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Oral history interview with Ed Weinstein,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Ed Weinstein on June 14, 1983. The interview took place at his home in New Haven, CT, and was conducted by Barbara Shikler as part of the Mark Rothko and His Times oral history project for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Funding was provided by the Mark Rothko Foundation

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

BARBARA SHIKLER: What I hope that you will be able to talk about today are some bits and pieces of what you remember about the very earliest experiences that you shared with Rothko and his relationship with you and your family. In particular, I think we ought to clarify something that's not very clear to us. How exactly were you related? Who was married to whom?

ED WEINSTEIN: Mark's father was my mother's younger brother. Mark was therefore my first cousin, and when his father and mother came to this country, Mark was with them. They stopped in New Haven to visit my father and mother and family before they took the train to go out west to visit Mark's father's older brother, Sam, who was my mother's brother also, of course.

MS. SHIKLER: What was your mother's maiden name?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Her maiden name was Rothkowitz. Her first name was Esther Baylor [phonetic sp.] and later became Weinstein.

MS. SHIKLER: I'd love to hear from you some of what it was like when the family first came, when you first met. What was your impression, for instance? What was the first meeting?

MR. WEINSTEIN: The first meeting was in New Haven. Mark's father and mother, and Mark, came to New Haven to visit Mother and family. At that time Mark was small. He loved to play. We had a little difficulty with the language....

MS. SHIKLER: How did you all speak to each other?

MR. WEINSTEIN: [Laughing] Mostly through sign language.

MS. SHIKLER: I understand he spoke Yiddish and Russian. Is that true?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes. I was told he spoke Russian but of course he did not speak to us in Russian. We all spoke Yiddish. While the older folks assembled together, Mark was inducted into the national pastime of baseball, which was played on the street in front of our home. My father and mother owned a one-family house with many rooms-two bathrooms, which was very unusual for these days, the second bathroom being in the basement. After a few days, Mark with his father and mother then returned to New York. From there they entrained for the West Coast.

MS. SHIKLER: You must have had a very warm and friendly family.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Oh, they were very close.

MS. SHIKLER: You say you had ten brothers and sisters?

MR. WEINSTEIN: There were nine besides myself. Mark seemed to be a very playful type and enjoyed his induction into the national pastime.

MS. SHIKLER: He was around ten, was he?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, I think he was less than that, I would say nearer to seven. The family enjoyed the visit of Mark's father and mother and it was a tearful farewell because his father and mother never returned to New Haven again. Of course, we had their emissary, Mark, who later came to Yale. Mark's father was a druggist on the West Coast and some of his family later became druggists also-I mean Mark's brothers, sister and relatives on the West Coast.

MS. SHIKLER: I'm interested to hear you say that Mark was "playful."

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes, he enjoyed playing, and in later years some of the times when he visited we engaged in the national pastime and he was a part of it.

MS. SHIKLER: What was his position?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Oh, I don't recall, he just seemed to fit in anywhere. He made many trips to New Haven. And even after he left Yale, he came quite frequently to New Haven, and he married his first wife, Edith. Then the trips became less frequent. I saw him for the last time when he received his honorary degree from Yale. He never returned to New Haven again.

MS. SHIKLER: Did you speak...?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Oh yes we had a half-hour conversation. At that time--well, we'll come to that later. I'll take that up at the time we discuss his receiving the honorary degree from Yale.

MS. SHIKLER: I wanted to ask you a bit more about the family. Without raising sensitive subjects, I was curious to know...his last years were marked by depression. Was there anything like that in his family? Were any in the family troubled with depression or any of them being treated or manic depressive or--I hate to use those terms....

MR. WEINSTEIN: Well, there was one member of the family that had problems but they were dissimilar, not the same as anything that would trouble Mark. This was many years before Mark ever arrived in New Haven.

MS. SHIKLER: Who was the person? Can we talk about that a bit?

MR. WEINSTEIN: What happened was that an older sister of mine, when she was three years of age--she was much older than I--and the family lived in the upper floor of an apartment house located a few blocks from here and the university. This was long before I was born. At the time there were only three members of the family. What happened was that one day the little tot went to the open window and fell out, and fell down four flights. She was injured and it did affect her although it was not apparent at the time. There was no one that had any depressions.

MS. SHIKLER: What were his parents like?

MR. WEINSTEIN: His mother was very bright and very capable, an excellent writer. Had I the slightest inkling, I would have retained some of the letters she wrote. His father was of course a pharmacist in Russia, and this is an accomplishment, knowing you must think back to the days of the 1900's.

