

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Agnes Mandl Adachi**  
**November 29, 1990**  
**RG-50.030\*0003**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Agnes Mandl Adachi, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on November 29, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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## **AGNES MANDL ADACHI**

### **November 29, 1990**

01:00:24

Q: Okay, we are on. Would you tell me your full name, including your maiden name please?

A: Yeah. My full name now is Agnes Adachi, and my maiden name was Agnes Mandl, M-A-N-D-L.

Q: Where and when were you born?

A: I was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1918, October 26.

Q: Okay. Tell me – would you tell me about your parents and your family when you were a child before the war?

A: I can do that. Well, I was very lucky. I was born into a very rich family right then and up 'til my six years, we were quite well to do and I went to private school started out. And then my father lost every penny he ever had through the crash in America. And instead of coming to America anyhow, he took us to Turkey where I lived for six months. And that was great experience for a little girl. That's where I saw my very first Mickey Mouse film what was still black and white and no words, but it was lovely. And it was a great experience for a little girl and we had a friend there who was once a captain on a boat and he always played with me because I wanted to be a little boy and I wanted to be on that boat and be his mate. So in the bathtub, we played – a mate. But, I turned out to be a little girl altogether. And then we came back to Hungary and we had quite a lot of difficult times.

01:02:30

Q: Tell us about – I'd like to know about your family life during that period. What – did you go to school. Did you have friends?

A: I went to school and, and according to my mother, everybody was my friend. I was a lonely child. I was all alone and I loved to be alone, but as soon as some other kids arrived and Mommy said I used to become a leader. I don't remember that at all. I just know I always had great time when kids came and while – as I told you before, I was six. My father was sort of a crazy man. He wanted to give anything to his child. That time back in Hungary to get some clowns to come to the house cost a fortune, but that's how I got the friends because the whole neighborhood – every child would come – 50, 60 of them you know. But then all that stopped and I was alone, but I never felt lonely. I was always a great dreamer. I was always full of dreams. And since I was a little girl I like to put everything down on paper. Of course, eventually I lost them all naturally. But I was

always writing. Then when it came up to junior high school.... Well, I, I remember one thing that my father was an absolutely unreligious. He said he was agnostic. He was in the Jewish faith, but he ran away from his bar mitzvah. That much what he didn't believe in anything. And so he never taught me anything either, but my mother was a little bit more religious and she used to put on the Friday night candles. That was about as much religion as I got because my father would take me, say, "Come. Let Mommy give us a blessing." And I went without a word. Then as I grew I went to the synagogue because I was a very pretty girl and all the boys were there on Saturday. So it was fun more than religion because I didn't know that I really should be. And then when it came to junior high school, then my father decided to put me in a Reformed Church Protestant school. And my mother first asked him, "Why you want her to go there?" And my father said, "Because that is the best school in Hungary, and she will get the best education." And I remembered he hold my hand when he took me there and there was a wonderful lady principal and she would turn to my father and said, "Mr. Mandl, why do you want your little girl to come to our school? We have no Jewish children." And my father said, "I don't like bigots. I want my child to think for herself, and yours is the best school in the country." So she smiled and she looked at me, says, "Would you like to come to this school?" And I looked her and I fall in love with her at once, I said, "Yes, I do." So then she explained to my father that a couple of children are there, but they are not allowed to come to morning services. Every morning they had a ten minute service, one prayer and two songs. And right away I picked up, "I can sing?" That was it. But the Protestant teacher, the religious teacher was a wonderful lady, another wonderful woman. She was about six foot tall with very black hair and a huge heart and I was like a half pension<sup>1</sup> in the school until seven because both of my parents worked and she used to take me and she was the one who taught me about Judaism. And she said, "You have to learn because that was the first religion in the world. And you have to learn some Hebrew." So whatever I know, I know from her. But I was the first and then we got more children so I was there through junior high and senior high. And I graduated except that I wasn't there on graduation because I got scarlet fever. And I missed the graduation where I was supposed to be a hostess and that hurt me. The only little Jewish kid that could have been the hostess, she couldn't be there. But that's how life is.

01:06:29

Q: What about, what about just being a Jewish child, a Jewish teenager in Budapest at that time?

A: Well, as a child I really didn't feel much because by that time my father was again quite wealthy and our house was always open and they – more Christians and Aristocrats came to the house, and I never felt that I was different from anyone else. And also we traveled quite a little bit as I grew up too because we had a very big family in Switzerland. My mother's sister went out there in 1915 I believe, and she stayed there and married there

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<sup>1</sup> Boarding-school student (French)

and so we, we went a lot to Switzerland and to Austria and to France. And I wasn't home that much, and when I was a teenager, I started to travel on my own sort of. So in '36 I was at the – in Germany at the Olympic games because my very best friend – and if you ever read my book you will read about it, how I came away from there, but I was their guest through the Olympics. And I was the lucky girl to see Jesse Owens running. Flying, not running. And I was so proud and I screamed for him. And it was a very interesting time in Berlin because it was 1936, and yet during that time they didn't dare to show the Nazism as much as they really were. They didn't like the Jewish people. They didn't like Jesse Owens because he was black. They didn't like some other people because they were another color, like Japanese, but still it was not bad. And we had a wonderful time and I met a lot of young people there and we exchanged cards and I never asked them, "What religion you are?" and they didn't ask me, so I had a lovely time.

01:08:35

Coming back from there I wanted to learn children psychology, and that send us through part of university. It was hard to get in because then they already started with religion. "You are a Jew. We don't want you." But I managed, and I went to Montessori school. So because of that I happened to go to Italy, and I really had Madam Montessori<sup>2</sup> teaching me just before she died.

01:09:07

Q: What was she like?

A: She was wonderful. She was a very simple woman with a great mind and I am very sorry for today's Montessori schools because her idea was sick children, most of them mentally retarded, to learn to do things by themselves – to dress by themselves. And today they turned this all out. Today they have Montessori schools where the kids have to be quiet. That is not for our children. The children have to let out. But hers was a natural thing. She didn't want the noise because it disturbed these children. And it was a most wonderful thing to see how little children help each other to close their coats or do their shoes, and I think this is not good to put over to our very healthy children the same thing. And also it's not good I found out because children learn too much and when they get to elementary school they are bored. Because in Montessori school most of them already learn how to write, how to count, how to do things. And it makes children very difficult to grow up. But it was a great experience to be in Rome. I love Rome. And she lived out in, in a not such a good neighborhood either, but her whole life was the children and the teaching the sick children and the poor how to go on in this world. So I do have my Montessori diploma. And then from there I went to England because I wanted to learn the King's English in a real good way and I did. Now, of course, I lost it all. Waited all the

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<sup>2</sup> Maria Montessori

years where I lived in different countries, it came off. And after England, I came home and that was already '39. And then I decided I wanted to go to Switzerland again.

01:11:04

Q: Let's, let's stop one moment. This is 1939 I believe. Things are changing. What was home like then? What was Budapest like?

A: I was not home, so I really didn't know what's going on and my parents wanted me to go out. In so far it was bad, you felt it coming. So, therefore my father used to send us out with Mommy every year because when you left Hungary – not just Jewish people, but anyone – you had to get so and so much money from the bank, not more. And then you would go somewhere and you would leave that money and you came home earlier and you said you spent all the money, you had to come home. So that's how we got our – Mommy had the diamonds and the fur coats and what not since all gone out and we came right back. By that time I was a big girl so I could do it with her you know, 16, 17. And still it was quiet. You did not feel – because there was always antisemitism in Hungary. But yet like our Regent Horthy<sup>3</sup> who always said, "Yes, I am a antisemite, but I cannot get along without my Jews." And he didn't. Because they were helping and they – the country was pretty well-to-do and it was the "Little Paris" as everybody called it, you know. The King who abdicated, his rendezvous were all in Budapest. He always came there. And I worked for awhile in the Ritz Hotel, which was our best, and he came there but we had hotels where you could not make love, so she had to have an apartment and he lived in the Ritz. Okay? But they came to Budapest because that was a "Little Paris" where it was a great place.

01:12:59

Q: Did you ever see Edward the Seventh?

A: I saw him once but that was all – not a big deal. But I went to Switzerland and I went to Geneva because I wanted to perfect my French. I had a French mademoiselle for 14 years in the house but you forget when you are not constantly talking. She was also from Lausanne. And while I was in Geneva in that – '39 almost in September with other three students, we made an auto-stop<sup>4</sup> tour. Now today you wouldn't dare to do it. We stood on the street and hold cars. We went all the way to the Riviera and back. Was a gorgeous trip. So we were not ready for what we found when we arrived back because '39 was already fallen, but young kids don't care and we were happy and we were in Switzerland when we came back. But there were a Zionist Congress and while these people had to have a rest, I went out to the Lake Geneva to take a rest and have a swim. And one day we were out there and that was September 9, '40 – 1939 when suddenly all the radios started to

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<sup>3</sup> Miklós Horthy

<sup>4</sup> Hitch-hiking (French)

blare that the Nazis overrun Poland. And most of these people were from Poland. And it was a heartbreak to see how they runned half-naked to the phones and the families were all home.

01:14:33

And then and there, somehow I promised myself that, as I am in a neutral country, I'm going to try to help and see if we can make peace. And I stayed on in Geneva, and my parents wanted me to stay. But the friend – and that's a very tragic thing whom we left all our stuff, and they were Jewish – as a matter of fact the husband was, I think, Orthodox – he kept on saying I should go home. After all, I'm the only child and it's crazy to stay there. “The Germans will not come to Hungary.” And I went home in January, 1940, middle of the war. Okay? But I found Budapest still very exciting. American and British film were still shown. They didn't like people talking English. They didn't like English. But we, we did speak it. And that was the time when I taught Congressman Lantos' not wife yet.<sup>5</sup> She was nine years old, and she was beautiful. She looked like Shirley Temple. And the two of us would walk on the street talking English, good and loud so everybody can hear us. But they thought we were foreigners you know, who knows from where. And then my best friend arrived from Germany and for a couple of weeks, it wasn't bad. From '40 to '43, you really didn't feel different like you did before. Antisemitism was there. We lived with it as best as we could. But then in March 1944 – 1940 – yeah, March 1944. That's right. I will never forget that day as long as I live.

