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Sol Feingold oral history interview by Michael Hirsh, September 5, 2008

Sol Feingold (Interviewee)

Michael Hirsh (Interviewer)

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Concentration Camp Liberators Oral History Project
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[Transcriber's note: This interview begins in mid-sentence. The Interviewee's personal information has been removed, at the request of the Interviewer. This omission is indicated with ellipses.]

Sol Feingold: —the monument's erected. Steve Ross knows. And I worked on it. It was quite an undertaking.

Michael Hirsh: Mr. Feingold, did you get—this is Sol Feingold. It's S-o-l F-e-i-n-g-o-l-d.

SF: F-e-i-n-g-o-l-d.

MH: When were you born?

SF: Nineteen thirteen.

MH: Nineteen thirteen, so you're ninety-five years old.

SF: I will be on October 4.

MH: And you were with the 42nd Infantry Division?

SF: Yes, I was.

MH: What city in America were you from?

SF: Chelsea, Massachusetts.

MH: Ah, okay. So, when did you get to Dachau?

SF: On the twenty-ninth [of April, 1945].

MH: On the twenty-ninth?

SF: Yeah.

MH: You were a rifleman?

SF: Yes, I was.

MH: With which unit?

SF: 42nd. I was with the 242nd Infantry Regiment.

MH: Can you tell—what did you see when you first got there?

SF: Well, we came into—we came in through the administration area of the concentration camp. You know, Dachau consists of the two camps: one was a training camp for the SS, and the other part was the concentration camp portion, where they kept the inmates. There were 25,000 inmates there.

MH: Yeah. And when you got to the camp, was there any shooting?

SF: There was. There was another infantry division; there was the 179th—a company from the 179th, if I remember correctly.

MH: Of the 45th Infantry Division?

SF: No. The 45th Infantry Division, they came in through the back side of the camp, whereas we came in through the front side of the camp. Yeah.

MH: And how much shooting was there when you got there?

SF: Well, the Americans did the killing.

MH: Right.

SF: Yeah, they shot the SS prisoners there.

MH: What was your rank at the time?

SF: I was a private at that time.

MH: And how did you happen to be going into the camp?

SF: Yeah, I was—at that time, I was attached to the division headquarters, on that particular day. I was a scout.

MH: So, you were with General [Henning] Linden?

SF: Yeah. Well, he was part of the team, you know, that got there. He was the one who actually liberated—well, he liberated the camp.

MH: Right, I know he took the surrender.

SF: Yeah, General Linden took the surrender.

MH: Were you watching that?

SF: No, I didn't see that, actually, there. But I know very much about it, because General Linden and I were very good friends after the war. He died about two years ago.

MH: When you got into the camp, were you able to talk to any of the inmates there, any of the prisoners?

SF: No, we were moving so rapidly because by the time we got there, the American army started moving a lot of troops into the camp, the hospital units to take care of the inmates. There was a lot of dysentery and sickness in the camp, so the inmates needed treatment and they brought in hospital units to take care of them. And probably the next day a lot of the inmates were given their freedom; you know, they could go out if they were healthy. Other than that, they stayed at Dachau, and they were treated by the hospital units. Yeah.

MH: How was it for you as a Jew to go into that place?

SF: Well, you see, you have to understand there were more goyim there than there were Jews.

MH: Right.

SF: Because they were moving—the goyim, I think there were 15,000 priests there, Catholic priests. The Jews only numbered a small amount of the total population, because the Jews were being moved out so darned rapidly; they were moving them out to Austria to be killed. A lot of them were killed on the road.

MH: Did you ever see any of the death marches on the roads?

SF: No, we didn't see the death marches because we came and we moved so rapidly. We received word that there was a death camp, there was a concentration camp in our area. So we were given—at least that's what I know—we were given orders there was a concentration camp on our route, and the word was there may be a concentration camp.

You know, that camp was very sacred; even the population, the civilian population, claimed that they knew very little about the camp, although we believed that they knew much more than they said, than they told us that they knew. Because that camp had been there for years, for many years; it was one of the first camps. There were only two camps in Germany itself: one was at Dachau—a main camp, I’m talking about—and the other was at Buchenwald. Yeah.

