

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:31,080

2

00:00:31,080 --> 00:00:32,530

Good afternoon.

3

00:00:32,530 --> 00:00:35,880

I'm Bernard Weinstein, director  
of the Kean College Oral

4

00:00:35,880 --> 00:00:39,060

Testimonies project  
on the Holocaust.

5

00:00:39,060 --> 00:00:40,350

I'm Susanna Rich.

6

00:00:40,350 --> 00:00:43,110

We welcome Mr. Aaron Schwarz.

7

00:00:43,110 --> 00:00:50,970

I would like to bring you  
some way how systematically

8

00:00:50,970 --> 00:00:55,170

the Germans picked up  
everybody from the most

9

00:00:55,170 --> 00:01:01,410

remote areas in town and the  
villages, picked up every Jew.

10

00:01:01,410 --> 00:01:03,240

How they could do this?

11

00:01:03,240 --> 00:01:07,470

A lot of people are  
wondering how it is possible.

12

00:01:07,470 --> 00:01:11,600

Now here is a-- when the Germans

moved in, everybody said,

13

00:01:11,600 --> 00:01:16,330

well, this is a highly  
educated people.

14

00:01:16,330 --> 00:01:17,810

There's nothing to worry.

15

00:01:17,810 --> 00:01:24,770

But this is the problem, how  
a highly educated country--

16

00:01:24,770 --> 00:01:26,520

nation, I would say--

17

00:01:26,520 --> 00:01:35,140

could become such terrible  
murders in such a scale that

18

00:01:35,140 --> 00:01:39,120

a human brain cannot  
comprehend that.

19

00:01:39,120 --> 00:01:43,020

The way they did this,  
the way it was planned,

20

00:01:43,020 --> 00:01:45,990

it is impossible  
for one who did not

21

00:01:45,990 --> 00:01:51,810

go through it to believe,  
or to visualize how

22

00:01:51,810 --> 00:01:53,940

this is possible to be done.

23

00:01:53,940 --> 00:01:55,890

Now, the way they  
picked up people

24

00:01:55,890 --> 00:02:00,240

from the most remote areas  
and the villages is they--

25

00:02:00,240 --> 00:02:04,260

first of all, every sheriff  
in the areas in the villages

26

00:02:04,260 --> 00:02:08,190

had a note from the Gestapo.

27

00:02:08,190 --> 00:02:12,320

They had to bring over all  
the Jews to the ghetto.

28

00:02:12,320 --> 00:02:15,480

And they cannot stay  
in this area at all.

29

00:02:15,480 --> 00:02:17,800

The Jews must be  
delivered to the ghetto.

30

00:02:17,800 --> 00:02:19,630

And of course, they  
were responsible.

31

00:02:19,630 --> 00:02:21,660

They did it.

32

00:02:21,660 --> 00:02:25,280

Now, being in the ghetto--  
of course, it's a long story,

33

00:02:25,280 --> 00:02:26,150

which I am not--

34

00:02:26,150 --> 00:02:29,130

I'm going to cut it short.

35

00:02:29,130 --> 00:02:33,910

I'm going to go where

my ghetto finished.

36

00:02:33,910 --> 00:02:39,570

And I went to Debica, a town, a small ghetto there.

37

00:02:39,570 --> 00:02:43,710

And we remained only about 200 people.

38

00:02:43,710 --> 00:02:48,000

200 young men became legal, so-called legal,

39

00:02:48,000 --> 00:02:52,760

because we were working on government jobs.

40

00:02:52,760 --> 00:02:58,470

And I was one of them there and working on the railroad.

41

00:02:58,470 --> 00:03:03,390

And the area there is called Debica.

42

00:03:03,390 --> 00:03:07,350

And this is near Kraków area.

43

00:03:07,350 --> 00:03:13,380

And so we were working there for almost a year and a half.

44

00:03:13,380 --> 00:03:18,110

And when a job finished-- there were several groups.

45

00:03:18,110 --> 00:03:22,330

One group was working on the railroad track

46

00:03:22,330 --> 00:03:25,740

cleaning the grass and picking

up where the transports were

47

00:03:25,740 --> 00:03:28,710  
going to the front lines.

48

00:03:28,710 --> 00:03:30,780  
It was military.

49

00:03:30,780 --> 00:03:33,900  
And then they are going  
back from the front lines.

50

00:03:33,900 --> 00:03:36,750  
And they were  
stopping in this town

51

00:03:36,750 --> 00:03:40,230  
there, because they had to  
let through other trains.

52

00:03:40,230 --> 00:03:49,020  
And so the trains did not have  
hygienic tanks or bathrooms.

53

00:03:49,020 --> 00:03:50,790  
Everything was on the tracks.

54

00:03:50,790 --> 00:03:53,220  
While they were  
staying there, an army

55

00:03:53,220 --> 00:03:55,490  
was going there day and night.

56

00:03:55,490 --> 00:03:56,720  
And we had to clean that.

57

00:03:56,720 --> 00:03:59,400  
And this was one of a group.

58

00:03:59,400 --> 00:04:01,350  
We were working on that.

59

00:04:01,350 --> 00:04:05,375

And one group was working  
as helpers to masons.

60

00:04:05,375 --> 00:04:08,070

We were building a  
big switch tower.

61

00:04:08,070 --> 00:04:10,890

One group was  
unloading and loading

62

00:04:10,890 --> 00:04:13,110

railroad tracks,  
which were-- they

63

00:04:13,110 --> 00:04:15,840

were expanding the railroad  
station, because they

64

00:04:15,840 --> 00:04:16,875

needed more tracks.

65

00:04:16,875 --> 00:04:20,212

66

00:04:20,212 --> 00:04:22,530

There were two lines only.

67

00:04:22,530 --> 00:04:24,030

They needed more.

68

00:04:24,030 --> 00:04:28,500

And so I'm working on that,  
next to the tracks there.

69

00:04:28,500 --> 00:04:30,750

And the transports  
with the Jewish people

70

00:04:30,750 --> 00:04:33,090

were coming every day--

71

00:04:33,090 --> 00:04:36,690

such a terrible thing  
to see and to hear, how

72

00:04:36,690 --> 00:04:39,030

the cries inside from children.

73

00:04:39,030 --> 00:04:41,490

This was the cattle trains.

74

00:04:41,490 --> 00:04:45,030

And it was before Rosh Hashanah.

75

00:04:45,030 --> 00:04:47,970

It was already cold outside.

76

00:04:47,970 --> 00:04:50,370

And inside, the heat  
was so tremendous

77

00:04:50,370 --> 00:04:53,300

that it penetrated  
through the boards.

78

00:04:53,300 --> 00:04:57,390

And the train was  
gray was frost.

79

00:04:57,390 --> 00:04:59,420

Inside, the heat  
was so tremendous

80

00:04:59,420 --> 00:05:03,470

that the people were dying,  
and not a drop of water.

81

00:05:03,470 --> 00:05:05,390

Were you able to see  
inside the trains?

82

00:05:05,390 --> 00:05:08,680

No, but it wasn't  
a train like this.

83

00:05:08,680 --> 00:05:12,170

And I could imagine  
how this looked there.

84

00:05:12,170 --> 00:05:17,530

And they were handing out  
some pitchers, some glasses,

85

00:05:17,530 --> 00:05:19,950

and water, water, and water.

86

00:05:19,950 --> 00:05:24,570

So I'm just working next to  
a railroad, to the train.

87

00:05:24,570 --> 00:05:28,220

Incidentally, the trains were  
stopped in a town like this,

88

00:05:28,220 --> 00:05:31,010

and they would railroad  
the site in order

89

00:05:31,010 --> 00:05:33,410

to let through the  
main transports,

90

00:05:33,410 --> 00:05:35,720

the military transport,  
to let through first.

91

00:05:35,720 --> 00:05:40,460

So those trains, on all counts,  
they were railroading the site.

92

00:05:40,460 --> 00:05:44,850

And we stayed until all  
the tracks were cleared.

93



00:05:44,850 --> 00:05:48,280  
And so I couldn't stand.

94  
00:05:48,280 --> 00:05:55,490  
I couldn't go through  
the knowing, the thirst,

95  
00:05:55,490 --> 00:05:58,790  
the heat there for  
a little water.

96  
00:05:58,790 --> 00:06:02,960  
So I grabbed a pitcher  
from one's hand.

97  
00:06:02,960 --> 00:06:04,145  
And I went across.

98  
00:06:04,145 --> 00:06:06,410  
A little further,  
there was a hydrant.

99  
00:06:06,410 --> 00:06:08,210  
And I filled it with water.

100  
00:06:08,210 --> 00:06:10,340  
And an SS saw me.

101  
00:06:10,340 --> 00:06:14,210  
And he took me over, come over,  
and takes out the revolver,

102  
00:06:14,210 --> 00:06:14,930  
and takes me.

103  
00:06:14,930 --> 00:06:18,110  
There was a little  
shack behind the station

104  
00:06:18,110 --> 00:06:20,140  
where we had kept our tools.

105

00:06:20,140 --> 00:06:26,601

And next to the shack was a  
pile of old leaves and garbage.

106

00:06:26,601 --> 00:06:29,920

That pile was saturated with  
blood, with Jewish blood.

107

00:06:29,920 --> 00:06:33,010

Every day, people were  
jumping out from the trains.

108

00:06:33,010 --> 00:06:34,760

They caught them,  
bringed them over there,

109

00:06:34,760 --> 00:06:36,920

and shot them there  
behind the station.

110

00:06:36,920 --> 00:06:38,270

And this was every day.

111

00:06:38,270 --> 00:06:40,360

Some casualties were  
laying on that pile.

112

00:06:40,360 --> 00:06:43,150

And so he takes me over there,  
and takes out the revolver.

113

00:06:43,150 --> 00:06:44,280

And he says, come on.

114

00:06:44,280 --> 00:06:46,020

And he's going to shoot me.

115

00:06:46,020 --> 00:06:49,427

And I start shouting.

116

00:06:49,427 --> 00:06:51,260

When you have the  
revolver before your head,

117  
00:06:51,260 --> 00:06:52,552  
you don't talk with your mouth.

118  
00:06:52,552 --> 00:06:54,650  
You talk with your  
heart, with your lungs.

119  
00:06:54,650 --> 00:06:59,132  
And I said, please ask,  
I got an order, an order.

120  
00:06:59,132 --> 00:07:02,240  
An order for them  
is a holy thing.

121  
00:07:02,240 --> 00:07:04,130  
And I said, I got an order.

122  
00:07:04,130 --> 00:07:06,210  
I got an order from  
the train leader

123  
00:07:06,210 --> 00:07:07,700  
that I should give  
them the water.

124  
00:07:07,700 --> 00:07:10,060  
Please, before  
you shoot me, ask.

125  
00:07:10,060 --> 00:07:13,160  
And I was yelling with my heart.

126  
00:07:13,160 --> 00:07:15,050  
And he stopped for a second.

127  
00:07:15,050 --> 00:07:18,090  
And it looked to me  
that he was putting

128  
00:07:18,090 --> 00:07:22,130

that revolver in his folder  
and was trying to go back.

129  
00:07:22,130 --> 00:07:24,050  
That train started to move away.

130  
00:07:24,050 --> 00:07:25,570  
And my luck is he left me alone.

131  
00:07:25,570 --> 00:07:27,050  
He left me alive.

132  
00:07:27,050 --> 00:07:29,180  
And so this is there.

133  
00:07:29,180 --> 00:07:35,580  
And of course, we were going  
out every morning to that work.

134  
00:07:35,580 --> 00:07:38,230  
We were counted,  
so many, so many.

135  
00:07:38,230 --> 00:07:43,070  
There was one  
entrance, one exit.

136  
00:07:43,070 --> 00:07:46,280  
And there was an SS  
standing always there

137  
00:07:46,280 --> 00:07:49,580  
and watching how many go  
out, how many come in.

