LEXINGTON ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS, INC.

Interview
Julian Soshnik
August 15, 1991

Interview conducted by Nancy Earsy
Videotape length 39 minutes

INT: We will be interviewing Julian Soshnik, who was the attorney for many, or most, or all, of the people who were arrested. I believe at that time, Julian, you were a Lexington resident. Is that right?

JS: Yes, I was.

INT: How long had you lived in Lexington in 1971?

JS: I would say approximately ten years.

INT: Were you ever involved in town affairs?

JS: I made an abortive attempt to run for elective office. I ran for Town Meeting Member, and I was defeated by a professor from Boston College who had pet goats that he walked on a leash. There must have been some interest in pet goats because he soundly defeated me, and after that I retired from elective office, but I continued to be involved in civil rights activities, mainly housing. I did some work for the election of the Civil Rights Committee and had one or two interesting cases.

INT: What were your impressions of the town when you lived there?

JS: I hate to say it. I considered the town a fraud. A hoax. I and a lot of other people believed that it was a very nice, sensitive, caring community where you could raise a family and deal with intelligent people at all levels of the community. It turns out that most of us who came here for that reason, the so-called wall-to-wall Ph.D.'s and the doctors and the lawyers and what-have-you, were busy with their careers and had very little to do with town government and town activities. So we more or less abandoned it to the shopkeepers and the bankers and the various other people who made their livings in the community. By necessity, they were very conservative

people who didn't want to rock the boat; they wanted to maintain the status quo. So the kinds of things that we were looking for— at least on my part—[we] didn't get. I mean, I didn't get a very sensitive responsive police force. I found out that it was us against them; they were at war with the kids most of the time, and that's not the kind of community I wanted to live in.

INT: And you were a lawyer, so I suppose you were exposed to this more than perhaps some people who simply taught at a local university.

JS: Yes, I was involved in it most of the time; many of my friends and neighbors had youngsters that were being harassed, literally harassed, by the local police. The police were punitive. In other words, if a youngster were driving, speeding, it's appropriate to give the youngster a ticket, but if you know the youngster, and you know where they live and what have you, there's no sense in arresting them, taking them down to the station, and locking them up. You just say, "Here's a ticket" and "I'm going to tell your mother or father" and "I'll see you at the courthouse next week." The Lexington police just went a bit too far in executing their duties. In other words, they weren't our friends; they really weren't helping us.

INT: How did you learn about what was happening with the Vietnam veterans?

JS: Nancy, my friend, I was minding my own business, performing my favorite Saturday morning chores. I was sitting on my riding lawn mower when my wife telephoned. I was, of course, mowing the lawn when my wife called out the window and said, "Julie! Nancy's on the telephone," and you told me that you were fearful that the Vietnam Veterans Against the War—well, I hadn't heard of it at that time—were going to be arrested en masse while performing Paul Revere's march in reverse—I think that's the way you described it to me. You asked me whether I'd be willing to participate as one of a group of lawyers to assist the young men if they were

arrested or got into some difficulties with the town authorities. I had nothing better to do, so I said, "Sure, I'd be glad to do it."

INT: A lot of people are glad you said yes to that, and as it turned out, I believe you were the lawyer. Is that right?

JS: Yes, I was.

INT: For how many people?

JS: I had four hundred and thirty, four hundred fifty, something like that.

INT: That's probably the largest group of people that was ever represented in Massachusetts.

JS: In fact, it turned out to be a record. Sometime later, the Judge in Concord, when I was out there on a case, showed me a letter he'd gotten from the Chief Justice congratulating him on the orderly administration of the court that day, and it was a record.

INT: So, for you and for the judge.

JS: That's right. I had not represented four hundred and fifty terrible criminals in one day at any given time.

INT: On the day back in May 1971, what were your impressions of the veterans when they were gathering on the Lexington Green that Saturday afternoon and that evening, after you got taken off your lawnmower?

