

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:11,820

2  
00:00:11,820 --> 00:00:12,500  
Continue, Leo.

3  
00:00:12,500 --> 00:00:15,630

4  
00:00:15,630 --> 00:00:19,800  
I would like to continue  
why on I call Birkenau

5  
00:00:19,800 --> 00:00:22,560  
a heaven instead of hell.

6  
00:00:22,560 --> 00:00:27,660  
I told you about that every  
day, as long as I was there,

7  
00:00:27,660 --> 00:00:31,860  
we saw youngsters, to the  
right and to the left,

8  
00:00:31,860 --> 00:00:33,780  
hanging onto barbed wire.

9  
00:00:33,780 --> 00:00:38,585  
I guess they had enough  
living under this condition,

10  
00:00:38,585 --> 00:00:40,640  
and they committed suicide.

11  
00:00:40,640 --> 00:00:45,410  
The second thing was, also,  
that even though that you didn't

12  
00:00:45,410 --> 00:00:48,680  
do it yourself,  
you were selected,

13

00:00:48,680 --> 00:00:54,110

and I will give you an  
example how it worked.

14

00:00:54,110 --> 00:00:57,230

Once, every so often,  
you come home from work.

15

00:00:57,230 --> 00:00:59,780

You line up behind  
because they count you.

16

00:00:59,780 --> 00:01:01,370

Then you go into  
the block, whatever

17

00:01:01,370 --> 00:01:02,900

block you're appointed to.

18

00:01:02,900 --> 00:01:05,180

My block was 28.

19

00:01:05,180 --> 00:01:10,400

And we start lining up to  
go to the front to the door,

20

00:01:10,400 --> 00:01:13,230

and you had two assessments.

21

00:01:13,230 --> 00:01:15,800

You had somebody who  
was giving you the soup

22

00:01:15,800 --> 00:01:17,930

and you had your  
canister with you.

23

00:01:17,930 --> 00:01:21,290

And they will ask certain  
people their number.

24

00:01:21,290 --> 00:01:22,220  
There was no name.

25  
00:01:22,220 --> 00:01:25,840  
There was no such name as  
Leo Laufer on the record.

26  
00:01:25,840 --> 00:01:27,590  
They did have a record,  
they knew my name,

27  
00:01:27,590 --> 00:01:29,540  
but they knew my number.

28  
00:01:29,540 --> 00:01:32,060  
And they ask your number.

29  
00:01:32,060 --> 00:01:33,680  
And it was like catch-22.

30  
00:01:33,680 --> 00:01:34,580  
You never knew.

31  
00:01:34,580 --> 00:01:38,810  
If you give them the number,  
are you going to remain?

32  
00:01:38,810 --> 00:01:40,610  
If you give them  
the number, you're

33  
00:01:40,610 --> 00:01:43,610  
going to go to the  
crematorium, because when

34  
00:01:43,610 --> 00:01:50,510  
we were in camp, in Lager D,  
which was called the labor

35  
00:01:50,510 --> 00:01:53,900  
camp, arbeitslager.

36

00:01:53,900 --> 00:01:56,330

We saw the chimneys.

37

00:01:56,330 --> 00:01:58,190

We smelled the flesh.

38

00:01:58,190 --> 00:02:01,490

We knew what was  
going on, but we never

39

00:02:01,490 --> 00:02:05,060

got close enough to actually  
see what transpired there.

40

00:02:05,060 --> 00:02:08,270

Otherwise, I wouldn't  
be here to tell you.

41

00:02:08,270 --> 00:02:10,190

I'm sure some of the  
boys knew about it.

42

00:02:10,190 --> 00:02:15,920

We had two kommandos, like the  
Kanada and the Sonderkommando.

43

00:02:15,920 --> 00:02:17,960

They knew what was  
going on, we did not.

44

00:02:17,960 --> 00:02:21,110

But they were separated from  
us, so we never really got

45

00:02:21,110 --> 00:02:23,660

any connections with them.

46

00:02:23,660 --> 00:02:25,520

Then they ask you the number.

47

00:02:25,520 --> 00:02:28,790

And I remember one  
time, and especially

48  
00:02:28,790 --> 00:02:31,850  
if you didn't look  
so good, or maybe

49  
00:02:31,850 --> 00:02:34,880  
you just got through  
diarrhea or some sickness

50  
00:02:34,880 --> 00:02:40,370  
and you looked like what  
we used to call Muselmann.

51  
00:02:40,370 --> 00:02:42,920  
I don't know if you have  
this expression of Muselmann.

52  
00:02:42,920 --> 00:02:45,830  
It's like a zombie, dead  
body walking around.

53  
00:02:45,830 --> 00:02:47,430  
And they take your number.

54  
00:02:47,430 --> 00:02:50,270  
And when you got  
into the block, later

55  
00:02:50,270 --> 00:02:53,690  
on when they closed the  
door, they called you number

56  
00:02:53,690 --> 00:02:56,285  
and you remained in the block.

57  
00:02:56,285 --> 00:02:58,160  
The rest of them go to  
work the next morning,

58  
00:02:58,160 --> 00:03:01,490  
and then they take you  
away and you are gone.

59

00:03:01,490 --> 00:03:04,850

You don't know what  
happened to you, and so on.

60

00:03:04,850 --> 00:03:07,280

I will tell you  
one incident that

61

00:03:07,280 --> 00:03:14,570

happened to me that I don't  
know what drove me, maybe some

62

00:03:14,570 --> 00:03:17,990

will inside or maybe God  
or maybe an angel told

63

00:03:17,990 --> 00:03:19,910

me to do this thing.

64

00:03:19,910 --> 00:03:24,830

My number is 143-248.

65

00:03:24,830 --> 00:03:28,100

And I remember just a week  
before, I was really sick.

66

00:03:28,100 --> 00:03:29,370

I also had diarrhea.

67

00:03:29,370 --> 00:03:32,180

Nobody got through  
that without having it.

68

00:03:32,180 --> 00:03:33,530

And I was so skinny, dried up.

69

00:03:33,530 --> 00:03:36,290

I probably weighed  
maybe 75 pounds.

70

00:03:36,290 --> 00:03:39,300

And I work, the same thing.

71  
00:03:39,300 --> 00:03:41,300  
There was two assessments,  
asking numbers,

72  
00:03:41,300 --> 00:03:44,600  
and I gave him 143-284.

73  
00:03:44,600 --> 00:03:48,125  
I just switched it, 248 to 284.

74  
00:03:48,125 --> 00:03:50,000  
And I didn't know if I  
did it right or wrong.

75  
00:03:50,000 --> 00:03:51,902  
I had a feeling if they  
asked me the number,

76  
00:03:51,902 --> 00:03:53,360  
that they're going  
to take me away,

77  
00:03:53,360 --> 00:03:55,450  
because I was barely walking.

78  
00:03:55,450 --> 00:04:00,230  
And I walked into the block 28,  
and I remember I was sleeping.

79  
00:04:00,230 --> 00:04:03,320  
I don't know if you know  
the perimeter of the camps.

80  
00:04:03,320 --> 00:04:05,990  
There was a bank on the bottom  
and then a bank in the middle

81  
00:04:05,990 --> 00:04:07,220  
and a bunk on the top.

82  
00:04:07,220 --> 00:04:08,720

And I was on the bottom.

83

00:04:08,720 --> 00:04:11,360

I was privileged,  
because you didn't

84

00:04:11,360 --> 00:04:13,980

have to jump up so high,  
because I was small

85

00:04:13,980 --> 00:04:15,620

and I really couldn't get up.

86

00:04:15,620 --> 00:04:18,980

And I remember there was a  
fellow that I got acquainted

87

00:04:18,980 --> 00:04:22,610

with in Auschwitz, Friedman.

88

00:04:22,610 --> 00:04:25,280

He was the first one  
and I number two.

89

00:04:25,280 --> 00:04:28,370

There were six of us in  
this bunk on the bottom.

90

00:04:28,370 --> 00:04:32,630

And the same night,  
the blockalteste

91

00:04:32,630 --> 00:04:35,720

calls up number 143-284.

92

00:04:35,720 --> 00:04:38,720

143-284.

93

00:04:38,720 --> 00:04:41,390

I don't answer  
because mine's 248.

94



00:04:41,390 --> 00:04:45,110

Just logically, I didn't  
answer because I did it almost

95

00:04:45,110 --> 00:04:47,810  
purposely, because I was scared.

96

00:04:47,810 --> 00:04:50,150  
And he kept on hollering  
and nobody answered,

97

00:04:50,150 --> 00:04:55,370  
because maybe 248, 284 was  
in another block somewhere.

98

00:04:55,370 --> 00:05:00,440  
And sure enough, the next  
morning, we all go to work.

99

00:05:00,440 --> 00:05:04,460  
And Friedman, his  
number, he remained, too.

100

00:05:04,460 --> 00:05:06,510  
He didn't look too good, either.

101

00:05:06,510 --> 00:05:07,430  
And he remained.

102

00:05:07,430 --> 00:05:10,530  
When he came back from  
work, Friedman was gone.

103

00:05:10,530 --> 00:05:12,650  
So we knew right  
away, because there

104

00:05:12,650 --> 00:05:15,620  
was no secret about the  
crematorium down there to us,

105

00:05:15,620 --> 00:05:19,340  
to the thousands and thousands

who were in Birkenau.

106  
00:05:19,340 --> 00:05:21,510  
So I guess I saved my life.

107  
00:05:21,510 --> 00:05:27,650  
I went through Auschwitz for  
a year, from August of 1943

108  
00:05:27,650 --> 00:05:31,220  
to October of 1944.

109  
00:05:31,220 --> 00:05:33,020  
I can go through  
a lot of episodes,

110  
00:05:33,020 --> 00:05:36,650  
but I think time will  
probably be limited to it.

111  
00:05:36,650 --> 00:05:38,150  
Maybe some other time.

112  
00:05:38,150 --> 00:05:40,460  
But I will give you  
some things that

113  
00:05:40,460 --> 00:05:47,100  
really happened that had an  
effect on me later in life.

114  
00:05:47,100 --> 00:05:49,730

115  
00:05:49,730 --> 00:05:52,900  
I also had the privilege later  
on to be transferred to another

116  
00:05:52,900 --> 00:05:56,410  
kommando, which was  
one of the best,

117

00:05:56,410 --> 00:06:00,970  
and this was called  
the [NON-ENGLISH]..

118  
00:06:00,970 --> 00:06:05,590  
They were looking  
for textile workers.

119  
00:06:05,590 --> 00:06:09,910  
Since my father supposedly  
worked in the textile business

120  
00:06:09,910 --> 00:06:11,270  
by remote control--

121  
00:06:11,270 --> 00:06:16,750  
it was a textile business,  
practical nothing.

122  
00:06:16,750 --> 00:06:20,770  
So I considered myself,  
I'm a textile worker.

123  
00:06:20,770 --> 00:06:23,260  
And I remember since I  
was 12, I was working

124  
00:06:23,260 --> 00:06:26,800  
for a cousin of mine in Lodge--

125  
00:06:26,800 --> 00:06:31,600  
in a little, small factory  
making men's socks.

126  
00:06:31,600 --> 00:06:33,430  
So I considered this textile.

127  
00:06:33,430 --> 00:06:34,270  
I'm an expert.

128  
00:06:34,270 --> 00:06:37,240  
And so I registered them  
as a textile worker.

129  
00:06:37,240 --> 00:06:39,070  
And they took me to  
this place, which

130  
00:06:39,070 --> 00:06:40,870  
was one of the best  
places in the region.

131  
00:06:40,870 --> 00:06:42,460  
It was the best place.

132  
00:06:42,460 --> 00:06:45,640  
It was inside barracks.

133  
00:06:45,640 --> 00:06:50,350  
And they used to shred up  
strips of clothes, probably

134  
00:06:50,350 --> 00:06:53,080  
the ones who died or took  
them away to crematorium,

135  
00:06:53,080 --> 00:06:54,460  
in small strips.

136  
00:06:54,460 --> 00:06:58,840  
And they used pleat it to  
make some straps for rifles

137  
00:06:58,840 --> 00:07:01,390  
for the army,  
because I guess they

138  
00:07:01,390 --> 00:07:02,680  
didn't have any [INAUDIBLE].

139  
00:07:02,680 --> 00:07:05,560  
So this was the type of  
work, and it was sitting down

140  
00:07:05,560 --> 00:07:08,080

in a chair, because you  
had to have a nail on it

141  
00:07:08,080 --> 00:07:09,990  
to put it in pleat, and so on.

142  
00:07:09,990 --> 00:07:13,660  
So it was pretty good work.

143  
00:07:13,660 --> 00:07:18,280  
We had a couple  
from Czechoslovakia,

144  
00:07:18,280 --> 00:07:21,250  
and then we had another couple.

145  
00:07:21,250 --> 00:07:24,280  
I remember Kurt was  
a little short fellow

146  
00:07:24,280 --> 00:07:26,230  
with a green  
triangle, and this was

147  
00:07:26,230 --> 00:07:30,520  
the real murderers, or whatever,  
if he had a green thing.

