Justin A. Frank Jr. '64
Dartmouth College Oral History Program
Dartmouth Vietnam Project
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Transcribed by Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft

[PATRICK A.]
DELLINGER: This is Patrick Dellinger here with Dr. Justin [A.] Frank [Jr.]. It is Monday, May the 9th at one p.m. We're in the Rauner Special Collections Library at Dartmouth [College].

Thank you for coming, Dr. Frank.

FRANK: It's a pleasure to be here. I hope I'm coming across okay voice level wise.

DELLINGER: Mm-hm.

FRANK: And this is great.

DELLINGER: Great. So we'd like to just start from the beginning. Can you tell us about where and when you were born?

FRANK: Well, I was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1943, February 25th, and I was a Caesarian baby, first of two, and grew up in Los Angeles. Spent my whole upbringing in Los Angeles. The first time I ever saw snow was as a freshman at Dartmouth.

My father was a physician who practiced internal medicine in Los Angeles, in Beverly Hills, and my mother was—had been a writer in college and was a housewife, and then I guess when the kids were older, she went in to do some kind of social work, sort of after we all were in college. And I have a sister who's three—three years younger than me.

And grew up in Southern California. I don't know what to say about it except that it was a very nice time, and—in those days especially, and had a lot of good friends and went to public school. Was brought up—my parents were pretty liberal politically, and so as a kid I was already politically aware of certain things. In fact, I was only five, so I really don't remember this. In 1948, my parents had Henry [A.] Wallace to our house. He was running on a third party

against [Harry S.] Truman and [Thomas E.] Dewey. And I have a button still that says, “Win With Wallace” somewhere. And then my parents worked for [Adlai E.] Stevenson [III] in ’52 and ’56 against [Dwight D.] Eisenhower. They didn’t really work for him, but, you know, they supported him. And I was on the debate team in junior high school in ’56, and I was on the Democratic side, so I’ve had a long history of that.

And then my father—it never went to court or trial, but he was investigated by the [House] Un-American Activities Committee for something that was a pretty minor thing, but they were really scraping the bottom of the barrel, looking for people, and he was with a group of doctors who signed a petition to make sure that there was this brilliant kidney specialist, nephrologist from the East Coast—was going to come to L.A., and a group of kind of conservative anti-communists staff doctors at this hospital didn’t want him to come because he had once been a communist, and he was, like, the best nephrologist in the world, from Harvard [University], and, you know, it was a big coup in those days to get somebody that good to come to L.A., in the ’50s. And so they signed a petition. All the ten doctors who signed the petition were eventually called before the Un-American Activities Committee at some point. So I have a long history of political awareness.

DELLINGER: Mm-hm. So you said you got some of that from your parents. How did that play out? Was it just living with them or conversations you had with them?

FRANK: Both. Living with them—a lot of it was conversations with them. No, we talked a lot about politics. I read a lot. My mother was in some ways less political in a way than my father, but when—in the early ‘50s, there was a group of people at the Los Angeles School Board of Education [sic; [Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education], who essentially wanted to remove any teaching about the United Nations in the school, so you shouldn’t learn about other countries. The United Nations was, if you were involved with, was a sign of American weakness, and you were going to be a victim of Soviet imperialism and blah, blah, blah.

So they actually tried to stop one organization from even being taught in the schools, the public schools, called UNESCO. I guess you know what that is, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. They tried to stop it. And there was a book called *The "E" in UNESCO*. I must have been nine years old or ten years old. And so my mother went to a PTA meeting about it, from my grade school or something. And she got in this huge argument. Everybody was all on one side, and she was alone. And she was so afraid that she actually asked one of the people there to escort her back to her car, and one guy yelled, "Why are you wearing a red dress, lady? Are you a Red?"

And—so we talked about that. And then she was written up in the magazine that was then called *Collier's* magazine, which was sort of like *LOOK* magazine. It was a very big periodical. And my picture was in there when I was nine and my sister was six, in the breakfast room with my mother. And it was called "I Was Called Subversive," was the name of the article. The guy who wrote the article, named Bucklin [R.] Moon, was an editor at *Collier's*. He was fired for writing the article, because it was sympathetic to my mother, although my mother really wrote it; he published it, and he was fired.

So there was a lot of fear and a lot of things. So at home, we talked about this stuff all the time. We talked about it at the dinner table. We talked about it. I mean, I grew up with it. I mean, my sister was not allowed to play on the lawn of some neighbor's house. I went to a Jewish kind of Sunday school. It was not really religious, but it was cultural, and the people who ran it were very old-time lefties from the [Woodrow W.] "Woody" Guthrie days and from the union days in the '40s, '50s.

And so it was always there. And then when I was in—in fact, when I was a junior in high school, I was in this honors program in my public school. They took 34 kids in the 11th grade who had the highest IQ, no matter what their grade scores were, and they put them in the same room for a year: history, English and math. It was unbelievable. It scared the hell out of me.

And for my history class there, I got interested in Sacco and Vanzetti [Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti]. I don't

know if you know about them. But Sacco and Vanzetti were American—American!—they were Italian, called anarchists, in the ’20s, and they were both arrested in 1920 and convicted of murder in South Braintree, Massachusetts, where [boxer] Rocky Marciano is from. And they were executed in 1927. They were in prison for seven years. There were all kinds of—it was a cause célèbre in the States in the ‘20s, and Europe wrote articles, and was writing here to spare them, Sacco and Vanzetti. There were pictures of them all over, and they were a big thing. And they were finally executed.

And, in fact, Thayer Hall [now Class of 1953 Commons] was the judge. His name was Webster Thayer [Class of 1880]. He’s the one who executed them. And so we have a great tradition here at Dartmouth.

And—and one of the defense lawyers for Sacco and Vanzetti was a young defense lawyer, who later became a Supreme Court judge, was Felix Frankfurter. He worked for the defense. And I wrote a paper in high school about anarchism but mainly about how anybody who spoke out against the government policy especially about war, would be persecuted and prosecuted. And in those days, they were executed. So I wrote a paper. So I was very interested in them.

And, in fact, as a father, I had my children all memorize Vanzetti’s last statement before was executed, which I’m happy to recite to you if you want.

DELLINGER: Yeah, if you want.

FRANK: Sure. [Assuming the voice of Vanzetti]: “If it had not been for this thing, I might have lived out my life talking on street corners to scorning men. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in the lives of such a poor shoemaker and a poor fish peddler—all our lives mean nothing.” Something about justice, and then he says, “And we’re going to die, and that agony is our triumph.” [Transcriber’s note: These are all of those final words: http://www.workersliberty.org/story/2010/06/22/last-speech-bartolomeo-vanzetti] I can’t remember the last sentence, but

”that agony is our triumph” [unintelligible; 9:04]. Pretty powerful stuff.

And he died. And his partner, Sacco—they really hardly knew each other, but Sacco was married and had a son, and he wrote a letter from prison to his son about America and about how important it is to deal with the values and everything. [Transcriber’s note: This is the letter, as made into a song by Pete Seeger. https://web.infinito.it/utenti/v/vallarsa/woody/saccosletter.htm]

So I was very interested in that stuff. And then I came to Dartmouth.

What else did I do in my formative years in L.A.? I was in the—I was the head of the Young Democrats [of America] for L.A., and I had a girlfriend in high school, and I snuck her into the [1960] Democratic National Convention, which I—as I got a pass from a cousin, and it was in L.A., and it was when [John F.] Kennedy was nominated. So I went to the convention every day, the floor. And I met, you know, Governor [W. Averell] Harriman from New York, and I met Adlai Stevenson and all the people from New York, Lehman Senator [Herbert H,] Lehman was around then. Amazing people.

And there was a button that you could have on your lapel for Stevenson, which had a sole of a shoe with a hole in it because he never took time to get his shoes soled; he was busy running around, trying to run for yet a third time. He was running against Kennedy this time in the primaries and lost.

And my girlfriend—she was 15. She got introduced to politics, and she became a congresswoman and became very well- —she’s still well-know, Jane Frank [now Jane Lakes Harman]. She’s on TV. She was my first girlfriend.

So that was big. And then the other thing I did—you reminded—I mean, I hadn’t thought about any of these things—I wrote a paper against capital punishment when I was a junior or sophomore in high school, and I interviewed the attorney general of the state of California, and I just

talked my way into there, and—named Paul Ziffren, I think was his name. I'm not sure about that. Oh, no, Stanley Mosk. Paul Ziffren was a Democratic councilman. Stanley Mosk.

And we talked about capital punishment. There was a famous execution in California of a guy named Caryl, C-a-r-y-l [W.] Chessman, and he was a murderer, and he was executed, and there was a big cause célèbre. I mean, I was, like, 14 or 15, but I wrote a thing about that.

So that's my history. And we talked about all that stuff.

DELLINGER: Mm-hm. So what brought you to Dartmouth? What—what was that process like?

FRANK: Well, I had a—I thought that an Ivy League education was something I always wanted, and California, we always felt like we were second-class citizens then in the '50s, for sure. And all the smart people went to the Ivy League, and so a couple of my friends in high school applied here and different places in the East, and I made a tour with my father, and we interviewed, went to a bunch of schools over Christmas of my senior year, and then I applied.

And I had a friend who was a year ahead of me in high school, who was the only person I really knew—his brother was my best friend in high school. And so I knew him very well because I would go over to their house a lot and play Ping-Pong and stuff. And he went here, and he was a freshman here, and he said I should come here. And so I did. I applied here, and I got in.

And I came here, and that's why I'm here. I mean, I mean I left here also, but I came here because of the prestige and the Ivy League, but it was very far away from L.A. My friend stayed here the whole four years, but I actually left after a year and a half.

I had some good friends here, and I was remembering as I was waling around this morning with my wife, showing her around. All kinds of good things, I was remembering. There was a poet who lived here then, who was a—I don't know if he was a poet-in-residence or on the permanent faculty,

named Jack Hirschman. I forgot all about him until I was here just walking around in Sanborn [Library], going in there.

But he had those students—he had a thing in some auditorium somewhere for—commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto and the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1944, I think, of the Jewish people in that ghetto. Were the first people who really stood up as a group and tried to—they were all destroyed, but they tried to fight against the Nazis.

And there was a book, and Jack Hirschman read from this book. He read the last chapter of a whole novel, to this group of—there must have been a few hundred of us sitting there. It was amazing. And I went and got the novel because of that. It was very powerful, called *The Last of the Just*, by André Schwarz-Bart, and I highly recommend everybody reading it. In fact, I had forgotten about why I knew about it until I got here. If I was remember [sic], I would have brought a copy and actually looked at it before the panel tonight, because it's really beautiful. It traces the whole history of anti-Semitism from—it's the novel form of a family that he traces from I guess the time of Jesus to the—to the Holocaust, and the last Jew in that family history of 36 generations or something was killed in the—the war. It's a great book, actually, it's really good. I mean, it's good.

And so I liked it here. I had some good friends here and a couple of really good classes.

