

HOW TO START A REVOLUTION

[Transcripts]

82-Minute Version _____ pg. 2-18

52-Minute Version _____ pg. 19-31

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[Transcript | 82-minute version]

CAPTION: "Dictators are never as strong as they tell you they are. People are never as weak as they think they are." – Gene Sharp

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): You know, this guy was in here the other day talking to me, and he said: "Hey, there's something screwy in the world. The people without guns are winning."

NEWS ANCHOR: Well, let's go live to Tahrir Liberation Square. We can speak to a freelance journalist who joins us on the line now. Ruaridh, we were hearing about those heightened security measures today around Tahrir Square. Is there a different atmosphere here compared with say yesterday and the day before?

NEWS REPORTER: Ah, yes. It's an incredible atmosphere today. That cross section of Egyptian society that left Tahrir Square yesterday is back in force now. They've managed to re-energize the protesters. There's very young children, women, older men here. People are singing and dancing. There are many instruments in the square, and it's more full here than it has been in days.

CAPTION: "All over the world, people are struggling against tyranny. One man's writings have helped millions achieve freedom."

GENE SHARP: Anything it's...I mess up, you fix, alright?

INTERVIEWER: Ah, ah absolutely.

GENE SHARP: Or we fix it.

INTERVIEWER: You fix it, yeah.

GENE SHARP: My name is Gene Sharp, and this is the work I do.

TITLE: How to Start a Revolution

INTERVIEWER: What do you do? How would you describe your work?

GENE SHARP: Oh, that's always a problem, describing my work, because it doesn't fit other people's preconceptions. Primarily, I try to understand the nature and potential of nonviolent forms of struggle to undermine dictatorships.

CAPTION: Gene Sharp is the world's leading expert on nonviolent revolution.

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): This is a technique of combat. It is a substitute for war and other violence.

CAPTION: Gene Sharp has written a guide to overthrowing dictatorships. It contains a list of 198 nonviolent weapons.

GENE SHARP: We don't know quite how it's read, but it certainly did into 30 some languages in different parts of the world on all continents except Antarctica.

CAPTION: The lessons from Gene Sharp's books are used by revolutionaries all over the world: Colors and symbols, signs in English, civil disobedience, and commitment to nonviolent action.

GENE SHARP: Oh, the famous 198 methods. There seems to have been an extraordinary response. That's simply the 198 specific methods. These specific forms of abstract are economic boycott, are civil disobedience, are protests. Exactly the counterpart of military, different kinds of military guns or bombs, any military struggle. Unless they have something instead of violence and war, they will go back with violence and war every time.

CAPTION: Gene runs the Albert Einstein Institution with Executive Director Jamila Raqib. They work out of the ground floor of his house in East Boston.

JAMILA RAQIB: I came to work at the Albert Einstein Institution very shortly after graduating from college, and I had been concerned about the world. It was 2001, and it was a very interesting time to be entering the workforce, and I was thinking about entering some development field, working for a charity and NGO, very consistent with my family background. I had ideas about the world, about violence, about conflict. Coming from Afghanistan, that's seen a great deal of conflict and growing up with that history as a backdrop to my childhood really, and having been a refugee at a very young age, I had ideas about how conflict should be waged and the need for conflict really. You know, I had perceptions of the anti-war community and the peace community as being really naïve, that people are not going to give up violence, and that they should not – that some conflicts must be waged. But at the time, I did not know there were very powerful alternatives to violence, so I began learning about the work at a very basic level. I did most of my reading and learning as soon as I started working at the institution, and I was hooked.

CAPTION: The Albert Einstein Institution was founded in 1983 to spread knowledge of nonviolent struggle.

GENE SHARP: I didn't start out to do this. I had a religious background that led me to want to leave the world in a bit of a better place and better condition than when I came here, and how to do that was always a problem.

CAPTION: In 1953, Gene refused to be conscripted to fight in Korea.

GENE SHARP: I was maybe 25 or something like that. I took a civil disobedience position against military conscriptions. And so I went to prison. I had a two-year sentence. I did nine months and ten days. In those days, you counted the days as well as the month, but I don't think that my action there did any good whatsoever. It was just to keep my sense of my own integrity so I would carry on in the work that I thought was really important. I never met Einstein, but I wrote to him. I don't know how I

got his address. I said, "Well, I'm about to do such and such and go to prison, but by the way I've written this book on Gandhi. Three quite different cases from each other about Gandhi's using nonviolent struggle for a greater freedom through just nonviolent means." And he wrote back that he very much hoped, but he couldn't know, that he would have made the same decision I did. And he would be willing to look at the manuscript, which I had sent to him, and he did so and wrote a very kind introduction to the book.

CAPTION: While studying at Oxford, Gene had a "Eureka" moment – a new analysis of how people could defeat dictatorships.

GENE SHARP: If you can identify the sources of a government's power, such as legitimacy, such as popular support, such as the institutional support, and then you know on what that dictatorship depends for its existence, and since all those sources of power are dependent upon the good will, co-operation, obedience and help of people and institutions, then your job becomes fairly simple. All you have to do is shrink that support and that legitimacy, that co-operation, that obedience, and the regime will be weakened, and if you can take those sources far away, the regime will fall. And that was a sort of 'Eureka' moment – that this was not just a theory, and this was something that actually had been applied in many different historical cases. And that was very, very important.

INTERVIEWER: And how did you feel at that point?

GENE SHARP: At the point, that Eureka point?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE SHARP: Oh, greatly relieved. Greatly relieved because that's what made it all reality.

GENE SHARP: The US Department of Defense and other countries sometimes sent special people to Harvard University for a year of doing something different. I had a program within the Center for International Affairs on the nonviolent sanctions, on nonviolent forms of serving.

CAPTION: Gene was about to meet an unlikely champion of his work, Vietnam veteran Colonel Bob Helvey.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I first met Gene Sharp at Harvard University. I was an Army Senior Fellow up there for a year, and one day I saw a notice on the bulletin board about a program for nonviolent sanctions at two o'clock this afternoon. So I had nothing to do so I went to see who these peace necks were and to confirm my preconceived notion that they probably had rings in their noses and ears and dirty. And so I went up there just to see them, and surprisingly they weren't there. I saw regular looking people there. And a few minutes after we all sat down, this little short, soft-spoken gentleman comes to the front of the room and says, "My name is Gene Sharp, and we're here today to discuss how to seize political power and deny it to others."

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): I say nonviolent struggle is armed struggle and we have to take back that term from those advocates of violence who try to justify with pretty words that kind of combat. Only with this type of struggle, one fights with psychological weapons, social weapons, economic weapons

and political weapons, and that this is ultimately more powerful against oppression, injustice, and tyranny than is violence.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: That got my attention. This is the flag of the 5th Battalion, 7th United States Cavalry. The 7th Cav, as you know, was the Regiment of General Armstrong Custer, who fought and died at the battle of Little Big Horn. That's me in my younger days. A full head of hair. This is the award for the Distinguished Service Cross that I got in Vietnam.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I think Vietnam influenced my view about the importance of nonviolent struggle, and particularly the importance of getting Gene Sharp's ideas out to the rest of the world because we must have an alternative. Vietnam convinced me that we need to have an alternative to killing people.

NEWS REPORTER: For more than 15 years, Manerplaw has been the headquarters of the Karen National Liberation Army. The opposition National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma is based here. They moved to Manerplaw after the military regime refused to recognize the victory of Nobel Peace prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, at a prodemocracy party in the 1990 elections.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I had retired from the Army and was doing some consultation work with the Karen National Union, and we conducted a series of courses for the leadership of the democratic opposition, which resided in the Karen state. And so I asked him to come over to conduct an evaluation of the training since it was his material, his ideas that we were presenting. So Gene came over, and I had someone meet him in Bangkok, and they came to Mae Sot. And then from Mae Sot, they took a truck north and then went to a side at the Moi River, put him in a boat in the Moi River, and took him on to Manerplaw. You know, it was an illegal entry into Burma, and what they do or what they did at that point was there was a Burma Army outpost up on the mountain looking at the site where the boats would come in and out, so you would have to wait until somebody gave you a signal that there was nobody watching, and that's when you went down to the boat carrying an umbrella so they couldn't see who was under the umbrella. Well, shortly after they got started, we got a message on the radio that the boat was coming, and it was a white man with a big suitcase coming up river. And of course there was no place to go but Manerplaw, so he was coming to Manerplaw, and when the boat pulled over to the beach, I went down to the riverbank to meet him, and Gene was climbing out of the boat, and I said, "Dr. Sharp, I presume?" And he got a kick out of that. The whole objective of adopting this strategic nonviolent conflict on the part of the democratic opposition was to remove the military dictatorship. I was talking to one of the Karen Commandos, and he had come by the classroom, and he was looking in the window, and he stayed there for over an hour, hour and a half, and then that evening he came over to where I was staying, and he says, "Where in the hell has this information been? We've been fighting and killing people for 20 years. How come we didn't know this?" Some of the Burmese came up to him and asked if he would write something for the Burmese on how to move from a dictatorship to a democracy. That's the origin of why the book was written: the Burmese.