MH: How did that experience affect your life?

SF: Well, I still haven’t recovered. I hate this damned place. Well, even this conversation may be monitored. I don’t like this place at all. So, how did it affect? It’s affected my way of living. I hate this place. I hate it. We’re not—I don’t believe we’re being treated properly, but that’s the way it is. I’ll die here. They won’t let me out because I’m blind, you know—I’m not totally blind, but I’m blind.

MH: But emotionally, how did seeing what you saw at Dachau affect your life?

SF: Well, it always left an impression on me. I thought, “Why the hell did I ever come to this camp? Why did I have to find this place?” You know what had an effect on me? The indifference of former inmates about this camp. They knew what went on, the Jewish people. You know, sometimes I feel sorry that I ever came upon this camp. I’m giving you my personal opinion.

MH: That’s what I want. Why would you feel sorry that you ever came across Dachau?

SF: Huh?

MH: Why would you be sorry?

SF: Well, the part—the remembrance to not leave something on the inmates to remember their liberators. What do you think? I’m a nobody; I’m only expressing my own personal opinion, you know? But I’m not happy about it. I’m going to die here, but there’s nothing I can do about it. The population here, the American population, they’re thieves here. They’re thieves! They steal from the inmates. They’ve stolen money off of me.

MH: You mean at the VA hospital?

SF: Yeah. Yeah.

MH: Were you a religious person?

SF: No. I was religious in that I always remembered that I was a Jew, you know? We have a rabbi here; we're supposed to have kosher food—(inaudible) the manager for some kosher food. We have about ten inmates, ten veterans here. But no, no way. The only thing that leaves an impression, that we liberated a camp. Nothing.

MH: But that was an important thing to do.

SF: Oh, yeah, no question about it. It was an important thing to do. Now, I get to look back on it. I left a monument there. I was a member of a group that had a monument erected. There were six glass monuments. Have you ever been to Boston?

MH: Yes, but I didn't see the monument. The monument in Boston is where?

SF: At City Hall Plaza.

MH: Okay. And it's a monument to?

SF: To the inmates, the Dachau—

MH: The Dachau inmates.

SF: Yeah, six glass monuments. Each one has one million names on it, all Jews, all Jews.

MH: How did you get involved in that?

SF: Well, I just happened to be there at the particular time, and I was attached to the Division.

MH: No, I mean working on the monument.

SF: Oh. At that time, the word was about that they were getting a committee together to put up a monument. They got in touch with me. They knew I was there because I got involved in the book—

MH: In which book?

SF: The liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. Yeah, I have a book. Well, I say have; I don't. The general, General Linden, and Steve Ross [wrote it]. But some of these inmates are more interested—oh, I'm telling you, everybody claims to have liberated.

MH: Right. And the 45th Division is still fighting with the 42nd Division.

SF: Pardon me?

MH: I said, the 45th Division is still fighting with the 42nd Division over who liberated it.

SF: What did the 45th do?

MH: I'm saying the 45th is still fighting with the 42nd over who—

SF: Oh, they have no grounds. I know. When I say it, I'm not speaking about fiction, because I did a thorough, thorough investigation with the general, with my other fellow Art Lee, who is a history buff. We learned the whole damn thing. I can give you a day-by-day rundown of exactly what happened. That colonel, lieutenant colonel from the other division, was supposed to have been court-martialed.

MH: You mean [Felix L.] Sparks?

SF: Yeah. He should have been. They moved him out of the camp the very same day Dachau was liberated, because he was the colonel who gave the orders to kill the German prisoners. I know he did. Most of the pictures around—there's a man, the guy who took the photographs. Now, these are motion picture films of the shooting of the German prisoners. The reason he was never—in my opinion, was never court-martialed was the

fact that prior to that, the German SS soldier took the—what was it?—a group from the armored division, and summarily shot and killed a whole company of artillerymen.

MH: That was at Malmédy.

SF: At Normandy?

MH: No, Malmédy.

