

[MUSIC PLAYING] Good morning. My name is Jeanne Miller, and I'm a member of the Kean College Oral Testimonies Project of the Holocaust Resource Center. We are affiliated with the Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies at the Sterling Library of Yale University. Sharing the interview with me is Bernard Weinstein.

We are privileged to welcome David Rosenblum, a survivor presently living in Bloomfield, New Jersey, who has generously volunteered to give testimony about his experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust. Welcome. Will you tell us a little about your early life and your family?

I could go back to about age of three and a half, when my sister was getting married. And my cousin came from the United States. And he married her. And there was a tremendous, huge wedding that I recall. And there was tremendous big party. The only outcry I had because they hadn't taken me to the wedding because I was too young.

And going back from that, I remember my children going to school, public school, going to Hebrew school. It was up to the age of 12, 13. I was bar mitzvahed. And, of course, I had parents, sisters, and brothers. I was one of 13 children, the youngest. Up to the time when the problem have started, around 1938, when the German Jew were evacuated from Germany, they were shipped into our city, to Poland.

Can you identify your city where you lived?

My city, it's Krakow Krakow in Poland, southern part of Poland.

Which is very large.

Very large population.

With a university.

We had about close to 300,000 to 400,000 people living in the city.

What date were you born?

I was born on May 13, 1925 in Krakow. Then, when they evacuee-- I mean, they were half German, half Poles. They must have been born-- their grandparents or somebody was born originated to Pole. They lived in Germany. They had to be evacuated from Germany.

So they came. They put them in between the borders. Poland did not want to accept them. Germany didn't want to have them. So somehow they had to be smuggled into the cities. When they came into our town, our Jewish community have ordered that every Jewish family have to accept a family to live with.

Recollection is mine. We accepted people from Frankfurt, Germany. And the man came in with his wife and children. He shown a bankbook, which I looked at it. He showed to my father. He had 2 million marks in Frankfurt. He came without a penny, without clothing on his back. So we fed him. Of course, our family was huge, and he lived with us.

How many people were staying in the house at this time?

At this time, about 15.

And how large were your living quarters?

Two and a half rooms. I had to sleep giving up my little couch. I had to sleep on chairs. The quarters were very-- I had a grandmother who lived with us then. She was of age at that time about 100. 100 years of age, over 100. That I'm sure of it. And we all somehow managed. My father was in business, fur, in clothing, in Krakow.

Were you the youngest child in your family?

I was the youngest child in the family. And I recall my mother always said that all children are going to go away. And you're the youngest, going to remain with us. And then the problem have become, like 1939, when the war broke out, September the 1st.

Well, the rumor came around the city that the German going to kill all the young people, the adults of age 21 above, particularly Jews. So two of my brothers have left into the woods. And they went to Lvov, on the side with the Russian side. The Russian occupied--

Which is Eastern Poland.

Yeah, Eastern Poland. And then I recall that the rumor was when the Germans were entering our city-- that was about September 5th or 6th, and they were entering our city-- the rumor that the English have arrived. We never seen a German soldier how he looks like. We had never seen an English. So as children, I was then about 14 years of age, and I ran to the bridge. And I've seen everybody laid out with machine guns. And they're looking at the soldiers, how they look like. So we came back, said, well, they don't look like English. And we don't know who they are.

Right after they came in, following day, looting have became in the city. All the stores were looted by neighbors. Ripped up the stores. Anybody had a shoe store, they ripped in. People, civilian population.

These were Jewish businesses that you're talking about?

Jewish businesses. Right away, they were ripping up and stealing whatever humanly possible it was at the city. And then they were coming in. The Germans were grabbing people off the street to work certain-- cleaning streets.

Was your father's store broken into?

Beg your pardon?

Was your father's store broken in?

Yeah, it was broken in. After a certain time, not at this present moment in 1939. But 1939, December to my father's store, because the Germans came out with the law that all fur, all kinds of clothing stores, they came on, and they put up a tape with a seal. If you've broken the seal, naturally, you were responsible for going into the store. You're being punished for it.

So at the same time, when thief broke into the store through the whole entrance, a German patrol came in. Three of them used to walk, military police. They had a white shield under here. Three guys walked in. The thieves from the outside, they say to them that there are rats and cats are firing. They didn't believe. They walked through. They caught the thieves.

