

Let's continue.

This hour later on, meanwhile a group was building the concentration camp, spreading out. Annexing a lot of land from the farmers there. They made it into about over 50 acres of land there in Plaszow near Krakow. They took away from the farmers' land.

And this gate, this barbed wire what we got in from the train, what they unloaded on the train, this material, this post boards building barracks. And all this was spread out there in that concentration camp. Now I'm talking about Plaszow.

That's why I spent a lot of-- most when I came out from Debica when they picked us up out of Debica, I am in Plaszow now. And so they were dividing people in groups. And of course, we were not so fluent yet in German at that time. We didn't speak well German.

So a German, he was from Bavaria, had such a heavy accent. They divided a group of about 20 people. He says, you are going to be called [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. Nobody thought of it that you will have to repeat that.

Was this the commandant who did this?

The German SS, the foreman. He divided us into groups when we came over to Plaszow. And he says, your group is going to be called [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. And he said it with such a deep, deep Bavarian accent that you just-- impossible. You didn't even think of it that he will have to repeat it.

Maybe five minutes later, he says, what group do you belong? Nobody knew. Nobody could repeat that. And this was actually Arbeitsgemeinschaft Berlin. And if he would have told us the way I'm saying it, we would have understood. But he had such a deep Bavarian accent.

And everybody's scared to do death. Because we didn't know if we are going to live or we are going to die or something like that. And so the beatings over the head with such a big whip. And that whip was inside there was a steel wire. And that steel wire wrapped you around until it cut your eyes out.

Everybody went out with such swollen eyes. And so everybody knew what group you belong already after that. And so I belonged to a what's called Baracken Bau. And Baracken Bau was a group were building barracks. Bau means building. Baracken you know.

And this group were working always outside. There were groups were going into tailoring shops. And there were groups who were going into shoe making shops. And there were groups where they made furniture. And this all was German industries.

They were supposed to be for the army some of it. But some was of their own. For instance, they were gathering from whole Poland all the thin pots and pans and the big-- in Poland, everybody had what's called to give a bath a child. What is it called?

Basin?

It's a basin. But it was from galvanized sheet metal.

Sheet metal, yes.

Big one. There were big ones for what they were doing the laundry. Everybody had that. This was a must in the home. So they gathered all those from whole Poland and from other nationalities. And they brought it in into that concentration camp there. And there was a established-- they made pots--

Enamel.

Enamel. Enamel pots and pans. And he was making little shovels for the army. But the pots and pans, the enamel pots and pans, this was his private job. And he was sending out trains, loads and loads to Germany.

Is that Oscar Schindler by any chance? Is that Oscar Schindler?

Oscar Schindler. You've heard of him. And you're familiar?

Go ahead, please.

That's the guy. But he was the good guy. He and whoever let him work in his part of the -- survived and he didn't shoot. But he didn't take in anybody. And people who went in there to work have had it better than the ones who worked here.

I was with tourists always because I was outside. Winter, the freezing, the rain. You came in at that barrack in the evening wet, frozen, because you worked all day outside. There's no way of getting in. And very cold. There's no heat.

And so when you laid down on that shelf, the cold shelf there, and you thought, is that possible? You thought like this. You dreamed, just daydream. Is that possible that people can come and take children and just shoot them like that?

Maybe it's a dream. I said to myself, let me wake up. Let me wake up. This is just a daydream. But unfortunately, it wasn't a dream. It was the truth. And so this was the way it started off. And then one group was outside working. They were working for about two years outside. They had their race track.

And they needed people there to attend to horses, and to clean the track, and to take the grass, and level everything. So they had about over 30 young men, old, young and tall. And they picked them up. And they were living there in the barrack outside on that in Krakow.

And again, knowing that in case they had any connection with the underground, one morning they brought them into Plaszow. This was in '43. They brought them in into this concentration camp and straight up on the place. And the [INAUDIBLE] commanders surrounded them. And they were straight left to be shot.

