

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with José Coltof
November 9, 2008
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with José Coltof, conducted by Ina Navazelskis on November 9, 2008 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Alexandria, Virginia and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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JOSÉ COLTOF **November 9, 2008**

Question: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **José Coltof**, conducted by **Ina Navazelskis** on November 9th, 2008 in **Alexandria, Virginia**. Thank you very much for agreeing to talk to us today, **José**. We really –

Answer: **José**.

Q: – appreciate it. **José**, sorry. Let's start like we always do in these interviews, at the beginning. Tell me about your – your family, tell me about where you were born, the circumstances, your mother, father, brother, sisters.

A: Okay. I come from a typical Dutch Jewish middle class family. My mother came from a family of five, she had two brothers, two sisters and parents, and everybody was married. My father came from a family of three, he had two sisters. One was married and had six kids, and the other one never married. My father's sister with the six kids had only one surviving child, my cousin, who was my only survivor other than my mother, that survived the war.

Q: What were their names [**indecipherable**]

A: Their names were – my mother's name – my mother's maid – my mother's name was **Hannah Feldman**(ph), her maiden name was **Feldman**(ph), and my father's name was **Marwitz**(ph) **Farp**(ph). And my father dealt in animal hides, and my mother – my grandfather del – was a butcher, a ko – kosher butcher. And everybody lived in **Amsterdam** at the time, except my grandparents on my mother's side, they

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moved about 10 years before, to **The Hague**, for health reasons. My grandfather had some respiratory problems and the doctor suggested that he should be near the salt sea air, so they moved to the – **The Hague**. And the life was, you know, very typical, like in the Dutch way. We were a religious family and life was good, everybody –

Q: Did you have a – brothers and sisters?

A: My mother had – my parents married in 1929, and two years later my mother had a child, a – a daughter, called **Judith**, who had some sort of a disease that they couldn't treat at the time, at the – when she ate, sh-she vomited or she had diarrhea, and they couldn't stop it, and eventually, at age two, she died. So I never knew –
[coughing] – sorry.

Q: That's all right, mm-hm.

A: – another sibling. But sh – they did have another child. And then, I'm the only child.

Q: Well, tell me a little bit – I mean, if you were born in 1942, as it says here on our – our questionnaire, tell me a little bit about the circumstances you heard of when the war erupted. What happened with your parents?

A: Okay, okay.

Q: What happened before your birth?

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A: Okay, okay. My mother, it's very ironic that she and I are the only ones that survived. When "**Mein Kampf**" was written, my mother was very smart, and she says, this guy is not fooling around. He's really gonna kill us all. We better get the hell out of here. And a lot of Dutch Jews had the misconception that **Holland** would stay neutral. And why was that? Because during World War I, **Holland** stayed neutral. And they figured – so they said, well, even if, you know, the war breaks out, we'll just stay neutral in **Holland** and we have nothing to worry about. And my mother was very smart and she says, we may want to stay neutral, but **Hitler** won't let us. And she made everybody crazy, said, let's get out, we have to get out of here. If we – th – it's not good, we must leave **Europe**. She was obsessed with leaving **Europe** and going to **America**. And nobody wanted to listen to her, because in **Holland**, like I said, they – they all thought nothing was gonna happen there. And there were other people like my mother. My – as a matter of fact, after I got married, my father-in-law – my – my husband's grandfather was the same thing, he also saw it come. And it got to the point that people didn't invite him any more, because they didn't want to hear this doomsaying, and i – this – they didn't want to get depressed, and they said he's crazy. And that's how a lot of people felt. My whole family could have been saved, because my mother had a brother whose wife

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had a sister in **England**, in **London**, married to a famous **hazan** there, and she would have –

Q: Can you tell me what that is, **hazan**?

A: A cantor.

Q: A cousin? A cantor.

A: A cantor, a cantor.

Q: Uh-huh, mm-hm.

A: And she would have happily you – you know, let everybody come. But they just didn't see it, they just thought that everybody that said, let's get out, let's get out, let's go crazy. So finally my mother said, okay, if nobody will listen to me, I'll try to get papers on my own, and I'll leave on my own. And she went, as she told me, she went already to the American consulate and started to get things going a little bit. But of course, then the war broke out and she got stuck like everybody else.

Q: And the war broke out when?

A: The war broke out May – I believe it was May 10 – in May, was May 10th or May 15th. Broke out in May 1940, in **Holland**.

Q: Okay.

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A: And she got stuck. So then I was born, and even already before I was born, in beginning of 1942, things started to get – the very first year or so, things weren't so bad yet.

Q: Can I ask a few questions about that?

A: Yeah, sure. Of course.

Q: Were you born in your family's home?

A: No, I was born in the **CIZ**, it was called. Th-The Central Israeli **Ziekenhuis**. It was th-the Jewish hospital in **Amsterdam**.

Q: Okay. But your parents still lived in their own home?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they still have –

A: They had an apartment, and they lived in their apartment, yes. And then what they did is, the men were called up to so-called work camp, and the Dutch are very gullible, and they said, well maybe if we do as we're told, it won't so bad if we – you know, don't try to get away with something. And my mother again was smart, and she says – my father was – I was born in March 4, 1942, and they started to call up the men, and my father's call-up came and my mother said, let's go into hiding. Being that my father was dealing in animal hides, he knew every farmer in town,

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and he was apparently a very nice man. And somebody would have gladly put him up. No, no, no, I'll go, I'll go. And –

Q: This was in **Amsterdam**?

A: This was in **Amsterdam**. And he never went into hiding. Then, when I was four months old, my father left. They – people had to go to the train station and at s – at the platform of the train station, my mother said, I beg of you, don't go. Come – come with me, come, let's go into hiding. He went. That was the last time she ever saw him.

Q: And you never knew him?

A: Of course not, of course – I was four months old. So then what happened, she went home to the apartment. And one night, not long after my father had left, maybe a couple of days later, whatever, the Nazis came, you know, they came and did house searches to take people out. And she went upstairs to the bedroom and she put the covers under her head. **[tape break]**

Q: All right. Okay, sh – covers were over her head.

A: So, the covers were over her head, and it's like a miracle, I was a four month old baby, most of the time babies cry, right? I don't know, instincts, I didn't cry. And it was dark, and my mother describes they – they had flashlights and they went over the – with the flashlight and said – and then one said to his partner, said, ah, there's

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nothing here, let's get out. At that point my mother said, this is getting a little bit too hot, we better go into hiding. So my mother had an address. Her sister worked in a bakery.