JS: I found them to be very sincere young men, who—if I can just metaphorically describe them—were almost on the verge of tears. They'd all been to war. Some of them had no arms or legs. And what they wanted to do was just tell their fellow countrymen that this is a stinking war. That's all they wanted to do, and they were just so upset that they weren't able to do this. I mean, they'd shed blood, they'd seen their friends die and become maimed, just for the simple right for doing what I'm doing now and speaking my mind, and they were being prevented from doing so by one of our governments—the government of the town of Lexington. They were crying;

they were very upset. They weren't angry—well, some irritation, of course; they're human beings—but they were more disappointed because they had fought a war which they thought was a wrong war, but they had fought it for America, and here was America saying, "No, no, you're not entitled to freedom of speech; you can't say that which we don't want to hear." They were really very upset about it.

INT: Did you talk with a Selectman or the police about what would happen if the veterans didn't leave the Green?

JS: On the evening that they were arrested, there was some conversation because the police were warning everybody, but prior to that, I hadn't any contact with anyone from the town at all until some time on Saturday afternoon. The judge on the Concord District Court was an old colleague of mine; we had tried cases against each other when he was practicing law, so once every few months, I'd have dinner with him. And Martha, my wife, and I were out in Concord for something or other, and we stopped by the courthouse on that morning to see if we could find the Judge. The Judge was on the bench, so I stopped in the clerk's office to leave a message for him, and there was the clerk of the Concord District Court and a sergeant and a lieutenant of the Lexington police force making out criminal complaints way before anything ever happened. The criminal complaints were for violating the town ordinance, staying on the Green after seven o'clock or whatever it was, and being disorderly persons. They'd already decided what they were going to be charged with, so we had a minor, small conversation. They were embarrassed, and I said, "You guys don't really mean to do this, do you?" and I left, and then I didn't speak to anyone after that until evening just before they were arrested. A sergeant on the police force who was a lovely guy—his name was Mike Forten—and I spoke a little bit, and he said, "Julie, they're going to do this. I'm sorry. They're

going to do this, and most of us are sorry." Actually, the police were very sympathetic.

INT: When he said "Do it," what did he mean?

JS: Arrest them. In the context of the fact that there were police from Lexington and other communities there, I think I even saw some police with dogs in the background. They had buses lined up—this was going to be a mass bust. But most of the cops were pretty ashamed of it. They began to identify with the young men; some of the cops were veterans themselves from different wars, and perhaps the Vietnam War. And Mike said, "Julie, I think they're going to do this. I'm sorry. Why don't you tell these guys that." He used the expression, "It's coming down, and what to do? We don't want any trouble." I said, "Mike, you think these guys are going to give you trouble?" and he said, "Nah, but I got to say the words," and that was about fifteen minutes before they actually began the arrests.

INT: Just going back for a minute to the issue of filling our the complaints ahead of time, what was your concern as a lawyer about that? Were there any legal issues there?

JS: [Laughter.] Without any doubt. I mean, they had made up their minds what crimes people had committed without the citizens having done anything. They said, "We're going to get these guys for violating a town ordinance and for disorderly conduct." God help us if one of them had decided to relieve himself on the Town Green—there wasn't any room on the complaint to charge him with that. They knew exactly what they were going to charge these people with. It's a clear-cut violation of the law. It's all fundamental; it's absurd.

INT: Your concern was really about due process, then.

JS: At that point, but I could also understand what the clerk was doing. He was told that we were going to arrest four hundred fifty people and bring

them to court the next day and he said, "Oh my God! I haven't got the budget to bring in clerks," so he said, "I'd better work on this now," and I hope that we can make out the complaints. All it took was a name. These were kind of designer complaints—just fill in the name.

INT: So it was a way for the convenience of the administration, right then and there, getting things ready ahead of time against what would be more proper due process.

