



## Interview with Ray Fisher

**Kathy Hersh:** My name is Kathy Hersh and I'm in the home of Sue and Ray Fisher. The date is September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and we are recording the interview with Ray Fisher for the Miami Beach Visual Memoire's Project. Let's start out by - let's talk about your childhood. Briefly we are going to focus mainly on your experiences on the beach but a little background on yourself [crosstalk]

**Ray Fisher:** Well, I was born in Cleveland and then at an infant's age, we moved to New York and I was brought up in New York. My father passed away when I was 13 or so and we stayed in New York for a while until my mother decided to move to Miami, which we did in 1940.

**Kathy Hersh:** What made her make that decision?

**Ray Fisher:** I don't know. I really don't know but I guess she figured there'd be more for her as a widow with a little inheritance in Miami than in New York. We moved to Miami and I was brought up on the Beach. I went to high school and then went to the service and came back and eventually I wound up working at the *Miami Herald*. I was with the *Herald* for I think 16 years as a staff photographer. When I left, I was the picture chief photographer and then the picture editor.

**Kathy Hersh:** What was Beach High like when you went to school there in the early 40's?

**Ray Fisher:** Beach High was, I can't think of it as being anything then just a high school. You went to class, you did your thing and then you went home.

**Kathy Hersh:** Did they have photography class?

**Ray Fisher:** I don't think so.

**Kathy Hersh:** How did you get involved with photography?

**Ray Fisher:** Well, strangely enough my father was in the photofinishing business. That means in the old days, you took pictures with your cameras and you brought the film into the candy store or to the drug store and his company would have people going all around the area in Long Island picking up these films every day. Bringing them back to the lab, processing and making prints and bringing them back. You could pick them up the next day and your pictures were all done and so I was around this kind of thing and somehow I got in to it.

**Kathy Hersh:** Do you remember when you got your first camera?

**Ray Fisher:** Not really, I think I got it from my father's supplies. I will say one thing. One of the companies he represented was German, the thing at the

museum light no. [Phonetic] Licha no, well who? [Laughing] She can't talk. I can't remember the people who put up the thing at the...

**Kathy Hersh:** At the World's Fair?

**Ray Fisher:** No in New York at the museum. My memory has gone blank.

**Kathy Hersh:** That's all right.

**Ray Fisher:** Say it, he'll turn off the microphone. [Laughing] I'll cover it. Go ahead.

[Whispering]

**Ray Fisher:** B.

**Kathy Hersh:** Anyway, your father worked for [crosstalk]. He has his own company.

**Ray Fisher:** He had his own place and they would process pictures and somehow I picked it up over there and then I would take just personal pictures never commercially. Then... [Crosstalk]

**Kathy Hersh:** Did you work for the high school yearbook taking pictures?

**Ray Fisher:** When I came back from New York, I went back - I did work, do some pictures for the yearbook. I probably still have the negatives somewhere.

**Kathy Hersh:** I remember your telling about you were just 15 years old and you would do some of the nightclubs on the beach.

**Ray Fisher:** Oh yeah, it was the big night clubs were the Beachcomber and the Copa which was next door and I was always fascinated with entertainers and show business. I went and just took pictures of the shows.

**Kathy Hersh:** Was it kind of exciting to have all this entertainment and famous people on the beach right under your nose?

**Ray Fisher:** Well exciting I don't know what would be exciting. I mean it was there and I could get to it and for some reason I got to know, the press agents and they let me in into the shows or the rehearsals. I would get pictures there. Sometimes I'd have to give them prints for publicity but most of the time I just made the stuff for myself.

**Kathy Hersh:** Was this sort of like a hobby or did you really set out to make money doing this?

**Ray Fisher:** I wasn't thinking in terms of making money in those days. I don't think so. I think it was just I enjoyed it.

**Kathy Hersh:** Who were some of the people you remember being impressed with when you were young taking their pictures?

**Ray Fisher:** Well they are in the book here, most of them. Danny Kaye, oh God I can't remember names now.

**Kathy Hersh:** Some of the early comedians?

**Ray Fisher:** Early comedians, early entertainers. Sophie Tucker we mentioned before. All the sudden my mind has gone blank.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** Well I'll help you, so...