SF: Yes, yeah. He killed them, machine-gunned them. And the reason they couldn't court-martial this colonel [Sparks] was the fact that if they court-martialed him, they had to let what's his name, the SS colonel [Otto] Skorzeny—they had to let him go.¹ Because Sparks did exactly what Skorzeny did: he killed—he shot the American soldiers. So, the Americans couldn't court-martial Sparks, they couldn't do it.

MH: You know, after Malmédy, there were a lot of Americans who didn't take any prisoners anymore.

SF: Oh, yeah, Americans—

MH: A lot of German SS and regular soldiers just got shot, because of what happened at Malmédy.

SF: Oh, yes, that happened, yeah. But to see what they did here, and what happened—the photographer who took the picture of the—now, I'm talking motion picture—

MH: Right.

SF: —was a Jew, Rosenblatt. What's his name? I think it was Rosenblatt or Rosenthal. He took the motion pictures. And, you know, there were still photographs that were taken by members of the division or an army unit. But the motion pictures are taken by an Army higher-up from headquarters, okay? So, they had the motion pictures of the shooting of the German prisoners. Whereas in the other instances, you know, these are all

¹ Lieutenant Colonel Otto Skorzeny was not involved with the Malmédy massacre. He commanded Operation Greif, in which he and the soldiers of Panzer Brigade 150 dressed in American uniforms and infiltrated American lines during the Battle of the Bulge. Skorzeny and nine of the soldiers were tried in 1947 for violating the laws of war during this operation; all were acquitted.

part of the everyday actions: Americans kill the Germans, the Germans kill the Americans.

MH: But let me ask you: truth be told, do you really feel bad that those SS guys got shot?

SF: Oh, no, no.

MH: That's what I thought.

SF: No, no, no, because they were scum.

MH: *Mamzerim*.

SF: They were scum.

MH: Yep.

SF: You think we have any better American soldiers here? We got scum in here. We got scum, you know, the veterans here, the scum of the earth.

MH: Why do you say that?

SF: Because I live with them. They steal, they steal from each other. They stole, they stole my cigarettes, they stole my money. They're bums, they're bums!

MH: What did you do when you came back to the United States after the war?

SF: I worked for the government.

MH: What'd you do?

SF: I worked for the Navy. I worked for the Navy. I worked on different projects. I worked for NASA. I worked for the—I worked a lot of jobs.

MH: In the Boston area?

SF: Oh, yeah, yeah.

MH: Were you married?

SF: I was married for a short while, a little while. I married the wife—the widow of an ex-Army colonel. That's like going back to war.

MH: Did you have kids?

SF: No.

MH: No kids.

SF: No, but my wife had two beautiful kids. But she was lookin' for a millionaire, I'm sorry.

MH: How long have you been in the VA nursing home there?

SF: Well, here—I've been here over eight years. I worked for the government—oh, God, how many years? I finished my career working for the government. I worked on a lot of projects for the government: I worked for the Navy, I worked for NASA. I traveled a lot for NASA. Oh, yeah. MIT.

MH: Really?

SF: Oh, yeah.

MH: When did you retire?

SF: Oh, in 19—uh, let's see, in the eighties [1980s] I think I retired. Yeah, I retired then.

MH: Aside from your vision, how's your health?

SF: Oh, look, I'm ninety-five. If I survived the Army, I can survive this inquisition here. Yeah. In other words, this call may even be monitored.

MH: That's okay. They're not going to do anything to you.

SF: No, I know.

MH: Yeah, what are you worried about?

SF: I'm not worried. I'm not worried.

MH: Were you wounded in the war?

SF: No.

MH: No?

SF: No, I wasn't wounded.

MH: Were you decorated for anything?

SF: I got the Bronze Star, and I got my book—I say my book; our book.

MH: That's the book with Linden, you mean?

SF: Yeah. That's a damn good—it's a military book; it's not heroes and all, it's strictly military. I still have a few copies left. But General Linden and I, and my other buddy—he's dead now, he was a crackerjack. We worked on it, gathering information for the book. We printed a thousand books.

MH: What was the name of the book?

SF: *The Liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp on*—what date was it, the twenty-ninth?²

MH: Of April.

