

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Annette Fein
November 7, 2008
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with Annette Fein, conducted by Ina Navazelskis on November 7, 2008 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Alexandria, VA 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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ANNETTE FEIN
November 7, 2008

Question: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Annette Fein**, conducted by **Ina Navazelskis**, on November 7th, 2008, in **Alexandria, Virginia**. Thank you, **Annette**, for agreeing to talk with us today. As – as you know, we are interested in recording the stories of people who experienced and survived the Holocaust. And since we are here at the child survivor's conference, we are very grateful that you've agreed to tell – to talk to us. Can you give me a little bit of background about your s – your whole – your story; where – where you were born; where your family came from? And we'll start from there.

Answer: Okay. My family came from **Poland**. I don't remember the exact location, but my brother **Jack** would be able to tell you. And they moved to – to **Paris**, where I was born.

Q: When?

A: In – I-I was born in 1940, so I assume like a year or so before, maybe two years before, because **Jack** was also born in **Paris**. And then, by the age of around two, we were put in hiding in a place called **Vales(ph) Galant(ph)**, and I have absolutely no memory of that time. And after I think about – well, I guess around 1945, we were brought by relatives to an orphanage. I just today learned that we were in several places, but I only know of one place, **Taverne**, an orphanage in **Taverne**, a Jewish orphanage, where I was until the age of **[indecipherable]** until 1948, when –

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where I then was adopted by American citizens, who were bo-both born in **Russia**, but they were both – they were both already American citizens, and we – I believe that happened in 1947, and it took about a year for the whole process to be finished, and I moved to **America** at the age of eight, 1948.

Q: Do you – do you know anything about your birth parents?

A: Well, we have photographs of them, and I know that they were both sew – tailors. I have photographs, but I – I dil – I don't remember them. I rem – it's all blocked out, basically, the whole time. I don't know ti – a-anything, except what –

Q: Do you know their names?

A: **Calpeak**(ph). **Rose** and **Joseph Calpeak**(ph).

Q: And do you – do you know – did they have any relatives that you were ever able to identify?

A: Not that we've been – yes, well, we had a – my father had a sister who also perished – or it was my mother, I think it was my mother's sist – sister. You'll have – I – I can't – I have to verify, I – I – I don't remember all these things, I forget them. I mean, I – I put them out of my mind, pretty much. They – and there was – there was another relation o – th-that – the daughters – the – the sister's daughter is still alive – is alive in – in **Paris**. We're in contact with. And there's another cousin also in **Paris**.

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Q: So would this suggest that when your family left **Poland**, it wasn't just your immediate family, your father and your mother, but a larger group of people?

A: Perhaps, perhaps, but I have no – no idea. I t – I have never really delved into the details of that. I know the fa – th-the minimal facts, and that's –

Q: Have you been happy knowing just the minimal facts?

A: It's been –

Q: Maybe happy isn't the right word, but –

A: Well, yeah, no, I do – I don't think it is the right word. For me it's been – i-it's something that was, and I accepted, and I don't feel that I can just delve on it all the time. Or even to know if it – I don't believe that it can help me personally in my life, so I just don't bother. I do – I go forward, not backwards.

Q: Do you know what happened, though, to your parents specifically? Were you able to learn that?

A: That, yes. We – basically. I know that my father was put in a camp much earlier, I don't remember the name. It's not that I don't know it, I don't remember. And my mother, evidently – I keep hearing stories that she would cu – she had put us in hiding, in this village called **Vales(ph) Galant(ph)**, and she lived there as well, with the family and evidently there were other children there. And she went back to **Paris**, I – I believe and got caught and then sent to a camp.

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Q: But you don't know whi – where –

A: Again, I don't remember. It's over and down, I just don't remember these names, because they – they're long and complicated things.

Q: So you don't – yeah, but you know, you – they're not recognizable, you don't know that it would have been **Auschwitz** she was sent to –

A: No, it's not **Auschwitz**.

Q: Okay. Okay. What's your **[indecipherable]**

A: **[indecipherable]** mental, it's a mental block, so – which I – I accept that it's there, and I – it doesn't bother me too much, so –

Q: Well, you know, who's to – who is anybody else to say how another person should deal with – with their stories and their lives?

A: Hm, right, right, mm-hm.

Q: Do – do you have an earliest memory in your mind, of anything?

A: None, no. The only – I-I used to – I used to have a memory or – or – of something like a place with a lot of trees, and we – I remember something – hearing – hearing people or children say something about Jews, and I never knew what that was about until I moved to **Israel**, and I would – any time I met French people, I would ask them if – because I only remember the tap – or the name, at that time, **Taverne**, the – the pla – the – where the orphanage was. And, I would – any time I

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would meet French people, I would ask them if they knew of the place. And it happens that – actually the first job I had in **Israel** was with an architect, and one of the partners was an interior decorator, Frenchman, and he – he tur – his name was **Josh Goldsta** – is **Josh Goldstein**. And he said yes, of cour – he of – he knows the place, and it turns out that he and his wife both worked at this orphanage, but once – after we'd already left there.

Q: So, would –

A: And so he described the – the setting, and that kind of made more sense, why that was stuck in my head, of the trees, and –

Q: So, until you had that conversation with him, did you know that this is – you – could you place it in a town o – when you had this image of trees, or you didn't even know where that was?

A: No, I didn't know where it was. I didn't know where it was, because I never –

Q: Okay. It was putting two and two together.

A: Yeah, I never came across anyone – cause I – when – whenever I would ask if they kn – i-it only started in – in **Israel** when I asked people where **Taverne** was. And –

Q: What was your first language that you spoke?

A: French.

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Q: French.

A: French.

Q: And was – how long was that the only language that you spoke?

A: Until the age of eight, and once we moved to **America**, I think within about two months we learned English. I learned English perhaps faster than my brother. And, in fact I got very low grades in French when I studied, because I used to talk in class. So –

Q: Yeah.

A: – I've put that – I've also blocked that out, I mean, I – I know that, I – I accept it, I – now, i-if I absolutely have to talk French, I might understand some. I understand a bit. But I don't – I mean, I – in – in fact, in **Israel**, in **Mitzpe Ramon** there are a lot of French people, and I find the French very snobby about the language, so I don't – I say, okay, I don't talk French. But [indecipherable] I can understand a little, because I studied a bit, right? When I wa – when I'm in **France**, I – the few times that I was in **France**, I was able to talk to people in the street, but not to people that I know. Mental – good mental block. But –

Q: Why do you think that mental block's there?

A: Probably there are things that I don't want to remember, I mean, that's quite clear, you know. Okay.

