

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Adam and Pela Starkopf**  
**May 24 1990**  
**RG-50.030\*0221**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Adam and Pela Starkopf, conducted on May 24, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

## **ADAM AND PELA STARKOPF**

### **May 24, 1990**

Q: Would you tell me your name please?

A: My name is Pela Starkopf.

Q: Where and when were you born?

A: I was born Warsaw, Poland, 1914, November 18th.

A: My name is Adam Starkopf. I was born in Poland in April 1st, 1914. I lived in Warsaw.

Q: Pela, tell me something about your parents and your childhood, your growing up.

A (Pela): I had a wonderful childhood. I...my parents uh...we...I had one brother who's three and a half years younger than me, with a very loving family. We were very well off. We had...I had...I was going to private schools since I was a baby uh five years old and uh I graduated grammar school, private grammar school, later high school and then college in Warsaw and uh we were a very happy...I had a nice big family. My mother had a couple sisters and two brothers. They always...family was together. I remember before every holiday we used to spend with our grandparents and it was just a wonderful life and I miss it terribly.

Q: Tell me about uh the school you went to.

A (Pela): I went to uh school in Chi...in Warsaw and this was a private high school and from there uh I graduated and I have some girlfriends here in the United States with whom I graduated school together, and uh the life was was wonderful. What can I tell you? I had a wonderful brother. We loved each other and uh the war broke...took everything away from...

Q: Where did you grow up Adam?

A (Adam): I grew up also in Warsaw, Poland. I went to private school also in Warsaw. After graduate, I attended University of Warsaw and uh I had one brother only who left Poland in 1933 for Palestine.

Q: Tell me the circumstances of all that, will you?

A (Adam): Alright. My brother was always dreaming about Palestine. He was really a Zionist, you know...very ardent Zionist and being that the British wouldn't give them...he wanted to immigrate to Palestine but the British, you know, government at that time wouldn't give them any entry visas, so they organized...the Warsaw \_\_\_\_\_...he was commander (ph) of the Warsaw \_\_\_\_\_...they ordered....organized a trip, a motorcycle

trip which they called Tel Aviv...uh Warsaw...I'm sorry...Warsaw, Tel Aviv, Warsaw. In other words, every one of them supposed to come back, but they all remained in Palestine that time...those days, went underground and they remained until the day when of course Israel was born. He...the trip took them about three months, so I had one brother. He died in 1965. He got a heart attack....supposed to come and visit us and unfortunately had a heart attack, died in Tel Aviv in 1965. And my parents...the same thing. We we had a wonderful family and uh quite a large family as far as...including uncles and aunts and cousins and so on. Unfortunately everyone of them was perished...perished in Treblinka. My mother especially was kind of a Jewish...we say that our daughter has her character, not even mine and Pela's. My mother was like a walking angel, walking, and she really had a wonderful character and unfortunately she died during the bombing of Warsaw and this is another story which probably Pela can describe because she died in her arms, and I was that time away because I had to leave Poland, uh Warsaw for the eastern part of Poland to be get, to be mobilized when the war broke out.

Q: Let's, let's hold it a minute. Uh you two have a have a love story that goes from before the war. Uh how did you meet?

A (Adam): OK. (Laughter) I was thirteen years old and she was twelve, and I walked down the street because we lived in the same neighborhood, and I walked down the street with a friend of mine and in our schools, in private schools, we used to have not uniforms in our school but these caps, you know, the same, you know, hats and school...each school had different hats and I saw her very often on the street with her briefcase with books and when I was a thirteen years old boy...can you imagine I said to my friend...do you see this blond girl across the street. He said yes. I'm going someday to marry her. (Laughter) That's at the age of thirteen...And then one day she was...I saw her uh on one of the streets in front of a library, and I walk over to her and I said, excuse me, could I keep you company? She said not now. I'm waiting for my boyfriend. She said we have to send some books in the library. Anyway, to make the story short, we became acquainted and from then on, we used to go out steady and we uh...it seems to me that that's, that's was our destiny (Laughter) and, you know, we just tied (ph) to each other, and Pela and I...and we decided that in 1936 we were married, three years before the war. This May 31st will be fifty-four years we are together, and we are just like one, and during the war I think we proved to each other that one for the other would be...you know...it's life in order to spare and save the other one. She would give her life to save me. I would give my life to save her, and both of us would give our lives to save the child. And that's the...we were fighting for it very, very strong.

Q: Pela, tell me about the first few years of marriage, in the late '30's and from Warsaw.

A (Pela): We...we had our apartment but I was going to school, so I didn't do any cooking. We ate with our parents, but in 1938, his mother became very lonely. She was very lonesome for her son, but she couldn't go to Palestine for a visit because we had...he had a grandfather who had an amputated leg uh many years before and he needed attention. We had a maid in the house, but she couldn't leave the father...she wouldn't leave the house because his father traveled a lot, so somebody had to stay in the house, live in the

house when she was away, so we decided to give up our apartment, put our furniture in storage, and move in with his uh his parents in 1938. And in 1939 she came back and the war broke out. So we were all together during the beginning of the war, bombing of Warsaw and all this. I loved her very much. I loved her. She was...my mother sometimes said I think you love uh Mother Starkopf more than me. I said Mother, no. You I...you know that I love you. Her...I just really adored her. She was just...just...I never met a human being...she...and this comes from a daughter-in-law. When I hear that some people say oh my mother-in-law...that that's not fair.

Q: Tell me about those first few years that...the first year or so and the bombing? What happened when the bombs began to fall?

A (Pela): The war broke out...broke out uh September the 1st. The bombing in the beginning wasn't as bad. Uh we...a couple of times he was going to...he was called into to, to dig some ditches but the last couple days after the 6<sup>th</sup> of September started so that was absolutely no day and no night. We were in the cellar where we used to keep potatoes or, or uh coal for, for uh heating the stove, and there we...the whole building...everybody was there with their cots and their pillows and blankets so the children who stayed there, because it was absolutely impossible to be in the apartment. And this was uh time of our holidays...September 16th...and his mother was uh...it, it started very heavy bombing but was around four o'clock and the bombing let off a little bit, so she said let's go upstairs and we will eat something. So we went upstairs. She started to prepare a little supper for my hus...my father-in-law, me...Adam was already away...and my parents were with us because their apartment was bombed completely. They couldn't live there any more, and she was serving that. She said I don't feel good and my mother was helping. She said I don't know...Adam...Pela...and that's it and she fainted. My mother...we couldn't...in that time on the street in Warsaw you couldn't walk. There was a curfew. After seven o'clock was no way. You couldn't be on the street. When a German would...will see you on the street, you could be shot. But we had to have a doctor in our building. Was no doctor, so she went out and two houses away she knew a physician. She uh run to him and begged him to come and to see what he can help my mother-in-law, and he he didn't want to come. He was afraid. She kissed his hands. She begged him at his knees...please come. And he came. And he looked out...was quiet on the street. Our door, our gate was open uh from our building. He run in. He came upstairs. Her blood pressure was 320. She was gone. Nothing could be done. So she really died with the with the name of her son...what I found out later that some man, young man, who went out the same time Adam went out, on the way the bombing was so bad that some of them came back. When they came back one of them said that everybody who walked out, who came out, is probably dead, and I think that Adam is dead...dead too. And she overheard it and that was why I think this was...because she said Adam, and she talked to my father-in-law. Adam...if Adam...if something happened to Adam, I don't want to live. And that's what, what happened. He was \_\_\_\_\_ away. He didn't know nothing about it.

