

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Lore Segal**  
**February 25, 2008**  
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## **PREFACE**

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**LORE SEGAL**  
**February 25, 2008**

Beginning Tape One

Question: Good morning, Lore.

Answer: Good morning, Joan.

Q: It's nice to see you. Tell me what -- what your name was -- what -- what is your name now?

A: My name now is Lore Segal.

Q: And --

A: I was born Lore Groszmann.

Q: But it was Lore?

A: It was Lore, and nobody can pronounce it the way my mother did, which is Lourie, you see, is the Austrian way to do it.

Q: So, it was a very long O.

A: In -- and in -- while I lived in England, I was Lorry, like a truck. But now people ask me how to pronounce it and I say o-open season, any --

Q: O -- and what was your date of birth?

A: March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1928.

Q: Now tell me something. This is, for me, somewhat odd way to start, but you wrote a novel about your -- about your experiences in Vienna and going to England. Why did you decide to write a novel and not a memoir?

A: Because I was really less interested in the history than in being a writer. And for many years -- I -- I have written little stories before that, and I came to the point in my 20's when it seemed to me I had no subject. I hadn't been in love, I hadn't died. None of the big events had happened to me, and I wanted to be writing. And it seemed to me that these stories that I did have with -- my experiences were a dime a dozen, everybody knew about them. And then one day I -- when i-in -- in my early days in New York, I had gone to the new school and taken a course in creative writing, and we -- the people in that class had a s -- had a -- had a party. And somebody said to me, how did you come to the United States? And I began to tell my -- my Hitler stories. And there was that silence in the room that I have since had as a teacher, but hadn't experienced at that time. I thought, gee, wow, I have stories to tell and it a -- and -- and it came to me that these stories were my subject. But again, I wa -- didn't write them because I wanted to -- what I think is now known as bearing witness. I wanted to be writing. And I -- I mean another answer is that as a novelist you can in a way -- it's a cliché, it's a truism, but you can be truer that you can --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- by sticking to the facts. Can I give you an example of --

Q: Sure.

A: -- how writing as a novelist changed what might be a fact. One of the -- one of the chapters in "Other People's Houses" was about my attraction for awhile to the stories of Christianity. No-Notice that I'm -- it's the stories that attracted me. Now, in the chapter about this in "Other People's Houses", I made it may -- the narrative seems to suggest

that it was the people in -- my foster parents at the -- of the time, my foster -- two -- two foster mothers tried to convert me. And when they got to -- when th -- one of them at any rate, read the story, s -- read the book, she wrote me and said, but we never tried to convert you. And I wrote back and said absolutely not, you didn't. But for an -- for a story, to be seduced by a person is more -- is a be -- it's a better story than being seduced by an idea. In fact, it's almost impossible novelisticly to write that. So novels suit me better than history, or biography, or auto-biography. It's a long answer.

Q: No, it's very -- it's very interesting. So is -- is doing an interview somewhat problematic for you because you are not being a novelist now, when I ask you questions?

A: Oh, no. I will try and answer you historically. But I -- as we were saying earlier, once you have actually written something, or even told it a lot, something has happened to it.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: It -- it becomes overlaid with, I guess a skin. Like an anecdote gets a kind of polish on it that is almost impossible to --

Q: To remove that skin.

A: -- to remove that skin and get back. But it's an interesting thing to do. I think it's what one would do in -- in analysis, I think. When you've got -- you -- you go back to -- to the -- to the -- to the -- to the -- I want to say real, but you go back to the -- to the event as it happened, or try to. And that's an interesting -- so this is interesting thing to do. I don't know how -- how well I can unpack what was -- what was wrapped up.

Q: Well, we-we'll divide our -- our -- your story into a few parts. So let's -- we'll go from 28 to 38 bef -- before you actually leave Vienna. So when you think about your parents as

a kid, what is your -- what is your earliest memory of being in Vienna? How -- how far back do you go? Cause you're born in 1928. Are you five, are you four, are you six, eight? Do you have --

A: Well, once again, as -- as with all those memories, I don't know what are the memories, and what are the stories told me.

Q: Mm, mm.

A: I mean, I have a lot of memories being a cute kid, very cute, and very much beloved. I was the only grandchild, the only child, the only grandchild, the only niece of two loving uncles. So I was a big deal. I will tell you the embarrassing story which explains this. My mother loved to tell the story against -- she felt it a story against herself, that she took me with her to a ladies' café yousa, a -- a coffee klatch. And all the ladies were talking with each other and at the end, as my little coat was being put on, I was reported to have said, here one knows nothing, here one speaks of nothing. I might have been five, or six. And my mother said, what do you mean? And I said, here they don't know that I dance on my toes. Here they don't know that I -- I can do the figure eight on the ice. No, I must have been older, seven -- six or seven [indecipherable]. And my mother was embarrassed and realized that I had been made too much of, and too much admired and too much praise. But I always thought that I'm incredibly lucky to have been brought up by two of the best people in the world that I know. My mother and my Uncle Paul, who -- who were both witty, loving, very, very, very much attached to me. Gave me a lot of space to show off. That was a world in which my poor very lar -- father, who was a six-footer, which was unusual for -- for a European Jew, I think, who was a -- who was an accountant, a chief

accountant in the Bank of Cooksbrock and company, was an outsider. He was odd man out. He was not able to laugh, he was not able to participate in the fun that we had before he walked in the door. He was very dear and very lacking in imagination and became, when I was five -- this certainly is a datable event, and one that I remember, became very ill. He was a bleeder.

Q: Oh.

A: I suppose not th-the worst degree of bleeder, otherwise he wouldn't have survived, but he's -- he was taking my mother is the story, for a bicycle ride along the [indecipherable] the -- the dia -- the Danube -- I don't know what an [indecipherable] what -- what -- what -- what broke down -- wh-what -- what is -- what is supposed to hold the water in?

Q: Dike?

A: Yeah. Anyhow, it was a long road, and they were -- they were riding along it and some partridges -- he saw some partridges and he took his hands off the bicycle and clapped and fell off and began to bleed. And I remember we were in my grandfather's house in the village of Fischamend, which is some half an hour by train from Vienna. Very close now, 10 minutes now from the modern V-Vienna airport, and th-that my grandfather had a house on the main square of the village, a huge house with a store, with my grandfather's straggled store at the bottom. And I remember my parents had their own room back there. My father -- remember my father flat on -- on the bed. He had -- he -- I-I remember particular that he was not allowed to have a -- a pillow, and oddly enough I cannot bear to lie for two seconds without a pillow under my head. But that -- he -- there was a bucket of ice water next to his bed with little balls of butter which he was

supposed to eat. I don't remem -- I have no idea what kind of a theory that was, but that was -- that's certainly one of my earliest memories of going to see my father lying flat. And it was really from that moment on that he was essentially -- well, in and out of hospital is overstating it, but I -- I do remember coming home from school and my mother saying, put -- don't take off your coat, we're going to go see Daddy, who was once again in the hospital, always with his head flat on the -- on the -- on the white sheet. My mother was always cooking diet for him. I think one of the -- one of the perhaps mistakes my mother made in her very, very lovely relation with me is to use me as a friend to c -- to -- to co -- to have headaches with and to complain of my father's illness, which stood for a lot of other weakness and incapacity, I think.

Q: So your -- your relationship to your father never became as close as your relationship with your mother?

A: It was not -- my relationship to my father was one of regret, that I was not responding adequately to the affection he had for me. I understood that I was not responding, and I re -- I was sorry for him. So was a g -- and my -- th-the man in my life was my Uncle Paul, who was then --

Q: Not your father.

A: -- seven years younger than my mother, who lived with us while he went to the -- to study at the -- at medic -- at the school of medicine, a -- ma -- University of lon -- of Vienna, and lived with us and read stories to me and played the guitar for me and told me about things like -- I remember that he had a professor called Professor Tort -- I mean, Professor Death, and he told me about -- I -- I can't think of the word now, hypo -- hyp --



hypnosis. I mean, here I was in my -- about seven years old, learning these fascinating things from my uncle, who would sit by my bedside and tell me -- tell me -- tell me about the world.

Q: Right. Was your father jealous of Paul?

A: My father wooed me. He wooed me by taking me out for ice cream, and my mother had told us not to have ice cream, it would spoil my lunch. It was always something the matter with what -- what my poor father did. I have a curious memory around the Christmastime and Vienna was full of -- of Christmas things. My father said, I'll take you across the street to look into the toy shop, because it has a Father Christmas there, a Santa Claus. And I said, I've already seen it. And I st -- to this day I regret not giving him the satisfaction of being able to --

Q: To take you.

A: -- give me something that I might enjoy. These are -- I mean, the -- in fact, my relationship to my father seems very vivid, but it is not a -- not a -- it is always a little sad. And of course, he became very ill. As soon -- when we -- when we came to England -- one of the chapters in my book is called "The Alien", and what it's about is my father being ill in a foreign country.

Q: Right.

A: You know what it's like if you're not home and you have a cold?

Q: It's terrible.

A: And here he was, being ill in a w -- in a world -- you know, he was -- he was supposed to be the one who knew English, but when we came to a -- I'm -- I'm jumping to the next chapter --

Q: It's okay, right.

A: -- but when we came to England it was my mother who promptly learned the language, who managed to do all the things that needed doing -- my father, who was incapacitated, only partly because of his illness.

Q: So did he know English in Vienna?

A: He knew English, but he didn't know it when he got to England.

Q: England. But he -- so did you learn some English as a kid, before you left?

A: I did, es -- I -- we had English -- English lessons in clu -- in school.

Q: In school.

A: Which I don't think that did very much except introduce a couple of --

Q: Right.

A: -- of words, which always seemed to me very peculiarly spelled. I went around saying pictooray. How can that be picture?

Q: Pictooray [indecipherable]

A: It makes no sense. Picstooray.

Q: Right.

A: [indecipherable]. But then when Hitler came, my cousin Inga and I were sent to a young lady, a young English lady who struck me as alien for two reasons. She was not Catholic. It struck me. I understood, I learned that she was something else, she was

Protestant, which seemed to me very peculiar, because in -- in -- in -- in the other people, the other world in -- in -- in Vienna was Catholic.

Q: Catholic.

A: And the other thing is that when my friend, my cousin Inga and I came outside to go home, outside they waited for her -- her -- her boyfriend, who was a nats -- an SS man.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you like school when you went, as a kid?

A: You know, I remember loving school, but when I think back of it, I'm not so sure. I remember when my children were small and I would go with them or pick them up and I walked into the school, I had a real yucky feeling and I realized, did I really like school? I'm not so sure.

Q: You're not so sure.

A: That's for sure.

Q: So what do you re -- what do you remember about it? Do you remem -- did you like ta --

A: About school?

Q: Yeah, did you like teach --

A: Oh, I was -- I was -- I was -- I was the good -- I was a good student.

Q: I imagine.

A: I was a very good student and I was a prig. I remember the first time I talk -- well in -- in -- in a Viennese school -- let me tell you about the Viennese school. You sat at a desk

in pairs and you had your hands like this. I have to show it. Yeah, I know that, yeah. Like this.

Q: Like that, right.

A: Your thumb was underneath the desk and your hands were -- I don't know what they thought you would do with your hands if you let them loose. God knows.

Q: You had to stay like this?

A: You had to stay like this. It seems improbable, but that's what I remember. And you did not talk to your person sitting next to you. Oh, and if you misbehaved, you had to stand next to your desk while the lesson went on. If you were really bad, you stood in the corner. The famous you stand in the corner.

Q: Right.

A: Is that a concept in America --

Q: Yes.

A: -- standing in the corner?

Q: Oh yeah.

A: Well, we stood in the corner. That hardly ever happened though. But I once spoke to my -- to the child sitting next to me about some practical thing, like do you have a pencil, and the teacher said Lore, stand up next to your desk. And I stood up next to my bed and I howled. My virginity had been ruined, I was no longer the person who had never stood next to her desk. And the da -- the teacher -- my mother said the teacher afterwards said to her, I had to si -- make her sit down, I was frightened that she --

Q: She was howling?

A: I was howling.

Q: Did you have lots of friends?

A: I-I -- I -- I had best friends, yes, I did --

Q: Best friends.

A: -- have best friends, yes. My cousin Inga was my best friend. And a couple of other children who had come. We -- had play -- play -- play dates. And one of the children actually not in my school, but with whom I had a play date is still an acquaintance, is still a friend. Now, I ha -- married to a Welsh doctor, living in England and that is the one -- that's the one left -- that's the one person still -- whom I still know from that period.

Q: Yeah, right. This one --

A: Then there was Ilse.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Who was sent to the camps with her parents, who have diphtheria and was -- was -- became deaf and was gassed. And I know that because her cousins, the cousins who were with them in the camps came out, and my mother many years later, they -- they made a bakery in -- in -- on Broadway, above -- above colum -- Columbia [indecipherable] Hospital.

Q: University? Uh-huh.

A: And my mother was a -- was a -- worked in that -- in that bakery.

Q: Huh.

A: And my cousin Inga came to England early because her father had a -- was an importer exporter and had a London partner, so they came out.

Q: This was -- this was a mixed sc --

A: We are talking --

Q: This was a mixed school, yes? It was boys and girls?

A: No.

Q: It wasn't? Just girls?

A: [indecipherable] only girls, yes.

Q: Is that typical?

A: I think it was universal. I cannot imagine having any school that was mixed. I'm just thinking am I -- am I -- no, it was -- it was not mixed.

Q: It was not mixed.

A: No, no.

Q: And it wasn't just Jewish kids, it was a mixed --

A: Well, it was Jewish kids within a week after Hitler came.

Q: Right.

A: But that's --

Q: But before then --

A: Before that, it -- yeah.

Q: -- it was -- it was --

A: And I remember that we learned how to sew. We made hem stitching. And th --

Q: Hem stitching?

A: Yes, one of the things we learned.

Q: So was it -- was it a very different kind -- do you know this -- wa -- very different kind of school than the boys had? Did you -- you had sewing, I'm sure they didn't have that.

A: I have no -- I have no idea about -- about boy's school except through my Uncle Paul.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Which is, of course, a generation, or half a generation earlier, who went to the gymnasium.

Q: Right.

A: Which was a different -- different kind of --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- education, yes, I would think.

Q: Was there a lot of talking about politics when you were growing up, before -- before Hitler comes? Do you hear about Hitler in Germany? [indecipherable] hear things?

A: Yes, I remember -- I remember -- now here I'm coming across one of those problems that what a -- what -- what I me -- I mean, yes, except in my book, for instance, I start with this event of a dinner where this was discussed, but I'm sure it was discussed constantly. And my Uncle Paul saying we should leave. Now, this is 30-something, if I remember it. I mean, I'm born in thirt -- in '28 --

Q: '28, right.

A: I left in '38, at 10, right?

Q: Right.

A: So when does it -- I mean, I -- I must have been six.

Q: S -- the Nazis come in in '33.

A: Th -- ma -- but -- but in Austria, it was not a ma -- '33 --

Q: Is nothi -- it do-doesn't happen, right.

A: Is -- y-you know -- you know what the political re-realities were? The Spanish Civil War.

Q: That was more --

A: Over the radio.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: We got our news over the radio, and I remember hearing about the Spanish Civil War and having one of those total revelations. There is always war. I suddenly knew as a child, there is no place -- time when there isn't war. I understood that, because I had seen the first World War pictures in my grand -- you know, iv -- a -- postcards with pictures of young ladies who -- and -- and messages to soldiers. You know, in -- in the sort of circular -- the -- the oval sha -- the oval shape. And I knew about the first World War, and here was the Spanish Civil War, and it came to me that war is one of the things that -- that's -- that's always there in the world.

Q: Did that scare you?

A: And what -- horrified me, as a -- and it was one of those real-realizations that -- that stays with you for life. But I do remember my Uncle Paul saying, probably not that realistic, because he didn't do it either, we should all leave. And my father making fun of him, saying what do you mean leave, where are we going to go? Going to go to the jungle and eat coconuts? And I said to my mother, what is go -- and I had that -- you know, that -- that -- you know that feeling that the -- the -- the release of gall into your -- into your --



I don't know how you can feel gall in you, but that's the -- that's the experience I remember. And turning to my mother and saying I -- what -- what's going to happen? Is there going to be a war? And my mother said no, no, no, no, don't worry. And my thinking, okay, I won't worry. I'm just going to not worry, cause I don't know how to worry. The problem was, when you're a child -- or not -- when you're a grown-up too, somebody mentions a calamity, and you kind of believe it, but how do you imagine it? What -- what is it going to be?

Q: Right, right.

A: What's going to happen? Who's going to do what to whom, you know? So, let's not think about it.

Q: But for you, you did write a sh -- a l -- a -- before the book, I think, on "Other People's Houses", where you start talking about every -- no, it's something else, but everywhere around you is calamity. When you -- when you realize when you had children --

A: That's the end of it.

Q: Yes.

A: That's actually the last -- the last -- yes.

Q: It's the last -- the last line that there's a calamity all --

A: The -- the -- the thing that I think se --

Q: -- surrounds.

A: -- that seems to me something that came to me as a result of hearing about the Spanish Civil War, th-the end of my -- my book says I'm -- at the moment -- in a moment of -- of -- of peace. I have a husband, I have children --

Q: Right.

A: -- my mother is here, nobody is sick. It feels like a -- an island, the season of -- of peace in the -- on an island, surrounded by calamity.

Q: Surrounded by calamity.

A: And by that I mean it isn't calamity -- it's not only the calamity -- the -- a political calamity -- I mean death is -- is a calamity, it's the final calamity, so --

Q: Right. Right, right, right.

A: -- yeah, there are no -- there are no good outcomes.

Q: Right.

A: But that was -- that was a very, very early --

Q: That's interesting.

A: -- it's a -- was a very early understanding.

Q: Your mother didn't work when you were a kid.

A: No.

Q: Wi -- before -- before she came to England --

A: No.

Q: -- right? But was -- she was a musician?

A: She went to the music academy in Vienna, was a talented -- talented pianist, but of -- not -- not -- not in the grand -- in the grand s-style.

Q: What does that mean?

A: I mean, she was not going to be a concert pianist.

Q: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

A: She wa -- she was a -- did not like to perform, but there were -- there was a piano in our house and -- and she wa -- she practiced. She had th-this imagination of -- I mean, there is always -- there was always practicing going on. In fact, I remember her playing Chopin and say -- an-and -- and I s -- I used to sit and listen, and I thought this was really something else, this was [indecipherable] lovely. And my mother would say, Chopin is nothing to Bach. And I thought, oh Bach -- I didn't know what Bach was.

Q: Right.

A: And I don't know which of those things Bach was, but Bach -- I took -- I took my -- my -- my taste from my mother.

Q: So you like Bach?

A: You che -- I like Bach better than Chopin, I --

Q: Still?

A: -- didn't re -- oh yes.

Q: Yes?

A: Oh, I've go -- I mean I -- yes, I caught up.

Q: You caught up and --

A: Yes, I think -- I think pretense is sometimes a very good teacher, because you -- if you say Bach is better, then you begin to listen to Bach, and you say hm.

Q: Hm.

A: But i -- it takes you years to catch up with your -- with your phony --

Q: Right. Did your mother teach you piano as well?

A: She did, it was a disaster.

Q: Why?

A: Well, because I -- I didn't want to practice.

Q: You didn't want to do that.

A: I -- I did eventually take piano for quite a time and became a reasonable proficient, but the fact that I no longer remember a note is a sign that I was really not -- that was not my -- you know, I thought at one point I was going to be a painter, I was going to be a pianist, I was going to be a -- oh, I was going to be a -- an ice -- ice skater.

Q: Really?

A: But actually I was a writer. I was always going to be a writer [indecipherable]

Q: You were always going to be a writer.

A: Once I settled down to that one.

Q: Right, right. Was your house very religious?

A: Not at all. I find it interesting that my grandparents, my mother's parents, my Hungarian born grandparents did not have any notion of Yiddish and had absolutely no relation with -- with the ortho -- orth -- I-I mean, the Orthodoxy is just too far away. I don't think my par -- grandparents would have known when the Jewish holidays were.

Q: Hm.

A: My mother's family. However, my grandmother would not eat ham. She served it to us, but wouldn't eat it.

Q: Interesting.

A: Whereas my father's parents, who had died by the time my mother married, ow -- h-he was -- came from Pressbourg, one of those places that was Hungarian in language, but became Czech by the time the first World War was over. I gather that they were Orthodox, or that there was -- you know, everybody you talked to had -- everybody's father or grandfather was chief rabbi of something. Well, mine were too, except I've never -- I've never followed through on that.

Q: So you're not sure.

A: I'm not sure, but I th -- I'm sure they were religious, and that my father said to my mother, we are going to have a kosher house, we're going to have a religious house, and my mother said like -- like how? And then there's a sort of a nasty story. This is one of the nasty stories, that my father asked my mother to light Shabbas candles and she did, and then he took out a cigarette and lit the cigarette on the candle, and Mother said -- my mother --

Q: That's the end.

A: That's the end of that. That was the end of her. And yet, she would say the Shema with me every night.

Q: Every night?

A: Every night. I -- I mean at some point, I -- I was made to say the Shema by my mother. I don't understand it. And we did spend the high holidays in the synagogue, but it was a synagogue that was created only for the high holidays, it was really a -- a Jewish restaurant. And I think -- that's what I remember.

Q: We have to change the tapes.

End of Tape One

## Beginning Tape Two

Q: You went to Hebrew classes?

A: Yes, God save the [indecipherable]

Q: When --

A: He-Hebrew classes are famously unsuccessful.

Q: Really?

A: I went to two Hebrew classes, one in Vienna, and one in -- in the f -- my f -- in -- in Guilford and they were both terrible. Why are they so awful? The wa -- I -- I remember the one in Vienna mostly because there was a naughty boy there, and I made it my job to inform him. I did not do a good job. My job at reforming him and telling him not to clap the -- you know, to keep opening and closing the -- the -- the -- the lids of the desks, and sitting still. It -- it didn't work, but I also remember absolutely nothing I learned there. I did not -- I was supposed to learn the -- the -- the Hebrew letters, and it's gone. I mean, there's nothing left at all -- of this at all. I just remember this being unsuc -- unsuccessful teaching. And that --

Q: And you're trying to keep this bad boy [indecipherable]

A: I was -- I was going to reform him, yes.

Q: Reform him, yes. You have that in you, right?

A: No longer.

Q: No longer

A: It's gone. I got tha -- rid of that.

Q: Oh, that's good.

A: Those were my wild oats, reforming little boys.

Q: So why do you think your mother was having you do the Shema?

A: I cannot imagine, because she was very disappointed in me, in her old age, because I became fascinated by Hebrew texts. I ha -- with my -- with my dear friend Jules Harlow, Rabbi Jules Harlow, translated the -- wrot -- did the translation of the wa -- the book of Adam to Moses, which was published by [indecipherable]. I mean I -- I did -- I -- I -- I now attend a -- a -- a monthly Genesis seminar. My mother is very disappointed in me, she really had -- she was a genuine non-believer and thought this was all a [indecipherable]. So her, in my childhood, making me say the Shema is a mystery to me. Perhaps my father wanted it. It's one of those things that has no --

Q: Was this very uncomfortable for you because you --

A: Not at all, no.

Q: -- not at --

A: No.

Q: -- it wasn't.

A: It was okay.

Q: No, it was all right.

A: I mean, I had my -- I had my bath and said the Shema.

Q: Did you say the -- the Shema in bed, right before --

A: Said the Shema in bed, I -- as I remember, yes. I also remember that those high holidays that we spent in -- in the -- in the synagogue, I remember sitting with my mother upstairs with the women -- must have been a synagogue. It must have been a synagogue.



Q: Must have been a synagogue of some kind if you [indecipherable]

A: And downstairs I remember my father with his prayer -- with the sh -- what do you call it, the -- the --

Q: The tallis?

A: With the tallis, doing the -- that -- that curious, that to me very curious bobbing up and down. I remember being allowed to go out with the other children when we got obstreperous and w-w-we -- there were -- there were some stairs and there was a little boy and I who made a lot of noise clattering up and down the stairs and co -- and -- and sliding on the banisters. The shamas came and gave us a bad time and made us go outside, and that's -- those are th -- my memories of that. Oh, and we had Seders and the Seders were always -- my father actually, I wa -- think very tenderly of my father sitting patiently at the head of the table, doing what he was supposed to do as the leader of the Seder and everybody else making fun. My -- my Uncle Paul would put the parsley, th-the -- the bitter herbs into his lapel. My mother would come down the [indecipherable] and make a line and top them up and ma -- and make a summation. I mean, was a -- it was a - - it was a good joke then. And I always, of course, spilled the red wine. Always --

Q: Always.

A: -- spilled the red wine on the white tablecloth. Every time, yes. That was my thing for me to do was to spill the red wine.

Q: But not on purpose.

A: Not on purpose, no.

Q: But you would spill it.

A: Every time, as I remember, yes.

Q: And that's tough to get out of the white tablecloth, isn't it?

