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Harold Bershad  
University of Pennsylvania

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## Remembering Erving Goffman

**Harold Bershadly:**

**Erving Turned to Me and Said, "You Know, Elijah Anderson Is Really a Professional Sociologist, He Is Not a Professional Black"**

This interview with Professor Harold Bershadly, professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, was recorded over the phone on January 22, 2009. Dmitri Shalin transcribed the interview, after which Dr. Bershadly edited the transcript and gave his approval for posting the present version in the Erving Goffman Archives. Breaks in the conversation flow are indicated by ellipses. Supplementary information and additional materials inserted during the editing process appear in square brackets. Undecipherable words and unclear passages are identified in the text as "[?]".

[Posted 05-08-09]

**Bershadly:** Hello.

**Shalin:** Greetings, this is Dmitri Shalin.

**Bershadly:** Hi, Dmitri.

**Shalin:** This is Harold?

**Bershadly:** Yes.

**Shalin:** How are you doing?

**Bershadly:** [Well, thanks].

**Shalin:** Let me ask you if I can record our conversation and send it to you for editing?

**Bershadly:** That would be great.

**Shalin:** Wonderful. I understand that you have seen some of the interviews.

**Bershadly:** Yes, I have read a few. I have read Renee's, I Victor's, Eviatar's, and Sherri Cavan's.

**Shalin:** Good.

**Bershadly:** I haven't see the others yet, but I intend to read them all.

**Shalin:** You must have a pretty good idea that people have quite different perspectives [on Goffman], and the idea is to multiply perspectives, to have as many people to weigh in as possible. I should add that somewhere along the

road I realized that this project is not just about Goffman but also about people of his era, people like Philip Rieff, Herbert Blumer, Al[vin] Gouldner. Once I have heard about them I realized that this is an important part of the story that helps us understand the historical context. Please feel free to bring up any names that you feel are relevant.

Maybe you can start with how you met Erving, go as far back as your memory takes you.

**Bershady:** I'll start. I had read *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* when I was a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin.

**Shalin:** When was it approximately?

**Bershady:** That was around '61-'62. And I liked it a lot. You must remember that I did a lot of graduate work in philosophy and decided to get a Ph.D. in sociology because the sort of philosophy that I was interested in does not have much receptivity in the United States. I didn't want to do logical analysis and spend the rest of my life doing that sort of thing. I didn't want to spend my life teaching the history of philosophy, so I decided that sociology came closest to what I was interested in. My professors in philosophy told me, "Look sociology is so poorly defined [that] you can probably do anything." I was interested in philosophy of history, metaphysics, and so on. But I thought that theory of value was already clearly within sociology. I had been reading some Durkheim and Weber and Parsons even when I was still in philosophy. They were very intriguing. So I switch[ed] over to sociology. I read *Presentation of Self* and liked it. Seemed to me reminiscent to the Aristotelian view, the dramaturgical idea that was very ancient, yet of course Goffman made it quite current. I thought it was very clever. But I didn't have much interest in pursuing that line of sociology. I was much more into macro sociology. In any event, when I was still an assistant professor, the possibility of bringing Goffman to Penn came up and was discussed in the department. I was very eager to have him come to Penn because I was reading his other works and thought he was [an] interesting man. Also, he was very literate, given the state of most sociological writing.

**Shalin:** Highly unusual indeed. We don't have such acute literary sensibilities in our field.

**Bershady:** That is correct. There are reasons for that, we may go into in a moment. In the department, however, I was astonished to hear from all the major professors that Goffman was not really a sociologist, that he was a journalist. I objected to that, but of course I was an assistant professor and had to be rather careful not to object too strenuously and too openly. I didn't

want to incur that much disfavor. I knew that people were already beginning to be: leery] of me, of my theoretical interests. When I quizzed some of the professors about this, their response was simply that [Goffman] wasn't a scientist. I asked them what they meant by scientist[s], and they had [a] simplistic idea, a kind of positivistic-[empiricist] view of science. It was virtually a-theoretical. I threw up my hands. I knew this might well mean the kiss of death for me as well because I didn't share that view. Whatever, Goffman did go into anthropology, and I am very glad of that.

I met him shortly afterwards, very briefly. I made a point of meeting him. I was kind of surprised at how disheveled he was physically – baggy pants, two or three day growth of beard, and so on. Rather odd, I thought. Very unlike the stiff, formal clothes and self-presentation [of professors at Penn]. I thought, "My goodness, what kind of presentation of self is this!" I was amused by it in a way. At this meeting, one of the early meetings, Philip Rieff was there, and he said in a rather stentorian voice, "Erving," – I can't possibly imitate that voice, "Erving, this place may be big enough for both of us." That was very funny. Of course they were like [Mutt and Jeff] When you saw both of them together.] Rieff was about 6 feet tall, and Erving was about 5'4. Now Erving – and I never called him Erving or rarely did– Erving really made fun of Rieff, literally would run around him, made jokes of him, and so on. I remember [his poking] fun at him. At some later point Goffman said to me, "You know, Rieff is a character – he's constructed himself bit by bit." I quite agreed because I knew something about Rieff from one of my professors at Wisconsin, Hans Gerth, who said Rieff was very ostentatious and demanding when they were both at Brandies together.

**Shalin:** What was the name of your professor?

**Bershady:** Hans Gerth. Gerth found that Rieff's father had been a butcher. So he kept calling Rieff "butcher boy." That was the only way he put Rieff down. Rieff had a sort of faux English accent (faux as in f-a-u-x), dressed in very strange 19th century clothes or his version of an English gentleman, which no one in England dressed like anymore, [if they ever did], But he could also be very vulgar, could [s]wear [like a truck driver on occasion.] Goffman was very astute at rule breaking and rule-observing. One joke was that Goffman went to a party given by a wealthy Philadelphia woman who was trying to cultivate members of the faculty, particular members of the faculty. At the end of the party Goffman came up to her and gave \$5 for the party, saying "Thanks." Whereupon she is reported to have said, "But Erving, that's not enough," which is quite a putdown. I don't think the story is remotely true. What is interesting about it, however, is that it is a story that says something of the view of Erving Goffman.

**Shalin:** Exactly. That was the perception.

**Bershady:** Yes, right. That tells you about an attitude toward Erving Goffman that he was both nasty of him and a put down of him at the same time. So there were rumors that he was quite nasty. I had not witnessed this directly, although I had detected a quality about him when I did have some interaction – it was very fleeting – that made me uneasy. I had no idea when he would turn on you, start making fun and teasing. That’s a rather uncomfortable way of being with anyone.

