

When we left, we were speaking with Margie Appel about her experiences in the town of Essen.

Yes.

You were telling us about having to leave the city.

Can you--

That was the most beautiful city, but it was bombed to ashes completely. I was very happy to see that. Because when we came, there was a lot of people. And don't ever let anybody say, they didn't see nothing. They saw us working day and night, and day and night. We were marching and singing to show we're happy.

And they saw us, and they used to say, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] and they're Jews, and look at them. Who the hell needs them? It's Sunday morning. And they're singing. They're waking us up. And that Pole that I says-- he said, what's the matter? You have to sleep. And I have to be up. I'm also a person, he said. He always fought back. I don't know. For some reason he wasn't a real-- a real SS. I guess, he got caught in the middle.

So he always fought against them and didn't help. But he used to tell them off all the time. He used to tell us when it's the Jewish holiday. He used to tell us the news that the front is here and the front is there. But I was going to say, Yom Kippur. We didn't know it was Yom Kippur. He told us when Yom Kippur was

We were hungry. We had nothing to eat. But we fasted that-- those little drinks that they gave us-- the soups. The soup-- you know, what they give for the animals. We didn't want it. We fasted. I said my prayer. I swear, I said my prayer in the morning Modeh Ani. I said every night my prayer-- Shema-- and before I went to sleep. And many times my sister-- she was a little off. She used to hit me and beat me. In the middle of the night, I used to have black and blue marks. I woke up, says, what is this? Why do you do that? She said, I don't know.

But I always kept my faith. Ask me why. Was there such a thing? Was there a God to let this happen to us? So many millions. So we had to leave. So we went to the trains. We went to the train and we traveled for nine days. That's what they told us. I didn't know that it's day that it's night-- but nine days. We passed a few camps-- many camps. And they waved to us. They looked worse than we did. Because we ate a little better. They needed our work. And they treated us a little better. But the man-- we just couldn't look at them.

So we passed Dachau and we passed a few of those camps. And with the train-- we were bombed day the night. We had nothing to eat. This much of bread they gave us. One morning, my friend says Malka, look under your pillow. You have no bread. They gave us for nine days this much bread. Your bread was taken away by your sister. And the piece of-- a little jam. I said, you're crazy. And she says, no. Look for the bread under the--

Mattress.

Not mattress. What's a mattress. There was a--

Spring.

Spring.

The spring.

Under the spring. Under your thing there-- blanket. Dirty blanket, yeah. Look under that. And you see, you have nothing left. I says, it cannot-- can't be true. Sure enough, it was gone. I says, [? Ruhu ?] you took my bread? She said, yeah. So she says-- my friend says, why don't you give her back? And she says, I don't know how to say that, even I have to I'm telling you, it hurts me so. She says, ah, Malka you know--

You should be cursed.

Yeah.

For her, why should I give it back? You know, I never said to that girl one word. But I never fought with her. I stuck my head out of the wagon with the wires. And I cried and cried. But I would never say nothing to her-- that why and what or yell and scream at her. My friend, the one who told me, gave me always a bite of her bread. And she wouldn't give it to me. And I didn't ask for it no more. Because I saw, she's sick. What am I going to do? And I respected the elders. I was taught that way. And I had nothing to eat the nine days.

So once in a while, they let us out from the train and the fields. And there was a radish or a carrot. So we picked a little here and a little there. And a potato-- raw potato with the dirt, with everything-- that was good. So we ate that. Once in a while, they let us out for a few minutes. And so we picked that on the field. And we went further.

Well we came to Bergen-Belsen. They let us out. Before the town-- much before-- we had to walk a long way. We walk. And we see the greenery. We see farmers. We see people milking cows. That normal life-- everybody's having a normal life, but us. We pass a camp of Hungarian soldiers-- traders. Then we come in to Bergen-Belsen. And I take a look here. And our first-- the lager fuhrer, the one-- the leader of our group. He was with us all along. He sat-- he stood down by the gate. And he has to give us over to the commander.

And he stood there. And I swear to you, his tears came down. And he started to cry. Because that was the end. We didn't know. But we knew the front was close. His tears came down. And he said like this-- I'll say it first in German and I'll explain. [SPEAKING GERMAN]

Till now you didn't know you were Jewish prisoners. But now you know. How right he was. That was the [NON-ENGLISH]. That was the--

Death camp.

