

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:20,800

2

00:00:20,800 --> 00:00:22,420

Good afternoon.

3

00:00:22,420 --> 00:00:25,380

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

4

00:00:25,380 --> 00:00:29,590

Testimonies Project of the
Holocaust Resource Center.

5

00:00:29,590 --> 00:00:32,619

Sharing the interview
with me is Pat Wiederhorn.

6

00:00:32,619 --> 00:00:36,730

We are privileged to
introduce Mr. Leo Laufer.

7

00:00:36,730 --> 00:00:38,890

Mr. Laufer.

8

00:00:38,890 --> 00:00:43,990

I would like to dedicate
this oral testimony

9

00:00:43,990 --> 00:00:47,920

to a very good friend of
mine, who I would consider

10

00:00:47,920 --> 00:00:54,580

an angel, who was a liberator
of Ohrdruf, which is now in East

11

00:00:54,580 --> 00:01:03,230

Germany, April the 4th, 1945.

12

00:01:03,230 --> 00:01:06,440

Not only did he
liberate me, but he

13
00:01:06,440 --> 00:01:12,500
has continued to work
on behalf of the message

14
00:01:12,500 --> 00:01:17,360
to bring to the public about
the Holocaust, which transpired

15
00:01:17,360 --> 00:01:20,930
from 1939 until 1945.

16
00:01:20,930 --> 00:01:25,970
I'm grateful that six
years ago, I have met him.

17
00:01:25,970 --> 00:01:30,680
And unfortunately, he passed
away not too long ago.

18
00:01:30,680 --> 00:01:33,290

19
00:01:33,290 --> 00:01:36,560
And also to Ann,
who looks like she

20
00:01:36,560 --> 00:01:41,160
is keeping up the
legacy of Jack Colston.

21
00:01:41,160 --> 00:01:43,790
Thank you.

22
00:01:43,790 --> 00:01:46,190
My name is Leo Laufer.

23
00:01:46,190 --> 00:01:53,810
I was born March 15, 1924,
in Lodz, Poland, which

24

00:01:53,810 --> 00:01:56,780
was the second largest
city of Poland,

25

00:01:56,780 --> 00:02:03,670
with a population
of about 650,000.

26

00:02:03,670 --> 00:02:06,190
Prior to the war,
we had a population

27

00:02:06,190 --> 00:02:10,710
of 250,000 Jewish people.

28

00:02:10,710 --> 00:02:16,740
I would like to give you a
prelude to the Holocaust,

29

00:02:16,740 --> 00:02:22,850
as I remember it as a youngster.

30

00:02:22,850 --> 00:02:28,040
I came from a very
religious family, very poor.

31

00:02:28,040 --> 00:02:31,040

32

00:02:31,040 --> 00:02:37,760
When I read about poverty
now, I reflect back

33

00:02:37,760 --> 00:02:42,890
on the way we lived with a
family of eight children, four

34

00:02:42,890 --> 00:02:48,730
brothers and four sisters, and
a father and mother, 10 people

35

00:02:48,730 --> 00:02:54,760

in two little rooms, which would
measure approximately 10 by 10.

36
00:02:54,760 --> 00:02:58,540
And the reason I know the
dimensions so very good,

37
00:02:58,540 --> 00:03:00,820
I took the liberty in
going back to Poland,

38
00:03:00,820 --> 00:03:06,580
my first trip in 1983
and then again in 1987,

39
00:03:06,580 --> 00:03:12,100
to verify a lot of things to
show to my family and really

40
00:03:12,100 --> 00:03:17,750
the way it was, the
prelude to the Holocaust.

41
00:03:17,750 --> 00:03:21,610
I will give you several examples
that I recall as a youngster.

42
00:03:21,610 --> 00:03:24,480

43
00:03:24,480 --> 00:03:30,900
My mother used to tell the
children, the ones who still

44
00:03:30,900 --> 00:03:40,880
remember, like I, to stay
home Easter and Christmas,

45
00:03:40,880 --> 00:03:47,120
because some of the teachings
in the hierarchy were so vicious

46
00:03:47,120 --> 00:03:50,840

antisemitic, they were scared
that somebody would get hurt.

47
00:03:50,840 --> 00:03:53,370

48
00:03:53,370 --> 00:03:56,520
And this was true.

49
00:03:56,520 --> 00:03:59,670
But we also had some very
good righteous Christian too,

50
00:03:59,670 --> 00:04:04,430
not all of them
were of this nature.

51
00:04:04,430 --> 00:04:09,450
I never attended
a public school,

52
00:04:09,450 --> 00:04:13,860
because my father
felt that I would not

53
00:04:13,860 --> 00:04:17,970
get treated like an
average youngster,

54
00:04:17,970 --> 00:04:23,070
because I wore a special
type of Jewish hat.

55
00:04:23,070 --> 00:04:27,060
I had curls under my ears.

56
00:04:27,060 --> 00:04:31,720
My father wore a long
beard, almost like a rabbi.

57
00:04:31,720 --> 00:04:34,260
And he was scared that
we would be mistreated,

58
00:04:34,260 --> 00:04:38,040
because the identity
of being Jewish,

59
00:04:38,040 --> 00:04:43,590
even though as a youngster
had very beautiful blond hair.

60
00:04:43,590 --> 00:04:45,450
You cannot tell it now.

61
00:04:45,450 --> 00:04:49,200
But I still got my blue eyes.

62
00:04:49,200 --> 00:04:52,380
So I went to a chedar.

63
00:04:52,380 --> 00:04:55,800
Never practically
learned the language

64
00:04:55,800 --> 00:05:00,750
of the Polish language, except
in the street and from friends,

65
00:05:00,750 --> 00:05:01,590
but not in school.

66
00:05:01,590 --> 00:05:04,780

67
00:05:04,780 --> 00:05:08,590
I think I showed my wife,
who was a second generation

68
00:05:08,590 --> 00:05:11,630
Dallasite.

69
00:05:11,630 --> 00:05:14,300
And I have four
daughters, all of them who

70
00:05:14,300 --> 00:05:16,520
were raised in Dallas, Texas.

71
00:05:16,520 --> 00:05:19,040
They graduated
high school there.

72
00:05:19,040 --> 00:05:23,090
And as soon as they graduated,
for some unknown reason,

73
00:05:23,090 --> 00:05:26,630
they never wanted to
attend any Texas colleges.

74
00:05:26,630 --> 00:05:33,530
And they came East, Boston,
Connecticut, all kinds

75
00:05:33,530 --> 00:05:36,170
of places, including Columbia.

76
00:05:36,170 --> 00:05:37,400
But they did very well.

77
00:05:37,400 --> 00:05:39,620
They graduated college.

78
00:05:39,620 --> 00:05:41,870
They also went to
graduate school.

79
00:05:41,870 --> 00:05:44,930
All four of them I
believe are trying

80
00:05:44,930 --> 00:05:49,910
to change the world, because
they got master of social work.

81
00:05:49,910 --> 00:05:51,440

I hope they did some good.

82

00:05:51,440 --> 00:05:53,750

And I'm sure they're
doing very good.

83

00:05:53,750 --> 00:05:56,420

Thank God, God has
been good to me,

84

00:05:56,420 --> 00:05:59,870

even though I remain the
only one from the family.

85

00:05:59,870 --> 00:06:04,370

I have five grandchildren,
four sons-in-law.

86

00:06:04,370 --> 00:06:07,880

Three of them live in New
York presently, one of them

87

00:06:07,880 --> 00:06:08,990

in Israel.

88

00:06:08,990 --> 00:06:12,540

And God willing, next year my
second one will move to Israel.

89

00:06:12,540 --> 00:06:17,210

So I almost have to
fly from Tel Aviv

90

00:06:17,210 --> 00:06:22,040

to New York from New York back
to Dallas, so I retired now.

91

00:06:22,040 --> 00:06:25,880

I'm going to give my all time
to my family, my children,

92

00:06:25,880 --> 00:06:30,020

and also, as you can see,

giving this story about the way

93

00:06:30,020 --> 00:06:32,910

it was.

94

00:06:32,910 --> 00:06:41,460

In 1939, as I remember very
vividly, on September the 1st,

95

00:06:41,460 --> 00:06:43,260

there was a blackout.

96

00:06:43,260 --> 00:06:45,825

We lived in a very,
very poor neighborhood.

97

00:06:45,825 --> 00:06:49,450

It was a four-story building.

98

00:06:49,450 --> 00:06:53,220

The landlord was
of German descent,

99

00:06:53,220 --> 00:06:55,590

which we called Volksdeutsche.

100

00:06:55,590 --> 00:06:57,990

Several Polish people
of German descent

101

00:06:57,990 --> 00:07:01,280

lived in the same building.

102

00:07:01,280 --> 00:07:05,450

As soon as Germany took
over the city of Lodz,

103

00:07:05,450 --> 00:07:06,740

which was never bombed--

104

00:07:06,740 --> 00:07:09,080

it stayed just the way it was.

105
00:07:09,080 --> 00:07:16,220
Warsaw was bombed-- we
could see the animosities

106
00:07:16,220 --> 00:07:22,250
of a double dimension,
one by the Germans and one

107
00:07:22,250 --> 00:07:28,340
by own neighbors, who
were of German descent.

108
00:07:28,340 --> 00:07:34,100
Immediately, they had
armbands with swastikas on.

109
00:07:34,100 --> 00:07:37,730
And not only this, they
lost some of the Poles

110
00:07:37,730 --> 00:07:40,290
who lost their own country.

111
00:07:40,290 --> 00:07:43,010
This was before they
formed the ghetto.

112
00:07:43,010 --> 00:07:46,550
They used to show to the windows
where the Jewish people are

113
00:07:46,550 --> 00:07:51,410
living, and they used
to bring them out

114
00:07:51,410 --> 00:07:56,120
to go to street cleaning,
to all kind of dirty works,

115
00:07:56,120 --> 00:07:58,210
like small groups in 10 or 20.

116

00:07:58,210 --> 00:08:01,290

117

00:08:01,290 --> 00:08:07,170

As this thing went
on, I remember

118

00:08:07,170 --> 00:08:09,990

one incident that
I've never believed

119

00:08:09,990 --> 00:08:14,130

could happen, even in
Poland, even though Poland

120

00:08:14,130 --> 00:08:19,560

was very known to be an
antisemitic country because

121

00:08:19,560 --> 00:08:25,200

of the teaching of the hierarchy
in the Catholic church.

122

00:08:25,200 --> 00:08:31,740

Across the street
from us was a bakery.

123

00:08:31,740 --> 00:08:34,230

When the Germans
took over, everybody

124

00:08:34,230 --> 00:08:40,500

had to get a ration card
to procure their food.

125

00:08:40,500 --> 00:08:45,315

Of course, the main
thing of food was bread.

126

00:08:45,315 --> 00:08:51,240

We used to go in line across the
street and stay for many hours

127

00:08:51,240 --> 00:08:55,290
until probably the next
morning at 6 o'clock

128

00:08:55,290 --> 00:08:59,160
when the bakery opened up,
and you allowed your rations.