Q: Did your mother, by the way, was she a homemaker, or wi – did she also have a job someplace?

A: No. No, no, she was a typical –

Q: Homemaker.

A: – **[indecipherable]** homemaker, yeah. And her sister worked in this bakery. And one of her customers said to her once, if you ever need a place to hide, or any of your family, this is our address. And sh-she gave her the **[indecipherable]** to my mother, so my mother had that address. And after this little incident, she went over there.

Q: Can I st – interrupt again for a second?

A: Of course.

Q: By this point, was the rest of the family still not believing the danger that was going on? I mean, I – I take it that what you are telling me now is a retelling as your mother explained it to you, what happened.

A: Right. Of course, of course.

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Q: And – and while one could be incredulous and not believe it when “**Mein Kampf**” comes out in 1920 –

A: Right.

Q: – in the 1920s, by the time you’re rolling around and it’s 1940 and people are being taken away and there’s searches, then that could change a few minds. What was that like? I mean, did she ever talk about that?

Q: By – by then you couldn’t get out, unless you had li – you had a lot of money and a lot of connections. By the time people realized, yeah, that maybe she was right, you tried to get out, it was almost impossible. You had to, as I said, lots of money and lots of connections, and lots of luck.

Q: I see.

A: My in-laws got out, I can tell you about that later, that’s nothing to do with me particularly, but they did get out in 1940, four months after the invasion. But by the time the people realized, it was too late, it real – really was too late.

Q: I see.

A: There was nothing you could do.

Q: Okay, okay. So let’s go back, she has this address –

A: So, she has this address, and she goes to this family, and they let her in, and **Amsterdam** was the more Protestant family. The sou-southern part of **Holland** was

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more Catholic, bordering **Belgium**. The northern part in **Amsterdam** was more Protestant, but there were also Catholic families, they just tended to have bigger families, I guess they didn't believe in birth control or whatever, they just tended to have bigger families. And that particular family also they had a bunch of daughters. There was about six kid – five, six kids in the family, seven, whatever, I don't know exactly. And so my mother was 35 at that point, and they had a bunch of daughters all in their 30s, so my mother could blend in. My mother also did not look Jewish at all. My mother could easily have blended in. Some of the Catholics looked more Jewish than she did, so – she was a little woman, she was slight, and she did no – my friend here to see – no, Mama, no, didn't look Jewish at all. So, she blended in. So they let her in, and while she was there, not very long, they said look, **Annie**, they're – she went by the name **Annie** – they said **Annie**, you know, we – we want you to stay and you're welcome to stay with us, but you have to find a place for the child, because our neighbors know that none of my daughters were pregnant, and when all of a sudden a baby cries, and a baby appeared, they know that something is up, and the baby will give us all away. And my mother realized, of course, they were right, and she certainly didn't want to jeopardize their life and her life and my life, so she set about finding a place for me. And she really didn't have a place. But apparently, from what she told me, there was an org – an underground organization

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consisting of doctors, nurses and medical students. And if you needed a place for a child, you could go there, and they would place the child.

Q: But she didn't know them personally? She didn't know the [indecipherable]

A: No, no, no, she just went to that organi – it was an underground organization, like, you know, like anything. So, my mother went there and she said, I have a four months old that needs to be placed, do you have a spot for her? And they said, okay, on such and such a day, a couple will appear, and they will take your child away; they will take your child into hiding. And they tried to match up the couples with the ages. Like, if there was a teenager, they wouldn't give it a couple in their early 20s, that would look out of place, you didn't want to walk – so, like I was four months old, so they gave me to a couple in their 20s. And my mother did, and –

Q: Must have been a tough day for her.

A: And, as she describes, she packed my things, and she put a few special things in there, like a – what do you call that thing?

Q: A rattle?

A: A rattle. A special rattle and some other things. And I had a little birthmark on my thigh, I think, but I don't have it any more, but I had that. And she figured if when the war is over, and she didn't – nobody knew when it would be over, and a four months old, after a year you don't recognize your own child, she would ask for

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the things, at least she would be able to identify her own child. Which, by the way, is exactly what happened. And –

Q: Smart lady.

A: – I can just imagine my poor mother, two strangers come to the door, and she handed me to two strangers, not knowing if she would ever see me again. In the beginning of the war from ol – this is all what she told me, they would tell the parents where they took the children. The Nazis soon found out about that, and they would get the parents and torture them long enough that it would give away the address of the children. By the time I was hidden, my mother wasn't told anything. They wouldn't tell me wha – what ci-ci – what city I went to, who I went to, where, she knew nothing, just handed me, and that was it. I was extraordinarily fortunate. Why? Because I came to a childless couple who were absolutely fantastic to me, who loved me dearly, who did everything and anything in their power to make things bearable...

Q: We were talking about your foster parents.

A: Yeah.

Q: And – and your luck.

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A: As I said, they were very – they were a childless couple, extraordinarily nice to me, and what was my luck? Number one that they were childless. In a way that was very lucky because they put all their love and – you know, devotion to me.

Q: Yes?

A: And for some reason, I stayed with them the whole war. They – I guess we clicked.

Q: So your earliest real memories would be of them.

A: Of course. So, but – well, why I say I was lucky, because I have many friends that were in hiding, and they were bounced from place to place to place. And that was a terrible th-thing. Every time you were attached to something, you know, they – they had to leave again, for a variety of reasons. That's why I consider myself lucky that they were good people. They treated me like their own. Their extended family were very good. My foster mother had a brother, a-and a s – a sister and mother-in-law that lived in town, and their children, they were good to me. Her parents lived in town. They were all very good to me. And ber – being a very good **[indecipherable]** I mean, the neighborhood – I was wa – hidden in a town called **Utrecht**.

Q: Oh yeah.

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A: And I was hidden in an area called **rivier er buurt**, which means the river – the river neighborhood. Why? Because a lot of the streets were named after rivers. And apparently there were a lot of Jewish children hidden in that neighborhood. So – and the underground knew about that. So, when they staged a raids, most of the time, the underground had enough time to ring the doorbell and said, get the kids out of here, a raid is coming. And guess where they took me? To her parents, to her sister and brother-in-law and their children. So not only did they –

Q: Also in **Utrecht**?