148  
00:07:30,520 --> 00:07:32,350  
And they were both very tough.

149  
00:07:32,350 --> 00:07:35,890  
But as long as you worked fast  
and good, they let you go.

150  
00:07:35,890 --> 00:07:38,560  
So it was [INAUDIBLE]  
bring you back a little--

151  
00:07:38,560 --> 00:07:39,880  
Were these kapos?

152

00:07:39,880 --> 00:07:40,730  
Yeah.

153  
00:07:40,730 --> 00:07:42,060  
Yeah, they were kapos.

154  
00:07:42,060 --> 00:07:43,540  
They were not Jewish.

155  
00:07:43,540 --> 00:07:45,640  
One of them was  
from Czechoslovakia.

156  
00:07:45,640 --> 00:07:48,550  
He spoke Czech, and the other  
one was a German, actually.

157  
00:07:48,550 --> 00:07:51,400  
He wasn't Jewish, either.

158  
00:07:51,400 --> 00:07:56,140  
And I worked down there, and  
I really didn't know how long,

159  
00:07:56,140 --> 00:07:58,000  
but I found out  
later after the war.

160  
00:07:58,000 --> 00:07:59,830  
I got my documents out.

161  
00:07:59,830 --> 00:08:02,530  
One day, I went into the  
[NON-ENGLISH] and I got out

162  
00:08:02,530 --> 00:08:04,520  
of the [NON-ENGLISH]

163  
00:08:04,520 --> 00:08:10,240  
And this was until October 1944.

164  
00:08:10,240 --> 00:08:14,710

Let me give you an episode  
that you probably heard of,

165  
00:08:14,710 --> 00:08:17,650  
what happened to the gypsies.

166  
00:08:17,650 --> 00:08:22,100  
The gypsies were in camp D.  
The camps were like A, B, C,

167  
00:08:22,100 --> 00:08:24,970  
D. We were in D,  
and then you had E

168  
00:08:24,970 --> 00:08:28,120  
and then you had F, which  
was the fraulein lager, which

169  
00:08:28,120 --> 00:08:29,945  
was the women's camp.

170  
00:08:29,945 --> 00:08:32,320  
In fact, at the [NON-ENGLISH],,  
we worked with some women

171  
00:08:32,320 --> 00:08:33,559  
together.

172  
00:08:33,559 --> 00:08:36,370  
In fact, I found a  
young lady who used

173  
00:08:36,370 --> 00:08:39,070  
to live in Munroe, New York.

174  
00:08:39,070 --> 00:08:42,010  
I found her later in Germany  
in one of the DP camps

175  
00:08:42,010 --> 00:08:44,290  
when I looked around,  
and found her alive.

176

00:08:44,290 --> 00:08:45,310

And she married.

177

00:08:45,310 --> 00:08:47,710

A very wonderful woman.

178

00:08:47,710 --> 00:08:53,260

So I reminisce about  
the [NON-ENGLISH]..

179

00:08:53,260 --> 00:08:59,920

In 1940, for one day, we used  
to have almost a pastime when

180

00:08:59,920 --> 00:09:01,985

we came home from work.

181

00:09:01,985 --> 00:09:03,860

I don't know if you can  
situate the barracks.

182

00:09:03,860 --> 00:09:05,530

There was an alley.

183

00:09:05,530 --> 00:09:07,660

The barracks were  
facing this way,

184

00:09:07,660 --> 00:09:09,970

and then you had another  
small alley in the back,

185

00:09:09,970 --> 00:09:11,830

and then you had  
the barbed wire.

186

00:09:11,830 --> 00:09:14,020

Then you had another  
barbed wire, electric,

187

00:09:14,020 --> 00:09:15,858

and then you had the next camp.



188  
00:09:15,858 --> 00:09:16,900  
And we used to come home.

189  
00:09:16,900 --> 00:09:19,570  
We used to go, some of us,  
and sneak out to the back

190  
00:09:19,570 --> 00:09:21,410  
and listen to the gypsies.

191  
00:09:21,410 --> 00:09:26,510  
And I guess we thought they  
were more privileged in us.

192  
00:09:26,510 --> 00:09:29,680  
And the reason they were  
more privileged, in camp E,

193  
00:09:29,680 --> 00:09:33,730  
they had their entire  
families together.

194  
00:09:33,730 --> 00:09:38,770  
Women, grandmothers, children,  
everybody was in the barracks.

195  
00:09:38,770 --> 00:09:40,990  
And they used to  
play the harmonica.

196  
00:09:40,990 --> 00:09:43,840  
So for us, it was coming  
a lot like soothing,

197  
00:09:43,840 --> 00:09:45,640  
a different way of life.

198  
00:09:45,640 --> 00:09:49,690  
You come home from hard work and  
you listen to this harmonica,

199

00:09:49,690 --> 00:09:50,800  
and so on.

200  
00:09:50,800 --> 00:09:54,130  
Then one night, we  
got up in the morning

201  
00:09:54,130 --> 00:09:57,800  
and the camp was totally empty.

202  
00:09:57,800 --> 00:09:59,710  
I don't know how  
many thousand, but I

203  
00:09:59,710 --> 00:10:01,660  
would say tens of thousands.

204  
00:10:01,660 --> 00:10:04,780  
I'm sure they have some  
records of how many gypsies

205  
00:10:04,780 --> 00:10:06,620  
were eliminated in one night.

206  
00:10:06,620 --> 00:10:09,850  
And as we lined up the next  
morning and we went to work,

207  
00:10:09,850 --> 00:10:13,090  
you could see the  
chimneys blasting.

208  
00:10:13,090 --> 00:10:15,860  
You could actually see  
the fire coming out.

209  
00:10:15,860 --> 00:10:18,940  
It must be pushed  
at such a tempo.

210  
00:10:18,940 --> 00:10:20,630  
It was horrible.

211

00:10:20,630 --> 00:10:24,370

And when we came home,  
all of them gone.

212

00:10:24,370 --> 00:10:27,700

Not a gypsy was in the camp.

213

00:10:27,700 --> 00:10:33,010

A few days later, a  
new camp filled up,

214

00:10:33,010 --> 00:10:38,500

which was called the  
zigeunerlager, gypsy camp.

215

00:10:38,500 --> 00:10:40,060

Got filled up.

216

00:10:40,060 --> 00:10:41,620

And who was it?

217

00:10:41,620 --> 00:10:44,320

None other but the  
remnants of the Jews

218

00:10:44,320 --> 00:10:50,020

from the Lodz ghetto,  
October of 1944.

219

00:10:50,020 --> 00:10:54,280

Of course, when we went to  
the wire to listen, hollering,

220

00:10:54,280 --> 00:10:56,860

lodge, lodge, lodge.

221

00:10:56,860 --> 00:10:59,440

Of course, I did, too.

222

00:10:59,440 --> 00:11:00,670

I went to the wire.

223

00:11:00,670 --> 00:11:05,380

And of course, you've got to  
realize that from one wire

224

00:11:05,380 --> 00:11:07,660

to the next camp,  
I would say would

225

00:11:07,660 --> 00:11:10,540

probably maybe 30  
to 40 to 50 feet

226

00:11:10,540 --> 00:11:12,910

away, so you had to scream.

227

00:11:12,910 --> 00:11:14,680

So everybody was  
screaming, did you

228

00:11:14,680 --> 00:11:17,140

see so-and-so and did  
you see so-and-so?

229

00:11:17,140 --> 00:11:21,130

Of course, I was screaming,  
Laufer, Laufer, Laufer.

230

00:11:21,130 --> 00:11:27,070

Finally, somebody showed up, and  
I recognized my older brother,

231

00:11:27,070 --> 00:11:29,040

who was married.

232

00:11:29,040 --> 00:11:32,530

This was October 1944.

233

00:11:32,530 --> 00:11:37,010

The joy that I had to  
see somebody, my gosh.

234

00:11:37,010 --> 00:11:42,170

I don't know if anybody, since  
'40, what happened to them.

235  
00:11:42,170 --> 00:11:44,720  
And I found out  
just a few years ago

236  
00:11:44,720 --> 00:11:48,950  
that a first cousin of  
mine, who was now in Israel,

237  
00:11:48,950 --> 00:11:52,610  
by the same name,  
Schmerl Laufer,

238  
00:11:52,610 --> 00:11:57,920  
after my grandfather, which  
was my father's brother's son.

239  
00:11:57,920 --> 00:12:00,950  
We were both named after  
the same grandfather.

240  
00:12:00,950 --> 00:12:04,730  
Was standing next to my brother.

241  
00:12:04,730 --> 00:12:06,080  
I couldn't focus on him.

242  
00:12:06,080 --> 00:12:08,810  
I did not know until I found  
out just six years ago when

243  
00:12:08,810 --> 00:12:12,440  
I found him that he was one.

244  
00:12:12,440 --> 00:12:15,200  
So of course my  
first reaction was

245  
00:12:15,200 --> 00:12:19,760  
to ask Schmerl what  
happened to my family.

246  
00:12:19,760 --> 00:12:26,240  
So he told me they  
took them away in 1942.

247  
00:12:26,240 --> 00:12:29,960  
I don't think he  
remembered the date.

248  
00:12:29,960 --> 00:12:32,480  
So when they took him away  
in 1942, and I said, Schmerl,

249  
00:12:32,480 --> 00:12:33,450  
where did they go?

250  
00:12:33,450 --> 00:12:34,270  
What camp?

251  
00:12:34,270 --> 00:12:35,630  
Where are they?

252  
00:12:35,630 --> 00:12:36,670  
He said, I don't know.

253  
00:12:36,670 --> 00:12:39,470  
They took him away in 1942.

254  
00:12:39,470 --> 00:12:43,280  
And of course, the agony  
that I had in those days,

255  
00:12:43,280 --> 00:12:46,610  
even though believe  
me, you become

256  
00:12:46,610 --> 00:12:50,212  
so hard that life  
didn't mean a thing.

257  
00:12:50,212 --> 00:12:53,780  
You could step over dead

bodies, it didn't mean a thing.

258

00:12:53,780 --> 00:12:59,790

But I got very emotional  
because he asked me

259

00:12:59,790 --> 00:13:02,340

what happened to his wife.

260

00:13:02,340 --> 00:13:06,240

And I thought at the time  
that he had two children

261

00:13:06,240 --> 00:13:08,850

and I found out later after  
the war from the documents

262

00:13:08,850 --> 00:13:09,980

that he had three children.

263

00:13:09,980 --> 00:13:11,850

And he had a little  
boy who was born

264

00:13:11,850 --> 00:13:13,860

in 1940 that I did not know.

265

00:13:13,860 --> 00:13:26,130

Of course when he  
asked me, excuse me,

266

00:13:26,130 --> 00:13:31,820

and what happened to his  
wife, I told him I don't know.

267

00:13:31,820 --> 00:13:33,690

Of course, we knew  
exactly what happened,

268

00:13:33,690 --> 00:13:37,740

because the only woman  
who got into the camp

269

00:13:37,740 --> 00:13:40,740

was probably single one  
who came by themselves.

270

00:13:40,740 --> 00:13:43,980

All of them were  
like young ones,

271

00:13:43,980 --> 00:13:46,500

you know, they never  
took any older ones.

272

00:13:46,500 --> 00:13:49,495

And for her to come when I told  
at the time was two children

273

00:13:49,495 --> 00:13:52,530

and they were all  
small, and I knew.

274

00:13:52,530 --> 00:13:55,320

And I said, Schmerl,  
I don't know.

275

00:13:55,320 --> 00:13:58,110

And six years ago when  
I found his cousin,

276

00:13:58,110 --> 00:14:02,220

he was trying to  
amplify because you

277

00:14:02,220 --> 00:14:05,220

know my memory doesn't  
reflect so much because I

278

00:14:05,220 --> 00:14:07,530

went on and on to other camps.

279

00:14:07,530 --> 00:14:08,940

He remembered.

280



00:14:08,940 --> 00:14:11,250

He said, Leo, you  
don't remember but I

281

00:14:11,250 --> 00:14:14,790

was standing next to  
Schmerl you and I remember

282

00:14:14,790 --> 00:14:17,700

you threw a little  
piece of bread, small,

283

00:14:17,700 --> 00:14:22,453

what used to call a [? pica ?]  
of bread, and he caught it.

284

00:14:22,453 --> 00:14:24,120

And he said you don't  
know what it meant

285

00:14:24,120 --> 00:14:26,070

to him because he was with him.

286

00:14:26,070 --> 00:14:31,290

Unfortunately, my brother never  
survived and my cousin did.

287

00:14:31,290 --> 00:14:34,150

288

00:14:34,150 --> 00:14:36,160

So this was gratifying.

289

00:14:36,160 --> 00:14:38,610

I don't know gratifying  
or not to see somebody

290

00:14:38,610 --> 00:14:46,700

and then it gave  
me an extra zest

291

00:14:46,700 --> 00:14:50,580

to survive, to find out what

happened because I did not

292

00:14:50,580 --> 00:14:51,080  
know.