129

00:08:59,160 --> 00:09:02,320
My mother was very happy
she had a lot of children.

130

00:09:02,320 --> 00:09:05,310
So we could switch between
a brother and a sister

131

00:09:05,310 --> 00:09:08,610
to go across the
street to stay in line.

132

00:09:08,610 --> 00:09:13,990
And every so often, you would
see some of our own citizens

133

00:09:13,990 --> 00:09:18,400
from our city, some of
them our own neighbors,

134

00:09:18,400 --> 00:09:21,170
used to pull us out by the arm.

135

00:09:21,170 --> 00:09:22,450
He'd say, you're a Jew.

136

00:09:22,450 --> 00:09:33,760
You don't-- you
don't need to eat.

137

00:09:33,760 --> 00:09:39,190
This is when I first saw
the agony of really being

138

00:09:39,190 --> 00:09:44,530
Jewish in a country where the
people have lost their country

139
00:09:44,530 --> 00:09:49,380
and still they hated us.

140
00:09:49,380 --> 00:09:51,480
I knew they hated us before.

141
00:09:51,480 --> 00:09:54,660
But I didn't realize
to the extent.

142
00:09:54,660 --> 00:09:58,580
Then as time progressed--

143
00:09:58,580 --> 00:10:04,520
this was in September of 1939--

144
00:10:04,520 --> 00:10:11,540
by May, the starvation
between the time

145
00:10:11,540 --> 00:10:18,830
of September until May of
1940, until they finally

146
00:10:18,830 --> 00:10:24,740
closed the ghetto, was
absolutely unbearable.

147
00:10:24,740 --> 00:10:28,640
Let me give you a little
outline of my family.

148
00:10:28,640 --> 00:10:33,500
I've my older brother, who
was from a previous marriage

149
00:10:33,500 --> 00:10:39,530
of my father, already moved out
of the house prior to the war.

150
00:10:39,530 --> 00:10:43,820
He had his wife and his
own family, two children.

151
00:10:43,820 --> 00:10:46,670
I had an older
sister, who was also

152
00:10:46,670 --> 00:10:51,430
from the previous
marriage, stayed with us.

153
00:10:51,430 --> 00:10:55,650
So we had seven
children in the house

154
00:10:55,650 --> 00:10:58,680
and my father and my mother.

155
00:10:58,680 --> 00:11:01,260
I had an older brother, who
was a year and a half older,

156
00:11:01,260 --> 00:11:02,550
which came from my mother.

157
00:11:02,550 --> 00:11:05,310
My mother had six
children actually.

158
00:11:05,310 --> 00:11:08,490
He died in 1938.

159
00:11:08,490 --> 00:11:14,310
And I remember he was, I would
say, the crown of my father.

160
00:11:14,310 --> 00:11:17,970
And the reason for it, he was
a little different than me.

161

00:11:17,970 --> 00:11:21,870

He was taken up the
same steps as my father,

162

00:11:21,870 --> 00:11:26,130

very learned in the
Talmud and in the Bible.

163

00:11:26,130 --> 00:11:29,120

164

00:11:29,120 --> 00:11:33,050

He was, I would say,
the privileged boy.

165

00:11:33,050 --> 00:11:35,120

He was the oldest.

166

00:11:35,120 --> 00:11:41,590

And he used to sit with him
for hours on end to teach him,

167

00:11:41,590 --> 00:11:42,220

to learn.

168

00:11:42,220 --> 00:11:45,050

And I was already a little
different youngster.

169

00:11:45,050 --> 00:11:52,060

I was maybe, you would say,
a little more outgoing.

170

00:11:52,060 --> 00:11:54,250

I wanted to go to see a movie.

171

00:11:54,250 --> 00:12:00,790

But how do you go to a
movie with a long coat

172

00:12:00,790 --> 00:12:04,510

like we used to wear or
the little hat that I wore,

173
00:12:04,510 --> 00:12:06,130
which was considered--

174
00:12:06,130 --> 00:12:09,530
from a mile away you could
recognize that I was Jewish.

175
00:12:09,530 --> 00:12:11,320
But I had some other
friends already.

176
00:12:11,320 --> 00:12:15,510
So I was a little different.

177
00:12:15,510 --> 00:12:19,370
My brother, my older
brother, unfortunately,

178
00:12:19,370 --> 00:12:25,530
passed away in 1938 on
a very minute thing now,

179
00:12:25,530 --> 00:12:29,300
which is called appendicitis.

180
00:12:29,300 --> 00:12:32,840
I think he stayed in a
hospital for a day or two.

181
00:12:32,840 --> 00:12:34,970
And he died of an infection.

182
00:12:34,970 --> 00:12:39,710
And I remember so
vividly, we buried him.

183
00:12:39,710 --> 00:12:41,790
And a year later,
by Jewish tradition,

184
00:12:41,790 --> 00:12:44,960

you have to put a stone.

185

00:12:44,960 --> 00:12:46,490

And as poor we were--

186

00:12:46,490 --> 00:12:48,410

I don't know how to

describe poverty,

187

00:12:48,410 --> 00:12:53,600

but I went back in 1983

to see the improvement.

188

00:12:53,600 --> 00:12:56,330

And the toilet facility is

still in the back yard the way

189

00:12:56,330 --> 00:13:00,240

it was 40 some odd years ago.

190

00:13:00,240 --> 00:13:01,610

The water has been piped in.

191

00:13:01,610 --> 00:13:03,320

We used to pump

water in the backyard

192

00:13:03,320 --> 00:13:05,930

and bring it up two flights.

193

00:13:05,930 --> 00:13:07,820

We never had a stove from gas.

194

00:13:07,820 --> 00:13:10,250

We used to chop wood and coal.

195

00:13:10,250 --> 00:13:14,720

Real very, very primitive, but

we were a very happy family.

196

00:13:14,720 --> 00:13:16,340

And a year later,

my father wanted

197

00:13:16,340 --> 00:13:18,300

to put a stone on
my brother's grave.

198

00:13:18,300 --> 00:13:19,970

And we didn't have any money.

199

00:13:19,970 --> 00:13:22,910

200

00:13:22,910 --> 00:13:25,600

And he went to the family,
from one to another,

201

00:13:25,600 --> 00:13:30,490

pedaling a few dollars,
zloty, which we called it.

202

00:13:30,490 --> 00:13:34,900

And he finally succeeded in
getting a very primitive stone

203

00:13:34,900 --> 00:13:39,460

without any marble, which
was probably not the best

204

00:13:39,460 --> 00:13:43,510

thing to do for an older son,
but he couldn't help himself.

205

00:13:43,510 --> 00:13:46,570

And in reality, it turned
out to be very good,

206

00:13:46,570 --> 00:13:49,300

because would he had
a marble, the stone

207

00:13:49,300 --> 00:13:53,080

would have been broken up during
the war or even after the war.

208
00:13:53,080 --> 00:13:55,510
And his stone,
thank God, is still

209
00:13:55,510 --> 00:13:59,470
the way it was in 1983
when I first saw it

210
00:13:59,470 --> 00:14:04,930
as it was in 1940, except
for the grass growing.

211
00:14:04,930 --> 00:14:09,100
So I became a more
outgoing youngster.

212
00:14:09,100 --> 00:14:20,760
And when they closed the
ghetto on May 31 of 1940,

213
00:14:20,760 --> 00:14:25,140
I saw very bleak for my family.

214
00:14:25,140 --> 00:14:30,750
My father already had an
incident with some neighbors,

215
00:14:30,750 --> 00:14:36,030
the Polish citizens, who
dragged him down from the house,

216
00:14:36,030 --> 00:14:37,860
cut his beard.

217
00:14:37,860 --> 00:14:43,560
And this was the biggest
disgrace for him.

218
00:14:43,560 --> 00:14:47,450
I remember when he
came back up, his face,

219

00:14:47,450 --> 00:14:51,525
it was probably very swollen.

220

00:14:51,525 --> 00:14:55,080

221

00:14:55,080 --> 00:14:59,160
Excuse me, Leo, this was done
by a Pole, not by a German.

222

00:14:59,160 --> 00:14:59,910
No, not by German.

223

00:14:59,910 --> 00:15:02,055
It was but Polish citizen
before the ghetto,

224

00:15:02,055 --> 00:15:05,430
when you lived in
the same buildings.

225

00:15:05,430 --> 00:15:08,280
They usually used to come by
some, what we used to call,

226

00:15:08,280 --> 00:15:09,330
hooligans.

227

00:15:09,330 --> 00:15:11,640
They used to point to the
window where the Jews live.

228

00:15:11,640 --> 00:15:14,310
And the Germans used to
come and drag them down

229

00:15:14,310 --> 00:15:19,900
and did all kind of cleaning
toilets and streets and so on.

230

00:15:19,900 --> 00:15:21,750
And they dragged my father down.

231
00:15:21,750 --> 00:15:22,770
And they cut his beard.

232
00:15:22,770 --> 00:15:25,080
And I remember
when he came back,

233
00:15:25,080 --> 00:15:29,770
he put like a handkerchief, a
little towel around his face

234
00:15:29,770 --> 00:15:33,540
not to show the marks.

235
00:15:33,540 --> 00:15:39,480
And we were scared for my father
to go out and procure some food

236
00:15:39,480 --> 00:15:40,990
or whatever.

237
00:15:40,990 --> 00:15:44,040
So I practically became,
what you would call,

238
00:15:44,040 --> 00:15:45,600
the man of the house.

239
00:15:45,600 --> 00:15:48,670
I was already going
on 18 years old.

240
00:15:48,670 --> 00:15:52,210
So I knew what should be done.

241
00:15:52,210 --> 00:15:55,380
And I decided that time
that I am not going

242
00:15:55,380 --> 00:16:01,010
to let my family die of hunger.

243
00:16:01,010 --> 00:16:05,780
I had a few friends
from the neighborhood

244
00:16:05,780 --> 00:16:07,730
that we used to play
soccer in the street,

245
00:16:07,730 --> 00:16:09,770
like any other youngster.

246
00:16:09,770 --> 00:16:12,260
And one of them was
a very precious lady

247
00:16:12,260 --> 00:16:14,990
by the name of Grabowska.

248
00:16:14,990 --> 00:16:22,100
And her son was my friend.

249
00:16:22,100 --> 00:16:26,170
She was a very devout
Catholic, because I remember

250
00:16:26,170 --> 00:16:27,790
during the ghetto
when they closed,

251
00:16:27,790 --> 00:16:32,440
I decided to go across the
barbed wire, take a chance,

252
00:16:32,440 --> 00:16:36,130
even if I get shot,
to go to every--

253
00:16:36,130 --> 00:16:38,350
with some kind of an idea.

254
00:16:38,350 --> 00:16:43,150

And the idea was plain
that I would like

255
00:16:43,150 --> 00:16:46,660
to start smuggling with us.

256
00:16:46,660 --> 00:16:49,930
And I told her
how it would work.

