

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Paul Halpern
October 17, 2010
RG-50.030*0602

PREFACE

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Transcribed by Erika Darnold, Kimberly Jancik, and Tami Watters, National Court Reporters Association.

PAUL HALPERN
October 17, 2010

Question: This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Interview with Paul Felix Halpern conducted by Juliet Eninina (ph) on October 17 of 2010 at the Kindertransport Association Conference in Arlington, Virginia. Well, first of all, I would like to ask your first and last name, when you were born, and where.

Answer: My name is Paul Halpern. I was born in Vienna, Austria November 29, 1932.

Q: Well, first of all, thank you for giving us this interview.

A: My pleasure.

Q: I would like to thank you. Let's recall your childhood and your childhood years in Vienna before the war. Where did you live at that time and what was your family like?

A: I was the second child and the first son of a manufacturer of rain coats. Quite wealthy. We lived at 2 Elizabeth Straße, which is one block off the ring in the first district. And my mother's -- my mother's father was a -- was a large manufacturer who had clothing factories all over Europe, and the name of his factory was Airkaklidafabrake (ph), and my father was -- worked for him. He was an office I mean, he worked his way up to be a manager, and my grandfather finally said, Have I got a girl for you. And he married my mother who was a deb. She was high in Jewish society. And my dad was 14 years old than she was, and they went away on the honeymoon. When they came back, my dad, he opened his own factory with the help of his father-in-law. We -- we had a very, very nice life. It was a lot of money. We would summer in Switzerland, and we would -- we had a

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nanny and we would walk out of the house and go to -- go one block and feed the horses in front of the opera house, and it was good -- really very, very nice and then --

Q: How many siblings did you have?

A: I had one sister.

Q: Oh. So just two of you?

A: She was four years old -- three and a half years older than I was.

Q: Two children in the family?

A: Two -- two children in the family. My mother had two brothers, neither one had children --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- at that time, and my father was born in Limbeck (ph), Poland, and he came to -- came to Austria and he went to business school, and then he got this job -- I mean, he -- he served in a -- he was -- he was a prisoner of the Russians during World War I, and then he came out, decided to work for my grandfather, and eventually hard work pays off. And he married my mother and it was -- it was a good life.

Q: And your mom was a housekeeper?

A: No. My mom was a debutante. My mother had season tickets at the opera. My mother was a dilettante. She -- she -- she went to the Cordon Bleu cooking school, couldn't cook a lick. We -- she -- she enjoyed her life. She was a young -- she was a young woman who enjoyed her life, and made it all the more difficult later on in her life, but -- and I didn't -- I was a spoiled kid and so was my sister. And we lived in an apartment, if I remember correctly, it was 11 rooms. And our dining room was big

enough that we used to do -- my sister and I would race our tricycles and bicycles in the dining room. There was enough room to make turns. It was that big. So you -- you know, those -- the big trouble when you're five and six years old, you don't remember -- you remember pieces. And riding my bicycle is more important than where I went to school, what I had to eat, you know, and those are things I remember.

Q: Sure. Can you describe your family as being religious?

A: No. Absolutely not. What's interesting -- my father was the son of Ichivibulha (ph). You know, he lived in Poland and he was like tevea (ph) without the milk route. He was -- he was the village hebruscala (ph) basically, but, you know, you can't live on the chicken somebody brings you for advice. So his wife kept what would be now called the 7-Eleven, you know. She had the local store, and people would come there, and he would sit there and give out advice. I never knew either one because I'm named after my grandfather and -- but they were smart enough that he was the oldest of six kids, and she said, Go to Austria. Get a business degree. Make enough money. Bring your brother out. When you bring your brother out, he goes to business school, gets a business degree. Bring your other brother out and then your sister, and they all got out. They all went out and they kept ties with the -- my grandfather and my -- my grandmother died of natural causes. I mean, that was way before -- before the Nazis, but nobody was religion. But my dad could only pray orthodox. I mean, we would -- when -- this was when I was conservative leaning toward reformed, but in -- we would go to the synagogue. They had all three congregations, the Jewish and the Jaxonites (ph), and he would go downstairs to the little hole in the wall orthodox, and he would daven only in the -- and passover with

him was a disaster because he would go through the entire Haggadah in Hebrew only -- never pausing for one word, and my mother would be say, Joe, the dinner's getting cold, but we weren't religion. No.

Q: And what was the name of your sister and your mother?

A: My sister's name was Lucie, L-u-c-i-e, and my mother's name was Ditta, D-i-t-t-a, which is diminutive for Edith. Little Edith. But her name on her birth certificate was Ditta, and my grandfather and his -- they came out of -- they came out of Czechoslovakia, and they were a super family. They -- my grandfather -- I have pictures of him flying to visit his factories in 1929, pictures standing in front of an airplane, airline flying to places, and they -- my grandmother's family -- they -- Peter Bogdanovich, the movie director, is part of my mother's -- my grandmother's family on my mother's side and -- and her sister was the first pharmacist in Czechoslovakia, you know, so they were -- they were an achieving upper-class family. And they're very, very -- I love my -- my grandparents. They were classy people.

Q: Sure. Did you or your sister go to school before the war?

A: My -- well, I was small but my sister went to school.

Q: Was it a Jewish school?

A: No.

Q: It was just a regular --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- older nation school?

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A: Politely put, even then we were in a simulated family. There was, you know -- the -- my -- my dad had Jewish friends and so on, but it -- the Jewish Society was Jewish Society, but I was never aware that I was a Jew. You know, we -- during the holidays and Passover, Yom Kippur, yeah, we did celebrate that, but usually at my grandparent's house.

Q: I see. Were you or your parents aware of Nazi --

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: -- rise and what -- what was their first --

A: Once again -- once again, I'm thinking as a five-year-old, but I remember when Dollfuss was assassinated. Dollfuss was a socialist minister who was against the Anschluss. And one day he was shot at a -- shot at a valley and the ambulance came through and said, We'll take him. And they loaded him in the ambulance. They found him in the ambulance two days later dead when it was sun up. And it was politically very difficult time. My father, I know for a fact about six or seven months before the Anschluss, one of his employees came in and he said, Mr. Halpern, I am a member of the Austrian Nazi Parties, National Socialist Party, and eventually, you know, it's just a matter of time before we come here and we need friends. No Jewish questioned at all but we need friends and we need -- and so it's how about a contribution now, and my father had him thrown out, fired him and threw him out.

Q: Did he mean, like, money?

A: Well, yes. Donation to the party to show good-will toward the party and when right after the Anschluss, my dad came to work one day and he was sitting in his office and he

said, You work for me now. And for a while my dad -- my dad did -- my dad did go -- one of the good -- and then you know we -- we had a nanny, and we -- we used to go to the park and then we couldn't go into the park so -- the nanny was Catholic and we would walk around the park, and then we had to wear arm bands.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: And my nanny -- I was upset that my nanny didn't wear one because, oh, you know, I'm sorry. You can't have one of these arm bands, you know. If you were Jewish you could wear one of these things, you know, and that summer we still went to camp in the Alps. We still went to camp in the Alps. I remember it was a vegetarian camp. It was awful. And I came down with appendicitis. Could not find a doctor in the -- in the area to treat me. So with a case of appendicitis, I went on the train back to Vienna, and they wouldn't take me. The hospital -- I know that from my mother. And then my appendix was taken out by a Jewish doctor in his office. You know, and he had kind of an operating room, and that was the first time I suddenly realized that something was a little bit wrong. And my sister had to change schools, you know. She couldn't go to the school, and -- but we lived in a building where -- mostly Christians. I -- I can't tell you, but I know -- I know that. And in the fall of '38, our nanny was not allowed to work for us anymore. So now my debutante mother had to take us for walks and stuff. And my sister was at school, and my mother said to me, Let's go for a walk. And she looked at me. She said, Your shoe lace is untied. So she literally stood me up on the dining room table. Okay. She was 4'11. She stood me up on the dining room table so she could tie my shoes. And I'm standing there, she's tying my shoe, and the doorbell rings. And two

gentlemen come in, and it was right out of a -- right out of a German movie. These two guys came in, and they had rain coats and snap-brim hats and the whole bit. And they said is -- is your husband here? And my mother said, No. He's -- and my mother was one of these very nervous people. And she said, No. He's not here. They said, We need to look around. And my mother said, Okay. And so they walked in -- and I'm five years old and I'm toddling behind them. I'm -- and they went into my father's study which was I remember it because it had green shades you know, in the old days instead of white shades there was a green shade. So the sunlight was always filtered and I remember distinctly one of them walking to my father's desk, reaching into his coat, taking out his gun, and laying it on the floor under my father's desk. And then the other one went over and said, Oh, what's this? And he picked the gun up and he turned to my -- went to my mother and said, Is this yours? And my mother said, No. And he said, Well, you're going to have to come with us. And she said, Well, why? He said, Well, do you have somebody who can take care of him? And so my mother went up and got one of the -- one of the neighbors to take care of me 'till my grandmother could come and collect us. And that the last time I saw my mother and father 'till spring of 1941. And they went to the downtown Vienna prison, and I understand for the two years they were in the downtown Vienna prison they saw each other one time in the exercise yard and never talked. But you have to understand here is a woman who has had the best of everything and she's living in a wing with 200 women, one shower, no doors; one toilet, no doors. But through this entire time, my former nanny used to come and collect her laundry and do her laundry for her, you know, what little rags she had. And she -- it was just kind of

different, you know. So we -- we went to -- we went to my grandmother's house and that's -- if you're going to record this, this is -- my grandfather, right after the Auschwitz and the troops were in the street, went on a normal business trip to Switzerland. And about three days later, my mother got -- my grandmother got a letter. And the letter said, By the time you get this letter. I'm on my way to the United States. I am not coming back. They don't want you. They want me. So sometime in the next week they will come and say to you, Where's your husband? And you show them this letter, and they're going to say, When is he coming back? And you're going to say, He's not coming back. Just show them the letter, and eventually they'll let you go because they don't want you. Sign over anything they want, give them anything you want -- they want, and they'll let you go -- because this is still early on. And that's exactly how it happened. And so, finally, after about by the spring of '39, my grandmother's arranging for us to go into Kindertransport, and they said, Just sign here. Give us the bill and then sign over and get out. And she said, Not until I put my kids -- my grandkids on the train. And they said, No, you have to get out. She said, No. I'm not getting out until they get on the train. That's how tough she was. And she was the only member of my family who was over 5'6, you know. So she was the queen. She put us on the train, and she went to the United States; and she joined her husband who was -- he had guts. I mean, he played -- he played with people's lives, but he -- he knew human nature. He knew that as long as they got what they wanted they were going to -- and I went to England, and I remember the -- I remember the train ride. And, you know, a little them -- them memories and I had my father's brother was in London, and he had come to England with his wife, Auga (ph),

as a domestic. They signed on as a couple, and Auga (ph) came over pregnant. So their son, Ralph, was born in England and was a British subject, and did very well. He is a Lord of the British Emperor. His name is Sir Ralph Halpern, and he was chairman of the board of Burton Industries, and he now lives in South Beach, and my -- my son and he are good friends. And I see them occasionally, and he was always a -- always a Brit and he's always been a Brit. Calls me Dear Boy and he's six years younger than I am. And it's kind of racy, and I -- he and I have a good time together. And -- and but there was nowhere we could stay in England -- we could stay with him in London. We'd stay a couple of days, and then went down to Bunce Court and Dan (ph) Court to -- Kindertransport. They made an arrangement for the kids who did not have -- weren't going to be taken there by families. There was -- there were these estates out by Kent, and they brought in an educator from Berlin named Anna Essinger and who was the most magnificent teacher. I was there 16 months, and I stayed in one school, and my sister stayed in the other school. And I can't tell you whether I was in Bunce Court or Dan Court. I think I was in Bunce Court because it comes easier to my mind, but, you know, the memories are strange. All I know is that I did a lot of schooling because I jumped like three years when I came here immediately because they thought I was a poor refugee kid until I -- I told them -- they put me in the second grade. I could read. I could do math. I -- I had a little bit of chemistry. I knew European History because that's what that's what the regimen there was, and the -- they -- the -- the -- the bombings were pretty bad around that area because a lot of fighter bases were in that area, and we got sent to London and -- which is interesting because then the Brits started in London for sure. And

the Brits -- Britains decided to have their own Kindertransport and, they went and signed up 30,000 children to get them first to the countryside and then to the colonies Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Halifax. And it was a little bit different. And from what I'd been read -- what I read -- it was part of the government in power at that time, and he said this is a mistake because they have to go by boat. And the -- the Germans controlled the seas. And if we lose one boat, when the war is over, we will lose the election because that will be an issue. And we were supposed to go in December of -- September 10th or 12th we were -- 1940, we were supposed to go from London to Liverpool to catch a boat, and I remember we sat in the station -- in Victoria Station because the air raids were very bad at that time, and we missed the boat. And it was the City of Benares, and the City of Benares was a troop ship converted from a Cunard-White Star Line. The City of Benares was sunk a three days later in the -- on its way -- way, and I think 89 children didn't die in the sinking but died of exposure to water. It was a horrific thing. And Churchill immediately cancelled that -- and about 3500 -- there were books on that -- there were more books on that Kindertransport than our Kindertransport because it was a different issue. And we stayed in Liverpool, and four days later we -- we got on the SS Antonia which was a converted Cunard-White Star Line, and all I remember is we were the only two kids on the boat and we saw in the crew quarters and my -- and for luck they would play cards with us sitting on their lap. And we were supposed to go to New York, and there was a -- there was a U-boat scare. So we went to Montreal, and we arrived in September 30th, 1940. And I got to see my first comics, and I can still remember the -- you know, Americans comics was something usual. And I -- I can tell you the