Then my father had to go and testify that nothing was missing and take out the tools what they've broken into the store, because they would be punished from the other side, from the thieves. So then, from either side-- you did good here, so you did bad here. On both sides you were the victim of it.

And then food was start getting very scarce. Because they've taken away from us this business, no income of money was coming into the house. So I became a key person to bring in food. My mother got ill. She's got an attack, a gall bladder attack. Gall stone. Tremendous pain, agonizing pain.

I've taken, and I had to stay in the line. They were giving out bread to Poles and German, white rolls. And the doctor have prescribed for my mother, she has to have white rolls. And no money could buy a piece of white roll. She could not have black. Black bread you could obtain, but my mother needed, as a medication, the light bread to eat.

So I got up in the morning, about 4:00, 4:30 in the morning. And I stood in the long lines and waited, bitter winter, to obtain four to five rolls to bring home. And the Germans stood around with dogs. If any Jew was in the line, they let the dogs on him, and they were ripping him up.

Were they checking your identity cards and things like that?

No, only the looks at that time. Nobody have ID card at that time.

So in other words, you were able to pass yourself off as a Pole.

As a Christian. As a Pole.

Because you were fair-haired?

The fair color, my hair was blond. And I have spoken the language proper way.

How long did you have to stand on the line?

For five, six hours to bring a roll for my mother, because she was in awful pain. And the doctor helped her. Medically, he helped her.

But one day, I was going to stay in the line, but all of a sudden a station wagon-- that was before Christmastime, 1939-- a station wagon pulled out. And they grabbed about five, six Jews off the street. [SPEAKING GERMAN]. I said no. Come on. They took me too.

They brought us into a Air Force type of a base. And they set us on a long bench. One of the officers came out with a big knife, hatchet maybe about two and a half to three feet with a hatchet. He came out. And he called, you next! In the meantime, he came out full of blood. I actually wanted to jump out through the window because we thought he took you into the door, you never came out. They butchered him.

So that came to me. He pulled me in, into it. As I walked in, we had to pluck geese for food, for the Weihnachten, for Christmas. They were killing geese, and we had to pluck them. In the meantime, that tension of your system was boiling out, that mental strategy was-- then they let us home. About 9 o'clock I came home. My father asked me, where were you? I explained it to him, what had happened to us.

So they were using a kind of psychological terrorism--

Psychological.

--as well as physical brutality.

Brutality. And they let me go. That was still good. Then I've seen Jews had to go. They were burning, cutting beards. Cutting beards, putting on fire. With toothbrushes they had to clean the streets in our city. This I've noticed.

And then it start, in Krakow in particular, it start getting worse. Worse and worse, the situation starts getting worse. We were hoping that the war would be over. And my brothers from Lemberg-- we had communication-- they came home. Our home family life was very knitted, close-knitted.

So they returned from--

They returned home. Everybody wanted it. Because my father remembered the First World War, that the Germans were not that type of a people. They could not do this type of a thing what have happened during the 1940s to our people.

There was no expectation of it.

No. Then we obtained 100 kilos of flour. My father was making toast, putting away a big sack of toast in case, because they were saying there'll be a relocation of people. From one town one came working in different factories.

So we had a neighbor who used to be a tool and die maker. He asked him he should put me into work. I should learn the trade as a tool and die maker. The Germans going to need some guy-- how would you say in Jewish? A [GERMAN]. I was then 15. Some kind of a tradesman, that if they're going to call you, that you've got a trade. On this assumption I thought I'd be able.

In the meantime, because being a key person, not looking as a Jew, my father seen that I was capable of organizing food for the house. So he went out. He bought papers, Aryan papers, Christian papers. He bought it, but the picture was from another fellow. His name was Roman Zamin Babish.

Who did he buy them from?

From a fellow the same type of age, Polish fellow.

Oh, this is his pass, with this boy's pictures.

Gave him \$1,000. And he faking the picture up. We duplicated with my photo and put the stamp on. Forged the seal, the swastika with the eagle. They looked perfect. In other words, my ID was, on the outside world, Roman Zamin Babish. I could have come out, come in any time I wanted. Out of the city, into this city, traveling. My father sent me to different towns.

At this time, was Krakow a ghetto yet?

In 1940 they started. '40, '41 begin the ghetto.

But the period you're talking about, it was still a relatively open area?