Anyway, I had dinner with him and some friends at a Chinese restaurant. This must have been in the very late sixties. It was casual, and he paid an enormous amount of attention to the wife of this friend [**laughing**]. This thing made my friend quite uneasy. Why Goffman was doing this I have no idea. Nothing came of it, nothing at all, but it was another inappropriate way of behaving in that kind of situation.

**Shalin:** And you witnessed that?

**Bershady:** Oh, yes.

**Shalin:** Was he refusing to carry out conversation with the rest of the group?

**Bershady:** He directed most of his comments to her, he teased her, he kidded around [with] her. He was playing with her and paying relatively little attention to the others. There were just four of us plus Goffman. He paid [little] attention to my wife, or to me, or to my friend, but a large amount of attention to my friend’s wife, which made us all very uncomfortable, except for Goffman. I just chalked this up to his peculiarities. It wasn’t really playfulness; it was a kind of slightly nasty playfulness. That’s what I thought.

**Shalin:** And how did the friend’s wife respond to that show of attention? Was she flattered?

**Bershady:** I thought she didn’t quite know what to do with it, but she could handle it. She joked back and that served to egg him on, if you follow.

**Shalin:** It’s like she accepted the challenge.

**Bershady:** Something like that. Now, I want to speak very briefly about Eviatar [Zerubavel]. Before I do that, however, I want to make one comment about Rieff and Goffman.

**Shalin:** Please.

**Bershady:** Rieff was very much of an egomaniac. He was upset, for example, when Victor [Lidz] and I started to teach theory courses together. We began to siphon off some of his students. He blocked the hiring of the theorists in the department and we didn't have [enough influence in the department to counter him] . . . I was then an associate professor, Victor was an assistant professor, and we did not have enough clout to oppose Rieff effectively. There was a rumor that Rieff was also instrumental in preventing Goffman from getting into the sociology department. They were both at Berkeley together; Rieff was in education, however. Did you know that?

**Shalin:** No, I didn't. I knew he was at Berkeley.

**Bershady:** Rieff was in education, not in sociology. Goffman was in sociology. And Rieff was the kingpin of the theorists in the sociology dept at Penn, but Goffman would have really stolen his show, I think. No question about that. I wonder whether in fact he had been . . . but that is a supposition that can't be proved unless there are records some place. No one knows whether that is the case, but there is no doubt in my mind that Rieff saw Goffman as a rival and a threat . . . his comment that this place may be big enough for both of us – might [suggest] something of the sort. I don't really know. But I do know that there was a peculiar relationship between them. They tried to demarcate their own areas very clearly.

**Shalin:** Perhaps we can explore a bit more this relationship between Philip and Erving. Would you say that they had an admiration for each other's work, for the scholarship of the other person? Was their rivalry measured by respect?

**Bershady:** I have no sense of that. What I do know is that Goffman thought Rieff was an intriguing personality. . . . After all, they both had the Chicago connection, not only Berkeley but also the Chicago connection.

**Shalin:** Did they know each other in Chicago?

**Bershady:** I don't know, but it wouldn't be at all surprising if they did. It was a relatively small circle of intellectuals in the era when they were both there, and they may have known each other. Many people I know who overlapped with them in that era had known about Rieff and Goffman but had little to do with them professionally. So I am pretty sure that they did know each other. They had that kind of connection, and I think Goffman knew something about Rieff's background. Consider his comment about his having constructed himself; it was . . . it was obvious Rieff had constructed himself. No one in the United States appeared the way Rieff appeared. Do you know? It was peculiar.

**Shalin:** Erving must have been intrigued with Rieff's presentation of self. They did share origins – both came from a humble Jewish background, both rose to the pinnacle of influence in their field, and from what I hear, both had a rather uneasy relationship with their Jewish roots. This is a separate topic I want to explore with you.

**Bershady:** I don't know what role Goffman's Jewishness played in his life. At one point, a friend of mine who knew Erving personally said to me, "You know, here is this guy Goffman. He is small, he is smart, he is not athletic, although he is very wiry. He grows up in this little town in Northern Manitoba where there are practically no Jews in the town. Imagine what this guy must have gone through."

**Shalin:** Dell Hymes said something like that.

**Bershady:** Yes. It may have been Dell Hymes who said it to me [**laughing**]. I am not sure.

**Shalin:** You knew Dell Hymes?

**Bershady:** Yes. I just forgot who said it to me, but I understood exactly the point. This made Goffman very defensive. So far as his actual Jewishness is concerned, I have no idea. He never suggested anything of the sort. Rieff, on the other hand, was really odd. I remember on the first Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, I asked him – and I was just a lecturer – would he be teaching on Yom Kippur. He turned to me and said, "I have nothing to atone for."

[**Laughter**]

But he did ask me once . . . I'd heard that he was quite fluent in Yiddish, and I grew up in a Yiddish-speaking environment myself, and I could speak Yiddish and still do speak a bit. I remember telling him that my grandmother had these expressions that might well have come out of Freud, of course in a different format, [Freud] was more scholarly. He asked me to tell him one of these expressions. I'll tell you the English version because I am sure you don't know Yiddish . . .

**Shalin:** I know very little. My mother is Jewish, I'd heard some of it from her.

**Bershady:** Well, in translation the Yiddish expression is. "A horse goes around the world and remains a horse," meaning that character is fate. Although I rather like my grandmother's way of putting it better.

**Shalin:** I'll confer with you about the Yiddish spelling. According to some of Erving's friends at the University of Chicago, Saul Mendlowitz is one of them (he was a close friend of Erving coming from a prominent Jewish family), Erving was running away from his Jewish roots. Saul told me about a saying going round about Erving in Chicago: "He thinks like a Canadian but he acts like a Britisher" – or was it the other way around? I don't remember, but the saying had the same ring to it that your grandmother's expression.

**Bershady:** Yes, yes.

**Shalin:** But you didn't have any opportunity to observe.

**Bershady:** None. Just knew that Rieff was very arch about his Yiddish or Jewish background. On the one side, he professed an interest in it, on the other, he remained steadfastly British.

**Shalin:** He wrote quite extensively about Judaism and Freud.

**Bershady:** Of course. Rieff did write about this, and his own relationship to Judaism was a peculiar one. He didn't observe any of the holidays in any way; he acted as though he was above and beyond this. He constantly referred to Anglican practices rather than to Jewish practices. He knew a great deal about the Anglican church and its holidays. I saw nothing but his occasional use of Yiddish expressions. I had heard that he spoke Yiddish quite fluently. I never encountered this in him.

