Hans Loeser Interview Transcript

Friday March 2, 2001
University of Pennsylvania Law School
Conducted by Larry Seymour

LARRY SEYMOUR: Good afternoon, my name is Larry Seymour, and I am here in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania Law School to conduct an interview for the Oral Legal History project, with Mr. Hans Loeser, a highly distinguished honorary fellow of the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Today is Friday, March 2, 2001.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Mr. Loeser, I would like to start with a few questions about your childhood, first can you tell us when and where you were born?

HANS LOESER: I was born on September 28, 1920, in a town called Kassel, K-A-S-S-E-L, in Germany.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Ok, can you describe the social climate in Germany at the time of your birth?

HANS LOESER: Only, so far as I know it since then, I have no memory of my birth. The social climate at the time of my birth...well, it was 1920, it was two years after the end of World War II. My father had been in the German army during the war and he had just come back, and just as we did towards the end of the second world war, I guess he got married soon after he came out of the army, first world war, and married my mother. He was the son of Max Loeser, my grandfather, and my grandfather had started in the 19th century, what became the largest department store in our city. Kassel was a city of about 180,000 at the time, and this was the largest store apart from a very much larger store that was part of a national chain.
LARRY SEYMOUR: Your father inherited the department store from his father that had been in your family for 75 years. As a child, did you aspire to continue the family tradition of running your father's department store?

HANS LOESER: Well as a child I suppose I sort of assumed it. It was sort of taken for granted and I didn't think very much about it. I have to add, and I'll probably have a chance to say some more about that, but in retrospect, I am really rather glad I didn't.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Your mother worked in your father's store. Was it unusual for a woman in your mother's economic position to work at that point in time?

HANS LOESER: Very unusual. My mother was the only one in our acquaintance who worked regularly in a job. Of course she wasn't paid, but we owned the store. Basically she ran the department, in German it was called a hand-working department, and it basically dealt with the making of clothes at home, embroidery, all of the things that mostly women in those days, and I guess still today, mostly women do at home. Of course, it was a much bigger thing then because at that time in Germany, almost all clothes were hand made, and this was a very large part of any store of the kind of our store to supply, to have the supplies for that. That included things like the paper patterns that you use. That was a big thing as I recall for making clothes.

[A short technical problem was not transcribed here]

LARRY SEYMOUR: What do you suppose motivated your mother to work then at that time?

HANS LOESER: That's a good question. I don't really know what motivated my mother. My mother was a very, a person who I think did not particularly enjoy the superficial societal contacts that most women engaged in in those days. You met in the afternoon for tea, for coffee with a bunch of other women and chatted about this and that and every other thing. My mother was never too easy in that kind of superficial interchange in
contact, and I think she really enjoyed, she didn’t have to do it, really enjoyed the work in the store. And she gradually established a relationship with customers which she greatly enjoyed, who asked her for a judgment and this and that they bought, and she liked that. It may also be, although that’s speculation on my part, that she enjoyed working in the same surroundings where my father was active, and the reason I say that is that certainly at dinner, at lunch or at dinner, there was a lot of exchange between the two that had to do with the business, and she would relate who came in during the day and he would relate what the overall patterns were, so I think she enjoyed the collaboration with my father. That’s really all I can suggest.

LARRY SEYMOUR: There was a period when your mother’s brother came and worked in the store. Were other extended family members involved in the business?

HANS LOESER: No, no, I don’t know. Nobody else. My mother had two brothers, one of them, Karl was sort of a lone wolf. He never got married. He was a very nice, but very quiet introspective person. He had spent a lot of time in Argentina after the first world war, and came back from Argentina in the mid-20s it must have been, and was I think, wanted to get back to the family more than anything else, and he, my father I guess offered him a job as an animal which we don’t have in business here. In German it’s called a prokurist. It’s a person who sort of assists the manager and has the right to sign on, as if he were the manager, and it’s sort of a generally overall useful assistant to the person who owns or manages the company. He held that job from as long as I can remember, the mid-20s, until Hitler came to power in 1933, and very soon after that, he decided to go back to Argentina, since he spoke Spanish, that was a place to go. Now that…I probably misspoke earlier, I said he had been in Argentina. I think he was in Spain before, and that’s where he learned Spanish, and he came back from Spain. And then in Hitler’s time, he decided it was better to get away further, and he went to Argentina, another Spanish speaking country, and he didn’t survive. He was deaf, he was hard of hearing I should say, as a result of the first world war, in which he also had been in the German army, and had been injured and become hard of hearing. And he was killed in an automobile accident in Buenos Aires. Might as well go on to say that my
mother's other brother was a very, very different person. He was highly interested in politics. He became a Zionist very, very early in the 20s, and actually moved to what was then British governed Palestine, established himself in Jerusalem, and practiced as a dentist in Jerusalem. He had been trained as a dentist in Germany. And, for reasons which are utterly un-understandable to me, he returned to Germany from Argen..., from Jerusalem in about 1927 or thereabouts, and established a dentist practice in a town near Kassel called Fritzlar. And we visited him there. He had a South African wife, and they had two children, and as soon as the...as Hitler came to power, he left again and went back to Jerusalem.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You lived in a large apartment on top of your father's department store with in-house servants as a child. Was this common amongst the people with whom you grew up?

HANS LOESER: Well, I think our apartment was probably larger than most people's. It was what we would call a duplex today with all the sleeping quarters upstairs, and the living quarters downstairs. It was very, very roomy. My grandfather had built that whole building, and I think must have built that apartment with his son in mind. I don't think my grandfather ever lived in that apartment. I'm not quite sure about that. Both my grandfather's on both sides, my mother's father and my father's father died either just before or just after I was born. So I really didn't know them, but it was a large apartment and we did have servants. We had a live-in maid, a cook who lived in. We had a woman who took care of us children and lived in. And we had people who came in to wash and to clean and so forth. So there was a lot of servant coming and going, and at least two servants living in the house. Now was that common at the time? Certainly a lot more common than it is nowadays. It was much...perhaps our...the number or so were above the average. When I say average, of course, I am talking about a middle class average. Obviously there were lots and lots of Germans who had no servants. But, among professionals and business people, everybody had at least one servant in those days. It was taken for granted. And many of the younger people in Germany, particularly from the villages all around, it was quite typical for them to take that kind of a job. And the
woman who took care of my sister and me for example was trained as a kindergarten teacher, highly trained, and that, perhaps she was more highly trained than it was the average of the people. But almost everybody had someone to help take care of the children in those days.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You have happy memories of your childhood with your sister Elizabeth, such as exchanging Morse code messages and playing in the attic. Are you still close with your sister today?

HANS LOESER: Yes, I am, except that my sister lives in Italy and I live in Cambridge, Massachusetts. But, actually my sister comes back to Cambridge, Massachusetts twice a year. She has taken over what used to be my mother’s apartment and we see each other. We are very, very different people, I mean we…it’s hard to think of two brothers, to a brother and a sister who are as different as the two of us are. But we get along very well and we have a very good relationship.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Can you describe in what way you are so different?

HANS LOESER: Well, what shall I say? I am much more of a…I like social intercourse. I am much involved with other people, with people. I’m very good at handling people. My sister is a bit of a lone wolf. She, not a bit of it, very much so. Although she was married, she was only married quite briefly. Her husband died early. She has one son, but she is basically a person who is satisfied to be by herself. I love to be surrounded by people. I…my sister is highly trained. She went to Smith and to Bryn Mawr colleges, but has never been able to translate that into what in our society is generally called success. And…either as a teacher or a writer or any of the things that she was trained for. She is an observer of the world. She looks in on the world and observes it, but doesn’t really participate. I am the very opposite. I was lucky to eventually get a good education, but I’ve always known what to make of it and how to turn it into practical success. So we differ quite a bit in that respect too.
LARRY SEYMOUR: You have extended family members with strong commitment to Zionism and Judaism. Did this affect your views of Judaism as a child?

HANS LOESER: Religion as a child, well... hard for... I mean I have views on it now, but religion as a child... it was taken for granted that we were Jewish. We weren’t orthodox, so we didn’t eat kosher, or observe anything other than the Friday night ceremony of lighting the lights and having a family dinner on Friday nights. Other than that, Judaism was not of great importance to us. We... in the German school system in those days, one was released... the German schools had as part of the system, Christian and Catholic instruction. We were released from that and went to a teacher, actually to the house of a teacher, or one who came to the school, who taught us some Hebrew and Jewish history and things like that. It was very, very poor instruction as I look back on it now. We learned to read Hebrew letters and we had, had to endlessly read prayers. We didn’t have the vaguest idea what we were reading. And it was... nowadays I can look back to it and say it was criminally bad kind of instruction. So Judaism was taken for granted. Most of the friends of my parents were Jews, though not all, but most of them were. But... and socially at which they moved, but Judaism as a religion was not very important until much later. During Hitler time, some of this changed.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You were fortunate enough to be financially able to attend private school as a child. Do you have any particularly fond memories of your schooling?

HANS LOESER: Well, the only private school I attended in Germany was actually the first four years of school. I went to a small private school which... well it’s pretty much as private schools are these days, there are people who could afford it. Just why my parents did that, I haven’t the vaguest idea any more. I can’t... I can’t tell. Maybe similar reasons to why we eventually sent our children to private school. It was just better, better classes, better education, better teachers than were available in other schools. I just don’t know. Generally we were the children of professionals, doctors, lawyers, business people who went to this private school. Then after first, second, third, after fourth grade, we all transferred to the public schools, to the gymnasium, as it was called, and there was a
choice of different schools that you...they were all public schools, but you could choose between one that emphasized Latin and Greek, and another that emphasized English and French, and some that mixed them both up. But they were all public schools, and that’s where we rejoined the other kids who had been in the elementary school, public elementary school before. And, these elementary schools, the public schools, there were really two ladders so to speak. The kids who went to the first four grades of public school, a lot of them went on in that public school and ended at fourteen and then went into...oh something like learning a trade. Kids who were headed for the higher professions, as they were called in Germany in those days, a terrible expression, but that’s what they were called. They were then transferred into the gymnasium where we also came, and we all ended up there together.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You learned to ski as a child. Have you engaged in skiing as an adult?

HANS LOESER: Yes, skiing has been one of my passions. I am now eighty years old and three days from today, I am going off to Europe to ski. I have...I learned to ski as a kid, seven or eight years old. We...that was in the days. Above Kassel there are mountains, not high mountains, but sort of middle high mountains, perfectly nice mountains to do some skiing, and we just after school put our skis on the streetcar and went up there to ski. Of course, there were no ski lifts in those days. You...if you wanted to ski down, you had to hike up. And we did that endlessly. We taught ourselves, there wasn’t a... there weren’t any teachers around except some parents. And we learned to ski that way, and later on...one...one...I am an enthusiastic skier, but I have to make one confession. When I much, much later enlisted in the United States army, I did not tell them that I was a skier. And, little did I know at that time that I would eventually volunteer for the paratroopers which was probably as bad, or worse than being in the ski troops. But when I enlisted, I knew that I did not wish to fight battles in the snow or ice if I could avoid it, so I didn’t tell them that I skied. But I’ve skied all my life, and I still enjoy skiing very much. And as I said, I am just about to go off to my...I, for the last twenty-three years, I’ve gone off every winter to ski in either Switzerland or Austria, or
northern Italy. And, one of my pleasures has been to teach my children to ski. And, I'm now occasionally skiing with my grandchildren, which is a wonderful joy.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Do you still telemark ski?

HANS LOESER: No. I don't. Of course, I learned that. Originally when we skied, there were two ways to turn, the *christiana* as it was called, the *christie*, and...which was a quick turn, and the telemark, that you're asking about, which is a turn where you sort of extend the ski forward and then turn. I learned it then...I do, did it then. I sort of abandoned that, and you know there wasn't any telemark skiing in this country until, oh I would say ten years ago, or something like that, when it suddenly came back into fashion. There had been cross-country skiing, and then they improved the cross-country skis and put steel edges on them, and you could do that sort of thing. But, by that time, I...I had abandoned it, and I don't do that. My sons, both of my sons do it very well.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Did your exposure to music and theater as a child stimulate an interest that continues in your adult life?