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Q: But it's interesting, you know, when one has a mental block, when I think about it in my own life, there are hard – there are some – there are some parts that have been hard, and if someone were to ask me to reconstruct them, it would not be easy. I remember that they existed. I remember, let's say, a basic story about them, but not necessarily a specific within it, or certainly not a timeline. But I know that they were there, you know, I – I was conscious when these events happened. And that's what's surprising for me is, when you're not conscious, you don't – you just don't remember something. Then the question is – is, is there a reason why you have no curiosity about it, or do you think you have no curiosity about it?

A: I've kind of never went too deeply into it because I just like my life, and I – I said, this is what happened, and I – you don't go back. You don't go back. You cannot solve – you're right, you can find out, yes, your roots, and – and things like that, but I'm sure like there are reasons why I – I do – I do a lot of sewing so I can say, oh yeah, well, my parents were also –

Q: In that profession.

A: – tailors, in that profession. I do a lot of – I – I do artwork. I don't know whether there's a connection there. But to me that's just to go – you can't go backwards, you can only go forwards. So that's why I don't – I don't s –

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Q: So, isn't it difficult sometimes, being with people who – who have another need, the – the need to go backwards? How do you – how does that –

A: That's [**indecipherable**] had become difficult for me, that difficult perhaps for them, but not for – I don't find it – that it's difficult for me. I look at it, you know, it – these are facts that you can't change, and I don't – I don't feel that knowing more about it – I learned now from – from my brother, who seems to know much – so much more. But he's a – for instance, he doesn't remember me as part of – in his – in his life, and I don't remember him in that wa –

Q: In that early life in **France**?

A: – in – yeah. So there's –

Q: That was going to be one of my questions.

A: Yeah, so it's – it's –

Q: Yeah.

A: – I mean, that's a – I say, okay, I mean, I've totally blocked it out, but – and he hasn't, but there's still a lot of things that he also doesn't – hasn't been able to relate to or to see clearly, or to understand clearly. And again, that for some – maybe because I live in **Israel**, and that's – it's a – my life is – is my life as it is, and without complications of my past. For me, I mean.

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Q: When you got – what I guess I'd like to try and trace is, when you got to the **United States**, or even if it was earlier, even though you were a child, a young child earlier, do you remember conversations coming up, about the war, about the Holocaust, about murders?

A: No.

Q: Did your paren – your adopted parents, what were they like?

A: Oh, they were very good people, very nice people, very giving. I don't remember too much, if they talked very much about the war, but was – it was always a – it was not like – it wasn't a hidden fact that we were adopted, we were – it was something that we were – we knew about. It wasn't sudden – suddenly we learned that we were adopted, and where we came from. But I – I think I just kind of like, you know, fit in as quickly as possible. Like for instance, learning English. I – I believe that within about two months I was talking English, I was fluent in it.

Q: And do you have memories of your brother being able to, or having – struggling with that?

A: No, no.

Q: Okay. How did your adoptive parents cross your path? Do you remember –

A: How did they what?

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Q: How did they cross your path? Do you have memories of the first time you met them?

A: No. Only through what they once – what they – my father told me – both of them, that when they came to the orphanage – they came to visit your – in yo – they came to **Europe** and my father, who was very – an ardent Zionist, decided that the best way to find out what the situation was, was by going to an – a Jewish orphanage, and that's how he – I-I don't know exactly what the procedure was, but that's how he came to that orphanage, and he always said that he – he saw me, and decided because they didn't have children of their own, he decided to ad – to adopt me. And my mother at the time didn't want – my adopted mother didn't want anything to do with it, because she was not feeling well at – at that – this was in '47. And – but he – it was his decision, basically, and they said there's also a brother. **[indecipherable]** said, okay, we'll take both of them. But I don't remember the situation, I don't in – in any way.

Q: Aside from the trees, what would be other early memories that you can recall?

A: Only – yes –

Q: It doesn't have to be Holocaust related, they could be about anything, just – just – what – what – what comes to your mind?

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A: Ah, there was – okay, there was one – as I said before, there was – hearing children yell out something about Jews.

Q: Was it a mean yelling out?

A: Maybe – yeah, I think so. And, again this – this interior decorator said to me that we went to school, evidently, and in order to go to school, we left the orphanage and passed a Catholic school. So, perhaps that kind of – so, for – at that point, that explained to me why I remember something like that. The details, nothing at all, right. And there was one other thing of someone – and again, I've never delved into it, because it's – I don't think it's a pleasant thing to remember, about – something about a tree, and a – interestingly enough, I had a time when I did – I would paint a lot of trees. And someone once decided that it would – it showed that I – my – I hadn't – that I didn't have roots, and that was why I was drawing trees. And I said, fine, that's, you know, pretty clear, and understandable. But there was one thing that there was a man – someone who had a lot of keys, and I think there was a name called zoo or **zoe** or something like that. And this could have been a dream, or it could have been something in detail, that someone was hanging from a tree, that's all I remember. I mean, that's – it was never made – never clear, and I really don't – I'm not all that interested to know too much about that. **[indecipherable]**

Q: Was it a shadow?

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A: A shadow, or –

Q: A shadow of a person on that tree, was it – or –

A: I can't even say. Just someone hanging on a tree, or hanging on a tree. Like a –

Q: Yeah. It doesn't bring – it doesn't bring up a – a – a pleasant image whatso – at all.

A: No, no, no. So, I put it out – I mean, I – it was there. When I was much younger, it would – it would – I would think about it now and then, but I – I pushed it out, and –

Q: Did you feel different than other children in the **United States**?

A: I think only in the – well, that's – I think that's why I se – I learned English very quickly, because kids in the s – in the neighborhood would call me **Frenchie**, and I decided I didn't – I wanted to be American, again, as quickly as I could.

Q: And did you feel different than other children because you were adopted, and you knew you were adopted?

A: No, I don't remember that feeling. Maybe in the first few months, or the first year, because we did go to a private school for one year. And then, when we went to grammar school, we would put – we were put back a year. And I never made up that year, whereas **Jack** did, because it wasn't – because I'd become friends with –

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with kids that were – I was with, so, it was enough, I-I didn't need to go – go ahead one year. So no, I don't think I felt too different.

Q: Can you describe to me a little bit about – I mean, I don't know how to express this in a way that doesn't sound much too – too many big words.

A: Mm.

Q: But how does – how did you form your – I mean, most of the time children form their identity from all of these building blocks that are part of their past. That doesn't necessarily mean they stay there, but that's what they have to start with. They have this building block, this one, this one, this one, and then later they can say, well, I want part of this one, I want part of that one, I don't want the rest. And little by little they start forming their identity. What formed yours? How did you form yours? What things did you choose to become who you are?