DELLINGER: So you mentioned that an Ivy League education was something that you really valued. Was that something that your parents also instilled in you?

FRANK: No. They didn't—they were—no. I mean, just my friends and my own envy and stuff. No, they both went to the University of Chicago. They were both very smart. And my mother was a—was the kind of fair-haired girl pet of—of an author named Thornton [N.] Wilder, who wrote *Our Town* and a bunch of other things, [*The*] *Bridge of San Luis Rey*. She was his—he was her—she was his favorite student at the University of Wisconsin, and then she transferred to the University of Chicago. My father went to Chicago, and they were very intellectual. And they came out to L.A. No, I don't think there was any particular—

DELLINGER: But education was important to [cross-talk; unintelligible; 15:39].

FRANK: Education was very important to me. I really wanted to learn, and I wanted to just do something really different and go to a different place. All my friend were going to Cal Berkeley [University of California, Berkeley], and in that days I didn't realize how great it was there, and so I just was happy to not do it like everybody else. All my friends from high school went to either Cal or UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles]. I had a couple of friends who went to Stanford [University]. And I just wasn't interested in—

And then I got into Reed College in Oregon, which was very intellectual, and I remember going there with a friend of mine—in fact, the brother of the guy who went to Dartmouth. His brother was my best friend, and he went to Reed; he didn't go east to Dartmouth. He went to Yale Law School, but he didn't go to Dartmouth.

And so I went with him to look at Reed, and I remember thinking I couldn't go there because it smelled bad. They had—the kids never washed, and it was just—I sit in this class, and I thought, *I can't do this.* Not that I'm a neat person, but, you know, it was too much for me. But there were smart people there.

And that was one of the three colleges at that time—I don't know if there's any now—that read the Great Books. You had—your first two years, you read all the Great Books. Everybody. No matter if you're an engineer or chemist or pre-med or—anything. You all read the Great Books. That was pretty cool. Those days are over.

DELLINGER: Did you have any idea of what you wanted to do as a profession when you came to Dartmouth?

FRANK: No, not really. A little bit as medicine, because of my father. When I left high school, a lot of friends thought I should go into politics because I was very vocal and outspoken and could debate people and give discussions, and one—a couple of friends of mine said that they know that in 30 years they'll be calling me Senator Frank, you know, from

California. But they could still call me Senator Frank now, but I'm not. I mean, [unintelligible; 17:32].

And then I got interested in pre-med, but I didn't take pre-med here. I mean, I don't remember what it was. I just took—I was only here for—is it still the trimester system now, or is it—

DELLINGER: Mm-hm.

FRANK: Yeah, so I took three trimesters freshman year and the first trimester in sophomore year, and I came back here, and I just—it was after an unbelievably beautiful Christmas in L.A., where I was surfing every day, and it was 80 degrees, and I came back and it was 30 degrees below zero, and I just—you could flick your earlobes into the snow when you got off the airplane. I said, *This is bullshit*, and so I left.

But I think I wanted to be a doctor—I know I was interested in psychiatry because my parents were both psychoanalyzed when I was a kid. They both had a lot of friends who were analysts, and that was a big deal in L.A. in the '50s.

And so I read a couple of novels that influenced me a lot in high school. *Lord Jim* influenced me a lot because, you know, he's in the jungle and he goes, "The horror, the horror." It was something of that—to me, the horror of the unconscious and the primitive passions that were just so disturbing, and I was interested in that.

And then I was interested in a novel—only because my parents read all of the books by John [H.] O'Hara, who was sort of a big deal in the '40s and '50s, not—I don't think anybody reads him now or even has hears of him, but he was a novelist. And his first novel, which was written in 1934, was called *Appointment in Samarra*, and it starts out with a guy at a party, as I recall, who takes a drink—at a Christmas party—and he throws it into his boss's face, just out of the blue. And I'm reading this book, and you can just see him gradually deteriorate over the story, and I was, like, 16 or something. And I just—it was so weird to me that there was no reason. You could not understand why he did something so destructive and self-destructive. It just made no sense to me.

So I was interested in psychiatry then, a little bit, psychology, and I was interested in sports a lot, so I was also interested in how people could get to a certain point and they'd lose in a championship game, or what would happen, you know? And I was a big UCLA football fan in those days. And they had the L.A. [Los Angeles] Rams in those days. I used to go to [all? 19:48] games.

And I was a sports photographer in high school for—and I used to go to UCLA and take all the pictures of these guys whose names you would never know: Rafer [L.] Johnson and different people like that.

So I didn't really have—I liked sports a lot. I liked following politics and music, and I loved to read, but I didn't have a real passion to be anything yet. I didn't know what I wanted to do.

I remember my favorite—one of my greatest memories here at Dartmouth was I had this great English teacher named [Gerald J.] Goldberg. I don't know what his first name was. He was a young guy. And I had a good and bad experience with him, but the good was the reading list was great, and we read *Wuthering Heights*, and I still remember going into Sanborn and sitting in one of those things upstairs in the library there and just—I read the whole book all night one night, and I just loved it. That was great.

And the bad experience with him was that I was really disill-—I was disillusioned in Dartmouth, too, because I was hoping to have contact with professors. One of the sells of it was not just Ivy League education and remembering, it was also that you could get to know professors. And everybody I know who went to Berkeley and Cal, they said the first two years was a waste because there are all these big lecture classes and you never really—at UCLA or at Berkeley, you never get to meet any professors. There's, like, three, four hundred people in a class, and the overflow is televised in the, you know, anterooms outside and everything.

So I was really excited because all the classes here were, like, 30 people at the most, at least for my freshman year. And Goldberg was great. And I remember going home over

Christmas, talking about him. I must have been in the first—it must have been English, my first trimester. And I had a friend who had taped a lecture from a psychoanalyst in L.A. about the conflict between religion and psychoanalysis. It was a really interesting lecture. I listened to the tape when I was—because I was 17 in my freshman year, you know. I was 18 in February.

So I'm sitting there and listening. I said, *Oh, I want to share this with Dr. Goldberg.* And so I let him give me the tape, and I brought it to give to Dr. Goldberg to listen to. And he probably listened to it, but my fantasy was he would invite me to his house, we could talk about it. It was going to be really a professor-student thing, and that never happened. He just gave it back to me a few months later and said, "Thanks," and that was it.

DELLINGER: Mmm.

FRANK: So I was disappointed. But I didn't have a passion for a profession other than I really liked learning stuff. I almost became a Greek Classics major here for a while. I mean, I wasn't here that long, but I had a great Classics professor. I liked my classes.

DELLINGER: So you mentioned debating in high school. How'd you get involved in that?

FRANK: Well, I was tapped by a couple of teachers because I was always so outspoken in class, and they said they're starting a debate society, and would I join, and so I did. So there were about four or five of us in it, and we would debate. But our biggest debate was—but I wasn't a major—I wasn't—didn't do the tournaments and the debating things like a lot of people do now, or even then. I just did it more in junior high. But I was really interested in it.

And my problem was that I was very emotional, so I didn't get a lot of points compared to the "fact people." That was my problem. But, no, I did it. I was interested in it. Probably it must have been my mother standing up and arguing, and she was on TV a few times when I was a kid, about teaching UNESCO in schools and stuff. A lot of influence. It was good.

DELLINGER: So do you remember what year you came to Dartmouth?

FRANK: Yeah, I remember everything!

DELLINGER: Of course.

FRANK: What year? I came in September of 1960, and that was the year [William S.] "Bill" Mazeroski hit a homerun and won the World Series for [the] Pittsburgh [Pirates] against the [New York] Yankees that fall. And then I remember that Kennedy was running against Nixon. Those were the first televised debates. And I watched all the debates on TV with a bunch of kids in the Hanover Inn, in the main room there somehow. There must have been a TV—a little TV—I just barely remember it, but I used to watch all the—I think there were three debates.

DELLINGER: And how do you characterize the student body when you got to Dartmouth?

FRANK: Well, it was funny because I was just telling my wife this, that my high school—we had—my high school graduated 802 kids in my graduating class, and the freshman class at Dartmouth was 802 kids, exactly the same number. I thought that was cool.

I mean, I just knew the people in my dorm, really. I didn't know that many other people. And I was disappointed because I was expecting to find a lot of intellectual, you know, discussions about politics and about literature, and it was not that much. It was, like, who's the best singer, Eydie Gormé or—I forget who the other woman was. Eydie Gormé, I remember because it was—I don't know. These were singers from '60s, early '50s—late '50s. Women.

And I met some smart kids from Brooklyn, and then my roommate was a nice guy, but we never talked about much. We were just assigned to each other. John. W. Russell [Class of 1964]. And I had some friends. And then I ran for freshman president of the student body here, and lost. But I remember there was this one guy who made a big banner for me in Thayer Hall. I think it was called Thayer Hall, where the eating—where you eat?

DELLINGER: It's called the Class of 1953 Commons now.

FRANK: Okay. But it used to be called Thayer Hall.

DELLINGER: Yeah, I believe so.

FRANK: I wonder if they changed the name because of Sacco and Vanzetti. [Both chuckle.] Maybe somebody found out about Judge Thayer.

Anyway, I liked the kids. I mean, we had a good time. I mean, I had a couple of really good friends. I had some really good experiences. I met a guy who was a sophomore, who was a jazz piano player, and we became really friendly, and he introduced me to some great music that I've—still always listen to. I mean, he introduced me to my favorite trumpet player that ever lived, Clifford Brown. I remember him.

And then I remember a guy from Newark [New Jersey] named [Howard P.] "Howie" Danzig [Class of 1964], and I went to spend Thanksgiving with him, I think, because you couldn't really just go home, and then it was too expensive to fly. You know, when they just started out, jets weren't really very used except by the L.A. Dodgers and the San Francisco Giants, who left the East.

Where are *you* from?

DELLINGER: I'm originally from Kansas City.

FRANK: Oh! Good for you.

DELLINGER: But my family moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when I went to high school.

FRANK: So you have split loyalties between Kan- —

DELLINGER: A little bit, yeah.

FRANK: Because that's hard in high school if you grew up in one sch-—you know, because a basic rule that I always lived by is you only have one mother and one team, and that's it.

DELLINGER: [Chuckles.]

FRANK: But anyway, I—I went to Howie Danzig's house, and then this guy, the piano player, lived in Washington, D.C., and I went to his house, and I met his father, who was a pediatrician, and he was a pediatrician for [President] Lyndon [B.] Johnson's daughters, Lady Bird [Taylor Johnson] and Luci Baines [Johnson] or whatever their—Luci and Lynda [Bird Johnson Robb], I think was their names. He was their pediatrician, and that was cool.

And I met, you know, some nice kids here. I had some friends here. And after I transf- —and a couple of them—you know, I had friends. I liked it. I liked them, the more I think about them.

And there was a poker game down the hall, but I didn't—I wasn't much of a card player, so I didn't—

And I had a girlfriend who lived in—whose family took her to —the same girl I introduced to the Democratic Convention, Janie—took her to Switzerland for a year, so we would write a lot, and I think we spoke three times on the phone for three minutes each. It was very emotional.