01:16:30

Early morning one of our neighbors running and said to my Father, "The BBC<sup>6</sup> just announced that our Admiral Horthy is going to quit the Germans and going together with the Allied Forces and he's coming on the radio." And my father ran out and brought in the champagne and I looked at him. I said, "Poppy. Please don't drink. I don't believe it." My father said, "You are too young. You don't understand." And sure enough, Horthy came on and he went as far as to say, "And we are now the friends of the Allies," and at that moment the Germans – the Hitler's hymn came on and they cut off his voice and I just dropped my glass. And I left to go to the Ritz Hotel where I was working there and I also – because I couldn't have no Montessori, nothing worked that time, so I worked in the hotel. I wanted to become a Manageress or something. And we had a wonderful, wonderful director of that place. He was Yugoslavian, but he spoke 16 languages perfectly. So between him and me we always talked French or English. And as soon as I arrived, the porter said, "Mr. Marentchic wants you." When I got out in the street, first of all, it was full with beautiful airplanes. It was a very sunny day. And I was sure that they were the Americans and the British and I was so happy I said, "Ah, they listed to Horthy, so they all here now. We are finished." And then Mr. Marentchic took me in his arm and

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<sup>5</sup> Annette Tilleman Lantos

<sup>6</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation

he said, "Go home and God bless you. Horthy was arrested, and these are not the Americans and British. These are the Russians – these are the Germans – excuse me, the Russians came after. So I ran home and my father's only words were, "You were right." And funnily enough, we were not collected from our houses. We heard that we have to put on a star, so we did that. We didn't go out much on the street, but we still were not restricted. Nothing! But they came in and immediately we heard that many, many, many people were taken and we still were not even touched. Nothing! Whether we were lucky, I don't know but we were in the house until – and it was bad because my very best friends lived very far from us and I missed them. We still had our telephones. The radios still worked. So we were watching because I had a big, big radio so you can hear the whole world and that's how we knew the news, what's coming in from all over.

01:19:32

Q: What were the streets like? What about school?

A: There were plenty food in Hungary. Don't forget, it's an agricultural country. Even through the whole Germany, nobody was every hungry. Food there was plenty, and the shops – it was still lit up because the bombing didn't start so we had plenty of lights. But we didn't go out much. We were afraid. And you also never know what moment they ring the bell and they take you. So we sort of were prisoner of our own apartment, but we were still safe – amazingly safe. But every day there was a new announcement in tele– in the radio. For instance, suddenly the Hungarian Nazis were – who were worse than the Germans – that was the Arrow Cross – so they – when the Germans came in, they said, "The Arrow Cross can take over." Now what we heard – we didn't see – you see what was the problem was that the Jewish people in Hungary didn't believe. We didn't believe like here they didn't believe that people are taken away to gas chambers. We just didn't believe it, that anybody can put out from the apartment, that anybody can be taken away. We couldn't understand it. So today when the people tell me, "Why the Americans didn't know?" But they couldn't understand it either. They were much further than we were. We were right there, and it was something – it's impossible. But then suddenly some Czechoslovakian friends arrived. Rumanian friends came down. They took everything. But somehow they managed to come away. Then we started to realize – started to be afraid that any moment anyone....

01:25:27

Letters still arrived from Europe, and I had a correspondence with a Swedish gentlemen for a long time because in a long time in Hungary when you were a girl, who spoke lot of languages and you were a girl scout, then they asked you to be a guide for tourists. And as I spoke lot of languages, once I was a guide for a whole Swedish group. And the one Swedish man started to write. He has written for years and years. We were corresponding. I didn't think of anything. I was young and I had a lot of young men around me and all that so I just thought, "How nice. This nice Swedish man never forget



a young kid. And actually he saved my life before Raoul, but I didn't know that then. So in any case one day – that was very frightening experience – finally, the bell rang. And I look out and there is a German soldier standing outside. And I look back at my parents. Well, we couldn't not open the door, but then I looked again. I said, "Oh, my God, I know him." When I was in Berlin in 1936, we exchanged cards and he happened to be one of the soldiers coming to Budapest. And my name evidently didn't mean a thing – that a Mandl could be German. He didn't think I was Jewish. And I said to my parents, "What shall I do?" He said, "Well, you have to open the door." He didn't want to come in, thank God. He just said would I show him Budapest? And I was afraid if I say, "No," or, "Why he was sent here?" It was a very bad feeling so I turned around to my parents. I said, "I'm going to show him Budapest." And I went out. All I heard is my father said, "Be careful." I said, "Yes." What else could I say? So I went and everything went alright for about an hour and then we came to a synagogue and he stopped me there and he said, "You see. That's where I'm going to kill everybody." So now I didn't know whether I should open a big mouth and tell him who I am or shall I ask a question. So I quickly thought, "Maybe I'll ask a question." I said, "Did ever a Jew hurt you? Did you know any?" He said, "I never knew any." I said, "Well, then, why do you want to kill people whom you never even met." He said, "Hitler told me to do it, and I am a German." So I quickly looked at my watch and I said, "Oh, you'll have to forgive me, but I have to teach English and I forgot that the time has come. Goodbye." And he let me go and I run. I never saw him again. I have no idea what happened to him.

01:24:14

But it was a close call. Yeah, because I really didn't know how to behave. So then we were all always frightened and then suddenly these two French gentlemen arrived with a note who send them from Paris. The two French men arrived and they're not supposed to say it, but they said they were French Underground and could we put them up in our house. Dad said we'd be delighted, but they were in and out and sometimes we didn't see them for weeks. And they were wonderful. One was a peasant and one was a very learned young man. One was a Jew, one was a Christian. And they came to Hungary and one of them fall in love with my wonderful girlfriend. He was unmarried. But they went in and out and they did wonderful things. I guess they were couriers between Rumania and Hungary for the Allies and for France and it's a very exciting time you know. Frightening, but when you're young, all you can think, "I have to survive. I have to survive." So now in the midst of all this, then came this announcement. The first day was that any couples mixed marriages have to separate at once or the Christian party is becoming a Jew and being killed. Well, within a half an hour, there were thousands of suicides. It's a very easy way to kill people. And then they reversed it and they said we changed our minds, but by that time thousands of people died. Thank God, my aunt and uncle called. My uncle was a grandson of a Unitarian bishop and he was a newspaper man and it was a wonderful marriage. And they called and they said they're going to commit suicide. I said, "No, you're not Uncle. Why don't you get some false papers and just disappear." Said, "I never thought of this." I said, "Well, then think." And they

survived. He died after the war, natural death, both of them. But many of them didn't make it. Then came the announcement that anyone who not having the Jewish religion can be saved. They just talked you know. It was – nothing was now, but we loved to believe everything because we wanted to live. So in my house—

01:26:42

Q: Excuse me. Excuse me. Not having the Jewish religion. You mean if you convert?

A: If you change, if you converting to another religion, then you're not counted. But was a lie, of course, you see. But we wanted to believe. So who arrived to my house? By that time we had a wonderful new principal in my former school who became later on the Protestant Bishop of Hungary and he had six daughters and I was more in his house. I was the seventh child, and he came to our house and he looked at my father, who was the same age, but he called him "Uncle." He says, "Let me baptize that child. She's my seventh daughter, and she knows as much about our religion as we do, and I want her to live." And my father said, "Yes." So we went to his tiny little church, and my father started to drive. And Pastor Berecky<sup>7</sup> said, "Uncle Arnold, stop crying. I have full of Jews down in that basement. If the Germans find out, we all be killed." And he baptized me more with his tears than with water. He cried so bitterly, and he hold me in his arms. And it was wonderful. And then he looked at me, says, "Child, you do what you want after the war. If you want to be a Jew again, go back to Judaism. But you are my child, my seventh daughter. So it was a very emotional and very great thing and we went home and all his Jews were saved, I guess, who were down in the basement. And they made me out original papers and they signed for it. You know my birth and all that, that I was born as a Protestant. And I took all these papers with grace. What else can you do? And then the next miracle happened.

01:28:38

By that time I used to write a lot of poems. I did that as a little child too. And we had one wonderful newspaper and I send him one what I wrote during the war. And suddenly I got two little letters in the mail that morning. One was handwritten from the editor of this newspaper and he very clearly just said "Dear Madam...." Oh, that time I wrote under an assumed name and it was "Rolopa" – what meant "Rome, London, Paris," and I took the first three names and that what it was. So he addressed it to "Madam Rolopa," and he said that, "I loved your poem but unfortunately the censor would not allow me to publish it. But I keep it with all my souvenirs." And I screamed and my mother was just in the bathroom, "Why you screaming?" I said, "Mommy, Mommy. Can you imagine. Handwritten and he kept my poem! That's better than if they publish it." And I was – I have his letter still. I was very proud. The second letter was a very – with little white letters, but within the back it said Swedish Embassy, Budapest. And I said, "What does

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<sup>7</sup> Albert Berecky

the Swedish Embassy want from me?" And I opened it up and they said, "Could you please come to the Embassy?" And I was dumfounded. "Why, why – what do they want from me? And how do I get there?" Because by that time you couldn't really get to any foreign embassies without probably being arrested on the street with my yellow star. So my cousin that time dated a very wonderful Christian boy and he said, "Well, what's the problem? I'll take you." I said, "How?" He said, "Leave it to me?" And he arrived in a huge big black Mercedes Benz, and he had the German flag on the front and he pushed me in there. And he said, "Now, you're in. We can go." And he took me up. Nobody stopped us. How would they dare—

[Technical conversation]

01:31:00

Q: Okay. Now we're on tape. Now let's start with the story about the car.