MS. SHIKLER: Indeed. So they were achievers.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes. Other members of Mark's family also studied and got degrees as apothecaries and so forth.

MS. SHIKLER: Were they fairly cheerful, outgoing people.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes. Mark was very outgoing and his family were also the same way. Of course, we knew him best of all because of his stay in New Haven. The others, once they got on the West Coast, they did not travel east. Mark's father was set up as a druggist on the West Coast by my mother's older brother, which was his older brother. His name was Sam Weinstein. Of course, Weinstein, as you know, is not the real name, but the family all went by the name Weinstein.

MS. SHIKLER: What was the real name?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Oh, there were three or four names, you see, because the families were large. My mother's family was large and some of the members of the family--I'm trying to think of my mother's maiden name, I know it as well as I know my own--they all changed over to the name Weinstein. When they came from Europe and landed, I believe in Ellis Island, the older members were requested to indicate their names. Of course they did not understand any English, and when asked for their names, they thought they wanted to know where were they going and they all mentioned they were going to Weinstein in New Haven, so they were listed by that name, which they all retained.

MS. SHIKLER: You mean your father's family?

MR. WEINSTEIN: My mother's family, who should have been under the name of Rothkowitz...

MS. SHIKLER: Oh, I see.

MR. WEINSTEIN: ...and Mark's father, when he came over he retained the name Rothkowitz because he came over much later, you see.

MS. SHIKLER: What was your father's name?

MR. WEINSTEIN: His real name was never Weinstein. My father's family changed their name to Weinstein because, as the story was told me, there was a family that lived in the same village in Russia which was wiped out whose name was Weinstein. My father's real name was Hirsch....

MS. SHIKLER: So both your mother and father had the name Weinstein?

MR. WEINSTEIN: My mother, when she married my father, was no longer Rothkowitz, she was Weinstein, you see. But actually our family's name should have been what the older ones were called, Hirsch. So there are no Hirsches in the family because everyone changed over to Weinstein. The Rothkowitzes, and even the ones where the daughters married other men, they still took on the name Weinstein.

MS. SHIKLER: Good Heavens, that's very confusing for historians, I must say....

MR. WEINSTEIN: So the name Weinstein became prevalent among all the relatives regardless [laughing] of what their real name was [both laugh heartily]. Well, you see, it was a mix-up when they came to this country. When they were asked their name, they all thought they were asked, "Where are you going?" So they said Weinstein. "What Weinstein?" "New Haven, Connecticut." Understand? This is where my mother and father live." And why did so many of them land on the West Coast? Well, what happened was that some of those who came over from the other side, when they came to this country, it happened to be somewhat of a depression, there weren't any jobs, they didn't know the language or anything else. They found out that they could make some real money by traveling out to the Midwest and becoming lumberjacks-felling trees and so forth. So they had to go where they could make a living. One by one, about three or four of them, went out to the Midwest-I forget whether it was Wisconsin, one of the states there-and they worked for a while and earned some money. The cost of living was low, so, just about the time the job petered out, they learned that a living could be made out on the West Coast. So with the little money they had left they journeyed out there and made a living, I don't know how, but they managed to earn a living. Then, one by one, as others came from Russia and Poland and so forth, and they came to New Haven, they remained with my mother and father for a certain period of time....

MS. SHIKLER: Now, this group that you speaking of is your mother's family?

MR. WEINSTEIN: My mother's family and later some of my father's too. They remained in New Haven with us, then after a while they went out and joined the other cousins and uncles and aunts out on the West Coast. No matter how many came from Russia to New York or New Haven, they all would up on the West Coast where the family, as it happened at that time, seemed to be doing rather well, and one by one they were taken into family businesses. The family business in most cases was that they opened stores and clothing stores, and as the younger grew they would open other stores and set them up in business. When Mark's family came, they were of a different caliber of education and so when they came to New Haven and left after a period, they then, at the invitation of the senior member of the family, Uncle Sam, who founded a chain of clothing stores-after all, Mark's father was his younger brother-and so they were invited to go west. They got out to Portland, Oregon, and one by one they were either taken into the business or financed in whatever they wished to engage in.

MS. SHIKLER: So Mark's father was being financed as a druggist when he first came.

MR. WEINSTEIN: He had no money to start with.

MS. SHIKLER: When Mark came to Portland, he found a nice full, fat family there. In a sense he was part of a community.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Right. When he left for Portland, the family was already established. At that particular period, business conditions seemed to be favorable, so everyone in the family was doing quite well. We would always get reports and photographs of some of the events the family participated in, like bar mitzvahs and I'm sure some of the weddings and so forth. Of course, the senior members of the family were in a position to foot the bills and so forth. At that particular period, conditions seemed to be favorable. Later on, when the Depression came along, everybody was hit.

