

THE RULE OF LAW ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Daniel Heyman

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Daniel Heyman conducted by Gerry Albarelli on April 20, 2012. This interview is part of the Rule of Law Oral History Project.

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

VJD

Session One

Interviewee: Daniel Heyman

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Interviewer: Gerry Albarelli

Date: April 20, 2012

Q: Why don't you start by telling me where and when you were born, and a little bit about your early life?

Heyman: Okay. I was born on Long Island, actually in a hospital in Queens. It was in the borough of Queens, Long Island, in 1963. I grew up in Port Washington, until I left for college. I didn't really have anything to do, really, with art much, as a kid. I did some afterschool classes at some point, maybe in fourth or fifth grade, for a while. But I just grew up in a pretty sheltered, suburban life, in Port Washington, going to the public schools. We used to go to New York City every week, to go eat dinner with my grandparents, who lived in Manhattan. For a long time I thought we lived in Manhattan. Then I went to high school, and I then I wanted to become an architect—that's what I thought I wanted to become—so in high school I started taking classes in New York City. There was kind of a think tank for contemporary architecture at the time called the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies, on Bryant Park. I would go in there on the weekends in the summer during high school and take classes. That was as close as I got to art.

When I was a kid my father worked in the family business in New York, so he was a commuter. He worked with his father, all of his uncles, some of his aunts, and his brother, and cousins. It was a family business. I had three older brothers. My mother started a school—she went back to school when I was about two or three, so probably in 1965, 1966, something like that, to get her

master's in special ed [education]. She started a school in Port Washington for—the tagline was kind of “for emotionally disturbed and learning disabled kids.” It was right at the very beginning of learning disabilities as an area of knowledge. She started the school, and essentially took kids from different public schools that the schools couldn't handle anymore, that they felt they couldn't teach, or they were too much of a disciplinary problem or something like that. She started this school in a social services agency that two of her friends and her began. One was a law project for people without representation, and one was—I can't remember. Something in the prisons. I can't remember exactly what the third one was. Then it kind of grew into this huge—now it's an enormous agency on Long Island. But my mother just stayed in charge of this one school.

Then I graduated from high school, and I was accepted at Dartmouth College. I thought I was going up there to eventually become an architect—which is kind of funny, when you decide those things when you're young, because they didn't have a pre-architecture program or even much of an art program at the time. But it was in New England, and I had always wanted to go up to New England to study. So I went up there and started taking a lot of French, because one of my older brothers, right about the time that I was going to college, he joined the Peace Corps and went to Senegal. When he'd been in college—he'd gone to UVM [University of Vermont]—when he'd been in college he'd lived in France for a year and became bilingual. Then he was living in Africa, and he learned a couple languages from Senegal—Wolof being the main one. So I had this idea that I wanted to become bilingual and live somewhere else in the world. I studied a lot of French, and I started taking art classes, kind of in preparation for being an architect—which never really happened because I kind of fell in love with the whole art thing, way before I

could get enough requirements through, to take an architecture course. I never actually took any architecture courses. I took some history courses.

Finally—not finally—but as a sophomore, I studied abroad in France. Dartmouth was well known to have a bunch of different programs around the world, really. Every department, basically, had a program someplace in the world, if not more than one. The French programs were either in Canada or in France, so I went and studied the French language in the Loire Valley, in a town called Blois, for three months. Then I stayed for an extra couple of months because I took the spring term off, and I was able to stay at the house where I had been living—which was really influential, actually, that period of my life, because as a student in this program, everybody was set with a local family. You lived with a local family. I had heard about this grandmother who lived way out in the country, and that if you really wanted to learn the language, she was a perfect choice for a family, because she loved to talk. There was nobody else around, and she liked to cook, so you would go out there—I had heard that you would go out there and she would just talk to you all the time, so you would learn the language. You weren't really supposed to make requests, but I requested to live with this older woman. So every day, after classes were done at around 2:00 or 3:00, I would ride my bicycle out into the country, sit around and—it was the winter and it was freezing—we would sit around the fire and chat. She, being probably in her late seventies at the time, told me lots of stories from her youth. Her name was Lucie Vanier, known by everyone as “Mamie.”

She was born in Belgium, and when she was six World War I broke out. The family thought it would last a couple weeks, so they uprooted and went to the coast in France, because they

thought they would go for a vacation, and then they would come back. She never came back.

She'd tell me that story about emigrating from this war. Then when she was a young woman and had a couple young kids, World War II broke out, and she also ran a family business that made shoes. She told lots of stories about the bombing of her city, and just the war stories. She adopted two kids whose parents were killed in the bombing of a nearby town—not that town. I didn't think about it that much. It was just this older person telling me these old stories. But a couple years later, after I graduated from college, I had studied in France again, and I always wanted to get back and hear more. I just kind of really wanted to hear people's stories. So other than my grandparents, who told a lot of stories of being immigrants to the United States, my experience in France was the first person—a complete stranger—who just completely opened up and told me these stories about her life, and the effect that different kinds of historical moments had on her life, personally.

Q: Go back to your grandparents, and talk about the family business. I'm wondering what kind of business, and some of the stories your grandparents told.

Heyman: Well, I think of them as incredibly distinct sides, my mother's side and my father's side. My father's side is easier. My father's side, they emigrated from—they always called it Russia, but it turns out it really wasn't Russia. It was outside of Riga, in Latvia. My grandfather's older brothers—and I guess my grandfather, too, but probably he wasn't yet old enough—they had been born around the turn of the nineteenth century—they had been shipped to Odessa to be apprentices of the Fabergé jewelry manufacturing there. This is the story. I have no idea if it's true. Then there was a revolution in 1906 or 1907, and they started to—the family

is Jewish. There were these pogroms against Jews. So the two or three uncles who were in Odessa came back to Riga, and then immediately emigrated to the United States and started working as apprentices with the jewelry manufacturers in New York. Little by little, over a period of about ten years—there were nine kids in that family, plus the mother. They all came, also, over to New York, and the brothers essentially all worked for different jewelry manufacturers, learning the trade of making jewelry. They started a company in 1912—it's our hundred-year anniversary this year. They started a company in 1912, making jewelry.

I heard a lot of stories, but my grandfather wasn't a big storyteller, and my grandmother was not at all a storyteller, on that side. But I did hear stories, and one of the more interesting stories was that during the Depression—. So, the family was very, very large. There were these nine siblings. They all had families. Then, during the Depression, they obviously all lost a lot of money, and they all moved into one house in Long Beach. So these nine siblings, their nine spouses—and each of them had three or four kids—moved into this one house in Long Beach, for a period of about a decade. My father used to talk about that time, because he was a little kid in this house. Afterwards, they were all able to move back to Manhattan and get apartments. They always worked together, six days a week, but they never, ever socialized together after that, which is kind of telling. I can understand that. So there are stories there but I didn't hear them from my grandparents.

The other side—my mother's father emigrated probably also from Latvia—I'm not really even sure—but also called it Russia. He was very gregarious, and very much a storyteller. He came over to the United States when he was seven or eight, with his siblings. He had one older brother

and they were eleven kids, so he had nine younger siblings. They were very, very poor. They rented the second floor of a house with another Jewish family in East New York, and it happened to be—that was my grandmother’s family. They had enough money that they could own a house, but they all had to live on one floor, and then this family of thirteen people lived on the second floor. My grandfather went to school for one or two years. That was basically it. Then he and his older brother and his father started a lumber company. I think they had a horse and a cart, and they would go across the Brooklyn Bridge to places where they were taking down buildings to build other buildings, and they would recuperate all the wood that was being torn down. They would clean it up, take the nails out, and then they would bring it back to Brooklyn and sell it for housing projects—for building projects. That’s how their company started. When my grandfather was eighteen, he had seen some movies and he had heard about the West, somehow. So he decided that he was going to go and be a cowboy.

There were two reasons. One, he really wanted to escape his family, working for the family, and living with the family. But the other reason was that my grandmother—who was downstairs, who was a couple years younger—she was the only one in her family who actually got to go to high school. So she was seen, I guess, in the house, as the incredibly sophisticated, cute girl, and she had, supposedly, a bunch of Socialist friends. She would swim, she knew how to get to the Y [YWHA – Young Women’s Hebrew Association] and swim. She did all sorts of things, which my grandfather—who could hardly speak English—couldn’t do. And she wouldn’t talk to my grandfather.

So he decided that he would save his money, buy a horse, and go to California. But he didn't tell anybody. So he saved his money, he bought a horse, and the story he told is that he started out for California from Brooklyn, and he got as far as Philadelphia—which was the first time anybody in the family ever came to Philadelphia—and he thought that wasn't really a great way to go to California. So he sold the horse, and he rode—and there's been an NPR [National Public Radio] story or two on this—he rode on the top of train dining cars. There were people who would ride across the country on these trains, who didn't have money for tickets, and they would ride on the dining cars—because, evidently, there were actual kitchens in dining cars in those days, so the dining car roofs were warmer than the other cars.

So he rode as far as someplace in the—I think it was Chicago—on a dining car. Then he used the money that he had from the horse to buy a ticket to California—which took weeks, I'm sure. Halfway to California somebody convinced him to leave all of his stuff—which couldn't have been much at the time—with this man that he met on the train, and to get off, and this man was going to get him this job as a cowboy in Arizona. So my grandfather got off, and never heard from the man or saw any of his stuff again, and ended up at some train station in Arizona. He eventually became a cowboy, and told all these stories about that when I was a kid. I had a lot of cousins, and we'd sit around and my grandfather would tell stories about being a cowboy. Because he became a cowboy, my grandmother started writing him. After two or three years he came back, and went back to work for the lumberyard.

Q: You mentioned Socialist work. Is that a legacy?

Heyman: These were the days when—this was really early. We're talking teens, maybe twenties. My grandmother—they were all in the Jewish working class, and I think a lot of people were Socialists. She was educated and seemed really sophisticated. My grandmother spent most of the days of her life as a Republican, not knowing much about politics at all, anyway. She just was not interested. But there were stories that she was a Socialist as a kid, which was good. She did spend World War II working for a military hospital. She always used to tell that story. But Socialist. Who knows? I don't know if she could have described what a Socialist was by the time I knew her.

Q: You know, oral history is interested in perspective and the experiences that you have as a younger person, which helped to shape your perspective. So I was wondering about religion and politics, and your family.

Heyman: Well, my father's side was very Orthodox. My father grew up Orthodox. My mother's side, my grandparents were not very religious at all, but their parents were extremely religious so my grandmother would tell about how she would tell her in-laws, when they came over, that everything in the house was kosher, and they would believe her because they didn't speak English. They never really learned English, or learned American society at all, so they would just believe her. But they, my maternal grandparents, were not religious at all. She was kind of a world explorer. I have this image of my mother's parents as these people who went on the Queen Elizabeth II once, and they went to Europe. My grandmother went to India. They traveled in Mexico. They became much more modern than my father's parents, who went to work six days a

week, and then came home and went to temple on Friday night and Saturday, and then went back to work. They were really different that way.

My family, when I was a kid—when I was really little—we were in a conservative congregation. But my mother was kind of a feminist. So that ended up not being that interesting to the family. So we joined a reformed—a very small community synagogue, that was very interested in social projects and what was going on in the seventies, in terms of experimental religion and things like that. Not at all the idea of a rabbi at the bimah, telling you down in the pews what you should be about. They joined this synagogue with twenty families. It's kind of silly now, but it was really experimental. The rabbi was like this kid, in jeans, and he had a guitar, and we would take the Torah out, and everybody would hold it. The seventies. It's funny.

Q: All right. So I guess back to France, where you were.

Heyman: Well, no—I can tell another story from my childhood. My oldest brother, who's a labor organizer now, he got really involved when he was in high school. He's eight years older than me, and I was in fifth or sixth grade. He got really involved with the health teacher in high school, who used to work—I have no idea at what hospital it was. I should find that out. Maybe it was Saint Vincent's or something, in the city—as an emergency room nurse. My brother would go in on the weekends and work in this emergency room. He started to get really involved. He probably graduated from high school in 1974 or something like that. So it's the tail-end of the sixties—but he was the first person in the family who really got involved with social

issues as a kid. It became really, really important to him, and that had a huge influence on me and my other brothers.

Yes. So, back in France. I was there for my sophomore year, half of my sophomore year, and I came back to New Hampshire. I was on campus for a couple terms, and then I got this internship in Jersey City, so I took the spring term off again. I was working in a first-grade class in a Catholic school called Saint Bridget's, in downtown Jersey City. That was a great program. Dartmouth used to have a house in Jersey City, and if you could get—I don't even think we got credit—but you could take a term off and live in the house, so long as you worked at one of the city agencies. It was really exciting, the work in Jersey City. It was an incredible population. I'd never been in a Catholic school, and all of a sudden I was the teaching assistant, which was kind of funny. I was working with somebody who had graduated from Dartmouth a couple years prior, who became a teacher there, which is something that I ended up doing when I graduated. I then became a teacher there. I taught fifth through eighth-grade language arts—which I had no training whatsoever to do. It was probably pretty horrible. I had one hundred forty kids in a day, and control was completely not possible. I was a complete rookie in the classroom.

