

When we were finishing the first side the first tape you said something. You had a story to tell about Bobruisk, and a story to tell of your experience in Hirschberg.

Hirschberg, yeah.

In general, you were in quite a few camps.

Yeah.

Was your work in the camps similar or different in the camps.

You see, I took a system, that not to be too long in a camp, if I could. Because I know when we stay long in a camp, you get no better. And that's why--

You get no better?

No better, and that's no good that they know you. So when they announce they need electricians, I run first. I am electrician. They need mechanics, I run. I'm a mechanic. In every camp, I was something else. They need whatever, repairs. How long you do it? My grandpa did my watch repair. My grandmother, my grandfather-- How long? Oh, we have generations. So--

How did you understand all this?

Because I saw what's going on. Let's go now. You have to get away. Maybe the other place is better. But if you're in a camp with only Jews, you eventually get killed. Sooner or later.

Did the others, the other Jews also understand this?

We never asked. We never discuss politic. I didn't know what's going on outside.

No, I mean, but the Jews who were in the camp with you and you, you talk to each other.

Yeah, we talk. Oh, now is the time probably Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah. We're guessing. We have no calendar or whatever. We didn't count. We didn't know what time. We didn't know a thing.

And in Bobruisk was about a month. I go back to Bobruisk, two kids run out in the camp. They run because there was a forest, big forest thing.

They went with trucks, with dogs. They bring one back. The other one, who run or they kill him there.

They bring him back. They build a thing to hang him out in the camp. We were standing like I show. And they hang him, the kid.

So we know where we are, with who we are dealing, what's going on. And one day, when I was there in 1943, of course, they took me about a few months-- not three months, about six months or eight months before the uprising ghetto of Warsaw.

So the chef come to me and say, how you working? Good? Yeah.

You hear what's going on in Warsaw? What? I don't know. The Jewish make a--

A revolt.

A revolt. So I said to him, they're stupid. Oh, they're-- for what?

They don't want to-- they want to win by such a big, strong army, the German army? They'll kill everybody. They'll stop it. They have no brains to do that.

My health was, you know. He wanted to bring out something-- whatever. And I give him the right answer, what he like it. And I get away with it.

Mm-hmm.

I was not 100% the Jew.

Yeah.

That was the--

But, I mean, you see, part of your surviving is that you understood not to stay in a camp too long if you could avoid it, and to volunteer for any job.

Any job.

You were a mechanic. You were a jewelry repair man.

Jewelry-- any-- you name it.

You can do anything.

Anything, anything.

Yeah.

Not with those same people.

Did you ever talk this over with any other people in the camp?

Nobody. I didn't know they were going to need electricians. All of a sudden, out. They need electricians.

So I went out. I go out from the thing. We didn't know what's coming up. And--

Did others do like you? They just ran because they asked for electricians.

Possible, possible.

Oh, you're not-- you don't know.

No, I didn't make attention. There was maybe real electrician. I was a funny electrician.

So what do you think, Doctor, they need me electrician? You wouldn't believe. That took us--

To change the bulbs.

No, no. To push airplanes into the hangar to fix the airplanes, and when it's ready, to push them out. That was my electrician business. [INAUDIBLE], whatever, I am.

All right, you had a story to tell about Bobruisk that we had-- that seems that were a very important story.

No Bobruisk, Hirschberg.

All right, I thought there was one on Bobruisk, also.

No, I told-- Bobruisk, they hang the kid.

That's the one.

Yeah, that's the one.

Yeah, all right.

Yeah, they hang the kid there.

That's an important story. All right, now what happened in Hirschberg?

I go back even and recalling it. Bobruisk, one day, we-- already 300 people, two German come in. And we're sleeping already. It was 8:00, 9 o'clock at night. We in-- on the bed.

He say to one, what's your profession? He say, whatever. What's your profession? Whatever, he say.

[INAUDIBLE] you find somebody. He was in the architect business, something. He say, yeah? I am architect, he say.

So he start question him, this and that, and that. So he say something different. He say different thing.

