yes."

"Will you vote?"

"Of course." It was just a done-deal with people; of course they were going to vote for it.

So, in fact, it went to the vote and we won by eighteen points, which was a very wide margin. We were absolutely thrilled. The then-president of the APA—the president is a year-long, elected position, elected by all the members—a man named Alan [E.] Kazdin, sent out a letter within a couple of days of this to Secretary [Robert M.] Gates and President [George W.] Bush, saying that this very significant change in APA policy and laying out the referendum. I got chills when I read that, it was so exciting. Then Kazdin kind of disappeared, even though this was only October or November, and it became clearer and clearer that no one was taking a lot of action. They said, "Well, we now have to have this ratified by the board. We'll do it." As Brad kept arguing, "You don't have to have it ratified when the membership has already voted on it."

So there was a committee formed to discuss implementation. I was in Australia so I couldn't be on the committee. Anyway, it was much better that Ruth was on that committee and Dan was on the committee because they had written the referendum. To argue with the APA, they were flown into Washington [D.C.] to the APA headquarters, to work with them on how to implement this; how to make sure that the only psychologists in Guantánamo Bay would be those who were either working for human-rights organizations or were working with the troops—the staff but not with the detainees.

It never happened. So now we are actually roundabout the fourth anniversary of the passage of the referendum. The APA proudly—*proudly*—touts this ethical change. They announce that this has been passed but, at the same time, there are places where they advertise for people, for military psychologists, to work on BSCT teams. They argue that the presence of psychologists in an interrogation protects the detainees. So it's just business-as-usual. They have just gotten away with it by stonewalling.

When it was clear to us that this had happened—and this was by now 2009—we started a movement to outright resign from the APA. We had a petition site, which you can get, with a link to it from the "Withhold Dues" and the "Ethical APA" websites and a number of psychologists did outright resign and sign up on there. We had templates of letters to the CEO [chief executive officer]—which is a paid position, as opposed to the president of the APA—to Stephen Behnke and also to the then-president of the APA, whoever that was at the time, spelling out reasons for resigning from the organization and saying, "We will only re-join the

organization if you will remove psychologists from Guantánamo Bay and the other sites that are in violation of the Geneva Conventions."

Of course, it hasn't happened. I am aware that there are not—there are probably a hundred people on this list, which doesn't amount to a hill of beans in terms of the APA's membership but I'm aware that many, many people have resigned from the APA, just by attrition have not renewed their membership. For some of them, it's the economy. But for a lot of people, as they've become aware of this issue, they just haven't been able to bear to pay—they've not wanted to get active; they've not been able to bother to write letters. I understand all of it. I've been there, done that, with other issues. But they've just not re-upped for the APA.

The coda to this story, the part where the collateral damage feels considerable to my professional identity, is that the Division 39—as I said, that's where my professional identity comes from, the Division of Psychoanalysis of the APA—has a by-law that says that members—you cannot be a member of Division 39 if you are eligible to be a member of the APA and choose not to be a member of the APA. Now that's a very peculiar clause. It turns out that there are many psychologists who are not eligible to be members of the APA. So there are psychologists who can be full members of Division 39 and, therefore, vote in Division 39, without being members of the APA. But those of us who went to APA-approved programs and APA-approved internships and have the right kinds of degrees and all the rest have to be full members of the APA in order to be voting members of Division 39.

Well, when we started withholding our dues, we anticipated this problem. There was a task force formed—I was a member of that task force—to talk about what would happen if we resigned from the APA, sort of conscientious objectors to the APA. The feeling was that Division 39 wasn't sure they wanted to penalize us by taking away our membership and making us associates.

The first of those task forces was very unpleasant. There were a lot of people on there who were not impressed by what I was doing, to put it mildly, and did not think that we deserved to be members of Division 39. I was on a couple of those task forces. I think there were three. I wasn't on the second. The second ended with people waiting to see what would happen to the referendum. Basically, people kept kicking the can down the road—"Let's see what happens with the referendum." The referendum gets voted. Then, "Oh dear, people aren't going to rejoin the APA because the referendum isn't being enacted. Okay. Let's see how many people resign. Let's see whether we can force the APA. No, they're not going to enact this. Oh, dear. We really are going to have to take some action as members of Division 39."

I was on that last task force. It was so different, I couldn't believe it. Laurie Wagner, who had originally completely opposed me in withholding my dues—as I said, she was a member of the APA—said, "Look, we want to make sure that you're full members of the APA, but how would you feel if you could also be officers?" Those people who were not members of the APA but were members of Division 39 could be officers. I said, "I think that's absolutely super. I would never have dreamt of asking that. I want to put it on the record that I will never run for office

under those circumstances because there will be plenty of other people." This becomes sort of a conflict of interest.