And how terrible it was for the guy looking like me. Each one had to pick up a small bundle of-- when we were building barracks, pieces of board, chips were falling in the side. We were having a pipe. Everybody had to pick up a bundle of this piece of board and taking over there to be burnt together before shooting.

And before shooting, he had to take off his shoes. They still had some pants and shoes, because they were outside working. Tie up his shoes together. And the pants, make in a bundle, put in the side. And going in into that, there was like a valley, rocks. There was a very rocky place there.

And there, they surrounded-- this [INAUDIBLE] commander with machine guns gunned them down. I remember a girl who worked as the chef in that concentration camp-- from that concentration camp. His name was Goth.

Amon Goth.

Goth, you've heard of that name?

Yes.

You see, not a lie. And this girl was there for quite a year. She was making the bed, and then taking care of him, and everything, and cooking and everything. And she had a brother that in that group. And she found out about. She cried terribly to that chef that she has a brother.

So the chef goes and give her a note, she should run over there and tell them to release her brother. They got over and they took that note and they shot her. That's how this work worked there. This is how they have felt for the worker what

they kept there.

They only kept always people because it wasn't their interest to have that camp and to-- it's called German to [? lyse. ?] That means to create, to work, to make for the army, for the things. This is what they-- this was in their interest to have it going.

But they had a order every four or six weeks-- maybe a little longer-- to pick up a group and to send to Birkenau to be gassed. So whom did they take? Everybody was going from work. There was a committee. And everybody had to undress.

And if you had a little boil here or there, you go to the left already. You go to the people who were going to be sent away. And there was young girls who were some of them already in their 30s. And when saw what's going on, they were pinching their cheeks so to get in some red, so that they would look a little better.

Everybody was just pale not knowing what's going to happen. And so they picked up a lot of it. Every few months, they were having these selections. And I remember one time, a man was picked up. And he had hidden one child. This is one child in that camp.

He somehow knew that there was a man who was in charge for the barrack. And he was responsible that no children be hidden there. He was responsible. But somehow, he had some connections with that man. And that one little girl, about maybe six years old, was hidden in that barrack there.

And the minute she heard that somebody is in the concentration camp coming in that area, she ran out on the highest perch there and covered herself with all the racks and laying there so quiet like nothing there. And so this is the way she was there.

And then the man who brought in a little soup and the things-- this girl was so pale , because she never had to go out to the sun, never see her outside. And he brought in a little soup always. They picked him up in this group, only because he was losing his hair.

He wasn't old, but he was starting to lose his hair. They took him to be shot. And they picked him up there in that group. And he was crying. Not that he is going to be shot. He was crying that I won't see anymore my little girl.

He was crying so terribly-- can't imagine-- that he will never see his girl anymore. And so they shot him. They loaded him on trains and on trucks and straight to Auschwitz. What happened to that girl, I don't know. Because I also left later Plaszow. I went away to Mielec to that [INAUDIBLE].

And I don't know what happened to that girl. But never heard of it anymore. And so now I was taken. Did I tell you number two I was taken to be shot? One at the train when I was handing some water. And one when three escaped and they took us to be shot.

And then in Plaszow, they picked up from the group 15 people to be shot, because somebody escaped. Who was the somebody? They picked up some people who were-- how can I say-- they were no more Jews. They were then converted into Catholic.

But for them, you are a Jew. If you are converted or not, they picked up people whom they picked up from the third or fourth generation who they were Jewish. And so a guy like this were to escape. Because he was converted before the war into a Catholic.

He had some friends somewhere in the village. But he could escape. I couldn't escape, because I didn't have anywhere to go. And I go in this group working. They picked up-- one escaped. And they picked up 15 to be shot. And I was in the group of the 15 again. Again, back in the 15.

My luck was that I got with one German, one SS, buddy buddy. How did I get buddy buddy with a guy like this? Let me

tell you that. One, I was working night shift building barracks. It's not Christmas, New Year's they had a big party at that concentration camp there.