So that's about it.

DELLINGER: But you wouldn't say they were very interested in politics.

FRANK: They weren't that interested in politics, but I had fun with them. I did say I didn't—I wasn't, like—I was a little bored. I felt better than I realized I felt. In other words, I felt worse—I don't which is to say, because when I got home after my freshman year was over, over summer, my parents said that I couldn't come back here. And, of course, that's all they needed to say, and I really rebelled against that. I said, "No, what do you mean?"

And they saved all my letters. And my letters—I read them over, and it was like writing from prison, you know? I was, like, miserable, and I didn't realize that I felt like that, consciously, so I really must have been feeling bad, and I wrote all these things, and then—but consciously I felt okay.

So I decided to try it again. I got a job working as hash—working as a whatever you call them, in the kitchen at Thayer, and—and—because they said I wanted to pay for some of it, [unintelligible; 29:33] was coming back. Help them out. And I came back.

And that summer—oh, that spring—I still remember the spring was fabulous here because it was—and I'd never seen snow, first of all, in the winter, so I remember running outside the first time it snowed, I was so excited. And they could always tell—people joke about the people from California, the first time they come and see snow.

And then in the spring, all the windows were open suddenly, and this one guy in Mass[achusetts] Hall or somewhere had a stereo, and he was playing—I don't remember—Del Shannon. "Runaway" was the name of the song, 1961, I guess. And blasting. I loved it. It was very happy, very springtime. I could sing that song, too.

And, yeah, it was okay. But I really was missing my friends more and more in California. My closest friends were there. And I missed my family some, although—that was okay. And I had friends here. But the weather really did it. And no girls.

And when I got home over summer, I broke up with my girlfriend, who came back from Europe. That was sad.

DELLINGER: So you transferred to Berkeley.

FRANK: To Berkeley. I transferred in my—I came back here in Jan-—in December, January, I guess, after New Year's and then transferred to Berkeley. And my roommate here—I had a new roommate. Either it was a new roommate—that, I can't remember, if I stayed with the same roommate for my second year, but I met this other kid, who was from L.A., and the two of us decided to transfer together, and so we both transferred to Berkeley. [Michael D.] "Mike" Saphier [Class of 1964] was his name. And he was in my class, obviously. And so we both transferred to Berkeley. He was very Beverly Hills, and I was from West L.A.

And one of my best friends from Kansas City, who I met in Berkeley.

And I liked it. I was called “the Dartmouth fink” for the first few months because they were—everybody was envious that I was an Ivy Leaguer and what was I doing there, and I had suddenly had been their friend and now I was this weird Eastern person, although I was only a year that I was gone. They called me “the Dartmouth fink.” “Here comes the Dartmouth fink.” It was done affectionately, but it didn’t make me happy.

And—and I had great courses in Berkeley, lots of good friends, girlfriends, men friends. And then Kennedy was killed in the fall of ’63, and that was devastating. And I remember I’d never been—I was born a Jew. I had never been bar mitzvahed. They had this little cultural thing that I went to, that I mentioned, Sunday school. And we sang union songs as a kid. That was it. I went to temple for the first time in my life. I didn’t even know why I was doing it – I just had to go, just to find some peace somewhere Friday night. He was killed on a Friday. And I drove into the city. I had a car here. I found this temple, and I just went alone and sat there. It was wild.

And then people came here. There was good politics here. Of course, I left before the Free Speech Movement. The Free Speech Movement started in September of ’64, with Mario Savio, and I graduated in June of ’64.

And in those—and then the draft was initiated around then, and so the only way to stay out of the [U.S.] Army was to go to grad school or to get married. That was it. So I didn’t have anybody to marry, and it wasn’t that interested in it, although I was almost engaged. And then I had to decide about grad school, and if you went to medical school, you’d be much less likely to be drafted, so I went to medical school.

But it was really partly to stay out of the Army, although I wasn’t really [loud tone] rabidly anti- —I have to stop. You’re blinking.

[Recording interruption.]

DELLINGER: No, certainly not. So sorry about that. We're back with Dr. Frank. Dr. Frank, you were just talking about entering medical school.

FRANK: So—yeah. So I debated between history and medical school. I was going to get a Ph.D. in history. And I talked to a guy, my TA [teaching assistant]. I took a special course in history at Berkeley, and I got to be friends with this TA, who was actually from Louisville, and he said I should do medicine and then go back to history because it's easier to go back to something from medicine than from history *to* medicine. So I said okay. I didn't think about it much. So I went to medical school.

But it was really to say also to just keep from being drafted. And I was in medical school in Louisville, Kentucky, at the University of Louisville, where this guy was from, and I had a lot of family from there, because my family was from Chicago, but then one whole branch of that family married some people from Louisville, and they moved down to Louisville and the others moved out to L.A. So even though I was with other group, there was a lot of people from Louisville that I knew.

So I went to Louisville. And there, it was hard to be politically liberal because everybody was from the South, and everybody was pro-Johnson—pro-[Barry M.] Goldwater, and—this as in '64. And it was very conservative, and people didn't know anything.

And then they had this—conservatives don't know anything. But [unintelligible; 35:36]. But they had this plan that the Army had, called the Berry Plan, which was that if you signed up for the Berry Plan, they would not draft you during medical school at all. You would be completely safe, as opposed to having some weird worries hanging over your head.

And you could go into the Army—you'd owe them four years instead of two, but of those four years that you owed them, two of them you could do in your specialty training, so you could actually have it count as your residency, so it was really a good deal. You'd be guar- —you'd be safe from draft, and you'd also be able to go into your specialty, what

you wanted to do and still have a couple of years to serve, which you'd have to do anyway. And you wouldn't get credit or anything. And you could also be drafted out of medical school.

So everybody signed up for the Berry Plan except me. I'm the only person in my whole class, freshman class, who didn't sign up for the Berry Plan because I didn't want to make a deal with the Army. I didn't trust them. So I didn't do it. People said, "You know, you should do it. It's a good i- — ." I said, "I don't care. I don't want to do it."

So then I was very active politically in medical school. In my freshman was the—was the first time I voted, because I was 21, and that was very exciting to vote, and it was Johnson against Goldwater. I had this big Johnson button. I remember wearing it to a lecture, and the professor looked at me, and he says, "Nobody wears those in this class. They only wear Goldwater." He says, "You! You get an A." [Chuckles.] That was very nice.

And—and I had another friend who I said—you know, who was a big Goldwater—everybody was. And I said—I said to him—I said, "You know, if you vote for Goldwater, we'll be at war in a year." So a year later, he came up to me, and he said, "Well, you were right. I voted for Goldwater, and now we're at war." [Laughs.] Who knew?

So—and then in my freshman year also, there was this huge thing in Louisville. [The Rev. Dr.] Martin Luther King [Jr.'s] brother lived in Louisville, A. D. King. He was a reverend, not—I never liked him very much, but he was there, in a church in Louisville. And he—and so was Cassius Clay from Louisville then, "the Louisville lip," before he became Muhammad Ali.

And he—but Rev. King—they had this thing about slums and open housing, because there was a lot of segregation in Louisville, although there were laws that were changing, but it was still pretty bad. And so I was with a group of maybe 50 people who marched for open housing. There were three of us from the medical school, two classmates and me, and the rest of the people were local people or some people in

undergraduate or law school or just citizens who were concerned about it.

And there was the rest of everybody, the police—we sat down on some street, and they came by, and they got to one row in front of me. There were three of us with our little white coats on. And I remember deciding if I—they said, you know, "If you leave now, you won't get—nobody'll get arrested." So the other two guys left. And I was thinking, in the middle between them, *I don't know what I want to do, but I'll just sit here. I'm not gonna run away.*

But right before the row before me, they stopped, and they just left. But they had arrested everybody. There must have been ten rows of people they arrested. So our picture—my pictures and these other two guys—was in the paper the next morning, and a friend of mine called me up from the Student Union building. He said, "Don't come to school today." I said, "Why?" He says, 'Because people are throwing darts at your picture on a bulletin board." They put it on the board in the student assembly room or whatever it as called, the student lounge. And they took the picture. They blew it up, from the *Louisville Courier Journal* [now *The Courier-Journal]*, and they put it up there, and they were throwing shit at my picture, so [unintelligible; 39:56].

So I didn't go to school that day, but then I went. It was scary, in a way. I mean, I was more scared there than anywhere. And—because there were a lot of real conservative, all hillbilly Kentucky people, really weird people. And I got to know them and became friends with them as I got older. I had very good friends there. But in the beginning, it was really weird.

One guy used to want to—he saw a lynching when he was 11. He was at a lynching in Stone Mountain, Georgia. His next-door neighbor was a member of—was the wizard of the [Ku Klux] Klan, and he was a kid, and he went out and saw a lynching. That was, like,—I mean, it was 1964, we're talking about, 1965 he was telling me about it, so it must have been just ten years earlier, in the '50s. Weird.

So I was political. And then the Gulf of Tonkin [Resolution] came, to go to *your* topic, Vietnam. And Johnson really

betrayed everybody who voted for him because he presented himself as somebody who's not going to be like Goldwater, and it turns out he did exactly what Goldwater would have done. He was a total warmongering hawk.

And he had a special way of lying to the people, which was brilliant. I didn't realize that until the next year, where they'd sent out a rumor that they were going to increase the troops by 200,000 people. Everybody was freaked out, and there were headlines, and then he increased it by 50,000, and people said, "Oh, so great, it's only 50,000." And he kept doing that. He kept saying that he was increase it by this huge number and then would increase it by half that or less than half that, and everybody would be happy. So stupid.

So then I—and then came the Gulf of Tonkin. I think it was in the summer of '64. It may have been before he was reelected. I don't remember the sequence of it. I should have done studies for this. But anyway, you'll know that stuff.

But anyway, I remember—it must have been then because I think I was still in the dorm, and I called—they used to have telegrams in those days, and I called Western Union to send a wire. There were two senators in the U.S. Senate who were going to vote against the Resolution. One was a Democrat, and one was a Republican. The Democrat was from Alaska, named Morris Greening, G-r-e-u-n-i-n-g or something like that [sic; Ernest H. Gruening]. And then the Democrat was from Oregon, who was a real firebrand, who actually—Republican, rather, but he became a Democrat, and he converted named Morse, Wayne [L.] Morse. Oh, he was great.

And the head of the—[the] chairman of the Armed Services Committee [sic; U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services] was [J. William] Fulbright, from the South, who was actually, despite being a racist segregationist, had his good qualities also, and he was a thoughtful man who could have voted against the resolution, because the resolution essentially gave Johnson the power to do whatever the hell he wanted.

