

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Chana Tencer  
September 30, 1991  
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## **PREFACE**

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## **CHANA TENCER**

### **September 30, 1991**

Q: Can she tell us -- at the beginning --

A: Excuse me, do you want Tencer Chana, or do you want Chana Tencer? Because she is used to the [indecipherable] way, and she starts from the last name.

Q: Chana Tencer, it should be.

A: It should be Chana Tencer?

Q: Okay, so could we start again?

A: Okay, you want her to say -- yeah. Okay. Okay. My name is Chana Tencer, I was born in Starochowice, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1930.

Q: Could she tell us how, in 1939, at the beginning of the war, how life changed for her in Starachowice, what she was aware of changed.

A: I was a quiet child, and my first shock occurred after war broke -- war broke out, when the first bomb fell very near our home.

Q: Okay. Would she like to just carry on?

A: Life has changed, because as the Germans came in, they started rounding up people in the streets. Then we had to wear the armbands, and that was the big change in life.

Q: What was the armband?

A: The armbands were white with a blue Star of David on it. This was specifically for the Jews to wear, so that they would be recognized, by wearing that white armband with the blue Star of David.

Q: How -- you were just a child then, how did you understand all that? What -- what -- what did -- do you remember what you thought when you had to go and wear a special thing on your arm?

A: I only thought in terms of why is it that we are different from the others.

Q: Did you have an answer to that? Di -- what did that mean for you?

A: No, I had no answer for that.

Q: Do you remember your parents saying anything at the time?

A: I am quite sure that the parents spoke to each other about it, but they did not speak to us about it -- the -- the children -- and they did not speak to children about it.

Q: And then, I assume they -- you saw more Germans, did they --

A: Fear. I felt very fearful.

Q: Can you describe the situation?

A: My first memory of that is when the Germans used to come -- came up to our apartment with dogs, and I was sitting on the couch, and one of the big dogs jumped on me, and this is what I remember.

Q: Why did they come to your apartment?

A: Wi -- nobody knows, but there were searches being conducted.

Q: When were you -- when did you have to go and live in the ghetto?

A: 1940.

Q: 1940. Does she remember the month at all?

A: Off the record, as they say in court, could I explain this to you?

Q: Okay, let's turn off. It's difficult --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- because I know all the people assume you know things, and you know you don't want to s --

A: Right, mm-hm. Okay. So turn off the [indecipherable]

Q: -- so she should treat me like [indecipherable]

A: Okay, the change occurred when certain streets were completely cleared of the Jewish people. But we li -- I -- they lived in an apartment which was on the side streets, which was still open to Jews. And they lived in a three bedroom apartment, which immediately was being packed with other people who were being evacuated, cleared off the other streets.

Q: And so other people moved into her apartment?

A: Yes.

Q: I see, so [indecipherable]

A: And that was not the end yet. The big change came about when the people who were placed in our apartment had to take up the room which my sister and I once shared, just the two of us, and now we had all these other people in our room, and on our bed, too.

Q: How many people?

A: Two families. 12 to 15 people.

Q: So -- how did they eat? I mean, how did -- did they have to provide for them? How did they get food, and --

A: Everybody was trying to organize his own way, his o -- his own food, and there were -- bread was being rationed, and you had to stand in line, and sometimes all night long to stand in line to get your bread. And these people, just like everybody else, had to sort of, say, shift for themselves, and stand on line, and of course sometimes the line got -- by the time they got to your point in the line, the food was gone. But this is -- basically was the division of everybody for himself. They had to secure their own food, and they -- her family had to secure her own food.

Q: What was the atmosphere like in the apartment?

A: Very stressful. But we shared whatever we could with each other, so that nobody in the house was -- went hungry.

Q: What was the -- what did your -- was your father doing at the time?

A: I have written down the answer.

Q: Oh. But I need to hear it from her.

A: Father was a cost analysis engine -- ...

Q: Okay, did the women all cook together in the kitchen, or --

A: Well, everybody was cooking together, and -- and -- as long as the food lasted, there was food cooked in -- in that place all together. And as -- and people did not go hungry at that time, while food was still available.

