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Dr. Russel R. Weiskircher oral history interview by Michael Hirsh, December 17, 2007

Russel R. Weiskircher (Interviewee)

Michael Hirsh (Interviewer)

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

Dr. Russel R. Weiskircher: Hello?

Michael Hirsh: Hi, is this Russ?

RW: Yeah.

MH: Hi, it's Mike Hirsh.

RW: Oh, thank you, Mike. Wait until I get over here. Wait a minute. I've got to get situated so this thing doesn't break your eardrum. I appreciate your call. I just got in a little while ago.

MH: Sounds like you've had a busy weekend.

RW: Oh, yes. Well, it was busy, and it was emotional. I'm too old to take that nonsense, and this one was tough, because this guy and I—now, we weren't World War II buddies. We were comrades up here with a World War II background, and we went to the same church and we're in the same community. We did a lot of things together. And all of a sudden, he dropped dead, and his wife has Alzheimer's so bad she can't realize she's

alone. And I worked on the—I preached a memorial service and his sons and his daughters and grandchildren were there. Even though he was an old man and we can expect those things, it was still tough. Made it a long, long weekend.

MH: Um, I'd like to turn the tape recorder on.

RW: Yeah, go ahead. I have no problem with a tape recorder.

MH: Your name, just so I have it on tape, is Russel, R-u-s-s-e-l, one L?

RW: That's exactly, one L. Russel R. Weiskircher.

MH: W-e-i-s-k-i-r-c-h-e-r?

RW: That's exactly right.

MH: Ph.D.?

RW: What's that?

MH: Ph.D.?

RW: Yeah.

MH: Brigadier General, Army, Retired?

RW: And a DST, Doctor of Sacred Theology.

MH: Okay. You're vice-chair of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust?

RW: Yeah! That's probably the most significant thing in my life now, because it's demanding and I work at it.

MH: ...

RW: Exactly.

MH: ...

RW: You got it right, Mike.

MH: I'm passing my test. And your email is.... Okay. Your date of birth is?

RW: 1-5-1925 [January 5, 1925].

MH: And that makes you eighty-three.

RW: Eighty-three in a month or so.

MH: You went into the service when?

RW: In forty-two [1942].

MH: And you were drafted?

RW: Well, I volunteered for the draft, because by that time—by the time Pearl Harbor came, no matter what you did, if you walked in and enlisted, or if you were drafted, you were just in for the duration and six [months]. And when I did this, I couldn't pass the physical, and I wanted to. The draft boards were dragging people that didn't want to go—allegedly, anyway, but most everybody was ready to go. But I volunteered for immediate induction and then kept taking the physical until the system accepted me. I wore them down.

MH: You wore 'em down. Okay.

RW: Actually, I cheated. I paid a guy to take the urine test. I had—

MH: Are you serious?

RW: I had transient albuminuria, which is nothing more than a hereditary problem. It's in the genes, and you grow out of it. And I had an old country doctor who said, "Tell those people it doesn't disqualify you," but you know the Army doesn't work that way.

MH: I'm aware of that.

RW: You know what I'm talking about.

MH: Yes.

RW: So I finally slipped—at the old post office building in Pittsburgh. I think it was the fifth try; it may have been the fourth. I slipped a guy a fin [\$5 bill], and that was big money then. That was big money. He filled the bottle, and I got to wear a uniform.

MH: (laughs)

RW: How about that?

MH: Whatever works. Um, I've read your military history.

RW: Oh, did you go through that?

MH: Yeah, I've gone through all that.

RW: You're a glutton for punishment.

MH: Well, it'll actually save time.

RW: Oh, yeah. I know.

MH: So, what date in the war were you beginning to approach Dachau?

RW: Well, the liberation was on 29 April 1945. And we didn't know Dachau existed prior to that. You don't know much about the world when you're an infantry grunt.

MH: And, before I forget, you were how old when you were—

RW: Nineteen.

MH: You went in—so, in 1945, you were—

RW: Forty-five [1945]? Let's see. Twenty-five [1925] would have been—well, yeah. I was twenty in January.

MH: And your rank at the time was?

RW: Oh, I think sergeant.

MH: A sergeant. What was your job?

RW: Well, let me tell you. I was with L Company as a rifleman, and I was with K Company as a rifleman, and then I got—I've been a rifleman. I've been—I carried a flame thrower. I was a sniper. I've been an assistant squad leader. You do everything if you survive. I came back from the hospital in the late winter, just before spring, at the end of the [Battle of the] Bulge, and I was assigned to Headquarters Company of the 3rd Battalion to the Operations section.

MH: Run the whole unit designation. 3rd Battalion of—?

RW: 3rd Battalion, 157th Infantry [Regiment], 45th Infantry Division. The 45th was the Thunderbirds. They were a National Guard unit out of Oklahoma, and the 157th was a

round-out regiment of Coloradans, a bunch of Colorado farmer boys that were put in that division. Now, I was a Yankee eastern replacement. They went overseas early; they were in Africa and Sicily and worked up the boot of Italy, and I joined them over around Anzio. And then I worked my—well, you work staying alive.

To answer your question, what was I doing at the time we first heard about Dachau, I was in the battalion headquarters, and I was acting operations sergeant. The operations sergeant was ending systems, and he was—I don't know just what happened. He was going to do something else, and the intent was that I would inherit it. I was in the battalion operations section, and the old man. Then Lieutenant Colonel Sparks—

MH: First name?

RW: Felix, F-e-l-i-x. Felix L. Sparks, S-p-a-r-k-s. Now, in those references I sent you, in Al Panebianco's website, he has a session where he has reports and letters and all the rest of it.¹ And you need to go in there, and you must read Colonel Sparks, because Colonel Sparks went to the National Holocaust Museum and spelled out in detail the liberation of Dachau, and he was the man. He was the battalion commander. I was at his side much of that day, back and forth, but he was like a whirlwind. You know, he's a scout one minute and a battalion commander the next, and he's all over the place. A hell of a man. He stayed in the military—no, after the war, he got out and he finished his law degree. He became a district attorney; he became a Colorado Supreme Court judge. He also became the Adjutant General of the Colorado National Guard, and as a BG [brigadier general]. He died just last year.

Mike, you can't understand Dachau without getting his testimony, because for some reason—partially known to me, and I'll spell it out—there's a breed of people that want to take credit for what they didn't do, places they haven't been, and claimed things that aren't true; and there's a breed of people that want to deny that the Holocaust existed; and there's a lot of revisionism, a lot of mistakes in history. But in my personal opinion, no better leader ever lived than Felix Sparks, and he was steadfast in his eighties and just died this past fall.

MH: Let me just take a second and tell you precisely what I'm doing and why.

RW: Yeah.

¹ Al Panebianco was also interviewed for the Concentration Camp Liberators Oral History Project. The DOI for his interview is C65-00098.

MH: I'm not trying to—I'm not a military historian. I'm not a historian; I'm a journalist and a writer. What I'm trying to do is track down the last people who were at as many different camps as I can find, who can stand up and say, "This is what I saw. This is what I heard. This is what I thought. This is what I felt. This is what I smelled. This is what I believed."

RW: Okay. When you talk to Al Panebianco, if you have—?

MH: Not yet. I mean, we've communicated, but I haven't spoken with him.

RW: He's with Company K of the same battalion. I didn't know him, he didn't know me. We met at Myrtle Beach at a post-war reunion a few years ago, and we've been kissing cousins ever since. But he's one of God's gentlemen, and very capable. And he was, I believe, a staff sergeant with K Company, but he was a rifleman. Have you run across Flint Whitlock?

MH: Uh, no.

RW: F-l-i-n-t Whitlock, W-h-i-t-l-o-c-k.

MH: No.

RW: Now, what I'll do, I'll send you an e-mail with the address I have for him. He's a historian.

MH: Okay, but what I want to do now is hear your story.

RW: Go ahead.

MH: Okay. At what point was the word "Dachau" first mentioned?

RW: First, the morning of the twenty-ninth, we were in six-by[-six], deuce-and-a-halves, trucks. We were reassigned to the 3rd Army, and the job was mop-up: catch the fleeing Germans in Bavaria. We had a feeling by the time we got to Munich, it would be all over. And we were chasing along when the word came through from regiment. Got an ops

order, and I'm just paraphrasing it now. It in effect said, "Disengage and go to these coordinates to the Dachau concentration camp."

MH: Was the reaction—

RW: The reaction was nil. We didn't know about a concentration camp.

MH: But you knew about concentration camps in general, or didn't you?

RW: Not very much, because [Dwight D.] Eisenhower had deliberately downplayed a lot of it up until that time, because he had a control problem with men going nuts and reacting like assassins, to put it bluntly. And nobody believed anybody could be that inhumane. So, we disengaged, and we started, followed the map coordinates. We got to the little town of Dachau.

MH: You're riding on a German highway?

RW: Oh, yeah.

MH: Or are these small roads?

RW: In the middle of the woods and all the rest of it. We're a battalion spread out, covering what would normally be a regimental or more front, because we're mobile, we're moving. In front of us, some twenty miles, [George S.] Patton had a bunch of tanks. You know, he'd run through town, and then we'd come past on mop-up, and we were running into a lot of sick, lame and lazy, and young kids and old men. [Adolf] Hitler didn't have much left. He didn't have any gas, he didn't have any ball bearings, he didn't have any tanks, and most of the people he had wanted to surrender. So, it was a mop-up.

MH: What kind of day was it?