A: Okay. So my cousin had a boyfriend who was a Christian and he said, "It's no problem. I'll take you up to the Embassy." And he arrived with a huge black Mercedes Benz. He had the Nazi flag on it, and he had a Nazi uniform, and he was very rough with me. He pushed me into the car and when I was in he said, "So now, we can relax and I'll take you." So nobody stopped us and I went. And then we arrived up there, it was – first, you know it was very funny. I, I walked in and there was the Minister Danielsson.<sup>8</sup> He was the Ambassador then and he looked up and said, "Who is that Nazi?" I said, "He is not a Nazi. He just brought me up here." He says, "Clever," you know, "but you never know." Anyhow, he and the Hungarian First Secretary, whose name was Mr. Mezey<sup>9</sup> – he was then the Secretary there – they needed somebody who speaks Hungarian. And they took me in and they told me first that they want to tell me the story about the wonderful Danish king who stood up for the Germans. He said that, "I don't know any Jews. I only know Danes." And he put on a yellow arm band and I was so stunned because we didn't know all this, you know. And after he told me that story then he told me about King Gustav the Fifth,<sup>10</sup> the Swedish King, who had told all the people in Sweden – and he blew that up as big as this, you know, on the walls all over Sweden – "Anyone who has family, friends, business associates in Hungary, would they come to the Foreign Department and we will help." And I said, "Yeah, but why do you call me?" And he says, "That's my point now. You have a fiancé." And I looked at him. I says, "I have a what?" He said, "You didn't know?" I says, "No Sir." I told the truth. I didn't know I have a fiancé. He said, "Well, your fiancé immediately went to the foreign department and he said, "If the war wouldn't be on, she already would be my wife. So she is Swedish and please take care of her." And I stood there, you know, and I, I was frozen. I had no words and I said, "I, I am a Swede? And he said, "Yes." And we go make your papers. And I

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<sup>8</sup> Ivan Danielsson

<sup>9</sup> Dénes von Mezey

<sup>10</sup> Oscar Gustav Adolf

said, "Oh, my God." "And that's not all. You're going to stay with us on the Embassy." And I said, "Oh no, no. I can't do that. I have my parents." He said, "Well, we will try to save your parents, but first comes you. We are now responsible for you, and I need some change of clothes and so on. You're going to stay here." I was stunned. So—

01:34:03

Q: This had all come from this young man?

A: That young man whom we wrote the letter, letters for years. And I still don't know whether – well, I will tell you, on the end. Anyways, my friend Steven, said, "Well should she come home with me?" And I said, "No, I think it's better if we send down to her parents. You, you can go home along and we send down one of our employees here and he will talk to the parents and we write the letter. So that's what we did. I felt first very bad and, you know, conscious that I am just leaving my parents. But we are young, and I wanted so badly to live. And it was really a terrible thing maybe, but I just – I wanted to stay. And so this man went down and told my parents that what happened and my parents said, "Ah, that's wonderful." And they gave them the toothbrush and change of clothes and I for three weeks a guest of the Embassy. I had a wonderful little room overlooking the rose garden and I found out I wasn't the only guest in the place. First, there was that famous Nobel prize winning professor, Szent-Györgyi,<sup>11</sup> who has found the vitamin. He wasn't Jewish, but he was a stout anti-Nazi and they had to put him there. But eventually the Germans were after him and so they gave him a new name like Swenson and a new lookout and they put him somewhere else and he left. But there was another wonderful young woman with two little boys and she was German, married to a Swede, and she got stuck with the children in Hungary. And she went away after on the very last train that could get back to Sweden. She left with the children. Later on we met in Sweden. So I wasn't alone there, you know, and found out there were other people. But three weeks I was there, and in the three weeks the big bombing started. And they really started and they were day and night, and the German artillery was right above us and we could see whole Budapest. We were in the Buda side. Have you ever been in Budapest? No. A beautiful city and it was a pity to see how everything was bombed out, but it had to be done and we were all hoping that the Americans come and then we be liberated.

01:36:35

But after three weeks we knew nothing. My dear friend arrived back with his Mercedes and demanded my return immediately. And the Minister said, "Why?" He said, "Well, maybe you don't know, but the Hungarian Nazi Party made every second house in Budapest now a Jewish house. Every second house has a big yellow star out because they think that the Americans will not bomb because they don't want to bomb the Jews." Of course, that wasn't true. They bombed the Jews. They bombed the headquarters, but the

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<sup>11</sup> Albert Szent-Györgyi

Christian – from the Christian houses like where we were on with my parents, that became a Christian house, so my parents had to get out. And thank God, my grandmother had a big apartment where my – my grandmother wasn't alive, but my aunt was there and her best friend who was also married to a Christian but he wanted to be with them, so he moved in. And Steven came every day, so we had two Christians helping us. And that house became a Jewish house and he said, "I have to come back because the Arrow Cross comes every day and reading the list of people in that house and if I am not there, and my name is still on, then they would kill my parents." So they had a little argument and the Minister said, "No, because we are responsible." And he said, "Well, she's responsible for her parents." I just spoke I said, "I'm going home." So then they said, "Not with him." I should go down in the streetcar and I should have one of the employees will go and sit on the other side because they want to know exactly where I'm going. So I went down with the promise that everyday when they allow us out – we were allowed one hour a day to go out shopping or whatever – that I call and, thank God, the phones were still working. Bombing or no bombing, we were lucky. The phones were working. And I did call up every day. So I went down with this young man and when I got to the house I looked at him and he did like this and he wrote a little note and he left. And of course, my welcome home was not so good. I felt very guilty and the family didn't really like that I had three weeks of heaven, but I can't blame them. I mean, maybe I shouldn't have done it, but as I said I wanted to live. I mean you have only one life. But I was back home. And I called up every day and I think I wasn't down longer than a weeks and a half and I called and a Hungarian secretary came Mezey and said, "Agnes, you have to get up here at once. Something new happened." And I said, "I'll try, but I don't know how." He said, "Well, maybe you're friend will bring you up. Tell him we will not keeping you here." So when he came I said, "Could you just take me up once more?" He said, "But you're not going to stay there and jeopardize the family?" I says, "No, I'll come back." And I went up and there was Raoul Wallenberg.

01:39:56

- Q: At this point I want to stop. I want to change tapes. I don't want to stop at this point. Bonnie, can we stop the tapes please? Do we really have that much? Alright. Okay, let's keep on going. We have 20 minutes. Tell us about Raoul.
- A: Alright. So Danielsson and Mezey introduced him to me, and he spoke English and German, and I think he spoke German that time because I couldn't speak Swedish yet, and his first question was, "Agnes, would you work with me?" And I said, "I'd be delighted Sir, but I still have a Star." And they all started laughing. And I said, "Why you laughing? I can't run around in the streets." He said, "You won't. We already have prepared papers for you." And the same day they send me all alone with the Star, but somebody followed me from the Swedish Embassy to the police station where the police chief cut off my Star. I don't know what – how they bribed him. I have no idea. He never told me, but they must have bribed the Hungarian especially because the war was probably almost over in '44, and they wanted to be in good foot with the Americans.

Right? They didn't know that the Russians are coming. So we all didn't know that that we are sold out, the whole Balkan, right? To the Soviets. Well, anyways he cried and I thought I was in Heaven already. I must be dead if this police chief is crying while he cuts off my star and I walked right back to the Embassy and I said, "Here I am." He said, "Okay. Second, go get your parents' apartment back." And I said, "I beg your pardon, Sir." And they laughed again. I said, "You're laughing, but I have to do it." He said, "I'm sorry. That we can't do it, but there is a new housing commission." You should have seen Budapest. I mean there were maids who used to work in houses. They walked in and they took the former employers fur coats and everything and they walked for breakfast with big furs and all that. They had no idea, you know. And they took all the apartments from everybody. Yeah? So he said, "Get to that place and get your apartment back."

01:42:10

What I didn't even remember, the apartment was written on my father's name, but I looked at him by that time and I got – you saw right away my, my identification from them. Actually, everybody in that time in Hungary needed an identification, even a shoe cleaner on the street, because otherwise you couldn't walk around. This was wartime. And so I got mine. You have them I think or you will have them. And I walked in with my head absolutely high because now I was a Wallenberg girl. Okay? And I walked in and I sort of threw my paper to, to the head. I said, "What can happen? Either he shoots me or not." And he looked at me awfully ugly and without a word he signed and gave it back to me. I said, "Oh, oh. Raoul, whom did you bribe again?" Something must have happened. But I got out. Somebody I heard yelling, "There is a bloody Jew going," but I just went with my head up right to my house. And I walk in and there is a – that was an apartment building and the superintendent is there and I walk in and he was so stunned that I am alive. You know they had no idea what happened to us. And I said, "Hello," and his wife started to cry because I loved her very much, but he was a leech. He lived on us for years and he looks at me and he said, "What do you want?" I said, "Here. My apartment back!" He said, "My daughter already has that apartment." Whereby the wife says, "No, our daughter has already another apartment." So I don't know what he did to his wife after, but I said, "I like to have the receipt official." So he said, "Well, you have to go to our lawyer and he should give it back to you." I said, "Look, where is the lawyer living?" I went to the lawyer and as soon as I walked in, the lawyer looked at the paper and he saw it was official so not much he could do and he said, "Yes, but that has a price." And I thought, "Oh, my God. If I have to give him money, I don't have." And I said, "Well, what's the price?" And he said, "You will have to testify that I was so good to the Jewish people." They all wanted that by that time, of course, because whoever comes in, they would have hanged them because they killed thousands of them on the streets. I saw it myself one day this green shirt. There was a little boy of two years old with a star, and he just – "bang" and killed him. No reason to kill a child of two years. But he had a yellow star on, why not kill? So in any case, I promised him anything and in the meantime my finger was like this [interviewee gestures] in the back. I, "The hell with you all, just give it to me." So I walked back to the house. Now he couldn't say anything,

because the lawyer signed. So we go upstairs and I had a very horrible feeling, "What will I find?"

01:45:15

I found an empty apartment except we had a maid's room and the maid's room was locked, and all that and we opened. All our stuff was in there, the paintings, the books, the furniture, and for a moment I thought to myself, "Gee, He isn't as bad as I thought," until he opened his mouth and he said, "I'll get even with you yet." But I figured the – in this ball game, the ball is now in my park. And I got my telephone back within a day and I had our apartment back and I had a telephone, so I was in constant contact with Raoul and everybody else. Now I wanted my parents badly to get out of that house. And I went to the house – to the Jewish house, and I screamed up. I shouldn't have done it, but I was so excited. I said, "We got the apartment back again, the apartment back." In the meantime, Raoul, as he promised, he got my parents some papers. They're not supposed to come out of that house, but I said, "Out! Out! Home!" And I took them out. I missed them and also my cousins. Her mother couldn't come then. I don't know where she was. And I took them all out. My cousin had papers from Salvadorian papers and the Swiss family helped her so we all went home. And then we started the big work with Raoul Wallenberg. That time I was–

Q: Excuse me, won't you? Would you pause a minute? Tell me you, when you said when you met Raoul Wallenberg, you seemed to know all about him. Did you know about him?

