

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Sidney Simon on October 9, 2015 in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Thank you very, very much Mr. Simon for agreeing to speak with us today, to share your story, to share your thoughts and your life experience with us and particularly of what happened during the war. I'm going to start by asking the most basic questions in the beginning, and then we'll build from there. So my very first question is, can you tell me the date of your birth?

May, 22, 1925.

OK. And what was your name at birth?

Moishe Schmeel a Jewish name.

Moishe Schmeel.

Moishe Schmeel.

And your last name?

Shimonovicz

Shimonovicz, Moishe Schmeel Shimonovicz.

Right.

And today, you are Sidney Simon.

Right.

OK. And where were you born?

I was born in a small village, Transylvania, where Dracula came from, a very small village called Sapinka.

Sapinka.

Szaplonca in Hungarian.

Szaplonca.

But Sapinka, Szaplonca Hungarian and Romanian. And it was Romania in my time.

OK.

Before my time, it was Austria-Hungary. And the Hungarians managed to hook up on the wrong side, and they lost the war. They're very good at it, losing everywhere they hook up with, the Hungarian. They lost the last war, the first war.

Anyways, so we were, in my time, it was Romania. The war was '49. The Hungarians joined up with the Nazis, with Hitler. They became allies of Hitler. So from Romania, we became Hungarians again.

During the war?

During the war.

OK.

So we were Hungarians for about 2 years before they deported us to Auschwitz.

OK. We'll come to all that.

Let me tell you what happened there. The Hungarians deported all the Jewish people to Auschwitz, OK?

Yeah.

We lost 6 million of our people. Now, Romania also was an ally of Hitler. Hitler wanted Romania to do the same thing.

And Romania said, no, no, no. These are my citizens. These are our citizens.

If you don't trust them, we're going to form a camp, like the Americans did to the Japanese. We'll keep them under guard, but we don't let them out of our country, the Jews. No Jew lost their life Romania.

And the Hungarians said to Hitler, take the Jews. We don't want them. They took some. I have two, three friends who were hiding out with Christian papers in Budapest, you know.

Yes.

And they were hiding out. And they survived, very few. And then, of course, the rest of the war was over. And everything went back where it was.

Romania got back their share. Czechoslovakia went to the Russians. It's now Czechoslovakia, used to be. It's now the Russians occupied that area.

So Sapinka--

So we, my whole family, wind up in Auschwitz.

We'll talk about that a little later.

OK. All right.

OK? Right now, I want to talk about your village Sapinka. Was it Sapinka?

Yes.

And that you start by telling me that it is Romania-- before that, it was Austro-Hungarian Empire.

That's correct.

During the war, it was once more part of Hungary. And after the war, did Sapinka go back to Romania?

Yes.

OK. And today?

Sapinka went back to Romania, and it's still Romania.

It's still Romania.

But the Jewish people, nobody survived. Nobody is living there anymore. We got a cemetery.

My mother was lucky. She died 2 years before. And at least my kids, my children, my grandchildren went to visit my mother where she's buried at the Jewish cemetery. That's all that is left of my town is the cemetery. And they take good care of it.

Well, that is--

All right?

Yeah.

Now, go ahead with your questions.

OK. So you were born and grew up in a part of the world where you could stay in the same village in the same city and live in four different countries throughout one's lifetime or five different countries. I'm making that kind of interpretation. You could grow up in one country, go to school in another, and you never move from your town.

We had one school.

OK.

We didn't have different schools. From the first grade till after the fifth grade-- one school, because a small village.

About how--

The rich kids, the parents send them to a big city to a good school. Some even went to college, who had-- very few people were rich. Maybe a half a dozen in my community had a little money. We didn't.

Yeah. Tell me about your family. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

I had two brothers and four sisters. Let's see, we were seven. I was number four. I was the first boy.

We had Alta, Raizi, Malchi, and Sophie. Four girls and three boys--

Can you give me their names?

--two and me.

So can you give me their names?

Their name?

The names of your siblings from the oldest to the youngest?

Pero he was 15 years old, my brother. My brother Auschler two. Me, that's it, the three boys. The rest were girls. The girls' name was Alta, Raizi, Molly, and Sophie.

The four girls, the older one didn't make it, because she was 24. She was expecting. She was married.

The other girls made it. They survived. So they came home. Three of them came home. My younger one, Sophie--

Hang on a second. OK. So your childhood--

I was number four, the first boy born. I was the favorite child by my mother.

Really?

Yeah, she loved me to death, because I was born after three girls.

Yeah.

All right?

Yeah.

As I grew older, I went to school.

What kind of school?

The public school and then I went to Hebrew school to learn the Jewish religion and all that. So I went half a day here and a half a day at public school. So I was busy with school every day except Friday, let us go half a day.

We had time to go play, Friday afternoon. And Saturday, of course, we didn't. Sunday-- back to school from 6 o'clock in the morning till 9 o'clock in the evening, school, school, school.

That's a lot.

Public school and the religious school, OK, that was my youth.

Now--

Tell me-- OK, OK.

My mother was a very smart woman. She was very smart.

What was her name?

Sophie.

And her maiden name?

Maiden name? She was Shimonovicz.

No, no, no, that's her married name.

I got my mother's name.

No, no, no.

I took my mother's name, Shimonovicz.

Shimonovicz was her maiden name?

Yeah, yes.

What about your father then?

Nathan. Nathan, Nathan.

Nathan, Nathan?

Yeah, that's my father's name.

And his last name was?

Who?

What was your father's last name?

Nathan.

[Nathan?

Nathan, Nathan.

Nathan.

That was his name.

Oh, I see. OK.

Nathan, first name-- Nathan, second name.

OK.

Nathan, Nathan. He comes out of a big family, a lot of brothers. Anyways--

OK, so you were saying about you mother--

--that's it, OK? So my mother decided to move us out from that village where we lived to a bigger town, like where Elie Wiesel comes from. It was only 18 kilometer from us.

But we went. She moved us to a town called Satu Mare, Romania. She said all these kids were in the village, they can't get jobs. But in the big city, they will get jobs.

That was my mom's moved. Father approved. Then the Hungarians took over the country, took all the work permits that Jewish had, stores--

Excuse me. OK. So I want to hear a little bit about Sapinka. Tell me, do you remember, do you have memories of being in Sapinka, of growing in Sapinka?

I remember everything since I was three years old.

Wow. That's a lot.

Yes.

That's a lot. So describe for me what the village looked like.

OK. There was a big long street, the main street, that went from one big city to another city. And they had to go through our village to get there. So we were in the middle. The Jewish families lived on the main street.

What was the name of the main street? You don't remember.

They had no names.

OK.

The Christians who were the farmers of the town. They lived in the side street, but they work the fields. Jewish people are not farmers.

They don't know how to farm. They were more business oriented. They were not.

So the Christian families moved on the side street. And they had farms. We, the Jews, we had three synagogues. Can you imagine?

That's a lot for a small village.

Three synagogue in a small village-- three synagogues. So I learned a lot about the Jewish religion. And I learned in school about math and a little bit of this, a little bit of that.

Yeah. It's a lot of education for a village boy.

Yes, I did.

Yeah.

I did. OK.

So Sapinka?

We were-- Sapinka.

How many people do you think Sapinka had?

I would say we had three synagogues, maybe 100 families.

100 Jewish families.

Yes.

And had your mother been born in Sapinka? Was your mother from Sapinka?

Yes.

And your father, too?

My father, too. They went through the war, World War.

World War I.

Yes.

OK. And had their families always been from Sapinka?

Yes.

Like your grandparents?

Yes, great-great-grandparents.

And great-grandparents-- so your family was from there from many generations from Sapinka?

That's correct.

OK. Did you know your grandparents?

I knew one of my grandpas on my mother's side. And my father's side, he had passed away before I was born. And my mother's side, my grandmother moved in with us after grandpa passed away. So we were kind of one family.

She had three sons living in America. They sent her living expenses. So she moved in with us, our grandma.

Oh, I see. So your mother had three brothers who lived in the United States.

That's correct.

Did she have any other siblings? Did she have any more brothers or sisters?

Yes. Yes. Let's see, two brothers, they stayed in Romania. They got deport, two brothers. Cham, David-- three brothers.

She had three more brothers in Romania.

Three more brothers who lived in different towns-- not in Sapinka, but not far, like 25, 30 kilometer, different villages.

Did she have--

They got married, and they went with their wife wherever.

Did she have any sisters?

If I had sisters?

No, your mother. Did your mother have sisters?

I think of-- one, yes, two sisters.

She was from a large family.

Large family, they all are. We were seven kids, remember.

Yeah.

They didn't know anything except make kids.

So she came from a family, it sounds like, of eight children. Three are in the United States. Three brothers are in Romania. And she has two sisters. So that's nine children plus her.

Yes.

Yeah.

They had a lot of kids.

A lot, yeah. What about your father's side of the family?

We were not close with my father's family for some reason. See, there were two-- there were about three families, what you call substantial, better--

Better off?

My father broke into the better family. My mother came from a better family. So my father had a-- but you asked me about my mother.

I asked you about your mother.

At some time, my mother had brothers. I told you.

Yes. She's had [PERSONAL NAME], Anselm. She had about three brothers, three or four. Two of them lived out of town. They got married outside of Sapinka. Matter of fact, their children are in Cleveland. Some of them survived.

Yeah. So your mother's family was one of the better, more substantial families.

Correct.

Was that in a financial way that they were better off?

Only in financial way.

OK. What kind of business or what kind of livelihood did they have in her family?

My grandfather, my grandmother, had children in America. And they send money to their parents.

[LAUGHTER]

That's what they had.

That's what they had, OK?

That makes it, yeah.

[LAUGHTER]

And your father, how did he support your family?