HANS LOESER: Regretfully, no. I grew up in a family, and particularly with a father who was enormously musical. My father played the violin, and also sang. He had a trained voice, a trained baritone voice. And also my father, we had quartets and trios, playing in our...we had a room...we had a music room in our house where we lived. And we had regular trios and quartets there, that I was exposed to and listened to. My father, when he sang, accompanied himself on the piano. And when my father went to the opera for example, or to a symphony orchestra, he took a conductor's score with him and followed it. He used to sit near an exit sign, where he had enough light to read the conductor's score and follow it. So he was an enormous music...enormously musical person, and he tried very hard to make a good violin player out of me. For six, at least six years, I had violin lessons regularly. I...I did not enjoy them. Whether that was because my father was a rather hard task-master, or whether I just wasn't gifted for it, or I had other interests and didn't want to concentrate on it, who knows? But the fact of the
matter is that I didn’t… as soon as I left home, as I think we’ll talk about that a little later, I took my violin with me. Of course, my father would never let me go without it. But hardly ever touched it again after that. In retrospect now, I am sorry about that. But at the time, I was glad to get away from under my father’s insistence that I practice day after day after day. And, my hunch is that I was never very good, and when you’re not very good on the violin, it really sounds awful.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You enjoyed reading fictional American westerns as a child. Did your interest in the American West continue when you arrived here?

HANS LOESER: Not… no. I think there was no connection between those two. What you are referring to is a series of books written by a man by the name of Karl May, May, M-A-Y, who every German boy of my generation read. And I believe he is probably still being read. At least I’ve been told that he is. He was a German who’s never been in America, either North America or South America, but who wrote these marvelous tales of the fights with the Indians, of the trappers who had names that every German boy knew, English names, “Old Shatter-hand,” “Old Sure-hand,” and an Indian chief called, “Winatoo.” You see, I’ve never forgotten… forgotten those… those things, and their adventures, and they had rifles that had particular names and were particularly accurate. And they had horses that were particularly fast. He wrote these great stories for… about both… mostly the American West, but some of his story also were about the Sierras and the Sierra Madre, south of us in Central America. And there were even some about the Arabs in the desert of northern Africa. He was a man full of imagination, who wrote these books that were probably in detail quite inaccurate. But… now has that generated any interest when I came to this country in the American West? I think they were largely forgotten. They were adventure stories, and I learned much later about the American West, and what we did to the Indians, and… and all of that, and it’s so, so different from… from these thrilling adventures, that I don’t think I could really translate, or ever did translate one thing into the other. But I never thought about that, that’s an interesting question that you ask me.
LARRY SEYMOUR: In 1933 your family ceased taking vacations as times became more difficult for the Jews. You were only thirteen at the time, did you comprehend what was beginning to happen?

HANS LOESER: Well, let me give you a lengthy answer to...to that one. Of course, we, in school, in the gymnasium where I went, we...we were perfectly accepted, and I knew nothing about...I had never heard of discrimination against the Jews or anything like that, it didn’t even come into my mind. Then, as...in the 1931-32, as the Hitler movement became more...a little more wider, not a little more, quite a bit more widespread, and kids came to school in Hitler youth uniform and things like that. I, for the first time, heard that there could be, or sensed that there could be such a thing that some people thought there was something wrong with the Jews. These kids would make nasty remarks. But, you know we were kids, and it didn’t really very seriously affect...affect me and the other in my class. Although I have to relate that there was an...a strain of anti-Semitism which has really existed in Germany for a long time. I remember that, in...before Hitler came to power, I don’t know exactly when it was. I would guess ’31 or ’32, not my class, but another class in which I had friends, went to an island in the north sea, off the Friesian coast, for...for one of those school vacations where they looked at birds or waves. I don’t know what they did up there, but anyway. And it turned out that that was an island which...to which Jews were not admitted, and apparently I found out later, that this had been the history of that island, and of other...certain other resorts in Germany, that goes way back. It had nothing to do with Hitler. It goes...goes way back to times when the aristocracy and some other people didn’t want to socially associate with Jews, although they certainly didn’t talk about exterminating them or doing anything like that. But this social discrimination must have existed. Anyway, I was not very conscious of all of that until, I would say...let’s see, Hitler came to power in the beginning of 1933. The boycott of German...the first boycott of German business, of Jewish businesses occurred, I think, on April 1st, I think it was April 1st, 1933. That day, I will never forget. My...my parents had sent, Ida, this wonderful woman, who took care of my sister and me ever since we had been little. She was really it, because my mother worked. She was really closer to us in many ways than my mother was. They sent her to
pick me up from school and escort me home, because at that...the store was closed...the store wasn’t closed, but there were uniformed guards of the S.A., which was one of the storm trooper...which was the Nazi storm trooper outfit, stationed there, who tried to prevent, not physically, but by assault...verbally assaulting anybody who was trying to get into the store, and saying, “don’t buy from Jewish stores. Buy from non-Jewish stores.” And the windowpanes of our department store in great big white and red letters, they had written the word Jew, in German of course. Jude, J-U-D-E, on...on the glass of...of the windows, and most people did not go through that cordon of guards, and turned away. So even though the store was open, there were very few people in it, and it took courage to go in it at that point. We, of course, had to pass through that to get to our apartment on top of the store, and Ida, who incidentally was not Jewish...she remained faithful to us throughout this awful history. So that was the first time I became aware of these things. And then, there was a crescendo...then that sort of thing accelerated really quite quickly over the next year, we were...we, my sister and I and my Jewish friends were no longer invited to birthday parties of people that we’ve always gone to their birthday parties and they had gone to ours. People in the street looked away and didn’t want to recognize us any more, didn’t want to say hello when we passed in the street. And there was this gradual ostracism. In school, I have to say that the teachers remained reasonably fair. And, you know...in German schools in those days, when the teacher entered the room, where the whole class had to get up and stand, and sit down when the teacher gave the signal. That’s just the way it was out of respect for the teacher. Then when, by 1934 or so, we didn’t just stand up, but we were supposed to say “Heil Hitler,” like this. And, of course, the Jews didn’t do that. We just stood up and kept our arms down. All of this resulted in a...in feeling somewhat ostracized from things, left out. And children as we all know, like to be part of the crowd, be...children are conformists essentially, so we began to feel excluded. Without knowing very much why, as I said, we were not orthodox Jews, we didn’t cover our heads. We didn’t do any of the things that would outwardly distinguish us as orthodox Jews might have been distinguished. There wasn’t anybody like that in our school, so it was hard for us to understand what really made us very different. But gradually that happened, and the fact that people didn’t invite you any more, that people didn’t recognize you in the street any more, it...it did
hurt. And I...you know, I had a boat in the river that I liked to use, and the little wharf, that kept this kayak announced that they didn’t wish to have Jewish kayaks any more. It sounds ridiculous, but that’s...that’s what happened. So I had to give up that boat because there was no place to leave it. The swimming club at the river that we had belonged to from time immemorial and gone to every summer to swim didn’t want us any more, and we had to leave it. All these things sort of gradually accumulated in giving you a sense of being unwanted, of being an outsider, and what was left, was to associate more and more with other Jewish kids, which we hadn’t before. Before we had never distinguished. We barely knew who were the Jewish kids and who were the Christian kids. But, we learned that pretty quickly and began to...really could only associate with Jewish kids.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You mentioned that you were not orthodox Jewish. Would you say that the majority of the Jewish population in Kassel was also not orthodox?

HANS LOESER: Yes. The vast majority was not orthodox. There was, of course, an orthodox synagogue, and there were...excuse me, there were some orthodox Jews in another synagogue. But I think they were a very small minority, and to be honest, I don’t think we ever associated with them, or knew very much...very much about them. My parents, and everybody they knew considered themselves Germans of the Jewish faith. And the Jewishness was no more than most Christians feel about going to church on Sundays. Some go to church, some don’t go to church, but it isn’t an awfully important part of their life as...as Americans. Some others obviously, but...we were very much Germans of the Jewish faith. We didn’t deny the Jewish faith, but it wasn’t of very great importance, and there were quite...very few orthodox Jews. Now, maybe this is the time for me to say something that German Jews can not be very proud of, but of course there were quite a number of Jews whose families had come from the east, from Poland in particular. And, I know that they weren’t quite taken for full by the German Jews. There was real social discrimination let me say. There wasn’t any association between my parents and their friends, whose families went back for long time...and I mean...in Kassel I mean, my family went back at least a hundred years in Kassel, and there were
many others who went back three to four hundred years in Kassel, these Jewish families. And, they did not associate very much with the Polish and Russian Jews who had immigrated into Germany, and I think many of the more orthodox Jews came from that Polish/Russian background, and that maybe one of the reasons I have so little recollection of it. Although that isn’t quite true, the great Jewish philosopher Rosenzweig came from Kassel and lived in Kassel, and he was certainly of...very conscious Jew, and lived in it. So, I’m not quite sure. Remember that I am talking about what I can remember from my early teens, and those memories may not be perfect. There may very well have been quite a number of German Jewish families to whom also, the religion...the religion was more important, than it was to my family. But I didn’t know them. I wasn’t conscious of them.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You’re nanny Ida, as you mentioned, was not Jewish, but was quite loyal to your family during the rise of the Nazi’s. In your experience, was this more the rule or the exception as far as the behavior of non-Jews that were close to your family before the Nazis?

HANS LOESER: It was very unusual. I mean, Ida was unbelievably faithful, took terrible chances by inviting my sister and me out to her house in one of the villages outside Kassel where everybody knew we were the son and daughter of the Loeser department store, and she was just...she was not political. She was not a social democrat or anything like that. She just couldn’t understand how anybody would ostracize a wonderful family like ours, that she had barely...that she had really sort of made her own family, by coming there when my sister and I were quite small, and staying with us until she got married. And then even after that as I say, she invited us to her house and so forth. So she was wonderful. But that was very atypical. We had of course a lot of staff in our business, and with a small handful of exceptions, I think they were opportunistic. They didn’t want to lose their jobs, so they tended to be reasonably nice to my father. But they also were caught up in the anti-Jewish movement that was going on, and I think basically approved of what the Nazis were doing, and at every opportunity, were on that side, not on our side, and did the bare minimum that they thought they had to do politely.
in order to stay employed. But of course, in those days, one couldn’t dismiss people anyway. Whoever was there was there, and my parents were stuck with them in the...in the store. But it was a very, very...you know it was a much more difficult period for my parents than it was for me as a kid. It was difficult as a kid, but we substituted Jewish friends, and we still had fun, and I can’t...from my point of view, it wasn’t nearly as serious a social and a problem for my future as it was for my parents, and their...and their generation.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Before Hitler’s rise to power, your parents were aware of social anti-Semitism, but they believed that the democracy of the Weimar Republic would gradually infiltrate society and reduce this phenomenon. Can you recall a point in time at which you or they knew for sure that this was no longer a realistic hope?

HANS LOESER: It took my parents a long, long time to get to that point. Well, see I have explained before that these families had been in Germany for hundreds of years. They...and anybody who knows German history knows that there had been ups and downs in the attitudes toward Jews, but in those ups and downs, gradually the...the curve had been going up, up being less and less discrimination. And so it was sort of assumed we were once again in one of those troughs, where anti-Semitism is high, but it’ll pass, and probably we’ll come out of it better than before. That was sort of the only sense that people like my parents really could get out of the history. It was un-understandable to them as it is in retrospect, I think, to most of the world how this could end up with an edict that we were going to eradicate, burn all the Jews that we can get our hands on. I mean, that wasn’t even considered feasible, just as it wasn’t feasible...considered feasible in the rest of the world. It wasn’t really understandable to my parents. And therefore, really, they thought, until...well I’ve talked about the early 30s. In 1935, late...in the fall of 1935, the business had become so bad and been so difficult to conduct that my father had to sell it. And I can talk a little bit more about that. And even then, having made this enormously difficult decision of selling a business that had been in the family for eighty years I think at that point. They...they didn’t leave Germany, they...they stayed in Germany. They...they couldn’t tear themselves away, partly because they couldn’t
conceive of themselves living abroad permanently and giving up everything that they owned, their property, which was part of what was... That was part of emigration, you couldn’t take it with you.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You’ve mentioned that anti-Semitism brought Jews closer together and fostered a greater sense of Jewish identity amongst its victims. Has this greater sense of Jewish identity stayed with you as an adult?