But I learned a lot. I learned a lot about different parts of America. But I really wanted to go back to France, and I was applying for different grants and stuff to take me back. I got a grant to go and kind of do oral histories. I don't think I called them that at the time, but to go and talk to—I kept thinking about this older woman who had told me all these stories about the war, and how alive they were for her. I wanted to go back to other places in France, and talk to people about

experiences about the war. I set up three different kinds of scenarios or groups of people that I was interested in.

Just to back up a little bit—right after I graduated from college, I led a high school trip through France. First we were in Brittany for a week. Myself and another instructor were teaching French to these high school kids. Then we were in Normandy—at a home-stay for two weeks—and the kids were living on these farms. It was a real farming village. I was their leader, and I was supposed to teach them for two hours a day or something like that. But I got mono [mononucleosis], so I couldn't do anything. The school had to send another teacher over to take them on the rest of the trip, and I stayed in this village for about a month, recuperating for maybe three weeks—recuperating from mono. Again, I was in a situation where the village was mostly people in their sixties, seventies, and eighties. The people I was living with ran this little café in their house. The village had ten houses, and it had six cafés. This was the biggest. It had like five chairs in it.

I got to know the couple who were running this café. They were in their seventies. I was American, and young, and in bed. So, they started telling me about World War II, and what it was like living under Nazi occupation for two years, and what it was like living through the Allied invasion. Then I go back and I teach in Jersey City, and I'm thinking about both of those experiences, about living in France, and hearing these stories in Europe, and kind of this chord that touched me. So I write this proposal to go back to this village, and spend a couple months in this village talking to everybody I can in the village about what it was like for them. Most of them had been kids at the time—so what it was like for them, living through the occupation.

Then I wanted to move to the Loire Valley, because by that point I had met Vincent [Renou]—who has recently become my husband. But I wanted to live with him. He was in university in Tours, which is in the Loire Valley. Right near there was a small river called the Cher, which was the dividing line between Nazi-occupied northern France, and Vichy France—southern France, for a couple of years before the Nazis took over the entire country. Because of that, the villages along that line had people—there were people there who had done more active things; or, in my mind, more proactive things about the war. I was interested in finding people who had helped people escape from the Nazis to the south. They had made a decision to participate in the war, whereas the people I was interested in, in Normandy, the war had happened to them. It was a civilian population. The war had come.

Then I went to the Loire Valley, and I was seeking out people. There was a priest who had taken people across the river, and then was eventually sent to a concentration camp. He was in his eighties when I talked to him. There was the daughter of this man who had had a printing press. He had died but she remembered him printing all these false papers for people. In the middle of the night, these people would come to the house, he would give them papers, and the papers would get them to the south. That kind of story I was interested in.

Then I essentially went to Paris for the last part of the project. I was interested in finding Jewish people who were living in Paris, who had been in France during the war as kids, and had been hidden. Because, in between time, I had discovered that I had a piece of my family, from my father's side—my grandmother on my father's side was born in the United States. That's another

story that I won't go into it. But her entire family was from Poland. There was this forced divorce in her family, as her father came to the United States, kind of in a humiliating way. He married somebody in the United States, a Polish-Jewish woman he met on the boat. They had these two kids—my grandmother and my great-aunt—and we didn't know anything about the family that he had left behind. But when I was in France, I discovered the descendants of this family that he had left behind—who kind of made contact with the family over the years—but I really became very knowledgeable of them.

The cousin I'm closest to was born in hiding, in Limoges, during World War II, when her mother was trying to escape the Nazis. Her father, right about the time—a couple months after she was born—was sent to Auschwitz and killed. She was exactly the prototype of what I was trying to find—“What was this like for you?” All the older people who had clear memories.

So I went to Paris and poked around, and heard some incredible stories about people who had walked from Dijon to Geneva—as a fourteen-year-old, at night—because they had nowhere else to go. They knew they had a cousin someplace in Geneva, if they could get there. That kind of story. They were pretty incredible stories.

My intention was to paint the stories, and I was young as an artist. I hadn't gone to art school. I had taken two drawing courses—one of which I didn't do very well in—and one painting course. I had this idea that I could paint World War II stories the same way that films and books could tell those stories. So anyway, I decided after two years of doing this—first of all, I ran out of money. Then I ended up in Paris as a bartender six nights a week, and couldn't do any painting,

or any interviewing, or anything like that. That job ran out, and then I was like a gopher in the clothing industry. Then I was a bartender in this—I think it was like a Mafia joint—because I was paid incredibly well, and I only worked there one night a week, and there was money all over the place. Then I worked for this guy—I had a car, and I worked for this guy picking up envelopes and delivering envelopes, but I was told to never look in the envelopes, because if I didn't know what was in them, I wasn't going to be in trouble if I was ever stopped. I don't know whether he was a bookie or whatever. But at that point, whatever I was doing in France, I kind of derailed. So I wanted to come back and go to art school. So I came back to the United States, and went to grad [graduate] school. That's how I got to Philly [Philadelphia], actually.

[INTERRUPTION]

Q: Okay. You were about to tell me—I asked you a question off-camera about coming out.

Heyman: Oh, yes.

[INTERRUPTION]

Well, I didn't come out in high school. In those days—I was born in 1963, so I graduated high school in 1981. When I graduated high school, I had never met a gay person—that I knew of. Of course, I'd met plenty, probably. There was nothing but derogatory remarks and worse concerning gay people, in general. And I went to college in northern New Hampshire, at a place that was known for being conservative. That's not as deserved as people think it is. I didn't come

out until I was a junior in college, and I was never really troubled by it. Maybe as a sophomore I came out to a friend of mine. I told her she could never talk to me about it—that I thought I was gay—and she said, “What do you mean, I can never talk to you about it?” I said, “You can’t talk to me about it.” That disappointed her, because I think she had some plans. I disappointed quite a number of women, I think, in college.

Anyway, it’s a funny story when I came out, because my best friend in college was also gay, but I didn’t know that. We had this mutual friend, a woman. We were visiting her in Miami over spring break. She lived in Miami. We got down there, and Larry and I shared a bedroom.

He started coming out—he said, “I have something really important to say.”

I said, “No, no, no. I have something really important to say.”

He said, “No, no. I do.”

I said, “All right. Whatever you have to say, just go ahead and say it.”

And he said he was gay. He was, I think, pretty troubled about being gay. He had an older gay brother. He grew up in San Francisco, and, for some reason, it was a real problem. But I think—I don’t want to get inside his head this many years later. Then I just started to laugh, which I don’t think really helped, because I think this was a really important, big thing for him to tell me, and I

was just cracking up. I thought it was the funniest thing I'd ever heard. Then I told him I was gay. That was pretty funny.

But that was after I'd already started going out with a guy up at school. I don't know which one you would call "coming out." That was the first time I probably told anybody. Then I went out with two different guys in college. I never really had a problem with it. I didn't tell my parents until a couple years later. Vince and I were already living together in Brooklyn, in a one-room apartment with one bed, and my parents had been there many times. I don't know what they thought at the time. But I remember I kept going back to Long Island with my laundry, to do my laundry, because I was going to tell my parents, but I could never get up the courage. Eventually, I told them I didn't have any laundry. I just came out to them, and said I was gay.

They took it really easily. My father said, "Oh, yeah. I know." A high school classmate of my brother's started working for him when he graduated college, and he was gay. He had been working for my father for about eight years at that point, and I know my dad loved this kid. Whatever kind of dealing with a gay person—he had done a lot of it, even if it hadn't been his own son. But he wasn't really ever judgmental, and my mother wasn't judgmental either, but she took a couple weeks to get used to the idea. She wanted to know who else in the family knew, and which friends of hers knew. She'd go home from work and call—she called me up when she went home from work a couple times and asked me questions she didn't want to ask in the office. Now my mother is not that way at all. She's very supportive, and was a prime sponsor at our wedding last year. My mother took about three weeks—two weeks—before it kind of faded back into the background.

Coming out is kind of a lifelong experience. I just came out to five people just now. Who knows? Maybe six or seven. Who knows who's hearing? But it's an ongoing process, and it's kind of an incredible thing. I think it's incredibly good training, if it's even that. I'm friends with this woman who's not gay, and she thinks that if everybody was gay there would be a lot more tolerance in the world. Because being gay is the only kind of minority status where a kid is different from their parents. And if you have to live within your close-knit family as an outsider, then you kind of have sympathy for outsiders for the rest of your life. I kind of think that's true.

Q: Okay. So let's keep moving forward with work.

Heyman: Well, I went to graduate school. I took all narrative out of my paintings for a long time. The faculty's opinion was that narrative had no place in paintings, and I came to school doing all these pictures about World War II. Then I moved to Brooklyn for a while. Then Vincent and I moved to Australia because he needed to do French military service. As a teacher—he's an elementary school teacher—he could be assigned to teach in a diplomatic school in any country, and he was assigned to one in Australia. So we moved to Australia for a couple years, which was great. This was kind of incredible for my art, because we didn't live in Sydney, or Melbourne, or Perth, or any big, exciting place. We lived in Canberra, which is this teeny little cow town—or kangaroo town—that happens to be the capital, and has a diplomatic school in it. It has a lot of international people, but has a population of about two hundred thousand, and really hasn't got an art scene.

So I was in a little suburban apartment, making paintings, and I could really kind of develop my own paintings on my own. Whereas when we were in New York, there's all this influence in New York all the time. There are all these things to see, and all these places to visit, and lots of art going on. There's a scene, and that's really great and helpful, but it really wasn't great and helpful for me, because you kind of lose who you are. I got stuck in Australia, and I started to bring stories back into my pictures. I really wanted stories.

Anyway, we traveled a little bit in Indonesia while we were there, which was also really great. Then the French school opened up in Philadelphia and Vincent's service was done, so we moved back to Philly. At that point, I thought Philly was kind of a great town, and we knew some people here because I'd gone to grad school here. So we moved back to Philadelphia, and for the next ten years of my art development, I started slowly to build up what I wanted to do with art.

My first big project, I would say, was—in 1995, there was a killing in Fox Chase, which is a neighborhood in Philly. There was this kid named Eddie Polec. It's kind of confusing, actually, what really happened. But the story, at least as it came out in the beginning, was that there was this kid named Eddie Polec who was getting off from work at a fast-food joint on a Friday night at 10:00. There were five carloads of kids from another high school district—maybe even outside the city, in Abington [Township] or something—who had decided the Monday prior to that Friday night that they were going to go and beat somebody up, in Fox Chase, on Friday night. So these guys and their girlfriends all gathered at their high school with bats, and got in cars, and drove out to Fox Chase, and parked at this McDonald's. This kid was getting off work. I really

don't know if this is actually what happened, because there have been other documentaries and reports that have said other things, but at the time, this is what I understood about it.

Eddie Polec and a friend of his get off from work, right when these cars drive up, and the kids from the cars start to chase them with these bats. Eddie Polec trips on the steps of this church named Saint Cecilia's church, and it's a church where he had been an altar boy when he was twelve. The kids catch him, and they proceed to curb him—which means one kid would hold him upside down by his legs, and another kid would bat his head against the sidewalk. He died that way, before the cops got there.

There were lots and lots of reasons why this was a scandal. One of them was that there was a whole kind of 911 issue, where neighbors were calling 911. The 911 operators said that the neighbors were screaming into the phone, and hung up on them, and kept saying, "Call back when you're calm. We're not taking this kind of abuse on the phone." Then it turned out that one of the 911 operators was African American. I can't even remember who was mayor at the time. That person was, I believe, fired, or there was a big scandal about it. That seemed completely beside the point. The whole thing was kind of cold, in a William Golding kind of way. It became this big media circus, where the television crews would follow Eddie Polec's younger sister to school, and home from school, every day, and report on how she was doing. It was all gross, and I really wasn't paying attention to it at all. I wasn't focused on the media, and how people's tragedies become public property. I really wasn't thinking about it.

But right at that time a friend of mine in France was living in Paris. She was an elementary school teacher in Versailles, which is not that far from Paris. The town of Versailles had just given her what's called a function apartment, which is an apartment owned by the city for people who work for the city. She worked for the school system, so they gave her this apartment. So she had previously leased an apartment, and she couldn't get out of the lease until the end of the year, for her apartment in Paris. I had just finished a job in Philly, and she said, "You know, if you want, my apartment is empty in Paris. You can come early this year." Because every year I go to visit Vincent's family for Christmas. We go every year. That's when we go see his family.

So I went a couple weeks early and stayed at this apartment in Paris. I had never been to see the Bayeux Tapestry, which is in this town called Bayeux, which is up in Normandy. It's this incredibly important, beautiful relic from the eleventh century, that is essentially an embroidery. It's extremely long—maybe a hundred feet long, maybe longer, I can't remember. It's an embroidery that tells of the invasion of England by the Duke of Normandy in the year 1066. Anyway, I'm there, looking at this incredible embroidery, doing drawings of the embroidery, thinking maybe I'll make a painting and I'll include some of these things into my painting. The embroidery tells this tale of this duke who goes around the countryside for two or three years, collecting young people who are going to be his soldiers in this eventual armada that he's sending over to England. They collect all this food, and they build all these boats, and they go across. Eventually, there's a storm so they have to go the next year. The next year they go across, and immediately they burn, pillage, rape, kill everybody in sight, until they eventually get to the Battle of Hastings, where they kill the King of England. Then the Duke of Normandy becomes King of England. It's a famous story.