A: I think I was very influenced by the – by the Israeli – I think also – okay, we're – when I came to **America**, I remember my father would – used to make records of us, he – he liked to sing and we – he made records of – of us talking in – and I remember one of the – even – no, even before I spoke English, I mensh – I thi – from the orphanage, we were ma – we were oriented to think about **Israel**, and I think that that was like – that was always my – my direction, is to come to **Israel**, which I did, very – as soon as I-I finished at th – sorry. When I ca – when I – in one

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of the tapes that we made, I said that I wanted to come to **Palestine**. And this was like very early in – in the process. So I think that was always what pushed me along. And because my parents, especially my father, was so much into **Israel** himself, it always –

Q: It was natural.

A: It was very natural. And I became involved in youth groups, Young **Judaea**, as in high school, before high school, you know, in high school at least –

Q: Where did you grow up here? What – what si –

A: In **Union** – well, we started out in **Newark, New Jersey**, and then in **Union, New Jersey**. And in – when I was in my last year, or my la – no, I think in my se – or junior – between my junior and senior year of high school, I came – I went to **Israel** with Young **Judaea**.

Q: That was the first time?

A: That was the first time. And afterwards I said I was moving – I was coming back to **Israel**. And, in fact, in my year book it says I'm known for wanting to go to **Israel**. So, I – I was ac – active in young Judea, wa – I decided to go to u – I went to university for – first, and – because my parents had said, you know, finish university, and then do whatever you want. And I realized that was a good a – good

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Q: Where did you go to school?

A: **Temple** University. Studied art, fine arts, and art education. And I finished and I went to **Israel** for a year, and I'm now – that was in '63, and I'm still living there, so –

Q: And does – is – is **Israel** more home than the **United States** ever was?

A: **Israel** is home. I don't – I can't say more home, because I feel very much at home in – in **America** because I grew up here. Yet, not here in this area, but in – in **Jersey** for instance, there's no more a – when my parents were alive, **New Jersey** felt very much part of me, and it was – it's always easier – easy for me to come to **America**, because I love it, right, I speak English, and there's no problem there, so – and I – I like some of the things that I see in **America**, but oh, you, the sun is in your eyes. Do you want to move? Do you edit afterwards?

Q: I stopped it, right now.

A: Okay, yeah.

Q: I paused it. Or, put it this way, I paused it, and we'll just move to these chairs here.

A: Yeah.

Q: Oops. Well, put it this way, I'll move to this chair here.

A: Yeah.

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Q: And you don't have to.

A: I'm okay.

Q: Yeah. If you're fine, then – then we can stay that way.

A: Okay. Now I'm –

Q: Okay. Here we go. I was hoping the sun was going to go in the other direction.

So, record, okay. So, you were saying that **Israel** is home, but you felt at home here as well, having grown up here.

A: Yes, yes, it's –

Q: So how did – how did these other parts of that early life that you don't remember, that – that was blocked out, at what point did they come in – at what point would you be reminded, or would some pe – point, some piece of information come up? Do you have –

A: Only when I come here and – no, basically only when I come here and I hear about things that my brother knows about and reads ab – o-or has been involved with. So, it's all. I was part of that too, but that's as far as it goes, because I go back home and – and – home to **Israel**, and get into my work and –

Q: And your – your parents from **Poland** came to **France**, your brother wasn't that much older than you were.

A: Two years older.

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Q: Two years older. But did he have any direct memories of them, that he would tell you, or that he would share with you, as you were kids still?

A: No, no. I – he may have had, yes, but we were not close to – we didn't – I do – we – for instance, we – we lived in **Newark**, we went to grammar school, but then we moved to **Union**, and he was already in high school, but – and still in **Newark**, and I – when we moved to **Union**, I started high school in **Union**, some – our paths wa-wa-was like, you know, I didn't know his friends, because he was in a different high school. So we were very much apart, and then he went off to college, and I was still in high school, and we were very, very much apart, I think.

Q: Well, you had – when – if you were eight years old when you came to the **United States**, and let's say normally it – you know, a teenager finishes high school at 17, you had less than a decade where you were living together. A decade is still a decade, but –

A: Yeah, but not – no, really –

Q: Not really, less.

A: – there was too many aga – because he went to a different high school, so our paths weren't similar. I became very involved in – in youth group in Young **Judaea**, he didn't want – it didn't happen with him. I went to overnight camps, I

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don't think he did. Well, maybe he did one time. I used to love to go, and he didn't, as far as I know.

Q: Can you tell me what those camps gave you?

A: He's a math – he's a mathematician, I'm into art. It's like, you know, we're two planets apart. I don't –

Q: Well, here's an irony, without knowing – without knowing you at all, and not having talked to your brother, it sounds that you were the person who certainly found an identity in being Jewish, and then looking to **Israel** as a place that would be for you, your direction, and he did not. And yet –

A: Yes, yes.

Q: – when you look at the Holocaust, and looking at what were those early years that are so murky, you have less interest in it, and he has more.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And there's a certain irony in that, you know?

A: Yeah.

Q: In –

A: I'm also the only one in the whole family that – that moved to **Israel** and that became – that decided **Israel** was the place for me. Which probably came from my adopted – well, no, I think that came way before, from the orphanage. Because

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again, when I came I said, I'm coming to – I wi – want to go to **Palestine**. I was even, I think, kosher at the time, as I – I was very concerned about what I was eating when I first came to **America**.

Q: No teachers you remember from the orphanage, or no – no –

A: None.

Q: – other individuals who cross your mind?

A: No, nothing, nothing.

Q: Well, it's just unu – it's unusual.

A: Yeah.

Q: That, even when I think in my own life, again, I have some memories of age three.

A: And you're younger, really, yeah.

Q: A little, a little, but – but –

A: No.

Q: But I remember some – I don't remember more than an episode, but I remember the episode, and it – some kind of a context of that episode. And then there's a next memory that could have been a year later, could have been a year and a half later. But some – a little bit is – something is there. And so that's why when you see me perplexed, I am – I'm truly perplexed, you know, of –

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A: Because it's never als – it's never really bothered me that I don't remember these things, because I've always believed for myself that I'm – I can't relive my past, and it's not going to change really, who I am, for me. I – I accept anyone who wants to delve into – into that, and – and to dig out things, and – like, I'll accept people that feel that if they go to psychiatric treatment, you know, and find out what their past was, and they – they – I accept that people need that, and somehow, for some reason – I don't say I don't need it, I just don't – haven't felt that I need to – to search that. Which is perhaps perplexing.

Q: Well, it's perplexing, but it's also a choice that no one else can say you should or should not do, you know, it is – it is an each individual choice. It is – but these things that happen, in some way or another, they form our identity. So what kind of a person do we become using those various pieces? And I think that that's one of the – I think that's one of the reasons why people do go back into that, they take something that they remembered, or experienced, and it shaped them, you know, and how did it shape them? And so that's what, you know, sometimes we –

A: Well, I think – I think that wa – what did shape me was the fact that we were – what I – I don't remember details, but I know that I came to **America** with the idea that I was going to move to **Palestine**.