HANS LOESER: Yes. Yes... I think...yes. It clearly has. As the Jews... as we kids had to associate with... with Jewish kids, the parents also had to limit their association to Jews. And, in early 1934, 1935, 1936, gradually all the Jewish musicians were kicked out of the symphony orchestras. All the Jewish singers were kicked out of the operas. These things were very important in Germany in those days, symphonies, and the orchestras. The theatres had to kick out the actors. The museums no longer displayed Jewish art. So... so there was suddenly, and of course, Jews had been very influential, much... in much greater numbers in the... in the arts and in music and other things, than the number of Jews in the country would have justified. So all of a sudden there was a [surplus] of Jewish artists, performers and so forth. And they would... they came together in what was known as the kulturbund, the culture association of Jews of Germany. And they went around and performed for Jews. And we had wonderful performances of theater and lectures, and music by all of these outstanding people that had previously performed in German orchestras and other institutions, now having their exhibitions and their performances for Jews only. So cultural life became centered on Jews, but that wasn’t too much of a sacrifice because these were all very good people. And, it’s another way in which life sort of went on. I think if all of that had stopped, and there had been no way to associate in this way, maybe people like my parents would have realized earlier that one can’t really stay in this country. But life went on. The Jews had these associations, and... and life became much more Jewish of course, as a result of it. My parents went to the... to the synagogue. They’d always gone to the synagogue on the High Holidays, but otherwise they began to become much more interested in Judaism. They studied it. They took some lessons. They went to Jewish events. So one became
much more conscious of one’s Jewishness. And your question was, has that influenced my later life. Yes, of course it has. I’m much more conscious of my Jewishness, and of...of what it means, good and bad, that...than I would have been otherwise. Did it make me more religious? No. I didn’t...others it did, I mean some of my friends have become very...very observing Jews. But frankly, it has not had that effect on me.

LARRY SEYMOUR In 1936, with no real options open to you to continue your schooling in Germany, you were told that you would be sent to school in England. Can you describe how you felt about this?

HANS LOESER: Yes. That’s quite right. In 1936, which would have been, fourth, fifth, six, seventh, eighth, ninth grade, I guess, in American terms, my parents....it had become untenable for us to go to school any further in Germany. When...[ ]Jews had been expelled from all the universities, so going to the universities was no longer a possibility. And qualifying for university would have taken another three years of high school study. So at that point, my parents just decided that we couldn’t go on in the German schools, we couldn’t go on to exist as outcasts, and we ourselves felt that it couldn’t be done. For the teachers it became untenable to have Jewish...Jewish children, and if they wanted to treat them fairly, they were punished for that. So the whole thing became untenable. Now my parents were fortunate enough to be able to send me to school in England. Now I have to explain that by 1936, the Jews who left in...around ’33 and’34 could really take with them most of their property. By 1936, Germany had gotten into rearming, needed...wanted all of its resources for rearming and all that, and wasn’t about to let the Jews use up any of their foreign exchange capital. So we were basically not allowed to just send children to school in England and pay for it. What you had to do was transfer money at...at a...at a rate that had so much penalty that most people couldn’t afford it. I think my parents had to pay about ten times as much for my... in order to but the pounds that paid for my schooling in England, than they would normally have done in an exchange of marks to pounds. For my parents, that was a possibility to do that. For one thing, they were wealthy. For another thing, German money had become worth less and less to them, and if they could afford to put some of it into my
education, they were willing to pay this outrageous amount. So they sent me to a school in...in southern England, in Hazlemere in Surry, which is south of London, which was a school for refugee kids. Now, I...I guess I ought to put that in context a little bit. Actually, my sister had been sent out of Germany a year and a half earlier. She went to a similar school in northern Italy, on Monta San Vigilo between Balsano and Mirano in northern Italy. Why they sent my sister out earlier than me, I don’t quite know. I suspect she was the more sensitive of us, and suffered more from the discrimination than I did. I had the thicker skin, I think. But that’s retroactive thinking, I don’t know what was in my parents mind, but anyway. My sister was in Italy, I was sent away to...to England. Now your question was, how did I feel about that, and it’s interesting because in retrospect, I’m amazed by it myself, but I have this strong feeling that I really didn’t want to go. And, it wasn’t I think so much that I didn’t want to leave my parents. It was more that I didn’t want to leave the accustomed surroundings, the accustomed language. I was by that time a teenager. I was interested in girls. We stood around at street corners and talked and flirted and did all of those things. Of course, we were all Jewish by that time. But, we had fun. I was quick. I had always been good in the German classes and good as a...as a writer in German. I spoke colloquially well. I could amuse people when we talked. All of these abilities seemed to me to be so much tied up with my language...with my knowledge of German, that I just couldn’t imagine ever doing that in another language. It didn’t occur to me...I’d had...I’d had a year of English in school, was one year or two years, I forget now. But anyway, I’d had a little bit of English in school, and that I could ever become fluent in another language, and conduct myself well, I found that very difficult. I liked the German classics. I had read a lot, and one establishes a tie to that culture as one goes on. So I found it surprisingly in retrospect, very difficult. I cried to myself in those days at the thought of leaving all of that behind. And, as it turned out, it wasn’t nearly as hard as I’d thought, and...but in prospectively I dreaded it. And the other thing you have to say, is that as I said before, children, teenagers are conformists. And although we didn’t like the anti-Semitism of the Hitler youth and of our comrades, we to some extent imitated them. That sounds terrible. I mean in retrospect I am almost ashamed of it. But the fact of the matter is that we wore similar pants, similar belts, similar neck...neckties and things, although not in the same
colors to make clear that we weren't trying to be in the Hitler youth uniform. But we...we had accepted that kind of life and conduct as the way to be, and that again...it wasn't easy for us to leave it behind for a totally different culture and all we knew about England and English literature was a couple Shakespeare plays that we had read in German, and they seemed strange.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Several factors, particularly the difficulty and expense of immigration contributed to some Jewish families decisions to try to stick it out in Nazi Germany. Can you discuss how your family dealt with this decision?

HANS LOESER: Yes, I think it was a major factor in keeping my parents much, much too long in Germany. As I mentioned before, my father was forced to sell his business in 1935. Once again, he...the normal thing would have been to sell the building as well as the business in it. He didn’t. He hung onto the building, sold the business, and got rent for...from the new owned. As soon as the new owner put his name there instead of our name, of course, the store was revived again. It had been empty for two years. Now it worked again, and my father lived upstairs and saw all of that and was incredibly hard on my parents to see that store suddenly revived and working again, just because there was a different name on it. But, they hung onto the building out of some sort of sense, well maybe this thing will pass, and we will still be the landlords here, and maybe someday can take it back. Somewhat later my parents moved to Berlin because there was some trouble in...in Kassel...trumped up trouble in Kassel and they figured instead of using that as an excuse to move from...to go abroad, to leave Germany, they couldn’t get themselves to do that. They actually, and I think this is almost un-understandable to me in retrospect, they moved from Kassel to Berlin because they figured in a much larger city they could just sort of disappear in the crowd and last this thing out. Now in all of this, the fact that they couldn’t take their money and their property and their furniture and their beloved art or all of those things with them played a very major role. My father was born in ’86, so in ’46 he was fifty years old, is that right? Yes, yeah if it’s fifty, no forty-six, eighty-six, ninety-six, yeah, he was fifty years old. And it...it, for him to start again in life with virtually no connections abroad, with no money, because he really couldn’t
take any significant part of the fortune out with him, was just a daunting experience, and
for that I have a little sympathy. I mean I that’s...it’s not easy to do that at that age.
And, but they stayed and I think the financial thing played some role in it, but more
important I think, I mean it wouldn’t have played a role if they thought there is absolutely
no hope and they are going to kill us all, but they didn’t have a feeling that that was going
to happen.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You lived in England during the difficult years from 1937 to 1940
while your parents remained in Germany. Were you fearful for your parents safety at that
time?

HANS LOESER: Yes, very much so. As I mentioned before, the school in England
was...which was called Stoatley Rough school was a school full of German refugee kids,
and virtually all of the parents were still in Germany, and...well you said fearful. One
wasn’t fearful that they would be killed at that time. But one was fearful that they would
have no future, and would be leading a miserable life. At least until 1938, I think
the...the so-called Kristallnacht in November of 1938 changed everybody’s concept of
that. That, as most people know was the night when the Nazis organized throughout
Germany. All synagogues were set on fire and were destroyed in every city and town in
Germany, and many Jewish men were arrested and sent into concentration camps,
including my father. From then on, I think, we began to fear for their lives. Until that
time, we feared for their future, but there was still no sense that they were in...in, their
lives were in danger really. Beginning with Kristallnacht, and the incarceration of my
father and a lot of other Jewish men, of course, all of that changed and one began to
realize that there was real danger, and...to them, and we began to fear very much for
them. And interestingly enough, I have the correspondence between me and my parents
during that time. I have the letters that went back and forth and they clearly reflect the
concern about their being there, and trying to be helpful in facilitating their coming out.
But of course, you have to realize that by this time, excuse me, everybody, all the Jews in
Germany realized that they had to leave, but by this time, nobody wanted them any more.
You’ve got to remember that while Hitler made it expensive for them to leave, and they
couldn’t take their property with them, they never put an obstacle in their way of getting out. But the obstacle was a) that they could not take their property with them, but by this time the obstacle was that nobody wanted them. America had a quota system, which...which had a waiting list of two to three years by that time, for Jews...for German Jews, which were of course on the German quota. France and England were closed. England was a little bit considerate of children. England let in children which to their eternal credit, I think they saved an enormous number of Jewish children that way. But most other countries in the world were closed, so it was extremely difficult to know where to go and Palestine, the English didn’t want to offend the Arabs, so Palestine was in effect closed, unless you had some special interest there. And as it turned out later we did, but that’s another story. And, so it became, at that point we became very fearful for our parents and for getting my father out of Dachau, which is the concentration camp where he was. And we were very, very worried, and doing what little we could from England to try to help.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Your schooling years in England were also an important formative part of your life, aside from what was going on in Germany at the time. For one thing you met your wife there. Does any memory in particular stand out and influence your adult life as far as happy memories from school.

HANS LOESER: Yes, the school in England was...is a very happy memory of wonderfully formative year...great years that I spent there. It was a peculiar surrounding, the school was run by German speaking people, some, and the English they spoke there was...was mixed, inter-mixed with German. Everybody had an accent. One of the reasons I still have an accent is whether I went to that school rather than an English school. At...in the years in which one can lose one’s accent. But it was a wonderful transition for...I’ve talked earlier about how I was worried about losing the connection to German culture and to everything that I had learned, and this was all the wonderful transition where we were introduced to English culture. We learned Shakespeare and Keats and Coleridge, and all the rest of the English literature, but by the same time, we still were with people who knew who Goerter was, and Schiller was, and who taught us
some German. So it was a wonderful transition, in addition to which, I have to say, that there were two German women, non-Jewish, who were there out of idealism. They wanted to help...they were anti-Hitler, they wanted to help, and they were helped by leaving Germany and taking a job...taking a job in this particular school. One of them was the, not the director, but the matron I suppose you would call it. She was really in charge of running the place other than academically, and she had the contact with us kids, and she was an enormously influential person, in so far as I was concerned, and most of the other kids were concerned. She was a somewhat of a disciplinarian. She was of course German, and she was brought up in the German education system. But she also was an eminently fair person, a person full of fun, a person who made good people out of most people who went to that school. I mean somehow we all came out with...Nobody made our beds, nobody cooked for us...yes there was a cook, but we had to do the dishes. We had to help with everything that went on. And there was a sense of communal responsibility which they managed to translate into giving us early on a sense of involvement with society and responsibility to others. My wife and I put out a book in...oh it must have been in the early ’60s. We wrote all of the graduates that we still knew of the school and published their letters back. And it was fascinating to see how many of those people ended up in the...what shall I say, helping professions. They were social workers, a few of them were lawyers, many of them were in education. But I think the background of that school, the sense of responsibility to others and respect for learning that we learned there was just enormously important. I think it was a wonderful place, and we still go with pleasure to reunions of the relatively few people who survive.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Can you describe your feelings on the day when you and your sister were reunited with your parents in New York?

