Interview with Steve Angell
Date: ca. 1998
Interviewer: Judy Ehrlich

Interview gathered as part of *The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It: The Story of World War II Conscientious Objectors*. Produced by Paradigm Productions. Housed at the Washington University Film and Media Archive, Paradigm Productions Collection.

Interview with Steve Angell, conducted by Paradigm Productions ca. 1998 for *The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It: The Story of World War II Conscientious Objectors*. Washington University Libraries, Film and Media Archive, Paradigm Productions Collection.

Note: These transcripts contain material that did not appear in the final program. Only text appearing in ***bold italics*** was used in the final version of *The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It: The Story of World War II Conscientious Objectors*.

00:00:11:00—00:00:20:00

Interviewer #1:

So, we will begin.

Steve Angell:

If at any time you want me to repeat the question you've asked me just—

Interviewer #1:

It's, I want you to do that all the time

Camera Crew Member #1:

Bridge, bridge

Steve Angell:

Oh all right.

[cut]

00:00:21:00—00:00:34:00

Interviewer #1:

Actually we were really lucky to get this room. It's got so many different corners, we can just—

Steve Angell:

Mm-hmm

Camera Crew Member #1:

[inaudible]

Interviewer #1:

We could do about fifteen interviews and make them all look different.

Camera Crew Member #1:

Yeah, look [inaudible]

Camera Crew Member #2:

[laughs]

Interviewer #1:

Plucky. 'Cause sometimes you get, you know, the Holiday Inn.

Steve Angell:

I'm glad I got the bench.

Interviewer #1:

Yeah. It looks good. I like the bench.

00:00:35:00—00:01:02:00

Interviewer #1:

Why don't you begin, are we rolling?

Camera Crew Member #1:

We are rolling.

Interviewer #1:

We, we're rolling. Would you begin by introducing yourself?

Steve Angell:

Yes, I'm Stephen Angell. I am a member of the Religious Society of Friends, and I'm here at this conference. Actually, I'm here at Pendle Hill for the fall term, and it just happens this conference is being held while I am here.

Interviewer #1:

Oh, how nice. Okay—

Steve Angell:

So—

Interviewer #1:

—so you're here anyway.

00:01:03:00—00:02:09:00

Interviewer #1:

Tell us, just briefly, what was your experience during World War II?

Steve Angell:

Well, World War, during World War II, I had to make the choice as to how I would serve my country, and because of my Quaker heritage and the way I saw things, I did not feel that I could go into the armed services and be an agent for killing other people. It's interesting because there were three boys in the family and one brother, one who's a year older than I am, chose to be a contentious objector, but go into the Army and serve in the Medical Corps. And my other brother, who was six years older, just signed up and went directly into the Army. Although he never saw combat service, he worked in logistics and that.

00:02:10:00—00:02:31:00

Interviewer #1:

How does that happen in a family? With the same background—

Steve Angell:

Well, my, my parents. I couldn't have had better parents [laughs]. They thought each one of

us had to search this question for ourselves, and whatever answer we came out with, that we felt was right for us, was just fine with them.

00:02:32:00—00:03:23:00

Interviewer #1:

Is, is that a Quaker attitude? Or teaching, or—

Steve Angell:

Well, I, I, I would say it certainly conforms to my views as to what a Quaker should be, and have tried to practice it with my own children. In that both my wife and I felt they had to choose, choose their own spiritual journey, and couldn't just be something that we were. So, I, I think that is very important, and a very important part of Quaker process, that you leave the individual open to seeking for him or herself what is the right course.

00:03:24:00—00:04:59:00

Interviewer #1:

I don't wanna sidetrack you too much, but was there a moment when you realized you were a contentious objector growing up?

Steve Angell:

That is an interesting question. Because I was born right after World War One, 1919, and so there was a good deal of talk about that war as I was a young child. And I can remember, when I was five or six years old, lying in my bed and thinking how s, s, stupid it was for pe— these men to be in trenches just a few yards apart, shooting at one another and trying to kill one another. And I said to myself, well if I was there I'd just get up out of the trench and speak to both parties and say this doesn't make any sense why don’t we all go home? I mean this was a five or six year old child looking at a very complex problem, but the— From that early age, and perhaps before then though that's my first memory of it, I felt that I want my life to do something toward helping to end war, and the threat of war, as a way of dealing with conflict on this planet. Because, if we don't do that, we aren't gonna continue to exist. So we better begin to address the problem.

