

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,720

2
00:00:01,720 --> 00:00:06,700
This is tape two, side A, of an
interview with Ernest Fontheim

3
00:00:06,700 --> 00:00:09,520
on June 4, 1997.

4
00:00:09,520 --> 00:00:11,200
The interviewer
is Randy Goldman.

5
00:00:11,200 --> 00:00:16,930

6
00:00:16,930 --> 00:00:25,170
Yeah, as the war finally
came home to Germany,

7
00:00:25,170 --> 00:00:30,560
we were delighted to see in
the official Wehrmachten,

8
00:00:30,560 --> 00:00:35,300
armed forces report, that was
issued at the end of each day.

9
00:00:35,300 --> 00:00:40,670
Finally, German place
names, names like Argen,

10
00:00:40,670 --> 00:00:47,700
Koln, and so on, instead of
names like Zabororja, Minsk,

11
00:00:47,700 --> 00:00:51,090
Halokoff, Kiev, and so on.

12
00:00:51,090 --> 00:00:54,950

That already felt
like a liberation.

13
00:00:54,950 --> 00:00:56,540
And there were more
and more German

14
00:00:56,540 --> 00:01:00,470
place names now in the
official army reports.

15
00:01:00,470 --> 00:01:04,819
And all that happened,
the government maintained

16
00:01:04,819 --> 00:01:08,510
the official line that
the war will be won,

17
00:01:08,510 --> 00:01:10,040
that there will be
a final victory.

18
00:01:10,040 --> 00:01:12,950

19
00:01:12,950 --> 00:01:16,790
As the fronts on
all sides collapsed,

20
00:01:16,790 --> 00:01:21,170
of course, preparations were
made for the defense of Berlin.

21
00:01:21,170 --> 00:01:25,640
I have to say that of all
the insanities, that may have

22
00:01:25,640 --> 00:01:26,960
been probably the biggest one.

23
00:01:26,960 --> 00:01:30,980
There was no reason

really to defend Berlin.

24

00:01:30,980 --> 00:01:37,010

And the Germans should have done
what the French did in 1940,

25

00:01:37,010 --> 00:01:41,150

declared an open
city and surrendered.

26

00:01:41,150 --> 00:01:43,790

But of course,
that was not to be.

27

00:01:43,790 --> 00:01:47,720

Instead, throughout Berlin,
tank traps were built,

28

00:01:47,720 --> 00:01:51,950

ditches were dug,
and the Volkshdum

29

00:01:51,950 --> 00:01:57,110

was called up finally
for participating

30

00:01:57,110 --> 00:01:59,540

in the defense of the city.

31

00:01:59,540 --> 00:02:04,820

And often, they would even
grab civilians from the street

32

00:02:04,820 --> 00:02:10,220

and just incorporate
them in some unit.

33

00:02:10,220 --> 00:02:18,500

The battle itself began in
earnest on April 16, 1945.

34

00:02:18,500 --> 00:02:24,830

I never forget that day because

even though the Russian front

35

00:02:24,830 --> 00:02:29,720
was on the east side of the Oder
River, which runs north-south

36

00:02:29,720 --> 00:02:33,740
and about 50 to 60
miles east of Berlin,

37

00:02:33,740 --> 00:02:38,900
so it was pretty far away, but
the artillery barrage was such

38

00:02:38,900 --> 00:02:42,320
that the ground under
Berlin, under the city

39

00:02:42,320 --> 00:02:45,380
was rumbling and
slightly shaking.

40

00:02:45,380 --> 00:02:48,380
And of course, in
battle reports,

41

00:02:48,380 --> 00:02:51,890
which I read long after
the end of the war,

42

00:02:51,890 --> 00:02:54,260
I can see the reason why.

43

00:02:54,260 --> 00:02:56,960
That was the biggest
concentration of artillery

44

00:02:56,960 --> 00:02:57,740
ever.

45

00:02:57,740 --> 00:03:01,400
The Russians spent
about two months

46
00:03:01,400 --> 00:03:04,220
getting ready for that
assault on the city.

47
00:03:04,220 --> 00:03:08,510
And they had assembled
a density of artillery,

48
00:03:08,510 --> 00:03:10,280
which was unheard of.

49
00:03:10,280 --> 00:03:15,140
And they raked the entire German
front for hours and hours.

50
00:03:15,140 --> 00:03:17,750

51
00:03:17,750 --> 00:03:22,490
As I said, at that time, I was
living in the Berlin borough

52
00:03:22,490 --> 00:03:24,050
of Tempelhof.

53
00:03:24,050 --> 00:03:27,780
And so the communist--

54
00:03:27,780 --> 00:03:31,340
I mean, secretly communist--
janitor of the house

55
00:03:31,340 --> 00:03:35,390
that I lived in, I also
got some information

56
00:03:35,390 --> 00:03:39,620
of how the Folkshdum
members were called up.

57
00:03:39,620 --> 00:03:42,800

And in fact, he showed
me such a call up

58
00:03:42,800 --> 00:03:44,630
order that a friend of his got.

59
00:03:44,630 --> 00:03:47,220

60
00:03:47,220 --> 00:03:51,650
So I kept a copy
of that and then

61
00:03:51,650 --> 00:03:57,020
typed on a typewriter that I had
available my own call up order

62
00:03:57,020 --> 00:04:00,920
every day so that,
if I had to have

63
00:04:00,920 --> 00:04:03,590
an errand to a certain
part of the city,

64
00:04:03,590 --> 00:04:06,200
I would write myself
a call up order that I

65
00:04:06,200 --> 00:04:08,750
had to report there for duty.

66
00:04:08,750 --> 00:04:15,110
The reason was that there were
groups of Folkshdum people

67
00:04:15,110 --> 00:04:19,050
either grabbing
civilians from the street

68
00:04:19,050 --> 00:04:23,070
or also sometimes just
confiscating their bicycle.

69

00:04:23,070 --> 00:04:27,170

I did almost all of my
commuting by bicycle.

70

00:04:27,170 --> 00:04:30,980

Public transport had
all but ceased to exist.

71

00:04:30,980 --> 00:04:34,580

There were still
a few subway lines

72

00:04:34,580 --> 00:04:37,070

that I thought would
run intermittently

73

00:04:37,070 --> 00:04:40,460

between a few stops until
they came to a place

74

00:04:40,460 --> 00:04:45,500

where there was an artillery
or bomb crater shutting down

75

00:04:45,500 --> 00:04:47,300

the rest of the line.

76

00:04:47,300 --> 00:04:51,500

So that was surely not
reliable transport.

77

00:04:51,500 --> 00:04:54,110

But the Folkshdum
did have the power

78

00:04:54,110 --> 00:04:57,320

to confiscate
bicycle for service,

79

00:04:57,320 --> 00:05:01,790

so I always wrote my marching
order always in such a way

80
00:05:01,790 --> 00:05:06,980
that it would say I have to
appear with my bicycle which,

81
00:05:06,980 --> 00:05:14,090
for purposes of my
service, is confiscated

82
00:05:14,090 --> 00:05:15,890
by the Folkshdum, the militia.

83
00:05:15,890 --> 00:05:18,560

84
00:05:18,560 --> 00:05:22,350
I kept visiting a
number of friends,

85
00:05:22,350 --> 00:05:25,860
and there was a peculiar
atmosphere then.

86
00:05:25,860 --> 00:05:29,580
By that time, the Russians were
still far away from Berlin.

87
00:05:29,580 --> 00:05:34,500
But nobody knew how the Russians
would take the city, what

88
00:05:34,500 --> 00:05:36,090
would happen afterwards.

89
00:05:36,090 --> 00:05:40,140
After all, the city was still
totally dominated by the Nazis.

90
00:05:40,140 --> 00:05:42,690
Not just the military,
also propaganda-wise,

91

00:05:42,690 --> 00:05:46,950
Goebbels's voice was
everywhere-- in newspapers,

92
00:05:46,950 --> 00:05:47,520
on the radio.

93
00:05:47,520 --> 00:05:50,310

94
00:05:50,310 --> 00:05:58,950
And it seemed as if a deep
chasm sort of separated us,

95
00:05:58,950 --> 00:06:02,550
our today, from what
would happen tomorrow

96
00:06:02,550 --> 00:06:04,050
after the Nazis are gone.

97
00:06:04,050 --> 00:06:07,920
And nobody could really
imagine how it would be like.

98
00:06:07,920 --> 00:06:10,590
From day to day, of course,
the Russians worked their way

99
00:06:10,590 --> 00:06:12,240
closer to the city.

100
00:06:12,240 --> 00:06:16,710
And in fact, the way they
planned their attack,

101
00:06:16,710 --> 00:06:20,610
instead of entering
the city from the east,

102
00:06:20,610 --> 00:06:24,000
their units passed by
Berlin to the north

103
00:06:24,000 --> 00:06:29,700
and south and then closed
the pincer west of Berlin

104
00:06:29,700 --> 00:06:32,160
and then entered the
city from the west.

105
00:06:32,160 --> 00:06:35,430

106
00:06:35,430 --> 00:06:40,530
And then the joy of
hearing German city

107
00:06:40,530 --> 00:06:43,980
names in the
official army report

108
00:06:43,980 --> 00:06:53,700
was replaced by the even greater
joy of hearing subdivisions

109
00:06:53,700 --> 00:06:58,320
and districts of Berlin
mentioned in the army report,

110
00:06:58,320 --> 00:07:01,320
like parts of
Shallotenburg, which

111
00:07:01,320 --> 00:07:03,840
is a well-known
borough of the city,

112
00:07:03,840 --> 00:07:09,450
had fallen into Russian hands,
or the suburban railroad

113
00:07:09,450 --> 00:07:14,940
station of Erkner has been
taken by the Russians.

114
00:07:14,940 --> 00:07:19,980
It simply seemed unbelievable
that these place names where

115
00:07:19,980 --> 00:07:22,910
I had been sometimes
only days before

116
00:07:22,910 --> 00:07:25,710
were already in Russian hands.

117
00:07:25,710 --> 00:07:28,770
In fact, there was a curious
situation developing.

118
00:07:28,770 --> 00:07:31,260
People could make
telephone calls

119
00:07:31,260 --> 00:07:34,230
into parts of the city
which were already

120
00:07:34,230 --> 00:07:38,280
occupied by the Russians, which
were behind the Russian lines.

121
00:07:38,280 --> 00:07:41,370
That was a weird thing, really.

122
00:07:41,370 --> 00:07:47,170
And visiting people-- one
usually parted never knowing

123
00:07:47,170 --> 00:07:49,350
whether they would
see each other again,

124
00:07:49,350 --> 00:07:53,160
and instead of the German
auf wiedersehen, which means,

125

00:07:53,160 --> 00:07:58,520

really, see you again,
one would say goodbye--

126

00:07:58,520 --> 00:08:01,560

we'd say [SPEAKING GERMAN].

127

00:08:01,560 --> 00:08:03,820

That means, survive it.

128

00:08:03,820 --> 00:08:08,670

And as I said, nobody
could even imagine

129

00:08:08,670 --> 00:08:13,740

how life would be once
the Nazis were gone.

130

00:08:13,740 --> 00:08:16,590

131

00:08:16,590 --> 00:08:19,860

Berlin was, of course,
under constant bombardment,

132

00:08:19,860 --> 00:08:23,730

and in the beginning, when the
first artillery shells fell

133

00:08:23,730 --> 00:08:26,910

on the city and in the
inner parts of the city,

134

00:08:26,910 --> 00:08:31,290

Goebbels distributed a news
release saying that these are

135

00:08:31,290 --> 00:08:35,204

not enemy artillery
bombardment, but trial

136

00:08:35,204 --> 00:08:40,140

runs of a new German
miracle weapon which

137
00:08:40,140 --> 00:08:45,690
is going to be used any day
now to throw the Russians

138
00:08:45,690 --> 00:08:46,873
back again.

139
00:08:46,873 --> 00:08:48,915
And there were people who
believed this nonsense.

140
00:08:48,915 --> 00:08:53,260

141
00:08:53,260 --> 00:08:58,810
Yeah, so there's a city-- and
of course, also, electricity

142
00:08:58,810 --> 00:09:03,490
slowly stopped being
supplied, and water stopped

143
00:09:03,490 --> 00:09:05,100
being supplied in Berlin.

144
00:09:05,100 --> 00:09:09,640
Even though it had already
been drained by evacuation

145
00:09:09,640 --> 00:09:12,940
of children and infirm
people, there were still,

146
00:09:12,940 --> 00:09:15,460
I think, between three
and four million people

147
00:09:15,460 --> 00:09:20,800
in the city, and to imagine
that city was headed

148
00:09:20,800 --> 00:09:28,630
into chaos without running
water, without, at least,

149
00:09:28,630 --> 00:09:30,460
reliable electricity.

150
00:09:30,460 --> 00:09:34,600
And the gas lines in many
places had been, of course, hit,

151
00:09:34,600 --> 00:09:39,130
and so there was no gas
supply anymore for cooking.

152
00:09:39,130 --> 00:09:43,660

153
00:09:43,660 --> 00:09:46,210
For me, the crucial
day was Sunday,

154
00:09:46,210 --> 00:09:52,900
and I remember distinctly
Sunday, April 22, 1945.

155
00:09:52,900 --> 00:09:57,460
By orders of Goebbels, who,
besides all his other officers,

156
00:09:57,460 --> 00:10:01,210
was also in charge of
the defense of Berlin--

157
00:10:01,210 --> 00:10:06,190
on his orders, all fruit
stores were ordered to be open.