A: And that was my degree of my Jewish education.

Q: So, this place that you went to that was a synagogue sounds like it was Orthodox, but you wouldn't know, right?

A: I wouldn't know.

Q: Because of the separation of men and women, one would think that it was in s --

A: Oh, but wasn't that [indecipherable] I think --

Q: It's Conservative as well?

A: I'm not su -- I wonder whether there were in Vienna in 1935, Reform synagogues? I'd --

Q: You think you [indecipherable] I don't know.

A: -- would they -- I mean you would know more about it than I. I don't know.

Q: No, I don't know.

A: I -- I really don't know whether there was any such thing.

Q: I don't know.

A: I -- I --

Q: I -- i-it's maybe even Conservative --

A: -- am now very much in doubt that mu -- it must have been a synagogue. I think it -- only that we didn't go there, except on the high holidays.

Q: Right.

A: That I thought it only existed on --

Q: Existed on the holiday.

A: -- I think that. I -- I -- I -- that -- that seems to me a more reasonable explanation than -  
- than --

Q: Now, for those people who may watch the interview, who don't know what a Shema is, could you explain what the Shema is?

A: No.

Q: Oh, you don't --

A: Well, it is the one -- isn't it the sort of daily prayer?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And that's about as much as I know about it.

Q: Do you remember it? The Shema?

A: I don't.

Q: You don't. Did your mother translate it for you?

A: No.

Q: No. She just told you to say it. Shema Yisrael --

A: Eloheinu echad.

Q: Yeah, that's part of it --

A: Then the elohein --

Q: -- there's a [indecipherable]

A: -- there's an eloheinu echad [indecipherable]

Q: Yes, yes.

A: No, I don't know it.

Q: And how long did you say this? Did you --

A: As long as I was at home with my parents.

Q: In Vienna.

A: In Vienna.

Q: And that -- not later.

A: Well, there was no later. There was no later. Afterwards we -- we sta -- we spend a little time in Fischamend with my grandparents. I have no particular memory, but I would have thought that that would be an evening ritual that would continue. Then, when we got thrown out of the Fischamend house, I had to go and stay with a friend because there was nowhere for us to live. And from then on I went to -- on the Kindertransport.

Q: Right, and so you [indecipherable]

A: Lived for only four months with a Jewish family. All the other families I lived with --

Q: Were not Jewish.

A: -- were not Jewish.

Q: Right. So when you went back with your parents, with your mother and father, that's -  
- that was --

A: My father had died --

Q: Died --

A: -- my -- and I was then with my mother ma -- the f -- I lived with my mother for a little while in London where we shared a -- an apart-apart --

Q: Right. And then sh --

A: -- a -- a room while I went to the university. Then she went on to join the family in the Dominican Republic.

Q: The Dominican Republic, right.

A: I then joined them, those -- m-my grandparents and uncle had absolutely no relation with --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- with Jewish performance. But I had a little time of being Orthodox in the first -- with the Cohens. I loved it.

Q: You loved it.

A: I really liked that.

Q: Well, we'll get -- we'll get to that in a -- in a second.

A: But it's also -- it's --

Q: It's --

A: A-And then I come back in my -- in my -- in my -- in my late life to a -- a real -- real fascination with the texts.

Q: And just --

A: I've gone to Talmud classes, I --

Q: Really?

A: Yes. I mean, superficially.

Q: Yes, but it's interesting --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: -- that there's such a move.

A: Yeah. Somebody asked me the other day, one of -- one of the many things you get asked, give me your seven -- seven favorite books, right? The Bible. Grimm's Fairy Tales.

Q: Right.

A: But the Bible comes first, as literature, you know? So, what can I tell you?

Q: But as a kid growing up, there's very little connection --

A: No, no.

Q: In -- in Vienna. There's these strange kinds of connections, but no real knowledge with respect to what this is, so you don't even know what the Shema --

A: Only one thing.

Q: Mm-hm?

A: A friend of mine, Ruth Gay -- I don't know -- you probably know her work.

Q: I do know the name, yes, yeah.

A: Yeah. Ruth Gay once said to me, did you have any non-Jewish friends in Vienna? And I -- I thou -- I looked my -- I thought the kids with whom I played --

Q: Right.

A: -- that were chosen for me to play with, or the people who visited my parents, none.

Q: None.

A: None. Not a one. There were no non-Jewish members of the social world in which we lived, either -- either in my at -- at -- it's -- in -- at my age, or at my parents'.

Q: So, not even close friends in the school?

A: No. And that was not by any -- any o-order by any by-law or by any choice, just who would you invite home, or who invited you home, these were always Jewish children. It's very strange.

Q: But maybe not so strange in a society that really had a segregation to it, that you as a kid can't help.

A: But the segregation at school was self-segregated.

Q: Self, uh-huh.

A: We were -- there were cr -- I mean, it was a regular wa -- regular public school.

Q: Right.

A: And it was not a particularly Jewish district, so there would be many different -- the wa -- it was not a je -- a Jew -- as it turned out later, it was not a Jewish schooling by any means.

Q: Right.

A: Very strange.

Q: And your neighborhood was mixed?

A: Mixed, totally mixed, yes.

Q: Totally mixed.

A: Yes.

Q: And did you live in a house, or lived in an apartment?

A: Lived in an apartment building that was four flights high. It was a block through con -- it consisted of one, two, three -- three or four -- fours floor high buildings separated by

yards, by square yards, and there was a pathway -- a -- a -- a g -- a -- a way through from one end to the other.

Q: So there was an inner courtyard?

A: There wer -- there wer -- there were two inner courtyards.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Probably two inner courtyards. Maybe it's four -- four inner courtyards, probably, yeah.

Q: So did you have a room for yourself?

A: I did not. It was -- no, there was a -- you know, when I went back in 1938 with my husband, we went up to the apartment and I rang the bell and the woman who lived in it put the chain on and wouldn't let me in. But my husband's -- a-a-and I said, you know, I remember the geography. Now, I think this is pretty interesting. We don't realize that what makes the impact is not the color of the walls, not the quality of the furniture, but the geography. You walk in, there's a bathroom here, but the kind of bathroom that's only a toilet. There's the kitchen here, the maid's room -- the miserable maid's room o-on -- beyond it. There's the [indecipherable]. There's a thing called this gas castle. I don't know, it was a ga -- it was a big piece of -- of -- of -- of furniture inside which I suppose was some kind of the ga -- ga -- I don't know what -- what to --

Q: Gas?

A: I am going to leave this. I can only tell you was called the gas -- the -- th-the thing that contained the gas. And then over here is the door that leads into the Herrenzimmer, which is the equivalent of the living room. Next door is the -- the dining room with a table so



huge that there's only a gangway around it, except my mother's piano is in there, so my memory is clearly not as efficient. And then there's my parent's bedroom. And then -- oh, th-th-the -- the f -- the front -- the -- that foyer is L-shaped, leads to my parent's bedroom, and the -- and the -- and the bathroom here. And there, very often, one of the uncles stayed. My -- I had my Uncle Paul, or my uncle -- my -- Mimi, my father's brother. And all my grand -- my parents slept in the -- in the -- in the -- that room, and I slept in the -- in the -- in the living room with a -- a be -- a bed put up for whatever uncle was sleeping there. When my ca -- parents had guests, which happened fairly often, they would -- I would be put to bed in my parent's bedroom because they would use the living room as a part of the -- of the -- of the events of the evening. And I would listen to the fun and games, the telling of jo -- I-I think my parent's social life de -- consisted of telling jokes. So here would be people sitting around this big table, and there would be one voice speaking, and then everybody would burst into laughter, and then would be another voice. And I was trying to listen. And I had this notion that they put me to bed early. I've checked this out with children, my grandchildren for instance, do you hate going to bed? Yes, because that's when all the fun starts.

Q: You listen -- right, right.

A: Do you remember that?

Q: Yes, absolutely.

A: You think that they just getting you off to bed so they can do their thing.

Q: Thing, right. And you would listen --

A: Especially when there were people there, yes.

Q: Right.

A: So --

Q: So did you hear the jokes?

A: No --

Q: No.

A: -- but I remember the jokes that -- when there were no guests there, or -- or when I was not in bed. Those jokes I was sent out of the room for.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: I mean, there -- there were jokes that I was allowed to listen to, those were the bathroom jokes.

Q: I see.

A: And then I guess there were others.

Q: That you were not allowed to listen to.

A: Which was a waste of time sending me out, I wouldn't have understood them anyway.

Q: Right [laughter]

A: That was a total waste. But there were those jokes also. But most of the jokes of Viennese -- of the Viennese class of my parents were bathroom jokes.

Q: Bathroom jokes.

A: Bathroom jokes. But, well there's a -- a -- I'm reminded of my grandchildren, all of whom go through the poopy --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- pooppy jokes. I think these were pooppy jokes. I don't know what else they  
[indecipherable]

Q: But they were adult pooppy jokes.

A: Adult pooppy jokes.

Q: Right.

A: And then there was a whole class of joke that were about Graf Bobby, o-or -- or --  
what is Graf in -- in -- is it Duke Bobby? They were Jewish jokes about the aristocracy,  
about the -- the -- the -- the -- the shabby -- the shabby po -- you know, the -- the -- the a-  
aristocracy that had lost its power and its -- its m -- power mind by intermarriages and so  
on, and so there were Graf Bobby jokes.

Q: But this was about Jewish acris -- a-aristocracy --

A: No, no --

Q: No, it's everything --

A: -- it was the Jewish joke about the --

Q: -- about --

A: -- about the --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- about making fun of the aristocracy.

Q: I see. [indecipherable]

A: I'll tell you one joke.

Q: Okay.

A: Graf Bobby and his best friend Tony are sitting in the park and -- poopy joke -- and the little bird poops on Graf Bobby's hat. And Graf Bobby takes off his hat and tells -- and asks his friend for a little piece of paper to wipe it off -- oh no, he -- he starts wiping and his -- his -- his friend give -- oh, that's it, his friend gives him a little piece of his newspaper and Graf Bobby says, because of that I'm not going to climb up on the tree. To wipe the behind.

Q: To wipe the --

A: That's -- that's a typical joke.

Q: This is -- is a typical joke.

A: Yeah, yes, that both makes fun of [indecipherable]. And interestingly, the Graf Bobby jokes traveled with us to England. So one Graf Bobby joke would be Graf cha -- Bobby is now a pilot and is coming to bomb London. And he goes back to Vienna with the load of bombs still in his plane, and his -- and they say to him, how could you -- don't you understand how dangerous it is for you to land? Why didn't you drop them over London? And Graf Bobby says, because as -- just as I arrived the all clear went off. They're Polish jokes.

Q: They're Polish, right.

A: They're Polish jokes, but it's making fun. I mean, it's a Jewish --

Q: Who is Graf Bobby? What does that mean?

A: Graf Bobby is a universal aristocrat.

Q: I see.

A: And what the -- what the Jewish joke is saying is they're all fools.

Q: Right.

A: You have to make fools of people --

Q: Right.

A: -- who -- who don't let you join their club.

Q: Club, right, right. Do you remember your 10<sup>th</sup> birthday?

A: Yes.

Q: 1938.

A: Yes.

Q: Was that significant?

A: I remember particularly because my -- my dance teacher was invited and I had a crush on my dance teacher.

Q: Oh.

A: Steffi Stile. I don't know whether she came or not, but that's really all I remember. I -- I also remember getting a -- getting a -- a turtle, but I don't know whether that was the ninth or the 10<sup>th</sup> birthday. And this turtle would not do anything but sleep, until it was put into the bathtub with a little bit of warm water, and then it went.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, I remember my turtle.

Q: Was a teeny turtle, a little one?

A: No, a [indecipherable]

Q: Oh, it was a big one.

A: Wonder what happened to my turtle.

Q: Oh, you didn't take it with you?

A: I -- I can't remember what -- that mu -- no.

Q: No [indecipherable]

A: That, I -- you know, I believe this, in 70 years is the first time I wondered what happened to that turtle.

Q: To your turtle.

A: I don't re -- I --

Q: Did you name the turtle?

A: No. I just remember its -- its boringness when it wasn't in a -- in the bathtub with the -  
-

Q: Who gave you a turtle?

A: My mother, maybe [indecipherable]

Q: Was -- it's interesting, why a turtle?

A: I mean, that was the only animal we had.

Q: Yeah.

A: We didn't have a dog, we didn't have a cat in -- in -- in -- in Vienna.

Q: In Vienna people didn't have animals.

A: I had a bird. I had --

Q: You had a bird?

A: Yes.

Q: What kind of bird?

A: It was a yellow canary with a hair standing up so that it was called Schopfel.

Q: And that you had --

A: And it was -- it had a re -- a relationship with my Uncle Paul, cause whenever my Uncle Paul wanted to study with his book open, Schopfel would sit on the -- on the -- on the page and he would do a sort of a -- a loop across his page.

Q: So he was --

A: It was a very in -- and it was a very important member of the family, the Schopfel.

Q: And so you -- you had the --

A: I had a turtle and a bird.

Q: -- and the bird. And you had the bird at a younger age.

A: Yes, he was there. The -- the --

Q: There was a long -- a long time [indecipherable]

A: -- the bird was there a long time.

Q: You liked the bird?

A: Ah --

Q: Do you remember?

A: I was interested in the bird.

Q: You were.

A: He -- he -- he also liked to take -- you know, he was a bird to tell stories about.

Q: Yeah.

A: There are people and their animals. And one of the things he did was to pick up a noodle, a long noodle and drag it across the table. He was a nice bird.

Q: Really? So --

A: And he flew around, yeah.

Q: Yeah, he wasn't necessarily in the cage all the time.

A: I guess not.

Q: I guess not.

A: It -- you know, this is the trouble with history.

Q: Right.

A: I remember the fun parts, but I don't remember --

Q: Right, not the bad parts.

A: -- the factual. I want to know what happened to my bird.

Q: You don't know what happened to the bird, what happened to -- and did they have a relationship --

A: And the turtle.

Q: -- your bird and your turtle?

A: None at all.

Q: None at all.

A: No, I don't -- I -- I don't think the turtle had much in -- had much going for it.

Q: No, it sounds like it was in too small a place, before you put it in the tub --

A: No, it was wa -- what do you mean? It was in the -- in the living room. I mean, it was walking around the apartment.

Q: Oh, it wanted water.

A: Maybe so.

Q: I think.



A: It wanted warmth or something, yes.

Q: Warmth. Warmth and water.

A: I guess so.

Q: I don't know.

A: But those were the only two pets. My grandparents had a cat, but in -- in Vienna we only had the bird and the ha -- and the turtle.

Q: Did a -- most people had no animals that you knew. The Jews that you knew had no animals?

A: I don't think so.

Q: Uh-uh. Now, only a few days after your 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Nazis come in.

A: Right.

Q: And then Hitler comes in on the 15<sup>th</sup>, so the --

A: 12<sup>th</sup>.

Q: Is it the tw -- 12<sup>th</sup> --

A: As I remember --

Q: -- right. Ri-Right.

A: -- the 12<sup>th</sup>, yeah. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, my parents had again visitors, but these visitors were not the kind that I was segregated from. They were my cousins ea -- I tol -- mentioned my cousin Inga.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And she and her parents came. And my mother and my Tante Ann -- by the way, I say the animals you tell stories about and Tante Erna was a person you told stories about. She

was the foolish aunt who -- it's not worth telling those stories, but -- but that's -- that was her -- her purpose in life was to make ma -- give -- give my mother stories to tell.

Q: But you have one story that you tell about her for that night, right?

A: Y-Yes --

Q: The night when sh --

A: -- well -- well, one of the stories was my mother used to tell that aunt -- Tante Paul -- Tante Erna would come and pick up her skirts and says, let me see your ne -- do you have new pants -- panties on? That was one of the stories. It may not be true, but that was -- that was a Tante Erna story. Oh, I tell you one other Tante Erna story, when she gave my cousin Inga a new doll for her birthday, she kept the box and wrapped the box again in tissue paper and put it on top so that the doll wouldn't get dirty. That was another Tante Erna story. A true Tante Erna story.

Q: That's -- that's a true one.

A: That's a true one.

Q: So -- so --

A: She wasn't --

Q: -- your cousin never played with the doll.

A: No, because it would get -- it would get dirty.

Q: Right. You had dolls as a kid, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Were they important to you as dolls?

A: Unsatisfactory.

Q: Unsatisfactory.

A: Yes, that's --

Q: Why?

A: Can't remember. They were always promised more than -- than -- they were not babies, I think. Th-Th-They were just dolls. I can't remember being particularly enthralled.

Q: Did you want a sister or a brother?

A: Yes. Yes. I asked my mother for a sister or brother. And I think after awhile she said, well you know, Daddy is not well. We -- we wouldn't have a -- i-i-i-it's not a good idea. I wa -- I wasn't -- I was not persuaded by this argument. I did -- that's why I -- you know, I showed you the picture of my parents when they took me into the Alps, they provided some little kid to play with --

Q: Right.

A: -- to make up for this li -- brother or sister I didn't have.

Q: Right.

A: Unsatisfactory, totally unsatisfactory.

Q: Right. And her explanation didn't work for you either.

A: No, I -- I kept wishing. I-I wish to this day that there was a -- a -- a -- somebody who'll remember the same things that I remember.

Q: Yeah. They don't remember the same things, that's the thing.

A: No? That's --

Q: They remember different things.

A: But the -- oh, the -- the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup>, I think there must have been that expectation of calamity, of a mi -- of -- of real calamity, immediate calamity. My Uncle Paul was there --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- and I remember them -- I -- I mean, I don't know what was in the newspapers, I remember my Uncle Paul calling a friend of his who was a journalist, and being told not yet. So there must have been in th -- i-it -- it must have been absolutely obvious what was going to happen. And in the middle of the meal -- we had the radio on in order to f -- to keep in touch with what was happening, and they stopped the -- the -- they stopped whatever was going on in the radio and Schuschnigg, the -- the ka -- cha-chancellor gave his goodbye speech. Now, I quote it in my book and it's -- it's -- it shows what a bad scholar I am that I didn't look up what he actually said. I mean, it is easily r -- it's on the records, but I -- I put down what I remembered, which is only partially true. And after he had spinish -- the speech more or less said, I wish my -- my -- there's going to be a change in -- in regime and I wish you all a bearable future is the way I remembered it.

Q: Right.

A: And then they played for the last time, the Austrian National Anthem, and my Tante Erna said to my mother, they're playing it slower than usual. And my -- and my mother said, it's the -- it's probably the same record they -- they always used. And Tante Erna said, Franzi, you, a musician, you don't hear that they're playing it slower than usual? And my mother said, Erna, you are a cow. You don't understand what has just happened to us. And Tante Erna said, Ernst, my coat. This is what she has said to me, this is what

she calls me. My mother said, please Erna, I am sorry, we are all th -- you know, in this -- in this th -- your world had just stopped. Yo-You -- you -- yo-you're going to be -- probably be -- likely to be dead in the next year and here you are, the nerves are acting in this -- in this human way.

Q: Right.

A: And Tante Erna and Uncle Ernst left.

Q: They did leave?

A: They left. But of course, they come back into the picture, because they are the ones who have the contact with London.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And they were the ones to whom I sent my letters to help. So they are make -- play a big part in this.

Q: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Let's stop the tape.

End of Tape Two

### Beginning Tape Three

Q: Do you remember your mother calling Tante Erna a cow?

A: Clearly, yes.

Q: You -- you were sitting there?

A: Oh yes, yes, I was sitting there.

Q: Were you shocked?

A: I can't remember my reaction, but I do remember watching my mother trying to take it back --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- and apologizing, and the apology not being taken -- a-accepted. But I at that time was already cla -- clearly aware that Tante Erna was the butt of jo -- not the butt of jokes, but the butt of stories.

Q: Right.

A: So I al-already understood that.

Q: Right.

A: That she was a comic character whom one told stories about.

Q: Right. It's a very interesting use of the word cow though, that -- that your mother uses it --

A: [indecipherable] kuh.

Q: -- [indecipherable] just kuh is just stupid.

A: Erna [indecipherable] kuh. It sounds better in German.

Q: Were you at that moment aware that something was going on now in Austria?

A: Oh yes.

Q: You did.

A: Oh yes. But of course that event, that little -- little interplay with Erna [indecipherable] kuh --

Q: Yes.

A: -- it -- it didn't lighten it, but it gave one -- it's almost like giving you -- giving you time to breathe before you were fully in it, bef -- let me tell you something which -- which may be irrelevant, but I once watched a shooting from my window on 77nd Street. I looked -- I happened to be looking town -- ah, down and -- from the 10<sup>th</sup> floor and a man came running out, holding his hand -- arm like this, which was bleeding. And I saw somebody -- two people running away and the man was yelling for the police. And I called my husband to come and watch, and we stood and we watched this. The man went back inside, he came back outside. It took some five or 10 minutes before the police came, bef -- all of a sudden there were a mass of people standing around, something had happened. I'm always been interested in the gap in time between what happened and the world's reaction, or even one's own reaction. And that al -- I always connect that. I mean, it may be very far fetched, but I always connect that with that -- the b -- the axe has fallen, but th -- a -- a time -- th-th-there's a time in which you don't know what to do with it.

Q: Right. And you don't even notice --

A: Do you remember in Fahrenheit -- what's his name -- shows our president --

Q: Bradbury, yeah.

A: -- sitting with the children whom he was being a president for. Do you remember? Do you remember the scene?

Q: I think so.

A: He sits for quite awhile. He's just been told that 911 has occurred, what we now think of as 911.

Q: Right. Ri-Ri-Ri-Ri-Right.

A: He sits. He does nothing. He does nothing. The -- you gi -- you see the -- the aid bending down to tell him this, and he sits. And then, of course, everything explodes. It's that moment, that -- to be [indecipherable] that's -- that's what that represents in my memory. Before you actually sit up and say, now our lives are totally changed.

Q: Changed.

A: We are now in imminent danger, but it doesn't hit you. You have to ha -- you have to have that -- that moment.

Q: Do you -- do you -- were you around when Hitler comes through Vienna, in that car?

A: I was around. I didn't see him.

Q: You didn't see him.

A: I didn't see him. But mine -- my -- mine -- my next experience is of being taken down s -- by my -- to my parents on the very next morning, going to the bank -- you know, when I go back to Vienna, I look fo -- at that -- at that door still. It's not a bank any more, but it was a building that had -- Vienna has so-some of the -- the -- the door seems to have been cut off of it. The door -- i-if you ha -- you have a square -- I mean, a corner --

Q: Mm-hm.



A: -- but the corner is cut -- is -- is cut off so that the door is -- I don't know how to explain it, geometrically, but I remember, I still look for that. And we went to that door, and the door was locked, or in the process of being locked, and there were lots of people standing out on the -- on the sidewalk. People trying to get their money out --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- before -- before it was -- disappeared forever, and we were already too late. I don't know what the financial situation was, but we know -- we did not get our money out, certainly not that day, because it was locked. And my -- and there were -- it was a very bright day, it was one of those beautiful March -- March days with -- that sun -- the -- I always think of the sun in Vienna being whiter and cleaner than anything is nowadays. Maybe -- maybe in -- in the light over the -- by the Great Lakes in -- in what -- in Chicago has some of that light. But it was that kind of light and there were flags up and it was jolly. And people kept lifting -- raising their hands. There's a very, very moving little picture, horribly moving, in -- in the movie "Into the Arms of Strangers" where a grandmother is trying to get her four year old to raise his hand --

Q: To raise his hand, yeah.

A: -- and he won't. He doesn't know what she wants from him.

Q: Right. But you --

A: But I thought it was very charming, I thought it was beautiful. And -- and you know, it looked very cheerful. And my parents rushed me back up home. So when you ask me what did I know, it's again one of those very, very unclear -- I did know, and yet I didn't understand why I was being rushed back into the apartment.

Q: So it didn't feel dangerous to you?

A: Didn't feel dane -- in fact it felt very gay. It felt very merry.

Q: So when they took you back upstairs you don't recall you --

A: I -- but I certainly understood their haste, and their -- that they were upset. I understand -- understood that very well.

Q: You understood that.

A: Yes.

Q: But you didn't know why.

A: At the moment I did not know why, no.

Q: Right.

A: So, at -- th-th -- th-that's one of the curious things of what a child of 10 does and doesn't understand of that large political picture.

Q: Right. And they didn't sit you down and say here's the [indecipherable]

A: No.

Q: -- and why would --

A: You know something? It's so interesting -- we -- we talk a lot about what is and is not told us. I mean, we are now doing a -- a wrap-up of -- of an event, how -- did I ever sit my children -- I happened to have written a book about it. But if I hadn't, would I have sat my children down --

Q: Right.

A: -- and explained it?

Q: Explained it?

A: I mean, explaining the facts of life is -- is one of those awful things that nobody knows how to do.

Q: Right.

A: And explaining the facts of history and of politics, is -- if we don't -- we don't -- we don't do it.

Q: We don't do it. We don't do it.

