

UNITED STATES
MILITARY ACADEMY

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The 21st
Sol Feinstone Lecture

on

**THE
MEANING OF FREEDOM**

BY

Terry Anderson

30 September 1993

The United States Military Academy is pleased to sponsor an annual lecture series on the Meaning of Freedom. This lecture program has been made possible by the generosity of the late Mr. Sol Feinstone, a dedicated American patriot, whose commitment to the ideals of the American Revolution led him to devote many years of effort and considerable personal resources to the collection of important letters, manuscripts, and books dealing with our heritage of freedom. His donation of these items to libraries and educational institutions ensures that the message they proclaim will be preserved and transmitted to future generations of Americans.

Mr. Feinstone's abiding faith in a brotherhood of free nations has found further expression in this endowed lecture series, which permits prominent Americans to interpret the Meaning of Freedom.

The U.S. Corps of Cadets and the staff and faculty of the Military Academy gratefully recognize the generosity and loyalty of this great American for providing a living endowment in the defense of freedom.

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

Terry Anderson

I am very honored to be here today to have a chance to address what I think are some of the finest young men and women we have in this country. You know, when I was in grammar school and in junior high school and even high school, I was absolutely determined that one day I would go to West Point. When I was about 15 years old, I learned that my dream was impossible. My eyes were too bad to allow me to qualify. That was a great disappointment to me.

Instead, a couple of years later on graduation from high school, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps. I spent six years in the Marines. From there I learned many of the same things that you are being taught here: not the rigorous academic subjects that you study but the even more difficult ones, like duty and honor. My instructors, all Marine sergeants, were not quite as polite as yours. But they were just as dedicated to instilling in us the pride and the discipline that you are learning now. Duty and honor, pride and discipline. My instructors, like yours here, like our parents, believed passionately in those old-fashioned and uncomfortable and uncompromising concepts. They taught me to believe in them too. Those things stood me in good stead over the years.

They were vitally important when I found myself in the circumstances I did in Lebanon, which tested me severely. That test came in March of 1985. I was the Associated Press's Chief Middle East Correspondent. At that time I had begun work on a story about the radical Shiites of Lebanon. I had interviewed one of the most radical of the Shiite leaders, Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah. This gentleman had been labeled the spiritual leader of Hezbollah, the Party of God, the most radical of the factions in Lebanon, and the one blamed for the destruction of the U.S. Embassy, for the deaths of over 240

U.S. servicemen at the Marine barracks in Beirut, and for the over 50 Frenchmen at the French headquarters. They were also identified later as having coordinated the kidnapping of Westerners, which had barely started then.

In our interview, as you might expect, he denied those charges. I finished the interview and I went home to lunch at my seaside apartment in West Beirut. Then I went back to the office. As I was driving back, a Mercedes cut in front of my car on the Corniche. Now the Lebanese are not the world's most considerate drivers, so I didn't think very much of it. Being rather competitive myself, I cursed at him, downshifted and stepped on the gas, pulled around him, and went on down the road. A couple of hundred yards later, he did it again. And this time I noticed that were four bearded young men in the car. I reacted in pretty much the same way, except I added a right turn down a small street that happened to be there and got ahead of him. He chased me for a while and then dropped off as we neared the Lebanese army check point in the road.

I went on to the office. I called in my best friend and deputy and told him about it. I wasn't absolutely sure it was a kidnapping, but I thought it probably was. I asked him not to tell my fiancee, Madeleine, anything because she would be worried, and I went about my business. Not the best move.

The next morning I had what I can only describe as a sudden attack of stupidity. I had a standing tennis date with a friend of mine, Associated Press photographer Don Mell. I got up earlier and put on my tennis togs without even thinking about what had happened the day before, and I went out to play tennis. We played, and I took Don back to his apartment. As he was getting out of the car, the Mercedes came back. This time they very definitely had guns, 9 millimeter pistols each one of them. They had my door opened, a pistol in my neck, and me into their car before anybody could react. They pushed me down in the back, between the front and back seats, stepped on me, and pushed a gun at me.

One of them sitting in the front leaned over the back and said to me in English, "Don't worry; it's political." Somehow I wasn't really reassured.

In a few hours, I ended up blindfolded and chained by both hands and both feet to a metal cot somewhere in the southern suburbs of Beirut. I don't remember too many details about those first few days. I was in shock. I couldn't really think about very much except Madeleine, whom I left in bed that morning, six months pregnant and very happy and about how stupid I had been and about how much that stupidity was going to cost the two of us.

