

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:14,640

2

00:00:14,640 --> 00:00:17,130

Can you tell us  
about your experience

3

00:00:17,130 --> 00:00:21,070

at the border, which you  
alluded to last time?

4

00:00:21,070 --> 00:00:21,570

Yes.

5

00:00:21,570 --> 00:00:23,565

Yes, it is something  
I will never forget.

6

00:00:23,565 --> 00:00:26,310

7

00:00:26,310 --> 00:00:30,340

As we arrived, I didn't  
even know at the time

8

00:00:30,340 --> 00:00:32,400

we were at the border.

9

00:00:32,400 --> 00:00:34,260

But the train stopped.

10

00:00:34,260 --> 00:00:38,790

And as I was saying,  
everybody got off,

11

00:00:38,790 --> 00:00:43,890

and groups formed of  
different nationalities.

12

00:00:43,890 --> 00:00:46,390

They were talking about

where they were coming from,

13

00:00:46,390 --> 00:00:48,060

where they were going.

14

00:00:48,060 --> 00:00:51,990

And this friend of  
mine I was liberated

15

00:00:51,990 --> 00:00:54,720

with that I was  
traveling with, we

16

00:00:54,720 --> 00:00:58,740

stopped just to listen what  
was being said or talked.

17

00:00:58,740 --> 00:01:02,640

And some soldiers were  
in a group singing,

18

00:01:02,640 --> 00:01:04,470

Hungarian soldiers.

19

00:01:04,470 --> 00:01:06,720

So we just stopped  
there and listened.

20

00:01:06,720 --> 00:01:14,370

And suddenly, behind us,  
there was this Russian soldier

21

00:01:14,370 --> 00:01:17,550

with his uniform  
with lots of medals.

22

00:01:17,550 --> 00:01:23,430

Half his left side of  
his jacket was bemedaled.

23

00:01:23,430 --> 00:01:27,000

And he addressed the two of us.

24

00:01:27,000 --> 00:01:29,160

I couldn't understand  
what he was talking about.

25

00:01:29,160 --> 00:01:32,940

My friend understood him,  
because as I said before,

26

00:01:32,940 --> 00:01:33,960

she spoke--

27

00:01:33,960 --> 00:01:36,048

she came from the  
part of Czechoslovakia

28

00:01:36,048 --> 00:01:37,590

that was close to  
the Russian border.

29

00:01:37,590 --> 00:01:41,700

She spoke Russian,  
Czechoslovakian, and Hungarian,

30

00:01:41,700 --> 00:01:43,320

and Yiddish.

31

00:01:43,320 --> 00:01:51,930

And this soldier, a somewhat  
short, young man, was talking.

32

00:01:51,930 --> 00:01:54,990

And he wanted to know--

33

00:01:54,990 --> 00:01:58,800

turned to me each  
time, what was my name?

34

00:01:58,800 --> 00:02:01,570

And it was translated to me.

35

00:02:01,570 --> 00:02:04,680

And I told him my name was Olga.

36  
00:02:04,680 --> 00:02:10,800  
And he looked at me and got  
very excited, agitated, almost.

37  
00:02:10,800 --> 00:02:13,680  
He said, my mother's  
name is Olga.

38  
00:02:13,680 --> 00:02:16,830  
And he said, that's a  
beautiful name you have.

39  
00:02:16,830 --> 00:02:19,290  
And each time I had to  
ask what was he saying.

40  
00:02:19,290 --> 00:02:21,990  
I couldn't understand  
what he was talking about.

41  
00:02:21,990 --> 00:02:25,500  
Then, after a few  
minutes, he wanted

42  
00:02:25,500 --> 00:02:28,950  
to-- he put his arm around  
me, around my shoulder.

43  
00:02:28,950 --> 00:02:30,450  
And he says, come with me.

44  
00:02:30,450 --> 00:02:32,880  
You are going to stay with me.

45  
00:02:32,880 --> 00:02:39,250  
And again, I had to ask  
what was this all about?

46  
00:02:39,250 --> 00:02:43,020  
And I said-- I responded  
that I can't stay.

47

00:02:43,020 --> 00:02:44,280

I am going home.

48

00:02:44,280 --> 00:02:49,740

I'm going home to find out  
if my family has survived.

49

00:02:49,740 --> 00:02:53,850

And he says, well, you  
can always do that later.

50

00:02:53,850 --> 00:02:59,440

You know, I am a  
commandant of this area.

51

00:02:59,440 --> 00:03:03,300

I have the highest position, and  
I have a house with servants.

52

00:03:03,300 --> 00:03:06,840

And you're going to have  
a very good life with me.

53

00:03:06,840 --> 00:03:10,640

And I was getting more and  
more horrified at-- just

54

00:03:10,640 --> 00:03:12,550

at the thought of what  
he was talking about.

55

00:03:12,550 --> 00:03:14,430

And as he was talking,  
he was serious.

56

00:03:14,430 --> 00:03:16,500

I saw that this was no joke.

57

00:03:16,500 --> 00:03:21,060

He was not saying that in jest.

58

00:03:21,060 --> 00:03:25,450

And I thought, before this  
goes any further in his mind,

59

00:03:25,450 --> 00:03:30,150  
and is becoming more and more  
reality from his point of view,

60

00:03:30,150 --> 00:03:35,190  
I somehow have to convince  
him that it is not possible.

61

00:03:35,190 --> 00:03:38,580  
And that I don't wish to  
stay with him, no matter

62

00:03:38,580 --> 00:03:43,380  
what beautiful house he  
has or how many servants.

63

00:03:43,380 --> 00:03:46,470  
And it was most difficult,  
because as I say,

64

00:03:46,470 --> 00:03:48,510  
I couldn't understand  
what he was talking about.

65

00:03:48,510 --> 00:03:53,310  
But he was very animated  
and became more and more so.

66

00:03:53,310 --> 00:03:58,620  
And at that point,  
there was some movement.

67

00:03:58,620 --> 00:04:00,030  
People were coming and going.

68

00:04:00,030 --> 00:04:05,100  
And I just had to save  
myself, literally.

69

00:04:05,100 --> 00:04:11,940

And I ran between people and got  
on a train that was stationary.

70  
00:04:11,940 --> 00:04:15,260  
And not on the train, but  
on a wagon, an open wagon.

71  
00:04:15,260 --> 00:04:18,180

72  
00:04:18,180 --> 00:04:19,290  
There was no one there.

73  
00:04:19,290 --> 00:04:23,730  
There were some barrels  
and some blankets.

74  
00:04:23,730 --> 00:04:26,520  
Did he attempt to follow you?

75  
00:04:26,520 --> 00:04:28,050  
At that time I didn't know.

76  
00:04:28,050 --> 00:04:30,970  
I just ran and got on the train.

77  
00:04:30,970 --> 00:04:35,700  
And, as I say, I didn't  
get on a train that had--

78  
00:04:35,700 --> 00:04:38,430  
that was a regular train,  
where you could sit on a train.

79  
00:04:38,430 --> 00:04:40,770  
I got into a wagon,  
an open wagon,

80  
00:04:40,770 --> 00:04:44,190  
which must have been at  
the end of this long train.

81

00:04:44,190 --> 00:04:48,090

And I got on there  
and climbed up.

82

00:04:48,090 --> 00:04:53,010

And when I saw these barrels and  
some blankets, I just pulled--

83

00:04:53,010 --> 00:05:00,120

I hid under the blanket  
in a corner of the wagon

84

00:05:00,120 --> 00:05:02,460

behind a big barrel.

85

00:05:02,460 --> 00:05:05,880

And I decided I'm  
going to play dead.

86

00:05:05,880 --> 00:05:09,690

Because this was something  
I didn't know how to handle.

87

00:05:09,690 --> 00:05:11,310

There was a language barrier.

88

00:05:11,310 --> 00:05:12,710

There was a--

89

00:05:12,710 --> 00:05:14,860

I sensed that there  
was an authority

90

00:05:14,860 --> 00:05:20,950

that I was facing that I just  
didn't know what to do with.

91

00:05:20,950 --> 00:05:27,980

That was too powerful  
for me to deal with.

92

00:05:27,980 --> 00:05:30,790

Now, I have to put



between parentheses,

93

00:05:30,790 --> 00:05:33,880

I just got out of a  
concentration camp.

94

00:05:33,880 --> 00:05:36,130

But I was one of millions.