**Ray Fisher:** If we go through here, I probably can tell you where they're from.

**Kathy Hersh:** Okay, all right, we'll probably do some filming of that later or digitizing.

**Ray Fisher:** Right, right.

**Kathy Hersh:** How did that make you feel hanging out with taking pictures of these celebrities and being in nightclubs?

**Ray Fisher:** I was able to make some money because I would sell the prints to the press agents and he would use them for publicity.

**Kathy Hersh:** So then, the press agent would get you in places?

**Ray Fisher:** Oh well I got to know all the press agents and I wanted to take pictures they'd say, "Go ahead." I would go everywhere and there were only two major nightclubs as I said the Copa and the Beachcomber. There was also a little place called Mother Kelly's. It was on Miami Beach. On the way to the Venetian Causeway and Mother Kelly's is where Julie Wilson started. It was just kind of a bar with a stage in front of it and entertainers would work there.

**Kathy Hersh:** There was no problem with your being underage being in these places?

**Ray Fisher:** They never gave it any thought and I didn't either.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** Do you have any stories or anecdotes from that time?

**Ray Fisher:** I have some but I don't remember the whole story, I'm sorry.

**Kathy Hersh:** Just start telling part of it and maybe the rest will come to you.

**Ray Fisher:** No, I'm thinking of one I used to kid about and I don't remember the whole, I'm sorry.

**Kathy Hersh:** That's okay. Sophie Tucker, what was she like?

**Ray Fisher:** She was big and sang and she took over the stage.

**Kathy Hersh:** So her voice would just...

**Ray Fisher:** Yes, same thing.

**Kathy Hersh:** Project it?

**Ray Fisher:** "Some of These Days".

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** "Some of These Days"?

**Ray Fisher:** That was her big song.

**Kathy Hersh:** So you graduated from high school.

**Ray Fisher:** That's right.

**Kathy Hersh:** Okay and then you went in to the service?

**Ray Fisher:** Shortly after that.

**Kathy Hersh:** Okay.

**Ray Fisher:** As I was stationed - eventually I wound up as being a photographer, which I wrote down. I wound up in "graves registration outfit" because their organizational chart they had a need for photographer to photograph the cemeteries, not the graves but for the, what do you call, people who design things? See what the land look like. [Crosstalk]

**Kathy Hersh:** The headstones?

**Ray Fisher:** So I was that and then I got out of that and I wrote a letter to the Commander of the photography school in New York at the old Paramount Studios in Astoria.

I wrote to him and I said because of my experience having worked at NBC as a kid. He requested my transfer, which was the best way to get transferred in the Army if somebody asked for it.

I wound up by myself going by train to Astoria and I wound up being stationed at the - I can't remember the name of - A S T - no I don't remember the name of the school what the - it was Astoria that I remember. It was the old Paramount Photo Studios. I was stationed there and one of the people I photographed there, they were making a film on him he's in here. He's Harold Russell. Remember he had the hooks in that movie?

**Kathy Hersh:** He was the guy hanging from the clock, wasn't he?

**Ray Fisher:** No, no, no not Harold Lloyd. Harold Russell had been injured in the Army and he had hooks instead of hands.

**Kathy Hersh:** Okay.

**Ray Fisher:** They were making a training film how you could get along with other artificial limbs for other soldiers who were injured and I took pictures of him. In fact, I know they're in the book.

**Kathy Hersh:** Was he in the film "The Best Years of Our Lives"? I think.

**Ray Fisher:** I think that - he was the one.

**Kathy Hersh:** Yeah.

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah, he was the one.

**Kathy Hersh:** So...

**Ray Fisher:** We saw him a few years ago, remember we bumped into him. He had - as I say his hands are hooks. In those days when we took pictures, we use flashbulbs. Today you have electronic. He'd have a blast. He'd take one of my flashbulbs. Put it in the hook. Hold it up like this and say, "Smile" and it looked like he was holding a flashbulb in the camera.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** He had a sense of humor about it?