MS. SHIKLER: Surely. At some point when Mark's father died they seemed to have difficulties-his brother and sister went to work for the family, is that correct?

MR. WEINSTEIN: They had problems. By that time Mark was working in one of the stores. About the time he was going to high school, still a youngster, probably 14 or 15, he used to work in the store, particularly on Saturdays. At that time he indicated he was not overly interested in a career in the store. He was very active in school life. When he was in high school and was working Saturdays in one of the stores, instead of being occupied with store business he was mostly using some of the wrapping paper to make his drawings. Once, one of his uncles found him with a large sheet of wrapping paper with a lot of sketches on it, so he upbraided Mark. "Mark, what

are you doing? You'll never get anywhere that way." [Laughter] Mark never forgot that.

MS. SHIKLER: How did he answer at that time?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Years later he told me the story....

MS. SHIKLER: What was his attitude when he told you the story?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Well, the only thing he could do in the store, he was not a salesman, he was all of 14 years old or so, he would do some of the cleaning and fritter away most of the time. Anything, [laughing] as long as he got paid on Saturday night.

MS. SHIKLER: How did he respond, when he was scolded? Was he defiant or did he laugh; how did he take it?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, he didn't, he just moved on, probably made a few motions with his hands indicating that he was busy at work. All he was supposed to do there was do a little cleaning and wrapping of bundles; when they sold something he would put it in a box or wrap it, and so forth and so on. Naturally the time was so long he had to occupy himself, he couldn't just stand around.

MS. SHIKLER: Did he speak about art as a future for himself at that time, do you recall?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, as far as I know he did not. For a while he took classes in dancing and so forth. There was a small school run by a woman who was interested in dancing and art and Mark and some of my closet friends who later became very, very famous in the field of medicine and pharmacology, and Mark were all in the same room, all in high school together, incidentally.

MS. SHIKLER: Who were some of those friends?

MR. WEINSTEIN: One noted friend was Louis Goldman, whose brother also was a graduate of Hopkins Medical School. Lou was president of the class in high school and later attended Oregon University and then medical school and then was connected for a short while with Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore and later came to New Haven to join for a while the Yale Medical School.

MS. SHIKLER: Is he still living?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes, I just spoke with him about a week ago. [B. Shikler voices wish to have his address at end of interview.] He's connected with Utah University Medical School. His wife's name is Helen Goodman. They were all very close friends of Mark in Oregon and very bright and capable people.

MS. SHIKLER: The dancing that they did, was that modern dance, interpretive, ballet, or what?

MR. WEINSTEIN: [Laughing] I haven't the faintest idea; I can imagine Mark dancing. [Laughter] They were very close. Goodman was the president of the class in high school and a very brilliant doctor. His older brother was a doctor too. They all knew each other from infancy, you see. They came to Yale when Helen was in New Haven and Mark came into New Haven. I think he hitched a ride, and came there and when he met Helen and Lou at our house-they lived only a few doors from us-it was a very joyous reunion.

MS. SHIKLER: He met them again after having left high school and gone on to....

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[TAPE 1, SIDE B]

MS. SHIKLER: Was that when he was already an established painter?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, he was on the way. I'd say it was most probably in the '50's. And later on he met them in our home too before the Goodman's left Yale and accepted a position at Utah University.

MS. SHIKLER: It's so interesting how everything comes back to New Haven and Yale. It was a very crucial place for your family and for Mark. I'm interested to know-you did tell me before we started to tape that just about everybody in your family had gone to Yale and that your older brothers had already been through it and were out by the time Mark came.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Actually it was only two older brothers who went to Yale. The younger ones next to me wished a business career or one in accountancy and at that time Yale did not have a school of business management, so the only place to go was to New York, where there were several fine schools for those subjects.

MS. SHIKLER: In your memory of Mark in those early years, I realize I'm asking you to call up a lot but you're doing so well that I hate to leave it for a moment. Can you tell me a little bit about Mark's relationship with his sister and brothers?

MR. WEINSTEIN: The only time I got an inkling as to how close they were-of course I knew they were close, you see-but [the only time] from actual experience and from seeing them together was when Mark's brother came east and Mark did his best to get him into a position where he could make a living. This was towards the end. Mark by that time was very well known.

