

Rose, again, I want to go back a little before we come to the point where we ended the last tape. You talked about Gina dying from that operation. Can you tell us a little bit about the funeral?

Yes. Dr. Zachert really was in touch, was the doctor in the hospital when Gina was there. I called her up. And I told her what happened, that the [INAUDIBLE] operated. And so she was really in touch with that. And when it came to the funeral, when I found out, Michal told me that she died, I went to the hospital.

And I wanted to speak to the doctor. And I waited for quite a while until he saw me. I don't know whether he knew, or this was neglect. I don't know. I am afraid it was a neglect thing, just saying. And I asked him what happened.

So they started to give him some medical terms which I couldn't understand. I couldn't comprehend the whole thing. And justifying, you know, the fact that there was no rescue for her, or something like that.

So then it was the matter of the funeral. And I spoke to Dr. Zachert. And she told me that she spoke to her priest and told him who she was, that she was Jewish. And the priest told them, let her be buried by the name she was alive and died.

So this-- where she was buried in Praga is the other side of the Wisła in Warsaw. And I didn't let Michal to come to the funeral because it was too dangerous for him. He was so exposed, you know. And different-- anybody could find him.

But there were a few people Dr. Zachert didn't come either. Because she didn't she was afraid, you know, to commit herself in case something happened. And some people came who were on the Aryan side to the funeral at that time.

And she was buried under her name, Kazimiera Jozwiak. And later on, after the war, I sent money to Poland to write down that Kazimiera Jozwiak was Gina Klepfisz. This way, she-- otherwise, she would be never found in the cemetery under this name. She was registered as Jozwiak. And this is how she has now a stone there.

And you came to the funeral?

Sure. Of course, I was. Yeah.

Was it dangerous for you also?

Oh, it was always dangerous to go into the street, particular to such, you know, gathering, any gathering. Somebody can find you out. It was always dangerous.

But we were living like that. I was going out into the street to do some shopping or whatever I was doing, it was dangerous. It was dangerous, you know, with my next door neighbor, whether he'll send something to say, please, check it out or whatever. Or if the concierge, you know, who was taking care of the building, it was always dangerous.

Did you know everybody who was at the funeral? Were these all--

Yes. I did know. Yes. I did know. I didn't meet them, but I know I knew them. And then it was through connections, they were found-- they found out, you know, that is the funeral. They came.

And it was Maria Sawicka and Anna Wachalska was there, the two of them, which helped.

Which helped you?

Of course, they were Christians. And it helped for them being there. In case, in sense of safety, Polacks, you know, they came to the funeral.

And how old was Gina? Gina was five years older than Michal. So if he was born in 1917, she was 1908. Yes, 1908, and 42 minus 42. So 34 years old. No.

She was born in 19-- OK.

OK.

1908, that's 44-- no, 34--

34, yes, 34 years old, yeah.

This is the only funeral and the only grave.

The only grave for both families. We don't have anybody else.

So it means a lot.

Yes.

When the Warsaw ghetto uprising was occurring, do you remember what it was like on the outside or whether people were [INAUDIBLE] things?

Yes, I was with the family Roba. And he was going every day to the city. Because he was doing some work as an architect. You know, very little, but he tried to earn some money. And he brought all the news. And I was asking him all the time, what's going on? So he used to tell me that the Germans are on this block. And they're burning the buildings.

And people are jumping from the windows. And the constant smoke he can see. He never went close to ghetto to see, or whatever. But he used to tell me which blocks are being surrounded by the Germans, and how people are fighting, and all that. The atmosphere was-- some said, oh, it's good that the Germans are finishing out the Jews.

I never went there, close by. I was I was afraid to go there, you know. Because of Irena. Somebody had to be for her. I knew that Michal is there. But I couldn't do anything about it. And there was a telephone from the ghetto still coming out to some people, which I had contact with. And they didn't hear anything. If they knew they, didn't tell me.

But the atmosphere among the Polacks were very divided. So I was not interested, or not very pressing. In a sense, it's good, what is happening. And some were very sympathetic.