A: All na – all in **Utrecht**, yes. So, not only did they themselves risk their life, her parents, her sister and brother-in-law, their children. I mean, it's unbelievable, and they were all good to me, I have the fondest of memories. I was playing with their children –

Q: I'd like to ask you about your earliest memories, then. Now we're at a point of your story where it's no longer as it was told to you –

A: Right.

Q: – but where you start –

A: I re –

Q: – remembering things. Can you tell me, what are those things you remember?

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A: Probably I remember being with them, being with my foster parents. I remember them –

Q: Did you call them Mommy and Poppy?

A: Of course, of course.

Q: So they were your Mommy and Poppy.

A: Oh, there's no question. And her parents were **Oma** and **Opa** and – and her sister and brother-in-law were, you know, **Ome** and **Tante**, aunt and uncle, of course, of course. And they were my cousins, no question. Of course, it was lucky for their part also that I was a baby when I came there. A child that comes at a year or two had a recollection of their parents, can give it all away by saying something wrong. I didn't know anything but them, so I could never speak out of tur-turn, I could never say anything wrong, because all I knew was them. I remember going to look for food. They would go out of town to the farms, I think – and buy some f – get some food. And I remember they went on like a – a car, a flat car with big wheels, and somebody would pull it. And it was like – like a hay – like today kids would go on a hayride, and it was kind of – of an adventure for a child. And they told me we're gonna look for food. I remember those things very clearly. We went, you know, as often as we could, whatever they could get. I remember whenever I went outside, if you look at me, brown eyes and brown hair – brown hair, and as a

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child too, I was, for **Holland**, a very Jewish looking child. And whenever we went outside, I was told to look down so that my eyes couldn't be seen, and I always got a kerchief or a hat on my head so my brown hair wouldn't show. And I remember that. **Yoka**(ph), I was called **Yoka**(ph), we all had a name, they gave us a name.

Q: And what was your name?

A: My name was – th-they called me **Yoka**(ph).

Q: **Yoka**(ph).

A: **Yoka**(ph), yeah.

Q: Is that a nickname or a full, normal name?

A: No, they gave me that name, I mean –

Q: Okay.

A: – every child got an – got a ha – a hiding name.

Q: Okay.

A: Especially if they have Jewish sounding – **José** is not particularly Jewish sounding name, but every – they – they identifal – you know, they – they give the name.

Q: Yes.

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A: I remember them very fondly. (Oh, sorry.) I remember very fondly them sitting in **Holland** – you know, you had no central heating, you had like a – a st – what do you c – pot belly stove –

Q: A little stove, yeah.

A: – you know. And we would sit around it and they would sing songs to me at night. And, now you shouldn't think there was anything in that potbelly stove, they had nothing to heat it with, but just the illusion, you think you sit in front of the stove, you feel warm.

Q: It's warm, yeah.

A: It's warm. And I remember the singing their songs to me.

Q: What were their names?

A: **Turner Hefferness**(ph). And the beauty of this, why I tell you this in particular, after I moved to **America** and I got married, I had them come. And when my daughter was si – what – how old was she? She was four, my son was six, something like that, was the last time they were here together, they would sit with my daughter on their lap and sing the same songs they sang to me. So life really came full cycle. I remember that, I remember being taken to her parents, to my f – f – I don't know, to my foster mother's parents, playing with the children. I have pictures of my playing in the yard with them, I remember the – the – the house. All

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those things I do remember. I guess when you live – and it was very clear that we were living under very bad circumstances. I mean, the na – the word Nazis was – was used, and –

Q: It was something you remember being – hearing, like –

A: Oh yes, oh yes.

Q: – like the Nazi is a boogeyman.

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: You remember it very well, that outside the house there was danger. And of course, there were also a number of close calls. Like I told you before, then the na – th-the underground would come when they knew they were staging a raid. A few times – this is all they told me, this I don't remember, of course. One time they had no time to get me out, so they had to do a little quick thinking and my foster father decided he was going to lay in bed and say he was sick, and they would put me on the foot end of the bed, and he made believe he was laying with his feet up on the pillow, and I was put in the foot end. And they really came in looking at the house, and they didn't see a child, and they left again.

Q: That was a very close call.

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A: [indecipherable] a close call, I could have coughed, cried. I was, you know, by that time where I could have been a year old, I don't know how old I was, I didn't ask him how old I was at that point. But it's like a child senses fear, and those went to, you know, do what's right, I don't know. Another close call was my foster mother's mother [indecipherable] that they took me to her too sometime. Came for a visit one day, and she – the underground came and told them, you have 10 minutes to get out, they're very close, get the children out. So she said to my foster mother, I'll take her home, just – and she says, and give me her dirty laundry, go to the laundry. And my foster mother says, why? She says, just – I just have a hunch, do me a favor, you never know where they're looking. Because babies clothes meant evidence. So, to satisfy her mother, okay, here's the dirty laundry. And off we went. They came, is a child here? No, no child, they went looking through the house, no child. Can I see your dirty laundry, please? If it wasn't for her instinct I probably wouldn't be sitting here talking to you. Those are the things that happened. You always have to go by your guts.

Q: Yeah, it's amazing what that instinct can tell people.

A: Always go by your guts.

Q: Yeah.

A: Always.

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Q: So, aside from – aside from that memory of going out to the fields in the – you know, in that hay, in th – in that sort of like cart that someone is pushing, what are some of the other memories that you have of them, of the larger family, of your first years.

A: Getting together. I remember going to church, my first religious experience was not in a synagogue, was in church.

Q: Was it a Catholic church, did you – or was it a Protestant –

A: No, they were Protestant.

Q: They were Protestant.

A: They were Protestant, they were Protestant. It was very important to know that not only were they Protestant, they were very devout Protestant, they were very religious. And the reason they took me was their Christian duty. They felt it was their Christian duty. Somewhere in the back of their minds, they also figured, well, if they don't come back, they'll have another Christian child. That was in the back of all their mind. Doesn't bal – bother me, because you know, what they did was good, the rest doesn't really matter. But it was definitely – I don't know if they were not such devout Christians that they would have done it. They felt it was their Christian duty to save a – to save a Jewish child. It was that motivation.

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Q: Do you remember anything about the church they would take you to? Any kind of thoughts, or –

A: No, no, I just remember walking in – in a building, it was a church and of course when you're a young child everything seems very big.

Q: Yes.

A: And there was a children's choir and towards the end of the war I remember singing in it. They – the little – there were little kids singing a song. That was my first, you know, recollection.