00:05:00:00—00:05:05:00

Interviewer #1:

To jump ahead, and we'll come back to the other stuff—

Interviewer #2:

[inaudible]

Interviewer #1:

I'm too far? Sorry—

Interviewer #2:

No, no, it's just—

[cut]

00:05:06:00—00:05:16:00

Steve Angell:

—full term

Interviewer #1:

Is this your home area, home—

Steve Angell:

New York, is where I grew up—

Interviewer #1:

New York, City

Steve Angell:

I just sold my home a few weeks ago.

Interviewer #1:

Ah, oh you did? Ah

Steve Angell:

So I'm—

Interviewer #1:

This is a good place to come, you know what I mean, right?

Steve Angell:

Yes, yes

00:05:17:00—00:05:22:00

Interviewer #1:

So, you're not, you're not quite sure where you gonna go from there?

Steve Angell:

Well I'll be going into a Friends retirement community I think.

00:05:23:00—00:05:27:00

Interviewer #1:

Ah, ah. There are Fr— that's nice. Where are those?

Steve Angell:

Well they're all around.

Interviewer #1:

Uh-huh. Oh that's good.

00:05:27:00—00:05:45:00

Interviewer #2:

Foulkeways.

Steve Angell:

What?

Interviewer #2:

Foulkeways. Are you going to Foulkeways?

Steve Angell:

Well there's Foulkeways, there's Kendal Longwood, there's Pennswood Village, there's Stapeley. All in Philadelphia.

Interviewer #1:

Oh, really, huh, that's nice. They're nice.

Steve Angell:

There are quite a few. Medford Leas out in Jersey.

00:05:46:00—00:06:00:00

Interviewer #1:

And are they mainly, are they, what was I gonna say, limited to, to Quakers—

Steve Angell:

Oh no. No, no—

Interviewer #1:

No. They're open to anyone—

Steve Angell:

In fact, there are more non-Quakers than Quakers—

Interviewer #1:

Are there?

Steve Angell:

—in most of them

Interviewer #1:

Like Quaker schools I guess.

Steve Angell:

But they are—

Interviewer #2:

OK

Interviewer #1:

OK

Steve Angell:

—run by Quakers

Interviewer #1:

OK, great

00:06:01:00—00:08:23:00

Interviewer #1:

So, go ahead and give me the more complex answer to that question.

Steve Angell:

Well, although I'm the youngest in our family, and I have my father's name. I don't need to go into that story, but, and, he was in real estate business for seventy-five years, and the family sort of looked at me, 'cause the other boys seemed to have been choosing different paths, as the one who would fill his shoes and take over his business and so forth and so on, which never resonated with me. And, I guess when I was eleven or twelve years old, I was in a discussion among adults in which my father or my mother, I don't remember, maybe both of them, were sort of talking about me as the one who was going to become the real estate person in the family. And, later they found me crying, and they wanted to know what the matter was, and I said well I can't do that. I feel I have to use my life in a different way, and in something that is more of service to humanity, rather than just a business. And so, it was very much in my mind, as I was growing up, what kind of a profession or a vocation I might undertake. And, I chose social work, and I guess I was somewhat directed that way because I did summer camp work as a younger person, camp counselor and so forth. The director of one of our camps was good at guidance and sort of gave me the tests and said, well this is what your tests indicate you would be good at, so.

00:08:24:00—00:09:11:00

Interviewer #1:

So for you the question of being a contentious objector was not a difficult one? When that, when the war came around, when you were drafted.

Steve Angell:

No it was not difficult. I knew. I mean, I mean I was just so clear that I could not do that. I couldn't even do what my brother was doing, which was go in the Medical Corps, because I couldn't see myself bringing men out of the conflict, mending them up, and then sending them back. I mean, to me, that was really participating, also, in something that I didn't believe in.

00:09:12:00—00:10:29:00

Interviewer #1:

So what was your experience in CPS camp? Did you feel that that was an experience you could believe in?