And so I—I was really worried about it because of taking away constitutional—it was the first time you could make a war without having to declare it. It never happened before

Vietnam. And so I was thinking, *You know, this is really—the whole reason we have checks and balances in this country is to protect one branch from usurping another branch and from just dominating.*

And Johnson, I thought, was a great guy except for this war thing, and—so I sent a wire to those three senators, Morse, Gruening and Fulbright, and I said, "All of Southeast Asia is not worth the loss of one American freedom." And the woman who took the—the telegram said, "You know, I'm—I'm going to send this, but I want to tell you that the reason Johnson doesn't mind having a war is because he doesn't have any sons. He has just daughters, so he doesn't really care about sending someone's boys out to get killed. I have sons," this woman said. "This is terrible."

So that happened. And then that was it. And then I joined a group of doctors and medical students called the Student Health Organization, SHO, and it was a group of students from all over the country. I was the only member of the group in Louisville [chuckles], so it was a very small group of one. But there were—and, as a matter of fact, I got two other people to join. But they had—you know, at—at Harvard and at NYU [New York University] and at Stanford, University of Chicago—they had a lot of students in it. I mean, I was really alone.

And—but they had—it was—it was an organization that was very much focused on domestic issues. They were focused not so much on the Vietnam War as they were focused on—

Are you okay? Am I going to bore you here?

DELLINGER: No, absolutely not.

FRANK: No, because if you want to take a nap, that's okay.

DELLINGER: No.

FRANK: No, you're okay? Because, you know, it gets boring after a while. But anyway, so I went there to that organization, and they were also very involved in what's called open housing and in desegregation—again, mostly white students because

in those days everybody was white, it seemed like to me, except for Martin Luther King and a few really great people.

And so they had a national meeting of the Student Health Organization in Detroit, and so I'd never been—I'd never been anywhere, really, and so I went to Detroit, and I met a friend of mine from Dartmouth, who was a medical student at Albert Einstein [College of Medicine], but I knew him here. In fact, he's the reason I'm here, because he was a big Dartmouth graduate, and somebody—they were looking for somebody who wasn't just in the military to come and do one of these things, and so [Edward G.] Miller found this guy, my friend [Steven S.] "Steve" Sharfstein [Class of 1964], and he recommended me, even though I didn't graduate here.

So I saw Steve was in that group, and Dr. [Benjamin M.] Spock came and talked to us, Ben Spock, of *Baby and Child Care*, and he made a—and [Leon] Trotsky's grandson was there. Was a medical student [chuckles] from somewhere in New York. It was wild. People.

And as an aside, I also like food and cooking and that kind of thing, and there was a drink I used to get in L.A. called Vernors ginger ale, which was a kind of a ginger ale that tasted like vanilla cream soda a little bit. It was a cross between vanilla and ginger ale. It was great. I'd never heard of it except they used to have it in a bottle in L.A., and I remembered, in deep recesses of my mind, that Vernors was made in Detroit, so I remember going to a bar after one of the meetings, and they had Vernors on tap, and I was so excited, and I just had fresh Vernors every night in Detroit for three days.

But Dr. Spock spoke, and there was a huge debate, which I think is very important for young people and especially for radicals or anybody who's at all opposing the government. He really made a very important point. The government had offered the Student Health Organization, the U.S. government, something like $100,000, which was a lot of money in those days, a grant to do our—to do work in the inner cities, do medical work.

And there was a big debate among the leadership of these students about whether or not to take the money. They said,

"I don't want to take money from the government when it means that I've got to approve—be approving Vietnam and approving all the bad things they're doing."

And Dr. Spock got up, and he said, "The reason you don't want to take money from the government is that you're afraid of being seduced, and you're afraid your principles aren't strong enough. There's nothing wrong with taking money from the government. You're doing good work. It's for a good cause. Take it. How often can you get the government to give you money when you're an organization that is opposed to them politically in terms of the war? But they're—domestically, Johnson's great. Why don't you just take the money? And the reason you're afraid is you're going to be seduced away from your anti-government stance about the war."

And he said, "Why should you worry about that?" It was a great interpretation. It was brilliant. And I think he was right, the people were afraid to take a—rather than, you know, "We're standing on principles." That's bullshit. So they took it, and it was good.

So then I stayed friends with Steve Sharfstein forever, but we didn't see each other again for a while. But I stayed in that organization and wrote some things in medical school, and then in my sophomore year, it was really heating up in Vietnam, and there was an antiwar march nationally. It was coordinated on some Saturday. And there were four of us in Louisville. Total. I mean, medical school. Four people: me and one other classmate and two other guys we didn't know, marching down the center of downtown. [Chuckles.] We had rocks thrown at us. It was unbelievable, unbelievable.

And my cousins, who I would go visit because they all this family there—they were very upset with me, although they loved me, so they put up with it, but—so that was my life. And I've got—I read—I was involved with a couple of peace activists, and I got really interested in the people called the Southern Christian Leadership Council [sic; Conference], which was a great group of people. And there was a group—yeah, SCLC, it was called.

And there was another group run by a husband and wife. Boy, were they great! I can't remember their names, but if it comes to me I'll tell you. They were great. They were from Alabama. And they had this theory that the government promoted racism in the South to keep poor blacks and poor whites from uniting and to prevent a class issue rather than—and so they used race. These two guys had this theory, this husband and wife, and I think they were right, that the purpose of all the racism in the South was actually not out of racist values only, it was actually to make sure that the poor blacks and poor whites would never learn that they had more in common than they had that separated them, because *I* think they had more in common. I mean, they were all suffering. The poor whites were these coal miners and these people [unintelligible; 50:56] jobs. It was horrible in the '60s. And the poor blacks were screwed.

So I thought it was pretty interesting. I [unintelligible; 51:08] his name. Dillinger? No. I'll remember it. Anyway, he was great. They were both great.

And then there was this other guy who used to write me letters. I don't know why he found—oh, because I was in the newspaper. So once I was in the newspaper, that picture, people read them all over the state, so some guy found my name and wrote me letters all the time, who was a liberal, radical, crazy person. And he had stamped slogans all over his stuff. And I used to read it. It was fun. He was from somewhere in western Kentucky. I don't know where he was from.

So I was interested in all that stuff. I was interested in the miners and the coal mining. There's a great book you would like called *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*[*: A Biography of a Depressed Area*], *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*. It's about strip mining in Louisville, in Kentucky, and it's wonderful. It's really a terrific thing.

You know, and then there's that movie that came out much later. Oh! About coal mining.

DELLINGER: About the strike?

FRANK: Yeah. What was that movie? It was a great movie.

DELLINGER: I forget its name. [Transcriber's note: *Matewan*.]

FRANK: It's by the great filmmaker. [Transcriber's note: John Sayles] He did *Eight Man* [sic*; Men*] *Out*, and he did—you know that movie. It was a great movie.

DELLINGER: I watched it for a class recently

FRANK: Yeah, it's a great movie. Anyway, that was my life. Those were the people. I knew those people. I mean, they weren't in medical school, but I knew a lot of—

And then in—in my senior year, I met these—I was—the group I rotated with, because they assigned you—all from Kentucky, all Kentucky hillbillies. Before that, I knew only my New York friends and my California friends and a few people I could talk to. I was only—I was surrounded by really right-wing, Henry Wal- —or George [C.] Wallace [Jr.] fans and Goldwater people. But I became really good friends with them all, and we had a great time my senior year.

And that was it. Played tennis. Won tennis championship for medical school. And hung out. And that was it. So then I did my internship at L.A. County [sic; Los Angeles County Hospital], because in those days you didn't go right into a residency, you had to do a year of internship and then do the residency. So I did an internship back home in L.A., and that was year of the Black Panthers. That was the year of '68, because I graduated medical school in June of '68. [Robert F.] "Bobby" Kennedy was killed June 6th, I think, of 1968, three days before I graduated. And Martin Luther King was killed in April of 1968. That was horrible. I mean, horrible.

And I had a friend in L.A., who was a doctor—I mean a friend from high school and college, who went to another medical school, and he worked for the Black Panthers, and he was their doctor. And he remembered going down there the night after King was assassinated, and they said, "You know, we love you, but you better get—go home tonight. We don't feel like seeing any white faces." It was really something.

So I—when I went out there, I started working with him, and we would doctor—I shouldn't say all these things in public, but we would doctor—if a black guy was shot and was brought into L.A. County, we would doctor the admissions note to make sure the police wouldn't find out, especially if they were involved in some kind of revolutionary activity or with the Panthers, so we would change records a little bit.

And then I worked for this thing called the Peace and Freedom Party, which was just formed, with Stokely Carmichael, [H.] Rap Brown, [L.] Eldridge Cleaver. I don't know if you know his name. He wrote *Soul on Ice*, which is a pretty good book, not a great book. But he ran for president of the Peace and Freedom Party in 1968, and I'm the only person I know who voted for him. I voted for him for president.

And I remember watching the Chicago Convention on TV. I couldn't go to Chicago because I was in L.A., and it was only my first month of residency, and the convention was in August, and I started in July, so I couldn't leave. I had a lot of friends who were there, who were tear gassed in Chicago. It was terrible.

And [Hubert H.] Humphrey [Jr.] got the nomination, was—the whole thing was terrible. They clubbed all those people. And there's a song with Country Joe and the Fish saying—you know that song?

DELLINGER: I don't think so.

FRANK: "The Vietnam Rag" or something [sic; "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag"]. I even wrote down some of the—oh, I've got the whole thing. I can give it to you! This is really good. See, I have—look at this picture. [Turns pages.] That's Bonnie and Clyde [Bonnie E. Parker and Clyde C. Barrow], based on the movie *Bonnie and Clyde*. That's LBJ, Lady Bird [Johnson] and Hubert Humphrey. And they dressed them up as kil- —as Bonnie and Clyde gangsters from the '30s. You can have that.

DELLINGER: Thank you.

FRANK: I'm sure it's a better image [unintelligible; 56:25]. But there as a song. A lot of things happened. There was a song by Country Joe and the Fish. I have the original one at home, and it's in a little—the verses:

> And it's one, two, three
> What are we fighting for?
> Don't ask me, I don't give a damn
> Next stop is Vietnam
> And it's five, six, seven
> Open up the pearly gates.
> Well there ain't no time to wonder why
> Whoopee! We're all gonna die

That was [Joseph A.] "Country Joe" McDonald. That was a song. [unintelligible; 57:01]. This is just a summary here, [unintelligible; 57:03]. Matter-of-fact summary, with no editorializing, if that's possible. It's the history of everything [in the class? 57:16].

And—it's got back and front. But that song ["Vietnam Song (Live From Woodstock)"—was a great song. I actually wrote it down because it was such a terrific—

> [Well] come on, all you big strong men,
> Uncle Sam needs your help again,
> [He] got himself in a big old [sic; terrible] jam,
> Way down yonder in Vietnam,
> Put down your books and pick up a gun,
> We're gonna have a whole lotta fun.

Unbelievable. So those were the things going on.

So then I got—[Sighs.] There was the murders of those two people, King and Kennedy. I worked in the L.A. County, and I worked with the Panthers, and I went to Peace and Freedom Party. Went to a lot of marches but in L.A.