138  
00:07:49,580 --> 00:07:54,900  
And so one evening,  
the problem was there

139  
00:07:54,900 --> 00:08:01,390  
that, if a group finished their  
work, they took that group--

140

00:08:01,390 --> 00:08:04,078

a group, I mean about 25, 30.

141

00:08:04,078 --> 00:08:05,120

They finished their work.

142

00:08:05,120 --> 00:08:08,410

They took their group,  
and they arrested them.

143

00:08:08,410 --> 00:08:09,850

And the Gestapo--  
and the Gestapo

144

00:08:09,850 --> 00:08:12,770

was next to that ghetto  
where we were living.

145

00:08:12,770 --> 00:08:13,730

And they arrested them.

146

00:08:13,730 --> 00:08:17,630

And they took them  
during the day.

147

00:08:17,630 --> 00:08:19,400

And in the evening,  
they took them.

148

00:08:19,400 --> 00:08:22,250

And they, one by one,  
were let out and shot

149

00:08:22,250 --> 00:08:26,210

on that pile of garbage.

150

00:08:26,210 --> 00:08:30,970

And of course, knowing what  
happened yesterday to a group,

151

00:08:30,970 --> 00:08:35,750

we were not waiting any longer.

152  
00:08:35,750 --> 00:08:40,110  
And I, at this same time with  
my brother, planned to escape.

153  
00:08:40,110 --> 00:08:42,260  
And I planned to  
escape the same day.

154  
00:08:42,260 --> 00:08:46,780  
But two boys escaped  
earlier than me,

155  
00:08:46,780 --> 00:08:49,550  
than my plans were to escape.

156  
00:08:49,550 --> 00:08:51,417  
They escaped right  
in the morning.

157  
00:08:51,417 --> 00:08:52,250  
How did they escape?

158  
00:08:52,250 --> 00:08:53,970  
They took their shovels.

159  
00:08:53,970 --> 00:08:56,660  
And they took a foreman,  
also a Jewish guy.

160  
00:08:56,660 --> 00:08:57,770  
He also escaped.

161  
00:08:57,770 --> 00:09:01,350  
And they were going over  
the tracks for work.

162  
00:09:01,350 --> 00:09:03,370  
It looked like they're  
going for work.

163  
00:09:03,370 --> 00:09:06,470

But actually, they  
went to escape

164  
00:09:06,470 --> 00:09:08,720  
with their shovels and wagons.

165  
00:09:08,720 --> 00:09:12,980  
And so when they  
escaped, suddenly the SS

166  
00:09:12,980 --> 00:09:17,870  
surrounded us, the whole  
group, and picked up 15 people

167  
00:09:17,870 --> 00:09:18,965  
to be shot.

168  
00:09:18,965 --> 00:09:21,840  
And this was number  
two, shot twice.

169  
00:09:21,840 --> 00:09:26,160  
And I am in this group with  
my brother and with my cousin.

170  
00:09:26,160 --> 00:09:28,000  
And I also planned--  
as I said, I

171  
00:09:28,000 --> 00:09:30,350  
planned to escape  
on this same day.

172  
00:09:30,350 --> 00:09:33,170  
So I had this revolver with me.

173  
00:09:33,170 --> 00:09:35,840  
And that revolver, I  
kept for a purpose.

174  
00:09:35,840 --> 00:09:37,850  
When I will be in  
the forest, or going

175  
00:09:37,850 --> 00:09:42,080  
through the forest,  
some Polish hoodlums,

176  
00:09:42,080 --> 00:09:44,420  
knowing that Jews  
are on the run--

177  
00:09:44,420 --> 00:09:48,110  
they have with them gold,  
and silver, and money.

178  
00:09:48,110 --> 00:09:50,840  
This is all we could  
take, if you had it,

179  
00:09:50,840 --> 00:09:52,610  
because you couldn't  
carry anything else.

180  
00:09:52,610 --> 00:09:54,650  
So they were marked  
and taken off.

181  
00:09:54,650 --> 00:09:58,620  
Even a good suit was removed  
from him and taken away.

182  
00:09:58,620 --> 00:10:01,250  
So I said, this is what  
I am not going to allow.

183  
00:10:01,250 --> 00:10:05,070  
And I made all efforts  
to buy that revolver.

184  
00:10:05,070 --> 00:10:06,260  
And you couldn't buy that.

185  
00:10:06,260 --> 00:10:08,090  
This wasn't a easy thing.



186

00:10:08,090 --> 00:10:10,730

Anybody who sold you  
a revolver, and if I

187

00:10:10,730 --> 00:10:15,350

would have been caught, let's  
say, with that revolver,

188

00:10:15,350 --> 00:10:17,780

and they start  
torturing you, you

189

00:10:17,780 --> 00:10:19,590

don't care what happens  
to the other guy.

190

00:10:19,590 --> 00:10:21,200

He was telling the truth.

191

00:10:21,200 --> 00:10:25,280

And so nobody would  
sell you a revolver.

192

00:10:25,280 --> 00:10:30,590

But I had a Polish  
officer from the army.

193

00:10:30,590 --> 00:10:32,760

He knew me from before the war.

194

00:10:32,760 --> 00:10:36,620

And I was going out, working,  
and I got in touch with him.

195

00:10:36,620 --> 00:10:39,210

And I asked him about that.

196

00:10:39,210 --> 00:10:42,170

And he brought me  
that beautiful gun.

197

00:10:42,170 --> 00:10:49,190

This was an automatic, eight  
shotgun with 20 bullets.

198  
00:10:49,190 --> 00:10:50,820  
And I paid him a lot of money.

199  
00:10:50,820 --> 00:10:54,080  
Whatever I could scrape up, I  
gave him, in order to get that.

200  
00:10:54,080 --> 00:10:59,510  
Finally, at that time  
planning to go away,

201  
00:10:59,510 --> 00:11:02,440  
I took a loaf of bread.

202  
00:11:02,440 --> 00:11:07,700  
And I made a small hole  
inside and dug out the soft.

203  
00:11:07,700 --> 00:11:09,175  
And I took that revolver.

204  
00:11:09,175 --> 00:11:10,610  
And I shoved it in there.

205  
00:11:10,610 --> 00:11:12,830  
And I closed it up so nicely  
that nobody would know

206  
00:11:12,830 --> 00:11:14,160  
that there is anything in that.

207  
00:11:14,160 --> 00:11:17,460  
And I kept it-- we always  
kept them in the-- the bread

208  
00:11:17,460 --> 00:11:18,290  
with you.

209  
00:11:18,290 --> 00:11:20,390

Otherwise, they were  
stolen in the barracks.

210  
00:11:20,390 --> 00:11:25,790  
People were stealing each  
one's bread, each one's things.

211  
00:11:25,790 --> 00:11:29,150  
But when they arrested me,  
I had that revolver with me.

212  
00:11:29,150 --> 00:11:32,720  
And my cousin, of course, what  
was going on in that basement

213  
00:11:32,720 --> 00:11:36,980  
where we were arresting, I  
just cannot begin to tell you.

214  
00:11:36,980 --> 00:11:41,300  
There were cries, and  
beating the head on the wall.

215  
00:11:41,300 --> 00:11:44,030  
It's impossible to tell you.

216  
00:11:44,030 --> 00:11:50,000  
So my cousin, he was a tall guy,  
maybe 6 foot 6" guy like this.

217  
00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:52,470  
He said, I am going first.

218  
00:11:52,470 --> 00:11:57,580  
And I planned with my brother  
to be the first at the door.

219  
00:11:57,580 --> 00:11:58,730  
They will open the door.

220  
00:11:58,730 --> 00:12:01,280  
When the guard, the SS opens  
the door, I'll shoot him.

221  
00:12:01,280 --> 00:12:03,450  
And I told my brother,  
you grab the gun.

222  
00:12:03,450 --> 00:12:04,520  
Let's try to escape.

223  
00:12:04,520 --> 00:12:05,290  
At least we tried.

224  
00:12:05,290 --> 00:12:08,040

225  
00:12:08,040 --> 00:12:11,880  
And so my cousin says,  
I am going first.

226  
00:12:11,880 --> 00:12:12,740  
He heard the cries.

227  
00:12:12,740 --> 00:12:15,140  
I don't want to hear any more.

228  
00:12:15,140 --> 00:12:17,570  
So finally, I told him--

229  
00:12:17,570 --> 00:12:20,000  
I said, what are you so in rush?

230  
00:12:20,000 --> 00:12:21,650  
Let me go first.

231  
00:12:21,650 --> 00:12:22,930  
I said, let me go first.

232  
00:12:22,930 --> 00:12:25,960  
I'm going with my brother.

233  
00:12:25,960 --> 00:12:31,490  
And I couldn't tell anybody that

I have a revolver, because I

234

00:12:31,490 --> 00:12:35,030  
was still thinking, in  
case we get out alive,

235

00:12:35,030 --> 00:12:39,920  
they did not have any right  
to know that I had a revolver,

236

00:12:39,920 --> 00:12:44,770  
because having a revolver was a  
sign that I am going to escape.

237

00:12:44,770 --> 00:12:46,880  
And going to escape,  
that's what will happen.

238

00:12:46,880 --> 00:12:47,755  
That's what happened.

239

00:12:47,755 --> 00:12:49,305  
They took me to-- they take 15.

240

00:12:49,305 --> 00:12:51,180  
And when I escape, they  
will take another 15.

241

00:12:51,180 --> 00:12:55,340  
And they always  
were very perfect.

242

00:12:55,340 --> 00:12:56,480  
They didn't take 14--

243

00:12:56,480 --> 00:12:57,020  
15.

244

00:12:57,020 --> 00:12:58,190  
They shot them.

245

00:12:58,190 --> 00:13:03,070

And so everybody was  
watching, guarded the guy,

246  
00:13:03,070 --> 00:13:05,840  
so shouldn't escape from work.

247  
00:13:05,840 --> 00:13:08,890  
I didn't want to tell them  
that I have the revolver.

248  
00:13:08,890 --> 00:13:13,390  
And so finally, it was  
getting so dark outside.

249  
00:13:13,390 --> 00:13:19,850  
And a voice came from the  
ghetto there, a young man.

250  
00:13:19,850 --> 00:13:23,450  
There was a little opening,  
like a cinder block opening,

251  
00:13:23,450 --> 00:13:24,707  
in that basement.

252  
00:13:24,707 --> 00:13:25,790  
And he says, you are free.

253  
00:13:25,790 --> 00:13:26,998  
You are going to go out free.

254  
00:13:26,998 --> 00:13:32,390  
What they did there is they took  
some gold and diamond rings.

255  
00:13:32,390 --> 00:13:36,950  
And each Gestapo got a  
diamond ring and a bracelet.

256  
00:13:36,950 --> 00:13:41,060  
And they almost paid  
them to let us out.

257

00:13:41,060 --> 00:13:46,820  
And the German soldier, the guy  
who we were working for him,

258

00:13:46,820 --> 00:13:47,690  
he was a German.

259

00:13:47,690 --> 00:13:49,310  
He was a civil.

260

00:13:49,310 --> 00:13:52,220  
And he was responsible  
for that work.

261

00:13:52,220 --> 00:13:54,260  
And he came over to  
the Gestapo himself.

262

00:13:54,260 --> 00:13:55,700  
And he says, [NON-ENGLISH].

263

00:13:55,700 --> 00:13:58,700  
He says, friends of  
mine, let them go.

264

00:13:58,700 --> 00:14:01,190  
You pick me up my best workers.

265

00:14:01,190 --> 00:14:02,580  
And I need to work.

266

00:14:02,580 --> 00:14:04,120  
I need the job done.

267

00:14:04,120 --> 00:14:06,410  
And whenever we will  
have the job done,

268

00:14:06,410 --> 00:14:08,150  
I will bring them over to you.

269

00:14:08,150 --> 00:14:10,610

And then you have a  
right, you can shoot them.

