

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Stefania Podgórska Burzminski
September 22, 1989
RG-50.030*0048**

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Stafania Podgórska Burzminski, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on September 22, 1989 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.

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STEFANIA PODGÓRSKA BURZMINSKI
September 22, 1989

01:00:39

Q: Would you tell me your name, please?

A: My name is Stefania Podgórska.

Q: And when and where were you born?

A: I was born in Poland, the place called Lipa. That is like a village.

Q: Near where is it? Near a big city?

A: Oh, that is close to, to the city called Bircza. And when I was born, sometimes hard to say because I never saw my certificate of birth. So what mother told me at that time I was 16. So I have to believe that. And during the war I went to, to city hall, and I made papers because I need it. So I told what mother told me, so I am going with these papers until now.

Q: Um-hm. Ok, fair enough.

A: But really when I don't know. I don't need to know. Absolutely.

Q: No. No, you don't. Tell me about your parents. What, what did your father do? How -- what was your life like as a child with them?

A: Well, life was very good. My father and mother, you see, they didn't talk about too much with, with children about what happened, how. But what I heard, that my grandfather received from some king a big possession, big land and home for some heroic things, but I don't know what. And because the parents did tell. So we had, we had a lot of land and big home, building, big. And what I remember...the people worked on the land, and the parents paid them, and, and I was little girl. So I remember also we had a lot of horses -- I think six horses was, and a lot of animals, cows and chickens, what I hated. And we played around, running around; and, and that's all what was.

01:03:30

Then maybe a year before war, father died. Yes. So mother was with us, and mostly sisters, two sisters older. They went to the city. They found the work there, and they worked. And then I was maybe 12 years of age, I visit my sister with my mother, and I love it. They, they work in Przemyśl, where I was later; and when I came there first time, I don't know. I love city. And I told to mother, "Maybe I will stay." Mother said, "No. You're too young." And I

wanted to stay, but they didn't let me. But a few months later, I was visit again, with mother, my sisters. So I said -- start to cry, and then I said to mother, "I have to stay. I will not go back." You know, I don't know, maybe that was my destiny. I really don't know, but I hated on the village this noise of the chickens and cows. I tell you, really, exactly at 12 o'clock at night, roosters start to crow. Oy, that's makes me nervous. And in the morning, early in the morning, chickens say "Cock-cock-cock-cock-cock" That makes me nervous. So when I visit the second time my sisters, was for me city was very quiet and was beautiful, and I start to cry, and I said to mother, "I have to stay. I will not go back there." So was no rooster at night that did crow.

Q: How old were you at this time?

01:06:00

A: I think I was maybe 12 or 13. So my sister said, "Ok, if--" she said to mother, " --if she wanted to stay, she can stay. We have apartment. Not too big, but she can stay. We will find for her some light, not too difficult work, and she will work. She can be not lazy here." So mother said, "Ok, but how will it be with school?" So I said to mother, "Well, I will see later. Now is vacation." So I stayed with her, my sister. Mother returned. And older sister Mary, she found work for me in some bakery. So I was putting the rolls and bread on the shelves, but sometimes was too heavy for me. So one day sister came, and she saw and she said, "Well, I will look something else for you. And that was special some woman who looks for a work for a girl or some sister. And I went to her; and she said, "Oh, for this little girl, I will think I will have the work." And she went with me to some shop; and that was older woman, a little corpulent, and a small shop with everything. And she saw me, and they talked together with this woman, and she said, "Well, I, I really don't know the price," what she wanted to pay me. Because she talked to this woman, and this woman later talked to my sister. So then she said I can stay with her, ok. And that was mother of present my husband, yes. And after few days, really she start to laughing, because, you see, I was young and I was jumping, running, singing, dancing. And she was lonely. She had four sons, and they -- some works. The other went to school, and husband was at home. He was old. So she was in this little shop alone, and lonely. But she said one day that I brought life to her life, to this little shop. So sometimes I was jumping through the -- these tables and, and she was -- sometimes she tried to do also a little exercise, because she was sitting all day behind this, this, this desk. And, and what I saw this part was too big.

01:08:56

And sometimes, sometimes she had it difficult to go out; because it was really -- I don't know how many years she was sitting there and that gathered all this fat. And also, when I start to sell things went, came sometimes young people, and especially boys. I sell them chocolates. And some day, I gave them one. They said, "Two." Ok. I gave them two, and they paid for two. And some, they gave me, one for them. So how many chocolate I can eat? So I put back. And she said, "That is a double!" I make money double for her, because I -- I

am selling twice the same chocolate. So, you see. And I worked there maybe a year. And then one day, I had enough. So, was too boring. And I found another work. And in a few days I walked through this street and close to her shop, and she saw me. She called, and she start to cry. She embraced me. And she said, "It is so sad in this little shop," and she's lonely, and she will double my pension and if I will return back. I said, "I will see." And she said, "I -- I cannot live without you." You see, sometimes her friends...she had a daughter, but something happened. Her daughter was sick, and she was in hospital; and some her friend, they thought I am her daughter. Sometimes she said, "Yes, I am her daughter." So -- and she, she really -- she was lonely. And so, why I said to you, I, I was jumping, dancing. And she sometimes she would smile all day. And then I returned back to her. And so I work with her. Sometimes in the morning, when was not clients, so I run to her home back to bring her some lunch. Something. Sometimes I ran to, to the market. I make some shopping, because the husband was not capable to, to do that. For me that was fun. Run out.

Q: What happened as the war began to draw near?

01:11:59

A: When the war began, and so I still was there, there. And my sisters were, were -- mother came one day, and they said.

Q: Excuse me. How many sisters did, did you have?

A: Six. That was six. Mother had six girls and two boys -- really, she had three boys. One died. That was later. Stayed two boys and six girls. That's a lot! So when war start, so I work, work still there. And then my sisters lost the apartment, and I didn't have apartment. So this lady, she said, "You can sleep in my house." But was no place, but it was little hole. And I said, "Well, I can sleep here in this hole." So her husband, he make like a courtesan to cover my bed, and that was rolling bed on the dirt at night. I make this bed, and daytime I put back together and to the corner. That was all. And that was few months. Then war start; and , the - - her sons and came German first. Her sons ran away to another city, to Lvov called, because closer to Russia. Because all youngsters they wanted to run away from Germany to the Russia. And they went there, to Lvov, and they couldn't go farther. So after, I think, few weeks they returned back, and Russia came. And Russia conquered this part. But the other part, after the river San, that was still German. So this lady was very afraid what will be if Germany will come back.

Q: What was it like under the Russian occupation?

01:14:58

A: Well, that was normal. That was normal. Only difficult was with language. So that was few weeks was German. So on the street, mostly I was running on the street to buy some bread, to buy milk, everything. Was no shop or market, "Star Market" or "Stop and Shop" like here.

Just on the street from the village women. So we were buying milk or butter, or something like that. So mostly in the morning, I was on the street running to, to, to buy everything. Soon I heard on the street Germans speaking and so, German soldiers. Came Russia, just Russian soldiers and the Russian language. For me, was not really different because some friends, they said, "Well, now we have Russia. We don't know, maybe later we will have somebody else. We have to use, be use to that." And our life start to be again normal. And shops were opened, and I was still living with my old lady in this shop. And then start again war, again fighting, fighting; and again Germans were coming. And again these sons were running to the Russia border and to on the way to the Russia. Again to the Lvov. And so came German and start to segregate people. And also after the few weeks, the sons returned back because the German were there also. So was no sense. They couldn't run away with the Ger-- with the Russian soldiers. Something happened. I don't know why. They didn't run away there. So they coming back. And they, the German start to segregate people. They start to talk about all Jewish people start to wear this arm bands with stars. So for me that was something strange because I, I didn't know why the Germans start to segregate people, and why they mark these people with, with stars and white armbands. For me, this -- and for all our friends, we sometimes talked and we said what happened. After war -- before war -- was everything all right, really together; and we were all friends, more or less. But we were friends. And now when Germans came to the country, they start to segregate people. So sometimes we were very disagreed with that, but we couldn't do nothing.

01:17:53

So then -- and you see, maybe why I later also helped, because when Germans were -- I'm sorry. I'm jumping so with.... So, on the street one day I walked, and I was surprised everything, some people start to talk something wrong about that. About Germans, war and, and when walked, some boy -- Jewish boy -- maybe 10 years of age, and the other boy was not a Jew, and the other boy start to a little yell at this Jewish boy. And what -- so ordinary worker man, maybe 30 -- and he asked this boy, "Why you yell at him?" And this boy said, "Well, be--because he is a Jew." And this man said, "What he is a Jew? Look at him. He is the same like you. You see he is not difference. Just German makes difference. Before was no difference. Look at him. He is a Jew, ok? Because that is his people gave this name -- a Jew -- like you has the name of Pole. Every -- some groups, they give themselves some name. But look at him --the same skin like yours, like mine, like all of these people. The same color of hair -- some are, some are darker, some are blonde. That depend." And said, "And what that he's a Jew? You have to be friendly." That now is a war; and war will finish, and we will be all again friendly. And these boys, and, and this man said, "Shake the together hands. Be friends." And for me that was something also new. You see, I looked and I said, "Of course, we are the same." And you will laugh, but when I came home I looked at my skin. Because I, I have no, no chance to educate myself about people. Was, was no, no television -- like today, you can hear television, you can listen and people are talking. But wasn't that time. Radio some only people had. So, I, I just learned what I heard on the street. That's all was.

01:20:39

So later I was surprised also that Germans segregate people. They start to talk about ghetto, and, and they made the ghetto. I helped to moved this -- my old lady with sons, with husband, to move to ghetto. We, we are carrying a little something -- a chair not too heavy, some luggages, some valises -- and they advised me also to, to find for myself some room. For me, especially, with my name. I really didn't know where to look, but they told me, they show me. And the same apartment, that was one room separate. And her husband told me where to go, and I went there. I brought paper. And he filled up everything, so I went there back to the city hall, and of building apartment. And they gave me permission for this one room. And I was so proud that I have my own room.

Q: How old were you at this time?