Well, he was wheeling at dealing and providing for the farmers horses, cows, and a lot of-- he bought the markets and brought them home, sold some to the farmers. And some they sold to a guy who was buying and smuggling across the border to Czechoslovakia. There was a big river divided the two countries, Tisza.

Tisza.

Tisza.

So Sapinka was close to the Tisza River?



Right.

OK. And so he was a tradesman?

I was kid.

Yeah. He was a tradesman. He was a trader.

Right, that's exactly right. He was a tradesmen.

OK.

He was only 52 when he passed away, when they killed him.

When they killed him, he was a young man.

Young man.

A young man-- so tell me, at home, was your family very religious?

Yeah. I mean, you call it very religious. Everybody there was religious. Some was more religious than others, but everybody basically was very religious.

You can imagine a small town. We had three synagogues. So that tell you.

Yes. For 100 families, that's a lot of synagogues.

Yeah.

Yeah. And you were the oldest boy. Is that the reason why you were sent to Hebrew school as well, so that you would get--

No, they sent all the boys to the Hebrew school.

All of them? OK.

Yes, me. My other brothers also went to Hebrew school. And everybody who was born Jewish there had to learn how to read the Bible and had to learn about the history of the Jewish people and all that. I learned all that.

What language? What language did you--

In Hebrew.

In Hebrew.

Yeah.

So in Sapinka, you were learning Hebrew. I learned Hebrew, to read and write in Hebrew. Like I could do-- now, I forgot most of them.

But I could do our services in the morning services. I could do it all by heart. I remembered it as a kid. And I was pretty good in the school that I went.

Did you enjoy it?

Yeah, the Jewish-- I was-- let me say this. I was too smart for my teachers as a kid. Because when I was learning, it didn't make sense, two and two made five. And I was an eight-year-old boy.

And I raised my finger. And I asked the teacher-- we called them rabbi, teacher-- questions. He said to me, you're going to grow up to be a [NON-ENGLISH], I told you that.

[LAUGHTER]

Because I asked the right question. He didn't have an answer.

Yeah.

Let me tell you that one little thing that--

Tell me.

--I try put through my throat.

OK.

After you get older, they give you an now, teach a history of the Jewish people. It's called the Gomorrah.

OK.

OK? So the first page talks about where once set of rabbis have an argument with another set of rabbi. And the argument was, if a goose, a chicken, lays an egg on a holiday, should you be allowed to eat it or not?

Here, I'm 80 years old, and that's a stupid question. And this is the first page of teaching history of Jewish. So I ask a question.

I said, one set of rabbis say yes. Other rabbi says no. So they lost me, OK? I start not believing much in what I was learning, OK?

But this is the type of thing that I was involved in the Jewish teaching. And I learned more than I wanted to know. Because I'll continue. You'll find out why I am the way that I am.

OK. What about public school?

I'm talking public schools.

Oh, you're talking about public--

One was Hebrew. And one was-- you asked me, and I said one was public schools.

Yeah.

We went to public schools from noon till 5 o'clock. From in the morning, 6 o'clock-- Hebrew school and then lunch. And then I went to public school for half a day.

Oh, really?

A whole day they kept the kid in school from early morning to late at night, half of it Hebrew, half of it public.

But the question that you were asked-- the question that was posed to you when you were 8 years old, that was in Hebrew school?

Yes.

Yes. And then after that-- and the language was Hebrew that you were being taught in and that you were learning? OK Now, afternoons you went to public school.

Yes.

And what language did you--

Romanian.

Romanian.

Yes.

And at home, what did you speak?

We talked Yiddish, Jewish.

So you have three languages--

Yes.

--from this one village that you're growing up in.

Well, I spoke Hungarian, too because we were Hungarians for a year, under Hungarian. The woman that here, she's Hungarian. I spoke Hungarian perfect a little.

Four languages.

We were one year, a year and a half Hungarians took over our area.

OK. Oh, we'll come to that. So you started having questions that couldn't be answered in Hebrew school. The answers didn't satisfy you.

That's right.

OK. And how did that get you thinking? I mean, what kind of conclusions did you come to?

Say that again?

I said, what kind of conclusions did you come to?

Oh, can I tell you?

Of course.

Really?

Yes.

It's not going to be nice to hear. I'm an atheist.

Oh. Oh.

I don't believe there is a God, because of what happened to us and what's happening now to millions of people. A God is where? How can he look down and let that innocent millions of people getting killed?

I got to tell you. I am very, very upset, what I lived through my life, believed in God. We had a rabbi in our town who's supposed to have a [NON-ENGLISH] line to God.

A woman couldn't get pregnant, they went to see this rabbi. Business went bad, they went to see this rabbi. I get to Auschwitz the second day of Shvues, it's a Jewish holiday.

The rabbi arrived the same time we did. And he couldn't walk anymore. And I saw two Nazis dragging him on the ground like a dog.

Now, this rabbi supposed to talk to God. Every problem he could solve they said. And I saw this rabbi, OK?

I saw with my own eyes where they dragged him on the ground. And he was dead an hour later, half hour later. It was this rabbi.

So coming where I come from, living through what I lived through, I don't think there is a god. I really don't. I stopped going to temple. I belong to three temples. I support all of them, but I don't go.

Rosh ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur-- it was the High Holy Days. I just don't, because my experience in life. I'm Jewish, very much Jewish. But I like all people.

I don't hold against anything whatever religion they believe. That's up to them. Christians, non-Christians, I had a lot of Christian friends I was raised with, did a lot of business with, you know.

But in my opinion, there is something wrong. That you go to temple on Rosh ha-Shanah, that you read every page. God forgive me for this. Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me.

You didn't do anything. Why do you have to ask God? I didn't do anything that need forgiveness. I'm a good person.

I'm a good, good-hearted person. I helped a lot of people who needed help. I employed a lot of people, most of a lot of Black people. I helped them buy houses. I came in from the South.

I was just a good human being. And that's what a person is supposed to be. That makes me religious, in my opinion, if you're a good person. The religion was set up to make people good people--

Yes.

--not animals, good people.

Yes.

If you're a good person, you're a religious person, in my opinion. That's my opinion. I like all people.

When I hear you say this--

Look here--

Yeah.

Look here, this woman's a Hungarian that works for me.

You mean--

She was with me 10 years.

--a lady who--

She's the nicest person was. And the Hungarians were worse than the Germans with the Jewish people. They said, take the Jews. We don't want them.

Romania didn't do that. Romania said, no, they're my people. I'll put them in camp. They survived.

But the Hungarians, we don't want the Jews thing. That's why they're suffering today. They cannot amount to anything.

You hardly recognize this is a country. Because without Jewish people, they're nothing, you know? They lost all the brains.

Look what's going on. She lost her father in the war. Her father, you know there was an uprising in Romania, they tried to drive out the Russians. The Hungarians, they-- I don't know if you remember.

In 1956. Yeah, in 1956, there was a Hungarian uprising.

Yeah, her father went to work with an army [INAUDIBLE] to World War I, you know, never came back. They killed him. I mean, what kind of brain is that to go fight the Russians with what?

They came in with the tanks, and they wiped them all out. And she lost her dad. I mean, you know, there are people [? of ?] people.

When you just told me that you're an atheist, I got the sense that it's very painful. Is it painful for you not to believe in God?

No. No.

No?

I'm right.

I tell you, I am the right.

Tell me.

I tell you. I used to belong to a club, men's club. We used to meet every four weeks. It's just general meeting, club.

So we would meet in different places, Cleveland, New Yorkers. So one day, we met in Palm Beach [INAUDIBLE], OK? And we always had a guest speaker to speak to us.

That time was a rabbi, the guest speaker. Sitting on the porch with me, we're having a drink, the rabbi, me. And we're talking.

And I go on. I say, rabbi, do you think there is a God? I do this the rabbi. He looks at me.

I said, tell me what you think, rabbi. You're going to have to speak tonight. He says, well, I think that God created the

world and turned it over to mankind. And mankind they're doing themselves in. Now, that makes sense.

But why do I go to the holiday and God every page, God, God, God? And what you're telling me, he's not around. Men are doing themselves in.

That's what you said. You're a rabbi. You're teaching, right? Well, he got quiet. He did not want to take me on any further.

It's logical.

He did make a speech, but he knew who he was dealing with. He almost told me I'm right.

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah. But how can you do that?

He almost told me that I'm right. I think I'm right. I think I'm right. God, you know-- the people are doing themselves in. Look, people kill people.

Yes.

Look what's going on now. You open the television, you get sick to your stomach when you see these people running. To one hand, they have baby. In the other hand, what they can carry, millions of people. Right now, while we're talking [INAUDIBLE].

That's true. That's true. They're refugees.

Right now, while you're here-- and we're going to have a nice lunch and people are dying, because some bastards decided to do that. If God is around, he should free them. Do something, God.

That's me. I can't help it. I saw what I lived through.

So you started having questions even as an 8-year-old boy?

That's right.

You started having questions then.

That's right.

And then, when things happened, those questions just became bigger and bigger?

Absolutely.

OK.

Absolutely.

So let's go now a little bit further. I have a picture now of what Sapinka was like. I'm going to repeat. Sapinka is a village of both Jews and Gentiles.

Correct.

The Jews live around the main road. There are about 100 families. You have three synagogues.

Yes.

And you study a lot. You go to--

Maybe it wasn't 100. Maybe it was 75. But you know, call it between there.

Something like that.

Yeah.

Something like that.

Something like that. Did everybody know everybody?

Yes.

OK.

Yes. Everybody knew everybody.

And the town that your mother wanted everybody to move to, what was it called again, Satu Mare?

Satu Mare.

And how far was it from Sapinka?

It's 80 kilometer from the village that I was born.

OK.

The reason, I did it many times, 80 kilometers.

80 kilometers. And what kind of a place did you move into?

We sold our house in Sapinka. And we bought a house there.