story. It was a Dick Tracy story, and I can do that when I get a smart -- I always -- I've always been trying to get the copy of that -- that particular page from September 30th so I could show -- and my grandfather -- my grandfather had us picked up in Montreal. We got put on the train, and the first day we were in -- in New York City, we went and applied for first citizen -- first papers because as far as everyone knew, my parents were dead. So my grandfather was my guardian. And we applied for first papers for -- for declaration, not to -- to get out of refugee status. And I lived in Forest Hills with my -- with my grandmother, and my sister went to my grandfather's brother who lived in Kingston. He was also quite wealthy. And it was a good life. And I -- and I went to school in Forest Hills and I went to PS3, and they -- a week after my teacher called my grandmother and said, He's seven and a half years old and he doesn't belong in the second grade. We're going to put him in the third grade. So I finished that year, and they said, We need to put him in the fifth grade next year. And my -- and my grandmother said, No. He's -- he's a smart kid, but he needs -- he needs a little bit of respect. He needs to be leveled off a little bit. He needs to be with his age. You can put him in the fourth, but you can't put him -- you can't put him in the fifth. So I was always early because of that. But my grandmother was very -- very clever about that she said, you know, He needs peer pressure, and he's not going to get it if he's a smart-alecky kid three years over his head. And -- and then in his early 1941 my grandfather who was in the -- he owned real estate, office buildings and apartment houses. They invested with -- with friends. He was in RNS associates and he was visited by a member of the German litigation who said to him, Would you like to buy a couple of Jews? And I think my grandfather always kind

of said that that's basically what he said. Would you like to buy somebody? And my grandfather said, Who? And they said, Your daughter and her husband. And my grandfather said, I sat shiver (ph) for them two years ago because my grandfather did -- was observant a little then. And they said No, they're alive. They're alive. And so an arrangement was made. And from what I understand, and I can't prove it, but I know that the fact that they had warehoused them for two years -- in the back of their mind, it was a product. My -- my -- it was a product to be -- it was currency that could be converted at any time. And an accommodation was made, and my grandfather -- the doors opened in prison, and they told my mother and dad, 48 hours. 48 hours or -- and then right after that, the -- the rest of the people went to -- within six months, they were all gone to concentration camps. They closed it up. And they went -- they did the route to Portugal, and they were supposed to go to Argentina and -- and wait it out. And the average wait was, like, a year-and-a-half, two years. And my grandfather had very intelligent advisers, and one of them said to him, You know you're sponsoring your kids, but they're grown people. Your grandchildren have status as first-paper Americans and they're refugees. Have them sponsor their parents, my mother and dad. Because it's a [compassionate] and no argument at all. Immediately after we filed papers, immediately my mother and dad came from Portugal to the United States. And it was -- there's an interesting bypass to this -- this part of it. If I may, my dad worked his way, you know -- he did what he could, and he got some Austrian woman and my mother they crocheted the shopping bags. You know, in Europe, they used the net shopping bags which nobody in America did so the -- the Austrian ladies would sit there and embroider

color hand -- onto this netting to make handbags. And my dad took them to Bloomingdale's and started to sell them -- you know, he was much of an entrepreneur, and he handled slippers, you know, that -- there were cottage made and he sold those, and then he got into the import/export business. And in 1947, the American government called my dad in and they said -- you know, he had become a citizen -- and they said, You know your factories are gone. Your factory was bombed because it was making rainwear but your father-in-law who had died, his factory is there in Gupendolfush dausen (ph), but the equipment all went east to Russia, but it's there. Would you consider coming back? We can offer you projection as an American citizen, not a lot of protection because it was behind the iron curtain but -- and we can't tell you that you can get any money on it right now, but it would help Austria come back on its feet and you have connections. And so my dad -- my -- my -- the family said, you know, everybody you knew it like the -- their father's right-hand man, he went back starting in '47, went back and rebuilt Airkaklidafabrake (ph). And about '49 my mother started going back. My father was not a happy man there. I mean, you know, but my mother, bygoness, bygoness. It never occurred to her that all of her friends never lost a thing. Still had the houses in the country. Still -- and she would -- it never -- the only way you could be that way is if you were one of them. You know, and they were all Christians. And she -- she was friends with them 'till she died. And she was -- she was a little bit different. And I remember my deb -- they -- they lived in a ponceon (ph) right on Amgraddam (ph). Do you know Vienna? Amgraddam (ph) is the shopping district like Rodeo drive. And I have -- I was -- I was there just recently, last November, and I took pictures with

my -- with my grandson. And she -- they lived in a ponceon (ph) the whole time and she -- she just kept -- kept going. She just enjoyed life again. And when they were let out of prison, the first place they went to was back 2 Elizabeth Street, and they knocked on the door. And the man opened the door, and my mother said she could see all her furniture. And the man said, What do you want? And she said, Well, We used to live here. And he said, You don't live here anymore, and he slammed the door. In about 1962, '63, my mother and my dad are eating in a very fine restaurant in Vienna, and my dad said -- and you have to remember, my dad was about 5'3, 5'4. He said to my mother, Excuse me, and he left the table, and he walked to the table across the room where a gentlemen was eating with a woman. And he said, You remember me? And the guy said, No. And he said, No. You should remember me. You lived in my apartment. 2 Elizabeth Straße 1941, and I came to the door and you slammed the door. And he brought his voice up a notch, and the guy said, I don't remember. And my grandfather -- my father, very quietly, said, Oh, you must remember me, and repeated the story at a higher voice. And when he got to where he was talking very loudly, the man called for his check and he left. And my dad went back to table, put his napkin in his lap, said, Let's eat. And that -- that's a marvelous story because my dad -- my dad was a very quiet man. Greatest American that live lived, most patriotic American that ever lived. Loved this country. And the only protection they had was he lived in the -- he lived -- the factory was in the 5th district. He lived in the second district. He lived in the first district -- first or second then he moved to the first district when my mother move -- came in. And, you know, because of the McCarran-Walter Act, he could not be out of this

country six months and a day, you know, naturalized citizens had to, you know -- had to be here for at least -- then he had to stay here six months, and it was just an inconvenience to him. I mean, he -- he said, I'm not going nowhere. I'm an American citizen, and I'm -- you know, I'm doing this. And he did very well in the factories, and he actually was able -- I was -- I was in Germany working in -- I was -- I was in the Air Force, and I was the German-American Press Officer for the Air Forces of Europe. And when I got that assignment, I called my dad in Vienna, and I said, Listen. I can get out of this job. All I've got to do is tell them who -- that you spent time in a German prison. And my dad said, 20 years is too long to hate. I'll meet you in Frankfort. And Dietzenbach (ph) is right outside Frankfort, and they would come and they would spend some time. My mother loved that we lived up in the mountains in a -- at a cor or (ph), you know, and they would go in the afternoon, listen to music. My dad was never happy in Germany, but he -- he -- he believed in his principle. His principle was, It's 20 years. You got to do what you got to do. And he was very proud of the fact that I was -- that I could do that. And I do have to tell you one -- and I -- I'm digressing, but you know, I -- I've done this before. I tell stories. I was the information officer Dietzenbach (ph) air base. And among the things that we had was the Glendola (ph) band of Europe, the Air Force band, which is equivalent to the -- the air force band that's in Washington, D.C., and the -- was the same band that Miller conducted when he was lost. And they played from Glen Miller (ph) music, they played from Glen Aus (ph). And I would -- because I spoke German, and I would take them on -- I would be -- I would be their press office, and I would do Voice of America Interviews, and we went on a Red Cross tour of

Austria, and we ended up in Vienna playing at the concert hall with 2,000 seats. And the concery (ph) had some problems because it was during the Vietnam War. And when we came on the stage, there were two empty rows which is really frightening. You know, I mean, it's -- it implied threat, and it was a 49-piece brass concert band, really unbelievably good music. And they -- I -- I did the announcing. I did the announcing for this one. And after about three numbers in the audience, they had just played the Braums Academic Festival Overture (ph), and people said, That's -- that's not a oompa (ph) band, and I came on and my German was pretty good, but I had a script. And I said, You're going to have to excuse me because I need this paper. I said, From my accent you probably can't tell that I was born in this country, and I got a lot of applause. I said, As a matter of fact, I was born in this city, and I got a lot of applause. And I said, As a matter of fact, my mother and my father are sitting right there; my mother and my father with four friends are sitting there. And my mother's down like this. And I said -- I said, now, I'm not a musician, but I think what you will agree that these gentlemen are -- and everybody, yes, because they were magnificent. And I said, therefore, for my mother in the city of my birth, My Fair Lady, and they played. And my mother is crying away, you know. And -- but to give you an idea of what kind of a debutante my mother was -- now we're talking about '68 so my mother's 63 years old, and she comes back stage with my dad. And I introduce them to my conductor, and she said, Would you have -- we're having a little coffee at the Intercontinental Hotel, which is one block from the course (ph). We would love it if you and the conductor, Miche Delfonso (ph), and the first chair would join us for coffee. I'm her son. I -- we've been touring Austria, walking around all

day. And she never mentioned it until she was there. So I did a Voice of America interview, and we walked down the street. And, you know, they're great musicians, but Vienna appreciates good music. And the restaurant was filled with people who had been at this concert. And we did Glen Miller (ph) the whole after the -- and as we walked in, when the conductor walked in, everybody stood up and applauded. And you know what a good feeling that is for a professional musician who's a military man to be applauded. Not because he was a Air Force officer, but because he was the conductor of a really good orchestra. And we had this wonderful dinner. And -- and I mean, wonderful coffee and shla (ph) coffee ve shla (ph). And then my -- my dad, in '68, I was getting ready to come back to the United States in -- in '69, I was coming back, early '69. He said, I'm tired. He's 76. It's '68. He came back and he said, It's my last trip. We -- we sold -- we've sold it to the European part of family. We've gotten our money out. I'm going to retire. And he was dead in two months. Couldn't -- came home, had a stroke. And I think if he had worked, he would have kept on working because that was his -- and my mother -- my mother lived another -- 76 -- 60 was when he died, she was 62. And she died at 94. She lived another 32 years and went back to Vienna. She went back to Vienna when she was 91 years old. And she would go to co orts (ph). She went to Shroonz (ph), and she kept those forshluganuh (ph) people as friends all her life. And it was -- it was -- it's an interesting thing. But I -- I'm little different about it. I don't -- I don't know -- I, you know, I -- I meet people and they ask me about -- and I do talk on the Holocaust. And they say to me, What do you remember? And I said, I've read some of these books. Some of these books are, like, these 5-year-old children will have an

epiphany, Oh, I was totally aware of this and that. That's -- that's bologna because at age five it's a guess. It's -- it's fun. I remember sitting in my back yard in London and watching Lufbafa (ph) fight the RAF, and I thought it was wonderful, you know. And -- and riding on the train with Zowy (ph), you know -- and so my mother wasn't there to annoy me, and my father was -- was never home anyhow; and I thought it was wonderful. Oh, I'm sorry. And I thought it was wonderful.

Q: Did you -- did you speak any English at all by the age of five?

A: I spoke no English --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- but within three weeks in the -- in -- because Bunts Court, English only. English only. So people say, What do you remember? I say, Well, I remember Bunts Court school. I remember that one of my roommates was named Wolfe, and he ate paper. If he needed attention, he ate paper. I remember when I turned seven years of age, I had my teddy bear named Peter. And in order to prove that I was a man, I flushed Peter down the toilet. These are the things I remember, and, yet, it was such a significant time.

But -- it's not lost on children, but our reactions -- if you put 90 percent of these people back into a hypnotic trance and ask them to repeat the things that they've told you, they would say, Well, I think that happened, but it's all post-knowledge. You learn about what you've done later. But for kids -- people always tell me -- you know, I -- I flew combat, I flew 130 missions in Vietnam, and I lost a lot of friends. And people say to me, Do you have any regrets? Because a lot of these people -- why me? Why did my mother -- my mother didn't love me. She kept my sister and let me go. That doesn't make any sense to

me. And I always say to the people, Look. The question always comes up. How do you feel? I said, I am very sorry for your loss, and I am very sorry that they didn't make it. I will not say that I am -- I wish it were me because I do not. I am very glad that I did make it. It's the luck of the draw. And if -- I couldn't survive if I didn't think that way. I couldn't think that way. And yet it's difficult. These people -- my -- my capadres (ph) here in their 80s -- and then, you know, we're reasonably young because you couldn't have been born before '23. So our oldest are only 87 years old, and that's young because there are a lot of Holocaust survivors, and it's a horrible thing. I mean, we were not scathed. We weren't scarred and we weren't beaten, and we -- we -- we -- you know, but it's tough because many of these people lost so many people and -- but I have no guilt, no regrets at all. I -- I couldn't -- I'm reasonably upbeat, and I couldn't be that way if I thought that way. There you have my story.

Q: Thank you very much. I would just like to --

A: Sure.

Q: -- go back a little bit to Vienna and to England.

A: Sure.

Q: First of all, my question is, was it your grandmother's decision to send you by Kindertransport?