158
00:10:06,190 --> 00:10:11,230
Now, anyone who knows
Germany and German mentality

159

00:10:11,230 --> 00:10:16,720

must be aware that the
closing of stores on Sunday,

160

00:10:16,720 --> 00:10:21,700

of all stores, was
something absolutely holy.

161

00:10:21,700 --> 00:10:22,450

There was nothing.

162

00:10:22,450 --> 00:10:25,960

There was always one
day, one Sunday--

163

00:10:25,960 --> 00:10:28,720

that was the Sunday
before Christmas--

164

00:10:28,720 --> 00:10:30,290

where stores were open.

165

00:10:30,290 --> 00:10:31,420

That was a tradition.

166

00:10:31,420 --> 00:10:33,880

But on all other
Sundays, nothing.

167

00:10:33,880 --> 00:10:38,350

The world had to
go under in order

168

00:10:38,350 --> 00:10:42,200

to be issued for stores to
be open, and that, of course,

169

00:10:42,200 --> 00:10:45,250

exactly was what was happening.

170

00:10:45,250 --> 00:10:49,220

Their world was going

under, and it was obvious

171

00:10:49,220 --> 00:10:52,540

then that what Goebbels
wanted to avoid

172

00:10:52,540 --> 00:10:56,350

is that the food
stores and the shops

173

00:10:56,350 --> 00:10:59,320

might be maybe taken
by Russian troops

174

00:10:59,320 --> 00:11:03,400

and rather than have that
happen have it distributed

175

00:11:03,400 --> 00:11:04,820

to the population.

176

00:11:04,820 --> 00:11:06,250

And in fact, there
was enough food

177

00:11:06,250 --> 00:11:09,880

there that he also
announced the distribution

178

00:11:09,880 --> 00:11:14,140

of all kinds of special
rations, the ration coupons.

179

00:11:14,140 --> 00:11:17,560

And of course, most
coupons were dedicated--

180

00:11:17,560 --> 00:11:22,270

like it would say for 100 gram
of butter, or 100 gram of meat,

181

00:11:22,270 --> 00:11:26,230

or whatever, this and that,

but there were certain coupons

182

00:11:26,230 --> 00:11:29,338
always which were un-assigned.

183

00:11:29,338 --> 00:11:30,880
They were just
labeled with a letter,

184

00:11:30,880 --> 00:11:35,480
like A, B, C, or something,
for special occasions.

185

00:11:35,480 --> 00:11:39,760
And so he announced
that on coupon A,

186

00:11:39,760 --> 00:11:43,600
everybody would get so much
of this food and on coupon B,

187

00:11:43,600 --> 00:11:45,280
so much of that food.

188

00:11:45,280 --> 00:11:49,240
There was a tremendous amount
of these special rations

189

00:11:49,240 --> 00:11:49,880
announced.

190

00:11:49,880 --> 00:11:56,200
Now here I was with my 16 food
ration card for 16 people,

191

00:11:56,200 --> 00:11:57,940
so I basically went wild.

192

00:11:57,940 --> 00:12:00,490
I went for-- and of course,
that was in the days

193

00:12:00,490 --> 00:12:04,780
before the supermarket, so
you had to go to the butcher

194
00:12:04,780 --> 00:12:08,470
separately, and to the
baker, and to the dairy

195
00:12:08,470 --> 00:12:11,090
for each particular
type of food.

196
00:12:11,090 --> 00:12:15,960
And so I was busy for a
long time buying all that

197
00:12:15,960 --> 00:12:20,110
and bringing it into the room
which I occupied in Tempelhof

198
00:12:20,110 --> 00:12:23,080
and thinking how I can get
most of it out to Potsdam

199
00:12:23,080 --> 00:12:24,830
to my friends.

200
00:12:24,830 --> 00:12:27,850
And then-- but even
more overpowering

201
00:12:27,850 --> 00:12:32,710
was that on that day, finally,
beaten German army units

202
00:12:32,710 --> 00:12:36,190
started to stream in to
Berlin, and that is a sight

203
00:12:36,190 --> 00:12:37,300
which I will never forget.

204
00:12:37,300 --> 00:12:39,070

I think that made that day--

205

00:12:39,070 --> 00:12:42,430

I can say without
equivocation may

206

00:12:42,430 --> 00:12:45,640

be the happiest day in my life.

207

00:12:45,640 --> 00:12:52,180

Anyone who has seen German
soldiers in ordinary life,

208

00:12:52,180 --> 00:12:56,920

or during the war,
or on parades,

209

00:12:56,920 --> 00:12:59,160

they always looked
spick and span.

210

00:12:59,160 --> 00:13:00,910

There was not a button missing.

211

00:13:00,910 --> 00:13:06,910

There was not a spot, and
they looked well-shaved, clean

212

00:13:06,910 --> 00:13:11,770

and was a certain aggressive
stride and demeanor.

213

00:13:11,770 --> 00:13:13,450

These guys who came back--

214

00:13:13,450 --> 00:13:15,580

they were dirty, unshaven.

215

00:13:15,580 --> 00:13:18,070

Their uniforms had
buttons missing.

216

00:13:18,070 --> 00:13:20,920
Many had bloody bandages
around their head

217
00:13:20,920 --> 00:13:22,840
or their arms in a sling.

218
00:13:22,840 --> 00:13:29,590
None of them bore any weapons,
and they had that dull look

219
00:13:29,590 --> 00:13:33,420
of defeat in their eyes.

220
00:13:33,420 --> 00:13:35,980
When I saw those
guys, I finally--

221
00:13:35,980 --> 00:13:38,920
even though I knew the war was
lost for Germany, of course,

222
00:13:38,920 --> 00:13:41,920
somehow, intellectually
and mentally,

223
00:13:41,920 --> 00:13:44,560
but now I saw it
with my own eyes.

224
00:13:44,560 --> 00:13:48,240
And I almost lost my mind.

225
00:13:48,240 --> 00:13:52,060
I got on my bike, I
remember, and bicycled along

226
00:13:52,060 --> 00:13:55,690
and felt almost like--

227
00:13:55,690 --> 00:13:59,410
thanking each of these soldiers
for the way they looked.

228
00:13:59,410 --> 00:14:02,230
I am somewhat of a
history buff, and I

229
00:14:02,230 --> 00:14:06,340
had read reports of
Napoleon's army streaming

230
00:14:06,340 --> 00:14:11,740
back from Russia after
their defeat in 1812.

231
00:14:11,740 --> 00:14:15,610
And these guys looked exactly
like those descriptions

232
00:14:15,610 --> 00:14:22,720
of Napoleon's defeated army, and
then the eerie thing was that,

233
00:14:22,720 --> 00:14:28,780
now and then, truckloads of
newly-outfitted soldiers who

234
00:14:28,780 --> 00:14:33,370
looked clean and fresh and with
weapons drove into the opposite

235
00:14:33,370 --> 00:14:38,920
direction towards the front,
which was probably just--

236
00:14:38,920 --> 00:14:39,640
I don't know--

237
00:14:39,640 --> 00:14:42,880
10 or 20 miles or so
away, if that much.

238
00:14:42,880 --> 00:14:45,940

239

00:14:45,940 --> 00:14:49,980

But then I finally
grabbed a hold of myself,

240

00:14:49,980 --> 00:14:52,090

and I went back to the house.

241

00:14:52,090 --> 00:14:54,120

And these German
apartment houses

242

00:14:54,120 --> 00:14:57,580

are always sort of built
with a courtyard in the back.

243

00:14:57,580 --> 00:15:04,090

And the rumor spread that there
was one person, apparently,

244

00:15:04,090 --> 00:15:06,310

who, for some reason,
owned a horse,

245

00:15:06,310 --> 00:15:09,450

and he couldn't feed
that horse anymore.

246

00:15:09,450 --> 00:15:11,800

And so he decided to
have it slaughtered

247

00:15:11,800 --> 00:15:14,350

by a professional butcher,
but of course, there

248

00:15:14,350 --> 00:15:16,180

was no refrigeration either.

249

00:15:16,180 --> 00:15:21,010

So he couldn't, say,
keep the meat forever,

250

00:15:21,010 --> 00:15:25,450
so he invited just anyone from
the house to serve himself.

251
00:15:25,450 --> 00:15:26,560
So it was incredible.

252
00:15:26,560 --> 00:15:29,410
I got myself a
long, sharp knife,

253
00:15:29,410 --> 00:15:34,420
and went downstairs,
and cut a big chunk out

254
00:15:34,420 --> 00:15:42,070
of the upper thigh or the
rear end of the dead horse

255
00:15:42,070 --> 00:15:47,035
that was laying there as
another sort of trophy.

256
00:15:47,035 --> 00:15:49,670

257
00:15:49,670 --> 00:15:54,910
And then another rumor spread
that there was a huge freight

258
00:15:54,910 --> 00:16:00,010
yard of the German railroads
about less than a mile away

259
00:16:00,010 --> 00:16:03,250
from that apartment
building, and the rumor

260
00:16:03,250 --> 00:16:07,690
spread that the Wehrmacht, the
German army, had just abandoned

261
00:16:07,690 --> 00:16:10,630

and was thrown from
the freight yards

262
00:16:10,630 --> 00:16:15,650
and that there were many
freight cars loaded with food.

263
00:16:15,650 --> 00:16:18,520
And I got on my
bike with a knapsack

264
00:16:18,520 --> 00:16:21,790
and bicycled to
the freight yard,

265
00:16:21,790 --> 00:16:26,380
and I saw already people
screaming there from all over.

266
00:16:26,380 --> 00:16:29,350
And then the freight
yard was periodically

267
00:16:29,350 --> 00:16:34,330
raked with machine gun fire
from deep-diving Russian fighter

268
00:16:34,330 --> 00:16:40,510
planes, and to avoid being shot,
I sort of scoot the bicycle

269
00:16:40,510 --> 00:16:41,530
away.

270
00:16:41,530 --> 00:16:42,880
And I had to--

271
00:16:42,880 --> 00:16:44,230
anyway, I wasn't on my bike.

272
00:16:44,230 --> 00:16:47,950
It was, of course, tracks,
so I walked, pushed it.

273

00:16:47,950 --> 00:16:53,920

And then I threw myself down,
pressed myself against the--

274

00:16:53,920 --> 00:16:59,220

what are these--
wooden ties, I guess,

275

00:16:59,220 --> 00:17:04,000

the railroad ties until
the planes had gone,

276

00:17:04,000 --> 00:17:05,650

and then I would get up.

277

00:17:05,650 --> 00:17:10,240

So then I came to a
railroad car which

278

00:17:10,240 --> 00:17:14,290

was loaded with big of vats
full of butter, so each one

279

00:17:14,290 --> 00:17:16,720

maybe 50 pounds or so on.

280

00:17:16,720 --> 00:17:20,119

And so how do you-- and
it was solid butter,

281

00:17:20,119 --> 00:17:23,750

so how do you grab solid butter?

282

00:17:23,750 --> 00:17:30,530

I had a huge screwdriver
in a tool kit on my bike,

283

00:17:30,530 --> 00:17:35,500

so I got the screwdriver
out, and sort of staked

284

00:17:35,500 --> 00:17:44,710
out a huge cube of butter,
and took it with my hand,

285
00:17:44,710 --> 00:17:48,700
and threw into my knapsack,
which at other times

286
00:17:48,700 --> 00:17:52,060
I had taken potatoes
in with dirty peels,

287
00:17:52,060 --> 00:17:55,310
and coal, and so on.

288
00:17:55,310 --> 00:17:56,290
So what I decided--

289
00:17:56,290 --> 00:18:00,660
if the outer layer of the
butter is covered with dirt,

290
00:18:00,660 --> 00:18:04,990
I'll just cut off a layer and
inside it should be clean.

291
00:18:04,990 --> 00:18:09,070
Anyway, so then
I took that back,

292
00:18:09,070 --> 00:18:12,070
and my room that I
had in that house

293
00:18:12,070 --> 00:18:16,540
was like a veritable
food storage place.

294
00:18:16,540 --> 00:18:21,490
Incidentally, as a sidelight,
when I came back after the war,

295
00:18:21,490 --> 00:18:24,800

I was told that
maybe half an hour

296
00:18:24,800 --> 00:18:30,190
or so after I left that place,
the Folkshdum turned up there,

297
00:18:30,190 --> 00:18:33,220
collected all males,
put them on trucks,

298
00:18:33,220 --> 00:18:35,600
and drove them out to the front.

299
00:18:35,600 --> 00:18:39,920
So I was spared having
to fight the Russians.

300
00:18:39,920 --> 00:18:44,020
And then I decided
I better get out--

301
00:18:44,020 --> 00:18:46,330
on the one hand, I
didn't want to get out

302
00:18:46,330 --> 00:18:50,600
of Berlin because I felt a
tremendous inner excitement.

303
00:18:50,600 --> 00:18:55,040
To see the fall of a
major capital which

304
00:18:55,040 --> 00:18:59,930
had a sort of
world-dominating role played

305
00:18:59,930 --> 00:19:03,620
was, to me, like, say,
witnessing the fall of Rome

306
00:19:03,620 --> 00:19:06,320

to the Germanic
tribes, whatever,

307
00:19:06,320 --> 00:19:11,720
2,000 years or so earlier, and
that filled me with excitement.