And then I got drafted. And I—it's interesting. I had a friend at my internship, who I knew also from Dartmouth, who I had forgotten existed, and he looked me up, and we were interns together in L.A. We went to different medical schools. He wants to say here [unintelligible; 58:28]. And we became friends, and he got into the same residency that I did at

Harvard. I got into Harvard for psychiatry. And it was very exciting because then I could get an Ivy League again —and Harvard is Harvard, you know.

So I called up—I got drafted. I got my 1-A [Selective Service classification], because I never signed with the Berry Plan, so this was it. I'm paying the price. So I got drafted, and I called up the head of the department at Harvard, the head of psychiatry, Jack [Ewall? Ewell? 58:57], and I said to him, "Dr. [Ewall? Ewell? 58:58], I'm accepted in your program, but I may have to go to jail during my first year at some point because I don't know what's gonna happen. I've been drafted, and I'm not gonna go."

And he—and I said, "So what'll happen to me?" [Chuckles.] So he said, "Well, if you're in your 80th day"—or something like that—"in your first year, and you go to jail, when you get out of jail you'll be in your 81st day." He was very supportive. I liked that.

So then I had a debate. I think you may have read this in my summary. But I had a debate about what to do, which was I going to go to Canada. I didn't want to really leave the country. And then I was going to go to jail. And then I saw this play about homosexual life in jails. I happened to go randomly, and it scared the shit out of me, and so I didn't want to do that.

So then I got a lawyer. And the lawyer said, "You know, you can't become a conscientious objector except on a religious basis that was changed in 1971, but in 1969 you could not. It had to be religion. I said, "Well, I'm not really religious." I was born a Jew, and I went to this cultural school when I was a kid, but I have no Jewish training. I was never bar mitzvahed. I had none of that.

And so she sent me to a rabbi she knew who was against the war and was a good guy, and so I spent a couple of hours with him, named Leonard [I.] Beerman, and we talked, and it turns out he had been to North Vietnam with Howard Zinn about a y- —a few months before that and met Hồ Chí Minh and did all this stuff, but he was pretty "out there" and was a great guy.

And we talked, and he said that he thought if I did some reading and listening to my belief system, that it'll certainly be in keeping with a certain wing, shall we say, of the Jewish tradition and that he would consider me a good Jew and he would testify for me in front of the draft board.

So you had to write out an essay, a bunch of essays and testify in front of the draft board, and there were four questions. And Carol, my lawyer, Carol [Krauthamer? 1:01:06] Smith—she said that I really need to decide if I want to become a CO or if I want to make a political statement, because you can't do both. You have to go by the rules if you want to be a conscientious objector. You have to really do it right and be clear. You can't just say they're full of shit and everything that I wanted to say.

So I did, and I wrote a real good essay, and I think I wrote it into that report. I don't know if you read it. Or did you read it? But essentially it worked out. Four percent of the people in my board got it, and I was one of the four percent. And I was very lucky. And that was it.

And so then, when I went to Boston, I did my alternate duty in the state hospital in Boston because you have to do two years as a CO - something. You don't work for the government, but you have to get a certificate that you've done two years of working for a state institution, in medicine of some kind. So I did that, and that was it. So that's all about the war. And I spoke out about it, and the war has affected me a lot, but I didn't really how much until I came back here.

DELLINGER: Mm-hm. So—

FRANK: I think you'd be doing all the talking and not me.

DELLINGER: [Chuckles.] Well, we like it when you do all the talking.

It seems like your sort of antiwar, maybe, protesting activity really picked up when you went to Louisville? Is that accurate, or would you say you were involved in a lot of that when you were at Berkeley?

FRANK: It was accurate. It was in Louisville, not in Berkeley. Nothing in Berkeley, really. Nothing, in fact. I was just stunned when he was killed. It was in the fall of '63. I loved my classes. I was [unintelligible; 1:02:43] interested. I was a history major, but most intellectual history of Europe. I had these great classes, and I took some religion classes. I took the minimal pre-med classes because I hated it all. Ugh, horrible! Anyway, I took physics four times. I took it here once, and I dropped out. I hated it. I took it in Berkeley once and dropped out, I took it at UCLA summer school and dropped out, and then finally I took it again at Berkeley, and I *had* to finish it [unintelligible; 1:03:10] horrible. But other than that—

So, no, I was not political in Berkeley. I mean, I think my most political thing, action in Berkeley was that I carried a green book bag instead of carrying my books under my arm. That was my radical statement. I never smoked drugs. I never did any of that stuff. I was really a straight-laced, normal, weird kid. I mean, I lived in a fraternity house for a year, and I left that, and had a good time. I made a lot of good friends. Went to some concerts. Studied! Had friends, I just was a person—I didn't have—because [the] Free Speech Movement didn't start until the fall of '64, and I was gone. I was in medical school.

And all the fighting at Sproul Hall and all the things that went on in California was quite amazing, but they all—I was gone. I don't know what would have happened—

The other thing is that the thing I liked about Louisville was that you either put up or shut up. I mean, there was no—it wasn't like you could hide among a hundred or a thousand like-minded people, screaming and yelling against the war. You know, you were just *there*. You were out there. And actually, I found that exhilarating, even though it scared me.

The dean called me into the medical school after that thing happened, and he was a very big Goldwater guy, very famous for right-wing views, but he was a man of principle, and he said to me, "Listen, young man, I don't care what you do. I don't care who you support. I don't care if you go out and demonstrate against segregation or against the war. But next time, don't wear a white coat. I don't want our school involved.

What he didn't tell me, and I found out four years later, was that they lost I think a quarter of their endowment for that year because of what I did. He never told me that, which was very good of him because it would have really upset—you know, made me feel terrible. Still makes me feel terrible. But I really was impressed at his forbearance and how he didn't say anything. So that was good. He was a man of principle. But I heard later that the school lost, I think, about a quarter of what they normally would get from alums because it was certainly outside agitators were coming there. That's what we were called. And they wouldn't give money to us.

But so, yeah, Louisville was where it started. And then Boston and my residency very much. I mean, [unintelligible; 1:05:38] over the war with them. I mean, my antiwar stuff. But I did teach-ins in Boston. I met [Ernesto] "Che" Guevera and spoke with him. I was on panels in Faneuil Hall on the square there, and I organized a couple of big teach-ins at Mass[achusetts] Mental Health Center at Harvard.

And then came the murders in—on May 4th. It was May 4th? Is that when it was? You know about the murders of—Kent State [University].

DELLINGER: Oh, yeah, Kent State.

FRANK: [unintelligible; 1:06:09].

DELLINGER: That sounds right.

FRANK: Nineteen seventy, so it was in my first year of residency. It was the spring of my first year of residency. And I said, *That's it. If they're gonna shoot demonstrators, I'm done. I'll write letters, and I'll do things, but the fact that the government is willing to shoot young American kids who are opposing the war, just shoot them down on a fucking campus in the middle of—in the middle of a college? No way. That's carrying it too-* —it was terrible. You know, it was the hawks and the doves, "love it or leave it," "change it or lose it." Those were the slogans. It was awful.

DELLINGER: So when you got to Louisville, do you think—

FRANK: This was Boston, “love it or leave it.” Anyway, go ahead.

DELLINGER: Of course. In Louisville, was it because of the war or was it because your views were so sort of outside the norm for that space that you really got so much more involved?

FRANK: That’s a really good question because I think it’s both. I think it’s because my views were so different from everybody, and I just couldn’t stand it. And especially—it wasn’t just the views, it was that I felt that people were closed-minded and jumped to conclusions. And I was still a kid. I was young. I was, like,—in Louisville I was, I don’t know, twenty-one, twenty-two? Had graduated medical school. I was twenty-five, I guess.

I don’t know. I think that when I was really put—I was very upset about the war. I had one friend, who I called Billy Joe, who was named William O’Connell from New York, Billy Joe. And he was very pro-war. It took me a whole year of working with him. Every week we would talk and argue, and at the end of the year, he said, “I think I understand what you’re talking about.” And I felt very good about that, but it would take me a whole year to convince one guy that the Vietnam War was full of shit, it was horrible. It really was horrible. Made no sense. It was crazy, crazy thinking. Domino theory and all that stuff. It was crazy, paranoid thinking. But I knew enough about paranoia by then. You can know paranoia when you see it.

No, I think it was my objection to the war and then being isolated, both. And also wanting to have a normal life. I mean, I also wanted to have a nor- —I mean, I liked medical school, to some extent. I liked seeing patients, to a great extent. And I had good friends there, too. I was very social. So it wasn’t like I was some kind of a Che Guevera, card-carrying zealot who only had a one-note—I mean, it may sound like that to you now, but, I mean, it was—

No, I mean, when I went to medical—when I went to apply to medical school, I applied to USC [University of Southern California]. (I forgot all about this.) And I walked in to—I was a senior—I must have been twenty, applying to medical—applied to USC in L.A. And the interviewer says to me—

Oh, no, this was at UCLA, the interviewer. I lived two blocks from UCLA. He says to me, “So, Mr. Frank, who was Henry Wallace?” It was so weird, you know, because I knew those things. So I said, “Well, Henry Wallace was secretary of agriculture under [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt from 1933 to 1940. He was vice president under Roosevelt from ’40 to ’44, and then he ran on a third party against Dewey and Truman in 1948. He was a very liberal guy, agriculture guy from the Midwest, Ohio or somewhere, Iowa.” He said, “Okay.”

And then he said, “Who wrote *Götterdämmerung* [*Twilight of the Gods*]?” And I said, “That was [Richard] Wagner. It’s the fourth opera of *The Ring Cycle* [*The Ring of the Nibelung*]. Very powerful. *Twilight of the Gods* is what it means.” He looks at me, and he says, “I’m not accepting you to medical school.” [Chuckles.] He says, “There’s not one freshman in the whole medical school class who could answer both of those questions. And you’re the kind of person who, if you don’t like it, you’ll just say, ‘Fuck it’ and leave. And everybody hates the first year, and I don’t want to take a chance on you. You’re a smart guy. You’ll get in somewhere, but I don’t want you to go to UCLA.”

DELLINGER: Wow.

FRANK: How do you like *that*? So then we spent the rest of the—him—more time in the interview, so I didn’t know what to do, and so he asked me if I knew Ray [D.] Bradbury or who he was—you know, the science fiction guy. I said, “Well, actually, my parents knew him, and I was a big fan of Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*.” He said, well, he lives next door to Ray Bradbury. So we were actually almost kindred spirits, this guy, the pediatric—he was a pediatric cardiovascular surgeon. He was unwielding.

DELLINGER: So during—

FRANK: [Chuckles.] Sorry.

DELLINGER: During this whole time you’re at—you’re at Louisville, you know, you’re participating in these activities, where are your parents?

FRANK: They're in L.A.

DELLINGER: And do they know you're doing [cross-talk; unintelligible; 1:11:33]?