And how large a town was Satu Mare?

It was a pretty good size town. It was a pretty nice town. And they had a lot of smart educated people, had good schooling. You hear that Elie Wiesel--

Yes.

Of course, everybody did.

Yes.

He comes from a town not as big as that one, but he was only 18 kilometer from my hometown.

18 from Sapinka.

From Sapinka is where he comes from. It was bigger than Sapinka. Sathmar was kind of a good sized city. That's why my mother moved us there, figuring, you know, she's got all these kids.

There they can get jobs. But that didn't happen, because the Hungarian took it over. And the Jewish people couldn't get permits. They took away their permits and everything.

OK. What year--

So we moved back to the village, because it's cheaper living there than living in a big city.

Oh, I see. So fill me in. About how old were you when you moved to Satu Mare?

15.

Oh, so you moved in 1940?

15.

I see.

I made the living.

What were you doing?

I was making the living.

What were you doing?

In Sathmar, let me tell you what I was doing. You know, they didn't have taxis like we have. Transportation was a horse and a buggy, like to see in New York in Central Park. You drive a horse and a buggy. That was the transportation if people had to go from one place to another.

My father, may he rest in peace, bought one of those when we moved to the big city.

A horse and buggy taxi?

I'm 15 years old, OK? He's got a day driver and a night driver. There is no meter. Whatever they made, they decided how much to give my mother. The rest they put in their pocket. They were stealing.

And I'm 15 years old. And I tell, I want to be the night driver. I want to be the driver at 15.

You think if I'm tall now, imagine how tall I was when I was 15 years old, OK? Finally, I talked them in. They're going to let me do it.

I had to learn the streets. I had to learn to speak Hungarian, because a Hungarian talking town. I got up early in the morning. I walked every street. And I remembered the name and where every street.

It took me about 2 weeks. I'm ready for the questions. Before they give your permit, they test you, what you know about.

So I go to get my permit to do this. I pass it. OK? I become the night driver.

And this you're going to get a kick out of. I'm driving. I know what I'm doing. And the money goes in my pocket.

I come home in the money. I give it to my mother. And then I do my services, my Jewish service. I went to bed slept till I started again.



I'm doing this now for about 2 weeks making good money for my mother. One day, it was still Romania. Two Romanian officers want me to give them a ride.

And they said, they get in in my thing-- and take me to the [NON-ENGLISH].

What's a [NON-ENGLISH]?

See, I had no idea what a [NON-ENGLISH] was. OK. But there were guys there doing the same thing. They were 18 year old. They knew what a [NON-ENGLISH] is. [NON-ENGLISH] is hookers.

Now, a 15-year-old doesn't know what a hookers, anything about hookers. They get out for my thing and get on the other. The guy said, we know, we Know We take you.

So the next day, they told me where they are two of them in the street. Listen to this, they tell me there are two of them on this and this street. So on a Friday, I go knock on their door.

Listen to this. And I said, if I bring you some customers, can I get a little cut? And I'm 15 years old. Wait, wait, I'm not finished. Hold on. Hold on, I'm not finished.

OK.

In a Friday night, we're having dinner at my house here. My grandson is 15 years old. And I tell this story.

My grandson, he said, grandpa, you were-- what do they call this--

A pimp?

You're a pimp.

You were a pimp.

I said, what the hell is a pimp.

[LAUGHTER]

He said, grandpa, you were a pimp. I learned what that was.

Now, did your mother ever find out that you--

She wasn't-- didn't know. Oh, she knew. I told her the whole story.

OK.

But now, I'm going to tell you the real thing.

OK.

I'm in America. I'm doing great. I come home. And I tell my wife, honey, this country has been so good to us. We're not doing anything for the country.

I was going to go to the Korean War. And they came out with a law that, if you have more than two children, they wouldn't take you. My wife got pregnant with my younger daughter. They wouldn't take me.

So I said, I've got an idea. We're 50 years in America. Let's make a party. We'll call it coming to America, black tie party. And we're going to invite everybody who touched our lives in the 50 years.

Oh, what a lovely idea.

Everybody who touched our lives in the 50 years. So we made this lavish party in the courthouse, three-story courthouse, where I got sworn in as a citizen. And we built the Statue of Liberty in the middle 28 feet tall. It was a black tie.

The guy who signed my first paycheck, his name is Sam Miller. He's still alive. And I tell this story. I tell this story.

The man who signed my first paycheck, Sam Miller, will you stand up? He got a big [? standing ?] ovation.

Then I tell the story. My kids, my grandkids who are next to me, standing while I'm speaking. And now, I'm going to tell you what my grandson taught me.

[LAUGHTER]

Tell me.

I told that story.

About the [NON-ENGLISH]?

About hooker, that he told me that I was-- everybody was dying laughing. It was written up for the newspaper, the greatest party ever in the--

Really?

--written up in this story front page.

Well, lovely.

I mean, I invited lawyers, doctors. Everybody would touch that lives was at that party, over 250 people. The guy asked me who did the party, said, how much you want to spread?

I says, I want a nice party. I can't tell you. Whatever it cost me, it costs for a nice-- boy, it was fantastic.

What a lovely idea.

That's what I did.

What a lovely idea.

I had to do something. I felt inside this country has been great for me. I pay my taxes, but there is plenty left after that. And I raised kids [? with all I got. ?] I got three daughters.

Tell me.

One became a great lawyer. And the other two have master's degrees. And we got those-- I don't know if you guys heard of Shaker Heights.

Yes.

The best schools and the best neighborhood, that's where they were raised, send them to that school. I was very [INAUDIBLE]. I was very lucky that I was born with a little bit up here from my mom.

Yeah, your mom. And so you even told her when you came back from that evening's ride?

Oh, sure.

Yeah?

I told everything my mother. She's laughing.

Was she laughing?

Yeah.

So she was able then to see the difference between what you were bringing in and what the other taxi drivers were doing?

Oh, of course. Yeah. It was like day and night.

Yeah. OK.

Then we finally had to move back to the village. The Hungarians took over.

When did the Hungarians take over Satu Mare? Was it 1941 or '40? Or when was it?

Yeah, something like that, the height of the war.

So you didn't live there long. If you moved when you were 15--

No, no. We lived there maybe 2 years. We moved back to the village, because it was cheaper to live in the village than to live in town.

My mom, here is what my mom did. She was a very smart woman. She had four girls. My older sister got married.

OK. So now, she's got three girls. One, she worked for my grandma. She took care of her. One worked in a store for another aunt who had a store by the boarder of Czechoslovakia and-- that two. Now, only one left, they're all jobbed out.

So the girls worked their jobs, worked for family. She was smart. My mother was smart woman.

When you move back to Sapinka, was that already part of Hungary or still part of Romania? You say you left--

That was Hungary. When I moved back, it was already Hungary, back to Hungarian and was there till after the war. Then it changed hands after the war. It's Romania now.

OK. Can you explain to me how that came about? Why was it that this territory that had been Romania got to Hungary?

Well, before World War I, it used to be everything Austria Hungary--

Right.

--before World War I.

I remember you said.

Now, when the Hungarians lost the war, you know--

Yes.

--whatever that war was with the Germans they took Hungary. And they cut in to shred, everything back to Romania the way it was. they took part of that land and made Czechoslovakia was born.

That's true.

And it became back Romania on one side the Tisza, the river. And the other side was Czechoslovakia.

OK.

And that's way it was till World War II.

OK. And so why was it that during World War II-- what made it so that Hungary reclaimed these places?

Hungary joined up with the Nazis, Hungarian. Well, Hitler gave them an order. Either you join, if not, we're going to occupy you. That's what they did.

They did that with Poland. Poland didn't want join, so they occupied Poland. Romania, they didn't care, because they weren't much to occupy. You know, they didn't have a good history. So that's what he did. Hitler gave him an ultimatum.

But Hungary takes back these lands that were now part of Romania. And where you lived either was Satu Mare or Sapinka, but it was now all Hungary.

So when you got back to Sapinka, did you have difficulty in getting those permits to be able to do anything? Or how did you support yourselves?

Oh, we couldn't. We couldn't get it. Well, I went to work.

OK, what did you do?

I went to work. I worked in the woods. We have big forests, the big woods. Myself and one other boy my age, we worked there.

My father didn't know what work was. Can you imagine sending me to do his job, you know? He was a nice guy, but he didn't have it. He made seven kids. He could support one.

My mother was the mover. She was. She was a smart woman.

What happened with your mother? You said she died before the war.

My mother died 2 years before they took us to the concentration camp.

OK, so [CROSS TALK]

She was lucky.

How did that happen?

I'm going to tell you how she died.

Tell me. She had a pain. We lived in a little house. And my sister-- the doctor would come to our village every other week.

So he examined her. And he told my sister, who took care of her, to put hot plates instead ice.

A hot compress, OK.

Hot plates. Hot plates-- the pain didn't go away. They took her to the hospital. And she had appendicitis infection, appendicitis infection. It burst on the driveway of the hospital.

Oh my goodness.

She was dead a week later.

Her doctor prescribed the wrong thing, telling her hot plates instead of ice. Well, she would have died in concentration camp 2 years. At least I could say that she was lucky. I know where she is.

She's buried in Sapinka. And I took my children, my grandchildren to visit her. And I have their generations full of my family, my grandpa, my great-grandpa. You know, all grandmothers and all, they're all buried there. Why they settled there, I don't know.

How old was she?

I don't know.

How old was she when she died? How old was she when she died?

I would say she was 50. My father was 52. She was 50, maybe 49, something like that.

Still a young woman.

She was a good looking woman.

Was she the main influence in your early years?

What?

Was she the main influence on you in your early years?

She loved me. I was her favorite, because I was number four. And I finally got a boy. She had three girls before me.

Yeah.

So anyways, I was very helpful. She saw a star is born.

