

You came to the camp in Birkenau.

I came to Birkenau.

Do you know how many people came with you at the time?

Oh, yeah.

Do you have any idea?

We came in a train. And we were standing like the herring. Do you follow me? We took a couple of hours to go from Plasz³w to Birkenau. It's not so far.

But they're standing at every station. And we came. Ah, we caught a little breath. And they took us right away over there where the showers are, the sauna.

The first thing, as soon as you got out the train.

The first thing. We stand up from the train. They took us with cars-- not with cars, no, the soldiers going.

Let me ask you. When you came--

To Birkenau.

Yeah. When you came to Birkenau, you were met by soldiers. Were there other--

When we came, we went down from the train. Right away, another SS, the soldiers. They take you around. They take you in cars, in the soldier's car they have, and took us to the sauna.

What about any other prisoners who were already in the camp? Were they there when you arrived at the camp?

No. No. No.

Because in some camps--

Some camp, a little later, they gave you a place where to go, the number. This is your place, your bed. You follow me?

Yeah.

First of all, we go into the sauna. We have to give the back all the luggage. And they take away from you everything. And you stay complete nude. We don't know where to go. Mengele said, right, or left. And we go into the place--

So the selection by Mengele was after the showers.

Before the showers.

Before the showers. OK.

Because when we went to the shower, we don't know if we're going to the shower or if you're going to the gas chambers. And we went. He said, right and left.

But you knew one direction was good, and one direction was--

We knew the one was good. But when we was in Plasz³w, we heard about what's going on. And we went to the shower. After the showers, we went out. And they give us shoes to put on. And I got the Holland people, on wood.

Wood.

Yeah. And they give you one dress, a gray dress with a blue stripe. This time, they shave the hair of the woman. But when I came, end of September, maybe at the beginning of September, there was no shave. They would just cut, very short, the hair.

And put on another side, we was waiting maybe an hour. Here came 300 women. And we went to a bunk. We should be alive. But what is the difference from bunk?

Tomorrow morning, 6 o'clock in the morning, Mengele came again. Outside, we went outside. He looked again. And right away, come on here, come on here. We didn't know where to go.

And who survived, back to the bunk. Who didn't survive went back to the gas chambers. And we went-- 7 o'clock in the morning came an SS man. We went work. We were working people. You know, what kind of work, we did it.

He took us. We walked, walked maybe a hour, or two hour. A little later, we came to the workmanship-- tremendous, big stones, maybe 50 kilos. In Poland, it was kilos.

Everybody has to take the stones and go back another street. If you can't carry or not carry, nobody's business. If you stand up, you get shot. You have to walk.

This was winter time. Poland is very cold. In Poland, we have [INAUDIBLE] degrees. You're not on, without a sweater, and without a hat, without a kerchief, just on this [? pasha. ?] And we worked. We come home 6 o'clock. We have to have this little soup.

What did you do with these stones? You picked up the stones.

The stones, we picked from this side. We took from this side. Next day, you come in. You're taking from this side instead, and put on another side. It was one week. The other week--

One person carried each stone?

One person. Myself, I carry. One stone, we have to go around with this stone. We have to walk. If you stand one minute, you're not going back to the camp. You're shot. This was going on--

Did you see the--

--for a couple of months.

--number of people you saw shot there.

A lot of people. a lot of people. Even though 500 woman-- example-- came back 300, came 250 something one week. The other week, they have carriages like the walking people-- sand, to put with a shovel full of sand, and go with another place, to another place, to another gas chamber. You know everything over there. This took for years to go, for months, this work.

How did you feel? I mean--

Very bad. How did I feel? I don't know. I says, oh, no sweaters, no coat, no jacket. You believe it? Nobody had a coat. Nobody had.

I said, what's going on this time? Nobody had accidents. I have my heart condition. Nobody had cancer. Complete people, like-- I couldn't understand how the people can.

And without food-- 6 o'clock, a little soup and a piece of bread. Tomorrow morning, you're going for coffee, 4 o'clock. Not everybody could go for the coffee. It was a fight to go for the coffee, because if everybody goes for the coffee, right away the coffee.

So come to the coffee, people are going and stand in the line. No more coffee. What are you doing? 4 o'clock in the morning, you went for a coffee [INAUDIBLE].

And the other man-- the ladies I was carrying the blocks in Auschwitz was very bad people. It was people from Czechoslovakia.

Let me ask you. Still in Birkenau, for two minutes.

Yeah.

You were fed once a day at 6 o'clock in the morning--

6 o'clock in the--

--a little soup and a little bread.

Not 6 o'clock in the-- 6 o'clock in the evening.

In the evening. I'm sorry.

A little soap, and a small piece of bread.