They had music playing, and dancing, and drinking champagne, the SS. The SS and the Ukraines altogether. Big party for everybody. Not for Jews. There were Jewish singers. There was Jewish music. They were from Krakow, good music which used to be in the radio. The Roosevelts, I think. Roosevelts orchestra. Beautiful.

They were playing them the music. And in the middle of the night, the light conked out. No light. And it was about one o'clock in the morning. In this they didn't have-- they were screwing fuses. Not the circuit breakers, like now the modern one.

The old fashioned one.

The old fashioned screw. And what they do? They couldn't go into the town. Nobody is open in town now at one o'clock in the morning. No light. So the Jewish leader-- he was shot too-- came out. And he says, I used to be a handyman. I used to whenever they moved a desk in the office, they called me in to rewire, wiring, things like that. So they knew me.

So this Jewish leader came out where I was working. He says, can you do something? The light went up there in that hall and they have no light. And I went in there. And I took a cork from a champagne bottle. And I made a little heavier. Put some-- it was paper over. And put some fine wire around it in a cross. And screw it in. And the light went on.

Oh, this was something he couldn't forget. He was in charge of this party. He said, this [NON-ENGLISH]-- that swine can do everything for me, for me. You know what it means. That swine can do everything. All right.

And at that time when they picked me up to be shot, this SS saved me. He took me out. He says, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. That they need me. And this saved me. Otherwise, would have been the last one from so many families. And he saved me. This is number three.

But how you feel when you know that the end is over, that you were strong and healthy, and you had dreams? And suddenly, you know in a couple hours later, you are going to be laying there. It's a terrible feeling. I don't wish that a dog should go through that feeling. And I went through it three times.

Do you ever dream about it?

Pardon?

Do you ever dream about it?

Oh, yes. I have dreams that I'm being shot and that I'm being shot. And I'm being shot and then I fly like-- slowly, I'm going down on the floor. And then I said, oh, I'm still alive. I didn't move, because there are cases when they shot you. And you fell down and you were still alive. You didn't move. They went away, you could get up.

There were a few cases like that where a shot through the neck. And so I am shot. And I feel that I'm still alive. So I lay quiet. I dream of that. I lay quiet. When he will leave, I'll be able to get up. That's dreams. And my wife and I, we always have dreams.

Those dreams are-- as I said, when you were with friends and you start talking with friends, it's always you come up on the subject. And when you sleep, you dream. And when you can't sleep, you just have it like a moving picture in front of you going through.

This is a terrible thing. And you can't get this over. Especially those incidents like shooting this child. A child in ghetto ask her mother. And I remember this little girl. And she looked like-- maybe you saw in television-- Jessica who fell into that--

A girl in Texas.

A little girl like this just similar like her. A little blonde girl says, mommy, is that true that you will be able to go to work and I will have to die? A four-year-old girl. The children were so conscious. They knew that they have no chance to live. They knew what was going on. And they knew everything.

You could take-- I once took a little boy before knowing that tomorrow is going to be-- the SS is going to surround everybody and in taking away who knows where. I took a little boy-- kids didn't having chance-- a little boy. Well, who was this little boy? The father and mother hid him while they were going out with the first transports.

And this little boy was hidden in the basement. And later when it became still some way of living, this little boy came out there he was hanging around there. And I knew the family.

So once there was another-- we knew that tomorrow is going to be a terrible, terrible day. They're going to surround us. Incidentally, everybody had to pay, it was called, slaughter money. In the beginning-- did you hear of that? You heard of that.

In the beginning, you had to give up gold, silver earrings, whatever you had. And the way it was said we are going to be able to stay, they're not going to put us in trains, they're not going to displace us if we give up all the gold and silver.

People were taking over wherever they had a piece of gold, anything. Giving up their-- and they gathered a tremendous amount of gold. They took it and they did their job.

The second time, the same thing. So people know they. The called it in Jewish shehita You understand Jewish? Shehita means slaughter money, to be slaughtered. You pay them to be slaughtered. That's what we were calling that.