308
00:19:11,720 --> 00:19:15,320
But on the other
hand, I really felt

309
00:19:15,320 --> 00:19:20,390
that I wanted to spend these
hours with Margaret, and so I

310
00:19:20,390 --> 00:19:21,530
finally--

311
00:19:21,530 --> 00:19:25,190
what I did is I wrote
myself a marching order

312
00:19:25,190 --> 00:19:29,510
for the Folkshdum which said
that my battalion that I

313
00:19:29,510 --> 00:19:34,040
belonged to had to report
for duty in Potsdam, which--

314
00:19:34,040 --> 00:19:37,220
I had earlier
mentioned the suburb

315
00:19:37,220 --> 00:19:42,830
where Margaret and her
parents had found a place.

316
00:19:42,830 --> 00:19:47,420
And I put as much into
the knapsack as I could--

317
00:19:47,420 --> 00:19:49,910

I mean the most vulnerable things, of course,

318
00:19:49,910 --> 00:19:53,930
were the butter, and also,
the chunk of horse meat,

319
00:19:53,930 --> 00:19:56,720
and then a few other things.

320
00:19:56,720 --> 00:19:58,070
I forgot what it was.

321
00:19:58,070 --> 00:20:01,270
Anyway, it was a knapsack
just full with food,

322
00:20:01,270 --> 00:20:08,180
and by that time, also, the army
had taken over traffic control.

323
00:20:08,180 --> 00:20:10,520
And at each major
intersection, there

324
00:20:10,520 --> 00:20:13,490
were transportation
officers directing traffic.

325
00:20:13,490 --> 00:20:15,470
Of course, what there
was was the traffic

326
00:20:15,470 --> 00:20:19,940
was all military by that time,
military trucks, and jeeps,

327
00:20:19,940 --> 00:20:21,230
and this sort of thing.

328
00:20:21,230 --> 00:20:24,200
And there was a
major intersection

329
00:20:24,200 --> 00:20:27,770
near the house
where I lived, and I

330
00:20:27,770 --> 00:20:30,500
went up to the officer
in charge and told him

331
00:20:30,500 --> 00:20:33,440
that I had been ordered
to report to Potsdam

332
00:20:33,440 --> 00:20:37,400
and whether he knew whether
the highway to Potsdam

333
00:20:37,400 --> 00:20:40,970
was still open or whether
the Russians had cut it.

334
00:20:40,970 --> 00:20:43,280
By the way, the Russians
then were always

335
00:20:43,280 --> 00:20:48,860
referred to by their nickname,
Ivan, so Ivan in English.

336
00:20:48,860 --> 00:20:52,050
So that's how you
talked about them

337
00:20:52,050 --> 00:20:54,800
was the Ivan because
nobody really knew it,

338
00:20:54,800 --> 00:20:58,850
and the officer's answer
was that he knows only

339
00:20:58,850 --> 00:21:02,570
what goes on within

a radius as far as he

340
00:21:02,570 --> 00:21:04,300
can see in each direction.

341
00:21:04,300 --> 00:21:08,570
And he didn't-- it
was just total chaos,

342
00:21:08,570 --> 00:21:12,270
and those idiots were still
fighting and defending

343
00:21:12,270 --> 00:21:12,770
the city.

344
00:21:12,770 --> 00:21:15,230
And by the way, at each
of these intersections,

345
00:21:15,230 --> 00:21:20,300
like that also, there were
heavy guns put into place so

346
00:21:20,300 --> 00:21:23,330
that in case Russian
tanks would appear,

347
00:21:23,330 --> 00:21:26,870
they would immediately be
subject to heavy artillery

348
00:21:26,870 --> 00:21:29,600
fire.

349
00:21:29,600 --> 00:21:34,520
So anyway, I decided to see
whether I can get through

350
00:21:34,520 --> 00:21:35,240
to Potsdam.

351

00:21:35,240 --> 00:21:37,670
There were rumors that
the Russians had already

352
00:21:37,670 --> 00:21:40,070
cut that highway.

353
00:21:40,070 --> 00:21:44,060
And I got on my bike with my
marching orders and everything

354
00:21:44,060 --> 00:21:50,170
and set out, and that trip to
Potsdam was a major experience.

355
00:21:50,170 --> 00:21:52,730
The highway was mobbed.

356
00:21:52,730 --> 00:21:56,150
Potsdam was in a direction
sort of southwest of Berlin,

357
00:21:56,150 --> 00:21:59,360
and now they were sort of
away from the Eastern Front.

358
00:21:59,360 --> 00:22:03,170
And it was full with
people and all kinds.

359
00:22:03,170 --> 00:22:08,330
There were groups of allied
soldiers, British and French,

360
00:22:08,330 --> 00:22:10,550
who were obviously
prisoners of war

361
00:22:10,550 --> 00:22:13,190
and which you had seen
throughout the war

362
00:22:13,190 --> 00:22:17,660

always in groups but under
heavy German military guard.

363
00:22:17,660 --> 00:22:20,660
These guys-- they were
simply walking down there.

364
00:22:20,660 --> 00:22:23,300
Nobody even-- they were
part of the population.

365
00:22:23,300 --> 00:22:25,310
Nobody even gave
a damn that they

366
00:22:25,310 --> 00:22:29,870
were supposed to be under
German military guard.

367
00:22:29,870 --> 00:22:33,350
I suppose they were trying
to get home or something.

368
00:22:33,350 --> 00:22:34,970
There were foreign laborers.

369
00:22:34,970 --> 00:22:38,300
There were people who pushed
some belongings they wanted

370
00:22:38,300 --> 00:22:43,190
to save in baby carriages
or in little wagons

371
00:22:43,190 --> 00:22:46,140
that they pulled and
then now and then

372
00:22:46,140 --> 00:22:50,960
a fancy, big Mercedes with
a driver leaning on the horn

373
00:22:50,960 --> 00:22:54,890

to make way while slowly
making its way getting

374
00:22:54,890 --> 00:22:58,100
some big shot out of the
city before the Russians

375
00:22:58,100 --> 00:22:59,210
would take it.

376
00:22:59,210 --> 00:23:01,460
And then in the
midst of all of that,

377
00:23:01,460 --> 00:23:04,730
periodically, Russian
fighter planes

378
00:23:04,730 --> 00:23:09,500
would swoop down and rake the
street with machine gun fire.

379
00:23:09,500 --> 00:23:14,690
And then everybody, as if
blown away by the wind,

380
00:23:14,690 --> 00:23:16,700
would vanish to the
sides of the road--

381
00:23:16,700 --> 00:23:20,540
and they are sort of rain
water ditches on each side--

382
00:23:20,540 --> 00:23:24,590
and lay down there until
that danger was over

383
00:23:24,590 --> 00:23:27,590
and then get back up and walk.

384
00:23:27,590 --> 00:23:29,420
It was the most incredible--

385
00:23:29,420 --> 00:23:32,360

386
00:23:32,360 --> 00:23:33,440
I bicycled part.

387
00:23:33,440 --> 00:23:34,310
I pushed.

388
00:23:34,310 --> 00:23:37,190
There were some areas
where there was a--

389
00:23:37,190 --> 00:23:40,730
one area, I think, where
a water main was broken,

390
00:23:40,730 --> 00:23:44,270
and the water was
almost knee-high.

391
00:23:44,270 --> 00:23:46,070
So you had to wade through that.

392
00:23:46,070 --> 00:23:51,720

393
00:23:51,720 --> 00:23:55,930
And then finally, I
arrived at the bridge which

394
00:23:55,930 --> 00:23:59,770
connected Berlin to Potsdam.

395
00:23:59,770 --> 00:24:02,980
There was actually-- at the
Western outskirts of Berlin,

396
00:24:02,980 --> 00:24:06,850
there's a River Havel,
spelt exactly, by the way,

397
00:24:06,850 --> 00:24:11,050
the same way as the name of
the President of the Czech

398
00:24:11,050 --> 00:24:16,870
Republic, H-A-V-E-L. That
river also separates Berlin

399
00:24:16,870 --> 00:24:18,070
and Potsdam.

400
00:24:18,070 --> 00:24:21,350
There's a bridge
leading over it,

401
00:24:21,350 --> 00:24:24,340
and that's how you get them
from Berlin into Potsdam.

402
00:24:24,340 --> 00:24:28,030
The name of the bridge
is Glienicker Brücke,

403
00:24:28,030 --> 00:24:31,310
which became famous
several decades later,

404
00:24:31,310 --> 00:24:33,880
which I couldn't have known
at the time, of course.

405
00:24:33,880 --> 00:24:38,400
It's famous because that's where
often spies were exchanged--

406
00:24:38,400 --> 00:24:40,585
yeah, that was, of
course, West Berlin there,

407
00:24:40,585 --> 00:24:42,910
or it became later West Berlin.

408

00:24:42,910 --> 00:24:49,120
And among others, for example,
the Jewish Refusenik Anatoly

409

00:24:49,120 --> 00:24:55,600
Sharansky, now an Israeli
minister and Natan Sharansky,

410

00:24:55,600 --> 00:25:01,180
was exchanged there and
given freedom on that bridge.

411

00:25:01,180 --> 00:25:04,780
Well, anyway, that bridge I
saw already at the distance

412

00:25:04,780 --> 00:25:07,460
was completely--

413

00:25:07,460 --> 00:25:11,050
there was like a chain
across the bridge

414

00:25:11,050 --> 00:25:17,590
of SS checking carefully
everybody's papers,

415

00:25:17,590 --> 00:25:21,580
but I had my Folkshdum
ID and my marching orders

416

00:25:21,580 --> 00:25:23,590
to report to Potsdam.

417

00:25:23,590 --> 00:25:25,710
So I figured nothing can happen.

418

00:25:25,710 --> 00:25:30,490
I had in my breast
pocket, also, the gun

419

00:25:30,490 --> 00:25:34,420

which I had bought on the black
market through that janitor,

420
00:25:34,420 --> 00:25:36,940
but I was hoping not
to have to use it.

421
00:25:36,940 --> 00:25:41,170
And of course, there was
such a sea of humanity,

422
00:25:41,170 --> 00:25:43,510
they obviously didn't
really have the time anyway

423
00:25:43,510 --> 00:25:47,560
to do very thorough checks,
but they found my papers

424
00:25:47,560 --> 00:25:48,970
to be in order.

425
00:25:48,970 --> 00:25:54,190
And then I passed
through, and I had

426
00:25:54,190 --> 00:25:57,070
to still bicycle through
a major part of Potsdam

427
00:25:57,070 --> 00:26:02,860
because a [INAUDIBLE] where that
orangery building was located

428
00:26:02,860 --> 00:26:05,140
was on the other
side of Potsdam.

429
00:26:05,140 --> 00:26:07,510
And then I appeared, and
they had already almost

430
00:26:07,510 --> 00:26:11,110

given up hope that I would
be able to get out of Berlin.

431
00:26:11,110 --> 00:26:14,200
So that was the 22nd, but
I had still a lot of food

432
00:26:14,200 --> 00:26:19,070
left in the apartment,
so I decided

433
00:26:19,070 --> 00:26:23,960
the next day I ought to go back
and pick up some more food.

434
00:26:23,960 --> 00:26:29,620
And when I arrived at the
Glienicker Brücke to bicycle

435
00:26:29,620 --> 00:26:33,280
across, the commanding officer
told not just me but everybody

436
00:26:33,280 --> 00:26:36,560
else that Russians
were reported nearby.

437
00:26:36,560 --> 00:26:39,130
Oh, yeah, and of
course, all bridges

438
00:26:39,130 --> 00:26:45,550
had been supplied
with explosive charges

439
00:26:45,550 --> 00:26:49,000
so that at the approach
of Russian troops

440
00:26:49,000 --> 00:26:52,450
they would be blown up so that
they couldn't use the bridges.

441

00:26:52,450 --> 00:26:54,700
That was another
part of the insanity

442
00:26:54,700 --> 00:26:57,940
because while the Russians
could have used the bridge,

443
00:26:57,940 --> 00:27:01,930
these bridges also were part
of the German infrastructure,

444
00:27:01,930 --> 00:27:05,920
which, at that time, was
already almost totally destroyed

445
00:27:05,920 --> 00:27:09,940
and under those conditions,
with a lack of war materials

446
00:27:09,940 --> 00:27:15,400
and so on, wasn't easily
rebuilt a bullet in those days.

447
00:27:15,400 --> 00:27:21,370
But the Germans and
particularly the Nazi party

448
00:27:21,370 --> 00:27:25,300
were so fanatic
that they completely

449
00:27:25,300 --> 00:27:29,560
disregarded the needs of
their own population, even.

450
00:27:29,560 --> 00:27:33,070
But they had it coming.

451
00:27:33,070 --> 00:27:35,980
With all of that,
my thoughts always

452

00:27:35,980 --> 00:27:42,970
go back again to the
period of the deportations

453
00:27:42,970 --> 00:27:46,720
and how brutally the
Jews were treated,

454
00:27:46,720 --> 00:27:50,720
and nobody gave a damn about
them either at the time.

455
00:27:50,720 --> 00:27:54,460
And furthermore, I
didn't even know yet

456
00:27:54,460 --> 00:27:58,870
what had become of my parents
and everybody else who had been

457
00:27:58,870 --> 00:28:02,290
close to me or whom I had
known, and I was still

458
00:28:02,290 --> 00:28:10,810
hoping to see them back once
that whole thing was over.

459
00:28:10,810 --> 00:28:15,520
And I decided to go
across the bridge anyway,

460
00:28:15,520 --> 00:28:18,550
hoping that they wouldn't
dynamite it soon.

461
00:28:18,550 --> 00:28:27,330

462
00:28:27,330 --> 00:28:30,750
But then I was finally stopped.

