

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Niklas Frank
June 6, 2016
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PREFACE

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NIKLAS FRANK

June 6, 2016

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. **Niklas Frank**, on June 6th, 2016, in **Washington, D.C.** Thank you very much, Mr. **Frank** for agreeing to meet with us, to speak with us, to share your life story, and your experiences, and your thoughts. It is much appreciated.

Answer: Thank you.

Q: We're going to start the interview from the beginning, with some of the simplest questions, and from there we'll build on it, and develop, and have a conversation. And hopefully we'll be able to learn your of – more of your perspective. So, the very first question is, could you tell me, what was your full name at birth?

A: **Niklas Frank**, only –

Q: Do you have a middle name?

A: No, no middle name, no.

Q: Okay, **Niklas Frank**. And what was the date of your birth?

A: The ninth of March, in 1939.

Q: And where were you born?

A: **Munich, Bavaria.**

Q: Okay. Do you have brothers and sisters?

A: I had four siblings; two brothers and two sisters, but they are all dead now.

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Q: Okay. Can you tell me their names, and approximately the years of their birth, in the order of the eldest to the youngest?

A: Yes. The eldest was **Sigrid**, a girl born in 1927.

Q: Okay.

A: Next one was **Norman**, born in 1928.

Q: Okay.

A: Then **Brigitte**, 1935, and then my brother **Michael**, 1937, then I am the last one.

Q: So you're the youngest of the family?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And tell me, who – your mother and your father's names.

A: My mother was – her name is **Brigitte Frank**, she is born as **Herbst**, like autumn, and my father's name is **Hans Michael Frank**.

Q: So he did have a middle name.

A: He has a middle name.

Q: Okay. And the years of their births, approximately – approximately?

A: Well, I know it by heart.

Q: Okay.

A: My mother was born in 1895, and my father was born in 1900. So she was five years older than him.

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Q: I see. Can you tell me your – if you can remember this, because of course it can get fuzzy in a person's mind, your very earliest memories, as a toddler?

A: My earliest memory is sitting in a small bath-tube being washed from my nanny, called **Hilde**(ph).

Q: **Hilde**(ph).

A: I must have been a baby. This is my very first memory.

Q: Is there anything particular about that, or just this glimpse, there you are in the bath?

A: It's a glimpse, but she left me, so I think that burned into my brain, I was sitting alone.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: And therefore, maybe I was crying, I don't know why, I think so.

Q: Her name was **Hilde**(ph)?

A: **Hilde**(ph), yes.

Q: How many years was she your nanny?

A: Til – til the end, til 1945.

Q: So six years?

A: Yes.

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Q: Six years or so. And was she also from the same part of **Germany** as your family was?

A: No, my family wasn't Bavarian.

Q: Uh-huh, where were they from?

A: My mother was born in **Forst**. That's a little town near the Polish border now. And my father was born in **Karlsruhe**, near the **Rhine** river. And **Hilde**(ph) was an original Bavarian girl, then about 22, 23, 24 years old.

Q: So tell me, how is it that your father from **Karlsruhe**, and your mother from **Forst**, end up in **Munich**? What happened?

A: My grandfather, the father of my father, he was a lawyer, and he went to **Munich**, and so the whole family went to **Munich**. And my mother, she was a secretary, and she wanted to leave **Forst**, because it was a too small city for her. So she went at first, during the first World War, to **Berlin**, and she had always old aged – old aged lovers and one of them brought her to **Munich**, and there he met **Hans Frank**.

Q: That begs a lot of questions. Not many people start in interview knowing about their mother's love life.

A: I know everything about her love life, my mother and of my father.

Q: How did you find out? Did they tell you?

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A: No, the – no.

Q: Okay.

A: My father was hanged in 1946, and I was seven years old.

Q: I know.

A: Would be a very nice question, how – Father, tell me about your love affairs.

Q: That's right.

A: No, my mother, she has one big talent, she was a very good writer.

Q: Okay.

A: And she wrote as a secretary. He always made a copy of her letters, all that were her girlfriends, and to all others. So I have really hundreds of letters, of all parts of her age. And my mother not – died in 1959, exactly on my 20th birthday, by the way.