GENE SHARP: I couldn't write about Burma honestly because I didn't know Burma well, and he said not to write about something you don't know anything about, so I had to write generically. If there was a movement that wanted to bring a dictatorship to an end, how could they do it? And so I wrote those theories, and they were serialized there, and published in English and in Burmese, and I

thought that was it. The military dictatorship of Burma were denouncing my little publication ‘From Dictatorship To Democracy’ because it was giving some ideas about how, to perhaps Burmese and other nationalities living in Burma, could free themselves. That’s why when someone simply carrying that little booklet with them and smuggling it through, when they were caught, they were arrested and sent to prison for seven years. For carrying a few sheets of paper! They weren’t bombs or guns or anything like that. Dictatorship cannot stand this. Strange things happened. The edition printed in Bangkok in English was on display in a bookstore window in Bangkok, and there was a student there from Indonesia, and he saw it and bought a copy and took it back to Jakarta. It led to that distribution under Muslim auspices and contributed somewhat to the democratic effort in Indonesia, which had also been under military dictatorships. And from then, we don’t know quite how it spread, but it certainly did.

CAPTION: Lesson 1: Plan a Strategy

GENE SHARP: I’d gone to Beijing after the Tiananmen Square protests were well underway. That whole event, which it should be remembered, was not just in Beijing, but reportedly in 350 other cities of China, similar protests were going on, but they were not planned. They were not prepared. There was no strategic decision. There was no advanced decision how long you stay in the square and when you leave. What became very clear to me in retrospect was that the students in the square were operating with great commitment and bravery, but they really didn’t know what the hell they were doing. The students had no plan. They were improvising all the way through, and later on we know that many of those Chinese people who were out on the streets, in another day, were shot and killed. The attitude that you simply improvise and improvisation will bring you greater success is nonsense. Exactly the opposite – that if you don’t know what you’re doing, you’re likely to get into big trouble.

GENE SHARP: I’d never grown orchids before. I’d driven down to Manhattan to see some friends of mine I had known when they were at Harvard, and near their house there was a flower shop, and they had some quite large potted plants of cattleya orchids so I bought two or three of those. They survived for a while. They bloomed for a while, but of course they soon died, but that led me to enquire about other ones and learning more about how you really take care of them and how difficult some of them can be and how easy some of them are. They take quite a bit of work. They became very important because it was something I could treat as they needed to be treated, and not expecting miracles, but if you don’t treat orchids right or anything else in life, then it’s not going to thrive.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I went to Budapest at the request of the International Republican Institute, which was providing support to the Serbian Opposition Movement, and one particular part of that opposition movement was OTPOR. That’s a Serbian word for resistance.

SRDJA POPOVIC: He’s a retired colonel and he has this type of military approach, and the way he speaks is really something that creates a strange impression with a bunch of student leaders.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: We talked for a while, and I said, “Well, there’s something missing here. We haven’t talked about who’s leader of this organization. Who is the leader?” And then one guy said, “We don’t have a leader.” And I said, “Well, wait a minute guys. I did not fall off the turnip truck

coming over here. Somebody has to lead an organization that has mobilized the entire Serbian society. There has to be a leader to that organization. There has to be a leader who's coordinating all these demonstrations. There has to be a leadership that's getting millions of dollars in funding." And they started sort of laughing.

SRDJA POPOVIC: So we spent probably one hour fooling him about some stuff, and the reason for this was that we were not very comfortable about giving the details about the organization to the foreigner.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: And then they explained to me, you know, why there's no quote "leader" – to keep it away from the government. The government doesn't know who's in charge. And I later found out I was talking to the leader, Srdja Popovic.

CAPTION: Srdja Popovic was a founder of the Serbian resistance movement OTPOR.

SRDJA POPOVIC: When Bob Helvey gave us the Gene Sharp's politics of nonviolent action, we were quite amazed. Partly, I was ashamed that I didn't know about such a book before, even if there was a translation of From Dictatorship to Democracy in Serbian, but I never seen it, and seeing the knowledge of how power operates, and pillars of the support operates, and all this stuff we needed to learn the hard way throughout our experience, written systematically on one place was quite an amazing thing, and from that moment I knew I will read it even if it was quite a fat book, but I didn't know how much it can influence the way we think and also I didn't know how useful it will be in developing our own future trainings. It's obvious that we are a majority. If we can just recognize all of those who are against Milosevic by saluting each other with a fist, he would probably be over within a few years.

SUBTITLE: For ten years, I've been trying to remove this stain. Believe me, I tried everything. Now there is a new washer that has an excellent program that reliably and forever removes this and similar stains. See! It works! Finally! He's finished!

CAPTION: Lesson 2: Overcome "Atomisation"

GENE SHARP: "Atomisation" is when a regime attempts to make every individual in this society an isolated unit. It's one of the main ways that took over their systems, seek to control their populations, make them all fear each other, fearing to speak out and to act together, never telling your neighbor or even sometimes a family member what you really think.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: And that's why it's so important that you begin with these very, very low risk activities so that people can put their foot forward for the first time, put their toe in the water of revolutionary change. That's the foundation that we work on is changing the obedience patterns, moving the obedience to a willing obedience rather than a coerced obedience.

GENE SHARP: By seeing the example of the demonstrations of bravery by other people, now it's 'we.' Now it's we, and we can do something that I alone could not.

SRDJA POPOVIC: During '96-'97, we were walking day after day after day, and the police was walking streets, and our numbers would start falling because it was obviously too boring for the people to demonstrate every day in harsh winter, so we said, "Okay, why won't we go home and try to make noise from our balconies." So we start hitting pots and pans, and it spread like fire throughout Belgrade and other cities and radio stations were, you know, transmitting, "Oh, it is very loud in this neighborhood. All these people are using the loudspeakers. Oh, there is a disco club joining the protest." We were doing it from 7.30 until 8.00 pm as a response to the state TV news. We don't watch your crap. We do our own thing. From the pots and pans to doing the stickers, so the stickers can be doing in every building, and also the things like, you know, "Will you go and prosecute the kids for wearing OTPOR t-shirts when there is not one single law which bans wearing anything on a t-shirt?" So for the policemen, getting inside high schools and arresting high school kids only because they were wearing the t-shirt and then going home and talking to their wife whose friend was complaining because her son was arrested. Getting a dialogue of your kids was coming now from his school where nobody wants to spend time with him or her because her father is now beating kids from my neighborhood. And now, you know, this systemic oppression doesn't work.

CAPTION: Lesson 3: Pillars of Support

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: These pillars are holding up the government like my fingers are holding up this book, and I developed a strategy to undermine each of those pillars: the police, the Sanghar, the religious institutions, the workers, whatever; every organization. And as they weaken and start to collapse, the government will collapse when those pillars are broken. Ideally, we want those pillars not destroyed, but transferred over to the democratic movement.

SRDJA POPOVIC: If you want these pillars to shift sides, you need to co-opt people. You can co-opt people by two means. If you put a price on what they are doing for the sake of the regime or give them the clear message that there will be a place for them in the future society. It's exactly what OTPOR was done. We were telling the police that we are both victims of the same system. They're pushed to do things they wouldn't like to do. We are pushed to the streets instead of sitting in the classrooms. There is no reason to have war between victims and victims. One of the victims wear blue uniforms. Other victims wear blue jeans, but there is no reason for this conflict. And this worked, really worked. And it worked in Georgia. It worked in Ukraine. It worked in many other places in the world. This is the way you do. You go and co-opt from this course of pillars. You don't throw stones at the police.

CAPTION: Lesson 4: Resist Violence

GENE SHARP: The many people in conflict situations that would like to use violence, but their opponents really have more military weapons and weapons of violence, usually physical weapons, than the potential resistors have, the resistors choose to fight with violence. Their opponent has all the advantages in that situation because you're choosing to fight with your opponent's best weapons, but you can choose to fight with a totally different kind of weapon in these nonviolent forms, which are much more difficult for the opponent to counteract.