**Ray Fisher:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

**Kathy Hersh:** Yeah, so tell us about your war experiences?

**Ray Fisher:** My war experiences? Well let's see.

**Kathy Hersh:** I think you told me once before that you were in Patton's Division?

**Ray Fisher:** I was in Patton's Third Army. As a matter of fact, I photographed Patton the day after his troops crossed the Danube and I came up and he was there with his - drove up with his dog in his own jeep. He went up to the edge of the Danube River. Took out a liberated context camera and took pictures of where his troops landed. I ran up afterwards. I said, "General, can you hold the camera up and let me get a picture?" He did and I took his picture and he saluted me. He said, "Make sure I get copies."

I never saw the pictures. When I sent it back to lab I said "make sure the General gets copies," but I never saw the picture itself. I have no idea what happened but I photographed Patton, Bradley, Eisenhower. I can't remember the others.

**Kathy Hersh:** Did you see any action, so to speak?

**Ray Fisher:** Well, we would - I was with a group of press people going up to meet the Russians and we would stop every once in a while. They'd put a sign pointing this way so the people coming in back of us would know where we were.

One time we stopped and one of the other photographers had picked up a German pistol and somehow he lost it or someone took it from him. We stopped at one place and I saw some German soldiers above, so I climbed up and walked over and says [speaks German] "Give me your pistol," and he looked at me and shot me.

**Kathy Hersh:** Shot you?

**Ray Fisher:** Yes. They first shot me in the leg. I turned around and see. The next one went through my back and the other one as I turn around and fall down and played dead went through my right torso and it's in my left leg. The funny thing is that I often thought it wasn't because I was an American soldier, it's because a few days later we had come to a depot where they had materials. We found some bolts of red material and it was spring. It was kind of chilly. We took the material. We'd tear it up and make it ascot, a scarf to keep warm. I was wearing that when I went over and asked the guys for the pistols and I think they thought that that was German flag and I tore it up and made a scarf out of it. That's probably why they shot me.

**Kathy Hersh:** You had them at gunpoint? You were pointing a gun at them?

**Ray Fisher:** I think I did have my gun out, yes.

**Kathy Hersh:** So they just shot?

**Ray Fisher:** They took off and I was able to get up. Take my pistol out, I said, "that's ridiculous. I couldn't hit him if I threw it at him." I ran back to where the car was. Came down and then the driver - who I kept in touch with, he just passed away about a year or so ago, his mother just died too - I got in the car, jeep and I reached back here. I said, "I think I've been shot." I reach my hand and it's bloody. Well, he was nervous as hell because he had come in at the invasion and never got hurt. Came all across Europe. We drove up until we found a medic. The medic came down and I laid down and they examined me. Gave me a shot of morphine and I was waiting for major medics to come along and pick me up.

The interesting thing - a side bar - I'm lying there covered with a blanket or something and these civilians come over and look down and say something in Hungarian. Now my parents were Hungarian and I understood Hungarian and spoke a little bit. I'm in an American Army uniform and they speak Hungarian. I look up at them and I answered them in Hungarian and they absolutely never understood what the hell was a Hungarian in an American uniform doing.

**Kathy Hersh:** So then, you were evacuated out?

**Ray Fisher:** Oh yeah, and then I got picked up and was moved up to medical outfit then they put me in ambulance and I flew to Rennes, France. Rennes was the place where they were signing the armistice to for World War II and I was in the hospital and couldn't take any pictures. I was there for a while under treatment and then I went back to my office. The interesting thing is that I left Rennes, the hospital, I'm in a truck, the back of a truck and

someone comes running out of the hospital and said, "Fisher, Fisher." I said, "Here." He said "Here's your Purple Heart" and he threw it to me.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** That was pretty unceremonious.

**Ray Fisher:** Well, because later on when I got back to Heidelberg where I was stationed and one time I photographed a Three-Star General pinning a Purple Heart on somebody. Same thing, but it was funny. He goes, "Here's your Purple Heart."