JS: I think that's what the clerk did, and I can't fault that all too much because the clerk wasn't going to issue the complaints until the people had been arrested and charges had been filed. Having the complaints for that or any other crime on hand wasn't of any great consequence. I don't think that they had four hundred fifty complaints on hand the day before for violating a town ordinance. I think that they had to run around to the various courthouses and borrow them so that they could be made out. What offended me was the fact that the police decided what these people were going to be charged when they didn't know what they were going to do. They had no way of knowing that these young men were going to stay on the Common [the Battle Green]. They decided, however, that if they stayed on the Common, they were going to extract a certain punishment, that is, they were going to be charged with A, B, and C. It's terrible, terrible.

INT: What were your impressions of the negotiations between the Selectmen and the veterans on Saturday night?

JS: I didn't participate in the negotiations. If there were any, I didn't know about them. I think that most of the negotiations were with the police the night of the arrests and then afterwards. It's my view, having looked at the documents, that the Selectmen never really intended to allow these young men to have the right of free speech. For example, as we piece it together, they had got a temporary restraining order and an injunction, but

they never served it, and they knew I was their lawyer. The customary thing is to serve the lawyer of the defendant. They never served me because if they'd served me, I would have run down to the courthouse to dissolve the restraining order and gotten the court to order that these men be permitted to exercise their freedom of speech. But everything was sub rosa, and they just sort of came in on them with the school buses and arrested them. They intended to deny them their access to the courts.

INT: You had mentioned earlier that they were filling out the complaints, and you had also mentioned that there were police from other towns. This took a little coordination.

JS: Oh, absolutely. They knew what they were going to do, and I don't fault the police for being ready for all possible contingencies. They didn't really know these young men, and there was a possibility that there would be a couple of hotheads to among them. What offended me was that all they wanted to do was to stay there, as a social gesture, much the same as you put up something outside your church that says, "On Sunday, we'll do so and-so." That's all they wanted to do.

INT: What was your reaction to the announcement that the Town Manager made about the risks of staying on the Green that evening?

JS: I think it was a threat that was senseless and boorish. These young men had been to war. They had been shot at and shot other people, they'd seen people die and bloodied, and some Town Manager is not going to have any influence on them at all. They'd earned the right—although I'm not sure that you have to earn it in America—but if you have to earn it, they'd earned the right. I was embarrassed that he was my employee.

INT: The Town Manager.

JS: Absolutely.

INT: Did you expect the veterans would leave?

JS: No, not at all.

INT: What were your impressions of the townspeople? There were a lot of townspeople on the Green, too.

JS: I was proud of them. I was really very proud of my fellow townsmen and women who were there in support not even of the issue that they were addressing. Some of the people that I talked to were not anti-war; they thought that what America was doing in Vietnam was the right thing to do—but they said, "But by God, these people have the right to say something about it if they want to." I had enormous respect for those who were pro-war types but who came out to support the veterans' right to say what they wanted to say. And there were a number of the people in town were that way. I knew some of them personally, some very conservative. I was on the Democratic Town Committee at one point with some of them, and they were very, very conservative types.

INT: So you saw this as a free speech issue?

JS: That's what it was.

INT: From start to finish?

JS: There wasn't any question about it.

INT: Did you stay around after the Selectmen or the Town Manager announced that people were subject to arrest if they stayed?

JS: Yes, I was the lawyer for these people, and I felt that it was my duty to see to it that if there were arrests, that they were done in an orderly fashion, that people were charged properly, they knew what their rights were, that they were properly housed. I had no idea where they were going to be taken until the first bus moved out.

INT: So they didn't tell you what their plans were?

JS: They treated it like a CIA mission. The lawyer isn't going to know anything until the last minute because he'll tell people. I don't know what

they thought we could do about the town barn [Public Works garage]. There's where they kept the snowplows and everything.

INT: And that was the jail, right?

JS: Yes, that's where they locked them up.

INT: That evening.

JS: Yes. They brought in fruit and coffee and what have you, but most everybody just lay on the floor in their clothes and had a snack and waited for the next day.

INT: And did you have access to your clients?

JS: Yes.

INT: In the town barn, which was the jail for the evening.

JS: Yes. I came and went as I wished, and I didn't have to identify myself. I just walked in, and they took a look at me, and they knew why I was there and didn't interfere with me in any way.