Q: Up until what point was there enough food?

- A: It went on like this up to the time when the Jews were removed from the -- from town all together, but there was less and less bread, but it was all rationed. But there was always less of it, up to the point when the town was cleared of Jews.
- Q: Were you hungry, though, up until the for -- of the time that the town was cleared of Jews?
- A: Well, basically the children, she and her sister very seldom went hungry because their parents would give up their own rations to feed the children.
- Q: Did your father continue working at -- at his profession for this period?
- A: Not at all, because the -- the company w-was located outside of the ghetto.
- Q: So what did he -- what did he do?
- A: He did nothing.
- Q: He stayed home all day?
- A: There was forced labor, and when they came and made you go to do forced labor, you did, and my father -- her father did that.
- Q: What -- what sort of -- two questions, what sort of forced labor, and was it every day, or was it -- from the -- with the way she just said it I got the feeling maybe it was just occasional, or --
- A: No, this was work here and there, as they required and as they -- as they rounded up people. There were -- there were people -- there were people who were rounded up for this forced labor, who would come back beaten up, and some would never come back.
- Q: What was the labor they were forced to do?
- A: They cleaned the town. This was basically the job done up to the point of the clearing of this town of -- of the Jews.
- Q: Did she go to school during this period?
- A: No. My sister and I, we took private lessons, but not in school.
- Q: When you were all in the -- the open ghetto, how much German presence was there? Were there soldiers there every day patrolling, did they -- I'm trying to get a sense of how much you were in day to day contact with German troops.

- A: I remember the Germans all around town, plus these German soldiers who marched in formation through town, singing that song that she just said, that the lyrics to which go, when the Jew -- when Jewish blood springs --
- Q: Are there any particular incidents that she witnessed at the time which -- which really affected her deeply?
- A: When they were killing people. And all --
- Q: I'm sorry, what I was going to say is don't translate sentence by sentence, because, if you could just like --
- A: Yes.
- Q: -- [inaudible] pause, and just wait right till the end of story, okay?
- A: Okay, okay.
- Q: I'm sorry, could we start that again? I -- I made a mistake there.
- A: I-I'm trying to nod the head to show you that there's more than --
- Q: I know, I know.
- A: Okay.
- Q: We maybe should tell her is that I -- I'd like to try and keep -- she's going to -- you can tell the whole story, and right at the end I'll get the translation.
- A: Okay, mm-hm. Did you want to re --
- Q: Yeah, could we start that one again, I'm sorry, it was --
- A: The question was -- yeah, repeat it.
- Q: Was what incidents did she see at the time that particularly marked her or shocked her?
- A: I saw how people were being killed, and first time in my life I saw people -- dead people. Also, on one of the Sundays, they erected a gallows in the center of the square, and they hung 10 or 12 people, and they waited for the people to come out of the church, and forced everybody to see it, including the Jews. Could I add something?
- Q: Mm-hm.
- A: These were Polish people, Christians.

Q: Polish Christians. Could -- yeah, who was it -- who were the people who --

A: I think that what happened was that the night before suther -- Sunday, there was a -- some kind of a party on Yuzhetska Street, where two germ -- in a Polish -- Christian Polish house, where two Germans were killed. In reta -- and in retaliation, they -- 10 or 12 people were hung in the square.

Q: S -- was it an atmos -- can she remember back to the -- like waking up in the morning? What was the atmosphere like? Was it one of terror, was there any hope? Was --

A: It was terrible fear among all, because nobody knew who was going to be next.

Q: Did you think you would survive?

A: I cannot answer that. At that time I was still being protected by my parents, and I really didn't have to think about those things.

Q: Did you get any sense of how your mother or your father felt?

A: It was basically that a -- that very fear of what will happen that my parents, I'm sure, felt.

Q: Did you ever hear any tales of -- witness any form of resistance to what was going on?

A: I don't remember that.