HANS LOESER: Yes, but once again I need to give some background I think. We...in the first place I haven’t mentioned that eventually my sister ended up in the same school in England where I was. She got a scholarship because my parents no longer could get permission to transfer money. Well, my mother eventually got my father out of Dachau. He spent six weeks in the concentration camp, and she got him out in a very ingenious
way. I don't know whether you want to go into this or not. But, it's an interesting story how charity sometimes can do unusual things. As I mentioned before, most countries were closed to the Jews. At that point, when...when this large number of German men had been arrested on Kristallnacht, there was still the ability to get out of concentration camp if you could promise to leave the country within twenty-four hours or thirty-six hours, whatever the time limit was, but immediately. But that meant you had to have a place to go, and that was difficult. My mother managed to figure out the following: in the '20's, we had made, my parents had made a charitable contribution, to either an orange grove, or an olive grove in Palestine. I think it was probably on the urging of my uncle who was a dentist in Jerusalem. And, to them, this was a charitable contribution. That's all this was. My parents were not Zionists at all. As I have already outlined, they were German Jews. But, they had made this. My mother finally figured out that this so-called contribution was really gave them a small percentage interest, it was a small interest, .98/100 interest maybe in this particular grove. But, it made them "land owners" in Palestine, because they owned a small percentage interest in that grove. And she managed to use that to get what was then called a preference visa. In other words, you got preference status, and she managed to get a preference visa to Palestine out of the British consulate. And having that preference visa and having a lot of money to bribe the right parties I suspect, she got my father out of concentration camp. And with the Palestinian visa in her hands, she also got a transit visa to Holland and to England so that they could leave immediately for Holland, where we had friends, so my father could recuperate a little bit from the horrors of the concentration camp, and they could pay a visit to us children in England on the way. And then they went to Palestine. They spent a year in Tel Aviv. They did not have a good time there. It...Tel Aviv was of course full of other German refugees, who all had come with the same furniture, and the same stuff that had been exported. They tried to sell stuff, and it wasn't worth anything. They all competed for the same lowly jobs. My father couldn't get a job. In those days, the highest job that anybody aspired to, was being a bus driver. Well, my father couldn't even get a bus driver's job in Palestine. And so they lived there, using up some of the little money that they had managed to bring out of Germany. And at that time, you were talking about...I was talking about maybe three, four thousand dollars that they had to
their name. That was all. And, waiting for the American visa. When eventually the American visa came through, it seemed clear to all of us, and this was in the fall of 1939, when the second world war had already started in Europe, although not in this country. Everybody realized, you better get as far away as possible from Hitler and from Europe. So that’s when my parents decided that we and they should reunite in New York. Now, we had...they had bought in Germany before they left, tickets for New York from London, from England, from Southampton. And tickets for themselves from Tel Aviv, from Haifa to New York. And it so happened in the very...in the late fall of 19...well in December of 1939, they left for New York, and my sister and I left for New York from England. And it so happened that we arrived in New York on the same day. We didn’t know...it wasn’t planned that way, but we were...both came by ship of course, and you couldn’t tell how long it would take. They arrived on the Jersey side in Hoboken, and we arrived on one of the west side piers in Manhattan. A cousin of my father’s and his wife picked us up. The wife picked us up, and the cousin, the male cousin, picked them up and they had rented a furnished apartment...a cheap furnished apartment in Long Island City, on fortyeth street in Long Island City, just off Queens Boulevard for us. And there, all of a sudden, the whole family was united, and we were...it was a strange happy feeling, very happy, but also very strange. We had been without our parents for a long time. Our parents had been without us. We had grown up. We had become rather fluent in English. Our parents were not, and the result, it was sort of a reversal of roles developed, where very often, on anything important, we...particularly I, but both of us, my sister and I, had to act as, not only interpreters, but as pointers...as point people to our parents because we found it easier to get around, and to find our way in an English speaking country. And that’s as I recall it, must have been quite difficult for our parents. I mean, suddenly we were more in charge than they were and, it’s...many refugee families I think encountered this phenomenon. And I think it added to making emigration difficult for...for the older generation. My father, you...you want me to go on and...Those early years in New York were very tough years. We all...at that time I said we had very little money. Let me finish on the money because it’s interesting. My father had left the power of attorney with a lawyer in Berlin, who was Jewish, married to a non-Jew, and who had said he will not leave Germany under any circumstances. So he
had power of attorney, and there was this endless correspondence with him, back and forth. And it did result in the transfer ultimately of the rest of my parents’ money, at something like six percent of its value before the Germans had taken out fifty percent for the tax that they imposed on anyone leaving the country called the Reichfluchstrager [sp?], the “Reich leaving tax,” and then there were other taxes. So in the end, one figured at that time, one was lucky if one got between six and eight percent of what you started with, and we did. And I think my family ended up, if I...if I may remember correctly with something between...around twelve thousand dollars I think, out of all of the German fortune. Now, that sounds like very little, and it was very little, but it was more than an awful lot of other people had. It meant that in those days one could live on it for several years, if need be. So you didn’t starve, and it was a kitty to fall back on. So in many ways, we were once again, a little more fortunate than others. But my father realized that this is nothing, and that we all had to make money, so we all looked for jobs. Now this was still the end of the Depression in this country. It was very difficult to get jobs. We all, my mother very quickly found a job in a factory that made, oh little gadgets like lipsticks and other things, and she...lots of women sat down in a row and packaged these little gadgets for very, very little money. And my sister found a similar job, hers was a lipstick factory. What the other one was I have forgotten, what my mother made. But it was also little things that had to be packaged by the hands of these women while they...while the moving belt passed in front of them, and they made, oh, fifteen to eighteen dollars a week, and I got a job as a delivery boy in a little factory up on 26th or 27th street in New York, of little rubber goods. And I ran around New York delivering this to various retail stores that sold these pressed out animals made out of rubber, and I started at fifteen...no maybe I even started at twelve dollars a week, and eventually got to be a little more. And these were very lowly jobs, but they were jobs. They gave us insight into how American business went, and they added to...to reduce the amount of money from the bank that we had to use up. So we were really quite happy with all of this. My father had much more trouble. He took jobs, that now in retrospect, we know...I know, were hopeless jobs, jobs that lead nowhere. But one didn’t know that as a refugee coming to New York. They were jobs like selling Fuller brushes door to door, or selling patent medications door to door. You had to go for...and you didn’t even
know enough to know what neighborhoods to go to. That's an important thing. If you sell Fuller brushes, there are certain neighborhoods in which you might do quite well, and other neighborhoods of New York where you...where nobody will open the door for you. One didn't know that, so just imagining going from door to door, as my father then did, and knock on the door, and having the door slammed in your face, most of the time. And...it must have been awful for somebody who had been a very important person in his lifetime. He had been on a lot of boards, and had a big business and all of that. It was very discouraging for him, and his spirits had already been depressed very much. Both his spirits and his health, by the six weeks in Dachau, but those early years in New York...eventually he graduated from Fuller Brushes to sample suitcases, that you went from one place to another. It was a tough, tough life, and I think he suffered greatly, from not just working hard, but from the degradations, that I think went with being a lowly...the lowliest of low salesmen. It's...it was very hard for him. He did not live very long after this. We came to New York in the first days of 1940. He died in September of 1943, so there, forty-one, forty-two...two and a half years really, a little more than two and a half years, that he survived...that he survived and I think he...think he died, although pneumonia was the cause of death, I think the real cause of death was...was a sense of not wanting to go on living. That may be exaggerating it a little bit, but he didn’t have the will to live...enough of a will to live to overcome some of the injuries that he had suffered in concentration camp, and in the rough life that he led in his first years in New York. So those years were terribly...the whole Hitler time really killed my father and made life, the last few years very, very difficult for him. And I haven’t said that here, but my father had been a person who like I really...enjoys life, enjoyed dancing, enjoyed parties, he enjoyed traveling, he enjoyed skiing. He was an outgoing, extroverted kind of person, and he lost all of that, and I am immensely sorry. And you know, as a kid at that time, it didn’t really...I didn’t really know it as much as I know it today in retrospect. My mother on the other hand took like a duck to water to life as a refugee in Europe. She was so delighted to have her family around her, to have everybody in good health, except for my father. And she didn’t mind the low...she who had been the grande dame so to speak of...of the town where we came from. She didn’t mind the loss of status in the least. She loved it. She loved being in America. She
learned to speak English. She got to be ninety-four years old, and I may come back to
that a little later on, when I get to life after the war. And she really enjoyed it, she never,
ever again went back to Germany, even when she could have afforded it after the war.
She wanted to have nothing more to...she made a clean cut with that life, and she had a
new life in America, and was very happy with it. Am I too long? In the preliminary stuff,
because it’s not legal stuff really.

LARRY SEYMOUR: It’s fine, it’s your narrative and it will cover some of the questions
I was going to ask you later anyway, so it’s ok. Go on. I wanted to ask, when you did
get here, given the whole effect that the Nazis had had on you and your family, was there
any question in your mind as to your willingness to enlist and risk your life to stop them?

HANS LOESER: No, on the contrary, it worked the other way. As I said, we came to
this country right in January, 1940. And I said...I mentioned before what I did. I
worked. Well I should mention, I graduated from being a delivery boy to being a stock
boy at Sak’s 34th street, which was then one of the two Sak’s stores in New York. It no
longer exists of course, only Sak’s...Sak’s Fifth Avenue has survived. But it was a big
store, right next to Gimbel’s, which also hasn’t survived, in Herald Square, in New York.
Anyway, I became a stock boy in the...in the leather goods department, and eventually
worked my way up to being an assistant buyer. So I...by that time, I must have made,
oh, twenty-two dollars a week, maybe even twenty-five, which was very good pay in
those days. And I was really sort of, on the...on the ladder, going up in the department
store business, where I had grown up. And my father must have been quite happy, to see
me so to speak, following in his, and in his father’s footsteps. But then came Pearl
Harbor, and...but more than Pearl Harbor, I have to recall at this time something that was
very important that these days is so much... is so often forgotten, is that Hitler’s progress
at the beginning of the war...Hitler overran first, most of Russia, and then all of France,
Belgium, Holland, got to the English Channel, and there was a time when everybody
expected, almost everybody except Churchill, expected that he would before long, land in
England. He seemed invincible. Russia seemed to be lost, they were at the doors of St.
Petersburg, and at the doors of Moscow. The German troops were within sight of both of
those cities. We forget that now. And of course, many of us in America, and not just us refugees, but many of...many Americans who abhorred Hitler, were really, really concerned of what would happen if Hitler won in Europe, as he was ...seemed to be about to, to do...what that would do to America. Father Coughlin was speaking on the radio every...I don’t know whether it was every day or every week, with anti-Semitic hate message. The America First movement was strong. Lindbergh was a strong supporter of Hitler. There was all of this going on, and we were really fearful as to what would happen to us, even in America, if things went on the way they seemed to be going in Europe. Then came Pearl Harbor, and America’s joining into the War. What we had seen of America at that point, and I...admittedly I have to say that we didn’t know that much about America. But what we had seen and heard, and I mentioned Father Coughlin, and various other right wing, pro-German, the Bund was big in New Jersey, and in New York, and lots of other places. We couldn’t quite see that America was going to make any major effort to defeat Hitler. Yet, we had left our, we had lost the Pacific fleet, and we had to do something about the Japanese. But Hitler, we weren’t quite sure that we would really take...take on Germany. So when it appeared clear that Roosevelt and American government, and then the American people were going to join an all-out war effort, not only against the Japanese, but against Germany...declared war and really turned the whole country around, into a war effort. There wasn’t any question that we wanted to be a part of that. So, by the summer of 1942, I had absolutely no doubt...really early in ’42, no doubt that I would want to enlist and be part of this fight against Hitler. My parents of course, having finally rescued our children and everybody else, felt very badly about seeing me go off to war again. But on the other hand, felt the same way as I did about it, and really didn’t...they were sorry, but they didn’t obstruct in any way, my enlisting in the army. It had one...there was one other thing that tempted you in enlisting in the army...is that you became an American citizen immediately upon enlisting, and we all wanted to be American citizens. So, in June of 19...in June or July of 1942, I enlisted into the...in the army, and I did so enthusiastically. And, with no hesitation at all because of my Germany background, that I would then be fighting Germans. On the contrary, I was much more convinced that I was doing the right thing than most of my American comrades.
LARRY SEYMOUR: You spent your first years in the American army as a military policeman in New York. Was this a relief to you and your family or did you feel, to some extent, that you would like to be more involved directly in the effort against Hitler?

HANS LOESER: I clearly wanted to be more involved against... the effort against Hitler. What really happened to me in the army, after basic training, the first three months at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which was then the big United States field artillery center... which was very rough physically, but very effective in making us soldiers and putting us in good physical shape. We were all...in those days you all had to take an intelligence test when you enlisted in the army. And as I later found out in retrospect, I don’t need to go into the details here, I did...I did very well in that intelligence test. I came out near the top. As a result, after...after basic training, I was sent to this military police battalion on Governor’s Island in New York, which was sort of an elite bodyguard for General Hugh Drum, commanding first army, at Governor’s Island. He was a peacetime general and we were sort of spic and span...spic and span kind of an outfit. From there, they sent me from one school to another, and indeed, that’s when they sent me to the University of Pennsylvania. I spent three wonderful terms as a private first class at the...living in the dormitories here, just a few hundred yards from where I am talking now, becoming an expert on Morocco, and learning to speak Moroccan Arabic. And we did learn to speak Moroccan Arabic. Unfortunately, by the time we graduated, in usual army fashion, the war had bypassed North Africa, and nobody wanted us any more. So they sent me to another school and another school, and I finally ended up in intelligence school, at a place called Camp Richie, in Maryland, not far from Washington. And this was an intelligence training center, and this was the first time the army decided to take advantage of the fact that I spoke fluent German. And there, one of the great strokes of luck came my way. The army needed some officers in intelligence, and fifteen or so of us in this school were commissioned second lieutenants, and that’s why I got my commission as a second lieutenant in the United States army, commissioned in intelligence. Now what was your question? I may not have answered it. I went way back, but what did you ask me really? I forgot.
LARRY SEYMOUR: Well, I initially asked if you were anxious to participate in the effort against Hitler, but you did answer that.