MS. SHIKLER: But as a child you were not aware of his relationship with his brothers and sister when he was little?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, because, except for the short time that Mark and his mother and father remained in New Haven, and then went out to the West Coast, we saw the older members of the family-Mark's uncles and cousins and so forth would come through regularly but not Mark's family, not his father or mother or brothers or his sister until Mark started to attend Yale. Then one of his younger brothers came east and Mark did his best to set him up in a business career. I don't think that they met with the sort of success that they would like, so I believe his younger brother returned to the West Coast. Mark, as we know, struggled quite a bit at the beginning but he received considerable praise, in other words, he was publicized in some of the papers, magazines and so forth and this of course led to his greater recognition, which meant that people started to take notice of him.

MS. SHIKLER: As a young man, when he was with you in your family, eating with you during the period when he was at Yale, what were discussions around the table like?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Actually, when Mark would come-he was living then in a room on the upper floor of a house owned by a local doctor who had his offices on the first floor-Mark would just come to the house and have his evening meal and then my mother would fill up a bag with sandwiches and fruit. She knew he was starving; [laughing] from the way he ate his evening meal, that he didn't have much to eat during the day. Of course, money was very tight. I don't have to tell you that what was a dollar then would be like 22 cents today.

MS. SHIKLER: What were discussions like around the table?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Not too involved, just minor things.

MS. SHIKLER: No discussions of music or philosophy or...?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes, we talked about music and politics and art and so forth and Mark was initiated into some of the homes of some of-my next brother, four years older than myself, was practicing architecture with our oldest brother in New Haven and he introduced Mark to some of his friends, some of who were quite outstanding musicians. One was a physician, and Mark became friendly with all of them and he seemed to enjoy himself very much because these people spoke a language he enjoyed. He liked art, music, literature and....

MS. SHIKLER: Was he in harmony with the opinions of these people and did he discuss differences of ideas and philosophy?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He did not give vent to any unfavorable opinions. It wasn't until later, after he received possibly his initiation in New York City, that he became more interested in the political situation and so forth.

MS. SHIKLER: It's interesting that you say that. During the period that he was at Yale I'm sure you know that he was involved in the publication of that little newspaper, the *Saturday Evening Press*. [Mr. Weinstein says he does know.] In that, of course he takes great issue with many of, well, the philosophies of the people around him, of their shallowness politically and intellectually. But he didn't sign that, it's interesting, nobody knew his name....

MR. WEINSTEIN: That's right; he can give vent to those opinions, understand, and hide behind anonymity.

MS. SHIKLER: But you didn't hear them in the house...?

MR. WEINSTEIN: But he rarely, rarely, ever engaged in any [laughing] violent expressions of what he thought of the political situation and so forth. He hadn't yet reached the point where I think he felt sure of himself.

MS. SHIKLER: Was it timidity, in your mind, that kept him quiet?

MR. WEINSTEIN: I don't think it was timidity. I think he just felt that, number one, these people were much older than he was, and number two, they had had access for years to newspapers like the *New York Times* and the various journals which had a left-wing tinge and so forth, and Mark was just reaching the point where he was coming in contact with this sort of thing, you see. These other people, like my older brother and his crew, were four years older than me and after all at that time I was at least four years older than Mark, so there was a big

gap of eight years. And what Mark read on the West Coast and what we would read in the New York *Times* is two different things.

MS. SHIKLER: Mmmm...vast difference.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Altogether different. But of course Mark learned very fast after he moved into New York for a while and of course came in contact with all the various differences of opinion.

MS. SHIKLER: Now, before we leave that whole period of education and background, I'm aware of the fact that the whole family, in one way or another, were achievers. Was there pressure on him in high school? For instance, I gather he finished high school in three years. Was there pressure on him to perform, to accomplish? Was there a stress placed on "getting there," going there, doing the best?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Well, he must have done fairly well. I base it upon this: that he and the other two who came with him received scholarships. Now Yale doesn't pass out a scholarship unless....

MS. SHIKLER: That's quite true.

MR. WEINSTEIN: And the others of course continued to do well. Mark got himself involved with politics and other things and he did not keep up in his classes. In other words, it was anticipated that, when they gave him funds to continue, that he would do fairly well in his grades.

MS. SHIKLER: You're saying that he didn't?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Well, he got so lost and involved that, while the others busied themselves getting grades, and Mark was certainly as bright as the other two, but his grades started to go down, and as a result, when it came time for renewal, Yale was hesitant. Then, of course, they later discontinued.