You Varfuchte Jude,. You know what he mean by that? You dirty Jew. You're going to argue with me? You?

Come here. He took him out. He took a chair. He took--

Belt.

Belts. He took a kid. Come here. Put-- they're going to hang him. He said, it's my friend. They're going to hang him.

What? He took all the two. Hang both.

There refuse to hang him. And the guy-- but they're going to hang him. And they hanged him, because the other two have a fight already to see what's going on. They hanged him. OK.

We couldn't sleep. We couldn't talk. Forever, that was such a thing what they was doing.

This is in where?

That is in Bobruisk. Bobruisk, we're going back. They took me before I was washing clothes. Took me to work in a forest to find something for the cows to eat.

So I was looking on the floor, bending down. And after that, I stretch myself. And I feel-- the SS man say, he shot on me.

Come here. So I [INAUDIBLE]. Jawohl.

What you was doing? I was working. Well, what else? I was stretching, stretching my hands up.

When you next time stretch your arms, you're dead. Jawohl Go back.

But he missed me with a inch. [INAUDIBLE]. But--

And this was every day?

Every day. Every day was going transport. Going to-- [NON-ENGLISH], taking all people to death. They didn't want to have sick people or people that was complaining.

They come home beaten up. They couldn't move. That was the system there.

You never found out why that German came in and went around asking everybody for their profession. Was he looking for somebody?

No, no. They didn't really. They-- when they need a transport 50 people in another place, they come and ask, who is electrician? That not happen in Bobruisk.

He didn't ask, who's an electrician. He asked, what's your profession?

Never asked.

That's what you told. And then one fellow said he's an architect. And they got into--

That was when he came in to the barrack.

Yeah.

He asked, who is that-- he looked for his profession.

He wanted to start a discussion.

Discussion, yeah, exactly. So that--

Did he want a discussion? Or did he want to argue with somebody and tell them, you're nothing?

He wanted discussed. He wanted discussed. Maybe he would be smart and say what you say, you're right-- little commonsense.

The joke.

He was not having common sense. He want to bring up that he's a good thing, whatever, architect. And he didn't like it.

Hey, you're better than me? You know better than me? You, varfuchte Jude you know?

He was not smart. And he would be really smart and have a little common sense. He wouldn't argue with him. You're right. You're right.

Always, yes man. Yes, always. If you don't do that, you're in trouble. You're in trouble.

So that was happened day in and day out. Night, they didn't let us sleep. At night, they stayed outside with two machine guys.

Opened the door, because a kid went out and-- excuse me for my expression-- to piss in the side. Who went out here? So nobody answered.

They started shooting in the barrack. I count to 10. If he don't come out here, we shoot them, everybody.

So we was screaming, who was outside? Go out, go out. So one went out. They shoot him on the on the --

And for that, they killed him.

They killed him right away for the-- because he went out there at night pissing on the--

Now--

That was Bobruisk.

That was Bobruisk.

Yeah.

And let's see. Then we-- you took-- you said you went-- from Bobruisk, you really went to Minsk--

For a while.

--for a while, for just for the-- and then to Lublin for Majdanek.

Majdanek, yeah.

Then you are in--

Budzyn.

Budzyn.

Yeah.

You have here this mark, which means you were in all these three places at about the same time, Budzyn.

Same year.

Mielec. And Wel --

Mielec.

Mielec.

Mielec--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Yeah.

I'll never speak correctly Polish, I see.

Oh, you're-- it's, well, about time that you learned Polish.

Yeah, yeah. All right, but these were, because there was some disorganization going on, they were running away from

the Russians.

Yeah, at those, there was a little better because--

You had the older people.

We-- all the people, we went out to work.

Yeah.

To work in the place where they repair airplanes.

Yeah. But all this movement at the same-- about the same time-- you didn't stay any place for just a few days-- that was because they were disorganized, running away from the Russians probably. Is that what it was?

No. That time-- no. They need-- I know that when I going to-- I know it. When I going to get out from Poland in a camp in Germany, that's going to be better, because in Germany, you have-- we have Russian, Yugoslav, French people. You have all mixed up.