Death camp. I walk in. We come in. A little further in, we see the man. And there I hear somebody is yelling, Malka, Ruhu, Ruhu, Malka. Between 500 girls, my three brothers recognized us by the wires. And of course, I wanted to jump around. My sister was so sickly. She didn't know what hit her. But I wanted to run. And my middle brother said, don't run. There is the guards. They're going to shoot. I didn't know there is a watchtower or something.

And so I was thrilled and happy. I have my brothers here-- the ones who were picked for work. And that was some camp, let me tell you, that was the worst. That was worst than Auschwitz. That was worse than anything-- schmutz It was smelly. It was from the death. It was full of piles and piles of skeletons on the wagons and on the piles. They had no time, no more, to bury them. They had no room to get rid of it. And we had nothing to eat and nothing to drink. Wherever we could find a little puddle, we wet our mouths. And like I read once that a soldier that liberated us-- then he came in. He thought the dead got up and are working. That's how we looked.

Finally one morning-- yeah, we have to schlep the corpses. But I could never do that. I did anything else. But I avoided somehow-- I was lucky. I couldn't pull the corpses. And all the time I saw-- whenever I saw a man, a corpse, I thought that was my brother, my oldest brother. I swear to you. I always saw him in front of me. This is my brother. This is my brother. And I didn't know. I knew they were alive.

And-- what was I going to say after Essen? So I knew they are in that camp. I was so thrilled. And all right, so they started. I didn't want to pull the dead-- one thing I refused to do. I did digging and all that. And I saw what was happening. Finally one morning three weeks later, people were dying like flies. And they used to lay down and never get up. You didn't hear a murmur, just dead. And every time somebody dead, we pushed them aside. We had more room to stretch our legs. Otherwise we were standing like this.

So that morning, it's light outside. And we don't hear-- we heard the front before, the shooting and all that-- and we saw the lights. I woke up. And I see it's light. It's bright. And we are not called for [? zellappell. ?] A day before, our kapo hit

me because I came a second late in the line. I wasn't even with the line. So she slapped me. I run. But I don't know.

So anyway, nobody's calling us. And we're looking around. Nobody's here. So one of the older women went out a little bit. She says, kids, I think we are free. Because we don't see any Germans. We don't see any soldiers. I think, we are free. But everybody stay put. So we were freed. But what happened-- they gave the guns to the Hungarian soldiers, to those prisoners. And they were just as bad. And every time they saw the girls were going for a little food, they shot them. So they shot many, many girls. And I decided I lived till now. I'm not going out. I have here brothers. And I'm not going. I will be hungry a day longer. But I'm not going down.

So they were shooting until-- one day I saw that they wheeled on a wheelbarrow a man. And excuse my expression, he was shot in both sides of the [NON-ENGLISH].

The buttocks. His buttocks.

And buttocks-- also from those Hungarian soldiers. So don't ask how we felt to see this guy-- poor guy. And finally we see, there comes the next day, a English officer with a German captain-- or whatever officer also. And there announcing on the intercom that we are free, that I'm given over-- I'm surrendering to the British army. That captain, he didn't look on the side that we were. He couldn't. He was coming down like he just couldn't look at us. So he turned always his head away. And the guy-- and the German fella was talking. So we knew we were free.

But I didn't go out yet. I said, no. Until we are not sure there is nobody around, until then I stay in. I found a warehouse with those striped clothes. And we were full of lice and full of things. And we had already typhus. We were-- excuse me-- sitting whatever we. We were doing our things. And it was horrible. everybody in the yard and all over. So I found the warehouse with the striped clothes. And I said to my sister-- she had not too much to say. Because whatever I did, she'd listen. And my friend-- I said, first we go and sleep. I love to sleep, one night peaceful. I don't care about the food.

And we snuck in, in a hall. And we went in there. We left all the dirty clothes-- the lice clothes outside. And we ran in and got dressed-- clean. And at least, they weren't eating us alive. And we said, we slept there. My sister, sick or not, she sneaked out at night. She brought herself baked potatoes. The girls were baking. And she followed them. And she put also in the fire a couple of potatoes. But she wouldn't give me a potato. Would you believe it?

And I said, I don't care. I don't want it. I'm not going to eat. I am liberated now. I fast another day. If it wouldn't be-- maybe three days later, none of us come out of there. Because they had a plan-- we found out-- to surround with wires the whole camp was just--

Who had a plan? I'm sorry.

The German.

The Germans did.

And to blow up with the people. And burn the whole ground down with the live people and with the dead people not to-

This was after the surrender to the British.