SF: Of April, 1945.

MH: Was that written with Linden's son?

SF: Linden's? Yeah. Pardon me?

MH: Was that written with General Linden's son? Or is that a different—?

SF: Yeah, that was Colonel [John Henning] Linden.

MH: Colonel Linden, yeah. Have you ever run into anybody who said the Holocaust didn't happen?

SF: Oh, sure, you run into these people. You run into these goyim who say it was a phony, it didn't happen.

MH: What do you say?

SF: I say, "Read the book. Read the book."

² *Surrender of the Dachau Concentration Camp, 29 Apr. 45: The True Account*, by John H. Linden, published in 1997 by Sycamore Press.

MH: Read the book.

SF: That's all, that's all. You can't argue with a book that has the facts, that has the dates and when and where, you know? It's not fiction. I wish we could have gotten more books published. Let 'em read it.

MH: Did you ever have nightmares over what you saw there?

SF: Pardon me?

MH: Did you ever have nightmares over what you saw there?

SF: Well, you do. To this day, I remember everything, everything. And I say even some of these people, these people who were liberated—do you think they appreciate being liberated?

MH: Yes, they do.

SF: No. No, they don't.

MH: Sure they do.

SF: Well, I'm talking to you from experience.

MH: Why, what kind of experience did you have?

SF: They forget. They forget who they are.

MH: You really think so?

SF: Oh, yes. Sure. Sure I do.

MH: Why? Why do you say that?

SF: That kind of people, that's all.

MH: I mean—

SF: You know, I got a sister who's (inaudible). Not that she's, you know—

MH: Where is she?

SF: She's in the nursing home, but she wasn't in the war and all that. But she's in the nursing home. I haven't seen her for two years. One of the guys I liberated, he's a doctor, a medical doctor, retired. He said, "Sol, when I get back, I'm going to take you to see your sister." Okay? I saw her once. I haven't seen my sister since; that's over two years ago. That's gratitude.

MH: Where is she in a nursing home?

SF: Nearby, here in Danvers, if you happen to know where Danvers is.

MH: No, I don't.

SF: It's near Boston. I'm from Boston, so it's about twenty-five miles. So—

MH: How old is your sister?

SF: She must be in her eighties now. I don't know. I've only seen her once. The doctor, he's retired; he's well off—very well off. His daughter is my lawyer. But, whatever. I'm not happy here.

MH: Yeah, I can tell.

SF: I'm very unhappy.

MH: What's your lawyer's name?

SF: Fisher.

MH: I'm sorry?

SF: Fisher.

MH: S-i-c-k-e-r?

SF: F-i-s-h-e-r.

MH: Oh, Fisher.

SF: Yeah, Fisher.

MH: And her first name?

SF: Tracy.

MH: And she's in Boston?

SF: She's nearby; she's here in Newton.

MH: In Newton, Massachusetts.

SF: Yeah.

MH: Okay. Well—

SF: I always sing the song (sings) “You’re Nobody Till Somebody Loves You.” (laughs)

MH: (sings) “You’re no one—” (hums)

SF: (sings) “—till somebody cares.”

MH: (hums)

SF: “You may be king,” you may be this, you may be that. But who the hell gives a damn?

MH: (laughs)

SF: “What am I doin’ here?” I say to myself. I’m a prisoner in my own country. I’m in a prison in a VA hospital, why? You know something? I can’t even get into a Jewish nursing home. They won’t take me.

MH: Why?

SF: I’m too old. That’s why I’m a nobody.

MH: Well—

SF: That’s what I say. What do you think, I’m a happy guy? I’m not happy.

MH: I know you’re not happy, but you’re not a nobody.

SF: Well, who am I? You tell me who I am.

MH: You’re—

SF: I helped liberate a camp.

MH: Yes. Yes you did.

MH: (phone is disconnected) That was Sol Feingold. The phone number at the ward in Bedford, Massachusetts, VA Nursing Home is.... He was with the 42nd Infantry Division. His direct phone number is....

SF: Hello?

MH: Hi, it's Mike Hirsh.