In Poland, they were all Jewish.

All Jewish.

All the prisoners.

Yeah.

All right, so then you did get out of Poland finally.

[PLACE NAME] is Czechoslovakia.

But you're in 1944, really, then.

Yeah. That's in Czechoslovakia, that.

Yeah, that's in Czechoslovakia. Do you remember what time of the year this was?

We was there-- I was there about two weeks. That's all what I was. They took out the same group, what we come from Bobruisk.

So the real camp that you were in at this point was Hirschberg.

Hirschberg.

Hirschberg is the name of a town?

A town, yeah.

Where?

In Germany.

In Germany. And when did you arrive there in 1944?

I arrived there July or July-August.

All right, summer 1944, we'll say.

Yeah.

And you stayed there until '45.

'45 in March.

March, that's as the war was ending.

Almost. I'm liberated April 29, '45.

Yeah, you have April 29, 1945. So from Hirschberg, you went to Dachau?

Dachau.

How did you get-- how did you move from each--

We walk.

How many camps were you in altogether? About 10 here.

Yeah, about, yeah.

And how did you move from camp to camp?

From that camp to that camp, we walk. We walk about--

From Hirschberg to Dachau--

About two weeks we walk at night and day.

Do you have any idea how far it is--

Very far.

--what the distance is?

We-- two weeks, we walk.

Yeah.

Was a [INAUDIBLE], about 200 miles, probably.

And all the others, you had transportation of some sort.

Transportation.

Was it the cattle cars? Or--

Cattle cars. Cattle-- oh, cattle--

Nothing but cattle cars.

Nothing but cattle cars.

Because we was-- we looked like cattles.

Have you been at the new museum in Washington?

Not yet. I--

They have a cattle car there.

Yeah?

I was wondering what your impression of that was, of course, that one's a very clean one.

Oh. Yeah, I-- you didn't ask me how we survive in the cattle cars to go into Bobruisk. We went about two weeks, took us. How we go out, how we drink something, how we eat something. That was--

What was worse?

--a miracle.

What was worse, the camp or the cattle cars?

Cattle cars, nobody was killing you. They were only slowly killing. There, if they don't like you? Boom.

What's-- did you tell us the story in Hirschberg?

Not yet.

All right, let's hear it now.

OK, from Flossenbürg, they ask for mechanics and electricians. So I didn't know which one I know better, mechanic or electrician. But I went.

I'm mechanic, electrician. They didn't ask me. When I went in the other side, didn't ask me, which one are you, a mechanic or a-- didn't ask me. Stand there.

We went. They took us a cattle thing from Czechoslovakia to Germany. Took quite a while to get to Hirschberg.

We arrive to Hirschberg. We didn't know what you're going to do. Why they need me out, mechanic or electrician.

So we went in. So I relaxing in the camp because I saw the Ukrainian, the French people, the all kinds. Big camp that not only Jewish.

But they make everybody-- when you're from Pole, they have this-- the sign here, Polish sign. When you are Polish Jew, on the top, a star, a Jewish star. When you only Pole, only the Polish star, not Jewish star.

And from France, French. That's-- everybody was wearing from where-- that when they see us, oh, you're French. The German need someone from France, you French? Yeah. Come here. You Poland?

So I was Polish Jew. But still, I want to be smart. So when we went in to the guy what make those signs, so he asked, you? French. So he give me a French.



You? Jew, Polish. Me? I am Polish. So he give me Polish without the star.

Put me on-- I figured this way, I'm going to get away, maybe the Polish people-- the Polish, they're bandits. Even in camp, they looked to take away your piece of bread from you, you are Jew.

So and I went-- I get away with this about three or four months. How? We-- they took us to work high and low. That's being on the mountain on down.

So our group was working on the mountain. [INAUDIBLE] people we call this. What we was doing there, they have a trailer coming up. You know going on the electrical wires, the little trains coming up? They bring cement.

A cable car.

Cable car. Cement, sand, all kind what they need to-- for building.

For work.