257
00:16:49,930 --> 00:16:52,930
I told her that she could
get whatever commodity

258
00:16:52,930 --> 00:16:56,410
she would have, a loaf of
bread or a pound of butter

259
00:16:56,410 --> 00:17:01,030
or potatoes or whatever it could
be a commodity, that she would

260
00:17:01,030 --> 00:17:05,890
probably get 10 times as much
as she would pay for it, because

261
00:17:05,890 --> 00:17:08,680
across on the
Christian side there

262
00:17:08,680 --> 00:17:12,430
was availability to go to the
farm and procure something.

263
00:17:12,430 --> 00:17:15,730
With us in the ghetto,
we couldn't do it.

264
00:17:15,730 --> 00:17:18,910
Furthermore, I have
pretty good access,

265
00:17:18,910 --> 00:17:25,210

because we did not have
to move from the ghetto.

266
00:17:25,210 --> 00:17:27,460
We were so poor that
I didn't realize

267
00:17:27,460 --> 00:17:30,640
that I was living in the ghetto
before there was a ghetto.

268
00:17:30,640 --> 00:17:34,300
So our street became
part of the ghetto.

269
00:17:34,300 --> 00:17:37,810
Except the street
behind our building

270
00:17:37,810 --> 00:17:40,690
was already the Christian side.

271
00:17:40,690 --> 00:17:45,070
And I had an opportunity to know
the neighbors across the street

272
00:17:45,070 --> 00:17:49,810
by having contacted them.

273
00:17:49,810 --> 00:17:52,810
My first contact was
across the barbed wire.

274
00:17:52,810 --> 00:17:56,480
I spent the night at this
Mrs. Grabowska's house.

275
00:17:56,480 --> 00:17:57,790
Her son was my friend.

276
00:17:57,790 --> 00:17:59,530
And she was very gracious.

277

00:17:59,530 --> 00:18:03,490

I remember at the time I asked
her, where is your husband?

278

00:18:03,490 --> 00:18:07,720

And she told me he was
in the Polish army.

279

00:18:07,720 --> 00:18:09,800

And I told her the proposition.

280

00:18:09,800 --> 00:18:15,020

I said, we can work
out a scheme whereby

281

00:18:15,020 --> 00:18:18,800

she would come at a certain
time at a certain place

282

00:18:18,800 --> 00:18:21,320

through the barbed wire
and have small packages,

283

00:18:21,320 --> 00:18:23,990

like a loaf of bread,
very nominal thing,

284

00:18:23,990 --> 00:18:26,750

and thrust it across
the barbed wire.

285

00:18:26,750 --> 00:18:29,390

And I will be there to fetch it.

286

00:18:29,390 --> 00:18:33,590

And then I will reimburse
her with the money

287

00:18:33,590 --> 00:18:38,120

by having a little stone
with the money wrapped around

288

00:18:38,120 --> 00:18:42,320
and cross it at a certain
place across our fence, which

289
00:18:42,320 --> 00:18:44,720
was the other side, where
the Christian side was.

290
00:18:44,720 --> 00:18:46,590
It worked beautifully.

291
00:18:46,590 --> 00:18:52,750
And I might confess that
for the first few months,

292
00:18:52,750 --> 00:19:04,600
from May of 1940 until
around October of 1940,

293
00:19:04,600 --> 00:19:09,640
I think our family was the best
fed family around the block.

294
00:19:09,640 --> 00:19:11,920
I used to get a bread.

295
00:19:11,920 --> 00:19:13,420
We had enough.

296
00:19:13,420 --> 00:19:15,430
When I used to get
a pound of butter,

297
00:19:15,430 --> 00:19:18,040
I used to take a
little part for us.

298
00:19:18,040 --> 00:19:19,450
The rest of them I would sell.

299
00:19:19,450 --> 00:19:23,230
Price was no object, because
people would give you

300
00:19:23,230 --> 00:19:26,200
almost anything for food.

301
00:19:26,200 --> 00:19:29,170
It was such a
tragedy that I don't

302
00:19:29,170 --> 00:19:32,950
think that I could
even now or my family

303
00:19:32,950 --> 00:19:37,300
could imagine what it means,
sustenance, to get something

304
00:19:37,300 --> 00:19:40,060
in your body to survive.

305
00:19:40,060 --> 00:19:43,600
It is hard for anybody
who has never been

306
00:19:43,600 --> 00:19:45,970
hungry to realize what it is.

307
00:19:45,970 --> 00:19:52,180
So I had no problem of selling
this thing at any price I want.

308
00:19:52,180 --> 00:19:55,150
Some was left for me.

309
00:19:55,150 --> 00:19:58,270
Plenty of it went to
this Mrs. Grabowska.

310
00:19:58,270 --> 00:20:03,160
This kept them for
quite a duration

311
00:20:03,160 --> 00:20:06,040

until finally I got caught.

312
00:20:06,040 --> 00:20:08,980

313
00:20:08,980 --> 00:20:13,750
I got caught, and I was
turned over to the Gestapo.

314
00:20:13,750 --> 00:20:23,700
To be very honest with you,
I got caught by some Jews,

315
00:20:23,700 --> 00:20:26,860
by our own.

316
00:20:26,860 --> 00:20:28,540
They wanted to be partners.

317
00:20:28,540 --> 00:20:31,120
And I was a very stubborn kid.

318
00:20:31,120 --> 00:20:34,000
And I said, what did
you contribute to this?

319
00:20:34,000 --> 00:20:36,580
And I said, I am
risking my life.

320
00:20:36,580 --> 00:20:39,790
And I guess I was too adamant.

321
00:20:39,790 --> 00:20:41,950
I don't know if I would
have been better off

322
00:20:41,950 --> 00:20:43,510
to share with him or not.

323
00:20:43,510 --> 00:20:45,220
I did not.

324
00:20:45,220 --> 00:20:48,760
And they turned me
over to the Gestapo.

325
00:20:48,760 --> 00:20:51,970
The Gestapo came to
the house one day

326
00:20:51,970 --> 00:20:55,300
and arrested me and put me--

327
00:20:55,300 --> 00:20:57,670
in fact, when I
went back to Poland,

328
00:20:57,670 --> 00:21:00,610
I showed my wife
and my daughters

329
00:21:00,610 --> 00:21:05,260
the little place which is across
the street from the big church

330
00:21:05,260 --> 00:21:07,900
where the Kripo, which
is called the Gestapo,

331
00:21:07,900 --> 00:21:11,110
held me down there
for almost two weeks.

332
00:21:11,110 --> 00:21:15,640
I was severely beaten
for almost two weeks.

333
00:21:15,640 --> 00:21:18,190
But I guess I was very stubborn.

334
00:21:18,190 --> 00:21:21,910
All they wanted to know is
not so much what I got across,

335

00:21:21,910 --> 00:21:25,420

but who is the one
who is the provider.

336

00:21:25,420 --> 00:21:29,230

And I was stubborn because
I learned the trick

337

00:21:29,230 --> 00:21:32,740

before because somebody
else was arrested.

338

00:21:32,740 --> 00:21:35,560

And they didn't tell
them where it came from

339

00:21:35,560 --> 00:21:36,560

and they let them out.

340

00:21:36,560 --> 00:21:37,810

And this was my alibi.

341

00:21:37,810 --> 00:21:39,310

I don't know.

342

00:21:39,310 --> 00:21:41,653

I saw a package coming
across the barbed wire.

343

00:21:41,653 --> 00:21:42,820

I happened to be down there.

344

00:21:42,820 --> 00:21:44,110

And I caught it.

345

00:21:44,110 --> 00:21:45,640

And that's all.

346

00:21:45,640 --> 00:21:49,120

I didn't deny that
I didn't get it.

347

00:21:49,120 --> 00:21:51,340

And I did not tell
them anything.

348

00:21:51,340 --> 00:21:52,540

It took two weeks.

349

00:21:52,540 --> 00:21:55,953

I was beaten up very severely
for the two week's duration.

350

00:21:55,953 --> 00:21:56,995

I wound up in a hospital.

351

00:21:56,995 --> 00:22:00,220

352

00:22:00,220 --> 00:22:03,400

When I finally came
home from the hospital,

353

00:22:03,400 --> 00:22:05,890

I remember I could hardly walk.

354

00:22:05,890 --> 00:22:08,980

Excuse me, my behind
was just unbelievable.

355

00:22:08,980 --> 00:22:11,770

It was broken to pieces.

356

00:22:11,770 --> 00:22:13,300

I had stitches.

357

00:22:13,300 --> 00:22:15,160

It was unreal.

358

00:22:15,160 --> 00:22:19,930

I came home, and then
I saw what happened

359

00:22:19,930 --> 00:22:26,440
during less than three weeks in
the house, I had no alternative

360
00:22:26,440 --> 00:22:29,410
but go right back
what I did before.

361
00:22:29,410 --> 00:22:32,005
The furniture-- there was
no furniture practically.

362
00:22:32,005 --> 00:22:39,550
It was all broken up and used as
wood for warming up the house,

363
00:22:39,550 --> 00:22:41,320
for cooking, whatever
little we had.

364
00:22:41,320 --> 00:22:43,910

365
00:22:43,910 --> 00:22:46,120
The whole family
look like skeletons.

366
00:22:46,120 --> 00:22:56,600

367
00:22:56,600 --> 00:22:58,280
I finally decided to go back.

368
00:22:58,280 --> 00:23:03,570

369
00:23:03,570 --> 00:23:10,870
I contacted Mrs. Grabowska.

370
00:23:10,870 --> 00:23:15,430
And I told her that don't
worry, I didn't say anything.

371

00:23:15,430 --> 00:23:18,250

She knew that I was arrested.

372

00:23:18,250 --> 00:23:19,550

And I told her this.

373

00:23:19,550 --> 00:23:20,140

Don't worry.

374

00:23:20,140 --> 00:23:23,080

We can continue
right the way it was.

375

00:23:23,080 --> 00:23:25,600

And we did.

376

00:23:25,600 --> 00:23:28,270

But this ordeal
didn't last too long.

377

00:23:28,270 --> 00:23:31,990

It lasted about
two to three weeks.

378

00:23:31,990 --> 00:23:36,260

One night, probably
around midnight,

379

00:23:36,260 --> 00:23:40,760

some civilian men, Germans,
knocked on the door.

380

00:23:40,760 --> 00:23:42,890

My father opened up.

381

00:23:42,890 --> 00:23:47,510

And they asked specifically
for me, where is Leo?

382

00:23:47,510 --> 00:23:49,063

Well, I came forward.

383

00:23:49,063 --> 00:23:50,480

First, when they
came in, they hit

384

00:23:50,480 --> 00:23:57,470

my father so hard he felt
right across the whole room.

385

00:23:57,470 --> 00:23:59,720

Then they asked for me.

386

00:23:59,720 --> 00:24:05,250

Finally, I got up out of
bed, and I came forward.

387

00:24:05,250 --> 00:24:06,360

I told him, that's me.