A: Can you imagine the moment in a life? I -- is it after breakfast? Is it at breakfast? Do you say, when you've had your bath, put on your pajamas and I'll tell you something?

There is no time.

Q: Right, right.

A: We don't explain things to each other.

Q: It's -- it is interesting.

A: It's -- it's -- it's very interesting --

Q: It's very interesting, yes.

A: -- that th -- we -- that is -- you know, is it our culture, or -- or -- or -- or is it just human that we don't actually have -- it's not part of what we do, to tell each other, to explain things.

Q: Well, especially to children. I-I-It's as if e-either we think that children don't need to know --

A: Or -- yeah --

Q: -- or they get so --

A: -- yeah.

Q: -- they get it anywa -- somehow people get it. I mean, often we don't explain to each other, right?

A: Exactly. I'm really very interested in this. There's -- I kno -- I know the -- the -- they -  
- there's now a kit that you can get from the Smithsonian about interviewing your  
relative. But certainly that -- but -- but that's an un -- it's an un-unnatural thing. It's a --  
it's a --

Q: It is unnatural.

A: -- it's an artifact.

Q: And it's very hard.

A: Very hard to do, yeah, yes, yeah.

Q: Much harder to do than someone you don't know.

A: I think it is. I -- I did debrief my grandfather for my book and I got him to tell me his  
childhood stories. But it was be -- for a purpose. It -- it wouldn't have occurred to me to  
do that.

Q: To do it otherwise, yes.

A: It's funny, one of the curiosities.

Q: So I know, when I ask somebody who is a child, did your parents explain, there are  
ways in which I know there's no explanation --

A: There's no explanation, yeah.

Q: -- and yet I want --

A: -- yeah, yeah.

Q: -- I w -- I want to know, because maybe there was something. But you felt something in their bodies. That's -- you did feel tension.

A: Oh, for sure.

Q: For sure.

A: Yes.

Q: So you knew something was wro --

A: And you become agitated yourself.

Q: Right.

A: I nearly became frightened.

Q: And you don't have -- you -- and how -- and anyway, how would you understand it [indecipherable] really.

A: I mean how -- what -- what [indecipherable]

Q: What would you --

A: -- yeah.

Q: So --

A: Now, it's interesting, when I did ex-explain, I -- I used that scene in my book, be -- the conversation between my Uncle Paul and my father. That explains in the book to somebody who doesn't know, what was happening. But I don't think that was ever -- I -- I don't think that happened. That's the way a writer -- I mean the writers -- the -- one of thing -- the first thing writers have to do is to introduce the reader to what they're talking about.

Q: Right.

A: But in life that doesn't happen.

Q: You have to create something that doesn't --

A: Yeah, you have to -- you have to i-in -- you know, you go to an Ibsen play and in the first [indecipherable] the bil -- the beans have to be spilled of what you have to know before you can start the story. Not in life, you don't do that.

Q: Right. So when is the first time that you experienced something that has to do with the Nazis, besides seeing the flags and --

A: I think that's it, that was it.

Q: That was it.

A: And then of course, the next thing is that at school, in the weeks before Hitler, everybody became intensely Austrian. And my -- the teacher had made us -- in our class we had made posters that said [speaks German here]. Red, white, red to the -- to -- to the death.

Q: Wow.

A: It's in -- interesting that I suppose there was still an assumption, at least in my school, from the top down I assume, that we were refusing to be annexed by Hitler. On the day we came home after the annexation, they brought big sacks into which we stuffed these posters that we had made, very rapidly.

Q: To hide them.

A: Because now we were on the other st -- th-the other side had won. And I remember that very, very, very clearly, the teacher tearing down, mak -- making -- and making us stuff it and tear it up. And that one of the children said, hey can I take a -- can I take

home the one that I made? And the teacher saying, don't -- are you a stupid fool? Put it in there quick. Some -- some really rude -- rude word, and -- and in a great agitation, be -- be -- I mean you can't -- you could get -- you could go to jail fo-for --

Q: For that.

A: -- presumably, for having that. And the next thing was -- I don't know if it was on the same day, but certainly within the next -- within the next moment of experience, that the Jewish children were ha -- were made to stand aside the -- i-it wasn't -- the word Christian was not the one that was used, Aryan. The Aryan children sat in the front rows, then you left a couple of rows free so that there would be no contamination, which I say now, I don't think that was said then.

Q: Right.

A: And the Jewish children sat in the back. And the next thing that happened was that the Jewish -- the Christian children, the Aryan children were moved to a different school, and my school became ther -- the -- the -- the area school for Jewish children. And the other great e-event in those days was that the teacher who was sent in, not a Jewish teacher, who was assigned to teach the Jewish children in my class, came in -- in an Austrian volksschule, in Austrian [indecipherable] the chi -- you behaved very well. I mean, you not only sit with your hands like that, but when the teacher comes in you rise to your feet. The teacher told us to take out our books -- take your books and read, she said. And then she went to the window and stood with her back to us and we could see her crying. You could see her -- her -- her shoulders heaving with sobs. And there was not -- I mean, they

fa -- the old cliché, you couldn't hear a pin drop. The effect of a -- of a grown-up crying and us all sitting there pretending that we were reading while sh --

Q: [inaudible]

A: -- bu-but [indecipherable]. I mean, I remember that, I can -- I can -- I can -- I can picture it, I can know exactly where everybo -- everything was in that room, that was such a -- such a -- such a -- a memorable moment.

Q: What did you think she was crying about?

A: Oh, I think we understood. We understood that she didn't want to be -- sh -- it was -- it was a demotion. I don't know what wa --

Q: So it wasn't the situation, it was her --

A: It was a c -- first of all, this was a grown-up crying. It was a grown-up crying cause she had to teach us. Oh, that was perfectly clear to me. It was clear to me then, it was clear to me -- it's clear to me now --

Q: Right --

A: -- it was clear to me then.

Q: -- right.

A: You know, it's inter -- i-if I were writing that, I would have to find some way of -- of how a child phrases that to herself.

Q: Right.

A: And I can't do that backwards. I-I mean, I don't know how to do that, but I certainly understood it. I think we all understood it.

Q: And what ha -- wa -- you knew you were Jewish. However, you were not religious --



A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- you knew, sort of, you were Jewish, right?

A: -- yes, yes. That's a very interesting k -- thing, isn't? How did I -- what did that mean?

Q: How did you know this? I mean, why didn't you think you were an Aryan kid?

A: No problem --

Q: There was no --

A: -- no confusion about that at all.

Q: That's interesting.

A: Very interesting. I -- I -- I've never asked myself that question. I -- I don't know. But there was no problem.

Q: So when the -- when the Aryan kids leave, and it's only Jewish girls now --

A: Only Jewish girls.

Q: What do you th -- wh-wh -- does something go on in your head like what the -- what is happening, why are -- why -- why are these kids leaving, what -- were -- or are you so confused to --

A: The word Hitler takes care of --

Q: Everything.

A: -- of all of this. Of all of this, yes. There are these events, one after the other, and they're all clearly understood. It was clearly understood that our maid -- we had -- we always had one maid, usually sent us by my grandmother from Fischamend, from the village of Fischamend, some -- some -- some daughter of one of the customers, or -- and

she had to leave because j -- Jews were not -- because Christians were not allowed, Aryans were not allowed. I mean, how did I know the word Aryan? That -- that -- that --

Q: Did you have a relationship with her? You knew her?

A: You know, I don't really remember which one she was. We always had a girl, they never -- did never --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- didn't necessarily stay very long. Not very much, no, no. I knew my grandmother's maids better, when I went to stay with my grandmother. There was somewhat a relationship. I don't think there wa --

Q: Did she live there?

A: She -- there was --

Q: There were --

A: -- th -- [indecipherable] the kitchen --

Q: Right.

A: -- and there -- there was a -- a -- a rotten little room behind the kitchen and when my mother later on in -- in -- in -- in England was the cook, she said to my father, this -- did we really make our maids sleep in a room like that? Shame on us.

Q: Shame on us, right.

A: Serves me right.

Q: Now the rule in Germany, I don't know what it was in -- in Austria, it was what, Jews could not have maids under the age of 45.

A: I don't --

Q: Only over 45.

A: I don't think -- I don't think that was --

Q: That was poss --

A: If it was, I -- I would -- didn't know.

Q: You didn't know.

A: I do remember -- and I remember it now, that my father would not acknowledge the -- the presence of a maid. He would look like this. If the maid was walking this way, my father m -- I could remember -- I remember my father sort of, you know, edging away from the co -- from the air contact --

Q: Really?

A: -- with this foreign body, yes.

Q: That's interesting.

A: But I remember how -- she didn't wait at table, but she brought stuff in and took stuff out. My mother did the cooking.

Q: Uh-huh. And did she do the --

A: For the longest time we had not a ma -- live-in maid, but a woman called Frau Raizy, who had a little boy called Eric who would come and play with me under the piano. And when I went back to Vienna I looked up Eric and we went to visit his mother. There's that wonderful story which is useless to tell because it a -- it only works in German. My mother said something to Frau Raizy, that she should do something that -- Frau Raizy was quite small and had little raisin eyes, that she should do something about that. And Frau Raizy said, [speaks German here]. Now, a shass is a fart. And the only way to

translate that is, in that -- if -- if -- if Madam wants me to do that, she has just stepped into my fa -- a fart. She has -- the fart has entered --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- it's -- but it's more, the fart has entered her -- her sole of her foot like a splinter. I me -- there's no way to do that. And my mother, who was about to get up on her high horse, put her back head and roared with laughter. And from that on, the two women were very good friends and in fact Frau Raizy took some degree of care of my grandparents. Her hu -- her husband was a -- was a -- was a -- was a Communist.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And she -- she took some degree of care of my -- of my --

Q: Interesting.

A: -- she bought them food.

Q: So if you played under the piano, it meant you had a grand piano in your house. Did you have a --

A: We had a baby grand.

Q: You had a baby grand.

A: No, I think -- is there something between a baby grand and a grand? Because I think it was bigger than a ba -- I have a baby grand at home and it seemed to me that piano --

Q: A little bit smaller.

A: -- was longer than that.

Q: Yeah, there is.

A: Yeah.

Q: Sure, cause they're different --

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: -- you know, there's [indecipherable]

A: And it was a Blutner.

Q: It was a Blutner?

A: Yeah, I have to --

Q: Yes, it's very good.

A: -- I have to di -- spell that. It was a Blutner, yes.

Q: That's a good piano.

A: And underne -- it was fun playing with Eric. And I -- I -- as I said, I -- I looked up Eric an-and the conversations were not very -- very satisfying.

Q: They were -- they weren't satisfying?

A: No.

Q: So school changes.

A: School changes, my f -- our maid has to leave, and I don't remember what her name was.

Q: Right.

A: I'm surprised that there was a maid because -- because it was really Frau Raizy who had been our cleaning -- cleaning help.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But there was a maid. I remember that, that she had to leave. And my father lost his job, and cou --

Q: And do you remember your dad lo -- losing his job?

A: I remember that he no longer went --

Q: To work.

A: -- to the office. I remember once my mother taking me to pick him up at the end of a day, we were going to go perhaps do something or other. And it was extremely grand. It was one of the baroque banking houses, and I remember my father coming down a stair. This may be an imaginary memory, but there it is. And I remember saying to my father -- we are going back to my -- to the early -- I saying to my father, what is it like up there, what -- and my father didn't have enough imagination to answer me. He just said, oh, I -- I sit and I write numbers. Unsatisfactory.

Q: Right, right.

A: I wanted to -- I was asking a novelist's question.

Q: Yes.

A: Tell me what it's like so that I can imagine you.

Q: Likes -- right.

A: You know, that was -- I -- I get back to that in a bit. I always needed -- I wa -- I wonder whether mo -- all children need to have a -- a mise-en-scène. You need to know how to -- if you want to think of your parents --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- or anybody, you need to s -- you know --

Q: You have to have a picture.

A: -- where they are. You have to have a picture, yeah.

Q: Right, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

A: My father was unable to --

Q: To create that.

A: My Uncle Paul could do this, you see.

Q: Right.

A: But my a -- father was never able to do that. But he was fired, and I know that he got a certain amount of money. What would you call the money that you get when you -- when you are dismissed from a job?

Q: I forget. But there is a -- there is a --

A: There's a -- there's a severance pay.

Q: Severance pay, right.

A: Severance pay. The reason I remember it, because at that point also, now I have -- I'm not going to tell you how I think our apartment was taken from us, because I do think that is imaginary, I really don't re -- there were too many years I did not remember how that happened. I just knew that we had to leave, and that we then went to live with my grandparents in the house in Fischamend. And I remember my father saying to my grandfather, what I should do is put my severance pay into the shop.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And my m -- grandmother saying -- turning to my mother and saying, your husband is a s -- is a fool -- my husband is a fool, your husband is a fool. You're going to put money into a shop when the Nazis are going to take it away from us? I mean, it is so -- there is that, knowing and not knowing.

Q: But she knew.

A: She knew --

Q: She knew something.

A: -- that my father -- my father had just been thrown out of his apart -- job and his apartment and he's going to put it -- what are we -- what -- what does the human head do with these facts? But I mean, of course the aw -- aw -- German Jews had been doing that since '32.

Q: Right.

A: Hanging in there, thinking it was going to go -- all go away.

Q: And isn't it human that if you move to another place, they're not here.

A: Oh.

Q: So, it's safe. The -- so geography seems to protect you.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Or at least you want to believe it.

A: Yeah, right.

Q: But what did pe -- I mean, she said this, she clearly was --

A: She understood it.

Q: She understood it.

A: I mean, she -- they all understood it, but she faced it.

Q: Right.

A: She looked it in the eye.

Q: Right. And did your mother face it in a similar way, do you think?



A: Don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: I don't know. My Uncle Paul certainly did.

Q: He did.

A: My Uncle Paul arrived one day from the University of Vienna from which he was about to be thrown out. He was a medical student who had screwed around being a -- being a Socialist, being a poet, you know, doing all these things, not getting on with his -- with his studies. And he came out with his ear lacerated, cause he got into a fight, from which time on he stayed out in Fischamend, which -- which I loved, because I loved to have him around. Then there come the, you know, the series of events I -- I -- I don't even know how to put them chronologically. There is a -- a September. There is a -- no, how could it be a September? We had left in August. There is a -- what I remem --

Q: You left Vienna in August of '38, right?

A: We -- we -- no, we --

Q: Or is that --

A: -- left in mar -- in April.

Q: In April to go to fishen --

A: To Fischamend.

Q: Right.

A: April, May, in -- within months of Hitler coming.

Q: Right.

A: April, May, June. I -- I can't -- I -- I mean, I -- I really can't do it. I -- I don't -- it was re -- I know that we were back in Vienna in August, so --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- sometime before then.

Q: Okay.

A: I know that I lived for several months in Fischamend, and that my Uncle Paul --

Q: Was there.

A: -- was my teacher, taught me there because I could not go t -- I ha -- I could not go to the -- th -- to the village school because it was -- because I was Jewish. Now, the village school was of course the school where my uncle and my -- Uncle Paul and my mother have gone as children.

Q: Mm-hm. How old is your Uncle Paul?

A: My Uncle Paul was --

Q: About. Is he in his twen --

A: -- seven -- my mother -- I can only do this, my mother was born '04 and Paul was seven years younger, so he was -- do the arithmetic, four plus seven.

Q: Four plus --

A: Oh 12? Six --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- 11, yes, 1911 --

Q: Right.

A: -- when he was born.

Q: Okay. Uh-huh. Let's stop the tape, instead of moving on.

End of Tape Three

### Beginning Tape Four

Q: Lore, when you were in Fischamend, were there Nazi kids -- were there young people who were Nazi supporters?

A: Oh, I would think universally, yes. My -- there were the kids that my Uncle Paul and - and my mother had gone to school with, who had -- you know, had been -- been anti-Semitic, but it didn't amount to very much. I mean, my mother used to say that they had a -- a --a game that was called the old bird seller. And the old bird seller was a Jew, and my mother always had to be the bir -- old bird seller, and -- and she was disappointed cause there were other -- other parts like being birds, or being somebody else that she would have liked. But it didn't amount to anything very much until -- you -- you see, this is to -- seems to me so interesting about this whole thing. One understands meanness of many kinds, one understands anti-Semitism or racism, but you have to wait for a -- a -- a regime that not only permits but mandates that meanness and that racism. And then you get hell on earth. These young -- these young people were just automatically mean, anti-Semitic people until Hitler came. And then there was the day on which they put ladders up against the windows of my grandfather's house and walked in -- came -- first they s -- they sat on the windowsills, and then they came in and helped themselves to whatever was in the house. These were the age group of my -- of my -- of my -- my mothers and uncles -- they had gone to school together, or their -- or their -- or their children, or their - or their younger brothers and sisters.

Q: So they're in their 20's --

A: The people who -- who wrote Kauf nicht bi Juden, don't buy from the Jew, in red -- in blood colored letters on the outside of the house or on the windows, and across the street and across the pavement, those were all the people that my -- my parents -- my -- my uncle a-and my mother have grown up with.

Q: Did this frighten -- cause you -- you're sitting in -- in a house --

A: Oh --

Q: -- was this frightening finally?

A: You know, lots of people have asked me -- have complained about my book, that it seems to be so cool and I can only -- only say yes, that it is -- e-everybody waits for the expression of -- of horror, and I -- it's there, but I can't -- I can't bring it to the surface.

Q: Right.

A: Some psychological damage, or some -- I mean, I -- I -- I refuse to put it into words if it isn't there in the feeling.

Q: Right.

A: But it certainly is missing. What is the reaction? You know, we'll come across it when -- when -- when we talk about my leaving home. Where -- where was the -- where was the -- th-the depth, th-the -- the intensity? I don't know where it is.

Q: You don't know where it is.

A: I don't know where it is. I remember being horrified when they -- the nats -- the young Nazis came and took my father an -- the men, my father, my uncle and my grandfather to the police station, and I -- to beat them up, I think is too -- too strong a word, but they

certainly smacked my father and broke his glasses. And that shocked me. That -- that seems to me --

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: It shocked me in a sense that I have a -- a memory of having seen that, which I could not have done because it was done at the police station.

Q: Right, right.

A: I remember being frightened because my bed had to be pushed way up against the wall away from the windows because they kept throwing stones until all the windows were broken. I mean, that must have terrified me, and yet terror is not -- is not what I can come up with in memory.

Q: Right, right.

A: That's a -- some kind of failing -- a failure of -- of -- of response on my part.

Q: But let me ask you something. When you were younger, before all of this started, how would you describe yourself emotionally as a kid? Were you very restrained? You're somehow treated as an adult by your mother --

A: Yes, yes --

Q: -- because of the inadequacy of the relationship, right?

A: -- yes, yes, yes.

Q: So do you then somehow feel as if you have to exhibit a certain --

A: No.

Q: No.

A: I did not feel that it was required of me to be brave. That's not --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- that's not at all what it is. It's a habit. It's almost like somebody preparing to be a writer. Let me observe this.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Let me see how this looks, how this operates, rather than a gut a-anger, or gut grief. And I can't answer the question because I've certainly thought about it, and I don't know how it works. I don't know how my emotions or my responses operate, I just don't know.

Q: Now, le-let me -- then let me ask you the people around you, because it -- it sounds as if you're taking stuff in as opposed to giving it out. You -- you -- you want to get a sense of what the circumstances are. What is -- what's happening with your mother, with your father, with Paul? Are they reacting in a similar way, that -- that you can remember?

A: I watched -- I watched that awful wonderful -- wonderful awful movie, "Mrs. Miniver" the other day.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: They seemed to react in a cool fashion.

Q: Yeah.

A: As if you watch what's happening, you -- you know, you -- you -- you deal with things as they come, your house has just been --

Q: Right.

A: -- broken up.

Q: Right.

A: I think it's -- it was -- I wonder whether that isn't how many people --

Q: Reacted --

A: -- in fact go through --

Q: -- yes.

A: -- I think we -- when we look for the high drama, I think we are thinking of literature rather than --

Q: Rather than human --

A: Human [indecipherable]

Q: And your mother in -- in the movie, "Into the Arms of Strangers", said something about herself. "I just -- e-essentially I went with whatever happened. I could deal with whatever happened." So it was -- she didn't sort of dwell on the fact that --

A: No.

Q: -- now she was going to be a cook, or now she was going to be a maid.

A: You do what -- what --

Q: What has to be done.

A: -- has to be done. And I think that's how -- my father, it seems to me, was hanging onto himself. I have a vision of him looking as if he was trying to not throw up.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He was co -- so concerned with staying on his feet, and not being -- coming ill again, that's what -- that's what he was up to.

Q: Right.

A: And then, you know, there were things -- i-in the -- the extreme reaction is not one that I remember -- any of us. It is curious, isn't it, because it's almost as if the reader or



the hero longs for some -- some -- the reaction to disaster, and here is disaster happening all around you.

Q: On the other hand, if you react too much, you cannot then act in -- within the context of the disaster.

A: Maybe so. Do you remember that famous photograph which is -- all -- wa -- something I carry almost in my head, of the little boy in the middle of the group of --

Q: Warsaw.

A: -- th -- yes.

Q: With his hands up, yes.

A: Now, what is the reaction of those people? They look horrified, but nobody is howling and screaming.

Q: Right. That's right.

A: I have one other s -- answer to this question. When my mother and I were flying from the Dominican Republic finally, to New York, we were in a plane. It started fra -- in -- in the Dominican Republic. It was full of Dominicans and my mother and me, and it was one of those horrible flights which goes all a -- which seems to descend or fly all the way. And all the Dominicans, ay, mamita, ay [indecipherable]. And my mother and I were sitting there with our -- with the white knuckle, holding on, saying not a word. And then the plane would steady up and I remember there was one toothless woman who turned around kind of shamefacedly and grinned at us. And then there would be another drop, ay, mamita, a didi -- Dios mio. There is the -- is there a different reaction that -- that you expect o-of yourself, or I -- it is a puzzle.

Q: It is a -- it's --

A: It's a puzzle.

Q: -- it is a puzzle. But I have the feeling that -- that often the response comes much later with people.

A: Yes, it comes in terms of my not being able to bear to go to the movies in which there's going to be a minimum of respo -- of -- of suspense.

Q: You also wrote somewhere -- maybe it was in the introduction to the -- the novel, that you don't actually like being in the movie theater, in the darkness.

A: I don't like it. I'm afraid -- I'm afraid it's going to bother me, it's going to put me through something.

Q: That you don't --

A: I mean I k -- when somebody in a movie once again goes into an empty room to look through somebody's desk that they're not supposed to go into, I close my eyes.

Q: Cause that's --

A: I -- there is -- I -- there's a -- there's a danger here. I mean, I know nothing's -- I been there -- I've seen that scene many times. I cannot bear --

Q: You've [indecipherable]

A: -- I mean, I -- I -- I've -- well, cannot bear, I find it excruciatingly uncomfortable and unpleasant to be in a situation of -- of -- of danger. I lie in bed -- now my -- I have a wonderful bed. My bed, if I look out to the right, I look all the way down to the Empire State Building. I look over to the Empire State Building and I think, look, it's still there.

Q: Right.

A: There's no war on at the moment. That's, I think, what has happened. But screaming and crying and howling at the time did not happen.

Q: At the time it [indecipherable]

A: Did not happen.

Q: What -- what -- wh-what you see, in terms of the rest of your life is --

A: Is a m --

Q: -- i -- is this -- there is a -- there is a danger that's always present --

A: Yes, yes, yeah.

Q: -- which is not present in man -- in -- in people who haven't been through stuff.

A: Is it not? I know people -- I -- you know, I'm -- I'm eager not to claim emotions for those of us who've been through this experience that are not universal. I really want to be careful not to do that.

Q: Mm-hm, right, right.

A: There may be -- there may be more -- more expectation of -- of disaster, of calamity, which is the last line of my book.

Q: You mean, in more people?

A: Ye -- in more -- more in me than in most, but I suspect it is not -- it's not a sp -- it's not a specialty. I mean, it's -- it's -- I think it is a human -- human experience.

Q: But it's a human experience within the context of experiences that are -- that match in some ways what you're talking about.

A: Yeah, yes.

Q: That where people have experienced external dangers, that they hold -- that they can't get rid of, because how can you get rid of it?

A: I -- yeah. I will also tell you that any time I'm supposed to go on a trip, including to Washington, I have a -- a week bef -- it is preceded by a week of having every illness under the sun. So, you know, it -- it plays itself out somehow.

Q: In some -- in some other way.

A: I get a cold, I get diarrhea, I get -- I get dizzy. And then I'm on the train and I'm having a lovely time. So it's there somewhere.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: It's -- it's -- it's gone underground and takes its place a-at -- in a -- it is -- comes up.

Q: And I don't know if it's not a rhetorical question to say, what did you feel at that moment, because I -- I don't know.

A: I have no answer.

Q: I know. Yeah.

A: I was certainly frightened, but I was not out of control frightened.

Q: Right, right.