A: I think, at, at that time, I was maybe 17, maybe 16, 17 -- something like that, yes. So I had my own room; and I was proud, very proud. So they went to ghetto. And all apartment, all these building was empty, because there lived only Jews. And on the first floor, that was some Catholic girl there. She lived there a long time ago. And sometimes we are laughing. We came together, and she said -- she was older, she was maybe 21 -- and she said, "Well, now we are here host. We are owner of this building." And sometimes I was afraid, because I was alone on the third floor. Was nobody there. But you see, then one night, I heard that people were taken from the ghetto to concentration camp. And one night I heard the screaming, my old lady and her apartment at that was across, and that was her voice. And in the morning, I ran to the ghetto. And I, I had my special hole there, under the screen, and I knew there a, a few policemen and few German policemen. I often were a guest around the ghetto. They, they knew me.

Q: I didn't understand. You had a hole where?

101:23:57

A: When I sneaked to the ghetto sometimes, that was -- the ghetto was around with barbed wire.

Q: Oh, your apartment was outside of the ghetto?

A: Of course.

Q: You were not inside the ghetto?

A: No, absolutely no.

Q: Ok.

A: I never was in the ghetto. I just visit, yes. So when I ran to the ghetto, and I, I run to ghetto

and I met there policeman who knew that me that I was very often there. And I told him I wanted to go inside. He said, "You cannot go there. It is very dangerous." I said, "I have to go there! I have to visit my friend and tell him something." He said that was the -- they took the people to the concentration camp, and some place. Anyway, it's very danger. You cannot go there. And then came German policeman. I said, also, I didn't speak German, just few words; but I told to this policeman, he Polish policeman -- he spoke very well German -- I said, told him that I've -- he have to disappear, and you, too, because I have to go to the ghetto. And this German policeman said to me, "Nein, nein, nein!"¹ He will not let me go there. I said, "I have to go there!" And I said to this Po-- Polish policeman, "Take him out some place to the building, and you and go and disappear. Because I have to go there." And they talked together and they went to some building. And I pulled out a little this screen, this wire, and I sneaked there and I went to, to their house, there to their apartment. So the parents that night were taken to the concentration camp. And because I heard screaming -- this lady, I heard voice -- because she cried that she left the children, and she didn't know what will be with her, with her husband. And they never returned back. And then again was "Aktion;"² "Aktion" -- that called when they took the people to concentration camp. That was the Aktion in the ghetto.

Q: Describe it, please. When you were outside, did you get to see any of it?

01:26:30

A: Oh, yes. I saw when they took it very often to the wagon, people. So that was bridge, connected from this place where I lived to the other side, to the ghetto. Before that was no ghetto. That was normal streets there. People lived. But that was the bridge through by the train were passing under, the bridge that was train, that was tracks. So very often I was standing on this bridge with some my friends. So I saw them, how they took the people to the trains, and the wagon left. And very often I went to the ghetto. I smuggled the food there, and sometimes they gave me there. So they, these four brothers, they didn't have any more parents. So they were alone. Then they took their other brother -- one brother also to the concentration camp, to Lvov -- that was a camp. And I visited there several times. I was there. That was camp not only for Jews. That was for Poles, for Ukraines -- Gypsy -- that was mix-it camp. So that also was one a policeman took care there, and he guarded there. So I made friends with him. So he sometimes he went there, and he called this brother Isaac (ph) -- my husband will show picture, I think, is here. And I brought food sometimes to him, and message. And so, I was lucky. I don't know why really, but I made it friends with people.

Q: Can you describe the camp?

A: I wasn't inside. I just this, this policeman, he took me one day to inside. But there came other guard, and he said, "It's forbidden to people from outside to bring inside to the camp." He

¹ "No, no, no!" (German).

² Murderous campaigns undertaken for political, racial, or eugenic ends (German).

said, "I am here working. I will not let my wife come here, or somebody else." So I saw just a little. So then this, this policeman said, "Ok, come on out."

Q: But you brought food with you?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Were you able to get it in to the --

01:29:35

A: Yes, yes. They called, they called this Isaac (ph). They call, and he came to this special room -- visit room. So I gave sometimes shirt clean or underwear, or something like that. And food I gave. But I came one day, and I -- we make arrangement. And this Isaac (ph), he asked me -- he wanted to run away. And he asked me to bring some old glasses and pair of shoes, that he will dress differently, like on the street. And he will run away when I will come next time. Ok. So I came next time. I brought everything. But I was late, and maybe three hours, because on the, on that -- well, you don't know but during the war was nothing in time. When I went by trolley, so soldiers stopped the trolley; because that the Germans, they called Nachschub.³ Germans army was passing. And for them, that was first way supposed to be, not for civilian. Just for the soldiers. So the train was waiting maybe two hours. Then one hour took me to get there. And this Isaac (ph), he waited for me. And, was another, some woman that was maybe similar to me. And he thought that that's me, that I am waiting there, and he ran from the camp. And some guard saw him and ran after him, and took him back. And I don't know what happened there; but anyway, he was dead. That everything told me, few hours later. His friend, whom I knew, also, from the same city -- they were neighbors. And he said "Isaac (ph) is dead." And he said how that happened. And so I gave him this bread? What I brought -- this food. And I gave him, and then I, I returned back. And that what, what happened. And you see, I returned back. And then again was Aktion in the ghetto, and ghetto was smaller and smaller. And one day, one brother with his fiancée, he works in some on the field, field with some with some farmers. They worked. They cultivated some vegetables. And they knew if German will have, will finish this war, so they will not needed them anymore. And next day, I heard that the -- again there's no more ghettos -- so ghetto still was, but again they took a lot of people to the concentration camp. And then that time, they took present my husband and his brothers, and others people they took. And like he said that on the way, he knew that they will not survive. They will go -- they, they were going to -- for a death. Nothing more. So he wanted to commit suicide. He -- he wanted to jump from running train, and he will be killed anyway. He wanted to commit suicide. And he bro-- broked the barbed wire from the window, make a hole and he jumped. And he told his brother also to jump after him. That they will be killed, and they will not have to go anymore to concentration camp. But he jumped, and he wasn't killed. And brother didn't jump. What he said later, Joe, when he jumped he had a bread. And this bread, he

³ Supplies, either personal or material (German).

covered it here on the chest. When he jumped, and he was slide because the, the, the force of the air pushed him and he was slide. And he stopped on the post, some post, and the post hit him here on the chest in exactly what was the bread. And he had big hole on the bread, but this bread saved his chest.

Q: It was a bag? I'm sorry. I don't understand.

A: Bread.

Q: Oh.

A: Loaf of bread, he had here. And this bread, loaf of bread, saved his chest.

Q: A loaf of bread? Ok.

01:35:54

A: Yes. And when he woke up, the train was far away; and he looked and he didn't find his brother. He didn't jump; but jumps other two people, some strange people. And he found them. One was broken here, this clavicle area, however, so he helped him. The other man jumped, young man. He had -- was broken something, hand here. So he helped them, and they walked a little. And they went to some man that Joe knew him before war. They went sometimes to skiing. And he, this man, had like some little cafeteria, and they came to him, and Joe said, "You remember me." So this man said, "Oh, yes. I remember." But he said, "You know, I am a Jew. And I jumped from the run-- running train that goes to the concentration camp. So can you accept me? Can I stay here only one night?" Because was cold. And he said, "Ok, ok. You can stay." And he asked about friends. He said, "Ok, stay with your friends." And they let him stay and give what he could, some warm coffee and some little -- he washed them, helped them, and in the morning they left. Early in the morning. So the next, in the evening, he went to another friend that he -- in Przemysl, the other friend, that he -- same city in Przemysl. And this man -- so he let him stay during -- all day he let him stay. But at night, in the evening, he said, "My wife is scared." Because of the Gestapo law, who was, "Who will help the Jews will be punished by death." Of course, everybody was afraid. So this man said, "My wife is afraid. I have children. So if somehow Gestapo will discover, so we will be all killed. So maybe you will find some -- another place, some-- somehow maybe somebody will take you."

01:38:46

So Joe, he didn't know if I am still living in the same place or no. And he -- but this man brought him to the city; because he, this man, lived a little behind the city. He brought him, and he let him go. And Joe said, "Ok, I will go out." And this man said, "Maybe God will help you. Maybe after the war we will meet again. And good luck." And he left. And Joe went to the same building where I lived and his parents before lived, and he went to the

basement because he didn't know what will, if he can come to me or no. For he, he thought that few days he will be in the, in the basement. When he came there. Well, basement the basement. Was some rats, mice, cats, sometimes were fighting, and that was maybe 11 o'clock in the evening. He was afraid also. And he was thirsty, hungry. And he was wounded also from the running train. When he jumped, he was wounded -- hands and face and knees; and he was afraid sometimes maybe some neighbors will come to the basement and will see -- find him. So he took the risk to come out. Maybe I will let him go if I am still in the same place and the same room. So he knocked. I was surprised for this knocking to my door so late in the evening. So I asked, "Who is there?" He said, "Joe." "Joe who?" And he said, "Well, you remember Joe. You worked with my mother. Is Joe from this little shop." "Ok." I opened. Well, I saw Joe. But that was no Joe. That was like three disasters together. Dirty, wounded, the blood on the face, blood on the hands, hands were very swollen. And so, "Ok," I said. And he asked -- and he said, "If you let me stay through the night, only one night. And tomorrow in the morning I will go out some place. But one night. I said, "Ok, come on." And my sister, she didn't know who was the Joe, and she didn't know who are the Jews, really. She didn't know the difference.

Q: How old was she?