Q: Tell us about...

A (Adam): This was a stroke. Now, you see, when they announced that all able-bodied, you know, military-aged uh men should uh proceed into their recruiting stations for mobilization, I went several times but the Polish government...it was...the war...you know, Germany at that point, you know...it was a tremendous surprise. They were not prepared for it. So they didn't even have enough uniforms and arms for the people for \_\_\_\_\_, you know, so they couldn't even...they couldn't mobilize anybody. But later on came on the 6th of September of 1939, the mayor of the city of Warsaw announced at night over the radio that all young people should leave Warsaw and proceed into uh towards the eastern part of Poland where they would be mobilized. And the city to which we had to go was about hundred and twenty miles away from Warsaw, \_\_\_\_\_. You know, just to walk \_\_\_\_\_, so we, without anything...without any transportation. We had meetings with our neighbors and uh with other friends in the building and finally we decided that I...that all the young people should go and I together with a few other young men left Warsaw. My father I remember now took me to his bedroom just to give me a few words of advice and he broke down and sobbed...sobbing and then I left. She, Pela, and my mother, in her house...in their house \_\_\_\_\_ robes...it was five o'clock in the morning...walked with me towards the bridge over the \_\_\_\_\_ River. This was a suburb in Prague...a suburb of Warsaw where we parted. At that time uh they left...Pela...I...Pela was sobbing. Pela was crying. My mother forced herself not to cry and even gave me a smile, and I looked back at them. My mother was very, you know, slowly leading Pela away and I was running away from them and this was the last time I saw my mother. Anyway, then I, together with another group...some of them came back because there was constant bombing as we walked, you know, towards that particular city. I was wounded. I was operated in the meantime, you know...but to make the story very short, that on the 16th of September I was in one of the border cities in eastern Poland, and over there was very quiet. We didn't hear any German planes. In fact people don't seem like they would know that the war was going on, and uh we were all...you can imagine after hundred and twenty miles of uh walking, we were all...my, my shoes my shoes were torn, my clothes and I was filthy and dirty and somebody put us up in a barn overnight to sleep and in the morning at five o'clock we heard some sound of tanks. We ran out in front of the barn and those were Russian tanks that were rolling into that particular town. We just that time found out that Germany and Soviet Russia signed a non-aggression pact and they divided Poland. There were at that time as allies, both of Russia and Po...and Germany and they divided Poland. The Ger...Germany occupied the western part of Poland, Soviet Russia the eastern part of Poland. So I found myself in the eastern part of Poland under Russian occupation and my dream then was only one dream...to go back to Warsaw, go back to my family to be with them. And I smuggle...I wrote about the \_\_\_\_\_ in book that I told you about, but I somehow smuggled myself through toward...I met a peasant, a Polish peasant. I gave him my wristwatch that I still had with me and he smuggled me through in a rowboat to the, the river that was dividing the, the, the, you know, the Russian zone and German zone, and I went back to Warsaw. I came back and that time I found out about the death of my mother. And uh then, of course, in 19...we, we somehow...the, the war was still on. Warsaw was already...on the western front...Warsaw already was surrounded...was under German occupation and in 1940 in October they began to uh work on the Warsaw ghetto, build the walls...about between eight and ten foot walls with barbed wires on top of the walls in Warsaw...broken glass, uh pieces of glass cemented

on top of the brick walls. And during...in, in ghetto of course, to describe it it's a long story about it...if you want me to...

Q: How...what was it like inside the ghetto? How did you, the two of you, get into the ghetto and what was it like?

A (Adam): We, we happened...we were lucky that our apartment was still in the in the section of Warsaw that the...that was in the ghetto because they extended the, the...when they take over the neighborhood for Jewish, you know, mixed neighborhoods and then they brought in people from different streets, different areas, and even different, different cities into the Warsaw ghetto which they built. The Warsaw ghetto approximately they estimate was built into on an area of about one...one thou...I think uh one thousand, you know...that's not important to you the size. The fact is that we had gates which were uh guarded by the Gestapo with Polish police, you know, assisting them. We found ourself in our apartment, which was as I told you, in Warsaw ghetto and we were living from selling our own possession to some people because, you know, there were no way...we couldn't support ourselves, so whatever those of us...there's a black market. There were some people operating, were buying certain things and selling on the other side of the ghetto, and I myself being that I looked very Ary...typically Aryan...I was blond and slim and when I was young...and I...we had an ordinance incidentally in the Warsaw ghetto that everyone of us had to wear white armbands with a blue Star of David. What I was doing, I was getting out of the Warsaw ghetto though some special places in the wall that we had all to walk through the cemetery which was outside of the Warsaw ghetto. I would smuggle out myself and I took, used to take off the uh white, the armband, and as a Po...as Pole, I had some connections on the other side. I used to get a little bit of butter, a little bit of, you know, milk...I used to smuggle in into uh back into Warsaw into the Warsaw ghetto to help the family and then in 1941, in 1941, January 14th, our child was born. Our daughter was born. And...

Q: Tell me \_\_\_\_\_. Tell us tell us the story leading up to the birth of that child, indeed.

A (Pela): Now I...when I became ill, the doctor told that I...I thought that I...I was running fever, something is wrong with me. He tells me to go take an x-ray and asked me to \_\_\_\_\_.

I don't worry about it. I cannot have any children. I was told that I cannot have any children, but when I went to the doctor she surprised me and she tells me I'm pregnant. Of course, I...I was bewildered and I thought that maybe to do away with this child, but my mother was with me and she said, don't darling do to it. Every human life has their destiny and you never know. Please don't. I listened to her, and the child was born in terrible conditions because I didn't enough money to have a doctor so a midwife delivered the baby. The next day she had to sew me up. It was in terrible conditions. But we were very happy. It was a beautiful little girl, healthy little girl. One day my father uh was supposed to come around ten o'clock. He didn't come. You know, maybe an hour and a half later, holding his hand with handkerchief near his mouth. I said, Daddy, what's happened? He went to the dentist. He had a couple gold teeth, so he let him pull his gold teeth and to sell it to buy milk for the baby. Where my daughter was born uh you know,

we put her in a pillowcase and we had a we had a belt and we crossed it that way it was. But the child was growing. She was a very healthy little girl. We were selling our...what we had, our belongings, our, our...what, what was left yet, and uh when he was arrested, my daughter was that time almost a year old. When he went out and tried to get a little more, you know food for us and we waited for him. He didn't come, and we were sure that he was killed, that something happened. We were all, all crying and it was around eleven o'clock at night...we heard we heard steps. We were living on the tenth floor. We had steps and I recognized his steps. I told my grand...my father-in-law, Dad, look...there is...Adam is coming. We opened the door. He came in and behind him was a policeman and he will tell you the story how...