A: Nothing! All I knew is that there is a young man and I said to myself, "What is he doing?" And first I think and that was the feeling that he thought it was an adventure. But he found out in one day, half a day, that this wasn't an adventure. This is something that you need. And he was a most fantastic organizer. A quick thinker! His first question was from – he had one friend and that was Per Anger, whom I don't know if you interviewed yet, but Per Anger was then the First Secretary of the Embassy. And he was an old friend of Raoul and he asked him the first moment, "What have you done for the people here?" Because it was not only Jews, but it was also anti-Nazi, aristocrats, and Christians, whom he had to help. It was not just the Jews, but mostly. And they said, "We have given out 800 real passports." Now that was what I had, too. And Raoul was beside himself. "Two hundred – two – 2,8000 – no, 280,000 people, you give 800 pass-passports? Well, that's nothing." And from the first day on, he actually took over the whole embassy. The Minister didn't like it very much because after all, he was a diplomat and he was nothing. And when he asked him – he came as a third secretary – he had to have a diplomatic passport because otherwise, he couldn't travel. And he said, "Mr. Danielsson, you'll have to understand that when you go and argue with the people, you speak as a diplomat. I don't." And that's how he wanted. He was like a devil.

01:48:40

You know to us, he spoke like the greatest brother, like a little child, and he was full of jokes all the time. And when we were a little bit down, then he would come up with jokes or he would imitate Mussolini<sup>12</sup> or he would imitate Hitler or Eichmann.<sup>13</sup> Whatever he could make us laugh, he made us hysterically laugh because that was his whole nature. What he felt inside, we don't know because he never showed. The only thing I knew that he was deathly afraid and that was the bombs because that he couldn't hide. But we all were afraid from that and he said now, "Whatever happens," because when the Americans come, when they bombed, it went all the way through to the basements. When the Russians came the two floors upstairs disappeared. One was our apartment. It's not all bombed out you know, but with the Americans it went, and it didn't matter whether it was the Jewish house or the Christians houses. Bombed! And that was it, and the British too. But Raoul took over immediately. And Budapest is a small town and it was like a wildfire that there is some "angel" who is here to help. So the Jewish Community and those of anti-Nazi Christians, they all came and Raoul – in two days we had 350 people helping. And we didn't get paid as you always hear, "He's a paid employee." Nobody was paid. We were paid because we had our wonderful identification, but quite a lot from our 350 people died and were taken and were killed, so those who were – we were lucky. Some of them didn't kill. Not because that they all say that that was saved their lives. It did not save our lives. It was a part of our work with him. We belonged to the embassy. And it was funny because the embassy only had 12 employees and Raoul had 350 in days, but he needed it. And in no time, he opened a hospital and he was looking. There was lots of doctors who were hiding. He found them, and they worked for him and the Red Cross nurses and the other nurses, and many of them died and many of them lived and helped him 'til the last moment. But he was, he was never for a moment without thinking, "what can I do next?"

01:51:10

And he was like a machine, you know "Go! Go! Go!" And so all of us became like this. I also slept sometimes one or two hours a night because there was no time. We always had to do something because there were always something new what Eichmann was thinking of and especially the Arrow Cross. So not only that we had these helpers but we had quite a few very rich people and they offered Raoul their houses. So we did in two weeks – we had about 60 houses on the two sides of the Danube, Buda and Pest, where the Swedish flag went on and we had Nazi-clad, Nazi-clad Hungarian, Jewish boys standing outside taking care of the houses and nobody could step in because it was a Swedish territory. And Per Anger writes it in his book and he says that at that time – because in Hungary, they always made jokes whether there was a war or not – that the Swedish government was the greatest landlord in Hungary at that time. And we had those houses and it was good because our offices had to move every day because they were after us. Eichmann

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<sup>12</sup> Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini

<sup>13</sup> Adolf Eichmann



was after Raoul all the time, but he was not afraid from Eichmann. He invited him for dinner, and then he forgot about it, and he had to call the Swiss Embassy – a Swedish guy, and he said, "Do you have any wine and food? I forgot I invited Eichmann for dinner." But he not only invited Eichmann for dinner. He asked one of the Jewish helpers to serve him so it would be fun to see how he reacts to somebody with the yellow star. And we did it because it was fun. Raoul wanted it. But at that time we were already bombed heavily, and Raoul had shirt open, and this guy here arrived with all the guns around him, but he couldn't kill Raoul on the Swedish territory you know.

Q: Let's stop here. Let's back up. What do you mean? Which guy arrived.

A: Eichmann.

Q: Oh. Okay.

01:53:18

A: With, with a soldier and all that. And Raoul – it was already no light, we had only candlelights – and Raoul opened the windows and it was the whole Budapest was burning. And he said, "Eichmann, look out. Look what you're doing?" And Eichmann said, "They deserve it." He said, "Stop talking and stop killing the people. You didn't win. The Germans lost, so give up." And Eichmann said, "No, I will not give up and my only thing is that you are in my way." And Raoul very quietly said, "But I am not enough in your way." He just didn't take it seriously. And then Eichmann left. But he had to have his say and he had to show it to him, you know. I wish he would be there when Eichmann had to be hanged or whatever they did to him. Unfortunately, he probably doesn't even know about it. So any case, it was wild because I was for awhile – I was just hostessing, you know, because thousands of people came up to us for the Schutz-pass<sup>14</sup> what was also his design. He designed – first, he went to the Hungarian and said, "Are there still trains going between here and Sweden. I'd like to take the Jews off your hand," he said. And they said, "Yes, Mr. Wallenberg. You can take 5,000 people." So he came back to the Embassy. He says, "5,000 and they will never allow me another one." So that's no good. So then he designed this Schutz-pass. And, of course, with 350 people we had millions of families and friends who collected the pictures, signed, and Danielsson, the Minister sat and signed each of them. Now I am afraid you will hear many times they said they were fake papers. Not one of them were ever fake. If they say it was too many, yes, because then eventually we were allowed to make 10,000 of it, but we probably made 50,000 of it. Alright? But they were not fake because everyone of them is signed by the Swedish Minister. What was fake was the Polish gentlemen who already did his three years Underground in Poland and he had a little printing machine and he figured he will come to Hungary and see what he can help there. And there he had Raoul Wallenberg. And he found one of his passes and he duplicated it and he signed "Danielsson" and

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<sup>14</sup> Protective pass (German)

some people found it. And they called Raoul, and Raoul met him and first very angry. He said, "You can't do that." But then as typical Raoul, he looked at him, he said, "But if you can save one single life, go ahead and do it."

01:56:16

So very many people got away with the fake papers because they looked so much like Raoul's, and some of them died with the real one and died with the fake one. But it was not Raoul's papers. They were not fake, you see. And these people just don't understand. He did. Also, they say he gave us passports. He never gave passports. It was a pass, and the pass and if you will read my book, you will see it. I have it translated. The picture of the person is on there, with the signature, and it says, "The above, the bearer of this paper is protected by the Swedish Government and all his belongings." And if and when we collectively can go to Sweden, then they will be going and then in Sweden in 14 days this paper will be invalid. It doesn't say anywhere it's a passport. It doesn't say anywhere that he can take his star off. It just says he's protected by the Swedish government. And then when these people had to be shifted out of their houses, then Raoul just picked them up and in these 60 houses we put them in. These were our safe houses and it was not comfortable, but they had food and they had medicine and they had Raoul Wallenberg. Raoul came there every day and visited everybody when he had time because he had to go in the meantime on the road. Now, on the road he didn't take us girls. He took the Red Cross and he took some of the diplomats. And by that time he called up the Swiss diplomat and said, "Help me. We need some help. We need you people doing this." So then we got the Swiss involved. We got the Portuguese involved. We got the Papal Nuncio involved very nicely. And so he had enough men to go with him including Thomas Veres, who was always with him. He was a young boy with a camera hidden and he made all these pictures. And he also saved the life of Raoul a couple of times because they were sitting and he's photographing and suddenly he sees a German aiming at Raoul and he would shout, "Raoul, jump. They're killing you." And Raoul jumped into the car and they left. But he went out after the people all the way to the Austrian border to get the people back. With lies, with complete lies, because they heard about it. As I said, it was the coldest winter and they marched the people and I don't know – and you said, you've never been in Budapest. Between Vienna – the border and Budapest, that was then a five hour car ride, and they were walking these people in the snow without shoes. Children, sick people, old people, and they died, and people trampled over them. And Raoul was beside himself. So he went on the road and one day Per Anger had met him and Raoul had – have we finished?

Q: Yeah. I want to stop. We'll change tapes and then I want to pick up with this march. It's important.

A: Okay.

Q: Okay Bonnie.