01:41:52

A: She was six and a half at that time. So I explain. I said, "That is my friend, the Joe." And she asked, "Why he is so dirty? Why he has some blood on the hands?" I said, "He fell, fell down some place." And so she helped me to washed him, and little so.... And I didn't have pajama for him, and I gave him my nightgown. And my sister, she laughed and she said, "Oh, now we have two Fusia, not one." She called me from Stefania, the Fusia. I'm Fusia. And she laughed, and she -- "Well, that is Fusia, and that is another Fusia." And he, I put him to the bed and he couldn't sleep because he was so excited and that he lost everything, and all night -- and he had a fever also. All night he was calling, "Mother!," "Father!," and "Brother!" Why he didn't, didn't jump. All night: "I am jumping, I am -- jump after me." He called still that this, this brother, that he should jump. All night I was sitting behind -- beside his bed, and quiet because I was afraid maybe somebody will heard this girl have a man in her room. In the morning, he felt a little better. So I made some tea, and then I bought some little milk and he felt a little better. And still he had a high fever. So he was a few days. And during the day came friend of mine. So I didn't -- her -- didn't want to see her, a man, so I said to, to Joe, "Jump under the bed." So he jump under the bed, and all his clothes I put, put with, with him. And I said, "Keep you feet, feet cannot sticking out. And don't, don't breathe too loud. Don't sneeze." And I covered the bed longer with a blanket, that nobody will see him. And he was stayed, I think, week or, or week and a half he was in, in my home. And this man, my bed. And I slept in the other bed with my sister.

01:44:53

And I have to enlighten my sister a little: who is the, the Joe, who are the Jews. And so

sometimes I took her around the ghetto, and I show her that is the Jews. And she asked a question, "Who are they, these Jews? What kind of people?" She didn't know. So I explain her, and I told her that Joe is a Jew; and she said, "But he is the same like you, like me. Like other men. He's the same!" I said, "Yes, he is the same." So I have to explain her the same what I heard this worker told to this little boy, who are the Jews: the same skin, the same everything, only the name is a the difference. And I told her, "You remember the mother, one time she said that God is one for all people. Only people choose some leaders, like she said Jews took the, the Moses. That is just a counsel. But God is one. The other people choose their counsel. But they, all these leaders counsels go to one God." And so I explained the same to my sister, because I had no -- I had no other way. So that she can understand a little more who are the Jews and why Gestapo are killing Jews. I, I said, "I don't know really why. I cannot tell you why, but they killed them. So we will try to help." And so she, she was enlightened a little who are the Jews. And, and then I --

Q: You have a picture -- excuse me. You have a picture here of you and your sister during this time.

A: Yes, yes. This is the pictures during the war and this picture is a little later.

Q: Hold it up a little just a little.

A: Yes. This is earlier. This is a little later. That is almost before, when war was ended. Almost, this picture. But that, that is a little earlier. You see this skirt, that is not mine. That is one of the women whom I hid in the bunker. She was -- why? Because was time where when they had no more money, so I have to exchanged dresses for our food. So I exchange all my better dresses for a food, and then I had only one dress.

01:48:00

And then I started to -- they started to, to look among themselves what they have to exchange. So I had only one dress, and the Sunday -- sometimes if I wanted to go out and have something, I didn't have dress. Only to work. So this woman, she was with two children. And she said, "Well, maybe this skirt...you will take mine." She said, "It's in good condition, so try." And I tried, ok. And that is her, her skirt, because I didn't have. I exchanged for a food. Listen, 13 people that I needed a lot of food for them. 13 them, two of us. That was together 15 people. I needed a lot of food. So that is my sister, and that's me. And that is later, almost when war was ended.

Q: Let us go back now. Sorry to interrupt you.

A: That's all right.

Q: So you have been hiding Joe under your bed for a week and a half, or --

A: Yes. And then I, I went where work his brother. When he works there on the field with his fiancée. I went there to tell him that Joe is all right; and he jumped from the train and he came to me. I went there and I told him. And he said, "Ok, but anyway he will be dead now or later. He -- they will kill us." And his fiancée, Danuta (ph) her name was, and she asked me maybe they will come to me also because when they will not needed them anymore, so they will kill them. I said, "I don't know. I have only one room." And the evening when they went back to the ghetto, she run away. She asked Henick (ph) -- her fiancé, Joe's brother -- that maybe he will run away from the way. And he was afraid, and she said, "You are going, or no?" He said, "No, I am not going." And she ran away by herself, and she came to me. So now I, I have two Jews.

01:50:53

But she two days later greeted me also unexpectedly friend of mine, and Joe were jumping under the bed, and I wanted her to jump, but at that moment friend of mine opened the door. And I just pretended that I am making the bed, to cover Joe under the bed with the blanket. And she saw this Danuta (ph), and she asked me, "Oh, who is that?" I said, "Well, that is a friend of mine." And, "What's she doing here? When she came?" Because she knows everything. Only was two of us in whole building. So you know, I don't know how these lies came to me. I told her that this friend, she's pregnant and she didn't want her parents know that she is pregnant. And she wanted to make abortion, and she ran away from parents and she came to me, yes. I don't know how I make up these stories. And this friend had -- she told, "Well, that's very easy." And she asked how months she's pregnant. I said, well, that is two months. And I really didn't know how, how, how long she was to say she was pregnant, because I didn't know the difference. The shorter, the longer -- I said, "Two months." And she said -- she gave advice, and she said to her, "Well, first of all, you have to make a hot bath. And you will, will sit there in the hot water maybe half an hour. Then you make exercise -- very, very strong exercise. Then again hot water, and then a run on the steps." I lived on the third floor. She said, "Run on the steps several times: up and down, up and down. And make strong exercise, and that will go out." I said, "Well, you have experience!" She said, "Well, a little." And I told to Danuta (ph), I said, "Listen carefully. You have to do that." And I asked her, this neighbor, I said, "Well, how I will make bath, hot bath for her? I have no bath here. There is nothing." She said, "Well, all right." And she said, "I will borrow you..." She had like a big, big, some rounded -- some pot.

01:54:05

She said, "You will warm water in the pot, and then put here warm water. And she will sit, and you will add every so 10 minutes or 15 minutes hot water. And that will be all right. And then exercises." And I said to Danuta (ph), "Listen, you have to do that if you want to get rid of these things when you have that." And then my friend, she left. And then she brought me this big pot. And I thanked her very much for her advice, and I said to Danuta (ph), "You thanks her, because that was for you." And she said, "Thank you very much." And she asked, "That will help?" She said, "Ok, that will help. You will see that will help." "Ok." So the

neighbor left, and we laugh a little. I said, "Will you jump?" And next day I went to the ghetto, and this brother, he was waiting around. He knew the place that mostly I were coming there. And I met him there; and he said, "Well, here in the ghetto everything is quiet. It's all right. They can return back." I said, "I don't know." So he said, "I already found a room." "Ok." So I went back, and I told Danuta (ph) and Joe how it is. She said, "I will not go back." And Joe also told, "I will not go back for a death there. There, there is only death, nothing more. But what is doing this Henick (ph)?"

Q: Let's hold it a minute please. We need to change the tape. Let them do that and --

A: Ok.

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

02:00:34

Q: Ok, we are now back there. You started talking about Henick (ph), is that his name?

A: Yes. Oh, I did not finish about the ghetto, yes. So that night came back, and I told that Henick (ph) is back in the ghetto and everything is all right there. And they said they will not go back. But after noon, came some men knocking to the door. And I asked who. He said, "Friend." "What a friend?" I didn't know this voice. So I opened the door; and this man pushed the door and he came into the room. And that's good that Joe, in time, jumped under the bed.

02:03:08

But Danuta (ph) was -- wasn't. And he came this man, and he pointed out on Danuta (ph). And he said, "Oh, this is the girl. This is the Jewish girl from the ghetto." And I was surprised and I thought, "Oh, that is..." Because I heard that the Germans had a lot of spies. There are spies. They were around. And spies. So I thought that is probably German spy. And he knew her and he came; and now probably he will kill me and Danuta (ph), and Helena, too. And he -- this man said, "Yes, that is the ghetto, Jewish ghetto. She run away from the ghetto. And you fiancé, Henick (ph), he told me that you have to come back to the ghetto. He begged me that I will come here and I will bring you back to the ghetto." And you see, when I heard that I was really angry. I said, "What a miserable thing!" How could he send someone that I don't know? Who is he to send and tell her -- him my name, my address? And he told who was the girl, that she is the Jewish girl and she is in my home. I was angry. But Danuta (ph) said, "I will not go back to the ghetto." He said, "Oh, girl, you have to go. You are a Jew, and your fiancé said that I have to bring you back." So I said later, and he doesn't, he, he said that Henick (ph) will not pay him until he will bring her back. So I said, "I will bring her back to the ghetto if she will not go with you. So you will be sure he will pay you." He said, "Ok, I will leave you here during the day." And he said to me, "But you have to bring her back." And she signed her signature and word that Henick (ph), Josef's -- her fiancé, Josef's brothers, he have to pay this man and she will return back to the ghetto. And the man left. And I was really angry, and Joe was angry, too. And Danuta (ph). How could he do that? But anyway, sometimes that is --. So in the evening, they said they will go back to the ghetto. They will not longer risk my life for them. If the ghetto still there, they will go back, ok. I will give them the food what I had, and I dressed them like on the street in the evening. So Danuta (ph), I gave some my dress, some jacket that she will look like a girl, and we took Joe between us. And we walked and we laugh and we joking sometimes when., when Germans.... I said to her, "Hey, you laugh a little and be joking that this looks like a girl's walk with a man." And they are smile and joking, and something like that. And we came around the ghetto. Henick (ph) was waiting there. And I said, "How could you do that? You are skunk. You couldn't go or come by yourself!" Because he was too afraid. "You sent

some man that I didn't know him. Nobody knows him. And you told him my address, my name!" He said, "Ah, that is good man." I said, "You know him?" "No, but I heard he is a good man."