[LAUGHTER]

Really, I tell you the truth. I took care of the whole family since I was 15 years old. I still take care of my sisters after they came home from the concentration camp. I made their weddings, took care of them. One of my sisters, still in Cleveland, I bought her a house.

Wow.

You did take care of your family.

I took care of all of them. I took care of all of them when they came home. I married them off. Two of the had boyfriends, married them off, made nice weddings.

The younger one didn't come home, went to Switzerland. She was a teenager. And the United Nations sent them a resort place to Switzerland after they liberate.

So she was there. And she met this guy, a German Jewish family, got out. And she meets this guy. And the [INAUDIBLE] they-- she comes to New York.

She remembered my uncle's address. And my younger sister, she wrote him a letter that my name is so and so. I am Cecil's daughter. Cecil was my mother's name.

He didn't have any kids. And she wrote him a letter. And he sent her an affidavit to come to America. She went to America, married in New York.

She has those genes, too. You know, the--

Yeah. So she came to America with this guy. And they got married. And the guy was ultra, ultra religious, no work, couldn't hold a job, no work.

So when I came to Cleveland, one of my sisters was there already. I said, what's happening with [PERSONAL NAME]? I sent some money to hold for me when I come to America. I sent her \$300, so I have a few dollars when I come.

So my aunt says, don't even bother calling. She's starving there in New York. Instead working, he goes to temple. I said, no, no. This can't happen. We've got to move her here.

So my other sister was here already, and her husband. So we got together, and we moved her to Cleveland.

With her husband?

I figured, if we're going to eat, she's going to eat. I'm not going to let her starve. So I was already in business. I gave him a job.

He didn't do nothing anyways. They wind up-- anyways, I bought her a house, two family house. I bought her an eight-suiter need so she has a little income.

She was to get rid of him. She wants to get a divorce.

Hang on.

He doesn't want to divorce her.

He doesn't want to divorce her?

He doesn't want divorce her. He wants half what she has, which I gave her. She owns an eight-suiter, and she owns a two-family house.

A Jewish divorce is called a get. You can't get divorced unless a rabbi signs off the get in court. So I get involved to help her out. She wants to get a divorce.

So the neighborhood rabbi in Cleveland, he's big name. He calls a meeting with three other rabbis and him. They were trying to make a deal.

And he figured out half of the assets is worth \$15,000. You know, there was [INAUDIBLE]. He says, you give me \$15,000, I sign off on the get.

They had nothing. I bought everything for them. And the other rabbis tried to help me. The rabbi tried to help me.

So finally by around quarter to 12:00, around midnight, nothing works. So the main rabbi calls me in his bedroom. It was at this house.

He calls in. Mr. Simon, we want to see you. So I go in there. He says, you want to get rid of that [NON-ENGLISH]?

I said, yes. Make out a check for \$15,000, and we'll get rid of him tonight. I said, rabbi, you got a deal. I made out a check for \$15,000.

He signed off. The next day, I went to court with it. And she got a divorce. That's my younger sister that I loved. She loves me.

So you did take--

She's not married now. She got remarried, but her husband passed away. She was maybe 13 years old when she got liberated, 15.

She was very young. No, she's 2 years younger. I was 18. She was 16.

So you did take care of them all?

I took care of all them.

Tell me this. You mentioned your father and that you have your mother's maiden name you took as your own name, Shimonovicz.

Oh, no. I took my mother's.

Pardon?

I took my mother's name. I carried my mother's name, Shimonovicz, Simon. My father was Nathan.

So tell me. When did you do that? When did you--

When I came to America-- I figured, I got uncles here. I'll find rich uncles. They've been here for years. They'll be bankers. And they'll be big business. They were nothing.

I find zero. Their kids start working for me. They were born in America.

Matter of fact, you know, I have four uncles here. They've been here from World War I, you know. And they have children here.

I'll take up my mother's name. I'll be somebody, Simon. You know what I found? Chicken flickers at chicken stores in the Black neighborhood.

That's what they had. And the sons were nothing. So two of the sons start working for me when I'm in business.

So you're the one who became something. You're the one who became something.

Yeah, I made it myself.

Let's go back to Sapinka. You're moved back there. Your mother passes away. It's already during the war when Hungary is controlling this area.

Right.

And you say she was lucky, because she avoided everything that everybody else went through. Tell me. What happened then? What happened when your lives changed, when you couldn't work anymore? Did you have to wear a yellow star, for example?

No.

No.

No. The ones who served as laborers, they had to wear a star. I didn't. I don't remember wearing one, a Hebrew star.

Did you move back to your old home, or did you buy a new home in Sapinka?

No, no, we rented.

You rented. You rented.

We rented.

All right.

We rented a house.

And how many kids were then at home? There was your father. There was yourself. There was your younger brothers.

Two young brothers.

Any of your sisters living at home?

One sister, after my mother died, she took care of us. She's 2 years older than me. She became the mother. She did the cooking, the cleaning, and all that. My mother was gone.

What was her name, the sister?

She passed away. I know.

I just told you.

No, no, no, your sister's name, the one who took care of you afterwards.

The one who took care of us?

Yes, after your mother was passed away.

She lives in Cleveland.

What's her name?



Molly.

Molly.

Molly Roth.

Molly took care of you.

Molly took take care of us.

How long did you stay in these rented quarters?

We stayed till they deported us, till they took us away. It was only maybe a year and a half or two from the time we moved back, a couple of years maybe-- moved back from bathroom Satu Mare to Sapinka, 2 years. And then--

And during that time, you were working in the forest? You said you were working in the woods.

I was working in the woods cutting trees. There was myself and another young boy like me. We worked. He had the same problem I had, trying to make a living.

And were there restrictions? That is, even in Sapinka, were there restrictions for what kind of jobs you could do?

No. There wasn't much jobs. The jobs that we took nobody wanted.

I see.

You know?

I see. I see. You know, nobody wanted to go sleep with the horses, with the cows, way out.

So when you were taken away from your home, was this a big surprise? Were you feeling like it was coming, or did it come as a complete surprise?

Yes and no, because we thought that they're not going to take us. We already saw people in trains leaving. We didn't know where they're taking them.

We had no idea. We couldn't get a newspaper. We couldn't have a radio.

They took away everything. Jewish people could not have a newspaper or a radio or listening to what's going on in the world. The war was on, OK?

So we didn't know. The only thing the real religious people said, God is not going to let us-- nothing's going to happen to us. God is with us.

They believed that God is going to step in and make-- save us. That didn't happen, because the rabbi, the other rabbi, I saw where the Nazis beat him up. He had a beard. They pulled his hair.

In Sapinka?

In Sapinka.

In Sapinka-- so there was a--

At first, what they did, they set up a ghetto. They took us from our home to carry what you could carry and leave. So we

take suitcases and carry.

We walked about 10 kilometer. They evacuated two streets where people were living. They put us up there till they got a train. We were waiting for a train to take us to Auschwitz.

And you don't know it was--

We didn't have idea where we're going.

Were these Hungarian--

I tell you, though. I tell you.

OK.

I didn't want to go. I didn't want to go where they take us. I came home. I told my dad-- my mother was already gone.

I said, I had a good friend, a Gentile boy, at the school. We became buddies. He says, take my birth certificate. I had long hair. I could get away as a Christian boy.

And that's it. Some people did. Not me, my father wouldn't let me do it.

I asked him. He says, no, you got to come with me to help me with the kids. So I went.

I could have taken a Christian-- there is no pictures or anything--

Right, right, right.

--and get lost to some village and work on a farm till this is over as a Christian boy. Because I had long hair--

That's right.

--you know, I was-- but my father said, you've got to come with me, help me with the kids. You go where the father said.

Yeah.

You know? I could have--

You could have escaped.

I know some people who did-- even in Budapest, were hiding out. I got two or three friends in Cleveland that I know. They survive on Christian papers.

So tell me about the neighbors in Sapinka, the Romanian neighbors, the Gentile neighbors.

They were all nice. I saw them crying when they left, when we left. I saw a woman crying as we walk in the street. And they stood. And I saw some Christian women crying when they saw us carrying-- some people babies, some big suitcase, like you see in television. That's what happened to us.

They took us in a-- we walked about 10 kilometers. And they put us up in houses. The women, the young girls, had to sleep in the attic.

And it was hot as well, because these Hungarian young soldiers would come and take at night the young girls, rape

them-- rape them. So my sisters were sleeping in the attic, hot as hell. It was summertime, you know?

So they took you in the summer of '44? Was this it or 1943? Which summer was it?

No, no, '44. We were the last ones.

You were the-- OK.

We were the last one. When I wound up in the concentration camp, they were Jewish people there from Poland for 3 years already. OK.

But you--

And they were so jealous that they were-- Poland was the first one that Hitler wiped out the Jews. So a lot of them survived in the camps. So I was in a camp called Bunzlau. I was there 9 months.

We'll come to that. We'll come to that. So when you were taken from your home, was it soldiers marched in there? Or did you get a letter? How was it--

No, no, no, no, no.

No.

There were Hungarian police, call them. They were gendarmes.

Gendarmes.

Gendarmes. So they took us into two towns away. First was [PLACE NAME], then Telc. And they emptied out two streets.

They told the local people to leave. They got it. And they put us in there.

They were waiting for a train. You know, it was during the war. And we were there, like, a month--

That's a long time.

--about a month. And then they put us in the train, boxcars, like if you're animals, boxcars.

Were you and your sisters and father all in one boxcar?

Boxcar.

Or were you split up?

No, the families were together in a-- maybe were three, four families in a boxcar, five, from my hometown. We had no idea. We had no idea about Auschwitz.

The trains arrived. I'm sure you heard that story from others. We got there. And all of us are-- raus! Out!

And Dr. Mengele was in there. And he decided who shall live or who should die. We got off.