**Kathy Hersh:** Was it an orderly at the hospital that threw it at you?

**Ray Fisher:** I never had any recollection. It was not an officer. It was not a major thing.

**Kathy Hersh:** Once you were healed, did you have to go back in?

**Ray Fisher:** Oh no, the war was over.

**Kathy Hersh:** The war was over.

**Ray Fisher:** The war over three days after I got shot.

**Kathy Hersh:** How did you react [crosstalk?]

**Ray Fisher:** That's a story about mayonnaise. Did I tell you about mayonnaise? Most of the mayonnaise used to come from England. It was shipped all over the world by boat and there was one year there was a boat headed to Mexico and it sunk. The Mexicans were so disappointed they created a holiday, "Cinco de Mayo."

[Laughing]

**Ray Fisher:** Whenever I tell that joke, I always say Cinco de Mayo is the day I got shot. That's the first time that joke will ever be on tape.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** It's immortalized. I want to ask you your reaction to Patton.

**Ray Fisher:** Well I say, oh his death?

**Kathy Hersh:** Yes.

**Ray Fisher:** Well it was very distressing, he was well-liked and he was quite a guy.

**Kathy Hersh:** Were there any [crosstalk]

**Ray Fisher:** He died, I was stationed in Heidelberg and he died in an automobile accident in Heidelberg. The time it happened, I was on leave. I had gone

to Switzerland, I think and he had the accident with the car, so I wasn't there.

**Kathy Hersh:** That must have made headlines everywhere.

**Ray Fisher:** Yes, that was a big story.

**Kathy Hersh:** Do you think that there's...

**Ray Fisher:** No, it was strictly an accident.

**Kathy Hersh:** You think it's an accident.

**Ray Fisher:** I don't think it was intentional. It was an automobile accident.

**Kathy Hersh:** So that must have affected the morale of people who had worked under him?

**Ray Fisher:** Well there are people I'm sure people because people liked him in spite of his personality.

**Kathy Hersh:** He was kind of gruff I understand.

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah he was gruff and he had his own way of doing things but when he was on the field as a soldier, he always won.

**Kathy Hersh:** After the war what happened? What did you do then?

**Ray Fisher:** Well, as I said I was in Heidelberg, I stayed in Heidelberg. Stayed for a while and I got discharged and stayed in Europe and became a photographer for the government as a civilian for the Army and I stayed there for better part of a year. Then I came home.

**Kathy Hersh:** Based in Heidelberg?

**Ray Fisher:** Yes that was my.

**Kathy Hersh:** You saw the aftermath all over the place I imagine.

**Ray Fisher:** I never think about it.

**Kathy Hersh:** What did you take pictures of?

**Ray Fisher:** Military medals being given and nothing earth-shaking.

**Kathy Hersh:** It was an official capacity?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah, I was working for the government.

**Kathy Hersh:** Okay, so I'm thinking in terms of Europe in the map being changed forever. Did you see Germans' civilian life much? How did they deal with the aftermath?



**Ray Fisher:** I hate to say this, but I don't remember.

**Kathy Hersh:** Okay, it's all right.

**Ray Fisher:** It's not something that's drove into my mind. I don't remember.

**Kathy Hersh:** A lot of vets that I've interviewed, say, "I was just doing a job." Is that your attitude or...

**Ray Fisher:** Well I was pleased that I was a photographer. It was better than being another type of soldier. I enjoyed it. I would be called upon to photograph the medals being pinned on by officers and I can't think of any, well also we would take portraits of people, other officers, everything for the record. I don't remember anything exceptional.

**Kathy Hersh:** Where you ever around Eisenhower?

**Ray Fisher:** What do you mean around?

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** Taking his pictures.

**Ray Fisher:** I took his picture, yeah.

**Kathy Hersh:** Okay, and so when you got back after Heidelberg, what did you do?

**Ray Fisher:** Well I got out of the Army when I was in Heidelberg.

**Kathy Hersh:** That's right. You're civilian and then when you got back [crosstalk]

**Ray Fisher:** Eventually I came back to Miami and I eventually ended up working at the *Herald*.

**Kathy Hersh:** What were the early days of the *Herald* like?

**Ray Fisher:** Well, I was a first one to use 35-millimeter cameras. They were still using large cameras with film and I started using buying my own film and they said, "Oh it'll never work." I bought my own film and made my prints, and turned the prints in to be published. Everybody, eventually it turned out, everybody started using 35millimeter.