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**17**

01:59:50

Tape #2

02:00:23

Q: Okay. We're back on camera. You were—

A: Yes. I was telling that Raoul went after these people all the way to the Austrian border. But one of these occasions he had Per Anger with him too, and he had a big black book and on the way to the railway station, he stopped and screamed at the Nazis in German. He spoke perfect German. "How dare you are taking our people. They're all our protected people. And all of those people, who have my papers turn around." And one of my very good girlfriends from here now, she said, "Well, what can happen? They'll kill her anyhow." She turned around. She didn't have any paper – and her sister and her mother. And "Get on the truck." Okay? And then he started to open his black book and started to read names like a machine gun. And people caught on, those who could still walk and they walked up whether that was their name or not, and he brought about thousand people back to Budapest to these safe houses. And on the way home, Per Anger said to him, "Raoul, I didn't know we have a black book and you have names? When did you do that?" And Raoul started hysterically laughing and he said, "I'll show it to you when I done it." And he opens it up and not one single name. Nothing! But that was his idea. He had to do something. He had to save people. And the same thing, he had drivers licenses and insurance papers, whatever he could find in Hungarian, what the Germans couldn't read. And he took it all the way to the train and he demanded to open the doors and he yelled to the people, "I have your papers here. Get out, Mr. So and So." And there to some people, you know, "Aw, maybe we can get away." And he handed them – some of them got the Schutz-pass, not with their name, but who cares, you know. And insurance papers and tax papers. You name it. He brought them back. But I don't know if you saw the film. There was one and that was the truth that he took home thousands and in the meantime they killed another thousand and you could hear it, but you can't save everybody. He always played with his own life because he can be killed any moment, but he didn't care. He just wanted the people. Once he was about 250 young men was taken and they were told that they will clean up Budapest from the bombing and he knew exactly that's not true. So he went after them, again just with two of his colleagues, and again a lot of paper and this Nazi looks at him and he knew who he was and he said, "Wallenberg, if there is one man who doesn't have a paper, I kill him on the spot." And Raoul looks at him and said, "That's fine. You can kill him." And from the 250, 249 already down, everybody had the paper and one give him eye contact with Raoul. Was a doctor, and he is in this country today. And Raoul understand immediately. He had no idea what the man's name is and he says, "Johnny, you left your paper at my desk again." And he handed him a paper and off they went.

02:03:36

Yeah? But he always – he came up with stories that, that you wouldn't believe that anyone can do. Now we had this hospital already. And also it was full of patients and also full of doctors and nurses, and it was cold. It was already a very, very snowy day in the beginning of December, or end of November, and Raoul had one wonderful thing what I could never learn. He remembered names, and once he had your name he would never forget. I forget it in five minutes. He never made a mistake, to call me Ava and somebody else Aggie. He knew who was Aggie and he knew who was Ava. No mistakes. So what he wanted to do – the Hungarian Nazi party, this horrible Arrow Cross, they had offices in every section of the city. And he send out some little spy to learn every officer's name to be sure that he gets the right people. And he never forgot those names, and he knew which one in which section. One day he comes to the hospital in this horrible snow and he was unshaven and probably hungry. Who knows where he was, saving people. And he comes in and he finds three little Hungarian punks. I mean punks because they were 12 and 13 year old analphabets, but they gave them the gun and they said, "Kill." If you tell that to a 12 year old, "Kill, then you won't get punished for it." Why not? So here they stand with the gun and the doctor's hand is up and the patients are shaking and Raoul – I was there, it so happened on that day – and Raoul had to think very fast, and he hit these three kids. I've never seen anybody hitting so strong. Then he doesn't speak Hungarian. Only a few words, and somehow he managed to tell them in half German and half Hungarian, "Get out of here. You are in a Swedish territory." And, of course, the guns fell to the floor. So we had three guns in no time. And he said, "Get your officers in here." These three boys ran out. I mean, they were little kids and they were frightened because he was just powerful. In three minutes, an officer walks in, a Hungarian, and they all spoke some German. And our Raoul as quiet as nothing happened, looked at his watch and says, "Simon, what took you three minutes to get here?" And the guy looks up and says, "How'd you know my name, Mr. Wallenberg?" He knew. And Raoul pushed up his shoulders and he said, "I know everybody's name and besides you are in big trouble." He says, "I am not in trouble. You are." He says, "No, you are because by mistake you killed a Gestapo officer, and they're looking for you." "No, I never killed anyone." "Yes, you did. He died here in our hospital. And before he died, he asked us to call the headquarters and your name is up at the headquarters. They're killing you. So get out and bring me what I ask you. Medication! And maybe I will help you." Without a word the guy ran out. And all of us looked at Raoul, you know, and the doctor start laughing. He says, "Raoul, what the hell did you just do?" And Raoul says, "Nothing. Nothing." He said, "How did you know it was Simon." He said, "I didn't know he was Simon, but that's the name of the officer there and we were lucky. It was Simon." And then the doctor looked at him again and he says, "Raoul, I never had a Gestapo officer here dying." He said, "Naturally not, but he killed so many people one of them could have been." You see, now that was the way he saved. It could have been a trouble for him at all times. He did the same thing when he saved 70,000 people.

02:07:34

We had a ghetto. A real ghetto. And that was just about on the end when the Russians were already outside the outskirts of Budapest and Eichmann laughed many times, "Kill everybody," and they put up the guns. Now by that time, we had quite a few Nazis who wanted to save their life and the Hungarian Arrow Cross and they helped Raoul and one of them came to him one day and he said, "Go immediately. Eichmann put up the bombs, and they're going to kill the 70,000 people." And Raoul says very quietly, "Oh, gosh and just our two Red Cross girls are in there delivering medicine and food." He says, "Get back to your headquarters and tell them that the Germans called off the killing." And now it's not like in the film. In the film, he went himself to them. But it's not so. We were all in the office and like a little child he says, "Now, listen to what I'm going to do." He picks up the phone and with his gorgeous German, he calls the headquarters, and he said, "This is Lieutenant Krauss(ph)." Okay? "I want to talk to" –I think Veesenmayer<sup>15</sup> was the General's name. I can't remember it. And in the meantime, he constantly looks at us, you know, and we all started laughing because he just made a joke. And when the General came to the phone, he said, "This is Wallenberg." Of course, he couldn't hang up on him. And he said, "I really astonished what you are doing. I understand you are a very highly decorated First World Officer. How can you take it on your conscious to kill 70,000 innocent people, plus my two Swedish girls who are in there now?" Whereby he must have answered, "Eichmann ordered," because our Raoul said, "Eichmann? Didn't you know he left town? I had lunch with him yesterday." That was a complete lie. Now you can imagine. Eichmann could have stood right beside that general, but he has to risk it because there were 70,000 people's lives on the line. Whereby he answered, "I didn't know." He said, "Alright. Then, I order you to call off the killing, because if not then I as a diplomat promise you that you will be hanged before your officers." He hung up. In two minutes, he called off the killing. And we have quite a few old people today like that who came to this country. They didn't know until today who saved them.

02:10:03

So you see, his life was all – what he was there. He was lying. He was cheating. He was bribing. But that was the only way. He did millions of things. I mean by that time we had our guns too and he dressed his boys up. They took – the Arrow Cross came in and took people out of our safe houses through the basement and they went. So Raoul turned to our young boys and he said, "You have the Nazi uniforms." "Yeah." "Get dressed. Get dressed." "Where we going?" He said, "You're going after them and bring them back." Three or four boys went screaming at the German. They all spoke German, and they said, "We have to take them to the Headquarters." "No, we have to take them. You have phony papers." And the Germans said, "No, I don't have." "Yes, that's a phony papers." Took it from him. "Turn around. We go." So these poor people, they didn't know where they going and then finally, one of these little Hungarian came up to somebody and says, "Don't worry. We are the Wallenberg people." And they took them all back. Now we had phony papers. We had real papers, too. But you see this – you have to do everything so

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<sup>15</sup> Edmund Veesenmayer

fast. Now, it was not always easy. His big, big heartbreak was when he had an orphanage. He had two orphanages but in the one, we had 79 children. And, of course, Raoul visits there bombing time and he picked up those crying kids and he would start making animal noises and telling them stories just to calm them down. And the kids were talking, laughing and forgot that the bombs were falling like crazy because that was Raoul. And he visited them as much as he could. Not every day because he had to go out to the Austrian border and who knows where. But he came to the children as much as he could, always with candies in his pockets and with just to make the kids happy. He was a clown without the nose and everything, you know. And one day he arrived and found the children all dead. We found out from the guard – was a young boy, who was also shot, but thank God it went in his shoulder, so he could tell the story. They came in. Young, young, young, 13, 14 year old kids and started to just shoot the kids. One little boy went under a chair because his mother taught him before they parted and he thought his mother was dead and Raoul found the little boy walking on the street and said to him, "Whenever you get in trouble, get under a chair." And these damn Hungarians were so busy shooting, they didn't even look under the chair. Just kill the kids. And one more was saved, because she had scarlet fever and Raoul got her some Christian papers and she was in a hospital. So those two kids were saved. The rest of it were all dead. They just killed them for fun! And this was the only time I ever seen Raoul Wallenberg down on his knees crying, bitterly crying. For about 10 minutes, he couldn't get to himself because killing children, that was more than he could take. And then suddenly he got up, and he was again like seven foot tall, and said, "We're not going to stop fighting. I want to save this nation. I want the children to make peace in this world." And he went on fighting.

02:13:35

And it must have hurt him so badly. And I do hope you will have a chance once to invite that wonderful young lady who has been saved because of scarlet fever. Twice she was saved by Raoul, and she is now teaching in Mercer College. She's teaching humanities and languages. And you should have her. I will give you the address after. She's a marvelous person. So in any case this was the two people. And then Raoul was out again, when we heard that they shooting people into the Danube River. And it was December, just before Christmas. And what the Hungarians did – it was no snow – it was a no stars, only heavy snowing and the Danube, the first time in 40 years was really frozen with huge icicles. And they thought this is the best time to kill people because nobody will look for them and in the dark and they were cowards these, these Hungarian Nazi men. But Eichmann said, "Do it." So what they did, they roped three people together and then they shot the middle one and, of course, all three of them fell in and died. Some of them, I understand, swam out somehow and survived. But Raoul arrived home the third day to hear about that from wherever he was, and he was beside himself. "What will Eichmann do next? How can they do that to human beings?" And this was the first time he turned to us and asked, "How many of you can swim?" I was the only one with three other diplomats, men, who put up my hand. I said, "I was taught swimming in school. Let's go." I had no idea where we're going. So we went with our trucks on the other side. We

knew where they were shooting on the right, and on the left. We turned off the motors. We had hot soup and change of clothes and we were standing at the cave, and every time we had to synchronize. When they shot we had to fall in too, so that the splash goes at the same time. Not that the Hungarians had time to listen because they were so busy. They were afraid they would be caught. So we – when they fell we jumped and thanks to the icicles the rope hang on to the ice, and we knew where there is a rope, there is a body. And we started to pull them out and then the nurses and the doctors were there, put them in, changed them. Fifty people we saved – what is nothing. But it's more than if we had no Raoul Wallenberg. We couldn't do more because we were all frozen so stiff that we couldn't move anymore.