SF: I don't know what happened.

MH: We got cut off.

SF: Oh, is that what it did?

MH: But don't get paranoid; it wasn't the VA.

SF: Huh?

MH: It wasn't the VA.

SF: Oh, it wasn't the VA.

MH: No, it's just an accident. So, I really feel bad that you don't feel good about what you did.

SF: Well, no, I don't. Sometimes I say to myself—I think about it, and even tonight before you called—what was your name again? I forget.

MH: My name is Michael—

SF: Michael.

MH: Hirsh.

SF: Well, I have to say something. I've been drinkin' tonight, and I drink, you know, about every damn day. And I say to myself—even today, before you even called, I say to myself, I wish I had never been there. I wish it had never happened. That I had to reach a stage in my life when nothing's gone right for me. It hasn't gone right for me. I keep saying I wish I was dead. There's no way. What have I accomplished? What, I liberated—I helped liberate it?

What I am glad is, I got the book written. I helped get the book written. Steve Ross is a sick man; he's in his seventies now. He was about sixteen or seventeen when he was liberated. The doctor was—Tracy Fisher, my attorney, the daughter of the doctor who was liberated. He was only a kid that time; he must have been about ten or twelve years of age at the time. And he was liberated. You know, there isn't even that comradeship between former inmates. I introduced people who were in the same liberated—you understand Jewish?

MH: A little bit.

SF: A little bit.

MH: A *bisl*.

SF: A *bisl*. You know what (inaudible) means?

MH: Uh, go ahead, tell me.

SF: Another day.

MH: Another day.

SF: Another day. It's another day in their lives; it doesn't mean a damn thing. It doesn't mean a damn thing. You'd think they'd keep in touch with each other. The two guys who live (inaudible)? They know from nothing. *Vus mir?*

MH: Do you think people have forgotten what you did?

SF: Oh, sure.

MH: Really?

SF: Sure they forgot. I got my own fellow vets. "You're a hero," they say to me, "you were a hero"—and yet they (inaudible) from me, they stole \$100 from me just recently. What am I going to do? Hey, look, what? Friends who are in the ward—you know, he's younger. The younger generation of veterans, they don't know what war was. They don't know. They fought a different type of war: Korea, Vietnam.

MH: I was in Vietnam.

SF: A different kind of war.

MH: Very different.

SF: Huh?

MH: Very different. You guys fought a much tougher, harder war.

SF: Absolutely! Now you got it. We fought a trench war, you follow me?

MH: I know what you did. I'm in awe of what you did.

SF: Yeah. These guys, what did they fight? A jungle war? Sure, they had it tough. But what we—it was bad. It was bad. I sympathize. Well, I can go on.

MH: Sol, I've told guys of your generation, I said, "You know, in Vietnam, we didn't have enemy aircraft. We didn't have enemy artillery, except for the Marines way up north, who were getting it from the North Vietnamese. We weren't under constant bombardment. And we served one year."

SF: Yeah, they don't know. You know, Michael, we fought—I fought—we got to Germany—to Marseilles, France—on December 12, okay?

MH: Of what year?

SF: Nineteen seventy-two.

MH: Nineteen forty-two.

SF: Yeah, 1942. And within twelve days, we were in the trenches already. Twelve days, greenhorns. We weren't even a full division: three regiments. Greenhorns. Five to seven degrees below zero, summer uniforms on. (inaudible) Who the hell's looking for money? I'm glad I came out with my ass still whole. But hey, look, I'm not (inaudible) to be here. But that's the way it was. It was a different kind of a war, altogether different.

MH: But that doesn't mean people have forgotten what you've done.

SF: Oh, sure, I know. They fought a different war. How many guys do I find who were in World War II here? I find a few guys here, yeah, very few.

MH: You've lived longer than most of them.

SF: Pardon?

MH: You've lived longer than most of them.

SF: Oh, yes, I did. Sure, I did. And I don't forget 'em. And the one thing I always say of veterans—I'll never, I'll never, I'll never hurt a veteran. But these son of a bitches, these

bastards, they'll steal from you. They'll take the eye from out of your head. Yes, they all want to know when next payday is. Yeah. Oh, what can I do? I can talk and talk and talk.