SRDJA POPOVIC: It's really difficult to build a nonviolent march because what you need is only one agent provocateur or only one lunatic or drunk person throwing stones at the police. So my question

is: You have 20,000 peaceful demonstrators and one idiot breaking out a window. These people got all the media, so this is the message which can efficiently undermine your movement. Big concentration tactics are very difficult to control. So what we were dealing with is like you would go on a march, and there is a risk of the people getting arrested, so what would you normally do? Instead of putting the big guys in front, you will put the girls in front. You will put the grandmas in front. You will put the military veterans in front, so the police is now faced with the friendly faces. And these people are actually carrying the flowers and the banners and smiling. So you make the situation less threatening, so you make the possibility of a violent outcome very small. October the 5th should be seen in the context of successful strategy, and that was not the day like many spectators or media, like CNN. They just see it as a big bunch of people, revolution, boom, and it's all over. It was, first of all, ten years of attempts and failures and two years of resistance, four or five different campaigns and we were setting the victory on the elections. We knew that Milosevic will lose, and we knew that he will not accept the fact that he has lost. So there was this ten days of increasing pressure that was very important because, not only we brought all the country to a standstill including the general strikes efficiently dragged down the 70% of electrical power, and if you look to the Gene's mechanisms, this is called 'nonviolent coercion.' So first, you try to convert somebody. Then you try to accommodate somebody, and then you go to the coercion. In nonviolent coercion, you're open. In this case, Milosevic was ready to continue to struggle. In fact, orders were given to the police to react against the people, but people were not responding to these orders because the policemen will know if they shoot into the crowd of hundreds of thousands of people including their own kids, they will go down to the sink together with Milosevic. They didn't want that to happen, but this is why this preparation period was so important because throughout this period, after victory in the elections and general strike, we will successfully explain to the people, in the police and in the military, that it is not again government against the opposition but this is people, this whole Serbian people against Milosevic. So around 3 pm, you hear like two to 300,000 people on the square, and there was a nonviolent takeover of the physically of this building. And this is where the people who broke into the building, on October the 5th, found many leaflets pre-marked for Milosevic. So this is where, you know, actually the physical cheat was taking place on the second floor of this building. It was more like symbolic takeover because what was the real takeover was that Milosevic lost power that day because police disobeyed, because he ordered the military to get through the barracks after 3 pm and they disobeyed. This is where he lost the power. What you are looking at on the TV, and physical overtaking of the building, was just a symbol of him losing authority that day.

SRDJA POPOVIC: I think what we learned from Bob, and what comes and derives from Gene Sharp, thinking and writing influence the way we think, and also made our struggle more efficient in a very important point when we were preparing for a resistive struggle. And yes, I think what Bob and Gene are doing are precious around the world, and we strongly believe that the nonviolent revolutions cannot be exported or imported, but the knowledge on how to successfully implement nonviolent struggle can and is transferred from one group to another as we speak.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: Well, I felt good that here was a revolution that occurred non-violently. There was no violence on the part of the democratic opposition, and it shows that what Gene was talking about year after year after year. There are realistic alternatives to violent conflict.

CAPTION: Srdja and his colleagues formed a new organization, CANVAS, to teach the lessons learned during the Serbian revolution,

SRDJA POPOVIC: Well, I mean, after Serbia, we were working with Georgians and Ukrainians and Lebanese and Maldivians and Iranians and Zimbabweans and Colombians and Guatemalans and West Papuans and the groups from places in the world I couldn't literally find on a map.

SUBTITLE: If you are disgusted, don't worry. There is 'Girifna' soap bar! It's not going to be easy after 20 years without change. You will have to scrub and scrub. Then squeeze and squeeze and squeeze. But you will like that result. 'Girifna' soap bar for the future of Sudan!

GENE SHARP: Then from Serbia, the news spread to Georgia, which was under a very repressive regime, and then to Ukraine, which again had problems, and it spread there, and then to a series of other countries in the southern tier of the former Soviet Union.

CAPTION: Volodymyr Viatrovych was a leader of the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.

VOLODYMYR VIATROVYCH (SUBTITLES): Among protest groups, there were different ideas including people who were ready for a violent option. Gene Sharp's book, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, teaches that dictators must be fought with nonviolent means. This idea was important. It helped form the Orange Revolution. Gene's book was known only to about 10,000 people, but his ideas were used by hundreds of thousands who never knew these ideas were from Gene Sharp. Even if people don't know who Gene Sharp is, if they know his ideas, it makes him influential in the world.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: They've been waiting for this! They've been waiting for this knowledge! And Gene provided it.

INTERVIEWER: How did it feel watching your work spread?

GENE SHARP: Oh, that spread was really quite remarkable. I always think, I'm still amazed. I'm still amazed. To have this piece that I regarded as very introductory – I think it's maybe 70 or 80 pages – to take off like that was a confirmation that the analysis was more or less accurate. It didn't spread because of good propaganda or some sales pitch. It spread because people found it usable. They found it important.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I worked with some people in Venezuela, I worked with some people from Zimbabwe, I worked with people from Iraq, Iran, Tibetans and possibly a few others, and in most of that work I was promoting basically Gene Sharp's work and the idea of strategic planning.

BOB HELVEY'S NEIGHBOUR: When we first moved in here next to Bob, I was always afraid that someone would try to come in and get rid of him because he'd been all over the world doing all sorts of things. We bought weapons to defend ourselves. I was afraid they'd get the wrong house and we'd be done.

INTERVIEWER: What did you buy?

BOB HELVEY'S NEIGHBOUR: I bought an AR15 and a shotgun and some other weapons.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: That's not all he's got.

BOB HELVEY'S NEIGHBOUR: Well, my wife wanted a pistol, and we were trying to decide which would be the right choice, and I was talking to Bob about it over the wall, and he brought me like 13 or 14 pistols and he said, "Why don't you use this for this or this for this." It's pretty interesting. I had no idea he was so well armed.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: We could send off the Army up here.

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): There has been more done by nonviolent struggle to liberate people from communist dictatorships and other kinds of dictatorships than anything the Pentagon has done with all of its billions and billions of dollars for 40 years, and yet we can't even get a five or ten million dollar budget to do some research in this field. I finally concluded, after many years, instead of spending my time trying to raise the money, which was usually fruitless, I would concentrate on the quality of my work and the amount of work I was able to produce, and people could see that work was important, and they could also see that it was important that we receive funding.

JAMILA RAQIB: We've had sort of a drying up of resources, and we've had a lot of difficulty in getting financial support for this type of work. For example, a story that I heard that a foundation was exploring the possibility of funding or work, and then I think there was some calls put into their attorneys and very quickly they said, "Sorry, we can't do this." And I think they feel that it's getting into a territory where you're moving beyond development and sort of building civil society and helping organizations. You're really trying to bring down a government.

CAPTION: As Gene's work spread, his books came under attack by dictatorships all over the world.

GENE SHARP: We had no contacts in Russia. Somehow or other, 'From Dictatorship To Democracy' got into Russia. This new translation was in a print shop in Moscow and was being printed. While the presses were operating, the FSB raided the print shop. The FSB was the new version of the KGB, and he looked at this item in the presses, he ordered the presses to stop, and denounced the publication. He says that book is a 'bomb.' The page proofs were taken to another printing press outside of Moscow and nevertheless printed. And they were on sale in Moscow and two independent bookstores intended to publish dissident literature when they could. Quite remarkably, both of those print shops caught fire very quickly, and that was the fate of free press in Russia publishing 'From Dictatorship to Democracy.'

JAMILA RAQIB: One thing that makes me very comfortable is that the books are there. The literature is there. It's online. It's in people's homes and people's hard-drives, and it's being disseminated at a level where that cannot stop, and it cannot be stopped. People go to great lengths to discredit this work, and there was one case where President Chavez had referred to our staff as the 'Bunch of Gringos' at the Albert Einstein Institution don't understand Venezuela. And I thought, "Well, it's true that we may not fully understand the situation in Venezuela. It's probably quite complex, but I'm not a gringo." And we also were accused in a book for having trained paramilitaries that were being sent to assassinate President Chavez and that that training happened on a farm in Colombia – a country I've never been to, and I have never even held a gun, and, you know, it's all very strange.