Open area. There was an open area there. In other words, I would be the key person to go out to do business. Because the Jewish people had to have certain permission of traveling, a document that they can travel. Were a lot of forgery too. People were making forged papers. Could have bought for x amount of money if they want to travel, let's say, from Krakow to Warsaw. They had to have ID.

How old were you when you got these Aryan papers?

I was 15. I was 15 years of age. Then, in Krakow, they made that the Jews had to wear a Star of David. Star of David. I never wore them. I wore only when I came in among the Jews, at home. Once I left him, even walking with my father-- my father walked this way. I stood from a distance, a Christian. Always be as a protector in case something does happen. Someone of our family is going to be captured, I'll be the one who'll be able to supply them with food or assistance of anything like that.

Were they cut off at this time from news or anything like that from the outside world?

News, media, right away-- 1939 through '40, all the radios, all the communication had to be surrendered. We had a radio, Telefunken. We throw it into the river, into the Vistula River. Because the brother in 1939 who left for the United States, my brother, the oldest brother, he had a radio. So he left it us. So we had to surrender. By surrendering, maybe you could have gotten into trouble. So my father took in the evening. We [INAUDIBLE] it and threw it into the river. Maybe today, up to date, it's lying there, into the river.

But you were able to be a source of information from the outside world--

To the outside-- I was.

--for your family.

Very much so. Because I was traveling through Poland. Then my father supplied me with money. Let's say, for instance, I made \$1,000. It wasn't a thing that I'm going to keep the \$1,000 with me. I gave everything to my father or to my mother. Then, whenever I needed it, they gave it to me back. It wasn't mine or yours, yours or mine. Everything was a unit.

Of course, the communication-- we were receiving letters from the United States up to year 1940 from my sister and my brother, who left just before the war, Passover in 1939.

Were any of your other brothers and sisters taken for Aryan?

They could have. They could have, but they have chosen to stay with mother and father. They've chosen. As we come later to the interview, I'll bring out certain things when they came to the final solution, one German wanted to sacrifice and run away with my sister. She was so beautiful.

And then, in Krakow, they start making the ghetto. By having a grandmother of that age, nobody of that age could remain in the ghetto. My father had a family in a town, Szydlowiec. It's not far from Radom, [? Chlewiska, ?] and Radom.

Was this your father's mother that you're talking about?

No, my mother's mother. My mother's mother. So we had to separate. Me, my brothers, and my grandmother, we left Krakow. My two sisters and mother have remained in Krakow, in our apartment in the ghetto. The reason was because they could not get the permission for my grandmother to stay. She was of age, so we rented an apartment in that town of Szydlowiec.

Then I was the communicate again between Krakow and Szydlowiec, between home. Szydlowiec was a town manufacturing of shoes and leather. My father, he, around my waist, wrapped around a package of leather, 10 heights, dress [? heights, ?] with a belt. And I stood at the train. I traveled for about seven hours with the train.

Under your clothes?

Under my clothes. I was stiff. I wasn't tall. And I had to bring it into my mother. There, they sold it. They gave me money back. So I went further back and forth into it. And I was the key person to supply the money for them.

Did you ever arouse suspicion in anyone?

Yeah, there were many suspicions. Matter of fact, one winter, that was in 1941, I was in Krakow. I didn't have a place to stay. My parents left for the same city, Szydlowiec. I went to the church. And I had with Capuchin in Krakow.

This is a monastery?

Monastery, Capuchini. And they gave me food. They didn't know who I was. When it came Christmastime, there came a choir, to sing in the choir. So I sang in the choir. And I had to come to the priest with the plate with a white wafer. As I stood there with the white wafer and giving to the priest, one of schoolmates of mine recognized me. He said, David! And I grabbed myself immediately at my stomach, that I got pain in my-- I gave the other kid the wafers, and I ran away. I went to somebody's house at the attic. And I slept there.

Now, was this other boy Jewish?

Oh, no. No, no Jews. Only Christians. Because in my school, I was attending my school, we were about 45 kids but 10 Jewish kids. In school, we had to sit separate too. We had a ghetto, the Jews on one side and the Christians on the other

side. In public school.

It wasn't always that way, was it?

No, it started in 1938. 1938. When the priest came into the class-- there were Christian school, a public school-- we had to leave the room. And after he left the room, we went for a [GERMAN]. We went for a recess. For a recess. We're getting beaten for no reason whatsoever. We didn't know why. They were calling all different names. Dirty Jew, dirty Jew, dirty Jew. And particularly before Passover. It was the biggest pain for us, because they thought that we Jews take bread for matzo.