Q: March? In March 19 –

A: March, March 1959. And she had surviving girlfriends, who also were then in the 60s, and they – I really said to them, you have to be honest with me, I am now old enough, tell me the truth. And they did it. So I found out a lot.

Q: So you have this very extensive archive of your mother's letters – that is, copies of them.

A: Yes.

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Q: Plus the stories. And you find out as a young adult, you know, about –

A: Yes.

Q: – her early life, before she marries.

A: Not as a young adult, I was 30s – 40 years old, around that. I had it always in possession, because when my mother died, I said to the other siblings, I don't want nothing, just I want every picture and every letter. Everything what is – was written on. And they said okay, take it.

Q: We'll come to that. That's a very key point. Okay, now we come to the first really big question. Tell us who was your father, and what kind of – yeah, who was your father?

A: My father was, in the end, the governor general of occupied **Poland**.

Q: Under the Nazi regime?

A: Under the Nazi regime. He was, by law, the deputy of **Hitler**, so he was, politically spoken, responsible for every death on – in this part of the Polish country. And before he was **Reichsminister** without portfolio, and he started his career as a lawyer for **Hitler**, in the so-called **Kampfzeit**, before **Hitler** took over power in 1933.

Q: So the **Kampfzeit** would be the 20s –

A: The 20s.

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Q: – and the early 30s.

A: Exactly.

Q: And the time when his first three children were born.

A: Yes. Two.

Q: Okay. Two. Two.

A: **Sigrid** and **Norman**.

Q: What are your memories of your father? Because you were born in 1939, and what stays in your mind of what you remember of him, directly?

A: There is one short scene which I have in mind, that the earliest one, when I went, as a very small boy, into his bathroom on the **[indecipherable]** of **Wawel**. And he was shaving himself, and put something of his foam to my nose. It was the only intimate moment I had with my father.

Q: Really?

A: The next one was after we as – must be February or March in 1945. He has already left the government general, was at the lake of **Schliersee** in upper **Bavaria**, and I saw him standing, and his glasses were laying on the little table, and I took the glasses, looked at his eyes, and broke the – the spectacles.

Q: You broke the – you broke his spectacles.

A: Yes.

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Q: And do you remember why you did it?

A: My first political deed. He was so surprised, I will never forget, just look at me, and he immediately gave me – in German you call it – in Bavarian [**speaks German**]. Clapped me into the face, which was okay.

Q: Mm-hm. Why was it o –

A: And there was another scene I just forgot, the most important scene was – it was in the **Bellevue**, in the castle in [**indecipherable**], and I was running around the room – round table, and he was always on the opposite side, and I was longing to get into his arms. And I was crying. And he said to me, what do you want? You are a friend here, a stranger? You are not belonging to our family, what do you want? And I cried, and I cried.

Q: Was he teasing you, or was he serious?

A: Nah, he – no, he was – I – it was both of it, because he saw that I'm not his son, but the son of his best friend, **Karl Lasch**, who was shot by **Himmler** during the war. He was a governor also in the government general of **Poland**.

Q: Do these episodes – are these episodes the ones that you remember, or are these episodes not only the ones you remember, but the only real time you were in your father's presence?

A: For sure I was very often in his presence, but I – I've forgotten about it.

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Q: Okay.

A: That – as a child.

Q: Did you – your born in 1939 –

A: Yes.

Q: – half a year before the war starts, half a year before –

A: Yeah.

Q: – the attack on **Poland**. And where did you spend the chi – your childhood, your first years?

A: I would say half of a year, we were at home at the Lake **Schliersee** in upper **Bavaria**. The other half we were living in **Kraków**, and there was a – I call it nowadays our weekend castle. Beautiful castle about 20 minutes by car away from **Kraków**. Wonderful castle. I have a lot of memories.

Q: And that cas – castle, what was its name?

A: **Kressendorf**.

Q: **Kressendorf**.

A: I don't know the Polish name. I knew it always, but I forgot.

Q: Okay.

A: **Krzesznowiceo**(ph) or something like this.

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Q: Okay. So, I'd like you to describe to me, all three places. The home in **Schliersee**, noyho – in **Neuhaus am Schliersee**, the **Wawel**, and **Kressendorf**, as the first places that you lived in as a child.

A: Let's – let's start with our house at the Lake of **Schliersee** is called **Schoberhof**.