HANS LOESER: But then you asked me about the schools, oh whether...you’re quite right. I got tied...I forgot something which is an essential to answering your question. Yes, I really didn’t want to go from school to school. So at some point in there, I think it was after Penn, after I spent three months at Penn, and I was clear that North Africa was no longer going to be our destination, I volunteered for the paratroopers because I figured that I...that that might get me closer to where I could do something useful against Hitler, rather than go from school to school because of a high intelligence score. And I volunteered, and this thing just went into my records in the army and instead of sending me to Fort Bragg to become a paratrooper, they sent me to the intelligence school. But I did want to get into the war, and I have to confess there was a selfish motive as well. During my time in England, the woman who became my wife later on, was also a student there. Actually she was secretary to the head mistress. We became as teenagers, close friends, and really, by the time I left, I was seventeen...almost eighteen, well I was eighteen, when I left. We really decided that we wanted to spend a lifetime together, get married, but it wasn’t practical. Her parents were in London, my parents were about to go to New York. So I went to New York and we spent four years, four and a half years writing letters to each other. So I want...badly wanted to be sent to England, where my girlfriend was, rather than be sent to the Pacific theater of war. And I felt that by volunteering for the paratroopers, I not only would do more to defeat Hitler, but I also figured with the on-coming invasion of Europe, it was more likely that they would send me to Europe rather than to the Pacific. So I had a selfish motive as well as the un-selfish motive, which might as well be disclosed. Things actually worked out that way. I went to intelligence school, and after I got my...my commission there, they shipped me to England. You want me to go on?
LARRY SEYMOUR: I actually have a related question to that. When you did get to England, which would you say was a...occupied a bigger space in your mind, your uncertain path with your ex...your former romance, or the uncertain path with the war?

HANS LOESER: Well, that's...I find it hard to give priorities. I think re-seeing Herta, my wife's name is Herta, H-E-R-T-A. Seeing her again was probably, at that point, the most important thing in...in my mind. But this...this was a few weeks after the invasion...after the Normandy invasion. It was perfectly clear that we would soon be shipped off to...to combat. So that part of it also was very important. You couldn't...there was fear, there was excitement, there was all the things a man feels when he is just around the corner from going into action. So both were important, but the most exciting thing was being back in England and seeing Herta again. We had both had four and a half years of lives by ourselves. We had met other people. We had had other friends, and it wasn't that clear that we still wanted to live with each other. But we decided after a couple of meetings that that's what we wanted to do. And as one had to do in those days, one had to get army permission to get married. And I asked for permission to get married to a person whom I had known for about seven years, and I got a letter back...General Eisenhower's signature saying yes, you may get married, but first you have to go through a ninety day cooling-off period. So we couldn't get married at that point. It was ridiculous of course, but those were the army regulations at the time.

LARRY SEYMOUR: What were your thoughts when you were stationed in England and you were unexpectedly assigned to the paratrooper division?

HANS LOESER: Well, what were my thoughts about that? For one thing I was amazed, that my earlier volunteering for the paratroopers, which I thought had long been forgotten, probably resulted...I don't know what resulted in it...my being assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, which was the...one of the two crack airborne divisions in the United States army at that time. They had both been dropped the night before the Normandy invasion, behind the Normandy beachheads, had had enormous losses in the course of the battle, and had come back to England to refurbish and to be re-staffed, and
we were replacements really. What were my thoughts? Well I don’t really know. It’s a war that I wanted to get into. I had volunteered for that. I was not actually qualified as a paratrooper, so they sent me to the glider infantry division of the 82nd Airborne. They had both... an airborne division at that time had both regiments that landed by parachute, and regiments that landed by gliders that were pulled behind powered aircraft and then cut loose and crash-landed. They had the advantage that there was a greater concentration of troops in one spot, or they could bring in a jeep and stuff like that. What were my thoughts? Well, I had expected to go into combat and why not go with an elite outfit. I was really quite pleased. There was a lot of fear involved too of course. I was about to land somewhere in Europe from the air. There’s a lot of excitement, fear, all mixed together. But on the whole, I was impressed and with people that I was with. We certainly had an elite crew of officers in that division...and I liked the fact that I was with a good...a very good outfit.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Would you say by the time that you went into combat, that you were convinced that the Allies would win the War?

HANS LOESER: Oh no. Well, maybe I answered that too quickly. We didn’t really think we’d be defeated, but remember, at that point, the beachhead in Normandy was quite small still. The Germans were mounting counter-attacks, it...I think it’s during that summer, when I was assigned to the 82nd, but we were not yet...see we didn’t get into action, actually until September, 1944. But during that summer we kept getting orders to land someplace, and then by the time it was all arranged, the first and third army tanks had...had taken the river crossings and other things that we were supposed to take. So several times we were about to take off, and then we were always too late because the tanks were moving so fast. The reason I point that out is during that summer, we were gradually became convinced that we were really winning the war, for two reasons, one the very fast progress of our armored spearheads in France, and equally, if not more important, the enormous progress the Russians were making. At some point in there, I forget when the Battle of Stalingrad was won by the Russians, but it must have been around that same time, and then the Russians began to push back the Germans, and
sometime during that summer, I think, we did become convinced that we would win the war, but it became...it was sort of a gradual realization and there was still considerable fear of that German army that had accomplished so much. And you didn’t quite know what rabbits they would pull out before the war was over, so there...we thought we would win, but there wasn’t the, the conviction that we would...really had won, came later. I would say, unfortunately just before the Battle of the Bulge, and if it hadn’t been for this sense that we thought we were invincible, probably the Battle of the Bulge would not have happened. But...we became over-confident by about October of that year.

LARRY SEYMOUR: As you advanced on Germany, you faced Hitler’s reserves, many of whom were young and brainwashed byproducts of the Hitler youth. Though pitifully young and manipulated, these same boys may well have been your tormentors or worse, had you stayed in Germany. What did you feel toward them as you faced them in combat?

HANS LOESER: Hatred, I would say. Strong, strong dislike and a great feeling of being on the side of the victors and teaching them a lesson. It’s...in the Battle of the Bulge, we were up against the most elite parts of the German army that were still left. And that was very tough, and fighting a war in foxholes in the snow, and this bitter cold, at that point, was pretty...was pretty awful. But, no, we had a strong dislike for the Germans, strong hatred for the Germans. They, well by that time we knew a good deal of what they had done to the people they didn’t like. We didn’t really know very much about concentration camps and extermination camps. That’s another thing that people don’t realize. Even at that time, very little was known about the extermination camps in the east. I think American intelligence knew about it, the State Department knew about it. But they didn’t talk about it, they didn’t release that information, and most of the world, including ourselves, didn’t really know how bad the Nazis had been until...well I was involved in the taking of one small concentration camp. That’s when we found it out. But...so but there was...I had a strong dislike, stronger than my American buddies I think, who... who didn’t have the same background. And if the implication of your
question was, did I have any hesitation to fight the people that I grew up with, the answer is no, none whatsoever. It was...I felt elated to be on the comeback as a...as a victor.

LARRY SEYMOUR: So there was no ambivalence at all in seeing Germany defeated, as your native land?

HANS LOESER: There was no ambivalence whatsoever. I thought they got what they deserved, and later on, when I was in military government, I...I certainly felt very strongly about that. No, there was none of...none of that at all. Somewhere in between I got married to my wife, which is also an important thing that I...I guess ought to be mentioned because it’s...it’s one of the most important events of my life. And it’s an interesting story, I can make it very short, but...after we landed in Holland in the famous “one bridge too far” invasion, we...and after the front stabilized, I landed by glider there. My...the story that I had known somebody for seven years, and then the army imposed a ninety-day cooling-off period, was sort of known in my division, and one day the chief of staff of my division called me in and said, “lieutenant, do you still want to get married?” And I said, “Yes, sir.” And he said, “I have...I have a pilot in troop carrier command who also wants to get married. Why don’t you guys take one of our planes and fly back and get married? Is that ok with you?” And I said, “Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.” And we got our own private plane, a DC-3, and we flew back to England and I got married to my wife, and while we were on our honeymoon, the Battle of the Bulge broke, and I knew that the 82nd Airborne, which was then in theater reserve, would be thrown in there, so we hurried back...and that’s just going back for a few months.

LARRY SEYMOUR: After the German surrender, you were responsible for researching the histories of German citizens as to their Nazi involvement, and their consequent employability. Did you find it hard not to be skeptical of non-Jewish Germans at that point?

HANS LOESER: Yes. After the war, I was first in Berlin, with the first Americans who relieved the Russians. And then I moved to Munich because I had gotten my wife a job
with the American army in Munich, and we wanted to be together, so I transferred to Munich, where I was in the office of military government, and I was in that part of the office of military government for Bavaria, which was to de-Nazify, which meant getting rid of Nazis in any important leading positions in Bavaria. And, we...what I remember...of course what all the Germans in important positions had to do was fill out a questionnaire giving all their background...Nazi background, what they had been doing and so forth. And then we went through the university, and there wasn't...there was hardly a person among the professors in the University of Munich for example, who hadn't been an outspoken Nazi. So we cleaned out the University of Munich...were virtually, oh I think there was only a handful of professors left. You know the...the universities in Germany were notorious in the forty...in the Hitler time, as really leaders in anti-Semitism, and the professions. But university professors, the lawyers, doctors particularly...the lawyers as well, had all been enthusiastic Hitler supporters. And of course, those who hadn't been Hitler supporters had been canned long ago. So what we found there was almost nobody that could stay. And we cleaned out the university, we cleaned out the hospital, the people...and try to find others to reinstate. We reinstated a lot of people who had lost their jobs as anti-Nazis to the extent that they had survived, and there were...there were quite a few who had survived. It was a fascinating job. Was I skeptical of the Germans? Yes, of course I was skeptical of the Germans, and I was rightly skeptical of the Germans. At that point, Germany had been defeated. All the Germans...any German you met could tell you a story about how anti-Nazi he had been, and how many Jews he or she had helped. And it was nonsense. You see...most of it was made up. Most of it was invented. In some cases, there may have been some sympathy for one person they knew and they did something for, but I mean, I remember, and we all remember, those of us who were in the same position, the days that the people who lived across the street from us, who had the stores across from our store, who had been friends...we had been going in and out of each other's stores, we had been buying in each other's stores, suddenly didn't want to see us anymore, didn't want to sell anymore. They were all...all of a sudden, all these people just remembered stories about how they helped Jews, and how the...anti-Hitler things they did. It was sickening and totally unbelievable, and yes we were very skeptical, and frankly, rightly skeptical. Now,
I don’t doubt that occasionally we did an injustice, because we were so skeptical and we had had the experiences that many of us had had. We may have done some injustices to Germans who had really been decent ones, and were not recognized as such because they didn’t prove it. There were probably a small handful of such people, but I am convinced that there weren’t very many, and that on the whole, what we did was the right thing to do, was useful to do. Unfortunately, it was all undone within a few years afterwards. When the Cold War started, we needed, at least we thought we needed the German’s help on our side, and the price of that was to reinstate the people who were used to running things, who…and many of the people that we kicked our were reinstated within four or five years.

**LARRY SEYMOUR:** In a very real sense you were chased out of Germany by tyrants, and you returned as an officer of the liberating army...army, a real twentieth century hero. Modesty aside, did you recognize this as you advanced across...across Germany?