But in our home, he was coming constantly, telling me my heart was when and how. And I didn't know for a long time who killed. Vladka came told me, this was it. I understood. Otherwise, he would call, or come out, or something like that. But don't want to believe it. Just want to hear that it, you know. If you don't hear it, you don't believe it. This was that. So it's a very tragic time, absolutely tragic for me. And I found out how surreal it is.

There was a point when two Germans came to pick you up? When was that?

It was when I was in Pruszków. And I went out to buy something. Germans were raiding up certain areas again for young people to go to Germany to work. They were slaves, you know, and men and women, you know, young, young men and women. And I went out-- Irena stayed home with the people I lived with-- just to buy something.

And suddenly, you know, there were four Germans. And they said, you come with us. My heart stood still. I knew that they're going to take me to Germany, Irena is lost. So I started to tell them that I have a sick child. I have a [GERMAN] [GERMAN]. I was afraid I didn't know German. I'm afraid that I put in some Yiddish words, you know. [GERMAN] my [GERMAN].

So they say to me, where is your husband? So I didn't think long. And I said Blanca was in Heidelberg. I said the Heidelberg. What is he doing? I said, he's a mechanic. I said, what firm? Blanca and Maria, were at Walter Kinsel. I said, the Walter Kinsel. And it went just like that.

And they believed me. So I had one soldier decide, went this one front, and the back. The big fish, they caught, you know, me. So one soldier said, from the left side, [GERMAN], "let her go, she's has a sick child." When I heard that, I turned around. And I ran. I just ran.

And this was my quick thinking, you know, knowing the Heidelberg, know the Walter Kinsel, also, that I can get-- I can shoot. This was it. What is that? I said, he's a mechanic. And I ran away. And I came home. I was without-- couldn't breathe.

When you spoke to them, do you think you sounded frightened?

I don't know. I don't know how I sounded. I just was thinking quickly. And I said-- I was scared to death. I didn't-- I was-- I didn't know what to do. I can only talk to them, you know. I was sure that I am going.

There-- Michal had a very close friend. You both had a very close friend, Friedrich--

Fred Sigmund, Friedrich, yeah.

And they made a pact.

Yes, they made the pact. Before the uprising, when the uprising started, they met. And they said-- he had a wife and a child, Elsa. She was born in 1936, Elsa. And whoever lives through will take care of the other wife and the children. This was their pact.

And Friedrich told me about it. Friedrich told me about it. Yeah, it was after when I met him when I already knew about what Vladka told me. And both of them, you know-- when Friedrich was killed taking out people from the canals after the Warsaw ghetto uprising, to a certain village. And they were caught.

And there were five people were killed at that time. And he was among them. And his wife perished in Majdanek. She was taken before that. And Elsa was with Polish people. And she was first in the convent. And then, you know, Marek Edelman and the whole group were just following her stay in the convent.

And then after the Polish uprising, she was shifted to another place, to a few places. And she was sick and tired of it. She was a young child, very bright, intelligent, beautiful. And she settled-- you know, they gave her to a Swiss family. And they left her. And they really wanted her.

And she felt good with them. And all the time, changing places, and losing her security, she was very angry and bitter about that. And after the war, when they came for her, Marek Edelman came with his wife Ala, to take her away from that Polish family, she didn't want to go.

Because her parents told her, remember, never anybody that you are Jewish. And she didn't know-- after the war ended, she didn't know anything. And the woman didn't want to give her away. She wanted to have her a child, as a child, her own. So they gave her a lot of money. And this way, they took Elsa.

And then started, the whole thing, again, you know, from place to place. I was, for her, a mother. But she loved Irena. And the pact was following me, you know, to take care of Elsa. And there is a family, Heerschatz, who adopted her.

She had tragic life. She couldn't-- she had a few nervous breakdowns. And she always was coming to me on the vacation. She was at Cornell. And when the vacation came, she always visited, not with her parents, adoptive parents, but as us, with Irena and me.

And they were like siblings. You know, to me, she was like a daughter, really. But she had the few nervous

breakdowns. And she went to the hospital. Also, she got married, a professor from Columbia. He is very known now. He's a historian.