RW: It was April in Germany. It spit a little snow that day. It was a cold spring day, not very springy, either. I would say it was in the forties, and it tried to snow.

MH: So, it's sort of cloudy, overcast?

RW: Well, a bit, a bit. We got to the town of Dachau, and our orders specifically were to enter the camp, to take it over, and to let nobody in or out until properly relieved by our regiment.

MH: Are you riding in the cab of the truck or in the back?

RW: I'm in the back.

MH: Okay.

RW: No, I'm in a Jeep.

MH: Oh, you're in a Jeep?

RW: I'm in a Jeep, yeah. I'm used to being anywhere, but with the operations section, hey, I got promoted, man. I got a clipboard and a map case, and got a radio, and I'm in a Jeep, and I got to pretty much to go where I want to.

MH: Who's driving?

RW: One of the guys from our headquarters motor pool. And sometimes I am. Depends.

MH: Just two of you in the Jeep?

RW: Yeah, sometimes three or four. We'd pick them up. And the old man had a driver and a radio operator and a runner.

MH: Okay, and he was in a different Jeep.

RW: He was in his own Jeep, that's right. And I had to be where he could get me whenever he wanted me. It might be to run to a rifle company, it might be God knows what.

We got to the town of Dachau. This was a little old Bohemian artist's colony. It was the Greenwich Village of Europe at one time, and nobody there knew anything about any concentration camp. Nobody knew anything about a war. It was all Hitler's fault, and nobody knew anything. You know the story.

MH: Yes.

RW: Until we met an old guy who pointed to his nose and told us to follow it. So, we went about two kilometers following our nose, and the smell is indescribable. And the source was a field full of bodies, forty-two boxcars loaded with corpses. Started out live people, who were nailed shut in these boxcars, left without food, sanitation, or water. And the irony of it is they were being taken to Dachau to be done away with while Hitler was trying to hide the evidence.

MH: When you came upon these boxcars—I'm just trying to recreate the scene. This is on a railroad track that's going to go into the—

RW: Into Dachau.

MH: But it hadn't gone into—the train itself had not gone in.

RW: Well, first of all, part of the railroad bridge had been bombed away by our Army Air Corps. Secondly, whoever was operating that train had abandoned it, probably during the bombing. And the rail system wasn't very good. So, they got as close as they could and they never got inside the camp. Now, the bodies were piles of maggots. Some were recognized and some were falling out of the building. There is a tale, unsubstantiated by me, that one man was alive. I never saw it.

MH: Right. I actually will be talking to Tony Cardinale, who's the—²

RW: You do that, but let me tell you, keep a grain of salt. And that's not aimed at Tony; I don't even know him. But if you talk to twenty people, Mike, you are going to get twenty divergent stories, because I can only remember the vivid things, and I can only remember where I was and what I saw, or what I thought I saw. And to put it bluntly, the battalion

² Anthony "Tony" Cardinale was also interviewed for the Concentration Camp Liberators Oral History Project. The DOI for his interview is C65-00016.

broke up into about three sections and tackled three different places to get in that camp, and it was like tackling a golf course. You know, it was big.

MH: Okay, well, let's just—you come upon the train. You approach it from the middle or the end, or the head?

RW: Well, about the middle.

MH: You're seeing this train spread out on the horizon in front of you, and you drive up to it. What's the first thing that comes—?

RW: Well, first of all, the smell would gag you. Then you realize these are bodies, and after you get through vomiting, you start looking in the boxcars and ripping them open to see what you've got.

MH: So, you got out of the Jeep.

RW: Sure. And you think, "Oh, my God!" We don't know what a concentration camp is, and somebody said—one of those people had an old Army OD [olive drab] Shade 33 shirt on. Now, this was a DP [displaced person] who picked it up somewhere. But immediately we said, "My God, these are GIs." You know what the reaction was? Chaos. I mean, absolutely almost uncontrollable chaos.

MH: You mean, your guys believed that the people dead in the train might be soldiers.

RW: Yes, that they were prisoners of war.

MH: Oh—

RW: We did not know what to expect about a concentration camp. Now, Felix Sparks was no fool, and we weren't fools either, but you just don't read the paper every day. You don't get the *New York Times* in a foxhole. And the *Stars and Stripes*, when we did get it—you know where we got our news, mostly?

MH: Axis Sally.

RW: Axis Sally. And we also got news from the tankers from their radios. They'd pick up some broadcasts, both British and American.

MH: And the *Stars and Stripes*, when you got it, were often a week or two weeks old.

RW: Oh, a week, maybe a month, but you read every bit of it. And the letters from home were a mess, you know. You didn't know what you got. Actually, Axis Sally read one of my letters. They got a bag of our mail on the beachhead, and that bitch cut the letters up and added things to it and thought she was teasing us. But she was so corny, she was entertaining, and we knew we didn't have to believe her. She was supposed to be forging mutiny; didn't happen. That's another story, though.

MH: That's another story. Okay. So, your guys are nearly going crazy. What do they do?

RW: Well—

MH: They're looking for people to—

RW: Exactly. And what do they do? The old man grabbed his company commanders, and said, "Into the camp." So, it was a three-pronged attempt to get into the camp. I Company broke up, K Company broke up, and they went across the railroad bridge, which was restored sufficiently it would bear the weight of a Jeep but not a tank. If somebody tells you they rode a tank into Dachau, they could ride a tank into the town and two kilometers out and up to the camp, but you couldn't get over the canal with anything heavier than a quarter-ton Jeep, maybe with a trailer.

MH: This bridge is going over—when you say "canal," do you mean the moat they dug?

RW: Exactly.

MH: You don't mean the river nearby?

RW: Maybe both; one ran into the other. The canal, the moat, drained into the river; the river was part of—you know, off past Dachau, and I don't know where it eventually went.

But, as I said, somewhere around noon, give or take—I don't know whether it was 11:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30, but somewhere around noon, my boss tried to get in the front gate. When I say "he," I mean a group of people with him. They couldn't do it, so they scaled the wall, got inside and took away the—they were like big 4x4s—and got the gate open.

MH: Any shooting going on at this point?

RW: Not at us. I'll tell you, most of the camp cadre—the SS, the people that counted—had gone, and I don't mean that morning. They had gone in ten days. We were anticipated. We were earlier than they expected, but they were gone, and those that were left behind were the sick, the lame, the lazy, and the kapos. You know about the term kapos?

MH: Yes, I understand it.

RW: Okay, and a lot of kapos, and most of them were Ukrainian. I want to tell you something: from the standpoint of the displaced person, the Jewish inmate and the political inmates, they were bigger bastards than most of the Germans. Typical trustee situation; they curried favors and, in doing so, they didn't care who they killed. Now, it's not because they were Ukrainian, but it just so happened at Dachau there was a whole group of them who were kapos, and, oh, were they bastards. Anyway, the boss and the few people got over the wall. They got the gate open.

MH: Where were you at this point?

RW: I was waiting to get either over the wall or through the gate. My Jeep went through, and I went over the wall. And where was I?

MH: You climbed the wall?

RW: Yeah.

MH: How high is this wall?

RW: Eight, nine feet.

MH: Barbed wire?

RW: Yeah, barbed wire.

MH: What'd you guys do, cut it?

RW: No, just smashed it, laid on it. No, we didn't cut it; we didn't have much engineer support. I remember standing like John Wayne; if there'd been one rifleman or one to kill us, he could've wiped out half of us. We got over—and incidentally, we did hear rifle fire, which means that the other two points of entry, somebody shot at something, or somebody was shot at. But we couldn't see what, because that's a hell of a big place.

MH: Yes. When you say “big,” how—I don't know what we can compare it to so I can get a sense of the size. But when you say a big place—?

RW: Like a college campus.

MH: Okay. That's good.

RW: Like a good-sized golf course, over 100 acres. And you have an interior moat and an island, and that was the original camp. That's where 32,000 people, give or take a couple dozen—better take, 'cause there were a little over 32,000—were jammed into buildings with inadequate facilities, practically no sanitation. And this was behind barbed wire, over the moat beyond a drawbridge, and inside there were dog tracks, SS dog handlers, and then another gate, and then these emaciated people.

MH: When you climbed the fence and ultimately they opened up the main gate, that's the gate that says “*Arbeit macht frei*”?

RW: Exactly. *Arbeit macht frei*.

MH: So, once you've opened that up, there's still further gates or fences or whatever—

RW: Absolutely. You go up there and there's the Jourhaus, the guardhouse, and that's exactly what it is. Incidentally, it had a whole IBM keypunch system there that identified every tattoo and every inmate, and it hadn't been destroyed. The Germans were great customers of IBM. That's another story. T.J. Watson admired Adolf's administration. I don't know what he thought about his politics and his nationalism, but he and Henry Ford respected—

MH: Yeah. Well, I know about him.

RW: You know what I'm talking about.

MH: Yeah.

RW: Well, okay.

MH: So, now you're inside.

RW: That's right. Go right or left, and to your left there's a bunch of buildings that were used—there was a dispensary, an administrative headquarters, a quartermaster supply place, all those type things. They were to the right and left of the main gate, and quite a bit removed from where the prisoners were. And, incidentally, they bring these prisoners down, and the crematories were to your left. They were four or five buildings away from the gate; I would say a quarter of a mile from the gate. There was a big building with the shower rooms where they had the xenon gas. Then there was the building with the four ovens. In some of my pictures, you can pick those things out.

MH: Were the ovens—was there still smoke coming out of the chimney?