A: No. My grandfather proudly found out the Kindertransport was going, and it's interesting. I've met some people here -- I just had breakfast with a gentleman who said he came from a poor family in Vienna. You have to remember that the Austrian Jew was -- of that time was pretty uneducated because there were not a lot of us, but the

Austrian was -- Vienna was an intelligent city anyhow, and most of -- most of the Jews were upper-middle class. But he said he was -- he was son of a salesman, and he was poor. But he was a stateless pole (ph), and that -- that way he was able to go late. The first two or three trains, from what I understand, were filled with people whose children are people of influence. Once again, I don't regret it. I'm not sorry that my grandparents had money.

Q: Do you know that they had to pay a lot of money for --

A: I would --

Q: -- you to --

A: -- imagine some money changed hands. Either that or my grandfather just by status, just by status had enough -- he -- he wasn't a super observant Jew, but I know he belonged to the biggest synagogue in Vienna and, you know, and he -- that's how the lists were made through there.

Q: Do you know what organization managed Kindertransports in Vienna?

A: No. I'm five. I'm six.

Q: Yeah. Sure. Do you -- do you know if your parents knew that you were being sent to England when they were in jail?

A: Yeah because the -- the -- it was a one-way street because we didn't know they were alive. Yeah. Basically in the beginning because my -- our nanny's name was Resi, R-e-s-i, and she was married to a guy named Pepe, P-e-p-e, and he was a photographer. And I'm a photographer, and I have a lot of old pictures you know, of us in the -- the mountains. And because wherever we went, the nanny went, and wherever the nanny

went, the boyfriend went. And I have pictures of myself in you know in Lay De Hoison (ph) up in the -- in the Alps and so news, my grandparents were informed because they would supply the money to Resi -- they would pay a little bit to go visit my mother, and pick up the -- which is -- if I tell you that somebody was in prison and somebody had -- had -- had a private person to do their laundry, you wouldn't -- but it was done. It was done. Not anymore, it couldn't be done that way.

Q: Do you know if your grandparents could visit their children --

A: No.

Q: -- in the prison? No?

A: No. My grandfather was -- my grandfather was already -- he left right after the Anschluss. He went to the United States, so my grandmother ran the show, but my grandmother always ran the show. But she was the perfect wife. And she was everything my mother was not. My kids loved my grandmother. They loved my mother too because there was gifts. My mother's favorite two holidays were Easter and Christmas. This is from a Jewish woman. You know, and we always had a Christmas tree because she loved Christmas. But she always had Passover, but --

Q: It was Christian Christmas, right?

A: Of course. Of course. She liked -- she would visit us right around Passover. Come for Passover. And I was military so I -- stationary, and she would bring battachini (ph) and botten (ph) kosher candy for the holidays and chocolate bunnies -- Easter bunnies for the kids. She was -- if somebody would've played my mother in a movie, it would be Betty White because -- or -- or even -- or -- she -- she was a little bit oblivious, and she

was an absolute expert on opera. She was an absolute expert on all this stuff and life just flew, you know. She just -- and she was always like that, and she was totally oblivious of the world situation. And when I went to Vietnam and my wife was in Columbus, Ohio, with a friend, and she would get a telephone call from my mother. And she'd say, Was that Paul? And Betty'd say, What are you talking about? She said, An airplane crashed in Chicago. Military airplane cashed in Chicago. A military airplane went down in Germany. Was that Paul? And she'd say, Mom, thank you for telling me, but, look, if I -- it's not Vietnam. If it's Vietnam, before you know it, I know it because the military takes care of its own. It would be horrible, and you would hear the news from me, not from a newspaper. You have to stop calling me because when you do that you're worrying yourself to death over nothing because he's not -- he's not in Germany and he's not in Chicago. He's in Vietnam. And the news comes out, I get it before you. But she was oblivious of the world situation like that. And she just went through life -- she was the perfect -- she was the perfect candid (ph). You know the Panglossian theory of we're living in the best of all possible worlds. And here's -- two years in a German defangnus (ph) who is friends, stays friends with the people who did not visit her when she was there. That -- nobody visited them, but it was just two inopportune years in her life.

Q: That's great.

A: It's unrealistic and she -- my sister ended up -- my sister died early. She was a psychiatrist. She was -- I mean, she was a doctor, and she was a psychiatrist who became nonfunctioning. She was so -- she was so bipolar that she ended up being on social -- she was -- went on social security because she could not -- could not work, and she died at

the age -- one week short of her 70th birthday. And I've taken both her daughters in as -- put them into my family. But my -- my kids remember my grandmother fondly -- I mean, my mother fondly because she brought them presents, but they remember my grandmother with love because they remember this wonderful, wonderful woman who -- who died in '96 and who was just regal. She just floated. But I used to sit in Forest Hills -- I -- in Jackson Heights. I used to sit in her apartment and watch her make strudel. Now this woman who had the best of all possible worlds could make the best damn strudel in the world and she would sit there with me sitting at her -- sitting at the table, and she would roll this -- and that's -- those are memories. Those are great memories for me, and not -- I wish it was my mother, but it wasn't. It was my grandmother that I remember these great things about. And my -- my mother was just -- I ended up being the -- she lived number one Lincoln Center looking down into the opera house. It's 2164 Street, and she had 24/7 help because she -- she was getting ill. She was getting older. And when she stopped looking out the window -- because the view was magnificent, you could look out into the Lincoln Center, we kidnapped her and brought her to -- brought her to Moorestown, New Jersey, and we put her into -- into the Evergreens which is a marvelous senior community nursing home. She lasted six months, and -- let me -- have I -- have I got a minute this-- this -- this --

Q: Yes, you have. If you want to take a break at any time just let me know.

A: I'm a talker. The -- I brought her -- we kidnapped her. We brought her to this very, very elegant -- it was a Presbyterian home -- a Pescable (ph) home but it was beautiful. And she -- my mother even said, This was very elegant, which is, from her words, a real

compliment. And I took up the first day, and I put her in a wheelchair so I could mobile -- she could walk, but -- and we walk -- we sat out in the gardens and we were sitting there looking -- and this is September, and she says to me, When is -- when is Easter? This is a Jewish woman. And I'm sitting there and I said, Well, Ma, let's see. This is September. We just had Labor Day. Thanksgiving is coming up. And then and -- and I said then Hanukah, and I'm trying to be Jewish, and she -- and I said, And then it's Christmas. And I said, Valentine's Day and then comes Easter. And the next time I came in, she said to me, What time is it? And I said, It's 9:00. And she said, Morning or evening? And I would say, If it was 9:00 in the evening, both of us would be in bed. She would say, When is Easter? And I would go through that same thing. If I came in the afternoon and she'd say, What time is it? And I'd say, 4:00. She'd say, Morning or afternoon? And I'd say, If it was morning, I would -- you and I would both be in bed. When is Easter? My mother died on Easter morning. And I don't believe in this. I don't believe in the mystic. But it was just -- why would a little Jewish woman with no connections to Easter want to know when Easter was coming? And she died on Easter morning.

Q: That's incredible.

A: It -- it is. And my mother was not a mystic. And she was 94, and she had a very good life, including -- I mean, excluding two years, but those don't count. In her mind, my mother was 92. She forgot those three years. I would imagine. She never talked about it. My dad never talked about it either. And it must have been hard. It must have been harder because of the fact that it was a debasing experience for somebody who is not used

to being debased. We only lost one relative, and that was my Uncle Jacque (ph) who was the third brother. And he -- I think he died of Doha (ph). And -- and then, of course, you know, further-out people, but there weren't a lot of us. We were a very small family. Now we're a big family. I have nine grandsons. Five of them have my name. So, you know, that's -- that's good. No. As a matter of fact, six of them have my name. And they range from 25 to 7 and they're a joy. They're my -- they're my -- they're my boys, and I have a good relationship with them. And I have the money and the -- you know, I have the time and the money, and I -- and we -- we do things together. And my -- my grandson has invited me to come -- he's a skydiver. He wants me to skydive. And I don't think I'm going to do that. I'm a little bit too old for that. I don't feel old. I don't feel old. It's been an interesting life. I mean, I've had -- I lost my wife two years ago after 54 years, and I moved into a -- I moved out of -- I lived in a senior CCRC (ph), went from the Jewish generation of Cherry Hill, South Jersey Federation, and I was up the board. I was among the original tenants at this place, and I was on a board, and I fought a good fight against them, you know, and I'm still very good friends with all the people there. And when my wife died, I -- it was perpetual shiver, you know, and I just couldn't do that anymore so I moved on. And I still -- I still go over and help install -- I set up the sound systems and -- because I was a graphic designer so I -- you know, I did -- well, maybe I should touch the fact that I went from Ohio State University directly into the Air Force. I spent 20 years in the Air Force as a flyer, as an information officer, as an intelligence officer. And when I got out, my wife and I opened a copy shop, and then we ended up -- there were -- we started with just my wife and I, and when we sold 26 years later,

we had 11 people. And my wife was the treasurer, so I have all the money I ever need for rest of my life because she -- I -- I was the schmoos (ph) and she was the -- she was the business end, and we were a good team. And my kids after about eight months, they said to me, I was -- I was sour and I needed to socialize. So I said to my daughter, Define socialize. And she said, How old are you? And I said, I understand. I said, what do your brothers think? She said, they put me up to this. They're afraid of you. So I -- I have been seeing people, and I have gotten into a relationship with a widow who is superintendent of schools of Donna Woodridge -- was. And we -- we have a mutual respect for each other. We've compartmentalized that part of our lives, and she's Jewish and I'm back to -- now I go to show Friday nights because she goes to show. She keeps Kosher. She keeps Kosher so I represent that in her home. We -- she doesn't keep Kosher out, and she doesn't -- you know, when she comes to visit me. But I'm back to being a Jew which I really never was. You know, as military man, I used to get a lot of, What's a good Jewish boy doing in the Army? And I said, Air Force. And there is a lot of them. Like Jews represent, what, one half or one percent of the population in this country, small part. My grandson is an Air Force Academy graduate.

Seven -- seven -- almost eight percent of the class was Jewish which is anomaly, but it's not. It's a good life -- I mean -- and I did it because kind of -- I kind of feel, you save my life -- I felt like my dad. You saved my life. Let me pay you back. And I enjoyed my military life. It was hard on my wife, but I don't regret it.

Q: Great. Thank you.

A: Okay.

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Q: Yeah. I just have --

A: Please.

Q: I would like to return back to England now.

A: Okay.

Q: Do you remember how you were treated in England those years you had to spend there?

A: Never left the campus the year and a half -- the year and a half --

Q: Did you make some friends there?

A: Not permanent. And I -- once in a while, there were people here who tell me they were in Bunts Court when I was there. I do not rememberer. I do not remember. I do remember that my sister -- there I hit her in the head with a rock because she was tormenting me. She was trying to be my mother, and I threw a rock and I caught her right between -- right between the eyes. And -- and I -- to this day, I think it was a 200 feet, but it was probably five feet. But like I said, it's -- it's -- it's interesting. It's hard. Everything is hindsight. You -- I have glimpses, and I remember we used to -- for tea, we would toast bread at the fireplace. We had a long fork, and we would toast bread. And I remember classes were really -- I mean, we learned -- I mean, it was -- it was a British boarding school run by a -- a -- a German martinet, you know, who really ran a tough school. But we weren't beaten; we weren't abused. And I don't ever ever remember going into town. I know we did. I don't remember it. I don't care. You know, I do -- I do remember when we moved to -- when we -- when the school moved. I think they went to Shropshire (ph). We came to London, and we stayed with my uncle in

London. And I remember the Blitz (ph) and in the beginning, we used to go every day down to the -- the shelters and the subways, and then after a while with -- you get hit, you get hit, you know.

Q: Was this school only for Kindertransport kids?

A: Yes.

Q: Jewish kids?

A: Yes. If you were -- there's a very good book called *My Heart's in a Suitcase*. Anne Fox wrote it and she's here. And she was at Bunts Court, and there's a whole chapter on Bunts Court. And I think Anne is a little bit older than I am. But, once again, it's reconstructionist history because you cannot remember methodology, and you cannot remember motivation when you're five and six. You remember the good times.

Q: Were you missing your parents or grandparents there? Do you remember your thoughts about them?

A: When I came to the United States, my sister almost immediately went to Kingston, and I was angry because Kingston was -- New York City; but I -- I lived with my grandparents in Forest Hills, and I -- we were in an apartment building there we didn't own which is really funny. My grandfather didn't own this one. It was really -- it was in the right off -- right off Greens Boulevard and I walked to school and I had a nice life. And I -- I never -- because of the fact that my family was a little bit disjointed to start with, my mother was the ultimate intruder (ph). I mean -- I mean, it -- she was a hadanist (ph). She enjoyed her life, and she would -- she had a nanny for us, you know. Until the day she went to prison, she had a nanny -- and she -- for the good times. But

my sister was already manifesting signs of bipolarism. When she got difficult, she would say to the nanny, You need to take her out. And that -- that's, you know, and that of course effected it. So my connections with my parents was a little bit different than -- and my dad was a business man. And my -- when I was born, he was 43, and we really didn't talk. And when we came to the United States, it was a little bit too late. His -- I'm -- he's 51; I'm 8, 9. But later on in life, we became friends. We became good friends.

Q: Did you happen to forget German when you got -- at all -- in England or --

A: No.