Did you eat this right away? Did you keep it? Did you save it till the next--

We ate the soup right away. And the piece of bread you chewed it, you bring back. You want to play around with this piece of bread. It has to happen, if you follow me.

And you know what? They give in the soup-- we didn't-- you know, we are grown-up people. We didn't have the menstruation, because they give to the soup something to kill everything. People became such bellies. We didn't know it was ladies. Do you follow me?

And sometime, people who was very beautiful, they took to the office, to the hospital. They made them without ladies, no ladies. They took them, some young fellow. They make them no more men. You don't know? You don't heard about this?

Sure.

Yeah. They make a special experiment on the woman. And we know it's coming. 6 o'clock in the morning, Mengele is coming. We said, who knows what will be today? Who knows what will be today?

So Mengele himself was personally involved in--

Everything. Mengele, in himself, he do with everything to the woman. He sent them to the gas chamber. He sent them for experimentation. He sent them all over. Of course, he came with a bunch of SS men, not by himself. And this was the way I was till January.

So you were in Birkenau from September?

From the 7th of September, a little later.

In 1940?

No. A little later, he brought a group to Auschwitz. We leave for Auschwitz. It was not far. And I don't know. They picked me up.

I must be very good built. I don't know what's happened. They are picked up. they made you stand against a wall. He called me. on the left. now. He called another lady. And --

I'm just sorry. For one second, I want to interrupt you.

Yeah.

You were in Birkenau from September of 1940.

I was in September till 1940--

Not 1940.

--1944 till a couple months.

OK.

In a couple months, Mengele come to the block. Out, everybody. He took us, a couple people. And these people has to go to Auschwitz. They took us, gave us a number. Who was in Birkenau didn't have the number.

When did they give you the number?

They gave you the number. Then I went to Auschwitz. Auschwitz, Birkenau, was far. Like from here, to go to south of-- to New York, over there to Brooklyn.

20 miles.

That's how. We walked.

You walked.

Only walked.

How many people were walking with you?

About a couple hundred people, a couple hundred people.

All women in your group.

Only woman. Only woman. And we went to Auschwitz. They give us-- before you walked into Auschwitz, they gave us a number.

Before you went into Auschwitz.

Before. This was now in Birkenau. They give them such a needle, a hot needle-- pushed it in, pushed it in. This never goes out, except you cut a piece of meat to go out. And we went to Auschwitz. Auschwitz are a little better. We went to

Auschwitz.

A little--

A little better was in Auschwitz. I went also [PLACE NAME] Outside working, also the same. We had wood we carry. We have digging.

In Auschwitz, we have digging in the water, in the one corner. You follow me? And once, I dig. Not everybody did the same.

One person worked in a kitchen. One person would work in a garment shop for the sewing for the soldiers. I was unlucky. I went on the outside, [PLACE NAME]. [PLACE NAME] is working outside.

And I remember it was 18 January, 1945, we went to bed 12:00. 1:00, maybe, came three SS man. Rouse. Get [NON-ENGLISH] and rouse from here, rouse

In--

January 18, 1944.

'44?

'44, not '45. 1945. And we did not--

So you had been in Auschwitz--

I was in Auschwitz three or four months. It's enough, plenty. Three, four months was like four years. And we went out. Some people were smart.

I was not so smart. I was hiding behind a bridge, behind the dead bunks. And we went out. 6:00 in the morning, the Russian came in. You understand?

Mm-hmm.

And the walked and walked, day and night. In night time, we relaxing out some time in a place for a couple hours. And in the morning, we were-- OK. We came.

About six, seven days it took us, maybe a month. And a lot of people were shot, couldn't walk. They sit down. They were shot. They say, I don't care.

I went with a group, five people here. Three people sit down. I said, don't sit, they kill you. Let me kill. I have no strength no more to walk.

How many people were in your group walking?

In my group? In this group, when I went to Auschwitz? Oh, about 1,000 people, maybe 1,500. A lot of people.

Did they tell you where you were going?

No, didn't tell-- just march, you go. And we go. We didn't know where we go. We didn't know Bergen-Belsen exist.

And Bergen-Belsen is so far, it's almost by the Holland border, very far, the end of Germany. We walked day and night, night and day, without food. Even in Auschwitz, we had. We had no food. We was walking outside.

We saw grass. We took grass in the mouth. You believe it? Grass. Again, all mine, it was. It was nothing.

I said, oh, my god, I wish to go to bed today, and tomorrow not to stand up. It was [NON-ENGLISH]. It was [NON-ENGLISH]. But it was not God's will. God didn't do this to me. I'm still alive. I'm still alive.

And I said, I'm so happy. My mother passed away before the war, [INAUDIBLE]. She's not just shot in the streets like the dog. So I'm blessed me this, I said.