388

00:24:06,360 --> 00:24:10,140

And he said, put your
clothes on and come with me.

389

00:24:10,140 --> 00:24:14,610

I didn't know what it was,
but they spoke German.

390

00:24:14,610 --> 00:24:17,090

And you could understand them.

391

00:24:17,090 --> 00:24:19,490

And one of them spoke Polish.

392

00:24:19,490 --> 00:24:21,980

And they took me.

393

00:24:21,980 --> 00:24:25,940

And I thought it was
for investigation.

394

00:24:25,940 --> 00:24:28,340

They locked me up.

395

00:24:28,340 --> 00:24:34,760

And a few days later, they
shipped me, there was a group.

396

00:24:34,760 --> 00:24:38,320

That's the first time--

397

00:24:38,320 --> 00:24:40,810

this was actually the
last time that I ever

398

00:24:40,810 --> 00:24:43,270

saw my whole family.

399

00:24:43,270 --> 00:24:48,190

I never returned
home from that day.

400

00:24:48,190 --> 00:24:49,240

There was a group.

401

00:24:49,240 --> 00:24:53,920

They put me in some
kind of internment camp.

402

00:24:53,920 --> 00:24:59,500

And there they selected
almost 200 people.

403

00:24:59,500 --> 00:25:02,200

And we were
transferred on train.

404

00:25:02,200 --> 00:25:07,540

And this is when I came
to the first camp, which

405

00:25:07,540 --> 00:25:12,850

is around the Poznan area,
which is near Wolsztyn.

406

00:25:12,850 --> 00:25:14,890

And it's called Ruchocki-Mlyn.

407

00:25:14,890 --> 00:25:18,880

408

00:25:18,880 --> 00:25:21,670

When we first
arrived down there,

409

00:25:21,670 --> 00:25:23,680

I want you to know
that all of us

410

00:25:23,680 --> 00:25:28,570

were very satisfied with
the outlook on the outside

411

00:25:28,570 --> 00:25:30,460

of so-called farm.

412

00:25:30,460 --> 00:25:32,550

Actually, it is not a camp.

413

00:25:32,550 --> 00:25:35,260

It was a farm area.

414

00:25:35,260 --> 00:25:39,430

Let me try to describe
it you the way it looked.

415

00:25:39,430 --> 00:25:43,720

On the right side of the
gate, there was a large barn,

416

00:25:43,720 --> 00:25:46,960

like you would see
in Eastern Europe,

417

00:25:46,960 --> 00:25:49,150

like Holland or France
or Belgium, which

418

00:25:49,150 --> 00:25:50,290
is not made out of wood.

419
00:25:50,290 --> 00:25:54,280
It is made out of brick
because of the severe weather.

420
00:25:54,280 --> 00:25:56,900
And on the left side, there
was a little small building,

421
00:25:56,900 --> 00:26:00,040
looks like made out
of the same brick,

422
00:26:00,040 --> 00:26:02,680
like the owner lives down there.

423
00:26:02,680 --> 00:26:06,850
And facing us was another barn.

424
00:26:06,850 --> 00:26:11,410
And we saw on one of the
barns, on the side to the barn,

425
00:26:11,410 --> 00:26:12,880
there was a big
mill like you would

426
00:26:12,880 --> 00:26:16,300
see in Holland, like a
water mill, with the blades

427
00:26:16,300 --> 00:26:17,530
and so on.

428
00:26:17,530 --> 00:26:22,180
And everybody was so joyful
and happy and satisfied.

429
00:26:22,180 --> 00:26:24,700
I said, my gosh, this
is the best thing

430

00:26:24,700 --> 00:26:27,610

we could have done to
get out of the ghetto.

431

00:26:27,610 --> 00:26:29,710

We will have enough food.

432

00:26:29,710 --> 00:26:31,060

We have a mill.

433

00:26:31,060 --> 00:26:32,080

There is corn.

434

00:26:32,080 --> 00:26:33,010

There is a farm.

435

00:26:33,010 --> 00:26:35,110

We're going to
have a lot of food.

436

00:26:35,110 --> 00:26:39,580

And the anxiety of food,
you forget about freedom.

437

00:26:39,580 --> 00:26:41,920

You forget about family almost.

438

00:26:41,920 --> 00:26:43,990

You forget about
anything as long

439

00:26:43,990 --> 00:26:46,360

as you can fill your stomach.

440

00:26:46,360 --> 00:26:51,280

And here we stand and waited.

441

00:26:51,280 --> 00:26:53,770

And when we came to
the camp, we were

442

00:26:53,770 --> 00:26:59,980
greeted by some civilians, who
spoke Polish, and some German.

443

00:26:59,980 --> 00:27:02,240
You could detect
a little accent,

444

00:27:02,240 --> 00:27:04,850
which was around
like Volksdeutsche,

445

00:27:04,850 --> 00:27:08,200
Polish citizen of
German descent,

446

00:27:08,200 --> 00:27:13,210
with swastikas, no civilian
clothes, with rifles.

447

00:27:13,210 --> 00:27:14,500
They told us to line up.

448

00:27:14,500 --> 00:27:17,680
And the first thing they told us
to go to this barn facing down

449

00:27:17,680 --> 00:27:20,500
there to get some shovels.

450

00:27:20,500 --> 00:27:21,430
So a lot of us went.

451

00:27:21,430 --> 00:27:22,900
We got shovels.

452

00:27:22,900 --> 00:27:25,960
And they told us to
go to this big barn

453

00:27:25,960 --> 00:27:28,140
and clean up the manure.

454
00:27:28,140 --> 00:27:30,050
Of course, you're under the gun.

455
00:27:30,050 --> 00:27:31,300
And you don't know what to do.

456
00:27:31,300 --> 00:27:33,370
You do what you were told.

457
00:27:33,370 --> 00:27:34,240
We cleaned up.

458
00:27:34,240 --> 00:27:38,080
And we never realized
what you really are doing

459
00:27:38,080 --> 00:27:40,600
and what is going to
confront us later.

460
00:27:40,600 --> 00:27:41,890
We cleaned up the manure.

461
00:27:41,890 --> 00:27:44,950
And the way it looks,
like the cows probably

462
00:27:44,950 --> 00:27:48,520
left maybe three or four
hours before we came in here.

463
00:27:48,520 --> 00:27:51,110
We cleaned up the manure
as much as we could.

464
00:27:51,110 --> 00:27:57,100
We had no water actually
to really clean it up.

465
00:27:57,100 --> 00:28:01,390
And then they told us to go

to the barn and get straw.

466

00:28:01,390 --> 00:28:04,150

And we lined up the whole
big barn with straw.

467

00:28:04,150 --> 00:28:07,320

468

00:28:07,320 --> 00:28:12,210

And this became our
course for sleeping.

469

00:28:12,210 --> 00:28:14,940

We had no baggage with us.

470

00:28:14,940 --> 00:28:21,250

The clothes that you had on you,
this became your possessions.

471

00:28:21,250 --> 00:28:24,790

And we slept, and we
thought at the time, well,

472

00:28:24,790 --> 00:28:28,870

you know, we could suffer
a night or two and so on.

473

00:28:28,870 --> 00:28:30,460

I want you to know
that this became

474

00:28:30,460 --> 00:28:34,410

the lodging for
almost six months

475

00:28:34,410 --> 00:28:41,490

until around March of 1941.

476

00:28:41,490 --> 00:28:43,140

Did you work there?

477

00:28:43,140 --> 00:28:45,840
Yes, we did.

478
00:28:45,840 --> 00:28:47,715
The type of work later--

479
00:28:47,715 --> 00:28:50,310

480
00:28:50,310 --> 00:28:58,040
after the liberation, I
was trying to reflect back

481
00:28:58,040 --> 00:28:59,930
why they took us?

482
00:28:59,930 --> 00:29:01,850
What did we do down there?

483
00:29:01,850 --> 00:29:03,980
What did it bring, the asset?

484
00:29:03,980 --> 00:29:08,790
And what was there
was a river that

485
00:29:08,790 --> 00:29:15,660
was running through this area
where this mill was situated.

486
00:29:15,660 --> 00:29:20,400
The blades were
touching the water.

487
00:29:20,400 --> 00:29:25,200
And as the water picks it
up, it grinds the corn.

488
00:29:25,200 --> 00:29:30,480
This water, this river
was running crooked.

489

00:29:30,480 --> 00:29:33,000
And what we needed to
do is to straighten

490
00:29:33,000 --> 00:29:36,270
up for a long way all
the way down the area

491
00:29:36,270 --> 00:29:39,750
this river to run smoothly
instead of crooked.

492
00:29:39,750 --> 00:29:40,980
Zigzagging.

493
00:29:40,980 --> 00:29:44,130
And when I went back
the first time to camp,

494
00:29:44,130 --> 00:29:51,870
I asked the question, why
did they put us down there?

495
00:29:51,870 --> 00:29:54,030
Why did we work on the river?

496
00:29:54,030 --> 00:29:58,590
Because I went to the,
presently what you call,

497
00:29:58,590 --> 00:30:02,760
city hall to find out
what is all about it.

498
00:30:02,760 --> 00:30:04,620
And they told me
that the only time

499
00:30:04,620 --> 00:30:08,370
you could work on this
river was in the wintertime.

500
00:30:08,370 --> 00:30:12,270

In the summertime, it
was like it was sink in.

501
00:30:12,270 --> 00:30:14,220
Because I remember
when we worked down

502
00:30:14,220 --> 00:30:18,480
there, October, November,
December, and January

503
00:30:18,480 --> 00:30:21,540
and February, you
could actually cut--

504
00:30:21,540 --> 00:30:24,780
when you use your shovel,
you can cut in the ground,

505
00:30:24,780 --> 00:30:27,420
just like you cut into cheese.

506
00:30:27,420 --> 00:30:30,690
In the summertime, we wouldn't
be able to straighten it up.

507
00:30:30,690 --> 00:30:34,170
And this is what
we did down there.

508
00:30:34,170 --> 00:30:44,080
By the time we left, we had
probably over half dead bodies.

509
00:30:44,080 --> 00:30:45,580
And let me tell you one thing.

510
00:30:45,580 --> 00:30:47,800
We had enough food.

511
00:30:47,800 --> 00:30:50,530
We used to get two
big bowls of soup

512
00:30:50,530 --> 00:30:54,520
that you practically couldn't
finish it and some bread

513
00:30:54,520 --> 00:30:57,790
and sometime we got some
margarine or a little piece

514
00:30:57,790 --> 00:31:00,560
of sausage and so on.

515
00:31:00,560 --> 00:31:04,730
But the dead, I
contribute, was two-fold.

516
00:31:04,730 --> 00:31:08,530
One of them from hygiene,
which was number one.

517
00:31:08,530 --> 00:31:12,160
And the second was from
the severe weather.

518
00:31:12,160 --> 00:31:15,070
And will give you an
example of hygiene.

519
00:31:15,070 --> 00:31:17,830
For the duration of
almost six months,

520
00:31:17,830 --> 00:31:22,750
the same clothes we came in
is the same clothes we left.