FRANK: Oh, yeah, yeah. My parents went on marches. My mother was an organizing member of a group called Women Strike for Peace, and she was friendly with a couple of very important great women, Dorothy [Ray] Healey, who you would want to write down her name because she's a very important person to know, Dorothy Healey. Really important. And—she just died pretty recently. She was very big. And they went to demonstrations. They were very much—

And when my mother came to visit Louisville, she brought a dove, a peace dove, which was one of the symbols of the antiwar movement, and it had a little ho- —it was plastic, and it had a little hole on the bottom. You put it on your antenna of your car. And so we put—I put it on my car. And she was driving around Louisville when she was doing stuff and I was in school. And she remembered—she told me that she stopped at a stoplight. Some guy yelled at her [yells]: "Why you got a duck on your car, lady?" [Chuckles.] That was unbelievable. The whole thing was unbelievable.

So, yeah, they were very—my father was worried about me, because he was—he was a person who was political, but he was always more afraid to make waves. He lost a lot of his practice when they had that investigation in the '50s, even though he never had to testify. I mean, people just stopped—if they heard you were at all tainted by communism, they would just stop coming to see you.

And my mother was—no, they were both very supportive. And my sister was in Berkeley, so she was there during the Free Speech Movement. She was there during all the stuff with Mario Savio and all the things that were going on.

I had heard Malcolm X speak in Berkeley. He came to Berkley in my senior year, and he was amazing. It was Louisville. It was where I was alone and I had a few friends, I felt really fired up all the time. It was good.

DELLINGER: Were you ever worried that this was going to affect your career?

FRANK: No. Never. I don't know why. I think other people would be worried, either about me or if they did it. I don't know why. I just never was worried. I think it's because of my mother. I really think if you have a mother who loves you a lot and she's inside of you in a really good way, you can have a lot of confidence in yourself, even if you do something very different. I'm convinced of it. I never thought about it like that, the way I'm saying it, but I'm sure of it. I'm sure of it.

DELLINGER: So when you applied to get a conscientious objector status, you said this lawyer told you you could either make a statement or you could try to get CO status. Was that ever a hard decision for you?

FRANK: Yes, at first, but I realized—at first it was, but then I realized, *Why should I have to make a statement to them when I'm going to make a statement everywhere else after I get it, and I've already been making statements, and I've already been outspoken. So why should I not do it their way?* It's much more important—it was much more important to get to my goal of not having to go, and not going to jail was a big goal. I wasn't—I was much more worried about jail than anything else. I didn't want to do it. And I didn't want to leave the country. So I *had* to get it.

So my goal was it was that it was more important to get what I needed than to be right or to insist that they were going to say, "Oh, yes, he's a brave man." I don't give a shit. So it didn't matter. It was really important to get it, get it. So then I did everything I could to get it. I interviewed people. I had a—I had a gui— I had a psychoanalyst friend of my family, named Henry Luster, who was a great guy. He asked me great questions in prepping me for the board questions and made me think about things I *never* would have thought about. And—you know.

And then they asked me very tough questions, some of which I had gone over with him, like, "What would happen if you came home and somebody was raping your wife at gunpoint? What would you do? Would you kill the person if you could?" I said to the—they asked me that. I said, "Yes, I

would kill him. I'd do anything I could to stop him." They said, "Well, then, why won't you go in the Army? Why don't you be—why are a conscientious objector if you don't believe in murder?" [sic]

I said, "Well, it's not that, it's that I don't want to work for an organization whose entire purpose is to murder people. I'm not doin' it." So I made a differentiation. So I didn't say, like, "I'm gonna sit around and go sit and have a hunger strike while this guy is raping my wife. I'm not gonna sit on the floor and, you know, pray to Yahweh or something, do a Buddhist chant. That's not who I am."

So then they asked me if, as a Jew—they said, "Well, what about the fact that Israel is the more warlike nation left, including the United States? How can you be a Jew"—and this one guy asked the question. The other guy on the board started arguing with the first guy. That was amazing. And he said, "Listen, I want to take issue with that. This man says that he's objecting to going to war as a Jew. That doesn't mean that because Israel is belligerent—it doesn't mean that that's because they're good Jews and following the Bible. They could be bad Jews, and they could *not* be following the Bible." So I never had to answer that question because they—they fought with each other.

And then the last one that was a good one was, "As a Jew, what would it have been like if this was World War II and you were drafted? Would you have gone then? Because they were putting people in gas chambers. That's a real just war. It's not like this war you have objections to." That was a hard one.

So to be as honest as I could, I said, "I honestly don't know. I don't think I would have gone because I think these beliefs and feelings I have transcend that. However, I am a Jew, and I really think the Nazis were horrible, and I don't know what I would have done. I might have joined. I might have signed up."

There was one rabbi, who's a wonderful man, as much as I know from a distance, and he died—he was probably already dead by the time I had my interview—named Stephen [S.] Wise from Cincinnati [Ohio], and he was

antiwar—I mean, he was a pacifist rabbi, and he counseled his congregation in Cincinnati to not go to World War II, not to fight. And he was very roundly criticized, if not excoriated, by Jews and Gentles alike, by everybody. But he was a great guy. I've never read much of his stuff. I read a little bit about him. I don't know if he wrote that much, even, Stephen Wise, but he was always a distant, admirable person.

So the draft—it was really not a conflict. I really—a lot of people have this problem in business and government, that they have a conflict between getting—being right and getting the job done, having your goal met. Do you want to stand up to a teacher or get an A? Sometimes you can get an A *and* you can tell the teacher to go to hell. But you should get your A first. [Chuckles.]

DELLINGER: Right.

FRANK: That's all I know.

DELLINGER: So—

FRANK: I mean, it's a long history after that—you know, wild stuff. Boy, I did a lot of stuff after that, political stuff.

DELLINGER: Did getting CO status affect your participation in all of this?

FRANK: Yea, it affected my—it did a couple of things. One is that it affected my view of Judaism, and I never really—I always liked Passover, which was a fun holiday where you get together and you have a great meal and you talk about stuff. But I was never into the religious part of it. But I started having Passovers [sic; Passover seders] when I was a resident already, right after I got my CO, and I was in Boston, and then ever since, I've been doing it every year.

And usually we talk about what's the important [sic] of Passover? What's the important? The importance is that Moses stood up to the Pharaoh, and the importance is that you have to be on your guard about having your freedoms taken away, and that the purpose of doing the ritual every year is to remind you that you're not that far away from being a slave.

I mean, when they passed the TSA [Transportation Security Administration] stuff here and when they passed all these—homeland security shit in this country—it's terrible what they're doing. They will rather sacrifice freedom, you know, for anything. Security. People don't have a brain anymore in this country.

So, yeah, so [unintelligible; 1:20:29] really affected me deeply in terms of Passover. And we would go around the room, and we'd talk about stuff. I would—every year, I would write out maybe my twenty favorite little aphorism quotes, from the previous year, maybe two years, and pass them around so each person could read the little something, from whether it was Bob Dylan or Joan [C.] Baez or something more recent, or some old poem, or Martin Luther King, or anything. Different stuff. About war, quotes about war. Tim O'Brien.

So I did—so that really affected me, and then I had the bar mitzvah at the age of thirty-nine, in Israel, which really shocked me, that I even did it because I'm not religious, but I really—I felt suddenly that I have been very prejudiced, myself, against the Israeli Jews, and I realized that they're fighting for their life, and they may not—I don't agree with the way they're doing it, but I suddenly realized that I'm part of that and I should honor that.

So I did it at the Wailing Wall because—I did it sort of cheating because the only time you can do it without having to learn Hebrew is if you—it's such a good thing to go to do it at the Wailing Wall. I didn't go to Israel with that purpose, but then when I got there, a couple of people told me that I could do that, and I decided I would do it, and so I did it. And it meant a lot to me. So I—that still means a lot to me.

And my kids have all been—had bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs, which is much more than I ever had. So it *has* had an effect on me. And they all know about war. They all know about my views. My kids give me a lot of crap sometimes. My son, who, when he was five, had a G.I. Joe figure. I mean, I didn't do stuff where kids can't play with guns or, you know, cowboys and stuff. But he had a G.I. Joe figure who lost his arm, and he was very upset. And he came crying to me and said, "Dad, G.I. Joe's lost his arm." And I said, "Well,

he has another arm." He says, "Yeah, but that's the arm that holds the gun." And I said, "Why does he need a gun?" (being a good pacifist', and he said, "To kill the bad guys."

And I said, "Well, Joey, what if he, like, talked to the bad guys or tried to reason with the bad guys?" He looked at me [chuckles], and then he said, "Dad, you can't change a bee. If it's gonna sting you, it's gonna sting you." I said, "Okay, I'm not worried about you. You'll be fine, growing up." Because it's important.

But it affected me in lots of ways, and in good ways. One of the things, as a psychoanalyst, that has been very interesting for me in terms of thinking about Vietnam and thinking about opposing the government in this way of—some of the war things—is that I realized that I can hide parts of myself in them and that I can see them as the bad guys, or the guys who go to the Army as bad guys, or the guys who signed up as stupid bad guys or something, and I don't feel that way. And that's always a danger of being in opposition of anybody, that you end up having to demonize the person you're opposing.

And to some extent, you have to do that in order to get yourself to stand up, a little bit. But after that, you can't if you're going to be really honest with yourself. It's really painful. You know, I was scared to come here and meet all these guys who served, tonight. And I'm not now, but, I mean, I really was. I thought, like,—and I remember that when [President William J.] "Bill" Clinton, who I'm not crazy about, but when he was inaugurated in '93, I went to the inauguration. I lived in Washington. And I suddenly was overwhelmed with emotion that I didn't know where it came from. I really felt like—like crying and completely—I was shocked at myself.

And what it turned out—I finally figured it out—was that we elected a draft dodger president, and that he was considered American enough, even though he was a draft dodger, an avowed draft dodger, that they thought he was American enough to be president, even though, you know, a lot of people didn't like him. But at least it was that. And I thought, you know,—I didn't realize that I felt not quite American

because I didn't serve, so I felt outside of what other people did.

I knew I was courageous and I did things, but there was a part of me that didn't feel—I didn't realize I didn't feel as American as I thought—as I figured that I must have felt all along, slightly outside of it. And that was an important moment. I felt much more connected and that it's really okay, like some kind of superego permission to be against the war and still be patriotic. That was good.

I don't know what else to say. I'm not giving you much of an opening to kill me here, but—

DELLINGER: So when you went back to Boston, you mentioned that you continued to be involved in some of these activities. Can you talk about some of those?

FRANK: Well, basically I was very much—I did teach-ins to teach people about the Black Panthers. I showed movies about the Black Panthers. I had—from my res- —my classmates. I organized marches, demonstrations.

DELLINGER: You were a part of some sort of- [cross-talk; unintelligible; 1:26:21].