463
00:28:30,750 --> 00:28:35,780

As I said, when I came to
Potsdam the day before,

464
00:28:35,780 --> 00:28:38,670
there was a place where
a water main had broken,

465
00:28:38,670 --> 00:28:41,050
and the water was
almost knee-high.

466
00:28:41,050 --> 00:28:44,130
Well, when the next day I
came back, it was even higher,

467
00:28:44,130 --> 00:28:46,980
and it was under a bridge.

468
00:28:46,980 --> 00:28:51,330
And it was practically
impossible to--

469
00:28:51,330 --> 00:28:54,120
you'd have to swim
across, and of course, I

470
00:28:54,120 --> 00:28:56,220
would have been
completely wet then.

471
00:28:56,220 --> 00:29:00,840
And anyway, I didn't have
the stomach to do it,

472
00:29:00,840 --> 00:29:03,160
and how would I have
taken the bike through it?

473
00:29:03,160 --> 00:29:08,430
So I just returned
without having

474
00:29:08,430 --> 00:29:10,530

been able to get
into the city again.

475
00:29:10,530 --> 00:29:13,590

476
00:29:13,590 --> 00:29:16,890
There was constant artillery
bombardment, of course.

477
00:29:16,890 --> 00:29:19,170
The 22nd by that time was over.

478
00:29:19,170 --> 00:29:21,390
That was the day
when I went out.

479
00:29:21,390 --> 00:29:24,570
The day where I made the
unsuccessful attempt to return

480
00:29:24,570 --> 00:29:28,540
was the 23rd, so
that is over now.

481
00:29:28,540 --> 00:29:30,345
Then there were several days--

482
00:29:30,345 --> 00:29:33,510

483
00:29:33,510 --> 00:29:42,000
there were several days of
fighting, and finally, on the--

484
00:29:42,000 --> 00:29:45,390
and finally, yeah, what
we had to do, also, is--

485
00:29:45,390 --> 00:29:49,440
we finally decided-- we meaning
all of the people who lived

486

00:29:49,440 --> 00:29:51,240

there as refugees--

487

00:29:51,240 --> 00:29:53,700

to transfer to the basement.

488

00:29:53,700 --> 00:29:58,260

There was a huge basement that
was full of simple benches

489

00:29:58,260 --> 00:30:02,310

and, actually, no
electricity, only some candles

490

00:30:02,310 --> 00:30:03,940

we had occasionally.

491

00:30:03,940 --> 00:30:10,690

And we just sort of hoped to
wait out the worst danger.

492

00:30:10,690 --> 00:30:17,660

On the 27th of April,
there was still no change.

493

00:30:17,660 --> 00:30:20,830

There was still
artillery rumble,

494

00:30:20,830 --> 00:30:23,300

but we didn't know
what was going on.

495

00:30:23,300 --> 00:30:27,660

So I decided I ought to
go out, and look, and see

496

00:30:27,660 --> 00:30:32,500

what's the situation as
I went out and didn't see

497

00:30:32,500 --> 00:30:37,570

a soul until I finally
saw a man in what looked

498
00:30:37,570 --> 00:30:43,090
to me like the uniform of an
engineering-- the German army

499
00:30:43,090 --> 00:30:48,670
had engineering
battalions which had

500
00:30:48,670 --> 00:30:53,320
brownish-type uniforms,
which were used in support

501
00:30:53,320 --> 00:30:58,540
of the troops to build,
quickly, bridges over rivers

502
00:30:58,540 --> 00:31:01,640
and things like that.

503
00:31:01,640 --> 00:31:08,370
And so I shouted at
the guy and wanted

504
00:31:08,370 --> 00:31:12,440
to know whether he
knew where Ivan is.

505
00:31:12,440 --> 00:31:16,780
His response was to
point his gun at me,

506
00:31:16,780 --> 00:31:19,690
and shout back at
me in a language

507
00:31:19,690 --> 00:31:25,480
that I had never heard before,
and run toward me as I stood

508
00:31:25,480 --> 00:31:27,820

there with my raised arms.

509

00:31:27,820 --> 00:31:32,650

And then he grabbed my
left arm, saw the watch,

510

00:31:32,650 --> 00:31:36,250

gave it a strong jerk,
pulled the watch off,

511

00:31:36,250 --> 00:31:38,630

and vanished again.

512

00:31:38,630 --> 00:31:43,340

So from that I knew that
the Russians had arrived,

513

00:31:43,340 --> 00:31:45,580

which I related downstairs.

514

00:31:45,580 --> 00:31:49,600

And from then on,
we frequently were

515

00:31:49,600 --> 00:31:53,260

visited by Russians
who came down there.

516

00:31:53,260 --> 00:31:57,110

They were interested
only in two things.

517

00:31:57,110 --> 00:32:01,510

One was women, and the other one
was possessions of any value.

518

00:32:01,510 --> 00:32:07,540

They took everybody's watches,
of course, and other valuables,

519

00:32:07,540 --> 00:32:13,750

and many women were taken not
just once, but innumerable

520
00:32:13,750 --> 00:32:14,250
times.

521
00:32:14,250 --> 00:32:16,990

522
00:32:16,990 --> 00:32:20,510
And so that went
on for a day or two

523
00:32:20,510 --> 00:32:27,280
and, of course, caused everyone
to be totally demoralized.

524
00:32:27,280 --> 00:32:30,850
And then I think
on the second day

525
00:32:30,850 --> 00:32:36,580
or so there was an artillery
unit actually stationed

526
00:32:36,580 --> 00:32:39,970
in front of the
orangery building.

527
00:32:39,970 --> 00:32:42,340
Fighting was still going
on in the neighborhood,

528
00:32:42,340 --> 00:32:46,810
and that artillery unit was
under the command of a colonel

529
00:32:46,810 --> 00:32:51,250
who made a more
educated impression than

530
00:32:51,250 --> 00:32:54,310
the run-of-the-mill Russian
soldiers and in particular,

531
00:32:54,310 --> 00:32:56,740
he spoke fairly fluent German.

532
00:32:56,740 --> 00:33:00,730
And so Margaret's
father went up to him,

533
00:33:00,730 --> 00:33:05,590
and introduced himself, and
told him that we are Jews.

534
00:33:05,590 --> 00:33:08,170
That's the first Russian
word that I learned.

535
00:33:08,170 --> 00:33:12,520
Jew means yevrey in Russian.

536
00:33:12,520 --> 00:33:16,180
And we were treated
just like the Germans,

537
00:33:16,180 --> 00:33:18,460
even though we had
suffered under them,

538
00:33:18,460 --> 00:33:20,470
just the same with the Russians.

539
00:33:20,470 --> 00:33:25,150
So the coronel pulled
out a piece of paper

540
00:33:25,150 --> 00:33:28,270
and wrote something
down in Russian

541
00:33:28,270 --> 00:33:35,140
and said, in the future,
Russians sort of tried

542
00:33:35,140 --> 00:33:40,690

to attack us or molest
us, to show that paper.

543
00:33:40,690 --> 00:33:45,260
And then he got orders
to move on, which he did.

544
00:33:45,260 --> 00:33:50,890
And then, now, unbeknownst
to me, also, by the way,

545
00:33:50,890 --> 00:33:53,720
the Russian
commander in the area

546
00:33:53,720 --> 00:33:59,300
had called on all German
forces to surrender.

547
00:33:59,300 --> 00:34:04,220
And furthermore-- in
that order, also--

548
00:34:04,220 --> 00:34:08,270
had declared that
any German who tries

549
00:34:08,270 --> 00:34:14,030
to evade-- any German soldier
who tries to evade captivity

550
00:34:14,030 --> 00:34:17,210
by putting on
civilian clothes will

551
00:34:17,210 --> 00:34:20,449
be treated by the
Soviet armed forces

552
00:34:20,449 --> 00:34:22,760
exactly the same way
as he would have been

553

00:34:22,760 --> 00:34:26,272
treated by the German forces.

554
00:34:26,272 --> 00:34:28,230
And as the German--
because the German forces--

555
00:34:28,230 --> 00:34:31,409
I mean that was already
going on for a month.

556
00:34:31,409 --> 00:34:38,480
Any deserter was, after a brief,
cursory so-called "military

557
00:34:38,480 --> 00:34:42,530
tribunal" was immediately
hung from a tree

558
00:34:42,530 --> 00:34:45,679
and with a sign
around his neck, "I

559
00:34:45,679 --> 00:34:50,780
am too much of a coward
to fight for my country

560
00:34:50,780 --> 00:34:57,660
and for our women and children"
and something of that nature.

561
00:34:57,660 --> 00:35:02,300
In other words, what it meant
is that if a German civilian was

562
00:35:02,300 --> 00:35:06,200
found, he could be immediately
executed by the Russians

563
00:35:06,200 --> 00:35:10,190
because he would interpret that
as the guy being a deserter

564

00:35:10,190 --> 00:35:14,240
trying to evade captivity.

565
00:35:14,240 --> 00:35:18,240
So I was out on that
day, and that was,

566
00:35:18,240 --> 00:35:20,740
what, I think a day
after that colonel came,

567
00:35:20,740 --> 00:35:23,630
either the same day
later or the next day.

568
00:35:23,630 --> 00:35:30,320
And again, a Russian soldier
was in the neighborhood.

569
00:35:30,320 --> 00:35:35,060
As soon as he saw me,
he pointed his gun at me

570
00:35:35,060 --> 00:35:37,325
and pointed me toward a tree.

571
00:35:37,325 --> 00:35:39,500
As I said, it was
in a park there.

572
00:35:39,500 --> 00:35:44,150
And I saw immediately that
he was going to execute me,

573
00:35:44,150 --> 00:35:49,010
so I shouted down into the
basement for Margaret's father

574
00:35:49,010 --> 00:35:53,180
to come up because he had that
paper that the Russian colonel

575
00:35:53,180 --> 00:35:54,890

had given him in Russian.

576

00:35:54,890 --> 00:35:58,460

And he came running up
and handed the paper

577

00:35:58,460 --> 00:36:00,140

to that Russian soldier.

578

00:36:00,140 --> 00:36:03,020

He looked at it and
made a motion with it

579

00:36:03,020 --> 00:36:12,080

as if he was wiping his rear
end with it, put it in his fist,

580

00:36:12,080 --> 00:36:14,330

and crumbled it up,
and threw it away,

581

00:36:14,330 --> 00:36:16,940

and told him to wait there, too.

582

00:36:16,940 --> 00:36:20,520

Then I stood at the tree
while he aimed at me,

583

00:36:20,520 --> 00:36:24,230

and at that moment, the
only thing I could think of

584

00:36:24,230 --> 00:36:29,030

is, I survived the Nazis,
and now I end up like this.

585

00:36:29,030 --> 00:36:33,800

And I could hear the
click of the trigger,

586

00:36:33,800 --> 00:36:34,850

but nothing came out.

587

00:36:34,850 --> 00:36:38,780

And he did that two or three times, and then he got mad

588

00:36:38,780 --> 00:36:41,840

and sort of threw his gun on the floor

589

00:36:41,840 --> 00:36:46,550

and shouted to me in Russian, which I didn't understand,

590

00:36:46,550 --> 00:36:48,470

and pointing at the tree where it obviously

591

00:36:48,470 --> 00:36:51,410

meant that I should wait for him there at the three

592

00:36:51,410 --> 00:36:54,410

to be shot when he comes back with a different gun.

593

00:36:54,410 --> 00:36:58,620

And of course, then Margaret's father and I--

594

00:36:58,620 --> 00:37:03,000

we immediately ran-- there were some bushes not too far away--

595

00:37:03,000 --> 00:37:05,540

and hid right at the bottom there.

596

00:37:05,540 --> 00:37:07,100

And it wasn't long--

597

00:37:07,100 --> 00:37:09,920

I don't know, maybe five minutes, maybe less--

598

00:37:09,920 --> 00:37:15,290

when he came back, and
you heard him shout.

599

00:37:15,290 --> 00:37:19,040

And I was just
sweating with fear

600

00:37:19,040 --> 00:37:21,650

because it wouldn't be
long until he found us.

601

00:37:21,650 --> 00:37:26,750

And all we heard is
he kept shouting,

602

00:37:26,750 --> 00:37:31,820

and then new voices
appeared, more voices,

603

00:37:31,820 --> 00:37:33,430

which, since we
didn't know Russian,

604

00:37:33,430 --> 00:37:36,140

I don't know what all
these voices were saying.

605

00:37:36,140 --> 00:37:38,300

But apparently
they had to move on

606

00:37:38,300 --> 00:37:41,480

because the voices became
more and more distant

607

00:37:41,480 --> 00:37:46,130

and then finally ceased, but
we decided that maybe the guy

608

00:37:46,130 --> 00:37:48,620

is just lying in wait for us.

609

00:37:48,620 --> 00:37:53,660

So we waited there for at
least an hour if not more,

610

00:37:53,660 --> 00:37:57,800

and I was completely silent
until we were sure that he

611

00:37:57,800 --> 00:37:58,970

really had left the area.

612

00:37:58,970 --> 00:38:09,260

613

00:38:09,260 --> 00:38:13,520

This is tape two, side B
of an interview with Ernest

614

00:38:13,520 --> 00:38:22,260

Fontheim on June 4, 1997.

615

00:38:22,260 --> 00:38:24,270

So we finally
emerged from there,

616

00:38:24,270 --> 00:38:27,600

and there was not a soul around.

617

00:38:27,600 --> 00:38:29,820

Then we went back
into the basement,

618

00:38:29,820 --> 00:38:33,320

and there was a
tremendous shot of relief.