But as I'm reading it, I'm thinking about this invasion of Fox Chase, where these kids from one neighborhood—who didn't know anything about this other neighborhood—come in and just kill somebody. I was thinking about the parallel, where the soldiers from Normandy go over to another country and just kill a bunch of people there. There are all these scenes in the embroidery about the towns burning down. It clicked to me that we had just had an invasion in Philadelphia. That there was just an invasion that was similar to other invasions in history. That it was just pure violence, and it really had nothing to do with anything else. It was teenagers, and I was going to make a history painting about it.

So I came back to the States, and I spent two years making a history painting about the death of Eddie Polec. That was the first of several projects of that kind of nature, where I would take a story that was out there and examine it in a different way than the nightly news. In that particular picture, I had the whole thing framed by photographers, who represented the media. On one side there's a photographer who's fully dressed. On the other side there's a photographer who doesn't have any pants on, who's jerking off, taking a picture. I thought about doing that as a kind of critique about everybody getting pleasure from this one kid's murder, in some way. You weren't in Philly, but it was a story that just wouldn't end here.

Then I did a story about Nancy [A.] Kerrigan and Tanya [M.] Harding. I spent a year doing a painting about that. That was kind of an American comedy, and it was a pretty tawdry story about the Olympics. Nancy Kerrigan was this perfect American representative, who was untouchable, and sweet, and innocent. Tanya Harding—who was my kind of heroine in the

whole story—was this trashy upstart from a trailer who shouldn't be anywhere near fame. She hired her ex-boyfriend to stab Nancy Kerrigan in the knee so she couldn't go to the Olympic trials, and it didn't really work. They both went, and they were the two top on the team. Then Tanya Harding's shoelace untied. Tanya Harding later went to jail for throwing a hubcap at her boyfriend. It was ongoing. I liked that story a lot. In both of those stories, there was a gay element to those pictures. In the Tanya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan one I did a scene of it, and I cast all the main characters as guys in drag in some way.

Anyway, years go by and I was working on different issues in the nineties, in the end of the nineties, and then 2001 happened, and I really didn't want to touch it. It was really raw, and really early, and I still don't really want to touch it, in a way. I didn't want to be either a hog or a whore for a big, national story. That event was a really emotional event for probably every American—myself included—but I didn't want to deal with it in artwork. Then there was the first [Persian] Gulf War. No, the first Gulf War had happened already. There was the second war, in Iraq, and I was dead set against the war. I categorically, without exception, don't believe that violence is a solution for anything. I was really interested in the war, but I wasn't really interested in politics. I'm not really, in a way, interested in day-to-day issues. I kind of am, I just don't want it in my art. I didn't really deal with the invasion of Iraq, and I didn't deal with that war—even though I thought the war was completely unjustified. I had known from the work I had done in France in the eighties that the effect of a war on a civilian population is lifelong. It affects their kids, and does damage that's not the damage you see on the nightly news, of the car that's bombed in the market. It's the damage on the person who saw the car being bombed in the market, and her customer, or her child, or her husband or something was bombed, too. Those

stories, which are never told in the political way of telling a war story—those were happening, and I wanted somehow to think about it. But I didn't really think about it, because I wasn't really ready to think about it in my artwork.

Then in May of 2004, Seymour [M.] Hersch published this incredible article in *The New Yorker* about Abu Ghraib, with, I think, five or six pictures from the hard site in Abu Ghraib. That, for me, was kind of the straw that broke the camel's back. That was something that was not the same as the invasion. The invasion was completely immoral, in my opinion, but the idea of torture was kind of a step beyond. The idea of Americans torturing. The idea of an American not speaking up about any of it—it just got too much for me. So I immediately—within a week or two—started making paintings about Abu Ghraib. At the time, I only had to work with things that were on the news, and there was a lot of stuff at that point on the news. Five or six became twenty or twenty-five pictures that were eventually released in the early days, to the public, and there are thousands of pictures and videos that we know of now, and hundreds of them have been released. But at the time, there were very, very few. I started to incorporate those images in my paintings, not highlight them necessarily, but just incorporate them. In a way, I was kind of trying to get at the point that there is all this information out there, but we don't pay attention to it. Or we are able to not pay attention to it, because there is all this other information, and we are so bombarded with things.

I got really disgusted over the year the only kind of material I had to work with was the material that was being filtered through the media or the politicians. The one thing that we knew about the victims of the particular crimes that happened at the time—we thought only in Abu Ghraib—was

that they were wearing hoods. They were tortured. You could see that in the pictures, but they were never identified and we never heard from them. They had hoods on their heads. So I was using those pictures in a way that I thought was kind of clever, or at least getting to the point of the issue. But I got very frustrated because I had to use the pictures of them being tortured, naked and unidentifiable. So they were types of people, and not individual people. I knew from having talked to people in France that wars happen to individual people. That's a major concept. That's just a major thing that people don't seem to focus on.

So, I was ready to give up after about a year—the kind of political football of these icons. These iconic pictures kind of lost interest for me in a way. But I was really interested in torture, and I was really interested in the topic. I knew, through connections in the art world here in Philadelphia, an incredible curator who worked, at the time, at the Moore College of Art [& Design], named Brian Wallace. Brian Wallace had shown a couple of my pictures from that time in a group show, probably in the summer of 2005—something like that—and we became friends. I became friends with his then-wife, Kelly. Brian sent his kids to one of the Friends schools, up in Germantown. I think it was Germantown Friends, but it might be whatever the other one is—Friends' Central [School] or whatever. I don't have kids, so I don't know. Anyway, at that school were the children of this woman named Susan Burke. Susan Burke lived, at the time, in East Falls, and she was an American lawyer working for some corporations, doing mostly corporate law at the time. I think she was working for Tenet Healthcare Systems and some pharmaceutical companies. She started this case—can I back up and tell a little bit about Susan? Because I think it's really interesting.

Q: Yes. I think you should. But they have only three minutes on tape.

[INTERRUPTION]

Heyman: I think I was going to tell the story of Susan Burke. Susan Burke—I think she's from [Washington] D.C. I'm not sure if she's originally from D.C., but she and her husband were living in D.C. She was a corporate lawyer. She moved up to Philadelphia to follow a job, I think, and she started in—right after the war started, which I guess was 2003? Is that the beginning of the war? March 2003? There were hints coming out of the administration, quotes like, “If the gloves aren't coming off, we're not doing our job. If people aren't getting roughed up, we're not doing our job. This isn't a war like the past wars.” All that kind of bullying talk that was coming out of the White House.

Susan was, for some reason, very attuned to it, and she thought, immediately, “They're telling us that they're torturing people, for some reason.” This was way before the torture stuff ever came out. She said, “They're putting out all the signals, all this kind of verbiage, and they're trying to communicate that they are torturing, and that's what they're doing.” She contacted a friend of hers who was at the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York. I think that's who she contacted first. You can fact-check it, but, anyway, it doesn't really matter. She contacted him, and they started doing an investigation together—as much as they could. Doing some research on the possibility that the U.S. was torturing people in prisons outside of the U.S. They were starting to find facts for a case.

I'll back up a little bit. There was this guy—the first case was called *Saleh v. CACI Titan [Saleh et al v. Titan et al]*, I think was the name of the case. I don't remember. But there was this guy named [Haidar] Saleh, who was an Iraqi from Baghdad. He had been tortured under Saddam [Hussein] in the nineties. He got released from prison. He was tortured at Abu Ghraib, and he got released from prison, and somehow said, "Fuck this country, I'm taking my family," and they emigrated outside of Iraq. They went to Sweden. They moved to Sweden, they lived there for a decade, and he had a car dealership or something like that. Then the U.S. invaded Iraq, and there was the moment where a lot of expatriate Iraqis had been hoping for, the taking-down of Saddam. He convinced his family, "This is the great moment we've been waiting for." They sold their business, and they decided to move back to Iraq. They were going to reestablish themselves in Iraq—in the new Iraq—and they were going to be part of the solution, and rebuild Iraq.

So right at the time of the invasion of Iraq and the fall of Saddam, the Iraqi banking system completely collapsed. It was kind of in the news, but if you weren't Iraqi, or banking in Iraq, you wouldn't really remember. But they were going to take all their money back into Iraq. So they sold their business and whatever they had in Sweden, and they converted it all into U.S. dollars—because there weren't any banks in Iraq at the time. They put it in a suitcase, and they flew it to Riyadh. They got onto one of these convoys going back up into Baghdad, to buy a house and establish themselves in the new Iraq.

In that convoy on the way up, they're stopped by American soldiers, and they discover this briefcase full of cash. The Americans immediately put a hood over this guy's head. He's put in the back of a pickup. He's arrested. He's handcuffed, and he ends up in Abu Ghraib—exactly the

same place where he had been tortured by Saddam—and he starts getting tortured by the Americans. Eventually, he gets released, and because he’s a Swedish citizen he’s allowed to go back. It might have been Norway, but I think it was Sweden. He’s somehow able to leave Iraq, he goes to Sweden, and I don’t really know if he brought his family or not. But he’s living in Sweden. He then goes to visit a cousin of his who lives on the Canadian side of Detroit—Ottawa or something like that. Someplace up there. I’m not really good with geography in the middle—but anyway, he tells his cousin this story about being arrested and tortured by Americans. He didn’t tell anybody in his family, he didn’t tell anybody in Sweden, he didn’t tell anybody in Iraq—which was pretty typical of the people we ended up speaking with. These weren’t stories that they—“Oh, by the way, I was—” whatever.

He tells his cousin, and his cousin, who’s Canadian, says, “You know, you’re in the West now. You’re near the United States. You have rights, and you have to talk to an American lawyer. You have rights.” So they drive over to Detroit, and they basically look in a phone book for an Arab-speaking American lawyer. I can’t believe I’m forgetting his name [Shereef Akeel]. There’s an American lawyer who does American law, medical malpractice stuff. He’s not a civil rights lawyer. He doesn’t really do anything with the Arab—he’s Arab-American, he’s Egyptian-American. He speaks some Arabic, but that’s not a field. Anyway, they look him up and this guy, Saleh, knocks on his door; comes in; sits down with the lawyer, and tells him this story. Shereef doesn’t really know what to do with this. The Arab-American community had been very positive toward the war at this point, and this is a pretty incredulous story of this guy coming in and saying he was stripped, and beaten, and forced to stand naked for months at a time, and hooded,

and all these compromising sexual positions. I haven't read the testimony or saw it, so I don't know if he was raped or not. Anyway, it was pretty outright torture.

Shereef doesn't really know what to do with it, and talks to another lawyer friend. He says, "You know, this guy came and told me this story. I don't really know what to do. It's not my part of the field." The guy says, "Well, I don't really know what to do, either, but you should call this place in New York called the Center for Constitutional Rights. They might know what to do about it." So he calls up, and it's about two weeks after Susan has called up the Center for Constitutional Rights, saying, "They're torturing. We have to start a case." Then all of a sudden this guy from Detroit calls up and says, "This guy came in. What am I supposed to do? I don't know if I should believe him. He said he was just tortured in Iraq." The two were put together, and they started a case. About a week later, the article comes out on some television, and then in *The New Yorker*, about Americans torturing.

So Susan's already starting this case even before there's any kind of knowledge about the torture. Then, of course, they start doing a lot of investigation. Susan is an incredibly brave woman. There's no money in this case. There's none of that kind of motivation. She's doing this case about torture with help from other pro bono services, like the Center for Constitutional Rights. Shereef was involved in the early years. In late 2012 or early 2013, Shereef Akeel again became involved in what remains of the cases. I think there is only one rather large case left. I think Susan is now out of the cases and Shereef is running them. She starts, with Shereef, setting up an office in Baghdad. I think Shereef went over to Iraq in 2004 or 2005, and they hire these two young Iraqis, Majid and Mohammed—one of whom is a large animal veterinarian, who doesn't

have any work after the war. The vet business has disappeared. Then this other young guy, Mohamed—as point people for the law firm in Baghdad, who will help vet people if anybody comes forward saying they have been tortured, organize their paper work so they can get them visas to get them out so they can talk with Susan and Shereef and other lawyers who are involved as the case goes along.

Susan, over the next couple years, goes on several fact-finding missions to different places in the Middle East—never to Iraq—to talk with people who have become plaintiffs in these cases that she's bringing in civil court in the United States on behalf of the torture victims. It's a case against mercenary companies that were hired out to interrogate and guard prisoners in Iraq. It's complicated and I don't necessarily have to go into it, but you can't prosecute a crime—I don't even know—you have to be a public attorney, like an attorney general, or work for the government to prosecute a criminal case. A civilian lawyer can prosecute a civil case. So Susan was not able to prosecute crimes, per se, against these people. She was able to prosecute cases against companies—on behalf of these people—for damages. There are several companies—many companies—that have contracts with the United States to provide all sorts of services in our war efforts. There were two in particular that she said she identified that had contracts for working at Abu Ghraib, providing interrogators and prison guards. So she went after those two companies. That was the strategy of the cases.