02:06:01

And Joe was also angry. And Danuta (ph) said to him, "Listen, Henick (ph), I will scratch you eye or you, you face. Everything." She was so angry at him, ok. We say -- said goodbye, and they went there. I went home. And every second day, Joe were coming to me. Sometimes twice a week from the ghetto, because they needed food. Was difficult to get food there. And I -- and he brought sometimes skirt, sometimes glove, sometimes dress. I ran to the, to the market, and I exchanged for the food and I gave them. Later one day, he came, and came friends -- one boy from work -- and Joe jumped under the bed and then he came from under the bed. He got ide maybe I will find a bigger apartment, that I will take them from the ghetto to hide them. I said, "Where did you get this idea? Under the bed?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Go back under the bed." "And to think about something else if you are thinking under the bed. So go back and think." He laughed. I said, "Reverse your thinking." He said, "Ok, I am going back." And you see, exactly this time, a girl was knocked on -- to the door; and again came the same neighbors. And we talk a little, and she ask, "That this friend, this friend, she had abortion? She, she made miscarriage?" I said, "Yes, you, you advice was wonderful. Wonderful." She said, "If you need it, do the same." So all the time, twice a week, Joe was coming to me and still drilling a little to find apartment, to find apartment. And one day, he came and he said in the ghetto his brother was ill. He got the typhus. And his friend and they needed more food and better food -- like a milk, like a butter, a little cheese.

02:09:00

And again I have to run on the street or sometimes go on the village. Sometimes I walked thirty miles on the village, because I knew there someone to exchange some dresses and bring the food to the ghetto. So one day he said maybe I will ask this -- my neighbor, this Mary who lived on the first floor -- she was a good friend -- maybe we together we will find some apartment, and we will take him, his brother, and his friend from the ghetto because they, they heard the ghetto will be finished. They will take all Jews to the concentration camp, or to kill. I don't know what -- will be no more ghetto. So they wanted to run away from the ghetto. Maybe together with friend, we will take some apartment and we will take few Jews from him and other. So I invite friend of mine, this Mary, and I told her. And I said, "Listen, Mary. You see the Jews are killing and taken to concentration camp. Maybe we will help few of them. Maybe we will find bigger apartment, and we will take few Jews - - these friends, some. You have also friends, some friends, Jewish friends. So we will maybe help them." "You know," she said to me, "Stefusia," she said, "I am 21. You are 17, probably. You know Gestapo law. We saw on the on the street there was the posters that was that sign by Gestapo: 'who will help the Jews will be punished by death.'" And was posters also on the same, on our building also, the same poster sign by Gestapo. She said, "You read

that. If you forget, go read again. That is maybe one percentage on the million that we can help and be alive. But this million, one million, that we can be dead." And she said to me, "I am too young to go to the grave for a Jew. If you want it, that is your life. If you wanted to be killed, to go to the grave in your young age, you can go. That is your choice."

02:11:57

But she said, "I don't like to be dead. And I am too young to be buried." And she said, "No, I am sorry. I will not help you. I will not take Jews and help, because that is death." And I said, "Ok, Mary. If you don't like, maybe I will not take also." And I told her, "Mary, please don't tell -- don't mention to nobody." She said, "Don't worry. I already got amnesia. I already forget everything. Don't worry. Everything gone from my head and my mind." And ok. So Joe came in the evening. I told him how Mary refused. He said, "Well, ok." I said, "Well, maybe I will take by myself. I will look for apartment." And I looked. I didn't know really where to go. But I look. And Joe advised me to go there, where was mostly Jewish street. And now was empty. That. Go there. Maybe there you will find apartment, ok. I went there. Was really empty, whole street. But was every apartment, I running up and down. Was no floor, was no doors, was no windows. No nothing. So I thought, "Well, floors is not necessary. But doors and windows, that is necessary!" Then I looked -- oh, sorry, then I looked around. If I will find some apartment there, I will take in these people where I will hide him, them. But was not apartment, was nothing. I thought, "Maybe from another building I will take some windows, some doors." But was no-- nothing. You see, I went out and I stood on the street and I thought, "Where to go now?" I didn't know where to go. Empty. And I was frightening a little, so ghostly. You were laughing, really, but I heard a voice. I heard a voice. When I stood and thinking, and I asked, "Dear God, where I supposed to go now to look for apartment? Where?" I looked around, and was a little scared because was nobody there.

02:14:52

And then I heard the voice. Some voice told me, "Don't be afraid, and go a little farther there. After this corner, there is standing two women, women who clean the street, and they are supporting on the brooms. And ask them for apartment. They will tell you." So I was listening; and then I said, "Well, what is with ordinary women who clean the street? What they will know about apartment?" And this voice said to me, "Go and ask. They will know. They will tell you." So I still thought, "Well, what they will know?" And this voice again told me, "Go. Please go." And I felt like a little pushed, and said, "Go and ask, and ask for a janitor there." And I said, "All right, all right. What I can lose?" And I am going exactly this way, like this voice told me. And aft-- after the corner, and I saw two women, and they are, they were talking together and supporting on the brooms, ok. I approached them. And I asked, "Ladies, maybe you know some apartment? I am looking for apartment. And there's nothing here. I looked here, but there's nothing. Maybe you familiar with this area or something?" They said, "All right. We know apartment." And one of them, she said, "Oh, is apartment empty. Tatarska (ph) 3. You go this way, Tatarska (ph) 3 -- that is little small

cottage, one family.

02:17:03

And over there is woman janitor, and you ask for this woman janitor, and she will show you this apartment. Is nice, nice apartment." And go, and they show me the way. And they said, "Tatarska (ph) 3, go that way and ask for this apartment. And janitor is there, woman. She will tell you." I thanked them, and I went there. And I went to this janitor; and I told her, asked her for apartment. She said, "Ok." There across is apartment. And she said, "Ok, I will take the keys. I will show you." And she opened the door and I went inside. It's really -- it's two rooms, something wrong. It's two rooms and a kitchen, separate attic. It's very nice. I looked around. She said, "Well, only bad thing is here is no running water inside. There's no electricity. Toilet is outside. It's primitive. But is nice." And she asked me, "How many people is?" "I have," I said, "By myself and my sister." She said, "Oh, that is big apartment for you. You not have to have electricity. You can have a candle, or...or kerosene la...lamp. And to go to the toilet, you not have to use at night. It's enough daytime." "Ok," I said. And she told me where to go to...to reach man that he will give me application and everything. And he is, he takes care of everything around these apartments, all apartments. All right. So I came home. In the evening, Joe came; and I told him that I saw apartment and I told him, "Primitive, very primitive." He said, "Ok, that may be better." And in the evening he dressed like.... He said, "I have to see that apartment." And he told me, "You will tell that I am your brother. I have to see this apartment." "Ok." He make artificial mustache and make up a little and everything; and evening, we run there. And I went to the janitor, and I said, "That is my brother. He wanted to see apartment." And she gave me the keys. And I went, opened, and he looks around and he said, "That is perfect." And he looked at attic, and he said, "That will be very nice."

02:20:03

And I said, "That is like a dream for this deadly business." So I told the janitor that I will take this apartment. And...but that was evening. She said, "Ok, tomorrow morning you can go to this and this man, and he will give you application and everything." Ok. In the morning, in this same evening, Joe went back to the ghetto. In the morning, I didn't went to work so I ran to, to this man. He sent me to the building apartment. He gave me, "Here's recommendation." And I went to the building apartment; and they gave me application and I went back, I came home. I filled up everything, and I went back there. And the secretary were there, there was a lot of people for apartment, but secretary is woman, very fine. She saw me and she heard: "You are back!" I said, "Yes. I have everything all ready." And she took it from me; and she said, "In four days, come back. I think we be ready." I said, "Really, you will take care of it?" She said, "Yes." And ok. In four day, after four days, I came, and she saw me and she yelled to me, "I have for you. I have, I have." So I came, and she gave me and I kissed her. She said, "Yes, now you have a bigger apartment. Not just a studio." And I kissed her and man who stood on the line for apartment, too. And he -- she -- he told, "Maybe...." To the secretary, "Maybe...maybe I will kiss you. Maybe you will give me

apartment, also." She said, "No, this girl was before you a few days." So -- and then I had this license my. And in the evening -- and I ran directly to the ghetto, and I told Joe that I have already apartment. And he start to organize there people and everything, a little money. And little by little, I -- first of all, I moved with my sister there. And my sister, when she saw two rooms and a kitchen separate. Oh, she, she lied on the floor and she, she rolled. And she said, "So big place!" And we moved right away to this bigger apartment.

02:23:01

And she was happy. And then start to -- first Joe and another man also with father, first when was everything ready. So from the ghetto they came. I went six o'clock, before six o'clock, under the ghetto. They were ready there. And then we met in some place -- not under the ghetto, a little farther -- and they were dressed like a workers, and they kept the hands like some can with coffee or something like that. And they are going to the work. And I brought them home. And two by two, with time, they came. And I had already seven people.

Q: Who were the seven?

A: Third came Joe with this man other, his friend -- Zenek his name. Then came girl from the ghetto. She is in Brussels now. Then came another man with his friend. Then came this two father -- men from -- father from this man who came with Joe first time and father this girl who was already in my home. You see what happen? Also little tragic, but a comedy. When these two father were prepared to come, I came to the ghetto and they arrange with the Jewish postman that they will take them from the ghetto as a post office man. That nobody will control them. Because postman from the ghetto every day comes out of the ghetto to the city to take mail, and comes and brings to the ghetto.

02:26:02

So they make arrangement with the postman to take them as his helpers, to take them out from the ghetto. But they paid him to take them out of the ghetto. But somehow -- I don't know if this man or other some, they denounce them to the German police. And what happened, I said, "What happened?" These men, they took them from the -- by mail, wagon mail, from the ghetto. And he knew the city of Przemysl very well, this man. Every day he was going from the ghetto to the, to the mail box, and that time that day he forgot the way. And he was surrounding three times around the city. He couldn't go straight to the mail box. He forgot! But what happened, I saw, we were waiting for them, for these two father. The policemen are waiting on the -- our street. Was two, two Polish policemen, and two German policemen. And they were walking up and down, up and down. Exactly at Tatarska (ph) 3. Up and down. I was a little angry. So we wait. Past one hour, two hour. They didn't come. So I talk. I said to Joe, "I will go out." He said, "No, don't go out. If you will go out, exactly this father can come here. So who will open the door?" I said, "No, I have to go out. I have to something, some -- take some walks." And I am passing this policeman. And I said, "Good day!" And I said, "Oh, I surprised that you are here. What happened here? Somebody was

killed, or something like that?" They said, "No, something, something maybe will be." I said, "Well, maybe you protecting us. Maybe we'll be -- we're landing here Hitler and Stalin, and we'll fight here. That you are here, maybe you will protect us." They said, "Well, if they will come here and fight, we will maybe help you to kill them both and will be war over."