Yeah-- no. Before the surrender. They had a plan if we wouldn't have been liberated. A few days later, they had this plan to blow up with the people, with the skeleton crew, and with the dead people. So they wouldn't be left any evidence of that. And then they came in. They saw something horrible-- something horrible that their eyes couldn't believe it. They thought that the dead are walking. They saw its people.

I saw an article a couple of years ago that this soldier-- English soldier-- saw a girl looking at him with two big eyes and very thin. He lives in England. I could write to him, I would. And she looked at him with the big eyes, hungry and all. He had nothing to give her but a piece of chocolate. And that happened to be me. He gave me the chocolate. And I ran

to give it to my sister. Because she had the diarrhea. And she had typhus more than I did. So I gave her that. And that was-- he gave for me that. He worked as a medic.

Yes.

So anyway this what happened there. So they started to take the sick people out of there to Bergen, where the officers used to live. They took the sick-- the very, very sick. And I wasn't that sick. So they took us a couple of days later. But I saw already that they have trucks. And they're raking up the whole ground-- the British army. First they fumigated us. They gave us clothes. And they got rid of the lice. And one guy looked me over. And he says, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]? How old are you? And I told him. He goes like that. Skeleton. Just English man from the liberated. They had the worst thing when they went in that was a shock. I had a friend of mine was there. And he said, he vomited days after. That was a terrible, terrible camp.

So we got into Bergen. And we had already beds. And they took care of us with the Red Cross. Then they took us-- we were there a few weeks. And they took us to Celle. Oh, I forgot to mention-- so I thought, I had three brothers. So after we were liberated, I'm running. I have three brothers. But I seen all the boys that had somebody-- came to look for somebody. And I don't see my brothers. It happened, this one brother died there. And I foresee-- I always saw him in front of me. He died at that time. And the two-- they took away eight days before. Either they shot them-- nobody knows-- or they were bombed. Or they killed them or something.

Eight days before-- eight days before the liberation?

Yeah. And I saw them I spoke to them. So this is what I heard-- after the war, I looked for them high and low, in the papers and organization. And my brothers-- still we couldn't find them. So we came to the--

So it was just you and your sister?

Yeah. So finally we came. We didn't find our brothers. We came to Celle. That was a blow. And my sister was in hospital. Then I had an ear infection. And I was in the hospital. And who came to visit us-- you wouldn't believe. I'll never forget-- Mrs. Roosevelt. She came to visit the sick people. And she had little packages for somebody. I didn't know who it was. All that we know an American came. But then they told us that that's the President's wife.

She was very nice woman. She asked me, what's wrong with you? My-- my was bandaged up completely. I says, it's my ear was full of pus. I don't remember. And they were going to operate. And they decided not to. So I was, for weeks, bandaged up. And my sister-- I took her into the hospital. And she ran out of the hospital. I took her in. One door she went in. And door she went out.

And the food that they gave me in the hospital, I couldn't eat. I couldn't eat. Because I was-- my ears was very bad. She took everything for overnight away from me. So I saw there something very, very wrong with her. So I thought, I'll come home. I heard that three of my brothers are alive-- older brothers.

How did you learn that?

There were soldiers coming-- American soldiers. And there were soldiers-- Czech soldiers. They were in the brigada. So my brother was also a volunteer from-- he was in the Russian prisons. And then whoever wanted to volunteer for the Czech army, for the brigada, they volunteered. So he was also. So I heard, one of his friends told me, that he is in near Prague, somewhere. Then I learned two of my other brothers are alive. Then I came to Pressburg, another city.

So they packed us in on a Red Cross train. And we traveled home finally. We traveled and traveled. Stopped here and stopped there and traveled through fields and through all over, all over. Then finally, finally we met the Russians. They were no good either. They took everything away from us. Those little packages that we had nothing-- just to change.

Because I said, I want only two things if I ever get liberated is two dresses-- one up and one down. Because when I washed my prison dress, I had to have a rope. I had to have a blanket and a rope. And every time, the rope opened up.

And I said, God, should only help me two dresses, I should have. And I'll never complain. You know, to this day, if I go to the closet, and I want to say, I don't have what to wear. I bite my tongue. I swear to God. I have two full closets of clothes.