**Shalin:** Maybe you can say a few words about Rieff as a teacher, as a mentor.

**Bershady:** I didn't know him in classes. I have no idea [of his teaching]. . . . [I'd heard] he was extremely demanding of students. One time, a young man and young woman, who met in his classes. They were very taken with Rieff as a teacher, but they also fell in love and decided to get married. And Rieff threw them out his class. He said, "This is incest. You cannot do that in my classes."

**Shalin:** [**Laughing**]. It's like he was Moses telling them, "You are my children."

**Bershady:** Right. And as a consequence they lost him as a mentor, which was really upsetting to them, tremendously upsetting [**laughing**]. It was an extraordinary thing for a professor to do. In any event, I know that.

**Shalin:** Did he have students who'd written dissertations with him?

**Bershady:** Did any students write a dissertation with him? I am not sure. There was a student who considered him a mentor for while. This was a Hispanic student who spent a couple of years at the Sorbonne, came to Penn, and who . . . He wasn't just a Hispanic, he was a Hispanic Indian from South America. He took Rieff's classes. He was new to America. He could speak fluently. He was already much more advanced than most other students, but he dressed in ordinary street clothes, very ordinary indeed, and casual – jeans, and so on. At one point Rieff turned to him and said in his peculiar accent, "It is very important that you present yourself in a proper way." Rieff had a very clear-cut notion of hierarchy. He then said, "For example, I present myself in such a way because I am professor." Then he turned to this guy and said, "I don't dress like a spic [?]."

**Shalin:** What is the word?

**Bershady:** "Spic." It's a very derogatory word for an Hispanic.

**Shalin:** It is spelled . . .

**Bershady:** S-p-i-c.

**Shalin:** I see. He was occupied with appearances.

**Bershady:** Yes, and status, but this was a terrible insult. The young man didn't know the term, by the way. The other students, American students, did know it, and were shocked. They tried to comfort this young man. When I heard this story later, I thought it was ghastly, frankly. The student was told what "spic" meant. It was equivalent of calling a Jew a "kike." Do you follow?

**Shalin:** Yes, I do.

**Bershady:** That really was the end of this young man's relationship to Philip Rieff. He didn't continue to take courses from him. So there was this peculiar quality about Rieff – he could turn on students in a strange way, without even thinking.

**Shalin:** So far as Philip's relationship with colleagues in the department of sociology – was he involved with the governance?

**Bershady:** No, he never got directly involved in governance. He always tried to operate behind the scenes. He used to court the new chair, whoever the chair was. I saw that. He very much wanted me to be part of his entourage. When he was ill, he asked me to take over his class, which I did of

course. But I wasn't a Rieffian, and then he discovered that I was interested in Parsons.

**Shalin:** That was the end of you [**laughing**].

**Bershady:** Well, it was worse than that.

**Shalin:** What happened?

**Bershady:** I'll tell you. Although this is not about Goffman.

**Shalin:** This is about Penn, the time, the place.

**Bershady:** I'd written a monograph about Parsons, *Ideology and Social Knowledge*. I'd given it to . . . I was in England at the time; I had a sabbatical and finished it in England. And I had given it to Basil Blackwell to look at. They liked it a lot, but they wanted an outside reader. I recommended Rieff among others. Rieff wrote back – and they showed me the letter – “I would not under any circumstance publish this book.”

**Shalin:** Wow.

**Bershady:** Which was crushing to me.

**Shalin:** Did he explain why?

**Bershady:** Pardon me?

**Shalin:** Did he give any reasons?

**Bershady:** But wait.

**Shalin:** OK.

**Bershady:** He hadn't given reasons for that. I told the press, you either have to ask him for reasons or you have to turn to other referees. The other referees were all enthusiastic. The book was published. They gave me a copy of Rieff's letter. After they agreed to publish the book I returned to the United States. I'd been promoted. Rieff asked me to have lunch with him whereupon he said, “You know you owe me your promotion.” I knew I didn't owe him anything [**laughing**]. Then I pulled out my copy of his letter and said, “You know, my book is being published.” He was startled. I [showed him his letter] and said, “Why did you say this? Why did you write this? It's very harmful to me.” He said, “Well, I just didn't think it would be a commercial success.”

**Shalin:** [Laughing]

**Bershady:** Basil Blackwell, [I said,] is not a commercial [publisher]. They are a university publisher and are underwritten. They publish things like this. He just hemmed and hoed. From that point on, our relationship really soured.

**Shalin:** Was Rieff just covering up, making stories, or he convinced himself that that was the case?

**Bershady:** No, I think he was making a story. I think what he was worrying about was what would happen to his standing in the department if . . . After all, I had written a completely theoretical monograph, then I would become known as *the* theorist.

**Shalin:** I see. That was sheer professional rivalry.

**Bershady:** That's exactly right. The same thing happened with Victor Lidz.

**Shalin:** You've seen Victor's reminiscences, and you concur with his take.

**Bershady:** I have no doubt in my mind that Rieff was instrumental in blocking Victor's promotion. I have absolutely no doubt. I'll tell you another incident a propos. When Parsons came to Penn – I think you have this information from Renee . . .

**Shalin:** Yes, she talks about her invitation to Parsons.

**Bershady:** Yes. And so Victor and Renee and I taught with Parsons. We taught three different courses with him. He wasn't here constantly, every other week, I don't remember exactly – I think he was here one week per month, that's it – he gave a university-wide lecture while he was here. . It wasn't a very good lecture, I must admit. Rieff stormed out scoffing, "Parsons is a phony," etcetera, etcetera. I told him point blank, "Look, he gave a bad lecture. It happens. Not everybody gives wonderful lectures all the time. He is a very plainspoken man; he is trying to work out something he hadn't worked out yet, so he was fumbling. But there are essays that he had written that I think are extremely brilliant." He said, "Show me one." And I said, "All right, the power essay." He said, "I'd be willing to debate that with you." I said, "Wonderful, let's have a public discussion on the power essay at your pleasure. I am willing to do it anytime, anywhere" [laughing]. Of course he never referred to this again. He was very anti-Parsons. And of course he [disliked] Parsonians. And here is Harold Bershady who has written this book on Parsons and was team-teaching with him, and so on.

**Shalin:** He took it as an affront.

**Bershady:** I think so. And it was a challenge to his authority in the department.

**Shalin:** He seemed to be very territorial, willing to throw his weight around the department.

**Bershady:** That is absolutely right. There is no question that Rieff was a man of enormous ability, but he was an unfulfilled man. After *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer*, his work wasn't very good, and even the Freud book, the last part of it was poor, I thought. It was very unhistorical. First two parts were really good. And I liked them a lot, thought they were valuable. But the last third where he speaks about the individualism running rampant without any notion of the historical context of American culture – that was really surprising from a sociologist. In any event, I think he is an unfulfilled man.