02:29:05

And we laughed together, really. And I wanted to pass them, and they wanted also to talk. And they said, "Well, miss. Talk a little!" I said, "No, I have to go some place. At least if you will tell me why you are standing here..." And passing exactly German policeman, and he asked something then and they told them something. I don't know what. I was not interesting. And they pass, and they walk up and down. And I said, "If you will tell me why you are standing here, I will talk to you. If no, bye." So came another policeman, and he said, "Well, of course, we can tell you. Why not?" And they said, "German policeman -- police received yesterday a note, a telephone, that today will leave ghetto some two rich Jews. And they order us to, to catch them. And you see, these two German policemen, they watch -- are watching us, too. They don't believe us. They watching us. We watching them. And we all watching for these two Jews. Two rich Jews. Probably German wanted to have also their money, or something like that." You see, when I heard that, and I was inspected -- expected -- these two fathers, my heart fell down to the heels. And I said, "Oh, God, what will be today? Will, will I, will I be killed today or no? What will happen today?" You see, and I went -- I said, "Well, thank you." And I said, "I don't think if some Jews will risk their life to go out of the ghetto. They know they will be killed if they will leave ghetto. I don't know if they will risk their life." Policeman said, "Well, I don't know. I think also this same way, but we received the note that we have to watch. So..."

02:31:43

And I asked, "But why you standing exactly here, Tatarska (ph) 3?" "Because," he said, "they don't know which number they will come. But some -- someplace between 5 in 1 -- and 1. So we stand here, 3. We observe for 1, 2 and 4, 5. And we have good view, so we observe. And that is in the middle, 3." I said, "Oh." I thought, "Dear God, they had the right number." And I said, "Ok, thank you." And I said, "I don't think that they will come, that they will risk their lives to come." And I went a little farther. That was a church, and I went to this church, and I prayed and I asked God to take somehow this Germans and this other policeman from here, that these two fathers will be not caught here. I prayed and I really asked God to help, to take out somehow these policemen. And I -- ok, and then I came home. Still was nobody. And sadly, this one, the Zenek one, the fathers -- the son of one of these fathers, he stand at the window a little farther and nobody can see him. And he observed. And exactly that time the policemen went up. All of them. And they talked, and came one father. This girl's father. And he came on the back yard, and he didn't know where to go. And he met the janitor, the woman, and he asked but -- before we talked together with this man if he will met someone that he will tell that he is from work, because that time I will not go to work, that he will a little angry at me why I didn't come to work. That he is from work. And

he came, and he asked the janitor and why I didn't come to work. And he was angry a little, and janitor said, "Well, she is a good girl. She lives here, but she is a good girl. She's work very hard, and she has a, a little sister. So she have to take care of little sister. Don't be bad to her. She is a good girl." And she show him where I am living. And I opened the door, and I said, "Oh," what his name was, this mister who was in the in the factory. I said, "I am sorry I didn't come to work today, but I had a pain in my knee. I am so sorry. But I will be afternoon, for sure, tomorrow." And he said, "You miserable girl! You didn't come to work today."

02:35:04

And I closed the door, and -- ok. And I asked him, "Where is the other father?" The, the Hirsch (ph) is the -- name of Hirsch (ph). He said, "I don't know. This man, he, he was lost, the mail man. And he -- three times around and around the city, and he lost his way." And he said, "He put us out of his carriage. And I lost the, the, the Hirsch (ph), the Schilinger." And I thought they, all my people were a little nervous. And after few minutes the son, who was watching, and he said, "Oh, it's my father! It's my father!" And here came the other father. He came. And he did -- the Zenek came, "Oh, Miss Fusia! Miss Fusia, my father!" And he tooked me and he lifted me up. And he said, "Go out. Bring my father. Go out. Meet my father." And I opened the door, and I asked, "Oh, you again? Also from the work?" And I took him home. And my feeling...he came home, and he said, "Oh, God, we are discovered! We are discovered. Look, Gestapo will be here. We are discovered." And he start to running from one corner to the other. "We are discovered!" "What happened?" I said, "Mr. Hirsch (ph), what happened?" "Be quiet." "What happened?" "Gestapo will be here. We are all killed. We are all killed." And I said, "Quiet! What happened?" And he said, "Story -- what, what happened?" And that he said, "I lost Schilinger, this foreman. I lost him." And then he said, "I went here to this Tatarska (ph) 3. And exactly a few doors before, one man caught me and put me to the inside to the building. And he said to me, 'I know you are a Jew and I know you are going to hide here 'til some Polish people.' Said, 'But I needed money. Give me some money. I know you are rich. Your people know that you will come here.'" And this father, he was prepared for that. And he had ten thousand zlotys⁴ in the pocket, and he --
[TECHNICAL PROBLEM]

02:38:10

Oh, yes, and he said he gave him this, this 10,000 zlotys. And he asked, "May I go now?" This man said, looked out and he said exactly the German policemen was crossing, walking. He took him back and he said, "No, you cannot go now." He said to him, "I am a thief, but I am not killer." He said, "I got what I wanted. I don't like -- I don't want you life. So go to this family. I know you are going to be hide some Catholic family, whoever they are. And good luck. Maybe after war we will meet." And he again went out. He looked that policemen were out, higher a little. He said, "Now it is all right. Go." And he let him go, then. Because he

⁴ Polish monetary unit (Polish).

was angry when he came. He had -- he said, "We are discovered. We are discovered. Gestapo will be here. Gestapo will be here." "We quiet him," I said. "Maybe we will be not Gestapo. Quiet!" But anyway, I was afraid because that is some, some man; we didn't know who. Maybe he observed where, where he were going. But everything was all right.

Q: How did you get the other four people? You have a total of 13?

A: The other, yes. You see, one day came to me two, really, some street boys. And they brought me a letter. They gave me a letter, and they said some woman gave them from the ghetto. And she paid them to, to deliver this letter to me. I start to read, and I see some woman named Zimmerman (ph)n (ph). I don't know who is she. I said, "I don't know who is she." And they said they required my signature to, to, to give her back, that she will pay them. And she will have proof that they delivered me this letter. I said, "I don't know. I don't know her." But anyway, I went to my people and I asked them. And they said, "Ok, give them your signature."

02:40:51

And this woman asked me to come there to the ghetto, and she said in this letter that she knows that I will take Jews, and she knows that I have a few. And she mentioned the names the people and, and she said that I had to take her and her two children. If no, she will denounce me to Gestapo. I a little was upset. But I gave my signature, and I said, "Go back. I don't know who is the woman." And we discussed among this people, my people, and they said they don't know who is she. Next day these same boys came. And Joe's brother was still in the ghetto, still was there, and his fiancée. And these boys came, and I read this letter again. And again this same question, blackmail, to take her and her, her children. If no, she will go to Gestapo. She knows whom I have already. So I said, "I gave my signature." They, the boys, left. And I told to my people, I said, "I will go. I will say -- see what she wanted and who is she." I came there. I went to the ghetto. And I met Joe's brother, his fiancée, and they introduced me to, to, to this woman. And I said to her, "You know, you are miserable. You know, you are a killer." I said, "You -- ok, you sent a letter. You can tell in the letters that you wanted to meet me. You...you could say that the Henick (ph) is sick, or Danuta (ph) is sick. That they wanted to see me, and here we can talk. But in the letter, you, you sent some streets boy. I didn't know who are they. And you mentioned the people, that I have the Jews, a few Jews. And you blackmail me, and you said that you will go to Gestapo if, if I will not take you." I said, "Did you have do that? You are killer!" I said, "You go, you go to tell, 'Come on to visit because Henick (ph) is very, very sick, or Danuta (ph).' And here we, we could talk. But not to mention in the letter everything." She start to cry, and she start to kiss my knee. And she said, "I don't know how to behave. I tho-- I thought that is the best way. But I wanted to be alive. I wanted to save my children. I wanted to be alive to hear that this is dead, not, not nothing more."

02:44:00

And she started to, to embrace -- kiss me, and my hand. And she said, "Please, I beg you. I beg you. I wanted to save my children. I don't want to die, and my children."

02:47:04

I said, "That was a very bad way, very low quality way." She said, "But I didn't know another way." So I said, "Ok, if I have so many people, three more people makes no difference for me. If they will kill me, they will kill once. Not many times. Not for every Jew kill. Just one death." So we make arrangement; and first, two days later, I took her children, girl and boy. Boy was maybe eight, eight years maybe, maybe seven. I don't remember exactly. Daughter was 15. So I brought them. Then she came. Then came Joe's brother and his fiancée. Also was trouble with him. He didn't want to leave the ghetto, because was very quiet there at that time. And he said, "Why I supposed to sit in, in the bunker and be closed? Here I have apartment. I have fresh air and I have food." Because he had the money to -- and he bought the food. Sometimes I brought the food, and was everything all right. So I said, "That will be not too long." And one day I heard on the street that ghetto will be finished. Will be end of the ghetto. And they, you know, during the war my ears were very long. My eyes were very wide. So I heard what people were telling, and I came home, and I said to the Joe what I heard on the street. And he was frightened and he said, "Oh, please, Fusia. Go to the ghetto and tell Henick (ph) that he is supposed to come right away. He is only one of my brothers, only one left brother. And you have to bring him here." I said, "How I can bring him? I cannot take him under my arms or hands and bring him here if he doesn't like to come." And he said, "Go!" And he start to cry, "Go, and bring him here." I went, and I told Henick (ph) what I heard. He said, "Oh, if something will be bad, we will hear first. Not on the street, but here. And the Jews, they have a good spies. They first know what will be." I said, "Listen, Henick (ph). Ghetto will be not long. If you will not come today or tomorrow, you will not come to me anymore. Because you will be not in this world. You will be someplace else in another world. You will be killed. And I will not come here anymore. If you don't like to come, stay. I will not come. But you will not, you will not come to me anymore, because you will be already dead." And I left. Next day, in the morning, early in the morning, he was dressed a little like a young Wehrsoldat,⁵ like a little, some youngsters, German youngsters dressed. Jackets, like that. And he was dressed also and early in the morning with his fiancée, Danuta (ph), he came. He frightened me.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION

End of Tape #2

⁵ Defense Soldier (German).