And that's what's going on to the last minute. All right, so now we are in Plaszow. And this thing was going on there incidentally. Everybody was so anxious to live. Life are so precious, you could go out hungry. It's hard to describe how hungry you would be.

But you still wanted to be alive to see the end of it, to maybe we will survive. Maybe somebody else survive and things like that. And so I told you before how my brother was shot. He escaped in the train. And he was going out. And I was still working at Baracken Bau.

Baracken Bau was the worst job, the worst. But unfortunately, I was the good man. I knew how to work and I knew what was going on. And they wouldn't let me-- the German wouldn't let me out of there. Incidentally, the German, he was a rotten fuhrer.

I called him after the war. He was a guy who was shooting right and left people, women, girls. Whatever came out there, he was shooting. He was beating everybody so terribly. One morning, he goes out, he says, everybody gets 25 on the behind.

And when he said 25 on the behind, it is just 25. It's no question about. And so they everybody got 25. All the group who was working. And I was between them. And I said, I also get 25? I am working. I am responsible for this work. Don't you see those barracks, what we built here? I am the one working.

He says, when everybody gets it, you are getting it too. So of course, you have to put down your pants on the bare behind. 25 is just like an operation. You take a knife and with that steel whip, 25. And every time that end whipped you around here, you had a cut, a cut, a cut all over.

And you just couldn't talk him out of it. He says, when everybody got it, you are Jewish. You have to get it. So I got it. And then later, every time, no matter what was going on, he hit you with that whip.

Once I said, please, don't hit me anymore. I am so beaten up that I can't bend down. I can't work when I am so sore. I am

so terribly sore. I can't-- when my pants touched me in the back, I just saw terrible things. He says, if you can't work, I have to shoot you. Those are the words.

Was this Goth who did this himself?

No, no. This was another. His name was Willie Schteip. Not too many knows him. I knew him, because he was my foreman. He was responsible for the work. And I called him after the war. I'm going to come to it. And this guy was there my foreman.

And you can imagine the treatment I got from him. Once knowing I told you before that people escaping with trains, girls who tried somehow to get papers, that they are Gentile, that they are not Jewish. They were places where you could work out with the signature of Frank, the governor of Krakow signature.

And of course, the Jewish girls had brown hair . And the Polish, the Gentile girls were mostly blond. So the Jewish girls were making themselves blond. And they found out about that. Whenever they saw a young girl dressed, nice lips, nice made up, blonde, they right away suspected her that she is Jewish.

They were picking them up one by one from the trains. So one morning going back to that unloading-- to that them leveling the ground and then taking out the teeth, they bring in two girls caught on the trains. Such beautiful girls, maybe 19, 20 years old.

So beautiful made up. Their lips like roses. They had to undress and were sitting like that and waiting to be shot in the camp, in the concentration camp. While we were working on the ground there, they were waiting to be shot.

And that SS didn't come right away. It took them an hour until he came and he shot them. Such beautiful two girls caught in the train. Just caught in the train. And they shot them. They didn't even bury them. They put them on the lower place. And when we were scraping out the ground, ground was falling on them. So it was covering them up.

This is [INAUDIBLE]. Once came in a whole truck load with people. They supposed to have papers to go to the United States before the war. Did you hear of that? And they were all shot there. Shall I go on and tell you?

Please. You must tell it.

A truck comes in, was full of people. They had their suitcases. They told them that whoever had papers or registered to go to the United States should come out on this and this place there. It was called appelpplatz where they are supposed to meet.

And everybody who had-- incidentally, I was in concentration camp, otherwise, I would have been there too. Because I had already papers to go before the war to the United States. And so they went out with their best suitcases with whatever belongings they had. And they loaded them onto trucks and brought them into Plaszow.

And they were gunned down. Right away, that [? sheso ?] commanders surrounded them. They took them over there to that place there and shot them. This is how they talked you-- how they cheated you in into-- without having any problems, telling you you're going to the United States. We're going to be taking you to the ship.