MH: How's the food they give you there?

SF: Pardon me?

MH: How is the food you get there?

SF: Oh, my God. You call it food? You know what I get for breakfast? Two slices of bread. Two damn slices of bread every day, most every day. I get some cereal. I still got a packet right here in my bag here. Corn flakes. That's what I had this morning, corn flakes. The food sucks.

MH: Are you in a room by yourself or with a lot of guys?

SF: A room with some other guys. Yeah, some other guys who have it so damn nice and easy got a room all nice to themselves. I'm in a room with about three other guys. Hey, what is it? This is why I say they don't care one damn bit about you here. They don't, they don't. What can I say? You have to live it to see it. Ah, a different war.

MH: And this is in Bedford, Massachusetts.

SF: Yeah. I understand (inaudible). You know, at one time the food used to be cooked here on hospital grounds. You know where the food is cooked?

MH: No.

SF: Cooked probably in Cincinnati, frozen, and then sent to Boston, to a commissary here. They warm it up. It's cold. It's cold food. It isn't fit for pigs! And you know, you have the people who—you know, nurses who—who I would call nurses—you got nurses that come over from Asia and all that were trained. They have a shortage of help here. So, you're not getting the best of help. It's a fact. I'm not describing something that's a lie, but that's the way it is. The government taxes the hell out of you. Can you imagine paying \$70 for ten packages of cigarettes?

MH: Eh—\$70? You shouldn't be smoking anyhow.

SF: That's right, I agree with you. Look, I don't disagree with you. But why tax the shit out of a veteran?

MH: (laughs) Right.

SF: Why do it to a veteran?

MH: You can't buy it in the commissary and not pay tax?

SF: (laughs) That's a fallacy. They have a base camp here, you know what I mean? You can go into a base camp and not pay a state tax. You go to the CVS [pharmacy]—you know CVS?

MH: Yeah, of course.

SF: I paid my provider—we call them providers; you know, take care of patients—went out and bought me a carton of cigarettes and paid \$70 for a carton of cigarettes. So, is that right?

MH: That sounds pretty high to me.

SF: That's what they're payin'.

MH: What kind of cigarettes you smoking?

SF: The best.

MH: What kind?

SF: The best cigarettes.

MH: What are they? Like Marlboros?

SF: Huh?

MH: Marlboros?

SF: Winstons. Marlboros I just paid \$70 for.

MH: Yikes. How much do you smoke?

SF: Huh?

MH: How much do you smoke?

SF: I don't know. I smoke maybe a pack a week, maybe even less than that. That's all. I shouldn't be smoking.

MH: I know that! How's your health?

SF: My health is good. Hey, I reached ninety-five. But I shouldn't be smoking.

MH: What's your birthday?

SF: October 4, I'll be ninety-five on October 4. I shouldn't be smoking. I say it, but you know, they won't even leave you alone. They won't leave you alone. You know, they have guards over us so we don't smoke. We have smoking hours. We have to go outside. We can't smoke here. We have VA police; they're in uniforms with guns. We didn't have them during the war, but we got 'em here. (both laugh) It is something when you can laugh at your own misery here. And you know they have women inmates here?

MH: Yeah?

SF: They're intermingled with men. I say, why should women be with men? Put them separate.

MH: You don't want the women around?

SF: I don't like them.

MH: Really?

SF: I don't like them.

MH: Okay.

SF: Why? What did they do during the war? They did nothing.

MH: Well, I've interviewed four or five of them who were nurses.

SF: Pardon me?

MH: I've interviewed four or five of them who were nurses, including two of them who were at Dachau. They were with one of the evac [evacuation] hospitals.

SF: Yeah, yeah. *C'est la vie*, as they say. What can you do? I hate this place.