Q: And where from that –

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A: So that did shape me.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I don't understand how it didn't affect my brother, but that's because, again, when we – we'd been so different, and always were very different. And that's what – that's what guided me.

Q: Can you tell me, what did – and – and I say this from complete ignorance: I'm not Jewish, and I've not – not been to **Israel**, and I'd like to hear what about it spoke to you. What articulated in a certain way, and –

A: At the time – look, I – again, I came the first time with a youth group. I was not a – I wa – hadn't finished high school yet, and it was very exciting, I remember this – also a very young country still. In '50 – it was '57 that I went, right, so it was only what, not even 10 years old. And it was – it was just li – we traveled a lot, and is a – as a – as a young person just traveling like that, it just affected me.

Q: It's a lot of fun.

A: And it was also a very free feel – a very – it's not what it is today, right? It was very free, very easy, very warm. If you ask someone how to get someplace, they take you there at the time. It ma – it may not happen today, but there is an easiness about Israelis, a warmth like, about Israelis that – that really pulls you. And again, today it's very different because it's become much more Americanized as well

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[**indecipherable**]. And bigger. So, it's not the same thing that it was when I first – when I first came to **Israel**, and I was – excitedly, I mean, I – you know, oh, I'm gonna come back to **Israel**, and I just did that, that's all I did.

Q: I belong.

A: I – yeah. I didn't have to identify as a Jew, I was a Jew. Everyone is a Jew, basically [**indecipherable**]. You didn't have to – I don't have to go to synagogue in order to prove that I'm Jewish. I don't like religion to start out with, so I don't know when – if that happened then, or now, but I'm very – I'm not anti-religious, but I don't – I think religion is a very big problem in our world, so – but, I mean, that's – that's now my feelings today, after being the age that I am, and seeing what I – what I see, everything. But it always just felt very much at home. So I came back, after being two months with a bunch of kids, you know, and having a great time. And I was still belonging to – to Young **Judaea** at the time, and I became a leader in the movement. And I got kicked out because I would tell the truth. I li – I liked si – you know, I liked the facts to be clear. It wasn't a great, easy place to be, and I'm – I would tell kids this, you know, that's not good, you have to tell them to – you know, to come. And I don't see the point in doing that, so –

Q: What was it that got you kicked out?

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A: Because I – I just never – I didn't want to lie about what **Israel** was. It wasn't an easy place to come to live in. It still isn't an easy place to come to live in. And if you want – decide that you want to come, you ha – I think you have to be aware of that, and not what the Jewish agency will tell you, because that's a bunch of lies sometimes.

Q: But you know, it's pretty harsh to kick someone out who has such a passion for a place.

A: No, it's okay, it's okay, because –

Q: You got over it, huh?

A: – I'd se – I – yeah, I – it didn't bother me. I mean, it was fa – it was funny to me, fine at the time, you know. It didn't stop me from doing what I wanted to do, was fine. I have – I'm going in my direction. And that's what I did, I mean, I finished university, I studied art and art education so that I would have something to ba – to fall on if I needed it.

Q: Did your parents support this?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: It sounds like they would have.

A: Yes, yes. They have – they – they had no choice really, because my father was always **Israel, Israel**. And they never – they never con – came to live in **Israel**

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because my mother actually didn't want to. My father wanted to come. He would –
he, in fact, left **Russia** when he was 14 –

Q: 1905 - 1910 –

A: Something like that.

Q: – something like –

A: And he came to **Israel**.

Q: To **Palestine**.

A: To **Palestine**. And he stud – he studied in th – in school there for a couple years,
until he got kicked out because he was illegally there. So in – and then he – he was
kicked out and then he came back to **Israel**. And then eventually, I think when he
was 19, he wa – he came to **America**. So –

Q: So you – d – what year was he born?

A: – he was always –

Q: What year was he born?

A: He was born, I believe sometime early 1900s, I don't remember exactly –

Q: So did – did you learn about his story and his family, and all of –

A: Yes.

Q: – where they came from in **Russia**?

A: Yeah, yeah, sure. I –

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Q: Where were they from?

A: **Odessa**.

Q: Oh, near the **Black Sea**. And what propelled them out of there?

A: Well, I don't remember what **[indecipherable]**

Q: It's okay.

A: It's all there, it's all there, but I just don't remember **[indecipherable]** you know.

Q: But did you – do you remember that he told you – was your mother also from **Odessa**? You don't know?

A: No, no. She came – my mother came to **America** very young, so she didn't go through the same thing. And she was in – because of her, he didn't come back – he didn't move to **Israel**, because she didn't want – her family was already in **America**. His family was in **Russia**, except for a brother, who eventually moved to **America**, they were all in **Russia**. So they would never – he never moved to **Israel**, but we always had Israelis at our house. He spoke Hebrew fluently.

Q: Oh, you did?

A: He did.

Q: He did?

A: He did.

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Q: Uh-huh.

A: I studied Hebrew in high school – in – in Hebrew school, but I didn't – I don't think I could s-speak it until I came to **Israel** and went to **ulpan**.

Q: Mm-hm. What's that?

A: A – a place to learn only Hebrew.

Q: What's it called?

A: It's **ulpan**.

Q: **Oopahn**(ph)?

A: **Ulpan**.

Q: **Ulpan**.

A: **U-l-p-a-n**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: **Ulpan**. It's like five days a week, six days a week.

Q: Intensive?

A: Five hours a day [**indecipherable**] I studied there when I first ca – I mean, I knew some Hebrew, but I don't think I could really speak it. When I moved to **Israel**, the first thing I did was go to **ulpan**. The si – for f – I ended up – it's usually six we – six months, and I went for five months, because I simply then got a job and I decided to – to take the job. But I mean, you know, that was always my direction,

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and that's what I did. And it came from our home, so the fact that my brother wa – I – it always also amazes me, and no one really, in the family came to that decision to do that. It was only me, which I [indecipherable] comes all back from **France**, and that was – that was what pulled me [indecipherable]

Q: It's interesting, it's interesting. What's the – when you – when you look at the American milieu, the American life, and I take that to be primarily Jewish American life, and you look at that sort of ethos and spirit and people there, and Israeli, could you expand a little bit on – on where you see the differences, where you see the similarities as far as –

A: That's very complicated.

Q: I know. I know.

A: Look, when I first came to **Israel**, I found it very – I mean, it was very different. There was, again, in o –

Q: Different than the **United States** you left, or different than now?

A: Than the **United States**. Different then than the **United States**. Today it's much more like – not like, but much more influenced by the **United States**.

Q: What were some of those differences?