PRESIDENT CHAVEZ (ARCHIVE) (SUBTITLES): Gene Sharp, George Bush, the ideologies and their 'soft coup,' ladies and gentlemen, here in Venezuela, this plan, forget it! The last thing that could happen is a revolutionary explosion.

JAMILA RAQIB: I have not trained paramilitaries, no ... no.

CAPTION: In 2008, the Iranian government broadcast a propaganda film. They accused Gene of being a CIA agent.

SUBTITLE: Gene Sharp, the theoretician of civil disobedience and velvet revolutions, who has published treatises on this subject, he is one of the CIA agents in charge of America's infiltration into other countries.

GENE SHARP: Well, you've seen our office. You can see how well funded we are (laughs). No, I was very delicately offered funds from the CIA at one point but I said, "No," and we have never had any funding or support from the CIA. It just didn't happen. We don't do that.

JAMILA RAQIB: The video that appeared on the Iranian state-owned television alleging that Gene Sharp was involved with plans to bring down the Iranian regime, when I first saw it, of course, in a way, I was impressed that we were on the radar, that they had Gene Sharp sitting at the White House, and in a way I thought I wish those in the White House would listen to us. I wish they would request a meeting with us. But they don't. We sit here. We operate out of our Tourem office. We have no connection with the White House.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I was not a member of the CIA. Never have been, never will be, and if you don't believe me, go fuck yourself.

JAMILA RAQIB: We are absolutely not a CIA front organization, and it's really ironic because we see this charge in the press and among various groups quite often, and we always wonder, where is this coming from?

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: Hey, you think I'm running, you know, clandestine movements all over the world from here with my two dogs? I will admit that I've got two smart god damn dogs, and I sit here on my fucking hillside, and I don't bother anybody, but if somebody comes and says, you know, "We need your help," if I can help, I'll help.

NEWS REPORTER: There are thousands upon thousands of people streaming down through the main boulevard all heading in the same direction. It's quite something. They're waving green flags. People are hanging out of cars giving the 'V' for victory sign. I was not sure people would turn up given the warning, and I'm wrong.

CAPTION: Lesson 5: Political Ju-Jitsu

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): When people are slaughtered, when they are beaten, this produces a process of what I call 'Political Ju-Jitsu,' in which the opponent's supposed strength is used to

undermine the opponent by alienating more people from supporting that regime, mobilizing more people into the act of resistance.

CAPTION: In June 2009, Neda, a young student, was shot by an Iranian Government sniper.

GENE SHARP: It's a kind of backlash effect. If the regime is so brutal, and instead of intimidating people which the regime intends, it causes other population groups and institutions to withdraw their cooperation and their obedience and that loss of power and control that more people are joining the resistance.

CAPTION: Iason Athanasiadis was arrested by Iranian Intelligence while reporting the 'Green' uprising.

IASON ATHANASIADIS: When I went to see the Chief Prosecutor on the second day that I was in prison, he looked at me when I took off my blindfold, sitting in his office, and he said, "Do you know why you're here?" And I said, "No, I mean, I've no idea. I've just been arrested", you know, "two nights ago." And he said, "Well there's a very serious accusation against you." And I said, "What is that?" And he said, "Are you sure you don't know?" Espionage." The interrogator kind of patted his laptop and said, "You know, this laptop contains a Persian language translation of Gene Sharp's 'From Dictatorship To Democracy,' which is a handbook for insurrectionists, and it gives them several dozen easy ways by which, if they only follow these ways, they can overthrow a government, a legitimate government, any kind of government. And I have read this book and so have my colleagues."

CAPTION: The leaders of the Iranian uprising were charged with using more than 100 of Gene Sharp's 198 nonviolent weapons.

JAMILA RAQIB: We see people in many countries in many situations that feel there is nothing they can do and that the steps they can take are mainly in, sort of, waiting for an external group to assist them in their liberation or to come in and help them by some means. And what this work does is show people that they themselves can be responsible for their own future, for their own liberation.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: People are beginning to liberate themselves, you know. They don't have to depend on an outside power. This is Srdja, my cat, named after Srdja Popovic. But they don't have to depend on an outside power. They can do it themselves, and can you imagine how good that makes a country feel? That we did it ourselves. And that's why it's so important that we transfer this skill and knowledge. There's no reason for the United States to be occupying anybody. We're not good at occupying anybody. Neither was the Soviet Union good at occupying people. Let the people alone. Give them the power to change their government if they want it changed.

JAMILA RAQIB: To be counted as a threat to a tyrant is a matter of pride, I would say. It means we're effective. It means we're relevant. It means out of this very small office we produce work that threatens regimes, and I think that's pretty cool. Yeah.

GENE SHARP: As my writings and research on this became more disseminated, we found people coming to us and asking us what to do. And people may be a little surprised. I don't tell them what to

do, because if I can tell you what to do and you do it, someone else can come next week and tell you the opposite and you do that instead, you know, but you can learn.

CAPTION: In 2006, the Egyptian Democracy group 'Kefaya' visited Gene in Boston. In 2010, former Serbian revolutionaries continued training new groups. Ahmed Maher was a leader of the April 6th democracy movement in Egypt.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): We were waiting for the event that would ignite a spark - that would trigger a large movement of the people. We were waiting for it, and it turned out to be Tunisia. There has always been a rivalry between Egypt and Tunisia in football. So we asked ourselves, "if we had started all this before Tunisia, why was Tunisia having its revolution before us?" Everyone was posting on the internet, 'the answer is Tunisia!' Of course, Gene Sharp's books had a huge impact, and there were other books and films we acquired from the internet, talking about the idea of powerful nonviolent struggle. So there were many inspirations for this idea. Our situation was different from OTPOR. Before their revolution, OTPOR won over the police and army. We were different. There was a very big battle with the police. The army was standing on the sidelines the whole time so our experience was very different to Serbia.

GENE SHARP: When I saw the developments in Egypt, I was quite amazed because they seemed so determined having been overrun time and time again, asserted "I'm not afraid", and many people were saying, "I'm not afraid." When I'd seen extreme brutality, I expected either the persons may not come back in again and they submit or they may – some may go with the violence, especially when there have been some scattered violence in the square.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): The most important tactics we used to break the fear was through active participation, coming to demonstrations and taking part in activities. People came from all over the place, and then they'd be arrested, which would make them even stronger. Technology played a heavy part in communicating our message. Technology played a part in our internal structure for contacting people in the provinces. We could hold meetings via a secret group on Facebook - or use Skype to stay in continuous contact. All these things helped in the dissemination of ideas. What is it that made the army support us in the end? The army, at the end of the day, comes from the people. Those in the army are part of the people, and the army has an important national role. Perhaps the role of the police was more to do with rigging elections and protecting the corrupt. They were keen to protect themselves and ensure their survival. I was just coming back to Tahrir Square, and there was a cafeteria with its TV on very loudly, and the speech was being broadcast live.

EGYPTIAN DIALOGUE (POLITICIANS SPEECH) (SUBTITLES): In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate. My fellow citizens, during these difficult circumstances that our country is experiencing, President Hosni Mubarak has decided to step down from the office of President of the Republic.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): I went mad with joy when I heard the speech. I sat crying, at last. At last! The dream we've had for years, what we've endured for it. I ran into the square shouting. All the people were crying, screaming, dancing, singing. It was a historic moment. I was in disbelief. Is this possible?

GENE SHARP: But somebody knew what they were doing, and we don't need anyone claiming credit for us or me or anyone if it's not deserved and if it's not documented.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Massacre in Juma, 15 so far killed. This is a video of a kid that'd been shot at. One boy was shouting, "My brother, my brother!"

CAPTION: Ausama Monajed is a leader of the Syrian uprising. His group has placed secret cameras all over Syria.

AUSAMA MONAJED: It's just a basic HD camera linked to a satellite modem, and we upload it on streaming websites where we can get the live feed, and we managed to get this Al Jazeera today. They've been broadcasting the live images we were able to provide them with because they cannot send their journalists. No one can, you know, not a new uplink, not a single media uplink. They can't send anyone or get any permission to film or yet be there to verify.