270

00:14:10,610 --> 00:14:12,360

I'll bring them over to you.

271

00:14:12,360 --> 00:14:13,910

And so I heard this saying.

272

00:14:13,910 --> 00:14:17,720

So finally, all this  
helped a little bit.

273

00:14:17,720 --> 00:14:21,260

And then it was getting dark.

274

00:14:21,260 --> 00:14:23,780

They were trying to  
take us out one by one.

275

00:14:23,780 --> 00:14:25,910

We had to undress completely.

276

00:14:25,910 --> 00:14:28,110

And they searched you.

277

00:14:28,110 --> 00:14:29,780

And then there's a problem.

278

00:14:29,780 --> 00:14:30,890

I had the revolver.

279

00:14:30,890 --> 00:14:33,320

What do I do with the revolver  
now, with the bullets?

280

00:14:33,320 --> 00:14:37,010

If they would catch me with  
that revolver, I'm cooked.

281

00:14:37,010 --> 00:14:40,220



So there was a  
bucket with water.

282  
00:14:40,220 --> 00:14:41,870  
It was soiled from  
the last night,

283  
00:14:41,870 --> 00:14:44,240  
what the people left there.

284  
00:14:44,240 --> 00:14:48,170  
I threw it in, in that  
bucket there, and that's it.

285  
00:14:48,170 --> 00:14:50,810  
Nobody would know that.

286  
00:14:50,810 --> 00:14:53,180  
And then, when I go  
out, I was dressed

287  
00:14:53,180 --> 00:14:57,500  
in about three pants and  
maybe six pairs of underwear.

288  
00:14:57,500 --> 00:14:59,020  
And I start to undress.

289  
00:14:59,020 --> 00:15:01,670  
So one SS says to  
the other, this guy

290  
00:15:01,670 --> 00:15:04,460  
wanted to escape  
today, this guy.

291  
00:15:04,460 --> 00:15:05,810  
I said, this is not true.

292  
00:15:05,810 --> 00:15:08,540  
I keep this on, because they  
are stealing in the barracks.

293

00:15:08,540 --> 00:15:09,350

I must.

294

00:15:09,350 --> 00:15:10,170

I must.

295

00:15:10,170 --> 00:15:11,750

I can't leave in the barracks.

296

00:15:11,750 --> 00:15:14,510

They steal anybody's things.

297

00:15:14,510 --> 00:15:17,430

And so he took this  
as a good excuse.

298

00:15:17,430 --> 00:15:18,530

And he let me go.

299

00:15:18,530 --> 00:15:20,932

And after we finished  
the cleaning there--

300

00:15:20,932 --> 00:15:28,850

[COUGHS] after we finished the  
cleaning, all the searches,

301

00:15:28,850 --> 00:15:32,540

the SS has three  
guys go in there

302

00:15:32,540 --> 00:15:35,270

and clean out that  
bunker, the basement.

303

00:15:35,270 --> 00:15:38,660

This was a part of a basement  
closed in with the cinder

304

00:15:38,660 --> 00:15:41,090

blocks with an iron door.

305

00:15:41,090 --> 00:15:42,490

And there were the arrested.

306

00:15:42,490 --> 00:15:45,740

And they were staying  
there to be shot.

307

00:15:45,740 --> 00:15:48,950

And so, from the last night  
when they shot a group,

308

00:15:48,950 --> 00:15:50,870

they left all the jackets.

309

00:15:50,870 --> 00:15:53,360

And everything, they left there.

310

00:15:53,360 --> 00:15:54,560

So we had to clean this out.

311

00:15:54,560 --> 00:15:56,180

So I go in there first.

312

00:15:56,180 --> 00:15:57,800

And I put my hand  
in that bucket,

313

00:15:57,800 --> 00:16:00,590

and picked up that  
revolver with the bullets,

314

00:16:00,590 --> 00:16:05,750

and go into the bathroom,  
and flushed the water,

315

00:16:05,750 --> 00:16:07,660

and cleaned it out, and  
put it in my pocket.

316

00:16:07,660 --> 00:16:09,470

And I was happy  
having that revolver.

317  
00:16:09,470 --> 00:16:12,260  
But somebody noticed  
me with that revolver.

318  
00:16:12,260 --> 00:16:14,900  
And when going back  
into the ghetto,

319  
00:16:14,900 --> 00:16:20,390  
the ghetto leader was Jewish.

320  
00:16:20,390 --> 00:16:25,560  
So he took me, my  
brother, and my cousin

321  
00:16:25,560 --> 00:16:27,890  
and arrested me in the ghetto.

322  
00:16:27,890 --> 00:16:31,160  
They took away that  
revolver, and the bullets,

323  
00:16:31,160 --> 00:16:32,360  
and everything.

324  
00:16:32,360 --> 00:16:37,430  
And then I was afraid  
that he will have

325  
00:16:37,430 --> 00:16:39,950  
to give this up to the Gestapo.

326  
00:16:39,950 --> 00:16:42,170  
And if he will give  
it up to the Gestapo,

327  
00:16:42,170 --> 00:16:44,870  
we are again dead people.

328  
00:16:44,870 --> 00:16:50,370  
And so my cousin again started

to cry and to raise heck.

329

00:16:50,370 --> 00:16:57,020

Finally, and then one guy  
from the so-called Judenrat--

330

00:16:57,020 --> 00:16:58,473

this was the community.

331

00:16:58,473 --> 00:17:00,140

There was a president,  
a vice president.

332

00:17:00,140 --> 00:17:03,740

And this vice president  
came in there.

333

00:17:03,740 --> 00:17:07,940

And he said, look, if  
Aaron will promise me

334

00:17:07,940 --> 00:17:12,050

that he will never escape,  
you can let him out,

335

00:17:12,050 --> 00:17:14,400

because he knew me  
from before the war.

336

00:17:14,400 --> 00:17:18,260

His wife was a house  
doctor, our doctor.

337

00:17:18,260 --> 00:17:21,349

And they knew me very well from  
before, from where I come out,

338

00:17:21,349 --> 00:17:23,119

and my whole family.

339

00:17:23,119 --> 00:17:26,660

So he said, if I'll promise  
him that I won't escape,

340  
00:17:26,660 --> 00:17:29,120  
they will let us out.

341  
00:17:29,120 --> 00:17:30,860  
Sure, I won't escape.

342  
00:17:30,860 --> 00:17:31,760  
And they let us out.

343  
00:17:31,760 --> 00:17:32,540  
And they took the revolver.

344  
00:17:32,540 --> 00:17:33,650  
What happened to it?

345  
00:17:33,650 --> 00:17:36,380  
I don't know if they gave  
it, or they didn't give it.

346  
00:17:36,380 --> 00:17:37,300  
They let us out.

347  
00:17:37,300 --> 00:17:42,320  
But I was under surveillance  
every day, and every morning,

348  
00:17:42,320 --> 00:17:47,180  
and watching if I  
don't plan any escape.

349  
00:17:47,180 --> 00:17:51,290  
The reason when  
the work finished

350  
00:17:51,290 --> 00:17:55,970  
that they shot you is  
they were always afraid

351  
00:17:55,970 --> 00:18:00,070  
that we had a contact  
with the underground.

352  
00:18:00,070 --> 00:18:04,580  
In order to make sure  
that there is not

353  
00:18:04,580 --> 00:18:08,150  
any plans in the  
ghetto, anything,

354  
00:18:08,150 --> 00:18:10,880  
that we had any contact  
with the underground,

355  
00:18:10,880 --> 00:18:12,620  
they wiped you out completely.

356  
00:18:12,620 --> 00:18:13,520  
And that's it.

357  
00:18:13,520 --> 00:18:16,820  
There is no problem  
of worrying that if we

358  
00:18:16,820 --> 00:18:18,763  
had any contact with  
the underground.

359  
00:18:18,763 --> 00:18:20,930  
What was going on in your  
mind during all this time?

360  
00:18:20,930 --> 00:18:25,080  
Did you think you really  
had nothing to lose?

361  
00:18:25,080 --> 00:18:25,790  
Were you praying?

362  
00:18:25,790 --> 00:18:27,230  
No.

363  
00:18:27,230 --> 00:18:32,380

We wanted to live so much that  
it's impossible to describe

364  
00:18:32,380 --> 00:18:37,090  
how life was less precious.

365  
00:18:37,090 --> 00:18:41,780  
Every day, people-- when I  
see here in the United States,

366  
00:18:41,780 --> 00:18:45,050  
this one commits suicide,  
this one is planning suicide,

367  
00:18:45,050 --> 00:18:50,780  
I can't begin to  
think of how precious

368  
00:18:50,780 --> 00:18:56,240  
life was to live a day in  
the concentration camp.

369  
00:18:56,240 --> 00:18:58,949  
I think-- pardon me.

370  
00:18:58,949 --> 00:18:59,935  
That's OK.

371  
00:18:59,935 --> 00:19:03,890

372  
00:19:03,890 --> 00:19:08,150  
I think it is because,  
when you have this freedom,

373  
00:19:08,150 --> 00:19:09,530  
you are not--

374  
00:19:09,530 --> 00:19:13,960  
you don't think of it,  
how valuable this is.

375



00:19:13,960 --> 00:19:19,090  
But when you lose this freedom,  
you see what you have had

376  
00:19:19,090 --> 00:19:20,430  
and what you lost.

377  
00:19:20,430 --> 00:19:25,220  
And so we were illegal.

378  
00:19:25,220 --> 00:19:28,530  
Being alive was illegal.

379  
00:19:28,530 --> 00:19:33,230  
And so we struggled  
day by day by night

380  
00:19:33,230 --> 00:19:39,020  
to stay alive another day,  
because we were hoping maybe

381  
00:19:39,020 --> 00:19:40,310  
that the war will end.

382  
00:19:40,310 --> 00:19:42,520  
Maybe it will change, maybe.

383  
00:19:42,520 --> 00:19:45,440  
But it never-- it  
took five years.

384  
00:19:45,440 --> 00:19:50,060  
So you just lost all the hope.

385  
00:19:50,060 --> 00:19:55,250  
And the most who broke down  
most of it is those young men,

386  
00:19:55,250 --> 00:19:59,648  
yeshiva [NON-ENGLISH],, those  
who were sitting before the war

387

00:19:59,648 --> 00:20:00,190  
in the shuls.

388  
00:20:00,190 --> 00:20:02,840  
They were learning Torah.

389  
00:20:02,840 --> 00:20:09,320  
They were not geared for  
this type of life of work.

390  
00:20:09,320 --> 00:20:11,000  
I was in the Polish army.

391  
00:20:11,000 --> 00:20:12,260  
I was a saper.

392  
00:20:12,260 --> 00:20:15,880  
We were taught to build  
bridges and to explode them.

393  
00:20:15,880 --> 00:20:19,600  
And building the bridges  
wasn't just with a machine

394  
00:20:19,600 --> 00:20:21,860  
putting piles in the  
ground-- by hand.

395  
00:20:21,860 --> 00:20:25,590  
We had a 20 kilo hammer.

396  
00:20:25,590 --> 00:20:29,040  
We were hammering those  
piles in the ground.

397  
00:20:29,040 --> 00:20:32,460  
And I knew how to handle  
a hammer and a shovel.

398  
00:20:32,460 --> 00:20:36,470  
That's why they kept  
me working all over.

399

00:20:36,470 --> 00:20:41,090

When this SS saw how  
I shovel, how I work,

400

00:20:41,090 --> 00:20:44,750

he always picked me up for work.

401

00:20:44,750 --> 00:20:48,410

And so this is the  
way, in the beginning,

402

00:20:48,410 --> 00:20:50,930

it was there in  
Debica in that town.

403

00:20:50,930 --> 00:20:52,590

This was as I said.

404

00:20:52,590 --> 00:20:54,620

Now, later on--

405

00:20:54,620 --> 00:20:56,270

Can we come back a little bit?