A: Okay. It's a much warmer place, not just – not just physically, but people are very giving, very, very tough, but very soft inside. Like this – what they call the

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sabra, which is the fruit of **Israel**, and it's prickly on the outside, and soft and sweet on the inside. And this is what the sabra – that's what an Israeli born person is like. And that's, I think, probably one of the things that – that attracted me. There was – you didn't have to – you know, you – you – you don't have to make an appointment – you didn't have to make appointments with people, you could just stop in and visit. Which you could – you can't do – couldn't do in **America**, and you still can't do in **America**. I remember a few times some visits I would have to call up people and say oh, well, they have no time to see me. Yeah, I'm just here on a vacation, you know, you're coming to visit, I mean, I'm not living here any more. And that type of thing is very like to – in **Israel**, even today, if I come ba – when I come back, I'll call up and say I'm coming over, there's never – almost never a problem with that.

Q: I can tell you I miss that in the **United States** too.

A: Yes, okay.

Q: Of people just dropping by.

A: Yeah.

Q: It used to be in another time and another place, but not necessarily here.

A: At the time also, which isn't happening – you can't do now, because of the situation, you could get out on the road and hitchhike without any problem. You

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could walk in almost any neighborhood without any problem. Again, this is all changed, by little, by little, there – it's not like that every place. You don't hitchhike so much today because of the – the situation. I unfortunately think that **Israel** – **Israel** has picked up on a lot of the bad things about **America**, rather than the good things.

Q: Su – such as?

A: I don't know exactly what the good things are. An efficiency that – that's here, that can be, I think, very helpful. I love going to supermarkets here, which I don't love it – especially not where I live now. I love the fact that they'll pack the things for you, where in **Israel** you have to do everything, except the [indecipherable]

Q: That's very European, too.

A: Yeah, okay, so –

Q: In **Europe** it's the same.

A: – yeah, yeah, I know. Do – all the red tape that you sometimes have to go through just to – like, for instance, when I first came to **Israel**, just to get a telephone, you would have to wait three years. Two, three years. Which was good. It's not like that today, but at the time, you know, you say, wow, look at – in

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America, within 24 hours you would have it, so – the – again, I mean, everything has become so Americanized there.

Q: So tell me about those things that are American influences that you have more reservations about.

A: Oh, the whole – the whole – cell phones, the computers, that's all – it all comes from **[indecipherable]**. Cable **TV**, needing to ha – buying more than – living above your – your means, yeah.

Q: So kind of a – a consumer –

A: Yeah.

Q: – as a consumer **[indecipherable]**.

A: It's true. Even when I fir – when I first came to – to **Israel**, I would – there were things like – that would bother me. For instance, I remember walking in the street, and – and people come and they push you out of the way to get to the bus stop, you know? Things like that would bother me, and – until I ended up, I remember once, passing someone who pushed me, and I pushed her back.

Q: You've become Israeli.

A: I've become Israeli. And now we have like an – a different thing in that – are you Russian? No, you're not Russian.

Q: Me?

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A: No, no, you're **Poland**.

Q: Lithuanian.

A: Oh, Lithuanian.

Q: Actually Lithuanian [indecipherable] I'm American [indecipherable]

A: No [indecipherable]. So, today, for instance, the Russians tend to do th-the things that – you know, they just [indecipherable] you don't know that you have to stand on line and they push ahead, and things like that. Then again, this –

Q: I could tell you stories. I've lived – I've lived in eastern **Europe**.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And the American part of me is just shocked. Absolutely shocked by the – the – the lack of behavior, you know, the – the impoliteness –

A: Of Americans, yeah.

Q: – of – of – of eastern Europeans.

A: Okay.

Q: Because in public life, people are very rude to one another. Privately they're not, because privately you've gone out – you've been – you've gone over a barrier of trust. That is, they now trust you once you're inside their home, and the behavior is different. But in public, it is atrocious. It is just – you know, it would flabbergast me

–

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A: But you also have here in is –

Q: Absolutely.

A: – are Israelis, I'd say if I'm – when I'm – especially in **New York** –

Q: Uh-huh.

A: – if I hear Hebrew, which you hear so – a lot of, and you know they're Israelis, you know **[indecipherable]**. I also, for instance, back sometime in the 80s, I – I – I went to buffal – to **[indecipherable] South Africa** to teach bla – blacks there. And via the gov – Israeli government.

Q: Do you have dual citizenship?

A: Yes. And I remember being very **[indecipherable]** these who were on staff that was there, because it was a – a project to teach blacks their crafts, so that they could then go on and –

Q: Make money.

A: – earn money, right. And it was extremely frustrating because what I could see, what was s-spending a fortune, the government was spending a fortune of money on us, training these people, and not giving them anything, and that really **[indecipherable]** me, and I – I would get so annoyed by it.

Q: It t – it's typical for all governments.

A: Yeah. So –

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Q: I was part of – when I lived in eastern **Europe** and i – and in **Europe** between 1990 and 2000, I worked for a lot of organizations, and that was – what your insight was, is exactly something I shared. They would say there's aid for this or that project, and it was to help bring freedom and democracy and all those other nice things, but the money didn't go into the pockets of the –

A: Into the pockets, yeah, right.

Q: – yeah. It went into the pockets of the contractors who knew how to get the – the assignment.

A: Assignment, exactly. So that – that type of thing, and I – I – I remember when I first came there they immediately, a party for the newcomers. It was a project of two years, I came in only for two months. I was supposed to be for three months, but they kind of messed up on it, and I said, I'm t – here for two months and that's it. They pa – bu – very wonder – good salary, a car. All I had to do is pay for my food. A-And, I would end up going back to the school in the evening to – because I n – I found that – I realized that the – the girls, they were mainly young ki – younger girls, were from villages, and they had – they had nothing to do after four or fi – after the school closed at four or five o'clock, there was nothing for them to do. So I would come back to work, and they learned that I would be there, and I would bring dried f-food or coffee, and I would share it with them. You know, and

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the other Israelis got very annoyed with me when I was giving so much to them.

You know, this is – we're here to help them, not for us t-to take. So, that – that kind of thing is, you know, where – I don't think that's an Israeli thing, that's just bad government policies.

Q: Well, it's – it's – I also – it's endemic for th – with all such structures, and those are the structures that exist.

A: Right, right, right.

Q: Whether it's the European Union, or whether it's the **United States**, or whatever. Whatever country is giving the aid, usually benefits its own citizens through that aid.