I lost my children. I don't know where it's gone. I had in my mind, maybe my children lives. Maybe someplace after the war, if I survive the war, maybe we get together.

But nobody had the wish to survive the war. Everybody was the wish to finish it. If I stand up in the morning, I say, oh, again? I have to go for the coffee? Oh, my god, I wish not to go anymore.

But I have to go. If not, I don't get -- she didn't do coffee. I'm my sabotage. I don't listen. I don't listen to everything, what's going on.

Finally, we came together to Bergen-Belsen. It took us eight days, seven nights at Bergen-Belsen. Half the people came. Half the people went outside-- not outside. They was killed, killed and passed away.

And in Bergen-Belsen, nobody works this time. Nobody went to work. We were sitting on the floor like this. Between here was people-- one, one, ladies, ladies. We were sleeping like this.

And it became an epidemic, typhus and lice. We didn't have a towel to wash the face. If you wash the face with water, you took you the dress, the same dress what they have in Birkenau, in Auschwitz, the same dress you was wearing. You washed up your face with this. You understand this?

The lice run on you, back and forth, almost going to the-- you couldn't-- like this, like this. You couldn't get over. It became a typhus. And people were sick. In the meantime--

How many people were together in this large room?

Oh, there were 600 people [INAUDIBLE]. The homeless have like this. It was no beds, no nothing, no tables, no chairs, only on the floor.

And when somebody passed away-- a lot of people passed away-- we picked up the body. Hey, look, it's another piece of bread behind the back. A little later, we throwed out the body, because it was so smell, we couldn't take it.

A lady said, why do you? I said, oh, I can't walk. I cannot go, my feet. How I can go pick up? The body is very heavy.

Came just some soldiers, and took the bodies out. And the bodies was laying like a five-store building. You follow? [NON-ENGLISH]. Nothing, only bones. This picture never got off of my mind. It was in Bergen-Belsen. It was.

Finally came a lady. And she recognized me, because in KrakÃ³w, people knows us. From Kazimierza, people knows us, too. My husband had a good name and KrakÃ³w.

And she said, Levenstein, I need a few ladies to go to the kitchen. Come on. She picked out from 500 ladies three ladies.

She was a Jewish woman.

A Jewish woman, but she was the leader. All of the Jewish people was the leader in the kitchen.

She was in charge of the--

Charge of the kitchen. And I said, how I can go? The lice eat me up. She said, everybody keeps up their lice, not you only. And she took-- she had a scarf on her. She start pulling around, and I'm clean. I went to the kitchen.

The SS man said, so who's coming to the kitchen? He had a speech before. You can [NON-ENGLISH]. You can eat how much you want. But god forbid, if you take outside of the kitchen, you shot.

Meantime, I went with my niece. I forgot to mention. My niece was with me. And she was in the same bunk with me. And the lady who took me-- I say, take my take my niece, she's a young girl. She said, let her come, you or the girl. I said, Manya, go over there.

She said, why do I have to go? Life is finished. I don't want to live. I have to go to work in the kitchen? I am sitting here so long till my eyes get closed. She didn't go.

I went to work. And I said to this lady, if you picked me up, you know me. Please, I have my niece. I have to bring her a piece of bread. You saw she's dying-- a piece of bread.

You know what she did it? She went to the kitchen. In a towel, she made me a bag to take. She could put what she want. She put a little sugar. Sugar was a million.

She put a little sugar, two slices of bread. She put to me and give to me. Go to the lady's room, how you're going to need it, and put back between the two feet. And bend it up, and carry this.

And I said, what if they find it? If find it, they find it. I have to bring a little bread for my niece. And I'm going out. And everybody correct. They're going, you have nothing, no pocket. He didn't touch it.

And I came home. I brang a piece of bread. You will see how happy my niece was. And all the people came to her. Give me a-- give me a-- I have no-- just a drop, just a little bit.

And she had the typhus. And she passed away. Her body was laying over there two months-- two weeks later.

Who was eat--

--I had the same. I have the typhus, too. And I went to the--

Who was eating the food that was made in the kitchen, just the soldiers and the--

No, the ladies was over there. And the SS men ran back and forth, forth and back.

Well, what--

You know what I did it in the kitchen? You believe it? Some people sitting and making the potatoes. Some people sitting and put the carrots. And I and myself, with another lady, had to pick up such a tremendous, big pot-- I don't know, pot-- put on the oven. And we were strong.

But I ate over there. You follow me? I ate the bread. I ate bread. And I ate the soap. And I have a little sugar, make coffee, what they didn't had for years, this, since we went out from the ghettos. But after all--

Your niece that you brought the bread to--

My niece. Yes.

--they didn't have any food.