Q: Mm-hm. Let's go forward then. I mean, if those are the memories that you have, you're sitting around a potbelly stove, or you're – or you're in the choir, or you're going out to the – to the fields –

A: And walking around after dinner, we would take a – take a walk, usually, if the weather permitted. **Holland** doesn't have such great weather always, but –

Q: Yeah. So, when did – when did things change? What happened?

A: Interesting you should ask that. For us hidden children, the worst was not during the war. Believe it or not, the worst was after the war was over. Because specially those of us that were born during the war were so young and were given as babies, we didn't know our families. All we knew is what we knew. These are our parents, this is our family. And one day, I came home – like I said, we – I would take a walk

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after dinner with my father, the war was over, and something amazing happened. The war was over and my mother, of course, went to look for survivors, first looked for her child. And that same organization where she went to place me, she went to find me. And she stated her name and the name of her child. And they produced a neat, nice, little list, and they said, oh your child is there, and there in that address **[indecipherable] Utrecht**. And I often think to myself, if the Nazis would have found those lists, again I wouldn't be sitting talking to you. But they were so organized, they could tell her immediately where I was. So, she couldn't get to me right away, because there was no transportation of any kind in – you had to have, I guess, some money, I don't know what. But, after about a couple of month, the next month or so, or two months, she came for a visit, she came to see me. And I remember going for my evening constitutional with my foster father, and we come home, and in the kitchen on a four prong stool – I'll – never in my life do I look at a four prong stool and not associate that – there's a lady sitting. And I was raised to be a polite little girl, and I s-stretched my hand out, and I want to shake her hand. And I said, good evening lady. And just like I'm sitting here talking to you, she says, you don't have to call me lady. You can call me Mommy. I am your mother, these are not your parents. When you're a three year old, your life as you know it at that point falls apart. So, like I said, I had kind of a secure little world with people

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that I loved and loved me, and there comes this strange lady, and telling me she's not my mother. What is a three year old supposed to think about that?

Q: It's terrifying.

A: They weren't psychologically very astute in those days. This is not the way you tell a child, you know, her whereabouts. And life after that was, for us children, very traumatic.

Q: Well, tell me how it was for you. What happened to you?

A: M-My mother came for the visit, she stayed a little bit and she went home. And then she would come to visit. And after she got away from her foster family and established herself in the apartment, which was – the Jews in those days didn't invest their money in stocks and bonds and mutual funds, there was no thing in those days. And the stock market they didn't trust, so if you had a little money, you bought a house, you bought real estate. And those typical European houses, you know, were three, four story homes. So everybody had real estate. So one house, two house, 10 house, whatever it was.

Q: Smart.

A: And my grandfather had a home in amster – you know, several houses in **Amsterdam**, and what my mother did is first after she looked to establish herself, she went into one of her house of her father and took an apartment and went to live

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there. So after she came to visit a few times here and there, she took me for a few days to stay with her. Now, also, you have to understand something else. They didn't give me up willingly. My fa – foster father and mother made a pact that if the war is over and one of my parents would survive or both, they would give me back to parents, but to nobody else. So if, for instance, my mother would not have survived, and my father did not survive, and an aunt or an uncle or a grandparent would come back, they weren't going to return me. And they had the law of the land with them, because the Dutch decided that it was in the best interest of the children not to be uprooted. S – and a lot of parents had big problems getting their children back. And they didn't give me willingly. They tried to convince my mother that maybe it was better I should stay with them. Now, I can –

Q: Do you remember – I – I'm sorry to interrupt here, but do you remember any of your response after that first time when she came and she said, they're not your parents, I am your mother? Did you cry, did you ask about it when she left, did you – do you remember anything of –

A: I was so dumbfounded, I don't think I cried. I – I must have just stood there, not knowing what to think. What do you think? What do you mean this is not my mother? A child doesn't understand –

Q: Of course not.

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A: – the reproductive system.

A: Of course not.

A: When somebody says call me mommy, you're mommy. And they were good to me, I had no reason to doubt that they were my parents.

Q: Of course.

A: They couldn't be better if they tried, they were wonderful people. It's – all of a sudden the – I mean, I was just so stunned and dumbfounded, but you sure don't know what to think any more.

Q: Did you think you – do you think you changed in who you were and how you acted? Do you think – did they ever tell you, your foster parents, that they saw a change in you?

A: No, no, because I think they were all trying to pull their own weight. My mother, yes she had lost her whole family, which by the way, she didn't know yet at that point, because people didn't know until a few years after if people had survived the war. It wasn't the computer age, and the Red Cross gave you the information. And people went for years after to look at lists at the Red Cross to see if anybody had survived. So my mother was not aware that everybody had been killed. She didn't know yet. But I can imagine, after her own source, and her own – you know, it wasn't easy for her to be in hiding either, and then you find your child and your

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child is a stranger to you and the child doesn't want you, and my mother didn't even know right away that it was right, and she asked to see that rattle, and if you remember in the beginning I told you she packed some things. She asked to see if they had the suitcase that she packed for me. And sure enough they produced it, and she looked to see if I had the birthmark on my thigh and there it was. I don't have it any more, but it was, I guess, a sign from God to show me who I was. And I can imagine how terrible for my mother. I mean, she would – the children that were older, that were reunited with their parent, they run to their parent, Mommy, Mommy. I didn't run to my mother, I didn't want to go to her. On the other hand I also understand my foster parents, who knew when they took me, it wasn't an adoption. It was – I was given there for safekeeping. They knew that they weren't supposed to keep me. But I can also understand, I have children and a grandchild myself, you get attached to a child, especially when you shelter a child against such horror. You don't want to give the – I understand their point too, as an adult. As a child, I didn't, of course. So I remember it was very tense between my foster parents, especially my foster father and my mother. It wasn't an easy relationship. And my mother would have liked nothing better than I would have said to her, oh, I don't want nothing to do with these people, I only want to be with you. And I didn't do that. I loved these people dearly, and I've loved them til the end of their days,

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and I had them come here to **America** and they met my husband and my children.

And, you know, I did whatever I could to them.

Q: It is –

A: It is just such a sad – I mean –

Q: It is tragic, and it – and requires such a sacrifice. You know, as I hear you speak and – and – and point out, you know, the heartbreak on all of the sides –

A: All of the sides –

Q: All of the sides.