619

00:38:33,320 --> 00:38:35,850

Apparently downstairs
somebody must

620

00:38:35,850 --> 00:38:40,140

have seen the Russian soldier

pointing his gun at me,

621

00:38:40,140 --> 00:38:44,220
so the rumor had spread that
both of us had been shot.

622

00:38:44,220 --> 00:38:50,190
And so when we appeared alive,
obviously the joy was great.

623

00:38:50,190 --> 00:38:59,010
So then finally came the 1st of
May, 1945, and the 1st of May,

624

00:38:59,010 --> 00:39:04,880
of course, is a big Russian
holiday, a Soviet holiday,

625

00:39:04,880 --> 00:39:06,300
and it was for the soldiers.

626

00:39:06,300 --> 00:39:13,320
By that time, things had quieted
down a little bit, although not

627

00:39:13,320 --> 00:39:17,750
too much, and a large group
of soldiers visited us.

628

00:39:17,750 --> 00:39:20,980
It somehow spread around
that Margaret's father, who

629

00:39:20,980 --> 00:39:24,330
was in general very
handy, was also very good

630

00:39:24,330 --> 00:39:29,130
in some simple dressing up
wounds and things like that,

631

00:39:29,130 --> 00:39:33,180
and we had, of course,

for our own purposes

632
00:39:33,180 --> 00:39:35,800
all kinds of medical supplies.

633
00:39:35,800 --> 00:39:38,430
And there were some
soldiers who had--

634
00:39:38,430 --> 00:39:40,200
I don't know what
it was anymore,

635
00:39:40,200 --> 00:39:41,910
some open flesh wounds somehow.

636
00:39:41,910 --> 00:39:44,340
And anyway, he treated them.

637
00:39:44,340 --> 00:39:48,150
And then that was also a
piano around for some reason,

638
00:39:48,150 --> 00:39:49,950
and he played the piano.

639
00:39:49,950 --> 00:39:55,290
And to celebrate them,
he played the song

640
00:39:55,290 --> 00:40:00,090
"The Internationale" which is
the international Communist

641
00:40:00,090 --> 00:40:01,380
Party song.

642
00:40:01,380 --> 00:40:03,840
And that made them
all very happy,

643
00:40:03,840 --> 00:40:06,960

and they became
somewhat friendly.

644
00:40:06,960 --> 00:40:09,850
And then I remember
one soldier--

645
00:40:09,850 --> 00:40:13,890
he was a giant of a guy--

646
00:40:13,890 --> 00:40:21,510
pulling out of a dirty pocket
some equally dirty photographs

647
00:40:21,510 --> 00:40:26,970
of obviously family pictures,
wife, children, or something.

648
00:40:26,970 --> 00:40:33,630
And with some tears
streaming down his face,

649
00:40:33,630 --> 00:40:40,500
he said they were all
killed by the Germans,

650
00:40:40,500 --> 00:40:45,960
and then after a
while, they said

651
00:40:45,960 --> 00:40:49,590
they needed all of the
women to come along.

652
00:40:49,590 --> 00:40:53,010
And so obviously we were
very uneasy about that,

653
00:40:53,010 --> 00:40:57,990
and then we said
what they wanted--

654
00:40:57,990 --> 00:41:01,110

there was very difficult
communication, obviously.

655
00:41:01,110 --> 00:41:04,020
None of us spoke
Russian, and they only

656
00:41:04,020 --> 00:41:07,440
knew sort of a smattering
of some German words.

657
00:41:07,440 --> 00:41:11,790
Anyway, it turned
out they had nearby

658
00:41:11,790 --> 00:41:17,010
some battalion or
regiment camped,

659
00:41:17,010 --> 00:41:19,860
and to prepare for
their meal, they

660
00:41:19,860 --> 00:41:22,500
needed people to peel potatoes.

661
00:41:22,500 --> 00:41:27,640
And so we immediately-- all of
our males volunteered to go,

662
00:41:27,640 --> 00:41:31,398
and so they took the women
and the men along to about--

663
00:41:31,398 --> 00:41:31,940
I don't know.

664
00:41:31,940 --> 00:41:35,400
It wasn't far away, a
quarter of a mile or so--

665
00:41:35,400 --> 00:41:37,740
where they were camped

and put us down.

666
00:41:37,740 --> 00:41:40,380
And they had piles
and piles of potatoes,

667
00:41:40,380 --> 00:41:42,970
and so we peeled
potatoes for them.

668
00:41:42,970 --> 00:41:45,330
And in fact, they
had discovered,

669
00:41:45,330 --> 00:41:49,020
apparently, somewhere
a storage shed

670
00:41:49,020 --> 00:41:54,610
that was full with potatoes,
and they needed more from there.

671
00:41:54,610 --> 00:41:57,660
One of the Russian soldiers
took Margaret's father along

672
00:41:57,660 --> 00:42:01,230
to help him carry them
in a sack or something,

673
00:42:01,230 --> 00:42:04,110
and when they opened
the door of the shed,

674
00:42:04,110 --> 00:42:08,180
the first thing before they
even saw the potatoes--

675
00:42:08,180 --> 00:42:10,650
there was a dead
German woman lying,

676
00:42:10,650 --> 00:42:14,610

so the soldiers just kicked
her away was his foot

677
00:42:14,610 --> 00:42:17,370
and said something
like kaput, which is

678
00:42:17,370 --> 00:42:20,550
a German word for broken down.

679
00:42:20,550 --> 00:42:25,860
And then they gathered the
potatoes and brought them back,

680
00:42:25,860 --> 00:42:28,860
and then we peeled potatoes.

681
00:42:28,860 --> 00:42:31,320
And then we were actually
taken back by them.

682
00:42:31,320 --> 00:42:34,050
Oh, while we peeled
the potatoes,

683
00:42:34,050 --> 00:42:36,060
they had accordion
players there.

684
00:42:36,060 --> 00:42:39,700
They played the accordion and
sang songs, so for a while,

685
00:42:39,700 --> 00:42:41,820
it became even
somewhat romantic.

686
00:42:41,820 --> 00:42:46,170
And they also gave us
some meat dishes to eat,

687
00:42:46,170 --> 00:42:50,430
which was hearty and even if

not exactly gourmet style.

688
00:42:50,430 --> 00:42:53,060
But we were always
hungry in those days

689
00:42:53,060 --> 00:42:56,370
and would have eaten anything.

690
00:42:56,370 --> 00:43:02,280
And then we were taken back
by them again to the orangery

691
00:43:02,280 --> 00:43:03,810
where we all stayed.

692
00:43:03,810 --> 00:43:06,990
But there were also, still,
less pleasant incidents,

693
00:43:06,990 --> 00:43:12,850
and robberies, and so on,
so a day or two later,

694
00:43:12,850 --> 00:43:19,000
I decided that we need, really,
some more firm protection

695
00:43:19,000 --> 00:43:21,750
and that by now,
since the city--

696
00:43:21,750 --> 00:43:23,910
there was no more
fighting, even nearby.

697
00:43:23,910 --> 00:43:31,200
There must be a city
commander, and so I got out

698
00:43:31,200 --> 00:43:33,480
and said that I will
try to find where

699

00:43:33,480 --> 00:43:37,560
the commander is and see whether
we can get some protection.

700

00:43:37,560 --> 00:43:40,790
And of course, I had no idea--

701

00:43:40,790 --> 00:43:44,010
the city picture
was totally changed.

702

00:43:44,010 --> 00:43:48,450
A few days before, the last
time I walked in the city,

703

00:43:48,450 --> 00:43:51,780
it was full with
Nazi Party uniforms,

704

00:43:51,780 --> 00:43:55,510
SS, Wehrmacht uniforms.

705

00:43:55,510 --> 00:43:59,200
All of that has vanished as
if swallowed up by the Earth,

706

00:43:59,200 --> 00:44:02,080
and all one saw was
Russian uniforms.

707

00:44:02,080 --> 00:44:05,950
And the traffic was
the traffic police.

708

00:44:05,950 --> 00:44:10,960
They were all women, usually
very hefty-looking women.

709

00:44:10,960 --> 00:44:14,050
The most prominent
feature-- they were all

710
00:44:14,050 --> 00:44:18,070
unbelievably heavily
bosomed, and they

711
00:44:18,070 --> 00:44:22,910
carried two colored
sticks, I remember,

712
00:44:22,910 --> 00:44:25,840
I think one red, one
yellow, which they waved

713
00:44:25,840 --> 00:44:28,590
and some prescribed
form with the left hand

714
00:44:28,590 --> 00:44:30,970
and with the right
hand, indicating

715
00:44:30,970 --> 00:44:34,210
which direction could move
and which had to hold.

716
00:44:34,210 --> 00:44:38,410
And actually, they did it in a
very snappy military fashion.

717
00:44:38,410 --> 00:44:42,280
I enjoyed, actually,
looking on, just seeing

718
00:44:42,280 --> 00:44:45,760
them perform these duties.

719
00:44:45,760 --> 00:44:49,780
Now, in the meantime,
in order to find

720
00:44:49,780 --> 00:44:52,720
where the kommandatura was--

721

00:44:52,720 --> 00:44:57,500
kommandatura is a Russian word,
actually, meaning the command

722
00:44:57,500 --> 00:45:01,120
office for the city commander.

723
00:45:01,120 --> 00:45:04,610
And I was always pointed
in some direction,

724
00:45:04,610 --> 00:45:07,120
so I just kept going
in the direction

725
00:45:07,120 --> 00:45:10,720
that I was pointed
at until I arrived

726
00:45:10,720 --> 00:45:13,840
in front of a huge villa.

727
00:45:13,840 --> 00:45:20,410
And that villa was beleaguered,
actually, by two huge throngs.

728
00:45:20,410 --> 00:45:24,280
As I found out in a
minute, one were Germans,

729
00:45:24,280 --> 00:45:26,500
and the other one
were foreigners,

730
00:45:26,500 --> 00:45:28,900
practically all of
them forced laborers

731
00:45:28,900 --> 00:45:33,280
who had been deported to Germany
and who obviously went there

732
00:45:33,280 --> 00:45:37,570

for help in trying to get
back to their home countries.

733
00:45:37,570 --> 00:45:41,910
They were Frenchmen,
Belgians, Poles, everyone.

734
00:45:41,910 --> 00:45:46,120
And the other
throng were Germans.

735
00:45:46,120 --> 00:45:50,680
The one person I remember
was a German medical officer

736
00:45:50,680 --> 00:45:55,880
who was in charge of the
local military hospital

737
00:45:55,880 --> 00:45:58,720
where the Russians
left him in charge.

738
00:45:58,720 --> 00:46:01,450
These were all soldiers
with fairly heavy wounds.

739
00:46:01,450 --> 00:46:06,250
He came to complain that his
nurses were being constantly

740
00:46:06,250 --> 00:46:09,520
raped and therefore could
not fulfill their duties

741
00:46:09,520 --> 00:46:11,830
to the patients.

742
00:46:11,830 --> 00:46:16,090
And I decided immediately not
to identify myself as a German,

743
00:46:16,090 --> 00:46:18,190

so I stood with the
foreign laborers.

744
00:46:18,190 --> 00:46:21,940
Oh, yeah, I forgot
to mention, also,

745
00:46:21,940 --> 00:46:24,790
when we left that
village overnight,

746
00:46:24,790 --> 00:46:30,880
we had taken along also
all our real identification

747
00:46:30,880 --> 00:46:35,320
because obviously we knew
the war would end within days

748
00:46:35,320 --> 00:46:39,580
or weeks, that we could then
establish our true identities.

749
00:46:39,580 --> 00:46:43,480
And among other things, I
also had saved my Jewish star,

750
00:46:43,480 --> 00:46:48,310
which I then put on,
and as I said-- and I

751
00:46:48,310 --> 00:46:51,640
waited there together
with all the foreigners.

752
00:46:51,640 --> 00:46:56,420
And so it was, of
course, a slow process,

753
00:46:56,420 --> 00:46:58,040
so finally, it was my turn.

754
00:46:58,040 --> 00:47:05,000

I was ushered in, and I was
in some sort of a front room,

755
00:47:05,000 --> 00:47:09,510
entry room, a waiting room,
whatever, and was told to wait.

756
00:47:09,510 --> 00:47:13,220
And then one from
behind it, apparently,

757
00:47:13,220 --> 00:47:15,890
was the real office,
and then one officer

758
00:47:15,890 --> 00:47:19,010
came and took a look at
me with that star and sort

759
00:47:19,010 --> 00:47:22,250
of shouted something
in Russian to the back.

760
00:47:22,250 --> 00:47:28,340
And then an officer with more
stars and so on, who seemed

761
00:47:28,340 --> 00:47:32,810
to be the commander, came
out-- he was a short, stocky,

762
00:47:32,810 --> 00:47:34,160
heavysset guy--

763
00:47:34,160 --> 00:47:40,680
took one look at me, and then
asked me in fairly good German,

764
00:47:40,680 --> 00:47:41,870
you're a Jew?

765
00:47:41,870 --> 00:47:49,850
And I said yes, and then he went

toward me, embraced me, and--

766

00:47:49,850 --> 00:47:53,600

sorry-- told me that

I was the first Jew

767

00:47:53,600 --> 00:47:57,530

whom we saw in weeks or months.

768

00:47:57,530 --> 00:48:00,249

There was no Jew left anywhere.

769

00:48:00,249 --> 00:48:06,760

770

00:48:06,760 --> 00:48:13,000

Then he asked me in his

office, and sat down,

771

00:48:13,000 --> 00:48:18,700

and told me to tell him how

come that I wasn't killed.