521
00:31:22,750 --> 00:31:24,550
We never washed it.

522
00:31:24,550 --> 00:31:26,710
We never changed it.

523

00:31:26,710 --> 00:31:31,930
We had, I guess-- the lice
probably had a picnic with us.

524
00:31:31,930 --> 00:31:34,120
What kind of clothing
were you issued?

525
00:31:34,120 --> 00:31:35,590
We were not issued any clothing.

526
00:31:35,590 --> 00:31:37,100
The clothing that
we came from home,

527
00:31:37,100 --> 00:31:40,700
this is the clothing you stayed
until you left this camp.

528
00:31:40,700 --> 00:31:42,250
And this was this
was warm weather

529
00:31:42,250 --> 00:31:44,200
clothing that you came with?

530
00:31:44,200 --> 00:31:46,240
Well, it was whatever
you could get a hold.

531
00:31:46,240 --> 00:31:50,020

532
00:31:50,020 --> 00:31:52,600
When they took me
out from the house,

533
00:31:52,600 --> 00:31:54,220
you know, you took
whatever you--

534
00:31:54,220 --> 00:31:57,760
probably your jacket, your coat

and pants and shoes and so on.

535

00:31:57,760 --> 00:31:59,530

This is the clothes we stayed.

536

00:31:59,530 --> 00:32:02,470

But the tragedy

was that we never

537

00:32:02,470 --> 00:32:05,560

had the opportunity in

this particular area

538

00:32:05,560 --> 00:32:09,450

to take a shower

almost six months.

539

00:32:09,450 --> 00:32:13,100

And the lice, it

was unbelievable.

540

00:32:13,100 --> 00:32:18,220

It was-- you know, when I

reflect back and read stories

541

00:32:18,220 --> 00:32:22,090

about camps, big ones,

Auschwitz, Buchenwald,

542

00:32:22,090 --> 00:32:26,860

and Dachau, I don't think

I can compare it with it as

543

00:32:26,860 --> 00:32:30,940

far as the hygiene, especially.

544

00:32:30,940 --> 00:32:33,400

And we died like flies.

545

00:32:33,400 --> 00:32:36,940

I remember the

skins of all of us

546

00:32:36,940 --> 00:32:40,120

were so red all the time for
the penetration of the lice that

547

00:32:40,120 --> 00:32:42,160

actually penetrated the skin.

548

00:32:42,160 --> 00:32:44,350

And you couldn't-- it was dark.

549

00:32:44,350 --> 00:32:46,630

There was no lights
in this barn.

550

00:32:46,630 --> 00:32:50,830

During the day, our pastime
was scratching all the time.

551

00:32:50,830 --> 00:32:52,750

It was horrible.

552

00:32:52,750 --> 00:32:53,770

Food we had.

553

00:32:53,770 --> 00:32:55,570

And the second
thing was the frost.

554

00:32:55,570 --> 00:32:59,350

We used to bring
home boys so frozen

555

00:32:59,350 --> 00:33:01,750

that actually the
limbs came off.

556

00:33:01,750 --> 00:33:04,880

And we used to drag them
home on these wagons.

557

00:33:04,880 --> 00:33:10,420

And I remember right in

the back of this barn,

558

00:33:10,420 --> 00:33:15,460

a little distance, not far away,
was like a zoned off little,

559

00:33:15,460 --> 00:33:17,620

I would say, a private cemetery.

560

00:33:17,620 --> 00:33:21,400

You could see like
blocks of cement

561

00:33:21,400 --> 00:33:24,580

around it, like
a zoned off area.

562

00:33:24,580 --> 00:33:26,440

And we dug this so deep.

563

00:33:26,440 --> 00:33:28,780

And every day, we took
a few of them home.

564

00:33:28,780 --> 00:33:29,680

And we dumped them.

565

00:33:29,680 --> 00:33:30,670

And we dumped them.

566

00:33:30,670 --> 00:33:31,810

And we dumped them.

567

00:33:31,810 --> 00:33:35,830

And I tell you, we
got so immune to it

568

00:33:35,830 --> 00:33:39,610

that it didn't make
anything to us.

569

00:33:39,610 --> 00:33:41,590

I don't know, I guess
everybody was in a zone

570
00:33:41,590 --> 00:33:45,700
just to survive another
day, and we kept on.

571
00:33:45,700 --> 00:33:53,100
I remember on the latter
part of February 1941--

572
00:33:53,100 --> 00:33:56,880
we talk about resistance.

573
00:33:56,880 --> 00:34:00,810
I think we had a little
resistance, even though not too

574
00:34:00,810 --> 00:34:04,530
many of them survived out of
this dilemma for the first six

575
00:34:04,530 --> 00:34:05,680
months.

576
00:34:05,680 --> 00:34:07,300
But we had a little resistance.

577
00:34:07,300 --> 00:34:11,250
And let me outline you
resistance that maybe you've

578
00:34:11,250 --> 00:34:12,239
never heard of it.

579
00:34:12,239 --> 00:34:15,460

580
00:34:15,460 --> 00:34:20,020
The resistance we had, we had
some smart kids who were left.

581

00:34:20,020 --> 00:34:23,949

And they said, in order
to get out of here,

582

00:34:23,949 --> 00:34:28,030

we're going to have
to do something.

583

00:34:28,030 --> 00:34:29,790

So the first thing
one of them came up

584

00:34:29,790 --> 00:34:33,130

and he said, we're
going to strike.

585

00:34:33,130 --> 00:34:35,130

One morning, we're just
not going to go to work.

586

00:34:35,130 --> 00:34:37,320

Let him kill us.

587

00:34:37,320 --> 00:34:40,020

And really, we were actually--

588

00:34:40,020 --> 00:34:42,239

we came to the
conclusion that life

589

00:34:42,239 --> 00:34:43,409

wasn't worth living anymore.

590

00:34:43,409 --> 00:34:45,800

Let them kill us.

591

00:34:45,800 --> 00:34:49,909

But from these
200, I don't recall

592

00:34:49,909 --> 00:34:53,420

anybody who ever committed
suicide, because really you

593

00:34:53,420 --> 00:34:55,639
couldn't commit suicide
and killing yourself

594

00:34:55,639 --> 00:34:57,602
unless somebody
else will kill you.

595

00:34:57,602 --> 00:34:59,060
So we really didn't
commit suicide.

596

00:34:59,060 --> 00:35:02,250
There was no suicide.

597

00:35:02,250 --> 00:35:07,490
So one decided that we
need to get a doctor.

598

00:35:07,490 --> 00:35:11,640
If a doctor would inspect
us and see the way we look

599

00:35:11,640 --> 00:35:14,600
and the circumstance
we are, maybe we'll

600

00:35:14,600 --> 00:35:16,730
have an opportunity--
and our dream

601

00:35:16,730 --> 00:35:20,810
was the first six months that
after we get through here,

602

00:35:20,810 --> 00:35:23,000
they're going to send
us back to the ghetto.

603

00:35:23,000 --> 00:35:24,750
We'll be back with our families.

604

00:35:24,750 --> 00:35:25,933

And so we suffered.

605

00:35:25,933 --> 00:35:27,600

And everything is
going to be beautiful.

606

00:35:27,600 --> 00:35:28,835

And this was my dream.

607

00:35:28,835 --> 00:35:29,960

This was everybody's dream.

608

00:35:29,960 --> 00:35:31,790

So we waited.

609

00:35:31,790 --> 00:35:34,670

So one guy comes along, he
said we're going to strike.

610

00:35:34,670 --> 00:35:37,850

And the second guy, we finally
had a consensus one night

611

00:35:37,850 --> 00:35:40,490

in the dark, we're going
to strike next morning.

612

00:35:40,490 --> 00:35:43,160

The next morning, they
knocked on the door to get up.

613

00:35:43,160 --> 00:35:44,660

Nobody gets up.

614

00:35:44,660 --> 00:35:45,560

We don't go to work.

615

00:35:45,560 --> 00:35:47,060

Strike, strike, strike.

616

00:35:47,060 --> 00:35:51,500

And we told these Poles that
we cannot continue this.

617

00:35:51,500 --> 00:35:54,270

And that was it.

618

00:35:54,270 --> 00:35:57,930

And the owner who
requisitioned us

619

00:35:57,930 --> 00:36:00,060

was a little short
German fellow,

620

00:36:00,060 --> 00:36:02,250

spoke Polish and German.

621

00:36:02,250 --> 00:36:04,380

And he lived in this
little building.

622

00:36:04,380 --> 00:36:06,420

And one guy said,
I'll fix him up.

623

00:36:06,420 --> 00:36:09,482

We took some hands full of lice.

624

00:36:09,482 --> 00:36:11,690

And when he came into the
barn, they threw it at him.

625

00:36:11,690 --> 00:36:14,400

The man was vicious I
mean, he was ready to kill,

626

00:36:14,400 --> 00:36:15,450

but nobody got killed.

627

00:36:15,450 --> 00:36:18,240

And we told him,
we want a doctor.

628

00:36:18,240 --> 00:36:23,460

Finally, we waited a few days and a doctor came.

629

00:36:23,460 --> 00:36:30,150

I remember as today, before the doctor came, a few days before,

630

00:36:30,150 --> 00:36:34,270

some youngsters decided to be very smart, which maybe it

631

00:36:34,270 --> 00:36:37,110

was smart or not smart.

632

00:36:37,110 --> 00:36:39,570

They just said, what are you going to show the doctor

633

00:36:39,570 --> 00:36:42,450

physically that we are sick?

634

00:36:42,450 --> 00:36:45,540

The ones who were physically sick already dead.

635

00:36:45,540 --> 00:36:47,940

The ones who survived looked half decent.

636

00:36:47,940 --> 00:36:49,770

What are we going to show physically?

637

00:36:49,770 --> 00:36:52,200

So we had one guy said, he said, let's

638

00:36:52,200 --> 00:36:54,960

take some nails out of the barn.

639

00:36:54,960 --> 00:36:58,290
And they punched your body.

640
00:36:58,290 --> 00:37:01,040
And usually we had some
salt from the soup.

641
00:37:01,040 --> 00:37:03,300
So they used to rub it in.

642
00:37:03,300 --> 00:37:05,220
And you get sores.

643
00:37:05,220 --> 00:37:07,710
And then another guy comes
along and he said, you know,

644
00:37:07,710 --> 00:37:09,570
I've got another idea.

645
00:37:09,570 --> 00:37:12,510
They wrapped up some
little pieces of cloth,

646
00:37:12,510 --> 00:37:17,730
like a small string And you wrap
your arms around or your legs

647
00:37:17,730 --> 00:37:20,400
and your body, and you
swell up if you leave it

648
00:37:20,400 --> 00:37:23,400
like this for 24 hours.

649
00:37:23,400 --> 00:37:25,448
And we did it like crazy guys.

650
00:37:25,448 --> 00:37:26,490
You know, we didn't know.

651
00:37:26,490 --> 00:37:27,630

We wanted to survive.