And the younger people, the working people who could-- they kept, like, me. I was 18 years old, the others. My father went left, because he was too old.

He wasn't too old, because we didn't know right or left. We don't know, if you go right, you could survive. And if you go left, you die an hour later. We didn't know.

My two brothers could have come with me, you know? One was 15. I know some 15-year-olds survived. I know some 13-year-- matter of fact, I've got a cousin whose 13 years old. He went to the right. He survived.

So we didn't know. We saw ambulances go to throw us off. This is-- bastards. I saw ambulances going back and forth.

They lined it up. It's four. And the doctor said, right, left. I'm sure you heard that before.

But how was it with you then? So it was you get off the train. You're lined up. And he decides that you go to the left--

They lined us up, you know, four.

Right.

It was a lot of people. And the doctor, the Dr. Mengele-- that we looked for him, we never got him-- stood there. And he decided right, left. If you look strong enough to work, you went to the right. If you look too old, in his mind, went to the left.

And so your brothers who were younger--

My brother went with my father.

But he could have gone to the other side?

He could have gone with me. We didn't know. But a matter of fact, my brother was 15 years old. He was a tall kid. I was the only shorty in the family. He was wearing my jacket.

I said, Bill, take off the jacket, so you look younger. So you won't have to go to work. We thought they're taking us to a work camp.

So he took off my jacket. He went to the left with my father. I don't know if my idea would have worked.

But I told him take off the jacket, because I thought we were going to work. So he wouldn't have to go to work. Had he gone with me, he'd have been alive.

And what about the girls?

The other one-- no, no. The girls all went to the right, because they were all of age where they could work, all of them. Except my older sister was pregnant. She was 24. She was expecting.

And you could see it?

She went to the left, yeah.

I see.

She went to the left.

And what about her husband?

Her husband went with me. He survive.

Oh.

I went with him. He went to the right. He actually saved my life at Auschwitz.

How did he do that?

He actually saved my life. And I'll tell you what happened. We knew the war is coming to an end, because we were close to the Polish border, a place called Bunzlau

It was Poland. But when the Germans occupied, they annexed in that area. So we were at the border of Poland and Hungary.

And one of the guys-- and we had these bunk beds where we would sleep. And I got up early in the morning, then we went to work. Like, I worked in a factory making false airplanes for a while out of plywood, airplanes. Because--

To throw off?

--the bombing would think they're real. They'll bomb the wrong place anyway. In a Friday, he tells us, go to sleep. But don't take off your clothes.

Your brother-in-law?

No, no, the chief--

The chief, OK.

--who was running the camp, the Nazi.

Yeah.

My brother wasn't with me. He was dead already, just me.

Got it.

This was my sister's-- when I told you, my sister's husband.

Your brother-in-law.

My brother-in-law, right.

My brother-in-law. So 1 o'clock, they wake us up with the clothes on and lines us up. And now, we're going to leave the camp, because the Russians attacked very close. We even hear the canons, noise of the military, the Russians. They were so close.

So he took half of us. We were 1,100. They lined us up.

You stay. You go. You stay. You go. There's father and son, for example. The father wasn't too old, but they decide have him stay.

OK.

Half of us out of 1,100 picked to leave with the Germans, to leave. They took us away. The other half stayed.

The half who stayed, it could be father and son, or they separated. But out of the 1,100, half of them stayed. They got

liberated the next morning by the Russians, the half.

I was picked to go. I was a young boy. I looked like I could work. And half of us picked to go.

We were pushing the wagons for the Nazis. They have horses, so they're pushing. And we walked and walked. And whenever it got dark at night, they put us up in horse stalls and farms sleeping. Lice would eat us up. So some people died on the road--

It sounds like a death march.

They couldn't handle it anymore. It was too much, no food. They gave us a piece of bread in the morning with black coffee. That was the meal of the day.

So we were, let's say, about 500. We were going through a village that was a big forest.

So this big Nazi, who was marching, who was like the gendarme, two of them, ask, who wants to stay in this village? Come out. Who wants to go? Stay there.

I picked to stay. So my brother-in-law came and grabbed my hand and said [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. We have to go. He takes me out of the line to stay.

So I kept. We're down maybe 100 yards. And we had the machine guns, killed all of those people. The Nazis took them in the woods, killed all of them that decided to stay.

My luck is my brother-in-law pulled me out of the line to go. But I'd have been dead. We were 100 yards away and burr, burr, burr. They killed them all, left them in the woods, dead.

And a lot of people in my home town-- the father and son left. And then the one was just the father stayed. The son decided to go.

Oh.

The father died. So half for the 500, a lot of them just didn't make it. Some of them died on the road.

And some were killed?

You know, on the road, they ran out of [INAUDIBLE].

Yeah, of course.

They ran out of-- walking, walking. I was kind of cold. And I was lucky. I was young.

Older people, when you were 45, 50, you were old. You couldn't take the punishment. So they died.

One, a friend of mine's father, died in my hands. You know me and my brother-in-law were carrying for a while. And then he gave up. He died. We left him there.

And his son was in the front walking with this guy. And I ran to tell him, your father is dead. See, he went like this. That's why I couldn't stand him.

He came to Cleveland. I couldn't stand-- I never talked to him. Can you imagine? No matter how far, he's going to say goodbye to his dad.

His dad is dead in a ditch. We left him in the ditch, dead. I thought I'd go to him.

Leibel was his name. He just died, too, couple of years. Anyways--

Your brother-in-law's name?

So we walked and walked and walked. Finally, they decided they have to do something. They have-- know what to do with us.

So we got in a boxcar train. And they took us to a big camp. You must have heard of it, Bergen-Belsen--

Of course.

--a very big, big camp.

Excuse me, but--

All the small camps--

I'm sorry. I'm interrupting, but we will get there. I want to go back to Auschwitz, because the reason we started on this train of thought was because your brother-in-law went to the side of the right.

And you went with him. And you then said, he saved my life. And now, you told me how he saved your life. And now, I'd like--

With Auschwitz, I went to the right.

You went to the right.

I went to the right. So I was there 2 weeks in Birkenau.

Yeah.

And then they picked out. They start asking-- now, this is Auschwitz I'm talking about now.

I have a couple of questions after you tell me, OK?

OK. Let me tell you what happened. Auschwitz, I was on a-- after Dr. Mengele said, right, left, right, left, I went to the right. My father went to the left with the two boys. My sisters went to the right.

So they came out. And first they ask for plumbers. You know, they raise their hand. They were looking for tradesman, looking for people they can send to Germany to work.

And they kept asking for this one and that one. So they came down for farmer. Since we were not farmers from my hometown, but we saw what farmers do.

So we raised the hands for farmers. About 11 of us from my hometown decided to go farmers. So they took us. We were riding the train for 24 hours into Germany and wind up in a camp, not in Auschwitz, Bunzlau.

Bunzlau.

They had camps all over. They need working people.

Yes.

Because the little people were at war, the young people. So they took people who could work, could help them survive, because they didn't have anybody. So I wind up in this camp Bunzlau.

OK, what did it look like, this Bunzlau?

What?

What did this Bunzlau look like as a camp?

Not too bad compared to other camps that people were. We have a Nazi who was in charge of the camp. We showered every Saturday. He gave us a clean shirt every Saturday.

He comes in. We had bunk beds, like, you know, three people, one here, one in the middle, and then-- in a bunk bed. He would come in after we fall asleep once in a while, turn on the light.

And he said, whoever finds a lice, I gave him a bread. We were cleaning. We were not allowed to have lice in our camp.

We were 1,100. And when we got liberated, I find that we had the best camp. The problem started after we left camp and we start walking, half of us. But the ones who stayed got liberated the next morning by the Russians. And our problems started.

We walked and walked and walked till, finally, they saw the war is coming to an end. And they took us to--

Bergen-Belsen.

Bergen-Belsen.

I want to stop there.

Yeah.

Bergen-Belsen.

Bergen-Belsen. I want to stop there and go back, because there are many questions I didn't ask you yet about Auschwitz and about the road to Auschwitz. I just hadn't had the chance--

The road to Auschwitz?

Well, about Auschwitz and before.

OK.

I still have some questions.

You could start from before we got to Auschwitz. That's what you want to know.

OK. Yeah. All right, here's a--

They took us from our homes.

Yes.

And they set up a ghetto.



You told me about that.

OK.

OK.

And from there, we went to Auschwitz.

Yes. I have still some questions.

OK, go ahead.

So one of the questions, it has to do with news.

With what?

With news, how news traveled.

News?

Yes.

OK.

You said before that, as Jews, you weren't allowed to have radios. The Hungarians didn't let you have radios. You couldn't have newspapers.

You're still in Sapinka. Did you have any idea? Is that true, first of all? No news, no newspapers, no radio?

That's true.

OK. Did you have any idea of what was happening to the Jews in other countries?

No.

OK.

No. The only thing that I remember seeing two young Jewish guys who ran away from Poland. Polish got killed first.

Yes.

They wiped them out.

Yes.

And they wind up in our little town somewhere. And they said, but we didn't believe them. How could that happen? We did not-- they said, we ran away, because the military was killing the Jews in Poland.

That's the only thing we knew. But our people were so digged into the religion, so [INAUDIBLE]. So God is not-- nothing's going to happen to us.

What happens to other people, [INAUDIBLE]. We saw the train, boxcars with Jewish people. But we still didn't believe.

You didn't make the connection between what they were saying and--

Did not make the connection at all.

And so even when you were-- yeah.

Because if I would have known, I would have never gone regardless what my father said. I thought we're going to work someplace, not to get killed. I would save my two brothers, the younger ones.

I don't know if I could have saved my father. But my two brothers-- could have saved. I could have taken them with me. We would hideout. Some people did, not many.

I know somebody in Cleveland that did, was hiding out. I know a family, a Christian family was hiding them out. The American Greeting Company, you've heard of that?