MS. SHIKLER: How did he feel about that? Did he ever express thoughts on that subject?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes he did but it was [he laughs] some 30 years later. It was funny...I was talking to him one day in New York in his studio and we got talking about the time he was at Yale and so on. Then the subject came up as to why he never finished and he mentioned the facts as I've outlined them to you and, instead of expressing regret that he did not make the slightest effort to get high grades, he felt grieved that they discontinued giving him the scholarship. I took exception, I told him, I said, "Look, Mark, the fault is partly yours too. They knew you were bright, they knew you could do the work, but the only thing that Yale has to go by is by the grades that you get."

MS. SHIKLER: What did he say to that?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He mumbled a few words and we let it go at that.

MS. SHIKLER: [Laughing] He didn't agree.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Many years later, when Yale was having its commencement exercises and generally some of the guests are those that are going to receive honorary degrees and they have a procession which commences from the Yale Commons and goes through the New Haven Green, then goes up College Street to Woolsey Hall where the exercises take place-if you had the time I would show these buildings to you-and there would be speakers, et cetera. By accident I just happened to be there-lots of times I watched the procession, and many years ago, long before you were born, my father used to do the same thing; he used to watch the procession. One day while he was watching the procession-and in those days, the attire was black frock coats with the cap and gown and the reason he was watching was probably because it was a Jewish holiday and he used to like to take his children through the New Haven Green to watch the procession. So, seeing my father watching the procession, one of the men in the procession, seeing my father all decked out in long frockcoat and derby hat, that being the style early in the 1900's, he thought that my father was most righteously some honored guest who got lost. So he got hold of his arm and dragged him into the procession and my father was propelled forward to Woolsey Hall, two blocks away, and he found himself [laughing heartily] sitting on the platform.

MS. SHIKLER: That's a funny story. I love it. And what happened when you saw Mark, then, quite by chance?

MR. WEINSTEIN: When we saw Mark in the procession, I realized right away that he was [marching] only fourth or fifth from the Yale president. It could only be one thing. He was going to get an honorary degree. So I called out to him, "Mark, what are you doing there." He put his finger to his lips [gesture] and said, "Shhh!" and of course I knew immediately. So I hot-footed it over to Woolsey Hall. Of course, you had to have a ticket of admission-as a graduate I could have gotten one. I asked one of the ushers. "Where's the head usher?" And I walked over to him and said, "Look, I have a cousin here. I've just learned he's going to be on the platform to get an honorary degree. I would like to see it." He says, "Sure," and took me all the way down to the front row

[laughing] of Woolsey Hall and there I sat...[Laughter]

MS. SHIKLER: Shades of your father?

MR. WEINSTEIN: ...and sure enough, in marched the procession and there was Mark. So after they called out the name of each honorary recipient they honored him with the degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, as high a degree as you could get. I waited outside. I knew that after the ceremony was over and the audience filed out, the honorary guests would be guests of the president and would have lunch in the Woolsey Hall Commons in company with the other members of the University trustees. So I waited outside at the rear entrance of Woolsey Hall, which is only 50 or 75 feet from the small Woodbridge Hall where the president of Yale has his offices, so I knew that Mark would be coming out through the rear. When I saw him, I says to him, "Mark! What are you doing here? Aren't you going to have a lunch with the rest of the recipients??" He says, [slowly, emphatically] "Who needs their lunch??" He says, "No, I'm going back to New York." So I walk with him back to Woodbridge Hall where he'd left his cap and gown, and he put on his coat and went down to the railroad station and he went home.'

MS. SHIKLER: Was he alone?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes, he was alone.

MS. SHIKLER: What were his spirits? Was he in good spirits?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He didn't care for ceremonies, he wasn't interested. If you knew Mark, you knew he didn't care, it didn't mean anything to him. He went but to this day I don't know whether he went willingly or he mentioned it to his wife or whatever and he got kicked to go. I have no inkling. Somebody else can fill in on that. It's possible that they'd had no idea that's what he intended to do. At that time I wasn't aware of any circumstances where there would be any disjunction or disunion with his family, you see. I had no way of knowing.

[Interruption]

MS. SHIKLER: I thought it might be fun to take him now to New York. He left Yale, apparently, and went off to an entirely different life. It must have been a big change, quite a shocking change. Did you see him during that period-the early years when he first came to New York?

MR. WEINSTEIN: I saw him for a short while, then I lost track of him for a couple of years because he would be intermittently coming into New Haven....

MS. SHIKLER: We're speaking now of the early '30s and late '20's.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes. He would sometimes hitch a ride. I don't think he was in any position to afford train rides and so forth.