**HANS LOESER:** Oh yes, oh yes. The period...the period right after the war...look, we had defeated the very...very Nazis I’d mentioned earlier. We really feared that they might come to America and ruin our lives in America. Here we had defeated them. That was number one point. We were hilarious, we were delighted about that. Secondly, we had survived, we had been shot at. We had fought...now on fighting, let me say something. I don’t want to sail under false colors here. While I saw a lot of combat, I was never a front-line soldier, who had a...with a rifle in hand, and a bayonet on top of the rifle...jump out of a foxhole and run into machine gun fire. I was an officer attached to regimental, sometimes battalion headquarters. I never had to do those things. And while I was shot at, I had a much, much safer and easier life than the front-line soldiers. And while we supported them, we saw a lot of combat, I just want to be sure that nobody thinks that I deserve the kind of praise that the regular GI’s did, who really fought the battles. I never shot at somebody point blank at any time. I’m...I had a pistol in my hands. I...but I never had to do any of those things. Later on, at the very...now, so...so secondly, we had won the war, and we had survived. Now that was marvelous. There was no reason that any of us could assume that we would survive. So we were delighted,
and then we drove into Germany. We rode tanks, American tanks, British tanks, going down the autobahn two or three abreast, racing down the autobahn, shooting at anything in sight. You...it just was a sense of life as a conqueror. I am not particularly proud of it in retrospect, but you might as well confess it. It’s a wonderful life when you are the conqueror. You are the law. Nothing matters. You get into a new town, you just tell...you go to the nicest house in town, and tell anybody, “get the hell out. We’re going to take it over. And this is where we’re going to sleep tonight.” You see, that’s the sort of thing, that conqueror’s right, that we thoroughly enjoyed and used to the hilt. We did it even with greater joy, after we had taken a town by the name of Ludwigslasse in northern Germany, where we liberated a small concentration camp called...now I can’t remember the name of it. It’s not one of the well-known ones, but it was a terrible sight, with hundreds of dead bodies stacked up, and hundreds of people about to die, ready to die, starved to death. That sort of...and we actually...we made the whole town come out and bury these people. And it strengthened our sense that we didn’t have to have much pity on...on these people. And the people in Ludwigslasse all told us from the mayor on down, that they never knew what was going on there. Well, hell, just the stink of the place, the smell of the place, they could...they couldn’t miss it. They could look through this barbed wire, so to have the nerve to tell us they didn’t know what was going on made us skeptical, and made us have less faith in what they said, and made us behave in...and to some extent misbehave, as conquerors, which we undoubtedly did in retrospect. But it was a wonderful feeling, and it became even more wonderful after we met the Russians. There was a lot of vodka around, and we celebrated. Yeah, we were conquerors who celebrated, and didn’t always behave as gentlemen. But conquerors have done that from time immemorial, and things haven’t changed that much.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Shortly after your arrival in the United States, your sister won a scholarship to Smith and you enrolled at the College of the City of New York. Given the bleak outlook for higher education that you had been forced to accept in Europe, this must have been very exciting for you and your family. Can you comment on your feelings at the time?
HANS LOESER: Yeah, I hadn’t mentioned that during the time that I worked for...for Sak’s in New York, during that two and a half years, I spent...I went in the evening to City College in New York. It was...I majored in economics, and I took exciting courses. City College at that time was a wonderful place, great professors, great students who were very politically involved, very interesting. Of course it was free, you see as it was...didn’t cost a penny to go to City College, education that came for nothing...came for free. And it was a great education. Of course I worked all day, and then you went to school at night, and I had responsibilities to my parents, so it was a tough life. It was very hard to find time to study. But you did, and you felt you really accomplished something. I enormously enjoyed City College. There wasn’t any of what these days...what we consider “college life,” you know, the camaraderie of hanging around a university and extra-curricular activities, none of that of course existed for us. But we learned, and we enjoyed each other. It was a very political place in those days, City College, very, very left wing, and interesting, stimulating, lots of discussions about communism. And should you be for or against, and that sort of thing, that...it was good to be faced with it, to be involved in it. It was a great place, City College. And it served me, and it was a great introduction...between City College and my four and a half years, almost five years in the United States army, I became an American in many ways. I learned about America, and what it was all about. And, those were my two big educational influences in terms of transforming me into an American.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You mentioned that you were shipped to several different schools while you were in the army, including studying Moroccan language and culture at University of Pennsylvania, and intelligence at Camp Richie. Have any of these wartime education experiences factored into your professional life since then?

HANS LOESER: Except for the fact that I got credit for them and I think we’re going to talk about that in a slightly different context, my getting into law school. The North Africa...the training in North Africa at Penn really has not helped my any in my later life, I am sorry to say, except for the fact that it gave me three terms of university training on the record books. But some of the others in that course made a career out of it, but I did
not since I didn’t do any study in that area. The intelligence course, not really. It was mainly a training in the order of battle in the German army, and reading aerial photographs, and things like that. So none of these army schools really taught me anything other than maturity perhaps, knowing how to get along with people, seeing life from different angles. I think they were all useful. And of course the three terms at Penn gave me a bit of an insight on what it was like to be...to be a real college student in an American university. We lived in those nice...nice dorms. And we ate in the dining halls, and though we were marched around as soldiers, it gave me...gave me a little insight into what college life at other times in a first-rate university would be like. But the contents of the course really has not been of any particular help to me, in later life.

LARRY SEYMOUR: By the end of the war, your exposure to various lawyers and legal thinking had you considering applying to law school in the United States.

HANS LOESER: Yeah, you see I sometime during my service in military government...that was almost two years that I spent in military government, first as a captain in the United States army, first as lieutenant, then I was promoted to captain, and then I continued for another year as a civilian, but in uniform, as a quasi-officer in military government. I worked with a lot of American lawyers, first time in my life that I had a contact with an American lawyer, and I enjoyed that. And it occurred to me that maybe I shouldn’t go back to department-store life. I mean maybe it would make sense for me to try to go to law school. Of course, the GI Bill, right around that time sometime the GI Bill passed, and that made...that made it financially possible for someone like myself, who didn’t have a penny to his name, to go to law school. It occurred to me that maybe, given the GI Bill, I should not go back to Sak’s, but see if I could get into law school. At that time also, I consulted a former German lawyer who had become an American lawyer, and who was an old friend of my family. He came to visit me over there, and he strongly encouraged me to apply to law schools, even though of course, I had no college degree, you see. I had two...two years of evening school at CCNY, three terms at Penn, and that’s it. So I had very little background to apply to law school, and...but in the end, this man, who was a graduate of Columbia Law School, but also had
been my father’s German lawyer in Europe. He encouraged me to apply...I have to confess that at that point, I knew nothing about American law schools, and I had heard of Harvard, Yale and Columbia, and I knew from my days at Penn that Penn had...had a law school. That was it. I really didn’t know of any other law school in this country. I never heard of Berkley, or UCLA or Chicago, or any other law school. So in the end, I decided to apply at Harvard, Yale and Columbia. Not having a college degree, explaining my situation, and then in the summer of 1946-1947 I came back to this country. Actually I have it in the wrong order now, in 1946-47, I came back to this country and my wife and I looked at New York and New Haven, and at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and I interviewed, and was encouraged...I was particularly encouraged at Harvard, I must say. Warren Seavey, I don’t know whether anyone still knows Seavey on torts, but it was the great torts book in those days and Warren Seavey was the great authority on torts. Warren Seavey interviewed me, and those were the days when the professor who was in charge of admissions had an enormous discretion to admit people. And we had a wonderful interview. I was in my captain’s uniform with all my decorations on, and he had been in the first world war, and he was fascinated by both my history as an airborne lawyer in this second world war, and also in my having been a German originally and getting into the army...so we had a wonderful talk, Warren Seavey and I. And he said you should apply at Harvard, and it’s not impossible that we might admit you. And low and behold, I applied, and Harvard admitted me. And with that skimpy college degree, and I have been told since that I am one of only three or so people who have ever been admitted to the Harvard Law School on that basis. Yale told me to come back when I had a college degree. Columbia was also interested in me, I have to say to their credit. There’s an interesting aftermath to this story. I was admitted at Harvard. I eventually [??] and went to Harvard. And in the fall of 1947, just after we had started at Harvard, I was asked to...we were all asked in my... the class of 1950, we started in ’47. I was asked to take an examination, they told us it made no difference to our admission, but to give...to give it a real hard try, and we took this examination, all of us did, and then forgot about it. That spring I was interviewed by a little committee of the Dean, and the Secretary of the Law School, and one professor I think, and asked all kinds of questions about myself and my background, other things. Then they said, “thank
you Mr. Loeser,” and I never heard about it again. Much, much later, I talked to Lou Treffer, who was then Secretary of the Law School, and he was later Dean of Northwestern Law School…and, Northwestern yes, and I asked him, “Lou, what was that all about?” And he said, “well, we were puzzled about something, because you know we admitted you with almost no decent background, and you flunked that trial examination we gave you, which was a forerunner of the LSATs, and you flunked it. And then you came out near the top of your class in the end of the first year, and made Law Review at Harvard, and we just tried to figure out what was the reason for it, and frankly I have to tell you, that it was a reason… that you were one of several reasons why Harvard, we called it the Loeser Syndrome, because, why Harvard, for several years after that, refused to adopt the LSATs, until they had been substantially changed because we realized that English being a second language, and you really having learned American English in the American army, you lacked the vocabulary and the background to pass that test, which was very vocabulary oriented. So there was a nice background to my admission to Harvard, and I think it’s…it made an enormous…this…my admission there, with really no background that qualified me is probably the biggest, most important change in my life, that occurred, other than my marriage to my wife.

[Technical Noise]

LARRY SEYMOUR: Ok, to pick up where we were, you had mentioned that you were accepted to both Columbia and Harvard Law Schools Seymour, and your wife was more inclined to move to Boston than to New York. Did you have a desire to return to New York after the time you had spent there before enlisting?

HANS LOESER: No, I can’t really say that. I felt less strongly than my wife….anti-New York. When we had been in Cambridge in the summer, and in Boston, and seen the town, we really liked it a lot. At that point, when we came back, my wife was pregnant…so, with our first child. So, we both realized that given our limited means, non-existence of means really, we’d be better off in a smaller town than in New York
City. No, I think we both agreed that going to Harvard was probably the most sensible thing for us to do. And we had liked what we had seen of Boston and Cambridge.

LARRY SEYMOUR: During your time at law school, the Red Scare was going on in Congress. Was this matter discussed in law school? And also, did the government behavior concern you more deeply as a result of your experience with the Nazi rise to power?

HANS LOESER: Yes, that’s...that’s an interesting question. And I think it clearly did. The whole Nazi story, and having been at CCNY, I was very politically interested, and coming out of the army and going to law school in Cambridge, we were very much interested in what was going on. This was a marvelously optimistic time, as I previously said. We felt that almost anything could be done, could be accomplished. And, of course, my law school class...at that point Harvard had an accelerated program. They started a new class every six months because of all the people coming. Well actually, my class of ’50 was the first...first one that was not accelerated. But the previous ones had been accelerated. So we were full of students who all felt the same way. It was a very exciting and very much politically oriented time at law school. Everybody was interested in what was going on. The McCarthy...McCarthy came a little later, didn’t it? Than when we were at law school, I guess that was the early 50’s, wasn’t it? Anyway, we were very much involved...interested in politics. I was always on the left, liberal side. I was always anti-Communist, I must say, but I was always very much to the left and I still kick myself...I can remember that as a law student, it must have been the 1948 presidential election, where everybody assumed that Dewey was going to win, and Truman didn’t have a chance. And so I took the opportunity, and the recent election, my God, is a reminder of that...to vote for...who was the third party candidate? Now I can’t remember his name, that year. You don’t remember either do you? Well, it’ll come to me, but I can’t remember it just now, I am embarrassed to say. But anyway, I voted for the third party candidate who was to the left of Truman, and I remember that evening listening to the radio and seeing that Truman had a real chance, and I kicked myself for doing what I did, and I swore that I would never, never, ever again try to do something
like this, and that I would always vote for one of the two major parties, even if it's only the lesser of two evils. And the most recent election has once again taught us the same lesson.

**LARRY SEYMOUR:** So we can assume you didn't vote for Ralph Nader then?

**HANS LOESER:** I most certainly did not. In fact, I had hoped to see him here this time, give him a piece of my mind. But he didn't show up.

**LARRY SEYMOUR:** Israel was declared a nation during your time at law school. Do you remember your feelings about this event?