RW: No, no, and there wasn't any bodies in the ovens, either. There was residual ash, burned bones, but they were stone cold and they didn't have a lump of coal or coke, and that's why there was no bodies in them.

MH: Got it.

RW: The bodies were stacked up like cordwood, and they didn't have any fuel to move the bulldozers, or they would've buried them. They were attempting to bury them by hand using prisoners, but they had so damned many, they didn't get it done.

MH: When's the first time you saw living prisoners?

RW: Well, first of all, we didn't see anybody. It was eerie. And you know why we didn't? 'Cause the Germans had told them that the Americans were coming, and when they got there, the Americans would kill everybody in the camp. And since they'd already suffered from the Air Force bombing right outside the camp, they probably were ready to believe anything—I mean, Air Corps. So, we didn't see anybody.

Then some people crawled out from under the barracks, the crawl spaces; they were up on concrete blocks. Hollow-eyed people that you couldn't believe. You know what they looked like. They crawled out of there and crawled toward the gate and called out, and the GIs ran toward the gate. Now, the gate was locked. We got orders we could not go in and we could not let them out. They had every disease known to man, and we weren't inoculated for anything.

MH: Just let me ask you a question. I was told by another man I interviewed—the guy whose picture I sent you—that they wouldn't let him go in, he told me, until he got a tetanus shot.

RW: Well, it depends on when that was. We didn't let anybody go in, period, tetanus shot or otherwise. And let me tell you what I did. I took a candy bar, a D ration Hershey candy bar. You're familiar with 'em?

MH: They don't melt in an oven.

RW: You better bet they don't. And I gave it to this German guy. He's been living on potato soup and bread with sawdust in it, and he grabbed that thing and he bit the chocolate and vomited his heart out. I damn near killed him. We found out the only thing we could do was give them bouillon and cigarettes and talk with them, keep them in there, and hope the medics got there to start taking care of them.

MH: There were no medics with you?

RW: Just our battalion medics.

MH: Right. But no hospital units.

RW: No, no, no. They came. The big job was to let the regiment know what was going on.

MH: When did you find out that you better not try giving these people food, 'cause you'll kill them?

RW: What's that?

MH: When did you find out that you better not give these people food, 'cause you could kill them?

RW: Well, as I say, when I gave the guy the chocolate bar and he vomited his head off. Nobody had to shoot me.

MH: Okay. (laughs)

RW: I knew right then and there. And so did everybody else, because the average GI's so generous, and they're empty. Hey, we all had musette bags—they weren't musette bags; they were gas mask carriers. We threw away the gas mask. And they were full of chocolate bars and cigarettes and any other thing you wanted to keep close to your heart and soul, and you'd give them to these people. And there were little kids; there were six-year-olds.

One little girl didn't know her name. All she knew was she had a tattoo, and she showed it to me, and that was her name. Turned out she was a Polish Jew whose mother and father had both been killed, and she didn't know where she was from or what her name was. Long story to that. She ended up being repatriated, if you will, and sent to the French sector and raised a Roman Catholic, and at eighteen, she found a Polish uncle, found out that she was Jewish. She ended up in this country in Savannah, of all places, until she died in—oh, about 2002. But I met her in 1998. That's another story; that's through the Holocaust Commission.

But anyway, you couldn't—you could go to the gate, but you couldn't wade across the canal, moat, whatever you want to call it, and then climb the fence and try to get in. It was just too high and too many obstacles. So, you had to approach the center island from one of two or three places. I saw and was connected with only one, and it was the closest to the main gate, and we kept it shut. We added to the chains, and we set up a machine gun and established people there with a .30 caliber, and nobody got in and nobody got out.

MH: Which way was the machine gun pointing?

RW: What's that?

MH: Which way was the machine gun pointing?

RW: It was pointed into the camp to keep them there, and we explained to these people—I don't speak German, they don't speak English. We made them understand that you got to stay there, and we made them understand that the doctors were coming, the medics. And some of those people spoke better English than I did. There were people in that camp that were well educated. They were artists and professionals from all over. Their only crime was political, if you know what I'm talking about.

MH: Yes.

RW: Of course you do. Anyway, the situation—

Now, going around the corner, farther away from me, over where most of I Company was, there were even guards in one of the machine gun posts in the tower. There was an exchange, and the guard—I know at least one German guard was shot out of the tower and killed. I know a couple of the German guards ran into the compound, and the inmates tore them apart and threw their dismembered bodies into the moat. So, you get an idea that there was mass hysteria.

MH: I've seen a picture of what I'm told is one of the guards, and the person—it was this Irv Ross that I met—³

³ Irv Ross was also interviewed for the Concentration Camp Liberators Oral History Project. The DOI for his interview is C65-00118.

RW: What?

MH: This man that I met here, who gave me a picture. He said it was one of the guards; they thought they were Germans, but he said it turns out they were Russians and Poles, and now you're telling me they were probably Ukrainians, I'd guess.

RW: Yeah, I suppose.

MH: They got him out of the tower, and the picture he showed me is fairly bloody. It looks like the guy's down on the ground, and somebody has put a buttstroke right through his forehead.

RW: I wouldn't doubt it. I can tell you right now, one of our I Company kids—we were forcing prisoners into a coal yard. It was a blind alley between two buildings, and the buildings were stucco, and it was a dead end. We were forcing them in there and lined them up against the wall, and they were not being abused.

MH: These are—?

RW: Germans.

MH: Germans, okay.

RW: German guards. And, incidentally, they weren't trying to get away, either. But this young kid was about seventeen-and-a-half, eighteen-and-a-half; he may have been fifteen lying. He flipped his lid and turned his machine gun on them and hit the trigger. He killed seventeen guards before the machine gun could be kicked away from him, and he left there in restraints, tied to a litter, wearing his jacket reversed like a straitjacket, because he lost his mind. He just couldn't take what he saw.

MH: Did you see that?

RW: Absolutely. Colonel Sparks, he's the man who kicked the machine gun away from the boy.

MH: I've seen this series of four photos in David Israel's book that shows Colonel Sparks firing his .45 into—⁴

RW: With his .45, you better bet.

MH: Tell me what happened.

RW: What he was doing was calling off some insubordinate half-crazed Americans. I mean, some of our guys went nuts. And Sparks is the kind of guy that puts an end to it in a hurry, and he did it Patton-style. Now, I don't mean the Hollywood-style. I mean the real Patton, not the George Scott thing. You get the idea? I admired that man, I certainly did.

MH: Tell me what he did.

RW: What did he do? Well, first of all, he got all of his company commanders and he let everybody know there'll be no prisoners, German or otherwise, killed unless it's a matter of self-defense. You get 'em all in here, and there'll be no looting. In other words, we'll be American soldiers. That's what he did.

And I want to tell you something else: Some of the subordinate officers—lieutenants, primarily, and I'm thinking of Lieutenant [William P.] Walsh, who commanded I Company, and Lieutenant [Jack] Bushyhead, who was one of his platoon leaders. They were both tolerant of and, I think, contributing to the near mutiny. Now, that's a personal observation; the records don't say that. But they were accused of it, and the Inspector General said it didn't happen. But the Inspector General was there months afterward.

MH: In this courtyard area, it was the kid on the machine gun who just opened fire.

RW: Exactly. And his answer was, "They were trying to get away," which ain't true.

MH: Did anybody else start shooting?

⁴ *The Day the Thunderbird Cried: Untold Stories of World War II*, published in 2005. David Israel was also interviewed for the Concentration Camp Liberators Oral History Project. The DOI for his interview is C65-00063.

RW: Different places, yes.

MH: Did Sparks actually fire his gun into the air?

RW: You better bet he did. He pulled that thing and fired in the air, and he got everybody's attention, and he got people moving. He did what had to be done.

MH: How many—

RW: Did he kill anybody? No. Did he fire at anybody? No. He just took action, and it made him the center of attention in a hurry.

MH: How many German prisoners—aside from the ones who were killed, how many were in—?

RW: About 200 total, and that included some very old men and some very young boys. There was an SS captain who was short, portly, and didn't look like the SS, and he'd been an adjutant. He was a paper chaser, and he'd been left in command. And then there was some dumb son of a gun who put on lederhosen and an Alpine hat and got a walking stick and came strolling by, said he was on his way to the mountains, trying to convince people he was a Dachau citizen. And the prisoners were yelling he was the *Hauptmann*, the *Hauptmann*, "the captain." And, of course, he was captured.

MH: And he was in the camp, walking out with lederhosen?

RW: Absolutely! He was someplace hiding and he decided to dress up like he belonged to *The Sound of Music*.

MH: (laughs)

RW: He was desperate. He also had been educated in the United States; spoke better English than I did. So, now you see what we generally have is building to building, place by place, one tragedy after another. Open a building, there's big vats full of iced salt water, and there's people tied in chairs and suspended in there. They were determining how long a pilot could live if he was shot down in the North Sea.

MH: And you saw this?

RW: You better bet I saw it.

MH: These were buildings that were outside the—

RW: Outside the moat but inside the camp.

MH: So, tell me. You walk up to this building—

RW: Yeah, and you open it up and it looks like a gymnasium at a high school, and then you see the big vats. You go over to see what they are and it's brine, and there's cooling rods going into it. But now what there is is a chair with a dead body, because the place is warm, it's not cooling anymore, and the body's dead.

MH: How many bodies are in this brine?

RW: In the building, three as I remember. But then there were bodies stacked up behind it to be moved away. They stacked them like cordwood, anywhere.

MH: So, you see that, and what do you think?