Steve Angell:

Well, yes. I, I believe that there were certainly things that I could do of service to my country in Civilian Public Service, although I knew nothing really of the program, I just knew that it existed and that it was supported by Friends. And, I was first assigned to a forestry camp up in New Hampshire, and it was—our, our responsibilities there largely dealt with, of course if there were any forest fires we would help with that, but one project I worked on, I was only there three months, was building a road into the forest in one part of the national forest there, so that if there was a problem with the forest fire they could get to it. And this is an interesting story connected with this, because we were offered the opportunity to volunteer for a, a guinea pig experiment.

00:10:30:00—00:12:20:00

Interviewer #1:

While you were there.

Steve Angell:

While I was there. And a camp was set up for building this road, and we were the ones who were in the experiment. The, the experiment dealt with finding ways to control lice, because it was well established that once the allied forces invaded southern Europe, the chances of cholera and typhus spreading among the population were very great, and that lice were the principle carriers of these diseases. And so, they wanted some individuals to volunteer to carry lice, of course these were clean lice, they weren't cholera or typhus lice, on their bodies and experiment with various powders to see which powders would work in terms of exterminating the lice. So, this experiment was conducted twice. I was in the first unit that went through it. And, for three weeks we had to wear the same underwear, all the time, [laughs] while we're working on this fire road, and every day we had to powder, use a powder that was given to us, to put on our underwear. And then once a week one member of our unit had count the number of lice that were in our underwear [laughs]. That job I wouldn't have wanted [laughs].

00:12:21:00—00:12:53:00

Interviewer #1:

They counted the lice in the underwear when you took it off.

Steve Angell:

Yes, yes.

Interviewer #1:

So they go through and count the—

Steve Angell:

Once, once a week we had to take off our underwear and hand it to this person who'd count the lice. And this way—

Interviewer #1:

What, what was the powder do you know?

Steve Angell:

We of course had no—all the powders looked the same. But it was out of this louse experiment that they discovered DDT. And this is what they used, and this is what prevented any serious epidemics from occurring in southern Europe when they invaded.

00:12:54:00—00:13:23:00

Interviewer #1:

So you were probably wearing DDT around? Or you could have been—

Steve Angell:

No, I don't, I don't think I was the DDT person. I mean we, some people just got talcum powder, and of course that didn't affect the lice one way or another. My colony, I think, decreased a little bit, but not sufficiently. So whatever they were using with me was not appropriate for the task.

00:13:24:00—00:13:34:00

Interviewer #1:

Let me just make sure I understand how this worked. Did they assign you a certain number of lice and then they would check to see how many were left—

Steve Angell:

Everybody got the same number of lice—

Interviewer #1:

I see

Steve Angell:

—when we started out. Everybody got the same number of lice.

00:13:35:00—00:14:09:00

Interviewer #1:

But what if the lice [laughs]. This experiment sounds a little shaky to me. What if they just didn't like you and wanted to jump on to somebody else, and it had nothing to, anyway, we, we won't go into detail on that—

Steve Angell:

Well I, I, I don't know if we were in that close contact [laughs].

Interviewer #1:

[laughs] [inaudible]

Steve Angell:

We didn't get in one another's beds and or something like— [laughs]

Interviewer #1:

Right, right, or just, jump off. Anyway, I guess that's, that's beyond our, our scope—

Steve Angell:

—that, but anyway, I was really pleased to be able to participate in that experiment 'cause I saw this as something that was going to help to save lives, not destroy lives.

00:14:10:00—00:15:20:00

Interviewer #1:

And, and then what did you do after that?

Steve Angell:

Well, while we were in the forestry camps, these were called base camps. They were developing other units that people could transfer to if there was work that would seem to them to be more appropriate to their interests and skills. And there was this school in Maryland which was for black, delinquent, and I might say also retarded, children. And they were looking for someone to serve as a social worker in that school, or institution. And so I applied for that, and since I'd had a year of social work I was among those selected. And there was one other social worker and two psychologists, which also were transferred to that school. And we set up a psycho-social clinic which was quite beyond anything that any of the other institutions in the state had.

00:15:21:00—00:15:36:00

Interviewer #1:

Hmm. Let me just clarify something. Was that, was the camp you were in a Quaker camp? And—

Steve Angell:

Yes, West Campton was a Quaker camp.

Interviewer #1:

—and was what you, when you went to the school was that considered detached service?

Steve Angell:

It was detached service, but it was also under the American Friends Service Committee.