**Kathy Hersh:** So you were kind of the pioneer of 35millimeter?

**Ray Fisher:** You would say that but no one will know at the *Herald* would probably think about it.

**Kathy Hersh:** So this is in the late '40's?

**Ray Fisher:** Right after the war, yes. No, '50's yes, because I went to college, remember.

**Kathy Hersh:** Yeah, where did you go to college?

**Ray Fisher:** Here, at the University of Miami.

**Kathy Hersh:** What did you study?

**Ray Fisher:** You're not gonna' believe this: speech. I majored in speech because I knew I had a terrible New York accent. I figured maybe speech would help me get rid of it, which it didn't. I think I still have it. I don't know but I took all the pictures at the university, as a matter of fact when I graduated the university hired me as their official photographer. I was the first one that ever be hired by the university as a photographer. I did all the pictures of the presidents and all these executives and board meetings.

**Kathy Hersh:** Were you shooting 35 millimeter?

**Ray Fisher:** All 35, yes.

**Kathy Hersh:** Then you went to the *Herald*?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah and then I left and went to the *Herald* because one of the things that always fascinating was the theater and I did all the pictures at the Ring Theater at the university and much of that stuff would get published in the *Herald*. They got to know me by my work. When I came to go to work at the *Herald*, I mean I applied. I had no trouble being accepted.

**Kathy Hersh:** In flipping through your album...

**Ray Fisher:** You mean this one?

**Kathy Hersh:** Yes, you seem to have a distinct style of [crosstalk], a knack

**Ray Fisher:** Un-posed.

**Kathy Hersh:** Un-posed but yet very telling about the person.

**Ray Fisher:** Thank you.

**Kathy Hersh:** So was that instinctive to you or...

**Ray Fisher:** It was the way I guess that's the way I like to do it. It comes from inside. That's the way you see it. I mean every photographer [Laughing] every photographer has an inferiority complex. He figures he sees the world like no one else sees it.

**Kathy Hersh:** You mainly did celebrity photography then?

**Ray Fisher:** No, I did everything.

**Kathy Hersh:** You did news as well?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah, but it's a lot of celebrities. One thing I remember I did, I had to cover something- I guess that's when I was working for the university- I

had to cover a sorority meeting on one of the islands on Miami Beach, so I went and took pictures and that's where I saw her [gestures off screen to his wife.]

**Kathy Hersh:** Okay, so tell us about that?

**Ray Fisher:** When she walked out and I was impressed and we got together and we eventually got married. That's 62 years.

**Kathy Hersh:** Congratulations.

**Ray Fisher:** Thank you.

**Kathy Hersh:** Are there any celebrities, when you flip through that book and you see their pictures, that stand out in your mind, is there anybody that said "Hey Ray come on out. Let's go out have a drink."

[Laughing]

**Ray Fisher:** I'd have to go just without looking, I don't have any.

**Kathy Hersh:** Maybe we could flip though it Carl.

**Carl Hersh:** Well you want to take a look at it now?

**Kathy Hersh:** Yeah, let's do that.

**Carl Hersh:** Just keep the book up and keep turning this way though. No, no we'll get this over the shoulder afterward, but right now...

**Kathy Hersh:** Just flip through and whatever memories come up from the pictures just start talking.

[Turning pages]

**Ray Fisher:** Memories, well of course believe it or not this was not shot when she was famous as Lucy, she was just visiting at the hotel on the beach over at Versailles Hotel where I was working as a photographer with the shooting people on the beach for themselves. She was just visiting. This was taken in the beauty parlor while she was waiting to be taken care of.