A: I left -- when I left my parents in Vienna, I was not out of control unhappy.

Q: Right.

A: I did something else, I was saying wow, I'm going to England.

Q: England, right. You have to leave Fischermund [indecipherable]

A: -- ermend.

Q: Fischermend.

A: Yeah.

Q: Does everybody have to leave? Does your -- your grandparents?

A: As I remember it, and I think this is correct, my grandmother, who was persona non grata, because she had a big mouth, as we say, she had expressed her -- her irritation with the customers when -- who came into the -- into the -- into the -- loudly. My Uncle Paul, my father and my mother and I had left. I don't know -- no, my mother and my grandfather stayed behind. Well, let me just say what happened was that they backed the -- backed a -- a truck against the door. By the way, Obama -- Barack Obama the other day used a f -- a simile which -- which -- which was wonderful. He said, wait til the -- the Republicans back their garbage truck against the door and dump it. And that called up the truck --

Q: Truck.

A: -- that the Nazis pulled up against my grandfather's house, and emptied it out, and then made him sign a gift to the vinter -- vinterhelfs fund. The Winter Help Fund. And it's es-essentially emptied the store out of -- of anything that was saleable, and it got closed down.

Q: Hm.

A: And after that -- that was -- after that -- you know, here -- here is the sort of -- first of all the blood red words on the wall.

Q: Right, right.

A: Then one -- my grandfather's assistant, a young man, came up one day on some message, on some trumped up message and found us listening to the radio, the o -- I

forget wh-what the -- I-I mean, so it was what is now radio-free Europe, but I forget what it is. Think it was British broadcasting --

Q: Was maybe the BBC.

A: -- I don't know, but we were listening to it and he found us listening to it. The next day one of Paul's old room -- colle -- schoolmates came up and demanded the radio for use at he -- at Nazi headquarters. I mean, there's several events like that. Then there was the Hitler rally, which happened right outside our ha -- store, because the store was on the -- on the main -- main square. There was a big pole, on top of which was mounted a radio, a loudspeaker that broadcast the whole -- in the environment. And there were all the young people in their Nazi uniforms, including my grandfather's shop assistant Mitzi who was my -- who was my best friend, I thought. And my mother kind of -- my -- I -- I -  
-I want to say, hi Mitzi --

Q: Right.

A: -- and my uncle pulled me into the room and ca -- and closed the door.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: And then came that really drastic event of their walking i -- up the ladders and into the --

Q: Into the apartment.

A: That kind of intrusion, that kind of -- I mean it -- it -- yeah, you're -- you're coming into my house.

Q: Right.

A: You're invading me.

Q: Right, right.

A: And -- and then the stones -- the -- the stones throwing that broke every window, and then the -- the stores closed, the men are taken to the police station, I think that is more or less. And then we have to go and my -- I think they -- they asked my father, or ordered my grand -- my grandfather and my mother to stay and fi -- close up the shop.

Q: And then -- and -- and so then you left to go back to Vienna in August --

A: We left to go back to Vienna, of course nobody having anywhere to live because they'd taken our apartment.

Q: Taken your apartment.

A: And we were kind of divided up. I was sent to stay with a -- in the book I make it -- in this book I'm -- I'm at pains to -- to m-muddle up who -- who was who, so that --

Q: Right.

A: -- out of -- out of some kind of probably unnecessary tact. But my grandmother went to live -- grandmother and grandfather let -- went to live with one of my grandmother's many sisters. She had 15 brothers and sisters.

Q: Oh my.

A: Of whom only three survived. All the others ar -- were killed in -- then, including Tante Frieda, whom they went to stay with.

Q: Mm.

A: Let me just say something about that. There was a movie once on television, I can't even remember where we were and which -- which disaster we are talking about, but one of the women who was being asked to -- taken on some -- some death march, was hugely

big, like my Tante Frieda, who had an absolutely lovely, lovely face, but was obese, and that now, if you want to know when I di -- when I fell apart, at -- watching -- it wasn't a movie, it was on the television, that's when I we -- fell apart. Because I tried to imagine my Tante Frieda --

Q: Walked.

A: -- being walked on a two day walk. And this women in the -- in the [indecipherable] died. Died [indecipherable] because she couldn't walk. That got me.

Q: Right.

A: That got me. But anyhow, I was taken to live -- to stay with a g -- a friend of mine, a school friend. My father went to stay with his brother Max, Mimi. I don't n -- Paul, I think went -- my Uncle Paul went to stay with his -- with his friend Dolph, I think. That's -- that's -- that's how I remember it. Eventually my grandparents found a house in the Jewish district, the sec -- zweiter Bezirk, the second [indecipherable], and then my parents went to live with him. And the last day before I went on my Kindertransport, I stayed, I think one or two nights with them there.

Q: Did you have any sense that this Kindertransport thing was coming?

A: I had no idea, all I knew is that everybody of the Jewish community talked literally about nothing except emigration. You know, it's so interesting when people ask us why we didn't leave. Now, what -- what -- I mean, the sensible question is why didn't you leave before it came because you had every reason to know it. But why we didn't leave then, nobody wanted anything except to leave. Our ac -- occupation was going to -- from one consulate to the other. Our -- learning hand skills, the one -- the kind of skills that



you n -- you -- that you could earn a living if you didn't know the language, my father made little -- little -- m-miserable little leather purses. My father and mother went to learn machine knitting, knitting on -- on these mechanized machines. My mother learned large quantity cooking, what do you call it, yeah, cooking for many people. They learned Swedish massage. My Uncle Paul let -- went on -- on a Hakshera with people who wer -- wanted to go to Israel to learn farming, to learn -- yeah, farm -- farm -- farm, do farm work.

Q: Right. And who's providing these classes? Jewish community?

A: I should imagine it's the Kulturschemand --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- the Jewish cultural organization, I would imagine.

Q: Yeah.

A: At least the -- the -- the -- the f -- the Hakshera, I'm sure that they -- they were doing it. The rest I think people just found -- found --

Q: The places.

A: -- the places. At this point it wa -- became you -- it -- it -- little by little what you co -- were allowed to do shrank. You couldn't go shopping, you couldn't -- th-these were the times when people were hauled out -- my a -- my Uncle Paul's second wife was hauled out of her house and made to scrub the sidewalks. That was a common thing, you would look --

Q: Right.

A: -- you would see people --

Q: Did you see that? Did you see that?

A: I don't think so. I think I see my Aunt Susan do it, but I don't think so.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I don't think I saw that personally, no.

Q: Did you n -- did you n -- do you remember noticing that the streets are different, that there's some -- th--there's something really different here than that --

A: Oh, well, firstly you -- you were -- you were told to hurry home. If you went to school, you hurried home. And then of course, the big event was -- it was Kristallnacht.

Q: Kristallnacht, yeah.

A: When they told us at school to go home very quickly, and we said why and they say, just go home very quickly.

Q: So you did go -- when you went back to Vienna in August, school starts in September, or --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And you did go to a Jewish school then?

A: I went to the same school that I had been -- that had been made into the --

Q: Right.

A: No, I went to a different Jewish school.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Because I was living in a different -- in a different district. Yeah, that's right, I wa -- I was now living -- I was no longer living in Josef Stetter strasse, I was living -- I forget where my friend lived, but it was a different school district.

Q: Right.

A: So I went -- I mean, I now see that I remember, I see a different class, a class differently --

Q: Arranged.

A: -- arranged.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And the different tea -- it was a male teacher. I don't really remember who the -- who -- I don't -- anyway, after -- after the event of the teacher crying, I have no more memory of that school. Maybe it was because we left very soon afterwards.

Q: Left soon, right, right.

A: But the school afterwards, there was a male teacher. And we were told to go home quickly, and that was th -- a very great drama because the Nazis came. Th-The kind -- th-the way Kristallnacht played itself out in our -- in -- in my friends -- in my friend's parent's house is that all the Jewish families who lived in that building -- now, buildings - - I have a memory of a huge building, but m -- there were no huge bil -- there was one [indecipherable] in Vienna. My mother went to take me, it was 10 -- 10 stories high, okay? So it was a four -- ba -- mise -- m -- wa-was not a -- more than -- I can't imagine it was more than four stories high. But what I do remember is that the Jewish families were being forced to move themselves and their furniture all into our apartment, the apartment of my friend, which had a bedroom, a living room and another bedroom. There were three rooms in general. Interestingly, I can't place the kitchen, but there was a kitchen,

I'm sure. And so, by the end of the night the furniture that they had brought in -- and you know, Viennese furniture is not like this, Viennese furniture is --

Q: Big.

A: -- big. It has to have weight. And when you're left alone as a child in your room, it creaks.

Q: It creaks.

A: It -- it's -- it -- it is alive and the wood shrinks and -- and you hear distinct, ghostly creaks. Well, this [indecipherable] and -- and there were upside-down chairs. There were tables with their feet up. There were people sitting around crying. It was a -- it was a -- some kind of a battle scene. Not with -- with active battle, but something was wro -- everything was wrong. Tables and chairs are supposed to have their f -- legs down and these were upside-down on top of cupboards. And the Nazis kept turning the lights off and on. I mean that makes of -- the -- the practical jokes against the people over whom you have power. The other thing that I remember very clearly is that Tante -- that -- that my mo -- my friend -- my friend was called Dieter, and her mother had a brother who came at that moment to hide out in our -- let me call it our apartment. Because they were taking men from the apartment he was living in and of course walked straight into the arms of the -- of -- of the Nazis and was taken away. I -- I don't re -- know -- don't remember the end of that story. What I do remember is the following days. It's such a curiosity. I remember one of the men, one of the neighbor -- male neighbors, stayed in his pajamas and whenever there was a ring or a knock at the door, he would get into bed as if he could pretend he had some terrible disease and then they wouldn't take him away. I

remember this man in the pajamas playing chess with one of the -- one of the children, one of the boy children. There was just this sense of -- of oddity, of pecu -- of -- of a peculiar world. And the funny -- a funny consciousness on my part that the man who kept pretending he was sick was lying, and you're not supposed to lie.

Q: There's that thing again. We're gonna --

A: And also I -- that -- that is the -- that is one of the times that I do remember crying in terror, because it occurred to me at that moment I didn't know where my mother was. And I do remember sitting down and crying and being comforted by somebody.

Q: By somebody.

A: I think it was Dieter's mother, whose name at the moment I -- her father was Otto and he was a -- he became a very dear friend, an old -- old -- older friend. He knew I was smart and he liked it and he talked to me. He, like my Uncle Paul found that it was fun to talk to me.

Q: Right.

A: As I now find it fun to talk to my grandson Isaiah --

Q: Right.

A: -- who is very clever, at seven.

Q: We have to change the tape.

End of Tape Four

### Beginning Tape Five

Q: When you were crying, when this -- somebody came and you -- you think it was the mother, it was -- it was Dieter's --

A: I think so. I think so it was.

Q: Yes.

A: I remember some of the s -- comforting me with a hand, with a voice. Can't remember what they said, but I remember feeling what you might feel if you suddenly realized you were in a -- in -- in -- in the supermarket and you had lost your -- you didn't know where your mother was. It was that -- it was that experience. It suddenly came to me I didn't know where she was.

Q: And that's what frightened -- at that moment?

A: That's what -- yeah, that moment, yeah.

Q: And who knows what really frightened you?

A: Well, the whole --

Q: Yeah, the whole thing.

A: -- I understood the whole thing to be a -- a -- a mad scene.

Q: Yeah.

A: Something where everything was wrong. Everything wasn't the way it was supposed to be.

Q: Now, is this before Kristallnacht?

A: That was Kristallnacht.

Q: That wa -- that was the night at --

A: That was --

Q: -- that was the night.

A: [indecipherable]. Now, there were much other stuff going on. There were -- there were -- this -- th-there were synagogues burning.

Q: Right.

A: A-All around Vienna, but I'm -- I -- I knew that later, I did not know that at the time.

Q: Uh-huh. So it's you --

A: It was not an experience.

Q: Right, right.

A: Yeah.

Q: So this was the experience. Now, is it a few days later that you are told that you're going to leave?

A: It seems to me it is, yes. I think that's what mobilized my father. That this is -- of course, happens off-scene --

Q: Okay.

A: -- that my mother wanted -- wanted -- my mother -- my parents by -- by this time now, moved in with my grandparents, into this two bedroom little -- little -- little apartment, and my mother wa-was just waiting f -- to bring me home. And I think at this point what - - my father -- I mean, this -- I know this from my mother's story, that my fa-father said, she's not going to stay here. And then he came to pick me up one day and it was within -- it would seem to me within the week, within 10 days of this, while -- you know, I don't

remember that condition of everybody living in this all -- I mean, we-well maybe some 10 -- some 15 people living in, with all their furniture.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I can't remember that -- they didn't -- never moved out again, so I must have moved out. My father picked me up and said, you're going to England. And I said, what do you mean I'm going to England? Y -- we're going to eng -- he said, no, you're going to England. Mommy and I can't go. And he took me to a burned out Temple, that's the b -- that's -- that's -- that's why -- and that's when I knew. It was a round -- a round Temple, a circular Temple, and when you walked across fallen lumber, it was gutted. And there were people cleaning it out and then there were people that -- pa-parents and children hanging out down there. And then there were people standing up the stairs and along the women's gallery, waiting to be processed.

Q: In this burned out place?

A: In this burned out synagogue, yeah. And my father and I were called out of line. My name was called, Lore Groszmann, and my father walked me past all these people into the office, and there was my uncle ot -- Tante Frieda had four children, one of them was Otto, who was -- unlike my uncle, had finished his doctor -- doctoral studies and was a doctor. And he had a girlfriend and the girlfriend worked for the Kulturschemand, for the culture, and she had put my name on th -- tha -- there's a complication of being in such a situation, of having been pulled out of line and -- i-it -- I -- I have not grieved over it, but I think about it once in awhile. Somebody was there because I was there, right?

Q: Right.



A: But anyhow, I was told that I was going to go on this -- on -- on -- on this Kindertransport. At this point my next memory is being with my grandparents and my parents in this little, very small apartment. And my -- I remember the evening before my departure, which was on a Thursday. Now, story. Cup -- I believe we went -- left on a Thursday, but I have since met a -- a -- somebody who was on it, who was not only 14 years old to my 10, but Orthodox, and he knows we left on a Saturday.

Q: That's interesting. Cause in the book you -- book, you clearly say it's Thursday.

A: It was thur -- but it was not. According to him --

Q: He was --

A: -- and we know it was on the same -- on the same Kindertransport, the first Kindertransport that left. But the interesting thing -- and this is something about memory -- I believe what my logic tells me. History tells me it was on a Saturday, but I still think it was on a thur --

Q: It's your experience that it was Thursday.

A: I left on a Thursday. Which I think tells you a lot about these things I'm telling you.

Q: That's right.

A: Right?

Q: Right.

A: And that was th-th -- you know, the gr -- the great drama of my leaving and all the cousins coming and all the friends coming and everybody bringing me candy to take along with me. And my mother, who wanted to do something special for me, said, I have

to pack you food for three days, what shall I pack for you? And I couldn't -- I wasn't hungry. I couldn't think of anything. So I said, a wurst. Which is a sausage.

Q: Right.

A: And my mother said, I am going to get you a wurst. And my father, who was very passive I think, or thought until I remembered that it was he who got me on to the children -- by the way, in her 101<sup>st</sup> year, when I visited my mother in the nursing home, she and I did a revisionist history of my father. If he got me on to the Kindertransport, he was not the passive --

Q: Right.

A: -- and th-th-th-there's something we had -- we had left out of the story, th -- she and I together, over the years.

Q: But even so, in -- in the novel, that is the one act he performs.

A: Yes, but --

Q: It's very clear your mother would rather you --

A: My mother didn't want to hear about it --

Q: She didn't want to hear about it, right.

A: -- she didn't want it -- it to happen. She -- she didn't argue because the situation -- I mean, it was clear by this time, my father had tried every -- see, it wasn't the only thing he did. He was the one who went from consulate to consulate. It was he who got our name onto -- on to the American quota, which is why I'm sitting here today. So it wasn't -- it wasn't all that clear --

Q: It wasn't just the one -- uh-huh --

A: -- it wasn't just that one thing. In my head it was the one thing, but my -- he quarreled with my mother, they -- he was afraid of her going down. What if in the last minute something happens and prevents us from -- I mean, I was supposed to -- I was due to go to meet up with the -- with the children to go on the train that night.

Q: Right.

A: But my mother went down anyhow. I wanted a wurst. I wanted a sausage and I was going to get that sausage and she was going to go and get it for me. And she went down and she got it and she came back and m-my -- the other thing I remember is the anger of one of the aunts, who had twins and how come I got onto the -- my father had got me on the Kindertransport, how come he hadn't taken the trouble to get her twins on the transport? And my father -- this I do remember very clearly, my father sort of standing me between his knees and saying, when you get to England, you have to talk to the English people and you have to tell them to get out -- Mom-Mommy and me out, and the grandparents, and Tante Milla and the twins. And I said, oh yes, yes, that's what I will do, I will get everybody out. And it does seem to me an interesting -- a -- a horrendous burden to put on a 10 year old --

Q: Right.

A: -- to save some -- some six or seven or eight family members from Hitler, out of Hitler's Germany -- Austria. But I -- I took it absolutely seriously, that's what I wou -- and I did -- I -- I-I -- I worked at it. At least worked at being guilty if I wasn't working at it.

Q: Right.

A: For -- for ye -- for a year or two.

Q: Mm.

A: Then everybody went to -- they -- they -- the aunts -- the aunts left, the cousins left, and my parents a -- a -- I think that th -- we -- as I remember it, we were allowed to take a rucksack, a backpack and one suitcase, and no more. And we had -- we were -- I don't know at what point we were given the number 152, but it was certainly -- I-I think it might have been when we got -- we -- here, we walked across the bridge and what I remember about that is seeing my father and mother talking over my head. They held my hand and over my head they were talking about how -- again, the la -- the conversation about getting out of -- of -- out of Vienna. And my mother said something like why don't you try the Dutch consulate, and my father saying here, you can go to China and go to Beijing. And my mother said, why don't you try the Dutch -- the Dutch. And I thought they are talking -- they are already talking about tomorrow and I'm not going to be here tomorrow.

Q: And so it was upsetting you.

A: Y-Y-Yeah, and I got angry --

Q: Right.

A: -- I got really angry and I -- I withdrew my hands from them.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I said to my mother, "Look, the moon is reflected in the Danube." But they kept on talking.

Q: They weren't paying atten --

A: And it was -- it was -- it was one of the hard, hard things, that here at this moment I am about to leave and they're talking and they're not listening to my -- you know, I -- there was a little boy, when I was living in Ellsworthy Terrace in England, there was a little -- I watched -- looked out the window and there was a little boy walking with two women, one of them was his mother, clearly. And the -- the -- the trees in the -- in the street were in bloom and the little boy said, "Mom, look at the -- look at the trees," and the mother kept talking to her friend. The little boy said, "Mommy, the trees, the trees, look at the trees." And I thought, oh, there -- there I go. It's happened again, and they're not listening. Anyhow, we got onto the tram --

Q: Wait, let me ask you something.

A: Yeah?

Q: Who packed your ba -- your luggage -- your luggage?

A: Oh, my mother, my mother.

Q: Your mother did.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: And your rucksack? Did you take --

A: My mother.

Q: Your mother. So she packed everything?

A: Yes, yes. Who else would do it? I --

Q: I don't know, no, was there anything you wanted to take, that you -- that you made a decision about?

A: No, no.

Q: No. But the wurst goes into the piece of -- into the luggage?

A: The wurst --

Q: Wurst.

A: In germ -- Viennese, it's a wurst.

Q: Wurst.

A: Goes into the backpack.

Q: Into the backpack, okay.

A: And I'm not carrying the backpack or the -- or the sum --

Q: They are.

A: -- they are carrying it. And we get into the tram on the other side of the Danube, and right across the aisle there is a child who is crying. And I said to my mother, look that girl is cr -- little girl is crying. And my mother said, yes, and I -- you're not crying, you are -- you are s -- being so brave. And I had a serious doubt on the subject. It seemed to me, in my childish wisdom, reasonable to cry, and I was not doing it. Cause what I was thinking is, wow I'm going to England. Cause I had counted. I had been to Austria and I had been to Hungary and I had been to Czechoslovakia. Now I was going to be -- go to -- to England, that's going to be four countries.

Q: Right.

A: But I can't count England until I'm there.

Q: But you have a double thing that goes on in you all the time, don't you? Why aren't I crying, but I'm going to England.

A: That's right.

Q: So it's -- there's the -- there's this -- some kind --

A: They -- there's -- there's the -- the -- the -- the feeling is, this is a -- this is exciting, this is an adventure.

Q: Right.

A: Ought it to be an adventure? Oughtn't it to be a grief and a horror? I have a friend, who -- an old "New Yorker" writer, Bernard Taper, who was a child of -- a-an English Jewish child, with hung -- with -- with -- with American grandparents -- grand -- an American father. The father died, the mother sent him to America to be out of the war, to be with th -- he had the same -- he did the same thing. He said this is -- w-we have talked about this. So it's not -- it's one way, apparently --

Q: Right, sure.

A: -- to handle this -- this situation. The one -- one o -- it's not -- it's -- it's -- seemed to me unnatural, but it's one natural way -- thing to do.

Q: I think so. What's interesting about you is that you have an internal conversation --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- of wondering why are you not crying like that little girl. And at the same -- as if there's some --

A: You know, I will ask him. He is still barely alive, but I will ask him if he was doing the same --

Q: Same thing.

A: -- if he wa -- he was -- also turned into a writer, so I mean --

Q: Right.

A: -- whether he was both playing that -- that game with himself and also being aware and wondering whether that was kosher.

Q: Cause you di -- you do this a great deal.

A: Yes.

Q: And clearly did it at a very young age.

A: Yeah, yeah. It was not -- I was not very old when I had the distinct -- not so -- it's not an image, the distinct experience of an entity, an -- a watchful -- an eye, a -- a knowledge, an awareness sitting -- and it's over here, and taking note of what was going on. I wonder if that's rare or whether that's -- and I always choose to assume first that this is a human thing you're doing, not -- not a special -- then you can check it out afterwards, but --

Q: I suspect the part that's rare is the double consciousness. I think that what you're doing, it may not be as rare, that a lot of people do it. I'm not so sure that the double consciousness is -- is --

A: You do -- you don't have a -- a -- a -- an observer who is fantastically interested?

Q: In what's going on.

A: Yeah, whatever it is. Whether -- whether it's grief or -- or -- or -- or the thrill

Q: I'm not -- I'm not sure. I don't know, I have to think about this.

A: I'm going to do a poll.

Q: You do a poll, okay.

A: Oh it's mostly in polls. But we get to an open field, an open -- a large open space behind the [indecipherable], the west station.

Q: Mm-hm.



A: And there are innumerable bodies, people, it's dark, and there are people with poles on which there are placards that say something like -- mine particular said 100 to -- o-o-of -- one fi -- 150 to 200 -- to 190 -- 199, assuming, right?

Q: Right, right.

A: And I must have had my number before, because we're -- we're -- we're -- my parents take me to this one thing. Now, at some point I have the famous little cla -- little -- little wooden -- little -- little pla -- cardboard thing with a number 152, and -- and they -- on -- on a -- on a shoe -- shoestring, with a nu -- with the same number which was attached to the two pieces of luggage. And I looked -- and my mother was standing -- my mother had a black pony fur. I've always tried -- I -- when going into stores and said if they have a pony fur, and they say, a what? Apparently there is no such thing as a pony fur, but that's what I thought my mother had. And it had a biz foc -- big fox collar, and inside that fox collar was her face, and it was perfectly red and hot. And -- but except for its color, she made a hi -- a -- a -- a monumental effort to neither cry nor look upset. In fact, she was talking to me in what sounded like a normal voice.

Q: Mm.

A: And we were just talking and I -- and my father must have been there but he was very tall and besides he was, as usual, a background figure. And then at somebody -- point, somebody told us to line up. I think -- I seem to remember that we were supposed to be in -- in -- in -- in a group -- in four or so. And my mother put the rucksack on me, and she carried the --

Q: The luggage?

A: -- the lu -- th-the -- the little suitcase. But she kept talking to me, she kept walking beside me and talking until somebody from the organization [indecipherable] took the suitcase and gave it to me, and the next thing I knew I was through the portal inside the station, and my mother was no longer there. Now, I had a friend who believed that he could elicit forgotten information.

Q: Yeah.

A: And it interested him because I said I remember my mother holding the suitcase, and I remember being inside the train. I seem not to have crossed the station, got onto the platform, got onto the train, walked into the carriage. And he tried very hard, it was very interesting. He tried to make -- he tried to retrieve the lost memory. I -- I mean, I tried very hard.

Q: You didn't succeed?

A: I didn't succeed, no, I can't do that, I can't do it, it's gone.

Q: Do you remember saying goodbye?