A: Yeah, right. Cause I – I remember also once there – basically, we were teaching them so that they could teach people from villages, you know? And I kept saying, well, I want to go to these – I want to go to a village, to see what conditions they will be teaching in. Because if I – suddenly I'm demanding that we have proper seats, and proper lighting. But then I said, what – what – what goes on in the village? They're sitting outside, on – they don't have chairs, they don't have lights. They work until – they can work until – until it's su – sundown and then they have no electricity, so how – how – why –

Q: But it wasn't – this experience wasn't sufficient to get you turned off from –

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A: No, no. This was just – look, I – I think I’m not very good with – with institutions altogether. I – I never taught in school, because of what I saw of the school system here in **America**, not – not just in **Israel**. I never taught in **Israel** – and in – in **America** I only student taught, and that was quite enough for me. I-I – I’m not – I-I – I – also, even when I worked, I’ve been inde – independent more or less since 70s.

Q: Tell me a little bit about – about your life –

A: What I do.

Q: – because we – no, well, no, we star – we started at 1963, and then kind of – what happened sequentially, sort of. When you moved there in ’63 to live, what happened, and then [**indecipherable**] rest.

A: Okay, basically, the first six months I learned Hebrew, and then I just wanted to ge-get work, and I found work in a silks – doing silkscreen printing. Outsi – I was living with this – **ulpan** was in **Jerusalem**, and this job was outside of – near **Tel Aviv**. So I moved there.

Q: Did you have friends or family from the **U.S.** that were already there?

A: No family, no.

Q: No family.

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A: Well, a – very good friends of the family. And I had friends from Young **Judaea** that were in **Israel** already. And I quickly made friends with Israelis. I knew more Israelis than I knew Americans. And I just say – I mean, I – I – I just went from – basically from – okay, I – I got ja – a job working in this – in doing silkscreen printing, and I was more or less in charge of the woman, the worker that was there. And that pushed me to – to speak Hebrew qui – more quickly because I was in charge of her, and she always spoke – or French, or Hebrew. So I spoke French. And [indecipherable] and after about three months, my boss said, maybe in five years we'll become partners. And I looked at him and I said, this is not the place for me. Because this was outside of **Tel Aviv**, it was in a little place that was – I s – I – I don't know what I was doing there. I would come back every weekend to **Jerusalem** because that's where I had friends. And after three months – af – when he said this I moved back to **Jerusalem**, and I – I had several – I mean, I went from – like a year I worked for a s – a publishing company doing graphic work. And I worked for "**The Jerusalem Post**" doing graphic work. And I was always painting or doing art work, but I wasn't doing it full time because I was working in places, until about the early 70s, or – just about the 70s, yeah, I think late 60s, beginning of the 70s, I decided to go and work on my own. And I became partners with a Danish guy, he was going to si – he did silkscreen printing, I did more of the graphic work,

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and he did – he did printing for – for artists and all sorts of things like that, until he left. And I just continued being independent, because I'm not – again, I'm not good with institutions of any kind, I – I don't like – like even when I worked for the – for the **Post**, or for the publishing company, I had – I know what I had to do. I had never liked clocking in. I didn't have to clock in at the time. I did the work that I had to do, and you – more, if it was necessary. But don't tell me what – you know, i-if my work is not good, I'm willing to hear it, but if – the hours I had to put in, I'm not good with that. So it's as – the same ki – I – I needed to be always independent, and I guess that's part of my – my whole makeup, is just to be, you know, where I need to be.

Q: Did your adoptive parents have those sorts of artistic streaks?

A: My mother, evidently, at some – of one – had wanted to be an interior decorator, my adopted mother. My father, no [indecipherable]

Q: Was he a businessman?

A: But he would – yeah, businessman, but he was more – yeah, he sang and he s – he loved telling about himself, of his – his whole background and that. So he was very vocal. And my mother, they had a – a – a business, a furniture shop, and she kept the books and all that, they worked together, but he was more outside, talking to people, she was [indecipherable] the business.

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Q: Well, there's the salesman, and the person who keeps it going.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Did you have a curiosity about your birth parents?

A: Only what they did, and what they looked like, which I, at some point, I don't remember, I got photos from my cousins in **Paris**. And she told – th-the cousin – this cousin told me a little, because she didn't – she's older than – than – she's about s-six years older than – than myself, six or eight years. So she has much more – she remembers much more.

Q: How did –

A: And I met her and she told me a bit more about they would – they were – but not details like my – like **[indecipherable]**. I don't remember where she was in connection to where we were. But again, I cou –

Q: How did she enter your life? After you left to the e –

A: Okay, yeah.

Q: It sounds to me like there is – you know –

A: This – okay.

Q: – be-before **America** and after –

A: And after **America**, yeah.

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Q: – **America**. And – and so when – before **America** went away, how did it – how did these things, even though you didn't seek them –

A: Okay, because my – okay, because our parents, our adoptive parents, kept in touch with the family in – in **France**, that [indecipherable]

Q: Which – which hid you?

A: No.

Q: Oh no.

A: No, no. It's a family that's our family, our immediate family. Cousin – two sets of cousins. They helped them out financially, they helped [indecipherable] daughters – one of the fa – one of the cousins, their daughters came to visit **America** and they stayed with my parents. In fact, by then, when I was in **Israel**, they also came to visit me in **Israel**. And I had no contact with them, with that part of the family. But there was – there was connection without being very to – they never made any great effort, so that this is one of the reasons that I believe that I don't speak French, is that this one relative, the father, who's since passed away, I was there, I think in '64, coming back from the **States**, from the visit, it was a year later that I would move there. And I stopped in – in **France**, and I stayed with them, and they were [indecipherable]

Q: This was a blood relative

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A: [indecipherable] relative, yeah. And he just went on – I got very upset, he went on about how he blamed my – our adoptive parents for the fact that we didn't speak French. And I got really very annoyed with him. And since then I just never made any great effort to keep in contact, nor did they. All right.

Q: The French relatives.

A: Now, that I – the French relatives. Now, there's another cousin, who today we're in touch with, but at the time I had met – her father was still alive, her mother was my aunt – my second aunt. My aunt which he was – she was, I think my father's sister, but I don't remember exactly now. And it just – cause it doesn't really matter to me. The father – her father, who was still alive when I came to visit, he was – he was very pleasant, he was okay. And I don't know what – I don't know if – I guess I – yeah, I probably met – he had a – a – okay, I have a cousin, and his brother. We met at the time. But then when I – when I – when I was living in **Israel**, and he knew I was living in **Israel**, and I came back to **Israel**, and then for years I had – we had no contact at all. And then suddenly they – I get – she called, she was in **Israel**, and she didn't know how to find me. And I always – I said, how can that be? I mean, you knew I was in **Israel**. The father – your father knew I was in **Israel**. My parents at the time were still alive, so there was no problem finding out where I was. And she went to **Yad Vashem**, the Holocaust museum in – in **Jerusalem** to try to find me.

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And they said, well what – why not look in the phone book? And they found me in the phone book, of course, you know. And that's how we came in contact again.