Answer (Adam): Now, you see, again on one of my trips when I was going over, you know, on the other side of Warsaw ghetto...I was caught without my...without the armband near the wall, near the wall by a Gestapo, by SS man. They arrested me, of course, and took me to the headquarters of the Gestapo in Warsaw which was outside of the Warsaw ghetto, in the Polish sectioned area...in the Polish section. And uh they were very rude and uh, of course, after interrogation they took me to a room which was about eight by eight and the walls were full of fresh blood, red walls, and then they have uh wooden benches on the floor and into on top was broken pieces of glass cemented into these benches and they, they used to force you to undress and beat you to death on those pieces of broken glass. He said to me, you're going to undress and lay down on this. I said oh no. I knew...why should I...I have no chance...you know I didn't have any chance. I had no ar...no guns. I couldn't help myself, but I said no, I will not undress. If you want you try. I felt that if he would try to undress me, I would start, you know, hit him and then he will just kill me at once and that's it, but uh I didn't and he said to me, OK. We just wanted to scare you. Tomorrow we finish you. They took me to the...again to another man, to Gestapo man. Finally they decided that they are taking me to the Polish police. The Polish police station was in ghetto, and that's how, you know, when they were...the, the gen...the Gestapo man that was taking me to get into ghetto to the Pol...Polish police station, he was more...he seemed to me like a human being, you know, normal human being. And he said I know what you are thinking of, he said to me. You would like to escape now. And I would let you but if I will let you, I will be in jail and my family will be destroyed. He said I cannot do that. So he took me to the police station and that time I asked the policeman that he should do me a favor before he leads me to the prison in ghetto. He should stop to see my family, and that's what Pela told you that I stopped and from there, so he let me kiss my Pela, let kiss the, the baby and my father and we went and they took me to uh prison, uh military prison in Warsaw ghetto. In those days, of course, in prison there were no criminals. Anyone that was a Jew...doctors, professors, and uh professional people, business people, you know...anyone that was a Jew was in prison at that time, and I was in prison about eight, eight weeks that time and thanks to Pela's intervention, they released me because Pela made...she met through some one and told this policeman that one of the policemen from the station gave her a name of a police officer who was of German descent, so called \_\_\_\_ deutchsh (ph) that she could, you know, somehow get me out. And we had a very beautiful bedroom set that was stored by some people uh you know, away like Polish people, and Pela made a deal with him and she gave him the bedroom set and he got me out from jail. But it didn't last too long because they realized



that he just, you know, uh put the...what he did actually he took the papers, you know, with my name and put them somewhere else in a different place I think underneath files or in a file and they finally...you know, they came to it and noticed that I am that I was missing. They came at night and took me away again. They took me away and this was already the second time when I was in prison and again it's a very long story to tell about the interrogations, what they're doing, were doing in the prisons, but I can tell you only that it was terrible. They were, for example, in some of the cells they were opening at five o'clock in the morning the door and the German uh SS men with the trained German Shepherds would point at you, for example, or at this man and on a certain word, Juda (ph), which means Jew in German, he would jump at you and tore you apart, the German Shepherd. And they were just going from every second cell, not every one cell. In our cell was twenty-six people. Four of them were destroyed this way. It's a miracle I survived. They didn't...and when they taking out four people to kill, then they supplement another four they brought in, so there's always twenty-six men in a cell, and then, of course, I learned over there about the liquida...about the beginning and the \_\_\_\_\_ I found out what they decided, you know that they liquidate the, the, the Jewish people and about the liquidation of Warsaw ghetto.

Q: How did you find out?

A (Adam): The work...I found out through some...in, in...you know...they, they came to us, to some people in the prison, that Warsaw ghetto is going to be liquidated and the beginning was...of the liquidation would be July 22nd, 1942. And how the Germans...you know, they always do everything with tremendous precision, so how how could they liquidate the easiest way. They surrounded first...in the beginning of July, they surrounded the orphanages, old age homes, hospitals, and prisons, because this was the the best, the easiest access to get the people for the unschlagplatz (ph) which the railroad tracks where they were prepared the cattle cars for Treblinka, so let's say they surrounded the pri...the hospitals. From the hospital anyone that was in relatively in good health was taken to the...was taken to Treblinka concentration camp or as I call it destruction camp. Anyone in in, you know, that was either weak or, or old, they were taken to the Jewish cemetery and at the edge of the mass grave, were executed then. The same thing was in orphanages. They took all the children to the Jewish cemetery and front of the mass grave and executed them. People in less than good health and older people, everybody to the Jewish cemetery and that's where they executed them. I somehow knew one thing only. I was dreaming all the time when I was in prison that something I had to do...something has to be done to save my family and during...when they surrounded the prison and tremendous chaos was created at that time. There were trucks, you know. So many trucks and so many people. The gates were opened. They were taking hundreds and hundreds of prisoners into Treblinka. I was able to escape with a few other men. Escape through the gate, and I came home, ran home. Of course, you can imagine how Pela and my father and my in-laws were surprised and shocked when they saw me, and I came and I went out...I already had this in advance in mind, to work out a plan how to save our child. This was our main object, how to save the child and being that the Jewish cemetery was outside of the Warsaw ghetto, we worked out a plan together with Pela that we would put the child to sleep with that friend of ours who put her to sleep, gave her an injection, and

we arrange a funeral for this child in order to get her out of the ghetto. In the meantime, through some underground connections that I had, I worked out false documents for us, and that under assumed names, like my name was Adam Bludosky (ph) instead of Starkoph. Pela was \_\_\_\_ Bludosky and Joanne was Yasha Bludosky and worked out there was, you know, the forged papers and we uh on this funeral, men were not allowed to follow it. Pela would follow this, this funeral. In fact when the German book which I showed to you before, you know, showed the picture of the entrance to the funeral and the casket in which she was carried out, and the register shows Pela...when Pela will take over, and she will tell you, she...how she came out with the child through the cemetery and then in the evening how I met them. Pela, I think maybe you...