406

00:20:56,270 --> 00:20:56,990

Yeah, go head.

407

00:20:56,990 --> 00:20:59,910

Can we go back to your  
early years before the war?

408

00:20:59,910 --> 00:21:00,440

Yes.

409

00:21:00,440 --> 00:21:01,503

Tell us about your town.

410

00:21:01,503 --> 00:21:02,920

Tell us about where  
you came from.

411

00:21:02,920 --> 00:21:05,630  
Of course, when the--  
now, going back to this

412  
00:21:05,630 --> 00:21:09,950  
time when the war started,  
I was in the army.

413  
00:21:09,950 --> 00:21:11,630  
And I was captured  
by the Germans.

414  
00:21:11,630 --> 00:21:13,660  
I was shot through my leg here.

415  
00:21:13,660 --> 00:21:22,260  
And we were going to the  
Ukraines, going back, and back,

416  
00:21:22,260 --> 00:21:22,760  
and back.

417  
00:21:22,760 --> 00:21:25,580  
And then the army, the  
Germans caught up with us

418  
00:21:25,580 --> 00:21:26,600  
and surrounded us.

419  
00:21:26,600 --> 00:21:31,010  
And we had to give  
up the weapons.

420  
00:21:31,010 --> 00:21:34,450  
They were loading us on trains  
going to Germany, to the--

421  
00:21:34,450 --> 00:21:37,652

422  
00:21:37,652 --> 00:21:38,360  
how is it called?

423

00:21:38,360 --> 00:21:40,290

The POW, is it called?

424

00:21:40,290 --> 00:21:41,240

Mm-hmm.

425

00:21:41,240 --> 00:21:42,870

There.

426

00:21:42,870 --> 00:21:46,490

And so, at that time, it  
was about in the evening.

427

00:21:46,490 --> 00:21:53,490

Instead to go into  
giving up the my rifle,

428

00:21:53,490 --> 00:21:55,650

I went with this rifle.

429

00:21:55,650 --> 00:21:57,110

There was a little brook there.

430

00:21:57,110 --> 00:21:59,870

And I went with a  
rifle, put that barrel

431

00:21:59,870 --> 00:22:01,790

of the rifle in that water.

432

00:22:01,790 --> 00:22:03,590

And I jumped through that brook.

433

00:22:03,590 --> 00:22:05,370

And I started to go home.

434

00:22:05,370 --> 00:22:07,850

So I went in, into  
a Ukrainian house.

435

00:22:07,850 --> 00:22:09,520

I was military dressed.

436

00:22:09,520 --> 00:22:12,200

And I told them, look,  
give me a pair of pants.

437

00:22:12,200 --> 00:22:13,480

And give me a shirt.

438

00:22:13,480 --> 00:22:19,900

And I'll give you this healthy  
big pair of pants, and suit,

439

00:22:19,900 --> 00:22:22,490

and everything, and my shoes.

440

00:22:22,490 --> 00:22:23,960

And he gave me.

441

00:22:23,960 --> 00:22:25,340

He gave me a pair of pants.

442

00:22:25,340 --> 00:22:29,360

They were not just  
plain patches.

443

00:22:29,360 --> 00:22:33,440

But it was patches,  
not a pin, not pins.

444

00:22:33,440 --> 00:22:36,260

But he gave me and I  
got dressed like that.

445

00:22:36,260 --> 00:22:37,470

And I went home.

446

00:22:37,470 --> 00:22:38,520

Slowly, I was going.

447

00:22:38,520 --> 00:22:42,500

There was a lot of people going

back, which were evacuated,

448

00:22:42,500 --> 00:22:44,180  
were running.

449

00:22:44,180 --> 00:22:46,940  
And then, when the Germans  
caught up with them,

450

00:22:46,940 --> 00:22:48,420  
they started to go back.

451

00:22:48,420 --> 00:22:49,970  
And so I was going there, back.

452

00:22:49,970 --> 00:22:51,080  
And we came back there.

453

00:22:51,080 --> 00:22:57,340  
Then I came back to  
my home, my hometown.

454

00:22:57,340 --> 00:23:03,560  
We were still about  
a year in our houses.

455

00:23:03,560 --> 00:23:06,830  
How we survived?

456

00:23:06,830 --> 00:23:08,240  
Everything was taken away.

457

00:23:08,240 --> 00:23:11,550  
You just were  
alive in the house.

458

00:23:11,550 --> 00:23:12,740  
So you have to eat.

459

00:23:12,740 --> 00:23:14,240  
We were a family.

460

00:23:14,240 --> 00:23:18,210

And so I was going out and  
smuggling from a small town

461

00:23:18,210 --> 00:23:18,930

to a bigger town.

462

00:23:18,930 --> 00:23:24,590

If I took 10 kilo  
sugar on a bicycle,

463

00:23:24,590 --> 00:23:27,520

and I brought it into  
town, to the larger town,

464

00:23:27,520 --> 00:23:32,480

to the larger ghetto there, I  
could make quite a few dollars

465

00:23:32,480 --> 00:23:34,070

to live again today.

466

00:23:34,070 --> 00:23:35,750

How many people  
were in your family?

467

00:23:35,750 --> 00:23:36,690

Who was with you?

468

00:23:36,690 --> 00:23:42,110

We were six children,  
six children and parents,

469

00:23:42,110 --> 00:23:45,810

eight people together.

470

00:23:45,810 --> 00:23:52,260

And so later on, when  
the ghetto was created,

471

00:23:52,260 --> 00:23:55,460

we were thrown out



from our houses.

472

00:23:55,460 --> 00:23:59,480

And we were going into  
the ghetto in Radomysl.

473

00:23:59,480 --> 00:24:01,520

This was a small town there.

474

00:24:01,520 --> 00:24:04,050

And they were a small ghetto.

475

00:24:04,050 --> 00:24:09,170

And we had to be about  
three or four families

476

00:24:09,170 --> 00:24:13,010

in one room, some of us  
sleeping in the hallways,

477

00:24:13,010 --> 00:24:14,930

in the backyards.

478

00:24:14,930 --> 00:24:19,430

Wherever there was a piece  
of place in the backyard,

479

00:24:19,430 --> 00:24:22,830

we were sleeping, because  
there was no room in the house.

480

00:24:22,830 --> 00:24:26,060

There was one room, and  
there were three families.

481

00:24:26,060 --> 00:24:28,040

Each one had about six people.

482

00:24:28,040 --> 00:24:29,660

And so it was a small oven.

483

00:24:29,660 --> 00:24:34,790

And you couldn't-- a little bit  
of potatoes soup to cook was

484  
00:24:34,790 --> 00:24:36,890  
a big deal, because  
you couldn't get to it,

485  
00:24:36,890 --> 00:24:39,430  
because the other  
people were before you.

486  
00:24:39,430 --> 00:24:43,010  
So this is the way  
this ghetto life was.

487  
00:24:43,010 --> 00:24:50,960  
And of course, any day we were  
expecting this, what happened.

488  
00:24:50,960 --> 00:24:57,050  
And one afternoon, we  
knew that tomorrow there's

489  
00:24:57,050 --> 00:25:04,760  
going to be what's called  
a slaughter or displacing.

490  
00:25:04,760 --> 00:25:08,900  
They picked up all the Jews,  
and the kids, and the women,

491  
00:25:08,900 --> 00:25:12,500  
and the older people,  
loaded them on wagons,

492  
00:25:12,500 --> 00:25:15,230  
and were going with  
horse and buggy

493  
00:25:15,230 --> 00:25:18,050  
to a larger town where the  
train was, because this town

494

00:25:18,050 --> 00:25:21,240  
where I was, there were  
no train connections.

495  
00:25:21,240 --> 00:25:27,200  
And this town was left  
Judenfrei, as I told you.

496  
00:25:27,200 --> 00:25:30,240  
And a night before, I  
picked up my whole family,

497  
00:25:30,240 --> 00:25:31,850  
and we went to the forest.

498  
00:25:31,850 --> 00:25:33,710  
The forest was a mile away.

499  
00:25:33,710 --> 00:25:35,900  
And there, we were  
staying over night.

500  
00:25:35,900 --> 00:25:41,100  
Staying in the forest, this  
was a terrible thing there.

501  
00:25:41,100 --> 00:25:48,150  
When you heard a dog  
barking in the village,

502  
00:25:48,150 --> 00:25:50,730  
oh, the Germans are coming,  
oh, they are looking.

503  
00:25:50,730 --> 00:25:52,230  
And this is how  
this life was there.

504  
00:25:52,230 --> 00:25:53,570  
How long do you stay there?

505  
00:25:53,570 --> 00:25:57,730  
We were there only two

days and two nights.

506  
00:25:57,730 --> 00:25:59,080  
I had a bicycle.

507  
00:25:59,080 --> 00:26:00,710  
And I paid a guy.

508  
00:26:00,710 --> 00:26:03,170  
I took a guy, a  
Gentile, and I paid him.

509  
00:26:03,170 --> 00:26:04,160  
I gave him my bicycle.

510  
00:26:04,160 --> 00:26:07,160  
I said, go over to town, to  
Radomysl there, and take a look

511  
00:26:07,160 --> 00:26:08,748  
if there are some Jews left.

512  
00:26:08,748 --> 00:26:09,290  
He came back.

513  
00:26:09,290 --> 00:26:11,050  
There are no Jews.

514  
00:26:11,050 --> 00:26:15,140  
So I asked him to go to Debica.

515  
00:26:15,140 --> 00:26:22,610  
This was about 20  
American miles.

516  
00:26:22,610 --> 00:26:24,310  
And he went there.

517  
00:26:24,310 --> 00:26:26,060  
And he says, there is  
a small ghetto left.

518

00:26:26,060 --> 00:26:28,460

And there was a  
small ghetto left.

519

00:26:28,460 --> 00:26:29,870

So we came over to--

520

00:26:29,870 --> 00:26:34,170

so we started one night  
to walk to that ghetto.

521

00:26:34,170 --> 00:26:35,050

And we came over.

522

00:26:35,050 --> 00:26:38,210

Nobody could let you in.

523

00:26:38,210 --> 00:26:43,170

First of all, there was an  
order, anybody who is illegal.

524

00:26:43,170 --> 00:26:46,760

The illegals were--  
who had a stamp,

525

00:26:46,760 --> 00:26:50,900

a signature from  
the Gestapo that he

526

00:26:50,900 --> 00:26:55,010

is employed here and there  
and there, he stayed legal.

527

00:26:55,010 --> 00:26:58,970

The rest of it, there  
are no illegal people.

528

00:26:58,970 --> 00:26:59,690

And we came in.

529

00:26:59,690 --> 00:27:01,580

We were illegal.

530

00:27:01,580 --> 00:27:05,470

Nobody let you in, not in  
that barrack, any place.

531

00:27:05,470 --> 00:27:07,840

And on the street  
was dangerous to be,

532

00:27:07,840 --> 00:27:10,160

because if an SS  
comes in and he's sees

533

00:27:10,160 --> 00:27:14,566

here are people coming  
in illegal, we were dead.

534

00:27:14,566 --> 00:27:18,470

So finally, my father--

535

00:27:18,470 --> 00:27:20,090

may he rest in  
peace-- and my mother

536

00:27:20,090 --> 00:27:24,890

had a gold watch before the war.

537

00:27:24,890 --> 00:27:27,230

Every bride and every  
groom had to have

538

00:27:27,230 --> 00:27:30,440

a gold chain and a watch.

539

00:27:30,440 --> 00:27:32,998

And my mother had a gold  
chain, which she turned

540

00:27:32,998 --> 00:27:34,040

around a couple of times.

541

00:27:34,040 --> 00:27:38,230

And I took this chain and  
this watch, my mother's watch.

542  
00:27:38,230 --> 00:27:41,420  
And I went over to the  
so-called Judenrat.

543  
00:27:41,420 --> 00:27:44,585  
This is a German word  
for the community.