They didn't. And it was 6 o'clock in the evening. Again, it was the same. All the concentration camp, to bring-- to give

you a little soap and a piece of bread. For 24 hours, to wait till next morning, 6 o'clock again, such a piece of bread. And with this to live is very hard. And she passed away.

A little later, I became a typhus. And it took me also to the hospital. And just then, I went to the typhus. And here are the German-- not the German-- the English. We was freed by the English brigades coming to Bergen-Belsen.

Let me ask you one question.

Yeah.

First of all, how long were you in Bergen-Belsen?

I was in Bergen-Belsen since January. We went out till April, beginning of May-- plenty.

What were the sleeping conditions like?

Off the floor.

Still on the entire--

Not off the floor, no. Sitting like this, what I told you.

The entire time.

I am sleeping on your shoulder. Somebody is sleeping on my back, like this. We didn't straight up. The feet even were not straight up. And the lice eat us up. This was the epidemic.

When I was in the hospital, I know my niece was not there, because I asked the nurse in German, this girl, this and this age, she was 18 years old. She said, no more is in this room. We throwed out, and everybody passed away.

And I was-- you see, and I survived. I was older than my niece. I was, at this time, 30 years old. And she was 18, and she didn't survive. A little later came the German-- not the German, the British.

How long were you in the hospital in Bergen-Belsen?

I was so long I went maybe before the English people came, maybe eight days before. The English people came at the end of April.

Did people try to get into the hospital, because if they could get into the hospital--

No, they get to the hospital. But the oldest, the other man, he was the leader from the barrack. She saw every day who would get sick. She called up. Come the soldiers took you away. They took you later in the-- the special, to the hospitals.

Now, the people who was living didn't do it, couldn't do it. A little later came the other people. They came in [INAUDIBLE]. They put on all kind of suits, because there's an epidemic.

And they start to give the people a little-- I don't know-- injection, a little food. And people passing away like the flies, because it was not used to. They have nothing in the belly. You understand this?

Sure.

You see, and I survived. And I survived Bergen-Belsen. I survived everything. And my niece, a little daughter, a little girl, passed away. I know she passed away. She took her away when she was alive, because they see bodies-- nothing

else, only bodies.

And a miracle, I survived. I know what I-- I don't know. I say one thing. All my family left. And I said, oh, why am I alive? I should go with them, too. But thank god.

After survivors, the English people start to give you good food. They give you different places, different places. We was living about three or four months. And I'm going. In the street came-- you know who comes to the Jewish people? English Jewish people who talked Yiddish.

Well, let me ask you--

Yeah.

You remember the day, of course, when the English--

When we was free?

Yes.

I think so. At the end of-- beginning of May.

1940--

1945, beginning of May. We didn't know exactly the date.

Did you know anything? Did you hear anything before?

Nothing. Nothing. I was separated from everybody. With strange people, I was there. I was with my niece. But she was also not there. And a little later, they give us different places to live.

Well, what happened? You were in the hospital when the English came.

When the English came, I was in the hospital.

Did somebody walk into the hospital, an English soldier?

The English soldiers for girls was coming. They spoke in Yiddish to everybody-- said, who knows Yiddish, who knows German and who knows French? And everybody said, Yiddish or Polish. And they came. And the [? sponsors ?] covered their--

Yes.

--cover everything, cover-- now gloves, everything, on because a terrific epidemic. And they give you a little medicine. They give you a little milk to drink with farina. And people start to eat. They passed away like the flies, because the stomach was empty for months, for years.

What was your feeling when, all of a sudden, the English soldiers came?

I was feeling I was happy to be free a little bit.

Were you convinced that you were free?

Free, because the soldiers came. And they started talking English. We didn't understand English a little bit. But the Jewish girls came in. They said, you're free, [NON-ENGLISH].

Only the British, we are here. We will save you. And when the British came, I was three weeks in the hospital. After the three weeks at the hospital, they gave us a home with two girls.

In a hospital where?

In the hospital that's in Bergen-Belsen.

Still, you stayed. OK.

Still in Bergen-Belsen.

Yeah, just press it. Right.

Still in Bergen-Belsen till the end. A little later, when we get a little healthy, they took out from Bergen-Belsen to another city.

How many survivors were there in Bergen-Belsen?

Very few survivors. Very few survivors. In mine, where we were, very few survived. Could be, from there, it was maybe about 10,000 people, maybe more, maybe more than 10,000 people.

Bergen-Belsen was a death camp. Nobody went to work. Nobody went to the gas chamber. The gas chamber was closed up. Nobody went to showering, nothing-- just sitting, and waiting for the death. And this lady, when she took me to the kitchen-- maybe I'm alive for this reason, because I have a little inside of food to eat.

Did you become friendly with anybody else in Bergen-Belsen? And what happened with the other--

In Bergen-Belsen, there is somebody next to me, next to me. One was from a different [INAUDIBLE]. We just get together. But we know each other.