Q: Can you turn it off for a second? I think the feeling is also, yeah, just don't be afraid if there's a pause, and take that necessarily to --

A: And wait.

Q: Just let her wait, till she gets --

A: Okay.

Q: -- really to the end of the story.

A: Maybe I just ne -- nod my head, so --

Q: Exactly, exactly, and --

A: Okay. She will try, yeah.

Q: Okay, I know it's difficult. As much as -- as much as you can. I guess what -- what we're sort of looking for is -- is a word picture. Okay.



A: Mm-hm.

Q: I wa -- I wanted just to go back, because you s -- you were talking about the fear, that it could happen to you, you never knew who would be next, and I wanted to ask you if -- you said you'd seen people die for the first time. Did you, in any incident see people die that you knew personally, or were these strangers?

A: At that time?

Q: Yeah, in the oagen ghetto. Okay, whenever you're ready.

A: The dead people she saw were basically strangers, but that was the first time that she ever saw dead people as -- as such.

Q: Could she describe the incident to me. I mean, what -- where was she going when she saw it, what happened, was [indecipherable]

A: There were many people dead in the street, who were just laying in the street, and that is what I saw for the first time in my life, though other people were dying also, but basically what you saw on the streets all the time were these corpses.

Q: Had they died from starvation, or from --

A: Cold, and -- and -- and hunger.

Q: Would you -- so people every day, I mean, two people, or three people, or 10 people, or -  
-

A: I saw them -- I saw single corpses here and there, but mother was very protective, and she would not allow me to see it, so whenever there was somebody killed in the street, she made sure that I didn't go out to see any more than I -- I have already seen. I ... I do remember something. ... They were apparently concentrating all the people at that time, but basically there was a work -- there was work to be done in our town because of the munitions factory. And they were always looking toward having cheap, or slave labor out of the people who were shipped in.

Q: I don't know if she happens just to know how many people were in the ghetto by 1944 when everyone was --

A: Not '44.

Q: -- when were people sent into --

A: '42.

Q: '42. By fi -- '42, how many people were there?

A: I wouldn't know.

Q: I'd like to go back a little bit to -- ... just to wait until -- before she answers.

A: Well, thi -- the circle vot -- of women, the volunteers sa --

Q: I guess what I was interested to hear was that there was this sense of solidarity with the new arrivals, and trying to help, and that it was organized help. And I just wondered if she could tell me a little about the theater group, and -- and doing plays, and what plays she did, and -- and what she -- what she thought she was doing, and what was her understanding of that.

A: Well, the theater was composed of th -- I need to answer. Then there was a -- there was a -- a little drama about a woman who took in a child, and she was -- she wasn't very kind to the child, and the child was taken away from her, and that was the drama that they enacted on the stage in that little theater.

Q: Does she remember the poem?

A: I don't know, some of it. Yeah, she remembers, did you want her --

Q: Can she [indecipherable]. Very nice. You've got an extraordinary memory.

A: This is -- this is the way the locomotive starts, and then it picks up steam, yeah. Wonderful.

Q: Did you get a lot of applause for that?

A: And a lot of kisses, too. A lot of kisses, and a lot of applause.

Q: So there were a few happy memories from this time?

A: The most important thing is that I was at that time still with my parents and my sister. And my parents were -- their only goal was to protect us, and to feed us, and to -- to be sure that our way of life does not change as drastically as the circumstances have forced us to live in.

Q: Could we move on now to couple -- a few years, to the time when you're taken to Auschwitz? Is your father s -- is her father still alive [indecipherable]

A: He died in camp, you see. We were talking -- you were talking up to the ghetto.

Q: Yeah.

A: Now is camp --

Q: I know.

A: -- and her father -- I told her to remember when the father died.

Q: Okay.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: But let's build up to that. Perhaps -- can she tell me how she came to go to the camp? What were the -- did someone come one day to the house and say, your -- pack up and go, or how did that --

A: At that time, and that is toward --

Q: Yeah?