MH: Well, I'm—

SF: I wish I wasn't here. I can't get into my own nursing home, my Jewish nursing home. You know what I said? Don't bury me in a Jewish cemetery. I don't want a rabbi there. What did the Jews—I say it, because it's the truth. Give them a million dollars, and they'll take you in tout [de] suite. I can't get into a Jewish nursing home. Why shouldn't I be with my own people? Why do I have to get into a *genem* here? Why? Do I deserve it? I don't deserve that. I deserve something a little better. The food—when I tell you the

food, it isn't food; it's garbage. What can I say to you? You have to see it; you have to see it to believe it.

MH: Okay.

SF: I can't—I don't manufacture news. I just relate what's happening here.

MH: Okay.

SF: They took this old hospital, I think 1988, and kept it going, you know. They should have closed this damn place. I was in a much better hospital, a government hospital, before I came here. This isn't the only hospital I've been in. Much better; the food was better. I used to go to one hospital; I used to get fed good. The food was good. The food was good. But this is ersatz, ersatz. It's phony food. I can't eat it. I carry right here in my little bag—I picked up a bag of corn flakes. I like cereal. A little packet with corn cereal, that comes in a sealed pack. Corn flakes. I kept them. If I run across a container of milk, I'll use it. I'll have cereal for breakfast. I don't want two flat ersatz eggs, you know. If I see a fresh egg, that's a delicacy.

MH: Really?

SF: I don't see any eggs. I haven't seen—if I'm taken outside—yeah, someone can take me outside, but I can't go outside. They got a bus here. The Italian War Vets gave this place a bus. The Italian War Vets; they paid \$58,000 for the bus.

MH: And where do they take the soldiers—the patients?

SF: Pardon me?

MH: Where do they take you?

SF: They don't take you. You gotta behave. You gotta be a good boy, gotta take your medicine. But I can't ride the bus, because I have to—I have to—the standards of a *fekakta* civilian. She's, I don't know, in her early twenties or something like that. She runs this hospital. She runs this hospital. What does she know about vets?

MH: What kind of food would you like to eat?

SF: Oh, I would like some eggs. I would like to have some eggs. I would like to have some decent cereal in the morning. I don't get. You know, the food is cold. It's cold. I'm not kidding. But you have to see it to believe it. You think I'm kidding?

MH: They don't give you like Kellogg's corn flakes and Rice Krispies and Cheerios and that stuff?

SF: No, they give it to you in the little container. That's it. But I don't get enough of it. I don't get enough. They give me a little container—

MH: You can't ask for more?

SF: —and a plastic little dish, a plastic dish. And that's my corn flakes.

MH: What sort of things do you like for lunch and dinner?

SF: Lunch? Well, I like to have a good meal, a hot meal. The meals are cold. Don't forget, they're shipping this food in from a city about twenty miles from here. By the time it comes into the campus here and goes through the system here and you get it on your table, it's cold. Who are you going to complain to? Who's going to cook the food? Who's going to heat the food? They don't give a damn. Eat it or don't eat it. They'll tell you that.

MH: Okay. Well, I wish I were coming up to Boston, 'cause I'd come over and visit you and take you out to eat.

SF: I would appreciate it very much. I have a guy that comes in here, but if they want to take me out, I've gotta go in an automobile. I can get into the automobile, you know. There's room for me so I can travel.

MH: Do you use a walker?

SF: Huh?

MH: Do you use a walker?

SF: No. Walker? What, are you kidding? (laughs) This is a VA hospital.

MH: No, do you need a walker to get around?

SF: No, but I have a wheelchair. But I need a car, somebody with a car who'll take me. There has to be room in the car so I can go out and eat. I used to have a fellow that used to have a car. I could go out in the car. He had a seat there, and he could take me out to a restaurant. I love it! I love to go out and eat. You know what I eat? I eat out of those vending machines. Would you believe it?

MH: No.

SF: I eat out of a vending machine. I eat Cheetos.

MH: Cheetos? (phone rings)

SF: Cheetos. That's my meal. I got it right here in my walker here. Cheetos, that's what I have. Where am I going to get a hot meal?

MH: Hang on one second. (on cell phone) Hello? Hi, let me call you back.

SF: Pardon me?

MH: Nothing. I just had to tell somebody I'd call them back.