The ritual murder idea.

Beg your pardon?

The idea of the ritual murder.

Ritual that we take, we shmeer because the matzo you put in the oven. It turns color that this is blood. [LAUGHS] That I was responsible for it. And they were beating us up for no reason whatsoever. This type of a-- as we proceed.

And you think that the priest used to--

I was not there. But assumption is they were good a half an hour before. And all of a sudden they became that. There must've been something there. And there was a feeling, my personal feeling. I was born in Poland. My father was born in Poland. My great-grandfather was born for a generation. And I felt as a youngster as I am a citizen, Polish citizen. But they did not make me feel as one, that I'm part of the country. Always I was a second-class citizen. My brothers were in the Polish army. They fought for the country. And a Jew could not obtain a position with the government.

So even before the war, there was this segregation and--

Tremendous.

--isolation.

Anti-Semitism was tremendous.

Was it worse in Krakow than it was perhaps in other cities?

Well, in other cities was more visible because the city was smaller. Incidents happened and everybody arose right away. In Krakow was a bigger population. In our city particularly, you got the University Jagiellonski. And over there the Jews could not walk through because they were putting in the sticks-- I recall they were putting in razor blades on the end of the stick. Anybody pass by, they went over, they slash you. That kind of occurrence did happen.

Matter of fact, the Pope today, he studied in our city, in Jagiellonski University. I know his city, Wadowice. I've traveled to that city. I know all the area. So actually, today he should know our feeling. But he still doesn't respond to our feelings-- I, personally, my feeling is towards my land of Israel, that he still doesn't want to recognize us. He should be first one to recognize it.

If we can come back for a moment to your being recognized by the other boy at the religious ceremony. What did you do? Did you run away?

I went to the bathroom. I said I had tremendous cramps. I never came back, throw off the robe off me. I had a white robe. I threw it off me and I ran. Ran so wild because there were Germans in the mess.

Yes. And you never came back to the monastery?

Never came back.

And did they search for you?

The reason were, what I went, one of my brothers was a dentist. He used to pull teeth. There were the Capuchinis. There were actually some doctors. They were pulling teeth. As a practice, he worked with them. And I heard about home, discussion about it, and that's what made me go there.

Over there I was to get a soup, food to obtain. They were giving me something to eat because I didn't have a place to sleep. I didn't know who walks behind me. That tension. You didn't know who's going to point a finger at you. Here he walks. And you get arrested immediately, or shot on the spot.

So where did you go after you ran away from the Capuchin monastery?

Then I went home. I took a ticket, and I went to back to Szydlowiec, to that town where my mother and father already reunited. They have reunited because on account of my grandmother they could not stay in the city of Krakow.

So we lived there from year 1941 to 1942 in Szydlowiec. Was a population of a city about 20,000.

How far was Szydlowiec from Krakow?

About three hours by train. It's in Central Poland between Warsaw and Krakow. And we obtained one room. Everybody squeezed in, to smaller quarters. We slept on the floor. On the floor, on benches, whatever we could obtain. One room was very, very tight quarters. My grandmother, I recall she was sleeping on a basket, a woven basket. She slept. That kind of a basket, like the table. Basket she slept on. And the food was brought to her. And she was quite alert person.

Was she aware of what was happening around her?

Not much. Not much. She was only with the prayers and saying that mashiah is coming, that mashiah is coming. And my sister from the United one time, she sent a few dollars. And she took over a hanky she wrapped around her fingers. That was her security blanket. She held to it.

Living in Szydlowiec, I traveled to Warsaw through Poland. I had an uncle in Warsaw. And I was handling bringing food to the house. I was the key person. I was getting the reward from my father, that nobody could-- I mean, the feeling that I've taken life into my hands as I'm running around as a Pole. My father must have had tremendous feeling, what he'd done to his son that he has to be on this guy's name for why.

The question always came to my mind. Why? What have I done? I have no [INAUDIBLE]. I haven't committed any crime to anybody. Because I just happened to be born into a Jewish family.

I recall living in that town, Szydlowiec. And they were arresting people, and they were taking to a camp, a little camp, Skarzysko, Skarzysko Kamienna. And there was a factory, ammunition factory. One of my brothers was captured there.