**HANS LOESER:** Well, yes, very much so. And we were very...very excited about it. Remember...well let me go back for a moment. While we were stationed in Munich, we were surrounded by what was known as DP camps, not depressed, but... what do you, the persons...stand for, it...homeless persons really...I'm searching for a word that I can't get to just now. But anyway, there were by camps of Jews who had somehow escaped Russia, and Poland, and Germany and managed somehow to survive concentration camps. They were all concentrated...displaced persons, that's what they are... "DP" stands for displaced persons camps. These people were all there, and my wife Herta, whom I had brought to Munich as an employee of the United States army had switched jobs to the...to a Jewish organization that assisted these DPs. And she was particularly in charge of putting families together again. You see, they came back, and they didn't know whether their parents or their children had survived or been killed or what. And so matching up the few survivors, or informing them that proof existed that they didn't survive, the people they were looking for, became an important thing. So we became very much involved in this whole DP story. And one of the problems was, what do you do with these DPs? None of them wanted to stay in Germany. But where could they go? And there was an underground railroad, an illegitimate escape route to Israel at that time. Now the British didn't want them in Israel. So when the...an independent state of Israel was...was established by the British, one was delirious because it provided a home for
thousands and thousands of these displaced Jews who had no place to go. Nobody wanted them and there they were wanted. And an interesting sideline to all of this was that I had a classmate, his name was Harold Katz, in law school, who during this...who had been in the American navy...been an officer in the navy during the war. But during this period right after the war was part of the underground railway, and he ran a frigate or destroyer, or some kind of a boat that had been purchased. And having been in the navy, I think he was a skipper of it, and he ran illegal...he ran immigrants illegally into Haifa and to other ports in Israel. And as such, he was serving...must have been serving as part of the nascent Israeli navy. I forget exactly what the story was, but anyway, someone who knew that challenged him, while I was at Harvard Law School, that he should be kicked out of the law school because he had sworn allegiance to another...to another country, and therefore could never become a member of the Bar. It was a pretty ridiculous charge, but it was seriously made by some rightist organization, and I remember well that one of our most conservative professors, who had been a general in the air force, Barton...W. Barton Leech, very well known lawyer who wrote the...who wrote the leading book on property law at the time. W...General...W. Barton Leech, a one star general in the air force, defended...became the defense counsel...I don't know whether there was a formal defense counsel because it was a law school hearing. It wasn't an administrative...formally....formal administrative hearing. But anyway, he represented Katz...Harold Katz, and of course got him off that charge. So, this whole Israeli thing, and the illegal immigration, and the British attempt to keep Jews out was very much at the forefront of our...our thoughts at the time. And we were quite...very pleased with it all.

**LARRY SEYMOUR:** What ambition...You were an editor on the Law Review at Harvard, and you graduated magna cum laude, quite a leap from someone who admittedly did not reap much reward from earlier education. What do you think accounts for this change?

**HANS LOESER:** What accounts for this change I think is, a) I had some basic intelligence. But more importantly I was very excited by law school. I remember...well
I've just summarized my background. I didn't say before, but I might as well say it, that even in school in Germany, I got by easily. I never got...I got sort of Bs and Cs, and was never outstanding, but I never had to work very hard and I got by. I was never terribly challenged, and then I was in these army schools, and they certainly weren't terribly challenging intellectually. So coming to Harvard Law at...at twenty-seven years old, and with a new daughter, and a wife and responsibilities, there was both an incentive to make the most of it. But I was also really excited about the intellectual challenge. I loved the case system. I loved to participate in class. I was...I always talked in class. I found myself very stirred-up intellectually, really for the first time in my life, and I loved it. I worked very hard. So between being very excited about it and working very hard, I...I did very well. And as I said, I really enjoyed law school. I am always shocked these days, when a lot of the young people in law school that I see tell me that...consider law school sort of a necessary evil, but they are not excited by it at all. I just can't understand that. I...I thought it was a wonderful three years full of challenge, and full of really having to stretch your brains, and having marvelous professors...not all of them. We had a couple of awful professors, but most of them were excellent. And I think that challenge and that exposure really for the first time in my life to people who appreciated intellectual effort is what made me come out as well as I did.

LARRY SEYMOUR: What non-academic interests did you have during your time at law school?

HANS LOESER: Hmm. Not much, there certainly wasn't time for sports. Didn't have the time or the money to go skiing in those years. I pretty much...I took a great interest in politics as I mentioned before. But, I can't recall that I really did...I had my family. I had a new daughter who was born mid-year...half way through my first year of law school. In fact she was born right in the middle of my criminal law examination, which was the first test we ever got at Harvard after the first term. But...I don't think I had very...any other or any of the usual sort of college side interests. I didn't do sports. I didn't belong to any other societies and things. I met a lot of new friends, and we had as law schools...all law schools did at the time, we had these study clubs, where we all
studied together, and studied in groups, so you made close friendships. And we spent our
time talking with each other and some of the friends we made at that time who also had
children at around that time, had come out of the army, have become life long friends.
But I don’t think there was any other real outside involvement.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Would you say that the ambitions you had for a legal career during
your time at law school have been realized, or been the ambitions you’ve stayed with as
you pursued your legal career?

HANS LOESER: Yes, I think so. I...you know...I came out of the army. I went to law
school. I was challenged by it and I assumed to be [??] at the time that the thing to do is
join a law firm. But even then, I wanted some independence and being on the Review,
which in those days was worth more than it is these days. But in those days it meant that
you could get a job virtually any place. But of course there is one thing: in 1950 there
was still discrimination against Jews in the law firms. All over the country, not only in
Boston. So...but except for that limitation, I could get a job any place, and we...after
traveling all over the country and interviewing lawyers all over the country, I...we had
pretty well decided to go to Boston. And...but even then I had the choice between a
large firm and a small firm, and I had a very difficult choice in fact. I got an offer from
Cravath, which was then considered, maybe it’s still considered the top choice, the top
offer you could get from anybody. And I was very tempted by that. But my wife flatly
refused to go to New York. So that ruled it out. And then I decided that, really probably
the thing I’d like to do is join a small firm and see if I could help build it, and that’s how I
ended up at Foley Hoag & Eliot. It’s an...it was then an unusual firm. The senior
partners had left Ropes Gray which was the biggest firm in Boston at the time, and...to
set up there own practice. And I was only the tenth lawyer there, and I figure that...and
they were very liberal people. You have to know...understand that some of the big firms,
including Ropes Gray and some of the other firms, would not at that point look at a Jew.
But Ropes Gray actually would, but they would carefully....carefully select one every
two or three years or so in those years. And this wasn’t my year, because a good friend
of mine was coming up the following year, and they had already decided they wanted
him. But anyway, I...I decided that going into a smaller firm and helping to build it might be the most exciting thing to do. And that’s what I did. I was the tenth lawyer at Foley, Hoag and Eliot, and I became a partner five years later, which was very fast even in those days. And I became involved in the management of the firm by the mid-60...mid-60’s I think, let’s see...no by the early 60’s. So by little...twelve years out of law school, I was involved in management of the firm and I was managing partner for the following...more than twenty years of the firm. And really built it up into a big firm. And that was wonderfully exciting, and interesting. And it enabled you to have a lot to say about how the firm should be shaped. And my honorary fellowship here is part of that...is because of my interest in...in pro bono work, and establishing one of the first pro bono departments in...in the country. And certainly the first in Boston, and...so were my ambitions...I did a lot of...course I did a lot of corporate work. But I saw to it that the firm and I would also be involved in politics and other things. I always was involved in politics in one way or another. And we can go into that in greater detail if you like, but...first I was...in the early years I was principally an administrative lawyer. We were heavily involved in airline law, and those were the days of the Civil Aeronautics Board. And I learned to present...to represent airlines before the Civil Aeronautics Board. We had a lot of work before the Interstate Commerce Commission, all of which I know don’t matter any more these days. But it was very good training in constitutional law and administrative law, and to some extent corporate law. And of course, in a small firm, like what we started, we didn’t remain small for very long...you did a...what was wonderful was that I did a lot of work. I know how to draft a will. Now, these days I don’t...wouldn’t do it because I haven’t kept up with all of the details of changes in tax law and all of that. But the basic drafting of a will, I can still do. And in fact I still correct the drafting, sometimes that our corporate...that our probate lawyers do. So I feel at home in a lot of those areas. I have litigated cases, so coming up through a small firm where you had to do everything, I thought was a wonderful training, and much more...more exciting and varied, than the early specialization that we are now exposed to. But times have changed, there is no way to alter that. I have always been...combined as I’ve said, my law practice with political involvements. Go ahead, you have some questions don’t you.
LARRY SEYMOUR: I do. You mentioned your pro bono work. You have served on so many charitable organizations and many capacities, there are literally too many to list here. Among them, you are an honorary fellow at the University of Pennsylvania, co-founder of the Lawyer’s Alliance for World Security, former chairman of the Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association. The list goes on. Can you pinpoint an organization or an experience you’ve had that’s been particularly gratifying for you in your pro bono work?

HANS LOESER: Yeah, let me…let me pick out two. And I’m not sure that there is one. I got deeply involved in the fight to end the war in Viet Nam, and that was sort of a crucial experience in my life as a lawyer, and as a politically involved person. I...I realized that all of the young people…the universities were full of protests, and there were lots of other people doing…the one thing that wasn’t happening was that the “establishment” was heard enough. And this was a time when a lot of the more conservative friends of mine, who were senior partners at law schools…in law firms all over the country, were changing their minds on the Vietnamese war. They were quiet about it, but they were moved by their children. They were moved by various arguments. Anyway, I think I saw more clearly than many people. I won’t say I was the only one, that getting a lawyer’s organization, and by that I meant really establishment types of lawyers, the big law firms…come out very publicly against the war, might have a resonance with the people in Washington, that other things wouldn’t have. And that’s why we started the Lawyer’s Alliance Against the War, and that wasn’t exactly it’s title, but that was in effect what it was. And, I and a prominent New York lawyer, a lawyer in the Debevoise firm in New York, were the co-chairmen of this thing. And what we…the reason why I think we were very effective is that we managed to publish full-page ads in the New York Times, in the Boston Globe, in the Chicago Tribune, in the Los Angeles Times, in all of the major cities, that were signed and paid for by names one would recognize as normally conservative names, that…not the typical rebels, not young kids with long hair, but establishment types. And we purposely went after those names, and of course they had the money to pay for it too. We published those ads and I think they
were unusually successful. As I later found out, as you may know, I was on Nixon’s original enemies list, when the Nixon list of enemies that he wanted the IRS and others to go after, was published, I was on it, and I think it was because our organization, with all of his friends from the big New York law firms, really got under his skin, and really hurt. And I think we were quite effective. We were certainly not the only ones. I am not claiming credit for ending the war, but I think we were very effective in doing that. And that taught me quite a bit, and was a very important experience. It had an interesting after-effect, which I like to relate, because I often relate it to our young lawyers who often are too afraid that their own, perhaps radical views, might not go down well with their clients, and that’s the following story. Several years later, I was in Washington, trying a case...an administrative case before the...before the Securities and Exchange Commission, the SEC. I guess among lawyers, I have to explain that it was a case under the, by now not very often heard from Act, the 1935 Act, the Act that deals with public utility holding companies. And we were...we were trying to acquire some utilities...I was trying to acquire some utilities for a utility which I represented, and this was a hearing before the SEC under that Act. And I had the presidents to testify that day, of both the companies we were about to acquire, and the company that was doing the acquiring. And they were all conservatives, and almost certainly Republicans. And then at eight o’clock one morning, my wife called me from Boston at the hotel and said, “you know what happened? A Boston Globe reporter just called and said you are on something called the president’s enemy list.” And she said...I answered...she said to me that she answered it, she said, “how wonderful! Hooray!” And I told her for Christ’s sakes, tone it down. I have to appear today in a courtroom with Nixon’s picture on the wall, and before people who have all been appointed by him. And when I got down to breakfast, it was quite clear that my clients, as well as the people on the other side, who however...however were going to be my witnesses, were very disturbed by this. Here was a lawyer who was on the enemies list of the president...the current president. And I was...understood that...I was...there was nothing we could do about it. I was the only lawyer who could possibly handle that day. So we walked into the hearing room that day, and there were these three SEC lawyers lined up on one side, and the...what we then called the hearing examiner. Now you call him an administrative law judge, sitting
behind the desk, and some other lawyers around. And as we came in, the three lawyers, SEC staff lawyers clapped, and then the administrative law judge did nothing. He got up and shook my hand and then sat down again. It was one of the great triumphs of my career. You could see my clients relaxing and feeling good about it, and it's a story that I often tell, because you never know how these things work out, and you ought to live your convictions. And this was one proof. Now that was a long answer to half of your question. The second organization which I am still very much involved in, is the...is the fight for nuclear disarmament. I am a founding...founder of the Lawyer’s Alliance Against Nuclear Arms, and now known as the Lawyer’s Alliance...Lawyer’s Alliance for World Security (LAWS, L-A-W-S). I am very much involved in that organization still. I think it is probably the most important thing we can do to assure the health and lives of our children and grandchildren at the present time, and I am sorry to say that at the moment, we are making much less progress than we used to do, and we are very worried about that. But, I am very much involved in that, and continue to be in...that’s an involvement that’s now goes back eleven years or so...eighty...you know, no, it was longer than that...it’s almost twenty years.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Are you interacting in any way with the Bush Administration as to their new Star Wars...well, not new, but revisited Star Wars Defense Initiative?