And so they all came out, whoever had any register papers that he is registered to go the the United States. He was on that truck and he was shot, all there in Plaszow. Plaszow was a terrible place there. Thousands and thousands of people lost their lives there. And so I was there from the beginning of '42 till '44.

You said that you had papers to come to the United States. When did you get them and how were you able to hold on to them?

Before the war. Way, way before the war. I had already a number. And I had to wait for my number to come up. Because the American Council has given me already a number. And whenever my-- no, how did I say? I can't describe

that in English.

Well, anyway, I was supposed to be called in to travel to the United States. But because the war broke out, and I was called in German [GERMAN]. That means army-- not skilled, but I was--

Trained.

No, trained, that was in the army. But I was one of the-- in the reserve to be called to the army. So the Polish government wouldn't let me out when they started to talk about the war. First, they took in Czechoslovakia and Austria, the Anschluss.

Austria, then Czechoslovakia. And then they wanted to take part of Poland. Denmark-- not Denmark, Danzig. How is it in English?

Well, yeah, it's now Gdansk.

Gdansk, Polish.

Then Danzig, yeah.

And so they didn't they wouldn't let me out. And so this is good that I was in that camp, otherwise I would have been in that truck too, because I had papers. I had the papers. Matter of fact, I had pictures and the stamp from this from the American Council.

Did they let you keep the papers or did you have to hide the papers?

At that time in the beginning, we had the papers. I had them hidden. Of course, hidden. But later on, I destroyed them. I destroyed them. Everything was destroyed. I was just picked up to the concentration camp like you see me now.

What led you to the army in the first place? Where you drafted?

In Poland, you when you were 18 years old, there was a law.

Conscription law.

Law, you had to go to the draft. And they measured you in and weigh you and everything. And I was taken in right way to the army. And I was 18 months in the regular army and in the Polish army. And then later when the war broke out, I was the first to be called in. And so this was there.

So going back to Plaszow. You want to hear some more from? Plaszow? I'll tell you some more things what was going on there unless you--

Please. No, go ahead.

About in '42-- no, '43-- I'm very bad on dates, but it is in '43. Don't ask me what month. One came out in a word that they are looking for people to go to Mielec to a flugzenwerk. This is a place where they are building airplanes, an airplane factory.

And when I heard about that, I was born there in this area. So I was trying to get to that area there, because I always was thinking in case the war comes to an end, I'll still have that road to make from there to Auschwitz or somewhere else.

So maybe at that time I can jump out. And this is what my plans were. And so I went voluntarily from that concentration camp to Mielec. In Mielec, oh, did I suffer there. Here in Plaszow, I was already an old timer. I knew every corner and everything, what to do, how to do.

And also the facilities were better. You had a big, big oven where you could take all your belongings and put it in one bundle, and bring it over to that oven. And they put it in for 200 degree steam. And they steam it out. So they took out the livestock from there.

And this is where you could keep yourself at least a little bit from the lice to eat you. When I came there to Mielec, this wasn't there anymore. They were laying there on their so-called shelves and a little straw, maybe it was maybe five years old.

So rotten, so black, and so in pieces. It wasn't any more straw. And I came over there. They took away everything without a cover, without-- they took away your toothbrush. So I go over there. I thought maybe they told me that I'm going to get their covers. They're going to get everything.

We came over, no cover. I go over to the-- it was called-- it was already again before like before Rosh Hashanah became cold in Poland, Rosh Hashanah is already cold, very cold. And I came over.

And I went over to the leader, to the concentration camp leader. And I said, look, I am freezing. I have nothing to cover. I came like this. Maybe you can give me some kind of a cover? He said, we don't have any covers. But go in that hospital. There's a little [? hug ?] called [NON-ENGLISH].

They put you in there for a couple of days. If you were a little longer than three, four days, you were taken out and shot. Go in there and maybe somebody died, they will take you the blanket and you will have a blanket.

I go in in the morning before going to work. And I go around and I look, I look. And I see somebody who is probably 90% dead. And I try to pull that blanket. I see he is still alive. But my heart didn't let me do that. I didn't do that. And so I went to work.