INT: What do you remember about the barn, or your clients? I mean, representing four hundred and fifty-eight people is really quite a big job. How did you go about it?

JS: I spoke to people in groups of fifty or one hundred and explained generally what the process was that they were going through, so they would understand. Most of them knew it from television, or most of them were reasonably well educated and had some awareness of what it was about. What I saw going on, however, was very interesting. There was a good deal of parenting going on, not just to the young kids who joined in, but there was a sense of family. They were concerned about one young man who was thinking about running for town office. And there was a young woman who was thinking about becoming a lawyer, and they were worried about the possibility that an arrest could hurt them. They said, "Reconsider it. We

know you're with us, but stay with us mind and spirit but don't give up at this point, don't blow it at this point."

And some of these young people…I remember one young man without any legs, in a wheelchair—and I should tell you about that because that's really, really exciting. He did a lot of mothering and fathering in the town barn. When the police started to arrest everybody there were two or three young men that I saw who were in wheelchairs. Some had no legs, some had one leg; I think one man had one leg, and the other two didn't have any. The police sheepishly walked around them because the veterans had sort of lined up when I said, "You're not going to have any trouble at all, fellows. Line up, and when they tell you to get on the bus, go. You know, we're here as a social protest." So they did, and these young men tried to get in line, and the police pulled them away. I remember one young man saying, "God damn it, I earned the right to be arrested by you so-and-so's"—nothing polite—and he said, "I want to go on that bus!" I turned to Mike Forten and said, "Mike, you know ,you gotta take him." He says, "We don't want to." I said, "Mike, you've gotta take him." And they put him on the bus, and there was a lot of applause for this young man. Then when we got to the barn he was wheeling himself around counseling, fathering, mentoring people. He seemed to pick up very quickly on the dynamics of what was going on in a group, and he'd inject himself into it. And people were quite willing to listen to him and take advice from him. They empathized and identified with him. It was a very lovely evening. It was the kind of thing I've learned women do better than men. There was more giving and loving and sharing going on there. It was really very interesting. And the kids! The cops said to the youngsters, "Where do you live? What's your name and address? We'll call your mother or father, and they can take you out of here." "No." And the

kids stayed; they wanted to participate. It wasn't a matter of excitement; some of the kids really understood what was going on.

INT: These were high school kids for the most part?

JS: Yes.

INT: There weren't—were there any little children?

JS: No, well, there were a couple of infants there with their mothers, but infants in arms. No, I think that most of these [were] young men and women—I think I saw two young women—and there were about five or six young men [who] were all there with the knowledge of their parents. Either the parents were there, or the parents had told their friends who were going to be there to look after the youngsters. There was kind of a ward for each of the kids.

INT: What was the procedure when people got to court on Sunday morning?

JS: They stacked the complaints alphabetically, I recall, and they took them to the courthouse by bus. They were brought in and sat in the courtroom, and the judge explained what was going on, and I spoke to them as well. When the names were called on the criminal complaints, they were asked how they wished to plead, and we went through the process. The interesting part of what was going on, however, was that I sensed the judge—we never spoke about this because it would be improper—I sensed the judge knew what was going on, too, and he also felt that he had to do what he had to do. But he was fining people two dollars and three dollars, small sums of money, and when they ran out of money, he said, "We'll suspend for a while." Then the people went out to the street. They walked around with their hats, and the townspeople—in this case, Concord townspeople—contributed money. There were a lot of people standing

around, knew that it was going on, and they reached into their pockets and purses and came up with the bail money.[1] It was really fascinating.

INT: You had mentioned that there were actually two charges. One was being in violation of a town ordinance—I believe it was being on the Green after a certain hour—and you also mentioned something about disorderly conduct.