Anyway, I got involved because Susan's kids went to school with Brian Wallace's kids, and Susan and Brian knew each other. Susan was talking all the time about this torture case that she was leading, and I had been talking to Brian about torture all the time, because I was obsessed

with this issue. Brian said, "I've just got to get you two together, because you, torture, and Susan, torture. I just don't want to hear about it, but maybe you can torture each other with it." We'd have a lot in common, and interests. So I went over to dinner at Brian and Kelly's house, and Susan was there, and Vincent was there. Halfway between, "Pass the broccoli," and "Is there any salt?" she said, "Do you want to come with us to the Middle East? We're going in a couple of weeks to interview some of these torture victims you're so interested in, abuse victims." At first I thought she was asking me to go with her to Iraq, and I didn't want to go to Iraq. Then she explained that no, she wasn't going to Iraq. This was in 2005. Iraq was a really hot war, and there were ways of getting the people to come out of Iraq, where she could meet them outside of Iraq, and that would be easier and safer, and she wasn't going to risk any American lives. It wasn't going to help the case at all to go get blown up in Iraq.

So I said yes, I'd really, really love to go. The first trip that I went on was to Amman, Jordan. Prior to that, Susan had been on a trip to Riyadh, and I think she'd been to Amman a couple of times before that. But they decided not to go to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, because Saudi Arabia is a very, very strict, orthodox Muslim country. Women are not allowed out in public without full burqas and veils and everything. Susan, who's an American very proactive feminist lawyer, was not going to go and put a veil on. So we decided to go to Amman, because from Baghdad you can drive up to Amman. I think if it's a straight drive it's like eight or nine hours, but it could take a couple days, depending on stops along the way. In those days, there were lots of stops along the way, and then there was getting through the border and all that stuff. Then they would meet them in a modern hotel in Amman.

So I went on one of these trips to Amman. I was at the time teaching in France, at a contemporary art school in Brittany. Let me back up a second. Susan said, “Why don’t you come with us? We’re going to go in a couple weeks.” I was like, “Well, I can’t really afford it.” It was unreal. Artists are not asked to go and listen to primary evidence as it’s being spoken, from people who are the center of a major, major international story. It was just an incredible opportunity. I didn’t have any money at the time. I just had this idea that I couldn’t afford to go, and she said, “Well, what’s it going to cost?” I looked online for tickets or something and I told her what it was going to cost me, and she said, “Well, if I give you that, will you give me a painting? I’ll buy a painting, and then you can come with us.” So the first time, she bought a painting, and I had money to go. After that she bought some other art work, but never really in that way.

But it was important for me never to be—not that they ever offered a job—but I was never an employee of the law firm. I wasn’t being paid by the law firm. If I didn’t have any money, I’d just put it on a Visa card. I figured I could pay it off at some other point, but I shouldn’t miss the opportunity. I was living in France for a term, because I was teaching in this American art school in France. The way the lawyers worked it is that they knew approximately when they were going, but they were never quite sure. So I would get these emails from Susan, “We think we’re going to go in a couple weeks. We think we’re going to go on this date. No, it’s been changed. We’re going to go on this date. We’re going to go in a couple weeks. We’re going to go in three days.” She would never really tell me—part of the reason was that they didn’t know when they would get the visas together in Baghdad, so they could bring the people to Amman. Then they didn’t know—once they were going from Baghdad to Amman—how long it would take to get

there. How long it would take to get through customs. And the lawyers who had a pay salary, those completely connected with them actually being at work, didn't leave until they knew that the Iraqis had already gotten to the hotel.

So they just waited until the Iraqis got to the hotel, and got through customs, and then they would buy their tickets and fly over the next day. Susan would fly over at night, sleep on the plane—which I can never do. She'd land at seven in the morning, and she'd start interviewing at 9:30. On the first trip, I was in France, and I told the director that at some point I was going to have to leave the program for a couple days. I was out in Brittany, and I went to Paris and met the Americans as they came over and changed planes in Paris. That was really kind of a funny story, because one of the lawyers who came with them was this woman named Judy [Judith B.] Chomsky. She's a pretty radical lefty lawyer, who had spent many, many, many years fighting Exxon [Mobil Corporation] in Africa. I think it was Exxon. It might have been another—Exxon Mobil or something like that. It was a big case. It was in Nigeria, I believe. Again, I'm not a lawyer and it wasn't my subject.

So Judy Chomsky—who is Noam Chomsky's sister-in-law—was there. There were some other people from the Center for Constitutional Rights, and on that first trip there was this incredible guy from California, Keith, who's a legal investigator, who was coming in to do some of the interviews. There was a journalist. I think the journalist met us in Amman—Tara [S.] McKelvey—who eventually published a book about it. I meet them in the airport. I'm incredibly nervous about the whole thing. I'd been to Israel twice in the mid-eighties. I didn't really love it. I was supposed to love it, because as a Jew you're supposed to love it, but I didn't really love it

because I thought it had a lot of problems. I'd never gone back, but I'd certainly never gone into an Arab country, and Amman, in particular—the population of Jordan is eighty percent Palestinian. Anyway. I was just nervous. The whole thing was making me nervous.

We get into the airport, and there's this older man, a tall guy in his eighties named [William] Ramsey Clark who's in the waiting room with us. I didn't really know who Ramsey Clark was but Judith knew him. She introduced him to Susan, who was completely excited to meet Ramsey Clark, so I knew he was somebody big. I didn't really pay attention. We get on the plane, and I had requested—because you could do it without paying a fortune, you didn't have to pay anything in those days, you could actually bring baggage—I had requested an exit row, because I'm kind of tall, and Ramsey Clark is really tall, and we found out that we were sitting next to each other. In those days, to get to Baghdad, you didn't just board a plane in JFK [John F. Kennedy International Airport] or Paris or London and fly to Baghdad. Everybody flew through either Riyadh or Amman. So the plane was filled with American soldiers—one way or the other, people who were on their way to Baghdad. And Ramsey Clark was on his way to Baghdad.

We were talking, and he was really, really interesting. He was telling me all about the upcoming trial of Saddam. How it was really important that they didn't convict him and kill him from his first trial, because there were so many crimes. If they didn't try him for all of them—if they convicted and killed him for this one—which wasn't a minor crime but it was minor comparatively—that they would never try the other ones in public, and that was really important.

Anyway, I thought that was interesting. The plane starts going down. We come off the eastern Mediterranean. It starts going over Israel. It starts hitting a thunderstorm or something. We started bouncing around, which, of course, makes me even more nervous. We land, and it's snowing in Amman. It was March, I believe. We get out, I find Susan, I find Judith, and I find my baggage and everything, and they ask Ramsey Clark if he wants to take—I think he was going to a hotel in Amman for the night, before he went off to Baghdad. They asked him if he wanted to share a taxi with us, and he didn't. I wasn't party to this. I don't really know why he didn't share the taxi with us. But we get in the taxi, and it's me, Susan, and Judith, and they're so relieved. I'm like, me too, because it was so bumpy, and I'm just so nervous to be here anyway, and I hate flying, and we were bouncing around. I hate flying.

They were like, "No, we were really nervous because Ramsey Clark was on the plane."

I was like, "Why? He was a really nice guy. I sat next to him. He was great."

They were like, "Well, do you know who he is?"

I was like, "I can't really remember who Ramsey Clark is."

They were like, "He's the American with the biggest target on his back in the entire war theatre. Ramsey Clark is Saddam's personal lawyer. He is representing Saddam at the first trial of Saddam, in Baghdad. Three of the judges, the other lawyers, have all been killed. The last man

standing is Ramsey Clark.” They were really nervous that the plane was going to be bombed or whatever. I don’t know.

I kind of thought, “Oh, my God. I have no idea what I’m doing here. I don’t know anything about the Middle East.” I just didn’t know. I didn’t know.

Then we get to the hotel and everybody there, it seems to me—this was a really Woody Allen moment—that everybody there is wearing red-and-white caftans. I’m like, “Okay. Everybody is Yasser Arafat, every single person here.” Of course, It’s not true, but it was late. So we go to the hotel—it’s okay if I tell these stories, right? Yes. So we go to the hotel, and I meet Tara McKelvey, who’s this independent journalist, who works for [*The*] *American Prospect* and other places, and she’s doing research on this case, and she’s come with us. She’s filing a report with her whatever, and she’s got a laptop. She’s filing a report someplace in the lobby. So I go and sit with the rest of the kind of American crew, including this guy Keith, from LA [Los Angeles]. Then there’s this Shereef Akeel I meet for the first time, and there’s this Iraqi American. I go over there and spout out all this leftist, liberal stuff against the American occupation—just whatever—and on my way back I talked to Tara a little bit.

She said, “You know, you should really know who you’re talking to before you just talk here. Not everybody is the same.”

I said, “What are you talking about?”

She pointed to this one guy who was in the conversation, and she said, “Just look up his website.”

I went online, and it was an incredibly hot, anti-Semitic website for this guy who was raising money. There were possible links with different terrorist organizations, and he was raising money for this organization, that organization, and I had just shot the breeze with him for an hour. I had thought he was great. But it was just like you’re not in New Jersey right now. It’s different. It felt like a war, even though Amman was not part of the war. But Amman had seven hundred thousand Iraqi refugees—or Jordan did. It borders Iraq, and it borders the West Bank in Israel.

Anyway, that week, the next day—so we get there late at night. The next day there’s a meeting that the lawyers have with their clients—the clients being the former detainees—and I think there were quite a number on the first trip. I ended up sitting in about nine interviews, but I think there were maybe twenty to thirty detainees there that time. It was a much larger group and there were many more lawyers than I worked with on any other of the trips that I went on. Susan, and Judith, and the other lawyers go in and have this meeting, and Susan is the only person I really know. I didn’t really know what I was going to do. I had brought some copper plates, because I thought I would make some portraits. I was going to do dry-points. It’s a pretty simple way to capture an image in a printmaking medium. Susan didn’t really know what I was going to do, so I was a little bit on my own but was going to feel it out. There were going to be six days of interviews and I brought eight copper plates. I thought that was a lot. It ended up not being nearly sufficient.

But it turned out that Judith Chomsky really didn't want me in any of the interviews, and put up a big stink about it. The whole issue of lawyer-client privilege was going to be violated, and I could be subpoenaed, and my work could be subpoenaed. She didn't know me either and I don't think it was anything personal. But she just had this lawyer reaction, like nobody is allowed. I kept getting this information that I wasn't going to be allowed in any of the interviews, and I kept saying to Susan, "Am I going to be allowed in the interviews?" She said, "Don't worry. Don't worry. I brought you here. It's fine. This is my case." I really don't know what happened between them, but Judith Chomsky never came back. They had some big falling out. It might have been over other stuff too, but definitely part of it was over the idea that an artist was going to be in the interviews.

It turns out that Susan's theory, or her philosophy, is that legal cases are incredibly legalistic. The language is very arcane. It's very specific. It's very inaccessible to a majority of the public. These cases are incredibly important to prosecute because the legal system—having a legal system is incredibly important, and prosecuting things in a court of law is how crime should be punished, or tried, or whatever. But they can go on for years, and they can never reach the public. So her idea was that you bring people into the process, who have—through their own professions—developed a way to talk directly to the public about things, in the public's language. That's not lawyers. Those people are writers, and painters, or printmakers, and storytellers like Nick Flynn, and writers from magazines or whatever. That was their job. That's what they were good at—talking directly to the public—and that she, as a lawyer working on this

case, could give them access to information that they would never, ever have if they didn't work with her.

So that was Susan's bottom line, and it continues to be Susan's bottom line, because I'm still working with her on different cases. She is also very cognizant that there are cases from the Vietnam War that have gone on for thirty years. At thirty years, it doesn't affect anything anymore. I mean, yes, there are repercussions from a settlement over Agent Orange in the nineties. But when the war ended in the early seventies, and the people affected—and the policy affected has moved on—the real chance to bring the story out is over in the nineties. So Susan's idea was that that's why she was kind of into me being there, among other people.

So the next day, eventually I got into an interview. I think the first interview might have been Shereef conducting the interview. It was this guy—an Iraqi—who was wearing a tweed jacket and a tie. I think he was a teacher—an elementary school teacher. I can't remember. Anyway, I sit down. The whole first week, the whole first trip we were in bedrooms—hotel bedrooms. Maybe they rented a couple hotel bedrooms with suites, so there was an actual sitting area on one side. We were all kind of sitting around a coffee table—or sitting on the bed—and there was a lawyer; a translator; a note-taker; myself; the witness; and sometimes the witness would have a family member with them, sometimes they wouldn't. Or, sometimes either Mohammed or Majid, who were the two employees from Baghdad, would be in the room, because they were the ones who knew the witnesses the best. So the witnesses sometimes felt more comfortable if they were in the room. They ended up being great, those guys.

Anyway, I'm sitting down with a copper plate. I'd decided to make prints because I have my own philosophies, too, and one of them is that I'm a painter. I'm an artist. I'm kind of an old-school artist. I do everything by hand. I don't do any of this microphone stuff. I wanted to use a medium that was connected, through history, to bringing information specifically back from wars. Printmaking has always kind of done that, for some reason or another. Printmaking, initially, was begun as a way to reproduce images extremely cheaply, so that information could be distributed extremely cheaply. It's widespread. So there were artists through history, like Jacques Callot in the seventeenth century, in France, who was tagging along with the French army through Alsace-Lorraine, making all these prints of what the war looked like. Then he would come back to Paris—or Versailles—and he would print them and distribute them. Then [Francisco José de] Goya did the very famous series of the disasters of war, which I think he did over fifty plates. He proofed them during his lifetime, but they were really kind of too hot to be printed during the time of his life. So those prints were never made until his son had them printed, thirty years after he died.