So we came home. And they stole everything. And I come to Mukacheve. And one of my younger brother-- every day he heard we are home-- we are alive-- he went every day for weeks to the train. For weeks to the train, every day he came. And finally we arrived. And I take one look at him. And I see my brother there. And I jumped over a big fence. I don't know how I did it. And he was liberated, like I said in the beginning, in the digest by the gentile there that he didn't go to the camps after. And Irene's father, my oldest brother, was home.

So it was a [NON-ENGLISH]. Irene's father, my oldest brother, he already took us to a woman. And she cooked for us a little bit. We should get to ourselves. And Irene's mother, my sister-in-law, also came home. And she was very sickly. She helped me also a lot in Auschwitz. She did a lot when we went to-- she brought me shoes. She worked by shoes. She brought me shoes. She knew we were going away to Germany. So she brought me shoes. And I should have-- and we should have new shoes. And she took the old shoes. And she gave us new shoes. So we tried to help each other in every way. So she came home very sickly. And my brother-- she couldn't cook. So he had a woman cooking for us. And finally we got to ourselves--

And your sister was with you through all this?

Yeah, yeah. But her mind wasn't-- and I said to myself, God, I should only go home. I know my brothers are alive. This time-- I am the youngest. Let them take over. So I don't have no more this problem. I can't take it no more. I'm too young. She don't listen to me. She used to say, what's-- what do you know? You're a young-- young kid. What do you know? So I came home. And I found my brothers. And they-- we were fed good. Everything was-- so one day my brother, he took me to the hometown, KleÄ nov where I lived-- to the village.

And I come there-- it was a wedding. One of the girls, they got home early. And she got married. I came to the wedding in a little-- how should I say a wagon-- horse and buggy. He took a horse and buggy. And we finally went-- cross the soldiers. They checked you all over, the Russians. You were afraid just like any place else. You were afraid to talk. You were afraid to walk. You were afraid-- you had to whisper all the time. So I came home to that wedding. And I see my house-- our house. I don't look in that side. It was on the right side. And I didn't look there.

We went to the wedding. And that sheriff with the son came. And he invited us to his house. And he said, Malka, you want to go and see your house? I says, oh, no. He says, why not? I says, don't worry. I says, a house was, a house will be. I don't want to see it. I don't want to see it. I can't take it. I wouldn't go.

The guy comes over-- Peter-- that guy that liked me. And he hugs me and kisses me. And he said, Malka, [RUSSIAN] in Russian. Now everything is even. No more Jews. No more gentiles. Today, everything is the same. [RUSSIAN], today everything evened out. You could marry a gentile. You could marry a Jew. It doesn't-- not no more like it used to be. And I answered him, Petra-- Peter go to hell. And I didn't see him. He wrote me letters. And I didn't want to see him anymore. But they were-- they meant good. They were good guy. This was the only good person. He came to see me. I didn't want to see him.

So from there, my oldest brother, Irene's father heard that the Russians are going to close the borders. So what happens, you have to go to Czechoslovakia to your other brother. Take the Ruhu and your other-- my younger brother-- all three of you, you're going to Czechoslovakia. To Prague-- that's where-- not the Carpathians where we used to live-- that was deeper in. And I said, again? I'm tired of traveling. I don't want to travel. He pushed us out. Thank God. The borders closed. And he came also later on.

And I came to my brother. He was pretty good up. He was an officer in the Czech army. And he kept us. He had a nice apartment. He took over from those Sudeten people-- the houses. And they threw them out. And we lived in it. And we were there. And one day came that the Russians are going to send back all of us again. So we start traveling again. So my sister in the meantime met a man that-- he had a family-- eight children and a wife. And they were all burned-- young kids. Nobody came home.

So he was after her. It's a heimish meyd! And he wants to marry her. She was 29 or something. He married. Her. They didn't have such a happy life. So they went also to Germany. And we went later to Germany to Wasserberg to Gabersee And they left earlier to the United States. And I stayed three years there. What I was going to tell you, in Czechoslovakia, when I came to my brother, the soldier, I met a very nice young man also a refugee, also from [? Ireland, ?] that went through hell. And he had no-- he had a brother. And I had--

He was from your same town?

Not from the same town. He was from Chust and then Chuchelna his hometown was-- a very nice guy. I was at that time going on at 17. And he was 20. Very good looking man. And we liked each other. Like kids, we met in Yom Kippur in schul. That was in 1945. We met in schul. I didn't know where they are davening. He brought me his siddur And gave me his siddur.

Where was this?