MS. SHIKLER: Why did he come back to New Haven?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He used to come to visit us, and he used to spend sometimes a week, sometimes two weeks. I strongly suspected at the time that this was the only place that [he laughs] he could get real food. I was sure of that. Then of course, I had seen him-when I was working for the State of New York in the State Office building at Albany and he was living a couple of summers out at the lakes in upper New York about 60 or 80 miles from Albany. He would come to visit me at the State Office building where I was an architect. This was before '33.

MS. SHIKLER: What was he doing at the lakes?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He was doing some painting and he was scrounging.

MS. SHIKLER: How did he live?

MR. WEINSTEIN: [Ruminatively] I don't know. I only know one thing. I took one look at him when he visited me one day-of course, where he was unfortunate at that time was the fact that I had an older brother who was an architect who wasn't making a dime, I had a younger brother who was an accountant and was just scraping by by the skin of his teeth. And I used to send home all the money I earned except for \$25 I kept for myself. That's all I kept. The room was only \$5.

MS. SHIKLER: Ahh, what a time.

MR. WEINSTEIN: And for \$10 you could buy all the food you wanted for the week....

MS. SHIKLER: If you had the \$10.

MR. WEINSTEIN: That's right.

MS. SHIKLER: And when you saw Mark, you were shocked at his appearance?

MR. WEINSTEIN: When I saw him and he had in his arms a roll of watercolors and he showed them to me and I said "very nice" and so forth. I knew his intent-to get me interested in at least one. Then I would say, "Here, Mark, take some money," and he would say, "No, no, no," and I would insist. That's the way it would end. Finally he said, "Is there any of these you would like?" I would say, "Of course you know although I have a grade here that indicates I'm a fulltime employee on tenure, but it's meaningless because there's a catch to it. If there is enough funds." As it happens, a year later the State was bereft of funds and that was the end of the architectural division.

MS. SHIKLER: Did you buy anything from him ever?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No. Well, I said to him, "No, Mark. Look next time you're in New Haven, you drop off one or two to my sister Sylvia." And then I gave him a \$10 bill, which was the same as \$25 today.

MS. SHIKLER: You bet. What was the work like? What work did he show you?

MR. WEINSTEIN: They were all water colors that he had painted out at Lake George.

MS. SHIKLER: [To the tape] I'm showing Mr. Weinstein Number 4 "untitled," late '20's, watercolor on paper, two figures. Does this look familiar, or the bathers here in Number 5 in the Guggenheim catalogue? Do either of these look like what he was working on?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, I couldn't tell from these because, after all, it is....

MS. SHIKLER: It's a long time, I know-I don't mean to put you on the spot; I just hoped some of these might evoke some tinge of memories here.

MR. WEINSTEIN: [Gently] Do you realize it's almost 50 years to be exact?

MS. SHIKLER: [Laughing] Oh, I realize all too well. Yes of course. These are watercolors, numbers 2 and 3....

MR. WEINSTEIN: It could be some of these; I can't tell because these are black and white and grays. The ones he showed me were mostly illustrative of the scenery around the lake.

MS. SHIKLER: Do you remember when he did this, Number 1, portrait of his mother? You see, there is no date on that; we can't give you any clue.

MR. WEINSTEIN: I think I remember that... [Pause] I'm just wondering.

MS. SHIKLER: You won't find them there. The ones that I was showing you are the earliest ones that are in this catalogue, these sketchy black and whites of landscapes.

MR. WEINSTEIN: I could only tell from the ones that are in actual color.

MS. SHIKLER: Yes. Well, that's all right; that's no problem.

[END OF SIDE B, TAPE 1]

[TAPE 2, SIDE A]

MS. SHIKLER: It's still June 14. I think as we left the last tape I asked you if Mark Rothko ever spoke about what it was like to be poor and in New York trying to be a painter. Did he speak to you about that?

MR. WEINSTEIN: There's no doubt that he struggled. Later on, years later, he indicated to me through praise the feelings he had toward some of those who assisted him at the time when he was struggling to make a living and how he appreciated the help that they gave him and the recognition that later befell him due to the fact that he was assisted in his early days when the struggle as to whether or not to continue as an artist or to go into another field where he could make a more substantial income.

MS. SHIKLER: At the time had he ever discussed the possibility with you?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He merely mentioned the struggles that he had. I could tell what was taking place by the fact that he would hitch rides to New Haven.

MS. SHIKLER: Did you ever visit his studios?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Oh yes, sure.

MS. SHIKLER: Which ones, do you remember?

MR. WEINSTEIN: I visited at least two. One I visited he wasn't in at the time....

MS. SHIKLER: Where was that first one, do you remember, or when it was?