293

00:14:51,080 --> 00:14:56,780  
He was in the Gypsy camp and  
I was in the regular camp.

294

00:14:56,780 --> 00:14:58,520  
And we kept on going to work.

295

00:14:58,520 --> 00:15:01,465  
Two weeks later he disappeared.

296

00:15:01,465 --> 00:15:02,090  
He didn't come.

297

00:15:02,090 --> 00:15:06,320  
Because he came every night  
just to say hello and so on.

298

00:15:06,320 --> 00:15:08,270  
There was no conversation  
because he did not

299

00:15:08,270 --> 00:15:10,790  
know anything what  
happened to my family.

300

00:15:10,790 --> 00:15:14,630  
So two weeks later he was gone.

301

00:15:14,630 --> 00:15:17,690  
I did not know where he went.

302

00:15:17,690 --> 00:15:22,890  
Then, a week or so  
later I was transferred.

303

00:15:22,890 --> 00:15:23,840  
We went to Dachau.

304  
00:15:23,840 --> 00:15:26,460  
We stayed a very short time.

305  
00:15:26,460 --> 00:15:29,190  
From Dachau we went  
to Sachsenhausen,

306  
00:15:29,190 --> 00:15:33,090  
and from Sachsenhausen  
we went to Buchenwald.

307  
00:15:33,090 --> 00:15:37,680  
This was all in a period  
from around the latter part

308  
00:15:37,680 --> 00:15:45,040  
of October, probably early  
November, till April of 1945,

309  
00:15:45,040 --> 00:15:47,460  
so it was just a few months.

310  
00:15:47,460 --> 00:15:50,230

311  
00:15:50,230 --> 00:15:54,100  
Of course, Dachau  
wasn't really too bad.

312  
00:15:54,100 --> 00:15:56,320  
You were already an old soldier.

313  
00:15:56,320 --> 00:16:00,340  
You know how to discipline  
yourself and so on.

314  
00:16:00,340 --> 00:16:05,910  
Sachsenhausen was also not bad,  
but Buchenwald was horrible.

315  
00:16:05,910 --> 00:16:08,950

Buchenwald, if I would  
have remained in Buchenwald

316  
00:16:08,950 --> 00:16:12,010  
I don't think I  
would have survived.

317  
00:16:12,010 --> 00:16:15,880  
In Buchenwald I got very sick.

318  
00:16:15,880 --> 00:16:18,140  
It was typhus.

319  
00:16:18,140 --> 00:16:21,140  
And when you have  
typhus, forget about it.

320  
00:16:21,140 --> 00:16:23,240  
You almost never survive.

321  
00:16:23,240 --> 00:16:28,430  
I don't know by a  
miracle I got up.

322  
00:16:28,430 --> 00:16:30,140  
I went back to  
work and then they

323  
00:16:30,140 --> 00:16:33,590  
transferred a lot of  
people out of Buchenwald

324  
00:16:33,590 --> 00:16:36,110  
to different little camps.

325  
00:16:36,110 --> 00:16:38,670  
And the satellite camp, the  
way I understand, Ohrdruf,

326  
00:16:38,670 --> 00:16:41,870  
it was Ohrdruf satellite camp.

327

00:16:41,870 --> 00:16:46,250  
And we came to Ohrdruf and we  
stayed in Ohrdruf probably not

328  
00:16:46,250 --> 00:16:49,310  
over maybe around three  
months, approximately two

329  
00:16:49,310 --> 00:16:51,660  
to three months.

330  
00:16:51,660 --> 00:16:55,780  
Ohrdruf was a horrible camp.

331  
00:16:55,780 --> 00:16:59,760  
The reason it was horrible  
is because of the work

332  
00:16:59,760 --> 00:17:01,950  
that we did.

333  
00:17:01,950 --> 00:17:03,510  
I'll give you an example.

334  
00:17:03,510 --> 00:17:09,450  
The majority of the boys' work  
was in a mountainous area.

335  
00:17:09,450 --> 00:17:12,270  
Ohrdruf was situated  
between the Harz

336  
00:17:12,270 --> 00:17:17,040  
and the Thuringen mountains  
in East Germany now.

337  
00:17:17,040 --> 00:17:20,700  
In the mountains,  
they're more like rocks.

338  
00:17:20,700 --> 00:17:26,400  
And we understood from  
the books after the war

339  
00:17:26,400 --> 00:17:29,130  
that these mountains  
that we worked on

340  
00:17:29,130 --> 00:17:35,700  
was supposedly be the bunkers  
of all the treasures that

341  
00:17:35,700 --> 00:17:38,970  
Germany accumulated, the  
gold and silver and paintings

342  
00:17:38,970 --> 00:17:40,200  
and so on.

343  
00:17:40,200 --> 00:17:43,140  
And it's supposed to  
be the communications

344  
00:17:43,140 --> 00:17:51,930  
point for the last stop of the  
Germans before the war ended.

345  
00:17:51,930 --> 00:17:56,100  
And what we did, they used  
to take dynamite and put it

346  
00:17:56,100 --> 00:17:57,900  
between the rocks.

347  
00:17:57,900 --> 00:18:00,900  
And the dynamite, they  
blow it and the rocks

348  
00:18:00,900 --> 00:18:03,540  
used to spew out  
all over the place.

349  
00:18:03,540 --> 00:18:09,450  
We never had any helmets  
or special precautions.

350

00:18:09,450 --> 00:18:13,010

So we used to drag home boys, it  
was unbelievable, without arms,

351

00:18:13,010 --> 00:18:13,860

without legs.

352

00:18:13,860 --> 00:18:18,607

It was the tearing, just  
pieces of flesh coming off you.

353

00:18:18,607 --> 00:18:20,190

I don't know, I guess  
I was fortunate.

354

00:18:20,190 --> 00:18:24,210

And this was the most  
horrible kommando Most of it

355

00:18:24,210 --> 00:18:26,160

was down there.

356

00:18:26,160 --> 00:18:27,570

I was again fortunate.

357

00:18:27,570 --> 00:18:34,870

Probably about maybe six  
weeks before the liberation

358

00:18:34,870 --> 00:18:37,750

they were looking  
for a small group

359

00:18:37,750 --> 00:18:42,880

they called the kartoffel  
kommando, the potato command,

360

00:18:42,880 --> 00:18:46,840

which was practically the  
best kommando in the group.

361

00:18:46,840 --> 00:18:49,480

And I don't know,  
maybe I was so small

362  
00:18:49,480 --> 00:18:52,090  
that people had a pity  
for me or whatever.

363  
00:18:52,090 --> 00:18:55,810  
I don't know why, but I  
believe I was a good worker.

364  
00:18:55,810 --> 00:18:58,510  
Otherwise, they wouldn't  
put up with me for so long.

365  
00:18:58,510 --> 00:19:02,800  
So they selected  
themselves out a few boys.

366  
00:19:02,800 --> 00:19:08,830  
And the whole kommando  
consisted of 10 boys, and one

367  
00:19:08,830 --> 00:19:12,640  
what we call the leader  
of this small kommando.

368  
00:19:12,640 --> 00:19:16,900  
Plus we had a Ukrainian  
who was a guard.

369  
00:19:16,900 --> 00:19:21,160  
And he had a German  
Wehrmacht soldier.

370  
00:19:21,160 --> 00:19:25,120  
He used to tell us the  
horror stories about what

371  
00:19:25,120 --> 00:19:26,800  
was going on in the war.

372  
00:19:26,800 --> 00:19:31,810



He was a man I wish  
to God, really,

373

00:19:31,810 --> 00:19:36,380  
that I would have found him even  
though he was a German soldier.

374

00:19:36,380 --> 00:19:37,900  
He was with the Wehrmacht.

375

00:19:37,900 --> 00:19:41,260  
He was, I believe, 65 or older.

376

00:19:41,260 --> 00:19:44,230  
You could tell he  
was an older man.

377

00:19:44,230 --> 00:19:46,670  
He was like a  
sergeant or something.

378

00:19:46,670 --> 00:19:49,210  
He had some kind  
of a round stripe.

379

00:19:49,210 --> 00:19:50,420  
And he was very nice.

380

00:19:50,420 --> 00:19:55,210  
He didn't let this  
Ukrainian beat us.

381

00:19:55,210 --> 00:20:01,990  
He was over the soldier, so he  
used to guard us a little bit.

382

00:20:01,990 --> 00:20:07,280  
I felt that he had sympathy  
but he couldn't help himself.

383

00:20:07,280 --> 00:20:11,260  
He was in the [? trenches. ?]

384

00:20:11,260 --> 00:20:13,270

And we used to go to  
this kartoffel kommando,

385

00:20:13,270 --> 00:20:16,630

and one of the leaders,  
the leader of the 10 group,

386

00:20:16,630 --> 00:20:19,180

was a boy by the name of Sasha.

387

00:20:19,180 --> 00:20:24,890

He was a Russian POW who  
ran away from a POW camp.

388

00:20:24,890 --> 00:20:26,680

And of course they  
caught him and put him

389

00:20:26,680 --> 00:20:28,035

in a concentration camp.

390

00:20:28,035 --> 00:20:30,790

He was a very sharp  
young man, Russian.

391

00:20:30,790 --> 00:20:33,490

We spoke a little  
Polish and Russian.

392

00:20:33,490 --> 00:20:36,280

He was very good.

393

00:20:36,280 --> 00:20:39,970

And this was a tremendous  
place, because the reason

394

00:20:39,970 --> 00:20:44,650

I said that the German was so  
good, when we came home what

395

00:20:44,650 --> 00:20:48,190

we used to do, they used  
to have around in the area

396  
00:20:48,190 --> 00:20:51,940  
bunkers of potatoes  
where they covered it up

397  
00:20:51,940 --> 00:20:54,750  
with straw for the winter time.

398  
00:20:54,750 --> 00:20:56,290  
Then you take them  
out and we used

399  
00:20:56,290 --> 00:21:01,690  
to deliver potatoes to all these  
small camps around the area.

400  
00:21:01,690 --> 00:21:04,900  
So we used to load it  
on a truck and then

401  
00:21:04,900 --> 00:21:07,820  
when we came we used to unload  
it with shovels and so on.

402  
00:21:07,820 --> 00:21:13,580  
But every night, as long as I  
worked down there, this German,

403  
00:21:13,580 --> 00:21:15,940  
he wasn't an officer,  
he was like a sergeant,

404  
00:21:15,940 --> 00:21:17,350  
used to give us two potatoes.

405  
00:21:17,350 --> 00:21:20,200  
He said, put it in your pocket.

406  
00:21:20,200 --> 00:21:23,770  
And he was the one who let  
us go through the gate.

407  
00:21:23,770 --> 00:21:26,800  
Mind you, even though that you  
got something in camp, when

408  
00:21:26,800 --> 00:21:29,650  
you came in they frisk you.

409  
00:21:29,650 --> 00:21:31,060  
And he let us through the camp.

410  
00:21:31,060 --> 00:21:35,320  
And if you can imagine  
what two potatoes meant

411  
00:21:35,320 --> 00:21:42,020  
a day for survival,  
it's unbelievable.

412  
00:21:42,020 --> 00:21:46,010  
And what we did,  
when we came home

413  
00:21:46,010 --> 00:21:50,000  
we used to have this oven  
in the barracks used to be

414  
00:21:50,000 --> 00:21:51,840  
burned with coal and so on.

415  
00:21:51,840 --> 00:21:56,530  
We used to put the potatoes  
in the ashes, used to bake it.

416  
00:21:56,530 --> 00:21:57,685  
It was like caviar.

417  
00:21:57,685 --> 00:22:00,400

418  
00:22:00,400 --> 00:22:01,570  
And it was good.

419  
00:22:01,570 --> 00:22:03,370  
It was sustenance.

420  
00:22:03,370 --> 00:22:04,600  
It was something.

421  
00:22:04,600 --> 00:22:07,840  
And then here is already  
this is already March.

422  
00:22:07,840 --> 00:22:10,830

423  
00:22:10,830 --> 00:22:14,520  
Around the latter  
part of March--

424  
00:22:14,520 --> 00:22:17,820  
No, let me tell you an  
episode of what happened.

425  
00:22:17,820 --> 00:22:20,250  
We unloaded a truck of potatoes.

426  
00:22:20,250 --> 00:22:24,000  
This was about three weeks  
before the liberation.

427  
00:22:24,000 --> 00:22:28,410  
We unloaded the truck of  
potatoes and I was, I believe,

428  
00:22:28,410 --> 00:22:30,570  
I was a very diligent worker.

429  
00:22:30,570 --> 00:22:33,930  
And I was trying to get off  
the last potato from the truck,

430  
00:22:33,930 --> 00:22:37,140  
took the shovel and scrape

it and put it all out.

431

00:22:37,140 --> 00:22:44,700

And as I jumped off the truck,  
I got kicked by this guard,

432

00:22:44,700 --> 00:22:46,350

by this Ukrainian.