After a while, when my head began to clear a bit and when I could understand exactly the situation I was in, I had to do some pretty heavy coping. I had to adjust to the fact that it was quite likely to be a very long time before I was free again. A very painful time. I had to come up with ways to deal with the guards' hatred, with their suspicion, with their violence. I had to learn how to control the enormous urge I felt to lash out at them, to show them my anger. I had to learn to accept the humiliations, the chains, the loneliness. I had to do that for nearly seven years.

It is very difficult to describe those years, to explain to people what it was really like. I could only try to give you a rough idea. I was chained. I was blindfolded. I was filthy for the first 24 days. I was unable to move. I was not permitted to move at all except for a 10-minute trip to the bathroom each day under double guard.

The guards would express their hatred in about any way they could think of with their hands, with their guns. Sometimes they would spit on me as I lay in the center of the room. Occasionally, a couple of them, luckily small ones, would come and sit on my chest. And they would poke guns in my neck and threaten to kill me and curse at me in Arabic.

There were times when I thought I wanted to die. When they would say were going to kill you, I would say, "Tfaddal. Go ahead. You kill me and my troubles are over. Tfaddal."

I thought about nearly every moment of my life in those weeks, as you could imagine, and in the months and years that followed about my family, my friends, people I had offended, people I had wronged. Mostly, of course, I thought about the beautiful and loving woman I had left sleeping that Saturday morning. I cried for her, I cried for myself, and I prayed. Many times I asked God, why? I dwelt on all my guilts and on all the things I could remember that I had done or not done.

At the end of that first three and a half weeks, 24 days, I knew I was going to go crazy. I knew I was losing control. I had been absolutely forbidden to speak. But I stopped a guard anyway as he walked by and spoke to him in the little Arabic that I knew, "Chebaab, hey Mr." He said, "Suh? What do you want?" And I asked him in broken Arabic, "Is there anyone here that speaks English?" He went away and came back with another guard who did speak English. He said, "What do you want?" And, I said, "I am not an animal; I am a human being. I am a man. I can't do this. I am going to go crazy." He said, "Well, what do you want?" I said, "I want a book; I want a bible." He went away.

The next day someone walked by the cot and threw a brand new revised standard American Bible down at my legs. They came around and they loosened the chains on my wrists so that I could sit up. I put a blanket over my head so that I could read the Bible. Whenever we had light, I read it over and over and over again. I figured by the end, I must have read it from cover to cover more than 50 times like a novel. Parts of it, of course, I read many more times than that. I don't know whether I would have been able to make it through without that Bible, without my Faith, without my companions.

I was lucky. I spent probably not as much as a year in

solitary confinement all totaled. Most of the time I had cellmates, other hostages. There were nine of them over the years. Now, I cannot say that we always got along. I am a fairly prickly person, hard to get along with even when you can leave the room. Some of my companions were equally prickly. There was David Jacobson. He is an Orange County Republican who found my liberalism about as hard to stomach as I found his conservatism. We argued about nearly everything. It didn't really matter in the end, though, because each of those men gave me something. Each of those men helped me in some way. We supported each other. We leaned on each other. We defended each other to the guards. Some of those men gave me a very great deal and I am very grateful to them. Father Martin Jenco, Pastor Ben Weir, two very kind and gentle clergymen. John McCarthy, a Brit with an incredible combination of dignity and humor. I never saw John lose his temper in all the time I was with him, something I did all too frequently. He could in the grimmest moments make a joke or imitate a guard to get us laughing and lift our spirits.

The hardest thing I think in those early years was figuring out how to deal with the guards. As you could imagine, they were the single biggest influence on our lives. They had total control over us. We depended on them for everything: a drink of water, food, a trip to the bathroom, medicine when we were sick. It was a difficult thing to find the correct relationship and the correct attitude to take with these young men. How do you maintain your dignity, your integrity on a daily exchange with men who have total control over you? How do you talk rationally with men you cannot see because you are blindfolded and, because in most cases, you cannot even begin to understand. Each of us made such compromises with himself as he thought necessary, or could stomach. I tried to behave most of time as if my captures were rational, normal people, even though it was clear they were not.