00:15:37:00—00:16:02:00

Interviewer #1:

So were you paid to do the detached service, versus paying to be in—

Steve Angell:

We got, we got seventeen dollars a month.

Interviewer #1:

But in camp you need to pay right?

Steve Angell:

No.

Interviewer #1:

Oh. In some of the, I've been told people had to pay thirty dollars a month.

Steve Angell:

Oh. No, we, we didn't have to pay anything, but we didn't, we didn't get much.

Interviewer #1:

I think the Friends may have paid for you—

Steve Angell:

Yeah, right.

Interviewer #1:

—in some cases, it wasn't, without church backing I think that the people paid themselves.

Steve Angell:

That's possible, yes.

00:16:03:00—00:16:40:00

Interviewer #1:

So that experience, how did that influence your life? That experience—

Steve Angell:

Well that was a very interesting experience from a number of standpoints. First of all, we found ourselves in a segregated institution. Our unit was both Afro-American and Caucasian, so we could not just accept this as the kind of situation we wanted to be in, or wanted to work in, or thought we should work in.

00:16:41:00—00:17:05:00

Interviewer #1

Describe how it was segregated in what—

Steve Angell:

Well—

Interviewer #1:

—the staff ate separately? Or—

Steve Angell:

Oh, yes. There were two dining rooms. A dining room for blacks, a dining room for whites. And the whites had the best housing, and the blacks had the not so good housing and the not so good jobs, and the whites had the best jobs, and it, it was, it was quite well segregated.

00:17:06:00—00:18:01:00

Interviewer #1:

The workers. The students were all black?

Steve Angell:

Oh yes.

Interviewer #1:

So it wasn't a question of segregating the students—

Steve Angell:

So, our unit got together and we talked about it. And those of us who were white got the black members of our unit to talk to the black employees and find out if they would have any objection if some of us moved from the white dining room and ate in the dining room with them, and they found nothing objectionable about that. So we did it. And this, of course, created a bit of a stir in the institution. And the superintendent, who had been eager to get us in, was now beginning to be eager to get us out [laughs]. And there was quite a struggle that ensued administratively.

00:18:02:00—00:18:36:00

Interviewer #1:

And what was the outcome of that?

Steve Angell:

The outcome was that we, we kept diaries of all the things that were happening and happening, and funneled the information to the board of managers of the institution. And finally the white superintendent was relieved and a black superintendent was brought in, and the whole institution became desegregated.

00:18:37:00—00:18:57:00

Interviewer #1:

So this was not the policy of the state, this was an individual superintendent—

Steve Angell:

I think it was a policy of the state. They only setup two institutions, they. And this wasn't only for delinquent children, it was also in mental hospitals, it was in general hospitals, it was, you know, the policy.

00:18:58:00—00:19:40:00

Interviewer #1:

But, but the people that you, that you complained to, that you send the information to, were state level and they changed the policy? Although—

Steve Angell:

Well, it it was—the board of managers was, they were appointed by the state, but it was heavily dominated by Quakers, because the Quakers had earlier brought to light the rather horrendous conditions that existed at the institution at an earlier time. And so there had been some shift and turnover, and Quakers were appointed to the board of managers and we worked through them.

00:19:41:00—00:20:25:00

Interviewer #1:

Could you just in one sentence say, we organized and integrated the, this, the institution, or just—

Steve Angell:

Well the CPS unit there came in and found a segregated institution, and since we were both Afro-American and Caucasian, and did not believe that this was the way that things should be operating, we got together and actually brought about desegregation in the institution. This was, I was only there two years, three months, so this happened in relatively brief period of time.

00:20:26:00—00:21:18:00

And you didn't name the institution in that, maybe just one more time, really quickly, where you name the institution and that you desegregated it.

Steve Angell:

Oh, OK. We, we were brought into this institution for Negro delinquent and retarded children in Maryland, it was Cheltenham School for Boys, and found it to be a segregated institution with the white personnel having advantages over and above what the black personnel had. And, our unit being a mixed black and white way, we got together and decided we were going to desegregate it and we did.

00:21:19:00—00:22:10:00

Interviewer #1:

So from there, you were there two and a half years, but that, was that the extent of your service or did you have another assignment—

Steve Angell:

No—

Interviewer #1:

—after that.