Only one niece, I had, myself. But she passed away. But you get the point. It's just a bunch of people.

A little later, when I went out from the hospital, they give me another two girl. One was from Bergen. One was from Germany, a girl. One girl was from France. The French people didn't survive.

The French people passed away like the fly. The cold killed them, not so much the food. They can be without food. It was very cold in Poland. We're used to this weather.

The Polish were used to the--

They're used to it. But note what I say-- just in one dress, a long dress, no better. I'm short, and a long dress. I walk with my shoes. I can fell every minute. And somebody stole her dress, such a dress. You follow?

They're punishing. I didn't say they're punishing. What they did to us, they're unbelievable. I have no words to describe what the German people was.

Sometime, somebody worked in the fifth. It was from the older people. This was from the army. It was a man. It was not a SS man. It was not German.

He feed a little better. But he couldn't help either. He couldn't help them. But someday he said, oh, [GERMAN]. You speak Deutsch? [GERMAN].

OK. I can't do anything for you.

I cannot do, yeah. I've forgotten a little bit Polish, because we are in the school. I'm going back to school. For school, we have to take-- in the public school, we have to take two languages. Polish was the first. The second-- German, everybody. And who went to college, or to gymnasium, you have to take French,

Latin, because who wants to take Latin? Latin took-- these people came for a doctor or went for [? pharmacy. ?] And everybody took French.

And now I have to tell one thing to the end. To the end, I wrote down my word. Our wounds will never heal. We must never forget. We must also teach our people. And the entire world must never forget Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Treblinka, Mauthausen, and Bergen-Belsen.

I remember them, everything. And I will never-- if I'm sleeping, even. I have a habit, what I'm so afraid now. When my husband goes out-- example, gives an evening for a meeting-- and he's supposed to be 7 o'clock. 10 o'clock, he left, he's not home, I am in Auschwitz. You follow me?

I'm afraid. Who knows what's happened with him? It's something my husband's [INAUDIBLE]. I say, what I can do? It's in my nature. I cannot help.

I don't want to do it. But I'm afraid you're not coming back. But usually, we went out, we'd never come back. It's a very interesting story, no? A sad story.

Very sad.

And you mean it. I remember everything. I may be attack 10%. But the church who was [INAUDIBLE] from these people-- I have no words to express myself. Devils. Sadistic.

Let me ask you--

You have to ask a question, something to me?

No, I just want to hear a little bit more.

You're tired of this.

Oh, no, I'm not tired.

I know. It makes tired, too, me. I know.

No, I'm not. I wanted to ask you a little bit--

What?

--about after you were liberated by the English.

Yes. Liberated by the English. I will tell you.

I would like to know what happened next.

The English--

I would like to know how you became reunited with your husband.

The English people come from the UNRRA, start to bring in food, start to bring warmer short, start to bring in warmer

dress.

And you were still staying, you said, in the hospital in Bergen-Belsen.

Still staying in the hospital. The doctor said, when you feel comfortable, I let you out. I was there three weeks after the English people came. The three weeks passed away, too.

And I was-- you couldn't walk. You was like this, and a swollen belly. And everybody said, what's going with that? What you have in the belly? We didn't ate. We did nothing. The glands swelled up someplace to go.

And they give you a dress. They came everybody, if you have a family, where you live, you have a brother, you have a husband, all the family. And they're sending us, all through Europe, letters.

You're looking for your husband. You're looking for your children. You're looking for your sister. You're looking for your brother.

But a couple weeks later, nobody came see nothing. She said, couldn't find nothing. A little later, I walked--

Were there any Jewish agencies that were--

Only Jewish agency. Only Jewish agency, the UNRRA. You know the UNRRA, the Joint. Only Jewish people was there. And everybody's [INAUDIBLE] and looked in England.

But Jewish people were not Jewish. And everybody spoke Jewish nicely to us. They say, you want to send a letter, come on. I will take it to England. And you can send the letter.

But over there, it was impossible. It was not organized. There was no post office. It was nothing, just like a forest, nothing else, with just bunks.

Did you think your husband was alive?

I didn't. I didn't. I had a feeling. I said to my friends-- a little later came an announcement. The Queen from Portugal says, Scot -- from another place sent for us outdoors.

Who wants to go to them? They opened the gates. And everybody can go over there to relaxation and live over there-- Portugal, too.

I, myself-- I said, I'm not going. I'm not going. Maybe somebody survived from my family. Nobody will know where I am.

And I said to the-- the leader that came in. Who's going? Who's going? And I explained to him in Yiddish, in Polish-- German. I spoke German fluently.

And I said, I don't want to go. It's very nice of the Queen she wants to take us. But I'm not going. I have to look for my family. My life is not interested.