And that Sunday morning, when she went to the hospital, she called me up. And she said, Lodzia, I'm going to meet my father and mother. Because she knew it'll be, you know, their link about their past, their childhood, and this, and that. And then she committed suicide. In 1962, she committed suicide.

This was Elsa-- Irka was at that time in Europe. She didn't know, I didn't want to write to her. She could never forgive me that. But I didn't-- I was afraid. I was really afraid.

So she found out-- not from me-- after she came back, through a pure accident from somebody else, not myself. I prepared myself to tell her during the weekend I'm home and be with her. Doesn't work like that.

This was Elsa. Was-- they were good friends. Sigmund-- Sigmund was the one who brought back the news about Treblinka, you know. Very active-- very active guy. Nice people.

So little by little, everything was shrinking, you know.

When we ended the last tape, you began to talk about meeting Marek Edelman in Lodz, and his telling you about how Michal died.

I met Marek before, as I told you. I took Irena in there, we went to them. And this is how I got through Helena Schaffner, you know. I went to them. And this was the first time I saw him, Marek, you know, still during the war, after the uprising.

He told me at that time what happened. What happened is that the whole group was on a attic, trying to get through to another building. They didn't know that there was a German with a gun, you know, standing. I don't know what's called.

Machine gun?

Machine gun, yeah. We were in a corner, or whatever it was, and suddenly they realized and they couldn't get through to the other building through the attics. So Michal was the one-- Michal was with Marek Edelman, the same group, was the one who jumped on him and killed him at the same time he killed him. So the group could pass through, you know. They survived, but Michal was killed.

In the same evening, Marek Edelman buried Michal in the court, which now, later on were ruins, because the buildings were burned, and so on. But he gave him the funeral, you know. He just buried from over there in the court, yeah. And this is what he told me that time, when I went to visit him. But since I visited Marek there, I got the contact already. They gave me some money that I could have, and I was-- would pay off some, which I was owing.

Anyway, I was doing some sewing late at night, being in Pruszków you know. They give some money for our living. So I said I can sew, and I can do something for you. And she was very happy about it.

So I was sitting and sewing sometimes to 2 o'clock at night, 3 o'clock at night. And Irena was sleeping. It was only two rooms, the total. One bedroom was there. I was in the bedroom, Irena was on one bed. Another bed somebody else was sleeping there. And this is how it was.

So how long were you in Pruszków then?

From-- Pruszków, I was since the Polish uprising, when they took us out to the [Chleniec, ?] I told you, till the Soviet army came in to Warsaw and then to us. Warsaw, they were before. They came before. And then they came to us.

And when I was seeing the Soviet army, I was standing and crying, you know, because I knew that we'll stay alive already. So how much, you know, I have against them, I cannot forget that they brought me to

freedom.

And this was already when people, I was, you know, I had the contact with the people. So people already started find out that I and Irena which is a miracle that she was alive, you know, with me.

Found out that we are here. And Bolek Ellenbogen, he was in Lublin at that time, with a lot of-- during the Polish uprising, they just went through the Vistula, Wisła to the other side, to the east side. And they could, you know-- the Soviets were there already.

Did that, just didn't come during the Polish. They didn't want to-- they wanted to kill each other, you know, when up. So Bolek found out where we are, and he was working for the Jewish committee over there already in Lublin. And one day-- and he already knew the address, my address. A car stops by, not a car, but the heavy, what I call the car, [POLISH] cieżarówka the big-- you know, they come with old--

Not a truck?

A truck, yeah. He came with a truck. And he brought me some food. He brought all the goodies in the world could be for Irena. And I remember he brought those cigarettes. I didn't smoke at that time already. and chocolate and sardines and all kinds of things. And it was like, you know, manna from heaven.

And I remember, and I was excited to give Irena little by little, the goodies. And Helena came, so I gave her the cigarettes because she was smoking, heavily smoking. And I gave her all the goodies. Irena was-- couldn't even reach the table. But she was looking how Irena-- how Helena was eating.

I gave her this, and I gave her that. So she asked me, Mommy, will Pani Helena eat everything? So I said, no. There's things for you too. Don't worry. So this was-- and then, he came twice with the truck, you know, from Lublin. And he brought me food.