Steve Angell:

—that, then that unit was closed. The American Service Committee finally got out of the CPS business. They found that working with the government and supporting conscription was not something that was very Quakerly [laughs] to be doing, and so they closed down all of their units. And I was transferred to a Brethren service unit at Norwich State Hospital in Connecticut, and there also they were looking for a social worker so I was able to serve in the social service department of that institution for the remaining year of my service.

00:22:11:00—00:22:25:00

Interviewer #1:

I didn't realize that AFSC got out of the CPS camps. What year was that?

Steve Angell:

Well that would've been, let me see, 1945, '44, '45, in there yeah.

00:22:26:00—00:22:39:00

Interviewer #1:

And the camps themselves were they taken over by the government or by another church group, or do you know?

Steve Angell:

Well that, that unit was closed. All, all of us were transferred. But the Brethren and the Mennonites continued to run their camps and the government ran camps, yes.

00:22:40:00—00:23:01:00

Interviewer #1:

Ah maybe Steve Cary might know a little more about, we're gonna talk to him about that later. That's an interesting piece of information.

Steve Angell:

Yeah.

Interviewer #1:

So then you went to another hospital and you did more of the same kind of work. Was it a mental institution that you worked at, was the, or was the—

Steve Angell:

Oh, no. It was a, it was, it was a state hospital—

Interviewer #1:

State Hospital, so it was—

Steve Angell:

—for, for men and women, because men and women were segregated in wards, but....

Interviewer #1:

Mm-hmm, mm-hmm

00:23:02:00—00:24:04:00

Interviewer #1:

Could you go on and talk about what, the work you've done since then and how the, how CPS camp experience, or the, the World War Two CO experience influenced what you—

Steve Angell:

Well, this was really in direct line with my vocational objective of becoming a social worker and I'd only had one year in the school of social work at The University of Chicago, so after CPS I went back and finished my education, and then progressed in jobs. I started out working in the family service agency, but soon moved into community organization work, working in community health and welfare councils which did social planning for communities. And I did that for about twenty-five years, and then started a business of my own.

00:24:05:00—00:24:37:00

Interviewer #1:

Which is?

Steve Angell:

I became a consultant in human services planning and community development. And so I've been in social work now for over fifty years, even continuing with it after my retirement when I, I became, I would say full time involved in moting [sic] the Alternatives To Violence Project of New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, a Quaker Project.

00:24:38:00—00:27:09:00

Interviewer #1:

Why don't you talk about what that group does, or the organization's goals—

Steve Angell:

I, it has a very interesting origin, in that—

Interviewer #1:

Could you, rather than say it has, say—

Steve Angell:

Oh, The Alternatives To Violence Project has a very interesting origin, in that we, we had a worship group in a prison there, in Dutchess County, New York, Green Haven prison. And the men in that prison heard about things that we had done during the Vietnam War, like training thousands of marshals to go into demonstrations against that war and to help keep them from becoming violent. And there was a group of them who were trying to work with younger individuals who were brought into the institution for them to talk to; individuals who were headed in the direction of a criminal career. And they were trying to help them change their behavior in ways which would make this not happen, but they were not having really any success with this. They were using largely the motivation of fear. And these young guys, they're, they're just, trying, drill into them, they come to prison it's hell and all these things are terrible things that are going to happen to you and so forth. But fear isn't a very positive emotion to work with, and once the particular thing that you are afraid of disappears from the scene, why you go back to whatever behavior you have been following. Also it largely suggests either reactions of fight or flight, and doesn't point to all of the great variety of reactions that stand in between. So, they asked this—the Quakers, if since we had done this during for demonstrators, demonstrations during the Vietnam war, if we could come and teach them something that would perhaps help them to do a better job with these younger individuals they're working with.

00:27:10:00—00:29:38

Interviewer #1:

Could you just say who they are, is, in that situation?