A: – I mean, it is so unfair, I mean, I can understand it was terrible. It wouldn't have been as bad for my foster parents, even though they were very attached to me, of course, to give me up, had they had their own children. I guess that made also a bit of a difference. But they didn't. And many years after the war they told me, no matter how bad the war was, having me were the best years of their life.

Q: Oh, how wonderful.

A: Yeah, imagine that.

Q: How wonderful.

A: And I was an adult, I was living in **America** already. I have a – that's what they said to me.

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Q: But you know, there's also something else that – in what you say that in many ways it's – there's a great deal of joy in this. We're talking this weekend with a lot of people who are child survivors, who were hidden, and one of the themes that comes through in many stories, and a sadness that just doesn't go away, is the abandonment. Children were abandoned because they had to be, because the parents wanted them to find some way of surviving. And then, after the war, sometimes there were relatives who were never interested in picking up those abandoned children. And in your case, what you have is the opposite of that, is that everybody wanted you.

A: That, yes.

Q: And then – and when you think developmentally, what a child needs, every single one, a chi –

A: Is to be wanted.

Q: Is to be wanted.

A: That, yes.

Q: And the foundation that that gives –

A: That yes, that yes, that yes.

Q: – for a future life.

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A: But it was very hard for me. I mean, I couldn't understand why – my mother was very grateful to them, but you wouldn't know it in the way she expressed it. Like – like I said, there was a jealousy. And I belong to a child survivor group and when we sat around and talking about it, most of us that were babies that were born, you know, during the war, they all have the same experience. The – the parents really would have liked the children to be estranged from the foster parents. But we kids, we wouldn't let. We really – I – it's probably a sign of strength on our part, as little as we were, I wouldn't let my mother not have contact with them. She would have loved it if I would have said, you know what? You're my mother now, I don't need them any more. Oh no, I wouldn't let them do that. I wouldn't let them do that at all.

Q: So, do you remember the – do you remember the day that you no longer lived with them?

A: No. No, I – I – I think I probably blocked it out, it must have been so traumatic for me to leave them, that I probably totally blocked it. Like there's certain things you block out, and I must have blocked that out. I don't remember the day.

Q: So, do you remember – do you remember how you felt to your mother, your real mother in the beginning, and how that grew and cha –

A: I resented her.

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Q: Okay.

A: I resented her for taking me away from them, and it was very difficult to be with my mother. She loved me, but she didn't express it in a way that I express my love for my children. She didn't pick me up and hug me a lot, she wasn't very demonstrative. And she loved me conditionally, not unconditionally. And it went something like this, you know, I can take all this love – loss of all my family, and she really never lost her whole family, if you're only a good girl, if you're only – it was very conditional. And I remember, I was married –

Q: It's a huge burden on a child.

A: It's ridiculous. And I remember – I think I was married already and I said to my mother, you know, what you expect of me is ridiculous. You had – lost her whole family, as I said. I said, I only know how to be your daughter. I don't how to be your husband, I don't know how to be your brother, your sister, your brother-in-law, your sister-in-law, your nieces, your nephews. I don't know – I can't make up for all these people. I only know how to be your child, that's it. And, you know, it's – she expects it – something **[indecipherable]** and wasn't possible to give to her. But never – she was – she felt all alone, and she was all alone. But, I think if she would – she never gave me a compliment for anything, never, never. And it was

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very stupid. If she would have done that, I would have maybe done more of what she wanted.

Q: How sad.

A: Like, she never told me she loved me til she was almost dying, but she would tell other people, oh she's so wonderful, I love her so much. That's not the way to raise a child. So – and the insecurity by living alone was terrible, as some – every child worries about what happens if their parents die. You know, children are not stupid, they hear the plane crashes, car – car crashes. What happens if – if my parents die? So I didn't have parents, I had my mother alone. And I had, as I said before, I had one surviving cousin, who moved to **Los Angeles**, at my mother's **assistant**. As a matter of fact, after the war, when my cousin came back, my mother stood there, and I remember her waving her finger at him. **[tape break]**

Q: Yes, waving her finger.

A: **Margrits**(ph), get out of **Europe**, get out of **Holland**. If you think this was a bad experience, this was **kinderspiel** compared to what's going to come. Get out. And she literally forced him out of **Holland**. And this lady that you just saw, her parents left in 1949, and they also went, so he had a pla – he went to **Los Angeles**. When my cousin left, I was 10 years old. As long as he was around, I felt I had a little

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moral support, a little something. So, after he left, I really felt all alone. Now, my mother had remarried after the war.

Q: Excuse me, let me back up just a little bit. How old were you when you switched your families? When you went – left your first – first –

A: Oh, about three and a half.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: So it was very soo – actually very soon after the war ended.

A: Yeah, probably it was about five, six months after that my mother took me full time. Before she took me – you know, you – she was smart enough to realize you can't just take me away full time. But – but it's a – a pr – yeah, probably about four

Q: Was that through –

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: So – so – so nevertheless, you knew – at four or five and six, you started having other memories, of not living with the family –

A: Oh yeah, yeah, sure.

Q: – but living with your mother?

A: Sure, sure, sure. Sure, sure.

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Q: And can you tell me a little bit about those, some of those early memories that come like episodes in a child's mind?

A: We lived, as I said before, in the house that my grandfather had owned. And my mother found somebody she knew from the past, it was a third cousin or something, in **The Hague**, an elderly lady, she would come to visit. I admire my mother, she did try to establish a life for herself. I remember going with her, being in the house, going out with her. My – then in '46, my cousin came back, he came to visit. They tried to live things normal. She tried to get some of her – the houses back, it was very complicate –

Q: Did she get them?

A: Some of them, but that's a whole different story. Things were kind of – I – there was no nursery school, my first school experience was five years old. My mother was smart enough – there was one Jewish school only in **Holland**, and my mother, thank God, was smart enough to send me to that, and I say smart enough, because all of us children had gone through the war, be it in concentration camp, hiding, so we became like a family. I had very close friends [**indecipherable**]. I remember my fort – first **Simkhes Torah** in – when she took me –

Q: You must tell me what these are.

A: Oh, **Simkhes Torah** is – is – is a holiday.

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Q: Mm-hm.