95

00:05:36,130 --> 00:05:39,490

And I followed orders  
like everybody else.

96

00:05:39,490 --> 00:05:42,550

Never stepped out of line.

97

00:05:42,550 --> 00:05:45,070

Did everything what I was told.

98

00:05:45,070 --> 00:05:48,430

And all through the  
time, I was never

99

00:05:48,430 --> 00:05:54,520

personally beaten, abused,  
any more than generally

100

00:05:54,520 --> 00:05:57,640

by the million.

101

00:05:57,640 --> 00:06:00,460

But suddenly, I was  
singled out and I

102

00:06:00,460 --> 00:06:03,730

had to deal with,  
person to person,

103

00:06:03,730 --> 00:06:05,770

something of an oppressor.

104

00:06:05,770 --> 00:06:11,260

And I felt terribly overwhelmed.

105

00:06:11,260 --> 00:06:16,270

And I was-- I don't know  
how long it was that I was

106

00:06:16,270 --> 00:06:19,270

under this blanket, motionless.

107

00:06:19,270 --> 00:06:21,190

I tried not to breathe.

108

00:06:21,190 --> 00:06:23,590

I didn't know who would hear me.

109

00:06:23,590 --> 00:06:28,210

And then I heard  
running, and commotions,

110

00:06:28,210 --> 00:06:29,940

and whistle blowing.

111

00:06:29,940 --> 00:06:33,010

And I thought, well,  
maybe this is the moment.

112

00:06:33,010 --> 00:06:40,180

Now we will leave, and  
somehow I get out of here.

113

00:06:40,180 --> 00:06:47,630

And I have to retract by saying  
that what he was offering me

114

00:06:47,630 --> 00:06:51,890

this fantastic life with  
him, to stay with him,

115

00:06:51,890 --> 00:06:55,510

he was also getting  
very upset and angry.

116

00:06:55,510 --> 00:06:56,980  
And I could see it on his face.

117  
00:06:56,980 --> 00:06:59,110  
And this is what frightened me.

118  
00:06:59,110 --> 00:07:06,670  
He was saying that you, all  
of you, you all went willingly

119  
00:07:06,670 --> 00:07:09,400  
with all the German soldiers.

120  
00:07:09,400 --> 00:07:14,050  
I am your liberator, and  
you are rejecting me.

121  
00:07:14,050 --> 00:07:20,800  
This was his attitude  
and how he saw the thing.

122  
00:07:20,800 --> 00:07:24,580  
He decided something,  
and it was refused.

123  
00:07:24,580 --> 00:07:27,490  
And he couldn't understand  
how can a liberator

124  
00:07:27,490 --> 00:07:31,150  
be refused such thing?

125  
00:07:31,150 --> 00:07:34,210  
And I have to say that  
I never had anything

126  
00:07:34,210 --> 00:07:36,040  
to do with any of  
the German soldiers

127  
00:07:36,040 --> 00:07:38,380  
during all those times.

128

00:07:38,380 --> 00:07:43,330

So I don't know  
if it was minutes,

129

00:07:43,330 --> 00:07:45,850

or could have been hours.

130

00:07:45,850 --> 00:07:50,410

I was absolutely terrified.

131

00:07:50,410 --> 00:07:55,870

And finally, after  
much and long time,

132

00:07:55,870 --> 00:08:01,840

I heard the first creak of  
the-- the train gave a jolt.

133

00:08:01,840 --> 00:08:06,730

And little by little,  
we begin to move.

134

00:08:06,730 --> 00:08:13,030

And a lot of people  
came on top of the--

135

00:08:13,030 --> 00:08:17,860

on the same open train as I was.

136

00:08:17,860 --> 00:08:20,830

137

00:08:20,830 --> 00:08:23,230

And I was still  
under the blanket.

138

00:08:23,230 --> 00:08:26,740

And I thought any minute  
somebody's going to step on me.

139

00:08:26,740 --> 00:08:28,390

And I will--

140  
00:08:28,390 --> 00:08:30,947  
I was just holding  
back that, you know,

141  
00:08:30,947 --> 00:08:32,169  
I shouldn't scream out.

142  
00:08:32,169 --> 00:08:33,960  
I didn't know what  
was happening.

143  
00:08:33,960 --> 00:08:35,710  
And there were a lot  
of Hungarian soldiers

144  
00:08:35,710 --> 00:08:42,070  
who were traveling  
in this open wagon,

145  
00:08:42,070 --> 00:08:43,690  
because there was  
no place anywhere.

146  
00:08:43,690 --> 00:08:45,400  
So every space was taken.

147  
00:08:45,400 --> 00:08:53,530  
People sat on those barrels,  
and were hanging their feet out

148  
00:08:53,530 --> 00:08:56,500  
of the train and everything.

149  
00:08:56,500 --> 00:09:06,490  
And I heard them say that there  
was some Russian officer who

150  
00:09:06,490 --> 00:09:11,410  
gave order to search the  
train before they could leave

151

00:09:11,410 --> 00:09:12,730  
who was looking for someone.

152  
00:09:12,730 --> 00:09:14,563  
And they didn't know  
who it was or what they

153  
00:09:14,563 --> 00:09:17,000  
were-- what he was looking for.

154  
00:09:17,000 --> 00:09:19,330  
But that's how--  
under the blanket,

155  
00:09:19,330 --> 00:09:25,040  
I heard them say that this  
Russian officer gave order

156  
00:09:25,040 --> 00:09:27,700  
to search for  
something or someone,

157  
00:09:27,700 --> 00:09:29,390  
and they didn't  
know what it was.

158  
00:09:29,390 --> 00:09:33,850  
And finally, I  
suppose, he gave up.

159  
00:09:33,850 --> 00:09:35,740  
And this is how--

160  
00:09:35,740 --> 00:09:37,540  
then we crossed the border.

161  
00:09:37,540 --> 00:09:39,460  
And I heard that  
on the other side

162  
00:09:39,460 --> 00:09:41,990  
there were Hungarians  
who stopped the train.

163  
00:09:41,990 --> 00:09:44,980  
And that's how I knew that now  
we were on the Hungarian side.

164  
00:09:44,980 --> 00:09:48,310

165  
00:09:48,310 --> 00:09:50,870  
How long had you been  
under the blanket?

166  
00:09:50,870 --> 00:09:51,880  
I have no idea.

167  
00:09:51,880 --> 00:09:54,700  
Who had a watch or  
time or anything?

168  
00:09:54,700 --> 00:10:02,230  
And when you are terrified,  
a second seems like hours.

169  
00:10:02,230 --> 00:10:07,990  
And at that time,  
suddenly, it all

170  
00:10:07,990 --> 00:10:16,050  
fell on me of being alone in  
the world and defenseless.

171  
00:10:16,050 --> 00:10:24,850  
And this is how reality  
loomed larger than life.

172  
00:10:24,850 --> 00:10:29,700  
And I couldn't find  
my friend after that.

173  
00:10:29,700 --> 00:10:33,510  
I have lost contact  
with her from the time

174

00:10:33,510 --> 00:10:41,152

I ran away from the platform  
to get on the wagon.

175

00:10:41,152 --> 00:10:42,360

You never saw her since then?

176

00:10:42,360 --> 00:10:43,550

I never saw her again.

177

00:10:43,550 --> 00:10:46,110

178

00:10:46,110 --> 00:10:51,060

And this train was  
going to Budapest.

179

00:10:51,060 --> 00:10:53,130

That's why we got  
on to begin with.

180

00:10:53,130 --> 00:10:55,720

Because when we asked,  
the answer was yes,

181

00:10:55,720 --> 00:10:57,105

it was going to Budapest.

182

00:10:57,105 --> 00:10:58,910

So I arrived in Budapest.

183

00:10:58,910 --> 00:11:03,620

And it's all very blurry in  
my mind what happened there,

184

00:11:03,620 --> 00:11:07,370

because I had nothing  
on, nothing in my hand,

185

00:11:07,370 --> 00:11:10,430

no money, no identification.



186

00:11:10,430 --> 00:11:12,080

And when we got  
off the train, we

187

00:11:12,080 --> 00:11:16,820

were not given  
anything of that sort.

188

00:11:16,820 --> 00:11:19,430

I didn't wait long  
enough when we

189

00:11:19,430 --> 00:11:23,450

were liberated in Czechoslovakia  
for the Americans.