Yes, yes.

He got survived, the guy who owns, runs the American Greeting Company.

He goes through--

He survived. His father was smart. He was friends with a Christian family. And they was hiding them out all through the war. Now, they was in the Czech side, the Slovakian side.

So when you do get to Auschwitz, do you have any idea where you are?

I had no idea. We saw this big chimney, smoke coming out. You ever been to Auschwitz? I'm sure you were.

No. I've been to others, not to Auschwitz.

You never been?

Not to Auschwitz.

OK. So when we arrived, there was this great big chimney maybe five stories high, big. And smoke is coming out. We didn't know what it was. We had no idea.

And we see ambulances going back and forth. What they did, they were afraid that we find what killing is going on, they would jump on some of the Germans. People would jump and kill a few of them. You get killed anyways.

So they figured we arrived. They're going to see ambulance. They're going to throw us off, these sick people, whatever.

What it was-- bodies burning and the smoke come. They throw people. They went in.

They told them to get undressed to take a shower. Let's take a shower. They turned on the poison.

They poisoned them. That was it. That was that for them. That was in Auschwitz.

How long did it last before you knew what had happened to your father, and your sister, and your brothers?

Actually, didn't know till I got liberated.

Really?

We didn't know. We had no knowledge at all.

Did you have any--

We didn't know.

OK. Did you have any contact with some of the prisoners who had been there for a long time?

There was no prisoners. There were no prisoners. They were just Jewish people, maybe a few were non-Jews.

But we didn't know. They didn't know more than we did. There's no newspaper, no information.

No, you said earlier that there had been some Poles, Polish Jews, who were in Auschwitz for several years.

Not several, 3 years--

3 years.

--before us.

Before you.

Yeah.

Did you have contact with them when you got into the camp?

We talked to them. They told us.

And they didn't tell you?

Well, we were there. We were already in camp.

I know. They didn't tell you about the chimney and what it meant?

They were not in Auschwitz. They came from Poland direct to a camp. It was not Auschwitz--

Oh, I see. I see. I see.

--just a camp, concentration camp.

Got it. Got it. Got it.

It's different between Auschwitz and concentration camp.

And the concentration camp.

They were in concentration camp. We wind up in a concentration camp.

In Bunzlau?

In Bunzlau.

OK.

After we were there awaiting to take us--

Got it.

--they took us. And we were on the train, I think, two days, three nights and took us to this camp called Bunzlau.

OK. So here's my other question. I wanted to make sure that I got your brother-in-law's name. Could you tell me what your brother-in-law's name was, the one who saved you?

Alter Chaim Deutsch.

Alter Chaim--

Alter Chaim Deutsch.

Deutsch.

And he survived. He saved my life. He got remarried. He married also a surviving woman. And he moved to Israel.

I saw him in Israel when I was there. I went to see him. He's not alive anymore.

He passed away. He was older than me. He took me by the hand, took me away. I would have been dead.

Yeah. During the two weeks you were in Auschwitz, what did they have you do? Where were you in Auschwitz?

We were sleeping on the floor, almost on top of each other, you know. And in the morning, they gave us a bowl of soup. Maybe six people or eight people lined up.

I took a sip. I gave him a sip and went around with the bowl of soup. That was in Auschwitz. For about maybe 10, 12 days, that's what it was. A big bowl of soup-- and went around through six or seven people. That was the food for the time we were there.

Did you have to work while you were there?

No. No, no. We were just waiting. They weren't quite ready to do what they had in mind to do, whatever.

Because we were there, I would say, 2 weeks, maybe 10 days. And then they start picking. They come out-- plumbers, electricians, carpenters, you know.

Right.

And my guys from my hometown, they were no tradesmen. When they said farmers, because we come from a farm town-- we were not farmers. Seven or eight of us raised our hand. And we went, and we wind up in Bunzlau.

So when you were in Auschwitz, that must have been the summer of 1944. Is that correct?

Yeah.

Summer of '44. And did you get a number on your arm?

No. They gave us numbers on our neck like they do for a soldier.

OK, like dog tags of some kind?

Dog-- that's it. My sister has it here.

She has a number?

Yes, she did. She cut it out. She had surgery, cut it out. No, we didn't get. We got it on our neck.

Do you remember your number? No?

I don't remember, and I wouldn't want to remember what the number was.

OK, OK. And tell me, do you remember what the barracks looked like where you were?

The barracks?

Yeah, in Auschwitz.

In Auschwitz, I was not in barrack. I told you. I slept on the floor. We were in a building. We slept on the floor. We laid down on the floor.

In the morning, they woke us up. And they gave us the soup. We were waiting for a train to take us to Germany to work.

OK. OK. So we didn't even get--

Had no barracks. There was no barracks there.

No barracks, OK.

The barracks was in the camp that I wind up Bunzlau--

In Bunzlau.

--clean barracks.

Do you remember the name of this director of that camp, of Bunzlau?

Director?

Yeah, the Nazi. The Nazi who said, I'll give you a piece of bread if you give me some lice?

Even if I would remember, I would want not to-- no.

No.

We didn't know their names. We saw him in the uniform. And I got to tell you this about the camp I was in.

When I caught on to what went on with all these different camps after I got liberated, I talked to guys who were different camps. We were in a very good camp compared to others. I was trying-- you know, match up. What was it like by you? What was it, you know?

I don't know if-- you know Sam Frankel? The Frankels are very active with--

I've heard.

Rina Frankel, Sam, like they were 40 kilometers-- He, Sam, a good friend of mine. He lives across the street from me here. He's go a home here, they have.

His camp was 40 kilometers from my camp. By mistake, the Russians bombed this camp, because they thought its German soldiers there. His brother got killed in that camp by the Russians from the bomb they threw.

But we, our camp where I was, I think 11 months only, 11 months.

11 months?

11 months. We got up in the morning. And a lot of people who-- we had a nice yard, you know. They got up, and they were conducting services, a lot of guys. Remember, the Jewish davening in the morning, the service in the morning, they remember it by heart. Can you imagine? Every morning.

Excuse me. Excuse me, I'm so-- OK. We were in Bunzlau. And you were saying that there were even services sometimes in the mornings.

In the morning, yeah. The guys who were religious guys, they got together. They were davening. I didn't, but some did, older guys. I was a young boy.

What kind of work did you do in that camp?

For a while, I was doing some work on faking airplanes they made out of plywood. And then say a German family called in. They had a garden.

And they didn't have anybody to fix it. They called. And they took a few of us to go help out different people.

Did you always have somebody guard you while you went outside of the camp?

Outside?

Yeah, did you have somebody? Were you guarded when I went outside of the camp?

Yes, it's outside the camp for people that lived there.

Yeah, yeah. Did a guard go with you?

Yeah, they did. It wasn't just me. They took 10, 12 people.

Oh, I see. OK.

You know, it was-- they had a guard, one guard. Matter of fact, the guard I had was a very nice guy.

Was he?

It was Yom Kippur, when Jewish people fast. So I told him, this is a big holiday. And the Jewish people are fasting. And we're fasting anyways.

And we worked at a place. There was a garden with potatoes, you know. He told me go get some.

So we have what to eat after fasting. He helped me steal potatoes. He made a little fire.

Really?

Took seven of us, each one got one. I took it in the-- he helped me smuggle it in the camp. Not an SS, he was a Wehrmacht guy, nice guy. I took the Yom Kippur. That was our fasting day.

Such things happen, too, such sort of small gestures of humanity, I guess.

Well, OK, let me start when we separated from the camp, what happened, OK?

OK. But I would love to talk-- excuse me. Before we do that, I'd like to talk more about what the work was that you did in the camp.

I just told you.

Just the planes and then working in the gardens?

That's it.

That's it.

That's it.

OK.

And then I left the camp.

All right, so then tell me about that.

Well, I left the camp. And then the people who stayed got liberated the next morning. And us, half of them died on the road.

And was it SS guards that were with you when you were on the march, or was it Wehrmacht?

I didn't look it was SS or it was-- there was the uniform.

OK.

It had to be--

OK.

They were not all bad, because the guy who was running the camp was an SS guy, an officer. He kept it clean. Matter of fact, Christmas, there was an old horse there. They had an old horse.

He said, that's what you guys are going to have for Christmas. And he asked if they have any butchers.

Of course, there were butchers between 1,100 Jews. There got to be butchers. So next hometown to us, there was two butchers.

They had butcher shop. They killed the horse. And we had a tremendous, tremendous dinner for Christmas.

He did it, the Nazi SS. He gave us the horse. They kill him, and they cut the meat, make a good, good dinner.

No. You know, when I got liberated after a while and I'm talking to people who survived like me, I was, compared to others, not as bad as others had it. Like Sam Roth, for example, his brother, he buried him in a Jewish cemetery right there, you know? It took him 10 years to bring his remains to Cleveland and buried it in a cemetery. Took him 10 years to get it.

Bunzlau, where is this Bunzlau in Germany? Can you give me a sense of--

Bunzlau was Poland.

OK. And during the war, they annexed it into Germany. The Germans occupied it and took it over, took over a big chunk of Poland into Germany. After the war was over, they had to give it back, you know. But during the war--

It was part of the German Reich.

--it was Germany. It was Germany. And that's what happened. So when I got liberated, I talked to some people, different camps.

And we didn't have it as bad compared to some others. So I am now out of the camp. And they didn't know what to do with us. So they put us in a train and took us to Bergen-Belsen.

Bergen-Belsen was a huge, huge camp. They took people from other camps and brought them into Bergen-Belsen. And they were going to kill us all over night, Saturday night. They poisoned bread Saturday.

Really?

And Sunday, they were going to give it to us and kill. About 60,000 we were in that camp, 60,000. So we got up Sunday morning-- no Germans.