JS: Yes, the police had decided early on, well before anything happened, to charge them with disorderly conduct, which was a misdemeanor; it wasn't a serious crime, but nevertheless, it's the sort of thing you don't want to be found guilty of. When we first got there I spoke to the judge with the police prosecutor about the charges, and I said that it was pretty obvious that there wasn't any disorderly conduct, and I gave him my legal argument about the complaints having been made out in advance, and violation of due process. He looked down at me, almost smirking, put his glasses down, and he said, "Mr. Soshnik. This is not an appellate court; it's a trial court." I said, "Yes, your Honor." He turned to the police prosecutor and he said, "I don't think these people were disorderly. I'm inclined to dismiss the charges." And the prosecutor said, "Okay, Judge." And he said, "Mr. Clerk, dismiss all the charges of disorderly conduct," and it was over, instantly, just like that. The police saw the drift and didn't want to fight it, so they gave up on it. But I have to get back to this: what incensed me was the fact that they decided they were going to charge these people with a crime even before they were within the physical territory of the town. These things were being made out while they were in Concord.

INT: So what they were left with, having been arrested and charged and found guilty of being on the Green after ten o'clock at night?

[1] They also gave money to pay the fines, which the judge assessed at$5 for violating the town ordinance concerning the Battle Green, an offense for which the penalty could have been a fine as high as $50.

JS: Well, actually they pleaded *nolo contendere*. They pleaded "no defense," and the judge found sufficient facts. Now that's not a finding of guilty, as you well know, and it's within the court's discretion to accept this. I don't contend, I have no contention, I throw myself upon the mercy of the court. The court says, "I find sufficient facts that you could have been found guilty of violating the ordinance," and fined them instead. So they don't have any convictions, but they do have a finding of probable cause, sufficient facts that could be used against them, weighed in proceedings if they were ever charged with a crime.

INT: So people had a record, then, although it was not a serious offense, there was a record for each of the people who were being so charged.

JS: Absolutely.

INT: I think you had mentioned earlier, or we had read about, a pardon petition. What can you tell us about that? Because I believe there was a lot of activity around getting a pardon petition, and really, it was partly or entirely your idea about doing that.

JS: We filed pardon petitions on behalf of everybody who wished to participate. There was one young man, I remember, who was very strongly opposed to our obtaining a pardon for him. He had a funny name, and he had a big head of hair, strange face—you see him occasionally on television. He's not really an actor; his name is Kerry. Our senator[2] was one of the Vietnam veterans [Vietnam Veterans Against the War], and he thought he would continue to wear this symbol of violating these Lexington town park ordinances; he thought that was a great badge of honor. But there were some other people who didn't think it was such a good idea for various reasons, so we filed some hundreds of petitions for pardon. The odd part of it is that they got sat on; they weren't acted on for about five years.

[2] He is referring to John Kerry, U.S. Senator from Massachusetts.

INT: That's a very long time.

JS: Oh yes, it was outrageous. I wrote letters saying, "What's going on?" and never got a response. But this is purely discretionary. It's a complicated procedure. Finally, when a new administration came to office, they found them and began to ask questions, but by then people had moved, I couldn't get answers for them, so nothing really ever happened with them.

INT: In order to get the answers, would you have had to say that this person is a good moral character now and should be pardoned—that kind of thing?

JS: I could say it; you'd have to get the responses from the people themselves, or from their friends and neighbors, and in many cases I had no way of communicating with them.

INT: Because people had moved?

JS: They'd moved, or certainly the veterans weren't Lexington residents, I couldn't find them.

INT: So that went away. Do you think it served any function, though?

JS: Yes, it showed me and others how poorly our government serves us in terms of recognizing our individual civil rights.

INT: Wasn't there also a campaign in the town after the pardon petition had been formally filed with the state government to gather signatures of townspeople in support of this idea? Do you recall that?

JS: Yes, and I know that some people wrote to the Board of Pardons about it. I didn't participate in that because it was something some other people were doing, and I had my hands full. I got writer's cramp. It was before the personal computer and the word processor. Yes, there was a lot of support. In fact, this incident left an indelible mark upon the town because some of the town fathers who—and they were fathers, not mothers, although some people would question that—who participated in this decided

not to run again or were defeated in their bids for reelection. There was a real revulsion on the part of the citizens in the community about what they had done, so I think that Mr. Cataldo who was Chairman of the Board was ousted and some others as well.