I remember Father Martin, that very kind man, dubbing two of the worst, Sicko and Psycho. There were another pair

we called the brothers Kalishnikoo because they liked to poke you with their rifles. Even with the worst of them, I tried to remain reasonably polite, reasonably calm. I argued with them a lot. Sometimes I fought with them when I couldn't accept some action of theirs or some condition of our imprisonment. Sometimes I went on hunger strikes, mostly as a way to get the attention of the leaders of the band who weren't there. Occasionally I got what I wanted. More often, I just earned more punishment, more degradation and sometimes for all of us and not just for myself. But I couldn't stop.

Mostly though, I just tried to get through the days just like everybody else. I just tried to accept to learn patience, the hardest of things to learn. I have to say it wasn't always grim and terrible. I talked about John's sense of humor and about how often he made us laugh. And we did laugh a lot at ourselves, at our guards, at our circumstances. Sometimes it was wry; sometimes it was bitter--but not all that often.

I remember one occasion when David Jacobsen and I were chained in one small room in a prison. Father Martin, Ben Weir, and Tom Sutherland were chained in the next room. We were sitting there in the evening when we heard a bell outside in the streets of a poor Shiite neighborhood where the prison was located. We called the guard and pulled down our blindfolds, as you had to when the guard came in. He came in and said, "Shu?" We said, "That sounds like an ice cream truck." And he said, "Yes, Bouza." (Arabic ice cream.) We said, "Well, why don't you go buy some for us?" He did.

As I said, I might have survived without my companions, but I know I wouldn't have done it as well. I wouldn't have emerged as whole as I have without their strength and their humor and their kindness. I am not sure I would have survived at all without the Bible, without my Faith and the foundation it gave me to stand on--the acceptance of whatever comes.

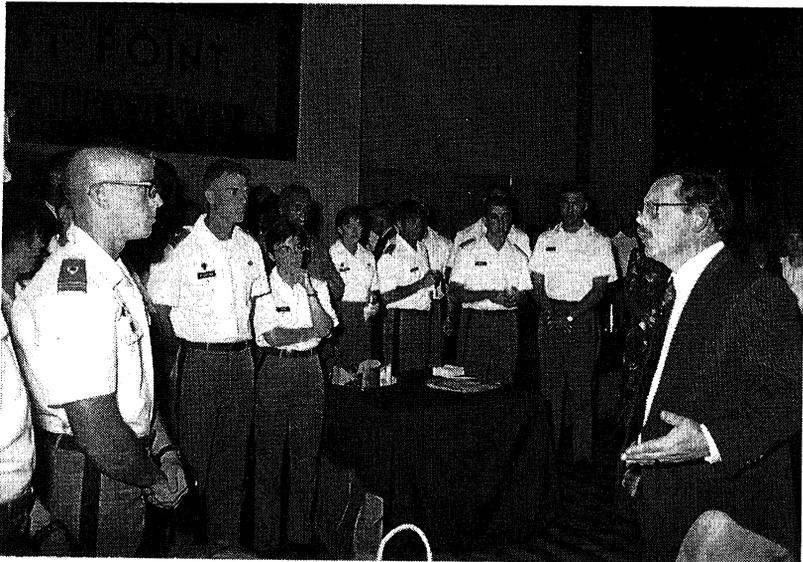
There were a couple of other things that I think were very important. Those were the pride and the discipline that I learned in six years in the United States Marine Corps. Those things were very important to me. They are going to be very important to you as well, I think. You are going to need them and not just if you ever find yourself in combat. (I fervently hope you never do. However, I believe it is more likely than not.) But I think you are going to need them in the near future when you enter fully into the U.S. armed forces at a time when they are facing change and controversy.

I'll talk about one issue that the U.S. armed forces are facing right now. That is the issue of gays in the military, a very divisive, very controversial issue. Like a lot of you, I personally cannot accept that homosexuality is right or that it is merely an alternative lifestyle or that it is equal in value to heterosexuality. That doesn't mean, however, that I believe that homosexual men and women are somehow not entitled to a full degree of respect as human beings or equal rights as American citizens. Remember those things I mentioned before--duty, honor, pride, discipline. You are going to be soldiers of the United States; you are soldiers of the United States, members of the finest armed forces in the world and citizens of the most powerful country in the world. Our president and our Congress have decided together on a policy of compromise--not fully satisfactory to very many people, but it is our duty to accept it. It is a matter of discipline that it be fully carried out. It is really very simple.