A: And after **Rosh Hashanah**, the last holiday, we have a month long of holidays, and the last holiday is **Simkhes Torah**, and there was – one of the ceremonies at **Simkhes Torah** in the synagogue is that you take all the children on the **retalli**(ph) and you bless the children. And one of my first memories as I went to shul with my mother, to the synagogue and they called up the children to bless the children, and I remember all the adults around, everybody was crying, the tear – crying, and I couldn't figure out what they're crying. Of course, now I know why. This was the remnant, these were the children that had survived the war, here they were. And every time I see them do that in synagogue on **Simkhes Torah**, I think back of that first time. You ne – you – certain things just stay with you. You never forget.

Q: This may sou – sound like a strange question, but it's born out of that experience that you described. You were with these foster parents, whom you loved, with whom you felt secure, who were Christian, who took you to church. When did you start feeling Jewish?

A: When my mother took me in, she took me to synagogue. I don't know if the word Jewish meant something, or Protestant, but it was different.

Q: Did you feel at home there in that synagogue?

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A: Yeah, it was my mother. It didn't bother me. As a matter of fact, I often think about if my mother wouldn't have come back, and I would have stayed with them, if they wouldn't have told me I would have been a Jewish child, whatever, figured it out. I think I would have.

Q: Why?

A: I guess I looked different than them. I-I look – I have very Semitic looks, and I think I would have figured it out. I think there's a certain – I think there's a certain warmth to synagogue, and a certain coldness to church. I think I would have figured it out. But I wonder.

Q: I was – I was after something like that, because at some point a person starts identifying themselves. They find –

A: I was – I was very comfortable in synagogue, I was very comfortable in a Jewish – not knowing the difference between Christian and Jewish. You don't know, when you're that young a child.

Q: No, no, no.

A: I was very comfortable with it, and we went to school, our first school experience was when we were five years old, kindergarten, and it was very Jewish and I was very comfortable in it. That I never wanted to go back for, I never said I

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want to go to church. It's interesting that you bring that up, because I never, ever said I would like to go to church.

Q: Well, see, what I'm trying to do –

A: I would love – I always loved seeing my foster parents, that I always was happy to go, but I never once in my life uttered the phrase, I'd like to go to church again.

Isn't that interesting?

Q: Well, one of the reasons where it becomes a question to me is because you – you drew a picture of – of warm foster parents and a – and a relationship with your mother that was fraught with certain tensions and anxieties –

A: Absolutely.

Q: – that wasn't easy.

A: Very difficult.

Q: So – so that, if you go from a place that was warm, to a place that has problems, and yet today you are someone who is very Jewish –

A: Yes.

Q: – and you – okay, something else must have brought you there. That's what I'm trying to –

A: Well, first of all, my mother came from a very religious background.

Q: Okay.

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A: And she continued that, contrary to some other people that came through the war and threw everything away. Now, again, my mother was hidden, she was spared the tragedy of the camps. People – although things weren't easy, but people were civil to her and decent to her. And people that went through the camps saw, of course, such cruelty that thank God, my mother was spared from. And, like my cousin, who believes in nothing any more, says, where was God when we needed him? And I la – and my cousin questioned my mother, **Tante**, why are you still religious? And my mother answered him, so if I'm not, would life be better? At least she felt it was something to hold onto, because she was brought up in that home. And it gave her a s – it gave her life and it did me the same. I went, as I said, to the only Jewish school in **Amsterdam**, there's only one Jewish elementary school to this day, it's called **Rosh Pina**, and the high school is now called **Maimonides**, I went there. And I'm very grateful my mother didn't send me to public school because I hear when I sit in our groups, kids that went – were sent to public school, they stood out, they were different. Even though th-the – the Christian children had als – you know, also had gone through a war, but a totally different experience. They were with their parents, they weren't separated from their families. It was a whole different experience. And they felt strange, and they felt out of place, where even though we didn't talk about our experience, but we all went through the same. And on vacation

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time, when people said, what are you doing on vaca – oh, I’m going to my foster parents, I’m going to my foster parents. And we had very close bonds, and I’m very grateful for that, that was one of the best things my mother ever did, because I didn’t have a family. So –

Q: It became something like that.

A: It became – absolutely.

Q: Another question. You know your story before you are conscious of it, that is you know of her story, you know of sh – so at some point she started talking to you, she started telling you.

A: She did. She fa – she talks – very interesting, she talked a lot about her own family, very little about my father. And not too long, not too many years before she died, I said to her once, I said, you know, I’d like to know a little about my father’s family. You never talk about him, tell me something about my father. She said, he was a very good man, he worked very hard, at night he was tired and he went to sleep after he ate. But she was very instrumental in giving me a very vivid picture of her life with her parents, with her two brothers and sisters, what that was like. That she – she talked about a lot. That was important to her.

Q: It – it’s also, in a totally different context, but I remember as a journalist I once interviewed someone who was a victim of torture in **South America** and had ended

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up in **Denmark** in a rehabilitation center. And he didn't want to tell his children about what he had gone through. And through his work in this rehabilitation center, he found out that that was a mistake. That when he kept that from him – from them, they could not get as close to him as they wanted to be. And when he started talking to them about his life, his – you know, the difficult parts, but when he started really saying, this is what my life was made up of, it changed the dynamics. And – and so, it sounds that – that it was a cau – she – she was a complicated, amazing woman, your mother.

A: But ag – but again, she was hidden, and I find that the people that were hidden, talked about their experience much easier than the ones in the concentra – I – that – that hell was much harder to talk about.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: And I think that's –

Q: For understandable reasons.

A: Of course. My only cousin, who I saw a couple of years ago in **Los Angeles**, and I said to him, I said, you know, I know you don't want to do the **Spielberg** thing, but I begged him to do the **Spielberg** thing, or what you are doing, and he wouldn't do it. I said, for my own personal collection, would you – and for the tape recorder, would talk with him a little bit? Okay, so he sat down, he talked some basic fact.

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But when it came to anything real, he just got tears in eyes, he said, I don't want to talk about it. After all these years. You mention the name of his siblings and he starts to cry. After all these years. So –

Q: Oh, it's horrible. Because it's – it's – it's ir – an irrevocable loss.

A: It's an irrevocable, but again I – I credit my foster parents with making the – I have a lot of friends that are in therapy, and this and that, and I think the love that they were able to give me, in these very early month and years of my life, they very, very important foundation. I'm not in therapy. My kids would probably say you beli-long in therapy, but that's another story.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: But – Ma, you crazy, but that's a different story. But I function better, I think, than a – than a lot of other, beca – because it's different where you p-pa – when you schlep from home to home, as many of my friends have. They went from place to place, and so in the end wound up even in the camps, after being in hiding.