But those also gave us all this information about Napoleon's invasion of Spain, and what the war looked like there. Then there have been other prints that came back from the Civil War. Prints have been tied into getting information back from war, in a very old-school way now, obviously. We have cellphones. If there weren't cellphones there wouldn't be an Abu Ghraib anyway, because those pictures were taken on cellphones—or little digital cameras. But I don't do that.

Anyway, instead of painting, I wanted in some way to connect with the print tradition, and I wanted in some way to be able to reproduce the images that came back, more than once. Because

I wasn't comfortable with the idea that I would go and—I didn't really know what I was doing in the beginning, but I didn't want to go and capture something, and have it sit in one place. That just seemed kind of stupid to me.

So I'm sitting in this first interview, and I'm drawing on the copper plate. That involves just a piece of polished copper, and I have this thing called the dry-point stylus—dry-point nib—and you scratch into the plate. That doesn't really make a hole into the plate, like etching would.

What it does is it raises up a burr of metal. When you go, later, to print the plate, you smear ink over the whole plate, then you wipe the entire plate clean. Wherever that burr is, that's holding the ink, that, when you go to print it, you put a piece of paper on it, and run it through a press—that burr holds the ink. Everything else gets wiped off clean. Whatever you've drawn becomes a line. You send it through the press, and you've got a repeatable image. Now with dry-point you have to do something called steel facing a plate, which can make it repeatable, because the dry-point wears down very quickly.

So I'm doing this portrait of this guy in this jacket and tie, and I'm adjusting the tie, and didn't really get a good line between his forehead and his nose, so I was kind of annoyed with myself. I'm fiddling around with the stripes on something—I can't really remember—and I'm listening to this testimony, which is kind of incredible. I've never heard anything like this. There's this guy, and he's been arrested in the middle of the night. He's been hooded, and handcuffed, and dragged off to—I don't remember the specifics on this particular one—but he was dragged off, probably, to the airport. He's eventually in Abu Ghraib. He's kept naked. He's in his cell without

any heat, and he's barked at by dogs, and beaten for a week. He's interrogated. He's got a hood on. He's tortured, in a prison.

I'm sitting there doing his portrait, and I felt like I think I have to get his testimony into the artwork. I had thought about it slightly, beforehand. I thought, "Oh, I'll just get the notes from the lawyers. I'll clean them up, and I'll put them up on the wall with the portrait, and it'll be—" whatever. And it just occurred to me that no, it has to be in the portrait, because I don't want anything edited. I don't want to be editing it. I don't want a curator editing it. I don't want people not to have to read it. I want it to be part of the image, because it's part of the portrait I'm bringing home. It's this guy, telling his story, in his way, associated with his face.

Because what I had been annoyed with for the previous year and a half or so was that we talked about the detainees, but we never saw their faces. We didn't know about their personal stories. We didn't know if they were married, or had kids, or grew up here or grew up there, or were teachers or computer scientists. I wanted the story and the face together. So I just started writing backwards things I thought were important from his testimony. I had to write them backwards because the print gets reversed, and I wanted it to be readable to the public once it gets printed. So I'm writing backwards, and I kind of kept that MO [modus operandi] up through now, when I do interviews, because I feel like the thing—. You always ask yourself, what is it of value that I can do that somebody else can't do better? Or what is it of value that I can do? What is it of value that I can do, and the thing of value I can do is I'm here listening to this guy. The least I can do is bring back what he says.

My idea has always been to do all the writing, and all the drawing, or when I got into painting, to do all the painting and all the writing right at the moment of the interview. When the interview was over, I was done. And since I wasn't controlling those interviews, that was a bit of a crap shoot, because I didn't know when the lawyers were going to decide it was done. I didn't know if they were going to repeat a story many times because they wanted more information, or if they were going to move on and skip something that I had started writing a sentence and then couldn't remember, and had to move on. But I feel like in the work, that makes it more alive in a way because perhaps the viewer feels like they're in the room. They're listening to this testimony as it's told—which goes around in circles, and has different stories come forward or not.

That week I had these eight plates, and I finished them in three days. I did, I think, two different people. I did two plates of them, and everybody else I did one plate of them. I didn't know what their stories were beforehand. I found it all interesting, but I didn't have a lot of room on that plate, so I would kind of listen to what I thought the story that they were coming up to telling was going to encapsulate enough to represent the whole story they had been telling for two hours. That was kind of tricky. But the stories were pretty incredible. We always began with “Where were you born, where did you grow up? Do you have siblings? Do you have parents who are alive? What's your profession? Do you have a spouse? Do you have kids?” and they would [talk] about that. Pretty quickly, it would turn to, “Tell us about your arrest,” and the arrests followed a couple different patterns.

One pattern was that the person was out in public someplace, and there was a bomb that had gone off, and everybody in the area was arrested. Because the American soldiers figured that

somebody in the area had set off the bomb, so if you arrest them all, and interrogate them, then you're going to find out something about the bomb. Another scenario was that there was information given about a certain address, so the Americans would storm a house in the middle of the night, and they would blow up a front door—or they would knock on the door—and fifty soldiers would come in. Or a helicopter would land on a building's roof, and they would just come in and arrest the men in the family. There was one terrible story like that where there had been—there were two that I'm confusing. One is where the soldiers came in and somehow either the door had been broken down and hit this guy's son, who was eight or nine, and he had a broken leg. He had to walk over his son after he was arrested, to get out of the apartment. There was another one whose mother had died in the invasion of their apartment, and he was handcuffed and dragged over his mother. Maybe his mother had fainted. I can't exactly remember, but those two stories were particularly terrible.

There was another one that first week, that was probably—they were all incredible that first week. We saw an uncle and a nephew the first week, and the nephew—at the time we interviewed him, I think he was seventeen or eighteen—but he had been arrested when he was fifteen or sixteen, and tortured. The uncle was very religious, and was wearing religious garb. He didn't let me do his portrait, but allowed me to sit in on his interview and do a portrait of the translator, who was this Palestinian woman. So I did a portrait of the translator, and I wrote his testimony. But they both kind of told the same arrest story because they were arrested together, but it's more impressive from the uncle/father side.

He lived with his wife and his five children in the same house with his brother, his wife and his children. This nephew was one of those children. And his parents—who all lived in the same house—that had been in the family for generations, that was outside of Baghdad, was on a dirt road. Across the street from the house—across this dirt road—they had two little shacks, one that had sodas in it, and one that they kept sweets in. They were locked, it was Ramadan, and the family was eating a traditional Ramadan festive dinner, at night. The kids wanted to go across the street to get some soda, so they gave them the keys and the kids left the house.

The father said, “We were just at dinner, then all of a sudden we hear this bomb go off, and we all rush out,” and he sees that the bomb has gone off in the middle of the kids. Two of his kids, a nine-year-old and an eleven-year-old, have been killed. He doesn’t know what to do. He looks down at his son, he picks him up, he holds him up to the sky—because there’s an American helicopter that’s appeared overhead. I don’t know how compressed time becomes in this story at all, but he says he picks up his son, and he’s wearing this traditional robe that goes back to Greece. Those robes have got to have been in the Middle East for three thousand years. He’s wearing this robe, telling us this story. He says, “I picked up my son, I held him up to the helicopter. I didn’t know what to do, so I said, ‘This is my son. This is my son. This is my house. This is my son. This is my son.’”

He said, “Then these soldiers came in, and they arrested me. I had to put my son down. I was forced down on the ground, handcuffed, and at that point, from that point of view, I saw then my other son had been decapitated. There was my other son’s body, decapitated. One of the soldiers was in communication with the helicopter, through his walkie-talkie, and he went into the field

across the street, and he brought back my son's head, and he put it next to my son's body. Then I was loaded into a truck, and we were carted off to an airport, and I was tortured, with the other surviving male members of my family, including this nephew.”

That interview went on. He was in Abu Ghraib for 135 days, and tortured terribly, as was his nephew. But we didn't pay attention to anything in that interview, because, me, I just couldn't get all those thoughts about that moment out of my head. He never got to mourn his son. He never got to bury his son—two of them. He never got to talk to his wife, at all, at the moment that they died. And the women in the family never knew where they were in prison, or what had happened to them. There was no communication allowed whatsoever. It's an absolutely inhumane story about war. The torture is the one thing that I went over to hear about, but that story was—that's the story of war. War is casualties. They're not casualties, they're killings, and they're deaths, and collateral damage is not collateral damage. It's civilian killing. It doesn't matter if it was an unidentified bomb or whatever. Somebody was killed, and somebody else had done something that killed them, whether or not it was purposeful.

That was a pretty heavy and intense week. There was another moment that was really great that week. Tara and I were working together a lot. She was the journalist, and I was doing these portraits. After I finished the eight plates, I ended up doing—I had brought some watercolors, because I thought we might have extra time. Maybe it was really a pretty city. From what I saw, Amman is not a pretty city—in my opinion—but it was kind of interesting and impressive. But it wasn't a place where I really wanted to go out and do watercolors. There was also this town, this kind of ancient site called Petra, which is in southern Jordan. I had hoped that, at the end of the

trip, I would be able to get down to Petra. I had bought this watercolor stuff to do some drawings. But, as I ran out of my eight copper plates on the third day, then I started doing watercolor paintings in the interviews. I think I did nine or ten of those that week.

There was another interesting moment where, after three days of not leaving the hotel—can I back up one second? I've got to back up to Susan Burke. Because Susan Burke has this big fight with the lawyers, and she keeps telling me it's okay. It's okay, and the truth is it's not okay. Susan says, "You're going in. I'm giving you my approval. This is my case!" Whatever. So there is all this tension between the lawyers. This is the very first day.

And then Susan says, "I'm leaving on a plane at five. I've got to go back to New York."

I am like, "You're kidding! You're leaving me?" I couldn't believe it.

She was like, "Yes. You'll be fine." That was kind of funny.

So anyway, a couple days later we have our first break, after all these interviews, and we'd been in the hotel. We have not left the hotel the entire time. We have heard horrendous things. We had a three-hour break for some reason. I don't know what the reason was. But Tara and I said, "Let's just get a taxi and go someplace. There must be a souq in this town. There must be an outdoor market. Let's just go." So we get a taxi, and we say, "Take us to a market." There was a French guide called [*Le*] *Guide du Routard*, which is the hitchhiker's guide to traveling, and I had my *Let's Go*, and I had my *Middle East on a Dollar a Day*—all those guide books—and I

was figuring out kind of a little bit how I was going to get to Petra, at the end of the week. We're in this taxi, and we go past this big open-air, taxi and van place. I'd traveled in Africa before, and I recognized that that was probably a place where people went to see if there was a car going to such-and-such, and you'd wait around until the car gets filled, and then you'd go—because I had done that kind of thing in Senegal.

So we're going past it, and I asked Tara—who had been in Amman many, many times—I said, “Is this the taxi place?”

She said, “Yes.”

I said, “Oh, I read about that in the guidebooks. They said you just go down here if you want to go to Petra. You ask around—‘Is anybody going to Petra?’—and you get in the taxi and you go to Petra.”

She said, “I wouldn't do that if I were you.”

I said, “Why not? The *Routard* guide says you should do that.”

She said, “Well, you know, Amman is like the Geneva of the Middle East, but it's not for the politicians and the bankers. It's where all the terrorist organizations and their connections and governments meet, because it's a very neutral place. And the place where they meet is this taxi station. I've interviewed people from Hamas over at that corner, and people from Hezbollah over

in that corner, and I've talked to people from Iran over there. You just don't go around, as a naïve American, asking people if you can get a car ride. It's not a good idea." So that was another kind of wake-up moment, of which there were many.

[INTERRUPTION]

The other Amman story is—I have a couple of Amman stories. The only time I was ever allowed in an interview with a woman was this one woman—an Iraqi woman in Amman. There is evidence that there were women at Abu Ghraib, and I just want to clarify—Abu Ghraib is kind of the common name. Abu Ghraib is a specific place. It's a prison that's been notorious for torture chambers for years, under Saddam. It's extremely large. It's basically on the city line of Baghdad. It was on the front lines during a lot of the war. It's like five football fields in size. It's got a lot of outdoor areas, a lot of different barrack kind of things. I've never been there, but that's what I imagine. I've seen pictures. They have this one cell block called the hard site, which was where the Americans interrogated and tortured people who were kept in singular, isolated chambers with grates over the front, so they could see out—but they were isolated. Sometimes the Americans would put blankets on those grates. That's where all those pictures come from.

Anyway, there were women in the hard site, and there were women in Abu Ghraib. I started to tell you—Abu Ghraib is one of many places that I've heard of where people were tortured. The one guy who, in my opinion had—this is a terrible thing to say—the third or fourth but not the first worst torture, maybe the first, never even was in Abu Ghraib. He was in a completely different place. We know about Abu Ghraib because there are pictures that came out. The U.S.