544  
00:27:44,585 --> 00:27:48,530  
And I say, look, we came  
here from the forest.

545  
00:27:48,530 --> 00:27:53,720  
I have no money, but I have  
these two gold chains and gold

546  
00:27:53,720 --> 00:27:54,590  
watches.

547  
00:27:54,590 --> 00:27:57,680  
Please, take it, and  
give me some kind

548  
00:27:57,680 --> 00:28:03,440  
of a-- you had to have a  
identification card in a room

549  
00:28:03,440 --> 00:28:05,068  
where you can go in.

550  
00:28:05,068 --> 00:28:06,110  
And they took it from me.

551  
00:28:06,110 --> 00:28:07,660  
And he make me legal.

552  
00:28:07,660 --> 00:28:10,160  
And this was--

553

00:28:10,160 --> 00:28:14,990

I couldn't tell you  
how much this was worth

554

00:28:14,990 --> 00:28:20,110

for us to be legal, at least  
another six months to live.

555

00:28:20,110 --> 00:28:21,980

And it didn't take  
longer than six months.

556

00:28:21,980 --> 00:28:24,650

After six months,  
everybody had to leave.

557

00:28:24,650 --> 00:28:28,820

The only thing left is  
about 200 young men.

558

00:28:28,820 --> 00:28:31,070

How many people were in  
your family at this time,

559

00:28:31,070 --> 00:28:33,380

or were with you?

560

00:28:33,380 --> 00:28:36,350

We were still eight  
people together.

561

00:28:36,350 --> 00:28:39,050

562

00:28:39,050 --> 00:28:41,180

I had three sisters.

563

00:28:41,180 --> 00:28:46,040

And we were three brothers,  
including me, and parents.

564

00:28:46,040 --> 00:28:51,780

And of course, I



used to tell them,

565

00:28:51,780 --> 00:28:55,130

please let's not  
stay in one place.

566

00:28:55,130 --> 00:28:57,110

Everybody must go on his own.

567

00:28:57,110 --> 00:29:01,280

Maybe it will be  
possible to survive.

568

00:29:01,280 --> 00:29:03,560

Incidentally, we did survive.

569

00:29:03,560 --> 00:29:09,870

My brother, the youngest  
brother, he was about 19.

570

00:29:09,870 --> 00:29:11,540

He came with me to Plasza<sup>3</sup>w.

571

00:29:11,540 --> 00:29:16,640

I am still jumping to Plasza<sup>3</sup>w.

572

00:29:16,640 --> 00:29:20,540

And one morning,  
he was at a group

573

00:29:20,540 --> 00:29:24,200

where they were going  
out to the train loading,

574

00:29:24,200 --> 00:29:27,490

unloading material  
what was coming

575

00:29:27,490 --> 00:29:29,210

to get to that  
concentration camp,

576

00:29:29,210 --> 00:29:31,400  
because they were  
building this train.

577  
00:29:31,400 --> 00:29:34,670  
There were three barracks  
when I came in over there.

578  
00:29:34,670 --> 00:29:40,010  
And of course, it  
was hell, the SS

579  
00:29:40,010 --> 00:29:45,140  
was with big dalmatian dogs and  
German shepherds going around.

580  
00:29:45,140 --> 00:29:50,330  
And any time a dog bit a  
guy, that dog next time,

581  
00:29:50,330 --> 00:29:52,550  
when that dog saw you  
from a half a mile,

582  
00:29:52,550 --> 00:29:54,560  
he ran after and bit you again.

583  
00:29:54,560 --> 00:29:55,970  
That's how this was.

584  
00:29:55,970 --> 00:29:58,890  
And so it was terrible there.

585  
00:29:58,890 --> 00:30:01,010  
And he was going out to work.

586  
00:30:01,010 --> 00:30:02,420  
And one day, he comes back.

587  
00:30:02,420 --> 00:30:06,710  
He says, you know, Aaron,  
we unloaded a train.

588

00:30:06,710 --> 00:30:10,700

And I could jump in, into  
one of the wagons there,

589

00:30:10,700 --> 00:30:14,090

and go back to the  
ghetto to town of Krak<sup>3</sup>w.

590

00:30:14,090 --> 00:30:21,000

This was about 60 miles,  
like from here to New York.

591

00:30:21,000 --> 00:30:24,170

Anyway, and I said,  
you didn't do that?

592

00:30:24,170 --> 00:30:26,000

Of course, I said,  
don't you see?

593

00:30:26,000 --> 00:30:28,280

Nobody is going to  
get out alive here.

594

00:30:28,280 --> 00:30:29,420

You see those machine guns?

595

00:30:29,420 --> 00:30:33,050

You see what they're doing here,  
how the dogs are tearing apart

596

00:30:33,050 --> 00:30:35,590

every day, and so many  
shootings, so many are killed?

597

00:30:35,590 --> 00:30:37,100

Nobody's going to get out alive.

598

00:30:37,100 --> 00:30:39,050

Next day, he did it.

599

00:30:39,050 --> 00:30:39,620

He did it.

600

00:30:39,620 --> 00:30:40,280

He went out.

601

00:30:40,280 --> 00:30:44,340

And he went back quite awhile  
and far with the train.

602

00:30:44,340 --> 00:30:48,350

And then, later, he went out  
into a town called Bochnia.

603

00:30:48,350 --> 00:30:51,530

And there, a group was  
going out for work.

604

00:30:51,530 --> 00:30:55,250

And he joined that group and  
went out from that ghetto

605

00:30:55,250 --> 00:30:56,080

there.

606

00:30:56,080 --> 00:30:59,810

And apparently, he was trying  
to get away from the group going

607

00:30:59,810 --> 00:31:02,540

further to Tarnobrzeg, because  
there was still my parents were

608

00:31:02,540 --> 00:31:04,160

there.

609

00:31:04,160 --> 00:31:06,170

And he was caught there.

610

00:31:06,170 --> 00:31:08,210

And he was shot there.

611

00:31:08,210 --> 00:31:10,040

This was my youngest brother.

612

00:31:10,040 --> 00:31:14,780

So my oldest brother  
was hiding in the area

613

00:31:14,780 --> 00:31:17,360

where we were growing up.

614

00:31:17,360 --> 00:31:22,590

And he, with a cousin,  
were hiding in the forest.

615

00:31:22,590 --> 00:31:28,140

And then they had a peasant,  
a farmer, who helped them out.

616

00:31:28,140 --> 00:31:33,340

When it was so cold, he let  
them go in into the stable

617

00:31:33,340 --> 00:31:35,310

and sleep there  
where the cows were.

618

00:31:35,310 --> 00:31:35,970

They were warm.

619

00:31:35,970 --> 00:31:38,220

And this was a very  
important thing.

620

00:31:38,220 --> 00:31:41,510

They had to sleep all night.

621

00:31:41,510 --> 00:31:46,880

And so six months  
before the war ended--

622

00:31:46,880 --> 00:31:52,710

imagine, he has suffered  
for four years there.

623

00:31:52,710 --> 00:31:55,930

And six months  
before the war ended,

624

00:31:55,930 --> 00:31:59,730

a robbery was there  
in that village.

625

00:31:59,730 --> 00:32:06,570

And so the police came to look  
to one, which they suspected

626

00:32:06,570 --> 00:32:09,300

that he was one of the robbers.

627

00:32:09,300 --> 00:32:13,660

And he says, you come to  
me to look for robbers?

628

00:32:13,660 --> 00:32:15,990

There, Jews are hiding.

629

00:32:15,990 --> 00:32:17,580

They are the robbers.

630

00:32:17,580 --> 00:32:20,960

And so they went over there, and  
they caught them early morning,

631

00:32:20,960 --> 00:32:23,400

and they shot both my  
cousin and my brother.

632

00:32:23,400 --> 00:32:27,270

And of course, after the  
war, I exhumed two bodies.

633

00:32:27,270 --> 00:32:29,550

I took them over to Tarnów.

634

00:32:29,550 --> 00:32:36,340

Now, going back again

until this Debica.

635  
00:32:36,340 --> 00:32:39,420  
Debica was-- there was  
hell when I was there.

636  
00:32:39,420 --> 00:32:40,470  
I was there.

637  
00:32:40,470 --> 00:32:43,140  
And I was always in front.

638  
00:32:43,140 --> 00:32:44,250  
How?

639  
00:32:44,250 --> 00:32:47,400  
Whenever they were  
shooting people,

640  
00:32:47,400 --> 00:32:53,220  
I was called to bury the people,  
because if they would catch

641  
00:32:53,220 --> 00:32:56,470  
a guy who was before the  
war sitting in the shul

642  
00:32:56,470 --> 00:33:00,150  
and learning Torah,  
and he couldn't handle

643  
00:33:00,150 --> 00:33:01,770  
that shovel, when  
the SS saw him,

644  
00:33:01,770 --> 00:33:05,100  
how he handled that shovel,  
he didn't come home back.

645  
00:33:05,100 --> 00:33:07,510  
He didn't come back  
into the ghetto.

646

00:33:07,510 --> 00:33:13,490  
So they picked up only people  
who could work, who could dig,

647

00:33:13,490 --> 00:33:15,330  
and things like that.

648

00:33:15,330 --> 00:33:16,260  
And so I was there.

649

00:33:16,260 --> 00:33:22,380  
And so this time, some  
people were coming back

650

00:33:22,380 --> 00:33:23,740  
from the forests.

651

00:33:23,740 --> 00:33:24,890  
And we were illegal.

652

00:33:24,890 --> 00:33:29,030  
There were about  
200 people, men.

653

00:33:29,030 --> 00:33:33,600  
And the older people  
who were hiding out

654

00:33:33,600 --> 00:33:36,030  
couldn't stay any longer in  
the forest-- coming back,

655

00:33:36,030 --> 00:33:39,495  
knowing that there's a little  
place where they can maybe--

656

00:33:39,495 --> 00:33:41,030  
maybe they can stay alive.

657

00:33:41,030 --> 00:33:42,430  
So they came in.



658

00:33:42,430 --> 00:33:45,850

So the Gestapo gathered  
them all in one room.

659

00:33:45,850 --> 00:33:47,580

It was called a  
little hospital there.

660

00:33:47,580 --> 00:33:49,320

And they let them stay there.

661

00:33:49,320 --> 00:33:53,610

They stayed there until  
they all came back--

662

00:33:53,610 --> 00:33:56,310

women, children.

663

00:33:56,310 --> 00:34:01,860

And one night-- and this was  
between Hanukkah and Christmas.

664

00:34:01,860 --> 00:34:03,820

Snow was so high there.

665

00:34:03,820 --> 00:34:12,960

And not the sun, but the-  
oh, what's next to the sun?

666

00:34:12,960 --> 00:34:13,750

The moon?

667

00:34:13,750 --> 00:34:15,070

The moon.

668

00:34:15,070 --> 00:34:20,239

The moon was shining so  
beautiful with so much light.

669

00:34:20,239 --> 00:34:22,830

And they were leading out  
those people to be shot.

670  
00:34:22,830 --> 00:34:26,340  
There were about 75 people  
gathered in that room

671  
00:34:26,340 --> 00:34:27,280  
to be shot.

672  
00:34:27,280 --> 00:34:30,360  
One was a friend of mine  
from before the war.

673  
00:34:30,360 --> 00:34:34,630  
I used to go out with  
his daughters and his--

674  
00:34:34,630 --> 00:34:37,690  
and of course, he didn't have  
the children anymore with him,

675  
00:34:37,690 --> 00:34:38,860  
but he and his wife.

676  
00:34:38,860 --> 00:34:40,889  
And I said-- his  
name was Goldklank.

677  
00:34:40,889 --> 00:34:43,920  
I said, Mr. Goldklank,  
what are you doing here?

678  
00:34:43,920 --> 00:34:44,850  
Go out.

679  
00:34:44,850 --> 00:34:46,889  
You see there is no future.