433

00:22:46,350 --> 00:22:52,050

And he hit me on my upper  
leg and I collapsed.

434

00:22:52,050 --> 00:22:56,250

I believe I was unconscious,  
because when I woke up

435

00:22:56,250 --> 00:22:59,550

I was in the dispensary.

436

00:22:59,550 --> 00:23:03,420

When I came to the  
dispensary, it was swollen,

437

00:23:03,420 --> 00:23:07,620

it was abscessed and so on,  
and I stated in the dispensary.

438

00:23:07,620 --> 00:23:09,810

In the dispensary it's dead.

439

00:23:09,810 --> 00:23:14,580

And you go into a dispensary,  
if I wouldn't have the courage

440

00:23:14,580 --> 00:23:16,860

to get out, I would  
have never been alive

441

00:23:16,860 --> 00:23:20,220

because I would have been  
like Jack Costen, when

442

00:23:20,220 --> 00:23:24,180

he saw all the dead ones  
when he came into camp.

443

00:23:24,180 --> 00:23:27,870

What happened later  
on it got abscessed

444

00:23:27,870 --> 00:23:30,000

and got a lot of pus underneath.

445

00:23:30,000 --> 00:23:32,730

And I remember there  
was a doctor, supposedly

446

00:23:32,730 --> 00:23:38,340

a doctor, a French Jew  
who was also incarcerated.

447

00:23:38,340 --> 00:23:41,130

He supposedly was taking  
care of the dispensary.

448

00:23:41,130 --> 00:23:43,800

So he said, Leo, lay  
down on the table.

449

00:23:43,800 --> 00:23:46,620

And I was holding  
my arms in the back

450

00:23:46,620 --> 00:23:49,800

and some guy stretched my legs.

451

00:23:49,800 --> 00:23:52,210

And he took a knife, or a  
razor blade or whatever,

452

00:23:52,210 --> 00:23:53,490

and he opened it up.

453

00:23:53,490 --> 00:23:57,300

And you could feel it,  
the relief that I got.

454  
00:23:57,300 --> 00:23:59,370  
And sure enough, it healed.

455  
00:23:59,370 --> 00:24:03,510  
They didn't put any stitches  
on it because I still got a 1

456  
00:24:03,510 --> 00:24:06,610  
and 1/2-inch scar  
that you can see.

457  
00:24:06,610 --> 00:24:08,700  
And it started healing.

458  
00:24:08,700 --> 00:24:11,910  
They put a little thing  
around, they taped it around.

459  
00:24:11,910 --> 00:24:15,600  
And they sent me back out.

460  
00:24:15,600 --> 00:24:18,840  
When they sent me back out,  
I went back to my block.

461  
00:24:18,840 --> 00:24:21,420  
This was block one.

462  
00:24:21,420 --> 00:24:26,700  
And the block leader was  
a fellow from Holland,

463  
00:24:26,700 --> 00:24:29,730  
a Jewish fellow from Holland.

464  
00:24:29,730 --> 00:24:33,170  
And I went to him and I said,  
I'm back from the dispensary.

465



00:24:33,170 --> 00:24:34,520

I want to go back.

466

00:24:34,520 --> 00:24:36,110

He said, forget about it.

467

00:24:36,110 --> 00:24:38,480

Somebody's already  
on your kommando.

468

00:24:38,480 --> 00:24:41,370

You go back to the mountains.

469

00:24:41,370 --> 00:24:45,420

So I started to go back to  
the rock throwing and so on,

470

00:24:45,420 --> 00:24:47,310

which was horrible.

471

00:24:47,310 --> 00:24:49,910

And I was limping and I  
could hardly really walk.

472

00:24:49,910 --> 00:24:51,860

And it was very bad.

473

00:24:51,860 --> 00:24:53,340

A few days later--

474

00:24:53,340 --> 00:24:58,940

it shows you sometimes  
God has his way to do it--

475

00:24:58,940 --> 00:25:02,270

I walked in with  
this other kommando.

476

00:25:02,270 --> 00:25:06,380

While I walked in with  
the kommando in Ohrdruf,

477

00:25:06,380 --> 00:25:11,150  
this German with his command  
of 10 walks in at the same time

478  
00:25:11,150 --> 00:25:14,580  
and he sees me, this old German.

479  
00:25:14,580 --> 00:25:17,270  
He said, what are  
you doing there?

480  
00:25:17,270 --> 00:25:19,190  
And he walked over to  
me and pulled me out.

481  
00:25:19,190 --> 00:25:21,680  
Because he's a German, he  
can do whatever he wants.

482  
00:25:21,680 --> 00:25:24,575  
He pulled me out and he said,  
he almost slapped me, he said,

483  
00:25:24,575 --> 00:25:26,480  
how come you didn't  
come back to me?

484  
00:25:26,480 --> 00:25:27,470  
So I said I couldn't.

485  
00:25:27,470 --> 00:25:30,260  
I said, I went back  
to the blockalteste,

486  
00:25:30,260 --> 00:25:33,830  
and the blockalteste said that  
somebody is already working.

487  
00:25:33,830 --> 00:25:35,810  
[SPEAKING GERMAN], he said.

488  
00:25:35,810 --> 00:25:37,370  
This pig.

489  
00:25:37,370 --> 00:25:40,850  
And really started  
cussing and he said, I'm

490  
00:25:40,850 --> 00:25:42,710  
going to go back with you.

491  
00:25:42,710 --> 00:25:45,985  
Took me by the hand, took  
me down the block one

492  
00:25:45,985 --> 00:25:47,760  
and came into the door.

493  
00:25:47,760 --> 00:25:51,560  
And the first entrance  
was a little special cabin

494  
00:25:51,560 --> 00:25:53,120  
for the blockalteste.

495  
00:25:53,120 --> 00:25:54,560  
And he hit him.

496  
00:25:54,560 --> 00:25:57,380  
As old as he was, he  
hit him in the face.

497  
00:25:57,380 --> 00:26:00,620  
He said, how come you didn't  
take Leo back to the kommando?

498  
00:26:00,620 --> 00:26:04,500  
And what I found out that he  
had a cousin also from Holland,

499  
00:26:04,500 --> 00:26:06,260  
Heinz.

500  
00:26:06,260 --> 00:26:08,090  
He took him to this

kommando because this

501  
00:26:08,090 --> 00:26:09,470  
was a good kommando.

502  
00:26:09,470 --> 00:26:15,980  
He got two potatoes a day and  
it wasn't such a terrible job.

503  
00:26:15,980 --> 00:26:20,840  
So he told him, right now you  
transfer your cousin back there

504  
00:26:20,840 --> 00:26:23,840  
and Leo comes back  
the block one.

505  
00:26:23,840 --> 00:26:30,170  
And I tell you, I really, as  
much as I wouldn't say it,

506  
00:26:30,170 --> 00:26:32,030  
he saved my life.

507  
00:26:32,030 --> 00:26:35,420  
And I went back to  
block one, started

508  
00:26:35,420 --> 00:26:39,860  
back and the kartoffel kommando,  
got a little strength in me.

509  
00:26:39,860 --> 00:26:44,600  
And thanks-- When around  
the latter part of March

510  
00:26:44,600 --> 00:26:51,350  
we already heard artillery  
fire and we knew something

511  
00:26:51,350 --> 00:26:52,778  
is cooking.

512

00:26:52,778 --> 00:26:55,070

We never knew who was fighting,  
who, believe it or not,

513

00:26:55,070 --> 00:26:58,460

you feel when you're  
incarcerated--

514

00:26:58,460 --> 00:27:03,200

We never saw a paper, we  
never heard what day it is.

515

00:27:03,200 --> 00:27:06,200

You have to look at the  
moon or the sunshine.

516

00:27:06,200 --> 00:27:08,510

You know nobody told  
us who is fighting who.

517

00:27:08,510 --> 00:27:10,430

Nothing.

518

00:27:10,430 --> 00:27:13,760

But we heard artillery and  
we figured the end is near.

519

00:27:13,760 --> 00:27:21,590

And then on March 31, 1945  
the whole camp was liquidated.

520

00:27:21,590 --> 00:27:24,460

It was such a fast  
tempo that we ran out

521

00:27:24,460 --> 00:27:27,740

from the barracks  
we line up in five.

522

00:27:27,740 --> 00:27:33,650

They usually have twenty  
fives, and they run you 100

523

00:27:33,650 --> 00:27:36,750

and you keep on going,  
keep on going and so on.

524

00:27:36,750 --> 00:27:38,880

And we don't know what happened.

525

00:27:38,880 --> 00:27:44,320

We were marching probably  
I would say six or seven

526

00:27:44,320 --> 00:27:46,150

hours at least.

527

00:27:46,150 --> 00:27:47,470

How many of you were there?

528

00:27:47,470 --> 00:27:48,710

Oh, there were thousands.

529

00:27:48,710 --> 00:27:50,830

There were thousands.

530

00:27:50,830 --> 00:27:53,890

What happened, where we  
were marching I don't know.

531

00:27:53,890 --> 00:27:59,050

But I understand from what  
I read that by the time

532

00:27:59,050 --> 00:28:02,830

they came back to Buchenwald  
it was the biggest massacre.

533

00:28:02,830 --> 00:28:05,200

There was practically  
nobody left.

534

00:28:05,200 --> 00:28:08,210

They were dying like flies.

535

00:28:08,210 --> 00:28:13,720

Thanks to this fellow  
Sasha, this Russian soldier,

536

00:28:13,720 --> 00:28:17,440

I think he had more courage than  
we had because he was an army

537

00:28:17,440 --> 00:28:19,430

man and he knew what to do.

538

00:28:19,430 --> 00:28:23,170

And since we worked together,  
we were friends, and he said,

539

00:28:23,170 --> 00:28:29,020

Leo, if we don't run away  
now, we'll never survive.

540

00:28:29,020 --> 00:28:30,430

He said, let's take a chance.

541

00:28:30,430 --> 00:28:31,900

So he commanded us.

542

00:28:31,900 --> 00:28:34,030

And then there was  
another guy-- in fact,

543

00:28:34,030 --> 00:28:37,780

this cousin of the  
blockalteste was one with us.

544

00:28:37,780 --> 00:28:39,760

The guy from  
Holland was with us.

545

00:28:39,760 --> 00:28:42,850

And then we had another boy  
from Warsaw, a Jewish boy.

546

00:28:42,850 --> 00:28:45,985

All four of us was the  
Holland boy and Warsaw

547  
00:28:45,985 --> 00:28:48,130  
and myself, and Sasha.

548  
00:28:48,130 --> 00:28:50,470  
And Sasha was the commander.

549  
00:28:50,470 --> 00:28:54,640  
He told us, he said, Leo  
take the [? annushka ?]

550  
00:28:54,640 --> 00:28:58,510  
what do you call it, the little  
thing that you got the soup.

551  
00:28:58,510 --> 00:28:59,430  
He said, drop it.

552  
00:28:59,430 --> 00:29:00,740  
A pot.

553  
00:29:00,740 --> 00:29:01,710  
Drop it.

554  
00:29:01,710 --> 00:29:03,250  
He said, you've got to be loose.

555  
00:29:03,250 --> 00:29:04,030  
We had a blanket.

556  
00:29:04,030 --> 00:29:06,010  
Each one had to take  
his blanket with him.

557  
00:29:06,010 --> 00:29:08,660  
We dropped the blanket We  
even dropped the shoes.

558  
00:29:08,660 --> 00:29:12,095  
We had these big wooden shoes



wrapped around with cloth.

559

00:29:12,095 --> 00:29:12,970

We dropped the shoes.

560

00:29:12,970 --> 00:29:17,200

He said, you've got to be quiet  
so you wouldn't make the noise.

561

00:29:17,200 --> 00:29:20,380

And he said now  
after we drop it we

562

00:29:20,380 --> 00:29:26,590

want to work ourselves in to  
the first row of the five.

563

00:29:26,590 --> 00:29:27,320

We switched.

564

00:29:27,320 --> 00:29:29,380

We worked ourselves  
into the front.

565

00:29:29,380 --> 00:29:32,020

In the front you  
had a chance to see

566

00:29:32,020 --> 00:29:34,400

what's happening on both sides.

567

00:29:34,400 --> 00:29:36,130

So when we were in  
the front, of course

568

00:29:36,130 --> 00:29:39,790

you had guards on both  
sides with machine guns.

569

00:29:39,790 --> 00:29:42,310

Of course you didn't  
have it at every interval

570

00:29:42,310 --> 00:29:44,947  
because it was like crazy.

571

00:29:44,947 --> 00:29:46,030  
We were running, actually.

572

00:29:46,030 --> 00:29:47,980  
We were not walking but running.

573

00:29:47,980 --> 00:29:51,950  
It looks like the end was coming  
near, the artillery and so on.