In Czechoslovakia Most. And he gave-- he took away my siddur. Fine. And we met going home. He knew my brothers already before. His brother was also in the army. So we went together. He was telling me his stories-- what he went through. And I told them what I went through. And we started to go out together. But when the report came that they have to ship us out, my younger brother was engaged. And he decided he wants to leave with his bride.

So I'm packing. I thought I'm going with him. He says, no. I cannot take you. Now I have my fiancee's packages. So what am I going to do with your packages? We have to go borders. We have to walk a lot. So I don't want to get stuck. Well don't ask. I had a blow. He's a good guy. But everybody for themselves. And my sister had left already with her husband. They got married. And they left to--

Were you relieved?

--to Germany.

And then my future-- my husband came over. And he said, don't worry. Don't cry, he says. You'll go with me. In a couple of weeks, I'll take you. So my brother-- the oldest brother-- keeps saying, you're not going to let a girl go just like that with a young fellow, right-- without a chaperone? So he promised that we should get engaged. He promised his hand, like you say in Yiddish. And we did get engaged. Two weeks or three weeks later we took off to Germany to Gabersee. And we stayed there.

And my brother-in-law was so old fashioned that he said, I don't want you to schlep around. Something might happen-- and this and that-- to young boy, a young girl. He was always afraid. He thought we weren't mature enough. He says, let's get married. August 27, '46, we got married. And they all went already later on to the United States. And some of my girlfriends', three sisters and a brother they made the wedding for us. And-- because we had nobody, only a wedding.

We ate-- it was funny. It was raining outside. It was pouring cats and dogs. By the time the chuppah and there was no water and there was no electric. But they were-- we were supposed to get married. And by the chuppah the sun came out. By the time we came in, the lights went in. By the time they had to cook, the water came on. It was just a miracle. And we ate in those tins where the soldiers eat.

Where was this?

In Germany-- Gabersee.

And what kind of a home was it?

It was a--

Camp?

A crazy house. It was a crazy house by the Germans. There was crazy people. We had this thick of doors-- steel doors-- and this thick of windows that-- they still lived there. And they pushed them out to another place. And they made room for us. So that used to be a house for insanes-- a big, big place. So that's where we lived until we went through to country. My husband didn't want to go to Israel. And I wanted to go. But my two brothers were already in Israel. And my brother and sister were here. And they said, you are the youngest. If you have a chance go to America. It's very hard the life in Israel.

How did you feel when your sister left you?

I felt good. I felt relieved. At least she was happy for awhile, you know. It wasn't such a happy marriage later on. But at least, she has somebody. She was sickly all along. He had her in a home, when he had her in an insane home. But she always came out somehow.

Did she have periods when she was able to function normally?

Yeah, at times. Not too much. So I came home. We were talking about-- you're talking about a different period. You know, I had one of my periods in the ghetto before. So anyway we stayed there about three years in Germany. I became pregnant.

With--

I must tell for the young people this story. Because-- maybe it has nothing to do with this-- but I have to tell them the story today with sex schmecks. You know. That's all that you hear. I didn't know nothing. I was a very, very naive. But when I was six, I asked my mother, how is a baby born? She gave me a good kick in the behind. Excuse me. And she said, when you grow up, you'll get married. You'll find out. I never asked again-- nobody. Even my husband, I didn't ask.

I got married-- I mean, I was pregnant. And I had-- I once went to the doctor. Because we had nothing like here. And once I went to the doctor, he says, yes, you're pregnant. And that's it. I didn't know anything. I didn't ask nobody. And one day I ate beans with cabbage or something. And I had big cramps. I thought that was from the beans. That was the labor pain. I came to the hospital. I still didn't know what end the baby's supposed to come out. I swear to God. But I wouldn't change it for the world. I swear.

And I have twins. I want you to know. Natural birth. The nurse tells me, [NON-ENGLISH]. I says, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. You have two babies. And I didn't believe her. And she says, put one hand on this side and one hand on the other side. And I did. And one was empty, and the other one was full. That's when I knew how a baby is born. But I wouldn't change it, believe me, for today. They don't know what they're missing.

And I had two boys. And I they took me in. Because my after birth didn't come out. So they took me for a little operation. And my husband comes running on a bicycle. They didn't want to take me in. Because I didn't have Blue Cross-- Red Cross. And we lied in the German hospital. It was a religious hospital. We told them we have. That's the only way to do. He comes on a bicycle. And he's come and running. And the doctor says to him, are you the father from the [NON-ENGLISH], from the two boys? He says, no. And he walks a few steps. And he said to himself, what is he talking about? Maybe it is mine. And the doctor says, yeah, yeah.