**Shalin:** By that you mean that he had some Yiddishe kopf, some talent, or whatever you might want to call it, but he didn't live up to his promise.

**Bershady:** Yes. I am sure this is right. His pretensions . . . he was constricted in an enormous number of ways, whereas Goffman did live up to his ability. Not every book was wonderful but he did some wonderful stuff.

**Shalin:** You feel that Goffman realized his promise the way Rieff did not.

**Bershady:** No question about that in my mind. I think Erving has left a lasting legacy. I don't think Rieff has.

**Shalin:** We may come back to this if time allows, but if you don't mind, let's go back to Zerubavel's dissertation.

**Bershady:** Yes. Victor and I were teaching a theory course together. At this time most of the students who took theory courses would take them from us and not from Rieff, which was one of the problems that we had, of course. We were very lively, and actually were learning as much as the students, because we were engaging each other as much as we did the students. I would needle Victor, Victor needled me, and this was very good as we provoked each other into thinking.

**Shalin:** Your differences were productive.

**Bershady:** Yes, it was both very enjoyable and very productive. I had been puzzling over *Elementary Forms* a great deal, especially the preface, and it finally dawned on me what Durkheim was doing – drawing an analogy from

*Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*. He was treating religion in a kind of an analogy, a rather peculiar analogy, to the Newtonian physics. Just as Kant was arguing that space and time were underlying categories that the mind contributes to the coordinated perception of things, so Durkheim was arguing that sacred and profane are the underlying categories coordinating the religious/moral life.

**Shalin:** Interesting.

**Bershady:** Do you follow?

**Shalin:** Yes.

**Bershady:** The analogy is simply this. Space and time are the implicit and necessary mental; coordinates of physical laws. [Take], for example,  $F = MA$ . You cannot either formulate or apply this law unless you locate it in space and time. But space and time are not out there – they are what our minds contribute. So too, you cannot formulate or apply any of the norms of religious ritual without the implicit categories of sacred and profane, the two coordinates within which religious norms are framed. You can draw a graph for illustrative purposes of course. That was one of my little breakthroughs, so we spoke about time and space, the sacred and the profane, and of course we talked about Durkheim being interested in the issues of time, in the sociology of time itself.

Eviatar was in this seminar. I remember talking to him about that. We were both very admiring of Durkheim. It was not the first time Victor and I had read Durkheim, or Eviatar had read Durkheim, nor will it be the last time. We read him many times and we continue to read Durkheim. I remember Eviatar telling me that sociology of time was very interesting to him, the way Durkheim laid it out and the way we were discussing it in class. I said [to him], "It's a great topic. It's really a great topic. I don't know if anybody did it, if there is any other way to do it but sociologically. There must be many different tacks one can take on it." He agreed. Then, – I don't know how much later, but not too much – he said, "I'm going to work on the sociology of time." Which was great.

**Shalin:** You wouldn't remember approximately when this conversation took place? Was it in late 70s?

**Bershady:** No, I don't think it was in the late seventies.

**Shalin:** Eviatar defended his thesis around . . .

**Bershady:** . . . '74, '75.

**Shalin:** So it was more like . . .

**Bershady:** 197[?] maybe. I guess that's late seventies [?].

**Shalin:** OK, go ahead.

**Bershady:** He said he had a proposal and asked me to meet with him and Erving Goffman and Renee Fox. And we did, in Renee's office. In the office, what struck me was the way Erving had very carefully gone over Eviatar's proposal and made some very good, very strong suggestions on how this could be done. He didn't think one could just write about time. One had to do a study of it. How to do this study was the real question. You have the materials that Renee and Eviatar gave [on this topic]. I do believe that Eviatar's imagination was sparked to some extent by what was going on in the class that Victor and I gave.

**Shalin:** What was the name of this class?

**Bershady:** It was simply . . . What was it? It was simply a theory seminar on classical traditions.

**Shalin:** And that was around 1970.

**Bershady:** About . . . seventy three-e-e or four.

**Shalin:** So that seminar might have been among the origins of Eviatar's interest in the subject.

**Bershady:** That might well have been, because we spent quite a bit of time speaking on these issues. And of course my own breakthrough came through Kantian analysis. I knew that Durkheim had studied with Renouvier, the French neo-Kantian, and he was well versed in Kantian metaphysics and epistemology . . . . When I finally saw the analogy it was not a surprise to me. This made a great deal of sense. Through this analogy Durkheim was able to translate the Kantian insight into the social world.

**Shalin:** He kind of sociologized the Kantian a priori, pointing to the sociological dimension as the condition of possibility of ritual life.

**Bershady:** It was a social a priori.

**Shalin:** Exactly, it was the Kantian a priori sociologized.

**Bershady:** That's right. In a similar vein Simmel created a number of other social a priori categories such as exchange, hierarchy. These social a priori categories became the conditions that made society possible. Do you follow?

**Shalin:** Yes, this makes sense. Simmel was self-consciously Kantian in his formulation of how is society possible. He took the Kantian question "How is nature possible?" and turned into a sociological question "How is society possible?"

**Bershady:** Correct.

**Shalin:** And then he answered that this was possible because units comprising society are self-conscious individuals who continuously synthesize society in the a priori terms supplied by a historically evolving community.

**Bershady:** That's correct. It seems to me that Durkheim was doing something quite similar to although in his own way, given that the sacred and the profane function as a priori categories of the moral life. In any event, I think that the analogy to Kant's space-time, plus all of the comments that Durkheim makes on time, probably sparked Eviatar's thinking. What Eviatar did was creative, it was wonderful, really. He did a fine piece of work that I admire. It was his work. But I think the seminar sparked his thinking. I think it is common that seminars spark students thinking, you know.

**Shalin:** It was a genuine case of synthesis where you work with what is there but pull it together in a way that is unique to you.

**Bershady:** That's right. In any case, when Goffman and Renee and Eviatar met, Renee's suggestion about using the hospital setting– I thought was wonderful . . . . The periodicity of hospital life, the pills that had to be taken, the checking that had to be done on patients throughout the day by doctors and nurses, the attending – these things happen with regularity. . .

**Shalin:** The structure of scheduling.

**Bershady:** . . .the scheduling – it's just incredible [**laughing**]. I thought this could be studied quite profitably. And so Eviatar started doing this, I guess. I dropped out of the thesis [committee]. I don't think I did it by intention as much as the hospital was not my setting. I knew very little about hospitals at that point. I didn't think I could be very useful. But I didn't formally say I couldn't be part of it. I think it was taken for granted that I wasn't going to be part of it. Erving and Renee were the major figures in the dissertation.