RW: Well, we knew we've got a bunch of nuts, crazy killers. What would you think?

MH: Yes. I realize—you're ordained now, right?

RW: Now, yeah.

MH: So, you can't say the words that you said then.

RW: Oh, shit, I can say them.

MH: Oh, okay. (laughs)

RW: I can say them, you don't have to—listen, I'm still profane as I ever was, except then I spoke a barracks language. But yeah, that's a simple answer. I'm amazed, I'm shocked, I'm nearly out of my gourd, and it was real hard to keep your cool.

MH: Do you start screaming at the guys you're with?

RW: Absolutely, them and everybody else. And the colonel says, "Shut your you-know-what mouth, and don't let anybody kill anybody," and he said to me, "You get on the horn, you get Colonel [Walter P.] O'Brien from regiment, and you tell them we need help in a hurry. This place is gonna explode."

MH: What weapon are you carrying at the moment?

RW: An M1.

MH: An M1, okay.

RW: I was still a rifleman.

MH: I just didn't know whether you'd left the M1 in the Jeep and had a .45.

RW: No, no, no, no, no. A .45's no damn good. I couldn't hit the side of a barn with a .45.

MH: That I understand from personal experience.

RW: Yeah. An M1 is the answer.

Now, let me give you—move a little farther. While we're doing this, we hear firefighting. The colonel has an idea. He's talking to his runners and his company commanders, and we don't know if it's all us or not, because we have been told that the 42nd [Infantry] Division was in the position and that they might support us or join us. The truth of the

matter is, elements of the 42nd Division did come to the backside of the camp and did get in, and didn't get involved in a firefight, and were part of the liberation.

MH: They did.

RW: They absolutely did. Now, they weren't where I was, but they were there. You'll talk to Thunderbirds that tell you that's not true, they were the only people there. But, Mike, they didn't know what was going on.

MH: I know. I just came back from the Rainbow reunion in Mobile, and there's still a war going on between those two divisions.

RW: Exactly. But the truth of the matter is it was higher headquarters' fault, because when you get an ops order that tells you that an adjacent division might participate, what the hell's good is that to you when they're on their flanks and you don't know where they are, and you've got no liaison?

MH: And your radios don't connect to their radios?

RW: Exactly. They may be netted, but they weren't at the time.

Now, let me give you the second page of the story. Into this mess drives one Brigadier General [Henning] Linden, L-i-n-d-e-n, Assistant Division Commander, 42nd Division. An asshole with a capital "A"—

MH: (laughs)

RW: —who carries with him his guard, his aide, his runner, and Maggie [Marguerite] Higgins, a reporter. And let me tell you why he was there. He was there to assume command of the liberation. Now, remember, this is after the firefight. And the original intent was—it was political, and it came from the White House while FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt] was still alive, that this man would come back to New York and lead the 42nd Division down Broadway and he'd end up governor of New York. Well, FDR died, and Linden died in obscurity, too, running from Patton, because Patton would've had him hanged. He came in there, he ordered Sparks to give up the command. He's a brigadier general, and Sparks just flat refused.

MH: Did you witness this?

RW: Absolutely. And I witnessed the son of a bitch try to take a riding crop, sort of a— what do you call them, a flyer stick? He was going to hit one of our non-coms [non-commissioned officers].

I also want to tell you that Maggie Higgins decided she was gonna climb the gate, go over the moat, get through the inner gate, and she was gonna interview prisoners. She was looking for Pastor [Martin] Niemöller, but he wasn't there. He'd been gone a few days. And we told her she couldn't, and she said she could, and she screamed about First Amendment rights, and I told her there was no such thing on the battlefield. We picked her up like a sack of potatoes and took her back to the Jeep and threatened to tie her or handcuff her there if she didn't stay. And she was there for the express purpose of making General Linden look good.

MH: Where did this confrontation between Linden and Sparks take place?

RW: Between Linden and what?

MH: Where did the confrontation between Linden—

RW: And Sparks?

MH: —take place?

RW: Between the coal yard and the front gate.

MH: And Sparks is a lieutenant colonel.

RW: That's right.

MH: And Linden's a one-star.

RW: A brigadier general. Sparks is about 6'4" and built like a drinking straw, and Linden is over-age, -weight, over-everything but intelligence.

MH: (laughs)

RW: Not that I'm sarcastic or anything.

MH: That's okay. We like that.

RW: You know what I'm talking about.

MH: I had a deal with a one-star at Củ Chi, Vietnam, who was—

RW: Oh, you know what I'm talking about.

MH: I know exactly. I know the type.

RW: I lived to reach that lofty spot myself for a very short time, so I know how to be both an asshole and the other kind.

MH: (laughs) Okay.

RW: I've been at both ends of the stick. But seriously, this guy was strictly looking—now, I am not maligning the 42nd Division. Hear me, Mike.

MH: I understand.

RW: Some brave people. But that guy Linden—and if you run into a lieutenant colonel in your things by the name of Ferencz, F-e-r-e-n-c-z [*sic*], the Hungarian spelling, that's the asshole who liberated Dachau with the 42nd Division, and also liberated Munich, and did everything but witness Hitler's incineration.⁵

⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Walter J. Fellenz.

MH: (laughs)

RW: And you will run into that, and he wrote reams. And the ridiculous part of it: some of the stuff he's sending letters back to a very deserving, wonderful son, who worshipped his father and did a lot of work and wrote a big book about it, and the guy was an asshole. He was a lieutenant colonel hiding from his battalion 'cause he didn't have guts enough to run it. But those things happen in war.

MH: Okay. So, the confrontation takes place, and how does it end?

RW: Well, what happens is, Sparks said to me, "You get on the phone, you get hold of Colonel O'Brien, and tell him what's going on here," and he literally chased the general and his Jeep full of people out of there. And he said to the general, "The only thing between your head and my fucking gun right now is me," you know, himself. (MH laughs) He says, "If you don't get the hell out of here, I'm gonna pull the trigger." That was after this guy was gonna take a riding crop to the sergeant. And they got out of there, and he's [Linden] screaming, "You will hear about this, you'll hear about this," and he goes away from there, hell bent for leather. This is no discredit to the 42nd Division riflemen who were well led and are back doing their job in another part of the camp. They don't even know he's been there.

Okay, he gets out of there. Colonel O'Brien, the regimental commander, arrives. Within minutes, Major General [Robert T.] Frederick arrives. He's the commanding general, 45th Division.

MH: Do you remember his first name?

RW: Frederick. Major General Frederick. No, I don't remember his first name.

MH: Okay, General Frederick.

RW: I think it was Robert, but it's Frederick. I can find it.

MH: That's okay. 45th Division.

RW: Right. He was thirty-seven years old, major general, youngest in Europe. He ran around in his shirtsleeves with an overseas cap. He didn't wear a helmet, and he didn't believe in wearing jackets when it was snowing, and he was what today would be a Ranger in Special Forces. And he was a showoff. He was fairly effective, but he didn't like Sparks, and Sparks didn't like him, 'cause he took chances with our men and Sparks didn't. Sparks was a deliberate leader, and this guy was a showoff.

But he came, and he told Sparks, "You forget about this, nothing will happen to anybody. I'll take care of him myself before this day is over." Well, you know what happened? That was April 29. The war was over on May 8 in Europe, and things were damned near then, and Frederick got tapped for someplace else. He just up and went. And the minute he went, Linden crawled out from under a rock and proffered charges for mistreatment of German prisoners of war, and for insubordination and fomenting mutiny, all these other things.

And let me tell you what happened. He pops all this stuff up, runs. Screw the 42nd Division; he's the deputy commander. It goes—it's supposed to go to Army and some jackanapes was reading the—I was going to say UCMJ [Uniform Code of Military Justice], but they didn't have an UCMJ then. Reading the equivalent of whatever the hell it was, and he finds out that the theatre commander has to approve a capital conviction. Doesn't say that he has to approve the court martial or the investigation. He has to approve the results.

So, they run that damned thing all the way to Paris, back to (inaudible), back to Eisenhower's headquarters, and—here's typical Army lawyers—come up with a definite maybe. They said, "This isn't our call. This is the Army commander's responsibility," and they sent it back to Patton. It was brought to Patton's personal attention, and he ripped them up and dismissed them and gave orders to pick Linden up and get him out of uniform. By that time, Linden was on the way to the States, became a civilian. Now, that's an oversimplification, but that's one of the things that happened.

MH: Okay, back inside Dachau. You've seen this confrontation. You've been in one building that has these brine chambers. Now, what's the next building you go into?

RW: Well, the cremator—first, I went over to the rack, where they shot prisoners. They had a kneeling rack.

MH: What kind of rack?

RW: A kneeling rack. Looked like duckboards in a shower room. They had some crazy idea that German soldiers, German officers, deserters, should be shot rather than cremated, rather than gassed. So, they shoot them with great ceremony, and I found the rack. And then I encountered piles of clothing, two stories high, quarter of an acre of clothes.

MH: Outdoors?

RW: Outdoors, piled up high. This is from the people who took a shower. They abandoned their clothes and were marched from the shower room into the crematory. And then we found the building with the ovens in it.

MH: Did you find the gas chamber first?

RW: Yes. First the kneeling rack, then the gas chamber.

MH: Tell me about the gas chamber, because there's stories that said people were not sent to Dachau to be gassed.

RW: Oh, bullshit. They were gassed regularly. And not only that, but they had wheelbarrow-looking contraptions on little—what looked like a (inaudible) railroad—so they could push piles of bodies from the gas chamber to the crematories. And they used slave labor to do it.