And they've been very, very nice. I mean, they're very pleasant people, and I like them. We meet. We – they've been to **Mitzpe Ramon** since I moved there, they come to visit. Three years ago I was – I came to the **States**, and then I went for two weeks to **Paris**, so we just met for dinner.

Q: But did they feel more –

A: I didn't stay with them.

Q: Do they feel more like people who are not in your inner circle?

A: Very definitely. The-They're – let's say they could be, but they're not. I like them very much, they're very warm, but there's – I think again **Jack** is much more – much closer to them than I am. I probably at si – in some place said okay, I know they're my relatives, but it's – it's a – a statement, and that's it. It's not all that strong relationship.

Q: Sounds like relatives without being family.

A: Without being family, right. I feel much closer to whatever relatives I have left here than I do them.

Q: From your adopted family.

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A: But yeah – but they're – but, I mean, this couple again, I like them very much, but – and I enjoy being with them when I see them, but it's always a very brief kind of thing.

Q: Did they ever tell you anything? Did they know anything about your parents? Did they ever share anything?

A: Well, yes, she – the cousin knew my par – knew – remembers my – my mother very much, she remembers her. She described her and the fact that they were both se-seamstress – sewers and all that. But we've never real – well, again, I don't think I made any great effort to sit with them and get all that information. And if you te – aga – last – the last time I was in **Paris**, they were busy, and we – I had – we met once for dinner at their house. I slept one weekend there, because the place where I was staying, I had to – I-I couldn't stay with who – it was a friend of mine, I couldn't stay that weekend so, they allowed me to stay. I didn't feel **[indecipherable]**. I pushed myself on them, I needed a place to stay that night, so I stayed with them. But they were then going on vacation, you know.

Q: So – excuse me, it sounds like there aren't – there weren't any really warm connections to **France**.

A: No, I – that's right.

Q: You know.

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A: That's right.

Q: From any –

A: Yeah, I know. For instance, this other girl, they've made an effort, this one cousin, and her husband –

Q: And her name is –

A: – they've made – **Sallah**(ph).

Q: **Sallah**(ph).

A: She's made – they've – she and her husband **George** have made efforts to make connection with me. I know he's – they're much closer with **Jack**. The other cousins, I've manage – I've – a few times, in fact, let's – the father – the father, who passed away already a long time ago, who put – blamed my parents for the fact that we didn't speak French, I never – after that I never have come – I haven't had contact with them. And there was one time like about, I don't know, I think 10 - 11 - 12 years ago that I went with **Jack** and his wife **Judy**, we went to **France**, and we went – my cousins **Sallah**(ph) and **George** for dinner, and this man who knew we were coming – the – well, she's the cousin, actually, his wife, but they were on vacation. They knew we were coming. I – to me, that's enough to not even search for them. And **Jack**, without a – he-he-he calls them up, they were in **Nice**, and then he asks – he puts me on the phone, and the guy just starts out about how **quelle**

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domage, I don't speak – don't speak French. And I said, well, it's too bad you don't speak English, and I gave the phone back to my brother. He wants to make contact with the – with these people, fine. I have no – no problem with that. I don't need the contact with someone like that. And again, they made no great effort to – to keep us in contact, and they knew how to – to reach us, how to find us. They knew where we were. So –

Q: You know –

A: – I felt – me – I think I'm sure that's part of the – obviously part of the – it's blocked out because it's not – I mean – in fact, I'm also [**background noise**] happy that I didn't grow up in **France**, you know? I find the French very sloppy, that language, and a lot of things, even though –

Q: We've got to – I mean, this machine, it will –

A: Yeah [**indecipherable**]

Q: – it will pick up everything.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What time is it?

A: It's 25 to five.

Q: Okay. You know there's a – hang on a second. **Vida**(ph)? It's **Viva**(ph), sorry.

A: Okay, she –

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Q: Is no one coming up, or are there other people?

Q2: There are other people. I was just wondering how much longer.

Q: I'd say about another 15 minutes, and that will be it, may – yeah, something like that, all right?

A: I haven't talked so much in a long, long time.

Q: Well, I – it's interesting, you know? It – it – and I – and I appreciate that you're talking to me and I'm a total stranger, you know.

A: Perhaps that's why.

Q: That – sometimes that happens, you know. I re – I remember – and one of the reasons I don't put my voice on the recorder is because, one of the things that's artificial, is that I'd love to jump in and so – you know, you say something and I want to say, oh yeah, that reminds me of **x,y,z** and I have to remember that 10 years down the line, if someone's listening to this, they don't care about my **x,y,z**, you know. But let me run this thought by you. They say that very often, psychologists say that children who were adopted have a sense – well, this I will put out, cause it's – here's the – here's the thought that occurs to me, and I wonder whether any of it fits. Okay, another one of **[background noise]** Okay. I hope that – I hope that this is fine and we're – we're recording. There are – there is this thought among psychologists that children who have been adopted, and know that they are adopted,

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and had the good luck to grow up in a – in a loving family, sometimes nevertheless have a feeling inside that someone at one point rejected them, because they were adopted in the first place. Somebody in the early part of their lives. It doesn't – it sometimes doesn't have any connection to reality. I mean, they may know, for example, that my mother did not want to give me up, my mother would have preferred to keep me, but she gave me up. But that there was a certain kind of rejection, and – that was experienced anyway, even though consciously you know that that other person's, the birth mother's circumstances could have been such that they had no choice. And when I hear you speak about the relatives that were blood relatives in **France**, it sounds that they had no great interest to keep up ties.

A: That, definitely yes, I mean, I – I see that, I feel that. And, again, I've given – if they annoyed me enough – also, very – I think make decisions, you know, it's – it's not making – not always logical, but this is fact for me. I don't – I would not go out of my way to change these facts. This is what it is, and that's okay, but I will not go begging to these people to be – to what, to accept me? I mean, this – I'm your relative. To this day we have no – I've been to their home, stayed with them once while back there, some years way, way back. I made the effort to come to visit them. Their daughters then came to me in – in **Israel**. They were – I was – they really annoyed me, because they just expected that you – to – to do everything. I'm

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not used to that kind of thing, I was – didn't grow up that way. So it would – it just – and they – again, they never made any more effort to keep in touch with me, at least this particular set of relatives. The others, yes, they've made every effort, and we stay in touch. So they're – they're fine. I – I – we're not that close, but still it's – it's a feeling that they – yes, they're my relatives, I accept them that way. I can't – I don't feel as close to them, perhaps, as relatives in **America**, but what they are, it's okay. S – not – I do – I'm not angry with them, I am probably angry – I definitely, not probably, I – of course, I –

Q: Well, I guess that's – I wasn't putting – I wasn't going to put the word on it, but there was a certain kind of – yeah, something there which is – I don't –

A: **[indecipherable]**

Q: Yeah.