680  
00:34:46,889 --> 00:34:50,100  
Some of these days, they  
are going to shoot you.

681  
00:34:50,100 --> 00:34:51,592

He says, I haven't  
got where to go.

682  
00:34:51,592 --> 00:34:52,800  
He says, I was in the forest.

683  
00:34:52,800 --> 00:34:54,929  
I was dying for a drop of water.

684  
00:34:54,929 --> 00:34:55,739  
I couldn't get it.

685  
00:34:55,739 --> 00:35:01,330  
The flies, the fleas, and  
the lice were eating me up.

686  
00:35:01,330 --> 00:35:03,780  
I don't have-- I  
can't go any place.

687  
00:35:03,780 --> 00:35:05,580  
I'd rather be shot.

688  
00:35:05,580 --> 00:35:08,430  
And so he was shot  
there with his wife.

689  
00:35:08,430 --> 00:35:13,800  
Going further, when  
he was loaded-- we

690  
00:35:13,800 --> 00:35:18,150  
had a wagon and a horse  
special for that purpose.

691  
00:35:18,150 --> 00:35:23,040  
Loading on the wagon, from under  
the corpses, he got out there.

692  
00:35:23,040 --> 00:35:28,110  
And he got down from the  
wagon himself still alive.

693

00:35:28,110 --> 00:35:31,440

He was shot through the  
neck, and he was still alive.

694

00:35:31,440 --> 00:35:35,980

So he was sitting in the side,  
seeing how we are digging

695

00:35:35,980 --> 00:35:37,500

and making the grave.

696

00:35:37,500 --> 00:35:42,270

And he saw the SS coming there.

697

00:35:42,270 --> 00:35:45,930

698

00:35:45,930 --> 00:35:48,390

He had about 500 zlotys.

699

00:35:48,390 --> 00:35:52,110

This was one banknote.

700

00:35:52,110 --> 00:35:53,480

He says, take it.

701

00:35:53,480 --> 00:35:54,900

He said, they should take it.

702

00:35:54,900 --> 00:35:56,190

Take it.

703

00:35:56,190 --> 00:35:59,430

It was all with blood  
from his fingers.

704

00:35:59,430 --> 00:36:00,330

And he gave it to me.

705

00:36:00,330 --> 00:36:04,970

He says, take it, Aaron,

instead they should take it.

706  
00:36:04,970 --> 00:36:07,020  
And so they came.

707  
00:36:07,020 --> 00:36:09,156  
And they shot him twice.

708  
00:36:09,156 --> 00:36:10,940  
[COUGHS] Ooh.

709  
00:36:10,940 --> 00:36:11,440  
You see?

710  
00:36:11,440 --> 00:36:12,140  
This is--

711  
00:36:12,140 --> 00:36:15,930

712  
00:36:15,930 --> 00:36:18,540  
And between those people,  
there was a rebbetzin.

713  
00:36:18,540 --> 00:36:22,540  
As a matter of fact, the  
rabbi, the husband survived.

714  
00:36:22,540 --> 00:36:25,780  
And he still lives  
in Borough Park.

715  
00:36:25,780 --> 00:36:30,130  
Now, Purim, I was  
there visiting him.

716  
00:36:30,130 --> 00:36:32,500  
And there, he was.

717  
00:36:32,500 --> 00:36:36,950  
And his wife was a beautiful  
woman, young, maybe 28 years

718  
00:36:36,950 --> 00:36:40,180  
old, with a little  
girl about six

719  
00:36:40,180 --> 00:36:43,210  
years, a little blonde  
girl, so beautiful.

720  
00:36:43,210 --> 00:36:45,580  
And they were leading  
them out to be shot.

721  
00:36:45,580 --> 00:36:48,520  
And this little girl was  
shivering like a leaf.

722  
00:36:48,520 --> 00:36:53,880  
And she was crying,  
[NON-ENGLISH],,

723  
00:36:53,880 --> 00:36:55,640  
with such a terrible voice.

724  
00:36:55,640 --> 00:36:58,870  
And this little girl  
says, mommy, don't cry.

725  
00:36:58,870 --> 00:37:02,100  
This is our destination.

726  
00:37:02,100 --> 00:37:10,060  
So when I speak of that,  
it just cuts my heart.

727  
00:37:10,060 --> 00:37:16,690  
Now, having grandchildren like  
that, when I talk about this,

728  
00:37:16,690 --> 00:37:19,630  
when I remind myself  
about this little girl--

729

00:37:19,630 --> 00:37:29,740

how she went, how she said  
to her mother, don't cry,

730

00:37:29,740 --> 00:37:32,610

this is our destination.

731

00:37:32,610 --> 00:37:35,750

And so a shot was fired.

732

00:37:35,750 --> 00:37:38,500

And this little girl fell.

733

00:37:38,500 --> 00:37:44,560

And then they asked her to turn  
around, because the SS never

734

00:37:44,560 --> 00:37:46,330

were shooting from close range.

735

00:37:46,330 --> 00:37:48,760

They were another  
shooting in front,

736

00:37:48,760 --> 00:37:52,820

because the victim was  
falling always to the front.

737

00:37:52,820 --> 00:37:54,850

And they were  
splashed with blood.

738

00:37:54,850 --> 00:37:57,990

So from close range, they  
never shoot from the front.

739

00:37:57,990 --> 00:38:01,330

They asked the victim  
to turn around.

740

00:38:01,330 --> 00:38:06,520

So the word turn around

in German is [GERMAN]..

741  
00:38:06,520 --> 00:38:10,777  
In my house, that word is  
never said, turn around.

742  
00:38:10,777 --> 00:38:12,360  
In my house, this  
wasn't, because when

743  
00:38:12,360 --> 00:38:16,960  
you heard this word  
turn around in German,

744  
00:38:16,960 --> 00:38:22,160  
you just knew that a  
life is being taken away.

745  
00:38:22,160 --> 00:38:26,950  
And so she wouldn't turn around  
and was crying, [NON-ENGLISH]..

746  
00:38:26,950 --> 00:38:30,490  
And finally, he shot  
her from the front.

747  
00:38:30,490 --> 00:38:37,180  
And apparently, the bullet  
did not go through in a place

748  
00:38:37,180 --> 00:38:40,700  
where it should be  
effective right away.

749  
00:38:40,700 --> 00:38:46,615  
And so she was moaning so  
terribly, maybe for 15 minutes.

750  
00:38:46,615 --> 00:38:52,180

751  
00:38:52,180 --> 00:38:56,710  
For 15 minutes, she was



moaning so terribly.

752

00:38:56,710 --> 00:39:03,430

And this Gestapo, he  
wouldn't spare another bullet

753

00:39:03,430 --> 00:39:05,410

to finish her.

754

00:39:05,410 --> 00:39:09,170

Finally, she didn't die.

755

00:39:09,170 --> 00:39:10,510

She was still moaning.

756

00:39:10,510 --> 00:39:14,110

So he put her-- rolled  
with her the boots.

757

00:39:14,110 --> 00:39:17,230

And there's a Polish policeman,  
which was watching him

758

00:39:17,230 --> 00:39:21,680

in the back says to him to--

759

00:39:21,680 --> 00:39:24,700

the Gestapo says to  
him, take a look.

760

00:39:24,700 --> 00:39:26,830

So he had a electric light.

761

00:39:26,830 --> 00:39:29,530

He cut the bra opened.

762

00:39:29,530 --> 00:39:31,030

And he put his light.

763

00:39:31,030 --> 00:39:33,580

And he looks in.

764

00:39:33,580 --> 00:39:36,820

And he says, well, the  
bullet has done it's job.

765

00:39:36,820 --> 00:39:41,080

It's only a matter  
of a little time.

766

00:39:41,080 --> 00:39:42,480

And he wouldn't shoot her again.

767

00:39:42,480 --> 00:39:46,780

She was about, for a half  
an hour, terribly moaning.

768

00:39:46,780 --> 00:39:52,330

And this is how  
sadistic they were,

769

00:39:52,330 --> 00:39:57,600

how life was in their eyes.

770

00:39:57,600 --> 00:40:01,390

A Jew was just worse  
than an animal.

771

00:40:01,390 --> 00:40:04,270

If they would have only treat  
us like they treated the dog,

772

00:40:04,270 --> 00:40:05,430

it would have been heaven.

773

00:40:05,430 --> 00:40:08,660

774

00:40:08,660 --> 00:40:13,110

And so this is the  
way we were in Debica

775

00:40:13,110 --> 00:40:18,770

going through such stages.

776

00:40:18,770 --> 00:40:26,760

A group was going out there for  
work every day, every morning.

777

00:40:26,760 --> 00:40:31,720

And when this man, the--

778

00:40:31,720 --> 00:40:35,670

it was called the Arbeitsleiter.

779

00:40:35,670 --> 00:40:42,180

This means the chief who  
was in charge of that job.

780

00:40:42,180 --> 00:40:44,820

He had his people  
there working--

781

00:40:44,820 --> 00:40:48,610

of course, never a  
penny, or something.

782

00:40:48,610 --> 00:40:54,260

And he was taking these people  
there every morning for work.

783

00:40:54,260 --> 00:40:58,500

And one day, he loaded--

784

00:40:58,500 --> 00:41:02,010

the SS, not let the guy who  
were in charge of the work--

785

00:41:02,010 --> 00:41:08,730

loaded about 30 guys  
on a truck, which is--

786

00:41:08,730 --> 00:41:12,832

there were a truck  
and another one.

787

00:41:12,832 --> 00:41:13,540  
What's it called?

788  
00:41:13,540 --> 00:41:14,485  
A hanger.

789  
00:41:14,485 --> 00:41:15,930  
A hanger is the correct word?

790  
00:41:15,930 --> 00:41:17,790  
Yes.

791  
00:41:17,790 --> 00:41:21,900  
He took about 30 guys with  
shovels there on that hanger.

792  
00:41:21,900 --> 00:41:25,770  
And they were going a  
little further out of town

793  
00:41:25,770 --> 00:41:27,420  
to do a job.

794  
00:41:27,420 --> 00:41:30,670  
So he goes so fast  
with that truck.

795  
00:41:30,670 --> 00:41:34,380  
When he came around a  
corner, he made a turn.

796  
00:41:34,380 --> 00:41:39,360  
And that hanger turned over  
and mangled all of them,

797  
00:41:39,360 --> 00:41:42,770  
all of them-- broken legs,  
broken hands, broken, broken.

798  
00:41:42,770 --> 00:41:46,020

799

00:41:46,020 --> 00:41:49,600

No one could get up  
anymore from the 31 people.

800

00:41:49,600 --> 00:41:52,140

So one goes through  
to the other one.

801

00:41:52,140 --> 00:41:56,230

He says, ha, [GERMAN].

802

00:41:56,230 --> 00:41:59,080

The other one says,  
a pile of dreck.

803

00:41:59,080 --> 00:42:00,830

He says that, you understand.

804

00:42:00,830 --> 00:42:03,540

He says, what did I do now?

805

00:42:03,540 --> 00:42:05,410

He says, a pile of garbage.

806

00:42:05,410 --> 00:42:10,030

807

00:42:10,030 --> 00:42:16,170

And this is how they thought  
of this, a couple Jews

808

00:42:16,170 --> 00:42:17,750

there in Poland.

809

00:42:17,750 --> 00:42:23,150

Now, you cannot describe  
exactly everything day by day.

810

00:42:23,150 --> 00:42:25,190

But it was terrible.

811

00:42:25,190 --> 00:42:28,165

If you had a wife, let's say,  
you couldn't live together

812  
00:42:28,165 --> 00:42:28,790  
with your wife.

813  
00:42:28,790 --> 00:42:30,740  
There were about 20 girls.

814  
00:42:30,740 --> 00:42:33,020  
They were working  
in the kitchen.

815  
00:42:33,020 --> 00:42:34,000  
One had a wife.