So he came in. The doctor told him that I was in the operating room. And that another thing that was stupid-- they told me to inhale the ether. And I was afraid of the gas. I had to mind the gas. I didn't want to inhale it. And I swear, I didn't inhale the gas-- I mean, the ether. I just had an injection that numbed me a little. But I felt everything. And I had-- the doctor says to the nurse, she's [NON-ENGLISH]. I thought, I am finished. I'm [NON-ENGLISH].

Dead.

Dead. And it turned out, I didn't want to inhale the gas. I was afraid I wouldn't wake up. So we had the two boys. Those three girls and the brother, they made a bris. Yeah, and my husband comes home in the camp. And they asked me, so what did Margie have? What did she have? He says, a twins. Nobody believed him. Are you crazy? I was wide. But I wasn't thick. Nobody believed him, till he convinced them that I-- [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Later on, seven weeks later, one passed away. They both had pneumonia. And one died. And I grabbed the other one in a Catholic hospital. And I also told them that we have full coverage and everything. And this was the smallest one. He was named after my father and one was named after his father. So finally this one-- thank God-- survived. So 1949, he finally made the papers and finally went through the whole Megillah. And we came to the United States-- was a big thrill. We were supposed to come to Brooklyn or New York-- I don't know. We came to Boston for some reason. To this day, I don't know why.

My brother, Irene's father, was waiting for us in Boston-- in New York. And we came to Boston. At night, we came by train to the HIAS in New York. And they also separated the men from the women. Because they didn't have much room. And then the other day, they placed us in a hotel that the wealthier people are today in the East side-- Lafayette street-- around there. And that was good. We were happy to be in the United States.

I had a rich uncle. But he didn't help that much-- he didn't want to help-- he was nice. He came to see us. He gave me \$100 present. And that's it. So it was better than nothing at that time. And then he took my husband. He bought him a suit. He bought me a dress. That was it. So my brother said, you go to the HIAS. I can't help you. Because I'm new here too. And the only way you get around is the HIAS. And they did. They did.

Finally we got transferred to New Jersey. Because my brother lived here. And my brother was very sickly already-- his heart. Irene's father-- he had-- if it would be today, he would have been a bypass. And at that time, they were experimenting. And he didn't want to take a chance. So I went through with them, through a lot. And my sister had a baby. And they lived on a farm by Lakewood. And they were doing pretty good. But then she got relapses all the time. She managed to have three beautiful children. And they're good kids. Religious kids. Since then her husband died. And she's in a home.

But I wanted to tell you what happened to me after this. My husband went to work first for \$27 for pocket books. Then my oldest brother died. He went int-- he had a grocery with his wife, with Irene's mother. He went to help her. And that didn't work. So he decided-- and then he worked in Ronson-- the cigarette lighters. And they struck so many times-- they had strikes. They decided to move out of this country.

And they moved to Pennsylvania-- somewhere-- Strasburg. They wanted to take him. After six months, he became a clerk. A very smart man. But he didn't want to move. I didn't want to move. That's all family I have here. And so then my brother died. He went in with my sister-in-law a little bit it. It didn't work out. So he bought a grocery store. 1954-- we lived on top of the store-- I had a-- in 1952, I had another boy. So we lived and called [? flats ?] up to them. It's a long story. But I had another boy. And he was two and a half. And we moved in on top of the store. Then we bought the house.

We made a living. But he said, I want to make a living only not in the Black neighborhood. I had enough from them. Because Irene's mother had a-- the Black neighborhood-- they made riots. And he just-- he says, I'll make a living but with white people. And that's it. I'll make less. But I want to be in a neighborhood-- my kids should be raised. And that's it. So only one black family was there and nice people. The kids played together always. So in 1970, my sister-in-law-- so we had the store for 16 years then. We made two bar mitzvahs.

Where was this?

In Irvington, New Jersey. We bought a house. We made two beautiful bar mitzvahs. And we made a living. Nothing-- didn't put away nothing. I got some-- [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Reparations.



--from the Germans. Yeah. And my husband did too. So we managed already. One day, my sister-in-law comes from Israel. And she says, listen. My son is getting married. I want you to come to the wedding. And that was 16 years in this business. And my husband says-- I said to them, listen. It's our 25th anniversary in August 27. We'll go to the anniversary. She says, no. So what's the difference? I'll make you a party earlier. My husband bought tickets. And we went to Israel.