Going back to work, I was watching this guy. I knew that he's going to die anyway. And I came from work and I go in that barrack there, in the [NON-ENGLISH]. And I look over there, somebody pulled over this blanket from him. He was still alive and somebody pulled it over.

And so this is the way the life was there. The lice were eating you up alive. So one morning, the sun was shining in the day. I worked night shift. During the day, instead of sleep, I go out outside and take off my pants and my gatkies and my everything.

And take two bricks and make a little fire behind the barrack. And took my-- I used to eat soap. And put in my shirt and my I gatkies there. And I start to boil it there. Made a little fire and I boil it there. Before I know, from the towers, the security saw some smoke.

Some people were getting a potato out of all of the kitchen and cooking it. This was terrible. This was right away a bullet in the head. And so they saw that this is what somebody is doing. They saw a little smoke going out. And before I turned around and I was standing completely, completely naked.

And the chef of them from the concentration camp runs over. Behind the barrack was a revolving door like this. What are you doing here? I said, I only want to keep myself clean. Those are the words. And in German, it sounds like this. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

And so he looked what I am cooking there. He let me live, let me alive. And I cook out my gatkies there a little bit. A half hour later, they were dry already. Sun was shining and I put them on. I had a day without biting.

But when I laid down on that perch there, the bed bugs, and the fleas, and the lice, they ate you up alive. So this was this was Mielec. And I worked in daytime and nighttime.

Again, in the beginning, they took me over to an airplane body. And on the bottom, it had, it was called in German a



[GERMAN]. A part from the bottom opened down. And it had there little steps to get in into the plane. And so they showed me just this [GERMAN]. And I'm supposed to erect this there. never

Had the slightest idea how to do it. So I took one and I cut off a little more than is necessary. It was a big space. This couldn't be, because the minute the air goes in, it would have ripped apart the whole plane. And I was beat. I was beat and kicked and beat. One day, the second day, the third day.

Once I said to myself, I'm going to tell them. I said, you don't have to beat me, in German. You don't have to beat me. Just show me once how you wanted to have it done. And I'll do it just the way you want it. He sent me over a guy, a Polack. There were Polish people coming in the morning, going home in the evening. Also worked for in the flugtenwerk.

He sent me over a guy. And that guy was working with me. Showed me how to erect this, to put this on. And from that time on, I was the best. They didn't beat me anymore. And that's how you went to this path. And then one morning, we heard the planes were coming in and loading bombs and going out. Coming in and going out. It was a whole night.

So we knew that something is going on fronts. Because they were never busy. And so they wake us up we had to carry the big, big bombs there to bring them over to the planes and to load it in the planes. And special groups were working there.

And so we knew that the war is to an end, was coming to an end. And one morning, I go out in the morning. And there is a call, everybody has to be ready in half an hour. The trains are ready. We are going we are going to be shift from here, the whole concentration camp.

And we incidentally, we first dismantled a lot of the big machinery. We loaded them on trains. They were going to that near Krakow, that little salt mine on the ground. They were supposed to be erect, a hall of work. And so-- I'll take a drink.

And so in half an hour, everybody has to be ready. Has to be ready to go. Good. I had a friend with me. And my plan was to jump out the train. Because at that time, we were not any more responsible for each other.

Before, one escaped, they took 15 to be shot. Later on, this law has changed. The SS was responsible for us. They didn't shoot anymore. If one escape, they didn't shoot anymore. And this was in the last half a year before the war ended.

So I knew about that. So in the train with my friend, we came in and took the train. Imagine the heat and everything. And I was standing at this little window there. And I had the little pliers, cutting pliers, which I used at the factory there that I had with me.

And the minute I came in, I cut the wires off on the bottom. [INAUDIBLE]. And I said to my friend, look, I'm going to stay here at this window. And we will come to a certain spot where I know where I am. I'm going to jump out and you jump out also. And then we come together there.