Q: -- was it --

A: To this day -- well, you know, when I came back and I -- I became the Dutch Americana shu press officer (ph), I had to -- my German got better again, and I got to the point where I could -- but I used to use words and people'd say, Where'd you get that word? And I'd say, well, I'm Austrian. Yeah, but you left when you were six. What six-year-old child says Auskasidenidt (ph)? You know? Or, you know, I -- I had a hell of a vocabulary. You know, I was a -- I was a precocious brat. I know that because I was a spoiled kid, and my sister -- my sister was probably smarter than I was. I mean, she -- she became a doctor, and she -- you know, she was a good student and everything else, but I don't regret what I do. I have a Master's degree, and I'm in public relations; and I -- I have good friends and I -- but not -- not as many as I should have because it's kind of the military restriction, and you move on and you go someplace else. And I've adopted a lot of -- my lady friends, for instance, she's had 60 years and it's different life.

It's a good life, but it's -- it's enjoyable. And I enjoy being around -- and it's a solid Jewish community. I mean, these are -- one of them is a Holocaust survivor, and we all, you know -- they -- they -- they -- they just sit around and drink coffee and -- and play cards and -- and talk about nothing hours on end, but it's -- I like it. I -- I like it. And then Shelly and I go to -- go to the theater or we go to a museum, and then we go back and we -- and we go to a dance, you know, and -- and it's become -- I'm ready for that. I've never really had that. And I've got my kids as friends, and I -- I enjoy my life.

Q: Great. Well, Mr. Halpern, now we have to pause and change tracks here. We'll just pause it.

End of File One

Beginning File Two

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial interview of Paul Felix Halpern conducted by Juliet Danilian on October 17th of 2010 at the Kindertransport Association Conference in Arlington, Virginia. So I would like to get back to the time when you first came to the states. Do you remember your first impression like what were your thoughts and what can you think about your experience in being in England and this Holocaust ordeal?

A: New adventure. You know, once again I'm eight years old now and I'm -- and I -- I spoke perfect English by that time. And the thing that I remember the most of all was I came into Montreal. And as I told you that my first impression was the Dick Tracy comics and the Tarzan comics and that started my love for comics real early at that time. But I got into the habit of reading billboards. You know, these roads signs and my

English -- if I didn't know what the word meant, you know, American, American English is different than English English. You know, there was signs for everything. But I was fascinated but I remember on the train reading all the billboards. And nobody in my family -- my grandfather didn't need a car. In New York you don't know a car. But if we travel I read, I would read the subway, the billboards. And I enjoyed the new experience. And I fit in pretty well. School -- my sister was a little bit abrasive. Like I say she was functioning. And but I was, I made friends easily. And my best friend was named -- and no Jewish kid should ever be named Palmer Kelpelman. Who knows a Jewish kid Palmer, P-A-L-M-E-R. Palmer Kelpelman and I got into more trouble. We would ride, we would ride our ride bikes. We would ride our bikes through Forest Hills. And we were -- we would go into the candy store and swipe candy. I mean, not because we needed candy but because you could do that. And I ran into Palmer like don't ask me where it was but I think we were about 40 years old at the time. He was the most boring, stuffy person that I've ever met in my life. You know, he was just -- it was just funny that out of that, that one thing Palmer was a bore. And then I ran, I had a friend named Lee Levine. And Lee's father owned Peter Pan bakeries of New York City. They ran up to about 200 stores and then there was problems and then they came back. And I road a tricycle because they wouldn't give me a bicycle. And Lee had a bicycle. And we ran all around Forest Hills, you know. And years later, my middle son was 14. So this is 36 years ago, we sent him to a sports camp. We sent my middle son to a sports camp at Tom Castella, he used to be a football player. And we went up to visit him and he said, "Dad, you know somebody named Lee Lavine?" And I said, "That's a name out of the past from when I

was eight years old. Nine years old." He said, "His son is here." And Lee, his father flies in to visit him every couple of weeks. He was like there six weeks. "And he takes us out." And I said, "You sure it's the same guy?" Well, he said, "I don't know but he owns all these bakeries named --" and I said, "Peter Pan." "Yeah." So you know, there one, one kid becomes -- one kid becomes -- and the third one of my group was a kid name Richy Raskind. And Richy Raskind, his father was an ophthalmologist. And I started to learn how to fly in the Civil Air Patrol and he was also -- and he crashed. And he became -- I visited him. He was -- and he crashed out in Long Island. And he was like 16 like I was and he survived, you know. And had some plastic surgery done. We used to play at his house all the time. And he was quite wealthy and I was just, you know, I was a little kid down the block who lived with his grandparents. And he turned into -- he became Renee Richards. You know who Renee Richards is? That's the sex change tennis player. So Richy Raskind became Renee Richards, which I guess was some weird friends. And among my childhood friends Mike Nichols, the director, and my sister were an item. My mother and dad used to go to Tanner's Field (ph) room. And to celebrate where you sat on the porch, you know, you rocked on the porch and they did bring us up there. And the people -- Ms. Nichols owned it. Owned the place. And Mike and Bobby were her sons and they kind of helped out there. And my sister and he -- and years later, years later he went to the University of Chicago. Left for years later I'm in Oklahoma and I'm at the University, and I have to fly, I have to fly to get my flying pay. We didn't have to do any work so I bought a Playboy Magazine with an interview with Michael Nichols. So I'm reading this thing. And I began to laugh. And somebody said, "What are you

laughing at?" I said, "My sister just made Playboy." And they said, "You're kidding. Let's see." And they asked Michael Nichols, "Do you remember your first sexual experience?" And he describes the area behind, the woods behind Tanner's field where the flash was. And he said, he goes to this entire thing, you know, but and he said, "I was, I was 16 and she was 18." You know, and he says, "You always remember your first experience," you know. And I came back from having to getting that. So I called my mother and I said, "Hi, mom. Listen, you might want to get a copy of Playboy Magazine." And said, "I know." And I said, "Oh, really. How do you know?" She said, "One of my friends told me." I said, "She's not your friend, mom." And she said, "Yes, but you think it's really Lucie?" I said, "Mom. Tanner's Field, New York?"

"Well, she wasn't 18. She was only 17." I said, "Mom, who cares." Then I called my sister. And I said, "Hey, Mike Nichols remembers you fondly." And she said, "Send me a copy." I said, "The hell with you. You know, buy your own copy." But so that's another claim to fame I have that my sister was -- Michael Nichols as first big -- and he is magnificent, you know. He's a good director. He was a good comedian. I mean he did the Graduate. He did, you know, we know a few famous people. Like I said Peter Danovich's his family. And friend Zimmerman who died. He directed High Noon and directed Oklahoma. He was a Vietnamese. And he used to visit my mother because my grandmother and my -- and Fred's mother were friends in Vienna. And any time he was in New York he would come and see my mother. He never talked film because my mother didn't understand films.

Q: Only Opera?

A: Let's not talk trains. You know, but so my claim to fame, the famous people I know are all, are all directors. All of them, all of them won Academy Awards. So it was a good life. And then when my parents came, we moved. We got an apartment in the same apartment house that my grandparents lived. So if I had enough of my mother I would go up and see, visit my grandmother. And my mother was totally oblivious but she did work hard. Let me put it this way here was this mom who used to -- my mother -- one year when she was young in Vienna I understand took a course in stringing pearls. What kind of a job is that? But my mother could string pearls. She couldn't cook but she could -- and she was quite -- she was -- you probably gathered that I'm not that much of a fan of my mother's. I have a Galle Vase. Galle is really -- and it belonged to my mother. It was given to her by a gentleman who I met. Who was about 10 years older than my mother. And like she always used to talk about this guy and the la moor (ph). And I finally met him in Switzerland and I know just in my heart that it had been more than a friendship. And so I have this Galle vase which is kind of irritating. It's beautiful. And it is out with the antique, some of the antique dealers from the antique dealers, I'm trying to get a decent estimate price for it to place it. I'm not going to pass that onto my, to my kids. But and I don't need the money. And what I will do with that money is that money I will -- eventually it will go in my estate, my three kids can have the money. I don't want to give anybody that vase. I just want to give them the money. And so I was up, I was up in Landenville, (ph) and they said, "You have any provenance (ph) for this?" "I said, "Yeah. This is a vase that my mother's boyfriend gave to her." And they said, "Excuse

me?" I said, "Yeah, don't ask." But we live a kind of strange life. I've always been this kind of a wacky person.

Q: Well, your Holocaust experience sounds like one big adventure for you. Do you have like some negative memories or were you realizing what was going on in Europe when you enter the states?

A: Yeah, I was pretty -- 'cause I followed. And of course, all young boys and since I was a voracious reader I knew I had the battle maps, you know. And I was at Boy Scout Camp when they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. And I remember we stood and cheered. You know, and now in retrospect it had to be done but it's horrific. It's horrific, you know. But I had a military attitude. And my grandson now flies the drones in Afghanistan. He's in Las Vegas flying to Afghanistan. And he doesn't talk about it. He doesn't talk about it. He's not allowed to. But I know he's doing awful --because -- but it's better that no American pilots are getting killed. The airplanes will do the work. And he's -- that's his job. And he and I talk -- his father tries to vicariously live his son's life but he gravitates towards me because I'm a combat flyer. And I flew -- I was in Cambodia and I flew a lot of friends in it. And when he talks he talks to me. And we have a good relationship. Well, I love all my grandsons. It's just fun. I take every one of them when they turn 12, I take them out to Bar Mitzvah trip. And I started with Joe. And the deal is you get in the car on a Friday afternoon and we go somewhere basically where -- the first trip where we went on a NFL football weekend to Washington, D.C. We stayed in Georgetown and we had a great -- that was Joe. And now I have got it pretty well refined. Lincoln, I took one of them flying. We flew around the Statute of Liberty. We

went to the battleship in New York. The Aircraft Carrier Intrepid. But they get in the car and I say to them, "This is what we are going to do. This is your party. Anything you want to say to me you can say and whatever you say in this car, stays in this car. And it's your party. The deal is you said you would like to do this, if you're tired or you're bored, we are out of there. We will find something else to do in the two days. And I know your father, your mother says 'Be sure you say thank you.' I don't want to hear that. If you have a good time when I drop you off at home, say 'Thank you.'" And usually in the beginning it's like kind of quiet. And then we just chat because I always make sure we do some driving like that. We drove from Philadelphia to the Meadowlands to see a football game. I went to the Cooper's Town Hall of Fame. We went to see Boston Red Sox play in Boston. And it's two days. And I had -- I've got a 15 year old. He got in the car at twelve and a half. He says -- I said, "You kind of know what's, you know, what to expect." He said, "Yeah." I said, "You can say anything you want." And he said, "Can I say this?" And he said a four letter word. I said, "Sure." He said, "How about this?" He did about six words. I said, "Very impressive."

Q: Challenging.

A: Yeah. Very impressive. I said, "So what else do you want to talk about?" You know, so he got out of it. And he's getting -- he had his headset and he's listening to music crap. Within an hour he's got the headset off and we're having a good, we are having a -- because my wife used to say it's amazing my boy -- my grandsons love me and until they go on that last trip. After that last trip they are yours. That's really funny. We will sit somewhere and they will sit shoulder -- on my shoulders. You know, we sit in the

living room both boys sit -- I'm not -- I'm not Oppa and I'm not Vaggy. (Ph). And I'm not Pop Pop. I would kill the first child that calls me Pop Pop. I hate that. And then it's -- they call my grandpa. And we have -- one of them called my gramps and that's my inventor and he does that just to irritate me. And he also when I started getting bold he was also the one that does this to me. But other than that I've got a good life, you know, I have been -- I enjoy what I do. And I know a lot of people just because I -- I don't -- I have been having an interesting time here. And I went to this seminar on can we do a plan from the next possible Kindertransport? Is it possible to come up with a plan. And of course, the argument was in this modern day and age if it's a disaster like -- she started to talk about Katrina. I said we can do Katrina, the world can save Katrina because we have the airplanes. And we have the equipment. And we can go down to Haiti. I did the Haiti. I was in McGuire as retired and I helped with the Haitian Airlift. I helped the refugee thing because that's what I do. And I said but the Kindertransports, Rwanda needed a Kindertransporter but because they were black it was messy. And so the final thing she said was we have to sum this up. I said, "You know, the next time you need a Kindertransport for a specific group, put them in a mine in Chile where within 69 days everybody will be rescued and there will be no political stuff because that's what the world does best. I mean this thing with the miners. So let's put the problem into a mine in Chili and the world will solve it. Otherwise, Rwanda is still not solved. You know, Kosovo, Sarajevo; not solved. They are still finding bodies.

Q: Haitian.

A: Yeah, it's horrific. Those are the problems that will not be solved -- because people didn't like each other. But everybody likes a good story and those miners were a good story and the world did their thing perfectly. I mean there was no flag because they all flew the Chilean flag and they made sure but it was done correctly. And that's -- if we could solve the world's problems, if we can put the problems in a mine in Chili. And that's the way I feel. You know, I kind of came to -- I was listening to this conversation on a -- I don't particularly like a lot of the -- a lot of the Austrian Jews have quite a bit of them because we didn't get reparations for a long time. They treated us like idiots. So this lady from the Austrian deligation, the gentleman from Germany was fantastic. You could ask him a question and he would think about it. And you know, "Yeah, we were wrong." You know, you are, you know, fourth generation. She said she started to talk about all of the wonderful things that the Australian government, all of these programs for the poor benefited Jews of Israel -- of Austria. And she went on and on and on. And somebody said to her, "How many Jews are left in Austria? How many Jews?" She said, "Well, I could kind of go with 3,000. "We are up to 15,000 but there are not the 15,000, the Austrian Jews, the upper middle class society that held with the culture of Vienna. It's Russian, Ukrainian, you know, Polish. And people hardworking labors basically. It's one step down. And she said, "15,000." And I was texting Shelly. And I said, "This lady from Austria just tells me they have 15,000 --" she said, there are 15,000 Jews left in Austria. She listed enough programs that every Jew could have one special project because she kept talking about all of these people. There is only 15,000. They couldn't do all of these things. This is all people wanting to play this "Give game," you

know. And it's wrong. It's wrong. And I'm not -- I'm not a fan of the Austrians. I don't mind the Germans. I enjoyed, you know, at least you can, you know, that's the past. Austria is still in this to this day. I know that. I know that. And the Austrian -- I mean here, you know, a lot of the people here from here from the Holocaust do not like their home county and will not visit or visit and are very uncomfortable.