So we took these by-laws to the Division 39 board of directors and they passed it unanimously. I was astonished. I was convinced that there were people among that board of directors who were still opposed to us. But no, it was unanimous. Very exciting. We had thoughts of making it a very powerful division of psychoanalysis, with all these people who could come in and vote and be members of Division 39, not just simply associates. It was going to attract a lot of people. We put this out to a vote. This would have been in 2010, the fall of 2010, two years ago. The votes were coming in like five to one. Then a couple of men—psychologists/psychoanalysts—who, in their times had been presidents of Division 39, got wind of this. I don't know how they hadn't had wind of it before. It had been discussed, always, at board of directors' meetings. I don't know how they didn't know about it. I really think it was a feeling, somehow, that they had not been consulted about such a big decision. They made such a hue and cry about it that the board of directors of Division 39 stopped the balloting.

Now, I don't know whether that was legal. I don't have the energy in me to—I didn't have the energy in me then and I would not dream of fighting it. They stopped the balloting and they went to a listserv, where this matter was then discussed. Once again this whole thing came up about our loyalty to the APA. There were people going around and saying, "Oh, you know Ghislaine. The reason she's doing this is that she had so much trouble with her parents." This is so pathetic. It's insulting and pathetic. [Laughs] I've never done particularly well with authority. I don't think my parents would have said that I particularly fought their authority but other authority I've been

able to stand my ground with, sometimes with my heart in my mouth, as I said. Other people were saying, "Oh, you're doing this to save money." [Laughter] The \$500 a year or whatever my dues were. Some people paid a lot more. It cost me a lot more money to run without dues and stuff.

Q: This was an effective denial, right? That they couldn't look at their conflicts or contradictions?

Boulanger: That's a good question. You know, I really thought it was a kind of siding with the aggressor. The APA are our masters, our parents, have this control over us; they can "ruin psychoanalytic psychology." By that point, the board of directors—by the fall of 2010, one of the best psychoanalytic-psychology clinical programs in the city—and there aren't too many of them left—had just been put on probation by the APA. So it's absurd to think that the APA was going to give us any support at all. The reason to put a program on probation is because they don't have enough cognitive-behavioral stuff in there. They don't teach enough empirically validated treatment. In fact, there is lots of empirically validated data about psychoanalytic psychotherapy as well, but it does not suit the insurance companies. Now this is a whole other conspiracy here. I use the word "conspiracy" lightly, as I say it to you but maybe I shouldn't.

Anyway, the feeling was that we should not antagonize the APA—and, furthermore, they asked, what are these people doing? Under the proposed bylaws, social workers could join. Social workers could become presidents of Division 39! In fact, not to go into too many details about this, that was always the case because of an earlier change. We are now enduring the 2012

election season. You see that people don't read what's put in front of them, they just read the lies. One person whose work I really admired was fulminating about antagonizing the APA and said, "These people don't deserve to be in Division 39." It was a terrible time. I sent maybe one post, perhaps two posts a week, to this listserv. Many of us were doing this, so I want to be clear that I wasn't the only person doing it by any means. A lot of us were fighting this battle. But I remember saying, "Division 39 backed the referendum. Mostly it was Division 39 psychoanalysts who brought the referendum to you. You backed the referendum and now you're telling us we can't be members."

Anyway, suffice it to say, we lost overwhelmingly. I cannot be a member of Division 39. I cannot vote in Division 39 elections. The person from Section 9 who wanted to be the representative to the Division 39 board had to rejoin the APA. I wouldn't do that. I don't think it's appropriate. I made a careful decision to leave the APA and I'm afraid I have to bear the consequences. The consequences are that I've lost my professional affiliations. It doesn't mean that I can't get paid for some things but it does mean that I'm not, in the ways I was feeling before, central to this organization in any way at all.

Q: That's very sad.

Boulanger: Yes. I remember at one point, when this became clear, at a meeting, another woman coming up to me. This is a person who was once president of Division 39 and is now president of the section on trauma—maybe the division on trauma—said to me, "Well, you've fought your

fight. You lost! So you'll join again, no?" I thought, "What part of principle didn't you understand?"

Q: I have a very simple question. I know you probably have to go.

Boulanger: No, I'm good. I'm good.

Q: Okay. Was there, before all of this or is there now, a code of ethics for the APA?

Boulanger: Well, there was a code of ethics.

Q: I mean a code of ethics like other codes of ethics, like the American Psychiatric Association or the Physicians—

Boulanger: Oh, yes.

Q: Okay.

Boulanger: Yes, yes. You can go online and find it. It no longer has 1.02, the contested 1.02 that we talked about, so that's a very good thing. But the referendum is not an ethic. While they can boast about it, it's not an ethic. If it were an ethic and if they actually acted on it, then I could rejoin the APA.

Q: That's what I was really trying to ask you.