And the third time came Marek, the man who took us to Lodz already. We couldn't get train tickets that took us. It's not so easy to say. There was a one train a day. And there were thousands, thousands of people. So he took me and Irena-- he showed Irena through the window. Somebody picked her up. Then me he pushed also through the window. And he somehow got through a door. I don't know how.

This was the way. This was Marek. Always caring. This is how people, a whole group of people, cared, you know. When they knew somebody. And they picked up Elsa, as I told you. People cared.

Take Bolek, you know, how he came with food and all that. Because first of all, a child alive at this time was like a miracle. I was the only mother. There was also Gabrish, Hannah Frishdorf they were in the Partisans.

But he was born in a bunker during the Polish uprising. And she went out, you know. She also was in-- but this was 1944 already. He was just born then.

And she was, for a while, the Polish uprising finished. You know, it was for a while she was in a village someplace. He was-- she was looked like, you know, a hundred Jews. And the little ones the babies, nothing.

But after a while she came to Lodz, to find out, you know, she went to Warsaw. And the committee with addresses and names, as you found out, to be in Lodz. And she came to Lodz and she found us, Hannah Frishdorf.

Her husband was killed in the Partisans. He went for a project, you know. They had for the trains, the dynamite or something. He was killed by the Germans. And she stayed, you know, pregnant with the child.

And she came to Lodz, and she found us. She went back. She brought Gabi, who was very sick also. He had some kind-- around his ear, some infections all around his neck. And we stayed together since then.

You know, this is why Gabi, she's like a brother to her, to Irka was Irka was the big sister, another three years old there, you know. So you know, we created families. It was like one was cared about the other, you

know.

And I had two towels. I gave her one towel, you know. Two apples, I gave her one apple. For Gabi, you know, this is how it was. And we lived together. It was a while in Lodz after the war, we lived together, the Ellenbogens and the Hannah Frishdorf and [INAUDIBLE].

I want to ask you a question about Irena. During this period, she seemed, from your description, from the little you say about her, rather than your feelings about what's happening, is that in some ways she was a calm child. That she was very good. That there was not-- that she wasn't creating problems in a very dangerous situation.

No.

As if she understood.

No. She was just, you know, she was a good child, you know. And she was listening. And I explained to her certain things, that you cannot do this because of that. You know, in a very light way, not to scare her for anything.

But she was listening. She didn't give me any trouble as a child. She was-- only gave me trouble later.

[LAUGHTER]

But as a child, no. No. She was very good. She was very supported too. Bolek in Sweden put her on a bicycle, and we were on the hill. And I said, you just hold the brakes and go down, and then stop. She did it.

To me, she said, you go home. You go in. I'll take care of. So this was said. She was going swimming there in Sweden. But this is a different job there already.

When you all meet in Lodz, and you're essentially forming surrogate families because people have lost. What is this like? Is there a lot of anger as well as pain about the world?

We were so busy with everyday life, how to get through, how to bring a let's say Halinka and I. And then I got an apartment. You know, I lived with the Bolek, with the Ellenbogens.

My one-removed cousin met me. He was in the Polish army. And he was always in the uniform. He wasn't in the army anymore. But he was very tall, handsome. And he went to all these offices, and he said, [POLISH]. I am [POLISH]. As General [POLISH]. Or something like that. I need an apartment.

They gave him. This was in my name, because nobody could get an apartment at that time. I said at the time, there was a child, and I need that apartment. And then, you know, it was one-bedroom apartment.

And I took in the Ellenbogens. The apartment was in my name. And he was working for the Journal at the time and from Lodz for the committee. And we lived together as a family. Whatever we had, you know, brought in. We gave the money.

I got some money. Some money, very little. But I remember that shared-- this is from the Bundist committee. They sent me some money at that time. And then my family, my aunt-- Michal's aunt from the states, used to send me few dollars here and there.

But it went all to the common account. That's all. And this is how we lived there. It was a family. Bolek we used to go with Irena, you know, for walks. We used to do some sewing at home for somebody. And also it was me. And this is how we lived.

Was it difficult to be in Poland during that period? Yes, once Irena was playing downstairs with the children. And she came up, and she said, Ma, this boy called me [POLISH] żydówka, which means, you know, Jewess. What does it mean, żydówka? She couldn't understand that.