FRANK: I gave talks at Faneuil Hall with Che Guevara. I was on the stage with him and with Howard Zinn. You know, I knew those guys. And then I got involved in an anti-nuclear group that was just forming, called the Physicians Against—Physicians for Social Responsibility, called PSR. And after I left Boston, I spent most of my adult—young adult life as the president of Physicians for Social Responsibility in D.C., for ten years. The day after my first son was born—he was born on January 21st, 1981. On January 20th, 1981, [President Ronald W.] Reagan was inaugurated.

On January 19th, 1981, two nights before my son was born, the night before Reagan was inaugurated, we had an anti-inauguration ball at my house. And we drank against Reagan and gave toasts an talked about what a bastard he was going to be and how terrible it was. And one guy said he was going to announce his cabinet, and then he said—the only one I remember is that he was going to have his

secretary of agriculture, Julio and Ernesto Gallo of Gallo Wine [sic; E & J Gallo Winery]. And it was pretty wild.

So then, [as I said? 1:27:37], on the day of the inauguration, I walked home from my office, and I had a martini. I had never had a martini in my life. I thought I should go back to the ’50s, ‘cause I figured since Reagan was going to be president, go back to the ’50s, so I had a martini on the way home.

And then next day, my son was born, and the day after my son was born, I joined the Physicians for Social Responsibility, which was a group of anti-nuclear doctors who were very concerned about educating people about the danger of nuclear weapons and the proliferation thereof, nuclear testing.

Kennedy, actually, unilaterally stopped atmospheric testing the year before he was assassinated. On June 15th—he gave a talk on June 15th at Georgetown, in 1962. But maybe it was the year he *was* assassinated, in 1963.

So I was very—and Martin Luther King gave a talk at Riverside Church. I assume you read that in class, the talk he gave about Vietnam? And how—he said that if—I think it was in that talk—that if—he knew the Russians were going to send over [twenty- two hundred? twenty-two hundred? 1:28:39] missiles or something, and if he were president, he would not bomb back, he said, because if you’re going to kill half of the world, why should you kill the whole world? It was a good point.

So anyway, I was against nuclear weapons, and I did a lot of that. I was very active, and I was on the radio and TV locally in D.C., and I wrote about it, and I wrote things, and I went to conferences. And we had a huge teach-in conference about defense, from the psychology of defense of an individual, defense in a family and how families protect themselves, and the defense of a group and the defense of a state and of a nation, and all the different psychological components, and the relationship between individual—and then nuclear weapons as a defense, and talked about the psychology of it.

Did a lot of that stuff. That was all in my—after Boston and my res- —in my adulthood, life. Until I started coaching Little League, and then—but I always was doing that stuff. And then I started—we did a lot of things in the Physicians for Social Responsibility. In 1985, the organization won the Nobel Peace Prize, so technically I have 1/80,000th of a Nobel Peace prize because [chuckles] there were 80,000 members world wide. [Laughs.]

DELLINGER: That's more than I have.

FRANK: Yes. Barely. [Laughs.] I don't know if I have a chunk of it somewhere or anything, 1/80,000th!

And then—I don't know what else to say. Then I started writing. I wrote two books. Did you know that?

DELLINGER: I did not.

FRANK: Yeah, these books—I wrote—I decided—when I was older, I thought I—I wrote psychoanalytic studies of the presidents. That was a *New York Times* best seller.

DELLINGER: [President George W.] *Bush on the Coach: Inside the Mind of the President*?

FRANK: Yeah. That was Harper Collins [Publishers], [Ronald S.] "Ron" Suskind. He wrote, "A blazing professional analysis of what everybody needs to know about what drives this man and who roils the planet." "A few hours on the couch with the good doctor" Tina Brown. Kitty Kelley, [unintelligible name; 1:31:02]. I don't know if you know him. But this was good. And it's me.

DELLINGER: That's a nice picture.

FRANK: Yeah. Then there's this one I wrote, because I wrote that one, and then I was—I did a lot of stuff on that, a lot of TV stuff, and then I got this big—I wrote this one.

DELLINGER: *Obama on the Couch*[:*Inside the Mind of the President*].

FRANK: Yeah. And now I'm doing [President Donald J.] *Trump on the Couch*.

DELLINGER: [Chuckles.] So besides the Physicians for Social Responsibility, were you involved in any other organizations?

FRANK: Political organizations? Not really. I mean, I've always been a Democrat, but I'm not political that way. I mean, I vote, and I've been concerned—I started writing—when this Bush book came out in 2014, Arianna Huffington was just starting *The Huffington Post*, so she gave me a book party in L.A., so there were all these people at the book party that Arianna gave. And she invited me to be one of her first bloggers for *The Huffington Post*, so I was, and I blogged for them regularly for a while. I got bored with that.

And then I wrote this book, and then I have my own little blog, and I write political stuff maybe twice a month or something, not regularly.

DELLINGER: Mm-hm.

FRANK: But I do different things. I write about stuff that interests me. But I've never been in an organization. I'm sure there are, that I don't remember. I mean, I did a lot of stuff with this. I mean, I was on TV with people, and I met panelists from all over and did interviews in L.A., and then the book was translated. I did a thing in London, and it's been translated into German and Chinese, Arabic. I had a friend whose family is from Iran. He read my book in Arabic when he was serving in the Middle East [chuckles] a couple of years ago.

And then Joan Baez read it, and she wrote me a letter, and, you know, that kind of stuff happened. So I'm in that world a little bit, but very peripheral, because I'm a little bit too liberal and a little bit too old for some of the people on TV, so I don't do much of it, although now that [Bernard] "Bernie" Sanders is a big deal,—my wife used to joke that if I ran for president, at least I could call myself—or for office—I could be calling myself "a fresh old face."

But there are no other groups. I don't—I mean, I really—you know, I marched against the first—Iraq I [the 2003 invasion of Iraq] and Iraq II. I remember thinking to myself and sharing it with a couple of friends—the *Washington Post*, on

the day Bush was inaugurated, George *this* Bush [referring to book cover], the *Washington Post* had a picture on the front page in 2001, January, of Bush, Colin [L.] Powell, [Richard B. "Dick"] Cheney, [Donald H.] Rumsfeld], and I think somebody else, maybe Condoleezza Rice, just standing there. And I was talking to a friend of mine, and I said, "If I were Saddam Hussein right now, I would be shitting in my pants. These people are gonna kill him." That was a couple of years—that was before 9/11.

DELLINGER: Look what happened.

FRANK: Yup. They did it.

DELLINGER: So looking back, you have this sort of long history of—of, you know, antiwar protesting, social progressiveness. What were those sort of inflection points, those most critical points for you in developing that mindset?

FRANK: That's a really good question. I think that clearly being drafted was critical. It scared me. [Sighs.] I think being afraid in high school of being called names and being called communist and those kinds of things. Even though overtly it didn't bother me, it really did.

But the biggest inflections then were—that—I actually think being able to leave Dartmouth, even though that was an apolitical decision, a hundred percent apolitical, if such a thing is possible, that it took a lot of guts, in a way, to leave because it's a great place. And—and—and several of my classmates came up to me, and they said, you know, "How can you do this?" And "You're leaving a prestigious, great place." And I said, "'That's true." And I really didn't even know. I just didn't want to stay. But it was, like,—that was hard to do, so I realized I could do hard things.

And then in medical school, a big inflection point was refusing to stand up when they were coming to arrest people when I was freshman in medical school. They were coming to arrest us for open housing. And I sat there, and I didn't—I was very proud of myself for that.

I never really yelled at people. I had one classmate in medical school when we were doing this marching, and all

these kids from Louisville were yelling and screaming at us for being communists. And this one friend of mine was actually gutsier than me. He just went ov- —broke out of our little group, and he said, “Why don’t you go join the Army if you’re so angry about this. What are you yelling at *us* for? Go and sign up right now!”

Meeting that rabbi was very important, Leonard Beerman, who has helped me. And it’s interesting how life works out sometimes. My son got married last year, and he didn’t know who—and he married somebody who isn’t Jewish but who’s a Quaker, but he didn’t know who he would want to officiate, and he doesn’t—didn’t know any rabbis because we didn’t, you know, know that many. It was one guy we knew in D.C., who couldn’t come, he wanted to ask.

I said, “Why don’t you see if Leonard Beerman’s alive?” By God, he called him, and he said, “I’m Justin Frank’s son.” He remembered me. He’s ninety-four. And he married my kid.

DELLINGER: Wow.

FRANK: And that was very moving. And I went to see him. We met for the first time in—I guess I last saw him in 1969, so it was forty-five years, forty- —yeah, about forty-five years. And we talked. He talked about war. He told me the most beautiful story, that there was a Jewish general. It was during the Lebanon invasion, one of them. And he was—and [Menachem] Begin was prime minister, I think, and he was on a hill, getting ready to lead the troops down the hill to invade Lebanon, Beirut.

And he looked in the telescope, and he said—turned around to his adjutant or whoever it is, and he said, “I’m not doing this.” And he called Begin. He said, “I’m not leading the men down there.” Begin freaked out and said, “What are you talking about?” He said, “I’m not doing [this].” “Why?” He said, “Because I see children playing on a playground, and I’m not going.”

That was very moving, and that was recent [unintelligible; 1:38;51]. And I’ve always felt that way. I think meeting a few great people over the years, Ben Spock, Helen [M.] Caldicott changed me. Helen Caldicott was the founder of

Physicians—one of the founders of the Physicians for Social Responsibility. And she said her goal, if she could have anything she wanted, would be to release 200 toddlers on the floor of the U.S. Senate and have them just crawl around, saying, “You want to bomb these people?”

So those were important inflection points.

My mother being called subversive. I was too young, but I became—she became heroic to me.

I met some great people at Mass Mental, in my residency, but that was already after I became a CO.

Inflection points. One of the biggest ones was my fear of going to jail. I mean, that was a huge thing. When I went to see this play—it was called *Fortune and Men’s Eyes*, was the name of the play. I still remember it. It was just random. I just walked into a play in L.A. because I was off that day from my work, and it was starring [Salvatore] “Sal” Mineo [Jr.], who was an actor then. I don’t know if you’ve heard of him. He was in *Rebel Without a Cause*, I think, with James [B.] Dean.

But he was in this play, and he was a kid who was sent to jail for smoking marijuana, and his choice was to either submit willingly or be raped. Either way, he was raped. Made me squirm.

DELLINGER: Was that after you had been drafted?

FRANK: After I had been drafted and when I had decided I was not going to leave the country but I was going to probably go to jail. I was willing to go to jail. It was before I tried to apply for a CO. Then I saw that play, and I said, *Okay, I’m not going to risk that.* I don’t know what would have happened if I didn’t make a CO. I honestly don’t know what I would have done. I didn’t have an alternative plan. I can’t imagine just disappearing or going to live in Canada, because the problem with Canada for me is that if you do that, it’s going to be really hard to ever come back. I mean, I would have nothing against Canada, but I would hate to close off any options, especially the one of being home with people I care about, and the country. I like it here.