652

00:37:27,630 --> 00:37:28,650

I did it myself.

653

00:37:28,650 --> 00:37:34,440

I wrapped my-- I became double
the size, my arms and legs.

654

00:37:34,440 --> 00:37:37,480

And then here comes the
doctor a few days later.

655

00:37:37,480 --> 00:37:41,208

And he told us to
take off your clothes.

656

00:37:41,208 --> 00:37:42,000

He's going to look.

657

00:37:42,000 --> 00:37:44,940

The doctor was about
75 feet away behind,

658

00:37:44,940 --> 00:37:48,270

because he was a German
doctor, civilian.

659

00:37:48,270 --> 00:37:51,690

And he looked at us, and
everybody let his pants down

660

00:37:51,690 --> 00:37:53,880

and take off the
jacket and everything.

661

00:37:53,880 --> 00:37:55,650

And it didn't take him--

662

00:37:55,650 --> 00:37:58,380

I don't think it took
him a minute to look

663

00:37:58,380 --> 00:38:00,270
at all of us who were left.

664

00:38:00,270 --> 00:38:06,330
And he said to this Polish
German, he said, quarantine.

665

00:38:06,330 --> 00:38:10,168
And we were so joyful, because
quarantine, you know one thing,

666

00:38:10,168 --> 00:38:11,460
you're not going to go to work.

667

00:38:11,460 --> 00:38:13,200
You'll be quarantined.

668

00:38:13,200 --> 00:38:16,200
A few days later they
brought some trucks in,

669

00:38:16,200 --> 00:38:18,990
and we went to the next camp.

670

00:38:18,990 --> 00:38:23,700
And the next camp was actually
in the city of Poznan,

671

00:38:23,700 --> 00:38:25,290
which is called the stadium.

672

00:38:25,290 --> 00:38:26,760
It was a stadium actually.

673

00:38:26,760 --> 00:38:31,110
You could see it,
big tremendous field.

674

00:38:31,110 --> 00:38:35,190
We were down there a very
short time, a few weeks.

675

00:38:35,190 --> 00:38:37,860

But what I could
remember, one episode

676

00:38:37,860 --> 00:38:41,040

in this particular
camp, when we came in,

677

00:38:41,040 --> 00:38:43,500

you could see the field.

678

00:38:43,500 --> 00:38:48,060

The entire field was
grass, except the buildings

679

00:38:48,060 --> 00:38:49,770

we were in.

680

00:38:49,770 --> 00:38:53,220

And within two weeks
time, you couldn't

681

00:38:53,220 --> 00:39:01,290

find a green grass or blade of
grass in the entire perimeter.

682

00:39:01,290 --> 00:39:04,560

When we got the
soup, everybody used

683

00:39:04,560 --> 00:39:08,550

to grab a hold of this
grass and rip it up

684

00:39:08,550 --> 00:39:11,160

in small little pieces
and put it in the soup.

685

00:39:11,160 --> 00:39:13,590

So the soup would
get real thick.

686

00:39:13,590 --> 00:39:17,760

So you can fill your
stomach, to fill it up.

687

00:39:17,760 --> 00:39:22,200

And, of course, after that
we got all kind of sickness.

688

00:39:22,200 --> 00:39:23,310

There was typhus.

689

00:39:23,310 --> 00:39:24,870

There was diarrhea, especially.

690

00:39:24,870 --> 00:39:26,130

It was unbelievable.

691

00:39:26,130 --> 00:39:27,360

There were so many--

692

00:39:27,360 --> 00:39:31,813

you could see in the stadium
dead bodies walking around

693

00:39:31,813 --> 00:39:32,355

like zombies.

694

00:39:32,355 --> 00:39:35,530

695

00:39:35,530 --> 00:39:38,530

Well, thank God, we
didn't stay too long.

696

00:39:38,530 --> 00:39:42,940

And we came from the stadium.

697

00:39:42,940 --> 00:39:46,540

Then they selected the
ones who looked half decent

698

00:39:46,540 --> 00:39:48,740

in smaller groups.

699

00:39:48,740 --> 00:39:53,140

And, in fact, when I
first came to the stadium,

700

00:39:53,140 --> 00:39:58,690

I realized that I was not the
only one who was incarcerated,

701

00:39:58,690 --> 00:40:04,810

because this stadium comprised
of thousands of Jewish boys.

702

00:40:04,810 --> 00:40:09,070

I thought we were the
only 200 who left Lodz,

703

00:40:09,070 --> 00:40:11,440

because for whatever
reason, like mine,

704

00:40:11,440 --> 00:40:14,140

I know it was for smuggling.

705

00:40:14,140 --> 00:40:17,140

Then we saw thousands from
different parts of Poland.

706

00:40:17,140 --> 00:40:18,800

I said, where did you come from?

707

00:40:18,800 --> 00:40:22,040

I came from this city, from
this village, and so on.

708

00:40:22,040 --> 00:40:24,190

And I said, my gosh,
what is going on in here?

709

00:40:24,190 --> 00:40:26,710

Were all these young men
are around the same age?

710
00:40:26,710 --> 00:40:28,110
Or where they were older--

711
00:40:28,110 --> 00:40:29,110
About the same.

712
00:40:29,110 --> 00:40:33,250
I know in the first
group that we were,

713
00:40:33,250 --> 00:40:37,510
I don't think there
was anybody above 25.

714
00:40:37,510 --> 00:40:42,550
It was all this age
around 17, 18, 20s maybe,

715
00:40:42,550 --> 00:40:44,660
about to the 30s.

716
00:40:44,660 --> 00:40:47,240
You never saw anybody older.

717
00:40:47,240 --> 00:40:50,350
And they were all in fairly
good physical condition.

718
00:40:50,350 --> 00:40:53,520
I guess so because if they
were selected for work,

719
00:40:53,520 --> 00:40:55,150
they were in physical condition.

720
00:40:55,150 --> 00:40:56,590
Otherwise they wouldn't
have taken them at all.

721
00:40:56,590 --> 00:40:58,360
They would have left

them in the ghetto.

722

00:40:58,360 --> 00:41:03,760

So this was the labor force that they got up in the beginning.

723

00:41:03,760 --> 00:41:07,930

Finally, the stadium, they selected smaller groups

724

00:41:07,930 --> 00:41:15,530

of about 100 to 150 to 200 to different areas.

725

00:41:15,530 --> 00:41:19,700

And I remember the first day we went, we worked on a highway.

726

00:41:19,700 --> 00:41:23,330

And I remember there was a German company out of Szczecin,

727

00:41:23,330 --> 00:41:26,270

who had all the machinery and cranes and so on.

728

00:41:26,270 --> 00:41:28,010

And we worked mainly on highways.

729

00:41:28,010 --> 00:41:32,210

We were building the highway from Poznan to Warsaw.

730

00:41:32,210 --> 00:41:33,680

And then we worked on a railroad.

731

00:41:33,680 --> 00:41:37,460

And we were transferred like every few months, every two

732

00:41:37,460 --> 00:41:40,080

or three months to another camp.

733

00:41:40,080 --> 00:41:48,250

So from the stadium, we made
another six camps from 1941

734

00:41:48,250 --> 00:41:52,500

until 1943.

735

00:41:52,500 --> 00:41:57,390

And, of course, the tragedy
was from one came to the other,

736

00:41:57,390 --> 00:42:01,140

it was like a domino effect.

737

00:42:01,140 --> 00:42:05,100

Wherever you made a
friend in one camp,

738

00:42:05,100 --> 00:42:06,870

you lost him in a second.

739

00:42:06,870 --> 00:42:08,730

Wherever you made a
friend in his second,

740

00:42:08,730 --> 00:42:10,260

you lost in the third.

741

00:42:10,260 --> 00:42:13,980

You never found the
friends as a continuation

742

00:42:13,980 --> 00:42:16,050

to be steady with
you as a real friend

743

00:42:16,050 --> 00:42:18,000

to hold down with somebody.

744

00:42:18,000 --> 00:42:21,240

Usually somebody got
sick and had diarrhea

745
00:42:21,240 --> 00:42:22,680
and then he had
typhus and then he

746
00:42:22,680 --> 00:42:24,405
wound up with another kommando.

747
00:42:24,405 --> 00:42:26,010
Or they took him apart.

748
00:42:26,010 --> 00:42:28,200
Or they took him
to the dispensary.

749
00:42:28,200 --> 00:42:30,000
You never wound up
with a friend that you

750
00:42:30,000 --> 00:42:32,980
can hold on for the duration.

751
00:42:32,980 --> 00:42:36,180
And this was an agony,
because you needed somebody

752
00:42:36,180 --> 00:42:40,740
to hold on to life.

753
00:42:40,740 --> 00:42:47,010
And, of course, on
August 1943, they

754
00:42:47,010 --> 00:42:50,460
eliminated all
these small camps.

755
00:42:50,460 --> 00:42:54,120
And the reason I remember
so well, because I

756

00:42:54,120 --> 00:42:58,590

got the documents from
Auschwitz, that 1,140

757

00:42:58,590 --> 00:43:04,050

some odd youngsters
came in August of 1943

758

00:43:04,050 --> 00:43:07,680

to Auschwitz,
which was Birkenau.

759

00:43:07,680 --> 00:43:09,105

Actually, it was
not in Auschwitz,

760

00:43:09,105 --> 00:43:11,760

but Birkenau which was
about three miles away

761

00:43:11,760 --> 00:43:14,010

from Auschwitz.

762

00:43:14,010 --> 00:43:20,100

When we came in to Birkenau,
you saw an entirely different

763

00:43:20,100 --> 00:43:22,980

atmosphere.

764

00:43:22,980 --> 00:43:28,890

You saw officers, soldiers,
tall, handsome German guys

765

00:43:28,890 --> 00:43:31,290

with boots, with whips.

766

00:43:31,290 --> 00:43:37,380

And as we got off the trains,
they were going right and left.

767

00:43:37,380 --> 00:43:40,800

And nobody knew-- now,
I know what happened.

768
00:43:40,800 --> 00:43:43,555
But then in those days, I
did not know what right mean

769
00:43:43,555 --> 00:43:44,580
and left mean.

770
00:43:44,580 --> 00:43:48,150
I guess I was fortunate enough
to go to the right side.

771
00:43:48,150 --> 00:43:50,400
If it was for the left or
the right, I don't know.

772
00:43:50,400 --> 00:43:54,030
But I'm here to
tell you the story.

773
00:43:54,030 --> 00:43:58,050
So later on, I found
out from the documents,

774
00:43:58,050 --> 00:44:02,670
that 1,140 some odd people
came in from this group.

775
00:44:02,670 --> 00:44:07,030
And only a little over
400 went into the camp.

776
00:44:07,030 --> 00:44:10,560
So as you can tell, 2/3
went somewhere else.

777
00:44:10,560 --> 00:44:13,270
And somewhere else
I found out later

778
00:44:13,270 --> 00:44:15,940

meant to go to the crematorium.