**Shalin:** I think they were co-sponsors of the thesis.

**Bershady:** So that's my story about Eviatar. Now, to go back to Goffman himself, earlier on we hired a black sociologist, Elijah Anderson, who became friendly with Goffman. Goffman invited Elijah, Victor and me to his house. We came. The house itself was kind of fascinating. One whole floor was his library. It had a huge library table. One could have a conference there easily. Lots and lots and lots of books. In the back of that floor was also a very large kitchen. I think it was on that floor, or was it . . . Now I have forgotten where it was. But the kitchen itself was quite interesting. There were large copper pots hung on hooks on a sliding rack [suspended] from the ceiling. It looked like one could really cook for hundreds of people in this kind of room. Now, downstairs was equally interesting. Goffman's room was like a monk's cell where he slept. There was a cot, and it was very bare. Just a place to sleep, nothing more than that.

**Shalin:** That was downstairs?

**Bershady:** I think it was downstairs. Either his study and his kitchen were upstairs or . . . I cannot quite remember. But both the study and the kitchen were impressive for their baronial qualities. What was equally impressive was the ascetic [quality] of his actual living quarters, [that is, his bedroom.] We spent a couple of hours talking, the four of us. And then we went out for lunch to a nearby deli. Maybe we spent an hour there at the most. I was walking with Goffman, Victor with Elijah were ahead of us. Erving turned to me and said, "You know, Anderson is really a sociologist. He is a professional sociologist, he is not a professional black." I said, "That's right." He said that quite appreciatively of Anderson.

**Shalin:** It was a genuine admiration.

**Bershady:** Probably. I thought it was good of Goffman to see that. Victor and I were among Anderson's champions in the department. That's another long and bizarre story.

**Shalin:** Those little things fade from memory so fast, yet they are precious. Maybe we could pursue that at some point. But continue about your encounter.

**Bershady:** That was the one comment Goffman made about Anderson and I liked him very much for that. I appreciated what he was saying about Anderson, appreciated his insight. He was really trying to see Anderson, and he saw him. I thought it was terrific, you know. I very much liked it in him.

**Shalin:** Would you be able to locate this meeting in time?

**Bershady:** Good question.

**Shalin:** It may be hard. Do you know if he remarried at the time? It might help if you figure out whether Gillian was already in the picture.

**Bershady:** I don't think so.

**Shalin:** Perhaps late '70s.

**Bershady:** No, I think it was maybe mid-'70s.

**Shalin:** Erving must have been single at that time – do you know anything about that?

**Bershady:** No, nothing. Zero.

**Shalin:** He was raising his son. Since '64 he was a single parent.

**Bershady:** Yes. I had read his *Asylums*, and I knew that this was sparked off by [the plight of ] his wife.

**Shalin:** How did you know that? What was the connection here as you see it?

**Bershady:** I don't really know enough. I'd heard that his wife was quite ill, psychologically ill. I certainly was aware of that, and I was sympathetic. My sister was schizophrenic and was hospitalized for many years before she committed suicide. I was extremely sympathetic to it all. I also had spent a summer working as an attendant in a so-called "mental institution." It was a summer job. I couldn't stand it. I couldn't stand most of the other attendants [who had worked there for years.] Some of the patients were lovely, interesting, sweet people. Many of them were very disturbed. You could see that, there was no question about that. It was very depressing work because I didn't know what could be done for the [patients], you know. So I was sympathetic to the asylum book. It was an angry book, frankly. Not so much angry as distressed and distraught, more than anything else. I was upset for him; this whole period must have been horrendous. And it wasn't such a short period. It must have lasted quite a while. But I never spoke to him about that. I didn't dream of ever speaking to him about that. It would be an intrusion.

**Shalin:** Of course, of course. Did you read "The Insanity of Place" where Goffman writes of what it feels like living with a disturbed person? This is a kind of companion piece to *Asylums* that some commentators consider autobiographical. When I compare both statements, I feel that Goffman's corpus has a crypto-biographical dimension to it.

**Bershady:** What's the name of the piece again?

**Shalin:** "The Insanity of Place."

**Bershady:** No, I don't know it.

**Shalin:** It appeared in one of his books, maybe in *Relations in Public*. It is so personal and so painful to read. The vantage point here is not that of a disturbed person violating the interaction order but that of a so-called "normal" one who has to figure out how to handle disruptive behavior of someone very close to you. No more talk about the funnel of betrayal; now it's the horror of trying to figure out what the troubled person is going to do next. You see that person picking [up] a kitchen knife or going for the exit and you couldn't help wondering what if . . . I have read that Goffman intimated that *Asylums* would have been a different book if he had a chance to rewrite it.

**Bershady:** That's news to me. I am glad to hear that. But I found it painful to read *Asylums*. I was positive it was written from pain.

**Shalin:** Oh, yes, very much so. But so is his essay on living with a disturbed person. I understand that Erving's wife was in treatment when he developed his interest in mental health issues.

**Bershady:** That might well be.

**Shalin:** [Going back to Philadelphia], Erving was presumably living by himself in that house. His son of course lived there with him.

**Bershady:** I never met his son.

**Shalin:** He was there at least until he enrolled in medical school.

**Bershady:** I never met his son, and my impression is that Erving was very protective of maintaining his son's privacy. That may or may not be true of course. He never referred to his son or to any women in my presence.

**Shalin:** Nor did you meet Gillian.

**Bershady:** I never met Gillian until much later, after Erving died. I didn't know her.

**Shalin:** Do you have any memories of the time when Erving came down with cancer?

**Bershady:** No. I'll tell you two of the other stories I know about Erving, however. Ned Polsky – do you know who he is?