A: No, because as a matter of fact, I was surprised when my mother was not -- oh yes, we said goodbye, we -- I kissed my mother, I must have kissed my father, and then -- but the -- but she continued to walk beside me after that --

Q: I see.

A: -- after that goodbye.

Q: Right. And then all of a sudden --

A: And then I'm inside the carriage and outside is my cousin Otto's girlfriend, with red hair and who knocked on the window. And I could, in those days, and for many, many a

decade later, stand on my head. So I got down on -- on my head and stood and wiggled my toes. I was a great showoff. You see, my fa -- I had been -- my -- my family had brought me up to be a showoff --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- they were always saying, oh she's so -- she can -- she can stand on her toes, she can --

Q: Right. You're very -- you were very proud of being able to do that.

A: I had got all this -- this -- all this reinforcement --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- yes. So I stood on my head for her. I think there were four children and four children. And I remember that it took an heck of a long time, too, for the train to go. It seemed to take forever. It didn't go and it didn't go and it didn't go. And we were being - - there was -- here's an interesting thing. The Kultusgemeinde is sent with us, of grown -- grown people to help us, to be with us.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Who I think tha -- wi -- "Into the Arms of Strangers" backs up this memory of mine, that they had agreed to go back. That if they were found to have bolted, there were going to be no more children's transports.

Q: Mm.

A: And it seems to me so peculiar, that the Nazis who wanted us gone from the world, insisted on these people coming back. There's so many inexplicable --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- and contradictory things in this -- in that -- this [indecipherable]. Why not make our exit easy? They made it difficult as possible. What was that about? You know, I always remember the story of the pharaoh and the -- and the gi -- a-and the -- and the Hebrews. He wanted them gone, but wouldn't let them go. What gives? That's such a -- such a peculiar --

Q: There's some tension between both --

A: Isn't there?

Q: Yes.

A: And there's something psychologically peculiar there. Go, but don't go. Get out of here, but --

Q: But we'll make it hard.

A: -- we're gonna close -- or -- close the doors. Very strange. So these people came with us and as far as I know, stayed a couple of days in the camps to settle us, and then went back.

Q: And then went back.

A: Went back into the -- into -- into hell -- into the hellhole. Meanwhile, it was -- that -- that was an exciting -- exciting train ride. First of all, the tension and the -- the usual nastiness between children, who was going to sit by the window. If you were going to lie down, somebody else had to stand up for awhile. And then it got to be your turn to sit and the other person to lie down. And there were th -- always the girl who would not get up, who wa --

Q: Who wouldn't -- right.

A: All the way to heaven or hell, that's got to be the person --

Q: Right.

A: -- who will not relinquish her seat.

Q: And with -- were the -- i-in your little cabin were there mostly [indecipherable] --

A: All girls.

Q: All girls --

A: All girls -- all girls.

Q: -- and mostly the same age?

A: No, no, there were some older wome -- older girls.

Q: So, older ones, but not --

A: So, I mean, the older would be 14 or 15.

Q: Right.

A: I was 10. There was a smaller child whom I wanted to make friends with, but she was -- she was -- I th -- always connected her with the child crying on the -- on the tram, but there's no reason to think that she was. I always -- I think I always thought she -- it was --

Q: The same one.

A: And she -- she wouldn't give up her suitcase, she held it on her lap and wouldn't let it go. Then came o -- and the -- and the -- the helper, the woman would come in and -- and say everything's okay, settle down, we'll go in a little bit. When I got -- was supposed to get up to give my place to somebody, I ha -- either remember or have created the good girl, the -- the -- the saintly girl who had never slept. I -- I don't know whether that's true, but she certainly was very sweet, very kind to me. She sent me to go wash my face in the

bathroom, where I discovered the pleasures of green soap. Because you could turn it upside-down and green soap would come out.

Q: Really? Oh, right, right.

A: And the other thing that I discovered is that if you go to the toilet and you pee and then you put your foot down, the thing opens up so that the --

Q: The thing goes --

A: -- pee can go through. But you could also see the rails go underneath.

Q: Right.

A: Oh, there's a lot of fun going on in the bathroom.

Q: Is that the first time you were on a train?

A: I was on a train all the time from -- from Vienna to -- to my grandparents.

Q: Right.

A: But I don't know that that was a proper train, that -- that didn't count. I don't remember any of these charms --

Q: Only these charms that -- right --

A: -- of the bathroom.

Q: -- right.

A: So finally I had to get out because people wanted to get in. I also remember the experience of -- th-there's always something interesting for children to watch other people sleeping.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I remember being rather terrified at seeing my father sleep at some point. That seemed very unnatural. He was supposed to be up, I was suppo -- but to go along this -- that train and look in and see children sleeping was very interesting. I remember it. I remember people in the act of waking up and sitting up and looking sort of as if -- you know how people sit up, but they're still asleep?

Q: Asleep, yes.

A: I remember seeing that. I -- I enjoyed that.

Q: Did -- did a number of kids cry, do you remember, when you were walking through, or were people pretty quiet?

A: No, I don't remember that.

Q: You don't remember.

A: I reme -- then I remember when we got to the border and the Nazis came in, the border contrale. And that was really terrifying. That I remember being terrifying, because they went from -- not carriage, what is it? Ca -- what do you call the -- the -- the subdivision, the -- the -- the cabin.

Q: Cabin, a little cabin, yeah.

A: And they t -- from our one they took one child out, and don't know what happened, but she came back and she looked -- she looked frightened. And I remember we didn't ask her what had happened.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: She must have been searched. I don't think anything more than --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- happened than that. But the -- the girls, the older girls said to us, you mustn't move.

And so we all sat down like that. You know, when you sit there like that you begin to --

Q: Shake.

A: -- vibrate, yes.

Q: Right.

A: Was no reason for us to sit like that, but it was something to do, I think, to be scared.

It -- it -- it's almo -- it's almost like an occupation. To sit like that is better than -- cause you can't do nothing when you --

Q: Right, right.

A: And then the Nazi, they got off again and the train went on --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- into the -- into the charms of -- of being welcomed in Holland. And be given chocolate and apples and it was very sweet, that.

Q: And that was nice.

A: Yeah.

Q: We have to change the tape.

End of Tape Five



### Beginning Tape Six

Q: Just one small detail. When did the kids started singing Zionist songs on the train?

When you got into Holland?

A: There is a moment -- y-you're on a platform and people, women are coming and handing you -- I mean, you are -- you're in the train.

Q: Yeah.

A: On the platform are these women and they're handing you food, apples, chocolate, hot chocolate to drink, chocolate. We -- the train starts up again. The children -- we're all at the windows looking out and this way and we're singing g -- wha -- I wa -- I forget how you say that in -- in German, something Princess Juliana -- Ju-Juliana, yes?

Q: Yes, sh --

A: Does that sound politically incorrect?

Q: That's -- sounds right.

A: I mean, go -- I would not say --

Q: Is it [indecipherable]?

A: -- God bless, but I can't remember.

Q: Right.

A: And the train gathers full speed, somebody cries, we're out. Now, this doesn't make sense, because it should be the other way around.

Q: Other way around.

A: Has to be the other way around. But it certainly, at some point somebody says, we are out. It -- it has to be. The scene of the -- of the platf -- people being on this platform has to be afterwards --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- except it -- I can't make it do that. I'll tell you why I can't do -- make it do that in my memory. Because somebody says we're out and immediately the -- the train doors open up and the boys come in. We were --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- a -- a -- a -- a --

Q: Segregated.

A: -- of the girls, and now the boys come in. And there is this big -- and they're some of the bigger boys, and they turn back their lapels and they have -- I mean, how anybody would do that -- they have the Kruckenkreuz of Austria, they -- they -- it's -- it's a cross like that and it has -- it has a -- it's like an eye. They have the Pfadfinder, the -- the -- the -- the g-guides -- no, what are Pfadfinder?

Q: Boy scouts?

A: Boy scouts, the boy scout. I mean, they have all these forbidden insignia on their lapels. And there's -- they were singing, and I think they were singing those Austrian songs, pre-Hitler Austrian songs, and they were singing Zionist songs, none of which I knew. And I was hugging somebody, somebody was hugging me. Now, the reason I cannot make my memory produce the scene at the -- when we were given the food after that -- because I remember going to sleep in the middle of this. That's what memory

does. And I remember that the very next thing that ha -- that happened was that somebody was putting my rucksack onto me -- I di -- one of the older girls, or one of the helpers, putting my rucksack on a-and identifying my suitcase and standing me down in the very cold air on the platform. So th -- I mean, you know, I -- obviously, this is logically not possible, but that's -- that's how --

Q: That's what your memory --

A: -- that's what memory, or memory does to me.

Q: Right.

A: Clearly. And then we were -- the next thing I remember is being on the boat and being led into a cabin, which was incredibly comfortable. Imagine after -- this was a day and a day, a night -- a day -- a night, a day, a night. And now you're in a little room that has a white bed with white sheets. And I had a worry, I had a problem. I couldn't brush my teeth and what would my mommy think if I didn't brush my teeth, so that worried me. And I had another worry. I had been to -- I had been told that when you go on the water you throw up. So I went, got into bed, and I prayed. I-I was sorry I hadn't -- I hadn't brushed my teeth. I hoped God would not met -- let me throw up and please don't get -- take my parents to the -- away [indecipherable]. Which incidentally, having your parents taken [indecipherable] was daily. I mean, you could -- we'd always hear of somebody -- so and so having been taken away, mostly men. Almost always men, but not entirely.

Q: Right.

A: So your parents being taken away, your father being taken away, it was just -- it wa -- it was what happened instead of going to the office.

Q: Right.

A: So -- and then I remember this black steward coming in and I'm s -- I said to him, am I going to throw up? And he said no, what you do is you put your head down and you go right to sleep and then you won't throw up. Oh, and I also asked him -- he had brought me something that looked like coffee and he said, no tea. And I said white tea? And he said, tea with milk. Which was my first experience of English tea.

Q: Did you have tea when you were in Vienna? No.

A: Not that I know of. Yes, tea with lemon.

Q: With lemon, but not with milk.

A: Lemon and sugar.

Q: Right.

A: That was a great experience, yeah.

Q: Right.

A: But not tea with milk, that looked like coffee.

Q: Right.

A: But he was ex -- he was very sympathetic. He was very tall and sympathetic.

Q: Were you alone in this cabin?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Really?

A: Yes. And I was also trying out my English on him and it worked fairly well. The next day we arrived and the boat was on -- standing there. The next thing as I remember, between then and getting to the camp, was the world of waiting.

Q: Mm.

A: You waited in the boat to be processed by these ladies sitting around the table. I was wanting for one of the many photographers to come and take my picture. And they didn't -- and they didn't take my picture. And I tried many things. I tried sleeping, I tried hopping, I tried eating. Oh, I forgot about the sausage. I have to tell you about the sausage.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because on the f -- when -- on the -- on the -- on the train, we were supposed to eat something and I took the sausage and I hated it.

Q: You hated it?

A: I couldn't bear it, so I ate some chocolate instead. And the next day there was still this sausage and I tried it again. And by that time it was kind of yucky looking and I tried it again, I really didn't like it. It was not the sausage I -- I wanted and liked. So that's --

Q: You wanted another kind of sausage?

A: So I'm -- I guess.

Q: Uh-huh, I guess.

A: I mean, when I said to my mother I want sausage, I was just saying something because she needed me to say something, not because I had a taste in my mouth that needed

satisfaction. So I ate more chocolate, and I had boiled sweets and I had more chocolate.

And I was eventually processed and given that visa, that -- I -- I t -- that I showed you --

Q: Yes.

A: -- th-that c-card --

Q: Right.

A: -- that special -- I mean, it was instead of a visa. It -- to get a visa from the Austrians was a nightmare. It's like going to the Social Se-Security.

Q: Right.

A: Right?

Q: Right.

A: That's what it -- and they -- a-and they meant it to be difficult.

Q: Right.

A: So we had these alternative things. And they either -- the -- either the lady gave it to me -- I don't know, but it had something to do, I saw that for the first time. And here comes another wrong memory. I was processed, and now I c-could -- could go with my coat, no suitcase, down the gangplank. What I remember is going down the gangplank entirely by myself, seeing an empty dock with workers standing, watching, and that there was a mist, a -- a s -- a -- a -- one of those English -- it's -- it's -- it's like -- it's like as if mist had been decimated and was hanging in the air, going down to a huge glass and iron hangar where were rows and rows of suitcases and I was told to get mine. And the notion of finding mine in all this seemed to me a nightmare. So I sat down and cried some more.

And somebody came and of course all they did was look at the number and then go to the number.

Q: Right.

A: But here is the puzzle. There exists, and it was given me by the wa -- la -- the producer of the movie, "Into the Arms of Strangers", which deals with the -- with the Kindertransport, they actually found a picture of me coming off the gangplank. You can see the -- I have it, I own it, I own this little picture. It says 152. I have my little cap on and I'm not alone by any means, I'm one of an-any number of children coming down the gangplank. I've given up trying to dis-disentangle memory from the evid -- from contrary evidence.

Q: But if your experience of that was of isolation --

A: Yeah, yeah, it is not -- it -- it --

Q: -- then you would just -- you'd knock everybody else out.

A: -- it isn't -- it isn't that puzzling, yes --

Q: Right, that one --

A: -- perhaps it's not, you're quite right --

Q: -- that one isn't.

A: -- that's very true, that's not that puzzling. I had a sense that I was alone in the world -

-

Q: Right.

A: -- going into a world I didn't understand --

Q: Right.

A: -- going to do a task which was demonstrably impossible.

Q: Right.

A: So then we sat in -- on the -- on -- then we sat in a way -- in a place where we waited for a train. And then we got in a train and then we sat in a place where we waited for a bus. And then we sat in a bus. And then a bus -- I wa -- of -- there's a double-decker bus [indecipherable]

Q: Did you go to the bathroom in any of this here? Did you -- is there any bathrooms in this waiting period?

A: Don't remember going.

Q: Okay.

A: [indecipherable] remember going to the bathroom.

Q: I don't know, I just --

A: Okay, I remember the bathroom on the train --

Q: -- given our conversation about what we don't talk about --

A: Yes, I don't remember --

Q: In the train you do, you know?

A: -- there must have been.

Q: Cause it sounds like there are long periods of time after you get off the boat.

A: Oh, like a day, yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, it must have been.

Q: So it must have been.



A: But I'm still eating my chocolate --

Q: Right.

A: -- and --

Q: And then na --

A: -- and it does occur to me that I'm not going to eat the sausage --

Q: Right.

A: -- but there's nothing I can do about that, so I pack it back --

Q: And you keep it.

A: -- pack it back up and -- I do remember approaching this little -- little city of tiny little huts on the seashore. It was adorable, these little -- they look like little dollhouses. When I -- later on, when I was with my first foster family in Liverpool, the Cohens, I wrote up this experience that you and I are talking about now. And I remember thinking how disappointing it was to just arrive there, no sunset, no sunrise, so I stuck one in. Exactly the kind of thing as a grown-up writer that I would never do, I would never you know, tweak it, never.

Q: Like that, never.

A: I mean, it's absolutely against my -- I very -- my -- my -- my deepest morality says you don't tweak a memory.

Q: No?

A: I mean, it may be a wrong memory --

Q: Right, but you don't tweak it.

A: -- but you don't mess wi -- you don't tweak it.

Q: Right.

A: You don't enhance it.

Q: Whatever is there, is there.

A: Yes, and you keep -- in fact, you keep it at its lowest and let it work. That's -- that's a -- that's a -- that's a holy --

Q: It's a holy writ.

A: Absolutely.

Q: Yes.

A: Very few th -- very few holy [indecipherable]. You don't -- you don't distort f-for purposes of drama, is --

Q: Right, right.

A: So we --

Q: So are you getting antsy in all of this waiting and tr -- or -- or not --

A: Exhausted, tired, sleepy.

Q: You're -- so you're tired, sleepy?

A: Sleepy. There are no strong emotions, no dram -- no s -- no drama. None of the things that would make a good movie.

Q: And the other kids? Everybody's the sa --

A: Everybody --

Q: -- is the same.

A: Well, if you see -- if you look at the children in the -- in -- in the movie --

Q: Right.

A: -- nobody is -- nobody is acting up --

Q: No.

A: -- nobody is screaming, nobody is howling.

Q: No. Right. It's very quiet.

A: They're howling -- they may be howling interially, but they're --

Q: Right.

A: We were then taken to this huge hall. The -- I -- I -- I understand that these -- these camps were w-workers holiday camp, closed for the winter and they had opened them up for us. They were su-summer camps, they were not for the winter, so while we were there they were installing -- this turned out to be one of the ha -- coldest winters in memory and they installed ovens, stoves, with -- with those l -- with those long -- with those -- what do you call it?

Q: Pipes [indecipherable]

A: Pipes that were led up out t -- of the ceiling --

Q: [coughing] Excuse me.

A: -- the glass ceilings.

Q: Right.

A: After we were addressed by the camp leader -- I-I don't remember anything about that, we were sitting there wi -- we were assigned five little girls with one older one, or four little girls with one older one, and assigned to a particular -- one of these little houses. And a-after we had put down our -- our -- our suitcases and chosen our beds, we were supposed to go back for a meal. And I said I didn't want to go, because it had

occurred to me I had to do something with this scosset -- this sausage, which was beginning to smell noticeably and had been commented upon by the little girls in the -- in -- the little girls in [indecipherable] what -- what's [sniffs]. So I said I wa -- I wasn't hungry, I was sleepy, I was going to stay there. And I was going to figure out what to do with this thing. And here comes one of the great puzzles in life. How do you -- how do you get rid of something that smells bad, which your mother has given you before you left Vienna. There is no way that you can throw it out, but there is no way you can keep it.

Q: Keep it.

A: And this is a problem.

Q: Right. You got a big problem here.

A: You got a big problem and you keep thinking that any moment now, you're going to figure it out. But you're also sleepy, so you lie down in the bed, and you're going to figure this out. By this time you hear --

Q: The kids coming back.

A: -- the kids coming back, so you scoot it under the bed. I mean, y-you take that -- it's in -- it's in a paper bag --

Q: Right.

A: -- and scoot it under the bed.

Q: Right.

A: Well, who is the horrible person who has made in her bed? Yes, who --

Q: Who did it?

A: Y-You jo -- you join, you know, where's the thief? You join the -- it's -- it was a problem for -- for many a day.

Q: So what did you end up doing?

A: Nothing.

Q: Nothing? Did it just shrivel up, what?

A: It shriveled up and stank.

Q: And just stayed there.

A: It stayed there. It stayed there. I tried several things. I tried to bury -- now -- by now the f -- the ground is frozen stiff. I took it outside and tried to make a hole for it with the heel of my -- of my shoe, it wo -- it wouldn't -- it wouldn't. It did occur to me I could throw it in the garbage, but I -- you couldn't. How -- you can't throw that away. Your mommy we -- went all the way down, she had a fight with your father about going down to get it, I mean. Anyhow, he -- in -- in the -- in the -- they were -- they -- they -- meanwhile we spend most of our time in this big hall. We stand around the -- the stoves. They -- we have -- there's a -- there's a -- a drawing competition. There's the bodybuilder who came and did a performance for us.

Q: There's film of that, I think. Yes.

A: There's -- no --

Q: Oh, was that -- is --

A: -- there's a film of -- of a guy play -- wh-who -- a tennis -- a tennis guy --

Q: That's true, you're right, you're right.

A: No, ours was a -- ours -- and I was so impressed with him because he -- all he had on, these little purple trunks and it was really cold, and he could flap his stomach muscles.

That's what I most --

Q: That's --

A: He could flap -- flap this one --

Q: And flap that one.

A: -- he'd flap this one. And I -- I did feel that it was very sweet of him.

Q: To come.

A: It was sweet of him to be there. The other thing that I remember is that the mayor of lo -- I think it was in Lowestoft. They were -- we were in two camps, but we'll make it in one camp, it's too long a story. We were moved out of the first camp because the next set of -- of --

Q: Kids were coming.

A: -- kids were coming.

Q: Mm.

A: And I think they divided boys from the girls cause they were doing things that you're not supposed to. Even in -- even in this --

Q: Even in this situation.

A: -- yes.

Q: Yes.

A: Where the little kids were -- were -- I don't know, but there -- there was a -- there was -- we were separated and moved on in a train to another camp.

Q: So the girls were separated?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: I do not remember. I -- I only remember that I -- well, the people I was with, I was suddenly no longer with, I was with other people. Here it becomes -- you know, there's -- it's interesting, there's just so much memory that you --

Q: Yes, yes.

A: -- or detail that you can put in, then -- then i-it's full and -- and there's no more room.

Q: Right.

A: The things rapidly that I remember. I remember the mayor coming and my thinking I was going to ask the mayor -- my daddy had said, you must talk to the English people and get them out of Vienna. My grandparents, my parents, my Tante Milla.

Q: And the two boys, right?

A: And so I was thinking I'm -- I will go up to the mayor and ask him. And I said to the girl who -- our -- th-the -- the -- the first big girl, I said to her, how do you say to bring out of Vienna, or some -- some phrase. And she said, I don't know. Now, I was still going to -- I had this -- this idea that once I was face to face with the mayor I would have the right words. But of course when it came to the point, I wasn't even sure which was the mayor and at that moment somebody addressed us, somebody -- he had a bad cold, I remember that. The moment never happened. And now I-I -- you know, I was beginning to worry that I was not doing this thing. My parents were going to be taken to ca -- to -- it

wasn't called concentration camp in the war, I don't know what it was called. But it was -  
-

Q: Whatever. Wasn't [indecipherable]

A: -- whatever it was, they were going to go because I had forgotten to -- I hadn't got around to talking to the mayor. The other thing I remember is that there were all of a sudden in the camp, these kind of -- these kind of things.

Q: What, wires?

A: Wires. They were all written because they were -- they were -- they were filming it all, or -- or putting it on tape.

Q: Really?

A: And I remember all of a sudden th-there were these me -- these snakes, these big snakes.

Q: Big -- real snakes?

A: No, no.

Q: No, no, the wires.

A: These snaky looking wires there, yeah.

Q: Right, right. Did they take your f -- they obviously took your picture somewhere.

A: Maybe. I don't -- let me get on with this. What -- what I also remember is they were dancing the horah, the children with their arms around each other and I wanted to dance, but I didn't know if I was meant to join them. And I didn't know how to get myself out of my chair, into the situation of dancing. And I thought, I wish somebody would come and ask me. So one of the ladies -- there were -- there were lots of ladies in -- suddenly, in fur



coats. And -- and one of the ladies in fur coat said, don't you want to dance? And I said no. And she said, why don't you come and dance? I said I don't want to. And then she went away, and I thought, if she comes back and asks me again, then I will come. Course she never came back. And I told this story tha-th-th-th-th-the Austrian filmmaker took us around and took us to some of these camps that now exist, that resemble these camps.

Q: Right.

A: And I was telling these tha -- th-there was a -- a-a -- a f-f -- a photo --

Q: Camera? [indecipherable]

A: -- camera, who was about 19 years old and there was the -- th-the -- the -- the person with the boom. He's a young, gorgeous young -- young man. And I told him this story, I thought it was so peculiar of a -- of a -- of a child that wasn't able -- oh, they said, I know just how that felt. I know exactly wanting to dance and not.

Q: So did you ever get up?

A: Th -- I never got up, never got up.

Q: Never.

A: Sta -- sat in my little coat. And you know, the longer you sit, the less possible it is to get up.

Q: Right, right.

A: The -- th-the -- there were ladies walking around with -- with -- what -- what -- what do you call the thing that you -- clipboards. And walking around saying -- saying to children -- choosing children. They were looking for 20 children to go -- I mean, the whole point of our being in the camp is -- was ba -- while they were finding us foster

homes, or schools to go to, or making the arrangements. By the way, one of the things my mother said most recently, she said, it just occurs to me that when we sent you away, we had no addresses. We didn't know --

Q: Right.

A: And that seems so amazing. Cause they were still in the process of finding places to put us.

Q: Right. And they didn't know where you were going to go.

A: They didn't know where we --

Q: Right.

A: Anyhow, they were walking around and this lady comes up to me and says -- two of them, there were two of them, and one of them came up to me and said, wh-what is your name? I said, Lore Groszmann. How old are you? I am -- I said half past 10. And she said, would you like -- oh, they said to each other, she speaks English. And one of them said, would you like to go to an Orthodox home? I said yes. And so they put me down and they said tomorrow you're going to Liverpool. And then when they'd gone, I was writing a letter -- I was in process of writing a letter, I said, by the way, what's Orthodox?

Q: You were writing to your parents?

A: To my parents, what's -- what does that mean, Orthodox? And my father wrote me back and said, do not go to an Orthodox home. By that time I was already in being --

Q: [indecipherable] over there.

A: -- having learned -- I was already doing a good job not tying my shoelaces on a Saturday.

Q: And you liked it. You liked it.

A: I liked it. I liked it. You know, there is something in a confusion, if there's certain things you know are right and wrong. This you're supposed -- I never learned how they were -- expected me to hold my knife and fork, cause it was different. That I couldn't figure out. But to not tie my shoes on a -- on a -- on a Shabbas, that I could do.