190

00:11:23,450 --> 00:11:28,310

I don't think they were ready  
or set up for any such things

191

00:11:28,310 --> 00:11:34,040

to give a paper to someone  
that it would be an identity

192

00:11:34,040 --> 00:11:36,090

card or something.

193

00:11:36,090 --> 00:11:41,030

So in Budapest, I  
received something.

194

00:11:41,030 --> 00:11:45,350

Since I was returning,  
they allowed

195

00:11:45,350 --> 00:11:51,500

me to have one trip  
free on any train.

196

00:11:51,500 --> 00:11:56,060

Not two ways, just one way.

197

00:11:56,060 --> 00:11:59,780  
And they recorded my name.

198  
00:11:59,780 --> 00:12:01,980  
And I gave the name  
of a little town

199  
00:12:01,980 --> 00:12:07,070  
where my mother came  
from, because I felt--

200  
00:12:07,070 --> 00:12:08,780  
my whole family on  
my mother's side

201  
00:12:08,780 --> 00:12:10,680  
lived in that corner of Hungary.

202  
00:12:10,680 --> 00:12:12,620  
And I thought, if  
anybody comes back,

203  
00:12:12,620 --> 00:12:16,280  
this is where they  
would come back to.

204  
00:12:16,280 --> 00:12:25,000  
And so this was one way.

205  
00:12:25,000 --> 00:12:27,610  
And, of course, I  
didn't find anyone.

206  
00:12:27,610 --> 00:12:35,750  
But I met a cousin's husband  
who had two children,

207  
00:12:35,750 --> 00:12:38,990  
aged two and six.

208  
00:12:38,990 --> 00:12:45,200  
And he was searching for  
his wife and children.

209  
00:12:45,200 --> 00:12:47,000  
And there was no one.

210  
00:12:47,000 --> 00:12:50,240  
And he told me that  
he came from another--

211  
00:12:50,240 --> 00:12:51,920  
where he came from  
another town, he

212  
00:12:51,920 --> 00:12:54,800  
said he has a brother  
who came back.

213  
00:12:54,800 --> 00:12:57,410  
And there were some--

214  
00:12:57,410 --> 00:13:01,130  
a few young people,  
as he put it,

215  
00:13:01,130 --> 00:13:03,628  
my age, also without  
their parents.

216  
00:13:03,628 --> 00:13:04,670  
Why don't you come there?

217  
00:13:04,670 --> 00:13:06,680  
There is no one here.

218  
00:13:06,680 --> 00:13:08,510  
So I went with him.

219  
00:13:08,510 --> 00:13:16,190  
And that was the town of MÃ¡d  
in the Tokaj region of Hungary,

220  
00:13:16,190 --> 00:13:22,070  
where they have the

famous grape vineyards.

221

00:13:22,070 --> 00:13:27,620

And so that was the story  
of returning to Hungary.

222

00:13:27,620 --> 00:13:35,410

And everywhere there  
were Russian soldiers.

223

00:13:35,410 --> 00:13:41,930

So I was glad to be at least  
with some people whom I know

224

00:13:41,930 --> 00:13:45,860

that they were Jewish people.

225

00:13:45,860 --> 00:13:47,810

Did you know them from  
before, or did you--

226

00:13:47,810 --> 00:13:52,580

I knew the husband of my  
cousin, yes, as a child.

227

00:13:52,580 --> 00:13:54,650

I was at their wedding.

228

00:13:54,650 --> 00:13:58,130

And I knew their  
two little children.

229

00:13:58,130 --> 00:14:00,200

And, of course, my cousin.

230

00:14:00,200 --> 00:14:02,900

They all came from  
the same little town

231

00:14:02,900 --> 00:14:05,450

where my mother come from.

232

00:14:05,450 --> 00:14:09,980

Incidentally,  
before we finish, I

233

00:14:09,980 --> 00:14:13,910

would like to pay homage to  
all those who didn't come back.

234

00:14:13,910 --> 00:14:17,490

235

00:14:17,490 --> 00:14:20,700

My mother had three  
older brothers.

236

00:14:20,700 --> 00:14:22,980

She was the youngest.

237

00:14:22,980 --> 00:14:30,110

So out of the three  
brothers, one came back.

238

00:14:30,110 --> 00:14:32,335

He lost his wife and  
two small children.

239

00:14:32,335 --> 00:14:35,050

240

00:14:35,050 --> 00:14:37,405

One brother was not married.

241

00:14:37,405 --> 00:14:40,390

242

00:14:40,390 --> 00:14:43,060

The oldest brother  
had four children.

243

00:14:43,060 --> 00:14:47,260

Out of the four,  
two were married.

244

00:14:47,260 --> 00:14:51,550

Two married daughters, each with  
two children, didn't come back.

245

00:14:51,550 --> 00:14:54,610

246

00:14:54,610 --> 00:14:59,230

His son was in a  
forced labor camp.

247

00:14:59,230 --> 00:15:06,700

He returned and died  
at age 75 last year.

248

00:15:06,700 --> 00:15:11,350

And the youngest of  
his four children

249

00:15:11,350 --> 00:15:15,220

was unmarried in her 20s.

250

00:15:15,220 --> 00:15:18,340

And she came back.

251

00:15:18,340 --> 00:15:23,710

And my grandmother, who lived  
in this little town of GyulahÃ¼za

252

00:15:23,710 --> 00:15:29,260

had two other sisters who also  
married in this town and who

253

00:15:29,260 --> 00:15:30,130

lived in this town.

254

00:15:30,130 --> 00:15:33,310

And their children  
and grandchildren

255

00:15:33,310 --> 00:15:36,790

all settled in the

same little town.

256

00:15:36,790 --> 00:15:40,690

And none of them came back.

257

00:15:40,690 --> 00:15:43,600

And my grandmother  
is buried there.

258

00:15:43,600 --> 00:15:48,340

But her two sisters,  
she had five sisters.

259

00:15:48,340 --> 00:15:52,150

They were-- four of them.

260

00:15:52,150 --> 00:15:53,560

No, they were five sisters.

261

00:15:53,560 --> 00:15:58,850

And four of them were taken  
away, all in their 70s, 80s.

262

00:15:58,850 --> 00:16:01,130

And their children  
and grandchildren.

263

00:16:01,130 --> 00:16:03,950

264

00:16:03,950 --> 00:16:12,030

So the devastation  
was really incredible.

265

00:16:12,030 --> 00:16:14,520

Did you find out about  
this only after you

266

00:16:14,520 --> 00:16:16,500

returned to this little town?

267

00:16:16,500 --> 00:16:20,520

Yes, because we lived  
in a suburb of Budapest.

268  
00:16:20,520 --> 00:16:23,610  
And we had no communication  
with them for quite a while,

269  
00:16:23,610 --> 00:16:25,260  
as I have said before.

270  
00:16:25,260 --> 00:16:30,030  
We thought because there was  
all this-- all the Germans were

271  
00:16:30,030 --> 00:16:39,150  
using all the trains to go  
eastward to the Eastern Front

272  
00:16:39,150 --> 00:16:40,260  
to Russia.

273  
00:16:40,260 --> 00:16:44,230  
And mail wasn't  
taken or delivered.

274  
00:16:44,230 --> 00:16:47,980  
So we didn't know what happened  
and when it happened to them.

275  
00:16:47,980 --> 00:16:51,000  
And we were in total  
darkness about it.

276  
00:16:51,000 --> 00:16:54,240  
How were you treated by  
the non-Jewish populace

277  
00:16:54,240 --> 00:16:56,760  
in this community?

278  
00:16:56,760 --> 00:16:58,000  
Before the war?



279  
00:16:58,000 --> 00:16:59,010  
After.

280  
00:16:59,010 --> 00:16:59,760  
When you returned.

281  
00:16:59,760 --> 00:17:03,110

282  
00:17:03,110 --> 00:17:05,079  
This little town  
called GyulahĀza?

283  
00:17:05,079 --> 00:17:05,579  
Yes.

284  
00:17:05,579 --> 00:17:07,589  
I did not stay there.

285  
00:17:07,589 --> 00:17:09,280  
I did not stay there at all.

286  
00:17:09,280 --> 00:17:10,170  
I went there back.

287  
00:17:10,170 --> 00:17:13,260  
And as I went back,  
I met the husband

288  
00:17:13,260 --> 00:17:16,619  
of my cousin, who invited  
me to another town.

289  
00:17:16,619 --> 00:17:18,369  
And I stayed with  
them for a while.