**Shalin:** No. It is Ned . . .

**Bershady:** N-e-d P-o-l-s-k-y.

**Shalin:** The name is vaguely familiar.

**Bershady:** He wrote a book called *Hustlers, Beats, and Others*. It is essentially about conmen, rule breakers, and so on. . . . He came to Penn to give a talk, and of course students were quite eager to hear him. I was chair of the colloquium committee at the time, so I introduced him [and was] very pleased to meet him. He looked ill to me, and it turned out he was ill. He spoke about his book, about his new studies. Apparently, he did a study of homosexual [– the term he used –] bars. At the time it was quite unique to do this kind of study. He described the relationships that were occurring in those bars – men embracing and kissing and drinking, and so on. Erving [who] was in attendance at the colloquium started needling Polsky, saying something like, “Well, maybe these guys just wanted to have a drink,” things of that sort. Those were rather silly comments. This went on and on. Clearly, Polsky was getting flustered and upset. At one point I finally I said – I really got angry at Erving for this – “Look, these guys feel illegitimate. If there is one place where they can appear and do what they want to do without being stigmatized horribly . . . ” What was interesting, of course, was that they were both rule breakers and rule performers. That is to say, they were breaking the “rules” by being homosexual, but they also do things people do when they are in love [**laughing**]. . . . There is no simple dichotomy of rule breaking and rule observing. These two things are happening simultaneously. This is very complex and interesting, people are finding some haven, and that is what this study was about. Erving got red in the face, just backed down, didn't say much of anything after that, and left early.

**Shalin:** How do you read this needling? Was he territorial?

**Bershady:** I am not sure. I don't think he was territorial. I think what he wanted was more details of how Polsky came to the interpretation that he came to. That's my impression. That's the impression I got later, not the impression I had then. He could have asked very differently. He could have been much more forthright about this, but he wasn't. You know the issues, “How did you reach that interpretation? What did you see that made you think that way.”

**Shalin:** The grounds for inference.

**Bershady:** Right. He likely did think apparently [that was the issue], which I didn't realize at the time. I guess my response was not a happy one for him, but [it calmed] Polsky and the rest of the people at the colloquium, because they were relieved that someone spoke up. It was [inappropriate and made everyone uncomfortable.] I couldn't believe [Goffman] would do this. . .  
. Anyway, he did what he did and I did what I did. I am not sure it put me in a very good stead with Erving.

Two other things. There is a book by Grathoff that came out on action theory.

**Shalin:** The spelling is. . .

**Bershady:** G-r-a-t-h-o-f-f. Richard Grathoff edited the correspondence between Alfred Schutz and Talcott Parsons. These were two brilliant men who just passed by each other [by, neither one recognizing what the other was doing.]. They simply did not understand each other.

**Shalin:** That was my impression when I read the book. I might have even reviewed it someplace.

**Bershady:** You did? OK. Anyway, that was a fascinating (mis-encounter.]. Goffman gave me a copy of the book. He said, "Here, I've read it. You may find it interesting." He gave me a copy, which I have it still. I talked about the issue of phenomenology with Victor. Two of my professors studied with Husserl.

**Shalin:** Really, with Husserl?

**Bershady:** With Husserl. Victor and I had been talking about how to bring the phenomenological insights into a closer alignment with action theory insights: how can you take the insights of the theory of human action and the theory of human experience simultaneously? Parsons' categories are the theorist's categories; they are not necessarily the actor's categories. We were thinking about this, and the book stimulated us to think some more about the issues. Victor and I thought that maybe we could have a roundtable and get people to discuss these issues. We wrote to Bellah, Smelser, Cicourel and to Jeff Alexander who was at that time just coming up, and we also wrote to Habermas, because we knew that Habermas had written about Schutz. We described what we were trying to do and thought maybe all of us could present at the national meeting. This was the meeting that Erving ran when he became the chairman of the . . . of the. . .

**Shalin:** ASA president?

**Bershady:** Yes, when he became president of the association, of the society. I presented this to Erving, and he said, "Fine, you are on." Shortly before, about a month before we were scheduled to go to San Francisco – and Goffman was in Philadelphia [at the time], he said, "I am bumping you off" [**Laughing**]. [I said], "How can you do this." He said, "I don't have the time [on the program for this session]." I said, "Look, rearrange it. I have all these people coming." Habermas couldn't come, but the others could. Aaron Cicourel was coming. We had quite a cadre of notable scholars coming who agreed to talk on these issues. . . . I was dumbfounded.

**Shalin:** Did he explain his decision?

**Bershady:** He said he couldn't find the time, couldn't schedule us. "But we were already scheduled, you scheduled us," I said. He said, "Well, I am taking you off." I talked about this with some friends who, by the way, were not in the department and not sociologists. One of them was a lawyer who advised me, "This is what you are going to do. Write a letter as though it were going to each of these people. Explain what has happened and carbons copy it to Goffman. Don't send the letter, show him what you would do if he insists on your being off." I did [that]. It was a page-and-a-half letter.

**Shalin:** Do you have a copy of it, by the way?

**Bershady:** I was looking for it an preparation for your call, but couldn't find it. I moved a few times. . .

**Shalin:** Sure, but go ahead, go ahead.

**Bershady:** Goffman said to me when he read the letter, "You are a small nation threatening a large nation." Of course he was referring to himself as a large nation. And I answered, "That's correct Erving, but I have the bomb."

**Shalin:** [**Laughing**].

**Bershady:** He said, "All right, you are on." And he rescheduled us for eight in the morning on the last day of the meeting. If you've been to these meetings, Dmitri, you would know that at eight in the morning on the last day very few people show up.

**Shalin:** Of course.

**Bershady:** About sixty five people showed up. It was packed. I was very . .

**Shalin:** So Erving blinked in a way?

**Bershady:** Yes. He died a few months after this. I didn't see him after the meetings ended. But I did read his presidential address. He had a tremendous animus against Parsons. I don't know why. But that animus seemed to me to be part of it. I don't really understand why. It's peculiar to me. I know that Parsons was tone deaf to what Erving was doing. He just didn't understand it. Maybe the same thing [applies to Goffman].

**Shalin:** Do you know this for a fact that Parsons did not think highly of Goffman?

**Bershady:** I don't know that at all. I have no idea of what Parsons thought of Goffman. I am just speculating that he might not have understood what Goffman was doing. It's quite possible that like Schutz and Parsons, Goffman and Parsons were talking past each other. Do you follow what I am saying?

**Shalin:** Yes, the Parsons-Schutz encounter paralleled that of Parsons and Goffman; even though there are bridges that can be built, need to be built in each case.

**Bershady:** Exactly. Garfinkel saw these things pretty clearly it seems to me. I didn't know what Goffman's relationship to Garfinkel was.

**Shalin:** Complicated, I think.

**Bershady:** I should think so [**laughing**]. They were very complicated [people].

**Shalin:** They might have been similar in character, I think.

**Bershady:** I never met . . . I think I may have met Garfinkel once, but that's it. I don't even remember what he looked like. Was he a big man? I have no idea. Erving was a difficult man who was respected, often liked, often disliked, a very difficult man to get a handle on. I had no idea about his Jewishness, none whatsoever. I had no sense of it from him.