MH: So, you go into the building where the gas chamber is.

RW: Exactly.

MH: Do you open up the doors to the chamber?

RW: Oh, we went all over the place. We tore it apart, and we found the gas pellets up in the showerheads, you know, found out that it was no shower room at all. And the gas was xenon, but we don't know what xenon is. We just know you don't light a cigarette.

MH: The gas was xenon? X-e-n-o-n?

RW: Right.

MH: It wasn't Zyklon?

RW: Xenon. It could've been others. I can tell you what I found on the cans we found. And you're right, I think Zyklon was—

MH: Yeah, Zyklon B was the gas that they were using.

RW: Okay, and xenon also. And xenon may have been a trade name for Zyklon B.

It's the same way I got into the commandant's office and lifted the 35mm Leica. And this guy was a camera nut. All those pictures that I have—and you saw a few of them if you read through—they were taken with that Leica. And this guy had a whole darkroom with a big cupboard full of chemicals. We took the chemicals, but we didn't know enough German to know how to use them, and we ruined half the pictures. But we took so damn many, and we made copies.

Then the Signal Corps got there, and I found the signal sergeant. You know, one can take care of the other. And I found souvenirs for him and he found negatives for me, and when I was ordered to give up my negatives because I was in the Army, and you don't have a private life in the Army, you know, I kept—I gave up copies. I kept my negatives. Some of my pictures ended up in *Life* magazine. All it said was "Photo by a soldier." You know, you don't get bylines in war, unless your name's Ernie Powell or something like that.

MH: Actually, a brief story. When I was in—Kathy does the transcriptions in this, and she can stop transcribing for a moment. When I was in Vietnam, I was an Army combat correspondent.

RW: Well, then, you know.

MH: I did the first story on conscientious objector medics in combat. And I did that story, and the military approved it, and we ended up giving it to *Time* magazine. When they finally ran their version of it, they ran it with a photo that I took of a PFC [private first

class] CO medic, who had by then been killed, and I got a photo credit in *Time* magazine that said, “Photo by Army Sergeant Michael S. Hirsh—”

RW: No kidding!

MH: —and a check for \$25.

RW: No kidding!

Part 1 ends; part 2 begins

MH: Now, back to Germany.

RW: Yeah.

MH: So, you went through the gas chamber.

RW: Right. No bodies in there. Place was reasonably clean, swept out by slave labor.

MH: Then you get to the crematorium.

RW: And then we go to the crematorium, that’s right. We don’t know what we’re doing. We’re going to the next building.

MH: And what do you see in the crematorium?

RW: We see open ovens, and we see that they’ve got—looks like they’ve been baking bread, looks like they got oars for a boat. You put a body on and slide it in and push it way down, you know, and we found the poles. And, of course, here there’s four ovens, and there’s corridors, and the building’s got three or four wings, and every one of them’s loaded with bodies. And the bodies are emaciated, stacked there, and you can’t tell a man from a woman, except to go over and men have—I mean, from a distance. And every body—every toe’s got a tag. You know, every body is tagged. The Germans were meticulous.

MH: The smell is overwhelming?

RW: The smell is there.

MH: Do you throw up?

RW: Yeah. It wasn't as bad as it was out in the field where the maggots and Mother Nature was there, because that building didn't have any heat. And those bodies—I don't know, it's like—there wasn't much flesh on those bones, but they weren't skeletons. But I tell you what, they didn't have any problem with body mass.

MH: You see that, and—how many guys are going through this with you?

RW: Oh, it varies. It varies, depends on who I was with and what the colonel had me doing. When he let me go, there was probably two, three people with me, and sometimes I tagged onto another group. I moved around pretty freely.

MH: Did you have the camera by that point?

RW: Oh, yeah, I got the camera. The camera was in the commandant's office, which was the first building—when you went in, the gatehouse was on your right as you went in, and then the administrative building was the first building on your left, and that's where the commandant's office was. I got in there early, and I was looking for a camera. When I saw what was in that field and realized we were going into that camp, I wanted a camera. I almost shot somebody for a camera.

MH: So, when you find the camera, there's film in it?

RW: Film in the camera? Absolutely.

MH: As a photographer, I start to wonder, how do you know what your exposure is?

RW: I didn't know a damn thing. I poked and hoped.

MH: I got it. Okay.

RW: I never in my life used a 35mm camera. The only thing I'd ever used had been a 110 Brownie Kodak, if you know what they were.

MH: I know what they were.

RW: That was the extent of my technical ability, and that's why my pictures are granulated, out of focus. Some of them are beautiful by accident and some of them are terrible. But it was quantity, shoot all you can, and I wasn't—there was all kinds of cameras in that place. The guy was a bug, and I wasn't the only one. There was probably a dozen guys got cameras, and we compared pictures. We finally got the Signal Corps—the Signal Corps came in there to set up a detachment to support the rehabilitation, and then we got them working for us, because—(coughs) Excuse me. We gave them loot, like Lugers [pistols] and Nazi flags and all those sweet things. They got what I call foxhole souvenirs, and we got their technical support.

Now, we got pulled out of there in a hell of a hurry, because we weren't rehab troops.

MH: Okay, but before you talk about pulling out of there, continue with your making your way through the camp. You know, you've been in the commandant's office—

RW: Well, we got through the cluster of buildings, and then we come out and we find a big place that—it's a big hole in the ground. We get over to it, and we find out that those are ashes, that they were burying the ashes. And then another pit where they were gonna bury bodies, but there sits the bulldozers with no gasoline, no oil, diesel, whatever they took. And then from there, we get farther around and work our way back towards the moat on the other side, and that's when we found people in the 42nd Division, including the guys that shot at the guard in the guardhouse, you know, up in the guard tower. So, we moved fast, and without too much purpose. You just keep going.

MH: How long did that tour take you, do you think?

RW: Oh, I suppose two and a half, three hours.

MH: And you still had not gone into the area where the prisoners were?

RW: No, no, except I came back—they kept on going. We run into the 42nd people, and I went back, picked up my driver and our Jeep, and went over to see who was—I was going to that gate to meet a prisoner. I didn't say I was going in, but I was going to meet a prisoner. And I did that, and I had a sergeant with me. He was from the Ammunition and Pioneer Platoon; they were there in support. I dragged him along with me. He's the guy that helped me throw Maggie Higgins away from the gate. That's a way to distinguish yourself: manhandle a reporter.

MH: Yeah, absolutely. Did she ever write about that?

RW: I don't know whether she did or not. I never got tarred with that brush. The charges, the formal charges, never happened. The Article 32, we'd call it, but the investigation never happened. It got as far as 3rd Army headquarters and Patton, and he said something to the effect of, "You're taught how to win a war, and you won it. That's the end. Goodbye." A little thing like that didn't bother him. He understands that you don't have to worry what your pinky's doing on the battlefield. Now, I'm pretty blasé about it, and we weren't then. We were scared shitless.

MH: Okay. Now, you've picked up the other guy and are in the Jeep, and you're driving over. You're driving—?

RW: Back to the original—the first place that we found to get over the moat onto the island, and in effect, driving as though we were going to drive right into the center of camp where the prisoners were. But, remember, the gate is secured, and there's some people there with a machine gun. They were from one of the rifle companies, and I think it was K. No—yeah, I think it was. Then we had our weapons company with their air-cooled .30 caliber and their 60mm mortars, you know—and their 81mm mortars, for that matter. They were running around that place, too. I'll have you know that a Chinese fire drill had more organization than that day.

MH: (laughs) What are they going to do with an 81mm mortar? I mean—

RW: What're they gonna do?

MH: Yeah.

RW: Well, suppose the guards had come at us en masse? That's about what would've happened. They'd have used 80s or 60s. But the guards didn't ever attack us. A couple guards did fire, and there was an exchange of fire, but I was never fired at at Dachau—I mean me, personally, pinned down.

MH: So, you drive the Jeep up to where the guy is sitting with the machine gun, and you get out of the Jeep.

RW: Get out of the Jeep and go to the gate. Talked to a little girl six years old that doesn't know her name, who shows me her tattoo. Talked to a guy and give him a candy bar and watch him puke his head off. And talked to other people and tell them the doctor's coming, get everybody out. And we did get water. Our headquarters company—we called back at our battalion headquarters, and they brought Lister bags up, and they brought fresh water, and we got water. And we had cooks that came and set up and boiled bouillon, and they were giving these people bouillon. You know those little ration three cigarettes in a package? Well, we had those. They tore the rations apart, passed out the bouillon and the cigarettes, primarily, and told everybody about the help that was coming. And it kind of settled down.

I was working my way towards that gate when Linden arrived, and we didn't know who he was or what he was. All that went on during this time, too, and just overlapped. It isn't one thing at a time. Didn't have a—it's pretty hard to put it in sequence at this stage. But you just stumble from one thing into the next.

MH: Were you pulled emotionally to stay there or pulled emotionally to leave?

RW: No, I wanted to stay. I wanted to stay. I wanted to stay; I wanted to be part of the rehab thing. I'd have been there till 1950 if they'd left me.

MH: Why?

RW: Because I wanted to see those people out of there and rehabbed and made human beings again. I've got some compassion in my body. There wasn't one person there that deserved to be there, and you know it, too. Thousands and thousands and thousands of people, and everybody there had somebody close to them dead or dying. Yeah, I'd have stayed.