MR. WEINSTEIN: It dates probably ten years before he passed away.

MS. SHIKLER: Oh, I see. Did you ever visit him in the '20's and '30's?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes, I visited him in the '30's.

MS. SHIKLER: What was his studio like?

MR. WEINSTEIN: It wasn't much of anything.

MS. SHIKLER: I know there were so many studios, he changed almost every year. Do you remember which studio it was you saw in the '30's?

MR. WEINSTEIN: The one I saw last was ...oh, it's difficult for me to retain the location, it was meaningless to me.

MS. SHIKLER: Did he speak about teaching in those years? He was teaching children at a Jewish school.

MR. WEINSTEIN: He mentioned something about..., yes.

MS. SHIKLER: Do you happen to know-it's a little bit of a mystery-someone told us that he taught also in Far Rockaway. Did you know where that was?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Far Rockaway is familiar but what he was doing there I don't recall.

MS. SHIKLER: Isn't that a shame. It's one of those things that nobody seems to know.

MR. WEINSTEIN: I remember Far rockaway but I don't recall what he was engaged in.

MS. SHIKLER: Did you visit him when he and Edith, his first wife, lived together?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yes, I saw them together. In fact, it was quite a while before I learned that they were separated.

MS. SHIKLER: He hadn't called to tell you or any thing like that?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, he didn't.

MS. SHIKLER: He apparently went through a very difficult time when she left him, where he didn't quite function as he had. He went through a pretty bad depression then. But you didn't see him during that period?

MR. WEINSTEIN: I may have seen him but I was not aware, because of the fact that whenever I visited him in the studio so far, none of the women were present. It was not the same as visiting him at home. I'm trying to think...I don't think I visited him in his home more than once. I remember seeing his first wife only once, too, and that was so many years ago I don't recall the circumstances. Neither the first nor the second wives left me with any clear vision of either one. In other words, they just seemed to be part of the scenery but not a part that I would be closely associated with.

MS. SHIKLER: So there was no feeling of bringing her into the family and bringing her back to the Weinstein's...?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, not really. I think probably that they didn't appear together in New Haven more than once and it could have been at a time when I wasn't even around.

MS. SHIKLER: Now I'm going to pop ahead a little bit, all the way back to what you wanted to tell me about his last conversation with you, on the telephone. Because-I'll just pause here a moment [turning the tape off at this point, then resuming]...the last time you spoke to him shortly before he died.

MR. WEINSTEIN: The last time I saw him was in front of the Metropolitan Museum. I had just left the museum. I had gone to New York specifically to see the exhibition there because I knew that Mark would have at least one or possibly two or three paintings in the exhibition, from information I obtained from reading the *New York Times*.

MS. SHIKLER: In other words, he didn't call you and say, "Come to see my show?"

MR. WEINSTEIN: No. What had happened; it was mentioned in a review in the *New York Times*. So, "Well," I says, "finally he's got into the Metropolitan." Of course years before he'd had a couple of drawings in the Metropolitan but those were in the infancy of his artistic development.

MS. SHIKLER: How about the meeting-you keep bumping into him, don't you, by chance?

MR. WEINSTEIN: What happened was that I went down to New York with a couple of friends. We went to the Metropolitan Museum, walked through and saw the exhibit, and, sure enough, there was Mark's painting, evidently a painting which he had sold to someone, because there was a memo on the painting which indicated that this painting is exhibited through the courtesy of some such person, which indicated that Mark didn't give it to him; he probably sold it to him. So I said, "Gee, as long as I'm going to be down in New York I'll certainly go over and see. Thank goodness, he finally made the Metropolitan." I went in and sure enough I found the painting there. It was attractive and so forth. Then after about an hour wandering around the Museum I left. As I walked out of the museum onto the Avenue, who was coming along but Mark. I said to Mark, "You know, I just left the museum, and I saw one of your paintings." He said, "Yah? Where is it? I'd like to see it. I painted it some years ago." So I said, "Well, I'll go back with you." We went back in the museum and I took him right over and he saw it. He was trying to recall just exactly when he did paint it because it was one he had painted years before and which he had sold. We had a conversation and then we left, and....

MS. SHIKLER: What did he say about his painting?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He recalled it. I've never seen it in any pamphlet or booklet or book.

MS. SHIKLER: Was that in the '60's, then? Middle or late '60's? You say it was the last time you saw him.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Well, that was the [pause]...that was the last time I saw him. But that painting could have been from years before.