**Shalin:** It just didn't come up in your interactions.

**Bershady:** There wasn't even a typical Yiddish slang term that Jews who had become very secularized occasionally use, like "schmuck." He never used these terms. He tended to use English terms, or British terms, more than anything else. So far as I know that's just about it with Goffman. I think he really wrote important things, I hope the general perspective he was trying to pursue will be continued, that others will continue this. The issues of what rules are, how they are broken, and how they are maintained are very complex. They can be accidentally broken without the intent to break

them. There are all sorts of rule breaking, but some are broken without any intention whatsoever. I hope those things will be studied – not by me but by others.

**Shalin:** Your early impression of *Presentation of Self* was that this was an important perspective, a fresh piece of scholarship, and you retained this vision of Goffman as an innovator whose thought continued to evolve, right?

**Bershady:** Right. I thought *Presentation of Self* was an interesting foray. I didn't know at the time what its full potential might be. At one time I thought the problem with Goffman was that he had a play but no stage. And then I read *Frame Analysis*. I remember discussing it with Victor at length, and thought this was an effort finally to develop a stage for this play, for the dramas that are occurring. He was staging them by giving definitions of situation in which these things were occurring within the frames. That was a real attempt. By the way, I did mention to you Michael Delaney, I think.

**Shalin:** Do you know him? Did he defend his dissertation?

**Bershady:** I don't think he wrote a dissertation. I am not sure. I know that he just dropped out. . . [Michael Delaney defended his Ph.D. thesis at the sociology department of the University of Pennsylvania in 1979. For further details, please check [Harold Bershady's comments](#) that appear in the "Comments and Dialogues" section of the Goffman archives]. He is very very bright. He is a very smart man, extremely sensitive and well read, very well read. Also, he came out of philosophy and into sociology. I liked him a lot. He has his problems, as we all do of course. He left the field altogether, as far as I know. He is somewhere in Seattle. He read through *Frame Analysis* in manuscript and Goffman acknowledged him. . . If you look [at the book], you will see that Delaney is acknowledged there. Delaney had been a reader for Goffman [when] Goffman gave a methods course. Delaney took scrupulous, very thorough notes. You might want to talk to him.

**Shalin:** I am in contact with him

**Bershady:** You are? Very good.

**Shalin:** He contacted me once he learned about the Goffman archives, which he uses in his work. He initiated contact at Sam Heilman's behest. He told me what you are telling me. He is working on a book; in fact, he is looking for a publisher to place a manuscript that contains transcripts of two classes or seminars he took from Goffman and a memoir.

**Bershady:** That's good.

**Shalin:** And I encouraged him to pursue this project.

**Bershady:** That's great.

**Shalin:** He is coming back into the field and maybe not having an easy time of it. He is interesting indeed. You said Michael was a reader for Goffman – does it mean he graded his students' exams?

**Bershady:** He read whatever Goffman wrote, and read it critically.

**Shalin:** Oh, I see. He was reading closely Goffman's works.

**Bershady:** That's correct. And [he read] critically. Goffman referred to him as the best reader he ever had, he ever encountered.

**Shalin:** Is this mentioned in the *Frame Analysis* or do you know this personally?

**Bershady:** I know it personally.

**Shalin:** Goffman indicated this about Michael . . .

**Bershady:** . . . to me. Yes.

**Shalin:** That's important. Now, as long as we are on this book, how did *Frame Analysis* strike you?

**Bershady:** I thought the book was extraordinarily brilliant. This was really an effort to develop a kind of theory of the situation that permits dramas to unfold. Because dramas do not occur in thin air. They [follow] certain cues, certain directions, as it were. . . . And you also need a title. Each drama has a kind of title. For example, when you are invited to a party, you know by the title more or less what is expected of you, but it is the specific party that tells you what is expected of you at this party. And when the act is going to change – that is, the party is coming to an end – you somehow know this. But how do you know those things? How are they "framed?" Those are the kinds of things I thought that *Frame Analysis* was trying to get at. It was a way of defining situations, framing them. I thought that was really innovative, that was the step toward the broader view . . . putting the norms within a larger context.

**Shalin:** I see this book as a valiant attempt to conceive the interaction order in structural terms.

**Bershady:** That's right.

**Shalin:** And you feel that he succeeded in his endeavor.

**Bershady:** I don't think he succeeded, but he opened it up as an issue. I think that he had some very striking things to say about these questions. I don't think he developed a full-scale theory by any means. He opened up an issue that he didn't really pursue. [This was] a more macro issue that intrigued and me other people I know, including Michael Delaney for that matter. It was a very different tack in his work, yet this tack was needed to place his work.

**Shalin:** It is indeed brilliant, I agree with that. I do have issues with this book and the difficulties one encounters in applying his insights.

**Bershady:** Oh, yes.

**Shalin:** In real life analysis you keep shifting from one frame to another without being certain which frame is at work at any given moment, or how the transition occurs from one frame to another. I have difficult time putting my finger on a specific situation and pronouncing one to be an instance of a particular frame and the other exemplifying another frame. I felt the need for some macro perspective that traces the logic of framing and frame transitioning. I didn't think it was quite there.

**Bershady:** I quite agree.

**Shalin:** But look, this is 500 page book; we should be grateful that Erving undertook this monumental task even if the result fell short in some ways.

**Bershady:** I think so. That's the next step, something that we should do.

**Shalin:** Now, do you have any idea, a theory, why Erving sought to become ASA president? I learned about different perspectives on that.

**Bershady:** I know nothing about that.

**Shalin:** It didn't surprise you?

**Bershady:** No, it didn't surprise me. I really had very little . . . I didn't know Erving that well, I really didn't. I never took a course with him; my conversations with him were brief. Yes, I spent a dinner or two with him, but not with him [alone], there were many people. I didn't have that much to do with him . . . . My real conflict with him occurred with the Polsky situation and in the last period when I wanted to have that session.

**Shalin:** When he wanted to bump you off the program.

**Bershady:** Yes. That was it, really. I was very glad that he did get to Penn, that despite the nuttiness in our department the university saw fit to bring him in. That was great. Why did the department . . . well, that's another story.

**Shalin:** You were a colleague of Erving from, roughly, '68 to '82?

**Bershady:** Yes. That's right.

**Shalin:** I see. If I may – and we can stop at any time because I don't want to take too much of your time – one issues that interest me is what does someone like Erving who discovered the front stage-back stage dynamics does when it comes to presenting his own self in public. I hypothesize that his carving out a persona for himself might have presented a problem. The question is how to remain authentic in the world that is perennially staged, that is, if you wish, phony though and though – any thoughts on that?