Department of Defense immediately confiscated all pictures from soldiers working in prisons after that, and there aren't any pictures coming out from other places, but there are lots of other places. There were women in these places, and there probably weren't anywhere near as many women as there were men. But in Muslim culture, the idea of being naked is incredibly shameful. The idea of being raped is absolutely shameful, and the idea that these women would come forward and talk about this to strangers—men in particular—is not going to happen for the most part. So some women have come forward. Some have talked to the female lawyers and female translators and whatever, but they have never allowed me in the interviews.

One woman did allow me in her interview, and she was incredible. I think she was beaten, I don't think she was ever raped, or we never got to that point in the interview. She also—I don't think was very religious. I know she wasn't religious prior to the war. She had lived in a very mixed Shia and Sunni neighborhood, and she was very modern. She spoke many languages, and she'd traveled. She had a story that was kind of an incredible—two kinds of things. One was that she had been married to her husband, who had beaten her while she was married to him. She had five children, including a two-year-old. She had been beaten terribly by this guy and abused, and she asked for a divorce. He granted her the divorce on one condition, and the condition was that she never, ever talk to her children again, ever, including the two-year-old. If she did talk to the children, he would beat the children. For the rest of her life, this was a woman who's going to be on tenterhooks, incredibly nervous and afraid. She did, however, continue contact with her children—at great risk—and she knew that at the time she talked to us, in 2005 in Amman, that—it might have been 2006—one of her sons was in prison. She didn't know where, and she was very, very afraid. She didn't know anybody, any of the other Iraqis who were on the trip,

who came up in the van. She was very afraid of talking to them, in case she became known as a collaborator. She was just afraid. All the time, afraid. That was incredibly impressive. She said, “I’m afraid of them. I’m afraid of you. I’m afraid of everything. I don’t know where my son is. I’m afraid of my ex-husband.” That was one incredible story.

The other incredible story—there were two other incredible stories. There was one guy who was walking down the street in Baghdad and a bomb went off, and he was injured on his leg, really brutally injured on his leg and his arm. He wakes up—he lost consciousness—he wakes up in the infirmary in Abu Ghraib, and he’s had an amputation of the leg, and he’s having an amputation of an arm, and he was incredibly—well, I don’t see why he wouldn’t be, but—suspicious of everything American.

Then there was another guy that same week that was one of the most dignified people I’ve ever seen, but also one of the most depressed people I’ve ever seen. You felt like all the energy was sucked into him and killed. He had a very calm, smooth affect, and he said he had nothing to do with the war. He had nothing to do with Americans, or terrorism, or anything, and he kept being asked—they thought he worked for Saddam, and they kept asking him where Saddam was. Has he ever been to Chicago? And what cells is he involved with in the West? And all this stuff. He denied all of it. He’s like, “I’m not involved in any of that.”

Anyway, ten days after the interviews—well, right after the interviews, Majid and Mohammed take everybody back in the van, they drive back to Baghdad, and ten days after the interviews there’s this big civil war between Sunnis and Shias. I bet, today, if you ask Americans the

difference between a Sunni and a Shia, they will still have no clue, and assume it's not much. It's like not knowing the difference between an Irish Catholic and an Irish Protestant. It goes back much further than that. It's a major thing about Iraq that we should know.

Anyway, he goes back to his neighborhood. All these people, basically, that we're interviewing are Sunnis who have all been turned in by Shias. That's how they got there—some of them, other than the ones who were arrested on the street. But he was arrested at home, I believe. Anyway, in his neighborhood there's a Sunni-Shia kind of raid. There's a militia. They call them religious militia raids, or something like that, and one hundred fifty people are killed one day, including him. That was ten days after we interviewed him.

I was back in France when I get this email from Susan. It occurred to me—it kind of slowly dawned on me what I had been sitting through. It was really a big thing, and I was really unprepared for it. I was really unaware of how important it was, or how important I think it is, anyway. These people didn't have access to English; to media; to newspapers; to judges; to lawyers; to anybody. All of them said to us, afterwards, that they so appreciated being able to tell their stories to these lawyers. They so appreciated that an artist was listening to them; that a journalist was taking the time to talk to them. They were going back to Baghdad, and, again, they didn't have any access. And here is this guy who had given us his testimony, and then he was killed. So I was carrying, in some way, on his plates, his last words. Like, there it was, and I had to do something. I've always shown as an artist, but I didn't have any following, and I wasn't really savvy about getting stuff in the media, or in any way—I always felt it was very egocentric. It didn't really interest me, naïvely, in some way.

Anyway, at that point, I thought, “I have to get this work shown. I have to get it out there. It has to be reported about, because, otherwise, they meet three or four Americans, it sits in a law case in D.C., and eventually gets rejected by the Supreme Court,” which is what happened. And then it just dies. It’s like I’ve been given this opportunity to take these words forward. So that was kind of really impressive, after the first week.

[INTERRUPTION]

There’s one very quick story I can tell you. There was a woman named Matid, who was on that trip. She did not let me in her interview, but I met her in the hallway and stuff. I didn’t really get to know her. She had a long interview. She had been brutally raped at Abu Ghraib, and tortured. I didn’t pay attention to it. I had enough on my plate. But about a year and a half later we get an email from Majid in Baghdad, and she’s gone missing. Then another one—“We found her body.” This was a couple months later. “We found her body at the morgue.” She evidently had been kidnapped, and raped, murdered, and mutilated. It took a long time to identify her body parts in the morgue. That was the content of the email. I asked Majid if he could ask her family if I could read the testimony and use the testimony that she had given to Susan and other people in the interviews, now that she had passed away. If I could use that and create some kind of memorial for her. I had been given the opportunity to do a show at a local place down here called the Print Center. What I did was I took her testimony and I stamped it on the entire gallery floor, pointed in the shape of a Muslim prayer rug, pointing to the East. So that if you came into the gallery to read the testimony of any of these people’s work, you had to confront her—or not

confront—her testimony by either walking on it, maybe by removing your shoes, maybe by deciding not to go into the gallery. But in some way this was going to make you have a physical contact with somebody who had absolutely no voice in the Iraqi war, and whose voice was completely squelched. So that was my memorial to her. That was another person I met on that first trip.

[END OF SESSION]

VJD

Session Two

Interviewee: Daniel Heyman

Location: Philadelphia, PA

Interviewer: Gerry Albarelli

Date: April 20, 2012

Q: Do you want to start by telling me the story behind these?

Heyman: Yes. Well, I brought these pictures here because the first trip I went over to Amman.

[INTERRUPTION]

On the second trip, I went to Istanbul. What happened was that the Jordanese closed the border to Iraqis. So the Iraqis could no longer come from Baghdad up to Amman, and the law firm needed to have a place they could get to from Baghdad with one flight, not two. There were only three or four choices. One was Riyadh. Susan didn't want to go to Riyadh. Another was Damascus, Syria. Everybody kind of wanted to go to Damascus, but they thought it would play really poorly with the jury—like why were these lawyers meeting with people in Damascus? This wasn't going to play. I think another place you could go was Tehran, and, of course, we weren't going to go there. Istanbul was such an obvious place because they could get there in one flight. It was a border country to Iraq, I believe, and it was an easy place for the Americans to get to. It also was kind of a pilgrimage site for Muslims, in general, because it has the Blue Mosque, which is a very holy mosque, and Hagia Sophia, which is a very holy mosque. It's a really fun city, and it's very peaceful, and it's not in a war zone and all that stuff. So we went to Istanbul.

On each one of the trips I decided I would try to think about the project I was doing on that trip differently. The first trip was a portfolio of eight prints, just black and white—black ink on white paper prints—and I think it was nine watercolors. And that was the set for that week. That became known as the Amman portfolio. In that first trip, I had waited to hear when the stories were interesting, and then I started to copy them down. I didn't try to get everything. I decided on the second trip I would try to get every single word that was translated while I was in the room during the interviews. So that made many more pictures per former detainee.

These are three images from one man—I think there is one more that I don't have here—of one detainee, and the four pictures that I made of his testimony. I don't know if you can read it from here, but this one, which is called “I Am Sorry, it is difficult to”—this is the very first moment of his interview. We asked him to talk to us. “I am sorry. It was very difficult to start, especially in the beginning. My door exploded in the middle of the night.” He goes on to talk about who his family is, and how he was arrested. Then he starts to talk about, “They dragged me across the court. I swallowed some sand,” and different kinds of torture moments.

[INTERRUPTION]

This is the first moment of the interview of this particular man, in Istanbul. This one is called, “I'm Sorry. It is Difficult to Start.” This is Chine-collé dry-point on paper. It's part of the Istanbul portfolio, of which there are ten prints, also watercolors. He starts to tell in the beginning that “Our door exploded in the middle of the night.” There were a number of people in his family. His children, his mother, etc. “Still, I was hearing the scream of some—the scream of

my daughters.” He’s describing the arrest, and he starts to describe how he’s taken prisoner. He’s handcuffed. He’s hooded. He’s kept naked. He’s dragged across the floor. This was probably the hard site at Abu Ghraib—or outside in the courtyard at Abu Ghraib. Then he starts to tell this incredibly surreal thing, that I just couldn’t quite believe that I was hearing. I’d like to read it to you, if I can.

“They took the bag off my head, shone a light in my face, identified me, and beat me. I passed out. In the Hummer, I was on the ground, and they stood on me. Twenty minutes later, another person was thrown on me. After that we stopped, and they beat me.” That’s still part of the arrest. He goes on to talk about how he’s brought to Abu Ghraib, he’s interrogated, and then there’s this one line in this particular print where you can’t read it—you being the person it’s intended for. What he was starting to describe—I was so caught up in it that I completely forgot to write backwards. He says, “At the camp, they put my foot,” and I’m reading it backwards, “they put my foot on a box and broke it by stepping on it with their foot.” Which was a pretty horrific thing to hear. You don’t get used to it, when you hear things like that. He was hung up by his arms. It was pretty bad.

Then I want to show you this one. In this one—this is a little bit later in the interview—he’s talking about being in the prison, in the hard site, and he’s talking about one particular night. He says, “Every night Graner mistreated us in different positions, to give us pain very fast. When we cried, he was happy. ‘This is the music I like.’ One night they put blankets over the cell bars. This was the night the prisoner was killed. I was made to stand all night facing the cloth. I am hearing, I thought, a prisoner being forced to drink from a toilet, like drowning. I could not

breathe. I thought, ‘My time is near.’ Then the prisoner’s noises stopped.” This was a pretty incredible part of his testimony, because he’s really describing listening to waterboarding, right outside of his prison cell. He claims that the person was killed during the waterboarding—which, of course, never happened, because waterboarding doesn’t kill anybody—according to the government.

So he tells this incredibly long testimony of being beaten and other things. Then we break for lunch, and—as was the case from that trip to Istanbul on, for the trips beyond that—the lawyers had these two large binders of photographs. Each one had about two hundred fifty to three hundred photographs. Each one had a number, and if the witness felt up to it, they would ask, after a break, if they would come back and go through the book, and see if they could describe something. See if they recognized anything. The lawyers were building a case, so they wanted some kind of information. “These are photographs from the war,” if they could be identified. If the people in them could be identified. If they ever saw anything like that. This one was—he was looking at the photographs later in his interview that afternoon, and he pointed out a photograph and he said, “Yes, I saw this. I remember this. This man’s tattooed.”

“Did you see anyone who was forced to have real sex?” “Yes, especially to newcomers. Abu Hamid was there a lot.” Abu Hamid is an American. “The civilians were present. I was involved. I saw one guy, twenty, stripped him on his knees, cuffed. Then another time they made a guy have sex. Then they put him down on his stomach, spread his legs to rape him, and made him confess.”

I have one more story to tell that's not in this picture. It's in another picture that's not here. We'd been interviewing this guy for hours about his own experience, and about these photographs of his experience. And all of a sudden he says, "Oh. I forgot to tell you—" Which is kind of an amazing thing, because it wasn't prompted by a photograph or anything. He says, "I forgot to tell you. They put a metal clamp through my mouth, then clamped tight, then clamped tight, the clamp on my jaws." Now that kind of misspelling is just because I'm in a rush writing it all down. "This happened to me once, and I saw it on others more than once. Here they are putting him in cold water. Then they drag him—it's another form of torture here, the soldiers giving a prisoner a shot. She's also standing on his wrist." We were looking at different pictures.

So one of the pictures—this was another moment like the moment of the guy who is describing to us his two sons being killed. We're looking through this book. This poor guy has had to relive this whole time in prison with us. All of a sudden, he flips a page and he just starts crying, and screaming, and we don't know what's wrong. He eventually says, "That's my brother. That's a picture of my brother, and I haven't seen my brother in three years. I didn't know he was in Abu Ghraib. That's him." There was a picture of man, naked, being tortured, beaten on the ground. That was an incredibly human moment. We had a lot of those moments but—there's kind of a—you know. It leads up to it slowly.