I have no [unintelligible; 1:41:26] inflection points. I would have to think about it. I think a big one was later, was after I got the CO. Being in Israel and deciding to get bar mitzvahed was a major thing for me because I realized what a prejudiced, anti-Israel person I was, even though I'm Jewish. And I realized that all people walking around there in Tel Aviv looked just like people I knew back home. And I thought, *Why am I hating them so much?* You know, that was an inflection point. It was different.

DELLINGER: And why did you hate them so much before?

FRANK: Because of their war and their one-sided view of the world. I really have—I al- —look, it is normal and necessary to divide the world into good and bad. It's part of what happens between the ages of five and eleven. And if you don't do that, you can't study. You can't learn anything because you're so busy about being anxious about all the craziness going on in your head, you can't do anything. It's important. It's necessary. It's organizing.

But if you live that way as an adult only, you're going to be a very limited person. You're not going to be able to think, and you're not going to be able to grow, and you're not going to be able to put yourself in other people's shoes. That's where Obama is such a great president, in some ways. He's different from any president we've had, in that way. I'm not crazy about him in other ways, but—

And so I think I just hated their unilateral behavior about the Palestinians, and then I realized that my hatred was unilateral and that my hatred was based on prejudice that *I* had. And I was giving them shit. Now—see, you could be a psychiatrist. Here's the next inflection point. Here's one of the biggest inflection points. This happened before CO, for sure. It happened in 1966. The Watts riots. I think it was '66, or '65. You'd have to check that because I—my—I'm not the best historian about that [Transcriber's note: August 11-16, 1954].

But I remember being horrified at the Watts riots, and I realized—speaking of hate and prejudice—that I hated Sheriff [David A.] Clarke [Jr.] and George Henry—George

Wallace and all these other right-wing—Lester [G.] Maddox from Georgia and all these horrible people from the South—as being racists. And then I realized that the reason the Watts riots were in L.A. was because there was a lot of racism in L.A. Now, I didn't feel part of the racism, because I—but I didn't know any black people because I lived in West L.A., so I hardly had black—I don't think I had any black friends at that point.

And so I realized that it's just easier to externalize hate and to be angry at the Southern bigots. When there's bigots right in my hometown, why should I start yelling at Sheriff Clarke when I could yell at Sheriff [William H.] Parker or whatever he was, Chief of Police Parker, who was a bastard, in L.A.?

That was a very big inflection point because it's about projection. It's about the pot calling the kettle black. And I don't feel angry at the people who served in Vietnam. I really don't. I feel that they—I do feel that if they knew everything, they might not have served. But I think some of them would have served anyway.

But that was a big inflection point, because the inflection points have to do with recognizing my own bullshit part or self-deception part, and part of it is really being oppositional when it's really a part of myself that I don't want to think about.

DELLINGER: Do you feel like people have expressed anger towards you because you were a conscientious objector?

FRANK: Yes. But not as much as—I think—it's the same thing. It's that when I was at this cultural center for Jewish learning when I was thirteen, I learned—they had this—I read this quote from a local guy here, Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was writing about two people having a conversation, and one person said, "I hate that man," and the other person said, "Why?" And the other guys says, "Because I don't know him."

And I really feel that that's a huge part of prejudice and hatred, and I think that people who hate me for being a conscientious objector don't know me, and the people who I might have hated for going in the Army—I didn't know those

people. And one of the things that I've learned over the years is that when you get to know people, you can't make a diagnosis. You can't distance yourself from them, their humanity, enough to do that, even though that's what I do for a living. And you can't.

I mean, to you I'm just Justin. I may be Dr. Frank, but I may be a nut, but I'm not a person who you're going to just sit and dismiss. Probably. Maybe you will.

So I wrote this book. I was completely ostracized, much more than for being a CO, because it's against the rules of the psychiatric community to write a book about a sitting president. In fact, in 1964, somebody did a poll of psychiatrists, and they said, "Do you think Barry Goldwater is dangerous, is stable enough to have his finger on the nuclear button?" And hundreds of psychiatrists wrote, "No, he's not stable." And so he sued the American Psychiatric Association, Goldwater. And they made a rule that you could never analyze a sitting president.

DELLINGER: So you wrote this while he was sitting?

FRANK: Yeah! I wrote this—and I knew the president. In fact, that's so funny. The president—no, I wrote this because I didn't—and I resigned from that organization, and I said, "I'm not gonna not write about this. He can destroy this country." I think he actually did a lot of damage that we're never going to recover from completely. I mean, he initiated ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant]. He initiated all that shit. Bush.

However, I wrote this thing, and of the whole psychiatric community, a lot of them were up in arms against me, and there were all these things on the Internet and stuff. And personal things. So I wrote back, and I said, "Have you read the book yet?" "No, we won't read it." I said, "Well, then, stop complaining. Just read the book, and then you can tell me what's wrong." You can't argue with a book. It's not like it's facts, but it's hard to argue against a—

But—so the people hate you before—when they don't know you. That's a long way of answering your question. And so I don't think people—I mean, it's interesting, because nobody knew I was—I mean, the guys did a double take at lunch, the

ROTC guys. You know, they said, “What unit did you serve in?” Because we were sitting there, having lunch, and they had never had a conscientious objector to—you know, I don’t know if it was [unintelligible; 1:40:10]. But they recovered quickly, and they asked me about it, and we talked about it. It was really interesting. [Now? No, ? 1:49:16] I’m interested in them, and I’m interested in patriotism, and I’m interested in all that.

But I really think that the problem with the Vietnam War and the problem with McCarthyism [after U.S. Senator Joseph R. McCarthy] before that was that people in this country have great values. We have great things. It’s a great place. And great things, about respect, freedom, the rule of law. But the one thing that happens when you have power is that it’s very hard to tolerate opposition to the exercise of power, but also opposition that makes you have to think and think, *Well, maybe this is a great country, but what about all these poor people who are doing that?* Or *What about all the unions that Reagan started breaking in 1981, when he fired the air traffic controllers’ union and broke the union?* I mean, he just was a destructive bastard, Reagan.

But when you remember about those things, when do you start thinking about what it’s about that we do value? And when you start breaking opposition, you actually weaken your greatness, and as a country you weaken your ability to think. And what I’ve discovered in the last five years, even though I’m an old guy now, is that there’s a deep strain in all of us, which hopefully your course and what you’re doing is going to at least modify—but it’s in all of us—is being attracted to non-thought. It’s just easier not to have to think sometimes. It’s just easier. And it’s attractive.

Why do you think we have a drink every, you know, Friday night or whenever, and shoot up or whatever the hell we’re doing? You know, all the things that people do. It’s attractive to not have to think because it’s tiring. And if you have to think about things that are fundamental beliefs, that *you* think are facts, as opposed to beliefs, you get in trouble.

It’s not a fact that this is the best country in the world. It’s a belief. So when Obama said British people think they’re exceptional and French people think they’re exceptional, all

the Republicans in the Senate just went crazy! But they didn't understand that he's talking about beliefs in a much richer way. Just because we think we're exceptional doesn't mean other people don't think *they're* exceptional. And they may be, to them. They're not, to us. But let's be clear here. It's not so simple.

And that's why Vietnam bothered me, and that's why Vietnam really wrecked a lot of things that were good in this country, and it set people against each other in a way that just shouldn't have happened, and so then we couldn't talk. And even when they talk, they talk about—I'm sure in your class you talk about [Ngô Đình] Diệm—you know, we put up this dictator, and Diệm was terrible. And then we did the wrong approach. And then [fictional character John] Rambo came along and said, "The government *is* the problem," or whatever he said.

And all these different things happened during that war. But they didn't talk about whether the Viet Cong actually preferred their way of life. I don't know if they did or not, but there was never a chance to even talk about it, because if you did try to talk about it, you said, "Well, they're just stupid peasants. They don't know. We know what's best. We know democracy's best, and freedom is best." That's bullshit. And that does bother me. That's the biggest lesson from Vietnam.

And I realized that people are attracted to not having to think. You know, it's easier. "My country, right or wrong." It's much easier than to think, *Oh, my God, what if we did something wrong?* It doesn't mean we're bad people, even. But we could have done bad things.

So I think it's very hard. It's hard to be responsible that way. I didn't mean to get off on this soapbox.

DELLINGER: No problem.

Do you have any final thoughts?

FRANK: I think you're very patient. [Chuckles.] I'm impressed that you let me talk, and I'm impressed that you could stay awake, so

those are two great things. And my final thought is that this guy who does this course—

DELLINGER: Professor [Edward G.] Miller.

FRANK: —is great. Having this course—I looked at the syllabus. Fantastic. I don't know. Do you have—do you use—I didn't see if you had this book in it. Have you ever read this one?

DELLINGER: I'm actually not in the course.

FRANK: Oh!

DELLINGER: I'm at the Dartmouth Vietnam Project.

FRANK: Okay. Do you know this book?

DELLINGER: I don't, no.

FRANK: Terrific. You should read it. It's actually—he does the entire war using *The Iliad* and relating *The Iliad* to comments that the soldiers make from Vietnam. It is really good.

DELLINGER: This is called *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*.

FRANK: Yeah.

And then the other thing—but the course is great. So I wrote a note down here. Where did I write it? Here's what I wrote to [unintelligible; 1:54:35] the guy.

DELLINGER: Just a little background for the recording:

FRANK: For the recording.

DELLINGER: Dr. Frank is here from the Vietnam War class taught by Professor Miller. He's here to—to speak on a panel with some veterans and I believe one other conscientious objector?

FRANK: He wasn't a conscientious objector, but he's a guy who was in the war—who was in the Army and then he left. I'm not sure how much he became a conscientious objector or not.

DELLINGER: Okay. And Dr. Frank will be part of a panel speaking to the students.

FRANK: So here's what my main psychoanalyst said: "Truth is to the mind"—for my final words—"like food is to the body. If you don't search for truth, the psyche starves." And what I like about this course is that there's a real search. But the hardest thing to do is to search about becoming a slave to ideological beliefs that you don't think are ideological, that are just the fact that America is the best place. And becoming a slave to those believes, as opposed to being patriotic about them, is a very hard thing, because can you be critical and still be patriotic?

And for me, the biggest lesson and last word is can I—and it was a struggle always for me—could I be patriotic and love this country and still think that some of the things we do are terrible and I don't want to participate in them? And I think that's what the Vietnam War was the lesson for me, and I'd like other people to have a chance to know about these things and to think about them and pay attention to them.

I'm not interested in the fact that it's done by, you know, crooked things or attacking Johnson and [Secretary of Defense Robert S.] McNamara or this or that. I mean, I understand that. Those are politicians. I'm interested in the fact that we end up going along with them, partly because we put our trust in the people we elected, but partly because we don't want to think about the possibility that America is not a fact but a fantasy. More than a fantasy, but still less than a fact. [Chuckles.] That's it.

DELLINGER: Well, thank you very much for coming, Dr. Frank.

FRANK: Thank you.

DELLINGER: I'll stop the recording now.

[End of interview.]