HANS LOESER: Yeah, well we are very, very much opposed to it. We think it’s a crazy undertaking. And as an organization, we are very much involved. Now the Bush Administration is too new still to say that we are involved with them. They haven’t even really appointed the people that one ought to be involved in, but the people that they have appointed are all people who apparently want to...want to go ahead with the so-called Defense Initiative, which we...we think is an insane thing to do. It’ll cost enormous amounts of money. It is not likely to work technically, and even if it works technically, it is likely to be totally ineffective because if anybody wants to blow up either San Francisco or Boston, they are not going to try to send a missile which we are likely to shoot down, is likely to miss its target. They are going to send in a trawler or a pick-up truck with one of those things in it and blow it up. And so, to involve...to have billions
of dollars invested in something that isn’t going to defend us at all, is insane. But it has, in addition to the money, the terrible effect that it’ll destabilize the ...the disarmament regime all over the world, and will be not only an incentive for the Chinese and the Russians to rearm, or to respond, but it also tells all the smaller nations that nuclear arms and defense nuclear arms is very important. So if they...if we consider them so important, having thousands, why shouldn’t they have...at least have one or two? So the whole regime...the whole attempt to...to prevent more and more arms all over the world is...is being heard.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You were the Honorary General...Consul General for the Republic of Senegal for many years. Can you discuss how you came to this position and what you did for them?

HANS LOESER: Yes, that’s...that’s one of those coincidences in life. My daughter...I should mention since we our telling our life story that I have three children, a daughter and two sons, and I have eight grandchildren, by now. But after my daughter graduated from Harvard, she has a Harvard College studies, she went into the peace corps in Senegal, and whether they liked it or not, all my children’s fate has been that whenever they go far away, we follow them and visit. So, we visited Helen, in...in Senegal, and traveled around Senegal with her, and had a very interesting visit. A few weeks later, the Senegalese embassy I guess, in Washington, asked the Boston Chamber of Commerce, whom they could recommend to be an Honorary Consul in Boston. And I guess I was one of the few people in Boston who even knew where Senegal was, and I had even been there. So, I think my wife talked...actually talked to somebody and mentioned that we had been in Senegal. So as a result, I ended up the Honorary Consul General of Senegal, which was kind of a fun job. It...in the early days it gave me diplomatic license plates, which allowed me to park any place in Boston. It was a great privilege, which later on was taken away from us, and rightly so. And you help...what did you do? You helped the few Senegalese who got in trouble in Boston...in the Boston area, and you tried to promote...promote commercial relationships between America and Senegal. That’s essentially it.
LARRY SEYMOUR: Ok. The post-war German Constitution protects freedom of speech, but protections are limited in the case of those who use free speech to preach hatred. Do you think this form of free speech protection is preferable to that afforded in the United States?

HANS LOESER: No. At least not in the United States. I am a member of the Civil Liberties Union, and have been all my life, and believe that free speech is so deeply established, and so important in America, that I wouldn’t want any change here. But I think we have to recognize that we have to be careful about exporting ourselves and our way of governing to other countries. We often...we often sort of assume because things work in America, and we like them, and we are proud of them, therefore, all the world should adopt the same thing. I don’t believe that that’s...that that’s true. You have to look at the history and the culture of the various country...other countries, and not...and there is no first...first amendment. There never has been a first amendment in...in Germany. And is it good that the German’s regulate hate speech? It strikes me as an ACLU member as wrong, frankly. But, I’m a little reluctant to...to say here that the Germans should change. I would like to...I would like to know a little bit more about what Germans would argue on both sides of that, and I’d rather not make that judgment. Very intelligent and liberal-minded people think it’s the right thing for Germany. And so I won’t judge them, although my instincts are on the side of the First Amendment.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You became a partner, as you mentioned, in five years at Foley Hoag.

HANS LOESER: Five and a half years, that’s right.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Can you describe a little bit the atmosphere of the firm in the 1950s at that point?
HANS LOESER: Yes, as I said, in the middle...in June, 1950, when I started there, I was the tenth lawyer. We all did just about everything. Nobody specialized particularly. It was a free-wheeling, wonderful, friendly organization, where we could all go to the senior partners' houses for parties, and knew the wives of everybody. And the standards of our work was very high, I mean everybody in the firm I think was an outstanding lawyer, and that's how we grew, and that's how we got a lot of clients. And we were unusual in Boston at that time. Strange as it sounds, today...as it sounds in today's context, Henry Foley and Garrett Hoag, the senior partners who had left Ropes Gray had decided that they would like to have a firm of approximately one third Protestants, one third Catholics, and one third Jews. Well nowadays, that kind of rigidity, that kind of test of where you stand in terms of religion sounds awful. But you must recognize, that in those days, it was a fairly…it was the most liberal thing you could possibly do, because many firms didn't take Jews at all. Many Firms discriminated against Catholics, and if they did take them, they took them in token amounts and so forth. So this was really a very progressive stance, and we were known for that. And we used it to great advantage in recruiting wonderful people. We...we could get the top of the best law schools that people who wanted to come to Boston, or stay in Boston, almost always if we wanted them, because we were known as a...liberalism was in the air then. Everybody wanted that kind of liberalism and it helped us enormously to grow, to be that open-minded. Of course, we never ended up being...having those exact percentages. What it really ended up meaning was that we would take people irrespective of their religious and racial background. We took women very early, earlier than any of the other...well earlier than most of the others. I can't...I don't have the statistics on that, but we took women very early on. I have to confess, we weren't very good at keeping them. They almost always left because their husband was trying...they didn't leave because they didn't like it. But they always left it, so we had some trouble hanging onto our women in the beginning, but eventually we did.

LARRY SEYMOUR: You've been very involved in alternative dispute resolution in your career. Can you mention how you got...became involved in that?
HANS LOESER: Yes, yes, as I have mentioned, I was either one of the managing partners, or the managing partner of Foley, Hoag & Eliot for many, many years, and then when we...in the early ‘80s when we abolished the managing partner system and had an elected executive committee, and I was very instrumental in bringing about that...that change. I was the first chairman of the executive committee and remained either chairman or member of the executive committee for many years. But in...in the middle to late ‘80s, ’87 or there about I think, I ceased to be...I ceased to be, because of age, a member of the executive committee, and at that time, my close friend Jim Warrenburg, was Dean of the Harvard Law School. And I talked with him at one point and...and he said, “you know, I’d love to have you become my assistant, now that you are no longer running your law firm, on a part-time basis, because I have to spend so much time dealing with intra-faculty members.” That was a time when there was lots of dispute within the Harvard Law faculty, and the critical...the critical legal studies people were very prominent and so forth. So he said, “we need to do some long-range planning around here. I want you to be my assistant for long-range planning.” So I said fine, and for the next six years, I spent about a third of my time... the other two thirds I spent practicing law...being involved in long-range planning of the Harvard Law School, which was very interesting. Then, that ended, and now we are in 1987. I guess the other one was a little earlier. And at that point, a couple of friends of mine who are judges in Massachusetts, asked me whether I wouldn’t want to try my hand at being a mediator. That was in the earlier days of dispute resolution, but I have to say that two to three years before that, while I was still actively practicing law, I had taken a summer course at Harvard Law School in alternative dispute resolution, with...with some of the leaders in the profession, Frank Sander and...the guy who wrote...Walter Fisher, Walter Fisher and Frank Sander. And “Getting to Yes” is the book that I was trying to think of. And, I had taken the summer course with them, so I had some theoretical training in alternative dispute resolution. So they asked me if I wouldn’t want to try and remediate some cases, and I said I would try it. So they talked me into it, and I took a couple of cases from Superior Court judges in Massachusetts, that were about six weeks before trial, and settled them, and settled them very successfully. And ever since, I have become convinced of the...of the merits of alternative dispute resolution, and I think it saves a lot
of money for the parties, both money and...and effort and time, and saves the Commonwealth, the state a lot of money. And it's enormous fun for the...I love it. So I've been a very active mediator, and I've become quite well-known as a mediator in Boston. And I still do...do that quite a bit.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Do you expect mediation and arbitration to supplant some of the litigation that is so prevalent in our society?

HANS LOESER: Well, to the extent that it exists, it obviously supplants it. How...how...whether it will supplant more and more of it, yes, I think so. I think a lot...a lot of the big company general counsels these days always consider mediation or arbitration as an alternative before they go to...to court litigation. And they set the example, so I think it'll, more and more, be an alternative way. It'll never displace...you know there are many cases that we all get, where issues of principal are involved, or issues of interpretation of a statute, and you just have to take those to the courts. We can't...a mediator or arbitrator can't resolve those. So those case remain, and then there are cases where people are so emotionally...emotionally charged that you can't settle them, and you have to...so there'll always be litigation, but I think it's a growth industry, yes.

LARRY SEYMOUR: To revisit, we are running out of time, so I just want to touch on a question I asked earlier. When you return to Germany, I know you have several times in different capacities since the War, what are your feelings toward the country and the people now?

HANS LOESER: Well, let me...since we are running out of time, let me summarize...I think I can summarize it in terms of a visit I paid in...in May and June of last year to my...to the country...to the town where I grew up in, Kassel. I was invited back by the city last May, to come back at the city’s expense, as the city’s guest in connection with the dedication of a new synagogue, the old one having been destroyed of course, in *Kristallnacht*. And I went back, and it was an interesting experience. I had of course
been back to Kassel many...several times before. The first time when I was an officer in the army right after the war, I took my jeep and went to Kassel, and I saw that it was...the center of the city was totally destroyed by Allied bombs, and I didn’t feel sorry about that at all...including our house was totally destroyed. Since then I have been back with my children to show them the city. I’ve been several times, and I’ve sort of enjoyed being in the town as such, but I hadn’t really had any contact with the people. I didn’t want any contact with the people. None of my contemporaries...most of them of course didn’t survive the war, my class of boys in school. They were all in the German army and very few of them survived. And this time in Kassel, for the first time really, I had contact not so much with my generation. In fact, my generation in Kassel stayed in the background, they couldn’t face us. There was about one hundred former Jews from Kassel who came back. But the younger generation I thought, was quite wonderful. They had a real interest in what happened to the Jews. And they just didn’t beat their breast and say, “isn’t it terrible what we did to them?” Or what our parents did to them. But they said, they were interested in a constructive sort of way, in, “what did we lose by losing the Jews of Kassel,” in this particular case of Germany. And I thought that was a very constructive approach. I found that the municipal museum in Kassel had... about a quarter of the museum was dedicated to the Jewish...to the former Jews of Kassel. And I was very interested and very encouraged by what went on. What wasn’t so encouraging is that we had to have a heavy police escort during all the time we were there, which indicated to us that there are still radical elements there, who like to take it out on Jews, particularly...a group of a hundred Jews from abroad would be wonderful publicity for them to do something to us. So we had police escort...armed police escort all the way. So there’s good and bad.

LARRY SEYMOUR: But you find you don’t harbor resentment towards younger generations?

HANS LOESER: No, I think the younger generations of Germans are very interesting. Of course, they have habits of regimentation and obedience to authority that rub me, as an American and a former German, the wrong way. They still do, and those...those traits
and those habits do survive, so one never feels quite comfortable in Germany. But on the whole, I am encouraged by what I see in the younger generation, but they've got a long way to go.

LARRY SEYMOUR: Ok, I guess I'll give you... ask you I should say, one more question. Do you have any advice for young lawyers entering the field today?

HANS LOESER: Well, I said last night at the table, and I've said it before, if I were again forty-five years old, and at the... I think I would leave my firm, which by now has 250 lawyers or something like that. I would leave my firm. I would know partners in other firms who felt that way that I...that I do, and try to get them to leave too, and found a new firm that would announce a cap on earnings, and I don't mean poverty rates. I mean earnings that...on which we could live very handsomely, but not the million dollar earnings that these days go with partners in...in the big firms. But we would limit our earnings, we would therefore be able to both limit our fees...our top rate lawyers, and are known as top lawyers. I think we could attract clients, and we...if that were happening in more cities, we might even revolutionize the law because I personally believe that the big firms these days are driven by a competitive frenzy which is irrational, which makes earnings too high, fees too high, and reduces the pleasure of being a professional, sharply...and making you more and more of a business and less and less of a professional. I think it's unfortunate that that is...happens. It's a very difficult thing in an existing firm to change that because you are bound to have some people who will always be attracted by another couple of hundred thousand dollars that someone else will offer. So in order to be competitive, you have to be up with everybody else. In order to get the best young lawyers, "best," because maybe they are not the best, but what...they are considered the best. You have to...they want you to be among the top firms that are rated every year...every year. So it is very difficult to do that within an existing firm, but if you just broke away, and founded a different animal, I think it would be marvelous fun to do that. Whether it would succeed, I don't know, but I'd love to try it.
LARRY SEYMOUR: Ok, well thank you so much for taking all this time, I really appreciate it.

HANS LOESER: Well, as you can tell I enjoyed it too.

LARRY SEYMOUR: I've got about twice as many questions as I've asked you that we'll have to forego for another time.

HANS LOESER: Thank you both very much for being so patient.