816  
00:42:34,000 --> 00:42:39,180  
And she came in during the day  
to see the husband after they--

817  
00:42:39,180 --> 00:42:41,720  
not during the day, after  
they worked, after work,

818  
00:42:41,720 --> 00:42:44,570  
about the 7 o'clock.

819  
00:42:44,570 --> 00:42:50,120  
He says, please  
go out, you are--

820  
00:42:50,120 --> 00:42:52,160  
in Jewish, I can't describe it.

821  
00:42:52,160 --> 00:42:55,580  
But you are putting me in grief.

822  
00:42:55,580 --> 00:42:56,480  
Go out.

823  
00:42:56,480 --> 00:42:57,920  
Because it was very dangerous.

824  
00:42:57,920 --> 00:43:03,380  
If a Gestapo saw a woman go  
in to the men department,

825  
00:43:03,380 --> 00:43:04,540  
they were shooting.

826  
00:43:04,540 --> 00:43:05,420  
They shot the men.

827  
00:43:05,420 --> 00:43:07,240  
They shot the women.

828  
00:43:07,240 --> 00:43:10,744  
And this was Debica.

829  
00:43:10,744 --> 00:43:17,030  
And then, one morning,  
it was end of Pesach.

830  
00:43:17,030 --> 00:43:20,870  
Going out, everybody had  
prepared some matzahs,

831  
00:43:20,870 --> 00:43:23,480  
because-- how did we  
prepare the matzahs?

832  
00:43:23,480 --> 00:43:26,960  
Everybody, after the ghetto was  
getting smaller and smaller,

833  
00:43:26,960 --> 00:43:33,140  
they got in some bed  
spreads, and covers,

834  
00:43:33,140 --> 00:43:36,910  
and some material, what is left  
from the other houses, what

835  
00:43:36,910 --> 00:43:39,500

the Germans left there.

836  
00:43:39,500 --> 00:43:42,590  
And they slowly took it  
out to the people outside.

837  
00:43:42,590 --> 00:43:44,520  
And they changed  
for a half a bread,

838  
00:43:44,520 --> 00:43:49,100  
or for a little bit of flour.

839  
00:43:49,100 --> 00:43:53,500  
And everybody had about, I'd  
say, 3 or 4 pounds of flour.

840  
00:43:53,500 --> 00:43:54,560  
And there was a bakery.

841  
00:43:54,560 --> 00:43:57,680  
There used to be a bakery  
in that part of the ghetto.

842  
00:43:57,680 --> 00:44:00,200  
So the oven was there.

843  
00:44:00,200 --> 00:44:02,110  
So we got together one evening.

844  
00:44:02,110 --> 00:44:04,950  
And everybody had a  
little bit of that flour.

845  
00:44:04,950 --> 00:44:06,740  
And we would made  
matzahs a night

846  
00:44:06,740 --> 00:44:11,600  
before, because the next  
day was end of Pesach,

847



00:44:11,600 --> 00:44:13,640  
in the morning going out.

848  
00:44:13,640 --> 00:44:18,740  
And at the gate, the SS came in,  
surrounded that little ghetto.

849  
00:44:18,740 --> 00:44:22,010

850  
00:44:22,010 --> 00:44:23,800  
The Ukrainians was there.

851  
00:44:23,800 --> 00:44:28,850  
The Ukrainians, they  
were in black uniforms.

852  
00:44:28,850 --> 00:44:34,160  
They were terrible,  
worse than the SS.

853  
00:44:34,160 --> 00:44:36,530  
And that's why they  
were staying there,

854  
00:44:36,530 --> 00:44:37,820  
because they were shooting.

855  
00:44:37,820 --> 00:44:42,290  
They were called-- in Prussia,  
when a group was supposed to be

856  
00:44:42,290 --> 00:44:50,130  
shot, the Ukrainians belonged  
to a group which was called

857  
00:44:50,130 --> 00:44:53,250  
[NON-ENGLISH] Kommando.

858  
00:44:53,250 --> 00:44:56,780  
And the minute they were  
ready to shoot that group,

859

00:44:56,780 --> 00:44:58,710

all they do is they called up.

860

00:44:58,710 --> 00:45:01,220

And the [NON-ENGLISH]

Kommando came over,

861

00:45:01,220 --> 00:45:03,980

and surrounded this group,

and took them over there

862

00:45:03,980 --> 00:45:04,480

in PlaszÃ³w.

863

00:45:04,480 --> 00:45:08,600

And there was a special

place between the rocks

864

00:45:08,600 --> 00:45:10,730

and such valleys there.

865

00:45:10,730 --> 00:45:12,790

And they were shooting.

866

00:45:12,790 --> 00:45:16,580

Now, end of Pesach-- going

back to end of Pesach,

867

00:45:16,580 --> 00:45:17,690

we were surrounded.

868

00:45:17,690 --> 00:45:19,360

And we were going out to work.

869

00:45:19,360 --> 00:45:20,610

Some of the IC were--

870

00:45:20,610 --> 00:45:23,950

871

00:45:23,950 --> 00:45:25,520

we started to go back.

872

00:45:25,520 --> 00:45:29,120

And everybody had something  
with them to sell, to go out.

873

00:45:29,120 --> 00:45:35,120

People took a-- they were  
feather beds, for instance.

874

00:45:35,120 --> 00:45:39,230

They took this material  
from the feathers,

875

00:45:39,230 --> 00:45:42,020

opened, and put the  
feathers in a corner.

876

00:45:42,020 --> 00:45:47,780

Incidentally, if you  
were three miles away,

877

00:45:47,780 --> 00:45:50,540

you knew that there is a  
ghetto, because the wind blew

878

00:45:50,540 --> 00:45:53,570

those feathers all  
over the world, all

879

00:45:53,570 --> 00:45:55,880

over the town, all  
over the gates.

880

00:45:55,880 --> 00:45:57,670

Everybody had them.

881

00:45:57,670 --> 00:46:03,800

And so they took the feathers  
out of that bed spread

882

00:46:03,800 --> 00:46:09,020

and took it with them to change

either for a piece of bread,

883

00:46:09,020 --> 00:46:13,030

or something to eat.

884

00:46:13,030 --> 00:46:14,830

And so I see they're going back.

885

00:46:14,830 --> 00:46:17,667

And everybody's throwing out  
whatever he had in the pockets,

886

00:46:17,667 --> 00:46:19,750

because he didn't want to  
be caught with something

887

00:46:19,750 --> 00:46:21,220

having in the pocket.

888

00:46:21,220 --> 00:46:23,350

And we go back.

889

00:46:23,350 --> 00:46:24,970

And we were standing.

890

00:46:24,970 --> 00:46:27,190

And they counted us.

891

00:46:27,190 --> 00:46:36,430

And they were-- a boy, he was  
working on the Gestapo there.

892

00:46:36,430 --> 00:46:38,050

He was cleaning the--

893

00:46:38,050 --> 00:46:40,990

he was polishing their  
shoes, making the fire,

894

00:46:40,990 --> 00:46:43,720

taking out the ashes, a  
young boy from the ghetto.

895  
00:46:43,720 --> 00:46:47,110  
And he was there with  
them maybe a year.

896  
00:46:47,110 --> 00:46:49,810  
And at that morning,  
they bringed him in.

897  
00:46:49,810 --> 00:46:53,170  
They didn't let him alive,  
because he knew too much.

898  
00:46:53,170 --> 00:46:55,550  
They shot him right after  
he crossed the gate.

899  
00:46:55,550 --> 00:46:56,650  
They shot it.

900  
00:46:56,650 --> 00:46:59,170  
And so we saw what's going on.

901  
00:46:59,170 --> 00:47:02,985  
They right away asked,  
who is a tailor?

902  
00:47:02,985 --> 00:47:03,610  
I was a tailor.

903  
00:47:03,610 --> 00:47:07,570  
Incidentally, I am a  
tailor from the home.

904  
00:47:07,570 --> 00:47:09,210  
And who is a tailor?

905  
00:47:09,210 --> 00:47:09,820  
Who tailors?

906  
00:47:09,820 --> 00:47:10,947  
And who is upholstery man?

907  
00:47:10,947 --> 00:47:12,530  
And who is seamstress,  
and everything?

908  
00:47:12,530 --> 00:47:16,480  
They separated us, and  
they loaded us on trucks.

909  
00:47:16,480 --> 00:47:18,070  
We were going to Krak<sup>3</sup>w.

910  
00:47:18,070 --> 00:47:21,910  
It took about six hours  
to come to Krak<sup>3</sup>w.

911  
00:47:21,910 --> 00:47:25,610  
And this was end of Pesach.

912  
00:47:25,610 --> 00:47:35,050  
And in Krak<sup>3</sup>w with my brother  
and my cousin, being there--

913  
00:47:35,050 --> 00:47:37,650  
it was bedlam.

914  
00:47:37,650 --> 00:47:38,920  
Terrible things were going on.

915  
00:47:38,920 --> 00:47:42,940  
As I said before, there  
were three barracks, open.

916  
00:47:42,940 --> 00:47:46,050  
The wiring was not yet  
erected, because it

917  
00:47:46,050 --> 00:47:49,030  
was started on a cemetery.

918  
00:47:49,030 --> 00:47:51,760  
So how did the work started?

919

00:47:51,760 --> 00:47:54,580

Girls, about hundreds  
of them, were

920

00:47:54,580 --> 00:48:01,000

sitting alongside with  
hammers and making gravel.

921

00:48:01,000 --> 00:48:08,080

We were splitting the big  
tombstones with a heavy hammer

922

00:48:08,080 --> 00:48:10,930

and bringing over to  
them in smaller pieces.

923

00:48:10,930 --> 00:48:15,400

And they were sitting and,  
from the smaller pieces,

924

00:48:15,400 --> 00:48:18,040

breaking this into gravel  
because of the road.

925

00:48:18,040 --> 00:48:19,300

They need road.

926

00:48:19,300 --> 00:48:22,090

So hundreds of  
girls were sitting.

927

00:48:22,090 --> 00:48:26,920

And the sun was so sharp.

928

00:48:26,920 --> 00:48:31,320

They were burned, so  
burned from the sun.

929

00:48:31,320 --> 00:48:34,690

Girls are never  
to the sun so far.

930

00:48:34,690 --> 00:48:36,370

And this was the girls' work.

931

00:48:36,370 --> 00:48:41,830

And we had to break up the  
tombstones and deliver to them

932

00:48:41,830 --> 00:48:42,700

the stones.

933

00:48:42,700 --> 00:48:45,420

And then there was a group  
taking away the gravel

934

00:48:45,420 --> 00:48:48,860

and spreading,  
making a road there.

935

00:48:48,860 --> 00:48:51,260

The road was on the cemetery.

936

00:48:51,260 --> 00:48:57,250

And then, further,  
they took a mountain.

937

00:48:57,250 --> 00:48:58,255

There was a mountain.

938

00:48:58,255 --> 00:49:00,790

939

00:49:00,790 --> 00:49:07,510

There were tombstones of old,  
50, 60 years, of famous people.

940

00:49:07,510 --> 00:49:10,150

And this mountain was removed.

941

00:49:10,150 --> 00:49:15,800

And the reason for it is every  
time they opened a grave,



942

00:49:15,800 --> 00:49:18,918

there were the jaw  
bones and the teeth.

943

00:49:18,918 --> 00:49:19,960

And there are gold teeth.

944

00:49:19,960 --> 00:49:22,430

In Europe, everybody  
had gold teeth.

945

00:49:22,430 --> 00:49:26,740

There were no white  
teeth like they do now.

946

00:49:26,740 --> 00:49:28,450

So the teeth were always left.

947

00:49:28,450 --> 00:49:37,030

So every day, I have picked up a  
pail from the cemeteries, maybe

948

00:49:37,030 --> 00:49:38,400

20 kilos--

949

00:49:38,400 --> 00:49:42,440

not pounds, kilos, that  
is more than a pound--

950

00:49:42,440 --> 00:49:46,870

and brought it to the  
Gestapo over there.