Now this is an example, a child comes up. Then there were constantly killings. You know, they were killing, you know. Murders. And we decided to go away at that time. It was antisemitism, it was. Why didn't finish up everybody. So it wasn't easy.

But to Lodz came a lot of people, the same thing to Warsaw. The survivors looking for the families, stayed here or there. You know, but the atmosphere was very bad. Then we decided too-- Jacob Pat came to Poland. And he said that he can give some visas, you know, to Sweden. Sweden was taking in people.

And of course I gave-- I was on the list, with Irena, because of Michal's aunt here. But to tell you about the atmosphere. To go by train to Gdynia this is the port of Poland, how we could take the boat to Sweden.

Two women, Polish women, went with us. We with the children, it was Hannah Frishdorf with Gabi and I with Irena in our train. In case something happens to their children. Because they were taking down people from the trains and killing.

So once came somebody to our apartment, with a gun, and looking for somebody. Luckily it was a mistake. No bullet was at that time. I was at that time home. Irena was asleep. It was in the evening.

To kill somebody because they had some kind of account, who knows? But it was very dangerous. Kielce. You know about Kielce? This was 1946. We left in 1946, the first of, the 31 of March, I think so. So this was very dangerous to live.

So we had with us some Polish people to go with us in case the children are theirs, always the children. And if they take us, OK. But the children are theirs. So this is how was, you know, Poland.

What was it like in Sweden?

Sweden was-- [NON-ENGLISH]. It was Eden. Really Eden. Irena used to say that this was my happiest years in my life. It was beautiful. Sweden was so, you know, like--

First of all, from Stockholm, we were how many? 21 minutes, I think, from Stockholm by train, a choo-choo train. Beautiful. It was really like Eden, you know. The children were wonderful there, you know. This is where Irena was going bicycling and swimming and school.

She spoke Swedish like a Swedish-born child. Immediately, you know, she went to school. The people were very nice to us. They always invited me and Irena for coffee and cookies. And she was playing with the children, then she spoke.

We didn't ever lock the doors at night. When Halinka said Irka go and buy some milk at the store, there was, you know, country store. And she gave her a little, you know, bag with a few Swedish crowns.

She said, where is your bag? Pocket book, Irena had. Well, I left it on the bench over there. She said, go and pick it up. No, I'll take it tomorrow. She found it tomorrow. So this was the kind of life, you know. It was nature around. She was playing with Gabi, and she was going by herself with the bicycle, swimming, over the train, you know, were passing by.

People were marvelous there really. And we had a whole group. I was always-- I don't like to live in groups. So we had two buildings. One was a big building with a lot of survivors. And we were only three families in this building, you know, where we lived.

And it was marvelous. Everybody cared about the other. And we could go to the city with Halinka and Halinka's brother's wife took care of the children to go to sleep, something like that. We started to work, both-- she was a very good children's dressmaker.

So we went to the biggest store in Melbourne-- in Melbourne. I said Australia already. I was in Australia for times. And you know, this is in Stockholm. And we did some work for them. And then we sent it by mail. By

the train. Packed it up, and they send it. This is how we-- but it was very, very close. I created a library there.

Where?

In Stockholm. This was the Jewish Labor Committee branch. And there were a lot of survivors in Sweden. And everybody was longing for a book, for a Yiddish book, for a Polish book, something like that. I wrote the Jewish Labor Committee to send me books, a lot of books.

They sent hundreds of books. They did send. And I made catalogs. And addresses I had, I sent them the catalogs, copies of catalogs, you know. Everything by hand.

And they wrote me what they want with numbers. They wrote me back what they want, and then I prepared the books and the Office of the Jewish Labor Committee sent them out in the morning. But this was in the evening, I was going to Stockholm.

Because during the day, I was busy with Irena and whatever I have to do. But this I was doing all these three years in Sweden, you know. But we had the whole group of friends over there. And this is how that we came here.

And when did you come here?

I came here the 11 of April 1949. I came here on the-- supposed to pass by the United States and to go to Australia. I had a permit to Australia. Not thinking that I'll go to Australia. I had my family arrived in Australia at that time. My sister was in Australia already.