We left there reluctantly, and I found every excuse in God's earth to come back there, and after V-E Day, I went back there for days and sponged on my friends who were there in the rehab work. And I went back there clean into the fifties [1950s], when I was back as an officer in the NATO situation and stationed in Germany again. I must've made ten trips to Dachau.

MH: When you went back when the rehab was going on, what did you do?

RW: I just watched. I haunted the place. See what was going on, see who was there.

MH: You went in the gates where the prisoners were kept?

RW: Absolutely.

MH: Tell me about that.

RW: By that time, they were cleaning the place up and disinfecting it, and they were performing triage and moving people out. They established barracks for people that didn't have to be operated on or hospitalized, and they were dragging the rest away in ambulances. They were even using deuce-and-a-halves for ambulances. I watched what was going on. Three general hospitals came in there, one right after the other. I didn't interfere in their operation, but I sure as hell watched.

MH: Did you get the impression that they were going to save a significant number of people?

RW: Yeah. I met my first—I got my first introduction to obfuscating bureaucrats, too: the AMGOT people, Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories, A-M-G-O-T. We'd call them Civil Affairs today. They were Washingtonians and God knows what. They were most of them Roosevelt appointees. They were political hacks, and they came in there to run the show. And I saw that operating, too. It wasn't a Red Cross operation, believe me.

MH: So, that stuff never goes away.

RW: No, no, no. It breeds. Ward healers, they come out of the woodwork, Mike.

MH: At what point did you—I'll put it this way. How soon did you realize that this experience at Dachau was going to be with you for the rest of your life?

RW: Probably before I got through the gate, over the wall. Right after I tossed my cookies in the first boxcar. You know right then and there that you aren't going to live this one down. And when we got away from there, I didn't tell the world. I didn't even put a mention of it, not a word of it, in my letters home. I didn't say "Dachau" and whether the censors would've let me or not, I didn't do it.

MH: Why not?

RW: Well, because I couldn't express it. I wanted to see what was going on, but I couldn't describe it. I didn't really find myself able to discuss it until I got back to the States. And I ran into the deniers, telling me that it was an Eisenhower—it was a Churchill/Roosevelt/Stalin myth, that there were no concentration camps, and my pictures were lies and I was brainwashed.

MH: When did you first run into those people?

RW: When did I run into that? Nineteen forty-six, in the United States. I got home. I was invited to speak at a German Evangelical United Brethren Church in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, and the damn pastor was a Nazi. He stood up there and introduced me and told everybody that what I was gonna say was a damn lie, but he wanted them to hear it. This was an ordained minister of God, a U.S. citizen.

MH: And you got up there and—?

RW: I got up and made him look like two cents. And I've been spiling ever since.

MH: I've heard from other vets I've talked to that they ran into fellow soldiers who hadn't been to any of the camps who said, essentially, that there were no concentration camps, that it was all bullshit.

RW: Yeah, I'm sure they did.

MH: How could that be?

RW: Some of them also ran into fellow soldiers said they were there when they weren't. There's more of that than denial. I didn't run into too much GI denial, but when you've got eighteen million people in uniform, you've got the cross-section of the world there. You've got everything going.

I want to run something by you for a second. You got your pencil there?

MH: Yes.

RW: I want to give you some names. Okay? Leon Baff, L-e-o-n, last name B-a-f-f. He was a lieutenant colonel, and he was a Philadelphia educator, and a black high school superintendent who portrays himself as a liberator at Buchenwald, and actually he was there after the liberation as an observer of the rehab. But together with Paul Parks, P-a-r-k-s, Massachusetts, Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth at one time, a lying bastard who said he hung onto the turret of a tank and rode into Dachau to help with the liberation, when his unit was eighty kilometers away, and he was an engineer who never got any closer than the minefields. But he actually was feted and got an award from the Berlin chapter of the B'nai B'rith about five years ago. We exposed him, and they went ahead and did it anyway! I tell you, this world's funny.

Let me tell you what happened, Mike. There were so many exaggerations and so many inaccuracies and so many contradictions, and when they set up the National Holocaust Museum, a very grateful, dedicated group of men and women accepted everything that was told them. They published a lot of it and they recorded it, and they gave credence to a lot of lies. Even Steven Spielberg produced a documentary, and Leon Baff and Paul Parks were in that documentary, and there wasn't five seconds of truth in that damn thing. Just to give you an example. But I wanted you—and if you run across those names, you take a good look.

MH: Do you happen to know, at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., if there's one or two people there who are really experts on the liberators?

RW: I don't offhand, but I can get you some. I'll have to get back. Let me make a note. Let me make a note. I will get you Major General Frederick's—

MH: Yeah, I can find that. That's easy.

RW: —ID. And you want to know about—?

MH: At the National Holocaust Museum.

RW: National Holocaust Museum.

MH: I need—

RW: You want to know two reliable—

MH: One would be great; two would be better.

RW: One or two reliable what?

MH: People who are experts on the liberators.

RW: Oh, expert on the liberators? Okay. There's a woman down there, her name escapes me right now, but I've talked to her twenty-five or thirty times, and she's—

MH: One of the things that I want to do is try and find at least one guy from as many camps as I can find.

RW: Absolutely.

MH: You know Curtis Whiteway?

RW: I know the name.

MH: I've spoken with him, and he was at Dachau III-B, Muhldorf, and also Hadamar.

RW: You know what happened, Dachau had dozens—

MH: I know. I've seen over two—

RW: —of sub-camps.

MH: I've seen over 200 sub-camps.

RW: And every sub-camp that got liberated, those people go away saying, "We liberated Dachau."

MH: Dachau, right.

RW: That's part of the confusion. And all they did was some little slave encampment. That happens.

MH: Every little slave encampment counts.

RW: You better bet. Every slave counts.

MH: Which leads me to ask, aside from the main Dachau concentration camp, did you run into any other places?

RW: No, I didn't, but our battalion did as we moved on. But I want to tell you something.

MH: Go ahead.

RW: By May 8, we were in Munich in the suburb of Laim, L-a-i-m, which was a suburb of Munich, right on the edge of it. We were in apartment buildings, and we thought we were gonna be kings for the rest of the war, and then 3rd Army came in and sent us out to the boondocks, sent us out to the horseshit piles, out in the woods and things. And then, of course, they started getting the outfits out and sending the high point people home. I

didn't run into any sub-camps, but part of our regiment and part of our battalion did. But I didn't.

MH: Let me come back first, so I don't forget this. When did you leave Dachau the first time?

RW: The second day after, April 30, 1 May.

MH: So, you stayed there for two days.

RW: Right. 1 May.

MH: Did you go outside the camp to sleep, or did you stay?

RW: No, no. I didn't worry about sleeping. You crawl up in—you know what you do? You turn your raincoat inside out and curl up in the Jeep, or you use one of the buildings.

MH: And you slept there.

RW: Exactly.

MH: And they were setting up—

RW: They were setting up, and I was sponging. I was only there at the largesse of the battalion commander, because he moved out late that day. The battalion moved on. They still had a mission. He and I talked, and he says, "I want you back with the troops within three days." Now, you have to understand, this was a compassionate leader. This was a guy who watched, knew what we were going through, and who appreciated the fact that if that general had opened his mouth to intimidate Sparks, I'd have clobbered him. I'd have scalped him with the butt plate of the M1.

MH: (laughs)

RW: And they all knew it. I was a spitfire when I was a kid.

MH: But then they would've done bad things to you.

RW: Absolutely. But I would've been stubborn enough, you know?

MH: You stayed there until May 1.

RW: Exactly. And then I caught up with the people on the way to Munich, got back with my—I caught up with the kitchen train, and then it was easy to find the battalion. It was only the second or third time I've done that. I got captured for five hours one day back in the Battle of the Bulge, too, but I got back that day. That's another story.

MH: In the course of the war, what awards or medals did you receive?

RW: What's that?

MH: Did you receive—were you wounded?

RW: Yeah, three times.

MH: So, you have three Purple Hearts.

RW: Three Purple Hearts, a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, a European-African Combat Ribbon with some arrowheads and some bronze stars on them—you know, campaigns. I forget how many now.

MH: When did you finally get back to the States?

RW: Oh, because there was a possibility I might suffer a general court-martial, I didn't get back to the States in a hurry. They sent me off to the 9th Division, to the 60th Infantry, to sit on my ass and do nothing until somebody decided there was not going to be any court-martial.

MH: This was for the incident with Linden?

RW: Right. It was October of 1945 when they released me.

MH: And then you came home?

RW: Came home, that's right.

MH: By ship?

RW: Yes. USS *General Mann*. Came into Patrick Henry, Newport News, Virginia, and went to [Fort] Indiantown Gap and mustered out and went home, and looked around and reenlisted.

MH: When did you first—well, you'd realized it before, but how did your experience at the camp, at Dachau, affect you the first time? When did you realize that this was in your guts?

RW: Well, I got home, first of all, and I went through all the emotional experience of getting home and getting back to a fiancée and getting back to a family and making plans to become a college student. I had a scholarship for Waynesburg College, with all expenses paid for four years, and of course, I hadn't been able to use a day of it. I came back to do all that, and I suddenly found out that I didn't like waiting in line for nylons and cars and tires, and I found out that the military wasn't that bad. I went back into uniform, and I was back in harness when I met these deniers, and I suppose that would've been in 1947. And it was forty-seven [1947] that I—and I'll tell you something else.