INT: You think in the short run, at least, the event changed the town's politics?

JS: No—oh, yes, in the short run a few more Democrats were elected because it was always kind of a Republican or Democrat thing, the more conservative people being Republicans, although that's not always the case, but in Lexington it was. The Democratic community—with a large D—had expanded so there were more Democrats entering the arena, but it really didn't change the town very much. It did in the short haul, but at least until I moved from Lexington about ten or eleven years ago, maybe twelve years now, it was always a very conservative community.

INT: Thinking back on it, would you do anything differently if the same situation came up again?

JS: I think I'm probably smarter than I was then, and I probably would have gone down and brought an action myself from the Superior Court, and if they wouldn't give me a judge, I would have gone up to the Chief Justice's house to file it. I was a pretty brash young kid at the time, so I would have taken some other legal steps then if I'd been more seasoned, but I was…

INT: But you would still have represented four hundred and fifty-eight people.

JS: Oh, a thousand fifty-eight. They had a right. They had a right.

INT: And that was what motivated you?

JS: Absolutely, no question about it. I was trying to make a living for my family. I didn't have any time, and my lawn didn't get mowed, I

mean… Martha said, "I guess I'm going to lose you for a couple days. Let's go shopping," and we went off to Concord and other places, so that the lawn…my neighbors got angry with me because they all had manicured lawns and the Soshnik lawn wasn't. Yes, I'd do it, sure, absolutely.

INT: I think some of your clients probably should have helped you mow your lawn, don't you?

JS: That was *pro bono*.

INT: Entirely. Do you have anything else that you'd like to say, or about the importance of this for us now?

JS: Well, I think this issue seems to be raising its head all the time in America—the right to speak out and address your government, the right to have an unpopular opinion. Thousands and thousands of young men and women have died for this right, and every so often our government seems to forget that that's what it was all about. This is just another example of it. I think it was Thomas Jefferson who said, "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance." I think that we must always be sensitive to this because if we stop complaining, we stop speaking, we stop criticizing, then they, whoever they are, control—the mindless people who are not sensitive to the needs of the community. I think we must maintain the right to free speech and freedom of the press. It's imperative, and this is what we were doing that day.

INT: Thank you so much

JS: Is the town still as conservative as it was, politically? The police still giving the kids a terrible time?

INT2: It's different. I think the police are better.

INT: It's different, partly because the people here are wealthier than we were at that time, and that's changed—I don't know exactly how—it's changing the hopes and the ideology; it's no longer shopkeepers who are in

control of the town, as it were. There are many more people who were—are—in the professions who are in Town Meeting, but there are also many people for whom this is a bedroom town, who make lots of money to afford expensive Lexington homes, and I think they're perhaps even less involved in the town than the professionals that you mentioned of the early 1970's and late 1960's. So, it's a different kind of town; perhaps it's more suburban, even, and more bedroom.

INT3: Probably a lot of people would consider it a little bit more of an effort in time to come to an event on the Green or to come to all the planning meetings that came before, not because they didn't want to or agree with it, but because they're doing too many other things. Everyone I knew at the time was only working part-time at the most among the females, and it was easier for the husbands and them to go down there because women had made arrangements for children in that case. One of the biggest changes I think is in that way. Volunteer organizations have changed; they meet at night.