Q: That you could do.

A: There were lots of things that were very clear, and I thought it was interesting. I thou -  
- I-I thought that was good.

Q: Yeah.

A: I -- I knew to tell them th-that I -- the -- the ca -- the maid not to put the milk [indecipherable] and the [indecipherable] together, I figured that one out.

Q: It's interesting. When did you start writing letters? After you got to the [indecipherable]

A: Oh, in the camp I started --

Q: In the camp.

A: -- writing camp -- and I wrote letters to my parents and my grandparents and I wrote letters to the cousins, here come the cousins. The cou -- the -- the -- Tante -- Tante Erna, who had been called a cow, they were already in England because of his business connections.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I wrote them interminable letters. Now --

Q: The cow was in England.

A: The cow was in England, the cow and her husband.

Q: And her hu --

A: Tante Erna and Uncle Ernst were already in England and they -- I wrote them letters.

Now, what I think happened is that they sent the letters on to the organization called Bloomsbury House, which was -- you must have come across that, no?

Q: Yeah.

A: They were the o -- they were the organizers, together with the Viennese Kultusgemeinde for -- for managing these refugee matters. Because my parents did, as a matter of fact, by March have a visa to England as a married couple; that is to say as a butler and cook. I have always assumed, and I don't know why I know this, that my uncle e -- Uncle Ernst sent this [indecipherable] or in some way organized this, because I don't know who else would have organized it, there was nobody in England except I and these cousins, who could have --

Q: But your -- your letter, the one letter that I read is extremely poignant, because while you're talking like a kid about how wonderful things are, things -- but in your heart there's this fear about your parents. And I can imagine someone receiving that letter --

A: And being moved by it.

Q: -- and being moved and si --

A: I was also operating like a writer. I had -- I had images. Out -- outside -- out behind the -- behind the cottage was a rose, and the rose had snow on it and I was saying how will my parents -- if you don't get my parents out, they will die like the rose in the snow, stuff like that.

Q: Like in the [indecipherable], right. It's fabulous, and unusual, it seems to me.

A: And I also thought, that's really good.

Q: That's real -- you did. You -- you knew it was good.

A: Oh, that's a good one.

Q: It was, it's a great -- you're too much. Let's stop the tape and change the tape.

End of Tape Six

### Beginning Tape Seven

A: I want to tell you about the other image that -- that I remember from -- from a letter which I was proud of, and which I think makes a -- m-ma -- it's really more interesting. Wa -- one of the problem -- one of the problems of getting out of Austria, out of Hitlerland was that you needed a number of documents. You needed a visa to get into the other country. You needed a -- the people of -- a letter from -- of either a job or people to look out for you. You needed an exit visa. And all of these things were dated, and all of these things had to be somehow procured and current at the same time. And it simply didn't happen. And my image was to say what I've just said to you, and say, it's like winding up a ball of wool that keeps falling out of your hands and unraveling. And I thought that was pretty good.

Q: That was pretty --

A: And I mean, it even refers to something real, that was a real, real disastrous problem.

Q: Yes, because you can't --

A: An-And the w -- yes --

Q: -- you can't catch it.

A: -- and the -- it was also the m -- the malice of all the countries like America, who made as many -- who put as many roadblocks in the way as possible, unconsciously, I believe.

Q: When you wrote these letters to your relatives, were you mainly at the Cohens or were you --

A: No, these were done -- these were written in -- in the camp, in the --

Q: But this -- this one, if this is --

A: The one that I'm talking about, the one with the rosebud --

Q: Right.

A: -- was definitely from the camp because the rosebud was outside the --

Q: But you must have known that you were going to the Cohens, because this particular letter seems to have care of Lore Shelly at the Cohens.

A: This somebody else's writing. Look at that. That's a grown-up writing.

Q: Oh, you're right.

A: Somebody put that on, I -- I was surprised to see that. Somebody must have added that to my letter.

Q: Put it on later.

A: Did you see that?

Q: You're right, it isn't your hand -- it isn't the same --

A: No, not at all.

Q: -- you're absolutely right.

A: That's a grown-up.

Q: You're right, cause your handwriting is different, I'm sorry.

A: I mean, we gave the letter --

Q: Right.

A: -- to the camp person --

Q: Right.

A: -- who must then have -- that must have been in that [indecipherable].

Q: So you're very self-conscious in writing these letters, of tryi -- of --

A: Absolutely.

Q: Both of being the writer and being this -- a desperate kid who wants your parents out.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And you love the fact that you create these great images at the same time.

A: Yes --

Q: You're very --

A: -- yeah. It's not pure.

Q: It's -- no, no, no, I understand it's not pure. Do you have all these letters? Did you ever get all of them back?

A: I think I do. I also have the letters I wrote to my grandparents that are incredibly boring.

Q: Incredibly boring?

A: And later on -- boring. I mean, what do you write to your grandparents year -- week after week after week? And what do they write to you? I mean, at one point I started learning to play the piano and I would tell them what I was learning to play. And since I learned to play the same thing through many a month, that's what was in those letters. I have those letters.

Q: You have those letters.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: This one I don't think has the -- see -- see whether you recognize this letter. Can you see it?



A: Not without my glasses, sorry. Here, hang onto that for a second.

Q: Okay. This is where you're writing to ern --

A: Is that the letter that was in the --

Q: Yeah.

A: In --

Q: In the book.

A: In the book.

Q: In your own book you don't --

A: No.

Q: -- you don't repeat the letters.

A: Today fourt -- is 14<sup>th</sup> of December. We live in a holiday camp. That's -- so that is still

--

Q: The camp, right.

A: -- that is still in the camp.

Q: And 14<sup>th</sup> of December is only a few days after you actually left.

A: Right. In fact, it must be the first day we were there. We left on the 12<sup>th</sup>, that I'm pretty sure about. Should I read it?

Q: So this means --

A: Shall I read it?

Q: Yeah, read it.

A: Ah, we live in a holiday camp toge -- oh, this is a translation, obviously.

Q: Yeah, yeah, you didn't write in English.

A: Y-Yeah.

Q: Yeah. I don't know if it's a good translation.

A: "Our address will be Dovercourt Camp, Holiday Camp, Harwich, England." That's the second camp, the first was Dovercourt, right.

Q: Right.

A: "Where I am now it is beautiful. We live in dark brown huts in which no more than four children can sleep. We have two little windows with red curtains. When we in the hut put the light on, it looks from outside as if there were a fire inside. In front of the hut are small green wooden fences. In the morning when I sit up in bed, I can look through the window and see far out across the ocean. Sometimes the sun has reddened the sky so that it looks as if there were pink silk drawn across it. The juicy green grass, too" -- this is -- this is self consciously pu-purple, all right? "The juicy green grass too, adds to the beauty of the region."

Q: Uh-huh, yes.

A: Yeah. "Just imagine, it is so beautiful here and yet it is not beautiful. I would almost say that it is ugly because whatever I am doing, I must think of my beloved parents.

Though it is good to think of one's parents, it is not good when one doesn't know whether they were still able to sleep last night" -- yeah, this is purposeful. Yeah, this is -- this is meant to be a tear raiser -- tearjerker.

Q: Yeah, but not every 10 year old, for heaven sakes, would --

A: No, I was a special 10 year --

Q: You were a special 10 --

A: -- who -- who was a good tearjerker. “Though it is good to” [indecipherable] -- “doesn’t know whether they were still able to sleep last night and when one doesn’t know if they will have enough money to pay for the emigration ticket. It is going to take a very long time. No, then it is truly not good to think about it. Sometimes when I think about it I have to keep myself from crying, and not out of homesickness, but because of the above-mentioned reasons.”

Q: Uh-huh.

A: “That is why I beg you a thousand times to give me news of my parents. I have written to them too late to expect an answer by next week and I’m afraid that they might not get my letter, and beg you to answer me immediately. And one more request, and this is the biggest one that I have ever had. In case my parents are not able to emigrate, please, please try and buy them a visa to Paraguay or get my poor -- my poor” -- there are many, many --

Q: Zeroes.

A: -- zeroes. I don’t know how to read that many zeroes, “times --

Q: A ze -- I don’t know, a billion.

A: -- beloved parents out of Germany somehow.”

Q: Right.

A: “Please, please write to me, even if there’s no good news to be told. Many, many kisses from your already ahead of anything that you are going to do grateful. Lore.”

Q: It’s a fabulous letter.

A: Yeah, it is a fabulous letter, yeah.

Q: It's [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, it's amazing --

Q: It's very unusual --

A: -- yeah, yeah.

Q: -- to think of a 10 year old writing this.

A: Yeah [indecipherable]

Q: And so it's not difficult to think that they would be --

A: Be moved, ah, oh surely --

Q: -- extremely moved --

A: -- surely.

Q: -- and try to do something.

A: And the anxiety is very genuine.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: I remember -- I-I remember a dream of my grandmother crucified. Now, where I get that shape from, she was a -- she was nailed to a wall like this. That was a -- one -- one dream that -- from which I woke with a -- with -- with -- in a -- in a sweat. And then, after my -- I've learned that my grand -- my parents had moved again, to another apartment. This is now when I'm living in -- in -- in Liverpool with the Cohens. Let me just finish the little story. The next morning, after I had said I wanted to go live an Orthodox family --

Q: Mm.

A: -- that my father's warning about not going to Orthodox reached me -- yeah.

Q: While you were there, right.

A: But the next day we went on the train out to Liverpool. And it was while I was out in the bathroom here, wa -- out in the bathroom. I came back to the -- to the -- to the compartment, that's what it's called, and found that somebody had taken down my -- my rucksack, my backpack, opened it up, and there was the sausage. Which by now had a different kind of smell. It's no longer active decay, but that sort of musty smell. And one of the --

Q: So you put it back in your --

A: Oh, I kept putting it back.

Q: Oy vey.

A: Cause I couldn't throw it away.

Q: Right.

A: And one of the children said, it isn't even kosher.

Q: [laughs]

A: And I died. I mean, I remember -- here -- here's a -- here's an image that I res -- I-I -- do you know, you feel as if the waters close over you, of shame, of embarrassment. Now when we got out, I guess it was the s -- in -- in -- in -- in Liverpool, that one -- the two ladies were -- who were -- picked us up said to me, now you can throw it away. And I threw it away and I finally hollered.

Q: Mm.

A: And I remember -- you know, because you -- you keep commenting on the double consciousness, I remember howling and I remember looking at the two ladies and seeing

they were frightened, because they didn't know what to do with an out of control, weeping child. Anyway --

Q: Was -- was that your -- your separating?

A: It was that -- that sausage.

Q: That -- which was separating from your mother --

A: Well, it was -- you know, I mean, we all know -- know that something given us by somebody has --

Q: Right.

A: -- it -- it becomes a -- it becomes a sympathetic magic, I mean, it's a magical object.

Q: Right, you're right, right.

A: That's why it -- so many [indecipherable] Victorians will have locketts, you know.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Stupid things, but they represent -- they represent the person who gave them.

Q: Right, right.

A: And I think that sausage --

Q: Right.

A: -- had got a -- had got a wallop of that kind of --

Q: Absolutely.

A: -- of meaning.

Q: So this is --

A: But I just wanted to bring us to it, to get -- get us finally to Liverpool. What wa -- what were you asking me about the letter? What -- oh, something about the letters. One

thing you do when you really need letters desperately, you try and keep disappointment at bay. So I would make long arithmetical arrangements with myself. I would say, it takes -- it'll take five days to get to Vienna, it'll take them five days to answer. Then they will -- it takes five days to get back, let's say six days. I'm not going to have a letter for the next 15 days. Then of course on the next day you get a letter. Happiness.

Q: Right.

A: And I turned that -- I had a little friend called Renata and I turned that into a game with her and she never understood what the principle was. So --

Q: She always had the wrong --

A: She always -- she always made -- well, she made her letters come as fast as possible.

Q: Possible, right.

A: I was always winning.

Q: And you were always winning, right.

A: Until she -- until she said she wouldn't play any more.

Q: So this is a real story that you have in the book.

A: Yeah.

Q: This is -- this really happened.

A: Yes, oh yeah, abso --

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: -- oh yeah, yeah. But I wanted to tell -- I wanted to give you some sense of how -- how it was, that fear for the parents.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Once I learned that my parents had once again moved, now I'm without a -- a visual --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- place in which to place them. And I had a extraordinarily uncomfortable image of my father on a -- I think it's -- I think it's something I got from Laurel and Hardy. I think at one point one of them is up on a big po -- th-that -- that connection came to me as ki -- came to me long afterwards, but the-there's a pole and one of them is straddling on top, you know, with a for -- like -- like a -- like a -- like a -- like a bug that's -- that's wiggling its -- and the problem is, as long as I was -- if I tried to think of my parents, they were up on that extremely uncomfortable pole. So I had to si -- try to not think about them.

Q: Right.

A: Which is like the elephant in the room.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And it was excruciating, the -- the compli -- the -- the -- the -- the tri -- the attempt to not think about your parents because if you thought about them they would -- they would be uncomfortable. It was -- it was a -- for m -- for many days in -- my occupation. And I think my -- the foster parents, the Cohens, would see me suddenly get up and run out of the room and come back again in an attempt to get away from the image, with a --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- or to occupy myself in some way so I wouldn't think about them. Very

[indecipherable]

Q: And they -- and they wouldn't understand, of course.

A: And of -- they -- I didn't understand it.



Q: Right. And yet, you couldn't stop thinking about them in some way.

A: Well, I couldn't stop thinking about them and I had to because it was dangerous for them.

Q: Right. So you were in an impossible situation.

A: It was impossible, yeah.

Q: It was really impossible.

A: So the -- the stress was not the kind that expresses itself in a flow of tears, it's this other stuff.

Q: Yes.

A: Now, there was a tear management that I learned after awhile. I would sit in front of the fire on a low stool and I discovered that if you -- if you a -- you -- you can use tears like a blanket, but you didn't want to cry them, because then -- the blanket then was all over. So I would bring them up to here, and sit looking into the fire and to have tears up to here. And that -- I got -- I got an exp -- got to be expert at being able to do that. And of course these poor people were trying to cheer me up.

Q: Right.

A: They kept telling me I -- why -- why -- don't be -- don't be miserable, and I'm s -- I was saying I'm miserable, I'm not miserable. I wish I was properly miserable.

Q: When you say you brought the tears up to here --

A: Up to here --

Q: -- you mean --

A: -- that's how it felt.

Q: -- inside?

A: That's how it fel -- up to here, yeah, inside.

Q: Up to here.

A: Inside.

Q: Inside the eye.

A: Before they came out.

Q: Before they came out.

A: Yeah, that was it. And you could do that and then they would st -- then they would go away and you'd have to work at it again to -- to get them up there and keep them there.

Q: Oh my God. So they found it extremely difficult to be with you, because you were not being with them.

A: I was not being with them and I was unable to call my foster mother Auntie Lena.

Q: And she wanted --

A: She wanted me to call her Auntie Lena and for some -- for reasons that I don't understand, I couldn't get those words --

Q: Out of your --

A: -- out of my mouth. So I couldn't call her anything. So another reason I kept disappearing from the room, because I couldn't think of a way to address her.

Q: How did you address the father, Mr. Cohen?

A: He didn't demand anything.

Q: He didn't de -- oh, so it didn't matter.

A: He didn't ask for anything, so this wasn't a problem.

Q: I see. Only she was the problem.

A: The girls -- there were six girls.

Q: That's a lot of people in this house.

A: Five girls, six girls. I have to count them. There were a lot of young women, of various ages. The youngest was 16, who was my friend, who still is, we're still in --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- w-we write for the Jewish holidays. I go to see her when I'm in -- in -- in -- in -- in London. She is -- she is a Zionist and a poli -- very political, wonderful, wonderful woman, terrific woman. And she brought me books to read which I couldn't because I -- my English was certainly not up to that. And she brought me paper to write my story on. And that's when I --

Q: Did she --

A: -- wrote this story for the first time.

Q: Really?

A: 36 pages full of -- full of sunsets and sunrises.

Q: But that was lovely of her to do that.

A: Very. She was wonderful. She was -- she was very sympathetic and very, very lovely.

Q: So she was bo --

A: The other women -- the other members of that family, except for the father, who wanted nothing except to give my sixpences.

Q: Right.

A: And sit -- let me sit quietly, without bothering me, without m -- dem -- without making demands on me. It was very sweet to sit with my tears right here and he was sitting in his cou -- couch over there, with his big, thick glasses. And he would just sit and I would sit, and that was very cozy.

Q: And that was okay.

A: And as soon as somebody else came in, there was something I was supposed to do, like be cheerful, or cry, or do something --

Q: Something.

A: -- that she could understand.

Q: So was this daughter with whom you were closer, the youngest of the --

A: Ruth, yeah.

Q: -- oh, ru -- Ruth was her name?

A: Yeah.

Q: Wis -- she wasn't like her mother?

A: No. She was the child in the family who was fighting her mother. Everything her mother did was stupid.

Q: Really?

A: She was the reb-rebellious one.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: She now tells me how much she values her parents. Those par -- you see -- you saw the parents?

Q: Yes, I saw the parents [indecipherable]

A: And I almost said to her, value what -- value what. But I didn't say that.

Q: You didn't say that.

A: No, I didn't say it.

Q: You would have a long time ago, I bet.

A: I hope not. But she is a classy lady.

Q: Yeah.

A: To look at, to talk to, to --

Q: That's funny. Is it Aunt Lena who tells you that your parents are coming? Who tells you?

A: Aunt Lena -- I am now at a -- at the Jewish school. They put us in a Jewish school. I have never -- I -- I look back on that, it's a -- I think it's a -- an Orthodox school, for one thing. It's the world at -- it's that -- it's the Jewish -- the Jewish world I don't know. It seems s-su -- subclass to me.

Q: Subclass?

A: Yes, underclass. I mean, it's -- it's -- I don't know that world. It's -- i-it's sa -- it feels to me like as I went into a cave, okay? I mean, children were still being beaten with -- with -- with --

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, ga -- boys. Boys --

Q: The boys.

A: -- boys had their hands beaten with rulers.

Q: Oh.

A: I -- it's really -- it was really a -- a -- a -- a -- a place -- a -- a -- an -- land I don't know.

Do you know the kind of thing I n -- or don't -- or don't you?

Q: I don't know. I certainly don't know that from experience, no. So they put you in that school and the other girls were --

A: All the -- all the children --

Q: -- all the children were there.

A: -- all the 20 -- 20 little girls went into that school.

Q: 20.

A: Yes.

Q: So you get there when? You're -- you get there December?

A: Ah -- I -- this is December -- yes.

Q: Something December.

A: I -- I was in two camps for about less than two weeks, I would say.

Q: Right.

A: So I -- I we -- I went to -- we came in this -- we -- we arrived on December 14<sup>th</sup> and I think before the end of the year, certainly.

Q: Right.

A: Bef -- before the end of the year --

Q: You were with the Cohens.

A: -- I was with the Cohens. And I -- I got to be 11 years old at the Cohens and they were going to give me a party. And on the day of -- the day before or the day of my birthday, Mrs. Cohen came -- I-I was called to the headmaster's office, and in the headmaster's

office sat Mrs. Cohen and said -- the headmaster said, you can go home today. And I understood -- already understood -- I mean, there must have been talk of my parents coming.

Q: Cause somebody had to know.

A: Which I can't remember.

Q: Yeah.

A: I -- there must have been something in the air, and I might not have chosen to know it in -- so as not to be disappointed. But, I said, my parents have come. And Mrs. Cohen looked at me and waited for me to do --

Q: Something.

A: -- something. I mean, just as I hadn't cried efficiently, here I wasn't happy sufficiently. So I -- she said, aren't you happy, you funny child. She does nothing but write letters home, and now I tell her, she's not even happy. So then we got in the car, and on the way I kept producing the drama that meant I was happy, because obviously I -  
-

Q: Right.

A: -- I wasn't -- I wasn't -- what I felt was very clear to me. And I've had -- you know, i-in -- in the movie, in "Into the Arms of Strangers" the number of people who have it -- describe something like this, the removal of a burden that you didn't know you were c -- you were carrying.

Q: Right.

A: You're suddenly realize what it's -- what it feels like to be a person. Y-Y-You haven't known that you were not, but you're suddenly out from under. And the feeling is exquisite and does not express itself in ah ha ha ha.

Q: Right, right.

A: You know, it doesn't express itself --

Q: Ri-Right.

A: -- in the expressions o -- it's true joy, and had nothing to do with -- with the things that -- that usually express. It seems to me s -- I've said to students in my writing classes, one thing you can be sure of, when you feel real emotion, it will not be what you think it's like.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Cause what you think it's like is taken from the last bit of probably not very good literature. Whatever it is you're going to be feeling, you will be astonished. And you will -- or at least I didn't, never manage to behave in that expected literary fashion.

Q: You know, your mother, when she was interviewed for the film, said when you left, nobody could speak. The film just says, I didn't speak when I came home, but if you read the full testimony --

A: Yes.

Q: -- that they didn't include, she said, nobody spoke.

A: She said my father went, lay down in the bed and s -- s -- lay perfectly still --

Q: Still, right.

A: -- and unspeaking and unmoving for days.



Q: Right. So is that not feeling? I mean, clearly it's --

A: Well, but is that what you would expect? I mean, if you --

Q: I don't know. I don't -- I don't know what --

A: What you don't -- you don't know what, is the answer.

Q: Right.

A: You don't know what. And you know, our -- I have learned to really let people ex --  
feel what they feel --

Q: Right.

A: -- without -- without assuming that I know what it is.

Q: Yes.

A: Or waiting for a particular -- I mean, it's wonderful to wa -- watch movies of the 40's  
and 50's, where everybody does exactly [indecipherable] what they're supposed to do.

Q: Right.

A: It's not so any more, I think. We are much more subtle now.

Q: It's true.

A: Yeah?

Q: It's true, they were -- they were really giving you a [indecipherable] tell you --

A: They were telling what you can -- yeah.

Q: -- what to feel.

A: And then people f -- when they didn't do that, thought, oh dear.

Q: Right.

A: I'm s -- I'm scared of messing up here.

Q: Messing up is right. And now it's much more nuanced.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: But is it --

A: And surprising, yeah.

Q: Right. But somewhere you -- you wrote about ur-geography. When you fir -- when --  
a-and the fact --

A: Oh that, that's about bedrooms.

Q: Be -- yes, about bedrooms, but it also seems -- cause at the end you said something  
about Proust said it right. A says something to B and B hears something.

A: Oh yeah, that's argument, that's -- that's in the nature of -- of excha -- yeah, it'll -- it'll  
apply here perfectly well.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes.

Q: That wa -- one doesn't know what the other person is really saying.

A: No.

Q: This is a little bit distressing though, isn't it?

A: And oddly enough I -- I -- I have made that -- that funny connection. I as -- I-I -- see,  
check yourself out. Put yourself in your be -- in your earliest bedroom.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know where the door is, right?

Q: [indecipherable] entering, yes, absolutely.

A: And my point was in that -- in that piece already, that we somehow assume that the other person knows our ur-bedroom. And if you don't know my ur-bedroom, there's nothing else. Everything else i-is not clear to you.

Q: That's true.

A: And the -- the -- I mean, it's -- internationally, it is a disaster that we don't know what the other person wants.

Q: Wants. What they're saying, yeah.

A: And that they do -- that we don't -- we don't understand what -- what their meaning, or their -- their -- their needs, or their wants are.

Q: Are you -- I -- when I read that, I began to think about the earliest bedroom that I remember and exactly what it looked like and exactly where things are. And I remember explaining something to somebody about the bedroom, but not -- they didn't ask me where things were. But all that I see is where things are.

A: Yeah, and I think I mentioned that -- that Ellen [indecipherable] --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- was -- was -- was eager to point out that what really mattered was that -- what is right and left.

Q: Yes.

A: And what is in front, because we didn't -- we didn't know. And we didn't know it because we thought everybody knew it.

Q: Yeah, because --

A: It is so basic that it didn't seem to need to be mentioned.

Q: So one thinks that what one is saying -- that people know that wa --

A: I mean, I'm not going to tell you that my head's above my -- my -- my feet, right?

Q: Right.

A: You know that.

Q: Right.

A: But all that other stuff, you don't know.

Q: I don't know.

A: Yeah.

Q: Right.

A: I'd forgotten that essay.

Q: It's very nice. I read this -- I read it last night, it was -- it's --

A: Huh. Hm.

Q: -- wa -- why the things we tell each other seldom achieve direct hits. What we mean is likely to land, if it lands at all, to the right or left, or aslant of what we intended.

A: What essay is this? What is [indecipherable]. I remember -- I remember the thought then --

Q: "Other People's Houses", but it's -- it's --

A: Oh, it's --

Q: But it's w --

A: -- is it the in -- introduction, is it?

Q: Well, you know, I know --

A: Nevermind, nevermind, nevermind.