For work. And we was taking this and carry it to the place where we need. And that was a place where they had machines. And they mix all those things. They're mixing to make cement.

And they put this in pipes. And machines, they pump. They pump those pipes down to tunnels. They make-- they're building tunnels. Those tunnels they was building for V-2.

If you heard something, the V-2, what they--

Yeah, the rockets.

The missiles, the rockets. So that tunnels was building for those V-2. We didn't know for what. Later, we find out. Tunnels, tunnels, we build tunnels.

So we was carry this back and forth, back and forth. All of a sudden, one day we stop working a half a day because those pump, those pipes was clogged up, because they put too much sand, too little water, too much cement. You know, they didn't mix everything what they need, what's said in the book-- so much this, so much this, so, and that.

And every day, they was stuck with work. What that was stuck, the pipes, so everybody is stuck. We don't do nothing.

The workers didn't-- there was a lot civil workers that were coming to work. Yugoslavs, [INAUDIBLE], Pole, French, they work there in the day. And then after, they going home. So everything was standing.

Finally, they say, what's going on here? What's going to be the engineers? See, we had engineers.

And I was working there. Look how he work. And so I said to myself, take a look here. Have a good job, that guy.

I wish that I had that job. He sit. He say, more this, more two, more three. More this. He said, perfect.

But not from our people. It's civilian people. He get paid for it.

And that gets stuck all the time. I say to the Yugoslav, because I could talk to him a little-- Russian, a little Polish. We get together. I could do that, that job.

So he talked to the engineer, the German engineer. And he called me. So I speak to him in German. You sure?

I say, I think so. I'm here already two months, whatever. I see it's very easy.

Easy? Here? Because if I would make that, it's sabotage. And they shoot me--

You're finished.

I say, I'm going to fix that. So instead a glass water, I put in two glass water. A glass sand, I put a half a glass.

And I figure, till come down, they're going to dry out a little. They must go through. And that worked perfect.

It was perfect. Everybody was happy. And I was happy.

And they worked. Every day, no one minute was standing and stuck. And I say, I'm going to fix you. I make you that -- the thing so not hard that you're going to appreciate that. And that was the end.

It was working. OK. But, well, that was too good for me. I said, I know from where I've come. That's too good for me.

And come a inspection. Come the kommandant from the camp with the haut kapo. The chief kapo was a Pole.

He look, look. And I am sitting in like a chair like that by the machines. And they are talking about me.

And they're talking [INAUDIBLE] the genius of me. He-- tell him, we have no problem with him. But that Pole, look on my face and look here, and took the-- we have a number. 4942 was my number.

He didn't say nothing. He went home. At night after coffee, and I am on my bed. A guy come in. 4942 to the kapo.

And I lean out and say, I hear my number. I look, make sure. Yeah. Hey, here.

Come. We have to close the whole lot where we stand in the morning to segregate for work. And that office in the kapo, I see in the windows the guy standing looking. He says, that's the guy, he say.

And when I went in, they were standing like in the army, two lines. And when I went in, boom, they start beating me. And I start screaming and screaming and throw myself out from the window. But. So the German--

Well, how high was it?

No, there was a in the first floor. And the window was so high from the one like here. And I see that I'm going to go out. I could save myself maybe getting beat up. But here, they choke me.

And my luck, the commander from the German see what's going on and break windows. They screaming. They run with machine guns. [NON-ENGLISH].

So the kapo say to him, [SPEAKING GERMAN]. He had not a-- he is a-- he changed his thing, his forgery. I make forgery.

He say to a German, another German, bring me the book. Got book-- big book. My name was there.

Say, what's your name? I say my name, Yakov [INAUDIBLE] Spiegel. What's number? 4942. And [GERMAN].

He see-- he find me. He say, it's right. What you want for him?

Yeah, but he have a-- he haven't got the Jewish star. Ah, [GERMAN], he say to him. It's shit like language. Go and make you a Jewish star, and that's it. He solved that problem.

I said, thank God. What's going to be tomorrow, I don't know. I went in to the guy what make those stars. He put me the

star.