574

00:29:51,950 --> 00:29:57,940  
And as we came to the front,  
on both sides of the woods,

575

00:29:57,940 --> 00:30:01,900  
the same area where Ohrdruf  
was situated, on both sides

576

00:30:01,900 --> 00:30:05,470  
was woods just like  
a little highway.

577

00:30:05,470 --> 00:30:09,700  
And we jumped into the woods,  
because thank God none of us

578

00:30:09,700 --> 00:30:11,410  
got shot.

579

00:30:11,410 --> 00:30:15,490  
Now we let the whole  
transport go through.

580

00:30:15,490 --> 00:30:17,380  
We were sitting in the woods.

581

00:30:17,380 --> 00:30:20,350  
After they got through,  
we don't know where to go.

582  
00:30:20,350 --> 00:30:22,810  
So Sasha said, let's  
go back to camp.

583  
00:30:22,810 --> 00:30:25,325  
We'll be safe down there  
because the artillery

584  
00:30:25,325 --> 00:30:26,200  
is coming from there.

585  
00:30:26,200 --> 00:30:28,990  
Let's go back where the  
artillery is firing.

586  
00:30:28,990 --> 00:30:30,760  
We walked back to the camp.

587  
00:30:30,760 --> 00:30:35,800  
We came within maybe 100 feet  
of Ohrdruf, from the camp,

588  
00:30:35,800 --> 00:30:38,470  
across in the woods.

589  
00:30:38,470 --> 00:30:42,220  
We heard unbelievable  
shooting constantly--

590  
00:30:42,220 --> 00:30:45,160  
fire, fire, fire,  
constantly shooting.

591  
00:30:45,160 --> 00:30:47,290  
We did not know what  
is going on down there,

592  
00:30:47,290 --> 00:30:50,200  
if the army already  
occupied or what is it.

593

00:30:50,200 --> 00:30:52,960  
We didn't know they were doing  
the killings, which we find out

594  
00:30:52,960 --> 00:30:54,280  
later.

595  
00:30:54,280 --> 00:30:59,350  
Then Sasha decided that there  
was an area down there--

596  
00:30:59,350 --> 00:31:02,770  
When we went to town we used  
to go through the square.

597  
00:31:02,770 --> 00:31:08,350  
About a half a mile from  
the camp on a highway,

598  
00:31:08,350 --> 00:31:10,240  
we used to see this  
air raid shelter.

599  
00:31:10,240 --> 00:31:13,540  
It was like a little  
embankment from the highway,

600  
00:31:13,540 --> 00:31:16,090  
and you could see  
two little windows.

601  
00:31:16,090 --> 00:31:19,060  
It was like a  
tunnel or something.

602  
00:31:19,060 --> 00:31:23,650  
So Sasha said, let's  
go into this bunker.

603  
00:31:23,650 --> 00:31:25,840  
We went into the bunker,  
and I will never remember

604

00:31:25,840 --> 00:31:29,350  
how courageous this guy was.

605  
00:31:29,350 --> 00:31:33,310  
He gave all four of us a rock.

606  
00:31:33,310 --> 00:31:36,640  
He said, If anybody comes  
into this door, or this door,

607  
00:31:36,640 --> 00:31:38,050  
or the window, kill him.

608  
00:31:38,050 --> 00:31:39,670  
Don't ask any questions.

609  
00:31:39,670 --> 00:31:42,340  
And we were really-- we  
probably would have done.

610  
00:31:42,340 --> 00:31:44,680  
Thank God nobody came.

611  
00:31:44,680 --> 00:31:49,390  
And we stayed in this air  
raid shelter for four days.

612  
00:31:49,390 --> 00:31:52,220  
It was unbelievable.

613  
00:31:52,220 --> 00:31:53,980  
And you know the reason I know?

614  
00:31:53,980 --> 00:31:56,680  
Because I didn't know what  
date it was or whatever,

615  
00:31:56,680 --> 00:32:00,640  
but I read it later  
when the army came in.

616  
00:32:00,640 --> 00:32:03,940

We were inside the  
bunker, and I hope

617  
00:32:03,940 --> 00:32:07,810  
you can visualize  
the reaction we had.

618  
00:32:07,810 --> 00:32:15,020  
We were barefoot, rags, no  
food, no water for four days.

619  
00:32:15,020 --> 00:32:20,920  
And we see a contingency  
of trucks, of army men,

620  
00:32:20,920 --> 00:32:24,310  
settling below us  
on the highway.

621  
00:32:24,310 --> 00:32:27,220  
And we looked out  
from this window

622  
00:32:27,220 --> 00:32:29,410  
and we didn't know what to do.

623  
00:32:29,410 --> 00:32:32,330  
After a few hours, we really  
couldn't stay any longer.

624  
00:32:32,330 --> 00:32:35,440  
We would have died  
down there from thirst.

625  
00:32:35,440 --> 00:32:37,180  
We finally walked down.

626  
00:32:37,180 --> 00:32:39,850  
I remember he said strip.

627  
00:32:39,850 --> 00:32:42,640  
We didn't have any white  
things to show a white flag

628  
00:32:42,640 --> 00:32:46,310  
so we ripped some clothes  
and we walked down

629  
00:32:46,310 --> 00:32:48,530  
flagging these things.

630  
00:32:48,530 --> 00:32:51,050  
And these GIs  
sitting on the road

631  
00:32:51,050 --> 00:32:53,920  
with all the machine  
guns pointing to us,

632  
00:32:53,920 --> 00:32:58,040  
and we thought now  
is the end of us.

633  
00:32:58,040 --> 00:33:03,680  
The trouble was that I believe  
now that the GIs were probably

634  
00:33:03,680 --> 00:33:08,600  
not trained on what  
will confront them

635  
00:33:08,600 --> 00:33:13,460  
when they see somebody of us  
like something from the sky.

636  
00:33:13,460 --> 00:33:17,270  
So when we finally  
got down, we had

637  
00:33:17,270 --> 00:33:22,310  
nobody who spoke  
one word of German,

638  
00:33:22,310 --> 00:33:29,090  
not one word of Polish, Russian  
or Dutch or Yiddish, not a one.

639  
00:33:29,090 --> 00:33:32,450

640  
00:33:32,450 --> 00:33:33,890  
They ask us where we're from.

641  
00:33:33,890 --> 00:33:35,750  
We pointed to the  
camp but they didn't

642  
00:33:35,750 --> 00:33:37,700  
know what it was all about.

643  
00:33:37,700 --> 00:33:40,460  
Finally, I remember  
there was an officer.

644  
00:33:40,460 --> 00:33:42,200  
I remember later  
he was the captain

645  
00:33:42,200 --> 00:33:44,240  
because he had two bars.

646  
00:33:44,240 --> 00:33:46,700  
And he had the helmet  
with a Red Cross.

647  
00:33:46,700 --> 00:33:50,520  
He was with the Red  
Cross or whatever.

648  
00:33:50,520 --> 00:33:55,610  
And he came over and he  
talked it was Czech, which

649  
00:33:55,610 --> 00:33:58,250  
was a little similar to Polish.

650  
00:33:58,250 --> 00:34:00,420  
So he understood us.



651  
00:34:00,420 --> 00:34:04,550  
We told him that we are from  
this camp and we ran away.

652  
00:34:04,550 --> 00:34:10,130  
And he said to the soldiers,  
put away your you guns.

653  
00:34:10,130 --> 00:34:12,830  
And then the tragedy came.

654  
00:34:12,830 --> 00:34:16,060  
The tragedy was--

655  
00:34:16,060 --> 00:34:19,560  
[CRACKLING SOUNDS]

656  
00:34:19,560 --> 00:34:38,560

657  
00:34:38,560 --> 00:34:42,800  
The tragedy was that they did  
not know what to do with us

658  
00:34:42,800 --> 00:34:45,110  
and how to handle us.

659  
00:34:45,110 --> 00:34:48,760  
So I remember they  
went over to a truck

660  
00:34:48,760 --> 00:34:53,500  
and they took out  
champagne and wine

661  
00:34:53,500 --> 00:34:58,400  
and all kind of canned ration  
and opened up cans and so on.

662  
00:34:58,400 --> 00:35:01,750  
And we were going like

animals to this thing

663

00:35:01,750 --> 00:35:03,970  
and we got so sick.

664

00:35:03,970 --> 00:35:07,660  
Thank God there was a  
doctor with this medic cross

665

00:35:07,660 --> 00:35:08,930  
and so on.

666

00:35:08,930 --> 00:35:12,880  
And they helped us and we  
survived and we vomited.

667

00:35:12,880 --> 00:35:14,540  
It was horrible.

668

00:35:14,540 --> 00:35:17,930  
And then we told him  
we are from this camp.

669

00:35:17,930 --> 00:35:24,560  
So this captain and some other  
guys took us to the camp.

670

00:35:24,560 --> 00:35:27,340  
And we went back to the camp,  
which was just about a half

671

00:35:27,340 --> 00:35:29,830  
a mile away from  
there, from Ohrdruf.

672

00:35:29,830 --> 00:35:32,350  
This is the first  
time in my life

673

00:35:32,350 --> 00:35:40,420  
that I had ever seen  
mass atrocities killings.

674

00:35:40,420 --> 00:35:42,940

And I'm sure Jack  
must have told you

675

00:35:42,940 --> 00:35:46,140

because he went into the camp.

676

00:35:46,140 --> 00:35:52,130

We saw railroad sidings  
with bodies, layer

677

00:35:52,130 --> 00:35:55,340

after layer after  
layer with lime.

678

00:35:55,340 --> 00:35:57,560

You can see the white foam.

679

00:35:57,560 --> 00:36:00,200

The bodies were  
totally disintegrated.

680

00:36:00,200 --> 00:36:05,330

Like you can see limbs and arms  
and heads just floating around.

681

00:36:05,330 --> 00:36:07,640

This is the first time  
I've seen dead people,

682

00:36:07,640 --> 00:36:13,200

and I'll be honest with you,  
even now when I reflect,

683

00:36:13,200 --> 00:36:15,710

I've seen this mass killing.

684

00:36:15,710 --> 00:36:19,670

This was the first  
time I've seen it.

685

00:36:19,670 --> 00:36:24,820

I don't think I had  
the reaction probably

686  
00:36:24,820 --> 00:36:27,500  
that Jack Costen,  
may he in peace, saw.

687  
00:36:27,500 --> 00:36:31,960  
Because he was from a  
different continent.

688  
00:36:31,960 --> 00:36:35,350  
He was a soldier to fight.

689  
00:36:35,350 --> 00:36:38,290  
He probably saw some killings.

690  
00:36:38,290 --> 00:36:41,950  
But to me it was just--

691  
00:36:41,950 --> 00:36:42,620  
I don't know.

692  
00:36:42,620 --> 00:36:45,310  
I don't think I had  
a whole lot reaction.

693  
00:36:45,310 --> 00:36:49,150  
It had an effect  
on me, I'm sure.

694  
00:36:49,150 --> 00:36:57,190  
And here we had to stay with  
the dead bodies in the camp.

695  
00:36:57,190 --> 00:37:00,950  
We cleaned up one  
of the barracks.

696  
00:37:00,950 --> 00:37:07,120  
And the ones who survived we  
found were straw bags and so on

697

00:37:07,120 --> 00:37:08,530  
and we rested.

698

00:37:08,530 --> 00:37:13,060  
And the army took over and they  
started giving us some food,

699

00:37:13,060 --> 00:37:14,950  
some Q rations and so on.

700

00:37:14,950 --> 00:37:18,680  
And we lived in the  
smell was unbelievable.

701

00:37:18,680 --> 00:37:22,750  
And still we didn't have  
a place where to go.

702

00:37:22,750 --> 00:37:26,230  
The war was still going on,  
so we didn't know what to do.

703

00:37:26,230 --> 00:37:32,180  
I remember we stayed  
probably about two weeks.

704

00:37:32,180 --> 00:37:33,970  
And I remember a  
week or so later--

705

00:37:33,970 --> 00:37:35,380  
Can I ask a question here, Leo?

706

00:37:35,380 --> 00:37:41,230  
How many Jews do you know  
survived Ohrdruf besides you?

707

00:37:41,230 --> 00:37:45,990  
I knew a friend of  
mine, Jerry Silbert.

708

00:37:45,990 --> 00:37:48,520

His name was really  
[PERSONAL NAME]

709  
00:37:48,520 --> 00:37:52,180  
from [? Bedzyn. ?] He became  
a very good friend of mine

710  
00:37:52,180 --> 00:37:54,370  
until unfortunately he died.

711  
00:37:54,370 --> 00:37:56,260  
He lived in Detroit.

712  
00:37:56,260 --> 00:38:00,220  
And there was another young boy,  
we used to call him Moishele.

713  
00:38:00,220 --> 00:38:02,710  
He was a little small kid.

714  
00:38:02,710 --> 00:38:04,750  
I don't know whereabouts of him.

715  
00:38:04,750 --> 00:38:06,610  
But Jerry I know.

716  
00:38:06,610 --> 00:38:10,130  
We were friends almost  
all my life really.