290  
00:17:18,369 --> 00:17:23,609  
But I didn't stay there at  
all, not even overnight.

291

00:17:23,609 --> 00:17:25,230  
Where did you go?

292  
00:17:25,230 --> 00:17:27,210  
I went with him  
where his brother

293  
00:17:27,210 --> 00:17:29,010  
was, where they came from.

294  
00:17:29,010 --> 00:17:31,020  
The town where they came from.

295  
00:17:31,020 --> 00:17:33,630  
And there I didn't know  
anybody except him.

296  
00:17:33,630 --> 00:17:37,680  
And, of course, I had  
met his brother, whom I

297  
00:17:37,680 --> 00:17:40,770  
knew of but I never met before.

298  
00:17:40,770 --> 00:17:43,920  
And I stayed there for--

299  
00:17:43,920 --> 00:17:47,160  
and I had met a couple  
of young people my age

300  
00:17:47,160 --> 00:17:48,870  
and became friends.

301  
00:17:48,870 --> 00:17:51,240  
I stayed with them  
for a little while

302  
00:17:51,240 --> 00:17:53,460  
and then went back  
to Budapest again.

303

00:17:53,460 --> 00:17:56,130

304

00:17:56,130 --> 00:18:03,270

By sheer coincidence, my  
father had a brother in Paris

305

00:18:03,270 --> 00:18:09,540

who lived there all  
since World War One.

306

00:18:09,540 --> 00:18:17,100

And he had searched for his  
relatives, that is, my father,

307

00:18:17,100 --> 00:18:20,700

and my mother, and I,  
through the Red Cross.

308

00:18:20,700 --> 00:18:24,030

And someone heard our  
name being mentioned.

309

00:18:24,030 --> 00:18:27,330

And this is how I got  
in touch with him.

310

00:18:27,330 --> 00:18:34,650

And then shortly after, I  
returned to France in 1940--

311

00:18:34,650 --> 00:18:35,340

end of '46.

312

00:18:35,340 --> 00:18:39,560

313

00:18:39,560 --> 00:18:42,920

So this is how I left Hungary.

314

00:18:42,920 --> 00:18:47,870

Then I really promised  
never ever to return.

315  
00:18:47,870 --> 00:18:54,970  
I felt very much betrayed that  
Hungary let this happen to us.

316  
00:18:54,970 --> 00:19:00,620  
And I have broken my promise.

317  
00:19:00,620 --> 00:19:03,305  
About three years  
ago, I have returned.

318  
00:19:03,305 --> 00:19:06,700

319  
00:19:06,700 --> 00:19:11,290  
But I felt I wanted to  
return, almost like a ghost,

320  
00:19:11,290 --> 00:19:16,210  
that I should see  
what was left there.

321  
00:19:16,210 --> 00:19:18,190  
But nobody should see me.

322  
00:19:18,190 --> 00:19:23,200  
I wanted to pass  
unseen and unknown.

323  
00:19:23,200 --> 00:19:24,880  
It was very, very painful.

324  
00:19:24,880 --> 00:19:27,490  
And I have completely  
forgotten Hungarian.

325  
00:19:27,490 --> 00:19:31,630  
I promised to forget  
it, and I promptly did.

326  
00:19:31,630 --> 00:19:35,080

I have never had a  
chance to speak it since.

327  
00:19:35,080 --> 00:19:39,940  
And I really got out  
of the habit, really.

328  
00:19:39,940 --> 00:19:46,540  
And it was a psychological  
factor that I forgot Hungarian.

329  
00:19:46,540 --> 00:19:49,810  
Did you recognize  
any places or people?

330  
00:19:49,810 --> 00:19:52,420  
When I went back to this  
little town, as I said,

331  
00:19:52,420 --> 00:19:55,390  
this was the cocoon where my  
whole family on my mother's

332  
00:19:55,390 --> 00:19:59,130  
side came from, and lived  
there for centuries.

333  
00:19:59,130 --> 00:20:02,980  
And I returned.

334  
00:20:02,980 --> 00:20:06,310  
Somehow, everything  
seemed like--

335  
00:20:06,310 --> 00:20:08,740  
there are two churches in town.

336  
00:20:08,740 --> 00:20:12,740  
This is a very little  
village, about 2,000 people,

337  
00:20:12,740 --> 00:20:16,750  
who lived there, and about

10 Jewish family lived there.

338

00:20:16,750 --> 00:20:21,490

Out of the 10 Jewish family,  
seven were my family.

339

00:20:21,490 --> 00:20:26,620

And my family lived very  
close and side by side

340

00:20:26,620 --> 00:20:27,460

with the neighbors.

341

00:20:27,460 --> 00:20:29,710

There were no animosities.

342

00:20:29,710 --> 00:20:31,720

There were no rich people.

343

00:20:31,720 --> 00:20:36,280

Everybody had just  
about the same thing.

344

00:20:36,280 --> 00:20:43,960

And I never felt that  
because I was Jewish I

345

00:20:43,960 --> 00:20:47,530

was looked upon differently.

346

00:20:47,530 --> 00:20:50,320

I think children are not  
so aware of it anyway.

347

00:20:50,320 --> 00:20:53,770

348

00:20:53,770 --> 00:20:57,280

And I remembered the  
neighbors of my grandmother's,

349

00:20:57,280 --> 00:21:02,280

and children I went  
to school with.

350  
00:21:02,280 --> 00:21:05,550  
And as I went  
through the town, I

351  
00:21:05,550 --> 00:21:10,540  
was with a friend  
who met me in Zurich.

352  
00:21:10,540 --> 00:21:13,350  
And we drove all the way there.

353  
00:21:13,350 --> 00:21:19,410  
And neighbors came out to see,  
because nobody can pass there

354  
00:21:19,410 --> 00:21:21,600  
without being noticed.

355  
00:21:21,600 --> 00:21:23,760  
It was my hallucination.

356  
00:21:23,760 --> 00:21:28,320  
6 o'clock in the morning,  
people came out of their houses.

357  
00:21:28,320 --> 00:21:30,420  
And they recognized me.

358  
00:21:30,420 --> 00:21:31,800  
Apparently, from  
the back, I look

359  
00:21:31,800 --> 00:21:33,920  
very much like my mother did.

360  
00:21:33,920 --> 00:21:36,420  
She was about my height.

361  
00:21:36,420 --> 00:21:40,410

And immediately, some  
neighbor came out

362  
00:21:40,410 --> 00:21:42,930  
and threw their arm  
around me and cried.

363  
00:21:42,930 --> 00:21:44,260  
And talking to me.

364  
00:21:44,260 --> 00:21:46,260  
And I couldn't understand  
what they were saying.

365  
00:21:46,260 --> 00:21:48,750  
And I could even  
less answer them.

366  
00:21:48,750 --> 00:21:52,650  
I was really just like somebody  
put a noose around my throat.

367  
00:21:52,650 --> 00:21:54,380  
I couldn't talk in any language.

368  
00:21:54,380 --> 00:21:57,090

369  
00:21:57,090 --> 00:22:00,000  
But two minutes later, I  
was in their living room

370  
00:22:00,000 --> 00:22:03,390  
and being given breakfast.

371  
00:22:03,390 --> 00:22:04,500  
And they cried.

372  
00:22:04,500 --> 00:22:06,930  
They just cried.

373  
00:22:06,930 --> 00:22:12,930



And it was a terribly,  
terribly emotional moment

374  
00:22:12,930 --> 00:22:15,620  
to return to somewhere  
where you felt so at home.

375  
00:22:15,620 --> 00:22:19,350  
And I felt sure and secure.

376  
00:22:19,350 --> 00:22:23,130  
And when I walked down  
the street as a child,

377  
00:22:23,130 --> 00:22:25,680  
older men would lift  
their hat to say hello,

378  
00:22:25,680 --> 00:22:30,840  
because they knew whose  
daughter or granddaughter I was.

379  
00:22:30,840 --> 00:22:33,480  
And suddenly there was  
absolutely nobody there that

380  
00:22:33,480 --> 00:22:36,780  
was belonging to my family.

381  
00:22:36,780 --> 00:22:40,080  
But the neighbors  
received me very warmly.

382  
00:22:40,080 --> 00:22:41,370  
And this is how I--

383  
00:22:41,370 --> 00:22:45,180  
I went back to the cemetery  
where my grandmother is buried.