So I can tell you about some others. I wanted to show you this book. This book I made after the first trip. When I came back with the watercolors from the first trip I wanted—I had wanted only to do prints, so I took four of those watercolors that I had done and I turned them into woodblocks. These are some woodblocks. I'll show you how it works. So this is a book, kind of

a four-page or five-page book, just text from those watercolors. The woodblock is kind of clunky material—or it is for me, anyway—and the pages are rather small, so I had to edit it down from the original text. This is obviously not my image. This is a very well-known icon of the man on the box. I just could use it to non-verbally signal what the book's about. The book—this comes from one of the testimonies, *Sing with a Lovely Voice: Abu Ghraib Testimonies*. Third Floor Press, which is right upstairs—two floors.

I told you earlier of a woman whose testimony I was able to listen in on, and this was a reduction of that testimony, or a bit of that testimony that she gave us. Then I turned her into an image here. “They told me I was a terrorist, my hair was the color of a terrorist. The interrogator, an Egyptian, said, ‘Confess, or I will send you to a place where you will be raped.’ I am scared of the others, and even of you.” I told you how scared she was.

And this was a page that gives the title to the book. “A.H.,” which was Abu Hamid, “would force a boy maybe ten, he would say, ‘Mohammed, sing for me,’ and the boy would sing with a lovely voice but very sad.” This was a story in the middle of a testimony—so this is one that gave the whole context of the story—but this was a story of a guy who was telling us a story about hearing this ten-year-old boy who was also in a prison, in a solitary-confinement cell at Abu Ghraib. They all knew he was there but nobody could see him. The boy knew that his father was also there, so he would sing this song as a way to communicate with his father. It was a traditional song about, “Don’t worry about me, I’m fine.” He would sing it. The guy who was telling me this said you could hear everybody crying in their cells.

There was another incident where a prisoner—a former detainee—told us that when he was in prison he was made to ride on the back of his father, as a donkey, through the prison. There was some kind of game, and how utterly humiliating that was. Of course, they were both naked.

I just brought you some woodblocks. These are the kinds of blocks, separations of color, that are used to print—this is the print that goes for “When I Saw My Son,” which was—I told you about earlier. I used somebody else’s portrait for it, but I thought that was a really important story to include. So this is one of the blocks that’s printing part of this image. The text, which is on this block here, “When I saw my son dead, I lifted up my son to show them this was my son. An American soldier went to find my son’s head. He brought my son’s head, put it on my son’s corpse four feet from me. Then they took us to prison.” So that was a great reduction of three hours of testimony.

On another trip—you know, this process went on for several years. I think my first trip was in 2005 or 2006. I think it was 2006. I did my last trip in 2009. So three years. There were five trips about Abu Ghraib, and two trips about a massacre that took place in a place called Nisour Square, which is a traffic circle in Baghdad. Of those two trips—I don’t have any of the work here, but those two trips were incredibly interesting for many reasons. One was it was a different kind of population. This was not a population of people who had been broken down and tortured for months on end. These were people who were simply going to work in and out of the square, in their cars, who were caught up in the middle of a battle. It wasn’t really a battle.

There was a convoy of four trucks, Humvees, that came through this square, just before noon, on a particular day—September 16, 2007, I think. The employees driving the trucks were from the Blackwater Corporation, which is not called that anymore. They shot rifles up into the air, which was a pretty habitual way of Americans telling people to get out of the square—and there were traffic guards all around the square. This square is enormous. It's probably the size of Times Square, if you took all the people out of it. It's quite a large place. Anyway, the traffic guard's—well, I can tell it easiest from the traffic guard's testimony.

The first person we interviewed was a traffic guard. He said it was in the morning, and he heard these rifle shots go off. What they did—it was a sign for them to stop traffic from coming into the square until the convoy went through the square. So he goes into the middle of this street, in the center of the square, and he stops the cars coming toward him until the convoy passes through. The first car is this white sedan, and it's being driven by a young man, and there's an older woman next to him. He looks at the car, and the young man is slumped over the wheel. He goes up to the car to see what's wrong and if he can help. He sees that the young man has just been shot and he's dead. The woman in the car is screaming, "My son! My son! My son! My son!" So the traffic cop tries to help the woman out of the car, and the car—because the driver is dead, and it's an automatic, starts to roll forward. At that point, the American soldiers—who have claimed that they were being attacked by this car, with the dead man—unleashed many, many rounds of bullets on this car. The car explodes, and the woman is burned to death. The traffic guard escapes behind a building, and we talk to him about seven or eight weeks later, when he comes up to Istanbul.

But it turns out that the woman was a doctor, and her husband is a doctor. They met when they were in med [medical] school in Baghdad, a long time ago, and they're part of the educated elite of Baghdad. And their son was in med school. Because at this particular time, in 2007, there were a lot of kidnappings. The father in the family, the husband—whom we also interviewed—said that none of the women in the family could—

[INTERRUPTION]

What was I talking about?

Q: You were talking about what it was like to hear these stories.

Heyman: Should I finish up that story, and talk about the husband?

Q: Yes.

Heyman: Anyway, the husband, who was the next witness we talked to—it was seven weeks after his wife and son were killed, and he was incredibly angry, and I think he felt incredibly guilty. Because he had made this rule in the family that none of the women should be out of the house or their place of work alone. So every day, the son, who was in med school, would go to his mother's office, pick her up and drive her home for lunch, and then drive her back. He would miss three hours of med school, but that was the way they felt it was safest. Because of that rule

that the father had applied—obviously not because of it, because he didn't kill them—but he was feeling an incredible mixture of emotions. And he was really angry. He was really, really angry.

One of the things that made him really angry was that right after that particular incident, the American embassy called as many of the survivors—either the survivors of victims who died in Nisour Square, or people who survived who had been shot up, but survived—into the American embassy and offered them two thousand dollars.

“Was that enough? Was that enough? Can we give you two thousand dollars?”

He saw one of the vice-ambassadors or something, and he said, “No, I don't want your money. I want my wife back. I want my kid back.”

“What about ten thousand dollars? Is ten thousand dollars enough?”

So by the time he got to us he was so incredibly angry at America and how they were dealing with this tragedy in his life—not that he took that out on the lawyers—but it was very, very different from the Abu Ghraib people who were the torture victims who had been—.

By the time they saw us, which was usually a year or two after they were released—these were people who were arrested. They might not have been tortured for the first six months in prison, or maybe they were tortured in the first four weeks or four months, and then they were in prison for another year and a half. By the time they got to us, there had been a lot of time that had

passed. They were much more depressed and much less angry. They were also much more—well, I don't know that they were more but they were extremely appreciative that we listened to them. On more than one occasion, they said, “This is the first time an American has ever listened to me who didn't have a gun in my face, or a baton at my head,” or something like that. “This is the first time that somebody just wanted to hear what I had to say without the threat of violence in there,” an American.

Which was not at all the case with the people from Nisour Square—who were probably, by 2007, since war had been going on in their country since they were born—pretty sick of war and its violence, and people who think it's going to solve anything. So it was a really different mentality.

Q: We were talking off-camera about your reaction to these stories, and the reaction of the other people in the room, and how that informs the work.

Heyman: Yes. There were, at different times, different reactions, depending on the people. There was one case which was an incredibly moving case, of this young guy—this was maybe my third or fourth trip to Istanbul. It was a person who had been detained at Abu Ghraib and tortured. That particular project, I did everything in one, big, long accordion book. The book unfolded to thirty-two feet by about two-and-a-half feet. I wanted to contain the entire week's testimony in this one book. This was maybe the third or fourth day of testimony, and I had been told in the morning, when we came in, that this guy was—nobody told me what his testimony was going to be, but I was told that he had a lot to tell us. So instead of just opening up one page, I opened up

four pages, so there was double the space, and I thought I was going to fill it all up with testimony. So I started to do his portrait in gouache, like this one, on the left-hand side of this big, open spread. I started to write, as he started to tell us—it was just the under-painting at this point. I started to write his testimony about being arrested, and being held captive, and being—I don't think he got to the six-month part—but he was just starting to begin to tell us about interrogation. He started to talk, and I had this big, long page open, and I kind of did this scroll across the top of it, of the words, and I was going to come back and make—who knows what I was going to do? Because I didn't do it that way. Maybe I was going to come back and make a big circle or something.

Anyway, he started telling us that for his interrogation, for a week—every day for a week—they would come to his cell and beat him up until he passed out. Then he would come-to in an interrogation room, and essentially he'd be beaten up until he passed out. Then he would wake up in his cell. Then the next morning, it would happen again. All this time, he is naked, which was incredibly humiliating for these men. But as he starts to tell us that, he breaks down and cries, he runs out of the room, and we had no idea if we would ever see him again—if he was going to talk to us again. He just couldn't talk about it, and he may never have talked about it before. A lot of the people who talked with us had never told stories to anybody in their family, or in their life at home. They told some of the things that happened to them to Majid and Mohammed, because those were the people who were vetting them. But, really, the vetting thing was more official documents, stating that they had been in Abu Ghraib, stating that they were released from Abu Ghraib, or wherever. Whichever prison.

Anyway, this guy leaves. I didn't know what's happening. I have this big spread open in the book, and I have like an under-painting on one side, and some testimony that leads to being beaten, as he was interrogated. Then I just decided that if he ever comes back, I'm going to turn those pages and start fresh. Because he needed that space, and you need that space, and I needed that space to pull it back together and focus again. In this particular interview, I then opened up a new space.

He did come back later that afternoon, and he basically cried through his entire testimony. He never opened his eyes again. He told us about being kept for six months, naked, tied to the bars in front of his prison cell, like this, with his legs apart, and they would throw cold water on him. Dogs would come and bark at him every hour. He was really just psychologically tortured for months. You could tell that that was an incredibly difficult thing for him, and it was incredibly difficult for us.

When I was listening to the stories, this was my work time. I didn't feel like I had room to react during the interview. Because if I were to react, and not be able to listen to what somebody was telling me, then I wasn't going to be able to transcribe what they were telling me, and I wasn't going to function, and wasn't going to help them, or help me, or whatever. Often it was later at night, when I would be crying back in my hotel room, with the lawyers. We would all get together and go out dancing. All the detainees, the lawyers, the translators, all of us, we would go—we found all these great dance clubs in Istanbul. None of us were young chickens. We would go dancing for two hours, and it was really fun. Istanbul is a very dense city, and a lot of the restaurants and bars are up on the roofs. It was kind of hot. We would go up and hang out on

the roofs for a couple of hours, and just kind of relax, and not talk about anything that we had talked about.

The Iraqis would spend the afternoons when they weren't being interviewed going to the bazaar and buying things for their wives back home. Sometimes some of them never left the hotel because they were so worried that they weren't going to get a phone call because a bomb had gone off. It depended on the trips and who was there, but there were some people who never left the hotel because they were so worried. Right when they got there they got a phone call that somebody had been killed or whatever, so they were very worried about their families that they had left.

I spent a lot of the trans-Atlantic flights on the way back, crying. One of my biggest reactions to the whole thing was to just make sure that I got out there, put the work out there, went and did a lot of talks at universities, and talks like this, so that I could in some way process it publicly.

Q: Okay. I would like for you to talk about that next. But if we could wrap up this section, or something that's related. I wanted to ask you—is to talk about your decision to focus on the face and the portraits. You've talked a lot about the text.

Heyman: Yes. Well, you know, I'm a very traditional painter, and there's a long-standing tradition in painting of portraits that starts in Egyptian portraits. There are portraits that go back in every society, and they tend to be an ennobling act. To make a portrait of somebody is to ennoble them, or to give them importance, or to show their importance. Go into any bank or

any university in the United States, and you see these pretty awful oil portraits of whoever happens to be in charge in that particular institution over the last hundreds years or whatever it is. I wanted to include these people as very important people. These are people who—in my mind, in some way—are very sacred. They have done our bidding as an American-Western power that has gone in and invaded their country, and asked them to be tortured for us, for whatever reason. They have become elevated and important, and it was important—you know, the portrait bust is a place of stature in Western society, so I wanted to put them in that place of stature, and I wanted to surround them—I wanted to give them an identity, because they were so unidentified in the way the story has been told in the United States. Even with people like [Fernando] Botero, who did those paintings of the torture chambers. He never talked to a victim. He painted Botero figures being tortured. The idea for me was that this issue has faces, these people have faces, and their face has been taken away, as well as their voice. So my intention was to show their face, and give them their voice.

I did just want to talk about this one image, which is in the book, that was a collaboration. Because often I'm asked how I design a page. A lot of it happens very spontaneously, in the act of doing it. I'm very conscious that I want to trick you, the viewer, into some kind of game where you have to decipher the text, because it's a really hard and difficult text to read. If it was printed really clearly, you might just give up because the text is so hard. But if I make it hard to read, you don't really notice it's so hard to read. I mean, if I make it hard to decipher, then that becomes a game in your head. So you're not thrown off by the content, because you have been brought in by the design.

In this particular—this is a book of poems and images. The poems are by a poet named Nick Flynn. We went over there together to work on this collaboration, but in this particular testimony—it says here—. This is a picture of a detainee, a man, I believe, named Taja. It says, “They brought female Iraqi detainees in from our cell, and raped them in front of us.” That’s pretty harsh testimony to start off. This isn’t the beginning of his interview, but it’s the beginning of this image. Then here, around his portrait, he said—and in this particular series of interviews I was not interested in collecting every single word. I was only interested in collecting words that were going to open places in your mind that they were going to.