772

00:48:18,700 --> 00:48:22,120

So I briefly told him

what had happened to me

773

00:48:22,120 --> 00:48:26,330

and also that I was

actually together

774

00:48:26,330 --> 00:48:29,110

with a family of friends

and that we needed

775

00:48:29,110 --> 00:48:31,300

some personal protection.

776

00:48:31,300 --> 00:48:38,140

And then he told me I

should, as soon as possible,

777

00:48:38,140 --> 00:48:39,490
bring the whole family.

778
00:48:39,490 --> 00:48:42,460
He wants to meet him.

779
00:48:42,460 --> 00:48:44,930
Oh, and of course--

780
00:48:44,930 --> 00:48:45,430
I forgot.

781
00:48:45,430 --> 00:48:50,140
His name was Major Shike, and
of course, he was a Jew himself.

782
00:48:50,140 --> 00:48:58,490

783
00:48:58,490 --> 00:49:01,300
So yeah, the only thing, then--

784
00:49:01,300 --> 00:49:03,830
before I left, he
asked me-- he said

785
00:49:03,830 --> 00:49:08,060
he wants to keep my
yellow star as a souvenir,

786
00:49:08,060 --> 00:49:11,150
so I gladly gave that to him.

787
00:49:11,150 --> 00:49:13,680
And then I went
back, and I forgot.

788
00:49:13,680 --> 00:49:16,750
These are the same
day or the next day.

789
00:49:16,750 --> 00:49:21,770

All four of us went there
and met Major Shike again,

790
00:49:21,770 --> 00:49:25,670
and he awards us a piece
of paper in Russian.

791
00:49:25,670 --> 00:49:28,310
That one was not
thrown away by anyone.

792
00:49:28,310 --> 00:49:31,850
In fact, I still have
it among my souvenirs,

793
00:49:31,850 --> 00:49:34,520
and in fact, I never
knew what it really said.

794
00:49:34,520 --> 00:49:39,750
And of course, with the Russian
immigration to this country

795
00:49:39,750 --> 00:49:42,470
here during the
last decade or so,

796
00:49:42,470 --> 00:49:45,110
we made some Russian
friends in Ann Arbor,

797
00:49:45,110 --> 00:49:49,010
and I had that guy
translate it to me

798
00:49:49,010 --> 00:49:52,970
for the first time, what,
40 years after Major Shike

799
00:49:52,970 --> 00:49:54,140
gave it to me.

800
00:49:54,140 --> 00:50:01,310

And it simply said that
every possible protection is

801
00:50:01,310 --> 00:50:03,890
to be given to the [INAUDIBLE].

802
00:50:03,890 --> 00:50:05,280
He wrote it in one word.

803
00:50:05,280 --> 00:50:07,310
I guess he didn't
realize that it

804
00:50:07,310 --> 00:50:09,200
was a first and the last name--

805
00:50:09,200 --> 00:50:14,810
family and also
that we are supposed

806
00:50:14,810 --> 00:50:17,210
to be supplied
generously with food.

807
00:50:17,210 --> 00:50:21,680
Oh, yeah, he told us also
that the Soviet army was soon

808
00:50:21,680 --> 00:50:26,270
going to start handing out
food to the population,

809
00:50:26,270 --> 00:50:29,870
and there will be very
small, restrictive rations,

810
00:50:29,870 --> 00:50:34,860
like so many grams of
bread, and this, and that.

811
00:50:34,860 --> 00:50:37,430
And so there will
also be long lines,

812
00:50:37,430 --> 00:50:40,260
but with that piece of
paper, first of all,

813
00:50:40,260 --> 00:50:41,910
we did not have
to stand in line,

814
00:50:41,910 --> 00:50:44,930
but we could right
away go to the counter.

815
00:50:44,930 --> 00:50:48,710
And also, we should
buy whatever we

816
00:50:48,710 --> 00:50:52,040
sought or needed to buy
and regardless of what

817
00:50:52,040 --> 00:50:55,260
the official nations are.

818
00:50:55,260 --> 00:50:58,200
And you can imagine the pride.

819
00:50:58,200 --> 00:51:02,940
After years of being
always kicked to the back,

820
00:51:02,940 --> 00:51:06,390
now we could go to the
front, and the Germans

821
00:51:06,390 --> 00:51:09,430
had to stay behind and wait.

822
00:51:09,430 --> 00:51:14,455
And so that went on for--

823
00:51:14,455 --> 00:51:17,710

824
00:51:17,710 --> 00:51:20,770
then our life got much
better, and we were not

825
00:51:20,770 --> 00:51:22,360
molested anymore.

826
00:51:22,360 --> 00:51:23,800
But the next thing
was, of course,

827
00:51:23,800 --> 00:51:30,170
he wanted to get back
to Berlin, and so I

828
00:51:30,170 --> 00:51:34,280
guess we had to find out whether
there's a suburban railroad

829
00:51:34,280 --> 00:51:37,940
line going from
Potsdam to Berlin.

830
00:51:37,940 --> 00:51:42,620
And so I suggested I go to
the railroad station, which

831
00:51:42,620 --> 00:51:44,330
was also several miles--

832
00:51:44,330 --> 00:51:48,500
that castle was somewhat
out of town of Potsdam--

833
00:51:48,500 --> 00:51:49,980
and to check the
railroad station

834
00:51:49,980 --> 00:51:52,190
and where the trains are going.

835

00:51:52,190 --> 00:51:55,400

And when I got to
the railroad station,

836

00:51:55,400 --> 00:52:00,500

it was an incredible
picture of destruction.

837

00:52:00,500 --> 00:52:03,660

Somebody should have painted
or at least photographed it.

838

00:52:03,660 --> 00:52:06,620

But of course, in those days,
we didn't have a camera,

839

00:52:06,620 --> 00:52:08,960

and I didn't have a
talent for a painter.

840

00:52:08,960 --> 00:52:13,490

But the railroad--
there was hardly

841

00:52:13,490 --> 00:52:16,520

any railroad car that was
standing on its wheels.

842

00:52:16,520 --> 00:52:18,410

They were laying on their sides.

843

00:52:18,410 --> 00:52:20,480

There were bomb
craters all over,

844

00:52:20,480 --> 00:52:24,530

and one locomotive
apparently, due to some force

845

00:52:24,530 --> 00:52:30,200

of some explosion, was standing
on its heads, on the front end,

846

00:52:30,200 --> 00:52:36,930

with the wheels on the side,
a totally grotesque picture.

847

00:52:36,930 --> 00:52:41,660

And wires were hanging,
and single lights

848

00:52:41,660 --> 00:52:44,330

were dangling down
or overturned.

849

00:52:44,330 --> 00:52:48,470

I mean you had to take one look
and know not only that nothing

850

00:52:48,470 --> 00:52:51,170

is running now but
nothing would be

851

00:52:51,170 --> 00:52:55,980

running for weeks, probably,
or months, or longer.

852

00:52:55,980 --> 00:53:01,580

So I walked back to give that
report, and on the way back,

853

00:53:01,580 --> 00:53:06,050

along one of the streets
I saw a sizable group

854

00:53:06,050 --> 00:53:12,710

of Germans coming under
guard by two Russians,

855

00:53:12,710 --> 00:53:16,310

one Russian in front with a
gun over the shoulder and one

856

00:53:16,310 --> 00:53:18,900

Russian behind.

857

00:53:18,900 --> 00:53:23,220

And they were wearing not
the usual army uniform.

858

00:53:23,220 --> 00:53:25,350

It looked similar
to the army uniform,

859

00:53:25,350 --> 00:53:29,580

except that their
military hats were green.

860

00:53:29,580 --> 00:53:34,560

And these were actually
the NKVD troops,

861

00:53:34,560 --> 00:53:39,360

which-- they were the forerunner
of what later became KGB.

862

00:53:39,360 --> 00:53:46,710

And so I walked along,
and they came toward me.

863

00:53:46,710 --> 00:53:53,280

And as they passed me,
the soldier in front

864

00:53:53,280 --> 00:53:59,190

asked me for my papers,
and I had my Jewish ID.

865

00:53:59,190 --> 00:54:03,240

And naively I thought the
guy knows immediately that--

866

00:54:03,240 --> 00:54:04,170

it didn't say "Jew."

867

00:54:04,170 --> 00:54:06,900

It just has a J
printed on top of it.

868

00:54:06,900 --> 00:54:08,620

And furthermore,
of course, it was

869

00:54:08,620 --> 00:54:13,830

in Roman letter which are used
in German and not in Cyrillic,

870

00:54:13,830 --> 00:54:15,210

which the Russians use.

871

00:54:15,210 --> 00:54:20,760

Anyway, he didn't
even look at the ID.

872

00:54:20,760 --> 00:54:23,910

He took the ID, put it
in his uniform pocket,

873

00:54:23,910 --> 00:54:27,690

and told me only a few
words he knew in German.

874

00:54:27,690 --> 00:54:29,430

One of them was come.

875

00:54:29,430 --> 00:54:30,840

It means come.

876

00:54:30,840 --> 00:54:36,750

And then I tried to
tell him that ya yevrey,

877

00:54:36,750 --> 00:54:40,350

and he just waved me off.

878

00:54:40,350 --> 00:54:44,850

So then I suddenly found
myself a prisoner of the NKVD,

879

00:54:44,850 --> 00:54:46,650

and we walked for

several blocks.

880
00:54:46,650 --> 00:54:49,800
And I noticed it
seemed totally random.

881
00:54:49,800 --> 00:54:53,910
There were some Germans whom
we let pass by and then,

882
00:54:53,910 --> 00:54:56,220
again, one he would take along.

883
00:54:56,220 --> 00:55:01,590
I couldn't figure out what, if
any, principle governed his--

884
00:55:01,590 --> 00:55:05,070
and by now, having seen the
Russians operate, I'm sure

885
00:55:05,070 --> 00:55:08,700
it was random, that there
was no principle involved.

886
00:55:08,700 --> 00:55:13,020
So anyway, we finally stopped
at a large villa which

887
00:55:13,020 --> 00:55:15,960
had been confiscated
by the Russians,

888
00:55:15,960 --> 00:55:20,690
and on the side of the--
we walked over to the side.

889
00:55:20,690 --> 00:55:23,670
On the side of the villa
a table was set-- sorry.

890
00:55:23,670 --> 00:55:31,830
A table was set up,

and behind that table

891
00:55:31,830 --> 00:55:37,170
there was an officer,
also with a green hat,

892
00:55:37,170 --> 00:55:39,060
next to a civilian.

893
00:55:39,060 --> 00:55:44,580
And we were lined up in
front on the other side

894
00:55:44,580 --> 00:55:46,830
of the table at a
certain distance,

895
00:55:46,830 --> 00:55:50,280
and then we were called
up one by one to sit down.

896
00:55:50,280 --> 00:55:52,560
There was one chair
across from them

897
00:55:52,560 --> 00:55:56,310
to sit down and being
asked questions.

898
00:55:56,310 --> 00:55:58,200
When it came to my turn--

899
00:55:58,200 --> 00:56:01,920
and by the way, the
interrogating officer

900
00:56:01,920 --> 00:56:05,770
looked exactly like
a brutal SS man,

901
00:56:05,770 --> 00:56:08,820
except the uniform
was different.

902
00:56:08,820 --> 00:56:11,180
When it came to my
turn, he asked--

903
00:56:11,180 --> 00:56:14,040
the questions were asked by
him in Russian, by the way,

904
00:56:14,040 --> 00:56:16,990
and the civilian next to
him was an interpreter.

905
00:56:16,990 --> 00:56:20,700
Then he gave it to me
in German, and they

906
00:56:20,700 --> 00:56:25,350
were all very standard, harmless
question, my name, my address,

907
00:56:25,350 --> 00:56:28,350
my father's name, that sort
of thing, date of birth.

908
00:56:28,350 --> 00:56:31,800
And after the last
question, then he

909
00:56:31,800 --> 00:56:34,440
turned that thing that
he had filled out,

910
00:56:34,440 --> 00:56:38,040
that sheet of paper,
over to me and asked

911
00:56:38,040 --> 00:56:39,760
me to sign at the bottom.

912
00:56:39,760 --> 00:56:42,960
Now, not only was everything
that he filled out and so

913
00:56:42,960 --> 00:56:48,690
on in Cyrillic, but then there
was a long paragraph below the

914
00:56:48,690 --> 00:56:53,250
filled out part of text.

915
00:56:53,250 --> 00:56:56,420
So I pushed that thing
over to the interpreter

916
00:56:56,420 --> 00:56:58,400
and asked him politely to--

917
00:56:58,400 --> 00:57:00,390
I wanted to know
what I'm signing--

918
00:57:00,390 --> 00:57:01,250
interpret it to me.

919
00:57:01,250 --> 00:57:05,480
But instead of translating
it into German,

920
00:57:05,480 --> 00:57:09,110
he told the officer that
I wanted to translate it,

921
00:57:09,110 --> 00:57:13,190
and then the officer barked
something that didn't

922
00:57:13,190 --> 00:57:14,780
sound very appealing to me.

923
00:57:14,780 --> 00:57:17,000
And then the interpreter said--

924
00:57:17,000 --> 00:57:22,100
he said, my boss says if you

don't sign it right away,

925

00:57:22,100 --> 00:57:25,520

he beat you to death

right here on the spot.

926

00:57:25,520 --> 00:57:29,570

So I signed it and was convinced

at that time and somewhat even

927

00:57:29,570 --> 00:57:31,870

today still that I

probably signed that I'll

928

00:57:31,870 --> 00:57:34,880

volunteer to go to Siberia.