The camp was surrounded with Hungarian soldiers. Hungarians were working with the Germans. We couldn't figure out what's going on.

1 o'clock Sunday, British tanks marched in our camp, 1 o'clock Sunday. The Germans knew they're coming. They ran away overnight.

And left us without-- they put Hungarians there to watch us. Because when you take a person and you lock them up for so many years-- we were lucky.

We were there one year. They become like animals. They're no longer human beings.

So they're afraid. A lot of people want that a long, long time. And they smuggled their way into the sewers, you know, to [? eat. ?]

First of all, we couldn't move. The Hungarians watched us. But there were some people who were not Jewish, a few. They went through the sewers into the town to eat.

They never came back. They died. See, when your stomach is not ready to take on-- what the British did after they liberated us, they kept us under guard for a month.

Wow.

We could not move. They gave us a little food at a time. We were so hungry. And we were waiting to eat. They knew what they were doing.

They couldn't give us a lot of food, because our stomachs couldn't handle it. So for about a month, we were going through a little bit, a little bit at a time. Then we found out why they did that, because they set up hospitals.

By the way, the minute they occupied, Sunday afternoon, there were walls going up building hospitals. They tried to save as many people as they could. A lot of them they couldn't save already. They were dying as they were walking.



So after about a month, we gained a little strength. And they took us, put us in houses, 10 here, 10 there, Germans, German families. Then we found out there is a place where people are coming to pick up people from Belgian, French, from all over. They come to pick up their people who survived and take them home.

We registered as the Romanian. Nobody came to get us. Why? Romanian didn't kill the Jews.

We didn't know. But we were all told we were Romanian citizens. And we're waiting and waiting. Nobody's coming.

I'm the youngest of a group. We were nine of us from my hometown. And I tell these older guys, I says, who has to be Romanian? Let's register as Czechs. We're Czech citizens.

Czechs' picking up their people, boom, boom, boom. No, we can't do that. Why not?

They don't ask for affidavit. They don't ask for anything. Just tell them.

They wouldn't go. I went, a cousin of mine, and another boy. We went to register Czechs.

The next morning, they call us. They put us in a big truck. And they take us to the border of Hungary and Czechoslovakia border and put us by the train.

From Bergen-Belsen?

The British did that.

The British did this.

It was occupied by the British.

OK.

And we're waiting for a train. We were sleeping on the floor. And they have a little office.

And a face looks out there. A girls looks out in that little room. There was a little office. I see this pretty face.

I say, I'm going to go talk to her. I get up. And I told the girl. She says, my sister has one leg. She lost her leg, cut.

And she needs help to get her on the train. I tell her, forget it. My cousin and I, we're going to take her.

We finally, three days later, got a train. We took her all the way to Budapest with us, the train. At Budapest, the Jewish Federation had an office. And anybody who returned registered, put the name. That was that thing.

So I go with this girl to register. They told us, there, there, there. So I go to register.

I put my name in. I go back. We stayed in a school that was empty [INAUDIBLE].

A half hour later, the door opens. Who walks in? My Uncle Al, an uncle of mine who survived.

And he was going to Budapest every day. You know, he was going to that office to see. He saw my name.

Your mother's brother?

He saw my name, because I had just registered. He was there a half hour later.

Wow.

And he came and found me in this school on the floor. First thing out of his mouth, says, your three sisters are alive, and his sister is alive. Because he already found out they got liberated.

Wow.

He lost his wife and a child. So he says, come on. Come on with me. He takes me in Budapest, where he stayed.

And we waited there for my sisters to arrive. And they came a week later, my three sisters. One didn't. She went to Switzerland, I told you.

That's right. That's right.

So yeah, Malchi and Raizi, only the two of them.

So two of them came.

Only two of them came. The other one went to Switzerland. Anyway, so we got together. I went home. I became the father and the mother, had to take care of my sisters.

Did you ever go back to Sapinka?

What?

Did you ever go back to Sapinka?

I went back for one day. And I settled in Satu Mare, in Sathmar.

I see.

I had nothing. I didn't want to go back. Nobody did. Nobody wanted to go back to Sapinka, because these are empty houses we left.

I mean, we didn't want to go back. Nobody returned. People who did, didn't want to go back.

So my uncle lost his wife and a child. And he got married. He married somebody he knew related to his first wife, first cousins.

And his wife, she had her daughter's daughter who survived. She came to the wedding. She came with my uncle's-- she stayed with them [INAUDIBLE] this way. That's where I met my wife. She stayed with my uncle and aunt. That's how we got involved.

In Satu Mare?

And we got married.

In Satu Mare?

In Satu Mare.

OK. So your wife--

Friday night wedding-- go ahead.

Your wife was also from Romania?

No, she was from Czechoslovakia.

I see.

She was in the Czech side.

I see.

Her parents didn't make it. She had a younger sister who didn't make it. She's the only one left in her family.

So her aunt took care of it, took care of her. Her aunt was her mother's sister. She didn't have anybody.

Father was a young guy. He died the last few days before the war ended. Somebody told her.

So when did you realize--

What?

When was it that you lost your brothers and your father? You said it took a long time until you realized what that chimney meant and that your father and brothers--

Well, I knew after I got liberated what happened. I didn't know while I was in camp who was living, who was dead. I didn't know.

No. You know, the news was out. We already knew then. Matter of fact, myself and one other guy, we stole two bicyclists from the Germans.

And we went to look camps to find them. That's when I hurt my knee. I fell. I'm not much [? a runner. ?] I couldn't stop it. I ran into a pole.

Anyways, so I found out. Al told me. My Uncle Al, he knew already. Somebody was with them who was alive in our family. So my three sisters survived.

In all this time--

Rose, my older sister, I told my older one died.

Yes.

Because she was going left.

That's right. That's right.

And my next oldest came home.

Her name was?

Rose.

Rose.

Yeah, she had a boyfriend from during the war. She got married in Satu Mare. And my other sister, Malchi, Molly Roth,

she got married. She had a boyfriend, also.

And I married them both off. The wedding was in Sapinka, married them off. Well, the youngest went to Switzerland. I told you.

Like you told me, yes.

That's it. I had her buying clothes. She's buying things for the wedding and all that.

How long did you stay in Satu Mare? How long did you live there after the war?

I lived there couple years. I was--

And it was now Romania again.

It was Romanian. After the war, it was Romania. I stayed a couple years. Then I got married.

In Romania.

I got married. Then we saw all the Jews are leaving and became a communist country. Gottwald-- no.

Gottwald was Czechoslovakia.

It was Prague. This Sathmar was Romanian. And Czechoslovakia became also communist, Gottland.

So you went from--

We went from Sathmar, we went to Budapest. My aunt and uncle were already in Prague. They were on their way to come to America, all right?

So he has brothers send them affidavits. And they-- So my wife and I, we married. We went to Prague to be with them.

They were not there very long, because they got affidavits to go to the United States sent by his brother. We stayed in Prague. My daughter Marjorie was born there.

And then we see everybody's leaving. I was a young boy. I didn't know right to left, you know. I was a capable young boy, but I see everybody's leaving. And everybody is quiet. They didn't want us to get caught under communist regime.

So we left. I had fixed up a beautiful apartment, furnished, married. I thought we going to live there for a while.

In Prague, yeah.

In Sathmar.

Oh, excuse me. Yes, in Sathmar.

In Sathmar, where I got married. When I saw everybody's leaving, we're going to leave, too. So I had maid, \$5 a month. I paid her.

And we left for Prague. And they registered to come out as students. The list was on mile long, no way.

So we didn't stay long in Prague. We went to Paris. Everybody else left out of Czechoslovakia, because it became communist.

So there I hooked up with all my buddies that I knew from Prague or from Sathmar. They were all in Paris. So we go. We make it to Paris. And I register again to come to America-- had to wait 10, 15 years.

Oh my.

But then I found out, in Germany, the UNRRA, United Nations, has an office for Displaced People, DPs, people without a country. So I tell my wife, let's go there. We're a displaced person. We have no country.

So we went to Germany, took Marjorie, went to Germany. And we registered there that we'd like to go.

What part of Germany was this?

Pucking.

Pucking?

Pucking.

Pucking? Where's that, do you know?

We--

Was this the American zone? Or--

It's American zone.

American zone.

America had the office. America ran the office, the United Nations office. American--

OK.

--ran it.

All right.

So we registered. And where do you want to go? I tell them America, because that's where I have three uncles and an aunt. And that's where we'd like to go.

So we waited about 2 or 3 months. Our number came up, and we took off to the United States.

And this was in 1940--

'49.

In 1949.

December '49, I arrived to America.

Where? Where did you arrive? Where did you come to?

Well, I had family there. My mother had three brothers and a sister. One on my uncles picked me up.

Well, we came by boat. And we were sick for 11 days. It was terrible. December, don't go by boat anywhere.

Yeah.

It was--

The seas were choppy.

Marjorie was this big. She was hungry.

Poor baby.

We finally got somebody who wasn't sick, took her to feed her. Anyways, we get to Boston we arrived, not New York.

Oh.

We get into Boston. So when we got there, I had to take a train to go to Cleveland. So I called my uncle.

He said, OK. I'll pick you up. You come in, and when, and da, da, da, da, da.

So I did arrive to Boston. My Uncle Al and his wife, they were already in America for a year and a half. You know, he was working in a chicken store with one of his brothers. That's what they had, chicken store.

That's what you told me, yes.

Yeah. So he picked up. On the way from the train to his house, he gave me the name Sidney.

Did he really? Is that where you became Sidney?

So help me God. I said to him, why do you call me Sidney? I mean Sidney? Because my son's name is Sidney. And you two are named after the same grandpa. That's how I got the name Sidney.

Sidney. And you--

I like it.

Yeah.

There's nothing wrong. So his son is Sidney, and I was Sidney. So I had to register Sidney Simon.