Answer (Pela): Adam didn't mention that when he came from jail, from this prison when he escaped, he didn't sleep home anymore because he was afraid that maybe they would catch him, so he slept by, by neighbors, by friends and uh got in touch with these friends of ours who were on the other side and got the false papers. My family was very bewildered. My mother and father couldn't believe that we are going to take this child...we didn't have to watch...what are you going to do. This is insane. But I said Mother, I have to...I have to do it. We'll come to, to take you someday back. We also find a place for you, but I have to save the child. Being in ghetto, remaining in ghetto, Yasha will be murdered, so I have to take a chance. We'll not go over that all three of us, but I have to take a chance, so when the uh everything was arranged to pick her up, uh one, one thirty, because we knew that we have to be at the at the cemetery gate a quarter to two. Every two hours another SS man had a post near the gate. We gave some money to a Polish policeman whom I knew, and he gave something to the German to let me go through and see my child buried and he said OK, but she will right away come back. He said of course she will right away come back. So at a quarter of two I went through the gate. But he stopped me. He said let me see what is that and he wanted to take his hand open the white \_\_\_\_ what I had over there covered my daughter. I said she died of typhoid. When he heard those words he turned away. He said alright, but you are going to be fifteen minutes back. I said of course I will be. But I knew that in fifteen minutes he is getting off his post and somebody else...he would not tell anybody else that he let in somebody to the cemetery and I...when the, the when they came the hearse came to the cemetery, the workers wanted to pick up the baby and throw her in the mass grave. I started to scream. I said don't touch her. She's alive. They couldn't believe...their eyes were open...their mouth open. And I took her out. I had with me under my arm I had a bottle with milk and I took her to the place where they used to wash the bodies before the war. In there I kept her. She was a little bit yet sleepy and a little bit...she woke up a little bit so I gave her the bottle, but she was very, very quiet and this was July 21st, 1942. And uh around eight thirty, nine o'clock was dark...started to be dark and I met up with Adam that through a hole in the wall in the Warsaw ghetto there they took some uh the uh bricks away and he would come, and he came. It was around nine o'clock, knew where I was waiting, and he uh met up with somebody next to the Jewish cemetery, were two cemeteries. One was a Catholic cemetery and one was a potter's (ph) cemetery what was almost not in use, but there was a caretaker and he was working with the with the Jewish boys, sometimes let through a little smuggle and he was he was...if you paid him off a little bit he was very cooperative with us, and without the smuggling into the Warsaw

ghetto, people would die like flies because that what the German gave us was not enough. People had to live on the rations, you will found them were on the street in the morning with swollen stomachs and swollen eyes...it was, was not enough, so when he, Adam took a big stone and knocked at the wall to the potter's cemetery and the man came...with with another stone that he heard us and he put down on our side a step ladder and I with the baby and Adam went on the step ladder, went on the other side and later he took the step ladder away and we were...we went out from his apartment and \_\_\_\_\_. We took our armbands, we throw away our armbands. We were as a Polish family. It was arranged for us to sleep the first night not far from the rail station in \_\_\_\_\_ and we...there was used to live a...uh this apartment belonged to the underground, but the man who owned the apartment for that night wasn't sleeping in the house. He let us have it, but he didn't know that we were Jewish. He thought we were the underground, and in the same building was the railroad Gestapo was in the first couple floors was the railroad Gestapo, so we felt very safe when we went upstairs. The next day we had to stay very quiet. She prepared...the lady of the house left some food for us, and when it got a little dark around eight o'clock our plane was leaving to the city of \_\_\_\_\_, around eighty miles from Chicago, and there, there was arranged.

Q: Eighty miles from where?

A (Pela): From ...(Laughter)...from Warsaw?

Q: And you were on a plane?

A (Pela): Yes, a plane. We took a plane. We went a train. We took a train eighty miles from Chicago. There the Jews lived here completely in peace. The German who was in uh in charge of this town was somehow a very nice person and he was taking...the Jews were buying nice gifts and he told them you, you can stay in your homes. When I will get an order that we have to bring you in, I give you enough time to escape. So from there Adam will tell you what...

Answer (Adam): There were exceptions, you know. But I like to get back Warsaw to mention to you what we had to go through even in Warsaw ghetto. Now when we decided to pre...you know, to get...we had the plan to...\_\_\_\_\_...when we, if when we how to plan to escape from ghetto, I was running very often after I escape already from Warsaw from prison fever, and one of our friends, a physician in Warsaw ghetto, uh diagnosed that I have inflamed tonsils. He said if you don't get rid of these tonsils, you you you'll not be able to get out of ghetto because you'll be sick all the time. Where will you go then? He said we have to remove your tonsils, but he had no anesthetic. He had nothing. He hardly had even the right tools, so he decided to cut out the tonsils alive in my father's apartment in ghetto. I was sitting in the chair. My father was holding my hands in the back. Pela with the baby ran downstairs in the, into the courtyard because she couldn't look at it. She couldn't watch it, and he was cutting alive my tonsils, you know. Can you believe it? And and uh I I took anyway and it helped me a lot. Now as Pela mentioned, from that little town, you see, we went to a place where I prepared in advance. I settled down Pela and the baby and I went back to Warsaw ghetto, the same way...through the

cemetery. Not to a funeral but through the cemetery. I again smuggled myself into the ghetto to get my...our parents, my father and her parents. What we wanted to do...we picked out a bunker for them. You see, we could be uh we could be, you know, visible because we looked typically Poles and Pela and I so we could be, you know, really on the outside, but they had to be in the bunker because the especially everybody the, the Polish people would recognize my father and my in-laws that they are Jewish. So we prepared a special bunker for them, and when I came unfortunately when I was already on the cemetery, on my way back...it was only three days later...I uh some of the people told me don't, don't try even to get in because you you'll be in spot because the ghetto is already on fire. They are...they are burning some of the buildings. I took on...I put on some clothes on the cemetery...you know, one of the...see on the Jewish cemeteries in Poland were only working Jewish grave diggers. That's why we could trust them. Here is different. Over there only Jewish grave diggers, so one of them gave me his clothes. I put away mine and I put on his and together with him on a wag...you know, on a special wagon that they were picking up the dead, dead bodies, I went into the ghetto and when I came to our building, it was on fire and our parents were taken away already to Treblinka. I came just about a day too late. So our both parents and my father was already taken away. Of course, you can imagine how I could break this kind of news to Pela and it was very difficult but she said again we had now from then on the three of uh the two of us had only one aim and one purpose...to save the child. And we did everything in our in our, you know, power to save her. We lived as Polish people, as Roman Catholics. Pela used to go every Sunday to church and she learned how to pray and how to act and uh then in the meantime of course our daughter developed from those wonderful things that she had around and the food she had, she developed tuberculosis and uh Pela took her to the hospital in Warsaw because uh men were afraid to, to travel. I was in the lumber...I was working, incidentally, in the lumber yard as a laborer, and she took her to the hospital and now would you like to take....