They sent me to the Information and Education School, which was at Carlisle Barracks. It was troop orientation—TI&E, they called it then. They call it Public Affairs, Public Relations; they got a different name every generation. But it was TI&E, and I went there and I ran into a warrant officer there who was a tremendously entertaining fool. But he broadcast the belief that there weren't any concentration camps, and we were all hoodwinked and brainwashed. I nearly took him apart, and he lit my fuse, and that's when I got started. I couldn't do much about it as a sergeant, but when I became an officer and started making speeches, I started talking about the—and I was in uniform and I began articulating the experience. And I kept at it individually, without any military sanction, but if I was called upon or had the opportunity to describe it, I did.

MH: What did you find the reactions of your audiences were?

RW: Oh, skeptical at first and very receptive in the end, particularly when you spread out all the pictures and give them a walk-through. You know, you load all that stuff up and show them where you took it and how, and you got a schematic of the camp and take them around, and if you take them on, you can be persuasive.

MH: Were you experiencing nightmares?

RW: What's that?

MH: Were you experiencing nightmares?

RW: I did in forty-six [1946], but I pretty much grew away from it by forty-seven [1947], forty-eight [1948]. There have been some recurrences; even in 2007, some things happened. I'll tell you when I had a real bad situation is when Sparks died last Thanksgiving. When Sparks died—see, up till then, he was on the other end of the phone. If they asked him and he didn't know, he could say, "Call Russ." Russ could say, "Call Sparks." And all of a sudden, the fact that he wasn't there, and that night I had a hell of a—I had a nightmare like I used to have in forty-six [1946], and I thought I'd outgrown that. My God, I was eighty-two years old. You'd think that—

MH: What do you see—?

RW: Your mind can play tricks on you.

MH: I know. What do you see in the nightmares?

RW: What do I see in the nightmare? Well, I see people running and being chased into trucks to be placed into trains to be taken off to a concentration camp. That's one of the dreams. And another one, of course, is I see—I dream I'm going back through that trip. You know, I find myself rediscovering all those places. Sometimes—and always, always, always, the crematory. No matter where you start, you end up there. The mind doesn't want to believe it.

MH: Right. In your dream, are you seeing bodies burning?

RW: No. No, I'm seeing bodies stacked up, just as they were. I never saw bodies burning.

MH: Right, I understand that. I just wondered if your mind elaborated—if your mind filled in the blanks.

RW: No, the mind didn't do that to me. I just relived what I had seen.

MH: So, how do you feel that your experience impacted your career choices, your education, what you've done?

RW: Oh, I think it was the building block for the rest of my life. How do you get away from it? I decided that good things happen—that bad things happen when good people shut up and don't do anything. So, I started out on a crusade of one to let the world know you gotta get off the dime and do something. You gotta wake up, you gotta get up, you gotta stand up, you gotta speak up, and you don't dare shut up. And that's been my creed for years and years and years. And people who knew me found that out, and it affected my service. It's the reason I was commissioned. It's the reason that I went to C&GS [Command and General Staff]. It's the reason I got ahead. It's the reason that, as a Mustang with no military claim to fame, I was able to stay so damn long in uniform, too.

I had a brigadier general write an efficiency report, and he said, "If I had established a new headquarters tomorrow and I was allowed only one officer in the U.S. Army, it would be Lieutenant Weiskircher." And he signed his name, and he was a brigadier general, and that Form 66 and that OER [Officer Evaluation Report] stayed with me for my whole damn career, made a water walker out of me. Everybody read that and believed it. If you're fortunate enough to have an articulate, communicative supervisor, you can benefit from it. Now, I'm not saying that I didn't do a good job, but I'm saying that I didn't do the job the way he described it. He just happened to be a man who had a way with words.

But I was driven. In fact, I was on the Holocaust Commission because I was making a speech in Savannah to the Mighty 8th Museum.

MH: To which museum?

RW: The Mighty 8th; that's the 8th Air Force. I was down there making a speech, and when it was all over, this man walked up to me and shook my hand and said, "I'm Zell Miller, the governor of this state. Why the hell aren't you on my Holocaust Commission?" And the next week, I was appointed to the Commission.

MH: When you were in World War II, how would you describe your belief in God or your relationship with God?

RW: It wasn't too strong, and it took a while. I was born and reared into a God-fearing, churchgoing home, but they weren't Quakers, they weren't evangelical. They were ordinary people without a real strong commitment, but they had good scruples and good ethics. I went to Sunday school and church and went through all the motions, but I wasn't a real practicing Christian and I didn't know that I wasn't. I thought I was everything that the church should be, and I was so overwhelmed in World War II and so busy staying alive. On the Anzio beachhead on the twenty-second of May 1944, before we jumped off to leave the beachhead, I made a commitment to God then that I hadn't in my whole life, and I guess that's when I made a decision that—I made an understanding that there was a God.

MH: Okay, but then you get to Dachau.

RW: Yeah.

MH: How can there be a God?

RW: Well, the Good Book tells me that God gave us the ability to think, to know right from wrong, to call our own actions. The Good Book tells me that the devil competes for us. We can go one way or the other. Don't let me give you a sermon now.

MH: No, well, you can give me a mini one, because I just—I mean, I'm Jewish. I read Elie Wiesel, who comes out of Auschwitz and talks about his relationship with God and ultimately believes in God. If I'd been in those camps, I can't imagine there's any way I could think that there was a God worth paying any attention to who would let that go on, which is why I raise the question.

RW: I heard—let me get this straight now. One of the televangelists, Charles—from the First Baptist Church of Atlanta, used to be head of the Southern Baptists. I forget his

name for a minute, Charles something. I heard him make a statement one time that AIDS was God's revenge for immoral people.

MH: Oh, yeah, a couple of them have said that.

RW: Well, when I heard that, you know, how can anybody believe that and say he's a Christian and believe that a God would do that? It's hard. I don't know what to tell you. I can't give you any magic words. Someday, you're going to come tight up against yourself, and you're either gonna believe or you're not gonna believe. Let me ask you this: If I believe in God and I do the best I know how to take care of me and my fellow man, and I die and it ain't true, and all I am is wormwood, does it hurt anything? No.

MH: (laughs)

RW: If I don't believe—

MH: That's like the people who say, "Yeah, well, I'm covering my bets, just in case."

RW: Yeah. (laughs) Well, maybe that's true, too. Maybe that's true. I sure don't have any magic answers, Mike, and I wouldn't insult your intelligence. Somewhere in your experiences, you'll either have it or you won't. Nobody can preach it to you, and nobody can give it to you.

MH: Believe it or not, a rabbi once told me the exact same thing.

RW: Well, I'm glad to hear it. Rabbis are intelligent, too.

MH: Some of them.

RW: Yeah, that's right. Some preachers are, too, and some aren't.

MH: So, you come back from the war, and your faith is actually strengthened.

RW: It's strengthened, that's right.

MH: Is it strengthened out of obligation that—I mean, God kept you alive?

RW: Exactly, and I hope you don't misunderstand this. I believe that I'm sitting here tonight because God wanted it said. And I don't believe that I'm that intelligent to say it, but let me put it in this way: He doesn't pick qualified people; he qualifies the people he picked. Remember, Moses stammered. He didn't volunteer. We have a history in this world, way back with our Judeo-Christian tradition going all the way back to Adam, that when God wanted leadership, he called it and he developed it. And he didn't always pick the brightest, best apple in the bushel, either. He didn't pick qualified people; he qualified the people he picked.

I don't take any credit for the fact that I'm articulate and communicative. And I'm gonna tell you in an unabashed, terrible way: I can take an audience and pull them on their feet and have them crying. I go from fifth grade through colleges, and I make some pretty emotional appeals. And I've been sought out and cited and—I put it this way: I enjoy doing it. I not only enjoy doing it, I have to do it. And I'm kind of driven about it. That's the only reason I'm still moving. Good gosh, I'm eighty-three, I earned the right to sit and do nothing, but I don't know how to do that. I have a distinct impression that, when I can't do that anymore, God's going to take me away. I'm not worried about that. He can do it any day he wants to.

MH: But right now, you still got work.

RW: That's right, I still got work. I got commitments from now through June with colleges, high schools, and middle schools. I don't go around—I'm not running a Wailing Wall. I'm not Jewish, I'm gentile. And when I first went into that Georgia Holocaust Commission—I'll be honest with you, Mike, it was principally a Wailing Wall. And the only thing I heard was "Six million Jews," and nobody talked about the other eleven million, you know? I worked on that and I've been the significant contributor to it, and the work we do now is much more acceptable and much better because of it, because we're inclusive rather than exclusive.

MH: Was that a political battle?

RW: Yeah, political and religious, and ethnic.

MH: The Jewish people wanted to keep the Holocaust to themselves?

RW: Some did. The Jewish people don't have any one single thought any more than you and I do.

MH: Well—

RW: I mean, there's no one pattern.

MH: Put three Jews together in a small town, and you'll end up with four temples.

RW: (laughs) There you go. You put three Germans together and one'll end up named Adolf.

MH: So, that's where things are now and where you see—well, how do you describe what your mission is now?

RW: Well, the mission now is to do as much as I can to get people involved to study what happened; to overcome bias and prejudice to see that it doesn't happen again; to get people in a position where they speak up when it's wrong and when they're not afraid to do it. If we had opened our borders when the Jewish immigrants needed a place to go, we could've lessened the impact of the Holocaust by close to 50 percent. You believe that?

MH: Probably. I do.

RW: FDR didn't open, didn't do one damn thing.

MH: I've seen the Gallup polls, or whoever was doing the polls back then—

RW: You've seen them? Well, you know what we're talking about.