This was in the evening. Supposed to be in the middle of the night. But I said, stay here. No, I was staying at the window. And then how long can you stay? And we got tired. We got sleepy. And I said to him, why don't you stay at the window and watch until we come to that certain spot?

And then we'll jump out. And I'll lay down. You just go down like this, because there's no space to lay down. So I laid down. And I fell asleep sitting. And he fell asleep. And we passed by this pathway we were supposed to jump out. And I woke up, it was-- hell, the day was already on.

Oh my god, what I missed. I thought I'm going to die. I said, this was the only solution where I could get out of that concentration camp. And this was all-- the end is coming. And now if somebody escapes, here's a chance to survive.

So [NON-ENGLISH]. It was too bad. We lost that opportunity. And so we went to Wieliczka. Wieliczka was a town

there where we supposed to work on the ground. This was a salt mine town. And then we're there. Instead we put all this machinery on the ground, a big hole.

Instead to go for work, since the Russians were approaching so rapidly, one morning, an alarm. We have to be in the train. We are going to be loaded to Germany. So where am I going?

And in the morning, early morning-- first of all, you couldn't pick up a piece of newspaper. That was a bullet to the head. No paper, even if you were going to the latrine. You couldn't have a piece of paper. This was a terrible-- you are a politician, politics.

One morning, I go out in the morning. The wind blew in a headline-- a Polish paper, just the headline that the Russians are there in Mielec where we were working. Oh my god, the Russians are there already. And here I am I'm going to be loaded in trains going to Germany.

I just couldn't stomach that. And so it didn't take too long. Everybody went to a-- [NON-ENGLISH]. How is that?

Revival.

No, no, no. Checked out. To give out everything you have, toothbrush, the spoon. You went through that--

A search.

A search. You went through that search. And I had something which I-- this was a pair of small vellum.

Phylacteries.

Phylactery. Very small. I found them in-- I'll tell you about that too. And I kept this with me always. Every morning, if I had the chance, I put them on and made the prayer. And when we were going to be searched, I took this little bag that was the phylactery. And I threw it over to this group who was already searched.

It was all involved a bullet in the head. But you took a chance, anything. A piece of paper you picked was a bullet in the head. Whatever we were doing, it was just dangerous. So living was a danger.

And I went through the search. And we were going to the trains. How we were going to the trains? Everybody had to hold-- there were five. And everybody had to hold each other. You came to the train, you must have been five. If you were four, where is the fifth one? It was dangerous.

We were holding each other. And these four were responsible for the fifth one. And so we were coming to the train in fifth. And they and they opened the train. And that train was the train what they were transporting these people to the gas chambers to Treblinka, to Belzec.

And of course, no sanitary things was going on in the train. Everything wherever you were standing. And after this finished, it was cleaned up a little bit. They put some chlorine powder on the floor. And the trains were standing all day. It was so hot, that chlorine powder from the heat went up in the air.

When they opened that train, that hit you in the nose. And you could get sick right away with chlorine powder. And I went in there, hot. And I went in into a striped suit. But I was always conscious having a pair of pants under and a shirt. it's called a civil pair of pants, not with stripes.

And went into the train again. I had this little pliers of mine going through them. I threw it through. And I also threw through my pants. Because you couldn't have that.

And they didn't see you throwing it?

No, no. About 500 or 800 people. So it's not so easy. And I go in and I took-- we were loaded into the trains coming into five into the trains, loaded into trains. The smell, the heat. And I took off-- it was hot-- I took off first this jacket. Took off my striped pants.

And I go to that window again. Quietly cut down the wires on the [? balcony. ?] And I said, I'm not going to go to Germany, even if I have to be killed right here. I don't want to suffer anymore. I'll take a chance. Either I'm going to survive or I'm going to be shot. I don't want to go to Germany.

And the minute the train started to move, the SS stepped up on the step to get on the train, on that cattle wagon. There were about 12 cattle wagons. And I jumped out. And next track, Polish people were working on the track.

So I jumped out there. And I fell down. And I lift with me up a railroad tie, a wooden tie. And I was sure that a bullet is coming any second. I was shivering like this. I picked up the tie and I was slowly going to the left.