Q: When did you visit for the first time after the war? After the Holocaust? When was it?

A: 1968 when I took -- the first time I went back to Austria was when I took the band, the Glen Miller band to Grats and Mimins and the military. And then I visited again with my wife and kids again in '68. And then just last November I was in Vienna in 2009 with my grandson.

Q: And your grandparents went?

A: My grandfather died young, he died when I was 14. So he died in 1946.

Q: And he died in the States?

A: Yeah. He -- well, I told you he came and he said, "I'm going to the United States," and he played the game. And my grandmother lived to be 96. And marvelous woman.

Marvelous woman. And the family they put her into a nursing home in Queens but a real nice one. I used to visit her. And she she would be -- she was 90. I would say, "Why don't you go?" Those are old people. I don't go with old people." And she was the oldest person there. And so at that time her son, my uncle Walter whom I love dearly, bought her a television set. And I understand every morning she read the large print edition of the New York Times. I mean that's how good she was. And she watched television. She watched sports and cartoons not because it moved. You know, when you get to be 90

years old and you're bored and your language, that's not your primary language, sports is easy to watch and cartoons. So my uncle Walter tells a story that it was the finals of the NCAA Basketball Tournament between Michigan State and Magic Johnson. These are people that you don't know but these are great athletes. And nine out the ten players on the floor were black. And they are all big and they were running up and down in the sports shorts. And my grandmother is, he's kind of watching the game, you know, a little bit. And she says to him, "Walter, what are they doing?" He said, "They are playing basketball Mom." And she said, "Oh." She watched for a while and she said, "Which are the Jewish boys?" And they were nine, six foot, inch when they are going for that. You know, but that's a fond memory. That's a fond memory. She was a wonderful woman. Wonderful woman. I like, I dearly loved her. She loved us which was the interesting thing. And I have no idea where she spawned a spoiled brat of a child that was my mother. And who -- at 90 was a spoiled brat. She was entertaining and she, you know, and like I said, I told you I thought Betty White would play her in the movie. Bill Burke would have played her in the movie. That's before your time. That was my mom. And but my kids loved her because grandma was synonymous with presents. My wife on the other hand ran my kids a little bit better. My daughter had Aaron who was very bright and he was two years -- coming up on two. And she would say dada and she wouldn't say momma. And she said, "You know, mom --" she my wife baby-sat for her one day because she was doing some work and her sitter was out. And she said, "You know, that kind of hurts." She says -- they work for us. Her husband worked for us. She says, "He will says daddy. He won't say momma." So she went away. She came back about four

hours later. And Betty said to Aaron, "Who is that?" And Aaron said, "Momma." And she said, "Who am I?" She said, "Momma." And she said, "How did you do that?" She said, "Really simple. We had lunch and I said, 'Do you want dessert?' She said, 'Yes.' I said to him, if you want dessert say momma." He said momma. And later on she said, "Do you want some candy? What, do you say?" "Momma." So within 30 minutes she taught them how to say a word that my daughter had been working on for months.

But that's the difference between my wife and my mother, you know. My mother would be the person that would talk about herself for hours and at the end of it, she would say, "Well, that's enough about me. Let's talk about you. What do you think of me." I mean that was the attitude that she had. And it was charming but at the same time after a while, you know, it's, it's up here. And it's not, it's not deep. But I was five when I left. I was in six -- well, five when she left me, you know, to go to prison. And I was always taken care of by nannies and so on. So my bonding with my mother was never really a bond. And it was her problem; not mine. When we came back to the United States she was busy -- they were trying to make a living. My dad came back. But the minute they came back into the situation where they -- where they could do well, it became her story again and not mine. You got to remember she went back in 1940 -- 1950, she went back to Austria to spend six months out the year. I was 17, she left. I was a freshman in college and she left. I got to be an anchor -- you know, at Ohio State. She could do that and never look back. And never look back on it. And there was no nanny for me. And I was a hard case. I mean I was -- I know what I wanted which I had no idea what was it but I knew what I wanted that's why, "He's a big boy."

Q: What did your dad do when he came to the States?

A: Well, first thing he did was he looked for work. And he came up with this idea of the pitman shortage was starting. And in Europe women carry net shopping bag, you know, fishnet shopping. And so like I said, he got my mother's friends who are all wonderful because they were all society women. They could all do embroidering and they could do this stitch. And they stitched these handles. Beautiful colors. They got the most colorful rolls to do that and he immediately started selling them. He took two dozen to Bloomingdale's and they ordered 100 dozen the first day he was there. Now he's got to get woman in line to do this. And then he did this and he did that. And then he became politely put it he became a facilitator. He went into the import/export business. During the War and after the War he was friends with -- he made friends with a guy named Sam Spig -- Sam Spiggel. And they had their European contacts and so on. And whenever something was needed, they understood how to get it legally. Not illegally. Legally they knew where to get things. They would -- the need -- like my dad invented these shopping bags for Americans but knowing it from Europe. They had a pretty good business together. And then Sam's son came out of the military. And he was a radar operator, you know radar was new and television had just started, you know. The World Series in 1939. There was and the first television was shown at the World's Fair. And the son came to us there and he said, "Television is the future." I know how to build -- you know, at that time you could buy a kit to make a television set with tubes and the whole bit. They are going to be hundreds of television stations around the country and they need monitors. They will need the monitor. It's nothing but a television set for one station basically is

what. I want to build perfectly, correctly done. I'll buy the kits. I want to build them and sell them to television stations as their monitors. And Sam came to my father and he said, "I want to get into this." My father, you know, he was mechanically was a disaster. He said, "If it will make us a buck," and they did very well. They made the first monitors for CBS New York and WOR and Dumont station. They had a good business. They had about four or five of these guys who were really good at it. There was tubes and solder and wire and they would pinch them until they were correct. And then they would deliver them and they got good money for them. You know, we had the first 12 inch television set. I watched the 1947 World Series in my house on a 12 inch TV set which was big, big TV set. And you know the memory of Europe after the war, a lot of Europeans came to the United States. Took out their first papers, hung around for three months and went back to Europe, you know, because the established residence and then went back. A lot of my mother's friends did that. And they kind of hang out at my house a lot of times, you know. I mean they lived in small quarters. There weren't that welcome because nobody had a lot of -- the wealthy people didn't have a lot of money but they came to the United States so they would have the protection in the next war. They would sit in my living room watching television which was primitive. Eating good food and have gained, everyone gained 10, 15 pounds, and talk about how stupid Americans were. And I couldn't stand it. And I was 12, 13. I couldn't stay in the same room with them because it was impolite to me. It was impolite to be rude to your guests. But I hate -- don't talk about my country like that because I'm an American. As far as I know, I'm going to be an America. And my dad the same way. My dad was not happy with that. But they would sit

and eat. They eat really good food. You know, they would and then talk down the country that they were getting first papers from. My mother said, you know, "They're just protecting themselves." No, you're not. You need manners. You are going to do that at least if you're a hypocrite be a hypocrite with manners. Don't be a hypocrite with no manners. And so you know, we didn't agree on a lot of things but nobody talked. I mean you weren't allowed. You didn't talk against them.

Q: Did your mom tell you something about being in prison or dad.

A: A little bit. My dad not a lot. Because he was -- I can't remember. My father came out of Polish country stock. And so he was a self-educated man. He was never very comfortable. My father never spoke to my mother, my grandmother in familiar. He never said Due. As a matter of fact if he said something, you speak German? He would say to my mother through my grandmother's (Speaking German.) "Would the dear mother like a cup of coffee?" He always called her (German). De or Due. Always spoke because he was -- her husband had been his boss. You know, and he was like -- my mother's family treated my dad like the hired hand. He went back and he build that business. And by the time the business sold they had, he had a lot of money had come back, had filtered through Switzerland legally. And they -- there's still money in Switzerland from 1968, '78. Still money accruing legally. Absolutely legally but he managed money correctly and did -- and he was their hired hand. And my mother let them do that. But you know, he was so much older than I was. I didn't have that kind of -- I didn't have that much respect for him. But as I got older I liked him more and more. We really can get into conversations and we liked each other. My dad was a good chess player. And he would

beat my brains out. He never insulted me. It was always, "Let's play another one." "Oh, you want to play another one. Oh, yeah." And I first time I beat him and I was so proud of myself. And so my kids, you want to play -- I'm not a good chess player but I'm better than my kids. But you want to beat me, I mean you want to play me chess. You want to beat me. I'm not throwing the game. You want to play Gin Rummy with me. If you are stupid, you're going to lose. And you know, and you know, it's not -- I'm not -- if you play with me level, I'll treat you with respect and respect is play. And I'll play with you and when you beat me, I would say, "Do you want to play?" And my genius grandson can beat me to death. And plays three dimensional chess. He plays this three level chess. He says, "I'm not very good at it." I mean, "You can't play?" "Oh, I understand the game. I'm just not a good chess player." He beats my brains out. So we don't play any longer. But that's -- it was a different, different kind of a family. You know, we didn't have many Jewish ties. And maybe I regretted. That's why I kind of like Shelly. Like I said, one day I said to my son, I said, "Where you going tonight?" I said, "I'm going to Black Wood to be with Shelly. To Lakewood." He said, "What are you going to do today?" "We're going to the show." And he said, "Dad, you hear that sound?" I said, "What is that?" "That's my mother spinning in her grave." You know, because that wasn't wasn't me. I enjoy it, you know. You know, because I got nothing to do right now. I'm enjoying my life. You know I go to bed when I want to. I'm kind of regretting having to give up this bachelor pad I've got now. Because not like, I'm a cook and there are some older people living above me but they see me travel with a suitcase and Camo bag and

they know I'm a graphic designer and they know I'm a photographer. And they know -- people they know that I sit out there and I smoke. I'm back to smoking one cigar a day. And I sit out by the pool and I put on a headset. Here's a 77-year-old man with a headset on and a hoody with the Air Force Academy on it smoking a cigar and listening to -- they have no idea what I'm listening to. If I told them what I listen to. I listen to Doo-wop music or I listen to Mozart. And I just -- and the little Oriental kids come and play with me. And I say "Mehow." (Ph). And they say "Mehow." You know, I'm kind of like they have no idea how old I am. They have no idea how old I am. I don't feel like I'm old, you know, I mean you have some people here and some of them are -- I'm very -- for a while I was solid, but you know then I got my life back. For the last year I got my life back. And it's a new adventure because I can show -- I can -- she is sharing Judaism, you know, she's been an Orthodox Jew. She is more of a mystic. She believes people have auras and people are this and people are that. But she's -- she is way more Jewish than I am. And I'm enjoying myself. I'm enjoying myself. I'm never -- I'm not happy with God. I'm not happy with God. I mean we work hard. My wife and I worked hard. And two months after we retire we was going to have a great time together because we got all the money in the world we need. We are going to do this. The kids are all very well off. And we were going to have a good time and she strokes out on me for seven years. That's selfish what I just said. She just stroked out on me. She stroked out. And I would have done this for the next 30 years. I would have -- as she got more infirm -- and they said, "Dad, you have all of this insurance. You need to have somebody in 24/7." I said, "Nobody sleeps with your mother but me." You know, I don't care if she gets up in the

middle of the night. I will take you to the bathroom and I'm not embarrassed about it. But you know, your mother and I had been together for some long but I would feel wrong. And my wife -- your mother would feel wrong having to be helped to the bathroom by an aide while I'm in the room. That's different. I would rather do it myself. And I tell you my daughter told me this maybe two months ago. The last year every Saturday she would say -- my daughter would say -- my wife would say, "I want to talk to my daughter." I dial the phone. I would say or Susan would call. I would go do my Camo work for something else. I would go out with the board. And they talked for what an hour and half. And she said, "Paul, I have to go to the bathroom." She would say, "I will call you back." I get her a cup of coffee or something to eat and she go back to the phone. And Susan said that for the last year every time she said goodbye she would say, "Remember. Do not let him vegetate." That's a good woman. And which is a blessing, you know. Originally I said, you know, it's not very long. "Dad, you're impossible. You know, you're grumpy. Your outlook on life is wrong. You know, the kids -- you're affecting the kids. You're not, you know, you're not who you normally are." And so basically she said, "Mom wouldn't want do you do that. Mom wouldn't want you to do that." And this woman understands. I mean she -- when we did -- like November 18th is, 19th is -- is was 28th. I would like -- but we will go to the cemetery the three of us. The four of us depending on if Jack can come from Richmond. We go to the cemetery. We will go to her favorite restaurant and we will order a vodka and Absolute and 7-Up and we will put it in the middle of the table and we will have lunch and we will leave the glass there when we go home. It's just, you know, it's something to do because we were friends. And it has