Tape #3

03:00:34

Q: Ok, tape's on.

A: Yes. And you see, a few days later I heard that in the ghetto is Aktion. Aktion -- that means they call will be Judenfreid,⁶ without Jews. And you know Germans you -- Jew is "Jude."⁷ Be Judenfreid. So they take all Jews to the concentration camp. And ok...is Aktion. Maybe week or week and a half later, so I worked normally. I went to work, the factory. Everything is all right. Took care of these people, food and everything.

Q: How? How did you get them food?

A: Well, I pretended that my sister and I, to make more money, that we buy food and sell food. When sister sometimes brought the bread, one or two. So to bring home, sometimes neighbors ask. My sister was prepared for that, because Joe taught her how to say to, to neighbors, to friends. And she said -- neighbors ask, she said, "Oh, today I didn't sell nothing. Maybe later I will go, I will sell something. And I will make money for one bread for us." Yes. And you see, that was the story. And maybe a week, or maybe two weeks later, I came -- I work at night at that time. In the morning I came home, so my people start to -- Joe and the Zenek -- they start to ask me what I will say if two people more will come to me. I said, "What you mean, what I will say? There is no more ghetto. No more Jews. How they will come? From where? From the other side of the war?" They said, "Well, what -- how you will behave? What you will say?"

03:03:04

I said nothing. What I can say? I know they cannot come. "But if..." I said, "...all right, if they will come they will stay with you. That's all." And they said, "You know, yesterday in the evening, when you left, came two people more. One couple. They were married not long ago, and they came." I said, "Ok." And they ca-- and they introduced me. And they came and they said, "Oh, please. Don't throw out us, please." And still kiss my hand. I said, "All right, all right. I tell you, they will kill me, if they will kill us all, only once." So that was 12 people already. So I said, "12 people, 12 troubles. Ok. Will be no more people." And a few days later, the same story. I came home from work, the same story. "What you will say if one man will come more?" I said, "What you are talking about? There's no more ghetto. There's no more Jews in the ghetto. No more Jews in this, in this city." "But what you will say?" I said, "The same I will say like before. If will come, will stay. Ok! Come on in!" In came, and came this man that time, this man.

⁶ Actually "Judenfrei," meaning "free of Jews" (German).

⁷ Jew (German).

Q: Hold it close to you and up.

A: And this man came at night -- not at night, before curfew he came. And they introduced me. And he said, "Oh, I am sorry really. But I, I wanted to live. I don't wanted to die. So I am so young, and I don't wanted to die." And I said, "Where you been all this time?" And this couple and he, they had friends, Catholic friends; and they ran from the ghetto through the sewer sometime. Something like that. And they went to them, to this Catholic family, and they kept them three days. And they said, "I am sorry. We cannot keep you any longer, because my family will be dead and we all will be killed."

03:05:51

But they knew my address, these, these Jews. They knew my address, so they said, "Ok, maybe we will go to this girl." But what happened, this man, special, he sent this woman to me, to ask me if I will take him. I tho-- I thought that again some blackmail me somehow. Maybe this woman knows that I have already this twelve Jews. She wanted to blackmail me, that they give her a money. When she told me that one Jew sent her, and he asked me to take him. So I said, "I am sorry. I don't know who is here he. I don't know any Jew, so..." And I -- and she said that I have Jews. I said, "I am sorry. I have no Jews. And I don't like specially Jews. If you wanted me to blackmail me, you will not get from me money. Just if you want it you can go to Gestapo. Maybe they will kill me, but money I will not give you because I have no money. And I have no Jews. And I will not take a Jew, because I don't know who is here he. And I will not take him. If you want it, you keep him. If he is really Jew. But if you came to blackmail me, I am sorry. You have to..." And I opened the letter in the bun-- bunker that time. And I opened all the rooms, and the rooms were, were -- went to the, to the attic. This small room I opened, I show her. I said, "Look at. Everything is empty. I am here only with my sister. You see, nothing happened. And nothing will happen. And I will not take Jew. And I don't like Jews, and I will not take this Jew what you said. And I am sorry. Please leave my home. If you wanted to blackmail me, I will not give you money, because I have no money." And she left. She left. But in the evening what she told this man; and he said, "Well, I will go by myself." And he came in the evening. When he came, I said, "Hey, you miserable! You shouldn't come by yourself. You so comfortable like maharajah! You sent somebody else, you couldn't come -- could come by yourself." I said, "You miserable! I didn't -- I didn't know who is this woman. You sent her to me." And I was really angry. And, like otherwise, "I'm sorry. I'm this, I'm that."

03:09:09

So -- and so I had 13 people. But, you see, what, what is started when was no money anymore for the food. This couple, they wanted me to sell jewelries what they had. I couldn't go to sell, because I didn't know where. And how I can go to sell to some, some jewelry, some, some shop to sell some earrings or, or rings, or something like that? So I couldn't go. So they talked together, and this woman who was married who came, she said, "We will go together. And I will go to her because I know her, and I will tell her everything. But I will

not tell her that I am here. Only someplace else. And she will help." Really, we were went in the evening there. I was waiting outside; and she went there. And this woman: "Oh, good that you are alive! Good that somebody helped you." And she took -- I don't know what she gave her, but she took it, and she prepared the next day food. And we came in the evening. She brought out, and we carry home. And then when German moved to my apartment, I had four German -- another story. Because in my story I title, they gave me two hour to move out of my apartment to a free apartment. How could I move and leave 13 people for a certain death? Whole story.

Q: Let's back up. You are now -- you have come home with this woman. She has sold the jewelry. You have food. You are putting it in the bunker. Describe the bunker. Was this in the attic? Where was it?

A: In the attic, yes. First of all, was in the attic. Everything. But later, they saw that it is too dangerous to be in the open attic. So they, Joe, and this Zenek, who came first with him, they looked and they said that they can divide the attic. And they can build false wall.

03:11:48

So now was trouble. They said to me, and they called me because they have to tell me everything. They call me, they told -- they showed me, and they said, "That will be better, because if sometime someone can come accidentally on the attic they will find us. So on it will be bunker. We will sit there. All day we can sit here in the open air, and if some it will be dangerous, we will go there." Now how I can find the same old wall boards? How I can find? They asked me the old to find, because they -- the old was old. And I was everyday, when I went out in the morning from the work, I was running around the streets and look. Because sometimes after the bombs was falling and destroy the buildings, the people were and taking the woods for burnings. Was difficult to buy some, some coal, something like that. Just wood. And I was running and looking for some boards. But who were selling was sometimes new, was not old. But Joe, every day when I came from the work, I found the big card, paper with the letters, big letters, boards -- "Buy a Boards." "Buy a Boards." -- old boards. Sometimes we laugh, really. I said, "Where I get?" He said, "I don't know where. But buy. Look." And everyday, few days I went running every morning from the work around. And sometimes I went to the market, because over there was gathering everything. And they -- and one day, had man some, some things. So I asked him how much that cost, and that was some instrument to, to dig the soil, soil there. And he asked me, "Well, miss, for what kind? For what you needed that?" "To bury Germans." "If you want it to bury Germans, I will help you." I said, "No, I want it to correct something." And when I returned from there home, I met on the street friend of mine from work -- two men -- and they had -- they selled also from the buildings the, the boards. And they took it and they sell it additional, so they make money. And I, I saw, and really old.

03:15:02

And I asked, "Well," They said, "High. High. It's morning." And I asked, "Well, that is good

board, and good wood, too, for burning." I said, "How much do you want?" They said, "Well, we set some price." They said, "But for you, will, will be lower." And they told me a price, and was not too high. Was really low. And I said, "Ok, I will take." And was really perfect. Was old, dirty, and a little black like other. So -- and they brought me home. This -- this things, this board old. And then they wanted to bring me inside. I said, "No, thank you. I have to exercise my muscles, and my sister, too." And I paid them, and they put in front, and I said, "Thank you." And I took really with my sister inside, and inside they helped me. And they took and they start to build a new wall to cut -- to, to divide this, this attic. And they built a new false wall, and they make a bunker up there. And that was -- and something was really. Some friend came, or something like that, so they went to the bunker. And all day, they were free. It was nobody. They were, they were in the room. They sit all day in the room, and downstairs. But if somebody came, so they run up. And I said, "Remember, take everything after you. Especially men things." So and I called them a ghost, my ghosts. I had thirteen ghosts. So when I wrote my story, I didn't know to, to, to write, to title -- *Thirteen Ghosts*, or something like that. So friend of mine, she said, "Well, I had one day thirteen ghosts. But that was really ghosts. But that is not the real ghosts." So I said, "Well, maybe *Fight for Thirteen*." She said, "That will be ok, all right." So title is *Fight for Thirteen* -- not *Thirteen Ghosts*. But otherwise I called them ghosts. They, they worked without shoes, barefoot, because not make the noise. And one day, one day, I had a boyfriend and he loved me very much, and he wanted to marry me. And I couldn't afford to have a boyfriend, because I didn't know if I will be alive today. Or maybe tomorrow I will be dead, or something. How I can have a boyfriend?