A: Especially when the – the father of these – these relatives, blame people who – who gave so much to me, and to **Jack** and to them. So, and then to blame them?

Well, but did you make any effort to bring me to **France**, to remind me of who – who – what my background is? Nothing. So, why –

Q: Well, that might be one of those answers.

A: Yes, well that's –

Q: **[indecipherable]** so interesting.

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A: Exactly. But I – I never had a chance to – I never bothered to talk to them. **Jack** isn't bothered by that. We've – again, we're very different –

Q: Different people.

A: – in our reactions to things. We're very different in everything, so it's not unusual.

Q: What about the French family that hid you? Do you have any contact or knowledge of them?

A: Yeah, no, I don't – he – he did. He went to – he went to meet them, he – he even – in fact, he's – he gave me a letter that they wrote. I think that the – the parents have since passed away, but their daughters and they – they're alive, and he – he did meet with them, and I never – I never – I never made the contact. I said, it's like, you know – I didn't want to, I guess.

Q: S-So when you find yourself at a place like this, the child survivor's conference, does it speak to you?

A: I don't know, it's the first time that I – I happened to be here. I'm not s – I didn't come especially for this. I – I was here because my – **Jack's** wife's dau – daughter got married, so they kept saying please come, please come, and I came. And then there was the conference, I said, okay I'll come to the conference as well.

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Q: Have you ever been any – to any other Holocaust related conference? And when

–

A: No, no. And I don't think that I would make an effort to come. Maybe after – after this time, I might. I know there was one in **Jerusalem** last year, I didn't – didn't go to it. I don't – I also – I don't like even seeing movies of – of that time. I don't like repetitions of the whole thing. I know it happened, I know it was, but okay, I – I think – again, I believe that we should go forward, and not to –

Q: So where – yes, but where is – where – what about it is where you say, how could – I don't know exactly how – how to phrase this, but what about it is repetitious? It's not the best way of phrasing this, but di – I wa – yeah, what about it is so –

A: I was born here, I grew up here, I was hidden, I was – it's so much of – I – I can't – I can't really answer that, because I have to think much more about it. I don't know.

Q: But it seems key.

A: It's – it's – doesn't push me any place, it's – to me it says, okay, it's like – there are things that you need to repeat, like if I want to learn how to work with this, with a certain material, that's important for me to repeat it so that I get to know what the

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material is like, how to work with it. To make contact wi – this to me doesn't – for me personally, it's not going to make me a better person, a better artist, just by –

Q: What do you think it gives other people?

A: I don't know. Everyone, I – I believe it gives everyone something. Everyone something that will fi-fill them in some way, and again I have no problem with that. I'm not one – I will – I'm the last person who will say, you shouldn't talk about it, you shouldn't remember. No, if it fills you and it gives you some meaning, I think you should do as much as you can. Which is, for instance, one thing that I've said to **Jack**, well, you know, you need that, go and do it, it's – but don't involve me in something that I don't feel that I could do. That's all.

Q: It sounds – in – in some ways it sounds also like – now, again, I'm not casting aspersions on – on the people who have that need. I mean, I work in an organization which is dedicated to this. But there are fundamental Christians who need to bring the gospel to everybody. And part of how they interpret fundamental Christ – how they interpret their mission as Christians is that they're not good Christians unless they share the gospels, you know? And they're gonna share those gospels with you whether –

A: Whether you want [**indecipherable**]

Q: – you want it or not.

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A: Yeah, I w – I would end up keeping away from it, because I will – don't want – also, religious Jews, I – you know, leave me be. I don't care, be religious. If it gives you something, do it. But I don't – for me, it's not my way. I – I think sometimes I'm more religious some – than these all that, you know, because I think what I – what I say is my – my word is definitely my word, I don't go back on it. I don't think that if you're going to fast it makes you a better person. Many things that I just think you have to be wi – you have to be straight with yourself in your life, and that's what's important to me. And again, anyone else, do what you need to do. I'll respect you, but don't force it on me.

Q: Were you ever curious about having a conversation with this – the mother you never knew? Were you – would – what – if there ever had been anything you would have wanted to tell her?

A: Ah, yeah. No, I don't know whether I would want to tell her something, but once I went to – in – in **Israel** we have a lot of people that read coffee cups, and I used to love to go to the, like coffee cups or cards, tarot cards or – not tarot cards, but mainly coffee cups. And especially at that time when in – when I was in **Israel** at first, these were usually very primitive women, who were so wise. My – but one woman said to me – I came there and she said, she wa – suddenly said, you have two mothers. And she said I would meet my – my – the – the other mother like in

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15 years, right? And, well, I was tripped out by it. I-I said, wow, this, you know, this is going to be very interesting. I know that it's not right, but still, maybe – maybe it was. [indecipherable] you know.

Q: What year was this?

A: Must have been in the mid-60s or late 60s or something like that. Of course, 15 years passed and nothing ever happened, so – but it was – it – for a long time it was in my head, but why? What would happen if I did meet her, if the –

Q: If she survived.

A: [indecipherable] But I never, never brought it to any – because I didn't really believe that this – that it could be, so –

Q: But nevertheless, she was uncanny that she knew you had two mothers.

A: Yes, yes. Uncanny, but again I think – no, she wasn't – she was just very wise in that I believe she asked me what, at first, what my mother's name was. And I stupidly said **Rose**, but it's not my real mother's name. So, maybe I said that.

Something, something made it clear to her, because a-again, they pick up on your – the way you sit, the way you talk, what you say. You know, every little thing, they knew exactly how to – how to interpret it, and I – I remember once after this, I was visiting friends in **Tel Aviv**, and I said to them, oh I can – I – I could read your coffee cup, you know. And I did the same thing. And they said [indecipherable] I

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said, don't be ridiculous, I just – I'm telling you what you want to hear, you know,
and so it's –

Q: Look at human beings, how much we need that.

A: Sure, yeah, yeah.

Q: We really do.

A: But it –

Q: What was your mother's name?

A: **Rose**, also [indecipherable]

Q: Your birth mother's name?

A: Yeah, and my adopted mother.

Q: And your adopted?

A: Yeah.

Q: Thank you for talking to me.

A: You're welcome.

Q: I appreciate it.

A: You're welcome, yeah.

Q: If there are any other questions that would come up, you know, that I'd have –
even if we – if they're long distance?

A: Welcome, sure.

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Q: Yeah?

A: Sure, of course.

Q: Thank you, thank you, I really appreciate the time you took.

A: Okay [indecipherable]

Q: Thank you. And I'm going to now just read the end, which is, this concludes the

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Annette Fein**, on

November 7th, 2008, in **Alexandria, Virginia**. Thank you again.

A: Okay.

Conclusion of Interview