MS. SHIKLER: Yes, it probably was, because "New York Painting and sculpture: the First Generation," I think was the name of the show. That was from October to February 1969 and '70. What he did was show pictures from 1946, '47, '52 and 1960. So it's entirely possible...

MR. WEINSTEIN: It's quite possible....

MS. SHIKLER: ...but he didn't discuss those pictures, did he, the pictures that he had on exhibit?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He was actually trying to recall just when he did the one I showed him first because it was years before, so it must have been one of his early ones.

MS. SHIKLER: You don't remember the subject, do you?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, I don't.

MS. SHIKLER: Did it look sort of fantastic, like these-Numbers 54, 55 in the catalogue?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No.

MS. SHIKLER: [Turning some pages for him] I'm trying to find you a color picture. This is Number 34, was it anything like this?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, nothing like that.

MS. SHIKLER: That's too early, actually, maybe it was later.

MR. WEINSTEIN: I don't recall ever seeing it again. That was the only time I ever saw that.

MS. SHIKLER: The style. Was it this style?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, it wasn't at all.

MS. SHIKLER: It hadn't reached this...?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Not at all; nowhere near it.

MS. SHIKLER: So it was neither '73 nor '74?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He was trying to recall, because he could see the date but he was trying to recall when he did it, so it had to be many, many years before. Then he said, "Oh yes, now I remember it."

MS. SHIKLER: And how about your phone conversation? You said that you had a long half-hour talk on the phone with him shortly before he died.

MR. WEINSTEIN: The last conversation I had with him took place just as he was shipping off some paintings which were to be exhibited-I don't want to give a location because I might be wrong-but he was shipping off some paintings that were to be exhibited, and it was probably only a year or two years at the most before his death.

MS. SHIKLER: What did you talk about?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Well, what happened was that he had hired a mover to move some paintings which were to be exhibited and the mover had appeared and the paintings were put in the mover's van and the usual papers were signed. I believe those were the last ones that he ever shipped out.

MS. SHIKLER: Do you remember any thing that he said about it.

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, I don't recall that there was anything unusual at all in the conversation.

MS. SHIKLER: You chatted for quite a long time apparently.

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, we always spoke for a lengthy time.

MS. SHIKLER: Did you speak about his state of mind or his health?

MR. WEINSTEIN: There didn't seem to be any reference to it at all.

MS. SHIKLER: So you just "schmoozed," as they say.

MR. WEINSTEIN: That's all.

MS. SHIKLER: Did he ask about family at all?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yeah, oh sure. In a gentle way I rebuked him for his failure to make visits more frequently than he did. I reminded him that the folks were old-I believe just my father was still living....

MS. SHIKLER: How did he feel about having been remiss? Did he feel bad about that?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Well, he said he was going to make sure to come down some time.

MS. SHIKLER: When did he come-how often did he visit the folks? In those last years?

MR. WEINSTEIN: See, there was a difference. What had happened is that as he'd gone up the ladder and he had a few dollars in his pockets, he no longer felt that he had to borrow to get a ride to New Haven where he could stay for two, three or four weeks and at no cost to live and so forth, because he had a very difficult life in his early days. I don't know how he made it. He always was happy to come into town but towards the end, especially after-I think I saw him after he had visited the White House, I probably picked up from the *New York Times* or someone the information that he had visited the White House, and I was going to be down in New York and I saw him after that. That was the last time I saw him.

MS. SHIKLER: So the folks didn't see much of him in their last years?

MR. WEINSTEIN: No. When his visits started to diminish was of course after he got married, the first time. For a while he didn't come and then after about six months I visited him. I found out there was something brewing, he didn't tell me, but I had a feeling there was something brewing in the marriage.

MS. SHIKLER: There was trouble in paradise, yes.

MR. WEINSTEIN: The next time I saw him several months before one of my brothers passed away and we had a short conversation. We always talked about the family and this and that. I don't know, [pause] I wasn't shocked when Mark passed away but I felt that there must be more to it than I ever knew, than I was aware of. Actually I had not seen him in the six months prior to his passing away, so a good deal could have transpired during that period.

MS. SHIKLER: You weren't conscious of the fact that he was deeply unhappy?

MR. WEINSTEIN: He did not give any signs of any changes in his household or anything else. He never mentioned it.

MS. SHIKLER: I suppose that wraps it up, Mr. Weinstein. You've been enormously helpful and we're all very appreciative.

MR. WEINSTEIN: I hope you can glean a couple of items out of it...

MS. SHIKLER: I'm sure we'll glean more than that.

MR. WEINSTEIN: ...and maybe a paragraph.

MS. SHIKLER: At least. The interview is over.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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