I went to sleep. In the morning, 5 o'clock, we drink coffee. We get a piece of bread. We stand out. He come and take me out to my--

Who's he?

The kapo, the Pole. Take me out. He call a Ukrainian. Ivan is the name.

He is your-- he is a Jew. Evret. [NON-ENGLISH] Try to kill him on your job.

So I-- he took me. And he have-- he is responsible for the scheisse kommando, shit commander. You know what shit is?

Yeah.

We go with bowls in every block and take out the shit what people doing at night. We've got big bowls. The bowls was on stretchers.

We put on a wagon. We roll into the field. With the holes, we pouring in.

We are eight people in one wagon. So four people in the morning, the four people in the afternoon. Me? He keep a whole day in.

When you throw it, I was smelling. I couldn't breathe, smelling. I went home. And I went on my-- because the scheisse commander, they have a special room to sleep. When I get-- went back to mine, they're screaming--

So they want-- they'll throw you out.

Yeah. Yeah, screaming, you smell, (Mumbling). I survive this a night. In the morning, we stand out. Nobody go out to work.

The thing broke down again.

Broke down. Where is the guy who do it? They say, it's a Jew.

Big officer, generals, nobody goes. Where's that guy? Where's he work? what he was doing.

He called the kapo. Where's the guy what's working there? They call me. They say, ew, you stink, smell. Change him there thing.

Wash him up. Wash him up. Get in here with clothes, new clothes, everything. [? So ?] [? fresh ?] [INAUDIBLE]. And you got help. OK.

And they wash me. Everybody stay. Nobody go out to work, about 10,000 people, all kind of jobs they're doing.

I'm ready. I'm clean. OK. took me on a thing to work. And I said, oh. The German, and the Yugoslav, the Pole, the civilian that was working there, they were so happy I'm back.

They could work. And the work was going beautiful, beautiful, going and going, going. All of a sudden, we don't go out to work. What's happened?

The England is already on the-- no, before England, the English bomb-- we were-- our camp was by a railroad train. And England fliers coming in. And a train was going. And give it, in the train. And the train turned upside down, and it killed whoever-- a lot of people.

The Germans come in. 500 people to work, to clean up that mess outside. It's not 500,000 running. They start shooting, like a revolution.

Finally, they took out a command of 50 people whatever. And what do you think they're coming for? What do you think they're bringing in? Can you give a guess, Doctor?

They're bringing in a hand, a foot. They-- and they cook it. They cooked that and eat it.

The prisoners did.

Prisoners. I was hungry. But I was almost vomited to seeing what they're doing. They're bringing a foot, hand, anything what they could grab. They bring it in, most of all the Ukrainian. They were so wild.

So that was that time. And after that, we don't go out to work. The England is here.

So they tried to make-- was about 20,000. They tried to make 500,000 group on out. It was-- who was our company? All German people.

They couldn't work. We couldn't work. They didn't work.

So what I was doing again, my brain was working overtime. How we get from here out as quick as possible because the Pole going to kill me. If the German don't kill me, the Pole going to kill me.

And that was a thing. I see the first group, we was to go, maybe the 20 groups, the 30 groups.

The first group went in. 500 are sitting. They're waiting till the people come to take them out.

And one was going to the toilet. So I went in and sit on his place. And that's all.

He come. He couldn't find his place. So he sit in the end.

When we start marching out, took five people. Five, and they're counting. They're holding. And I did like that, they didn't recognize me. I took the hat this way, that way, that the kapos didn't recognize me and take me out.

So I walk through them. And the last one what's supposed to go, they took him back. Was one over.

And I say, thank God, I'm out. He dropped dead. And we start going.

On the way, we was-- the England and the American was bombing us. They figured that's a military or something.

Well, you said you were making rockets.

No, that-- we don't-- the rockets was not-- the tunnel was not finished. The rockets was-- the tunnel was not finished because was a lot of tunnels to make because it was a short time. And the airplane from England or from United States coming in, tour over. They're looking, looking. Bomb, bomb. They're sending bombs on us.