929

00:57:34,880 --> 00:57:40,700

And so then-- and

actually, a few

930

00:57:40,700 --> 00:57:43,430

of the people, after

that interrogation ended,

931

00:57:43,430 --> 00:57:44,690

were sent home.

932

00:57:44,690 --> 00:57:47,840

Others were not, and of course,

I was in the latter group.

933

00:57:47,840 --> 00:57:51,420

Then after he was

through with all of them,

934

00:57:51,420 --> 00:57:54,410

we were led around to the

back, and in the back yard

935

00:57:54,410 --> 00:57:58,670

there was an air

raid shelter ditch

936
00:57:58,670 --> 00:58:03,110
which the Germans
had dug during a war

937
00:58:03,110 --> 00:58:05,270
to protect against air raids.

938
00:58:05,270 --> 00:58:06,470
And what it was is--

939
00:58:06,470 --> 00:58:17,870
it's a ditch about, I would say,
3 yards wide and about 5 feet

940
00:58:17,870 --> 00:58:20,300
deep, at most, maybe a bit less.

941
00:58:20,300 --> 00:58:31,700
And then over it was a sort
of pre-cast concrete arch

942
00:58:31,700 --> 00:58:35,990
that extended the
length of the ditch,

943
00:58:35,990 --> 00:58:40,270
and that pre-cast concrete
arch then would be covered

944
00:58:40,270 --> 00:58:44,000
or was covered with Earth and
something planted on it so

945
00:58:44,000 --> 00:58:45,920
that it was camouflaged.

946
00:58:45,920 --> 00:58:48,705
But you could go
in for protection,

947
00:58:48,705 --> 00:58:53,310

as I said, against bombs,
or artillery, and so on.

948
00:58:53,310 --> 00:58:54,980
And they used it
now as a prison.

949
00:58:54,980 --> 00:58:59,366
Of course, it was totally damp,
and there were benches in them.

950
00:58:59,366 --> 00:59:02,380
But it was very
damp and unpleasant.

951
00:59:02,380 --> 00:59:06,110
And then there was a guard
with a gun at the exit,

952
00:59:06,110 --> 00:59:10,550
and the only reason
for anyone to go out

953
00:59:10,550 --> 00:59:14,870
is if somebody had
to do some business.

954
00:59:14,870 --> 00:59:18,190
And to guard who stood there
knew only one German word, we

955
00:59:18,190 --> 00:59:23,750
were told, and that is scheisse,
which is the German slang word,

956
00:59:23,750 --> 00:59:27,770
actually, the total equivalent
of an English, means shitting.

957
00:59:27,770 --> 00:59:33,200
So if somebody had to go,
then he was taken out,

958

00:59:33,200 --> 00:59:37,730
and what they had rigged up
there is, between two trees,

959
00:59:37,730 --> 00:59:42,580
they had fastened
a horizontal boom

960
00:59:42,580 --> 00:59:46,430
at about sitting
height, chair height.

961
00:59:46,430 --> 00:59:50,660
And you just had to sort of
sit over that boom, holding on

962
00:59:50,660 --> 00:59:55,280
with your hands, and do
whatever you had to do, and then

963
00:59:55,280 --> 00:59:59,100
go back again into the ditch.

964
00:59:59,100 --> 01:00:04,050
And after a few hours, we
were even brought some food.

965
01:00:04,050 --> 01:00:08,280
It was in a bucket,
which is used in Germany

966
01:00:08,280 --> 01:00:13,080
or, I guess, here, too,
for washing floors,

967
01:00:13,080 --> 01:00:17,570
and they had in there
some nondescript soup

968
01:00:17,570 --> 01:00:21,060
with a few pieces of meat
sort of floating around in it.

969

01:00:21,060 --> 01:00:30,660

970

01:00:30,660 --> 01:00:31,580

Yeah.

971

01:00:31,580 --> 01:00:34,113

Then later that day--

972

01:00:34,113 --> 01:00:35,530

that was all still
in the morning,

973

01:00:35,530 --> 01:00:38,290

and then we get something
at noon, that food.

974

01:00:38,290 --> 01:00:44,370

And then the afternoon, somebody
shouted down, all Germans out.

975

01:00:44,370 --> 01:00:46,490

Again, there were
Germans and non-Germans

976

01:00:46,490 --> 01:00:47,710

that they had collected.

977

01:00:47,710 --> 01:00:52,720

The non-Germans were
always the forced laborers

978

01:00:52,720 --> 01:00:56,020

that the Germans had
deported into Germany.

979

01:00:56,020 --> 01:00:58,510

But anyway, all Germans
were called out,

980

01:00:58,510 --> 01:01:02,470

and I immediately
decided, I'm not a German.

981
01:01:02,470 --> 01:01:04,420
And so I stayed in there.

982
01:01:04,420 --> 01:01:08,860
And they were actually
taken out to peel potatoes

983
01:01:08,860 --> 01:01:10,980
for the Russians.

984
01:01:10,980 --> 01:01:14,200
It was a fairly large
group of policemen,

985
01:01:14,200 --> 01:01:16,770
and investigators, and so on.

986
01:01:16,770 --> 01:01:19,690
And after they
were finished, they

987
01:01:19,690 --> 01:01:22,450
were told, OK, now
they can go home.

988
01:01:22,450 --> 01:01:25,840
Then I thought I could
hit myself over the head.

989
01:01:25,840 --> 01:01:28,720
If I would have gone
out with the Germans,

990
01:01:28,720 --> 01:01:31,030
I would be out and free now.

991
01:01:31,030 --> 01:01:33,850
Well, it was the wrong guess.

992
01:01:33,850 --> 01:01:38,020
And then a night

came, and we had

993

01:01:38,020 --> 01:01:43,040
to sort of sleep
sitting up on that bench

994

01:01:43,040 --> 01:01:48,160
in that damp atmosphere
there as well as one could,

995

01:01:48,160 --> 01:01:57,370
and the next day, various
people were called up

996

01:01:57,370 --> 01:01:58,780
for more interrogation.

997

01:01:58,780 --> 01:02:01,480
Yeah, and then I had
started up some sort

998

01:02:01,480 --> 01:02:07,270
of talking acquaintanceship
with a Czech engineer who

999

01:02:07,270 --> 01:02:13,130
had been taken by the Germans
to work on some war plant.

1000

01:02:13,130 --> 01:02:18,490
And so he was called up, and he
was brought down by the guard

1001

01:02:18,490 --> 01:02:21,610
after, whatever,
maybe half an hour.

1002

01:02:21,610 --> 01:02:24,130
And he was hardly
down and had sat down,

1003

01:02:24,130 --> 01:02:26,320
and he looked already

very disturbed

1004

01:02:26,320 --> 01:02:30,400
when another officer who
looked also extremely brutal

1005

01:02:30,400 --> 01:02:33,730
appeared with a--

1006

01:02:33,730 --> 01:02:41,070
he had sort of a baton, a sort
of wooden stick, in this hand,

1007

01:02:41,070 --> 01:02:43,630
waved it in front
of the Czech guy,

1008

01:02:43,630 --> 01:02:46,330
and shouted at him in
Russian something that

1009

01:02:46,330 --> 01:02:48,920
didn't sound very pleasant.

1010

01:02:48,920 --> 01:02:52,840
And when he was
gone, the Czech guy

1011

01:02:52,840 --> 01:02:58,120
told me that the Russians
doing the interrogation

1012

01:02:58,120 --> 01:03:01,810
told him that they have
evidence that he was not

1013

01:03:01,810 --> 01:03:05,290
forcibly deported but
that he volunteered

1014

01:03:05,290 --> 01:03:07,570
to work for the Germans.

1015

01:03:07,570 --> 01:03:11,050

And of course, he denied that,
and it wasn't true, he said.

1016

01:03:11,050 --> 01:03:14,140

And that guy who came
down shouted at him,

1017

01:03:14,140 --> 01:03:17,710

if you don't admit the
truth that you volunteered

1018

01:03:17,710 --> 01:03:21,310

to work for the Germans,
you'll stay down here

1019

01:03:21,310 --> 01:03:24,400

until you starve of hunger.

1020

01:03:24,400 --> 01:03:28,040

1021

01:03:28,040 --> 01:03:31,450

And then he told me--

1022

01:03:31,450 --> 01:03:34,730

by the way, he knew Russian,
also, that Czech guy.

1023

01:03:34,730 --> 01:03:35,630

He told me--

1024

01:03:35,630 --> 01:03:37,900

I told him a little
bit about my story,

1025

01:03:37,900 --> 01:03:43,360

that they probably won't believe
that you are a Jew, either.

1026

01:03:43,360 --> 01:03:48,400

Anyway, later that day, before

I was even interrogated,

1027

01:03:48,400 --> 01:03:51,700
we were all called
out and marched off.

1028

01:03:51,700 --> 01:03:56,160
And I thought now,
actually, that we

1029

01:03:56,160 --> 01:04:01,480
are headed toward some place
where we were being shipped off

1030

01:04:01,480 --> 01:04:06,670
into the Soviet
Union, and I was sort

1031

01:04:06,670 --> 01:04:10,075
of looking around whether
there would be away

1032

01:04:10,075 --> 01:04:12,260
to make a quick escape.

1033

01:04:12,260 --> 01:04:15,070
There was just-- there were
two soldiers, one in front

1034

01:04:15,070 --> 01:04:18,730
and one bringing up the
rear, each one with a gun,

1035

01:04:18,730 --> 01:04:21,130
and it would have
had to be somewhere

1036

01:04:21,130 --> 01:04:24,550
where they couldn't
immediately-- anyway,

1037

01:04:24,550 --> 01:04:25,660
it never came to that.

1038
01:04:25,660 --> 01:04:28,450
We only walked about
two or three blocks,

1039
01:04:28,450 --> 01:04:30,670
and then we were
asked to sit down

1040
01:04:30,670 --> 01:04:35,830
on the street in front of
an even bigger villa which

1041
01:04:35,830 --> 01:04:42,430
was also occupied by these
same green-headed soldiers.

1042
01:04:42,430 --> 01:04:46,360
And then we were
called up one by one

1043
01:04:46,360 --> 01:04:49,240
into the building
for interrogation,

1044
01:04:49,240 --> 01:04:53,480
and some people actually,
after they came out, left.

1045
01:04:53,480 --> 01:04:55,570
Apparently, they
were told to be free.

1046
01:04:55,570 --> 01:04:59,890
And others came
back and joined us.

1047
01:04:59,890 --> 01:05:04,660
And when I was called in,
there were two interrogators,

1048
01:05:04,660 --> 01:05:07,850
and they struck me

immediately totally different.

1049

01:05:07,850 --> 01:05:10,950

The Russians, which I
had come across so far,

1050

01:05:10,950 --> 01:05:21,790

all looked pretty
uncivilized and brutal

1051

01:05:21,790 --> 01:05:25,180

in sort of a raw way.

1052

01:05:25,180 --> 01:05:28,420

These two guys-- they
also looked brutal,

1053

01:05:28,420 --> 01:05:30,640

but they were well-shaved.

1054

01:05:30,640 --> 01:05:32,040

They looked brutal, maybe--

1055

01:05:32,040 --> 01:05:33,790

it sounds funny to say--

1056

01:05:33,790 --> 01:05:35,680

in the SS way.

1057

01:05:35,680 --> 01:05:38,520

They had elegant uniforms.

1058

01:05:38,520 --> 01:05:40,930

They talked fluent German.

1059

01:05:40,930 --> 01:05:45,830

They seemed to be very educated
but made a ruthless impression

1060

01:05:45,830 --> 01:05:46,690

that way.

1061

01:05:46,690 --> 01:05:54,580
But anyway, they wanted to know
who I am, which I told them,

1062

01:05:54,580 --> 01:05:58,990
and then exactly as that
Czech had predicted,

1063

01:05:58,990 --> 01:06:02,260
they told me that they won't
believe that I am Jewish

1064

01:06:02,260 --> 01:06:07,780
and, in fact, that they have
some evidence that I was

1065

01:06:07,780 --> 01:06:10,590
working under orders
to blow up bridges

1066

01:06:10,590 --> 01:06:15,490
to delay the Russian
advance and how

1067

01:06:15,490 --> 01:06:17,590
I could prove that I'm Jewish.

1068

01:06:17,590 --> 01:06:21,400
And then I told them,
well, you have my papers

1069

01:06:21,400 --> 01:06:25,600
because they confiscated-- then
they both laughed, indicating,

1070

01:06:25,600 --> 01:06:30,750
these days, anyone
has forged papers.

1071

01:06:30,750 --> 01:06:34,920
And then I was sent down into
the basement of that villa.

1072

01:06:34,920 --> 01:06:37,650

The basement was, of
course, concrete floor

1073

01:06:37,650 --> 01:06:40,320

covered with a thin
layer of straw,

1074

01:06:40,320 --> 01:06:47,000

and I was greeted there by
a chorus of other Germans,

1075

01:06:47,000 --> 01:06:48,900

a new one coming in.

1076

01:06:48,900 --> 01:06:51,900

And of course, in lying
there with those guys,

1077

01:06:51,900 --> 01:06:56,550

I found out one of them was
the local Nazi party district

1078

01:06:56,550 --> 01:06:57,570

leader.

1079

01:06:57,570 --> 01:07:01,620

That's sort of the same position
as that guy that we had there,

1080

01:07:01,620 --> 01:07:05,490

and I said to myself,
what an irony.