A: Toward the ... So what do you want to tell her? I gave her the date, what did --

Q: Okay. Yeah, if she could tell us, when she heard this knock --

A: Yes.

Q: She knew what it meant? Did she know what was going to happen? And could she describe how she felt?

A: We knew by then that this was a clearing to go to -- t-to Treblinka, but we --

Q: What happened at Treblinka? Did you know who -- there were death camps, and that you would be systematically --

A: Basically, ah -- she knew that people were being --

Q: Is this noise okay for you? It's gone now, okay.

A: Okay.

Q: Could we -- could you carry on telling me the story of when you heard -- they banged on the door, and you heard them saying everybody up?

A: What's sh --

Q: What happened next? I mean, I wanted --

A: What happened next, okay. The night before, we -- because there were selections going on in neighboring towns, and it was then that everybody realized that it was not passive -- that we will not get away, by not -- we will not get away, that we will be included in the selections, too.

Q: So you got dressed, and you went down to the square.

A: When the selections started, they were se --

Q: You knew at that point what each group meant, that it -- you were presumably put in the children's group.

A: No, she was a older child --

Q: So th --

A: They're talking about --

Q: Oh, little -- little children.

A: Babies, yeah. What was the question originally?

Q: So, ho -- did she know what was -- everybody was aware that little children were going to be --

A: Yes, yes. Then there was also a group of women that was being separated and my mother was in it, sort of assigned to personnel, that they were going to run personnel or whatever. And I stayed with my mother, and -- and I was able to get in with her, into that group.

Q: And what ha -- where were you taken?

A: We were marched into -- toward that camp. Father always -- also went to Shterneetsa, the camp Shterneetsa.

Q: But he marched separately, or --

A: Together.

Q: So the whole -- your whole family managed to stay together?

A: All four. Father, mother, and the two girls.

- Q: You know, when you di -- I was coming back to what you were saying about the doctor and -- and her child. From the footage that I've seen, the -- the selections always look sort of -- everyone seems very quiet, and passive, but obviously that wasn't the case with -- with the selection as you experienced it. It must have been a lot of screaming, and crying, and horrible, awful stuff.
- A: If the people were very quiet, chances are that they were totally in shock. Because the crying, and the -- and the -- the -- the noises were basically were people were being separated, where they were being torn apart. But otherwise, people were in total shock, and they were -- i-in that way, they were quiet. There were also those who were [indecipherable] and they knew that this was the last -- last trip.
- Q: Tell me a -- so you -- you marched for three or four hours to the camp?
- A: It was two or three.
- Q: Two or three hours to the camp. What happened when you arrived?
- A: When we arrived at the camp Shtelneetsa, there was a wall-like structure, because ... There was a communal kitchen where soup was being cooked, and people who went to work in the factory got a portion of soup and a piece of bread in the morning, and the same in the evening when they returned from the factory.
- Q: Did you work in the factory?
- A: No, I was -- I did not work in the factory, I was peeling potatoes in the kitchen, work with my mother.
- Q: Was there a roll call every day, was there strict discipline in the camp?
- A: There was no roll call as such, however people did have to line up by specific arrangement to go to work.
- Q: And how long was the working -- how long did you have to go to work?
- A: How many hours --
- Q: Well, the father, for example, how --
- A: How many hours of work?
- Q: Yes, yes.
- A: I think eight hours. There were three --

Q: Shifts.

A: Shifts, thank you. Three shifts, eight hours each.

Q: What was the -- did many people die through the hard conditions and lack of food?

A: Very many people died, not just from the conditions and work, but also from typhus. There was a typhus epidemic at that time in the camp. I reme -- she remembers that the commandant of the -- of the police -- of the -- the German police, during the epidemic came one day to camp, parked his car in a specific place, and told all the -- the sick ones to come out and run around the car. And whoever couldn't make it was shot right then and there.

Q: Were there many incidents of simply gratuitous brutality like that? I mean --

A: Yes.

Q: I guess what I'm unclear about i-in the -- this whole thing with the camp is how is it different from a concentration camp? How is it different from Auschwitz?