951

00:49:46,870 --> 00:49:52,240

This was just the best  
gold, 22 carat gold.

952

00:49:52,240 --> 00:49:55,225

Did you actually have to  
take it from the bodies?

953

00:49:55,225 --> 00:49:56,620

There were no bodies.

954

00:49:56,620 --> 00:49:58,058

The jaw, the jaw and the skull.

955

00:49:58,058 --> 00:49:58,600

The skeleton.

956

00:49:58,600 --> 00:49:59,142

The skeleton.

957

00:49:59,142 --> 00:50:00,240

So you had to collect it?

958

00:50:00,240 --> 00:50:01,300

Oh, of course.

959

00:50:01,300 --> 00:50:03,640

This was the idea.

960

00:50:03,640 --> 00:50:04,600

This was the idea.

961

00:50:04,600 --> 00:50:08,220

Buckets are full of teeth  
every day, gold teeth.

962

00:50:08,220 --> 00:50:13,060

And we removed an  
area maybe of 3 acres.

963

00:50:13,060 --> 00:50:15,730

It was hilly there.

964

00:50:15,730 --> 00:50:21,460

And then they removed the  
ground into the lower parts.

965

00:50:21,460 --> 00:50:27,820

We had erected such little  
push lorries, little tracks,

966

00:50:27,820 --> 00:50:29,515  
and push wagons.

967

00:50:29,515 --> 00:50:34,710  
And we were loading this  
by hand, and the dirt.

968

00:50:34,710 --> 00:50:36,730  
And we were moving  
the whole mountains.

969

00:50:36,730 --> 00:50:38,200  
And the reason for it--

970

00:50:38,200 --> 00:50:43,360  
not as much they wanted to have  
a straight, flat place, because

971

00:50:43,360 --> 00:50:44,020  
of the teeth.

972

00:50:44,020 --> 00:50:45,710  
They knew that there is gold.

973

00:50:45,710 --> 00:50:48,760  
Everyone had gold  
teeth in Europe.

974

00:50:48,760 --> 00:50:51,736  
There is no-- and even those--

975

00:50:51,736 --> 00:50:57,905

976

00:50:57,905 --> 00:51:01,810  
oh, how is [NON-ENGLISH]?

977

00:51:01,810 --> 00:51:02,510  
The graves.

978

00:51:02,510 --> 00:51:03,790

Grave.

979

00:51:03,790 --> 00:51:06,600

Even those graves,  
which were not old--

980

00:51:06,600 --> 00:51:09,070

when you opened  
them, you could still

981

00:51:09,070 --> 00:51:12,280

see the colors,  
the prayer shawl.

982

00:51:12,280 --> 00:51:17,960

And the body was  
already falling apart.

983

00:51:17,960 --> 00:51:21,260

But the teeth were  
there in the jaw.

984

00:51:21,260 --> 00:51:22,650

And we got them out.

985

00:51:22,650 --> 00:51:25,420

And this was our job.

986

00:51:25,420 --> 00:51:29,250

And so they were loading  
this dirt over there

987

00:51:29,250 --> 00:51:31,080

for the little--

988

00:51:31,080 --> 00:51:38,170

the heads, the skulls were  
rolling down that hill.

989

00:51:38,170 --> 00:51:41,530

They were along this dirt.

990

00:51:41,530 --> 00:51:43,390

We were straightening  
out the ground.

991

00:51:43,390 --> 00:51:49,600

So all the skulls were rolling  
down there, and the bones,

992

00:51:49,600 --> 00:51:51,730

and the finger bones,  
and everything.

993

00:51:51,730 --> 00:51:54,450

And everything was there alive.

994

00:51:54,450 --> 00:52:01,180

Wintertime, when we needed  
sand to put on the ropes--

995

00:52:01,180 --> 00:52:03,430

they had trouble,  
because it was slippery--

996

00:52:03,430 --> 00:52:08,470

you could find finger  
bones, and skulls,

997

00:52:08,470 --> 00:52:12,070

and jaw bones on the  
roads, because this

998

00:52:12,070 --> 00:52:15,300

was picked up with the sand  
and spread on the thing.

999

00:52:15,300 --> 00:52:19,960

Now, this is the work  
we went through there.

1000

00:52:19,960 --> 00:52:21,400

They gave us this work.

1001

00:52:21,400 --> 00:52:26,050

And they got them the gold.

1002

00:52:26,050 --> 00:52:31,630

This experience with  
the bodies is so tragic.

1003

00:52:31,630 --> 00:52:35,530

How were you and your  
co-workers experiencing

1004

00:52:35,530 --> 00:52:37,330

exhuming these graves?

1005

00:52:37,330 --> 00:52:41,090

My dear folks, there is no--

1006

00:52:41,090 --> 00:52:43,630

you were so hardened.

1007

00:52:43,630 --> 00:52:47,950

There were no  
feelings for anything,

1008

00:52:47,950 --> 00:52:53,005

no feeling for a body,  
no feeling for a man.

1009

00:52:53,005 --> 00:52:56,380

You see a child being  
shot, you have no feelings.

1010

00:52:56,380 --> 00:53:00,190

You were just like an animal  
hardened like a stone.

1011

00:53:00,190 --> 00:53:05,520

Now, when I remind myself of  
the cries, what the kids--

1012

00:53:05,520 --> 00:53:07,973

or incidentally, I  
will come to that.

1013

00:53:07,973 --> 00:53:08,890

There were no feeling.

1014

00:53:08,890 --> 00:53:12,700

Everybody was numb, numb.

1015

00:53:12,700 --> 00:53:17,380

That is the word-- numb, no  
feeling for the next person.

1016

00:53:17,380 --> 00:53:18,880

That's how it was.

1017

00:53:18,880 --> 00:53:26,800

And then, at that time, the  
KrakÃ³w ghetto was cleared.

1018

00:53:26,800 --> 00:53:30,820

First of all, a lot of people  
were escaping with the trains,

1019

00:53:30,820 --> 00:53:31,630

going away.

1020

00:53:31,630 --> 00:53:34,470

They were caught, slowly brought  
in into the concentration camp,

1021

00:53:34,470 --> 00:53:36,050

and shot.

1022

00:53:36,050 --> 00:53:41,770

And some of them smuggled some  
children into that PlaszÃ³w

1023

00:53:41,770 --> 00:53:44,710

ghetto, in the PlaszÃ³w camp.

1024

00:53:44,710 --> 00:53:48,640

They thought maybe they can  
hide it there for a while.

1025

00:53:48,640 --> 00:53:52,180

Maybe they will be able  
to get it out later.

1026

00:53:52,180 --> 00:53:55,540

Incidentally, one  
family, a friend of ours,

1027

00:53:55,540 --> 00:53:56,570

had a child there.

1028

00:53:56,570 --> 00:53:59,470

And they smuggled  
this child back out.

1029

00:53:59,470 --> 00:54:02,260

And men who delivered  
milk to the SS

1030

00:54:02,260 --> 00:54:04,300

every morning--  
they were big cans.

1031

00:54:04,300 --> 00:54:07,930

Maybe you remember those  
cans, old-fashioned cans.

1032

00:54:07,930 --> 00:54:13,156

He put that child in a  
can and went out with it.

1033

00:54:13,156 --> 00:54:18,820

And that child grew up to be a  
surgeon in New York Hospital.

1034

00:54:18,820 --> 00:54:22,570

He goes around with a yarmulke,  
a very [INAUDIBLE] man.

1035

00:54:22,570 --> 00:54:30,160

And he is one of the best  
surgeons in New York Hospital.



1036

00:54:30,160 --> 00:54:32,890

So this is only one thing.

1037

00:54:32,890 --> 00:54:37,340

And so later on, this was  
going on, building roads

1038

00:54:37,340 --> 00:54:42,010

and breaking these tombstones  
and straightening the ground

1039

00:54:42,010 --> 00:54:47,230

in order to get out  
the gold from the jaws.

1040

00:54:47,230 --> 00:54:52,010

And later on, they found out  
that there are children here.

1041

00:54:52,010 --> 00:54:53,380

So what did they do?

1042

00:54:53,380 --> 00:54:56,770

They gave an order to put all  
the children in one barrack.

1043

00:54:56,770 --> 00:54:59,740

And they took two  
little girls, and they

1044

00:54:59,740 --> 00:55:04,540

should be the nannies  
for those childrens.

1045

00:55:04,540 --> 00:55:07,060

So we thought, maybe they  
will keep those childrens

1046

00:55:07,060 --> 00:55:08,070

in that barrack there.

1047

00:55:08,070 --> 00:55:12,490

And then let them have  
something to eat, some

1048  
00:55:12,490 --> 00:55:14,400  
milk they delivered, the SS.

1049  
00:55:14,400 --> 00:55:17,210

1050  
00:55:17,210 --> 00:55:23,770  
And so one morning,  
they have put

1051  
00:55:23,770 --> 00:55:27,820  
outside microphones  
on each barrack around

1052  
00:55:27,820 --> 00:55:32,650  
and played loud Bach's music.

1053  
00:55:32,650 --> 00:55:35,800  
And they loaded, and  
they took two trucks.

1054  
00:55:35,800 --> 00:55:40,000  
And they were loading those  
children on the trucks.

1055  
00:55:40,000 --> 00:55:44,120  
Their mothers were tearing  
their hair out from far away.

1056  
00:55:44,120 --> 00:55:45,295  
They couldn't get to it.

1057  
00:55:45,295 --> 00:55:48,880  
There was no way  
of getting to it.

1058  
00:55:48,880 --> 00:55:51,610  
They were crying and  
tearing their hair out.

1059

00:55:51,610 --> 00:55:54,100

And those children-- the  
cries of those children,

1060

00:55:54,100 --> 00:55:55,720

I can hear them now.

1061

00:55:55,720 --> 00:55:57,220

I can hear them always now.

1062

00:55:57,220 --> 00:55:59,620

I'll never, never forget them--

1063

00:55:59,620 --> 00:56:05,200

Mommy, Mommy, with their little  
hands up, and such terrible

1064

00:56:05,200 --> 00:56:09,110

cries that it was just  
cutting your heart.

1065

00:56:09,110 --> 00:56:12,310

But at that time, incidentally,  
at that time, you were numb.

1066

00:56:12,310 --> 00:56:15,590

You didn't feel a thing.

1067

00:56:15,590 --> 00:56:16,860

And so they loaded.

1068

00:56:16,860 --> 00:56:22,500

There were about  
over 180 children

1069

00:56:22,500 --> 00:56:29,570

from two years, a half a year,  
up to about six, seven years.

1070

00:56:29,570 --> 00:56:33,160

And so they loaded those  
children straight--

1071  
00:56:33,160 --> 00:56:36,740  
they were straight to  
Auschwitz, Birkenau,

1072  
00:56:36,740 --> 00:56:40,530  
where the chimneys where  
there, where they were gassed.

1073  
00:56:40,530 --> 00:56:42,570  
Did you know where  
they were going?

1074  
00:56:42,570 --> 00:56:45,670  
We knew that they are  
not going for life.

1075  
00:56:45,670 --> 00:56:46,170  
We knew.

1076  
00:56:46,170 --> 00:56:48,030  
We didn't know, at that  
time, that they are

1077  
00:56:48,030 --> 00:56:49,480  
going to be gassed right away.

1078  
00:56:49,480 --> 00:56:52,862  
But we found out later they  
were all gassed right away.

1079  
00:56:52,862 --> 00:56:54,320  
We have to stop  
for a few minutes--

1080  
00:56:54,320 --> 00:56:54,820  
Yeah.

1081  
00:56:54,820 --> 00:56:56,610  
--to change the tape.

1082  
00:56:56,610 --> 00:57:01,000

Contact [reference@ushmm.org](mailto:reference@ushmm.org) for further information about this collection