That was November the 2nd. The 8 was the wedding. We had the greatest time in Israel. He said, this was the best time of my life. Because he was religious. His father was-- he wasn't a fanatic. But he knew all about the Bible. His father was very well read about it. And he saw many places. He had his hands always open to give charity for everybody.

So-- and he came from Israel. Finally we came home-- the 23rd of November, that I remember. [INAUDIBLE] And by that time, we came home. My son was gone. My first son went to Rutgers-- in college. He finished there. Rutgers-- in Newark . And by that time, my other son went to college at Rutgers.-- And by the time he came home, the kid tells us, he dropped out. And we were very upset.

He didn't want to tell us he was attacked by a bunch of hoodlums by the car. And he's afraid to go back. So my oldest son and my husband took him. But it didn't help. He had the shivers. He's not going. He's not going to school. He dropped out. And it was tough times at that time with the youngsters. And so he sat around. And we were very upset over it.

And 18th of December, before Christmas, I was with my husband on the phone. Every morning, I called him-- 10 o'clock. I call him 10 o'clock. And I had my coffee. I made Shabos. It was Friday. I prepared kugel and this and that. At lunchtime, I went over to the store. Because I didn't live no more on top. I had a house down the block. And I could see to the house. It was a half a block away-- I mean, to the store. I called him and I said, Margie-- I said, Marty, are you busy? He says, I'm very busy Margie. You want to hold on? Or you want to hang up? I said no, I'll wait. I just called to see how he is doing. Every day, for years and years, 10 o'clock in the morning, I called them.

Because 12 o'clock, I was going down already. And he says, I'm quite busy. And I said, I'll hold. I heard boom. I thought the door slammed. And I wait, wait. And I heard him say, get out, get out. Now he would never say to a stranger, get out. It was somebody he knew. Because I knew the store. And I used to say, it too. And he told me if a stranger comes, he asks for money-- he never had a hold up-- if he asked for money, just give it to him. But this must have been somebody he knew.

And I didn't know it was a shot. But I heard the door slam-- I thought it was the door-- then another slam. And I look out the window, I see a colored man walking back and forth. At that time they moved up already in our area. But they weren't too bad. And this man-- and I grabbed my slippers. It was December cold-- barefooted. And my son says, what's the matter? What's the matter, Ma? I said, something is wrong. My heart stopped. And I'm running down. I said, you shut off the gas from everything. Something happened. I don't know what.

Come down and this nice fella comes-- the colored man. And he comes. And he says, tell me are you the one-- that I know you work here-- but are you the owner? And I said, yes. Something happened to the man there. I says, I know what has something happened. I already have a feeling. And he's lying there unconscious. 45 years old-- we celebrated in Israel, his birthday-- our anniversary, they made a party for our anniversary and his birthday together.

Listen to this-- earlier then, when we were planning to go-- we were planning to go on August. And this was in November. She said, you'll have your 25th anniversary-- my sister-in-law-- you come over here. And we did. We had a party. We had his birthday celebrated. So he was unconscious. I grabbed him There was an ambulance. A half hour later they took him up for surgery-- a half hour later. Yeah, first the detectives-- was he ever sick? Did he have high blood pressure? Did he get dizzy? I said, no. He wasn't dizzy. He wasn't sick. He must have been shot.

Because I already saw that it was his eye, his brains. And I thought to myself, hell, Moshe Dayan lives with one eye. I hope he'll be all right. You try to-- like I say, I'm always-- I always have hope. And I come. And there comes-- by that time, my son came running down, Irene's mother came running down. And the Oriental fella comes out-- the doctor. I

wanted to run in-- they wouldn't let me-- to the operating room. And he said-- yeah, by that time, the detective said that he was shot. I said, I heard. Then it must have been the bullet and not the door.

I found on the counter three Pepsis, three Devil Dogs-- if you know what Devil Dogs-- and three cigarettes-- packs of cigarettes. And I know what they bought. They bought in the morning all these things for breakfast-- the colored people. And this Oriental fella comes out. And I says, how is my husband? I'm screaming that all the sick people are listening. They're all very sick with the tubes and everything. But I didn't know when-- he says, your husband deceased. I says, what? I didn't know that word. I didn't understand that word. I never heard it. I know death, but deceased, I didn't know what it meant. He says, your husband just passed away. He had a 22 caliber bullet in his head. That was my [? gick. ?] So don't ask. It took me far--

You had two holocausts?