nothing to do with Jewish tradition. I mean I do not like my religion right now. I don't like -- what kind of God let this go on like this? I went back to my senior community for the holidays. And I didn't, I did-- I did Rosh Hashana but I fasted and I did Yom Kippur with my friends because out of respect. I think, I think that she needs to be remembered. She needs to be remembered for everything. And I never going to -- she is buried in a military cemetery about 20 miles from where I live and six miles from the base. And I work at the McGuire Airforce Base one day a week at the terminal helping people, space available in the families. And I can go two miles out of my way and take a different road to the base. And I visit my wife twice a month for ten minutes. It's just -- I go out there. I remember one day I was at McGuire. I was going to go afterwards because it was summer. It was late. And the base closed up because there were lighting storms in the area and they said, "We're going to cancel all operations." So the weather was still clear and I said, "I'm going to go out to the cemetery now." And I was standing there and I don't know if you have seen military cemeteries, they are flat. All of headstones, you know, how thousands are buried there. And I'm standing there and about 150 feet away was this lighting bolt came down and hit in the middle of the woods and I began to ran. I mean the thunder and lighting hit together so it was right where I was. I was standing out there among metal planks so I started to run for the car. And the car is 150 feet way and I am like a wet rag. And it's raining and the lighting is hitting and I rolled the window down and I said, "That's not funny. You got me." But it's just, you know, it's not -- you don't have to -- one of the greatest -- there's a man. His wife died in December. And every time I was there, he would spend four days a week in a chair and he had a hamper

for food and he would sit for six hours a day and go have lunch and go back. He had a picture of his wife and he set it up in the attic. And he sat up and that's not necessary. You know, we can tell stories about my wife forever and the kids understand that. I mean, you know. And they have a totally different idea of who she is because she is the tough one. You know, I went to Vietnam she ran the house. And she got into it with my 14-year-old son about he wanted a motor scooter. And he wrote me a letter. And the letter said, "Dear Dad, your wife is driving my crazy." That's beauty, isn't it? "Your wife is driving me crazy." I wrote her back a letter. I said, "Join the crowd. Take a number. Live with it." You know, what else was there. But I have a good relationship with the kids. You know, you talked about German. You talk about working for Germans. My daughter worked -- she was IT for Siemens for 17 years. She was head of IT from big money. And then when she got divorced she wanted to stick close to the home and now she works IT for a buyer and she works from home and she is an absolute killer. She's a mother. She's just as much as my mother as her mom. And my oldest son is vice president of NCR corporation and he runs the automated checkout division. And he is a combination. He's me. He's a little guy. Five foot six and his son is five foot four. He's a little guy but you don't want to call him a little guy. I mean he's vice president NCR and he's really tough. He owns a vineyard and we go out and we pick by hands for 10 years. I just finished for helping. And the third one is a Cornell graduate and he's largest caterer in Virginia. Right now business is not great. Nobody has any money. When Betty died, we had sold the house and we took the money to buy this apartment in this Federation, CCRC, or most of it and I got lucky because when I die -- when she died and I moved out I got 90 percent

of my money back. That they had a year to pay me but they sold my apartment within two months. So I took 200,00 some odd thousand dollars. And I said, "This is not my money. This is not my money." And I set up education funds for the remaining grandchildren that hadn't been -- and I gave money to the guys who had graduated. Not a lot of money but I got nine of these guys that I spent -- I gave \$200,000 away. Well, and what about mothers. As I started taking care of my mother I would drive up there twice a month and I would pay the help and I would do the shopping for her. And you know, and she said to me, "I have to redo my will." I said, "Okay." And she said, now the problem is you know Liz is on welfare, you know, and on Social Security. And they tell me that she's not going to -- that that might affect the will." I said, "You're damn right. Any money you leave her the State of New York will take for welfare. You have to pay back the state before she gets the money." "Well, that's not fair." I said -- she said, "Well, then we have -- I want to give money to my grandchildren. She has two daughters and you have three children." I said, "Mom, just skip the generation." "Well, I can't do that." I said, "I don't need your money. I don't have the money but I don't need your money. I already running your business anyhow. You got money. I'm representing you in all the family affairs and I don't get paid for it. Skip a generation." "Oh, that can't be done." My idiot uncle who is an engineer says, "Oh, you can't do that." I said, "Talk to your attorney." So they get an attorney. They get a \$3,000 bill that say, yeah, of course you can do that. The guy thought about it for nine minutes. They said, "He doesn't know what he's talking about." They get another attorney and they spend \$4,000. Says, "Yeah, of course you can do that. I'll write the will." So now the will gets -- and the

deal is skip a generation, the money gets split between the five grandchildren. And among them -- among not between. And I'm the executor which is legal. I get a call from my uncle. He says, "That's an unfair will." "What are you talking about?" He said, "You know, it was 50/50. Your three children were going to split 50 percent of grandma's money. My mother's money. And your sister's kids were going to get -- now they would have gotten 25 percent each. Now they are really getting 20 percent and your children should have gotten 60 now they are getting 20. That's not fair." And I said a verb and pronoun you know what I mean. And I said, "You know, 25 percent of nothing is nothing. 20 percent of million plus is something." And each one of the kids got almost \$300,000 by the time I finished, you know, over the years and I distributed it. And so I feel very good about that. And I don't mind, you know, it was better for them. I mean they were able to use it. And Mike bought a vineyard and Susan bought a house, and you know, everybody did well. And but that's the family this, this spoiled bunch of -- my grandfather and my grandmother were really sharp but they raised three of the most spoiled brats in the history of the world, you know. I love my uncle because he was a mechanical engineer genius and he died just two years ago. Great. He was a good man. We were friends. But as far as -- I said to him, "Are you going to go for the Holocaust money?" And he said, "I'm not a Holocaust survivor." I said, "Walter, where were you in 1939?" He said, "I was a student at RPI." I said, "Where were you living?" He said, "I was a student living in United States going to Polytech." I said, "Were you able to get back?" He said, "Oh, no. I couldn't get back." I said, "Guess what, you were a refugee." "Oh, you think so. Well, I don't need the money." I said, "Okay. Let me fill it out for

you. You know, fill out the information. I'll ask you questions and we will submit it."

And he said, "If you get me money, you can have it." Then a year later I called him up and I said, "Where's my check?" He said, "What check?" I said, "You got a check for \$26,000 and you told me I could have it." "Well, I will buy you dinner." And I said, "I'm going to find a place where dinner is \$26,000 because you own me money." No -- well no. I said, "Don't worry about it." So the next sequence came and they didn't fill it out again. This time they lost a lot of money because now they started -- here's an interesting, the last preparations came in, you know -- and you know, we had the apartment and the world but I remember my father sold the family business so they couldn't have that many assets left because they had been paid -- the money had been come out of in 60s. So I got my final and they said, you know, it's so many -- you people live so -- basically it's you people live so damn long. There is so many of you remaining, we don't have a lot -- we can only pay ten cents on the dollar. Here's what you're worth and we're going to pay you a three-fifth. So remember your sister gets, your sister's family gets one half of the estate but since they didn't apply for it nobody gets it unless you're willing, you know, unless you're willing to let them get paid through you and you will agree to pay them which I did. And they left a lot of money on the table. Now you are going to get -- you are going to get documents that I'm getting you. And among the documents I found this list because I'm pretty good about the computer and the internet. And there was a listing. And here was my father and there were open insurance policies. I said that can't be my father; he didn't believe in insurance. But I wrote them a letter. And it was a Italian company, department. And I said, "My dad died. Here's the death certificate. My mother

died. Here's her death certificate. My sister died, here's her death certificate. I have no idea what this is but the birthday is correct and asked peck (ph) is correct. Do I have any money coming?" About a month later I get this package and it looked like it been went through a washing machine. And there is stamps all over it; Italian stamps. And it's from them and it's a package. And they said, "Yes. You are -- thank you very much. We have certified that you're the sole beneficiary because of the fact that we have the death certificate. Your father took out a \$2,000 -- now he took out a \$200 annuity for 20 years would have have paid in '49. And the Nazi party cashed it in in '39. Therefore since that's an invalid cash in, it would have been 4,200 some odd dollars. Since it's an invalid cash in, we are going to pay as if you had never done it, we would like to know where to sent \$137,000. And I read it again. And I said, "We're going to buy a nice car, Betty." You know because the best revenge is living well. You know, and I got -- so my bank that I used to print for calls me up and says, "Mr. Halpern we just got a deposit into your account." I said, "Really." They said, "Yeah. You want to leave it in your checking account?" I said, "Five figures?" They said, "No, it's six figures." I said, "Okay. I'll be down there. We are going to deal with it but just put it over into a money market account until I get there." But that was, you know, and that was my dad and he had done that for one reason: Because my grandfather believed in insurance. Now I will tell you if my father had a \$200 account, my grandfather's account was in those papers. His name was listed too. They never followed up on it. Now if my father had \$200, you know how much -- my grandfather had a policy with Anchor. Anchor was a British company Uncore I think but they paid too. If my grandfather had -- if my father had \$200, then

my grandfather must have had \$2,000. Because my grandfather -- my father would never have bought that policy if my grandfather hadn't said it was a good idea.

Q: Now speaking about family funds, I would like to get back to the incident you described in the restaurant where your dad was speaking with man who he recognize. Do you know who those people were who were living in your apartment?

A: Nope.

Q: What happened to your apartment like --

A: Well, the building got bombed out.

Q: It's a different building now?

A: It's completely -- it's a totally different building now. It was the corner building onto to where you stepped out. But no that's -- I don't know what happened. It's just a great story because my father, my father was that kind of a man. Quick one on my father that that I heard from my mother and she -- her attitude was different. Where my mother went in 1950 the first time she was went -- she was going to come live with him in Germany and you got the Ponseon and they always traveled by the Queen Elizabeth and they played bridge all the way across the ocean and back. And you had stop in Paris to get a gray card so you can go behind the Iron Curtain. And at that time the Cold War was going on. And my father said to my mother, "We're going to get on this train. And we have a compartment, you know, semi-private compartment. And the Russians are going to come on board and they are going to ask you. You don't say a word. Not a word. I'll talk to them." You got to remember he's really mild mannered. He says, "You can't say anything." And you know, if you know that the Russians occupied Austria with their

Mongrel troops. Vienna was occupied by the Mongrels because the Russians knew that if they sent their sophisticated troops in possession was unbelievably high so they sent in the guys that slaughtered chickens -- I mean they really were the murders. You're a Russian but you understand what I'm saying?

Q: Yeah, I know about Mongrels.

A: The Mongrels troops were the ones that they sent and they were tough. So my mom and dad, the train starts and it gets to the border. And into their compartment come two Soviet soldiers. And my dad -- and they are carrying Stens over their shoulder. And he says -- when the soldier says to my father, "Passport." International world. My father takes out these two -- in those days the American passport was green with this enormous eagle on it. The American eagle. And this guy looks at him and he says, "Americane." And my father says -- and he takes the passport and he opens it and he does this, you know, next to his face. And then he goes to my mother and she flinches and does that next to her face. He closes it and he hands it to my father and he hands it to my father and he leans over my father and he spits between my father's legs. (Noise.) He hands him the passport and father says, "Thank you."

Q: What year was this?

A: '60, '61. And he says -- no, no. Excuse me, '50, '51. Excuse me, but this '50 or '51. Because my mother went in '50. So it had to be '50. And he -- my father says, "Thank you." And this Russian looks at him and he says, "Sacebo". (Ph). My father says, "Thank you." He says, "You sir, Sacebo." My father said, "I am an American. Thank you." And the guy took the sten off. Never pointed it at him. Took the sten off his helmet and said,

"Sacebo." And just then an officer comes to the door and he says in Russian, "What the hell is going on?" We got all this -- you guys are wasting time here." My father leans around this soldier and in perfect Russian says to him, "This expletive deleted, expletive deleted is trying to teach me a language that was my mother tongue before he was just an idea in his father's mind." You know, really course. And he said, "He wants me to speak a language that I knew. I will not. I am an American. I will speak my language. The language of, of the country." And he said -- and he sat there. And the soldier is still holding the passports. The officer went over and he took the passports out he said something. They left the compartment. And the officer walked up to my father, handed him the passport and said, "Thank you." Which is a great story. You know, but my mother said, "You father's insane. Your father is insane. He could have gotten me killed." That's my mother. And I said, "No, if you had died you would have died a hero," because that's magnificent. That was my dad. You know, I mean he was a real quiet man and I wish I had known him better. And to tell you the truth when I go up to the family plot, I talk to my father. They're buried in Mont Hepburn in Flushing, New York. I go up there once a year. But that's -- so money wise I don't know. I do not know what happened. I know the apartment was demolished. I know that went to visit the factory in Gumpoldsdorf (ph). On our way out back to Vienna we stopped. It's in the Fifth District. And I went -- I vaguely remember that you had to open -- it was a bunch of buildings on a narrow street but you had to open a gate. There was a courtyard for the factory. And it's still there but it's a music studio and graphic design. Once again there we go again. But I -- I don't feel any smertz for loss because I'm an American. I mean I

came so early. I love baseball. I played college soccer but I played. I'm an American.

I'm sportswriter. I can be couth, uncouth. You know, but I am, I like who I am. I'm -- not everybody likes me but I am who I am.

Q: Did you speak German in your family or English?