03:18:00

So to all my boys who wanted to date with me, I said, "After war. After war." And this boy also, he came to me too often, maybe. Maybe too often; and when he came, always I had some excuses to get rid of him. And I walked with him out, but not all the, all the, time my excuses worked. And he start to talk about marriage, absolutely. I said, "Listen, after war. During the war is no, no sense." But he start to bother me, really. If I wouldn't have this, this 13 -- my deadly business -- I really wouldn't hesitate, because that was a good boy and handsome boy. So one day, I thought and I said -- I didn't sleep all night, and I thought what to do. How to scare him? Then came to me idea that friend of mine, she had a photo studio. And boy's, this boy's girlfriend, before he had some girl and she had some, some German boyfriends she met later. And I, and he left her because she date with Germans, this boy. And there came to me ide "Well, if I will have also German some photo, studio some photo-- photograph of Germans, maybe I will scare him, too." And I ran to -- in the morning, to friend of mine. And I told her, "Listen, Emilka (ph), maybe you have some photograph, some picture -- could be SS man or Gestapo, but very handsome. Very handsome." She looked at me, and she said, "Well, for what purpose you needed that? If I know you, you not specially in love with them." I said, "But with this one, I will be." And I told her story. She said, "Well, for this purpose I make yesterday SS picture, and he is handsome." And she said, "I will make him more handsome. I will take out all the ruddish (ph)..." -- like she call, all this some, some spots or something -- "And I will make you -- him handsome." And I

came home, and Joe had the same idea. Real-- really, like, like my mind went to him, and the same idea. I said, "I already was, and I order."

03:21:01

And you see, two days later I came to this friend of mine, and she had already framed this SS man. And he was really handsome. And you see we are standing together. And I keep this picture, and I said to her, "You know, he is handsome." She said, "Yes, he is handsome. If will be no war, or before war, really that this boy is nice." And we laugh a little. And I said to her, "Well, if I will hang on the wall and my boy will come, I don't know his reaction." And I keep this picture, and then watch, and she told -- and this, the same SS man is coming. Is coming, because he came maybe picture is all ready. And she said to me, "Oh, trouble came." And this SS man came, and he show -- saw his picture. And he looked, and he looked at me, and he said, "Oh, Fräulein, Fräulein."⁸ I have his picture. And the friend of mine, she spoke very well German. And she asked him that I asked her that he is very handsome, if I can have his picture. And he said, "Oh, Fräulein, Namsie (ph)! Namsie (ph)!" And he raised me, and he lifted me up. And he said, "Namsie (ph)!" And he kissed me. And he, and he lifted me up, and he said, "Ah, all right! Namsie (ph)!" And this friend of mine, she said to me, "Stefie, run away. Run away!" So through the teeth, she told me, "Run away. And fast." And I said to him, "Danke sehr schön, sehr schön."⁹ And he said, "Ah, Fräulein, Fräulein." And my friend looked at me: "Run away! Run away!" And I went out. And I brought home this picture, and I hanged on the wall over my bed. Next day, this boy of mine came. And he looked, and he said, "Well, what is that?" I said, "What? Who is that, not what!" And he said, "What he is doing here?" I said, "Well, that is my new boyfriend." He said, "What! He and you!" I said, "Yes." And he said, "I don't believe." I said, "Don't. But that is true. I am dating with him, and I will stay with him."

03:24:21

And I was so little aggressive, and you know. And this boy looked at that picture, then at me, and I saw that he was like a paralyze. And he looked at that picture, and then at me, and he became like older man. And he couldn't moved. A few minutes he stood and he looked, and he wanted to open mouth. He couldn't. Now, you know, my heart was broken. I wanted to cry, really. Because I, I loved him. But I repelled this thing, this my mind from him, that I cannot love. But I wanted to cry. I -- and was a moment that I wanted to tell him everything. I wanted to tell him, "Listen, I have 13 Jews. I have to save them. I have to help them." I wanted to tell him. But, you know, but some things, some mind told me, "No, don't tell him." And second was that I wanted to tell him, and the, the other second told me no, not to tell. But inside, my heart, heart was broken and I wanted to cry, but I kept my tears. And I, I wanted to embrace him and tell him everything, but I couldn't. I couldn't. I thought, "God, I

⁸ "Oh, young lady, young lady." (German)

⁹ "Thank you very much, very much." (German)

have to help these people. If I will tell him, I don't know what his reaction will be." And I didn't tell nothing. And he -- then he moved, and he looked at me and he said, "You? You and SS? You?" I said, "Yes, me and SS. Me and SS man." And I said, "Look how handsome he is!" And he turned, and he still look at me and he went out. And I watched at the window, and he walked really like old man. I tell you how much I wanted to cry. I wanted to run and after him and cry. But I said, "No, no." And he left. But otherwise, he was after me, behind me. He was at work. I saw him far away, but he was with his friend or someone, or sometimes alone. Sometimes on the street, I saw him. Otherwise I saw him. But he didn't talk to me. I didn't talk to him. Then another boy I met on the party, my friend party. And the first time he met me and I met him, we danced all evening like some.... If you study physics, you know some things just go together; and this, this like some things just come together. And like we came together, really; and we dance all night together and then he asked me...so came a curfew. So I said, "Before curfew, I have to go back home." And he wanted to bring me home. I said, "No, I am sorry. You know I have a little sister. It's not nice for me to bring men to home, something like that. No time, no nice for a little girl to see." OK. And we make date on the Sunday. We will meet on the Sunday. But in the Sunday, I arranged with one man around work... factory that will bring food from village, bring him food to the store. He had a little store. They will bring food--things like cabbage, potatoes, kasha, all these things. So in the Sunday in the afternoon, they will bring him. So I told him, "Leave for me some few pounds these. Few kilos this." He said, "Ok. Come Sunday. I will leave for you." So I ...Sunday, I was running to this shop and I saw this boy was waiting for me. But I couldn't go to him, because I had to first to buy food. And he was so handsome, really. But I ran there to the shop; and exactly came this religious people and this was, this man was alone in his shop. So I help him to, to weigh these...these potatoes and the cabbage, and to bring inside and everything. And for that, he gave me gave me a few kilos something for nothing. So...so I had maybe 50 kilo--I had a little potatoes, maybe ten kilo potatoes, and three kilos kasha and some cabbage, some other things, some piece of cheese he give me without nothing. Piece of butter, he gave me without nothing. He said, "Oh, you so pretty, you have to have this little nourishment." Ok.

03:30:18

Q: Tell me about the Germans. You brought, you brought the food home. Where did you store it first?

A: Well, mostly they kept in the bunker.

Q: Ok.

A: They kept. A little I kept in, in my -- in the kitchen, but mostly they kept. All bread and butter. Only a little I had in my kitchen, and rest they kept there in the bunker. Also potatoes. I couldn't have too much. Just a little, for two girls, just a little. So they kept there.

Q: Tell me how Germans came to live in your apartment?

A: Well, across my apartment that was -- before that was a school. Like a college, big building. But that time, we don't -- we didn't know that Russia came closer and they repelled German from this moving and they fight with Germany. And German were a little repelled. And they have to have a hospital for a military people, for soldiers -- wounded soldiers. So they looked for a some big building. And they found exactly this building -- college across, big building. And they took it for a hospital, and they make their hospital exactly from my, from across my building. So they make up a hospital over there, and they went -- walked around neighbors and around street, they looked for apartment for their personnel, hospital personnel. Like nurses, doctors. Some they lived there, inside; but was not so much place so they look around. And they took here one room, there one room. And they came to me, two SS men and they looked around and they saw two girls, two rooms -- big two rooms and the kitchen. They said, "You not need it so much. Two girls, they not need it so big apartment." And these two SS men told to me, they gave me order just two hours to move out of my apartment and to leave for them empty apartment. They will come in two hours. If I will be still here, they will kill me.

03:33:00

They have to have this apartment. That is big apartment. They have to have it, this apartment. Two hours. So you see, I went out and I looked for apartment, and I still went to this street where was before lived Jews. I was still running up and down, up and down. Was no available apartment that I can take it. Was nothing. Nothing. Doors, windows, kitchen -- nothing. Nothing. Just ruined, nothing more. Past two, one and a half hours. So I came home. I start to cry. I said, "How I can leave 13 people for a certain death? I can run out, but these people will be dead. And I have no apartment." So they advised me to go for another -- some street. There look for apartment. For sure I will find something. I ran there. Was nothing available, nothing. Was 20 only minutes. I came home. I said, "Nothing." You see, all my 13 came down; and these three children, they pressed all to me. And they that was so tight to me, and all 13, they looked at me. My decision. Will I leave? My decision. Will I leave them or no? And -- [Technical problem] I have to keep my hand, but I am a little too nervous. I am not here. Sorry.

Q: Ok, go ahead.

A: And you see, all 13, they said to me, and Joe and these older people, and they all said to me, and this Zenek, "Run away! You not have to die with us. We have to. But you don't have to die with us. You cannot help us anymore. Save your life and your little sister. And run away, because still you have time, 10 minutes." And they said -- and Zenek and Joe, they pushed me. They said, "Run away! Don't die with us. You cannot help us anymore. What you could, you helped us. But not now. Save your life and Helena. Go. Run away." And these all people watched me, and the children were so pressed to me that I heard their breathing. And my sister watched me. And so I really, you see, I didn't know what to do. I said to them, "Well,

first of all, come on. We will pray. We will ask God."

03:36:55

And you see, I had a picture when I bought when I was a little girl -- Jesus and his mother picture. And I bought it. And always hanged on my wall. And I said, "Come on. We will pray. We will ask God." And first I knelt, my sister and all the 13 after me, behind me. And I prayed, and I turned. All 13 were in deep, deep prayer. And I asked God not to let us killed. Help somehow. I cannot leave this apartment. I cannot leave 13 people for a certain death. I will be alive if I will go out, but 13 people, 13 lives will be bad, will be killed. That is the children also. And young people. I asked God, "Help, somehow." Again I heard a voice, woman voice. Was so beautiful. Was so nice. Was so quiet. She said to me, "Don't worry. Will be everything all right. You will not leave your apartment. You will stay here, and they will take only one room. And will be everything all right. I am with you." And she talked to me. "Be quiet." And she advised me what to do. She said, "Send your people to the bunker. Open the door. Open the windows. Clean your apartment, and sing." You see, I had my hands like that in prayer. When I heard this voice. I was like hypnotized. My hands was bent down, and I was listening, listening. And then voice said, "Will be all right." And disappeared. And after few minutes, I listened. Was nothing more. And I got up. And I said to my people, "Go to the bunker." Exactly like the lady told me. And I said, "I will not move from my apartment. I will stay here. And go to the bunker, and be quiet very quiet." And you see, and I was completely like different people. And they looked at me. They thought -- all my 13 -- they thought that my mind, there's something wrong with my mind. And I said, "Ok, go out -- go in the bunker. Will be everything all right. And stay quiet over there." And I opened the window and the doors, and I clean. I start to sing. I don't know how I became so happy. And the all neighbors came. And they said, "Miss Podgórska, what happened? Why you not moved? Gestapo, SS will come. They will kill you. That is the war. That is the, the military. That is the, the -- they said they have no mercy for an for an enemy. They are our enemy. Go out. We don't like to see you to killed. You're too nice, too young to be dead."