Answer (Pela): ...came to...I heard of a of a doctor \_\_\_\_ even before the war Doctor \_\_\_\_, so I came to him with the baby and I, I told him she's running such a fever. He examined her. He said she has tuberculosis and we have to have to hospitalize her. I said but I have no money. My husband is a Polish...said who's in hiding. We have no money. He said don't worry. I will take care of it. And he took the child but later he told me that to, to be able to save the child, I need gold injections. He said we Poles don't have...we cannot get it. You can get only in the German uh...but the German can get it or the Italians. I had a very close friend, \_\_\_\_\_. He was a Greek who was a very close friend of ours and I went to him and I told him about Yasha. He said don't worry. I have some friends in the Italian Embassy and I will see what...if you can get the prescription, I will see what I can do. And he gave me five milligrams of gold injections for five injections, and I brought it to the hospital. He was...Doctor could not believe it. He said I don't know if we need all three of them...maybe three of them...all five of them...maybe three will be enough. I said no Doctor. Take all five of them. If you save my daughter, use it for another child, but she also needed good food and nourishment, so the maid of the friend, \_\_\_\_\_, every day came to the hospital with cooked some soup for her. Even she had orange, apple and she \_\_\_\_ too, you know, \_\_\_\_\_. You see there are good people. There are still some good people in this world.

Answer (Adam) This particular friend of ours is Greek, uh was arrested several times by the Gestapo for helping Jews. He was a wonderful person, a wonderful person. An elderly man...was much older than we, was a wonderful person. Anyway, then later on...so we leave...I worked on...you know, in the lumber yard as a laborer first, later in the office and we struggled a lot. We had to hide a lot because, you know, there were...we always were afraid somebody...it, it was...let's put it this way if I think I mentioned to you...very often we envied the people that were in concentration camps because we felt that at least they are thousands and hundreds of them. They know, they have sinned (ph). They know they are going to be killed, murdered, but they are together. We feel \_\_\_\_\_. We are all alone. We are still young people in their twenties, uh two of us in their twenties and with a baby, and uh nobody to talk to and we were afraid because, you see, mentally, mentally it was a tremendous ordeal. Mentally, for us. But the main thing was to save the child and with the...and then luckily, ironically, Pela had to have emergency operation. She became ill. And I took her to a Catholic hospital in Warsaw. She was there six weeks. I gave the child, in the meantime, into a sanatorium where they were run by nuns and not far from Warsaw. She was there. It's like an orphanage, sanatorium, an orphanage, and children were there. I told them that I am a \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_\_\_. I can't take the child with me, and the child was deaf (ph). It wasn't easy to leave the child. You can imagine how she was crying when we were leaving her, but anyway I left her there and I traveled for six weeks, back and forth from that particular town where there was the lumber yard...I didn't work there in the lumber yard already...I was afraid to be caught and what would she do in the hospital and the child in sanatorium. So I was living on the trains for eight weeks...six weeks it was, right. Six weeks you were in the hospital. On the train...I shaved on the in the railroad stations and I living and sleeping on the train, back and forth every day seeing her in the hospital, and uh then finally when she was released from the hospital I got another job on the railroad tracks with through somebody that I met, and in August of 1944 we were liberated by the Russian army in a town...because already at that time as you know, Russia and Germany were in at war, so liberated by the Russian army, and then uh in 1946...in 1945,'45 we escaped from Poland into the German zo...into the American zone in Germany in a Russian ambulance. In a Russian ambulance we escaped from Poland, and rode through the border Czecho...into Czechoslovakia, later to Germany and then in...we were in the DP camp in Feldafing where I worked also for a while in the at the with the Joint Distribution Committee and UNRA and a friend of ours, a friend...she befriended us. She was my superior uh you know, she was actually the manager of the office where I was working. And she made an affidavit for us and she came to us one day and said would you like to go to the United States. This was Thursday. If you want to leave, you can leave Sunday. We had not much packing to do, you know (laughter), so we decided to uh leave and that's how this was...this was May, this was a long story.... And happened for a couple weeks that in 1946 on May 23rd or 24th or 23rd, we arrived in United States, and I can only end with that you know, when we arrived, when we came here, this was the second transport ship. It was a Navy transport ship. We came as refugees on a Navy transport ship with three dollars in our pocket, and at night when we arrived, we were waiting for the customs to clear to clear us, and there were all kinds of sounds and sirens and the, the baby was scared. She was holding hands because scared and she said Mom, Daddy, are they killing people here?

Are we safe here? And Pela took her around...darling, don't worry. You are in safety. You are in a free country, and then she turned to me and said Adam, I just can't believe it. We are alive and we're in the United States. Isn't this a miracle, and I turned to them. They were both crying and Pela was crying and I turned to them, embraced them and I said look, Pela very often wanted already to give up, you know, and I said didn't I tell you always never give up...there is always time to die. That's what gave me the idea to for the title of my book, that it's called...

Answer (Pela): Can I add something...that on this lumber yard where my husband worked, there were two more families. One was a family Leiberbaur (ph), who was like a manager, the right arm of this German \_\_\_\_ who was in charge of this lumber yard, and another was a young boy, maybe nineteen years old, who was managing the outside. He was like an outside...and Adam said to me, you know, there is something about this boy uh...

Answer (Adam): I always said...his name was Wally (ph)...you know, Wallish in Polish, and I always said he's so dedicate, he's so nice. He never...because I was older...he never...if I wanted to pick up a piece of lumber, he would say Mr. Bludosky, let me help you. I said there is something about this boy. He is not the regular Polish boy. There is something about him that he is...and one day I decided to try him out. I said Wallish, how about this Sunday you go with me to church, and the church was about three kilometers away from the lumber yard where we worked and where we lived on, and you had to walk to the highway and and on both sides of the highway there were forests. So I...he said OK, let's go. So we were walking down the highway and I said to him, Wallish, what would you do if some Jewish people that are hiding in the forest would jump, would attack us now. He said Mr. Bludosky, he said, called me Mr. Bludosky. They wouldn't, they, they have...they lie away...they live there...people leave them alone. They wouldn't hurt anybody. I said Wallish, are you Jewish? I am Jewish. This way I went over to him. He embraced me. He started to cry, this young boy. You can't imagine. He was Jewish. He was from the city of Lodz and he lived not far away from the lumber yard with his parents. His parents got a got a name even before the war Rogeresky (ph)...very known in that city of Lodz because the \_\_\_\_ were very well-to-do people, had a big factory in Lodz, in the city of Lodz, and he and unfortunately again...it's a long story...I described it in my book how I met them and what happened to both of them. The other one and this one and they was killed. They were killed by the Gestapo.