779

00:44:15,940 --> 00:44:21,120

So we came in, and we
were assigned jobs.

780

00:44:21,120 --> 00:44:24,120

But the first thing
I must tell you,

781

00:44:24,120 --> 00:44:30,600

this was the first time in the
almost from 1940 of October

782

00:44:30,600 --> 00:44:36,720

until August '43 that I got
the best shower and the best

783

00:44:36,720 --> 00:44:43,170

delousing that I ever had in
the entire duration from 1940.

784

00:44:43,170 --> 00:44:48,540

New clothes, new boots,
whatever they gave me was new,

785

00:44:48,540 --> 00:44:49,860

was fresh.

786

00:44:49,860 --> 00:44:50,790

It was clean.

787

00:44:50,790 --> 00:44:55,150

Every blade of your body hair
was shaven off and so on.

788

00:44:55,150 --> 00:44:58,050

So this was gratifying.

789

00:44:58,050 --> 00:45:03,710

I failed to mention
a couple of instances

790

00:45:03,710 --> 00:45:06,640

that I think would be
important, because I

791

00:45:06,640 --> 00:45:08,050

skipped so many camps--

792

00:45:08,050 --> 00:45:10,540

six of them.

793

00:45:10,540 --> 00:45:13,630

In one of the camps--

794

00:45:13,630 --> 00:45:18,010

you know, people ask now
question after so many years,

795

00:45:18,010 --> 00:45:20,990

why didn't you resist?

796

00:45:20,990 --> 00:45:23,030

Why didn't you fight?

797

00:45:23,030 --> 00:45:28,340

Couldn't you kill a German
and be satisfied and maybe

798

00:45:28,340 --> 00:45:30,710

the rest of them would survive?

799

00:45:30,710 --> 00:45:34,550

Rebel, react.

800

00:45:34,550 --> 00:45:37,610

I told you already
one resistance.

801

00:45:37,610 --> 00:45:39,530

So where did it get us?

802

00:45:39,530 --> 00:45:41,240

To another camp.

803

00:45:41,240 --> 00:45:43,250

And then we went
to another camp.

804

00:45:43,250 --> 00:45:47,990

I'll give you two camps that
when we worked, one of them

805

00:45:47,990 --> 00:45:49,810

was on the highways.

806

00:45:49,810 --> 00:45:51,560

And one of them we
worked at the railroad.

807

00:45:51,560 --> 00:46:09,680

808

00:46:09,680 --> 00:46:13,720

I want to show you
now, I don't know,

809

00:46:13,720 --> 00:46:17,000

now probably, I would
be more of an activist

810

00:46:17,000 --> 00:46:21,680

maybe even to give my
life to save somebody.

811

00:46:21,680 --> 00:46:26,240

But I don't think in those
days I wanted so much to live,

812

00:46:26,240 --> 00:46:31,040

because I did not
know where the end is.

813

00:46:31,040 --> 00:46:34,872

And especially when I left
an entire family at home

814
00:46:34,872 --> 00:46:36,580
and I did not know
what happened to them.

815
00:46:36,580 --> 00:46:41,848
So I wanted to resist fighting
and I wanted to keep on living.

816
00:46:41,848 --> 00:46:43,890
But I want to give you
now one example in a camp.

817
00:46:43,890 --> 00:46:46,220
We had two boys who ran away.

818
00:46:46,220 --> 00:46:48,920
They were, I
believe, from Bedzin,

819
00:46:48,920 --> 00:46:50,150
from some city in Poland.

820
00:46:50,150 --> 00:46:53,850

821
00:46:53,850 --> 00:46:57,120
A few days later, they
brought them back.

822
00:46:57,120 --> 00:47:01,920
I want you to know that
when you were in camp

823
00:47:01,920 --> 00:47:05,520
you were identified
through some identity

824
00:47:05,520 --> 00:47:10,242
that you couldn't really be--

825
00:47:10,242 --> 00:47:11,700

that people wouldn't
recognize you.

826
00:47:11,700 --> 00:47:16,050
First of all, if they look at
your hair, they were shaven.

827
00:47:16,050 --> 00:47:19,650
You had special cuttings in
the middle with a razor blade,

828
00:47:19,650 --> 00:47:20,890
like a Mohawk haircut.

829
00:47:20,890 --> 00:47:24,030
So everybody was outside
of the camp would recognize

830
00:47:24,030 --> 00:47:25,620
that you were at camp.

831
00:47:25,620 --> 00:47:29,220
Rewards were plenty
by the Germans

832
00:47:29,220 --> 00:47:32,760
in order to find anybody who
ran away from a concentration

833
00:47:32,760 --> 00:47:35,370
camp or a slave labor camp.

834
00:47:35,370 --> 00:47:36,960
These two boys
were brought camp.

835
00:47:36,960 --> 00:47:42,340
And in this camp, it was a
fairly good, I would say.

836
00:47:42,340 --> 00:47:44,300
It was hard labor.

837

00:47:44,300 --> 00:47:46,060

But we got food.

838

00:47:46,060 --> 00:47:47,680

It was very strenuous.

839

00:47:47,680 --> 00:47:48,580

It was hard.

840

00:47:48,580 --> 00:47:50,440

But it wasn't bad.

841

00:47:50,440 --> 00:47:51,700

We were not beaten.

842

00:47:51,700 --> 00:47:54,370

We were not really killed.

843

00:47:54,370 --> 00:47:56,170

Do you remember the
name of the camp, Leo?

844

00:47:56,170 --> 00:47:56,740

I don't.

845

00:47:56,740 --> 00:48:00,820

I think I got it because
I got a book in Poland

846

00:48:00,820 --> 00:48:08,680

of over 5,600 some odd places of
incarceration in Poland alone.

847

00:48:08,680 --> 00:48:11,710

And I'm trying to
pinpoint certain areas.

848

00:48:11,710 --> 00:48:12,670

I think I got one.

849

00:48:12,670 --> 00:48:14,200

I do not recall the name.

850
00:48:14,200 --> 00:48:16,060
I got at home somewhere.

851
00:48:16,060 --> 00:48:18,520
There was two or three
camps that I remember

852
00:48:18,520 --> 00:48:22,810
because it came to focus after
I read through the thing,

853
00:48:22,810 --> 00:48:25,180
because these camps were
only like two months or three

854
00:48:25,180 --> 00:48:26,170
months.

855
00:48:26,170 --> 00:48:31,070
In this particular camp, I
remember there was a wagon.

856
00:48:31,070 --> 00:48:32,380
It was a truck.

857
00:48:32,380 --> 00:48:35,770
It looks like a cement truck
with an opening on the top,

858
00:48:35,770 --> 00:48:37,570
like a round top.

859
00:48:37,570 --> 00:48:41,410
This was called the
delousing wagon.

860
00:48:41,410 --> 00:48:44,050
Every week we used
to take our clothes

861

00:48:44,050 --> 00:48:47,740
and put them in this
truck on the top.

862
00:48:47,740 --> 00:48:49,750
And they used to
turn on the steam,

863
00:48:49,750 --> 00:48:52,570
so they could kill
the lice instantly

864
00:48:52,570 --> 00:48:55,750
by the power of the steam.

865
00:48:55,750 --> 00:48:57,010
And it was hygiene.

866
00:48:57,010 --> 00:48:58,450
It was good.

867
00:48:58,450 --> 00:49:00,430
When these two boys came in--

868
00:49:00,430 --> 00:49:02,290
they caught them.

869
00:49:02,290 --> 00:49:04,030
We came home from work.

870
00:49:04,030 --> 00:49:10,690
And all of them had to line up
in five, like they usually do.

871
00:49:10,690 --> 00:49:12,700
And then they took
some of the boys

872
00:49:12,700 --> 00:49:22,720
from us, from the prisoners, who
had to take one boy at a time,

873

00:49:22,720 --> 00:49:30,580
put him in in this wagon, shut
the top, turn on the thing,

874
00:49:30,580 --> 00:49:31,820
and let it run.

875
00:49:31,820 --> 00:49:33,490
It didn't take long.

876
00:49:33,490 --> 00:49:35,260
And we stayed.

877
00:49:35,260 --> 00:49:39,430
And all of us were so
flabbergasted to realize,

878
00:49:39,430 --> 00:49:41,890
what is the result
going to be now?

879
00:49:41,890 --> 00:49:46,030
And then these same kids
had to go pull them out.

880
00:49:46,030 --> 00:49:47,380
I don't know.

881
00:49:47,380 --> 00:49:49,197
I don't think any human being--

882
00:49:49,197 --> 00:50:03,060

883
00:50:03,060 --> 00:50:08,637
really could visualize
the person who went in

884
00:50:08,637 --> 00:50:10,470
and how you looked after
they took them out.

885

00:50:10,470 --> 00:50:19,850

886

00:50:19,850 --> 00:50:26,470

He looked like a caricature,
big head, shrunken arms.

887

00:50:26,470 --> 00:50:28,710

It is horrible.

888

00:50:28,710 --> 00:50:31,100

And each one of us had to
go through-- of course,

889

00:50:31,100 --> 00:50:32,100

this was a smaller camp.

890

00:50:32,100 --> 00:50:39,900

This was not over 150 to 200.

891

00:50:39,900 --> 00:50:42,090

And we had a walk through.

892

00:50:42,090 --> 00:50:43,290

And then this wasn't enough.

893

00:50:43,290 --> 00:50:45,090

They had to take
the second one in.

894

00:50:45,090 --> 00:50:47,310

And we got to go again around.

895

00:50:47,310 --> 00:50:55,710

This will show you what it
meant discouraging of revolting,

896

00:50:55,710 --> 00:50:59,700

discouraging to resist.

897

00:50:59,700 --> 00:51:06,250

Another camp, I

remember so vividly,

898

00:51:06,250 --> 00:51:07,500

we did not know what happened.

899

00:51:07,500 --> 00:51:10,420

This is what happened
during the night.

900

00:51:10,420 --> 00:51:12,820

Usually, the way the
camps were built,

901

00:51:12,820 --> 00:51:17,060

you did not have any toilet
facility in the same block.

902

00:51:17,060 --> 00:51:21,140

You usually had to go
to the end of the block.

903

00:51:21,140 --> 00:51:23,950

There was the latrine.

904

00:51:23,950 --> 00:51:25,120

And this we had to go.

905

00:51:25,120 --> 00:51:30,880

So I guess what happened, one
of the youngsters had diarrhea.

906

00:51:30,880 --> 00:51:34,180

And he was running from
his block to the end

907

00:51:34,180 --> 00:51:37,990

and probably couldn't make it.

908

00:51:37,990 --> 00:51:40,840

And he went behind the barracks.

909

00:51:40,840 --> 00:51:42,863

And some of the guards--

910
00:51:42,863 --> 00:51:44,530
I want you to know
when I emphasize this

911
00:51:44,530 --> 00:51:49,000
that all these guards
were not Germans.

912
00:51:49,000 --> 00:51:53,980
We already had Ukrainian,
Latvians, Lithuanians,

913
00:51:53,980 --> 00:51:56,260
Estonians, all civilians.