A: The first thing is there was no crematorium. In this camp there was still families, you could still see the families. In Auschwitz it was already all separated and -- and no more family set up.

Q: Were the living conditions better than at Auschwitz, or about the same? Food, lodging, clothing, whatever.

A: Yes.

Q: And how long were you here for, at this camp? ... And just -- just one second, just sorry --

A: May I also explain before we start, as I told you before, there were two camps, and this camp, Shtelneetsa was later liquidated and combined with the other Myoufka camp, you see?

Q: So she went from one to the other.

A: She went from one to the other as I did, too, and we went to Auschwitz as one unit.

Q: From the second camp.

A: Right. Because first there were three camps, then there were two camps, and then there was one camp. And -- you see?

Q: And -- and let me just double check one thing, which is, the men were ...

- A: I don't think this came out very clear, that she didn't say it so that you -- I -- I -- let -- let me just coach her.
- Q: Okay, I understood that. How was her health, and her family's health in this time, did they get sick?
- A: You know, her father died in camp?
- Q: I know, so --
- A: We actually were -- had typhus first, and that weakened us all. But we somehow recovered even though we were weak, but the father was paralyzed after the typhus, and he died in Shtelneetsa camp.
- Q: Did he have any medical help when he was sick? Did there -- was there a doctor?
- A: The only medical help that I'm aware of is that one of the Ukrainian guards was paid to bring in leeches from town. And he brought the leeches, and my father was treated with leeches, and that's about all I know.
- Q: Were -- was your mother, or were any of you with your father when he died?
- A: My mother was -- the mother was with the father.
- Q: And what -- what day did he die?
- A: No, I don't know the date. ... transfer of other people that --
- Q: Try and get her to really tell it --
- A: Fine.
- Q: -- in detail with --
- A: Yeah, I don't really know that she knows more than that, you see?
- Q: About -- about the breakout?
- A: She remembers that the -- when the f -- ... the night before he died, she saw -- the last time I saw my father, he was choking, and there was no pillow for to support his back. So my mother told me to sit down and support my wi -- support his back with my back. And this is the last time that I remember him alive.
- Q: Let's move on now to -- to when you move on to the third and final camp.

A: Okay. There were originally three camps, tarta -- now she's -- ... In that third camp, that was on the rail line -- ... The trains -- ... to -- to line up, and enter, the men separately from women. There was -- there were many more men than -- ... this was work force. Men were lined up on one end, we were -- the women were lined up on the other end, and we're -- and everybody was told to line up single file and enter. Many people saw what was happening, and as they approached the tri -- the entrance to the train -- to the wagon, instead of entering, would go to the end of the line, trying to beat it, so to say. And very soon the Germans realized that this was going to go on, and this wasn't what they were expected, so they started beating everybody furiously, and that way the ca -- the trains were loaded. Hel -- she remembers that her mother took with her a -- a teapot with water, and she sat on the teapot right along. The women's wagon train -- the wagons were not -- were orderly, they were -- they were packed pe -- they were packed with women, but not as badly as the male wagons for the --