717  
00:38:10,130 --> 00:38:13,780  
As far as you know, you three  
were the only ones who--

718  
00:38:13,780 --> 00:38:16,630  
I'm sure there must  
be some other ones.

719  
00:38:16,630 --> 00:38:20,260  
There must be some other  
ones because what happened,

720

00:38:20,260 --> 00:38:23,630

I'll tell you what happened  
a couple of weeks later.

721

00:38:23,630 --> 00:38:26,020

I remember when we were  
in camp there was--

722

00:38:26,020 --> 00:38:30,550

Of course, we had  
quite a few Poles.

723

00:38:30,550 --> 00:38:34,660

We had quite a few  
Russians in Ohrdruf

724

00:38:34,660 --> 00:38:38,080

who were also, like  
Sasha, POWs who ran away

725

00:38:38,080 --> 00:38:41,340

and they were in camp.

726

00:38:41,340 --> 00:38:43,990

A couple of weeks later,  
we saw a big entourage

727

00:38:43,990 --> 00:38:44,860

coming into camp.

728

00:38:44,860 --> 00:38:49,180

It was like cleaning up and all  
this kind of thing and so on.

729

00:38:49,180 --> 00:38:51,855

We didn't know who it is  
because they were strangers.

730

00:38:51,855 --> 00:38:52,480

We didn't know.

731

00:38:52,480 --> 00:38:55,070

But we saw

high-ranking officials.

732

00:38:55,070 --> 00:38:59,560

You could see the guns they  
were holding and the surrounding

733

00:38:59,560 --> 00:39:02,750

of it and translating and so on.

734

00:39:02,750 --> 00:39:06,250

And I remember not  
until I believe

735

00:39:06,250 --> 00:39:10,730

the 70s when President  
Eisenhower wrote a book,

736

00:39:10,730 --> 00:39:15,130

it's called In Review, I  
opened up the centerfold

737

00:39:15,130 --> 00:39:19,270

and I saw this picture  
of the dead bodies

738

00:39:19,270 --> 00:39:23,140

with the translators and I  
see General Bradley, General

739

00:39:23,140 --> 00:39:26,688

Patton, and President  
Eisenhower trying to tell them

740

00:39:26,688 --> 00:39:27,730

what happened in Ohrdruf.

741

00:39:27,730 --> 00:39:32,710

And you can see on the right the  
barrack actually that I was in.

742

00:39:32,710 --> 00:39:33,790

And I said, my gosh.



743

00:39:33,790 --> 00:39:35,740

And I said, we were  
right down there.

744

00:39:35,740 --> 00:39:37,630

If the camera would  
have had a wider angle

745

00:39:37,630 --> 00:39:41,140

I probably could  
identify myself--

746

00:39:41,140 --> 00:39:42,430

or maybe not, I don't know.

747

00:39:42,430 --> 00:39:44,950

But I probably could have  
done because I was there.

748

00:39:44,950 --> 00:39:48,430

And then, of course, after  
that it got so horrible

749

00:39:48,430 --> 00:39:51,310

down there because  
nobody practically

750

00:39:51,310 --> 00:39:52,730

took care except for food.

751

00:39:52,730 --> 00:39:55,660

And we were staying with the  
smell of the dead bodies.

752

00:39:55,660 --> 00:39:57,890

And we went out.

753

00:39:57,890 --> 00:40:00,820

I actually went  
out, left Ohrdruf,

754

00:40:00,820 --> 00:40:02,680

and we went toward  
the next city which

755  
00:40:02,680 --> 00:40:06,670  
was Gotha, which was about  
maybe seven or eight miles away.

756  
00:40:06,670 --> 00:40:07,600  
And we walked.

757  
00:40:07,600 --> 00:40:11,393  
And as we came on the  
outskirts of Gotha--

758  
00:40:11,393 --> 00:40:13,150  
And there were several of us.

759  
00:40:13,150 --> 00:40:17,620  
In fact, Jerry was with me and  
Moishele, and some other guys,

760  
00:40:17,620 --> 00:40:18,740  
Poles and so on.

761  
00:40:18,740 --> 00:40:20,200  
We just ran away.

762  
00:40:20,200 --> 00:40:23,770  
And we came on the  
perimeter of Gotha

763  
00:40:23,770 --> 00:40:28,300  
and the military police,  
American military police,

764  
00:40:28,300 --> 00:40:29,230  
identification.

765  
00:40:29,230 --> 00:40:31,153  
We had nothing.

766  
00:40:31,153 --> 00:40:32,320

So they took us to the camp.

767

00:40:32,320 --> 00:40:34,112

They took us in the  
truck and [INAUDIBLE]..

768

00:40:34,112 --> 00:40:37,570

And when we came  
into this camp, we

769

00:40:37,570 --> 00:40:42,610

had thousands upon thousands  
of every nationality

770

00:40:42,610 --> 00:40:43,750

that you want--

771

00:40:43,750 --> 00:40:47,320

Russians, Poles, Germans,  
everybody was inside there.

772

00:40:47,320 --> 00:40:49,660

Jews, everybody  
was inside there.

773

00:40:49,660 --> 00:40:54,760

And it was really unreal, you  
know, after your liberation,

774

00:40:54,760 --> 00:40:57,130

you know nobody's  
going to kill you

775

00:40:57,130 --> 00:40:58,780

but there was no organization.

776

00:40:58,780 --> 00:41:00,070

Nobody took care of it.

777

00:41:00,070 --> 00:41:04,420

And I think I had  
enough gumption

778

00:41:04,420 --> 00:41:08,900

so to speak to get out of  
the camp and go to the city.

779

00:41:08,900 --> 00:41:10,240

I remember it was on the square.

780

00:41:10,240 --> 00:41:13,680

781

00:41:13,680 --> 00:41:14,790

And I saw a building.

782

00:41:14,790 --> 00:41:17,130

It looked like now I  
would say a bank building,

783

00:41:17,130 --> 00:41:19,500

big posts, old building.

784

00:41:19,500 --> 00:41:22,770

And I walked in and  
a GI was standing

785

00:41:22,770 --> 00:41:27,090

guard, tall, handsome  
young man with a rifle,

786

00:41:27,090 --> 00:41:29,640

with his helmet SG.

787

00:41:29,640 --> 00:41:36,150

And I ask him in German  
that I wanted to work.

788

00:41:36,150 --> 00:41:40,310

And he answered me  
almost like in Yiddish.

789

00:41:40,310 --> 00:41:45,300

I said, my gosh, how could this  
happen after so many years?

790  
00:41:45,300 --> 00:41:49,860  
So we started talking Yiddish,  
and of course Yiddish was

791  
00:41:49,860 --> 00:41:51,380  
my mother's.

792  
00:41:51,380 --> 00:41:53,100  
And I started talking  
to him, and he

793  
00:41:53,100 --> 00:41:57,060  
was telling me that he is  
a soldier in American army.

794  
00:41:57,060 --> 00:41:58,320  
He's from the Bronx.

795  
00:41:58,320 --> 00:42:00,990  
And I knew about  
the Bronx like I

796  
00:42:00,990 --> 00:42:03,000  
didn't know anything about it.

797  
00:42:03,000 --> 00:42:05,850  
And he finally went and talked  
to the commanding officer

798  
00:42:05,850 --> 00:42:08,010  
and told him there's a  
little young kid who wants

799  
00:42:08,010 --> 00:42:10,300  
to work here in the kitchen.

800  
00:42:10,300 --> 00:42:12,190  
And he took me  
in, and I remember

801  
00:42:12,190 --> 00:42:13,900

they gave me a  
little small closet,

802  
00:42:13,900 --> 00:42:16,840  
and there was a little  
cot like the army cots

803  
00:42:16,840 --> 00:42:20,530  
with a green blanket  
and an old pillow.

804  
00:42:20,530 --> 00:42:22,720  
And they took me to the  
kitchen and they told me,

805  
00:42:22,720 --> 00:42:25,420  
you know, we were peeling  
potatoes and so on.

806  
00:42:25,420 --> 00:42:27,280  
And we did all kind  
of kitchen work,

807  
00:42:27,280 --> 00:42:30,940  
cleaning tables and  
so on, and then they

808  
00:42:30,940 --> 00:42:33,280  
transferred me from there  
to the officer's mess.

809  
00:42:33,280 --> 00:42:37,300  
And I was already  
going great guns.

810  
00:42:37,300 --> 00:42:40,780  
They gave me a uniform,  
without insignia, of course,

811  
00:42:40,780 --> 00:42:43,120  
and these GI boots  
with the buckles

812

00:42:43,120 --> 00:42:45,203  
and I felt like \$1 million.

813  
00:42:45,203 --> 00:42:49,450  
And then of course I met  
another few GIs who were Jewish,

814  
00:42:49,450 --> 00:42:54,700  
and they really took like  
protecting me and so on.

815  
00:42:54,700 --> 00:43:00,720  
And we became friends I  
would say almost for life.

816  
00:43:00,720 --> 00:43:03,220  
And then, of course,  
we transferred.

817  
00:43:03,220 --> 00:43:06,710  
The army changed  
and the Russians

818  
00:43:06,710 --> 00:43:08,960  
came in and the American  
army came and we

819  
00:43:08,960 --> 00:43:12,980  
had another GI who told me  
and Jerry to get on a truck

820  
00:43:12,980 --> 00:43:16,100  
and we moved out of Gotha.

821  
00:43:16,100 --> 00:43:18,080  
And from Gotha we  
went to a little

822  
00:43:18,080 --> 00:43:20,900  
I believed the town  
was called [? Sin. ?]

823  
00:43:20,900 --> 00:43:22,550

It was near a castle.

824

00:43:22,550 --> 00:43:26,720

It was a glider area, like  
a little small airport.

825

00:43:26,720 --> 00:43:28,940

And we went down there.

826

00:43:28,940 --> 00:43:33,890

And of course I kept on all  
this life to be friends with him

827

00:43:33,890 --> 00:43:37,310

until he just died a  
couple of years ago.

828

00:43:37,310 --> 00:43:41,330

And Ben Kaplan became almost  
like I would say a father.

829

00:43:41,330 --> 00:43:45,140

He guided me from  
place to place.

830

00:43:45,140 --> 00:43:48,540

And Ben Kaplan and  
Al Schwartz left.

831

00:43:48,540 --> 00:43:50,180

Ben Kaplan took over.

832

00:43:50,180 --> 00:43:52,640

He said, Leo, you're  
going to stay with me.

833

00:43:52,640 --> 00:43:55,820

Of course, the army dissolved  
and everybody went home.

834

00:43:55,820 --> 00:43:57,770

Kaplan was single at the time.



835

00:43:57,770 --> 00:44:02,880

He was an officer in  
this 134 AAA I believe,

836

00:44:02,880 --> 00:44:05,090

it was the third army also.

837

00:44:05,090 --> 00:44:09,020

And he told me, he  
said, Leo, I'm not

838

00:44:09,020 --> 00:44:11,420

going back to the States.

839

00:44:11,420 --> 00:44:13,310

I'm going to stay in here.

840

00:44:13,310 --> 00:44:18,110

I am very good  
friends with fellow

841

00:44:18,110 --> 00:44:24,500

by the name Hugo Carucci,  
who was the Director-General

842

00:44:24,500 --> 00:44:26,930

of the UNRRA.

843

00:44:26,930 --> 00:44:30,560

He was a friend of Fiorello  
LaGuardia, incidentally.

844

00:44:30,560 --> 00:44:33,530

And then Fiorello  
LaGuardia left UNRRA.

845

00:44:33,530 --> 00:44:36,350

846

00:44:36,350 --> 00:44:39,080

Hugo Carucci, he  
is now in the 80s--

847  
00:44:39,080 --> 00:44:40,160  
in fact, I talked to him.

848  
00:44:40,160 --> 00:44:43,680  
He still is alive, he  
lives in Washington.

849  
00:44:43,680 --> 00:44:45,950  
And he made then--

850  
00:44:45,950 --> 00:44:47,840  
they were friends before--

851  
00:44:47,840 --> 00:44:52,760  
and then became the  
director of transportation

852  
00:44:52,760 --> 00:44:56,360  
and supplies for the  
UNRRA for the camps

853  
00:44:56,360 --> 00:45:00,110  
around the area of Frankfurt,  
Regensburg, Zeilsheim,

854  
00:45:00,110 --> 00:45:01,550  
all the camps.

855  
00:45:01,550 --> 00:45:03,540  
And of course, I  
became a big shot.

856  
00:45:03,540 --> 00:45:07,160  
I worked down there  
and I even got paid.

857  
00:45:07,160 --> 00:45:12,170  
I got paid \$200 a  
month with the UNRRA.

858  
00:45:12,170 --> 00:45:18,780

He stayed with the  
UNRRA till I believe

859  
00:45:18,780 --> 00:45:21,270  
'46, latter part of '46.

860  
00:45:21,270 --> 00:45:24,510  
In '46 he said, Leo,  
I'm transferring

861  
00:45:24,510 --> 00:45:27,360  
to the AJDC, which is the  
American Joint Distribution

862  
00:45:27,360 --> 00:45:32,490  
Committee, and also in Hanau  
in Germany, near Frankfurt.