384  
00:22:45,180 --> 00:22:47,400  
Then I went back  
last year, and I

385  
00:22:47,400 --> 00:22:50,790  
found a second cousin  
who was not back,

386  
00:22:50,790 --> 00:22:54,850  
not returned till later.

387  
00:22:54,850 --> 00:22:59,770  
And he told me that not only my  
grandmother and her husband--

388  
00:22:59,770 --> 00:23:03,360  
which I knew, I never  
met my grandfather--

389  
00:23:03,360 --> 00:23:07,980  
was buried there, but  
also my great grandparents

390  
00:23:07,980 --> 00:23:10,290  
and great great grandparents.

391  
00:23:10,290 --> 00:23:12,720  
So, you see, in this  
little tiny cemetery,

392  
00:23:12,720 --> 00:23:18,090  
there are several generations.

393  
00:23:18,090 --> 00:23:22,460  
They were all  
shoemakers, tailors.

394  
00:23:22,460 --> 00:23:27,480  
The Jewish people were either  
in business or in trade.

395  
00:23:27,480 --> 00:23:30,630  
And they owned a little  
parcel of their own

396

00:23:30,630 --> 00:23:32,045  
where they grew their own food.

397  
00:23:32,045 --> 00:23:34,650

398  
00:23:34,650 --> 00:23:38,130  
This was a very low key town.

399  
00:23:38,130 --> 00:23:40,620  
Nobody had any more than  
the next door neighbor,

400  
00:23:40,620 --> 00:23:46,806  
and nobody competed with  
each other for anything.

401  
00:23:46,806 --> 00:23:55,990  
I was a very quiet  
and, I don't know,

402  
00:23:55,990 --> 00:23:59,590  
perhaps uninteresting  
way of life.

403  
00:23:59,590 --> 00:24:02,410  
But I am very  
sentimental about it.

404  
00:24:02,410 --> 00:24:09,910  
When these people were greeting  
you again, did any of them

405  
00:24:09,910 --> 00:24:16,050  
attempt to talk about the  
past or what happened?

406  
00:24:16,050 --> 00:24:17,410  
Or why it happened?

407  
00:24:17,410 --> 00:24:19,570  
Or was this avoided?

408

00:24:19,570 --> 00:24:20,500

No.

409

00:24:20,500 --> 00:24:22,780

I don't think they could  
talk about it either.

410

00:24:22,780 --> 00:24:26,110

And I had no voice to ask them.

411

00:24:26,110 --> 00:24:32,010

412

00:24:32,010 --> 00:24:34,890

These were good neighbors  
that I remember well.

413

00:24:34,890 --> 00:24:40,230

414

00:24:40,230 --> 00:24:45,720

I understand better today  
what really happened.

415

00:24:45,720 --> 00:24:48,870

And I was not part  
of their life.

416

00:24:48,870 --> 00:24:51,270

They went through  
a revolution that

417

00:24:51,270 --> 00:24:54,780

was after something  
horrible happened to us.

418

00:24:54,780 --> 00:24:57,450

But something horrible  
happened to them,

419

00:24:57,450 --> 00:25:01,080

where people could

point to each other

420  
00:25:01,080 --> 00:25:03,360  
in order to save  
their lives, saying

421  
00:25:03,360 --> 00:25:06,510  
that this one or that one didn't  
agree with the new regime.

422  
00:25:06,510 --> 00:25:09,540  
And they were hung.

423  
00:25:09,540 --> 00:25:13,740  
This was the Hungarian  
revolution of '56.

424  
00:25:13,740 --> 00:25:16,830  
So they went through  
great deprivation.

425  
00:25:16,830 --> 00:25:19,270  
And after what  
happened to us, there

426  
00:25:19,270 --> 00:25:21,840  
is no comparison,  
perhaps, because it

427  
00:25:21,840 --> 00:25:24,420  
happened to us en masse.

428  
00:25:24,420 --> 00:25:26,370  
Everybody it happened to.

429  
00:25:26,370 --> 00:25:31,170  
But it eventually came to  
them in a different form.

430  
00:25:31,170 --> 00:25:35,460  
But this was a very  
difficult time for them.

431

00:25:35,460 --> 00:25:38,040

And I don't know  
all the details.

432

00:25:38,040 --> 00:25:43,410

But some of them must have had  
great traumatic experiences

433

00:25:43,410 --> 00:25:47,730

and losses, personal losses.

434

00:25:47,730 --> 00:25:52,770

And as I say, we  
didn't talk about it.

435

00:25:52,770 --> 00:25:56,400

I hope to return and  
perhaps be more composed

436

00:25:56,400 --> 00:26:02,490

and find my voice in  
Hungarian and speak with them.

437

00:26:02,490 --> 00:26:04,780

I hope I can still  
find the same people.

438

00:26:04,780 --> 00:26:08,590

Because one of the ladies  
was quite on in years.

439

00:26:08,590 --> 00:26:10,620

Has the language  
come back to you?

440

00:26:10,620 --> 00:26:11,520

Yes.

441

00:26:11,520 --> 00:26:13,740

Yes, it has come back,  
because I have begin

442

00:26:13,740 --> 00:26:15,150  
to correspond with someone.

443  
00:26:15,150 --> 00:26:17,070  
And I need a dictionary.

444  
00:26:17,070 --> 00:26:19,680  
And I don't have any good  
dictionaries in Hungarian.

445  
00:26:19,680 --> 00:26:22,590  
I don't even think  
they do have good ones.

446  
00:26:22,590 --> 00:26:25,200  
Because when I was  
there, I bought one.

447  
00:26:25,200 --> 00:26:29,370  
I had an old one, which  
was French Hungarian.

448  
00:26:29,370 --> 00:26:32,880  
And I bought a new one,  
which is English Hungarian.

449  
00:26:32,880 --> 00:26:35,130  
And even so, I have  
great difficulty

450  
00:26:35,130 --> 00:26:38,910  
to finding normal  
everyday words that I

451  
00:26:38,910 --> 00:26:42,540  
want to use in my letters.

452  
00:26:42,540 --> 00:26:45,780  
But I have more facility today.

453  
00:26:45,780 --> 00:26:50,880  
And I think I'm more  
composed about it,

454  
00:26:50,880 --> 00:26:54,210  
because since the  
first time I returned,

455  
00:26:54,210 --> 00:26:58,150  
I talked more about it.

456  
00:26:58,150 --> 00:27:00,840  
And I think it's--

457  
00:27:00,840 --> 00:27:04,110  
I released something in there,  
some little trigger in my mind

458  
00:27:04,110 --> 00:27:07,530  
that was holding it all back.

459  
00:27:07,530 --> 00:27:10,273  
Let's go back to  
your stay in France.

460  
00:27:10,273 --> 00:27:11,190  
What did you do there?

461  
00:27:11,190 --> 00:27:14,730

462  
00:27:14,730 --> 00:27:20,760  
My uncle was a musician  
during the war.

463  
00:27:20,760 --> 00:27:25,950  
Before the war, he was  
with the Paris symphony.

464  
00:27:25,950 --> 00:27:30,510  
As the war came, everybody  
went into the army,

465  
00:27:30,510 --> 00:27:32,310  
the undergrounds.



466  
00:27:32,310 --> 00:27:35,100  
My uncle went into the  
army with de Gaulle,

467  
00:27:35,100 --> 00:27:37,830  
the Free French Forces.

468  
00:27:37,830 --> 00:27:40,920  
And everybody lost  
their position.

469  
00:27:40,920 --> 00:27:42,990  
The conductor came  
to San Francisco,

470  
00:27:42,990 --> 00:27:45,450  
Pierre [PERSONAL NAME].

471  
00:27:45,450 --> 00:27:47,460  
And there was no orchestra.

472  
00:27:47,460 --> 00:27:51,480  
When the war was  
over, it took time

473  
00:27:51,480 --> 00:27:55,260  
before they were  
in financial shape

474  
00:27:55,260 --> 00:27:57,630  
to reorganize an orchestra.

475  
00:27:57,630 --> 00:28:01,530  
And, of course, they  
auditioned musicians.

476  
00:28:01,530 --> 00:28:05,520  
And he didn't get his job back,  
because he was 48 years old,

477  
00:28:05,520 --> 00:28:12,180

and they felt that he would  
be eligible for a pension

478  
00:28:12,180 --> 00:28:14,280  
much too soon.