I've tried to take him out. I paid quite a bit of money to a German. We came with a motorcycle. I want to get him out. He got caught on wires. I saw him on wires. We stood in the woods to get my brother out.

And they put him to-- I heard the word. They put him to [NON-ENGLISH]. [NON-ENGLISH], this is a working class [INAUDIBLE]. They were making powder, and people were getting yellow jaundice. Yellow. They were turning to a yellow--

Jaundice.

Yellow color. And my brother was taking the-- did he survive? Did not survive? I do not know. I haven't seen-- dead or

anything like. So then I came home. I told my father that I was a failure. I was very depressed. And I cried, tremendous. I was bitterly crying. I did not want to go anymore to do anything. Because I wanted to stay with my parents. I didn't want to take the chances. I was tired. I didn't know, actually, what it was.

And around September, just before Rosh Hashanah, my mother was praying for Yontif for holiday. There came an order about 4:00 in the morning. The night before, my father went to where they said that people have to be relocated. From a few days before, they have to be relocated from this particular town. And I said, that's no good. I said to my father, we have to run away. I said, don't be silly.

I slept in the room with my grandmother. And they went to a lumber yard, a big yard. And first I went to a bakery. And I bought a bread. As I bought that bread, I said let me go over to the Gestapo. The town was surrendered. I came over to the Gestapo, and I said to him, there's a Jew who owes me money. I came from another town. I came from another town. And I'm going to be afraid to go to my own father. He's going to beat me up. He's inside. He's got the money.

So the Gestapo says, show me. What Jew is it? So I point out this is the Jew-- my father, my brothers, my mother, my sisters. And I bit my lips, they shouldn't make a wink, run over to me. So I say, this is the Jew who owes me money. He said, [SPEAKING GERMAN]. He should give me the money. And I bit my tongue. In the front he stood with a revolver in the back of me.

He gave me the money. My brother took a ring off his fingers, slipped it into my hand. I said, thank you. I'll see you. I walked out of there. I came to my grandmother's room. I locked the room. And she was shot. She was 105 years old, my grandmother. [SOBS]

Then I came out of the town. This particular town, there was a cemetery up on a hill. And I came out. Coming out of the cemetery, a Ukrainian stood there. Actually, the Ukrainian, and the Lithuanian, and the mortician, they was doing the surrounding of the town. There were 15, 20 Gestapo [INAUDIBLE], and the rest of it, they were doing.

And I'm coming out with that bread under my arm. And I'm leaving and I'm whistling. I'm going now. Hey! He yelled at me. Where you going? I says, to eat it. And he says, you're a Polack. I'm a Pole. So right behind, that guy stays there. No, he's a Jew! He takes the gun and he wants to shoot me. I say, no, I'm a Polack. Here are the papers. That's me. And he wants, He takes my pants. He drops my pants. He sees I'm circumcised, and he wants to shoot me.

I grab his rifle. He should not keep the rifle in the back of my head, because most of the time they're going to shoot you in the front because they cannot see the sight of the blood. When they shoot you in the front, you fall backwards. When they shoot you in the back, you fall forward from the impact. At least they don't see the mess on your face. I did not permit him to do that.

So we walked through up to the same Gestapo what I asked him to go to my father. He stood there. Fortunate enough that he could not speak any Ukrainian, that Gestapo. And he said, Yevrey! Yevrey! Jew! Jew!

The Ukrainian did?

The Ukrainian, on me. So as he points out on me, another Pole came over. He says, I know him. He's a Polack. So he said, go back to your post. He let me go.

So, ironically, the Gestapo man saved your life.

Anyway, Because he thought I'm a Pole. He did not know that I'm a Jew. I'm a Jew, he shoots me immediately. Then from there, I went into the woods, to the next town, Skarzysko. Szydlowiec, Skarzysko. And they were taking everybody. They were walking. I heard it. I went on the tree. I hid for one day on the tree, in the woods. I jumped on a tree. I was afraid to go down. Didn't have a place where to go.

Once you lost the background, that you haven't got a home to go back to, so I was paralyzed. And I felt tremendously lost. What am I going to do? I don't know where to turn to, who to turn to.

