

VJD

Session Two

Interviewee: Stephen Soldz

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Interviewer: Mary Marshall Clark

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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](http://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 legitimation 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 [Kebriaci] 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 Zarfawi, 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]