479  
00:28:14,280 --> 00:28:16,560  
So they tried to get  
younger musicians.

480  
00:28:16,560 --> 00:28:21,480  
And he was in a difficult  
position to find a job.

481  
00:28:21,480 --> 00:28:25,410  
He was a classical musician.

482  
00:28:25,410 --> 00:28:29,820  
And at first, for  
a while, he was

483  
00:28:29,820 --> 00:28:32,730  
replacing-- you know, if  
somebody couldn't make it

484  
00:28:32,730 --> 00:28:33,960  
to the opera.

485  
00:28:33,960 --> 00:28:38,760  
He was also-- he played  
the big bass, which is not

486  
00:28:38,760 --> 00:28:42,300  
like you need so many of them.

487  
00:28:42,300 --> 00:28:45,990  
And for a while, he  
replaced musicians

488  
00:28:45,990 --> 00:28:49,720  
who couldn't make it on the  
evening they had to perform.

489

00:28:49,720 --> 00:28:51,430

So it didn't give  
him a steady income.

490

00:28:51,430 --> 00:28:55,650

Eventually, he found a  
job, a better position

491

00:28:55,650 --> 00:28:58,980

with the Strasbourg--

492

00:28:58,980 --> 00:29:06,990

[SPEAKING FRENCH] So  
this was a steady job.

493

00:29:06,990 --> 00:29:10,590

And when I came from  
Hungary, he happened

494

00:29:10,590 --> 00:29:14,220

to be in Strasbourg,  
employed in Strasbourg.

495

00:29:14,220 --> 00:29:15,930

And this is a  
coincidence, because I

496

00:29:15,930 --> 00:29:17,880

was born in Strasbourg.

497

00:29:17,880 --> 00:29:22,200

So when I returned  
from the great detour

498

00:29:22,200 --> 00:29:24,950

that my father  
took, unfortunately

499

00:29:24,950 --> 00:29:31,000

at the wrong time, back towards  
Hungary, and when I came back,

500

00:29:31,000 --> 00:29:33,090  
my uncle happened  
to be in Strasbourg.

501  
00:29:33,090 --> 00:29:38,630  
So I went back to art school.

502  
00:29:38,630 --> 00:29:41,540  
And that's what I  
did in Strasbourg.

503  
00:29:41,540 --> 00:29:44,840  
I stayed there less  
than four years.

504  
00:29:44,840 --> 00:29:51,510  
Then I came to Chicago, to  
a cousin of my mother's.

505  
00:29:51,510 --> 00:29:55,010  
Just to show you how clannish  
and close the family was,

506  
00:29:55,010 --> 00:29:58,460  
I never knew about this  
cousin of my mother's.

507  
00:29:58,460 --> 00:30:04,100  
She searched for everyone  
who was her family.

508  
00:30:04,100 --> 00:30:06,950  
Her father and my  
grandfather were brothers.

509  
00:30:06,950 --> 00:30:10,640  
And there were about six  
children in the family there.

510  
00:30:10,640 --> 00:30:15,000  
And anyone who remained,  
no matter how removed,

511

00:30:15,000 --> 00:30:19,410  
she single-handedly  
brought them out.

512  
00:30:19,410 --> 00:30:24,720  
She set herself up with saving  
money from her kitchen money

513  
00:30:24,720 --> 00:30:28,020  
and putting enough money  
together to send a ticket.

514  
00:30:28,020 --> 00:30:31,260  
And no sooner somebody  
came out, and she put them

515  
00:30:31,260 --> 00:30:35,010  
into whatever profession  
or vocation they had.

516  
00:30:35,010 --> 00:30:36,540  
As soon as they  
earned enough money,

517  
00:30:36,540 --> 00:30:40,590  
they had to repay her, because  
she was recycling that money

518  
00:30:40,590 --> 00:30:43,590  
to bring somebody else out.

519  
00:30:43,590 --> 00:30:47,670  
And I called her Aunt Fanny,  
because she was much older.

520  
00:30:47,670 --> 00:30:51,720  
She had grandchildren  
already when I came out.

521  
00:30:51,720 --> 00:30:55,180  
And that's how I happened  
to come to Chicago.

522

00:30:55,180 --> 00:30:58,510

She was a fantastic,  
wonderful person.

523

00:30:58,510 --> 00:31:03,190

This is Fanny Leibovitz.

524

00:31:03,190 --> 00:31:06,390

And she was known for her  
good deeds far and wide

525

00:31:06,390 --> 00:31:09,940

all the way to Israel.

526

00:31:09,940 --> 00:31:14,750

There are at least 50 people  
who she brought over by herself.

527

00:31:14,750 --> 00:31:20,050

She was like the Joint  
Committee herself,

528

00:31:20,050 --> 00:31:22,210

a one-woman organization.

529

00:31:22,210 --> 00:31:25,020

530

00:31:25,020 --> 00:31:30,000

And did you go to school  
in Chicago, or work?

531

00:31:30,000 --> 00:31:33,630

No, I remained in  
Strasbourg until just

532

00:31:33,630 --> 00:31:35,220

before I got my diploma.

533

00:31:35,220 --> 00:31:38,970

I always seemed to miss the  
last six months, the crucial six

534

00:31:38,970 --> 00:31:40,050  
months.

535

00:31:40,050 --> 00:31:45,540  
And that was because there  
was a war going on in Korea.

536

00:31:45,540 --> 00:31:48,090  
And every day, the  
newspapers reported

537

00:31:48,090 --> 00:31:51,060  
about the 38th parallel  
where they were fighting,

538

00:31:51,060 --> 00:31:52,020  
terrible fighting.

539

00:31:52,020 --> 00:31:56,490  
And someone had suggested  
to my uncle and myself

540

00:31:56,490 --> 00:32:00,960  
that if you really think about  
going to the United States,

541

00:32:00,960 --> 00:32:05,010  
you should not wait too long,  
because the United States is

542

00:32:05,010 --> 00:32:13,170  
in such a war with Korea that  
they might close the border.

543

00:32:13,170 --> 00:32:17,130  
And they won't let any  
immigrants come through.

544

00:32:17,130 --> 00:32:22,460  
So I left before I  
would have gotten--

545

00:32:22,460 --> 00:32:29,570

I've gone through all the  
preparation for the diploma

546

00:32:29,570 --> 00:32:33,050

in designs and art and all.

547

00:32:33,050 --> 00:32:36,990

But I didn't wait for the  
oral exam at the very end.

548

00:32:36,990 --> 00:32:38,630

So I didn't get my diploma.

549

00:32:38,630 --> 00:32:43,640

But when I came out to Chicago,  
less than two weeks after I

550

00:32:43,640 --> 00:32:46,430

arrived, without speaking  
a word of English,

551

00:32:46,430 --> 00:32:52,850

I was working for the  
United Wallpaper Company

552

00:32:52,850 --> 00:32:55,610

in the merchandise mart.

553

00:32:55,610 --> 00:32:57,770

And that's how I--

554

00:32:57,770 --> 00:33:00,950

from then on, instead of going  
back to school, which perhaps

555

00:33:00,950 --> 00:33:02,630

I should have.

556

00:33:02,630 --> 00:33:06,530

But I was already earning money.

557



00:33:06,530 --> 00:33:12,230  
You don't have to speak in  
order to do designs or colors.

558  
00:33:12,230 --> 00:33:14,570  
And I learned on the job.

559  
00:33:14,570 --> 00:33:15,530  
I learned English.

560  
00:33:15,530 --> 00:33:18,390

561  
00:33:18,390 --> 00:33:23,640  
Then, about eight  
months later, everybody

562  
00:33:23,640 --> 00:33:26,250  
was laid off, because  
they closed the studios.

563  
00:33:26,250 --> 00:33:30,570  
And they told us, in  
a couple of months,

564  
00:33:30,570 --> 00:33:33,480  
if we reopen, try us again.

565  
00:33:33,480 --> 00:33:36,970  
If not, find a job elsewhere.

566  
00:33:36,970 --> 00:33:39,090  
And that's when I decided  
to come to New York.

567  
00:33:39,090 --> 00:33:41,640  
Because I really studied  
textile designing,

568  
00:33:41,640 --> 00:33:44,080  
and I couldn't find a job  
in that field in Chicago.

569

00:33:44,080 --> 00:33:47,120

570

00:33:47,120 --> 00:33:50,090

So this is how I happened  
to come to New York.