AUSAMA MONAJED: The reporter there on the CNN, I was talking with her just liaising what's took place, what was going to happen and what information we can provide and the videos you've seen, they're on CNN. We have some people uploading these videos are now on CNN, on Al Jazeera here, or Arabic or Jazeera English, ABC, About France, 24, BBC, Sky. So we have someone uploading these videos on their website, and we already in contact with various media. Now they need confirmation of videos or fact verification or eyewitness accounts, we can provide that. Without the modern technology, you wouldn't be able to make it, absolutely. I think Gene would have killed it in the bud. Gene Sharp's tactics and theories are being practiced on the streets of Syria as we speak now. The dynamics that the regime is facing in Syria is what Gene Sharp spoke about, and what we've seen in the early weeks and that was what empowered people and made them believe more in nonviolent struggle – that this is going to work, and it is working. What we did is promote these tactics and explain them to people through the Facebook pages that we have and also the YouTube channels. This is how they're applied, from putting flowers on the spots where fallen heroes fell, and frustrations from the campaign while you marched, from cleaning streets and making it, you know, nicer and better because we can do something even better than the regime can do in terms of services, so yeah. From Dictatorship To Democracy gives you the inspiration, the assurances that this could really be achieved and this can really happen.

CAPTION: After the killing of hundreds of Syrian protestors, Ausama travelled to Boston to meet Gene.

AUSAMA MONAJED: We're going to see Gene Sharp, and there's some, you know, critical questions we have in mind. I know he might be reluctant to comment on a specific country situation because he always says, "I do not have enough knowledge and the local issues and background info experience." But there are strategic questions on a macro level that we are facing, and it will be very helpful to get his insight at least. Well, here we are, trying to find a place, and here's a parking place in here we can park. Perfect.

INTERVIEWER: When were you last here?

AUSAMA MONAJED: I can't remember exactly. Was it 2007 or 2006? Yeah, years ago, when it was only a few people thinking about nonviolent resistance scenario, and only quite a few believed this can really happen in a country like Syria. Ok. All set.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Hi.

JAMILA RAQIB: Hi Ausam, how are you?

AUSAMA MONAJED: Good. Good to see you.

JAMILA RAQIB: Please come in.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Gene.

GENE SHARP: Hello.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Hi.

GENE SHARP: How are you?

AUSAMA MONAJED: Hi, good to see you again. Good to see you. Good to see you.

GENE SHARP: Good to see you.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Good to see you too. How are you doing?

GENE SHARP: Not too bad.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Health-wise?

GENE SHARP: I'm coping.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Perfect. Good to see you. All right, so we've got some work questions, advices, so we're...

GENE SHARP: No advices.

AUSAMA MONAJED: No advices?

GENE SHARP: No advices.

AUSAMA MONAJED: All right.

GENE SHARP: I'm happy to see you. It was so good you have time in your schedule to come to say, "Hello."

AUSAMA MONAJED: Well, the pleasure is mine. I was really delighted, and I can tell you there's a lot to talk about.

GENE SHARP: This is new territory for us, too.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Yeah.

GENE SHARP: We've never been there personally. The cases we've studied don't exactly match.

AUSAMA MONAJED: He's so humble and down to earth to a limit that you feel how amazing this is, like all these great writings coming from a very tiny little office in Old Boston. It's rather interesting.

GENE SHARP: Maybe there's one thing that's been "learned" in quotation mark, may become Tunisia and Egypt, which I think is a mistake, a major mistake. And that is that the existing ruler has to resign. He doesn't have to resign. You take all the supports from out from under him, he falls with no matter what he wants to do. This is the distinction in the analyses between nonviolent coercion, in which he has to resign but he's forced into it, and disintegration, when the regime simply falls apart. There's nobody left with enough power to resign and stubborn so and so to resign. It may prolong the time he stays in some control, and even at the end, if he resigns with conditions, as they did in Egypt, that still gives him some control, even after he's physically gone from the powers.

AUSAMA MONAJED: If Einstein was the genius in physics, so Gene Sharp is the genius in freedoms and how to achieve freedoms.

CAPTION: Lesson 6: Don't Give Up

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I feel good in a way that we're spreading the word, and if people follow Gene's advice on how to think about waging a nonviolent struggle, sooner or later, they'll win. See, the advantage that we have using this form of struggle, the people against the tyrant. As long as we don't surrender, we never lose, and that's a key. As long as you haven't given up, you haven't lost.

JAMILA RAQIB: I think, in the long term, Gene Sharp will be a household name. I think his books will be in every library in the world, and they will be translated into most languages. Can we survive until then? Can this institution survive until then? Well, we certainly hope so.

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): Politically significant nonviolent action has occurred in at least the following countries: Guatemala, Australia, Thailand, Burma, China, Japan...

GENE SHARP: ...Georgia, Iran, Kurdistan, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, and there's bound to be a couple more.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I think there's the father-daughter relationship developing there. They can sit down and talk, and they're on the same wavelength. She protects him, and I think she loves him as a daughter who loves a father.

JAMILA RAQIB: Gene Sharp is someone who is, of course, my personal mentor, but I think he has served as that role for multitudes of people. He is someone who has dedicated his life to providing the means by which oppressed people can self-reliantly gain liberation, and that is something which I believe has changed the world and will continue to do so in dramatic ways, and I look forward to witnessing that and hopefully contributing to that. It's really personal stuff.

GENE SHARP: Sometimes people ask me what I really want. Do I have a dream? And I do. I dream that the oppressed people of the world will be able to learn from the available records and new experiences that this type of nonviolent struggle can be used to liberate all oppression and replace military and violent conflicts, so that you won't have to carry on struggles against terrorism anymore because the people who might have become terrorists have instead chosen to use this kind of struggle to help out the oppressed people. This can change the local systems throughout the world. My name is Gene Sharp, and that is my dream.

[End]

HOW TO START A REVOLUTION

[Transcript | 52-minute version]

NARRATOR: In 2011, the Arab Spring Revolutions swept across the Middle East - from Tunisia to Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria. For more than 50 years, a quiet American scholar has been helping people bring down their dictators. His tactics of nonviolent resistance have been used in revolutions from Serbia to Ukraine and Iran.

JAMILA RAQIB: To be counted as a threat to a tyrant is a matter of pride, I would say. It means we're effective. It means we're relevant.

NARRATOR: This is the story of the power of people to change their world, the modern revolution, and the man behind it all.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Gene Sharp's tactics and theories are being practiced on the streets of Syria as we speak now.

GENE SHARP: My name is Gene Sharp, and this is the work I do.

TITLE: How to Start a Revolution

INTERVIEWER: What do you do? How would you describe your work?

GENE SHARP: Oh, that's always a problem, describing my work. Primarily, I try to understand the nature and potential of nonviolent forms of struggle to undermine dictatorships.

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): This is a technique of combat. It is a substitute for war and other violence.

NARRATOR: His handbook to revolution – From Dictatorship to Democracy – has been smuggled across borders and downloaded hundreds of thousands of times.

GENE SHARP: We don't know quite how it's read, but it certainly did into 30 some languages in different parts of the world on all continents except Antarctica.

NARRATOR: The hallmarks of Gene Sharp's work can be seen in revolutions all over the world.

CAPTION: Colors and symbols, signs in English, civil disobedience and commitment to nonviolent action.

NARRATOR: Gene's books contain a list of 198 nonviolent methods of resistance.

GENE SHARP: Oh, the famous 198 methods. There seems to have been an extraordinary response. That's simply the 198 specific methods. These specific forms of abstract are economic boycott, are

civil disobedience, are protests. Exactly the counterpart of military, different kinds of military guns or bombs, any military struggle. Unless they have something instead of violence and war, they will go back with violence and war every time.

NARRATOR: In 1983, Gene Sharp founded the Albert Einstein Institution to spread the knowledge of nonviolent struggle. For years, people living under dictatorships have been coming here to East Boston for help. Jamila Raqib has worked for Gene for more than 10 years.

JAMILA RAQIB: I began learning about the work at a very basic level. I did most of my reading and learning as soon as I started working at the institution, and I was hooked.

GENE SHARP: I didn't start out to do this. I had a religious background that led me to want to leave the world in a bit of a better place and better condition than when I came here, and how to do that was always a problem.

NARRATOR: In 1952, Gene was sent to jail for refusing conscription to fight in the Korean War.

GENE SHARP: I had a two-year sentence. I did nine months and ten days. In those days you counted the days as well as the month, but I don't think that my action there did any good whatsoever. It was just to keep my sense of my own integrity so I would carry on in the work that I thought was really important. I never met Einstein, but I wrote to him. I don't know how I got his address. I said, "Well, I'm about to do such and such and go to prison, but by the way I've written this book on Gandhi - three quite different cases from each other about Gandhi's using nonviolent struggle for a greater freedom through just nonviolent means." And he wrote back that he very much hoped, but couldn't know, that he would have made the same decision I did, and he would be willing to look at the manuscript which I had sent to him, and he did so and wrote a very kind introduction to the book.