They figure it's a military-- we military or something, because was walking the most in yards and that don't see that. And most, we walk at night, not during the day. And they kill a few people they kill. And we survived this, too, till we come to--

Dachau.

Dachau. We come in to Dachau. No, Dachau, the sign. [GERMAN] and arbeit macht this. And you're going to live long

if you work nights, the signs by the door.

So I say, I know those signs and those names. And they took us-- took down the clothes, the dirty clothes. They're supposed to give us the new clothes.

So in the meantime, the United States Army bombard Dachau. So I pray, where you was so long? Why you waiting so long? In April.

So it was-- the stockroom from the clothes was out, the clothes. Meantime, I clothe myself. I dress myself because I-- if I'm going to wait till they're going to give me, I'm going to drop dead here. I'm going to freeze to death, whatever.

And I dress myself. I have clothes. In April 29, '45, the American army come in, open the doors.

Everybody-- I-- my weight, I was like that, 85 pound, no hairs, because in three years, no one hair was growing on me.

Really?

Not on the head.

Not on the face.

A head, not on the face, because we didn't have protein. They didn't-- no-- I was sometime I wondered, what the hell? I have no hairs.

And I -- They cut me the hairs, and I have no hairs growing, over three years. It started growing in '46.

How was your health through these years?

Health was good. The health was good because I owe my life what doing sports-- play soccer, boxing, hockey. I was active.

At the end of the war, how was your health?

Weak. I was very weak. The American army took me to France, to a convalescing home. I was weighing 85 pounds. They took me. It was--

How much should you have weighed?

Normal.

No, then.

85 pound.

Yeah, how much should you have weighed?

Oh, yeah, about 220, 20, something like that. 215, 220.

Yeah, are you talking kilo or pounds?

We're talking about pounds.

Pounds.

Kilos-- it was 40-something pounds. 2 pounds and something is a kilo.

Because 120 for-- at this time, you were close to 30 years old. You were about 28 when the war ended.

27, 26.

You should be more than 120 pounds.

No. From what? From what? From that--

No, you said you weighed 85 pounds.

Yeah.

If you had been at Å  Ã³dÅ¼ and there was no war, you would have weighed how much?

115, 120.

That's all?

That's all.

OK.

Because I was not fat.

All right, so you were liberated. And did you look for your family?

Yeah. They went. They liberated. I couldn't look. I--

First of all, you had to get your strength back.

Strength-- right. They hang all the kapos there. All the officers, the German officers, they was hanging. And the American army helped us. We finished them up.

Then they took me to France, Lyon, France, to a convalescing home.

How long were you in the convalescent home?

About six month. They treat us--

That was a long time.

Yeah. They treat us so nice and so good. Really, I couldn't forget them.

And that was all Americans?

No, French people.

Oh, the French.

The French people. [INAUDIBLE] they treat us. And you have free-- free the train, free anything. When you go to movie, theater, free You can Look at me. I looked like a Holocaust survivor.

And did you have friends at the time?

No. I have nobody.

You did everything yourself?

Everything myself. I went there. And after six month, I went out. So I went to a Jewish committee. It was a Jewish committee what taking care on refugees, the Holocaust survivor.

So I went up and told them that I am here, and there, that. I need where to sleep. Where do they think?

They say, don't worry. We get you a family that you're going to be there. I start so crying I feel so bad, because my father was the president for orphan home. My mother was, and now, I am in the same situation. It was feeling very bad.

And they get me to that family, the family Litvin. That I couldn't forget. I was like a foster, their own son. They have two children. They treat me like their own son.

Go-- they went to parties, and [? amusement ?] or whatever [? to help me. ?]

How long did you stay there?

I stayed with them one year.

And did you do-- what did-- what were you interested in doing?

I was interested to get out from there, to go to United States.

Yeah.

So because I get in touch with my--

Grandparents.

With my grand-- no, my uncle. My uncle, have more way to find him like my grandparents, because he was in Hollywood. In Hollywood, he was working for Hollywood with hats. So everybody's easier. He is --

My uncle was a cantor, a cantor in New York. But at that time, he was sick, and he didn't-- they didn't know where it is. So what I-- a tourist from the United States. I went and asked him, from where are you? He say, Los Angeles.