863  
00:45:32,490 --> 00:45:35,880  
And he took over as  
director of supply

864  
00:45:35,880 --> 00:45:41,190  
for the AJDC, which was catering  
strictly to the DP camps

865  
00:45:41,190 --> 00:45:44,760  
because they had other camps  
of Lithuanians and Latvians

866  
00:45:44,760 --> 00:45:45,960  
and so on.

867  
00:45:45,960 --> 00:45:49,500  
And Ben became a big  
[NON-ENGLISH] and he said, Leo,

868  
00:45:49,500 --> 00:45:51,060  
you're coming with me.

869  
00:45:51,060 --> 00:45:53,130  
So we came to Hanau.

870

00:45:53,130 --> 00:45:56,110

I got a beautiful apartment.

871

00:45:56,110 --> 00:45:57,450

I got paid.

872

00:45:57,450 --> 00:45:58,720

I saved money.

873

00:45:58,720 --> 00:46:00,930

In fact, when I came  
to the United States,

874

00:46:00,930 --> 00:46:02,640

I want to tell  
you a little story

875

00:46:02,640 --> 00:46:07,670

that I think the  
honesty of a person

876

00:46:07,670 --> 00:46:12,780

reflects sooner or later.

877

00:46:12,780 --> 00:46:17,980

Al Schwartz, may he rest in  
peace, lived in the Bronx.

878

00:46:17,980 --> 00:46:24,840

He came back in November  
of 1945, after the war.

879

00:46:24,840 --> 00:46:29,250

He married a girl  
also from the Bronx.

880

00:46:29,250 --> 00:46:32,980

Unfortunately, they  
never had any children.

881

00:46:32,980 --> 00:46:39,340

And I became, I would

say, like an adopted son.

882  
00:46:39,340 --> 00:46:44,430  
I think my children  
called him grandfather.

883  
00:46:44,430 --> 00:46:46,620  
He made every wedding.

884  
00:46:46,620 --> 00:46:47,880  
We were in touch--

885  
00:46:47,880 --> 00:46:49,950  
in fact, I'm still  
in touch with her.

886  
00:46:49,950 --> 00:46:52,920  
She still lives in the  
same place in the Bronx.

887  
00:46:52,920 --> 00:46:55,450

888  
00:46:55,450 --> 00:46:56,350  
He's passed away?

889  
00:46:56,350 --> 00:46:57,220  
He's passed away.

890  
00:46:57,220 --> 00:46:59,540  
She still lives I remember  
it's on the corner.

891  
00:46:59,540 --> 00:47:02,950  
It's 2933 Grand Concourse.

892  
00:47:02,950 --> 00:47:08,380  
It's on the corner of Bedford  
Park and in the concourse.

893  
00:47:08,380 --> 00:47:13,150  
And I remember when I was

ready to come to the States

894

00:47:13,150 --> 00:47:14,770

Ben was really an angel.

895

00:47:14,770 --> 00:47:16,390

He guided me.

896

00:47:16,390 --> 00:47:19,120

I worked for the

AJDC, I made money,

897

00:47:19,120 --> 00:47:24,310

I became almost what you

call a second-class officer.

898

00:47:24,310 --> 00:47:25,810

I couldn't have the

title of officer

899

00:47:25,810 --> 00:47:28,210

because I wasn't

an American, so I

900

00:47:28,210 --> 00:47:30,400

had a title of a

second-class officer

901

00:47:30,400 --> 00:47:33,190

and I got paid accordingly.

902

00:47:33,190 --> 00:47:35,710

And all the privileges--

903

00:47:35,710 --> 00:47:43,150

having a car, driving around

AJDC he had an old Mercedes

904

00:47:43,150 --> 00:47:46,810

and we had a Jeep and I

traveled all over Germany.

905

00:47:46,810 --> 00:47:48,880

And my main purpose  
with the traveling

906

00:47:48,880 --> 00:47:52,150

was to look for relatives.

907

00:47:52,150 --> 00:47:53,500

I was very fortunate.

908

00:47:53,500 --> 00:47:56,245

I made a trip with  
Jerry, who died.

909

00:47:56,245 --> 00:47:58,130

We were friends all the time.

910

00:47:58,130 --> 00:48:00,190

In fact, Jerry  
after the war find

911

00:48:00,190 --> 00:48:02,140

a sister in Czechoslovakia.

912

00:48:02,140 --> 00:48:05,770

And they came from  
Czechoslovakia to Hanau

913

00:48:05,770 --> 00:48:08,050

and Jerry got married.

914

00:48:08,050 --> 00:48:12,250

He went to Bergen-Belsen after  
the war and we were walking

915

00:48:12,250 --> 00:48:17,365

in the street in Bergen-Belsen  
and I said to Jerry, Jerry--

916

00:48:17,365 --> 00:48:18,490

you know we were big shots.

917

00:48:18,490 --> 00:48:22,210

We had uniforms with  
AJDC, the signal.

918

00:48:22,210 --> 00:48:23,200

We had passports.

919

00:48:23,200 --> 00:48:25,150

We had everything.

920

00:48:25,150 --> 00:48:26,470

We even had cards.

921

00:48:26,470 --> 00:48:29,140

We could go to the  
military thing.

922

00:48:29,140 --> 00:48:31,330

And I said to Jerry,  
I said, Jerry,

923

00:48:31,330 --> 00:48:33,310

I heard some voices  
sounds familiar.

924

00:48:33,310 --> 00:48:34,390

Let's go back.

925

00:48:34,390 --> 00:48:37,810

So I ran back and I  
see two young ladies

926

00:48:37,810 --> 00:48:39,850

with some men walking.

927

00:48:39,850 --> 00:48:42,370

I take a look at her  
I'm going to die.

928

00:48:42,370 --> 00:48:51,060

It was two first cousins, my  
mother's sister's children.



929

00:48:51,060 --> 00:48:54,680

And I remember there  
were three sisters.

930

00:48:54,680 --> 00:48:56,720

I said the youngest  
one was Pepe.

931

00:48:56,720 --> 00:48:59,090

I said, where is Pepe?

932

00:48:59,090 --> 00:49:03,848

So she said, we will  
show it to you tomorrow.

933

00:49:03,848 --> 00:49:04,890

And I said, what's wrong?

934

00:49:04,890 --> 00:49:07,040

They said, well,  
she's in a hospital.

935

00:49:07,040 --> 00:49:13,600

This is the first time I saw  
sick people after the war.

936

00:49:13,600 --> 00:49:18,640

She had typhus and she  
was so horrible looking.

937

00:49:18,640 --> 00:49:23,440

She was a beautiful girl when I  
remember years back in Europe.

938

00:49:23,440 --> 00:49:26,710

And she was in a hospital,  
they showed it to me.

939

00:49:26,710 --> 00:49:31,533

She was like no hair,  
skinny just like a skeleton.

940

00:49:31,533 --> 00:49:32,950

I thought she would  
never survive,

941

00:49:32,950 --> 00:49:35,120

but thank she did survive.

942

00:49:35,120 --> 00:49:35,620

She made it.

943

00:49:35,620 --> 00:49:38,960

She just died just  
three years ago.

944

00:49:38,960 --> 00:49:41,980

So the other two sisters,  
another sister died already.

945

00:49:41,980 --> 00:49:43,180

One of them is still living.

946

00:49:43,180 --> 00:49:44,722

They live in Canada.

947

00:49:44,722 --> 00:49:46,180

So we started  
looking for families.

948

00:49:46,180 --> 00:49:48,970

949

00:49:48,970 --> 00:49:50,980

And of course this was  
an ordeal in itself.

950

00:49:50,980 --> 00:49:53,650

When I found them  
I said, I am going

951

00:49:53,650 --> 00:49:57,550

to do all my life I'm going to  
search and search and search.

952

00:49:57,550 --> 00:49:59,020

And I didn't know  
where to start.

953

00:49:59,020 --> 00:50:04,780

Of course, in those  
days I thought

954

00:50:04,780 --> 00:50:08,080

I'm going to find somebody  
that I wanted to get married.

955

00:50:08,080 --> 00:50:10,120

I said, no, I don't  
want to tie myself up.

956

00:50:10,120 --> 00:50:11,650

I want to be free.

957

00:50:11,650 --> 00:50:12,740

I want to travel.

958

00:50:12,740 --> 00:50:17,970

I want to find the  
family, in my head feeling

959

00:50:17,970 --> 00:50:20,100

that I will find somebody.

960

00:50:20,100 --> 00:50:25,230

Unfortunately, I travel to  
every DP camp there where.

961

00:50:25,230 --> 00:50:30,270

I went even to Vienna to  
Zeilsheim, and to Regensburg,

962

00:50:30,270 --> 00:50:31,800

to every part.

963

00:50:31,800 --> 00:50:36,120

British zone, French

zone, everywhere.

964

00:50:36,120 --> 00:50:40,170

Didn't find except these  
three first cousins.

965

00:50:40,170 --> 00:50:48,340

I remember we had a delegation  
came from Israel to Hanau

966

00:50:48,340 --> 00:50:51,190

because we were  
involved with AJDC.

967

00:50:51,190 --> 00:50:56,470

And this was already around  
I believe in early '48.

968

00:50:56,470 --> 00:50:59,050

969

00:50:59,050 --> 00:51:01,940

We had a delegation from Israel.

970

00:51:01,940 --> 00:51:04,570

I believe the fellow who brought  
him was a fellow by the name

971

00:51:04,570 --> 00:51:09,340

Himan, the head of AJDC  
I believe nationally

972

00:51:09,340 --> 00:51:11,230

in the United States.

973

00:51:11,230 --> 00:51:16,690

And I was in charge of  
checking the barges which

974

00:51:16,690 --> 00:51:20,380

used to come in from  
Antwerp in Germany to Hanau.

975

00:51:20,380 --> 00:51:23,980  
Hanau was a port, and we were  
unloading to our warehouses

976

00:51:23,980 --> 00:51:26,740  
for the AJDC and then  
loading it on trucks.

977

00:51:26,740 --> 00:51:28,660  
And I used to take  
counts and so on.

978

00:51:28,660 --> 00:51:30,910  
And mostly the  
workers were mainly

979

00:51:30,910 --> 00:51:33,202  
there was a big camp  
down there from Latvia

980

00:51:33,202 --> 00:51:34,660  
with the [INAUDIBLE]  
and Estonians.

981

00:51:34,660 --> 00:51:36,320  
They were usually the workers.

982

00:51:36,320 --> 00:51:38,740  
So I was already  
an official then.

983

00:51:38,740 --> 00:51:42,820  
So I had a little title  
and I was making money.

984

00:51:42,820 --> 00:51:45,820  
And I remember they came  
and I asked one of the guys

985

00:51:45,820 --> 00:51:46,670  
from Israel.

986

00:51:46,670 --> 00:51:51,160

And I said, you know, I remember  
I don't know what year--

987

00:51:51,160 --> 00:51:58,330

'36, '37, '38, I had a  
cousin, my mother's brother's

988

00:51:58,330 --> 00:52:00,540

one of the sons.

989

00:52:00,540 --> 00:52:02,910

And I said his name  
was Yanov Cheronovski.

990

00:52:02,910 --> 00:52:05,880

My mother's maiden  
name was Cheronovski.

991

00:52:05,880 --> 00:52:10,200

And I said, I remember that  
he came into the house,

992

00:52:10,200 --> 00:52:12,930

tall young man in  
a leather jacket.

993

00:52:12,930 --> 00:52:17,970

He was a [NON-ENGLISH]  
and he said he wants to go

994

00:52:17,970 --> 00:52:19,980

to Palestine.

995

00:52:19,980 --> 00:52:25,650

And I said he came in and  
said to my mother goodbye.

996

00:52:25,650 --> 00:52:26,853

And he left.

997

00:52:26,853 --> 00:52:28,770

And I said, I don't know

what happened to him.

998

00:52:28,770 --> 00:52:31,440

They said, we should find him.

999

00:52:31,440 --> 00:52:33,790

They took the name.

1000

00:52:33,790 --> 00:52:38,760

And I think four weeks later I  
got a letter from him that he

1001

00:52:38,760 --> 00:52:46,240

was living in Ramat Gan, has a  
family, has children and so on.

1002

00:52:46,240 --> 00:52:56,550

Of course, I wasn't maybe astute  
enough at that time to probe,

1003

00:52:56,550 --> 00:53:00,540

to really get farther down  
the line what happened.

1004

00:53:00,540 --> 00:53:04,980

And maybe I wasn't smart enough  
to realize what advertising

1005

00:53:04,980 --> 00:53:07,590

or publicity will do.

1006

00:53:07,590 --> 00:53:09,510

I wanted to look for  
more family because this

1007

00:53:09,510 --> 00:53:11,130

was another first cousin.