NARRATOR: While studying at Oxford, Gene had his Eureka moment - a new analysis of the power of people to bring down a tyrant.

GENE SHARP: If you can identify the sources of a government's power, such as legitimacy, such as popular support, such as the institutional support, and then you know on what that dictatorship depends for its existence. And since all those sources of power are dependent upon the good will, co-operation, obedience, and help of people and institutions, then your job becomes fairly simple. All you have to do is shrink that support, and that legitimacy, that co-operation, that obedience, and the regime will be weakened, and if you can take those sources far away, the regime will fall.

INTERVIEWER: And how did you feel at that point?

GENE SHARP: At the point, that Eureka point?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

GENE SHARP: Oh, greatly relieved. Greatly relieved because that's what made it all reality.

NARRATOR: While teaching his theories at Harvard, Gene was about to meet an unlikely champion of his work - Vietnam War hero, Colonel Bob Helvey.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I first met Gene Sharp at Harvard University. I was an Army Senior Fellow up there for a year, and one day I saw a notice on the bulletin board about a program for nonviolent sanctions at two o'clock this afternoon. So I had nothing to do, so I went to see who these peace necks were and to confirm my preconceived notion that they probably had rings in their noses and ears and dirty. And so I went up there just to see them, and surprisingly they weren't there. I saw regular looking people there. And a few minutes after we all sat down, this little short, soft-spoken gentleman comes to the front of the room and says, "My name is Gene Sharp, and we're here today to discuss how to seize political power and deny it to others."

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): I say nonviolent struggle is armed struggle, and we have to take back that term from those advocates of violence who try to justify with pretty words that kind of combat. Only with this type of struggle, one fights with psychological weapons, social weapons, economic weapons, and political weapons and that this is ultimately more powerful against oppression, injustice, and tyranny than is violence.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: That got my attention. This is the flag of the 5th Battalion, 7th United States Cavalry. The 7th Cav, as you know, was the Regiment of General Armstrong Custer who fought and died at the battle of Little Big Horn. That's me in my younger days. A full head of hair. This is the award for the Distinguished Service Cross that I got in Vietnam.

NARRATOR: In 1968, Bob was deployed in Vietnam. He was decorated for bravery during a Vietcong ambush. But his experiences there would change his views on the way conflicts should be waged.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I think Vietnam influenced my view about the importance of nonviolent struggle, and particularly the importance of getting Gene Sharp's ideas out to the rest of the world, because we must have an alternative. Vietnam convinced me that we need to have an alternative to killing people.

NARRATOR: As a US defense official in Burma, Bob had seen the military dictatorship there persecute the minority Karen people. After leaving the army, Bob travelled back to the rebel camps to teach the Karen Gene's lessons in nonviolent resistance.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I was talking to one of the Karen Commandos and he says, "Where in the hell has this information been? We've been fighting and killing people for 20 years. How come we didn't know this?" Some of the Burmese came up to him and asked if he would write something for the Burmese on how to move from a dictatorship to a democracy. That's the origin of why the book was written: the Burmese.

GENE SHARP: I couldn't write about Burma honestly because I didn't know Burma well, and he said not to write about something you don't know anything about, so I had to write generically. If there was a movement that wanted to bring a dictatorship to an end, how could they do it? And so I wrote

those theories, and they were serialized there and published in English and in Burmese, and I thought that was it.

NARRATOR: In 1989, Gene travelled to China at the height of the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. It would shape his views about the importance of planning and strategy.

CAPTION: Lesson 1: Plan a Strategy

GENE SHARP: I'd gone to Beijing after the Tiananmen Square protests were well underway. That whole event, which it should be remembered, was not just in Beijing but reportedly in 350 other cities of China, similar protests were going on. But they were not planned. They were not prepared. There was no strategic decision. There was no advanced decision how long you stay in the square and when you leave. The students had no plan. They were improvising all the way through, and later on we know that many of those Chinese people who were out on the streets, in another day, were shot and killed. The attitude that you simply improvise and improvisation will bring you greater success is nonsense. Exactly the opposite. That if you don't know what you're doing, you're likely to get into big trouble.

NARRATOR: The government of Slobodan Milosevic, in Serbia, presided over years of crimes against humanity and brutal internal repression. The regime fuelled the creation of new democracy groups in the country fighting for his removal.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I went to Budapest at the request of the International Republican Institute, which was providing support to the Serbian Opposition Movement, and one particular part of that opposition movement was OTPOR. That's a Serbian word for resistance.

SRDJA POPOVIC: He's a retired colonel, and he has this type of military approach, and the way he speaks is really something that creates a strange impression with a bunch of student leaders.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: We talked for a while, and I said: "Well, there's something missing here. We haven't talked about who's leader of this organization. Who is the leader?" And then one guy said: "We don't have a leader." And I said: "Well, wait a minute guys. I did not fall off the turnip truck coming over here. Somebody has to lead an organization that has mobilized the entire Serbian society."

SRDJA POPOVIC: So we spent probably one hour fooling him about some stuff, and the reason for this was that we were not very comfortable about giving the details about the organization to the foreigner.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: And then they explained to me, you know, why there's no quote "leader" – to keep it away from the government. The government doesn't know who's in charge. And I later found out I was talking to the leader, Srdja Popovic.

NARRATOR: Bob began teaching Gene Sharp's lessons to the new Serbian revolutionaries.

SRDJA POPOVIC: When Bob Helvey gave us the Gene Sharp's politics of nonviolent action, we were quite amazed. Partly I was ashamed that I didn't know about such a book before, even if there was a translation of From Dictatorship to Democracy in Serbian, but I had never seen it. And seeing the knowledge of how power operates, and pillars of the support operates, and all this stuff, we needed to learn the hard way throughout our experience – written systematically on one place was quite an amazing thing.

NARRATOR: One of OTPOR's first tasks was to create a symbol of resistance to help unify the people.

SRDJA POPOVIC: It's obvious that we are a majority. If we can just recognize all of those who are against Milosevic by saluting each other with a fist, he would probably be over within a few years.

GENE SHARP: "Atomisation" is when a regime attempts to make every individual in this society an isolated unit. It's one of the main ways that took over their systems, seek to control their populations, make them all fear each other, fearing to speak out and to act together, never telling your neighbor or even sometimes a family member what you really think. By seeing the example of the demonstration and bravery by other people, now it's 'we.' Now it's we, and we can do something that I alone could not.

SRDJA POPOVIC: During the '96-'97, we were walking day after day after day, and the police was walking streets, and our numbers would start falling because it was obviously too boring for the people to demonstrate every day in harsh winter. So we said: "Okay, why won't we go home and try to make noise from our balconies." We were doing it from 7.30 until 8.00 pm as a response to the state TV news. We don't watch your crap. We do our own thing. From the pots and pans to doing the stickers, so the stickers can be doing in every building, and also the things like, you know, "Will you go and prosecute the kids for wearing OTPOR t-shirts when there is not one single law which bans wearing anything on a t-shirt?" So for the policemen, getting inside high schools and arresting high school kids only because they were wearing the t-shirt, and then going home and talking to their wife whose friend was complaining because her son was arrested. Getting a dialogue of your kids was coming now from his school where nobody wants to spend time with him or her because her father is now beating kids from my neighborhood. And now, you know, this systemic oppression doesn't work.

CAPTION: Lesson 3: Pillars of Support

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: These pillars are holding up the government like my fingers are holding up this book, and I developed a strategy to undermine each of those pillars: the police, the Sanghar, the religious institutions, the workers, whatever, every organization. And as they weaken and start to collapse, the government will collapse when those pillars are broken. Ideally we want those pillars not destroyed, but transferred over to the democratic movement.

SRDJA POPOVIC: If you want these pillars to shift sides, you need to co-opt people. You can co-opt people by two means. If you put a price on what they are doing for the sake of the regime or give them the clear message that there will be a place for them in the future society. It's exactly what OTPOR was done. We were telling the police that we are both victims of the same system. They're pushed to do things they wouldn't like to do. We are pushed to the streets instead of sitting in the

classrooms. There is no reason to have war between victims and victims. One of the victims wear blue uniforms. Other victims wear blue jeans, but there is no reason for this conflict. And this worked, really worked. And it worked in Georgia. It worked in Ukraine. It worked in many other places in the world. This is the way you do. You go and co-opt from this course of pillars. You don't throw stones at the police.