Oh, yeah, I supposed to have a uncle there. What's your uncle name? I say, Haime Spiegel.

Haime Spiegel? Oh, yeah, did he have kids? Yeah, two sons. What's their name? So and so.

That's my neighbor-- like that. You know, everything come together to make me easier. My neighbor.

You want to talk to your uncle? Here. Went up to his-- he took me to his hotel.

Pick up the phone. Call. Say, Haime, you won't believe who I have-- name me. Who?

Your nephew. Nephew, your brother's son. The name is Yakov.

Your brother is Yosef. He is? Yeah, from Å Å³dÅ¼. Yeah, yeah.

So I talked to my uncle. And (TEARFULLY) he want to see me. So he want to see me.

Go to the consul. Put down your name. I'm going to send you papers.

So finally, I register in consul. It took time because I was not in the camp. When I was stay in the camp in Germany, I will stay one year and go to the United States.

I am not in the camp. I am private already in French. They consider me as a quota.

The Pole have so much a year. This one have so much a year. So I have to wait for the quote.

So I was waiting so long till declare in 1948 declare a Jewish state. So I say, goodbye, United State.

And you went there.

And I went to Israel.

Then you were there until 19--

In the army.

You served in the army the whole time?

The whole time, 12 years.

For 12 years.

I was in the army till 1960.

'60 or '61.

No, I was in the army to '60.

Because it says--

And I was '61 in Israel, but in the army to '60. I went out, and I looked for something to survive however. In the meantime, my wife went away already to United States because she have a father in Canada, and a brother. And a sister she have in New York.

And her sister send a paper. That time, was very hard to come a family together because Eisenhower was president. And he didn't allow it, come a family together. So my wife after that could send me papers this way.

So you came to America. You had children in Israel?

Two children.

Two children born in Israel. You have anybody here?

One child.

All right, so you, your wife. Your wife is also a survivor, I believe.

Yeah.

So you, your wife, and three children lived in America.



Yes.

You started living in Brooklyn, I think.

Brooklyn, yeah.

And then you moved--

Moved to Brooklyn.

No, but you also came to Staten Island? You lived in Staten Island?

No, in Staten Island I live only a year.

Uh-huh.

Yeah, over a year.

That's after you retired.

After I retired, yeah. I sold my house in Brooklyn. And I bought a condo in Staten Island and in Florida. So I'm six month, I am in Florida. And six month, I am here in Staten Island.

Your children are married, single?

One is married. One going to get married in six week. And my son is divorced.

Uh-huh. And you have grandchildren.

I have two grandchildren in college and one in high school from my daughter.

OK, very nice. Now I want to ask you some general questions as we go through this.

[INAUDIBLE]

When did you start talking about the Holocaust and with whom?

I start talking the Holocaust with my children in Israel.

So you always talked about it.

Always talking. They didn't want to sleep if I don't give them a story.

And did you speak-- did you find that there were some people who listened and some people did not listen?

I am tell-- the people I didn't tell because it was a lot of-- a lot of people from the Holocaust.

In Israel.

A lot of-- in Israel, a lot of people from Russia. But they was also suffering quite a while in Russia because was no wood, no food. The Russians suffer.

So then you come and-- excuse me-- suffer, too. Excuse me a minute. So it's not unusual for them to give them the story.

They was the same-- in the same boat like me.

They have their stories. And you have your stories.

They have their stories. Everybody have their own story.

All right, I have two questions which are quite difficult. If you can answer them, fine. If not--

Any question you can ask.

How has the Holocaust affected your outlook on life and your understanding of human nature?

In a positive way, one way. And not to lie to you, the religion way, I get a little cooler, because was time when we went out from Russia ghetto, they was taking us to [PLACE NAME] The rabbis were saying, hey, kinder, don't worry. We go with God.

Don't worry. We go with God. Don't worry. We go with God.

So we went to God. They went to the gas chambers. They went, like me, to Bobruisk, to the killing camps.