Answer (Pela): The same lumber yard were three families who were not from, from this town and this was the \_\_\_\_\_ and one day he was...he had the mumps. He got the mumps. He was home. And the Gestapo came and asked him, are you Juda. Somebody denounced him. The father...they say the father was uh making some \_\_\_\_, you know, whiskey drink...there were....with some uh peasants and maybe he drink too much or had an argument with them and say they sent the Gestapo, so he turned to his mother, said mother, give me poison, and the Gestapo killed him, killed his mother. The father wasn't home. He heard about it so he run away. The father survived. We met him after the war. The other family was the Leiberbaur family. He was in charge with Mr. \_\_\_\_ of this lumber yard. He was a very nice man. His wife was so religious. In her house she had...in his house he had, she had a little like a Jesus...Jesus like a figure and which looked like a

little church or a house. She had a little boy by the name \_\_\_\_\_. He was maybe a year and a half, two years older than my Yasha, and they became very friendly. And uh one day they came to us and they said that they had to talk to us. What happened? Somebody sent them a letter and said, Mr. Liberbauer, where you come from, \_\_\_\_\_he came from \_\_\_\_\_. In this place where you used to work came Gestapo and asked for you, and if even if you are converted, you better run away, because they are after you. He came to us and said what to do. So we said go. \_\_\_\_\_ that night and take the train to Warsaw and from there he went, they went to a little like a resort place, \_\_\_\_\_. Be there for a while and if you want to send any messages, sent to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. I see him a couple of times a week. You can say go to Warsaw, and I will let you know if everybody...if somebody came to ask for you or just a hoax. So came a couple of weeks, three or four weeks came by and he was writing little notes to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ saying I cannot stay any longer. People start to look at me. Maybe this was a hoax. Maybe I should come home. Adam wrote to him, please, wait yet I am not sure yet, but he didn't listen to us and he came back. One afternoon Adam was in the office and he will tell how it was.

A (Adam): When this, this Liberbauer was Jewish but converted because he married a Catholic uh woman and when they discovered that he's Jewish...you know, of Jewish origin and I was at that time already they promoted me from...you know, I was a laborer and then I work in the office a little bit, and I was in the office in the morning and Liberbauer was there and all of a sudden the door opens and the Gestapo walks in. They point at ...who is Liberbauer. He says I am Liberbauer. They took him away and took him out and uh to make the story short, they killed him. In the meantime his wife run away with the baby, so as you can see, two of them, this little boy from...this young boy from Lodz and he was killed by the Gestapo.

Answer (Pela): Why why it was so dangerous for us to remain in this lumber yard, because we were the only strangers from this town, who were not born in this town and people started to talk and one night we were sitting...we were home and one of our workers from the lumber yard, with a bottle of whiskey...he said, Mr. Bludosky, I had to drink...or I have to take a good drink before I have the guts to come to you and to ask you...look, there is enough bloodshed on this lumber yard. If you have anything to hide, please, leave the lumber yard. Enough, please. So Adam looked at me and I crossed myself. I said you see Adam, that's what you're you have for being a good Pole. I left my family. I left everything...everybody, because you were afraid because you want to work for the underground and now your own people for whom you are working so hard are calling you to be a Jew. And now this is this is the thanks you have. So he looked at us. He said, oh Mr. Bludosky, no. Oh I am...oh we should have more men like you. I am so glad and because I had no other choice. I had no place to go. Joanne...my Yasha was after...she after tuberculosis I couldn't take her to the woods, so I pray for \_\_\_\_\_ and that's \_\_\_\_\_ but one one day, maybe a couple of months later, Adam was called to the office. Adam was called to the office.....

Q: We need to stop the tape...we'll change tapes and then we'll go on...

END OF TAPE 1

A (Pela): ...see there is a way. Adam had, he told you that for a while he had to live on the train because one afternoon the German who was in charge of the, of the lumber yard called in Adam. He was a little high. He was a little drunk. He said, Mr. Bludosky, what I hear...such an \_\_\_\_\_. They say that you are Jewish. If somebody else will come and say it, I'm going to give it to them. Adam, Adam was bewildered but somehow composed himself. He said I'm not Jewish, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. I'm not Jewish. But since then he felt that it was very dangerous for us to remain there. This is why when I was still in the hospital, he was...tried not to be too much home, but after the hospital...uh during the ho...really, I didn't have to stay five weeks, but I really didn't have no place to go. So I think that Professor \_\_\_\_\_, the one who operated on me maybe during the operation and maybe because I later found out that he was a very good Pole, that because he saved in his own house, he saved a Professor \_\_\_\_ who was his assistant. He saved him in his own house, so I don't know...maybe he he probably knew that I am Jewish. But one day, was maybe the fourth week...his assistant came over to me. What in the hell, he said, are you doing here yet. It's time for you to go home. I didn't answer him, but I started to cry and I turned my head and at that moment, a couple of minutes later Professor \_\_\_\_\_, all his assistants came every day to make the rounds, and my...I was in a in a four-bed uh ward and my bed was just right...as you came in my bed was first, so he looks at me and I turned my...normally I was smiling to him, greeting him with a smile. This time I turned my head because I was crying and I didn't want to see him, so he came to the bed, sit down. He said what's going on? Why are you crying? I said oh nothing. He said somebody did something to you? Please tell me. I am in charge of this hospital. I want to know. I said no, because the man who told this to me was just behind you. So I didn't say one word. Next to me was a, another lady, a Polish lady, who became very friendly. She liked me very much. She said to me she never had a sister but I am like a sister to her, and she said you know, when she heard that uh I told him that my husband travels and I have to wait till he will come to pick me up...she said if you want you can come and stay with me. And later in the conversation she said, you know, I know it's terrible that the Germans occupied our country, but one thing we have to be grateful to them...they got rid of the Jews, got us rid of the Jews. So that was the wonderful friend of mine. So it was very hard and it...when he came to see...to visit me and I knew that I had to leave the hospital, I said Adam, we have no other choice. Let me go someplace. I will throw myself down from the...and kill myself and you will stay with the baby. But of course he didn't and through another friend who got this job in another part of Poland and during the night we packed our little belongings and went to this little town. This was \_\_\_\_\_, not far from \_\_\_\_ and there was...there the Russians uh liberated us, but it wasn't easy because the town was going back and forth for maybe five days. Once the Germans got it. Once the Russians. And we were hidden. A couple of people, maybe seven or eight grown-ups and children, were in a cell in a, a like a bunker made where used to keep the potatoes, but this was not connected to the house. It was outside. We were there, and we heard the bombing and and the scream...

Answer (Adam): ...called a cellar, cellar...

A (Pela):...and we were screaming and, and, and heard Russian voices and when German voices we were very quiet. We had nothing to eat. Was very little water and one night it became



very quiet and the same day, the next day, was very quiet. \_\_\_\_ the man said, we had to take a chance. We'll open a little the lid and we'll look out and when they opened the lid, the, the house was burned completely. This...the place where the, the all the cows and the, the horses were dead. Everything was killed. And they...when they looked out, they saw Russian tanks and uh you know, they greeted them and Adam walked over to one of the officers there. He looked to him like he was Jewish. He looked very, very warm. So he said to him, \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_ during the war...during the war it was like one Jew wanted that, so he answered him, and Adam asked him what should I do. Should I say who I am? He said don't say nothing yet, because we now have the town. In a couple of days we can loose the town. Just play the way it was, but he helped us. He gave us some milk. He gave us some butter and uh something for the baby, so that's as it was. It wasn't easy.