571

00:33:50,090 --> 00:33:52,440

Was there anyone living  
in New York that--

572

00:33:52,440 --> 00:33:52,940

No.

573

00:33:52,940 --> 00:33:58,140

574

00:33:58,140 --> 00:33:59,540

I came without knowing--

575

00:33:59,540 --> 00:34:02,310

I had one friend  
from that little town

576

00:34:02,310 --> 00:34:04,065

that I had met  
some young people.

577

00:34:04,065 --> 00:34:07,440

578

00:34:07,440 --> 00:34:08,670

And I wrote to her.

579

00:34:08,670 --> 00:34:12,090

And she put me up  
for a few nights.

580

00:34:12,090 --> 00:34:17,520

And then I found a  
furnished room in Brooklyn

581

00:34:17,520 --> 00:34:21,449

not far from her because she  
was the only person I knew.

582

00:34:21,449 --> 00:34:24,570

And from Brooklyn, I  
traveled all the way

583

00:34:24,570 --> 00:34:26,400

to Dumont, New Jersey.

584

00:34:26,400 --> 00:34:31,590

It took me two hours each way  
to get there and to come home.

585

00:34:31,590 --> 00:34:37,449

But when you are 20 years  
old, it doesn't matter.

586

00:34:37,449 --> 00:34:39,239

And what did you do in Dumont?

587

00:34:39,239 --> 00:34:45,570

I was working for a wallpaper  
studio who supplied designs

588

00:34:45,570 --> 00:34:49,739

to the one I left in Chicago  
by sheer coincidence.

589

00:34:49,739 --> 00:34:55,650

And one day, the head of the  
studio came to look for designs

590

00:34:55,650 --> 00:34:56,670

and recognized me.

591

00:34:56,670 --> 00:35:00,730

592

00:35:00,730 --> 00:35:03,100

From where?

593

00:35:03,100 --> 00:35:05,320

Because I worked in  
Chicago in the studio.

594

00:35:05,320 --> 00:35:09,040

And he was-- he came to Dumont,  
New Jersey into the studio

595

00:35:09,040 --> 00:35:10,720

to look for designs.

596

00:35:10,720 --> 00:35:12,460

And I was there.

597

00:35:12,460 --> 00:35:17,610

I worked-- I was the only girl  
with 11 men in the studio.

598

00:35:17,610 --> 00:35:21,680

599

00:35:21,680 --> 00:35:28,630

After that, I-- actually, I  
met my husband two weeks later.

600

00:35:28,630 --> 00:35:37,970

He happened to write an article  
in a Y bulletin, 92nd Street Y

601

00:35:37,970 --> 00:35:38,470

bulletin.

602

00:35:38,470 --> 00:35:40,810

You've probably heard  
of the 92nd Street one.

603

00:35:40,810 --> 00:35:44,200

But I was living  
there at the time.

604

00:35:44,200 --> 00:35:48,850

And he was a soldier  
in the American army.

605

00:35:48,850 --> 00:35:55,120

And he was fighting in that area  
where I had lots of friends.

606

00:35:55,120 --> 00:36:00,790

And I was unbelieving when I  
saw that there was somebody

607

00:36:00,790 --> 00:36:06,700

from the United States who  
ever heard of the small towns

608

00:36:06,700 --> 00:36:09,170

that he was talking  
about in his article.

609

00:36:09,170 --> 00:36:11,680

He returned as a soldier.

610

00:36:11,680 --> 00:36:13,090

He was there as  
a soldier, and he

611

00:36:13,090 --> 00:36:20,410

returned to see that year  
whatever happened to the places

612

00:36:20,410 --> 00:36:21,100

he's been to.

613

00:36:21,100 --> 00:36:22,790

Because he has  
really not visited.

614

00:36:22,790 --> 00:36:24,890

He was in the trenches.

615

00:36:24,890 --> 00:36:26,570

It was a big battle there.

616

00:36:26,570 --> 00:36:29,060

There is a tremendous  
American cemetery in the.

617

00:36:29,060 --> 00:36:33,800

Town and lots of his  
friends died there.

618

00:36:33,800 --> 00:36:35,680

So he was at NYU at the time.

619

00:36:35,680 --> 00:36:39,970

And there was some very  
special trip advertised.

620

00:36:39,970 --> 00:36:44,950

And he took advantage  
of it to go over by boat

621

00:36:44,950 --> 00:36:48,580

and revisit all the  
places he has been to

622

00:36:48,580 --> 00:36:52,800

but really didn't see because  
it was occupied by the Germans.

623

00:36:52,800 --> 00:36:56,750

And he was wounded there.

624

00:36:56,750 --> 00:37:02,500

He was taken care of in  
one of the hospitals.

625

00:37:02,500 --> 00:37:05,140

And when I read this article,  
I mentioned it to someone

626

00:37:05,140 --> 00:37:07,420

that it's unbelievable that  
someone knows this town.

627

00:37:07,420 --> 00:37:09,070

This is not a tourist town.

628

00:37:09,070 --> 00:37:12,880

There's nothing for  
Americans to see there.

629

00:37:12,880 --> 00:37:16,510

And the person I spoke to  
said, I know who he is.

630

00:37:16,510 --> 00:37:17,900

He lives around the corner.

631

00:37:17,900 --> 00:37:20,620

And he comes here very often.

632

00:37:20,620 --> 00:37:23,140

And this young girl happened  
to have enough courage.

633

00:37:23,140 --> 00:37:25,330

In those years, we  
didn't approach people

634

00:37:25,330 --> 00:37:26,950

to talk to on the street.

635

00:37:26,950 --> 00:37:29,390

You had to be introduced.

636

00:37:29,390 --> 00:37:34,240

So she had courage to talk  
to him when he she saw him.

637

00:37:34,240 --> 00:37:37,480

And she told him that  
there was somebody

638

00:37:37,480 --> 00:37:41,410

who came from that area  
that he was writing about.

639

00:37:41,410 --> 00:37:44,200

And then he came  
to the office where

640

00:37:44,200 --> 00:37:48,850

his aunt was the  
assistant directress

641

00:37:48,850 --> 00:37:51,130

to ask is there a  
young girl who just

642

00:37:51,130 --> 00:37:55,660

came to live here recently?

643

00:37:55,660 --> 00:38:00,010

And she came from France.

644

00:38:00,010 --> 00:38:02,080

So his aunt said,  
there is the list

645

00:38:02,080 --> 00:38:07,340

of the latest arrivals of the  
young girls who live here.

646

00:38:07,340 --> 00:38:11,170

Why don't you look if any of  
the names seem familiar to you?

647

00:38:11,170 --> 00:38:13,010

And he picked out my name.

648

00:38:13,010 --> 00:38:15,400

And he said, well, when  
she comes to pay her rent,

649

00:38:15,400 --> 00:38:16,690

let me know.

650

00:38:16,690 --> 00:38:19,600

Tell her I would



like to meet her.

651

00:38:19,600 --> 00:38:22,000

And that's how we were  
introduced, by his aunt.

652

00:38:22,000 --> 00:38:25,390

But I didn't know  
it was his aunt.

653

00:38:25,390 --> 00:38:26,710

And we talked about the town.

654

00:38:26,710 --> 00:38:29,140

But he knew the  
officials of the town

655

00:38:29,140 --> 00:38:31,420

and I knew the young  
people of the town.

656

00:38:31,420 --> 00:38:34,240

I have my best friends  
who live there.

657

00:38:34,240 --> 00:38:38,865

And so that's-- very shortly  
after, we got married.

658

00:38:38,865 --> 00:38:40,240

So the town brought  
you together.

659

00:38:40,240 --> 00:38:41,560

Yes, yes.

660

00:38:41,560 --> 00:38:45,650

661

00:38:45,650 --> 00:38:49,700

And your children  
were born soon after.

662

00:38:49,700 --> 00:38:50,210

Yes.

663

00:38:50,210 --> 00:38:52,190

I have two daughters.

664

00:38:52,190 --> 00:38:56,480

And now I have  
five grandchildren.

665

00:38:56,480 --> 00:39:00,860

Have you been able to  
talk with your daughters,

666

00:39:00,860 --> 00:39:05,330

or even with your husband,  
about your experiences?

667

00:39:05,330 --> 00:39:08,900

My husband never asked me.

668

00:39:08,900 --> 00:39:16,910

I think he felt the more  
I put it back in my mind,

669

00:39:16,910 --> 00:39:20,180

the better I can go ahead.