CAPTION: Lesson 4: Resist Violence

GENE SHARP: The many people in conflict situations that would like to use violence, but their opponents really have more military weapons and weapons of violence, usually physical weapons, than the potential resistors have, the resistors choose to fight with violence. Their opponent has all the advantages in that situation because you're choosing to fight with your opponent's best weapons. But you can choose to fight with a totally different kind of weapon in these nonviolent forms, which are much more difficult for the opponent to counteract.

SRDJA POPOVIC: You have 20,000 peaceful demonstrators and one idiot breaking out a window. These people got all the media. So this is the message which can efficiently undermine your movement. You would go on a march and there is a risk of the people getting arrested, so what would you normally do? Instead of putting the big guys in front, you will put the girls in front, you will put the grandmas in front, you will put the military veterans in front, so the police is now faced with the friendly faces. And these people are actually carrying the flowers and the banners and smiling, so you make the situation less threatening, so you make the possibility of a violent outcome very small. October the 5th should be seen in the context of successful strategy, and that was not the day like many spectators or media, like CNN. They just see it as a big bunch of people, revolution, boom, and it's all over. It was, first of all, ten years of attempts and failures, and two years of resistance, four or five different campaigns, and we were setting the victory on the elections.

NARRATOR: In September 2000, Serbia went to the polls. But OTPOR expected Milosevic would fix the election.

SRDJA POPOVIC: We knew that Milosevic will lose, and we knew that he will not accept the fact that he has lost. So around 3 pm, you hear like two to 300,000 people on the square, and there was a nonviolent takeover of the physically of this building. And this is where the people who broke into the building, on October the 5th, found many leaflets pre-marked for Milosevic. So this is where, you know, actually the physical cheat was taking place on the second floor of this building. It was more like a symbolic takeover because what was the real takeover was that Milosevic lost power that day because police disobeyed, because he ordered the military to get through the barracks after 3 pm and they disobeyed. This is where he lost the power. What you are looking at on the TV, and physical overtaking of the building, was just a symbol of him losing authority that day. I think what we learned from Bob, and what comes and derives from Gene Sharp, thinking and writing influence the way we think, and also made our struggle more efficient in a very important point when we were preparing for a resistive struggle. And yes, I think what Bob and Gene are doing are precious around the world, and we strongly believe that the nonviolent revolutions cannot be exported or imported, but the knowledge on how to successfully implement nonviolent struggle can and is transferred from one group to another as we speak. Well, I mean, after Serbia, we were working with Georgians and Ukrainians and Lebanese and Maldivians and Iranians and Zimbabweans and Colombians and

Guatemalans and West Papuans and the groups from places in the world I couldn't literally find on a map.

GENE SHARP: Then, from Serbia, the news spread to Georgia, which was under a very repressive regime, and then to Ukraine, which again had problems, and it spread there, and then to a series of other countries in the southern tier of the former Soviet Union.

NARRATOR: Vlodymyr Viatrovich was a leader of Ukraine's Orange Revolution. He used Gene's book to convince activists that there was a powerful alternative to violence.

VOLODYMYR VIATROVYCH (SUBTITLES): Among protest groups, there were different ideas, including people who were ready for a violent option. Gene Sharp's book, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, teaches that dictators must be fought with nonviolent means. This idea was important. It helped form the Orange Revolution. Gene's book was known only to about 10,000 people, but his ideas were used by hundreds of thousands who never knew these ideas were from Gene Sharp. Even if people don't know who Gene Sharp is, if they know his ideas, it makes him influential in the world.

NARRATOR: On the top floor of Gene's home is his orchid house – a refuge from the work below.

GENE SHARP: They take quite a bit of work. They became very important because it was something I could treat, as they needed to be treated, and not expecting miracles, but if you don't treat orchids right or anything else in life, then it's not going to thrive.

INTERVIEWER: How did it feel watching your work spread?

GENE SHARP: Oh, that spread was really quite remarkable. I always think, I'm still amazed. I'm still amazed. To have this piece that I regarded as very introductory – I think it's maybe 70 or 80 pages – to take off like that was a confirmation that the analysis was more or less accurate. It didn't spread because of good propaganda or some sales pitch. It spread because people found it usable. They found it important.

JAMILA RAQIB: One thing that makes me very comfortable is that the books are there. The literature is there. It's online. It's in people's homes and people's hard-drives, and it's being disseminated at a level where that cannot stop, and it cannot be stopped. People go to great lengths to discredit this work, and there was one case where President Chavez had referred to our staff as "the bunch of gringos at the Albert Einstein Institution don't understand Venezuela," and I thought: "Well, it's true that we may not fully understand the situation in Venezuela. It's probably quite complex, but I'm not a gringo."

PRESIDENT CHAVEZ (ARCHIVE) (SUBTITLES): Gene Sharp, George Bush, the ideologues and their 'soft coup,' ladies and gentlemen, here in Venezuela, this plan, forget it!

NARRATOR: In 2008, the Iranian government broadcast a propaganda video accusing Gene of working for the CIA.

IRANIAN PROPAGANDA VIDEO (SUBTITLES): Gene Sharp, the theoretician of civil disobedience and velvet revolutions, who has published treatises on this subject, he is one of the CIA agents in charge of America's infiltration into other countries.

GENE SHARP: Well, you've seen our office. You can see how well funded we are (laughs).

JAMILA RAQIB: In a way, I was impressed that we were on the radar, that they had Gene Sharp sitting at the White House, and in a way, I thought I wish those in the White House would listen to us. I wish they would request a meeting with us, but they don't. We sit here. We operate out of our Tourem office. We have no connection with the White House.

GENE SHARP: It just didn't happen. We don't do that.

JAMILA RAQIB: We are absolutely not a CIA front organization, and it's really ironic because we see this charge in the press and among various groups quite often, and we always wonder, where is this coming from?

NARRATOR: After the Iranian elections in 2009, opposition groups declared the result was a fix.

NEWS REPORTER: There are thousands upon thousands of people streaming down through the main boulevard all heading in the same direction. It's quite something. They're waving green flags. People are hanging out of cars giving the 'V' for victory sign. I was not sure people would turn up given the warning, and I'm wrong.

NARRATOR: Thousands of protestors exploded onto the streets of Tehran. The government response was brutal. During the uprising, a young Iranian student, Neda Agha-Soltan, was shot by a government sniper. Her image would become a rallying call for the opposition

CAPTION: Lesson 5: Political Ju-Jitsu

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): When people are slaughtered, when they are beaten, this produces a process I call 'Political Ju-Jitsu,' in which the opponent's supposed strength is used to undermine the opponent by alienating more people from supporting that regime, mobilizing more people into the act of resistance.

GENE SHARP: It's a kind of backlash effect. If the regime is so brutal, and instead of intimidating people which the regime intends, it causes other population groups and institutions to withdraw their cooperation and their obedience and that loss of power and control that more people are joining the resistance.

NARRATOR: Jason Athanasadis was arrested by Iranian Intelligence while reporting the Green uprising.

JASON ATHANASIADIS: When I went to see the Chief Prosecutor on the second day that I was in prison, he looked at me when I took off my blindfold, sitting in his office, and he said: "Do you know why you're here?" And I said: "No, I mean, I've no idea. I've just been arrested", you know, "two

nights ago”, and he said: “Well, there’s a very serious accusation against you.” And I said: “What is that?” And he said: “Are you sure you don’t know?” Espionage.” The interrogator kind of patted his laptop and said: “You know, this laptop contains a Persian language translation of Gene Sharp’s ‘From Dictatorship To Democracy,’ which is a handbook for insurrectionists, and it gives them several dozen easy ways by which, if they only follow these ways, they can overthrow a government – a legitimate government, any kind of government. And I have read this book, and so have my colleagues.”

NARRATOR: When the organizers of the uprising were arrested, they were charged with using over 100 of Gene Sharp’s 198 methods.

JAMILA RAQIB: What this work does is show people that they themselves can be responsible for their own future, for their own liberation.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: People are beginning to liberate themselves, you know. They don’t have to depend on an outside power. This is Srdja, my cat, named after Srdja Popovic. But they don’t have to depend on an outside power. They can do it themselves. And can you imagine how good that makes a country feel? That we did it ourselves. And that’s why it’s so important that we transfer this skill and knowledge. There’s no reason for the United States to be occupying anybody. We’re not good at occupying anybody. Neither was the Soviet Union good at occupying people. Let the people alone. Give them the power to change their government if they want it changed.