And you had then chosen to have your mother's maiden name be your name.

Yeah.

And up to then, you were Nathan? You were Natan? Up until you chose your mother's maiden name, you were Natan?

Right, right.

OK.

Right. So [INAUDIBLE] I wound up renting a house. It was a two-family house. I rented upstairs \$150 a month. My whole fortune was \$300.

So I went to work. I told you. I made \$1.05 an hour. And after that, you know, America was mine.

That's wonderful. That's wonderful.

America was mine all the way. It still is. You know, my kids from [INAUDIBLE] there are all educated.

One is a lawyer, and masters degree and-- great I had a great life. I worked very hard. I wasn't afraid of anything. I'm a risk taker.

I did a lot of building in my days. I helped a lot of people. And I love to be around.

Mr. Simon, at what point--

You know?

At what point--

What?

We were talking earlier about God and about how you stopped believing. During this journey that took you from Sapinka to the ghetto to Auschwitz to Bunzlau to Bergen-Belsen--

How we got there?

No, not how you got there. My question is this. Was it at any point along the way there? When did you stop believing in God? At what point?

I could tell you. When I saw two Nazis-- when we had got to Auschwitz, when I saw these two Nazis take this rabbi who supposed-- the people believed in him like he's a second God, a [NON-ENGLISH] to God. A woman couldn't get pregnant, they went to see doctor. They came from all over the villages to see this guy. He was so important.

When I saw him dragged down from the boxcar, two Nazis are dragging him on the ground like a dog. And this is this rabbi. And I said to myself, something's wrong.

Something's wrong. And I got to tell this, something that I forgot. I was laying in the bunk beds in camp. And we had an iron fence.

And through the fence, I see dogs walking on the street. I can't walk. A dog can, but I cannot, because I was born Jewish.

What did I do wrong? What did the Jewish people do wrong they deserved what we got? Slaughtered 6 million people-- I said there's something not right. Something is not right.

And I was a church-goer, like synagogue-goer. I was raised religious. And I learned a lot about it.

And I said, two and two is making five. My kids were born. They could choose. They all went to Hebrew school. They learned a lot, and I left.

And I said, wait a minute, I mean, how could God look and allow this to happen? And it's happening now, killing people like that. And we supposed to rule the world, who shall live and who shall die, who by fire, who by water.

You know, the religion, I go to the temple on Rosh ha-Shanah, Yom Kippur. And it tells a sheet after sheet, God forgive me for this. Forgive me for this. And forgive.

All the asking God and the whole prayer to forgive me for all the sins. I didn't make any sins. I don't need to know that.

They ask God every page. And I belonged to two temples. I didn't go to either one, because the whole thing is silly.

I asked God to forgive me something I didn't do. And two days spending in temple, one day you got to fast. I gave that up a long time ago.

So I have a problem. And then somebody has the answer for me. And anybody I talk to who's smarter than me, more intelligent than me, they don't have the answer. They go, like this. That's the answer.

I told you, I had the rabbi. I says, God, you believe there is a God? And he got hit like this, you know? So he thinks. And that's what he tells me.

God created the world, but it's not-- turned it over to mankind. Hey, come on. Come on, you got to do better than that. Well, that's what I am.

My family, my kids are the same. They agree with me. But they're good kids, very good kids.

They really belong to-- like the one-- I got my little daughter, who's a lawyer, a very bright young lady. She belongs to a temple in Sedona, Arizona. She lives there.

She's work in a temple [INAUDIBLE]. She goes to temple Friday night. I said, I'm proud of you. You're better than your dad.

[LAUGHTER]

You know, so I got a problem with it. And you know, I did help build especially one synagogue in Cleveland. If not me, they wouldn't have it.

Because I know the people who belong there, and they need it. They need it. Some people need it. I don't. And I helped them raise money. And I gave them some money.

And some people who go there, they need it. Some people need it. It's like--

Some people do.

--some people need the church. You know, a lot of people need to go and get rid of their sins.

[LAUGHTER]

I don't do anything like that.

[INAUDIBLE]

I used to when I was a kid. I was young. The devil just got into me a few years ago.

[LAUGHTER]

Mr. Simon, thank you very much. Is there anything else you would like--

Well, you asked me. I thought you were going to ask me a lot of things that I can answer. I'm walking away with nothing.

[LAUGHTER]

Is there anything else?



I think maybe I talk-- without you ask talk too much. I mean, you could tell who I am--

Yes.

--what I am. I give you my life from A to Z. You know, I already did, I think.

I think you did.

Yeah.

I think you did. Is there anything you'd want to add to what we talked about today that you think is important for us to know?

Let me tell you what I think. I think the organization is great. It does work, and it needed done, the federation [INAUDIBLE]. And let me tell you. Let me tell you what's in here.

Please.

I think I started to tell you, but I'll tell you why I did it. I opened an endowment fund over a million dollars with the Jewish Federation of Cleveland. They're going to be around. There is a million dollars that I put up.

I want that money to be used to teach, hire teachers to teach the Holocaust. There is an organization formed and started in Boston. It's called Facing History. I don't know if you've heard of it or not.

I do. I've heard of it.

OK.

My money goes to them to hire teachers to teach the Holocaust, but I want them to expand, to learn, the kids in high school, to get along with each other, not to hate each other, to become like units, not because you're Black or white or Jewish or whatever. The kids should learn together, so they don't have to kill each other. You understand?

So the money they use is for hire teachers to go to schools and teach kids to get along, to live together, and especially teachers to teach the Holocaust. Because it's going to be forgotten. There is not too many left who survived.

You understand? Like you're here hearing my story. There is not too many people you can find who could tell you what I told you.

That's right.

Most of them are dead. I am lucky.

That's right.

You know? So I think that there was mistakes made by Jews and Christians that grew up in areas. They should learn together, live together.

You're no better, because you're Jewish. And you're no better, because you're Christian. We're all people.

When you get born, you get born with a brain. Some have a good brain. Some have the father's brain. Some have the mother's brain.

But you get born with something. And you must contribute something to society, not take it all to yourself. And I did. I

had a lot of people working for me.

I had people, Black people, working for me, the laborers. I had one particular guy I have to talk about. I saw him walking, and it was very, very cold on the street in South Euclid, Cleveland.

And I stopped him. I said, what are you doing here? He said, looking for a job.

I said, what would you like to do? He said, anything. And my family is still in the South. I couldn't get a job there.

I said, you just got a job. You come with me. I hired him. He worked as a laborer for me, a laborer.

I had mason crews. He was laborers. He was the best laborer I had, OK?

And he grew with me, you know? Now, he comes. I like to bring my family over. I don't have money.

So I said, what do you need? He said, I can buy a little house. I need \$600 for a down payment.

I said, if I give it to you, will you not leave me, quit? Mr. Simon, I'll stay with you the rest of my life if you do that. I gave him the money.

He brought his family over. Guess what? My aunt is in the hospital there. And her name is Simon. This nurse says, you know, my dad used to work for a Sidney Simon here when I was a kid.

She said, that's my nephew. She grabbed her and says, I'm here, because of him, you know? I brought them over from the South to move to Cleveland. He couldn't get a job there.

So what I'm trying to tell you-- in the wintertime, we didn't work. I had to lend them a little money. I did. Some paid me back. Some went back to the South, but I didn't quit.

There is good one and bad ones. You know what I mean? But I helped them all the time.

Because you know what? Somebody helped me. I was lucky.

I was lucky that I was born with a little brains here and willing to work. Nothing stopped me from working. I used to come home with bloody fingers.

You know, the cement blocks cut up your fingers. My mother-- my mother. My wife had to do this to my fingers.

To wrap them, to wrap them [INAUDIBLE].

You know?

What a legacy. What a legacy.

I worked. I used to love it.

Thank you.

I raised a good family. Unfortunately, my wife left me 10, 12 years ago.

She passed away.

Yeah, she got sick. She had cancer in her throat. They couldn't fix it.

But I'm happy. I got three nice daughters, beautiful grandchildren. I'm a great-grandpa four times.

Oh my goodness.

Yeah, four times great-grandpa.

Four times.

They live in LA. And I'm getting a little boy now. One of my is getting-- first one, little boy. The other has three girls.

Three girls.

Anyways--

So thank you.

Anyway, so I'm kind of retired. I'm not creating anything. I'm watching what I have from my kids, my grandchildren.

They all have homes that I bought. They're all in good shape. And I play golf every day.

Wonderful.

Yeah. This girl, Moriko?

Yeah?

She never had a club in her hand.

She's been with me 10 years. And I gave her 10 lessons for the long ball, 5 lessons for this short ball. She out-drives me by 50 yards.

[LAUGHTER]

I'm not kidding you. She hits some balls so good. I learned it the wrong way. I just went out and played. I never took lessons.

Everyone loves to play with her. But she can't go play. She's got to play with me.

Of course.

So she's a very nice woman. She takes good care of me. My kids like her. She likes my kids.

I told her we going to speak about the Hungarians, not to be here. But we didn't, you know. The Hungarians, in my opinion, were worse than the Nazis for us.

Yes.

They were terrible. They occupied 1940. They were-- anyways, they should done what Romania did.

Romania said, no, they're my citizen. You can't have them. Romania wouldn't allow the Jews to get killed.

OK.

That's lunch.

It's lunch. Well, I think that we're pretty--

I think it's lunch time, no?

Yeah. Hang on just a second.

Moriko? Is that her?

Yeah.

Finish.

So I'm going to say, thank you again, Mr. Simon.

And thank you for doing the work.

Well, it's been a pleasure.

It's not easy.

It's been a pleasure. To speak with you has been an honor.

And likewise. I'm glad you're here.

Thank you.

I'm glad you're in America.

Me too. And with this, I'm going to conclude the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Sidney Simon on October 9th, in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Thank you again.