Q: -- I don't -- I don't know if it's from the introduction beca --

A: If it's not in --

Q: Maybe it is.

A: -- it's not in the body.

Q: No.

A: Cause that's a much -- much later thought than --

Q: Right.

A: -- I mean, I didn't --

Q: This is when you were in Ohio State.

A: Yeah, I don't remember.

Q: So, I don't know what the date of this is. I didn't recall reading this.

A: I remember writing it, but I had forgotten [indecipherable]

Q: It's quite lovely, it's really lovely. So, you se -- oh, okay, let's change the tape.

End of Tape Seven

### Beginning Tape Eight

Q: So, what was it like to see your parents? What --

A: I've been sitting here trying to remember the first view of them, and I can't remember that.

Q: You can't?

A: It's gone.

Q: Do you remember sitting in the living room [indecipherable]

A: Oh, I remember many, many moments, but not --

Q: The first.

A: -- I mean, I'm trying to open this, like my friend --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- tried to recover the -- the -- the scene in the -- before I got in the train, I'm trying to open the door, I'm trying to look and I don't -- I don't know it. What I remember is my mother's eyes, which were huge and tear laden.

Q: Mm.

A: I remember my father looking ill, sitting in a chair, not knowing what to do with himself, tending to echo what my mother said. And I remember their leaving. I remember their l -- they stayed a couple of days and one of the things that happened on those couple of days was my birthday party, with a whole lot of children from school. They were not -- there was s -- ch-children from the street that I'd played with and children from the school, refugee children from the school. And the English children introduced games that I remember -- still remember with horror. One of them was you were ba -- you were

blindfolded and then told a funny story, which included your putting your finger on something and you -- and when you put your finger it was a -- a -- a -- an -- a tomato. So that you put your finger in something that within the story context was really disgusting, like an eye, you know. That's what I remember. And I remember looking at my mother, whose eyes were following me. Everywhere I went, my mother's eyes followed me. I remember my mother constantly thanking the Cohens, and my father echoing the thanks that my mother was giving them. I remember that the neighbors collected money for my parents, who were about to go down south to --

Q: To Kent?

A: -- Kent, to become -- to Kettles -- the place was called Kettlesell House, to be a -- a cook and a butler. And I remember their leaving and I was standing at the top of the stairs, and I wouldn't go down. I -- I wouldn't go down to embrace them. I was embarrassed. I was in some way confused by the double -- by the double family that I now belonged to. And my mother and my father standing there being -- about to be driven to the train by one of the daughters, and I wouldn't come down.

Q: Hm.

A: I have to make that analogy. In the movie, "Into the Arms of Strangers" there's Erica, whose parents are about to arrive at the end of the war on the same train as her schoolmates and she can't stand it. So she says -- sh-she's about 13 - 14, and she says, I'll -- I'll just run down and put the kettle on for tea.

Q: Because it's too much.

A: One of the -- one of the sadnesses of these stories are how hard it was to become reunited with a broken family. It's not -- I mean, you should think of what could be more blissful than to be reunited with your fa -- and it was. But it was complicated.

Q: Right.

A: It was unmanageable on both sides.

Q: Was it worse then the children were older, or when wa --

A: I don't know.

Q: -- you don't know.

A: There's a story -- and again, one a -- one a -- one of the stories in "Into the Arms of Strangers" where the -- the 18 year old pushes away his father's hand from his hair. It -- it -- it's -- it was -- it's -- and I -- when -- when later on, when I rejoined my parents, I was disappointed that they weren't English.

Q: That they weren't English.

A: They were not English, they were these oth -- these -- these people from some -- some strange past of mine. I mean, I loved them, and I --

Q: Yes, yes.

A: -- I wanted to be with them. Nevertheless, there was something the mat -- there was something wrong with them.

Q: And you were already more English in some ways, I guess.

A: I-I -- I th -- I knew how to serve tea in the drawing room and my parents were have -- ta -- kept having this coffee on the table. I -- I mean, that's terrible.

Q: Right, right.



A: I mean, when you think back, I mean, there was a time when I embarrassed and horrified at this. Now, I just look back on it as another one of those --

Q: Right.

A: -- one of those results --

Q: Did your mother talk to you about her memory of that first time that she met you -- she saw you after the --

A: She did. And what I'm telling you is now -- has -- contains -- or -- wa --

Q: Part of her story.

A: -- her -- yeah. I -- I -- it's -- it -- it was a -- it was a disastrous, wonderful visit, because I couldn't -- I c -- y-you -- there wa -- there wasn't an embrace that will do it, there wasn't a kiss that would --

Q: Right.

A: -- I mean, again, literature thinks -- or -- or movies think that -- that -- that -- that -- that kiss, that embrace will -- will -- will close the deal, but it doesn't.

Q: It doesn't.

A: Y-Yeah. I have to really think more about that. Why that was, why the -- that -- those reunions were so regularly disastrous. And nothing like as disastrous as the -- the -- the children who never saw their parents again, who never got over that.

Q: Right, right.

A: I mean, and there were only 10 percent of us --

Q: Who had [indecipherable]

A: -- accor -- yeah, according to -- to some statistic that ever got reunited with our parents.

Q: I don't know, there must be -- there's so much that's unresolved, that seeing each other again doesn't res -- necessarily resolve it.

A: Well, you know, I mean, al -- there's enough problems between parents and children -  
-

Q: I know.

A: -- at best of times, and now you add -- you add a separation.

Q: Right.

A: And add the fact that the child that you get back is three months older, or eight years older, and there has become -- has -- has acquired a bit of a different nationality.

Q: Right, right.

A: And a lot of snobbery. A wall up of snobbery. That one get -- that's one one gets over.

Q: That one gets over pretty quickly.

A: By the time you're 80 you've got over the snobbery of that -- of those days.

Q: You know, I once interviewed a woman whose mother sent her to another family because she thought she would be killed, so this way at least the child would be safe. It ended up the mother lived, was reunited with the daughter. I met the daughter when she was over 50. She has never, ever forgiven her mother for giving her up, even though she knows intellectually --

A: She no -- yes.

Q: -- she did it to save her life, and her mother is alive and across the street.

A: [indecipherable] know that, yeah, yeah.

Q: And she can't --

A: Yeah.

Q: So there's some -- there's someth --

A: Do you know in the movie "Secret Lives", by Aviva Slesin, about the children given away when they were -- Aviva herself was given away to a -- a -- to a p-peasant woman when she was two months old and returned to her mother when she was three years old.

Q: Oh my God.

A: That -- but that is not the subject of the film, but these -- but she takes other --

Q: Right.

A: -- hidden -- hidden children back. And that -- that's -- it's fascinating and complicated.

Q: I should see it. I haven't seen it.

A: You must see it.

Q: Yes.

A: It's a -- it's better than this film. [inaudible] No, this is good, but -- but that -- that --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- is very extraordinary.

Q: Right. Your parents go to Kent --

A: Yes.

Q: -- to be a -- a cook and a butler.

A: Cook and a butler.

Q: Although your father ends up being too sickly to really do very much, or he's also [indecipherable]

A: My father was too sick, my father was -- I -- I think it happens so often that the women were more agile, more adaptable, more adventurous in a way, more willing. My mother was a -- became a wonderful cook. She liked -- she liked the lady she -- she worked for, to some degree. She -- my father -- you know, I have a memory, I don't know whether that's in "Other People's Houses" or not, of visiting, when I eventually visited my mother at the school holidays. I remember sitting in the kitchen when my mother was in the scullery, and my mother was wash -- maybe it is in there -- was washing dishes. And I looked in bec -- and the steam was rising, and in the steam was my mother whistling in the sweetest ma -- most beautiful -- she was a wonderful whistler. She was whistling some -- something, I forget what, but it was extraordinarily lovely. Now, there was nothing -- actually, my father did like nature. This -- this man from the -- from the bank -- from the -- h-he did like the chickens. He did like pottering at -- put-puttering around. But he was ill, he was not able to -- to use the language he knew. He was within -- within a -- a couple of months of having -- having a stroke.

Q: Right.

A: And he could not understand ho-how you wait at table, giving food from the left and taking away from the right. Left and right were beyond him in that -- in that condition. So my mother would do the cooking, take off her kitchen -- kitchen -- kitchen apron, put on the service apron and wa -- go in and serve for him and come back and take off the c --

put on the other ga -- and make the next -- next course and go in and serve it. He could not . He could not.

Q: Was -- is it an accurate portrait in the book, of your frustration with him? Is -- is --

A: Yes, I'm sorry to say, yes.

Q: -- is that --

A: Yes. Well, I was --

Q: I mean, you were a kid, after all.

A: -- I was on my mother's side --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and I could see that he was making her life -- she didn't say that.

Q: Right.

A: I'm not sure that she's -- thought it.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I saw it. I saw that he was making her life yet more difficult. And you know where I saw it? Later on in Guilford. The Jewish doctor saw it. He saw that she was wearing herself. Wasn't even aware that she was doing all the housework, going to visit him in the hospital, going back to cook dinner and coming back in the morning.

Q: Yeah. Right.

A: He, at point, forced her into a holiday. So I was not the only person who saw --

Q: Who saw that.

A: -- that what -- the -- the -- the weight she was carrying was beyond --

Q: [coughs] Excuse me.

A: -- beyond the possible. But I was very angry at my father for being ill, for making life so hard for her. For the unreas -- his unreasonableness, in his illness. I have thought that my father's illness, in the weight, in the -- in the -- in the dread of it, was as bad as Hitler. I mean, the experience of Hitler was no worse than the experience of my father's ongoing illness. Those two things seem to carry -- have been as -- one as -- as heavy as the other.

Q: That's interesting.

A: I said the -- something like this to my class. I -- I teach a class in creative writing at -- for the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, and I said something about this. Somebody asked me about it. And one of my students began to cry. She said, my brother is ill like that.

Q: I don't know what to say to that one, because it -- it would appear as if the historical weight of what the Nazis were doing was much heavier than --

A: Of course it is.

Q: Of course.

A: Of course.

Q: However, your experience of it is not so weighted on the Hitler side -- I mean, it's par -- it's -- it's partly that you --

A: I think if I had been in -- in the -- in the camps --

Q: The camp, you wouldn't say it.

A: -- I would not be saying that.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I think that's what I'm thinking.

A: Yeah. But let me say that the emigration, the Kindertransport --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- was no heavier than my father's ongoing illness.

Q: Right.

A: And no -- ma-maybe it's -- may-maybe it's -- it's foolish to try and weigh these things, but it -- I'm really only expressing the immensity of --

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: -- of my father's -- of the illness, my father's illness and --

Q: It's --

A: -- everything. An --

Q: It's very clear that everything is colored by that, right?

A: Yes, yeah, it is. I used to -- I had this notion, I think I describe it, I had that notion that things never happen when you expect them, or from the direction in which you're looking for them. Which resulted in my notion that if I kept imagining my f -- well, the things that could be happening to my father at any given moment, that's not what was going to happen. Kept me once again like before, very busy trying to keep on top of all possibility so that it -- to prevent it from happening. I mean, h-he -- he had the -- he had strokes, one after the other. I was going to prevent another stroke by imagining him having a stroke. That's hard work. And there was my mother at that time, we're now in Guilford. We're -- we're many -- many -- many ha -- e-events, many adventures later, and she's working as a cook down in a subterranean kitchen, which I could look down into, because that -- there was a grate, right? So here's my father, continuing to be -- to have -- to bother her by having strokes, and here she is down, working in the kitchen.

Q: And you can't stand it.

A: And I can't stand it.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then I would go visit him in -- in what was then the ward. I mean, people la -- he lay in a bed, and in this direction and this direction were other beds with men in them.

And you -- they would get their food and you would look down -- look down the row and you would see the mouse, like that. And I would have my -- I had my bag here like that and I had my hand in it on a book. And I kept wondering, I wonder if it's okay for me to take out my book and read while I'm sitting next to my father who is now eating. I'm visiting him.

Q: Did you?

A: Never.

Q: You never took it out?

A: No, never took it out. And I kept my finger in the pages.

Q: Did you talk with each other, or was it mainly s --

A: He was not -- he -- he kept saying that he wanted my mother to take him home. So I would yell at him, please don't suggest that to her, because she'll do it, right? Then he said, I wish she would write to Paul -- my Uncle Paul, who had -- who had stopped short of getting a doctor's certification, as if maybe my uncle's information, medical information, could save him.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And then I would try to explain to him that this was not reasonable. That was our conversation. Not --



Q: Nothing else.

A: Nothing else. I pitied him. I was irritated by him. I wish he would stop leaning on my mother. I wish I weren't so bored. Bad. You know, I had another thought.

Q: Mm-hm?

A: I remember I thought nevermind about my being such a bad daughter. I will be old, and I will be ill and my children will not want to sit next to me.

Q: And you -- and you'll pay the price?

A: I will pay --

Q: You thought of this at 10?

A: I thought -- no, 10, I'm not 10 --

Q: 11, no you're a little --

A: -- now, I'm 15 --

Q: -- all right, 15. Still --

A: -- I'm [indecipherable] big girl, I'm a -- I'm a --

Q: You're a big girl, yes.

A: [indecipherable] a big girl. And I'm, you know, I thought it's okay, let me -- let me not give myself such a bad time, because there will be a payoff. I would -- I would get a payback from this.

Q: You're in five different places in England, right? Five different homes bef --

A: The -- the -- the Cohens, who -- I think he was a manufacturer of furniture or se -- cellar furniture. Jewish Orthodox in Liverpool. The next one was -- then I went to stay with my mother and father, who were being a married couple. The Cohens wrote and said

-- Co-Co-Cohens have had it with me. And it was a [indecipherable], so they suggested that it might be happier for me to stay with them. And anyhow, they had some aunt or some -- somebody needed care. So my mother talked to the lady. These were called our ladies.

Q: Our ladies, right.

A: And the lady connected her with the -- with the Tumbridge -- the Tumbridge la --- church ladies' Committee for Refugees, who found me a home with the Gillams. He was a railroad stoker. I mean, it's so sweet to think of somebody being a stoker. That meant he was the person who put the fuel in the place that makes the train go.

Q: Train go, right.

A: He was a -- a -- a union man, a -- a charming, witty fellow. He had a wife who played the piano. He ha -- who in -- sta -- stammered. And two daughters, one of whom I'm still in touch with --

Q: Really?

A: -- Mari. Mari -- oh, this is an interesting story. I -- oh it -- probably shouldn't even tell this story because it was told me in confidence, but it's so long ago. There was also -- these are people, these are working class people who take in the Jewish refugee child and they also took in the orphan from the orphanage. And the orphan from the orphanage was a horror. His name -- I call him Albert, I think his name was Harold. And he was -- he was -- h-he really hated me, because I was the newest -- the newest member an-and a -- I can't even do Harold. But we hated each other. And a -- at some point we were wa -- Mari and I went to go to the public school -- oh -- ra -- or the -- the -- th-the s -- city

school, and we both won a -- a -- a -- a -- what do you -- what do you call it, a -- a -- a -- a -- we were -- both could have gone to the -- what she called the la-ti-da school, and told me that she wasn't going to go because it would -- it would betray her class. And I certainly didn't care anything about betraying any class --

Q: Class --

A: -- and I went. Now, many, many, many, many years later, I was in vi -- was in England and I -- Mari and her husband, a -- who was an engineer, a ship -- shipbuilder's engineer, came to see me and I reminded her of this. And she said, that wasn't why I didn't go. I went because my mother told me that my sister Joy had not made the examination and there would be bad blood in -- in the family if I went. So that's why I didn't go. I said, Mari, would you do the same thing with your children? She said, are you kidding? A-And -- well then Mari -- and then it was Mari -- what I said in the book, and what I believed was that the discrepancy between our education finally got too much for the Gillams and they said I had to leave. They also had an aunt, a blind aunt who needed to be taken care of.

Q: Who came, right, right.

A: So this is not in the book and I've never -- never -- this is not in public. Mari then went to the bathroom, and John, her husband, said to me, that was not why they -- you know why they sent you away? Because Harold attacked Mari and tried to rape her, and they wanted to get you out of the house. So all this time I have been thinking of them in such a demeaning -- or such a m -- not demeaning, cause they were very good, but minimizing way. Whereas what they did was to --

Q: Was to protect you. Try to protect. Wow.

A: If you really -- to judge other people's motives is just -- it's a -- just a stupid thing to do.

Q: Wow.

A: And he said don't tell her then, that they didn't want you to know that. But I'm glad I know that.

Q: Yeah, I am too.

A: Anyway, they said I had to leave, and then I did this amazing thing. I borrowed Mari's bicycle and went to the church ladies' committee and said I have to leave. And they gave me an address, and I -- I motor -- I motored out -- I mean, I f -- I bicycled out to this -- to this other family and interviewed th -- you know, the -- I showed you a picture of the three little children?

Q: Yes.

A: Those were her children.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Sh -- He was a munitions worker and I -- I -- I literally interviewed her. She was a very simple young woman. And I decided I would come and stay with her. I lived with them long enough for him to get -- you know, we do know that the war has started in the meantime, right?

Q: Yes.

A: The war has started, my father has been sent to the Isle of Man, my Uncle Paul has been sent to the Isle of Man, because here there were enemy -- enemy --

Q: Aliens.

A: -- German speaking enemy aliens.

Q: Right.

A: I came -- went to live with -- wi -- wi -- I forget what their name was, but anyhow, he was sent to Croydon where munitions -- as a munitions worker, and they sent me to live with her mother and father. They were old -- sweet, old people. He was a milkman. He had a pony with a little panel truck. And these people -- you know, people take children and take children in. They had a daughter called Ruby who went -- who was a -- a ladies' maid, I -- a -- across town, who went to stay with a neighbor so that they could give me her room. I mean, these are -- you know, none of -- I-I've said, none of these people were really -- I -- I didn't have a wonderful time with any of them, but how amazing they were. So this Ruby goes to live next door. There are a batch of young males in that family and they all live upstairs in the attic, together with a -- a -- a-a -- a -- a London -- what do they call them when they sell the children away from London? You know, to -- to -- to -- to avoid the blitz?

Q: Oh.

A: I've lost the word for the moment, but you know what I mean.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: So there -- there are any number of people in this household. This is when my mother, who was -- had to le -- and I'm leaving out bits, but -- but I -- let me fill in, when the war first started, England went into a -- into a panic. First my mother and father's flashlights were taken. Flashlights and maps, in case they were going to give --

Q: Signals.

A: -- signals to the enemy. Then they interned all male, German speaking enemy aliens over 16. The next rule was that women also could be spies and needed to be moved inland from a certain mileage to the coast, so they wouldn't give signals. So my mother came and picked me up and we went to Guilford, the last place where we lived, where she and I got -- she got a lovely job with this -- with the best family in the world. They were Scots, they were classy Scots. He was a architect and he lived -- he was a -- a national trust architect and lived in a s -- in a -- let me call it a 17<sup>th</sup> century water mill. They lived in part of it, the other part was for public -- the public could go and -- and visit it. And these are still my very dear friends. We go -- we go visit. They come and stay with me, I stay with them. They are the s -- the salt of the earth. The people without class consciousness.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: The upper class --

Q: The upper class [indecipherable]

A: The upper class Socialists.

Q: Right, right.

A: So, [indecipherable] Socialists.

Q: And your father is ill enough so they sent him out of the Isle of Man and he comes to Guilford, is that correct?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And are we talking 1941 now, '42? '41? We're talking about the attack on Poland now.

A: '41 -- '41.

Q: Yes.

A: I -- I -- I -- I -- yeah [indecipherable] got the --

Q: Right.

A: And I went to live with the church -- th-the -- the -- one -- one of the ladies working for the church committee in Guilford. Miss Ellis and Miss Wallace.

Q: Who were Protestant.

A: High church.

Q: High church.

A: Protestant is --

Q: Episcopali --

A: Well, it's not called Episcopalian, but High Church.

Q: It's High Church.

A: Yes. Church of England.

Q: Yes.

A: Church of England.

Q: We have to stop the tape.

End of Tape Eight

### Beginning Tape Nine

Q: You were starting to talk about the last house you were in, with the High Church women.

A: Can I tell you about a one that preceded this?

Q: Sure, absolutely.

A: Because I have not written about it at all. This was upstairs and downstairs. I lived downstairs in upstairs and downstairs. It was an extraordinarily grand house, with seven gardeners gardening the --

Q: Seven?

A: Seven gardeners and a butler and a housekeeper and my mother was the cook and there were any number of ladies' maids. And there was the cook's little daughter staying over. And you would have thought -- you know, this was th-the -- this -- this was the real McCoy, except it wasn't. Except that the lady of the house was, I think an -- an old -- an old prostitute who was living there with her new young man and the -- and the husband was off somewhere in -- in the city. But otherwise --

Q: Otherwise it was --

A: -- it was the experience, you know, all that you learn in -- in "Upstairs, Downstairs." You know what I'm talking.

Q: Yeah, yeah, I do.

A: Wa -- that was how it was regulated. It was very interesting, or -- or God -- Godsford? It was Godsford. Th-The Altman movie.

Q: Right, ri-ri-right.



A: Anyhow, just want to put that in because that's very -- it was very interesting to learn.

Q: Now this was the only place where your mother was working where you were actually living, is that correct?

A: I wasn't living, I was visiting.

Q: You were visiting.

A: She was there only for a short period, and I can't quite fit in -- I -- I can't -- you know, I don't -- I'm -- I wasn't good at dates, but -- I'm not good at dates, and I wasn't -- don't -- don't know how it fits in, but she was there for several months and I stayed with her for several weeks. Y -- and then somehow at that point -- I think from there we went to Guilford.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I cannot put it in --

Q: Right.

A: -- in -- in -- in --

Q: Right.

A: -- in chronological order.

Q: Right.

A: But yes. So now I was living with Miss Wallace and Miss Ellis, two elderly ladies in a Victorian house, where again, there -- I -- I still sometimes look at the confusion of my dinner table and remember how Miss Ellis and Miss Wallace could or -- the orderly upper class procedures, you know, in family life. I've never been able to repeat it, but I remember it. I remember liking it.

Q: You liked it?

A: Yeah, I liked. Miss Ellis ha -- always ha -- ho -- Miss Ellis was a -- was in her -- must have been in her 50's, she seemed very old to me. I think the -- I think Miss Wallace -- I would now imagine Miss Wallace was her companion, but that was never -- it was never brought up, there was never -- Miss Wallace drove an Austin with a -- with a tra -- what's the seat that you ope -- sit in the back?

Q: A trundle seat?

A: Trundle seat. And it -- it had to be cranked up in order for it to go. Miss Ellis rode around town on one of those high bicycles, like -- like -- like ene -- do you know the movie, wa -- one of my favorite movies, "Blithe Spirit"? If you ever see Madame Arcati ride some -- looked exactly like Miss Ellis.

Q: Yes?

A: I love that movie because it looks like Miss Ellis. And they had this formal household, Miss Ellis always loved babies, and she always had an -- a maid, who had an illegitimate baby to -- which she could bring into the li-living -- in-into the drawing room, we didn't have a living room, it's the drawing room, in order to play with. And upstairs there was a study for the canon. Canon O'Malley, or canon something from the -- from the -- Miss E- Ellis's church. It -- I -- I have -- you know, I have said, and I think I might have shocked people to say that I find it simply am -- wonderfully amazing and -- and terrific that I got to the -- live the inside life of all -- of the class system of England, which most people don't get to do.

Q: Right.

A: I mean, you visited as -- you visited, you are a -- a tourist. But I was a member of the household, I was a child just barely less than the child of the family, but almost like [indecipherable]. For instance, Ellis at -- I didn't have a nursery for me [indecipherable] chil -- but I ate -- I didn't eat -- I ate breakfast and lunch with them, but dinner in the kitchen with the -- wa -- or the -- some -- some memory of how children are treated in a household.

Q: Huh. So it wasn't just because you happened to be this refugee kid?

A: No.

Q: No. This was the way children --

A: But -- that was the way children -- yes, this was the way children -- I mean, read -- read -- read Henry James, the children come down -- or -- or -- or Jane Austen --

Q: Right, right, right.

A: -- children are coming after dinner.

Q: Right.

A: Of course, I was too old to have -- have a governess, but they tried to rec -- recreate that world. I-I mean wa -- not tried, I mean, that was the na --

Q: Right.

A: -- the na -- the na -- way for it to be in.

Q: But you were also quite amazed that these people, in spite of the fact that you said you weren't very nice, you weren't easy to be around, that these people opened their houses to you, and he --

A: I -- it wasn't that I wasn't nice, I was merely a child --

Q: Right.

A: -- who was being a child. I was not -- I was not a -- I was not a darling little girl.

Q: Right. But --

A: But I'm amazed at the -- I'm amazed --

Q: That they were opened --

A: -- and they didn't -- yeah, and some of them got tired of me and got rid of me after several months, but the -- but Miss Ellis kept -- they kept me there for -- well, fr-from 12 to -- til I was sixt -- four years.

Q: Four years?