Q: Oh, my.

A: Oh yeah, a lot of the kids went in a hiding place –

Q: So they were caught?

A: Yeah, of course. Of course. So, with everything, I consider myself pretty lucky.

Q: Tell me a little bit more about your life after the school, and when you –

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A: Oh, okay, okay.

Q: – married, came to the **United States** and so on.

A: Okay. As I told you before, my mother was obsessed with getting out of **Europe**. The obsession never stopped. She told my cousin to go, and he listened, and as soon as the war was over and things started to normalize a little, my mother still wanted to get out of what – of **Europe**. What happened, she met a man in the late 40s, probably '48 - '49, and they wanted to get married. They couldn't get married right away because I'm sure you're familiar with the fact that you needed death certificates, and the only ones to provide them were the Red Cross. So she needed a death certificate that her husband had died, and he needed the death certif – he was a man, a German Jew, he needed the death certificate that his wife had died. And it took a couple of years, so they finally got married in 1951. And so he was in **Bergen-Belsen** in the camps, and it didn't do any good to his health. And eventually, he had a heart condition, after three years he died. So in 1954 he died. So my mother was –

Q: Do you have memories of him?

A: Very unpleasant memories. He was very resentful of me, because he had an 18 year old daughter that died, and my mother's daughter lived. So he tolerated me. He wasn't bad to me, but he wasn't any good, and I was a little child when they

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married. So, you know, it would have been nice to have somebody that is nice to you –

Q: Is warm.

A: – and warm and kind. He tolerated me. He wanted my mother, I was the child, he couldn't very well say to my mother, get rid of the child. That she wouldn't have done. So I was tolerated, and I – I knew it. And it got to the point that I felt so unwanted that I was trying to think to myself, I want to get out of here. I don't – if my mother wants to be with this man, that's her story, but I want to get out. And I actually hatched a plot how to get out. I had heard about youth **aliyah** and kids going to **Israel** at that point, and I said, you know what? Maybe I can go to youth **aliyah**, and I heard about kibbutzim. I said, you know, my – let me see, maybe I could go on my own to a kibbutz and live there. I don't want to be with this man any more. But that's up to my mother what she want. And I hate to say it, but when he died, I wasn't very unhappy. And, so then, after he died, my mother went again for her papers, and **HIAS** helped people with papers, and we went to – 1955 to **America** for three months.

Q: **HIAS** being the Hebrew –

A: Yeah, aid society, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

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A: And we came, we got an affidavit through our friends. This lady that you just saw, her parents gave us the affidavit, and we went for three months to **America**. And in those days you had to go every two years to **America**, otherwise you lost your a – your – your papers. So, we traveled back and forth, my mother had still things to do in **Holland**. And when – and we lived for one year in **Los Angeles**, we went for one year to **L.A.** And then we went back, I finished my school. My mother wanted me to finish high school, so fine, I did. And then in '62 I came permanently. And I met my husband, let's see, in 19 – yeah, December '65, and in February '65 – '66 we got married. And I have a daughter and a son, and they were born in '71 and '74.

Q: And your husband was an American, or –

A: Very interesting. I met my husband through mutual Dutch friends. As I said to you when you were talking before –

Q: Right.

A: – how come you stayed in, people didn't get out, as I said, only people with money and connections got out. My in-laws lived in **Rotterdam**. Both my families, my – my family on my side know that they go back hundreds of years in **Holland**, and my husband's side also. We're not Dutch, you know, for one generation that came from **Poland**, or what. We're as Dutch, real Dutch Jews. My husband's

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family, as I said, lived in **Rotterdam**. My father-in-law was a physician, my mother-in-law for her day was extraordinary well educated. She – women in those days were educated when they finished elementary school, very well educated if they finished high school, and exceptional to go to the university. My mother-in-law went to the University of **Leiden**, my – to study law. My father-in-law went to study medicine, they met at the university, they got married. My f – mother-in-law actually practiced law in those days, in the 30s and all that. And my father-in-law had a practice in **Rotterdam**. And they had connections. My f – mother-in-law's family was in the scrap metal business, and there was somebody that they knew that got a group together. And they said, if you can get 50,000 **guilders**, which is like a half a million today, or more, you can get out. And he had a group and all – every couple have to pay 50,000 **guilders** to get out. And my father and mother-in-law described a scene where they went to this Nazi's place, and the money was piled up on tables to the ceiling, practically. And they did manage to escape. Their flights – **Steven Spielberg** could make a movie of the story how they got out, via **Holland, Belgium, France**, finally **Spain**. When they were in **Spain**, I think for a couple of months, and then they finally wound up in **Cuba** and then to **Holland**.

Q: To the **United States**.

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A: To the **United States**, I'm sorry. My father-in-law had to get again his license to study medi – to practice medicine in **America**. After he had got that and then they moved to **Queens**. And there was a Dutch family and they heard, oh, there is a Dutch doctor in town, let's go to him. And from being doctor patient relationship, developed a very wonderful friendship. I knew that family, they know me, they know my husband and they put us together. So even though we – my husband was raising his second – that ship that they went to, went to **Havana**, and then they came to **America**, so his second birthday was in **Havana**. And I married a Dutchman here in **America**.

Q: Wow, wow.

A: Yeah, as he is fond of saying, she is from **Amsterdam**, I am from **Rotterdam**, and together we have a damn good time. **[laughter]**. That's – that's his quote. But yes, I did marry a Dutchman, and we do speak Dutch at home and my children understand Dutch and speak it also.

Q: How interesting, how interesting. And you now live in **Los Angeles**

[indecipherable]

A: No, no, I don't live in **Los Angeles** –

Q: I'm sorry, I'm sorry, so sorry –

A: – **[indecipherable]** live in **New York**.

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Q: – you live in **New York**, I'm sorry.

A: No, no, no, no, no, no, I don't live in – in **Los Angeles**, no, no.

Q: Somehow or other, **Los Angeles**, maybe it's because your cousin –

A: Because my friend is from there, and my cousin went to **Los Angeles**, yes.

Q: That's right, that's right, that's right.

A: And my first, when we went to **America** the first time, we stayed in **Los Angeles** for – for three months, and we lived in **Los Angeles** for a year.

Q: And tell me a little bit about how you maintained contact with your foster family. You know, how you forced your mother to do so, and how –

A: Oh –

Q: – and how you maintained that contact then?