03:40:32

I said, "I have no place to go. If SS man wanted to kill me, they can kill me. I will not leave my apartment. I have no place to go." They said, "You can go to your friend's. You know, your friend. She has two rooms. You can stay there." I said, "No, I will not go from my apartment." And they thought also something wrong, and came janitor's husband. And he said, "Miss Podgórska, I will throw you out. Go out. I don't like to see you to be killed. I have no place to bury you." And serious -- he was serious. He said, "That is, that is enemy. That is, you know, that is Gestapo and SS, that is the same. And that is wartime. Nobody has for nobody mercy." I said, "No, I am sorry. I will not move from my apartment." And he said, "Something is wrong," you see, and he left. He left, and I am singing and cleaning my apartment. And past exactly two hours, this 10 minutes, is coming only one SS man. And he was so friendly. He was laughing to me from a few yards. And he came closer to the window. And he said, he spoke a little Polish. Very broken, but he spoke. And he said good

that I didn't moved from my apartment, because they will take only one room. This last room they will take. And he said, "Very well, you can stay. It is good that you were not moving." So ok. And he looked, and he laughed. And you know, he saw letter was on the table from my mother, and my mother was in Germany in the Salzburg, and he saw this letter. This letter and the address and the Salzburg, and he said, "Oh, who, who you are in the Salzburg?" I said, "Whom? My mother. You took my mother to the Germany, and my brother."

03:43:00

He said, "Oh, your mother is in the Salzburg!" And he looked, and he said, "Oh, I know this address. And that is my friend's, and I will go there next month. Can I give the best regards to, to your mother?" I said, "Ok." What I can say? And he said, "Ok. I will go next month. I will be on my vacation. I will be back two or three weeks after that." He said, "And I will come back, and I will tell what your mother are you're doing there. And I will bring regards from your mother. And I will see your mother." And he talked. He was so friendly. And he said that he has also two sisters about my age and younger, and he said sometimes he would like to go. He missed family and sisters. They sometimes fight, but what is family? And he left. And maybe ten minutes later, came two sisters from this hospital with luggage. And this -- and he came with them. And I opened the door, of course, and he took this one last room. And bunker was exactly over they's room. And every night, they had two boyfriends there. Soldiers, German soldiers. And they slept with them. And every night, these two boyfriends -- these, these soldiers -- came to them every evening with their rifles, you know, when I saw old rifles and soldiers. I thought, "Oh, maybe they will kill me today." And they slept with them. In the morning, they left. And sometimes I think they suspect, because they probably heard the noise over their head. And they maybe suspect that maybe something is there. Because one day came, I came from work, and came these two German and also one SS man. And the -- these two sisters came also from the hospital. And one sister caught me, and she started to talk, ask something. And the soldiers, too. And one sister went -- one woman went to the, to this, this room where it was exit to the attic. But Joe, and these people -- when they saw that Germans came to my home again and the sisters came from the hospital and they all came -- he said, in the last moment, "Go to the bunker." And he closed the door, and he said, "Be quiet, because we never know. Maybe they suspect sometime -- something."

03:46:08

And when this sister and these soldiers kept me busy and I wanted -- because I saw she is running there, and to the -- to the other room, to the, to the exit to the attic. I wanted to run after her, and they caught me. They, they hold me. They didn't let me go after her. And she went there, and lift the ladder up and she went on the attic and she looked around. But you see, before, when they built this, this wall, I put there old things, old, some junks. Old, that if somebody will come, will see that I have storage there. Old some dresses, some, some, some junk, all old. And she looked around carefully, this side and this side. And she saw nothing. Just storage things -- dirty, and old. And she came out and probably she gave them a sign,

and they let me go and they left. But I tell you, this moment I knew that -- I thought that she will see them. Because I didn't told them, "Go." And over, I think over eight months, every day, every night, I had at home four Germans and 13 Jews over their head upstairs. Do you know, can you imagine my feeling? I don't think so. If you will not through, be not through by this things, this horrible time, you will not imagine my feeling. When I went, came from factory sometimes, I walked in the morning -- after seven o'clock, after work. Otherwise I ask God, "Dear God, what I will see at home? Maybe all, they already killed. Maybe they are waiting for me to be, to kill me. Maybe something." Oh, I tell you... But one day, when I returned from work afternoon, this same SS man who gave -- I took the picture, with his friend he waited close to the factory, and he called me. And he call -- he knew that my name is Stefie, but in the German they don't pronounce it clearly. Shtefie (ph) -- they add "s," and they and they pronounce "Shtefie (ph)."

03:49:02

And they call me, "Shtefie! Shtefie! Shtefie (ph)!" And I looked. "Who called me Shtefie (ph)?" Friend of mine said, "Oh, look at your boyfriend!" Because she saw one day. And he called me, and friend of mine said, "Ok, go to him. I will wait farther." And you know, I am going in his direction, and I still ask God. Oh, probably he ran away from my wall. And some, you know, my imagination were -- was running. I imagine everything. I thought, "Well, maybe from the picture he saw my 13 Jews, and maybe he already killed them. And he came here and now he is calling me. He will kill me. Oh, probably Helena is killed and all 13 are killed. Now he will kill me." And I said, "Oh, dear God, don't, don't let kill me." Oh, oh. You see, but all my mind was working. And I came closer, and this -- he said, that is his friend and he embraced me, and they talked together. And then this, this SS man whom I had his picture, he said in Polish -- they argued between themselves something, I don't know what, but he -- the SS man -- he said to me so much broken Polish that I should run away quickly, fast. Run away, run away. And I in a minute, I said, "All right, all right. Gute Nacht. Gute Nacht, auf Wiedersehen."¹⁰ And when I came to friend of mine, and she heard what they are were talking. This other SS man, he told him to take me to their room for a night. And he said, this other, he said "No, she is too young. And she is nice girl, and young. Why we have to kill her in the morning to throw her out?" He said, "The war. She is our, our enemy." And he said, "We are her enemy." And they argued together between themselves. And this, this other, his friend, he wanted to take me for the night. And this said, "No." And because he told me run away. And I ran -- and this, and you see, he, he somehow he saved my life. I said, "God help-- helped me, protect me to save my life that I will save, save other lives. And you see --

Q: That's almost an ending for the tape. We're just about done.

A: I'm sorry.

¹⁰ "Good night. Good night, and see you again." (German)

03:52:18

Q: Tell me the end of the war very briefly.

A: Well in the end of the war, that was another story.

Q: We have three minutes.

A: Three minutes, ok. That was fighting, fighting all night. And in the morning we didn't know who won. German or Russia? So they stood all at the window, and I stood with them. Who win we'll, we'll see to first, German or Russia? Well, first of all we saw German. I said, "Back to the, to the bunker! Nothing. We will wait." Then after few minutes comes Russian soldiers. Oh, and he called to, to, to this, this soldiers, German. "Ruck Gewehr, Ruck Gewehr!"¹¹ Like, "Hello!" He put up his rifle and hands up, and he took him. So I said, "It's Russia now." So all my people, they wanted -- oh, it's not all. But a few hours later, I said, "You still be in the bunker. Be out, and I will see what will be next, because after a few hours German can come back." And they went there. And I had opened the window and everything. And I was singing a little, because it was reason, maybe. It will be freedom. And two Russian soldiers passing, and they saw me and they come to my window. And we start to talk a little. I didn't know Russian, few words from before. And they asked if they can come in. I said, "Ok" They ask if I have vodka. I said, "Well, not too much." But a little I saved, so I have. I put on the table vodka. So they have some little chocolate, some, some something. So they asked me questions. How was Germans? How -- what I worked, and everything. So I asked them, "Where is the German? Where is the front?" And everything.

03:55:06

And one of them, they said, "Well, why is so question like a spy?" I said, "You gave me questions. Now I give you question. You know that is war. We had Russ-- German. Now I ask you, where is the German? Maybe they will come back." And one of them: "Oh, no. They will not come back. We are far, far away after them. They will not come back." So when this all my 13, they were listening under the door. When they heard that the German will not come anymore, they all opened the door and they come. And these two Russians, they with their rifles, they didn't know who they are with the rifles. So I kept the rifle down. I said, "Be quiet. Let us quiet, people." "And who are there? Who are there?" So then I told them that they're Jewish people, and I kept them with this, my little sister. And I saved them, and they are quiet people. They are not bad people. And they all came, and they start to, to kiss these two, two, two soldiers. And when this they heard that they are Jews and they are safe, they start to kiss. And because, they said in Russia they heard a lot what happened in their country, too. And they, they looked at me and my sister; and they said, "Two girls!" Not two girls, a girl and a half. And they embraced me, and they lifted me up. And they said,

¹¹ "Swing rifle, swing rifle!" (German)

"Hero! Hero!" And sister, too. And they said that I am more a hero, bigger hero like the soldiers on the front because soldiers are fighting with the rifles, with their friends against the enemy. I didn't have nothing. So they said I am bigger hero. I fought with, with enemy with nothing. Ah, that was -- and so they came out. And these soldiers were -- came back again, and again and again. And otherwise they looked at me. They said, "Oh, geroi, geroi¹²!" -- "Hero! Hero!"

Q: Perfect ending for the tape. And thank you very much.

A: Thank you. Oh, I have to come back. I have to come back to myself.

Q: Take your time.

A: I have to bring myself from the Poland. From Tatarska (ph) here back.

Conclusion of Interview

¹² "Oh, hero, hero!" (Russian)