02:16:12

And then that was over and then we had one more big thing. When they advertised – the “lovely” Germans – that all the women between the age of 15 and 25 should go to such and such a palace next morning to clean up Budapest, we knew again that they will take them right out of the country. So Raoul again turned to his 350 people and he said, "You all have young friends and sisters and so on, so we got the pictures and we were working in the Buda side in a beautiful villa because as I told you we always had to move our offices and Danielsson was sitting there, the Minister, signed each one of these passes. And there was a curfew. No one, no Jews, no Christians, nobody was allowed out on the street. But what was so amazing that it was a most beautiful, moonlit night, cold like ice, but moonlit. Why they didn't bomb us, nobody knows. Why they didn't come on that night. Maybe they knew about this stuff, and they didn't. We don't know. The CIA<sup>16</sup> must have been very good and the Scotland Yard. They didn't come. And suddenly Raoul arrived around midnight. Again, he looked hungry and tired and unshaven, but he said, "Are you all finished because by two o'clock we have to deliver all these passes?" And so we said, "Yeah." And then he told us quickly a joke. He said, "I don't want you to look up, but I want you to know that we have new neighbors in the next villa." And naturally we all looked up. He says, "Don't look up. Just work. It's only the German Headquarters." And he did like he didn't care. If Raoul doesn't care if the German has headquarters, why should we, you know? I mean it was crazy. We were taken over by his strength. And it was really a feeling, “If he can do it, then we should help him with everything.”

02:18:10

So I was the lucky one who was first ready with about 500 of his papers and I – he embarrass – embraced me and he said, "Be careful." And I said, "Yes Sir, I will." And I left. And I remember there was no one around. I went with the curfew. And I walked across the bridge to Pest because all my people were on the Pest side. And it was a very emotional going because I had to ring some door bells and some friends of mine came to the door and they said, "Aggie, what you doing out?" I said, "Please don't ask. Don't ask.

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<sup>16</sup> Central Intelligence Agency



Just take this. An angel sent it to you." And we kissed and cried and I went on delivering all 500. All I heard is my footstep on the snow. But no bombing. Nobody. So I went home and finally I sit down on my bed and then it dawned to me what I just done. And I said to myself, "Are you crazy? You could have been killed." Then like Raoul Wallenberg would say, "Get killed? No way. Because the Hungarians and the Germans, they're cowards. They wouldn't be daring to be outside in a curfew." And I went to sleep with nothing. I woke up at six o'clock in the morning that my two girlfriends were thrown out of the camp because of the pass. And they ran all the way to our house because they – actually they spoke more German than Hungarian because they were from Berlin. But the German officer picked up their German and said something very ugly to them in German what they can do with the paper. But the kids made one look at him and they turned around and started to run and he never shot after them. He let them run. So the paper had a big "something." We don't know what Raoul did really. If you read a few books now, you can put it together what really happened and what he did. But it was amazing. So my two girls friend are actually in this country. They are grandmothers, both of them. But they lived. Okay? So it is incredible the things he has done. And then that was already Christmastime.

02:20:21

I have never seen him again, because I got sick. Maybe it was partly the Danube, a little bit cold, but it was worthwhile. And we only found out after that evidently I had a nervous breakdown. But it didn't come out only in the afternoon when I got a bit excited. I ran a big fever and there were no doctors to get. They were either hiding or being out on the front or they were Nazis. But my super said he will find me one. And he came to the house and he said, "Ach, just a little cold." And that is not funny. It was a needle what you give for animals, but neither my mother or me knew to, and he said, "I give her sulfa." And very smilingly, he gave me the sulfa, and five minutes after he left, I was in a deep coma. And my mother was in a panic and the phones still worked, so she called there. The super promised me that one of these days he'd get rid of me, but it didn't work yet. He tried it once more. Anyway, Mother called a friend and the friend found a doctor. And the doctor came and he asked my mother what happened and Mommy said, "He left – I don't know what happened. He left a needle there." And he says, "Oh, my God. He poisoned that child. This is for an animal. You don't give that to people." Somehow they found an anti-whatever. So it took a – I got back. My mind stayed alright except I had jaundice. So I was incapacitated. I couldn't get out. I never saw Raoul again, unfortunately. That was my end. And then the bombing really became so big and the bridges disappeared so we could not go. And that was "part one" of this little life there – very exciting life. And then the Soviet arrived.

02:27:27

And it wasn't better at all than the Nazis. If it's possible, it was even worse. Because they just picked people up from the streets – never mind who it was – and shipped them right

off to Siberia. The officers arrived in American tanks and American boots. The soldiers came all the way from Siberia barefoot. They were hungry. They attacked old women, young women. They only ones they saved were children. They loved children. They washed their face in the toilet, and they made their business in the bathtub. We couldn't believe it that they were that primitive. Some of them stole the watches. They had watches from here to here, and they came up to you and say, "tick tock, tick tock." It was incredible. So it was not much better as what it was. And I had no idea what happened on the other side, what happened to the legation until one day on a boat over came one of our lawyers who was a Czechoslovakian who worked with Raoul and he didn't tell me that Raoul disappeared by himself. He didn't say anything. He just said that the whole legation has been taken. And I assumed that Raoul was with them. I knew nothing. And I said, "Where did they take them." And he said, "Debrecen." Debrecen was the headquarters of the Russians. And he said, "Do you want to help them?" And I looked at him and I said, "Yeah. How could I help?" You know I was all excited. And he said, "Well, you have to go to Rumania."

02:24:19

And my parents right away, "No, she's not going anywhere." I said, "Wait, Mommy. Let Paul<sup>17</sup> tell me what he wants." I said, "Why Rumania?" He said, "Because Rumania is already occupied by French, British, Russian, and Hungarian, and that is the only available embassy, Swedish embassy in the whole Balkan, and somebody has to go there and ask that Ambassador to help this one." And I said, "Can I go? How?" He said, "Well, it's very easy because the Rumanians are now allowed to repatriate. So if you became a Swede legally, now you can become an illegal Rumanian. Just don't open your mouth because you don't speak Rumanian." I said, "Well, that's great." So my parents were very much, "No. No. No." I said, "Mommy and Poppy, the Swedish government saved us. At least what I can do, save them and Raoul. I mean what they have done for all of us." So they knew that I have a hard neck and anything they will tell me, I will say, "No." So they – Paul said, "I'll come back in a couple of days, bring you the papers." Now how you get there? We had the same wagons as we had to deport the Jews. And we were – I was told by a few people that some people are disappearing middle of the trip by the Russians. They take them to Siberia or they're ship back to Budapest. "Do you still want to do it?" I said, "Yes." What else can you say? You have to try. So I had a knapsack, and I had a fur coat, what was my only warm stuff I had. And I had slacks and we had ski shoes what was on me for four months because it was so cold and we always went down to the basement. And it took us 12 hours before we even left the station. And you didn't know who the other people were. You knew nothing. But in a little while everybody warmed up. Everybody was hungry, so everybody came out with a little food so at least we had eaten. But after six hours of trip they suddenly stopped. They said, "Something wrong with the train. Get out." We didn't know where we were and again this feeling, "Oops, we can be picked up by the Soviets now. What happened?" But we were taken to

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Hegedüs

a school and we slept in that school. There was room on the floor. It was cold, but somehow when 30, 40 people sleep in one room, you don't even feel the cold anymore. You were all dressed. And we were waken up in the morning that we're going on to Rumania. And there were very lovely Rumanian soldiers up there and they spoke a little Hungarian and German. And they explained to us that when we come to the front – frontier that Russian soldiers will come. And we were in a wagon with a lot of hay. He says, "I would like you to all go under the hay somehow and not a word. Please try not to cough. Try not to sneeze. Usually the Russians are drunk, but they will come in with the spotlight. And Good luck. We have to leave you on your own. And let's hope that you all make it in to Rumania." So we did that and sure enough, we could hear them coming. singing along. And they opened this heavy door and they skimmed through and nobody coughed. Thank God! And they closed the door and we started to move and we couldn't believe we were in Rumania.

02:28:01

Now, we arrived in a very small town where I had two wonderful girlfriends. One of them was a baroness who was a great philanthropist, and I was hoping that she lived through all this and she did. And the other one was a girl who went to our famous Liszt<sup>18</sup> Academy of Music and she lived in our house and then she went back. "Maybe in Rumania there won't be any war," so she goes home. She lived too. And that's a long story I don't want to get in. Anyhow, I met each of them, and then I told my friend, Marika,<sup>19</sup> that I have to go to Bucharest. And she said, "Why?" I said, "I can't tell you." She said, "Well, I know you well enough. If you can't tell me, there must be a good reason." But nobody's allowed to go on, only in official capacity on these trains. I said, "Could you find some official reason?" She said, "I will." The next day I got my police whatever it was, to get to Bucharest. First class. Two Russian officers. And my stomach went down. Both of them looking at me. One of them picks up the vodka, says in Russian to me, "Drink." And I said, "No." And he looks at me again, "Drink!" He took it to my mouth and I let it run. I was scared. I said, "Now, for that I came out. Now I'm going to be raped or who knows?" I was frightened. So the one suddenly started to – "You speak German." And I said, "Yes." I said, "Uh-oh, now inquisition. Maybe he's thinking I'm a Nazi or something." So they asked questions here and there in German. And he said, "Are you Romanian?" I said, "Yeah. But I lived in Hungary." He said, "What you going to do." "I'm going to teach." Come out of my mind you know. In the meantime, the other one is still looking at me. Finally, we come to Sinaia. That was a stop. And I said, "I have to get off for fresh air." They let me go. And I come back, they were not there. The two coats were there. No officers. So we were already moving and they still were not there. Suddenly, I see them coming, looking around and jumping in, closed the door. So inside, something told me that these are not just bad Russian officers. There must be something, but I didn't ask. I didn't talk. Suddenly, the one in German started to talk to me again.