Steve Angell:

Well, they, they were delinquent youth in New York City—

Interviewer #1:

But go back and say who was it that asked you to come in and—

Steve Angell:

Oh, oh. There was a group in the Green Haven prison. They called themselves the Think Tank. And, they, they decided that what they needed was some better techniques for instructing or trying to instruct these younger persons who were out in the community in ways of dealing with conflict that would not bring them into conflict with the law and consequently prison. And, so they turned to the Quakers, this Think Tank group, and said is there something you can do for us? And so we held our first workshop there in Green Haven

prison, this is the prison where we have the electric chair in New York which fortunately we haven't used yet, though it's possible. But anyway, these were men who'd been involved in really serious crimes, it wasn't any minimum security institution, it was, and, so we had our first workshop there and it was immediately received very favorably by the men, and we drew the team that lead that workshop from all around the East Coast, individuals we knew had been doing some of this work. But, it was so well received that immediately they wanted more, and the word spread to other prisons and they wanted more. And so we found ourselves in the position of having to train individuals to do these workshops, and—so that we could—

Interviewer #1:

[coughs]

Steve Angell:

—pursue the program in many places. We're now, in New York State in about thirty-two prisons, and we do more than four hundred workshops a year and there, these workshops are three days long.

Interviewer #1:

[coughs] Excuse me [coughs].

[cut]

00:29:39—00:30:19:00

Interviewer #1

[coughs] Excuse me. What is your role in this Stephen?

Steve Angell:

Yes. I be—early on, I became one of the facilitators for running these workshops, and I've been doing it ever since and, as I indicated earlier, when I retired from my regular work I have really put almost full time in on doing Alternatives to Violence workshops. We call them AVP workshops.

00:30:20:00—00:31:06:00

Interviewer #1:

Is it just in prisons, or is it in other places?

Steve Angell:

No. It started in the prisons, but it's a program that's needed everywhere. It changed me, okay? I think it can change anybody. I was never going to work in prison, but a friend of mine who helped start the program said, Steve would you be willing to be an incorporator for the program, so I said yes, and then my other friends who were in it said, Steve would you be willing to just take a workshop to see what we're doing 'cause I think you ought, you ought to know, and I said yes. And, I became hooked. And—

00:31:07:00—00:31:47:00

Interviewer #1:

When you say it changed you, excuse me [coughs], you were already committed to nonviolence. How did it change someone like you?

Steve Angell:

Well, of course, I didn't think I was a violent person. I mean, I don't carry a gun, I don't carry a knife, I don't go around picking fights, and if there's the possibility of a fight I look for a way around, rather than getting into a fight. So, I really didn't think I needed to take a workshop, but I agreed that I needed to know what these other folks were doing. But, when I took my workshop I found out some things about Steve Angell I didn't know before.

00:31:48:00—00:32:22:00

Interviewer #1:

Such as?

Steve Angell:

I found there was violence in me too, and that maybe I wasn't doing these awful things that I viewed as violence, but I was doing other things. Like putting people down when I didn't need to. Rather than seeking the solution to a problem, getting into an argument. I mean all of these things have a violent element to them. Having violent thoughts when I didn't need to have violent thoughts, and....

00:32:23:00—00:33:53:00

Interviewer #1:

And this program, is, teaches people how to change their behavior or change their thinking—

Steve Angell:

The program is a personal growth workshop actually. We just hang it on the hook of conflict

resolution, and as far as I'm concerned, personal growth is a lifelong task. I think when I stop to grow personally, I'm stopping living the fullest kind of life that I can live. And, as a facilitator of these workshops, I'm always learning. In fact, one of our basic principles is that those of us who are facilitators, and those who are participants, we're all teachers and we're all learners. We tell the group when, even in prison, when we start the workshop, we don't come in with the answers. We're together going to find the answers. Also, our workshops, there's only one entrance requirement, and that is that the individual volunteer. We don't let prison administrators tell men or women that they have to take this workshop. If they do, or if they choose the people who are going to go in, we stop doing the workshops.

00:33:54:00—00:33:59:00

Interviewer #1:

Did you say it's in other places besides prisons?

Camera Crew Member #1:

I, I'm sorry we have to turn the tape

Interviewer #1:

Oh, okay. All right.