End of Tape #1



Tape #2

- A: When we arrived in the camp, in Auschwitz platform -- ... women's camps. And all these women were wearing stripe -- you know, the stripes. And we noticed they had no hair, and we thought -- I thought that the -- she thought that this was total like a madhouse, some kind of a madhouse, because these women were trying to shout something, and say something, but obviously they were talking in a language that she didn't understand. She didn't know what they were saying, so the whole thing was like an -- like a -- like a -- like an in -- like insanity, because nobody knew what they were saying. Finally, they were taken to the so-called bath, you know, the sowнар?
- Q: Mm-hm.
- A: And w-were supposed to enter a receptacle with water with the shoes on. And the next thing were told to strip naked, and the hair was shaved. The hair was shaved everywhere on the body by men. And how -- the first impression that the men were there viewing these women bodies, and -- and th -- the fact that in such circumstances that was -- that was the first, strongest impression of that time.
- Q: Can she carry on with what -- her next impression?
- A: From the sowнар we -- they were taken out to be tattooed. Her mother, and her sister and she lined up together for the tattoo, to have consecutive numbers. After that, clothes was given out to -- to -- they -- their clothes was taken away, personal clothes was taken away. They were given out other clothes that was handed to them, it was more like putting, because tall women got short dresses, and short women got long dresses, and nobody got what really fit, it was just being handed out. And later on, when the number was administered to the arm -- the tattoo was done in the following fashion. They used a - - sawed off a fountain pen, and they applied little dots to make the number, dot after dot. And all I remember -- all she remembers is that when the tattoo was done she was told to lick her finger with her saliva and -- and rub it on the number. Why that was to be done she doesn't know, but she did it. And that's -- that's the way the number was made.
- Q: What's -- what's your number?
- A: Her number is A14319.
- Q: Is there a significance to the -- why an A?
- A: It was a series, but this was the second time around. Those are numbers that other people already had, without the A, and this was the second series number. So it's hard to tell how many people had the same numbers, except for the letter A.
- Q: Now, was there an insignia with it -- with the number? On the -- on the uniform?

- A: Oh. No, there was the exact thing as was -- as appeared on the arm.
- Q: And then what happened after you were -- you were given your clothes?
- A: They went to Birkenau, camp A -- camp A, barracks 25.
- Q: Was -- was this whole entry process very well organized? Was it efficiently done? I mean, your first impression was that you were in the lunatic asylum.
- A: Unfortunately they were so well organized that everything, absolutely everything was functioning perfectly.
- Q: Was it mostly men? You -- you -- men would shave you, but was it mostly men in charge in running it, or were there women --
- A: On the camp? On -- on -- in the -- on the platform, or in the camp?
- Q: In the entry process, the shower, the shave [indecipherable]
- A: All men.
- Q: So you arrived at Birkenau, block 25, what did it look like?
- A: The barracks were long, and they were divided. They were mostly Jewish women from Slovakia.
- Q: Could she say that once more from the top? Give them the names of like who they were, instead of just saying they were. Say the supervisor, the secretary, the messenger, whatever.
- A: The personnel consisted of the main overseer of the -- of the barracks, the s-secretary, the messenger, four supervisors, ea -- one for each section of the barracks. They were all prisoners as we were, and they were women -- Jewish women from Czechoslovakia.
- Q: So, did they -- what was your relationship with them? Did they treat you well, they were fellow prisoners, did they abuse you --
- A: They weren't -- they weren't very awful to us, but certainly they were not good.
- Q: Could you give an example?
- A: When the roll call came around, they -- they yelled terribly. Also, they used to yell a lot when they were checking -- there was a check of the -- how the bunks were kept. And if they didn't like something there was terrible yelling, but they did not beat us.

Q: Did you have any personal possessions with you by -- at this stage?

A: Well, at first they were on quarantine -- ...

Q: Do you know what they were doing? Why they were taking these pictures now?

A: No, no.

Q: How long were you kept in the -- you were kept in the quarantine for a month?

A: One month.

Q: And -- and then where were you sent after that?

A: At -- at first -- ... The first asa -- ...

Q: Can we --

A: When we had a roll call early in the morning, every morning, was still dark outside, and the -- ... she remem -- ...

Q: A lot of like little details, like didn't you ever feel in the morning that you just couldn't get up and go do that again? You couldn't stand outside in that cold? Weren't you cold? Di -- could you ever wash? Could --

A: The -- the business of washing up, of staying clean was that once every na -- every -- once in a while, the group would be taken to the sownar, which you know what it is, right, for disinfect -- ... Yes, people who were on that same bunk, would talk to each other, and most of the time about the past, but quite often about future, which was really fantasyland.

Q: Were you in the same -- you were in the same barracks with your mother and sister?

A: On the same bunk, in the same barracks, yes.

Q: That must have been the -- the reason you could survive.

A: I think that I -- mother did not survive, sister did not survive, but I -- she thinks that she survive because that was meant to be. Destiny.