914
00:51:56,260 --> 00:51:58,000
No German soldiers.

915
00:51:58,000 --> 00:52:00,410
No uniforms, all
civilian clothes

916
00:52:00,410 --> 00:52:04,000
with swastika band and rifles.

917
00:52:04,000 --> 00:52:06,430
And they caught him.

918
00:52:06,430 --> 00:52:11,110
The next morning when we got
up at Appell, you stay outside.

919
00:52:11,110 --> 00:52:14,740
And some boys had
to dig a grave.

920
00:52:14,740 --> 00:52:18,654
Standing right down,
they put them him in.

921

00:52:18,654 --> 00:52:23,500
And they shovel the sand back
in with him standing about

922
00:52:23,500 --> 00:52:28,040
up so deep to the chin.

923
00:52:28,040 --> 00:52:33,870
And we had to go
through and go to work.

924
00:52:33,870 --> 00:52:35,650
And the agony of the all day.

925
00:52:35,650 --> 00:52:36,280
What happened?

926
00:52:36,280 --> 00:52:37,510
Did they take him up?

927
00:52:37,510 --> 00:52:38,500
What happened?

928
00:52:38,500 --> 00:52:42,400
When he came home from work,
of course, he was dead.

929
00:52:42,400 --> 00:52:45,820
They had to dig a grave behind
the barracks, dump him in.

930
00:52:45,820 --> 00:52:48,010
And this was another episode.

931
00:52:48,010 --> 00:52:51,550
So when you talk
about atrocities,

932
00:52:51,550 --> 00:52:54,460
I think they invented
so many things

933

00:52:54,460 --> 00:52:58,610
and what to do with human beings
that I could hardly scratch.

934
00:52:58,610 --> 00:53:03,670
I don't think the
dogs could be treated

935
00:53:03,670 --> 00:53:06,770
this way as human beings were.

936
00:53:06,770 --> 00:53:08,080
And as I told you, we went on.

937
00:53:08,080 --> 00:53:10,570
We came to Auschwitz.

938
00:53:10,570 --> 00:53:11,350
In Auschwitz--

939
00:53:11,350 --> 00:53:13,840
Excuse me, in this camp,
there was nobody there

940
00:53:13,840 --> 00:53:17,260
who wore a German uniform or
there were no Germans there?

941
00:53:17,260 --> 00:53:18,670
No, German uniform.

942
00:53:18,670 --> 00:53:22,810
There were Volksdeutsche,
Poles of German descent.

943
00:53:22,810 --> 00:53:26,750
Some of the guards were
Ukrainian, Latvian, Lithuanian.

944
00:53:26,750 --> 00:53:32,470
I never saw one single uniform
German soldier from October

945

00:53:32,470 --> 00:53:36,670
of 1940 until August of 1943.

946

00:53:36,670 --> 00:53:39,460
There was no German
soldiers with uniforms.

947

00:53:39,460 --> 00:53:44,320
It was all civilians, because
this was all civilian labor.

948

00:53:44,320 --> 00:53:47,080
It was all contracted,
probably requisitioned

949

00:53:47,080 --> 00:53:49,870
by whoever company they was.

950

00:53:49,870 --> 00:53:51,790
And we were the slaves.

951

00:53:51,790 --> 00:53:55,730

952

00:53:55,730 --> 00:53:58,370
In Auschwitz, when
we came in, as I

953

00:53:58,370 --> 00:54:03,550
told you already, that we got
the best cleaning of our body

954

00:54:03,550 --> 00:54:05,240
that we ever had.

955

00:54:05,240 --> 00:54:07,280
He got the uniform,
the stripe uniform.

956

00:54:07,280 --> 00:54:08,390
They gave us a tattoo.

957

00:54:08,390 --> 00:54:10,250

And they gave me a number.

958

00:54:10,250 --> 00:54:17,990

And they transferred us to
different barracks and so on.

959

00:54:17,990 --> 00:54:21,770

The first kommando that
I worked was horrible,

960

00:54:21,770 --> 00:54:25,970

because, you know, you got
to understand in the camps

961

00:54:25,970 --> 00:54:30,500

even there was a
lot of protection

962

00:54:30,500 --> 00:54:33,110

if you know somebody.

963

00:54:33,110 --> 00:54:38,390

And there was a lot
of who the kappo was,

964

00:54:38,390 --> 00:54:41,210

who the block Elderste is,
who the Schreiber-- you know,

965

00:54:41,210 --> 00:54:45,600

each block in Birkenau had
a block Elderste, which

966

00:54:45,600 --> 00:54:47,930

was the block leader.

967

00:54:47,930 --> 00:54:52,310

Then you had a Schreiber,
who runs down who died,

968

00:54:52,310 --> 00:54:53,725

who, you know, and so on.

969

00:54:53,725 --> 00:54:57,780

If somebody died, the
new block, overnight, you

970

00:54:57,780 --> 00:55:00,950

got to drag them out, stay at
the Appell behind the barracks

971

00:55:00,950 --> 00:55:01,640

to count.

972

00:55:01,640 --> 00:55:02,930

Everything had to count.

973

00:55:02,930 --> 00:55:06,020

It was so methodical that
everything had to be on record.

974

00:55:06,020 --> 00:55:09,470

Everything had to be--
it was so bureaucratic,

975

00:55:09,470 --> 00:55:14,792

that everything that you did
was recorded day and so on.

976

00:55:14,792 --> 00:55:17,630

In fact, I found
later my own records

977

00:55:17,630 --> 00:55:20,330

after the war,
where I worked, when

978

00:55:20,330 --> 00:55:22,610

I came in, because I
didn't remember dates.

979

00:55:22,610 --> 00:55:24,980

Was it Monday or
Tuesday or what day?

980

00:55:24,980 --> 00:55:28,940

I have now all the records,
when I came in, when I went out,

981

00:55:28,940 --> 00:55:32,060

and how I was transferred,
and everything.

982

00:55:32,060 --> 00:55:37,940

So in Birkenau, I made
a remark to someone--

983

00:55:37,940 --> 00:55:40,910

and I want to make it in here--

984

00:55:40,910 --> 00:55:44,950

is when I came to
Auschwitz to Birkenau,

985

00:55:44,950 --> 00:55:50,950

I said it was like going
from hell to heaven.

986

00:55:50,950 --> 00:55:53,530

And I'm sure a lot of people
will probably disagree.

987

00:55:53,530 --> 00:55:57,670

How could you compare hell
to heaven and calling heaven

988

00:55:57,670 --> 00:55:59,080

Auschwitz?

989

00:55:59,080 --> 00:56:01,270

And I will give you
real in my analogy

990

00:56:01,270 --> 00:56:09,200

what I meant when I was already
a few weeks in Birkenau.

991

00:56:09,200 --> 00:56:12,997

I was assigned to a job to
work on, what they call it.

992

00:56:12,997 --> 00:56:15,080

I don't know how you would
describe it in English.

993

00:56:15,080 --> 00:56:17,120

It's called lorry.

994

00:56:17,120 --> 00:56:20,240

It was real small
sitings railroads,

995

00:56:20,240 --> 00:56:23,870

where we used to dig and
load it and the lorry.

996

00:56:23,870 --> 00:56:27,095

And you push it, and
they come back empty.

997

00:56:27,095 --> 00:56:28,220

And then you load it again.

998

00:56:28,220 --> 00:56:29,910

And it was pretty hard work.

999

00:56:29,910 --> 00:56:33,055

But I think, I guess I
was young, I could do it.

1000

00:56:33,055 --> 00:56:33,680

I don't think--

1001

00:56:33,680 --> 00:56:36,000

Did the work have a purpose
or was it just work for--

1002

00:56:36,000 --> 00:56:40,250

Some it was purposely, it

was purpose, was building.

1003

00:56:40,250 --> 00:56:45,290

It was all kind of mountainous
area and some other area.

1004

00:56:45,290 --> 00:56:47,090

Some people were
assigned to the Buna

1005

00:56:47,090 --> 00:56:50,730

Werke, which was,
what do you call it,

1006

00:56:50,730 --> 00:56:52,400

with airplanes and so on.

1007

00:56:52,400 --> 00:56:53,270

There was a lot of--

1008

00:56:53,270 --> 00:56:57,080

some of them was just
to keep you busy.

1009

00:56:57,080 --> 00:57:01,010

And I worked on
the-- and every day,

1010

00:57:01,010 --> 00:57:04,010

and the reason I made
this remark heaven is

1011

00:57:04,010 --> 00:57:08,180

when you went to work and
you line up behind each block

1012

00:57:08,180 --> 00:57:12,260

every morning and they count
you and you start marching

1013

00:57:12,260 --> 00:57:14,990

and you go in with
this music going in,

1014
00:57:14,990 --> 00:57:16,700
with this music coming back.

1015
00:57:16,700 --> 00:57:19,580
And all this music
was all like you

1016
00:57:19,580 --> 00:57:22,160
would go to the Metropolitan
Opera now, you know,

1017
00:57:22,160 --> 00:57:23,600
and hear classical music.

1018
00:57:23,600 --> 00:57:25,940
It wasn't any rock or jazz.

1019
00:57:25,940 --> 00:57:28,370
It was classical
music, beautiful music.

1020
00:57:28,370 --> 00:57:34,165
And here you see violinists and
bass and cellos and beautiful.

1021
00:57:34,165 --> 00:57:35,870
And marched to the music.

1022
00:57:35,870 --> 00:57:37,700
And you feel like you lifted up.

1023
00:57:37,700 --> 00:57:39,590
And then you come back home.

1024
00:57:39,590 --> 00:57:41,450
And you see all
the people mostly

1025
00:57:41,450 --> 00:57:45,560
like dead zombies walking
to work and dead of them

1026
00:57:45,560 --> 00:57:47,000
coming back.

1027
00:57:47,000 --> 00:57:49,350
And every day you
could see on both sides

1028
00:57:49,350 --> 00:57:52,160
of the wires, which
were electrified,

1029
00:57:52,160 --> 00:57:54,950
you could see people hanging.

1030
00:57:54,950 --> 00:57:57,860
Every day, there wasn't a
day that I was in Birkenau

1031
00:57:57,860 --> 00:57:59,750
that you wouldn't see
a few people hanging

1032
00:57:59,750 --> 00:58:00,830
on the barbed wire.

1033
00:58:00,830 --> 00:58:03,770
I guess they probably
felt enough is enough,

1034
00:58:03,770 --> 00:58:05,898
and they commit suicide.

1035
00:58:05,898 --> 00:58:07,940
Excuse me, Leo, we have
to stop for a few minutes

1036
00:58:07,940 --> 00:58:09,020
to change the tape.

1037
00:58:09,020 --> 00:58:10,310
So we'll continue momentarily.

1038

00:58:10,310 --> 00:58:10,810

OK.

1039

00:58:10,810 --> 00:58:12,160

OK.

1040

00:58:12,160 --> 00:58:20,000