[cut]

00:34:00:00—00:34:31:00

Interviewer #1:

and how do you put together that tradition, and the reality of modern American life. And how can that tradition instruct and influence modern, or can, can it be an important influence in modern—

Steve Angell:

You want me to answer that now? [laughs]

Interviewer #1:

Yeah, in thirty seconds. I know it's a big question, but if you could just take a, take a shot at that, and then I'll come back to the other. You just remind me. I don't wanna forget—

[door opening sound]

Steve Angell:

I'd rather have a little chance—

Interviewer #1:

We're just gonna have one more question

Unidentified speaker:

OK

Interviewer #1:

I know it's late

Steve Angell:

I, I'd rather have one more chance to think about that than— [laughs]

00:34:32:00—00:35:39:00

Interviewer #1:

Give it a try, and just see if something comes to mind on that. I know its a big question, and its not something I expect a, a complete answer on, but just your thoughts on that would be helpful.

Steve Angell:

Well. I, I think the United States as a nation was certainly founded on principles that recognize the value of the individual, but this is a two sided thing. And we're seeing it now in the current attitudes of people that, yes we're all free as individuals and therefore we should be able to have guns and so forth. Individualism was very strong in the founding of our nation [sound of saw], and resulted in—

Interviewer #1:

Maybe I should, could you just say that again, 'cause we just, we have a saw out here interrupting—

Camera crew member #1:

Yeah, yeah they're working on the house—

00:35:40:00—00:38:51:00

Interviewer #1:

You could just say individualism was really strong.

Steve Angell:

Individualism is really strong and this is a two edged thing, because it has, it has produced a, a society that believes an individual therefore has the power to go out and to, to do things for him or herself in, in a way that is not always nonviolent. On the other hand, I think if we respect the, the values of, of each human being, being valuable, and special, which is what we do in AVP, we believe there's good in everybody. And, if we can look at those good parts of ourselves and respond to that part of ourselves and respond to that part of ourselves, people can change, and they do. Because we live our perceptions, and if our perception is that we're a tough guy, we're gonna go out and be a tough guy, and if our, if our perception however is that we can be a helping person, we're going to go out and try and be a helping person. I mean, we're just filled with perceptions, all kinds of perceptions of ourselves, and these are what we live in our lives. I just want to say one other thing before we close, because I think I've given, given too constricted of a view of where AVP is in the world today. For the last five years I've been traveling around the world sharing AVP, in many places. This past year we were in Africa, and shared AVP in South Africa and its starting to grow there, also in Kenya and Uganda. We have to get back to all these places and help them along. I was just out in Hawaii and we got AVP seated in Hawaii, just a couple of months ago, and it's starting to grow there. But, it's all over the world. Australia and New Zealand have very active programs. Britain, Canada, Hungary, and it's active in Germany, and Nicaragua, Colombia, so that it has really established itself as an important program in many places. And while we started as a prison program, we recognize that the need goes far beyond prisons, and schools particularly are important places to work, and so we have programs operating in schools and drug rehabilitation centers, and all kinds of situations, communities, and Friends meetings [laughs].

00:38:52:00—00:39:17:00

Interviewer #1:

How many. Do you have any idea how many groups there are in the country, or how many, I don't know what you'd call them. It's not chapters, right? It's just programs.

Steve Angell:

Okay, AVP is active in forty-six of the fifty states, and there are at least a dozen or more countries where it is currently active and this number is constantly growing.

00:39:18:00—00:39:30:00

Interviewer #1:

Is it accurate to say you're one of the founders of the organization?

Steve Angell:

We don't believe in elitism in AVP, so no I'm not [laughs]. I'm just one of earlier participants. All right?

00:39:31:00—00:40:59:00

Interviewer #1:

That's funny, that's funny. I think that's it, unless you, do you feel that there's any—that any other quick, concise, statement you could make about the relationship of your experience as a World War Two CO and the continuance of the idea of nonviolence today.

Steve Angell:

Well, definitely. My life, I feel, has been focused on this point of wanting to do something toward making the world less violent. And I, one thing I haven't mentioned, I'm very active the Friends Committee on National Legislation that works on national level. I'm active with a program in the U.N. that works on an international level. And I think it's important to work on those macro levels, but I don't think the world's gonna change unless we change people inside. And to me, AVP is the kind of program that can help people change inside. You, and me, everyone. 'Cause we all have to do some changing, but I've gotta concentrate on me, and I'm trying to share AVP so other people can use that as, as it may be useful to them and helping them to change too.

Interviewer #1:

Great, I hope I didn't step on your last line there. That definitely does sound good, thank you. That was lovely I'm, I'm interested—

[cut]

[end of interview]

00:40:59:00