So I went from there. I followed the train with a passenger train, wherever they go. I wanted to know where the relocation is, where they're taking them. First, I came back on the road where they were taking the people into the station. It's about three, four kilometer. I've seen hundreds of people dead, shot. [INAUDIBLE]. And you load them into the cattle car. And they're transported into Treblinka.

As far as I could go, I could go as far as Malkinia as a Pole. I happen to have a container with me. Thermos of tea. I seen the train stood right next to the cattle cars, and the passengers. And the Poles in the car, they used to say, oh, they go and schmelz. Schmelz, it means they're going to make out of them fat. In other words, they'll be killed. They'll be cremated. That's what's going to happen to these people. And I took this--

They said it within earshot of the people too? They said it so the people could hear it?

No, they could not hear because the glass was closed on the passenger train. Only to us, in a group of people standing at the window in the train. Not too many people could stay. Just everybody-- I opened one of them, and I wanted to handle them.

So the guy said to me. And in Polish, I could say that. [SPEAKING POLISH]. If you have a boil, bad boils on your head-- these dirty, lousy Jews. You're going to help them? I said, you're absolutely right, I said to him. And I went to the bathroom. I cried myself out.

And I continue with that. I've seen that. And there I seen about 10-- these railroad tracks. On these railroad are 20, 30 boxcars. And the people were in them, screaming. The cries you could hear to heaven. Such pictures. They were impossible to visualize, how they could dehuman-- making people-- I mean, they took them to dehumanize them. Condition. Condition the people that they were worse than animals.

So then I returned to Warsaw, to go into the big ghetto. The big ghetto was not there anymore. There was the small ghetto. And I had an uncle in Warsaw, and I was looking for him. The working people were coming in and coming out, out of Warsaw. In and out.

I had hidden a band, white star band, always in my stocking. And I took it out. I put the band on among the workers. And I went through the gate into the ghetto. I didn't know. I came to the police station. And I said to him, I come from the Aryan side, Polish side. I just returned from Malkinia. I said, children were being burned and cremated. They're killing us.

And they couldn't believe it. They wanted to arrest me. They wanted to call in the Gestapo on me. They thought that I'm some kind of a villain, some kind of a crazy nut. But I cried to them, please! What they've done to me. They dropped my pants. You drop my pants and see that I'm Jewish.

I escaped from there. And I went back to the Aryan papers, going from city to city, traveling through Poland as a Christian then, making different type of a handle. Dealing and wheeling. Went to Lwów, Lublin. Stood two days in here. Traveling. Most of the time I slept on the train, in a basement, in the gutters, between bums.

In Warsaw, I stood on the street with a certain class of people, low class of people. And said, please give us. My father is sick. Give me \$0.10. Begging on the street because I didn't have a place where to sleep. Nobody wants to take you in.

If they took you in, they get a reward. Kilo sugar or four kilo sugar, a bottle of whisky. That was the reward of giving out a Jew. If you had a lot of money, some Christians kept you to a time till money runs out. They point you out.

But there were some righteous Christians too. They kept the Jews. They hide them out. I cannot say. A lot of Jewish children were hidden out in different monasteries. Up to date, they don't know that they're Jews. But they are there because nobody came to claim them.

How long were you on the street? In other words, homeless?

Since I left there. From 1942 till 1943, May. So I happened to be-- I went to Belzec, another [INAUDIBLE]. That was another crematorium, burning in Belzec. Rybotycze.

One particular incident I recall. That was in Starachowice, the city I came in. Also they had relocation, finishing the town. And everybody had to settle on the market. So I see a woman stood with a child on her hand, holding, and a little suitcase. So the German point a gun and shot her. And that bullet went through, right through the child's head. And that child was not dead. That child was still moving with the mouth. And a Polish woman, from a distance, she ran in. She grabbed her suitcase. She ran away. While the child was still moving.

So actually, we did not have a friendly to somebody to help us. If they would be friendly people to us, maybe more would have survived. But we did not have. They said, the Jews are rich. They have the houses. They have everything, the whole wealth. and all the thing.

Living in Warsaw. I made certain deal. I was selling horse's hair. And they were making brushes out of it. I was going to the farmers. I was buying. And I was selling on the black market. I was making money.

One time, I come into Warsaw in a hotel. And I want to sleep over. I slept over. And as I came into the room, opposite me another room opened up. I was at that time 16. It was a beautiful blonde, stays in the door in a negligee. And she, with a boy, she sends me a card. She wants to see me. I didn't want to go. I was afraid. She'll recognize me.