1008

00:53:11,130 --> 00:53:16,620

Then he told me that  
his brother is in Russia

1009

00:53:16,620 --> 00:53:19,210  
and he is back in Poland.

1010  
00:53:19,210 --> 00:53:22,500  
And he got another sister  
who is now in Australia.

1011  
00:53:22,500 --> 00:53:25,980  
She was saved by a group  
who went from Sweden,

1012  
00:53:25,980 --> 00:53:28,420  
you know, went to  
Sweden from Poland.

1013  
00:53:28,420 --> 00:53:30,090  
So I already got six cousins.

1014  
00:53:30,090 --> 00:53:34,380  
And I said, God, I got to find  
maybe a brother or sister.

1015  
00:53:34,380 --> 00:53:36,030  
And I couldn't.

1016  
00:53:36,030 --> 00:53:38,820  
I searched all my life.

1017  
00:53:38,820 --> 00:53:45,870  
Six years ago, I went probably  
for the 12th time to Israel

1018  
00:53:45,870 --> 00:53:50,040  
because we go about once a  
year or twice a year to Israel.

1019  
00:53:50,040 --> 00:53:53,820  
And my wife, I think I  
got to thank her for it,

1020  
00:53:53,820 --> 00:53:55,530  
she's very persistent.



1021

00:53:55,530 --> 00:53:58,060

She doesn't give up.

1022

00:53:58,060 --> 00:54:01,890

She said, I want you to  
put an ad in the paper.

1023

00:54:01,890 --> 00:54:05,910

And we put a big ad  
in the Jerusalem Post

1024

00:54:05,910 --> 00:54:10,290

in the [INAUDIBLE]  
giving the whole story,

1025

00:54:10,290 --> 00:54:12,450

who the father and so on.

1026

00:54:12,450 --> 00:54:16,260

We stayed at the Diplomat  
Hotel in Tel Aviv.

1027

00:54:16,260 --> 00:54:19,450

And a young lady called us.

1028

00:54:19,450 --> 00:54:23,350

She said, are you Leo Laufer?

1029

00:54:23,350 --> 00:54:26,950

Is your Hebrew name  
Shmuel [PERSONAL NAME]??

1030

00:54:26,950 --> 00:54:29,790

I said, yes.

1031

00:54:29,790 --> 00:54:33,990

I said, was your  
father's name David?

1032

00:54:33,990 --> 00:54:35,550

She said, yes.

1033

00:54:35,550 --> 00:54:38,040

I said, who are you?

1034

00:54:38,040 --> 00:54:43,110

He said, well, we have a Laufer  
in our family name Shmuel Lai

1035

00:54:43,110 --> 00:54:47,347

Blauffer and he lives  
near Ramat Gan.

1036

00:54:47,347 --> 00:54:48,930

And when I heard  
this, I said, couldn't

1037

00:54:48,930 --> 00:54:53,790

be nobody else but my first  
cousin from my father's side.

1038

00:54:53,790 --> 00:54:58,110

Sure enough, he  
became a first cousin.

1039

00:54:58,110 --> 00:54:59,400

He came to the hotel.

1040

00:54:59,400 --> 00:55:00,270

We talked about him.

1041

00:55:00,270 --> 00:55:07,110

He said, Leo, do you know  
that you had an aunt in here

1042

00:55:07,110 --> 00:55:10,720

by the name of Bacharach?

1043

00:55:10,720 --> 00:55:12,810

I said, no.

1044

00:55:12,810 --> 00:55:14,610

I said, who is she?

1045

00:55:14,610 --> 00:55:18,110

That's your father sister.

1046

00:55:18,110 --> 00:55:21,830

I remember when I was  
a kid my father used

1047

00:55:21,830 --> 00:55:27,320

to tell me about having  
a sister in Germany

1048

00:55:27,320 --> 00:55:29,690

but he never elaborated.

1049

00:55:29,690 --> 00:55:32,150

And I realized why.

1050

00:55:32,150 --> 00:55:33,650

My father was a very--

1051

00:55:33,650 --> 00:55:38,410

he was a [NON-ENGLISH] if you  
know what [NON-ENGLISH] is.

1052

00:55:38,410 --> 00:55:41,240

You belong to a certain  
tribe and so on.

1053

00:55:41,240 --> 00:55:42,530

He was very religious.

1054

00:55:42,530 --> 00:55:45,020

He got up in the  
morning with a prayer

1055

00:55:45,020 --> 00:55:47,330

and went to sleep with a prayer.

1056

00:55:47,330 --> 00:55:50,470

He ate something with a prayer,  
thanked God for the food.

1057

00:55:50,470 --> 00:55:53,270

And I mean it was  
constant and this

1058

00:55:53,270 --> 00:55:55,010

is the way he was brought up.

1059

00:55:55,010 --> 00:55:59,000

And I guess his sister  
was a little more like I

1060

00:55:59,000 --> 00:56:02,420

was when I got a little  
older and he didn't

1061

00:56:02,420 --> 00:56:03,980

want to have any connection.

1062

00:56:03,980 --> 00:56:06,110

That's why he didn't elaborate.

1063

00:56:06,110 --> 00:56:09,830

But when he mentioned it I said,  
fine, let's go see the aunt.

1064

00:56:09,830 --> 00:56:15,170

He said the aunt died in 1969.

1065

00:56:15,170 --> 00:56:17,430

She has three children.

1066

00:56:17,430 --> 00:56:24,710

In fact, she was the real aunt,  
a real sister of my brother.

1067

00:56:24,710 --> 00:56:29,750

My other cousin Shmuel Lai  
Blauffer, is from another wife

1068

00:56:29,750 --> 00:56:31,680

that one of them  
died from the second.

1069  
00:56:31,680 --> 00:56:37,430  
So this aunt was a real aunt, a  
real aunt, one of the children

1070  
00:56:37,430 --> 00:56:39,050  
is still alive.

1071  
00:56:39,050 --> 00:56:42,560  
And from this  
children I would say

1072  
00:56:42,560 --> 00:56:47,510  
there are hundreds  
of grandchildren,

1073  
00:56:47,510 --> 00:56:49,070  
great-grandchildren.

1074  
00:56:49,070 --> 00:56:51,560  
And one of the  
daughters is still alive

1075  
00:56:51,560 --> 00:56:55,640  
and she still  
lives in Ramat Gan.

1076  
00:56:55,640 --> 00:57:00,050  
The irony of it is when I  
found this I said, my gosh,

1077  
00:57:00,050 --> 00:57:02,060  
you got to continue the search.

1078  
00:57:02,060 --> 00:57:04,230  
You cannot give up.

1079  
00:57:04,230 --> 00:57:05,480  
So we didn't give up.

1080  
00:57:05,480 --> 00:57:08,360  
We looked through--

in fact, I'm going

1081  
00:57:08,360 --> 00:57:11,090  
to Israel in about  
three weeks and I'm

1082  
00:57:11,090 --> 00:57:13,460  
going to spend two  
months this time

1083  
00:57:13,460 --> 00:57:15,800  
and I'm going to go through  
to each one of the family

1084  
00:57:15,800 --> 00:57:21,170  
to get on tape all the  
information that I possibly

1085  
00:57:21,170 --> 00:57:22,470  
can.

1086  
00:57:22,470 --> 00:57:25,620  
And I found a  
picture of my mother

1087  
00:57:25,620 --> 00:57:32,720  
which I have never had of  
me as a 12-year-old boy

1088  
00:57:32,720 --> 00:57:38,720  
and I had a brother who died  
about a year and a half older

1089  
00:57:38,720 --> 00:57:40,190  
than I was.

1090  
00:57:40,190 --> 00:57:46,250  
I found a picture of my brother  
that I met in Auschwitz.

1091  
00:57:46,250 --> 00:57:49,340  
I got a picture  
of my grandfather

1092  
00:57:49,340 --> 00:57:51,620  
that I'm named after.

1093  
00:57:51,620 --> 00:57:54,290  
But I never found of  
the children and so on.

1094  
00:57:54,290 --> 00:57:58,400  
Evidently, we were so poor  
or we were so religious

1095  
00:57:58,400 --> 00:58:00,410  
that they didn't take  
pictures you know.

1096  
00:58:00,410 --> 00:58:04,220  
So this might be  
either of the cases.

1097  
00:58:04,220 --> 00:58:08,390  
And from this, a whole  
family sprang up.

1098  
00:58:08,390 --> 00:58:12,080

1099  
00:58:12,080 --> 00:58:15,440  
When I met this  
cousin, it's a cousin,

1100  
00:58:15,440 --> 00:58:19,340  
the aunt is already dead,  
she was telling me episodes--

1101  
00:58:19,340 --> 00:58:22,100  
because she's in the 70s--

1102  
00:58:22,100 --> 00:58:25,880  
about my father, how  
religious it is and so on.

1103

00:58:25,880 --> 00:58:28,040  
She said, you know what?

1104  
00:58:28,040 --> 00:58:31,940  
You know that your real  
name is not Laufer?

1105  
00:58:31,940 --> 00:58:32,780  
I said, no.

1106  
00:58:32,780 --> 00:58:35,790  
I said, I'm not aware of it.

1107  
00:58:35,790 --> 00:58:36,800  
I said, why?

1108  
00:58:36,800 --> 00:58:41,180  
She said, well, your  
grandfather's name,

1109  
00:58:41,180 --> 00:58:45,440  
which is her grandfather's  
name, was named Laufer.

1110  
00:58:45,440 --> 00:58:49,100  
My father was named Laufer  
and I am named Laufer,

1111  
00:58:49,100 --> 00:58:51,080  
and I thought this was it.

1112  
00:58:51,080 --> 00:58:55,370  
And she is so much older and I  
guess she was more freer than I

1113  
00:58:55,370 --> 00:58:56,780  
since her childhood.

1114  
00:58:56,780 --> 00:59:01,160  
She says, you know that  
your great-grandfather

1115



00:59:01,160 --> 00:59:05,080  
was named it Itsinger.

1116  
00:59:05,080 --> 00:59:06,570  
I said, this is--

1117  
00:59:06,570 --> 00:59:08,560  
now this is just six years ago.

1118  
00:59:08,560 --> 00:59:09,650  
I said, Itsinger?

1119  
00:59:09,650 --> 00:59:12,050  
And I said, I don't believe it.

1120  
00:59:12,050 --> 00:59:14,350  
She said, well, I'll  
show you something.

1121  
00:59:14,350 --> 00:59:20,560  
So she shows me a letter  
which is dated 1917

1122  
00:59:20,560 --> 00:59:29,260  
that my grandfather wrote to his  
daughter, which was my father,

1123  
00:59:29,260 --> 00:59:35,450  
the one who died in 1969, and  
the way the letter describes--

1124  
00:59:35,450 --> 00:59:36,840  
OK, please go ahead.

1125  
00:59:36,840 --> 00:59:37,700  
Continue.

1126  
00:59:37,700 --> 00:59:43,040  
The way the letter describes  
is observe the Shabbat

1127  
00:59:43,040 --> 00:59:45,920

and please believe in God.

1128  
00:59:45,920 --> 00:59:49,200  
I want you to be a  
good child and so on.

1129  
00:59:49,200 --> 00:59:55,010  
And then it mentioned in the  
letter about the grandfather,

1130  
00:59:55,010 --> 00:59:59,390  
that he was a rabbi in a small  
little town on the border

1131  
00:59:59,390 --> 01:00:01,520  
of Czechoslovakia and Poland.

1132  
01:00:01,520 --> 01:00:05,720  
And when he got older, he  
wanted to go to Palestine,

1133  
01:00:05,720 --> 01:00:06,957  
to Jerusalem.

1134  
01:00:06,957 --> 01:00:11,030  
[INAUDIBLE] And in  
the letter it says

1135  
01:00:11,030 --> 01:00:16,070  
that he lives in Jerusalem.

1136  
01:00:16,070 --> 01:00:17,840  
My daughter, my  
youngest daughter Lisa,

1137  
01:00:17,840 --> 01:00:20,840  
who is now in Israel,  
she just left last week.

1138  
01:00:20,840 --> 01:00:23,270  
I said, Lisa, you're going  
to Hebrew University.

1139

01:00:23,270 --> 01:00:28,130

You know Hebrew I want  
you to go and research

1140

01:00:28,130 --> 01:00:31,870

about my great-grandfather.

1141

01:00:31,870 --> 01:00:33,620

So she went to the  
[INAUDIBLE] Commission.

1142

01:00:33,620 --> 01:00:35,390

We have to stop for a  
moment because we're

1143

01:00:35,390 --> 01:00:36,690

running out of tape.

1144

01:00:36,690 --> 01:00:39,050

Can we continue for  
a few more minutes?

1145

01:00:39,050 --> 01:00:41,510

We'll put on a  
smaller tape and just

1146

01:00:41,510 --> 01:00:43,410

continue for a few moments.

1147

01:00:43,410 --> 01:00:44,090

Good.

1148

01:00:44,090 --> 01:00:46,120

All right we're going to.

1149

01:00:46,120 --> 01:00:55,000