JAMILA RAQIB: To be counted as a threat to a tyrant is a matter of pride, I would say. It means we’re effective. It means we’re relevant. It means, out of this very small office, we produce work that threatens regimes, and I think that’s pretty cool. Yeah.

NARRATOR: This was the beginning of the Egyptian Revolution. The uprising was spontaneous, but Egyptian democracy groups had been working on the strategy for years. Egyptian democracy group Kefaya first visited Gene in Boston in 2006. Five years later, former Serbian revolutionaries were training new groups on the outskirts of Cairo. Egypt’s Muslim brotherhood posted Gene’s work in Arabic on their website. When the moment came, these groups were ready to guide the revolution.

NEWS ANCHOR: Well, let’s go live to Tahrir Liberation Square. We can speak to a freelance journalist who joins us on the line now, Ruaridh, we were hearing about those heightened security measures today around Tahrir Square. Is there a different atmosphere here compared with say yesterday and the day before?

NEWS REPORTER: Ah, yes. It’s an incredible atmosphere today. That cross section of Egyptian society that left Tahrir Square yesterday is back in force now. They’ve managed to re-energize the protesters. There’s very young children, women, older men here. People are singing and dancing. There are many instruments in the square, and it’s more full here than it has been in days.

NARRATOR: Ahmed Maher was a leader of Egypt’s April 6th democracy group.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): We were waiting for the event that would ignite a spark - that would trigger a large movement of the people. We were waiting for it, and it turned out to be Tunisia.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): There has always been a rivalry between Egypt and Tunisia in football. So we asked ourselves, "if we had started all this before Tunisia, why was Tunisia having its revolution before us?" Everyone was posting on the internet, 'the answer is Tunisia!' Of course, Gene Sharp's books had a huge impact, and there were other books and films we acquired from the internet talking about the idea of powerful nonviolent struggle. So there were many inspirations for this idea.

NARRATOR: As the peaceful protest grew in Tahrir Square, President Hosni Mubarak intimidated them with weapons of war.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): Our situation was different from OTPOR. Before their revolution, OTPOR won over the police and army. We were different. There was a very big battle with the police. The army was standing on the sidelines the whole time so our experience was very different to Serbia.

NARRATOR: Even after violent clashes with police, the revolutionary leaders restored nonviolent discipline in the face of overwhelming force. The protestors faced brutal attacks from police and security forces, but they held their ground.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): Technology played a heavy part in communicating our message. Technology played a part in our internal structure for contacting people in the provinces. We could hold meetings via a secret group on Facebook or use Skype to stay in continuous contact. All these things helped in the dissemination of ideas.

NARRATOR: As Muslims and Christians guarded each other while they prayed, the leaders of the revolution were persuading the army to support the protestors.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): What is it that made the army support us in the end? The army, at the end of the day, comes from the people. Those in the army are part of the people, and the army has an important national role. Perhaps the role of the police was more to do with rigging elections and protecting the corrupt. They were keen to protect themselves and ensure their survival. I was just coming back to Tahrir Square, and there was a cafeteria with its TV on very loudly, and the speech was being broadcast live.

EGYPTIAN DIALOGUE (POLITICIANS SPEECH) (SUBTITLES): In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate. My fellow citizens, during these difficult circumstances that our country is experiencing, President Hosni Mubarak has decided to step down from the office of President of the Republic.

AHMED MAHER (SUBTITLES): I went mad with joy when I heard the speech. I sat crying, at last! At last! The dream we've had for years, what we've endured for it. I ran into the square shouting, all the people were crying, screaming, dancing, singing. It was a historic moment. I was in disbelief. Is this possible?

GENE SHARP: But somebody knew what they were doing, and we don't need anyone claiming credit for us or me or anyone if it's not deserved and if it's not documented.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Massacre in Juma, 15 so far killed.

NARRATOR: Ausama Monajed is a communications expert and a leader of the Syrian Uprising.

AUSAMA MONAJED: This is a video of a kid that'd been shot at. One boy was shouting, "My brother, my brother!"

NARRATOR: He co-ordinates a network of secret cameras all over the country.

AUSAMA MONAJED: It's just a basic HD camera linked to a satellite modem, and we upload it on streaming websites where we can get the live feed, and we managed to get this Al Jazeera today. Gene Sharp's tactics and theories are being practiced on the streets of Syria as we speak now. What we did is promote these tactics and explain them to people through the Facebook pages that we have and also the YouTube channels. This is how they're applied, from putting flowers on the spots where fallen heroes fell and frustrations from the campaign while you marched, from cleaning streets and making it, you know, nicer and better because we can do something even better than the regime can do in terms of services, so yeah. From Dictatorship To Democracy gives you the inspiration, the assurances that this could really be achieved and this can really happen.

NARRATOR: In Summer 2011, after a brutal onslaught by the Syrian military, Ausama travelled to Boston to meet Gene.

FILMMAKER: When were you last here?

AUSAMA MONAJED: I can't remember exactly. Was it 2007 or 2006? Yeah, years ago, when it was only a few people thinking about nonviolent resistance scenario, and only quite a few believed this can really happen in a country like Syria. Ok. All set.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Gene.

GENE SHARP: Hello.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Hi.

GENE SHARP: How are you?

AUSAMA MONAJED: Hi, good to see you again. Good to see you. Good to see you.

GENE SHARP: Good to see you.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Good to see you too. How are you doing?

GENE SHARP: Not too bad.

GENE SHARP: I'm happy to see you. It was so good you have time in your schedule to come to say, "Hello."

AUSAMA MONAJED: Well, the pleasure is mine. I was really delighted, and I can tell you there's a lot to talk about.

GENE SHARP: This is new territory for us.

AUSAMA MONAJED: Yeah.

GENE SHARP: We've never been there personally. The cases we've studied don't exactly match.

AUSAMA MONAJED: He's so humble and down to earth to a limit that you feel how amazing this is, like all these great writings coming from a very tiny little office in Old Boston. It's rather interesting.

GENE SHARP: Maybe there's one thing that's been "learned" in quotation mark, may become Tunisia and Egypt which I think is a mistake, a major mistake. And that is that the existing ruler has to resign. He doesn't have to resign. You take all the supports from out from under him, he falls – no matter what he wants to do. This is the distinction in the analyses between nonviolent coercion, in which he has to resign but he's forced into it, and disintegration when the regime simply falls apart. There's nobody left with enough power to resign.

AUSAMA MONAJED: If Einstein was the genius in physics so Gene Sharp is the genius in freedoms and how to achieve freedoms.

CAPTION: Lesson 6: Don't Give Up

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I feel good in a way that we're spreading the word, and if people follow Gene's advice on how to think about waging an unbalanced struggle, sooner or later they'll win. See, the advantage that we have using this form of struggle, the people against the tyrant. As long as we don't surrender, we never lose, and that's a key. As long as you haven't given up, you haven't lost.

JAMILA RAQIB: I think, in the long term, Gene Sharp will be a household name. I think his books will be in every library in the world, and they will be translated into most languages. Can we survive until then? Can this institution survive until then? Well, we certainly hope so.

GENE SHARP (ARCHIVE): Politically significant nonviolent action has occurred in at least the following countries: Guatemala, Australia, Thailand, Burma, China, Japan...

GENE SHARP: ...Georgia, Iran, Kurdistan, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, and there's bound to be a couple more.

COLONEL BOB HELVEY: I think there's the father-daughter relationship developing there. They can sit down and talk, and they're on the same wavelength. She protects him, and I think she loves him as a daughter who loves a father.

JAMILA RAQIB: Gene Sharp is someone who is, of course, my personal mentor, but I think he has served as that role for multitudes of people. He is someone who has dedicated his life to providing the means by which oppressed people can self-reliantly gain liberation, and that is something which I believe has changed the world and will continue to do so in dramatic ways, and I look forward to witnessing that and hopefully contributing to that. It's really personal stuff.

GENE SHARP: Sometimes people ask me what I really want. Do I have a dream? And I do. I dream that the oppressed people of the world will be able to learn from the available records and new experiences that this type of nonviolent struggle can be used to liberate all oppression and replace military and violent conflicts, so that you won't have to carry on struggles against terrorism anymore because the people who might have become terrorists have instead chosen to use this kind of struggle to help out the oppressed people. This can change the local systems throughout the world. My name is Gene Sharp, and that is my dream.

[End]