**Bershady:** I know this. Erving insisted that he be called "Mr. Goffman," not "Dr. Goffman."

**Shalin:** But not Erving.

**Bershady:** Right. That's number one. . . . Number two, I never saw him with a shave [**chuckling**]. He always needed a shave, it seemed to me. He always had a two-three days growth of beard. But then again, I didn't see him every day, so he might have shaved.

**Shalin:** Never a full beard?

**Bershady:** No, never. He looked like he had shaved yesterday. He always looked that way, like maybe shaved yesterday but not today. He always wore rumpled clothes, mostly jeans – no, not jeans, mostly chinos. Chinos and some kind of pullover shirt. I never saw him with a jacket. I mean suit jacket.

**Shalin:** Any ties?

**Bershady:** Pardon me?

**Shalin:** A tie?

**Bershady:** No, never with a tie. He didn't wear sneakers or tennis shoes. I remember that. I did sit on his class, or tried to sit in on a class he gave. I just went to it, but he spoke in a whisper. Students were practically beside themselves trying to hear him. So he was certainly drawing a great deal of attention to himself. Whatever he did, the way he appeared with his unshaven

face, his rumpled clothes, his very whispery voice in the classroom – everything was geared to having people look at him. Which, speaking of self-presentation, is in itself fascinating. Since I couldn't hear him, I decided not to continue the class.

**Shalin:** Why would he speak in this way? Was it part of his self-dramatization? Maybe he just didn't care. What was it?

**Bershady:** I don't know. I can't answer that question. It clearly served to make people strain to pay attention to him.

**Shalin:** It sounds like he was accustomed and expected to be paid rapt attention to.

**Bershady:** Well, the consequences of some act are not necessarily the intentions of that act. You know, "post hoc ergo propter hoc" and all that. I don't know what he expected, but certainly he must have seen the way students were straining. I mean, he couldn't have been totally oblivious to that. Then, why didn't he speak [louder]? Maybe he didn't want to discommode himself. I have no idea.

**Shalin:** I see.

**Bershady:** I don't know if he liked teaching or not. I can't tell. I know that in that colloquium with Polsky he didn't whisper. He spoke very clearly [**chuckling**], and rather nastily. The whispering quality was his persona while teaching.

**Shalin:** So when he wanted to, he could project his voice.

**Bershady:** Absolutely.

**Shalin:** Some intent is to be implied.

**Bershady:** I suspect there was, but I don't know what that intent was.

**Shalin:** Who knows, maybe to drive as many students away as possible?

**Bershady:** Perhaps so, because students did want to study with him, you know. They really did.

**Shalin:** Eviatar Zerubavel tells how he came from Israel and wanted to study with Erving and almost didn't make the cut.

**Bershady:** That's right. I read that [**laughing**]. Poor Eviatar. Eviatar had a rough time, but he was daring in a way. Renee and Victor and I – we all were really trying to make Eviatar comfortable. He was very bright, creative. I don't know what [his] problem was with Erving. I really don't.

**Shalin:** This is wonderful stuff, Harold. I have more questions but I should let you be. I will transcribe our conversation and send you the transcript. There are a few things in my queue but eventually you'll get the draft. I think you need rest, but there are a couple of questions, particularly about Parsons, I'd like to explore in the future. You knew the man.

**Bershady:** Very well, yes.

**Shalin:** It's a separate conversation. Maybe at some point I will talk to you about him, Victor Lidz, and a few other people you knew. You can designate any part of it as confidential. I just want to preserve for posterity as much of your memories as possible.

**Bershady:** OK. I don't want to end [on this note]. One point concerning the early response to Goffman in the department [which] was an interesting response. The department, as is true in much of the profession, was riddled with scientific – not scientific – attitudes. I don't know how Rieff himself got in.

**Shalin:** He wouldn't fit into that mold of thinking.

**Bershady:** No, no. And neither would I.

**Shalin:** You know the saying, "Every well-stocked zoo must have one rhino."

**Bershady:** That's right [**laughing**]. Exactly right! I wrote the first theoretical dissertation at the University of Wisconsin, people told me. It was completely theoretical, and that was great. But I was hired before I wrote the dissertation. Although sociology is still quite positivistic, it now sociology tends to be more policy oriented. I think that's what worked in Goffman's disfavor, so far as the department is concerned. I don't think anybody knew him other than Rieff.

**Shalin:** When Goffman was invited, the department's agenda was more positivistic, methodology driven, right? Rieff himself was an anomaly.

**Bershady:** Rieff was an anomaly, I was an anomaly. I wasn't certain whether I could get tenure at this point because of my own attitude and orientation.

**Shalin:** Victor suggests Rieff was instrumental in his failure to secure tenure at Penn, but you managed to pull through.

**Bershady:** Well, I was a very popular teacher. I also had developed real friendships with Renee and with a number of other people [like] Digby Baltzell – and that’s another interesting relationship that Goffman had.

**Shalin:** What is this name?

**Bershady:** Digby Baltzell – B-a-l-t-z-e-l-l. He was the man who was presumed to have invented the word “WASP.”

**Shalin:** Oh, yes, yes. I’ve heard of him.

**Bershady:** He wrote *Philadelphia Gentleman, The Protestant Establishment in America, Puritan Boston & Quaker Philadelphia*, and so on. He was a terrifically nice man. Goffman knew him and his wife somewhat. His wife, Jane, was a very good painter, very well known Philadelphia painter, who liked Goffman. I think Digby himself had mixed feelings about Goffman, mainly because of Goffman’s presentation, which was sort of a guy-on-the-street [**laughing**], which was kind of odd. I don’t know more about their relationship beside what I’ve just told you. I know that Jane said she liked him.

**Shalin:** Do you know if she is alive?

**Bershady:** No, she is dead. She died in 1990 or 1991. Baltzell died too. In any event, that’s about it, so far as I know. . . .

**Shalin:** That’s aplenty. I gather you don’t have any papers that shed light on Erving.

**Bershady:** No, the only thing I have is Grathoff book that he gave me. There is nothing in it that is underlined, no comments, nothing checked – it’s clean, newborn from the press.

**Shalin:** If you come across your letter to Goffman that you mentioned, let me know.

**Bershady:** It maybe on a WordPerfect disk, in which case I would have to see if I can transcribe it to Microsoft Word.

**Shalin:** Don’t worry about it. If it doesn’t show up, it’s OK.

**Bershady:** OK.

**Shalin:** And thank you so much.

**Bershady:** You are very welcome.

**Shalin:** Take care.

**Bershady:** Bye.

**[End of the recording]**