1081

01:07:05,490 --> 01:07:12,180

Here I am in prison now
with guys like that.

1082

01:07:12,180 --> 01:07:18,660

And then we will also, again,
fed some nondescript food,

1083

01:07:18,660 --> 01:07:22,380
and people were
constantly being called up

1084
01:07:22,380 --> 01:07:25,590
for interrogation upstairs.

1085
01:07:25,590 --> 01:07:29,880
And then night fell,
and then the guard

1086
01:07:29,880 --> 01:07:33,930
would periodically
come into the cellar

1087
01:07:33,930 --> 01:07:37,800
and shine a flashlight
into people's faces,

1088
01:07:37,800 --> 01:07:40,220
looking for a
particular individual,

1089
01:07:40,220 --> 01:07:41,760
and then gave him up.

1090
01:07:41,760 --> 01:07:45,900
In the next morning,
I was called up again,

1091
01:07:45,900 --> 01:07:49,530
and the same two
guys were there.

1092
01:07:49,530 --> 01:07:54,270
And they immediately took
me into sharp questioning

1093
01:07:54,270 --> 01:07:57,480
and said whether I
had changed my mind

1094
01:07:57,480 --> 01:07:59,700

and I'm willing to
tell the truth now.

1095
01:07:59,700 --> 01:08:04,870
And I told them that
that is the truth,

1096
01:08:04,870 --> 01:08:08,470
and one guy walked
up to me and said,

1097
01:08:08,470 --> 01:08:10,830
you know, I tell you one thing.

1098
01:08:10,830 --> 01:08:17,260
We have too many of your types
of Jews in the Soviet Union,

1099
01:08:17,260 --> 01:08:18,960
and you are all the same.

1100
01:08:18,960 --> 01:08:23,490
You don't want to work, but
you want others to work--

1101
01:08:23,490 --> 01:08:26,340
you want other people
to work for you.

1102
01:08:26,340 --> 01:08:31,859
If one thing, we'll teach
you guys how to work--

1103
01:08:31,859 --> 01:08:36,000
and then with that, he
lifted his jackbooted foot

1104
01:08:36,000 --> 01:08:39,180
and gave me a powerful
kick into my rear--

1105
01:08:39,180 --> 01:08:41,149
and now get down.

1106
01:08:41,149 --> 01:08:44,100
And the guard took
me down again,

1107
01:08:44,100 --> 01:08:45,779
and then other people
were called up.

1108
01:08:45,779 --> 01:08:49,510
And I forgot whether there
was a third night or not,

1109
01:08:49,510 --> 01:08:52,380
but anyway, the next
time I was called up,

1110
01:08:52,380 --> 01:08:59,130
the guard who did the bringing
up came into the basement,

1111
01:08:59,130 --> 01:09:02,490
pulled his pistol, and
shouted into the room.

1112
01:09:02,490 --> 01:09:04,170
Usually he called by name.

1113
01:09:04,170 --> 01:09:06,750
Now he shouted,
where is the Jew?

1114
01:09:06,750 --> 01:09:11,859
So I got up, and he pulled
his pistol and said,

1115
01:09:11,859 --> 01:09:13,529
you're going to be shot now.

1116
01:09:13,529 --> 01:09:17,340
And that didn't sound
real to me because they

1117

01:09:17,340 --> 01:09:19,350
weren't shooting people there.

1118

01:09:19,350 --> 01:09:22,420
And anyway, as I
walked ahead of him,

1119

01:09:22,420 --> 01:09:27,490
he sort of pressed the muzzle
of his gun into my back.

1120

01:09:27,490 --> 01:09:30,000
But somehow, at that
point, I wasn't afraid.

1121

01:09:30,000 --> 01:09:33,120
I felt that was just a ruse.

1122

01:09:33,120 --> 01:09:37,380
And when I came up, there
were these same two guys,

1123

01:09:37,380 --> 01:09:43,060
and they again asked me
whether I had a change of mind

1124

01:09:43,060 --> 01:09:46,109
and whether I'm ready
to tell them the truth.

1125

01:09:46,109 --> 01:09:51,149
And I said, that is the truth.

1126

01:09:51,149 --> 01:09:55,300
Then they asked, well, how can
you prove that you're a Jew?

1127

01:09:55,300 --> 01:10:01,290
So I said, well, I know some
Hebrew, upon which one of them

1128

01:10:01,290 --> 01:10:03,800

rattled something in Yiddish.

1129

01:10:03,800 --> 01:10:05,970

Then I said, well,
that wasn't Hebrew.

1130

01:10:05,970 --> 01:10:07,500

That was Yiddish.

1131

01:10:07,500 --> 01:10:11,080

Then he said, oh,
what's the difference?

1132

01:10:11,080 --> 01:10:16,350

So I explained the difference
to him, and then he smiled

1133

01:10:16,350 --> 01:10:21,450

and then he said, well,
what Hebrew do you know?

1134

01:10:21,450 --> 01:10:25,410

In that moment, the only
thing I could think of

1135

01:10:25,410 --> 01:10:27,660

was a Shema, which I recited.

1136

01:10:27,660 --> 01:10:32,370

And then they both laughed,
and then it suddenly struck me,

1137

01:10:32,370 --> 01:10:35,640

these guys are Jews.

1138

01:10:35,640 --> 01:10:42,250

And then they were just
instantaneously switched.

1139

01:10:42,250 --> 01:10:47,010

They were extremely polite,
told me to sit down,

1140

01:10:47,010 --> 01:10:49,080

and I must be hungry
after that ordeal.

1141

01:10:49,080 --> 01:10:53,130

And they barked some
orders at some guy outside,

1142

01:10:53,130 --> 01:10:57,180

and it was in five minutes
he came with delicious rolls

1143

01:10:57,180 --> 01:11:00,900

with sausage and salami.

1144

01:11:00,900 --> 01:11:03,540

And then we had a
conversation that day.

1145

01:11:03,540 --> 01:11:06,780

He asked me what I want to
do, and I told him of it.

1146

01:11:06,780 --> 01:11:13,740

And then he said, well, OK,
I should get out of there

1147

01:11:13,740 --> 01:11:15,090

and go home.

1148

01:11:15,090 --> 01:11:16,170

Now, the thing is this--

1149

01:11:16,170 --> 01:11:21,480

on the day that all started,
when I was looking for the--

1150

01:11:21,480 --> 01:11:24,480

when I was looking for
the railroad station and I

1151

01:11:24,480 --> 01:11:26,250

had a light coat on--

1152

01:11:26,250 --> 01:11:31,440
and that coat, of course, I had
left downstairs in the cellar,

1153

01:11:31,440 --> 01:11:33,060
in the basement.

1154

01:11:33,060 --> 01:11:35,400
But during the days
that I was down there,

1155

01:11:35,400 --> 01:11:37,140
you hear all kinds of stories.

1156

01:11:37,140 --> 01:11:39,450
They were telling
of somebody who

1157

01:11:39,450 --> 01:11:43,470
was released by the guys
upstairs who also had forgotten

1158

01:11:43,470 --> 01:11:46,770
some personal belongings
in the basement

1159

01:11:46,770 --> 01:11:48,540
and said he wants
to retrieve it,

1160

01:11:48,540 --> 01:11:53,520
but the guard had a change of
mind and just told the guy,

1161

01:11:53,520 --> 01:11:55,050
he's not letting
him out again, even

1162

01:11:55,050 --> 01:11:57,870
though the officer
upstairs-- so I

1163
01:11:57,870 --> 01:12:00,220
figured, to hell with my coat.

1164
01:12:00,220 --> 01:12:02,290
I'm free, and that's
more important.

1165
01:12:02,290 --> 01:12:05,790
But of course, in those
days, even a simple coat

1166
01:12:05,790 --> 01:12:09,210
was somewhat of a
fortune, but my freedom

1167
01:12:09,210 --> 01:12:12,360
was even more valuable.

1168
01:12:12,360 --> 01:12:17,340
I forgot to mention, by the
way, on the first day when

1169
01:12:17,340 --> 01:12:21,720
those Germans asked to peel
potatoes and then released,

1170
01:12:21,720 --> 01:12:27,990
I managed to tell one of them
the address where the Haas

1171
01:12:27,990 --> 01:12:30,390
family were living
there in the orangery,

1172
01:12:30,390 --> 01:12:34,270
and to notify them where I
am because they had no idea.

1173
01:12:34,270 --> 01:12:37,470
So when I came back, they knew.

1174

01:12:37,470 --> 01:12:40,170
That guy had actually
notified them,

1175
01:12:40,170 --> 01:12:44,850
and they had gone to
Major Shike in hoping

1176
01:12:44,850 --> 01:12:47,370
that all that needs to be
done that he has to pull

1177
01:12:47,370 --> 01:12:50,100
some strings to get me out.

1178
01:12:50,100 --> 01:12:53,280
And when they told
him where I was,

1179
01:12:53,280 --> 01:12:55,690
he immediately backed
off and said, well,

1180
01:12:55,690 --> 01:12:58,950
there's nothing that-- these
guys know what they're doing,

1181
01:12:58,950 --> 01:13:01,500
and he cannot interfere.

1182
01:13:01,500 --> 01:13:04,440
So that's an interesting
sidelight on--

1183
01:13:04,440 --> 01:13:08,490
the system was exactly the
way was the Gestapo in Nazi

1184
01:13:08,490 --> 01:13:09,400
Germany, of course.

1185
01:13:09,400 --> 01:13:13,490

1186
01:13:13,490 --> 01:13:15,650
So anyway, after
all of that, we knew

1187
01:13:15,650 --> 01:13:18,020
that no trains were
running to Berlin,

1188
01:13:18,020 --> 01:13:20,390
but that's where we
wanted to get to.

1189
01:13:20,390 --> 01:13:24,050
And then in the meantime,
my bicycle, of course,

1190
01:13:24,050 --> 01:13:26,030
had been stolen by the Russians.

1191
01:13:26,030 --> 01:13:27,620
That was after the watch.

1192
01:13:27,620 --> 01:13:29,460
It was the next thing.

1193
01:13:29,460 --> 01:13:31,610
So I couldn't even
bicycle to Berlin,

1194
01:13:31,610 --> 01:13:34,550
but I suggested that
I walk to Berlin--

1195
01:13:34,550 --> 01:13:38,390
it was about 25 miles or so--

1196
01:13:38,390 --> 01:13:43,490
and go to the Tempelhof
district where I had that room

1197
01:13:43,490 --> 01:13:44,990

and see what's going on.

1198
01:13:44,990 --> 01:13:48,120
So I walked there, and
right when I got there

1199
01:13:48,120 --> 01:13:52,850
I found out, first of all,
that the Russians had already

1200
01:13:52,850 --> 01:13:56,410
instituted a German
civilian administration,

1201
01:13:56,410 --> 01:14:00,800
and in the borough city hall--

1202
01:14:00,800 --> 01:14:02,610
Berlin has 20 boroughs.

1203
01:14:02,610 --> 01:14:06,530
In that borough of Tempelhof,
where that apartment was in,

1204
01:14:06,530 --> 01:14:08,630
then had its own city hall.

1205
01:14:08,630 --> 01:14:13,070
And so I went up
there, and I found out

1206
01:14:13,070 --> 01:14:18,140
that they have lists of
Nazis, particularly Nazis who

1207
01:14:18,140 --> 01:14:20,270
had more prominent positions.

1208
01:14:20,270 --> 01:14:24,080
And their apartments
are available for people

1209

01:14:24,080 --> 01:14:26,230
who are returning from
concentration camps

1210
01:14:26,230 --> 01:14:27,770
or were persecuted.

1211
01:14:27,770 --> 01:14:32,810
So the guy told me that all I
have to do is ask for a list,

1212
01:14:32,810 --> 01:14:36,110
and I can pick the
apartment I want to have.

1213
01:14:36,110 --> 01:14:38,650
And of course, I didn't
want to make a decision,

1214
01:14:38,650 --> 01:14:42,540
so I just stayed one night
and then walked back again.

1215
01:14:42,540 --> 01:14:47,640
And then there's
another one or two days,

1216
01:14:47,640 --> 01:14:54,980
and then I walked with
Margaret's father, Mr. Haas

1217
01:14:54,980 --> 01:14:55,850
to Berlin.

1218
01:14:55,850 --> 01:14:58,430
There we had another
incident where

1219
01:14:58,430 --> 01:15:02,240
we were walking on
this major highway that

1220
01:15:02,240 --> 01:15:07,910

also goes through suburban
city streets toward Berlin.

1221
01:15:07,910 --> 01:15:11,550
We saw already at a distance
there was a big hospital there,

1222
01:15:11,550 --> 01:15:15,920
and the Russians, you
could see, were busy there

1223
01:15:15,920 --> 01:15:18,700
carrying the equipment out.

1224
01:15:18,700 --> 01:15:20,090
But as you come
closer, you could

1225
01:15:20,090 --> 01:15:23,570
see that they were
basically Russian guards

1226
01:15:23,570 --> 01:15:26,480
and German civilians
carrying equipment,

1227
01:15:26,480 --> 01:15:30,500
and so as we got there, the
Russian guard immediately

1228
01:15:30,500 --> 01:15:36,290
enlisted us to also help
carry out equipment from--

1229
01:15:36,290 --> 01:15:39,210
they were dismantling
the entire hospital,

1230
01:15:39,210 --> 01:15:43,070
and we had to go in and carry
out whatever medical supplies

1231
01:15:43,070 --> 01:15:45,190

and so on.

1232

01:15:45,190 --> 01:15:50,000