I have nobody. I am alone. I have plenty. I had plenty tsurus I had for my own. Now I want to find somebody.

And he said, if you don't want to go, I will not force you. But I have a order to take everybody. He said, go out. I went out. And he loaded everybody. And I was alone now, walking in the street. And I see a man. Now I recognize one man.

You're walking in the street where?

In the city in Bergen-Belsen, everything in Bergen-Belsen. And I saw a man passed away with another man. And I went

to him. And I said, are you Borsak? He said, yes, I'm Borsak. How do you know me?

I say, you know me. You know I'm Levenstein from Kraków. Oh, yeah, Levenstein from Kraków. How you been? I say, you saw my husband?

He said, your husband? I saw from the [INAUDIBLE] a short fellow. Is this my husband? Oh, yes, because you are-- and somebody had, in fact, our name, metal So he had, in fact-- they're called not by the name Levenstein, the metal.

Yeah, he walks. I saw him walking. And I came home. And I ran to the owner. And I said in Yiddish, I find out my husband is alive, and I have to go back to Kraków.

He said, to Kraków, so far? I don't know about your sister, but Kraków is so far. How you go to Kraków to find your-- how do you know your husband's alive?

I said, misses, listen. Before I went away from Plaszów, and before my husband went away from Plaszów, we made up if I survived the war, I have to come back to Kraków to our superintendent. If you survive the war, I'm coming back to Kraków to superintendent. Over there, we can meet each other if we survived.

This was the story. We fainted. We're still alive. It's a miracle. And I said to the owner, to this lady, I have to go to Kraków.

Money, we don't have it. Dressed? We are not dressed. I am very ambition. I don't want to take for nothing, nothing. Since I'm alive, I even-- what if they give to me? Just give me a--

This, I want to throw away. I don't want to have to see more in my life, because everything is with lice, with everything. She gave me just a scarf and a blouse. And we met each other. I met his [? boss. ?]

She said, listen, Mrs. Levenstein. I'm going to the office. And come tomorrow to the office. And I will tell you. Alone, you will not go. I said, alone? I don't know how to go alone.

Finally, I came to the office three days later. She find for me three men and three women to go. One is going to Poland. One is going to Czechoslovakia. But we're going the same direction everybody.

We was hitchhiking. The English people took us someplace. We stopped another soldier. He took us another place. It took us two weeks to go from Bergen-Belsen to a place where I can take the train.

We came on the Polish border. Everybody goes on the train. Somebody went away to Katowice, somebody to Sosnowiec. I am going to Kraków. I'm going to Kraków.

Come the man for the ticket, I said, I have no ticket. I am a survivor from the concentration camp. He said, oh, OK, go.

A little later, I came to Kraków where the superintendent was living. It was in this place not far where the ghetto was. It's far to go. I take the trolley car. And I take the trolley car. And I'm going home to the superintendent.

Again, where is the ticket? I said, what kind of ticket? I have no money. What do you want from me, life? Take my life. German didn't took my life. You will take my life, maybe. He said, go. And I came in to the superintendent.

He start to cry. Jesus Maria, you survived the war. Your husband just walked out. No? This time was-- everything starts to be dead in my life.

And three hours later, my husband came then. We start to cry. Where is our children? We start to cry this. We start to cry this. I fainted on one side. He fainted the second side.

When we get together, where do we go? We go to our apartment. Maybe we get back our house. We go to our

apartment, And I knock on the door.

Open, a woman. And I put my feet inside. She said, what are you doing here? Why are you going to get in? I said, this is my apartment. Thank god my beds are here. My couch is here.

I don't know nothing. You dirty Jew, you go now. If not, I take a pail of hot water, and I put on your face. Go out from me. And I start to cry.

We went out. We went out. We have no factory. We have no apartment. We have no place where to go. And we go to the-- over there in Kraków is also a Jewish organization. They say, you want to go out from Kraków? And as we said, I will gladly go out from Kraków, because every stone is washed with our blood.

I have no business. I have no money now. I have nowhere to sleep. How long will it take me this, my superintendent, another night, another night? He said, you know, I have an idea-- is get together in Vienna.

In Austria is the Jewish UNRRA. And who wants to go to America, wait over there, and you can go to America. We have nothing what to pack, just one suit and a dress. And we went to Vienna.

And from Vienna, we went to-- how called is this place? In Austria was a place called Bindermichl. And over there was built barracks for the German soldiers, I bet you. And the UNRRA, of course, takes away all the building and gives the people to live. And they get food.

In the morning, we went. A little later, we get a little this. We get used to this. People, they're making business by the American soldiers. They bring in the other place. We start to make a little money.

And how long were you there?