The Polish people saw me. But at that time, they were already a little bit-- they didn't know what's going to be when the Russians will come in. They thought that the Russians will come in. The Jews will have all the rights. But unfortunately, it wasn't like that.

Anyway, they didn't say a word. They saw me. I picked up the tie and I was slowly going-- the train was going to the right. And I was slowly going with the tie to the left. Then I went, there was a gate, because this was in the salt mines. There was a gate.

Threw away that tie, that wooden tie, railroad tie. And I tried to jump through that gate. I couldn't-- by no means I could lift myself out. I was so shaky. I went through that gate. And I go through-- go out of that gate. And I went in into a high-- it was high corn was growing there a little further after.

I go into that corn and lay and sit down. I say, I'm going to rest a little bit. And I start to look what do I have with me. And I had with me those phylacteries, those vellum. I said, what do I do now? I kept them from so many concentration camps.

I skipped so many-- I went through Mielec. I went through Rymanow, [? Schevne. ?] And I kept him the way I did the first time. And now I am maybe I'm going to be free. Maybe I will survive. I should throw this away? No. I said, if I will keep this with me, no matter what's going to be.

Because I know I knew that when they wanted to find out if they catch me and they want to find out if I'm Jewish, even if I wouldn't have any sign, they had a way of finding out, what they did. Let me tell you further. Jewish people were circumcised. No Gentile was circumcised in Poland. No. They're all Catholics. No circumcision.

And so they know how to check. So I said, if they catch me, they will find out if I'm Jewish. I'm not going to throw it away. And I kept it with me. And I was going with this, started to go in the direction where the Russian front is.

And this was about 60 European miles. And 60 European miles. A mile had about six American miles. It was a further way of going. And I was starting to go. And you got hungry. And I tried to get it into a little house there. I didn't look for big rich houses, the poorest house.

I went in out of the highway. And I went in there in that house. And there was an old [? goike ?] there cooking. And I said, I tell her whole story that the Germans picked me up with my horse and buggy. And I left them with the buggy. And I going back. I have a wife there. A whole story.

And she and she gave me some-- a piece of bread and some milk. This was like manna, manna from the skies. And I was going further. I'll make it short. I see it has to be an end to it. I was going further. And it was fields. I was afraid to go with the road.

And then there were three bridges to cross. This was the most horrible thing. How could I cross a bridge? There was a

bridge, not as big as the Verrazzano, but half of the size. Half the size. And on each bridge, on each side of the bridge, there was a gestapo, an SS working there, standing there, and watching. Because they were afraid that somebody would blow up the bridge. Because they were already withdrawing.

The Germans, the big tanks were going back in big trucks transport. And how do I cross a bridge? I couldn't go into the water. The water was deep. I didn't know that water. So I go down from the road. A little further away, it was grown in bushes.

And I sit there thinking, how will I be able to go through that bridge? And this was about 1:00 during the day. A women, an old [? goike ?] leads a cow to pasture with a goat.

And because of those little-- of those trains, of those trucks going in the opposite direction, there were no highways to divide, same thing. And this goat was so scarred. Was so pulling herself back, almost got choked. I jumped out. I said, lady, I'll help you. I'll help you. Give me the goat. I'll help you go to that bridge.

I see you are going to the bridge. She says, yes. She gave me the goat. And I was going to-- she was leading the cow and I was leading the goat. And the SS were standing. I was going through.

And I said to myself, oh my god, this wasn't a goat. This was an angel. This was an angel let me through that bridge. And so I went through further. But I got so-- my feet were like pieces of wood. I couldn't move them anymore. I wasn't used to walk that far.

So I went down into the fields and I was trying to rest until the next morning. I went in, there were big piles of hay, and corn, wheat cut and bind in piles. So I pulled out a bundle from the bottom. And I pulled myself in, pushed myself in under that the pile of corn. And I was sleeping there untill the next day.

Excuse me, Aaron. I'm going to have to stop the tape now.