Boulanger: Yes. We have laid out, both on our "Withhold Dues" listserv website and on the "Ethical APA" website—and on the website that you can go to, to resign from the APA—we've laid out the conditions for rejoining the APA. Of course, it's all contingent on the referendum being properly enacted.

Q: So what now?

Boulanger: Now I live my life. [Laughs] I continue to be active in Section 9. I'm the co-editor, with Ruth, of the *Psychoanalytic Activist*. We try to keep this issue alive in the minds of psychoanalytic psychologists. We will carry an article on activists, about the referendum, five years later. There are Division 39 meetings, as there always are, in April, in Boston. Ruth Fallenbaum, Stephen Soldz, and I have proposed a panel called "The Psychodynamics of a Political Stalemate: The Referendum Five Years Later." We were turned down. That was a blind submission—except that you could probably figure out who was behind it. But the Division 39 very clearly is not able to bend. They can't revisit these by-laws. That was a crashing defeat. The various sections, like Section 9—and I'm active in a couple of other sections as well—have rewritten their by-laws to make sure that we can be active in those sections. But it's really horrifying to see how quickly institutional memory has moved on—less so in the APA. I don't know what's happening in the APA but watching Division 39 institutional memory, hearing people on the planning committee for the Division 39 meetings say, "What are you talking

about?" when there was some discussion about the by-law fiasco, which, at that point, had only been eighteen months earlier. So institutional memory just sweeps on.

Q: I'm not speaking psychologically but my question is, is this part of an ongoing denial of what we're doing as a government, to these prisoners?

Boulanger: Well, I think what's very distressing about it is that there's this spreading of the denial. I think that people got energized—I mean, my experience was quite energized by "Withhold Dues"; it got energized by the referendum—and I don't think they know what to do. As I say, institutional memory is short. Lifetimes in these kinds of institutions are often quite short, too. Old alliances die hard to the APA or to other members of your section or your division who are staunch APA members, and then you say, "Well, okay, we can't think about that anymore." I think that the punishment, if you want to put it that way, for those of us who have chosen not to become members, not to renew our membership and are therefore punished by Division 39—I think that punishment is kind of a cautionary tale to people who want to become activists.

So it is a spreading of the mental anesthesia about these issues. I still run into people who say, "Yes, but the referendum passed." And I say, "Yes, but it wasn't enacted." I know that Stephen Soldz has one—maybe before you finish these oral histories, there will be one other piece of news that will happen that will perhaps put this whole thing back on the map. But otherwise, yes, we live with cultural denial—Germany from 1933 onwards. Again, in saying that, I don't want to raise this to the level of the Jews in Germany—that would be appalling—but to watch the ways

in which people become comfortable again with ideas that had originally made them very uncomfortable is interesting.

Q: Through all this time, analytically speaking—not psychoanalytically speaking but analytically speaking—how do you explain to yourself the purpose of the APA being at the service of the military in Guantánamo?

Boulanger: Oh, it's very simple, and I'm not the best person to ask this question of. The APA has a long-standing relationship with the Department of Defense. DOD financed many of the really important social-psychological experiments of the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s. Stanley Milgram's experiment. Look, I think Milgram's experiment was incredibly important. I don't know why people have turned him into a kind of torturer at this point because his purpose was exactly the opposite—to show how easily people fall into this mindset and to warn against it. That relationship—many sociology as well as social psychology departments are underwritten by grants from the Department of Defense. There were some hearings before one of the House [U.S. House of Representatives] committees that Behnke testified at where they [APA] were basically asking for money again to look at torture, to train people in it and to research interrogation practices.

Q: To train people. A lot of that was in 2008. You can go all the way back to [Martin E. P.] Seligman.

Boulanger: Yes. Seligman's role in this is very troubling, of course. I think you've probably collected a lot of data about that already.

So, over the course of time, what had been a relatively, I would say, benign relationship, and certainly a relationship that allowed psychology to grow as a field and to allow clinical psychologists to be trained in the Veterans' Administration—vast numbers of psychologists were trained in the VA. Over time, I guess, as the CIA has gotten more involved—I don't know whether it was an abrupt change or a more gradual change with the war on terror. I suspect it was much more of a gradual change that we could finally see much more clearly with this so-called war on terror, starting in 2002. But look, they were right there, waiting to change that ethical clause, 1.02, in 2002. They were pretty snappy with that one.

Q: That's really what intrigued me.

Boulanger: And they deny it. I will be very interested to see if Stephen Behnke can explain to me—yet again, because I keep hearing these empty explanations—what the purpose of adding that clause that I read out to you was.

Q: Well, thank you for your time and for your commitment that you've made to attempt to alleviate torture in your own way, and your wonderful work in which you do work with people who have experienced trauma and torture. And thank you for this interview.

Boulanger: Well, thank you for giving me a chance to revisit it. I get excited and despondent all over again.

Q: Okay.

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