**Kathy Hersh:** Do you think she was down here to visit Desi?

**Ray Fisher:** That was before they were even married.

**Kathy Hersh:** Tell us the story about Desi and your quizzing people who's the most famous Cuban?

**Ray Fisher:** Well I asked people who the most famous Cuban is in the world and they'll say, "Of course, Fidel Castro." I says no, Desi Arnaz, he's on TV every day all over the world. "I Love Lucy".

**Kathy Hersh:** So when you took that photograph, he was already an older man?

**Ray Fisher:** Well, let's see the opening night of the performance of his daughter in 1976 in the play called "Mack and Mabel". He won fame as Ricky, and actually besides being the bumbling bandleader he appeared on TV, he was a TV executive and with his wife, Lucille Ball owned the Desilu Studios, at the time, the world's largest production facility.

Here's Tony Bennett. You said you love Tony Bennett. This is - people, don't remember her - Josephine Baker and Tallulah Bankhead we got, my wife always was crazy about her. She was one-of-a-kind. Remember Bob Barker? TV show, "Let's Make a Deal." Baryshnikov and this is old Milton Berle.

**Kathy Hersh:** Was he as funny when the lights were dimmed, as he was?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah he was funny when he wanted him to be. How many people remember Clyde Beatty?

**Kathy Hersh:** Clyde Beatty? Wow.

**Carl Hersh:** Oh yeah, the lion tamer.

**Ray Fisher:** Only has a chair. Jack Benny, Joyce Brothers, there's General Bradley. I'm not going to mention everybody's name.

**Kathy Hersh:** I see they're in alphabetical order. I didn't get that.

**Ray Fisher:** More or less yes.

[Flipping pages]

**Kathy Hersh:** You mentioned something about photographing 11 presidents.

**Ray Fisher:** That's right. You want to get it too? I have it all on one.

**Kathy Hersh:** You must be one of the few photographers alive that's done 11 presidents?

**Ray Fisher:** I'm probably the only one alive that's done 11 presidents and never worked in Washington. That's an important sidebar. You know because if you work in Washington it's natural but most of them were photographed elsewhere. Mostly in Miami, but other places.

**Kathy Hersh:** The whole world came here to Miami Beach right?

**Ray Fisher:** At one time, everybody came to Miami Beach. That was even before the Fontainebleau.

**Carl Hersh:** How about the transition on that. The changes that have happened?

**Kathy Hersh:** Yes, so do you think that the Fontainebleau made a big difference?

**Ray Fisher:** I think so, yes. It still does. People still go there because it was originally the Firestone Estate -I was gonna' say Fairchild- The Firestone Estate is where the Fontainebleau is.

**Kathy Hersh:** So...

**Ray Fisher:** Across the street when the Fontainebleau, some people used to park their boats, big boats and live in their boats while they were working in Miami. Not necessarily in the Fontainebleau. There's the 11 presidents. I've seen it.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** I just thought you might have some specific memory about, which was your favorite?

**Ray Fisher:** I guess Clinton, everybody always says Clinton.

**Kathy Hersh:** You liked Clinton?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah and Reagan I photographed for the first time in 1939. When I lived in New York as a kid, I used to take pictures of the theater and I went to the Loew's State Theatre and they had Louella Parsons, remember Louella Parsons? She would bring a troupe around the country of Starlets and they had Susan Hayward and others. One of them was Ronald Reagan and I have a picture in fact that's in here, I have a picture of the whole group with Louella Parsons. That's Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, Ford, Bush, Hoover, Clinton and Reagan. Let me find the presidents, Parsons.

**Kathy Hersh:** Herbert Hoover.

**Ray Fisher:** Hoover.

**Kathy Hersh:** Was he the first president you [crosstalk]

**Ray Fisher:** The first one I ever photographed?

**Kathy Hersh:** He would have been the oldest in that?

**Ray Fisher:** No, I think the first one I photographed was Reagan. Hoover probably was the oldest. He was not president at that time. These were not all presidents at the time. He would like to fish and they would come down here and hire, rent a boat and go out fishing. I was at the hotel where he was staying and there was a boat in front of it and I got him as he came out and posed. Let's see if Parson's here. You want me to keep talking about something? [Laughing] Arnold Newman, let's see Parsons. [Flipping Page] Oh, it's on this side, Parsons. Oh, come on. This is ridiculous, Sue. Louella Parsons isn't on here? Jack Paar.