A: No, we -- well my mother wanted to speak to my father, they knew the German we understood it. We didn't speak German at home. But they would talk French. No my father -- typically my mother. My mother spoke a lot of languages. My father speaks about twelve. From business he spoke Czech, Croatia, Slovenian, Russian, Hebrew. But mother would speak in a language in which he was uncomfortable -- he was not comfortable in French. He could speak it. But he was like a student. My mother spoke perfect French because she learned it. You know, but pretty soon we caught on.

And my sister and I both took French from, you know, we knew what they were talking about. Then they switched to Czech a little bit. But no, no, but my mother, of course, spoke German with her friends. And I just wanted to slap her silly. Because come on, mom, everybody speaks English. I know you speak English. I know she speaks English because I speak English to her. And she is just -- she was just a little bit different. But yeah, we can't speak -- like I say, my vocabulary came out of nowhere. Like I said, what five-year-old child knows the word was asqacitnine (ph). You know, and I would pick up expressions from my mother. She called delicatessen the Malour (ph) shop because it's, you know, I use that expression. I guess I learned some things from my mother. Snobbish things. But no, she would do life totally -- to somebody who spent two years in the prison

when from the Nazis to be totally unaffected. Literally unaffected by it. Ask me who her favorite composer is? Wagner.

Q: Did she know about Wagner being --

A: Of course. My mother went -- they live in Forest Hills. When my dad died her friends wouldn't come play bridge on the subway so she moved to Lincoln -- to one Lincoln Center so she could walk and always had one ticket available. She used to go three or four times a week to the opera. They would hold the ticket at the box office. And they always had one ticket for her. And she would sit through the entire -- she would sit through every single one of these one of those and they would do this marathon. They would do them like in five nights and my mother would go every night. And it's like eating a mattress. It's good God. There some nice but it's really heavy, heavy, heavy heart. So she bought this membership. And she always got five tickets for two for five. She always had a ticket. She would get five operas and she would also be able to pick three good ones and always Wagner. And it always give you -- like you know when you buy baseball seats, you get the teams you don't want to see but you have to buy that ticket. And she said to us, "I have these tickets to the Opera. Why don't you come and have dinner and then you can go to the opera because I have these very nice seats." I said, "That's nice of you, mom." I like opera but my wife -- Cleveland, Ohio. And she said -- I said, "What's the opera?" She said, "Hazel and Gretel." And I said, "Thanks, mom." I hope -- "Will there be a translation so I can follow this story?" That was my mom.

Q: Well, we have to interrupt for changing tracks here.

End of File Two

Beginning File Three

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Interview with Paul Felix Halpern conducted by Juliet Eninina (ph) on October 17th of 2010 at the Kindertransport Association Conference in Arlington, Virginia. Let's continue.

A: It is -- it was -- Levi Eshkol had just died. And when we visited the cemetery, they had just -- it was the last day of Shiva, and they had opened the grave up for -- you know, that people could go by there. And so that's the timing. I just figure out a week after Levi Eshkol died, that's when I was there with my wife on that trip. And I loved everything, and I felt very -- and my wife said, This is the most amazing place in the world. That garbage man over there is a Jew, and that mailman is a Jew, and that guy in that barber shop giving a haircut is a Jew. And, you know -- and they'll talk about the rich Jews, and everybody is a brother here, and it isn't -- it's -- it's classless. I mean, there are classes but within -- and it -- it makes a lie out of the rich Jew. And she says, I'm not a rich Jew. I was a poor Russian, you know, and I -- you know, and they told me I killed Christ, you know. And -- but she was very -- she loved Israel. We thought it was -- and we walked. There was no tram. We walked up on the -- the -- the Masada. We walked. We walked up there. And, of course, to me, the military aspect of it is tremendous. You know, that's where the Tank Corps gets sworn in. And I tried to get -- give my military guys -- I says, You don't understand. Never again means never again. And it's -- if -- and they said, Well, you know, we're not -- we're gonna neglect Israel. I says, You're out of your mind. Israel goes down, they will take the rest of the world down with them, because never again means never again. They're not going down without a fight. And if

the fight is nuclear, they're gonna go nuclear and the world will die because of that, so it behooves every country in the world to make sure that Israel continues to exist because of the fact that these are tough, tough people who are not going down. Now, I'm not as honest. I -- I believe land for peace, but that's my opinion. And I had no right to tell them what to do, and I feel very strongly about that. And what's interesting is, I -- I had the -- like I say, I had this -- my father's cousin. Her name was Betty Rubenstein (ph) and her kids were soverest (ph), and she and her husband came in the thirties through the Palestine. And they were very well-established, and they had friends in high places. And one of her friends was a woman named Tao Rath (ph) who was the pearl (ph) muster, the social -- unofficial social secretary. When Bernstein would come to -- he would stay with Tao. And we had a lot of time because, in between peace missions, you know, when -- the Secret Service would be at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, and they'd say, Henry's going to bed. You guys are off duty. Check in again in the morning. Because we flew the limousine back and forth. And I get a call from this lady, and she says to me, Hi, I'm Betty's -- Betty Rubenstein's friend, Tao Rath. And I didn't know who that was. She said, Do you like music? I said, I love music. She says, You know, the Israeli Philharmonic is playing tonight. I said, Yeah, but it's like the -- like the tickets to the Boston Red Sox. You have to -- have to know somebody who dies so you can get their tickets. She said, Ooh, would you like to go? And I said, I would love to go. And she said, Do you have a jacket? And I said, Yes, I have a jacket. I had a blazer, because we flew civilian clothes. And she said -- and she said, The address is so and so. I said, I know where it is. I can get there. I'll take a cab. And we were staying downtown -- we

were staying out by the airport, as a matter of fact. I said, I can get there. And I'm standing there, and she said, Meet me at the musician's entrance. And this limousine pulls up and this driver gets out and he opens the door and this woman about that big -- my mother's small. This woman is that small. And she gets out, and she is the most charming woman in the world. And she says, We're running late. Come in. She knocks on the door, and the door opens up and the guard says, Ah, Mrs. Rafal (ph) Rath, how are you? Hello, Henry. How are you? And she shakes his hand, and we walk across the stage -- and the orchestra's tuning up. We walk across the stage, we walk down into the audience and Krivitsky was conducting and playing. He actually was gonna play. And he's magnificent. And we walk, and she's shaking hands with people, and she says, Where's George? Oh, George is not here tonight. He couldn't make it. Okay, this is my friend Paul. He's with Dr. Kissinger. He's gonna sit here. And I said, Where are you gonna sit? She says, Ooh -- and I look and she's sitting on the steps with friends. And the first act is -- you know, he -- he's playing, and it's marvel -- he's a real -- he was fantastic in typical Russian with -- with the flowing hair. And she says, Come buy me a drink, you know? Then she says, Do you have any Israeli money? And I said, Yeah, I got shekels, you know? And we stand there, and people come around her because she is -- and because I'm with her, people are talking to me. And we -- we finish, and we go back to -- back to our seats and we finish the concert, and she says, Would you like to meet the maestro? I said, I'd love to. And we go to the Arturo Toscanini room, which is the VIP lounge, back of the hall, and she walks in and Krivitsky puts down his glass, walks across, kisses her hand and says, Tao, my darling, how are you? And she said --

she says, I'm wonderful. This is my friend, Paul. He's with Dr. Kissinger. And, of course, he doesn't shake hands with anybody. His hands are his gold. And he said, Nice to meet you. I said, Thank you so much, Maestro. It was marvelous, you know? I know how to talk. And he looked at me like Americans that do that, and he said, You're welcome. And that was the first time. So we went to see two concerts. One was with the American -- the one that conducted the Washington National, the black who was paralyzed, and he was marvelous, too. One day she says, Are you free for dinner tomorrow? And I said, I'll call you. And I'd gone out to where she lived one day, and she said, Betty -- I want to take you and Betty to dinner. And she fixed me up at the hotel and Betty's in the car with Dr. Rubenstein, and we go driving out into the mountains -- obviously, you know -- you know Tel Aviv and that area -- and there's an enclave up there where most of the official -- government officials live. Very highly secure. And we get to the gate, and she says, Do you have an identification card? And I said, Of course. And we get to the gate, and this real hard-ass Israeli soldier at the gate, and he sees the limo, so a little bit of respect, and he leans in the back window and he says, Good evening, Mrs. Rath. And she says, How are you? And she knows his name. And he says, I'm just checking the names. And he -- you know, Dr. Rubenstein, Captain Halpern -- or Major Halpern? And I said, Yes, I am. And we drive, and she says, Diane lives over here and so and so lives over here, and this is where -- and we drive up, and we're going to a dinner party at a Minister of Finance's house. And the door opens up, and I'm wearing a jacket. Everybody else is in evening culottes (ph). And there are Sehgal's on the wall and there's a Picasso on the wall, and they're not -- they're not copies. And she --

this charming woman, she says, Darling, this is my friend Paul. He's with Dr. Kissinger. And she says to me, How's your -- how's your Hebrew? And I said, Nonexistent. And she says -- I said, I speak a little -- I speak a little French. And she looks at me like phooey, you know. And she says, Just a moment. And she turns around and she says, Ladies and gentlemen, in deference to our guest, English only, please. And the rest of the evening nobody spoke anything but English. And there was a cocktail party. There was everything. So I sit down. There's a very erect gentleman sitting next to me over here. There are very erect gentlemen sitting over here. Absolutely military, no argument about it, sitting in close. And, remember, I am just the navigator for the airplane that carries Kissinger's cars, but I'd been to Syria. I just came out of Damascus. And we start a conversation. And finally I said, Navy or Air Force? And he said, Army. And the other guy says, Navy. And I said, Gentlemen, I'm just a poor navigator, you know? I said, I am an information officer, as you know, and you know that I've talked to your people at - at the airport. I've talked to your people, but there's nothing I can help you with, but I am honored that you would think that a poorly major -- you know. And they -- they had just decided to put two people next to me that wanted to talk about -- and I knew nothing about Dr. Kissinger, except that he couldn't get it done. He was under a lot of pressure to get it done. His best friend, Joseph Alsop, died and he was supposed to be a pallbearer, and he wasn't allowed to come back. He had to get that peace mission. So he missed his best friend's funeral because of that. But it was quite an experience. And Israel's seen as a military man. And then I flew the Israeli airlift. I flew the Yom Kippur War, and we flew -- this is when our own country was told by our allies if we had trouble -- we

flew out of the Azores, nonstop with a double crew carrying equipment to Tel Aviv, to Lod. Lod. Ben Gurion. And we were told, in case of emergency, we could not land in Spain or France or anywhere. And they put their ranger, which is an American aircraft carrier, in the middle of the Mediterranean, and that was out, and they said -- so the question was: Do you -- are you gonna control us? What if we need to land? Put it in the Mediterranean. And we said, This airplane swims like a stone. So every one of us said, If we're in trouble, the first time that the French are gonna know that we're on their runways is when we land. We're just gonna put it down. We could see Italian and French bases coming down the Mediterranean. We were gonna land. So we were coming this way, and Aeroflot, the Soviets, were coming this way, and they were going to -- they were going to Egypt and we were going this way, and they were coming in. And, you know, English is the language of the -- of international air, and these Russian pilots had terrible command of the English language. And they would call Cypress and they would say, Cypress Control, this is -- this is Aeroflot so and so, and Cypress would start to talk to them, and we'd hid our microphones and just block out -- block out that transmission. And we drove them crazy. And finally, Cypress Control said, Military aircraft in the vicinity of such and such a position, stop your transmissions. Because they knew we were doing that, you know, because we were just flying. It was -- and we got to -- we got to -- we got to -- you know, where Egypt -- Israel, and the Mirages came up for us and the migs came up for the -- and we could see each other. And we just landed. And they turned us around. You know, they turned us around immediately. And they had taken all the first class seats out of the -- out of the LR Air-Cranes (ph) and all the

stewardesses, and so we were crew members, and I said, Just leave us your loadmaster and you guys -- and we'd like to get something to eat. And we had fresh orange juice and this and that. You know, we had a -- we had a wonderful time. And they knew more about our airplanes, how to load our 141s, than our people did. And within two hours, all our flight plans were filed for us, all the weights and measurements were done, you know, our pilots had signed off. And we knew how to get home, you know; Mediterranean, head east, head west. And I did -- the total mission was like 20 hours each time, and we would drop things off and we would pick things up and bring them back to the Azores. And the lead commander of the Israeli Yom Kipper War airlift was a colonel who was the deputy commander at my base, and I was a speech writer besides being a navigator, and his name was Wrigley. Like Wrigley -- Wrigley like W-r-i-g-l-e-y. He was a full colonel and he knew me because I used to write speeches for he and the general. And we had a Jewish pilot. We -- you know, military airlift command, you don't fly set crews. You just -- two pilots, two navi -- you know. And he came to me, and he says -- his name is Steve Tirshen (ph) -- and Steve said, You know, we could make an all-Jewish crew. Do you think we could get the first crew into Tel Aviv? And I went to Colonel Wrigley, and I said to him, Steve Tirshen -- and Bob Rowe's (ph) the navigator and he's got a Jewish copilot and he can get a Jewish navigator. Bob was a navigator who I knew for years. They want to be the number one aircraft. And Wrigley said, Okay. Just like that. And he was a -- he was a -- he was an Ekta (ph) goy, you know. He -- and he -- so they put this airplane at number one air plan on this Erma and was gonna be this all-Jewish crew. And I remember the pilot's name. His name was