Pardon me?

You had two holocausts?

Two holocausts in this country. So everything went wrong. The kids were upset. And they didn't know. My son got-- this-- they never-- like I didn't talk about the Holocaust. They don't talk about this. And it's very hard. So the next best thing is a friend of mine-- two years later-- a bachelor, a friend of mine. He met my husband-- also from our part. I couldn't marry anybody else but our own. Because we have a lot in common.

He came to comfort me. I know his sister-in-law came from the same town as my first husband. And we were close friends. He came to comfort me. He says, well you're going to cry constantly. Come out. We'll have a coffee and this. I went out a few times. And little by little, we got used to each other. And we are now celebrating Saturday night-- Saturday, 2nd of May, the 15th anniversary. Thank God. Thank you.

So what can I say? I have now-- I'm going to wind up, I guess the story I have now too-- my sons are-- one is graduating. That son-- he went back to school. He is graduating hospital administration. A masters he is getting. They are both working with emotionally disturbed children. And I says, it's not much money involved here. What are you doing? It's a job. Somebody has to do it. They're very good kids. I have two lovely grandchildren. I have a boy-- eight years old. You see?

Yes.

And I have a little girl who is two years old. And thank God. Thank God for that. And I have told my doctor, Solomon, my troubles-- how hard it is. He says, nobody promised you roses.

[LAUGHTER]

And he was right. So I did marry. It was also tough. It's not easy to-- I always felt for the family a little rejected. They were a little jealous. He was always a bachelor-- my friend. But it's natural. They felt that I'm taking something away. But now everything-- after years and years, I cried. But I don't remember-- 8, 10 years-- that's why I can't cry no more.

I cried, and cried, and cried, until I just can't no more. And I make the best of my life. And I try to have a happy life. And a good husband I have. And I'm a good wife. And the best we can expect from life.

You are a survivor.

We are survivor all around.

You talked before about fate. Do you think there was something other than fate that helped you survive?

I think, mostly it was fate in my case. Because I-- somehow I took things as it came. I said-- everybody said, how can

you look-- they took away your husband. I says, look. He wanted to go to Israel. And we did go. He made it. And he was so happy. It meant to be. We were going to go in August. And we went in November. That means that faith was there. He didn't have much time. So he went earlier. And we celebrated earlier. And I didn't know at first. I kept saying, there is no God. There is God. But I still say, faith is here. And that's it.

Because look, my husband is a bachelor. He went out with so many women. And I knew the women before. And I used to ask him, how come you don't get married? And everybody asked him that. He used to get sick and tired of it. And my husband had to go. And he has-- lots of times he says, he had to go. I should have a wife. And this is something unbelievable what could happen.

But I think, you're also very strong.

Strong and weak. I'm very nervous. I have my days. But I am good natured--

And very generous with this story.

I do good in every way whenever I can. And I think, with good, you could do better than with the other way around. I always say to my husband, if I could be good, why should I be bad? He says, sometimes you're too good. And then you pay off. I says, it happens. It happens. But I think, it's mostly fate. In my case, I kept praying. And I kept-- I never disbelieved.

Many times I say, where is God? What did he do? Why did he do? And then I come back to my beliefs that there must be. It took me years to wonder whatever happened? Why did we survive? And just a few years ago-- 5 minutes-- just a few years ago, I came to the conclusion-- I'm not the smartest. Because it took me a long time-- then I clean. I think of it-- that we survived, that our Judaism should grow again, and again, and again, that they cannot destroy us.

That was my own thinking. Because I-- we don't discuss things like that. And it had to come to my mind alone, and only alone. And I clean. I do things. And I start thinking and thinking. This is what I came up with-- why us? Why not them? So it had to be a real reason. We are young. We're gonna have families. I have two boys. My kids have two. The other one hopefully will get married. Then we'll have to show the world that they cannot destroy us.

Life has to continue.

That we were left a seat. And this is what I came to the conclusion without being educated or anything else.

Oh, I think you were very well educated.

We had our own education.

And wisdom.

That's more than the schooling career.

Yes. It's wisdom.

Thank you, very much.

You're very welcome. And I hope everything comes out. And I hope to God that we never go through this again.

I hope so too.

Nobody, nobody-- I don't wish it on nobody.

[Music]

Thank you very much.

Thank you very much too. [INAUDIBLE].

[MUSIC PLAYING]