**Kathy Hersh:** Louella Parsons, did you get to know her?

**Ray Fisher:** No, but I photographed her. That's why I keep saying, I can't find.

**Kathy Hersh:** Is there anybody that you didn't photograph that you would like to have photographed?

**Ray Fisher:** That's hard, I can't think of anybody off hand.

**Kathy Hersh:** Any really good-looking actress or Grace Kelly?

**Ray Fisher:** No, I didn't do her.

**Kathy Hersh:** Who were some of the others of the day, Ava Gardner?

**Ray Fisher:** I didn't do her.

**Kathy Hersh:** Did you ever do Sinatra?

**Ray Fisher:** Oh yeah.

**Kathy Hersh:** You did him several times?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah, let's see Sinatra -find you- I can't find Parsons I know she's in here.

**Kathy Hersh:** Was he nice?

**Ray Fisher:** Oh yeah, let's see Sinatra. Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? Where is he? 243. [Flipping Page] Here he is.

**Kathy Hersh:** "Old blue eyes."

**Ray Fisher:** Known as the Chairman of the Board. He was at Miami Beach of the Fontainebleau Hotel filming a Frank Capra movie "A Hole in Your Head" in 1958. He was working in the movie during the day and performing in La Ronde in the hotel every night. I took this photo. I was being interviewed by a tiny elderly lady reporter where he rehearsed his nightclub act. It was a reporter at the *Herald*, Beatrice Washburn, that was about this big. She was ancient, but she did the interview of Sinatra.

**Kathy Hersh:** Did you hang out at the Fontainebleau a lot?

**Ray Fisher:** No.

**Kathy Hersh:** You just went there on the side?

**Ray Fisher:** When I was working that's right. Though I have a picture of, what the hell is his name Sue who built it?

**Kathy Hersh:** Novack?

**Ray Fisher:** Yes. Let's see Novack, Ben Novack. Why is everybody so quiet now all of a sudden?

**Kathy Hersh:** That family was kind of troubled was it not? They kind of made headlines later, not kind of they did.

**Ray Fisher:** 196, here he is.

[Flipping Page]

**Kathy Hersh:** Ben Novack.

**Ray Fisher:** Owner and manager of the original Fontainebleau Hotel Miami Beach. Is built, he ran the hotel. Every famous person throughout the world stayed there and it was even featured in a James Bond movie "Goldfinger".

**Kathy Hersh:** When you were a young man going to be tied, did you have any favorite places you'd like to hang out? Were you a beach person or?

**Ray Fisher:** No, I never.

**Kathy Hersh:** You were a city boy?

**Ray Fisher:** I never went to the beach, not the sun not much but you mean hang out in Miami?

**Kathy Hersh:** In Miami Beach in high school, what were the hangout spots? Did you ever kiss a girl on the beach?

**Ray Fisher:** Kiss a girl on the - what part of the body is a beach?

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** Did you even kiss a girl on the cheek on the beach?

**Ray Fisher:** No, I don't think so. I don't remember.

**Kathy Hersh:** You were more of a lips guy?

**Ray Fisher:** Lips guy? That's a Russian name isn't it?

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** Did you have the sense of humor in high school?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah I think so. I think I've always had the kidding around sense of humor. I don't know if it was going to all the vulgar shows and seeing the comedians or if I just was like that.

**Kathy Hersh:** Maybe that's part of the charm you had of getting good pictures.

**Ray Fisher:** Maybe.

**Kathy Hersh:** Do you think that there is a certain kind of rapport that's either spoken or unspoken that helps you get a good picture of a person?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah I think it's first a talent and your vision of the way it looks and your technical ability. I'm just looking up there if there's anything. Well you saw the picture of me, with hand on the chin.