So he says, “We heard a female detainee give birth. She had no medical attention. She gave birth in her cell. Her son died.” I had heard other stories of this woman—or maybe it was another woman—who had given birth in her cell at Abu Ghraib in the torture chamber, and also sometimes maybe it was the same person. But when I heard that line, I designed this to be kind of like a birth canal. This guy and his head is protruding, and bringing out this story in a way that went with the content of the text. You had another question?

Q: I actually wanted to ask you to say a little bit more about the making of this book—about that collaboration.

Heyman: Okay. This book has nine—it’s called *Re d acted*. Nick Flynn is a poet who is very interested in torture, for a number of reasons. He saw my first portfolio that was displayed in Cape Cod, in 2000 and something. I think 2007, maybe 2006—the summer of 2006—and he and I met through a mutual friend. He was really interested, and I said, “Look, I’ll introduce you to

Susan Burke, this lawyer. She's really interested in people out there in the culture, who are interested in this subject." I had introduced Susan to another woman. Kathleen Tolan is a playwright who ended up coming on a couple of trips and has started a trilogy of plays, one of which was produced last year in Chicago.

So Nick was this poet, and we decided we wanted to do a collaborative project. I always wanted to make a book. We decided we wanted to do a collaborative project about Abu Ghraib somehow, so we went together on one trip to Istanbul. Then he went on a trip by himself, and then I went on a trip by myself—with the lawyers but without him. We didn't really know what to do. When I went on my own, I made these portraits. I made nine portraits with text, in prints, and I made six or seven paintings with text. I came home, and I wrote out on my computer all the texts. I sent it to Nick and I said, "This is what I collected. Maybe you can find inspiration from that." Nick had been there a couple of times, so he knew the context of all this stuff. He came up with this idea of redacting all of the text that I gave him into these seven poems, in the way that the government redacted the war entirely. So if you know the context, and you can see the context in the other pictures, you can have one reading of the poems. If you don't know the context, you have a completely banal, other, reading of the poems. That seemed to me to be a really great idea.

So what I then did—he sent me the poems, and I designed this book. I had a particular layout with the dry-point images. Then, similarly, with his poems, with the color rectangle and his poem in the middle, and then I redacted from Nick's poems, out onto the outside of the page, something that I thought would, again, give another reading to the poems. So this one has this

line in it. “They said they knew. They woke me at three.” Those are lines from that poem. It was a really, really interesting project to work on, and to think about the material a different way, and to think about a different kind of audience. It’s definitely not a gallery audience or a museum audience too much. All of the books I’ve been able to place are at university collections or similar, so the Princeton Library has one. The Yale Rare Books Library has one, and Swarthmore College has one. The University of Virginia has one. The Getty Research Institute Library has one. My intention has always been that none of this stuff will really be in private hands. It will always be somehow—if I can get rid of it, I can get rid of it to a public place that will ensure that it’s available to the public for the future. That’s the idea of the book.

Then there was one other one that I wanted to just point out, because I think it’s really interesting. “For twenty-two days, one other thing happened. I did not have a beard. That night, in that tent, one on each side, the photographer lifted the ground. The next day to Garso a cold tank of water, sometimes with ice. They were going and coming, and then they went back. I tried to find myself all night.” That’s Nick’s redacted poem, which I happen to think is really beautiful, but it has this word in it Garso, which if you asked 99.99 percent of Americans what Garso is, they don’t know. The reason they don’t know is because there weren’t any pictures from Garso, but Garso is another one of the American-run prisons in Iraq where we evidently tortured innocent prisoners. So I took that word Garso and I printed it black-on-black around this poem. That’s how we were thinking about this.

Q: What about the reception of this work?

Heyman: Well, there have been different kinds of reception. The most immediate reception is what do the Iraqis think of the work, at the end of an interview? When I was doing copper plates, you can't see anything. I have one here someplace. You can't see anything on a copper plate when it's initially done. All you can see is some scratches. In the 2006-2007 years, in those interviews, there was a really brutal civil war going on. These Iraqis were incredibly scared for their lives; for their families; that they would be going back to prison, some of them. This one over here went back to prison. He's in prison now. There was a lot of fear. So they were not interested or concerned with me at all. I was just another person that the lawyers brought in, and a nice guy to have at dinner and stuff. They kind of liked me, but there was no concern about what I was doing there. So long as I didn't send them any images. They did not want me to send them copies of the prints because they were very afraid that they would be seen as collaborators in some way with the Americans, and that they would be physically in danger.

Then as the years went on, the Iraqis—in the latest years, especially when I started doing paintings, they had mostly the same reactions as so many other people have to this kind of work, “That's not my shirt color. My hair doesn't really look like that. Am I really that old-looking?” All those kind of vain questions that people say when they've just been painted. Or, “I like that,” or, “That's cute.” Some of them, but not very many, wanted to take some home. So I offered to paint—I wouldn't let them take these home, but I offered to paint them again, either after dinner or before breakfast, or something like that. Only one took me up on that, and he took my painting home, and I'm very happy for that.

Then the reaction in the States has been—the patriotic fervor of 9/11 and all that has passed us by, in a way. But in the first years that I started working with Abu Ghraib, even before I met any of the Iraqis, that work was more—the reaction was varied. There were some drawings, some prints of mine that were drawn on, in an exhibition that somebody put smiley faces on. It was actually this print, which I didn't use. That's why I decided to use those as a book. But I had done a series of these prints, somebody had come into the gallery—they were all kind of hung up without frames—and drew smiley faces on one or two of them. Another put in a little thought bubble that said, "At least I haven't been decapitated." That was, I think, a summer of a lot of decapitations.

Every now and then in a public forum—but really rarely—a time when somebody has been belligerent in the audience, who asks questions about, "Why don't you tell the American side? Why are you so in love with terrorists?" Things like that, which are completely crazy. And then one time I gave a talk in Philadelphia, and the next day I got an email that said—this was about the installation with the floor print—they really liked it, but "You can never tell if an Iraqi is telling the truth. They could be lying. A lot of them are lying." But there was no signature and there was no name. So I wrote back and said, "Who are you? I'll talk to anybody." Susan says if you get hate mail, just delete it. It's not worth it. But I thought, "Well, I'll talk to them." So I got an email back that said Sabrina [D.] Harman.

Sabrina Harman was one of the guards on the night watch with [Charles A.] Graner [Jr.] at the hard site. She's the one who took 212 pictures with her camera to send back to her girlfriend stateside. She's the one with the ice man, with the thumbs-up. Sabrina Harman is a main player. I

wrote back, and I said, “If you’re Sabrina Harman, you know they’re telling the truth. And if you’re not Sabrina Harman, it’s not a funny joke.” “Oh, oh, oh, I’m Sabrina Harman. You can verify this with so-and-so.” So I did the verification, and eventually I put her in touch with Susan Burke, because she was going to become a witness for Susan’s side.

There hasn’t been a ton of negative reaction. There’s been great reception in certain kinds of circles—universities that will let me in the front door tend to really like it. I had an offer to do a show at Swarthmore College, and I suggested to the curator, “We’ll do a symposium, also, and we’ll invite other artists who have worked with war issues, or veterans who have become artists.” So it’s like, “Oh, that’s great.” The University of Virginia—I went down there to have a show in the fall, and a new series that I’m working on with Susan is a series of survivors of military sexual assault—which are mostly women but there are some men—who were raped by their colleagues in the military. It’s a major problem. It gets in the news every now and then, and Susan is prosecuting a big case on behalf of these survivors. So I talked about that in my talk. Then I was invited back by the University of Virginia’s medical school to give, not at grand rounds, but every week they have someone come in from outside the medical field to give a talk to the physicians. So there was a conference of psychologists and psychiatrists who were working on PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], who asked me to come in and talk about my work with the veterans, particularly the sexual assault victims.

Those kinds of reactions have been really good. I have a really great gallery representative now—a woman up in Providence. But for a long time it was very hard to get any kind of commercial gallery at all interested in this work, which was interesting to me, because I was able

to—not all of it, but I was able to place a lot of the work in university museum collections around the country. I think I have twenty-four museums that have bought portfolios from me. I've been written about, and most of it is good. I've given talks around the country. People don't necessarily go to them. But I can definitely feel that the air is out of this issue. Nobody wants to talk about this issue at this point.

But it's funny. The war—you assume that people are supporting the war. They support the soldiers, do or die. They do support soldiers. But they don't support soldiers torturing people who—. In order to get into any one of these cases, they, the witnesses, had to have documentation from the U.S. military saying, "We arrested you by mistake. We never had any evidence against you. We never charged you with a crime, and we release you free and clear of any wrongdoing." So nobody is going to support torturing those people. Nobody in the United States.

One of the reasons I got into it, and Susan Burke also, is that we both feel like we're patriotic Americans; we just don't recognize our country in this. This is not what our country is. I think a lot of people feel that way. And the art world is a teeny, teeny, teeny, teeny world of very specialized people who are interested in art. In the art world, like in the regular media, you don't have an automatic point-counterpoint system. I put out my show; somebody puts out another show at some other point. But it's not like any kind of news analysis on TV. If they have anybody with any kind of liberal point of view, they have somebody with an extreme right-wing point of view to counterbalance it. That's not how the art world works, so there's not that kind of negative reaction.

Q: Okay. Is there anything you would like to add?

Heyman: Yes. Well, one kind of story—I was invited to the University of Iowa to have an exhibition, which was wonderful. We decided—me and the curator—to create a whole weekend symposium. It was really, really great. There were several different talks. There was a radio show, and there was a lot of stuff, which was great. One of the talks was by a history professor who had been invited because he had just published a book about Americans torturing Filipinos in 1904. How that became an issue in the newspapers in the United States—in 1904-1905-1906, one of those years—and how it became discussed in Congress. Congress had passed laws pertaining to it—pro or against it, I don't really remember. But at the time the discussion was whether or not you could tie up a Filipino villager, and pour water down their nose. It was so important a statement to me, because it's been here for a long, long time, and it's still here, and it's going to still be here. My work, if I see it as anything, it's kind of like at least let's put it out there on the table.

There was one other thing I wanted to mention—which, of course, I can't remember. Torture. Of course it's been around a long time.

Q: Your work strikes me as so much about how hard it is to put it out on the table.

Heyman: Yes. I'm not trying to change policy. It would be great if policy changed, but that's not really the point. The point is to understand it. I want it to be really hard to read, really hard to

look at. It shouldn't be something that's—. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they had these great heroic paintings of the war. Well, we know enough about war in the twentieth century—war, and torture, and poverty, and all these other things. They are not heroic things, they're tragic things, and in some sense that's the goal. At least to put that honest bit of information out there, if not change it. Okay. Let's just record it.

Some people say, "Who is your real audience?" You know, as an artist, sometimes your audience is the people in front of you, but a lot of times—I've been painting for twenty-five years. A lot of times the audience is the people who have been dead for several hundred years, whose paintings I adore, and I'm in a dialogue with them. Then, on the other hand, there are these people who haven't been born yet, and I'm trying to speak to them. In some way, the same way that perhaps the sculptors of those incredible sculptures on the façade of Chartres Cathedral [Cathedral of Our Lady of Chartres - *Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres*] were trying to explain the world to themselves. I'm trying to explain the world as I see it now, for the future to come and take a look at what it was like when we were here. If they survive, that's another story.

Q: Okay. You can't remember the other—?

Heyman: I'm not sure I will. We were talking about Iowa. Oh, yes. Yes. I was on another really great panel. It was myself, this guy named Michael Kamber, who's a photographer and writer for the Associated Press, Reuters, and *The New York Times*, etc., etc., at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton. This was three, four, five years ago. I had been asked to show my work at the Woodrow Wilson School. They had this gallery in the main school building, and as a way of

balancing it they asked this photographer to show his photographs of the war. He had these beautiful photographs of American soldiers in the war, and they were kind of tragic. We both got up to talk, and Susan Burke was also on the panel, and there was a person from the Woodrow Wilson School on the panel.

Anyway, Kamber got up and he said, "Okay, now I'm going to show you the work that's in the gallery," and it was these picture of American soldiers in the wars, pictures that seemed very familiar. There were a lot of kind of the helping out, rebuilding Iraq pictures. Then he started showing these other pictures. It was like the horrors of war, including dead American soldiers. He said at this point maybe 3,900 was around the number of Americans who had died in Iraq since the invasion in 2003. And he said that of the 3,900 American soldiers who have died in battle in Iraq, exactly four have ever been photographed. Or, exactly four photographs of a dead American soldier has ever been published in the United States. He said, "I've been there. I was embedded for six years, and there were many other photographers, and we took pictures of the battles. But you can't get the pictures out without going through the government censors." Then he said something that's always stuck with me. He said, "The photographers in this war have been blinded, and the public is blinded by that. The censorship is so incredibly professional and strong in this war, that what you're getting in the United States is a very cleaned-up version of what the war has been about."

I thought about that for a long time, and I spent about a year doing a piece called, "When the Photographers are Blinded, the Eagle's Wings Are Clipped." It's this large print of a blind

photographer viewing a war, and what he wouldn't see. He's kind of blindfolded, holding a camera. So that's the other story. Alright.

[INTERRUPTION]

Q: I'm glad you remembered that, because that was the second part to my question, really—how hard it is to get it out there, what is out there, when the photographers are blinded?

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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