Therefore, at night, sleeping in the hotel, two police detectives came in. And they told us that you were Jewish. Me? Ask me any question. You ask me all the religion about Polish religion. I answered them. I said, doesn't look to me. But you have to still take you to the police station, check you out.

I said, you're not taking me anyplace. The only place you're going to take me, only from down the street. I'm going to jump out through the window. How much? There were the people who were getting [INAUDIBLE]. We call that [POLISH].

There came the police [INAUDIBLE]. And I gave them everything. I told them, but gentlemen, only on one condition. I'll give you the money. You just have to sleep over and be with me in that hotel. And you have to buy me a ticket to go to Krakow. Which I wanted to go back because my father gave money to certain people, Christian people, the money for hiding, whatever deal he had. And I knew about it. And maybe I would be able to obtain to have. And I was pretty well-dressed then.

Coming through on the train-- I went on the train, picked a train. As I'm going on the train, there is a station, Radom. The train arrived at 12:00 midnight, the train did. Everybody out, out of the train.

This was in the Radom station?

Radom Station. In Radom Station, they were taking everybody who didn't have a working card, they were taking into Germany for labor. Or anybody smuggling anything was taken away. And the whole train has to go out. Then slowly they were putting in.

And in Szydlowiec there was Arbeits. There was working a guy, a Volksdeutsch. It's a part of - His grandfather could have been a German. He became part of a German. And I knew him. I played soccer in that time with him. And he recognized me. And he said, you're still alive? Wait here. The Gestapo is going to take you.

I went over to a policeman. I put a few dollars in his pocket. And I said to him, listen, I'm from the underground. I want you to let me through. And that Polish policeman let me through. And I jumped out a wall about six, seven feet wall. How I did it, I do not know. But with the fear, you jumped over that wall.

You don't think?

You jump over that wall. I jumped that wall over, the divider from the bathroom to the outside. And I went on the railroad tracks walking. As I walked, they had the wooden dividers between the street and the railroad. I jumped over.

A German police with guns, they stopped me. What are you doing over there? My mother is sick, I said. I live here, to the Germans. [LAUGHS] I lived in this here. My mother said it's cold. I went to bring some coal. No, you're sabotaging. I said, I'm not sabotaging. I'm a poor boy.

They took me into a building. And the guy spoke German. In the meantime, they're looking for me at the station. The Gestapo is looking for me for that. And they wanted to bring me into the station. I was fortunate enough he stood till 5 o'clock in the morning, and the guy let me go.

And then I walked about 28 kilometers by foot to Szydlowiec, back. Because I knew that my father put away certain money in a double-decker coal box. So he hid some money over there. And I thought I'm going to get it. I'll be able.

As I came into the house, everything was gone. And I had to run away [? for the ?] [? time, ?] because the people were very much against. They caught a Jew, they get a big reward. And I had to run away into the woods.

The house had already been looted?

Oh, everything was gone.

Everything?

Yeah. Then I took the train, and I went back to Krakow. Coming back into Krakow. I went to my neighbor. And that neighbor, he used to be a super in our building. And I said, Mr. [? Tanda, ?] would you please give me some money? I'm hungry. I want to eat. I want to do something.

So he says, get out of here. If you don't get out of here, I'm going to call the Gestapo. And I started crying to him. You know my father. You know my family. You ate with us! We supplied you everything! How can you be like-- he said, get out of here. So he [INAUDIBLE]. And I said, never mind. Don't bother. And I walked to the railroad station in Krakow.

As I walked into the railroad station in Krakow-- in Krakow we have a big glass window, which you can see somebody's reflection and the back of you. And I was waiting to purchase the ticket. And all of a sudden, I feel two barrels, guns in my back. There were two Gestapos. Then I froze.

Then my recollection is the only thing I remember, I've taken my gums. I've bitten so hard that I cut my whole piece of meat, and I spit it out. Because the destiny I knew. The law I knew-- that you're going to be executed immediately.

And I could not visualize myself here being alive, and here being dead. And what have I done? What crime have I committed? This question of-- I envied the cat. I envied a bird. I envied anything that could be free and movements to have.

And they arrested me. They arrested me, and they brought me to the Gestapo. [POLISH] in Krakow.

Can we pause at this point? We've already gotten our signal. And we will continue in a few moments. Thank you.