A: Miss Wallace, who was the -- she was the member of the church committee, she bought a house in -- she bought two houses. She bought one house in which she housed English gentry who had lost their money, and she bought a house for people like my mother and father and other refugees.

Q: Really?

A: I mean, that's amazing.

Q: It really is amazing.

A: That is amazing. There was a -- a meeting where -- where the refugees met at. In fact, it was the auditorium of my -- of my high school that I -- that I went to, where the refugees met on Thursdays, which is the maid's day off, day out.

Q: Mm-hm. And so you could see your mother.

A: I could see my mother. I could also run across to Albury Lodge, which the -- the house that -- that Miss Wallace had bought and go visit my mother and my f-father there. And

there you see you have the difference between all these -- all these -- all these Jews living together and here was my -- my upper class, English --

Q: Right, right.

A: It took some getting over.

Q: To get at -- to be --

A: I mean, the orderliness, the handsomeness of the furniture.

Q: Right, right.

A: It was a -- i-it was the class -- I was playing -- I was living out the class -- class system of --

Q: Of the -- of the --

A: -- class world of England.

Q: What do you think motivated all these people to -- because especially --

A: Virtue.

Q: Virtue, all of them?

A: Christian --

Q: It's Christian virtue.

A: -- virtue. Now, it didn't make them loving and --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- and -- and -- but it made them take us in. Miss Ellis -- you know, I have an image in my mind. When I began to menstruate, I have an evening where Miss Ellis is sitting, sewing me my -- what do you call them?

Q: Napkins, or [indecipherable] or whatever --

A: Nap -- yeah, sanitary napkins, she sewed them for me.

Q: Sanitary. Really?

A: I mean, that is this -- this -- that is amazing, isn't it?

Q: It is amazing.

A: It's a very moving, I think --

Q: Did she explain to you? Did you know what was going to happen?

A: Well, you don't want to hear that story, that's just everybody -- every girl has a story of -- of --

Q: The story.

A: -- of being shocked and surprised. You don't want to hear that story.

Q: It's certainly shocking, yes.

A: But there she was, taking care of it once --

Q: Right. So it wasn't your mother, it was her.

A: It was her, yeah. I was living -- that's where I was living.

Q: Right. I didn't hear --

A: By the way, I just wanted to say something about the -- maybe this is [indecipherable] these wonderful people in the mill, the MacGregors. They not only -- they took one look at my mother and said, oh you come and eat in the dining room with us. When you finished cooking, you come in and eat with us. Then my father had his n<sup>th</sup> stroke and was in the hospital and came out of the hospital. They said oh, let him come in -- you -- he can s -- live with us. And I was welcome to play with the children. That was a house -- this was during the worst bombing in London, th-the blitz in London. And every weekend

this house was open to people from -- who were tired of being blitzed. They would come out the week and spend the week in the -- in the mill. If there weren't enough beds then you just put -- you put mattresses on the floor and there were always enough coats to cover people with. That's the kind of people they were, they really a -- th-they were and are extraordinary. These were people who were -- y-you see, they were good in the way m-most of my -- my m-m -- foster parents were not. They did their duty, but these people did their duty out of some -- out of some -- some heart -- un-unthinking heart.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I always -- I -- I love them. I -- I really think they were -- they were -- they were extraordinary. It's -- it's it -- almost a -- a -- almost a view of what -- what the world could be like.

Q: Right.

A: First of all, the mill is absolutely gorgeous, and -- and -- and it's built over -- over a wa -- a running water, with the mill wheel, though broken, still -- still there, and the watercress growing on the side.

Q: Right, right.

A: I mean, it's just physically beautiful.

Q: Right.

A: And we all -- we go spend summers there sometime.

Q: Do you? Yes?

A: Yeah. But there's a great difference between that kind of goodness and that other principled goodness. I mean that difference -- I'm making the difference there. Miss Wallace certainly was -- was -- was good-natured and -- and -- and --

Q: Right.

A: -- careful. Miss wa -- Miss Ellis, the older one was -- was not. She was doing her duty.

Q: But you benefited from all these different --

A: Oh, it --

Q: -- [indecipherable] in -- in extreme ways.

A: -- and I -- as I -- as I then add, I have not done the same. I have not taken in alien children. Most of us don't do that.

Q: Most of us don't, no.

A: Most of us don't. Most of us have perfectly good reasons for not doing it, but they did it. The Cohens, the Gillams, the -- all of them, and -- and I find it amazing.

Q: It is ama -- when you think about how many people have --

A: Think what -- I think what it's like to have a child in your house.

Q: Right.

A: You know, I didn't have to be a nasty child, I was just a child.

Q: Right, right.

A: And all that involves and all the -- all the thought, all the -- all the -- the -- the noise, the mess. And then they go and menstruate.

Q: And then they go -- and then they become young women, right?



A: Yeah. I tho -- I think they were -- I think the English were just wonderful, they were won -- ama -- wa -- amazingly wonderful.

Q: Were you following the war very carefully?

A: I was hearing the bombs. Guilford was on the route from London to wherever the -- the -- the bombers came from.

Q: So you could hear the bombers.

A: So you see a double -- a double -- ah, you would see our bombers fly in this classic formation, to bomb what they were going to bomb. In the morning we would open the windows and watch them come back and you would see where there were holes in the formation. You could count how many had been --

Q: Been shot down.

A: -- had been shot down. Meanwhile, the bombers flying back, would very often unload -- unlike Graf Bobby, they would unload and we would very often have bombs in the vicinity. They were not -- we were not targets, but they would unload before they flew back.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: There was a lot of bombing. I remember lying in bed thinking, where there ever be a time where there will not be bombs dropped? Later in the war, there were the doodlebugs. Do you remember? Do you hear about? They were self-propelled and they made a very particular noise, they went bzz, bzz, bzz, bzz, bzz, and then they stopped. And we were, at that point already knew you -- I forget, you ca -- a count of five and they would explode.

Q: Hm.

A: And that's when you wondered whether you were the one they were exploded on top of.

Q: And were you -- were you hearing rumors about concentration camps and killing centers?

A: I can't remember when that became conscious.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That is Ruth Kluger's.

Q: Yeah.

A: Her story of -- of the -- of th -- her shock at the unwillingness of the Jews in England and in America to -- to want to hear --

Q: Right.

A: -- to want to think about that.

Q: Right.

A: I don't know --

Q: You don't know.

A: -- the answer to that.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I am -- I am shocked that I don't know the answer to that.

Q: It's possible nothing was --

A: Now wa -- the -- but England a -- is in the war in a way that really, the States don't --

Q: We're not, obviously, of course.

A: Miss Ellis -- when -- when France fell, Miss -- the -- they create -- they were -- imagine of -- pieces of concrete, about this high with ab -- as -- a pole of iron. Imagine four of them. Imagine those poles connected with barbed wire, and they went across the whole of England, including through Miss Ellis's rose garden, to keep out the invasion, the -- the German a -- the Germans. Miss el -- Miss Wallace, she's the one who -- the -- the -- the member of the refugee committee, collected our refugee's paper, put them in boxes, ready to bury them, so that the nat -- the in -- the incoming Nazis would not --

Q: Look at them.

A: -- identify the Jews.

Q: Hm.

A: I mean, it was, in -- in a sense that you were about to be invaded. That it didn't happen was, I think a surprise. They would change the names of ro -- of streets. They would rearrange street names to --

Q: To confuse.

A: -- to confuse. It just a -- it just happened now to happen, but -- but England was entirely -- and there was the Home Guard. My mother was so anxious to play her part that she and m -- an-and my singing teacher from school were Home Guards together to -- to walk up and down the street. And she did -- see, this is where m -- where my fa -- where I was angry with my father. My father had lost the lo -- was becoming -- a -- e -- couldn't walk any more, couldn't -- he -- he was becoming senile. And my mother did not only her own evening, but his as well. My mother paid the -- the -- the -- the refugee

committee paid for my private school and my mother insisted on giving them 15 dollars a month.

Q: That's a lot of money.

A: I still have the -- 15 shillings, 15 shillings.

Q: Yeah.

A: I still have the roster of -- of her payments, which is really very touching. She absolutely wanted to do everything that was possible to be part of the -- of the solution.

Q: Right, right.

A: And -- except here. Here is where we -- here is where we differ. One of the other miss -- miss -- Mrs. Biddle of the refugee committee, when I had finished high school, called me in and said you know, your mother is working, your father is so ill -- I had applied for college and got into c -- University of London. And she said, you know you can't go. You know that, don't you? You have to go to work. And I went home and said to my mother, she doesn't -- she thinks I'm not going to go to college. She thinks I'm going to work. My mother said, oh, it's just ridiculous. Ridiculous.

Q: Ridiculous, you go to school.

A: Thinking about -- what's she talking about? Of course you're going to college. The mindset, the Jewish mindset.

Q: So is this the end of the war?

A: This is towards the end of the war.

Q: Towards the end of the war.

A: Yes. '45 -- I went to college in --

Q: In '40 s --

A: -- '45.

Q: '45.

A: Yes, right.

Q: And your father passes away a week bef --

A: The -- what -- what was the last -- I don't know what is the last day of the last week.

Literally, the week before the end of the European war. I mean, the Japanese war went on for some time.

Q: Right, right. But I think it's May fifth or something, 1945.

A: '45, yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So he dies before it.

A: He dies the week before.

Q: And going back to what's constant in this story, is you're trying -- you would tr -- you started walking, trying to cry.

A: I did have a paroxysm of crying when I first heard, and then I couldn't.

Q: You couldn't.

A: Couldn't do it any more.

Q: But there must have been some relief as well, because it was so difficult.

A: Well, the relief takes one of the evil forms. I dream of hearing my father's tap tap of his stick and I'm appalled. And wake up feeling monstrous.

Q: There's no end, is there? No.

A: After my father died, my mother had a brief breakdown of her own, but it took the form of buying a pink dress, and almost acquiescing in having an affair with his doctor, at least going around the block with him, and being invited to coffee.

Q: Oh, good.

A: But she -- she couldn't --

Q: She didn't -- she couldn't do it.

A: -- she couldn't -- she couldn't do it. But she did buy the pink dress.

Q: That's great.

A: She told me, I bought a pink dress. I said, you mean a dull pink. She said, a pink dress.

Q: Pink dre --

A: I mean, she wore it twice and then -- and then abandoned it, but -- you see, when I tell my students, assume that when something happens you will not react the way you think, it's only another example.

Q: Right. A pink dress.

A: With -- with white dots.

Q: With white dots. That's quite amazing. Now, your mother -- you -- am I wrong? Was Paul in England also? Uncle Paul?

A: Paul -- Uncle Paul came to England with his wife Edith.

Q: Uh-huh, the one who was --

A: A very beloved, a very, very passionate young -- young love. They were in the midlands, he was working as a farmer. He was over 60 and he was a --

Q: That he was [indecipherable] yes, right.

A: -- a German speaking enemy alien. He finds himself in -- on the Isle of Man with Edith still somewhere and speaking not a word of English, in the midlands, living on a farm where she knows nobody and there's nobody -- now this is that moment when the -- when somebody comes to the camp and says, who would like to go to the Dominican Republic, and everybody says, in the what? Who's heard the Dominican Republic?

Q: [indecipherable] right.

A: And Paul says, will I be reunited with my wife and they say sure.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's how --

Q: And that's how he got s --

A: -- Paul gets to the Dominican Republic. When he -- he got there -- domin -- Dominican Republic was -- was the attempt to set up -- make up a settlement of -- of t -- European farmers, taught by American experts on goodness knows what, certainly not tropical farming. And I c -- I c -- this is too long a story, though it's awfully interesting. You should -- you should have somebody talk to you about [indecipherable] really --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- it's really -- but that's a whole -- that's its own story. Edith died of -- I -- in the store -- in the -- in the -- see, this is what you can do with a novel. I -- I -- I did not want to put Paul through what actually happened, so what -- I made her die in childbirth, which is not what happened. She was pregnant, but died actually of blood poisoning.

Q: Mm.

A: After having touched a -- a -- a spot on her face, and I think blood poisoning is a s -- is a si -- a s -- you know, grows as rapidly as the pla -- as tropical plants. By the time they got her to Puerta Plata to the hospital, she was already dying or dead. And as I say, I think they hurried up -- m-my theory is, my theory, my belief, my fantasy, my knowledge is that they got Paul his parents. That -- that -- that th-they got out --

Q: Because --

A: -- yeah.

Q: -- because [indecipherable]

A: He was going to go crazy, I think with his grief and -- and -- and when my unc -- Paul found that he could not physically do the land work. So they set up in a shop for him, called Productus [indecipherable] where the -- where the cheese and sausages and whatever were sold in the nearby middle -- mid-mid -- little town called Santiago de los Caballeros. And my -- when my grandfather became ill, Paul called my mother who was -- she and I were living in London, I was going to University of London, to please come and help. Help in the shop, help with my grandfather. And my -- and we agreed that I would finish -- get my degree and then join my mother.

Q: Right.

A: All this time we were waiting for the American quota. I mean, it took us from August '38 til May '51 for the quota to come through. But one of my -- one of my thoughts these days is, if -- this was '48, if it had been '78, I would have said to my mother, I really like it in England.

Q: Yes.



A: I'll come visit. Never oc -- what interests me is it never entered my mind --

Q: That you wouldn't go.

A: -- that I could say that to her. It isn't that I fought valiantly to -- to do what I had promised, it never occurred to me --

Q: To not go.

A: -- that -- that I had that choice.

Q: Right.

A: And I think that really is a -- a -- a difference of the decades, don't you think?

Q: Probably, yes

A: That a -- a g -- a -- a young woman of 21 -- of 20 --

Q: Would stay in England, why would --

A: -- would -- would stay in England if she chose to stay in England.

Q: Right. So you finished your degree --

A: So I finished my degree.

Q: And f -- wa -- followed and went to Dominican Republic.

A: Went to the Dominican Republic via Trinidad by -- by boat to Trinidad. There were only three flights a week from Trinidad to the Dominican Republic. Just to give a sense of it --

Q: Yeah, right, right.

A: -- of the changing of -- I went to stay with my uncle -- with -- with -- with the -- with -  
- with the f-family in S-Santiago. It was interesting that they would not let me help in --

in the shop. It was still assumed that I was made for better things. It's -- it's funny. My mother worked there, my grandfather worked there, my grandmother --

Q: Everybody worked --

A: -- everybody. It never occurred to them.

Q: That you should --

A: Another things that doesn't occur to people, right? Didn't occur to them I was going to be a shop girl. I was going to go to sh -- to [indecipherable], live there and teach English.

Q: But not work in the shops.

A: Not work. Didn't occur to me, didn't occur to them.

Q: I -- I have a stupid question to ask you. Did your mother ever ask you about the sausage?

A: Well, I started wri -- I mean, she read it --

Q: And you wrote -- she read it.

A: -- in the book, yes.

Q: And did she say oh, this is what --

A: She was, of course, fascinated by the book.

Q: Yeah, I bet.

A: Which is dedicated to her. No, she didn't -- I-I mean, I don't think the sausage meant to her what it meant to me.

Q: Meant to you, yeah.

A: She didn't think, oh here if I give them a sausage. That was my experience.

Q: Yeah, it didn't became an icon.

A: Yes. For her not at all.

Q: Right. We have to change the tape.

End of Tape Nine

### Beginning Tape Ten

Q: I think what we'll do is we'll close off this part of the interview and I will come to New York and interview you on your life after the war. But I do know that you went from the Dominican Republic with your mother to the United States in 1951. But pre --

A: Well, let me go back a little bit.

Q: Yes.

A: My -- my Uncle Paul -- my father had died in England in '45.

Q: Right.

A: My uncle's wife Edith died in the Dominican Republic at age 21. My f -- grandfather died in the Dominican re -- is buried in the Dominican Republic, in 40-something. My father had put our name down on the American quota in ma -- in August '38, and our quota came through in '51. But it ca -- it came -- th-the quota was -- was given out depending on land of birth. So my grandmother went -- came to ing -- to New York first. My Uncle Paul -- she was Hungarian quota. My Uncle Paul was on the -- on the Viennese quota, came next, and my mother and I came next. So the remnant of the family, whoever was leftover and hadn't died, all came to New York by 1951.

Q: And were you on the Viennese quota as well?

A: I was on -- my mother and I were on the -- both on the Viennese quota, yeah.

Q: Oh this -- right.

A: But it also depended on when you had put your name on this -- on this list.

Q: Right.

A: Or goodness knows what else it depended on.

Q: But life in New York was not so easy. You didn't -- you -- you all had to work in various places for a long time --

A: Oh yes, yes

Q: -- before you could do --

A: Oh yes, and -- and I thought, because I had this degree in -- in th -- in English literature I was going to get some wonderful job.

Q: Right.

A: But what I ended up was filing.

Q: Right.

A: In Queens, in a shoe factory. Badly.

Q: Badly. Cause that's not your thing.

A: No, I'm not good on -- on -- on filing details.

Q: But you -- you're s -- very strong desire as a very young child of nine or 10 years old to become a writer, became true.

A: Oh yes. And I had been writing by the -- I mean, in a way I been writing since 1938 --

Q: Right.

A: -- in sa -- no, in '39 I was already writing.

Q: Right.

A: And in -- in -- when I came to the -- to New York, I -- I discovered, because somebody asked me a question, somebody asked m -- I kept thinking I've got nothing to write about. Finished. I've shot my wad. I have not been in love, I've not died, what di -- what -- what -- what am I supposed to write about? And then I was -- I went to the -- I

went to a -- the new school fo-for social research and took a course in creative writing.

And in one of those sessions, or rather in a party afterwards, somebody said, so how did you come to the United States? And I had been thinking that everybody knew all those stories. You saw them on the newsreels. I knew them, everybody I knew knew them.

That was nothing to write about, but being asked that question, how did you get here, I began to tell my stories. And the room was silent. And I had the experience, which I've had often since, having been a teacher of me talking, other people listening.

Q: Right.

A: Delicious.

Q: It's delicious, yes.

A: So I realized I actually did have a theme and I began to write the stories.

Q: Right.

A: In -- and when I first came in '51, they didn't get published until -- '62 they began to be published.

Q: But they finally did.

A: Yeah. They were published in "The New Yorker" between '62 and '64 and then -- but look what a -- what a -- what a long --

Q: It's a long haul.

A: -- a long haul.

Q: Right. But some people never do, so it's wonderful.

A: No. Well, I was going to write anyway, that would have --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- that's -- that's all I'm really good at doing. So [indecipherable]

Q: Well, it's been a pleasure to talk with you, really.

A: Thank you, Joan. [indecipherable]

Q: And now what we'll do is we'll stop the camera and we'll do some of the photographs. And thank you very, very much.

A: Thank you for inviting me to do this.

Q: You're more than welcome.

A: These are my mother's parents, my grandmother Rosa Stern -- Shtern and my grandfather Josey Shtern. Do you need more than that?

Q: And they survived?

A: And they we -- my Uncle Paul was able to bring them from Vienna to the Dominican Republic even after the war started, I think in -- in 1940, which was a remarkable thing to manage.

Q: Right. Okay. Do you need me to [indecipherable] that?

Q2: Okay, and who is this?

A: This is my father's mother, Gisele Groszmann, who died -- she -- well, she and her husband died before my mother was married -- my mother and father were married. They lived in Pressbourg, and I know very little about them, except that my mother was once mistaken for her. So maybe there was a little family resemble -- a non-family resemblance. I think the greengrocer addressed my mother as Gisele Groszmann.

Q: And who's the child here?

A: The child is Franzi, Franzi Stern. She is my -- my mother -- th -- the -- my mother as a little girl, and I want you to know that my grandmother made all her dresses for her.

Q: Really?

A: And the other one is my mother at, I would say, she -- this is already in the United States, so it must be after fif -- after '51. I can't do arithmetic fast enough to figure, but this is -- this is how I remember her.

Q2: And when was this picture taken?

A: This is my mother in her late 90's. She died in -- a-at -- three months before her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. She disliked this picture very much, but it was taken by a painter called Katherine Kadish, who -- who loved my mother and who thought she was very beautiful in her late old age. I love that picture.

Q2: Okay, go ahead.

A: My mother lived in her own apartment on the ground floor of the building in which I live on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor and she was able to stay at home until she was 97, and only spent the last four years in a nursing home, quite close -- some 16 blocks -- 13 blocks out from where I live.

Q: Great story. This one?

Q2: What's this photograph?

A: This is my father, Ignatz Groszmann. He was an accountant in a bank. He had been an officer in the Austrian army, briefly, I think. And my mother -- I -- my mother married him, firstly because he asked her, and secondly because he was not like all the -- the



crude and joke-y salesmen who came to my grandfather's store in Fischamend and wanted to marry her.

Q2: And who's this little cherub?

A: This is little Lore, age about four or five, I imagine, in -- in Hammerling Park, which was the park very close to where we lived, which I went -- went to see when I went back to Vienna and where I remember the words, kina Juden, no Jews, during the Hitler period.

Q2: And on the left?

A: In the left, my father had -- always had August off from his bank job, and we would always spend a month in the Austrian Alps. This is my father, mother and me biting my nails, because my parents had decided I needed some little other kid to play with and they got -- they found -- somewhere found this little boy who was Hungarian, didn't speak a word of English.

Q2: And what's this photograph?

A: These are my dolls. I'm not sure that I was that interested in ma -- as babies, but I did like to arrange them. No, really.

Q2: And this shot?

A: Yes.

Q2: What's this?

A: This is the ti -- a little older Lore, doing her homework.

Q: How old do you think you are there?

A: I would have to guess six, seven? I'm trying to think of my grandchildren, trying to guess how old I would be at that a -- at that -- with that look.

Q2: And this group shot here?

A: It's -- it's -- it seems to be posed for -- for some very s-stiff photograph -- I'm sorry I'm screwing up.

Q2: That's okay.

Q: That's all right. No, no, no, it's fine.

A: Have you already d-d-di --this --

Q2: Who -- who is in the shot here?

Q: Who is in the shot?

A: Oh, oh. It's my father on -- on the left, my grandmother in the middle, my Uncle Paul standing behind -- who was then a medical student. Little Lore on the table and my mother, Franzi. This is a formal shot made for perhaps my grandfather's birthday or something like that.

Q: And how old do you think you are?

A: Three, two? Two or three.

Q2: And where was this document here?

A: This is the lifesaving document. You will see it says, this document requires no visa. And the attempt to get visas and -- and -- and permits and everything at the same time was a -- an almost impossible job. So the -- the Kult-Kultusgemeinde in Vienna and the Bloomsbury House and the State Department in England cooked up this particular way of facilitating the -- the imi -- the emigration of children, but only children without parents.

And this is the document that got me onto the Kindertransport and from Vienna to England.

Q2: And what does this represent?

A: It is actually not the camp to which we -- in -- in which we were housed while they were find -- trying to find foster parents for us, but it is the closest thing that exists today, or rather this is the only picture that -- that -- that I could find of such a camp, such a worker's camp, which were used for the children. And this is the kind of view that I would have had -- that we would have had from the bus, from the top of the bus, after the crossing the channel and arriving, this is the view we would have had, with the ocean behind it and this little -- little s -- little town of little -- little houses in which we were housed while we were in the camp.

Q2: And what about this picture?

A: The family Cohen, whom I -- my first foster parents, bought me a little coat and then they took me to the -- to the photographer to have a picture to send to my parents and I was 11 years old, or almost 11. This would be 1930 -- '39, early 1939.

Q2: And who is this couple?

A: This is my -- this -- these are my first foster parents, L-Lena Cohen and the -- her husband, whose name I can't remember. I do remember that he was very dear and very quiet and didn't ec -- expect anything of me except for me to sit next to him while we -- and look into the fire, whereas Auntie Lena insisted that I call her Auntie Lena and I could never get myself to do it. This picture was given me by their youngest daughter

Ruth, who was my friend and champion and with whom I am still in touch. And who speaks very lovingly of -- of these two parents.

Q2: And this shot, Lore?

A: It's a picture of my father, my mother and me, age about 14. I think what -- what is most the -- moving and sad is the degree of my father's illness and the deterioration.

Q2: And who are these?

A: These are the three children of the family of the munitions worker, whose name I can't remember, but who took me in after the first family, the Gillams could no longer keep me. I remember taking -- after I was told they could not take me, I remember borrowing a bicycle and -- and going to -- essentially going to interview their mother to see if -- if I would be taken in by them.

Q2: And who is this?

A: This is Miss Wallace, one of the two ladies -- one of the two ladies with whom I lived in Guilford. She -- I -- and her -- and her dog, her favorite dog, she was -- I -- what I can s -- tell you about it is that she bought one house to take care of -- of -- of a -- of pauperized gentlefolk and another house to house refugees like my parents. She was a -- a -- a -- a marvelously good woman. And I -- probably the -- probably a companion to the other, older woman called Miss Ellis. And this was -- they took me in when I came to -- to Guilford, and I lived with them for some four years.

End of Tape Ten

Conclusion of Interview