And which sister is this?

Anka, Genia perished, you know. And I had only 10 days. Hannah Frishdorf left two months before. So a certain way, you know, but she couldn't take Gabi. When she comes to the states, she could claim Gabi to bring him over there.

So Gabi stayed with me for two months. And meanwhile, in Sweden also, I was learning English, because I knew wherever I land, I need to know English. So a woman, a German woman, was a teacher of English. She used to come to our [NON-ENGLISH], the place called, and giving lessons. So there were groups.

But I had to be alone. I want the full hour, not with a group. And I learned. I learned grammar. I read Steinbeck already.

Really?

But this was British English. Another thing, when I came here, and I opened the radio, and I couldn't understand the word, I started to cry. Because this was the American English, and I learned British English. So I couldn't speak, you know, but I was reading and writing.

So this was all so I know what we did in Sweden. So when I came here and I brought Gabi with me, which was a nice one on the boat. At that time, in 1949, it was an order from the immigration department that nobody can land in New York, only first to go to Ellis Island.

This was an order. And not even with visas. Not only passing by. Cannot go. I didn't know about it. Nobody told me. Gabi was secure. His mother was here, you know. She was legally, you know, here. But I didn't know about it at all.

And during the passage, there was a young woman who really was with me constantly. She was going on legal, legal visa to her sister here. But she was-- she was from a camp, something. Very depressed. But I took her under my wing so I had her go to the doctor. So I said, child, you go first to a doctor, so I gave her one child. She go before me, and I went after her. This kind of thing.

And her sister was also there when we arrived. They let them come on the board, you know. Aboard. And I see that they keep her. They don't let her go. She has to go to Ellis Island. From Ellis Island, she can go to her sister. I wondered why, but I couldn't talk to her, because I was the next one.

So Hannah Frishdorf was there, was Bernard Goldstein was another one, survivor also. And so first of all, I clear Gabi. I say, the mother is here. She can pick him up. I know the mother. And Gabi is through.

Then I come, and I supposed to go. Gabi shouldn't have gone, you know, to Ellis Island as a child. But all the other passengers with visas, legal visas, had to go to Ellis Island. From Ellis Island, they had to release them. Next I come.

So I give my passport, all these documents for clearing. And he said, now, you go to Ellis Island. He talked fast. So I said to him, with my husband. I said to him, you speak very good English, but too fast. He take the stamp to put pass.

Can you imagine such a thing? I was the only one with Irena who passed.

[LAUGHTER]

And then they go-- if I would go to Ellis Island, I wouldn't be here today. Because I only had 10 days. And they sent everybody out. In transit. I was in transit. But this is what I said, these few words. I said my husband said you speak very good English but too fast. I didn't know was Ellis Island. I didn't know what he was talking about. And I got the stamp pass. So this is how I came here.

To New York?

Yeah. Australia was, for me, too far. From what and from whom, I don't know up to now. I was four times in Australia. Every 10 years I was going to Australia.

You-- it didn't-- you didn't feel as if you should be near your sister or that was important?

No, I was afraid that for Irena, it wouldn't be good somehow. I don't know why.

Right.

Far, far away, Australia. Who knows about Australia?

Makes sense.

So this--

Was New York Eden too? Like Sweden?

Oh, no.

Right.

Had a very hard time. Very hard time. Until I established myself, you know. Who I am, what I am. With Irena being a child, it was English, she didn't know at all. It was very difficult. She was very sensitive for me going away to work and being alone. It was a very difficult period for me. Very difficult.

Were you more alone in New York or were there other circumstances?

The circumstances, you know, the stresses between one and the other, was-- I got the apartment [? amalgamated. ?] A beautiful apartment, you know. But because they cared, the Jewish Labor Committee brought me over.

So this is-- we had a very difficult time here. The beginning was very-- I didn't know what to do, and Irena first of all, you know. Irena was afraid to leave here, you know.

The school, she was scared. She was very scared. So we came on April, 11 of April. And Dr. [INAUDIBLE] arranged for her to go to the workmen's circle camp for the summer. In fact, she went-- she spoke a beautiful Swedish. She went to the camp. She lost the Swedish and came back with an English, you know. Just like that.