A: Well, in those days, you know, there was no email, it was snail mail, so we wrote letters to each other. Later on – the telephone was a luxury in **Holland**, you know, in the early years, so they – they got the tele – yeah, telephone, we would have, you know, phone calls back and forth, but mostly letters. I mean, people were big in writing letters.

Q: Did you go st – did you go stay with them then, let's say [**indecipherable**]

A: After I came in amer – to **America**?

Q: No, no, I meant when you [**indecipherable**]

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A: When I was a child?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, my mother would – sometimes she would let me stay with them a little bit, an overnight or something. Not much, we usually would go for the day.

Q: I see.

A: I-I don't know if she was fearful of – that they wouldn't give me back again, I don't know what was it a ma – mostly we went, spent the day. And they came to me to spend the day, they came for a visit. It was mostly visits.

Q: I see. And then when you became an adult, did your ties in somehow or other change?

A: Well, I was in **America**, so that was oh – you know, I came to here when I was 20 years old. And I always corresponded. When I came to **Holland** for a visit, of course, I went to see them. But I had them come to **America**. They came together twice as a couple, and then my – so, they had the pleasure of seeing my children and my husband. And of course it's nice that my husband's also Dutch, so they could communicate, because they didn't speak a word of English. And after my foster pa – father died, she came once alone. And so my neighbors, my friends around where I live now, actually met my foster parents, which was very interesting for them. And my daughter remembers them. My son was too young, he doesn't

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remember them, but my daughter remembers them, and like I said, it was really something for me to hear them sing. They brought du – books with Dutch songs, and they were sitting now singing to my children the songs they sung to me. I really came full cir – full circle.

Q: Very warm – a very warm thought, a very warm kind of image.

A: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to add to what you've told, that you think is important for people to know?

A: Ah, yes, I think it's very important to know that as much as I have a good life, and I'm very grateful for the life I have, it never leaves you. Like I said, I don't know if I said it to you, when I go to weddings, or Bar Mitzvahs or places, and I see the people go into a family picture. And the picture, the le – wide angle lens isn't wide enough, they fi – ho-how to fit everybody in. And, you don't need a wide angle lens for my family. They si – except for my husband, my children and my one cousin, and he is ac – older already, he was born in 1924, there is no family. And no matter, you know, you miss that always.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: You always miss that.

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Q: How long was your mother with you?

A: A long time, thank God, she lived a long life. She died in 1998.

Q: Oh.

A: She was almost 92 years old. So she saw my children into adulthood. I'm sorry she didn't see my daughter get married, but she did have that – and she was – like it's funny, like you say what else can you add? As I told you, I – her love for me was very conditional, but my – her love for my – my children was totally unc – she adored them. And I often say, you know, kids, you couldn't do any wrong, and – I couldn't do any good, but you couldn't do anything wrong. And it was really, you know, I'm glad she lived to see my children, because she really, she adored them, and they – they knew it.

Q: And it also is in a way trying to give you back what she couldn't have given you directly, by loving your children, whom you –

A: Yeah.

Q: – love, you know, it –

A: Also something funny, and I wonder if other people feel that way. When I was raising my own children, you just do what you do. You're busy, yo-you – yo-you – you – you go, you change diapers, you make food, you shop, you dress, you bring them to school, whatever it is you do. And I did that. I never stopped to think of

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anything else. Now that I have a grandchild, it hits home even more in a way, because she comes and she goes. I look at this little child and I say, how could these bastards have hurt a little child like that? I look at this little girl, she's now three years old. Some of these little children were left all alone in the world, looking for somebody to hold their hand, to take care of them. How could these bastards, and how can we ever ask to forgive this? Never. When my granddaughter turned four – my daughter knows my whole story, I – you know, I've never been not open about it. And when she turned four months old, I said to – her name is **Yerwousha**(ph), I said, **Yerwousha**(ph), would you imagine your having to give this little girl, somebody coming to your door and somebody taking this child from you? You never know if you will ever see her again. Then she broke out in tears. As much as she knows my story and m-my foster parents, now that she's a mother herself, she understands really how it hits home.

Q: And what price was paid.

A: And what price was paid. And like I said, it hit. And now I see this child, I say, how could they hurt a child? How can you do it? How can any human being do this? It – it hits me in a way even more now, because I take distance. It never leaves you. It never leaves you. As much as I function and I, you know, do everything I'm supposed to do, I-I think, it never leaves you. It will go with you to your grave.

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Q: So hard to hear it, but it is true.

A: It's true, I mean –

Q: It's true.

A: I'm – you know, function an-and do everything and I don't feel sorry – don't think I ever feel sorry for myself. I consider myself the lucky ones. I also don't have survivor guilt, like some people have survivor guilt. Why? The world would be better if I would be dead too? No, at least I'm survived and I have two children an-and grandchildren. I don't have survivor guilt, maybe that's bad of me, I don't know.

Q: No, no, I think you – I think it's –

A: I don't have that at all.

Q: Yeah.

A: A lot of people have that.

Q: No. Well –

A: And my early – oh, one thing I want to say of my earliest recollect – you asked for my earliest recollection with my mother. I remember the first years, at least five years after the war, no matter what happened, at some point of the day, my mother would break out in tears and cry. And when you're a little child, and there are two people in the house, you and her, well, if she's crying, must be my fault. Now, I

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understand now, as an adult, of course how she cried, she always thought of – for her relatives. I mean, she missed them terribly. But that’s the environment we grew up in. That was it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Take it or leave it, that was it. But I’m very lucky because I have a wonderful husband, a really sweet, nice guy and I have wonderful healthy children and a healthy grandchild, with another one on the way, so I’m really the lucky one.

Q: I understand what you’re saying. I – you know, it is – yeah, there are just some things can’t be filled in. They just can’t be.

A: Listen, there – there are lots of other tragedies.

Q: Yeah. Well, thank you for sharing your story with us today.

A: You’re very welcome.

Q: This concludes the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **José** –

A: **José**.

Q: – **José Coltof**, on November 10th, I believe today is, or ninth?

A: You said nine before.

Q: Ninth, ninth – in **Alexandria, Virginia**. We’re gonna double check that downstairs.

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A: Okay.

Q: Thank you.

A: Wait a min – we can look in my book.

Q: Okay, let's look in your book.

A: Let me look in my book. Wait –

Q: All right, so let's do – so, yes, it is, Satur – Sunday, November 9th, 2008 in
Alexandria, Virginia. Thank you very much.

Conclusion of Interview