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<sup>18</sup> Franz Liszt

<sup>19</sup> Baroness Marika von Neumann

Said, "Are you Jewish?" I said, "Yes." He said, "So am I." And, you know, I look at him again. I said, "What you doing?" He said, "We are dissidents." So but I still didn't tell them who I really was. And he said, "We are trying to go to Israel. My friend doesn't speak a word other. He's Christian. He's from, from Stalingrad" – or I don't know where – no, from Kiev and he was from Odessa, and they are friends. And he's a writer, the other one and this is a doctor. And he said, "We are trying to go to Israel. And we are going to Rumania now. We don't know now, how, – what. Can we help you something there?" I said, "Yes, I will need a job. He said, "We know everybody at the Joint." So I – you know, I mean, it was incredible.

02:31:38

So we arrived there and they helped my parents a lot. They went back to Hungary and helped my parents and then when my parents finally came out, they helped them through Czechoslovakia and my two girlfriends' mother. So they were very helpful. I don't know what happened to them. I have no idea if they ever found them or if they ever made it to Israel. I have no idea. But it was a very interesting meeting and a couple of times we met in Bucharest. And they knew by that time that – but they didn't know who Raoul Wallenberg was. I told them the whole story why I'm there. And the one of them – they said that "We have written a book and I wish you could take it with you." And I was very excited and I thought that was a fantastic thing because finally the outside world will know because they have written exactly how bad the life is during Communism and that only the top Communists had everything. They can go on travels and they have food and the people just dying around them from hunger. So it would have been a terrific book to take with me. But we hadn't left Bucharest. That's why. Finally, I was in Bucharest and they helped me to get a very small job that I am enjoying, but they got me a room. And next day I hailed a cab to go to the embassy. And the taxi driver also spoke German and Hungarian and he asked me why I am there. "Are you Jewish? And I said, "Yes." "So am I." And so we were talking for a little while and he said, "It's a very dangerous place where we're going." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because the Russian Embassy is just beside the Swedish one." It's a gorgeous, gorgeous avenue. Beautiful, with all very rich people who used to live there. And I said, "Thank you." He said, "I'll pick you up again." I said, "No, that's not necessary. I'll get home." "No. No. I will come."

02:33:36

Alright. So anyway, I walk in and there's a secretary and she says, "Why – what do you want from the Ambassador." And I said, "I'm sorry. I can't tell you." And she wouldn't let me in and I sat there 'til four o'clock and so in the end she got so tired of me. She says, "Look, I think you can go in now." So when I went in and he looks at me and he says, "Why did you sit there all day and you didn't come in?" And I said, "Could I have told her why I came?" And he said, "No." I said, "Well, now I'm here." So it was so exciting because he had his teletype machine and they were looking for all the people that Paul gave me. There was eight Swedes and all their families were looking for them and I could

tell them, "Yes, they are alive." And my fiancé also was looking for me and I could tell him, "Here I am sitting with you." "How did you get here?" So I told him my wonderful trip. He says, "Oh, boy. You really made it. Now, promise me one thing. Don't carry Hungarian papers. Don't carry Rumanian papers. Carry nothing but your Swedish paper with you." And he gave me a new this is what you have now is a new one, because the other one I don't even know what happened. So that's all I carried with me. And he said they want me to go with them when they out and I told him exactly where it is. And in eight days the whole embassy, minus Raoul Wallenberg was in Bucharest. He helped.

02:35:03

Q: Explain. I lost something in there. You – how did you get the Embassy people into Bucharest.

A: I didn't. That was the Ambassador. But I told him where they are. So that's why Paul, that lawyer said, "Go, and you're the only one who could help. You have to talk to the Ambassador." And what the Ambassador did I don't know. But as soon as they arrived, of course, it was a big crying and laughing. What else can you do you know. We all asked, "Where is Raoul," and Per Anger said, "Don't worry about him. You know he will come back." He never did. And then in about – yeah, and they were very nice. They said they're going to give me money every week. Something to help me out. But when I marry my fiancé, then he will have to repay the whole thing to the government. And I understood that. I mean after all, they will take me with them. So there were seven Swedes and I – so eight of us, and they were the 12 Embassy people. Finally, we got a call. We can leave and it was great excitement. And we all went out. The railway station is in Ploesti, the famous place where they bombed it. And we were all there, and we were about to get on. The Embassy people were already on and suddenly the Russian said, "Nyet,<sup>20</sup>" for the other eight and we couldn't go. So we were let down you know. Thank God, my room was not yet rented. So I went back and we stayed together as much as we could and also I was told to be very careful because with the British and the French and the Russian and the Hungarians, I can be any day taken to a prison and asked questions. And sure enough, one day up comes a Rumanian. And he says, "Papers." And I smiled like I don't know what he's talking about. He tried every language and I keep on smiling. You know I didn't know what to do. You know I said, "Now, should I get in trouble?" So finally, he motioned me to get into the police station and in the police station, they also talk Rumanian only. I gave the Swedish paper. He didn't know what that was. And then suddenly I asked for a pencil. You know, I showed him and he gives me and I put down the Embassy's phone number. In about half an hour, the Ambassador arrived. He was gray in his face. He was so frightened, you know? And I was as quick thinking as Raoul. I knew a few words of Swedish. One was milk, that's "mjölk."<sup>21</sup> "Tack så mycket"<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> No (Russian)

<sup>21</sup> Milk (Swedish)

<sup>22</sup> Thank you (Swedish)

means “thank-you,” and “bröd<sup>23</sup>” is “bread.” And as he walked in, I started to throw these out at him, “Mjölk, tack så mycket. Bröd, bröd.” And I went over and over and I could see how his face started to relax, and he almost started to laugh. And, of course, these Rumanians – and he talked something in Swedish to me and I talked back again. “Tack så mycket,” this and that. So they just let me go. And then we going out to the car and he says, “How did you come to that idea?” I said, “I’m a Wallenberg girl. Remember?” I had to think fast. You would have never been....” He was laughing all the way back you know. He said, “This is most incredible.” I said, “What else could I have done? They would have pushed me either to Siberia or back to Budapest.” So that was my whole knowledge of Swedish at that time. “Thank you, milk, and bread.” But I got out from the jail.

02:38:43

And then we were called again that now we can leave and that we be careful, because we will have a very, very great security and everything will be taken from us. So my two Russian friends came, “Take the book,” and I cowardly said, “I don’t dare because I understand they’re going to do it.” Said, “Well, we understand.” Not one thing was looked through. We just went by. But how do you know that before hand? You don’t. And we went on a – that was very interesting. We went on a South American – not South American – South African military plane. And the side – we could only sit side – this was the first time in my life I sat in an airplane, you know. And we sat on the sides where the bombs used to be there. And we had to fly to Bari, what was the headquarters of the British and the French and the Americans and the Indians and everybody. And we were the eight Swedes, there was two Frenchmen, not my friends, but other two and there was two British. One was a big fat man with a [inaudible] case and he was holding on to them and he looked at us so ugly because one of the ladies – she was German, but she was the wife of a Swedish consul who died, she was a widow – and she and me, we spoke German. And what we didn’t know that this man was from the Scotland Yard. No idea. But he didn’t like the German talking you know. He thought this was Germans who were running away. But we didn’t know all this. And we were in – there was one young man who also, only after–

02:40:29

Q: We need to, we need to condense this a little bit. Could you, could you just tell us when the plane arrived.

A: The plane arrived. Okay. The plane arrived. You’re right. I’m sorry. I open my big mouth. We arrived to Bari. That was the military base for the Americans and the British. And we went first to the British headquarters and they invited us to tea and they said that we are going into a hotel because the Swedes are paid for it. And we did not go in a hotel. We

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<sup>23</sup> Bread (Swedish)

went to a transit camp. "Number One," what was before for the Jews. From there they took them to the gas chamber. Now it was for German prisoners, and for people whom they didn't know what to do with. And it turns out that this man was from Scotland Yard and when he heard us talking German, he made up his mind that we were Nazis running away. We were four weeks in that place until they found us. But, as you said, we have to condense. I can't tell you. We were there four weeks and it was most interesting, fascinating, all the things what happened. Then we got word that we can go up to Rome, and we got an American, wonderful American, young sergeant, who had a truck and he drove us through Monte Cassino, and this I don't want to go in either. And he was singing all the way, like Paul Robeson, you know, in a gorgeous voice. He didn't sing in Monte Cassino. None of us could. It was tragic there. But anyhow, he took us to Rome. In Rome, we were another month, and from Rome we went, finally, to Switzerland. And from Switzerland, the old ladies were taken on an airplane and the Ambassador's girlfriend who was a Hungarian Countess, she was flying there. And almost everybody except the lady who spoke German and this one Hungarian I think it would be the inner-minister's son, whom we only found out after that he worked for the Scotland Yard. Didn't even know that. Just he left to – so only one man, another man whose wife was Swedish, and this lady and I we stayed.

02:42:43

Q: What happened to you at this point again very briefly. What – where did you go?

A: Well, at this point, it was very exciting because I have a huge family there. And all I wanted to tell them this marvelous story about Wallenberg. First of all, they didn't want to hear anything – not about Holocaust. They weren't interested. And I kept on saying, "But this is such a wonderful story." "I told you we are not interested. And don't think so much about it. We don't have it." Switzerland had everything, but they didn't want it. So it was a very unpleasant four weeks when we got our marching orders that we can go with the Norwegian Red Cross through Germany into Denmark and then from Denmark to Sweden. Well, the Swiss knew exactly that we had no food in Germany at all, and they took everybody's food and everybody's money away. And I was very lucky. Again, I was all the way in the back. I went into the toilet and I took all my money and I put it in my shoe and I went back. So at least I had money. Food, they took away. So we went three days and we didn't eat because there was no food in Germany no where. We went through Nuremberg. We went through whole lot of things, and then we arrived in this small town of Denmark and it's incredible. There was a whole village made up with maybe millions of showers with hot water and food. You have never seen so much food in your life. We all got sick because we didn't – we couldn't eat that much, but the Danes just didn't know what to do because there were Norwegians who were stuck. And there were Danes and there were Swedes and there were us, you know. They were incredible. Our drivers on the car – on the trucks by the way were Nazi prisoners, and I will never forget that, that nobody – all the Norwegians, the Danes, they spoke German. None of them wanted – but they decided it is dangerous because all the signs through Germany

now in English and there are places where there are no bridge. Somebody has to do it, so I used to be the youngest. So they said, "Will you speak to them in German?" So I said, "Do I have to?" "Yeah." So I sat with the driver and he still had the Swastika hanging there. Today, I'm laughing about it. If he would have known that a Jew is giving him the directions and the orders what to do, I think he would have killed us all. But it was fun. And we made it.