We was there since 1945 to 1949, four years. Meantime, I get pregnant. And we have our daughter. The life, a little, start to shine better, because from the beginning, we said, no more children. We have to bring the children to take them to the gas chamber. No more children.

But you live so long. It's a long psalm. It was absolutely without interest in life. It was like we're just walking around like dead people-- came the night, came the day, no interest for nothing.

Only interest-- I saw everything. Where's my children? Where's my children? And my husband said, no more children. I said, no more children.

In the meantime, I had a girlfriend. And I was a little experienced, because I had children. She said, oh, Sally, come over to me. I have my daughter. I don't know how to handle. We don't have diapers. We have nothing, just shmatas.

And I went over there. And I became so in love. I says, we are stupid. If we get a child, we will be in a better mood. So nine months, I get born a daughter. And the daughter give us now so much pleasure, so much nachas. After knowing four grandchildren, the life moves back.

But still, still, still, never forget. The heart's always cut, always cut. To be such a happy person-- I used to be a very happy person, always laughing, always jumping. No more the same way.

Just you have to live, because I have children now. And we are not such a young people. You have something to ask me, questions?

Who--

I'll answer.

Who sponsored you to come to the United States?

My husband-- I will tell you what. When he was-- Eisenhower, General Eisenhower. After these people was free, he went in three camps.

And when he came back to America, he said, everybody is welcome to come to America. You don't need a visa even. You don't need nothing. Just be sending paper to this community.

But my husband-- we had Passover home. You follow me? Passover. It was [INAUDIBLE]. After the war, we was in Austria, in Bindermichl.

And this time, we was in Bindermichl, also with American soldiers. It was American occupied. And two soldiers came-- just not special to us-- came to this building. Say, who lives here, Jewish people?

So he just talk a little Jewish, a little English. But we could get together. And I just said, yeah, I'm Jewish. Here is Jewish people. I say, [NON-ENGLISH]? [INAUDIBLE] the Jewish people.

I said, come onto us. We're making a Seder. We were always orthodox people. I'm here, myself and my husband, in the home. And a sister was with me, together. And we make a Pesach.

He said, can I bring my friend? I said, bring you a friend, too. And we had Seder together. We started talking with the hand a little, a little bit this. And he picked up a little Yiddish.

This is the American Jewish soldier?

American Jewish soldiers. that's right. And my husband said, you know, I have an uncle who lives in the Bronx. But I forgot completely the address for this uncle. I don't know nothing.

He said, from the Bronx? I'm a Bronxer. He is from Bronx. But the way he lives-- he started to talk this, this, this street, this. My husband said, I don't know.

You know what he did? He wrote a letter home to America. And what I find a friend in Bronx lives his uncle. And this parents from this soldier put a Forward to the Jewish paper and said, I met a man survived the war. His name is Isak Levenstein. He looks for uncle, for Levenstein.

And finally, he reads in the paper. He saw, [NON-ENGLISH]? This is my nephew. I remember. And he start to send us every day. But we didn't come on this very day.

We come, and Eisenhower let everybody in. It took us four hours-- four years. I mixed up a little hours and years, something.

So you came to--

And some other people went away before me. But I gave birth to my daughter. And after waiting at least-- she is of two months. You follow me? Two month.

Your daughter was born in 1947.

No, my daughter was born 1948.

'48.

'48, she was born. When, she was eight months. they took us with the-- not with the airplane, the ship. It took us a week, two week. And we came to America. We came to America. We have nobody.

We know the language. But I remember that a little something. We took in Austria little lessons, English. But English lessons teach over there is like British. And here is completely different.

But a little, we could talk, a little by little. And we find my-- my husband's uncle came to visit, and took him, and write him. Maury Ponteera was before us. We went with him together. A little later, we rented an apartment.

In New York.

In New York. This was in Washington Heights. Ponteera] was living on the fifth floor. I was living on the sixth floor. And we started to look for a job.

He was walking by The Needle Eye. My husband said, The Needle Eye? Never in my life. I know how to sew a button. And he went working to a store.

Meantime, my brother-- I told you, I have a sister. And my brother-in-law was from generation and generation of builders.

Your brother in law's?

Brother-in-law. My sister was living in a Ohio state, in Canton, Ohio. He had a brother living in Lima, Ohio. And when he came to the state-- my brother-in-law, with his wife-- he went to him a little later. He went out with him.

He borrowed him \$500. He bought a lot. He settled not in Lima. He settled in Canton, Ohio. And he was a builder.

He was-- a lumber yard, he had. He went in a forest. You know what a forest is. He said, this is worth so much money. He bought it. He cut the [NON-ENGLISH]. How you called it? [NON-ENGLISH].

The trees.

The shingles. There's all kinds. And he said, on a job, I'm not going. First of all, I'm too old to work on a job. And I never in my life worked by somebody. I had people working for me.