**Kathy Hersh:** Right here?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah take it go ahead.

**Kathy Hersh:** Tell us about that, when was that taken?

**Ray Fisher:** It was taken 1945 in Heidelberg, Florida. A photographer woman photographer names Tita, T-I-T-A Binz, B-I-N-Z and she was a famous photographer in Germany and she took that portrait of me.

**Kathy Hersh:** This was in Heidelberg

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah, 1945.

**Kathy Hersh:** You were a good-looking guy.

**Ray Fisher:** Thank you.

**Kathy Hersh:** I can see why you went for him. Did you have to chase her very much or?

**Ray Fisher:** No, I ran faster than she did.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** Maybe she wanted to be caught?

**Ray Fisher:** I think.

**Kathy Hersh:** So...

**Ray Fisher:** Okay what else? [Crosstalk] He's the boss.

**Kathy Hersh:** What would you have to say to young photographers today? It's quite a different world.

**Ray Fisher:** Everything is digital today and when they ask about if I shoot digital. I say, I've been shooting digital for over 50 years. That's my digit.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** Carl, do you have any question?

**Carl Hersh:** I'm just wondering, you came to Miami Beach and really during before the war would've been still - it was sort of in a bit of a decline because of the depression and [crosstalk].

**Ray Fisher:** The nightclubs were still active.



**Carl Hersh:** In the 50's, it's booming. It goes into decline, comes back. Do you have a sense of this trajectory of Miami Beach?

**Ray Fisher:** No, because I wasn't involved with the beach anymore. I was at the university and I was working on my own, doing magazine. I work for *Time* a lot. *Time Magazine*. I did a lot of work for them and other publications *Look*, *New York Times*, who else?

**Carl Hersh:** Did you consider yourself a Miami photographer or did you at time the look, did you [crosstalk].

**Ray Fisher:** Well they knew I was in Miami.

**Carl Hersh:** I see.

**Ray Fisher:** I didn't think well...

**Kathy Hersh:** Did they send you anywhere?

**Carl Hersh:** Did you go to Cuba?

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah, I went to Cuba. I went to Latin America. I went to Texas, where else?

**Kathy Hersh:** What did you photograph in Cuba?

**Ray Fisher:** I did Castro, which is enough.

**Kathy Hersh:** Did you kid around with him?

**Ray Fisher:** Not really, I don't remember the incident that well. I just remember photographing him.

**Kathy Hersh:** Did that run in the *Herald*?

**Ray Fisher:** I don't think it was for the *Herald*. I think it was for *Time*.

**Kathy Hersh:** Did you ever make any covers of *Time*?

**Ray Fisher:** No. I did which one? I can't understand.

**Carl Hersh:** Disney?

**Ray Fisher:** Who?

**Carl Hersh:** Walt Disney?

**Ray Fisher:** Walt Disney? I had their *Time* cover on that? I don't remember.

[Laughing]

**Kathy Hersh:** So why is it not up on the wall?

**Ray Fisher:** I know. Yeah, I covered the opening of Disney World for *Time* I think and that was an experience.

**Kathy Hersh:** I bet. Was Walt still alive when Disney World opened?

**Ray Fisher:** No, not when Disney World opened, no.

**Kathy Hersh:** Yeah, he was alive when Disneyland was invented.

**Ray Fisher:** Yeah he was.

**Kathy Hersh:** Any advice for young people, I mean it's such a different world today with social media and imagery is everywhere.

**Ray Fisher:** Well everybody is a photographer because of all the cellphones and everything that take pictures. I think the best advice I can give photographers today is to study old photography. Study photographs and see what makes them good, or unique, or memorable because most of them don't know, I mean most of don't know what the hell lighting is. I mean this light up here. I don't think most of them can figure out lighting and I'm sure, when they go to the movies or on TV, they don't look at the lighting and realize how they make it memorable.

**Kathy Hersh:** Lighting is pretty important, isn't it?

**Ray Fisher:** I think on the movies especially. I'm sure he does too. He's got the earphones on. He's not listening. Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

**Kathy Hersh:** Yeah, he thinks lighting is very important as to why.

**Ray Fisher:** Of course. Okay.

**Kathy Hersh:** Well anything else on your mind or you can think of?