670

00:39:20,180 --> 00:39:23,660

I had nightmares  
for years after.

671

00:39:23,660 --> 00:39:26,990

And he comforted me  
every time to wake me up

672

00:39:26,990 --> 00:39:29,930

to reality that is whatever  
I was dreaming about.

673

00:39:29,930 --> 00:39:35,630

But he never probed

what it was about.

674

00:39:35,630 --> 00:39:41,510

He was a very astute, very  
intelligent, very gentle,

675

00:39:41,510 --> 00:39:45,100

sensitive person,  
who would not want

676

00:39:45,100 --> 00:39:49,290

to touch on anything  
that would be hurtful.

677

00:39:49,290 --> 00:39:55,580

And so I never really  
talked about it.

678

00:39:55,580 --> 00:39:58,790

And being married to  
someone, a New Yorker--

679

00:39:58,790 --> 00:40:01,550

for already his  
parents were born here,

680

00:40:01,550 --> 00:40:04,310

so he was the second generation.

681

00:40:04,310 --> 00:40:11,000

I didn't sought out people  
who came from the back--,

682

00:40:11,000 --> 00:40:16,190

the same environment, who went  
through the same experiences.

683

00:40:16,190 --> 00:40:19,430

I didn't have the need.

684

00:40:19,430 --> 00:40:24,200

And raising two children  
fulfilled my life.

685  
00:40:24,200 --> 00:40:26,660  
And I really felt  
like a little seed

686  
00:40:26,660 --> 00:40:29,480  
who was carried by the wind.

687  
00:40:29,480 --> 00:40:33,890  
And now it was everything  
was blooming around me.

688  
00:40:33,890 --> 00:40:35,007  
I was very happy.

689  
00:40:35,007 --> 00:40:37,929

690  
00:40:37,929 --> 00:40:41,180  
As for my children, I never  
talked about anything.

691  
00:40:41,180 --> 00:40:48,980  
I have decided quite early  
that I will talk to them when

692  
00:40:48,980 --> 00:40:51,470  
they will ask me questions.

693  
00:40:51,470 --> 00:40:56,150  
And always find out what  
was the motivation why

694  
00:40:56,150 --> 00:40:59,720  
they were asking me, and how  
much they wanted to know.

695  
00:40:59,720 --> 00:41:07,190  
I did not want to give them  
any of the reality, which

696  
00:41:07,190 --> 00:41:13,490

were really horror stories,  
because I felt I myself did not

697  
00:41:13,490 --> 00:41:16,310  
cultivate hatred.

698  
00:41:16,310 --> 00:41:23,120  
Because I felt if I let  
myself be eaten by hate,

699  
00:41:23,120 --> 00:41:26,360  
it will eat me up and  
will not change anything

700  
00:41:26,360 --> 00:41:28,880  
about what happened.

701  
00:41:28,880 --> 00:41:33,890  
And I did not want it to  
infect my children with hatred.

702  
00:41:33,890 --> 00:41:39,140  
I felt whenever they would be  
old enough to ask questions,

703  
00:41:39,140 --> 00:41:44,570  
I'll tell them about it  
factually as it happened.

704  
00:41:44,570 --> 00:41:48,680  
And, of course, they  
have no grandparents.

705  
00:41:48,680 --> 00:41:54,720  
I have nobody as family  
to hand down to them.

706  
00:41:54,720 --> 00:41:57,710  
And eventually, I  
don't even know,

707  
00:41:57,710 --> 00:42:00,920  
I just asked my

daughter recently

708

00:42:00,920 --> 00:42:04,310

if she could remember when  
she asked me questions at all,

709

00:42:04,310 --> 00:42:08,000

or when she heard it, and  
she couldn't remember.

710

00:42:08,000 --> 00:42:10,790

But she-- one of my  
daughters automatically

711

00:42:10,790 --> 00:42:13,400

went through a lot of  
literature about it

712

00:42:13,400 --> 00:42:17,510

in order to learn all  
about what has happened.

713

00:42:17,510 --> 00:42:20,930

And my other daughter  
could never cope with it.

714

00:42:20,930 --> 00:42:24,620

I remember once, I remember  
she heard something.

715

00:42:24,620 --> 00:42:25,940

She was already in college.

716

00:42:25,940 --> 00:42:30,530

And she called home in  
tears of what she has heard.

717

00:42:30,530 --> 00:42:33,650

And I comforted her to tell her.

718

00:42:33,650 --> 00:42:36,020

I said, well, if you  
want to talk about it,

719  
00:42:36,020 --> 00:42:38,240  
when you come home,  
we can talk about it.

720  
00:42:38,240 --> 00:42:40,730  
If you have any  
questions, I'd be

721  
00:42:40,730 --> 00:42:42,590  
happy to talk to you about it.

722  
00:42:42,590 --> 00:42:45,080  
What she had heard, was  
it about the Holocaust?

723  
00:42:45,080 --> 00:42:46,790  
She heard something  
about the Holocaust

724  
00:42:46,790 --> 00:42:49,880  
and all the Jews,  
what has happened.

725  
00:42:49,880 --> 00:42:52,160  
It has affected her very deeply.

726  
00:42:52,160 --> 00:42:59,130  
And she wanted to know,  
what do I know about it?

727  
00:42:59,130 --> 00:43:01,820  
And it would have been  
much too cruel to tell her

728  
00:43:01,820 --> 00:43:03,600  
over the telephone  
anything like that.

729  
00:43:03,600 --> 00:43:06,710  
And I said, well, we'll talk  
about it when you come home.

730

00:43:06,710 --> 00:43:10,550

And anything you want to ask  
me, I know a lot about it,

731

00:43:10,550 --> 00:43:14,360

and I will tell you about it.

732

00:43:14,360 --> 00:43:18,320

To this day, my younger  
daughter, who is now 31,

733

00:43:18,320 --> 00:43:22,940

cannot bring herself to talk  
about it and seldom asked

734

00:43:22,940 --> 00:43:23,900

questions.

735

00:43:23,900 --> 00:43:27,420

This is her way  
of coping with it.

736

00:43:27,420 --> 00:43:32,040

On the other hand, my older  
daughter has really in depth--

737

00:43:32,040 --> 00:43:36,290

I think there is not a  
publication that ever appeared,

738

00:43:36,290 --> 00:43:40,010

any book that ever appeared,  
that she has not read.

739

00:43:40,010 --> 00:43:43,640

And she's very keenly  
interested in it.

740

00:43:43,640 --> 00:43:45,470

She's extremely  
sensitive as well,

741



00:43:45,470 --> 00:43:49,640  
but she's able to read about it.

742  
00:43:49,640 --> 00:43:54,800  
And it's not so long  
ago that she really

743  
00:43:54,800 --> 00:43:57,770  
encouraged me to talk about it.

744  
00:43:57,770 --> 00:44:00,470

745  
00:44:00,470 --> 00:44:03,500  
And the fact that I  
am here to record this

746  
00:44:03,500 --> 00:44:07,430  
was also her idea,  
because she feels

747  
00:44:07,430 --> 00:44:11,990  
that it should be said  
and talked about so people

748  
00:44:11,990 --> 00:44:15,770  
should always remember.

749  
00:44:15,770 --> 00:44:18,290  
And there are too  
many movements already

750  
00:44:18,290 --> 00:44:22,280  
who try to eradicate  
the memory of it.

751  
00:44:22,280 --> 00:44:28,340  
And unfortunately, as time  
goes on and people die,

752  
00:44:28,340 --> 00:44:31,200  
there will be less and less  
people who will be able to say,

753

00:44:31,200 --> 00:44:35,330

yes, I was there,  
and I am a witness.

754

00:44:35,330 --> 00:44:37,010

And I have suffered from it.

755

00:44:37,010 --> 00:44:41,540

And I have lost my family.

756

00:44:41,540 --> 00:44:47,990

So this is the reason that I  
am here talking with you now.

757

00:44:47,990 --> 00:44:50,730

Thank you very much.

758

00:44:50,730 --> 00:44:52,140

I can't say my pleasure.

759

00:44:52,140 --> 00:44:56,490

I wish I would have never had  
to do it, but I'm glad I did.

760

00:44:56,490 --> 00:44:59,795

And I thank you for listening.

761

00:44:59,795 --> 00:45:02,865

[MUSIC PLAYING]

762

00:45:02,865 --> 00:45:33,000