Q: When did you...how did you get the baby...no longer a baby actually...out of the sanitarium uh or out of the place where she was and what was she like...was she happy?

A: OK. When we...when I came back from the hospital and Adam changed the jobs, and we saw already...this was not far from a railroad station \_\_\_\_\_. We saw the trains coming from the Russian border and there was a lot of trains with soldiers and some of them wounded soldiers or German soldiers, so we realized that the war was coming to an end. And Adam said to me, I have to...you have to go to \_\_\_\_ and pick up Yasha because it will not be good separated. And I went there and I told them that I'm feeling better. I thanked them for taking care of her and I brought her home. My Yasha, during the all the years she didn't know she was Jewish. She like anybody else. Uh one day she came with the \_\_\_\_ friend of hers, with a little branch and, and like, like a gun on her shoulder said Mommy, we are going to the woods to hunt for Jews. And uh she, she knew she was like anybody else. She...I don't think she suffered. She didn't know nothing what we were going through. But uh when we decided that it's time to...after the liberation we went...later was liberated...Warsaw was liberated. We went to Warsaw. Of course we had no...was no transportation but the trucks of soldiers always picked up people on the way and we came to Warsaw and uh there was a Jewish community and we registered that we are looking for anybody who survived, and of course nobody survived. And uh from there we decided it's time to leave Poland. There was already...they establish already a DP camp in Germany and the...in West uh in West Germany and uh the war almost to an end. It was uh...the war ended in May and when we decided to leave was around August, so we went to a friend of ours who we knew that she lives in Lodz. We went there and uh we lived there for a couple of days and we tried to make connection...we knew that Russian ambulances going to Czechoslovakia are taking...for money are taking people who want to escape from Poland, so we made the connection, but before we, we were able to leave, the friend of mine asked me...Sophie I have to do something. Will you come and help me? I said OK. She said let Adam go with us. So we went out for an hour, and we left our daughter with a woman who was her like housekeeper. She also came from concentration camp and she didn't have with whom to live, so for helping her uh be a housekeeper she had her room and board. So we left and we came after an hour...the woman was crying, so my friend asked her why are you crying. She said please, don't ever leave me with this child uh alone. So I said why? What did she do? She said she wanted to go on a step ladder and I was afraid that she would get hurt. I told her not to do

it. She said you dirty Jewess. You have no right to tell me what to do or not to do. So my friend says to me, now. I said maybe not now yet. She said now. She called in my daughter. She said Yasha, why did you call her dirty Jewess. Because she is. She said what would you say if I would tell you that your mother and father is Jewish and you are Jewish. Oh no. That's not true. My mother is not dark with a long nose and my father...no, it's not true. No. Mommy...Daddy...tell me the truth. Aunt Eva (ph) is just pretending. It's not true. So Adam said to her, yes darling, we had to pretend that we're not Jew...not Jewish because we wanted to save you, but we are Jewish and you are Jewish. She started to cry and she ran to her bedroom, closed herself on a key (ph) and was sobbing and I was standing and begging her to open the door. She didn't for maybe an hour and then she opened the door. She came out, swollen eyes. She had...in her hand she had a little string where she had the cross on it. She said if this is not my God, you show me my new God. I said we don't have a picture of God, but when we will come to Germany I will buy you...I will have ten commandments...I will buy you the ten commandments and this will your....so when we came to Germany, Adam got the ten commandments for her. We didn't have uh a chain so with a, a safety pin we put it on her sweater and every night she asked us to put the sweater under her pillow because she wanted to sleep with it, her new God. But it was very hard for her. She...when we came to the United States, she had a lot of nightmares. She wan...didn't want to go to sleep. She had...when I took her to a psychiatrist they said that she became what she hated. She hated the Jews like everybody else there, and she became a Jew. It was hard for her to, to become what she hated, but with years passed by and uh she somehow got some friends. In the beginning she had a very hard time. She spoke only German and Polish and she wanted to be outside with the children to play. She asked them something in Ger...German or something in Polish. They first make faces at her and, and made fun of her. They said they didn't understand her, so she cried and I told her darling, they didn't understand you. You will learn English and you will be able to play with them. So she had a very hard time. But when we were approached by the \_\_\_\_\_ University to make Voices, the story of three of three families and she heard our story and she wanted to get in touch with my daughter. I told him that she probably will not agree because she was...when she saw a German uniform she could not even talk about what happened. So he said please give me her number. I will talk to her. He called her. In the beginning she said no, but after a while she said OK. I will let you come, but when I will start crying, please stop filming. He said I promise you. And when I saw the Voices...and I I wasn't present when he interviewed her...I found out when she was going to grammar school, she was already in the first grade, not in kindergarten, first grade, when I took her to school and we had to cross some streets...I crossed with her...and when she had no more streets to cross she said Mommy, you go home. I already have...now you know, I am already OK and I am right away going to school. And when I left and she turned around...she saw me leaving...she run three blocks to the nearest church and she said I knew when I will cross myself I will have a good day. (Laughter) And that's it.

Q: Pela....

A (Pela): And one....when we were already here...this was...she was at that time also around uh six and a half years old...she was...we lived in another apartment. We lived in

another apartment...not in the same school, another apartment we had. We moved. In the United States, in Chicago. This is where we lived on Madison...hear \_\_\_\_ hotel...I don't know if you know Chicago...near \_\_\_\_ hotel. So, uh there was a store, a grocery store and the people were Jewish. In the beginning I had sometimes to use a Jewish word if I wanted something what I...my English was very bad, so she knew that they are Jewish and it came before Christmas time...she wanted a Christmas tree. I said darling, Jewish people don't have Christmas tree. We have Hanukkah and Hanukkah man comes and brings eight presents, so I bought some presents and Adam used to knock at the door outside and oh the Hanukkah man came and she got some presents. One day just before Christmas and we went...I went with her to the store and she looked in the store. In the window was a very big Christmas tree and she went into the store with me and she said Mommy, look. You are a liar. You told me that Jewish people don't have Christmas trees. They are Jewish people and they have a Christmas tree. So you see it was very hard for her to...the change was very hard for her, but somehow now she's a very adjusted young lady, adjusted. She's going through a trauma but I hope she's...

Answer (Adam): The main thing is that we were able to save her because this was our dream. This was our aim. This was our purpose, you know. We did everything really just for this child to, to save her and, you know, after we were starving with nothing to eat, three times a day in the lumber yard we had for the morning she would cook a few potatoes, for lunch few potatoes and for dinner few potatoes if she was lucky to get them. If you were lucky to get an apple, let's say, maybe lucky ones to get an apple, I peeled the apple and we gave it first to our child, and we were fighting with each other. I wanted her to eat the peels...she wanted me to eat the peels, you know, and in order we should get something, and I I was the winner always, you know. I mean, she had to eat it, but the child was always the main thing in our...and we really truly we lived only for her. That I can say.