Steve Tirshen. And they took off and they lost an engine. And they had to dump -- they had to dump out over the Mediterranean -- over the -- over the Azores, South Atlantic, and make a turn and come back in again, and Wrigley went to number five in -- in line. Number two and three were ready to go and number five was just getting ready. He put -- he -- he hopped in the truck and he said to the crew, Take number five. And he let them -- he couldn't give them the number one, but he gave them the first open air plan, which I thought was, you know, a real nice touch for a military man, you know. I was number four crewman, and I flew with a bunch of -- a bunch of goys. But we went in and we -- the first time, and it -- and then we had 12 hours on the ground. We were two crews. And we were coming down the Mediterranean, and the Ranger said to us, You've got company. And we look up and there are two Algerian migs sitting on our wing. And they're -- they're flying real close to us, and they're going like this, and "blah," you know, and all we do is we take -- we always have a camera, and we were just taking pictures and -- you know, the official -- and they were fully voiced, and the Ranger said, You guys want company? We said, We'd appreciate it. And we look up and there were two Navy F-4s appeared, and the -- look up and these F-4s are sitting directly above the two migs. And the F-4s let down there, their props had slowly come down like this, and these guys are looking like this, and they're on our wing. And they finally got here and they accelerated and went on their way. And the Ranger said, I think they've left. We said, Yeah. Thank you very much for the help. And he did -- great stories that are -- never get told. You know, I don't know if I'm -- I'm not breaking protocol because I'm not telling you any of the procedures, but it was -- it made me feel like a good Jew. You know, it --

it -- and I -- I was gone about 10 days, and on the last day they said, Who -- who's -- and they -- some of us were rotating out, and they brought us -- there -- I must have had 10 dozen baby roses, just -- and we flew home -- flew -- flew to Lajes where we were flying out of, the Azores, and I kept those in the -- in the flight kitchen. And 12 hours later, we flew home. And I got home at 4:00 in the morning. 4:00 in the morning. And I filled the sink, and the roses were still tight, and I dropped the roses in the sink to let them soak all night, and I went to bed. And two days later, I'm -- I'm -- I'm at synagogue. It was one of the holidays. It was Yom Kip -- it was -- it was Yom Kippur. The Yom Kippur War -- it was right after Yom Kippur, and it must have been Sukkot, because my -- my -- my wife's yossi (ph) is Sukkot. And the rabbi's talking about how we must help because he hears things are terrible, you know, and I'm sitting in the back -- I've been there. I just came back. I just came back from there, and I can't say anything about it, you know. Can't say anything about it at all. But that's what good Jews -- it was great.

Q: I'm sorry.

A: Again, all that has more religious and efficous (ph) than it did as before. It was -- like I say, when I lecture, I lecture. When I give talks, I talk about a five-year-old, a six-year-old child and its impressions of -- of the Nazis and -- you know, and how it's -- you know, that's -- that's different than --

Pause in Proceedings

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with Paul Felix Halpern conducted by Juliet Eninina (ph) on October 17th of 2010 at the

Kindertransport Association Conference in Arlington, Virginia. So we were talking about --

A: The significance --

Q: -- the significance of your experience as a Kindertransport child --

A: I said it was -- I said it was -- it is my life, because I -- the Kindertransport saved my life. I know that. But it -- it didn't affect me as a Jew. The older I get and the more introspective I get and the fact that most of my -- my kids, they all were bar mitzvahed but they're -- they're assimilated Jews more than anything else, and they -- I -- I've become more and more introspective about it. And I'm still -- because I lost my wife, I'm not much of a -- I'm not much of a churchgoer, you know? But at the same time, ethnically, I'm a very strong Jew, and I feel -- I feel very close -- close to what's going on. And I think that probably I -- I could probably do the Holocaust Museum -- I could do the museum. I hadn't been there. I've been to the one in Richmond because my son does a lot of work with them, but we'll probably give it a shot. I may -- I'll go there. I'm slowly coming to -- to terms with it. You know, I'm 78 -- I'm gonna be 78 years old. I don't feel like it, but -- so I always kid with this -- this lady I go out with now, and I always say, You know, 20 years from now we're gonna -- and she says, Well, I may be here, you know, because she's only 70. But I'm not looking to make a mark. I just -- I just want to understand more. And I'm getting there. I don't do a lot of reading about it because the people who were there were too young to really understand. I didn't go -- you know, I -- I talked to people who were -- who were in Auschwitz and who came out and some of my friends are survivors who hidden -- who hid and were shot and things like this, and the

people -- they were all young people, and young people don't think like us old people. In retrospect, I'm beginning to understand more. And you -- see, you have the advantage of watching me have this experience, and -- but if you were experiencing it right now, 50 years from now it's gonna be a different thing because you're gonna say is, Oh, that's what scarred me; Oh, that's why I'm affected. And all these little crazy things like knowing -- having had a friend who ate paper, but yet that was a manifestation of a child needing attention, a Jewish kid away from home, but I didn't think about it like that. My friend, Wolf (ph), ate paper, you know? I flushed my teddy bear down the toilet, you know? I'm just saying, Hey, somebody look over here, you know? But you don't know that as it's going on. You do things and then why did you do it? But it makes life a lot of fun. And, look, I'm a journalist and I -- I'm published. I've -- I've written articles and I've written -- you know, but at the same time, I cannot sit down and write this stuff down. And I've told you a lot of stuff. Like this story about my father and the passports, it's a magnificent story. Any Jewish newspaper, if I write it well, would pick it up.

Q: Why do you think you can't write it down?

A: I don't have the right words for it. I don't have the right respect for it. And I'm good. I mean, I can -- I can write. I was a journalist. I'm a sports writer. I can write features. You know why? I've become too close to it. You tell me -- you could -- you told me that story, I could write it, like you probably could write this, too. It's just not -- and even though I'm a gadgeteer, you know, and I have full command of computers and I have full command of digital, I have upstairs a Sony tape recorder, which I was gonna take with

me to listen, because -- but it's electronic and I can't do electronic. I'm a typewriter guy, you know?

Q: Sure.

A: And even on the computer. I have trouble on the computer because it's too easy. And, you know, I -- I now have -- I just bought Nuance. I bought voice so I can -- I -- it can type, and I find myself reading and saying, That's not how you spell that, instead of saying, Just get it done. And I have troubles. I have started five or six recollections about my father and about my -- my -- can't finish them. Because the people I lecture to on -- and I haven't done it in about three years because I was busy with my wife. They want to hear a five year old. They want to hear the story that a five year old -- from a five-year-old aspect that -- they want to hear the fact that I remember riding my bicycle, that I was so -- not that I was so affluent that I -- I could ride my bicycle in the dining room, but the fact that I was a kid and this is how Holocaust affected me originally was I rode my bicycle around and I -- I -- I had a good father. It was cold one night and we still had our nanny, and in our -- my sister and I had a room and there was a potbelly stove in the room, you know? It was just as a convenience. And my -- and my nanny lit a fire and burned up about \$50,000 worth of money that my father had put away for emergency escape funds. You know, those -- but the -- but when I tell that story to people, they say, Well, that's a lot of -- it's entertaining. The Holocaust was not entertaining, even though I tell it that way. And I tell my grandkids, Dying hurts and there's no rerun from it, you know? You know, bang, bang, bang, you're dead, and this and that, and they shoot -- all the shoot 'em up games and, yeah, but if you come away from this game with the aspect

that you can do something really reckless and once that game is over you can go back and do it -- undo it, you can't do it. You get a shot -- you know, particularly -- I tell a joke, Watch yourself when you fly. I said, Dying hurts. And -- you know, and I -- not that I -- I've been told. Nobody has come back to tell me, but I know it does. And, Just be careful. And -- but that's not how life lives. The bottom line is: Be careful. Be careful. But we weren't careful. And, you know, kids today -- if I tried to thrust one of my kids on the train, he would probably pop me one. But we went because mom said we -- you know, mom and dad took me to the -- took me to the -- and Oma took me to the train. It's a different world. It's a different world.

Q: Did you tell your story to your children and grandchildren?

A: My kids know it. My kids know it. I made them -- I -- I was principal speaker at -- my synagogue did a Holocaust Memorial Garden, and a couple of -- couple of state senators were there and so on, and I gave this little speech. It was real funny. They told me -- asked me if I would do this, and I said, Okay. And I sat down to write the basic speech, and I hadn't -- I hadn't done Kindertransport speeches yet. And I said, How much time do I have? And they said, Oh, about five minutes. I said, Just forget it. I said, If you're gonna -- just so that that -- that state senator can -- can babble on about how wonderful you people are -- he had an Irish name -- I'm not -- I'm not playing second fiddle. This is a memorial -- Holocaust memorial thing. If you don't want to hear it -- Well, how much time you need? I said, I just ran it through. It's 30 minutes. Oh, that's way too long. I said, Okay. 20? They said, Okay. And I did 35 minutes, you know? But I said to my kids, Do me a favor -- and they weren't a member of my synagogue --

check me out. See how I'm doing, because I'm gonna be giving this talk at your schools pretty soon. So -- and they said they love it. And 35 minutes is good because school sessions are 40 minutes, you know, so I could -- I -- I haven't done it lately, and -- but Betty and I did teach reading in Camden. She wanted to teach reading to adults. And then, of course, when she -- when she had the stroke, she couldn't -- for transportation. So we taught first grade and second grade reading. And when Betty -- and when Betty died, we -- people said, What do we donate to? And we said, the Elizabeth Halpern Readers Fund. And we got a lot of money, and we went to that Puerto Rican school or Hispanic school in Camden where we had taught reading, we said, What do you need? And every year we give them \$500 worth of Readers Club books. And just the other day, I went back -- for Rosh Hashanah, I went back to Lionsgate. And we have this wonderful rabbi who was my rabbi when he came out of reconstruction school, and he has done this siddur just for us, you know, abbreviated session, and he's really -- and the auxiliary had given him the money for it. But, you know, they're gonna need more and more. So I went over and I said, I want to give you money for this. And I gave them a check -- I remember the people at that Lionsgate gave money to my wife's fund, the Readers Club, and I took -- just gave them \$300 from the Elizabeth Halpern Readers Club to buy more siddurs, because that's reading. That's reading. You know? That's not -- that's not what the original intent was. I ran -- and I -- I funded -- I funded -- I bring it up to a thousand dollars every year, and it's only been two -- she's only been gone -- second anniversary. But we came down and I took it up to a thousand, and I said to her -- I said, Let me give you a couple hundred dollars and give me a check for \$300 and I'll -- because that way

it's tax free for you, you know, and it's tax free for me. And I just thought it was a -- and she -- he said, Well, it already says who -- I said, Who cares? You know, I just -- you know, I like to do things like that.

Q: Yeah. One second. I'll just pause and --

A: I'm all -- if I want to sum it up, I -- I am content. I am -- I don't want to die, but we all do. That's too bad. I -- I hope -- I hope to continue on for -- you know, I -- I want to be shot by a jealous husband and during the act, you know? I mean, that's -- but that's -- that's not gonna happen. But I feel very -- I'm -- I'm content. I look at -- I've got three productive children. Two of them are married correctly. The other one is a good mother. They all had bought into education. The name's gonna go on. And for that, Kindertransport, my name is on because my sister's name is gone. I mean, you know, she -- her married name, but she's gone. But Halpern goes on because of my -- my nine grandsons, six of them who -- three -- yes, six of them have my name. The other -- the others are -- so I feel that I've accomplished something. I mean, you know, nothing -- nothing big deal, but without Kindertransport, I'm not here. I'm not a dedicated -- you know, maybe I got too much of my mother in me. I -- I enjoy life, you know, a little bit. But I get angry, and I get -- I get angry because Rwanda happens and I get angry when Sarajevo happens, and I get overenthusiastic when Chile happens because, you know, there is solution -- there are solutions to this stuff. I'm -- I just -- I just want -- I just want to be remembered my -- you know, Your grandpa was nuts, you know? You know, or my kids -- I want my -- my grandkids to say, He was a nice guy. He was a friend. We could have a beer together. Like I'm going to go have a beer with them at Founders --

you know, Founding Fathers restaurant -- Founding Fathers. I didn't get what I'm -- I'm not the greatest writer in the world, and -- but I guess -- I guess I did all right, and I guess I'm gonna do all right. I mean, I -- I --

Q: Sure.

A: This -- this -- and the interview is not the end of my life, and I'm gonna go on to see -- I hope to -- I have no idea whether -- you know, my oldest is 25 and he's a fighter pilot. He's not gonna get married for a while. I'm a decision (ph) great-grandchildren, and I'd love to be able to go to a bar mitzvah of a grandchild. And I go to bar mitzvahs and I -- and I have a good time. And I'm a Jew, but I'm an -- I'm a -- I'm an ethnic Jew. I'm -- I -- I'm a -- Lenny Bruce (ph) used to say, What is a Jew? I said, If you eat white bread, you're a goy. If you eat pumpernickel, you're a Jew. I'm a pumpernickel eater. I like -- I like my -- I like my people. I like -- I think we can laugh at ourselves. I think -- you know. And I'm very proud of the -- I will come to the Holocaust Museum. I'm gonna take Shelly down and we --

Q: Great. You're very welcome. We are very happy to invite you.

A: Well, I understand -- I understand the process that you do, the closing and the -- you know, and I understand the -- it's supposed to be very good, and I will -- I will come.

Q: Please. Thank you very much, Mr. Halpern.

A: My pleasure. I'm sorry I took so long.

Q: Oh, don't be sorry, please. It's --

A: Send me a bill.

End of File Three

Conclusion of Interview