Q: What sort of physical condition were the three of you in by the time the selection was made, the selection that you're going to tell us about?

A: Physically they were not well off because they were starving. Somehow or other they were pushed through, but that does not mean they were in good physical condition.

Q: Were you or your mother or your sister ever punished for any reason?

A: The discipline was so -- so strong, and it was -- everything was obeyed that there was very seldom a reason to -- to punish any transgression. The biggest punishment as far as she's concerned is that she was taken to the gas chamber, and that's what she would like to tell.

Q: Could she -- could -- would she tell us the story now, from beginning to end?

A: Yeah, mm-hm.

Q: Just don't translate, just let the tape run, okay?

A: Okay. Just I want to tell her she needs to say the date first.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: Approximate, because she doesn't know, but --

Q: Okay.

A: It's November.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And just let her talk, you don't need to translate --

A: No.

Q: -- till we get to the end.

A: Okay, okay, okay. [tells story in Polish]. This is very good point to break.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: And wait [indecipherable]. Okay. ... piles of hell piled up, and she and her mother are huddling, and her mother is explaining to her that, "You shouldn't feel bad, because life - - all of life is just like a corridor, like a hallway, you know. You pass through it to a better life, and that's where we're going." Some women were hysterical, other women were sitting quietly, and every now and then the door would open, and the SS men -- women -- SS women would come in and say, "Ha, you're still alive." And they would close the door. And then they would hear all these sounds outside, laughing and joking. Then the

door opened again, and the men came in with gas masks on, and they had a box. They opened the box, which contained powder, like talcum powder, white talcum powder, and they scattered it around, and they threw the box down, and they left. Well, they were quite sure that this was the very end. And finally, a few more times, they -- the -- the -- then the women came in, the SS women said, "Now, you are going to have to sort these rags here, because these rags are going to be sent to the crematorium, and you are going to be sent to a place where there's braiding to be done." And so they said to each other, "That cannot be, they are teasing us, because what she means is that we will go the crematorium, and the rags are going to go to the place for braiding." And th-this lasted for 48 hours, no water, and no food. 120 -- 100 to 120 women. And these SS women constantly coming, "Oh, so you're still alive?" And all this brutal teasing type of thing. Finally, one of the women -- then a women came who -- ... She has no recollection now, from this point on, that's why I cut it. They stayed about three days, she and her mother in that hospital, covered with -- ... She has never seen a selection as such in camp -- I mean that she -- if she wasn't in it, that she saw a selection. So she is take -- she was taken to that place, to another work camp, where they would braid -- ...

Q: That they wanted to really gas you, and it didn't work? Ho-how do you understand this experience?

A: What happened is that they were po -- most probably destined to be crem -- cremated, t-to do -- go to the crematorium, but the eastern front, the Russians, they were approaching. This is now the end of the year, '44, you see?

Q: Mm-hm

A: Very near liberation. And so that they were demolishing the crematories, and the gas chamber, as you know, was the preliminary to the crematory.

Q: Right, right.

A: And as they were demolishing the crematories, this gas chamber -- they probably wanted to take them there, and to -- to gas them, but they ran out of crematories, and that -- they had to open the door and let them out. And her destiny proved to be fate was kinder to them than to thousands of people who just went through that kind of hel-hell to get t-to -- to death.

Q: Why -- did you ever try and get rid of your tattoo?

A: No, because this is a memory of what I went through -- what she went through. Even though she did realize when she came to Israel and she was traveling on the buses, and she would hand -- she would hold on by hand, you know, on the bus, and she noticed that everybody was watching, that wherever -- if she ha -- held by -- with the left arm, that people were watching her number. But that -- that was what it was. There was no explanation for it, and that's what she has. As a matter of fact she met a great personality,

some very important man in Israel, quite casually, and he saw the number. And he went over and kissed her hand and started crying. An older man.

Q: Would you like to read that thing [indecipherable] if you'd like to do that.

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Sure. You ready?

End of Tape 2

Conclusion of Interview