Answer (Pela): Tell her about the first time we came \_\_\_\_, that you stole some.

Answer (Adam): Yeah. You see, my father had a friend of...business associated, used to deal with him before the war, and he was from a different part, a worser part of Poland that they were settled later into Warsaw during the war and uh he lived in of course outside of the wall in the Polish neighborhood. When we were already on the Polish papers living in the lumber yard, you know, I used to once in a while come to Warsaw by train and I asked him to let me sleep in his apartment so I used to sleep on the floor in the kitchen. Of course, I realized that he was risking his and his family's life once he, you know, let a Jewish man be in his place and in the morning, one morning, I got up and in his kitchen on a string were hanging Polish sausages, you know. I stole one Polish sausage. I put it into my, you know, coat and I traveled the eighty miles by train. I was hungry like a dog but I wouldn't touch it. I brought it to them and tried that they should have it. I I don't think that I was a hero over this, you know. I think that that's that was a natural thing for me to do. I didn't know another way, you know...just for them. And that's, that's how we survived. We came to the United States with three dollars in our pocket that \_\_\_\_ gave us on the Navy transport ship and when the uh social service came, they wanted to wanted to give me some...maybe you need some money. I said no, I have ten fingers and I I am

an accountant but as I have ten fingers...get me any kind of work and I was working as a laborer in the stock yard in the beginning, you know, and uh I wouldn't take any handouts.

Answer (Pela): You know, it was not only stock yards. He had five, five jobs. He was in a mirror (ph) factory, a \_\_\_\_....

A (Adam): Oh many, many, many. I worked like, you know, from one \_\_ to another...

A (Pela): And wanted to get enough...uh we came with the second boat, \_\_\_\_\_. The first one was Maria Fletcher (ph)...came uh somebody who we knew from Warsaw. He came with his wife and she became...she was pregnant and then she gave birth to a child. She died. So I went to her funeral with a friend, \_\_\_\_, somebody who I knew in Germany and she came also to Chicago and we went to the uh to the temple. As we were sitting, a man passed by and he started to scream rouse, rouse (ph)...that you...this was somebody who with who he was in, in Auschwitz and we started to talk to each other and I invited them already...I had one bedroom apartment and we...Joanna had...Yasha had the bed the bed in this little bedroom and I and Adam slept in the kitchen every night. We made our bed...our head was to the radiators and the feet near the stove, so I invited them to come to meet my husband on Sunday and this friendship of three of these people...this is the way we started our business. I saved enough money to buy my daughter a little bicycle, a three-wheeled bicycle...

Answer (Adam): Fifteen dollars....

A (Pela): And we went to the store to...a family in Chicago...there's a sporting goods uh store, \_\_\_\_\_. We went there to buy the bicycle, and this friend of ours went with us and looking at the window he saw footballs and basketballs. He walked in into the store with us and he said, you know \_\_\_\_, I know how to, to uh make footballs. I would be able to sew this, this footballs. He said would you like a job? He said of course. He said I know the owner of the, of this factory, uh Mr. Dugal (ph), and I will call him. I am sure he will give you a job. We're very grateful, and he did. He got a job. Worked there for six weeks and came to the boys. He said boys, I know how to make these footballs and let's open our factory ourself. OK. We needed some money. We needed uh to start...he had four hundred dollars but he was the one who knows how to sew. Another partner needed two thousand dollars but he had it, but we didn't have two thousand cents...so we started to ask some friends and we had wonderful friends, people who was only a couple weeks...one lent us three hundred dollars. He was a butcher and this was a lot of money in 1946, 1947, and another was a place here in Chicago, Herman Bush (ph). They had a general cleaning uh \_\_ factory...five hundred dollars and another five hundred....to make the story short we had thirteen hundred dollars and we needed two thousand. Another seven hundred dollars. Adam called to Mrs. \_\_\_\_ who made affidavit for us. She already was back from Germany in New York and he said to her I want to open a factory with two other boys, but I need seven hundred dollars. She said Adam, take a train. Come to us, tell us about it and we will talk to you. He took a train, came there, and she listened to him. She said I think boys you will make it. She gave him a new check. He didn't even

open the envelope. When he came home in the envelope was a thousand dollars. I said oh no...I don't want a thousand dollars. I need only seven hundred dollars. I took out a money order and sent the three hundred dollars...sent her back the three hundred dollars to her and we paid off for, for six months my husband when they started the business didn't draw anything but the landlord with whom we lived who also lent us five hundred dollars...he was one of them...gave him thirty-five dollars every week that I should not know that he...supported...and we...after a while the factory progressed and then came from business became importers. We traveled all over the world. We were importing goods from Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong...I was in, in Pakistan, in India...everywhere we traveled. So England...

A (Adam): We \_\_\_\_\_ work in Chicago, you know, in the community, in the Jewish community and \_\_\_\_\_ organization for Israel and so on and...

A (Pela):...I was treasurer of the \_\_\_\_\_ foundation of the State of Illinois and I uh I am very...I was president of American \_\_\_\_\_, so I would do...we try to pay back...the people who lent us the money, we cannot...we don't have to pay back. We paid them back...

A (Adam): They're dead already...anyway I paid them everybody, you know, back...

A (Pela): We tried to be kind to other people and to do what we can to help other...and that's...

Q: Anything any of you want to add?

A (Adam): That's the main thing is and the last I think...

A (Pela): ...the, the penny project...

A (Adam): The penny project...you heard about it, the penny project that we have. We thought that about being that the Jewish life wasn't worth a penny, so let's collect six million pennies in memory of the uh six million Jews and we do. We have interviews in different papers and I uh tell you...even in Israel in newspapers. I received from Israel pap...a newspaper with an article about the pennies...and here throughout the States and I am getting pennies via UPS...would you believe (laughter) and uh I sent over twenty thousand dollars already to the United...to the...to Washington, DC and we hope that we will get soon, you know, the balance which is actually sixty thousand dollars, you know, six million pennies, but uh I think that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is the best thing that that could happen to us, you know, because after all, millions of people, as you know, are traveling to, going through Washington, DC every year, Jewish and non-Jewish people, and this was...this will be like \_\_\_\_\_ in Jerusalem. It will...the same thing will be in the United States. I think it's a tremendous idea and we like to...we are involved in it, of course, and we try to be more involved yet, and we thank you so much for interviewing us and if we can be of any assistance to you, just let us know.

Q: Thank you.

A(Adam) It's our pleasure. And I gave you the, the things what I gave you, the pictures and other things....

END OF INTERVIEW