She didn't-- you know, when she came to school, I put her in school nearby. This was nearby. So the teacher wrote about her. Here today came to a class, a little girl, with two braids, with two bows and a bow on top. You know. Very sweet little girl. Something like that, you know.

And she didn't know. I remember that once was the fire alarm just-- and all the children went out. And I ran out. I was afraid. I heard it. That she'll be scared. And this girl was scared to death again, you know. Because she knew about the bombarding, and she was very much scared at the time.

It was not good for her, for me going away. And since I started to work in the designing room. I was very good with my hands always. Was working for a while. And she was alone home, and I had to rent the bedroom.

We were sleeping in the living room because the rent was \$50. And I couldn't spend the \$50, so I was working, sewing. And it was very difficult. Very difficult. And then I started to work at the YIVO because the director of the YIVO, with the confidence of claims, you know, we started to get the money.

And he knew me from Poland, Dr. Friedman. Philip Friedman.

Philip Friedman.

Yes, he knew me from Poland. And he got in touch with me. He wanted me to work for him, you know. And I worked for him. Since then I was working for eight years at the YIVO. On Holocaust all the time. Then he died 1960.

Was that when you created the bibliography? Was that the first bibliography?

Yes. You'll see my name there.

We saw it yesterday.

Really?

Yeah.

Yeah.

It's in very large print.

And then took over. Dr. Robinson took it over after his death. And I was working in the public library, you know, looking for material constantly. For months, for months I was working at the public library.

And he-- Dr. Robinson use to come and took material and gave me new material to work constantly, you know. Till 1962 I was working in the-- at YIVO And one day, Dr. Robinson approached me. I was his right hand, you know, same thing as Friedman's also.

And he approached me, said that somebody approached them from the Joint. They need a person for the archives, whether he has somebody. And he told me, I have chosen you.

I was shocked. I said, Dr. Robinson, why do you want to get rid of me? Was something wrong? He said, no.

He put his arms around me and said, I know you have a daughter. You have no insurance here. We'll probably finish in '64. Because it was 10 years, the claims conference gave money for this project, and that will be it.

You might stay YIVO, but you won't ever have the insurance, health insurance, or even the wages. I was making \$60 a week. But she had everything. Irena had always everything, you know. She didn't feel it.

And there is a good possibility for you. Was 35 people in our [? plant ?] I was shocked. Why do you want to get rid of me-- Anyway, so I spoke to Dr. Pat. Was a very good friend of mine. Excellent friend who take care of Irka, you know, health wise. Meanwhile, I got sick again. My thyroid. And--

Your thyroid again?

So I spoke, you know, to him. He said-- I said, what should I do? He said, I would like to see you yesterday there. And I trusted him because, you know, he took really good care of us. I mean health wise and as a friend, a very close friend was.

And this way, you know, I left the YIVO. Made me big party. Have a beautiful crystal from them. It's a beautiful speech from Dr. Robinson. You know, I went to the Joint. Then started a new era.

And life got better for you also?

Yes, I could make more money if I would have the chutzpah to ask. If I made 4,000 at the YIVO I ask for five. I could ask for seven. I didn't. They grabbed me. But because of the recommendation of Dr. Robinson, you know.

He came once. I ask him to come take a look what I'm doing. Because I put in a new system completely. And he approved everything. So this way, you know, first of all, I had insurance. For me, for health, it was very important.

The work was very gratifying. And so was at the YIVO, the work. Very gratifying for me. So this is a new era started.

And you were there for 23 years.

Only.

Only.

Only, yeah. Up to now I'm a contact-- they constantly send me-- I went to the [INAUDIBLE] affair. It was 60 years of [INAUDIBLE], and my executive director greeted me, you know, also. And he said, Mrs. Klepfisz, You don't know how much we're missing you here. [INAUDIBLE] miss. Didn't print one single catalog since my going away.

I left six catalogs of the scribed material, the archives. Six catalogs. Now, not one.

So they need you?

So want me get back to work. I would. I wouldn't go back.

I think we should stop the tape. We have about two minutes.