MH: I know exactly what you're talking about. And the [MS] *St. Louis*, that went up the coast. Yeah, I know what you're talking about. But it makes me wonder if today we were given the opportunity to save 200,000 people from Darfur, if we would let them in, and it was put to a vote. You think we'd vote yes?

RW: It would be tough. I know how I would vote, but it would be tough to sell it. Now, there are those who'd line up. There'd be the Ted Kennedys that'd say, "Yeah, bring 'em all in, put them on welfare, and get them all to vote for me." That would happen in a hurry. And there would be those who would keep them out. You know, there'd be people want to bring them in and organize and benefit from them, and there'd be people who'd genuinely wanted to save them, and people who didn't give a damn. Human nature's—

MH: Which leads me to ask, what do you think we have learned from the Holocaust?

RW: Well, what I think we learned is that you can't sit still and wait it out. You can't let the bastards get away with it. That's as simple as I know how to put it.

MH: Okay. And then what—

RW: You gotta speak up for your neighbor before they come for him and they'll end up coming for you. The last man to go is me.

MH: What happens, though, when you guys are all gone, and all that's left is—?

RW: It depends on what kind of an impact we made.

MH: The paper record will be left, but the deniers can look at the paper. See, you can stand up and say, "This happened," and you saw it.

RW: I can't proof the future, and I can't promise you that I can be so effective that I'll never be contradicted, but I can do the best job I know how. Now, that's a Pollyanna way of putting it, but I can do everything I can, and I am working to do just that. I go from place to place, and I leave things and I establish things, and I work with some mighty damn good teachers. One thing you have to remember is that I work with an institute that teachers public schoolteachers, two weeks of every year, how to use the Holocaust to overcome prejudice and bias.

MH: Where is that?

RW: Well, it's properly the Georgia Holocaust Commission, and it's at West Georgia College in Carrollton, Georgia.

MH: Where in Georgia? I'm sorry.

RW: Carrollton, C-a-r-r-o-l-l-t-o-n. You can pick it up on the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust website, if you go to Google.

MH: And teachers come there to learn how to teach—

RW: Exactly, and not only that. We pay them, they get paid, and if the school year's going, we pay a substitute to stand in for them. They get their room and board, and they get promotional credits, they earn advancement. And we teach them how to handle—how to create diversity and accept diversity in the classroom, and we teach them how to fight prejudice. And when we're not using the facilities, the Georgia State Patrol uses them to teach local policemen how to quell riots without killing Americans. You don't back them into a corner like they did at Kent State and give them a chance to die. You don't chase them into a blind alley. And that's part of the job, too. We cover a lot of ground when we teach the teachers.

MH: What is there that I haven't asked you that I should've asked you?

RW: Oh, I don't know. Let me pick this piece of paper up here. How do I know what you should've asked? You met Al Pacino and you've met—I mean, you know who he is—and Dave Israel, and I told you about Flint Whitlock.

MH: You mean Al Panebianco.

RW: Al Panebianco, yes.

MH: Al Pacino I haven't met, but I know who he is, too.

RW: You know what we're talking about.

MH: Yes, I do.

RW: You're gonna run in, eventually, to a guy by the name of Jim Bird, B-i-r-d.

MH: I've got his name and e-mail address right in front of me.

RW: Okay. He's up in New Jersey. He was a tanker with the 45th, and he knows his way around, and he's extremely articulate. You would benefit by talking with him.

MH: Okay.

RW: Let's see what I got down here. I'll tell you how things happened, so you can understand how it happens. There's a Jewish guy by the name of Alex Gross; he lives in Florida now, and he's retired. He used to be on the Holocaust Commission. And if you were to meet Alex, he would tell you that—and he's a survivor. He was a political inmate. He was in the Holocaust. I'm not sure what camp; I think maybe Bergen-Belsen, but I'm not sure. But he will tell you he was liberated by a black man. That ain't true. He was out of his mind, sick, lame and damn near dead, and four days after liberation, he was one of those people that was carted out to a hospital, and his ambulance attendant was black. So, he'll tell you he was liberated by a black man. And he's 100 percent right, but it's not right. The black unit didn't liberate him; it was a truck driver in an ambulance unit.

MH: What about the Nisei?

RW: The what?

MH: The Japanese [Americans]?

RW: Well, they did a good job in Italy, and they did a good job in a couple places in Europe, but they didn't have a damn thing to do with the liberation of not even one concentration camp. And senators who receive major medals for doing it are lying to themselves. You know what I'm talking about.

MH: I think so.

RW: [Daniel] Inouye, Hawaii, Medal of Honor. Read that damned citation. It didn't happen. It didn't happen. But he's a U.S. Senator. How do some people get away with it, Mike?

MH: It's all in who you know.

RW: I remember when they were so naïve, when the world was so naïve that [Gary] Hart couldn't even have a date. He got caught and they tarred and feathered him. And then [Bill] Clinton can flaunt a [Monica] Lewinsky and get away with it. Times change.

MH: Before I forget, do you have a good current photo of you I can use in this book, and do you have a photo of you—I've seen the one on the website of you back in World War II.

RW: That's as good as I have as far as World War II is concerned.

MH: Okay. Nobody ever took a picture of you at Dachau.

RW: No, no, no. No, if they did, it didn't happen. And as far as a current picture is concerned, I've got some, but they aren't anything to brag about.

MH: What I need is something—either a good print, or if it's scanned—

RW: Most everything I have would be scanned. I don't think I own a print.

MH: Okay. Is there a way to send me a JPEG of a good picture?

RW: I'll try it.

MH: If you know how?

RW: I'll write it down here. I'll try it. What I might have to do is—I got a digital camera that even won't work with my current system, and I'm not a camera bug. I've put that out

of the way. I don't have a bunch of pictures of myself, but I'll find something and get it to you. And I've got your snail mail, also.

MH: Okay. The other thing is, at some point, I might want to ask if I could use some of your Dachau pictures.

RW: You can use anything I have, anytime, anywhere. Like I told you in my e-mail, if it's on Marion Chard's site, if it's on Al Panebianco's site, if it's on the 45th Division re-enactors site, and they got copyright problems, remember they got it from me. I still got my hard copy here, and I can give that to you, and you can use it.

MH: Okay, 'cause I don't know that I can pull those photos off the sites; they're very small, and even when you click them they don't blow up that big.

RW: I agree with you. But you see what you have and you get back to me. I'm looking to see what else I've got written down here that I thought we might want to talk about. I told you about Paul Parks; I told you about Leon Baff. Now, Leon recanted and did a pretty good job, but Paul Parks is one of the world's bastards.

MH: One of the problems that I know I'm—'cause I've run into already—is guys tell me things that I'm pretty sure are wrong, but they actually believe them. They're not lying.

RW: I agree with you. They believe it.

MH: They believe it happened the way they—

RW: And some of these guys—let me tell you the worst: the doting sons that got it from the father who's now dead. Oh, hell hath no fury like, "Don't you besmirch the honor, the memory of my father." If you were to tell General Linden's son that his father—or Colonel Fellenz [the son]—that his father was a lying bastard, he'd want to kill you. And I wouldn't much blame them. I understand that. But I run into that all the time.

MH: These guys I interviewed at the 42nd reunion, I mean, some of them were telling me things that I know are flat-out wrong. And they believe them.

RW: You never heard any exclusivity or any wild statements from me from the beginning. I don't take that approach, because I'm sure had you been there and been on the other side of the camp, that you'd have a completely different perspective if we never met each other.

MH: Yes. We have a reunion coming up for the twenty or twenty-one guys in the PIO [Public Information Office] shop of the 25th Division. And at our first reunion—someone found us all in 1998, and we had a reunion in Atlantic City. We sat down and rehashed the first mortar attack on the base camp, and there were twenty guys and there were probably fourteen different stories.

RW: I'm going to say twenty versions, yeah.

MH: Well, some of us were—if you were in the same bunker, you pretty much had the same story.

RW: Exactly. Well, it's the same thing at the camp. You look at a camp the size of a small college campus and realize how much can go on around the other corner. I had a guy say to me, "Were you the first, second, or third soldier in there?" I said, "I was among the first, and that's as much as I can truthfully say."

MH: See, my attitude at this point is, "It doesn't matter."

RW: I agree it doesn't matter. I was there as a liberator, and the Army Department of Defense defines "liberation" as the first forty-eight hours. And I think in a way that's too defining, too narrow, because there were people three and four and five days later who were finding pockets of resistance and discovering guards who had hidden and who were really liberating, even though it was the third day instead of the second.

MH: Right. Okay. Well, if you could find me the person at the Holocaust Museum, that would be really great. I want to thank you very much for your time.

RW: I've gotten stuff written down about the Holocaust—let me put that down here again. Pix and museum, I got it. If you want to see anything about what the Georgia Holocaust Commission is doing, just Google Georgia Commission on the Holocaust, then pick up the website and go from there. The links are real easy. You'll find it quite revealing. Incidentally, four, five, maybe a dozen other states have followed the lead of this particular commission, because the executive director, whose father was a survivor, is

a ball of fire. She just really does the job. Outstanding person. Sylvia Wygoda; her father [Hermann Wygoda] wrote the book *In the Shadow of the Swastika*.

MH: Okay. I thank you very, very much for your time.

RW: Oh, you're through! You're welcome, Mike. I'll get some stuff to you. You get back to me any time you please.

MH: I appreciate that. Thank you very much, Russ.

RW: Okay. If I'm out, you leave a message. I'll get back to you.

MH: Okay. Good night.

RW: Good night.

End of interview