SF: Yeah. But I have nothing to eat. I don't get a hot meal. I don't know what a hot meal is. Who's going to take me out? They have what is called "patient escort." We don't have any patient escorts. They don't have a patient. They tell you—you bring in someone that you want to put into a VA hospital, well, they paint a rosy picture. "Oh, this is what we do for the veterans, here's what we do, we have patient escort." They don't have it. They just

don't have it. There's none available. You know what I do? I'm in a wheelchair. I got a wheelchair that's a broken-down piece of shit. I can fall and break my neck in this wheelchair. I tell them I had a good wheelchair, they took it away from me and I got a broken-down wheelchair that probably served in the Civil War.

MH: (laughs) Why don't you—can't your lawyer do anything?

SF: Pardon me?

MH: Can't your lawyer do anything?

SF: I don't get your—

MH: Your lawyer, Tracy, can't do anything?

SF: Who?

MH: The lawyer, Fisher?

SF: No. Oh, they can't do anything. You know, they'll paint one of the most rosiest picture in the world. (inaudible). You know, they're building a new hospital down on Washington to take the place of—what's the name of the Army hospital down there?

MH: Walter Reed [Army Medical Center].

SF: Walter Reed. They'll never finish the new hospital. They just don't have the money. They'll tell you they don't have the money for it. There's no money available, that's all.

MH: Okay. Well, I would hope things get better for you.

SF: You know, seeing is believing. You've got to see what I mean. You know, don't take my word for it. Don't take my word for it. You know, these guys here don't know what a good meal is. They never saw a good meal. So the *chazzera* they give 'em, they love it. They'll gobble it up. But they don't know—a cold meal, it doesn't—I don't know. I'd

like to have a good steak. I'd like to have a good hamburger. I had a hamburger today. Like a rock. Like a rock. I don't eat it. I don't eat it, I won't eat it, so I eat Cheetos. I have Slim Jim's. You ever eat Slim Jim's?

MH: Yes.

SF: You like 'em?

MH: They're okay.

SF: Would you like 'em every day?

MH: No.

SF: I got 'em. I got a Slim Jim's. My guy takes me to go down to the canteen, gets me a can of Slim Jim's, what else? Cheetos, potato chips. I eat a lot of potato chips. There's no hot meal. There's no hot meals, Michael. That's the way, that's the system here. I'm not a complainer. Look, I was brought up poor; I know what lousy food is. This is lousy food. But I've never been in a place like—you know, I say I want to get the hell out of here. I'd rather die here than continue. But the others here, the goyim? Give them drek and they'll eat it like it was ice cream.

MH: (laughs) Okay.

SF: The government? These contractors are making the money. The big companies—can you imagine? You buy Coca-Cola?

MH: Yeah.

SF: How much you pay for a bottle? Just a drink.

MH: Just one drink?

SF: Yeah, a sixteen-ounce bottle.

MH: I don't even know what they cost, 'cause we don't buy them like that.

SF: Let's say a bottle. You drink a bottle?

MH: Yeah.

SF: Yeah, how much you pay for it?

MH: That kind of bottle? You'd probably pay a dollar. You'd probably pay a dollar for it.

SF: I paid a buck and a half for it. As if Coca-Cola isn't making enough money. They got contracts with the government. The owner, Nabisco—Pepsi-Cola can't get into a government place. Why? Because they haven't got the connections. Look, I'm not making up stories; I just want you to understand the system. I hate this damn place. They're making money off the veterans. Maybe this phone is being monitored but I don't give a damn. What have I got to lose?

MH: Okay. Well, I need to go. My wife is calling me right now.

SF: Okay. When the general orders you to do something, you do it.

MH: You're right.

SF: Jump!

MH: Exactly.

SF: That's the system. But I'd like to meet you.

MH: Okay, well, if I get up that way—

SF: I'd like to have you—on the quiet—visit a VA Hospital. You know, I used to live in a town; we had a naval hospital, we had a veterans' home. The food was good. It was good. But the government (inaudible). What's the sense, what's the sense? I'm ninety-five, so maybe I got a year or two to go. That's the way it is.

MH: All right, sir, you take care of yourself.

End of interview