And this brother gives him \$500. He bought a lot. He built up a house by himself. He sold it. He make more than \$1,000 on this house.

He start to buy it, to build the land. Land was, at this time-- he came 1947, '46-- it was cheap. And he became good off.

When I came to the States, my brother-in-law came right away to us, took him to Canton. We stayed over there a couple weeks, couple months. And he said, Isak, what are you doing? Isak said, I'm a metal factorer.

I know that. He said, don't start at the metal factory. Metal factory needs millions of dollars. We have money. We have money.

I will teach you. I will show how to plan to make it. I will teach you how this wood is the name, how big, how long. I'm a builder now from generation. And he came.

Isak said, I will not settle in Canton, Ohio. That's a small place. I will settle in New York. OK, we go to New York. And we bought--

Somebody recommended to New Jersey. We never knew about New Jersey state. And we bought-- my husband became a builder and took Ponteera to partnership.

Why New Jersey? Who--

We were--

I understand it was--

Well, New York was-- we didn't know where to go. So New Jersey-- it took -- and I was living in New Jersey in Newark. And Newark is a smaller place.

He stopped. My husband stopped to talk about building. He find a man with lenders. A little later, we had learned he didn't know what to do with his land-- not my husband, not Ponteera.

He called up right away my nephew. And he looked around. He said what spot, what not. And he make a blueprint. And now we need money.

He said, I have a good credit over there with the bank. You have your bank, too. We went with our bank. And the bank called my nephew. My brother said to the-- call up to my bank. And we'll see my credit is open. I give credit, meantime, these people for a little while.

And so we started little by little. Nobody was a builder here. Only we're the first builders. Nobody was the builder. And he started for nothing. We make up very good. Follow? This is the way. Everything comes from my family.

It's an unbelievable story.

Unbelievable story. And still, you hear such a story--

I don't mean unbelievable.

Unbelievable comes to life. Sometime, you pray to God. You pray to God no more that you stand up in the morning. You know why I'm telling you?

I come from a very orthodox family. My father was a very famous man at home. [NON-ENGLISH]. You know what's [NON-ENGLISH]. Only the [NON-ENGLISH], the biggest [NON-ENGLISH] yet. I don't know. I cannot explain to you.

There was a rabbi, his cousin, [INAUDIBLE] rabbi. He was a big shot in Poland. He was my father's very good friend, a good cousin. He came to us. I was a young children.

I forgot to tell you. he called up my mother. He blessed me. He blessed my mother. He give us such a-- a gold. I don't know if it's silver.

But my mother has worn this. And he gave me this, too. Sometime, I am sitting and thinking, maybe this rabbi gave me this for this, maybe I'm alive.

[INAUDIBLE].

But I say, where's my other brother? My other brother is also the same for him. Why he didn't survive? I survived. And I didn't believe in nothing.

I said to myself, if I survive the war, I will see a Gentile child, I would do the same what they do with my children, because the Nazis-- when they come special to Kraków, when somebody born a child, they went to the hospital. If the child was older, they tore-- they take the child, and took pieces, throw through the window. And I said, where is God? Where is god?

We are [NON-ENGLISH]. We are the people where the God pick us up. Where is God? God is not there to see it.

Comes a rabbi. He was living a neighbor. I forgot this to tell before even-- comes to Plasz³w. Complete out, tallis and tefillin covered him. And said Shema Yisrael This is such a scream you hear on the other side of the country. Standing people was a grave. In life, they'll put them in grave and put earth on him.

Where is God? I asked Rabbi [PERSONAL NAME] some time. Some time, he get [INAUDIBLE]. You know [INAUDIBLE]? Something you believe in.

I said, Rabbi, tell me. I am a grown-up person. Maybe I have sins. Maybe I have sins. I don't feel to have sins. But my children didn't have sins. Why they was shot and burning?

He said, Mrs. Levenstein, I will not answer for you. No question. Don't ask me. Nobody can answer this. Now we are-- we get normal. But someday, you feel it. You're not normal with such tsuris.

For this reason, I want to say for the Gentile generation, because I don't believe it-- the people what didn't hack on his own body are the people who believe this. Because a couple years ago, two years, was a professor from Chicago-- this is not true, everything is full of baloney. And I lot of people say this, too. I don't believe somebody believe this. If you have an own body, even if you was in a different camp, they believe.

Maybe you know a lady. I read in a paper-- I put away the paper, I didn't read. In the Jewish News, in Essex County, was a girl. She was-- I don't want this-- does it have to be on the tape, too? No?

No. I just want to thank you.

Yeah, but I want to say what you wrote.

You want to say it on-- OK.

Not on the tapes. This is not supposed to be on the tape.

OK.

Yeah, that was finished.