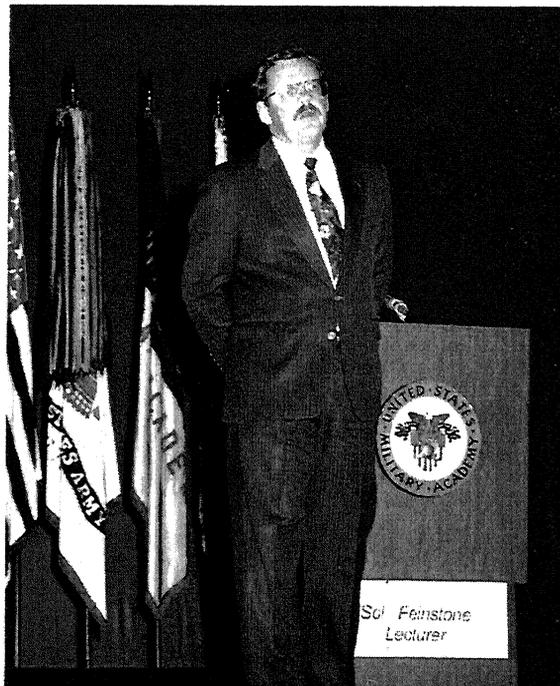
Unfortunately, you are going to meet in your career some people who do not accept that policy decision, just as there are those still who cannot accept that women are entitled to equal respect and an equal chance to serve our country. There are even some few who have not accepted blacks or Hispanics. Some of those people may by some action or by some inaction or by some attitude encourage you to ignore the president's and the Congress's decision, to somehow subvert it or undermine it. And you are going to need what you have been given here, discipline and pride and honor, because it is

not going to be the presence or the acceptance of the presence of homosexuality that impairs the efficiency of our armed forces. It will be the indiscipline, the refusal of duty by those who reject their presence and the president's order. And it is going to be your pride in being American soldiers, your sense of loyalty and honor that will allow us to get through this change and that will continue to make our armed forces the finest in the world.

For nearly 200 hundred years, West Point has taught duty and honor and pride and discipline. And taught them very well. Its graduates have carried them across the battlefields of the world and have maintained them in service here at home. I know you are going to do the same because they are not just traditions--they are necessities in the task that you have undertaken: defending the United States. You have honored me very greatly by inviting me here and by listening to me, and I honor you equally for that task that you have undertaken, for the courage and the dedication that you are showing. Thank you very much.



Born in Lorraine, Ohio, he was reared in Potavia, New York, and later served six years in the United States Marine Corps in Vietnam and Japan. Following his military service, he covered the Far East and South Africa for the Associated Press before being assigned to Beirut. He had been head of that bureau for two years when in March 1985 he was taken hostage by Shiite Moslems. His determination and strength during the long ordeal made him an inspiration for other hostages. Fellow captive Thomas Southerland has said, "Without him I couldn't have made it for six and a half years." Then, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the balance of power in the Middle East shifted, and he was released after 2,454 nights in captivity. Terry Anderson has faced severe trial and has emerged uniquely gifted to share his sustaining hope and the supreme meaning of freedom.



PAST FEINSTONE LECTURES

1971 - General Harold K. Johnson

1975 - Rear Admiral Jeremiah A. Denton, Jr.

1976 - Herman Wouk

1977 - Sidney Hook

1978 - Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

1979 - Barbara W. Tuchman

1980 - Isaac Bashevis Singer

1981 - Carl Sagan

1982 - George F. Will

1983 - Hanna H. Gray

1984 - Milton Friedman

1985 - Daniel Patrick Moynihan

1986 - Tom Wolfe

1987 - Elie Wiesel

1988 - A. Bartlett Giamatti

1989 - Dr. Richard Selzer

1990 - Dr. John Stoessinger

1991 - Fred Friendly

1992 - Dr. Orlando Patterson



Dr. Sol Feinstone, (1888-1980), Founder and First Director of the David Library of the American Revolution, Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania, presenting to Major General J.B. Lampert, Superintendent, USMA, a gift of an original George Washington Letter (24 February 1964).

SOL FEINSTONE'S CREDO

DEDICATED TO

The Judeo-Christian commitment of self-sacrifice for peace on earth, and the brotherhood of free nations of free men;

The Spirit of '76, a struggle of free men to remain free;

The immigrants who came after the revolution and helped build our country in freedom;

The underprivileged of all races who, by uplifting themselves, will raise all mankind to a higher humanity.

MY DEFINITION OF FREEDOM

In the beginning there was the void of sameness; the spark of life made everything different.

The stamp of sameness is the stamp of death.

Freedom to me means a social order based on individual freedom to live differently and to dream differently. I dream of a Brotherhood of Free Nations of Free Men.

Sol Feinstone