INT2: There are many more Asians here now, but they don't play a political role yet, but their children…

JS: Yes, oh, that's typical of the Asian community, tend to be very quiet and try to not draw attention to themselves, but, who's winning all the prizes? But this is a part of the American history, I mean, the waves of immigration to the United States, and it's the new immigrants who had to make it, and also the immigrants who had a strong family base. An Asian youngster is told to study, he or she will study because mother and father say to do it. Much the same sort of thing happened to some of us who came from families that had a strong family, functioning as a strong family. I think I might have mentioned this before: when I got drafted, I wasn't sure if I wanted to go. Of course, a lot of young men didn't know if they wanted to go, so I went to see my father, who was a saloon-keeper in New York City,

and I said, “Papa, I got drafted.” He says, “So?” And I said, “Well, I got a friend who's a head-shrinker who gave a letter saying terrible things about me, and I won't have to go,” and he says, “You want to do that?” And I said, “I don't know, Dad. I, I, I need some advice,” and he says, “Do the right thing.” In other words, the typical pregnant pause. Then he says, “But if you do it, you're not my son anymore.” So I went. And I said, “Papa, why did you say that?” Because he was kind of an Archie Bunker type, and a lovely man, but his political mores were somewhat like the stereotypical Archie Bunker. I was actually proud of him, but quite surprised to hear him say, “America's been good to our family. We don't have to worry about anything. I have a business. I send my kids to school. I can vote Republican or Democrat or anything I damn well please. No one in the family has ever been called upon to pay their dues. We’ve either been too old or too young. You’re the first one. You pay the dues for our family, or you’re not our son.” So, I went. And that’s kind of the feeling that I have about these sorts of things that I've done over the years in civil rights. It really has got to do with our need to protect ourselves. I remember I was involved in the civil rights case here for a guy named Parker, James Parker—the irony of it is the Minuteman statue, Captain James Parker, same name, except Mr. Parker was a vice-consul to the United States who'd been sent here, I think he was going to Fletcher School for a year—and he wanted to rent a house, and he was told the house was rented. He'd responded to an ad, and he smelled something, so he contacted the Lexington Civil Rights Committee. They asked me to help out, and we got him a house. But I remember when it was all over and done with he asked me why I did it, and I said, “Jim, I did it for my family. Not for you, but for my family, because if they could do it to you, they could do it to me, they could do it to my wife, and they could do it to my kids.” So it’s that kind of understanding, having

a *weltanschauung* [a world outlook], a perspective, of the need to protect the rights of all people in this society, and the effect, the results upon your own family that I've lived with for a long time. But I've always been in love with the Constitution anyway.

INT2: Speaking to that particular issue, there was an effort a few years ago to get a Civilian Review Board in town. And it was really very discouraging to see how many people were afraid to even sign the petition, although they knew of continuing police harassment and abuse. They didn't; they feared retaliation by the police.

JS: It's not just Lexington.

INT2: People testified in the East Lexington Town Meeting Committee and didn't dare to testify in fact in Town Meeting about what they had seen. I know it's not just Lexington.

JS: Mmm.

INT: It certainly isn't just Lexington, but if people are afraid of police retaliation in Lexington, imagine how much worse it must be.

JS: Oh, this is a terrible problem we have in our society. I remember once walking down the street with my grandfather, and a young woman was run over, struck by a bus, and people walked by her, didn't do anything. Nobody ran to the phone, and my grandfather who was an immigrant and couldn't speak English—somehow I understood him. I never understood the language he spoke, but I understood him, and he said sardonically, "America. I'm glad I came. It's a great country." And ran off to the store to shake on someone. I followed and pointed, and he took a nickel out of his pocket for the man to make a phone call to call the police, but people just walked by. "Don't bother me, I'm busy, I don't want to get involved." There's a lot of people like that, and they're [inaudible word] themselves and their children and their friends and their neighbors by doing that. There's no

danger; I mean, rarely will there be anything—retaliation. So they gave you a ticket for parking illegally. Big deal. You can afford to pay it. Some things you have to live with. But nobody's going to beat you up, nobody's going to shoot you—as bad as I say the Lexington police have been in the past—I don't know them now—it's not that they would physically abuse anyone. It was just my sense of their being overbearing and essentially not understanding the civil rights of people, but I never knew a Lexington policeman who was a Lexington policeman to do anything brutal to anyone. So I don't think there's any danger, but people—don't point the finger at me; they're the kind of people who wear dark clothes all the time and button-down collars so they won't stand out.

INT: Would you like to see the veteran's film?

JS: Love to.

END OF INTERVIEW