02:45:17

Q: We need to – excuse me, we need to condense. Could you now tell us when you got into Sweden? Just very briefly. How long you were there.

A: Sweden, I got in, in October. October four or five. And I first went to my fiancé's mother. First, they wouldn't let me in and that's a long story. I'll tell you another day. And then we went up for a weekend to Stockholm already together with his mother. And there was two gentlemen. He and another gentleman who met me, and they were greeting me with a fist like this and I said, "What's that?" And he said, "Oh, don't you know? That's the Communist's greetings." And my stomach went down again and I said, "Huh?" Tells me his greetings, but I thought it was just stupid joke. Anyhow, next day, that was Sunday. Monday, I got in contact with everybody from the Swedish Embassy. My first question was, "Where is Raoul?" "We don't know," was the answer. And then I told them about my fiancé whom I have to marry, and I told them that I am very disturbed because he greet me like that and you will have to understand that I cannot marry a Communist. And they say, "Well, we understand that, but after all, he..." I said, "Yes, I know." They found out he was one of the top Communists. And what happened is that in Switzerland, I was interviewed by a friend who's a newspaper man. And, as usual, with newspaper people, they go after their own head. I said, "I'm going to Sweden." What he put down that I'm going in Hungarian government business to Oslo. And even when the Embassy saw it, "Is she crazy? Well, what is this?" So that wasn't true and so this fiancé of mine thought that I am going from Communist business so he brought the chief of Communist's party. Anyways, everything turned out. I didn't have to marry him. And that was wonderful, you know. But in the meantime, it also turned out that he really wanted to save me and he was in love with someone else. So it turned out alright that far. But I was there and I very fast got a wonderful job with Count Bernadotte<sup>24</sup> who brought in from all the camps the people they needed – people who go out and can speak France and German and Hungarian and tell them stories about Swedish literature and culture. And that was a very wonderful thing to do because I had a key to the Royal Library because they had the books were translated from Swedish to German so I could read Selma Lagerlöf and all that. And I went and spoke for six months in all the camps. I was very well paid, and it was also very wonderful. The people I met in these camps who came out so sick, and the Swedes took care so beautifully of them. So that was the – I was three years in Sweden.

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<sup>24</sup> Count Folke Bernadotte



02:48:33

After this job, I worked for a Scandinavian bank and then I got frightened from the Soviets because everybody thought the Soviet going to overrun Sweden. Everybody was learning Russian in Sweden. Children were – when they were naughty, they said, “We give you to the Russians.” And I got frightened. I just wanted freedom, and it was wonderful and I loved Sweden. And Raoul wasn't home yet, and we didn't know what happened. Nothing we knew about it. And in the meantime, I brought my parents out. And I wanted to come to America and they wouldn't let me. They said American was closed 12 years for Hungarians. So Australia let me, and I went all alone all the way to Australia and left my parents behind in Sweden. And Raoul was still not back. And we couldn't find him. We still didn't hear too much and still nobody was looking for him. Actually, nobody cared. You never heard that word, “Raoul Wallenberg.” Then I came to the States, and when I arrived to the States my parents went to Argentina. They lived there for three years, and when I became a citizen, then they finally came here. And in 1960, I got married and the first person ever listened and believed the Wallenberg story was my husband. Three weeks on our honeymoon, I told him the story and he was crying for three weeks. We want that man back, but we still didn't do anything.

02:50:20

And then as you know, in the late 70s, Congressman Lantos<sup>25</sup> and his wife started to look for him. And that's how it all started. And now my job is strictly to let the whole world know, especially children, that there is a hero outside. Because we don't have any heroes. And we don't teach our children. And the Holocaust is important. Not just because the 6,000,000 Jews, because you know that Hitler killed 3,000,000 people who were priests, nuns, gypsies, blacks, and children in wheelchairs. Three million, that's Holocaust. Twenty three million young Russians. That's Holocaust. What's going on in South Africa is Holocaust. We don't teach it to our children. We can't live like that. Children have to know what to fight for as Raoul Wallenberg did, because only the children without prejudice holding their hands, can make peace in the world. And this is the only way, and that's what I am teaching. I cannot bring Raoul out. I have no authority for that. I let that let the diplomats handle it. But he's teaching us to go on, 'cause he taught me too. Alright, I was in a family where nobody was ever prejudiced, but I learned that, like Raoul, always that there are no colors. There are no religions. There are two kind of people, the good and the bad. And if you're good, try to make the bad better. And that's what children – and children listen. You'd be surprised how wonderful they are in the schools. And if I only reach three or four children in every school, in every college, then we will have some wonderful people.

02:52:23

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas P. Lantos

Q: Thank you.

A: You're welcome.

Q: You had told me before the interview about Raoul and being with people. Could we go back to the war? And go back to your early working with Raoul. I know he went to the Yellow Star houses. Can you tell us about, about – alright, can you tell us about your going with Raoul to help people? You had told me several stories.

A: Yeah. Not to Yellow houses. He never went to the Yellow Star houses. He went to the houses what he set up with the Swedish flag.

Q: I'm sorry. You're right.

A: Alright? I actually didn't go with him in this. I was in the hospital many times with him because that he needed help there, the nurses and the sick people. And I was a hostess at the Embassy when these people came up to the door to ask, "Please help." And then I took their picture and I went to the Ambassador and he would sign. And the Danube, as you know, and mostly I helped up in the Embassy. Whatever I could do. I was not a secretary, I was a gofer – "go for this" and "go for that." And it was wonderful. But we always knew what Raoul did, and then on my own, I also collected some people and said, "Do you want to be saved? Give me a picture." And then I took it back. And sometime it come out very embarrassing because you don't remember the people you help, but they remember you. And this happened to me when I arrived. If you are interested, I arrived to this country, and I had something wrong with my tonsils, and I found a Hungarian doctor of all places up and near West End Avenue in New York. And one day, I'm sitting in his living room. His living room was his waiting room, and people come up from his bedroom, his family. And I'm sitting there reading a book, and suddenly a fat gentlemen walked by and start screaming, "You saved my life. You saved my life." And I looked around. I forgot the war you know. Who thinks of the war? But he comes suddenly, and he sits down and starts kissing my hand, and talks Hungarian, and I said, "Uncle, what are you doing? Who are you?" You know, and looking frightened. And then he told me the story you see. The Embassies are – whether there's a war or not, they close at three o'clock. Okay? Three o'clock, a knock at the door, and there stands this gentleman with four pictures and he said, "Please. Please. Would you give us the paper." And I said, "I'm sorry. We are closed." And he started to cry. I said, "Okay. Okay. Uncle. Just a minute." And I went over to the Ambassador and I said, "Ambassador, just these four more." And he said, "No. No. No. I have a date." I said, "Please. Just sign your name." He did. And I handed it back to the man. It happened to be the son the, the brother-in-law of the doctor. Okay? And I was so embarrassed. And it was him. They all survived.

02:55:35

Per Anger had the same thing happening to him years after in Vienna in 1956 when the uprising in Hungary happened during the Russians. Well, in this uprising the only people who run away, was some Nazis who were left over and some Jews. And he was then already Vice Consul in Vienna, and the people came on the boats. So he thought, "Well, if Raoul could do it then, maybe I should go down to the riverside and help these people out." And he goes in with this little light, and suddenly a lady comes off a boat and starts running. "Mr. Anger, you saved me from the Nazis. Now you're saving me from the Russians." And he still – he was – you know, it was, it was a terrible – it's a beautiful feeling. To Raoul it happened once. When the Russians took him, and it's also you not like to hear that, he right away went. He came back once with two Russian officers behind him and the only person who saw him was our electoral in Budapest. And he came back and he said, "I don't know whether I'm ordered back to the Russian headquarters, but I don't know if I am going as a guest or as a prisoner." This was his last words. But he said, "I have to tell you a story. On the way here now, we saw a little old lady with still the yellow star that she was carrying bread in her bag. And I got out and I said to her, "Do you speak German?" And she said, "Yes." And I said, "I am Raoul Wallenberg." And she said, "I know," and she pulled out the pass. And he said, "I started to cry." He said, "At least one person I know is alive." So I'm glad that it happened to him at least once that he found someone who lived because of him. And you know, and it happened a few – a year ago, I think, I spoke to a big group grownups in a synagogue, I believe, in Pennsylvania. And I was telling them the Danube business, and suddenly an old gentleman got up and he says, "Stop." And he looked around to the people. He said, "Everybody can see this little scratch here?" And the people said, "Yes." He said, "Well, I was lucky. The bullet hit me there, and that's the girl who pulled me out and I froze. I said, "No, I didn't." He said, "Yes, you did." Because you know, after awhile you don't believe it yourself because years going by and I was sick and it was frozen. But I was the only woman. So and that is a life. And I thought it was a wonderful life and I am glad I lived through it.

Q: Thank you.

A: You're very welcome.

02:58:34

[Technical conversation]

[Displaying photographs]

A: Well, you see, we worked for Raoul, 350 of us, and we all got working papers, and this is mine. And the working paper is written in two languages, in Hungarian and German, and thanks God, everything is signed by Raoul, himself. In Hungarian up there he signed and in the German, too. It says exactly that we are working under Department B or some of

them work for Department A, plus the Swedish Red Cross. And this we always carried with us the all time.

[Technical conversation]

03:00:13

A: Well, this is before Raoul arrived to Hungary. The Swedish Government, itself, gave out 800 of these passports. They are real Swedish passports. When the house doesn't have the hard cover, they give you this. And I was one of the lucky girls to get one, because I was evidently engaged to a Swedish gentleman and he said if the war wouldn't have come, I would be his wife. So I am Swedish and that's my paper. And I traveled along. All the visas on the back, you can see. I traveled with this passport until I arrived to Sweden and then – "makuleras"<sup>26</sup> means "void." But I didn't need it anymore.

[Schutz-pass for Arnold Mandl is displayed]

03:01:10

[Conclusion of interview]

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<sup>26</sup> Cancelled (Swedish)