I lost confidence in a way, not 100%. I respect the religion. I-- that's why I went to Israel.

And I tried to my children not to forget what they are. A holiday is a holiday in my house. Any holiday, any seder, any-- all get it in my house. I keep the tradition 100%.

Yeah. You answered my third question, which I didn't ask yet. Now I want to talk about the second question.

Go ahead.

Human nature-- how do you understand human nature, that people should kill-- the stories you told.

Yeah.

This was human beings were doing this. How has this affected your view of human-- how do you see human nature?

It affected in a positive way. That's what I told you, Doctor. I see people-- I believe in people.

And also, my wife and my kids have to-- daddy, why you believe so? Why you think-- be careful like [INAUDIBLE]. No. I don't need to be careful now. We are in a free country.

I was in Israel and the old country, our country. I feel here very free. There is here and there some differences between-- segregation between race, between religion. But that is minor.

That couldn't happen, what happened because now, we-- if something serious happened, we have where to go. We have a home. We have Israel. We go. I have two children born there.

And they know it. And now I have a grandchild, God bless him. He's in Israel.

And he went volunteer-- student volunteer for three weeks. He's only out there three months, then he didn't want to come back. And the school started.

And the parents call him and everything. And I was screaming all over there on the phone. And he didn't want to come.

Finally, so happened that he have to come back because there is a wedding. My daughter getting married. So he come--

he doing us a favor. He come November the 9th. He come back from Israel.

But that is like in the heart. In the heart, he have the Jewish. He knows he's a Jew.

He listened to my stories. Grandpa, [? back ?] [? in ?] [? the ?] [? day-- ?] Grandpa--

But you're talking about the people who are victims and their children. I'm talking about the people who did the crimes.

Oh, from that--

How do you see human beings in those terms?

OK, 1973, they called me to Germany as a witness in court, 1973. I didn't want to go, of course. But finally, my wife say, if I go with you, let's go.

That's going to be in the history maybe. Don't refuse. See what's going on.

Maybe you're going to feel better, cooler, that happens, happens with those matters. But there was in our camp, in Bobruisk, was killing so easy. So I called-- I told the German. I called up the consul Germany and say, you want us-- you want me to go? I go only but [INAUDIBLE] that my wife go with me because I don't feel secure to go alone, flying this, down-- told him the story.

And he say, with pleasure. We send your wife tickets, and a room where to stay with you in a hotel. And you'll get food, money, and everything.

I said, listen, I have a very small child. She's about 5 years. I have to hire somebody to take care on her.

So he say, do you have somebody? I have other two children, and they're going to school. And they say, OK, can you take a baby sitter, and we pay for it?

So they pay for it. I took somebody who took care of my daughter, who want to get married now. And they took care. They paying for everything.

But they didn't pay me. When they was killing all my family, they wouldn't pay with money.

Yeah.

Yeah. And I wouldn't buy something that's German. But I know that German now help a lot Israel. They give a lot of money, a lot of hardware, a lot of-- because they sign up. That they give so much, so much. 19-- that was 19--

Back in the '50s.

--'50-something.

Adenauer's time.

Yeah. So Ben-Gurion signed it up. And they get it in the-- and you should see now Israel. And if you was in Israel-- and I was in Israel in 1948.

We took Eilat. We went from Tel Aviv to Eilat, about 50 soldier in one truck. We was pushing the truck more than running because there was no roads. It was terrible.

Today, you go. You see-- you don't see the United States. We have-- you have grapes. You have oranges. You have roads-- unbelievable.

Yeah. All right, I want to thank you very much. We spent close to two hours together. And I was spellbound listening to you tell about your experiences. It's very important.

I didn't tell you a lot.

I know. I realize that. But what you did here was very, very important. And we appreciate it very much.

I think it's truly remarkable that a person went through the experiences that you did, and you have a positive outlook on life.

Always.

This is a wonderful characteristic on your part.

But that's why parents, my brothers and sisters (TEARFULLY) left me to have the name.

Yeah. Thank you very much.

It was my pleasure.