Q: **Schoberhof**, okay.

A: Was an old farming house, which my father renovated in the midst of the '35 - '36 [**indecipherable**]. And that was a very comfortable house, and was –

Q: What does it mean, comfortable?

A: Like an old farming house, was good to live in. The rooms were small, and was not big like the **Wawel**, or like **Kressendorf**, it was really –

Q: Did it have modern conveniences?

A: No, I don't – there's a former where the – where the cattle was, it was a big hall then, but not a high one, small one. We always celebrated Christmas there, for instance, or big festivities, birthdays, like this. And we had the so-called **baronstruber**(ph) where the farmers for – their good room, where they were sitting together.

Q: And that's part of the **hof**? That's part of **Schoberhof**?

A: All part of the **Schoberhof**, yes. And coming to the **Wawel**, **Wawel** I like very much, because I had the little car, with pedals, and I always tried to herd the grown-

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up people. So I was waiting in my little car til grownups come along the long aisles, and I had very good experience to start my car around the corner and crash into them.

Q: Oh, they must have loved you.

A: They must have loved me, because immediately you know, as a little boy, you have a very powerful father. You can do everything.

Q: You sensed it.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. I want to return to the **Schoberhof** however, because I don't have enough of a – of a picture. You say that it was a very comfortable house. By modern conveniences, I meant electricity, plumbing, you know, newly –

A: And that's – everything was in.

Q: Yeah. So it had all those.

A: Bathrooms, and –

Q: Okay.

A: – electricity and everything.

Q: Did – di – di – and it had many buildings? Was it like an estate?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

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A: It was just one house.

Q: Just one house.

A: One house.

Q: All right. And compared to the other houses in – in **Neuhaus** – and what was **Neuhaus**, a town, a village?

A: No, no, it's small village.

Q: Okay.

A: The original part of **Neuhaus** where we are living was about a hundred meters from the lake of **Schliersee**.

Q: Okay.

A: Distant. And it was – all around were three more farming houses, where farmers still are working, til nowadays.

Q: Okay.

A: And **Neuhaus** were a small village, with some shops and normal houses of small villages, but no farmers.

Q: Did most – did most people know each other in **Neuhaus**?

A: Yes.

Q: So the village knew it – you know, everything.

A: Yes. Everybody knew each other.

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Q: And it sounds like you were very, you know, well-to-do, even before **Poland**.

Was that so?

A: Yes. We were very good integrated into the other – into society of **Neuhaus am Schliersee**.

Q: And how is it that your parents came there, given that they were from other parts of **Germany**? Why there?

A: My father grew up – my father's mother was original Bavarian girl, who lived near the lake of **Tegernsee**, who was another lake, besides lake of **Schliersee**. So, he grew up in the midst of the original Bavarian things, before – when they went to **Karlsruhe**, and so always in these vacations, he was near **[indecipherable]** was the name of a very small village. And he spoke fluent Bavarian dialect, and he loved the mountains, and he loved the sea, and he loved upper **Bavaria**. So he was looking for a farming house.

Q: But he wasn't a farmer.

A: No, he wasn't.

Q: Okay. Did anybody farm there for him?

A: No. In the – in the family? No, nobody.

Q: No. Okay, okay. And nobody hired, let's say, there was no more – there wasn't land as part of the –

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A: No, it was about 5,000 square meters land around it.

Q: Okay. Okay. Was he always well-to-do?

A: What does it mean, well-to-do?

Q: Well-to-do, was he always financially well off?

A: Yes.

Q: Even as a young man?

A: Well, no, not always, n – when he started, the Bavarian state supported him, as a law student. And once he was kneeling down in front of my mother saying, **Brigitte**, once upon a time, I would like to earn 1,000 marks a month. And that's a good wish. I had it myself. And this – this – later, he made a fortune.

Q: This 1,000 marks a month, do you know what year he kneeled down and said this to your mother? Because it would – we need to place it in a context.

A: They married in – yes, they married in 1925, so it was around this time.

Q: And what does that mean in the **Weimar** Republic, to earn 1,000 marks a month?

A: Well, the good money.

Q: It was good?

A: But not – special, but not – not to become a millionaire, but was good to live on.

Q: Solid. Uh-huh, okay.

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A: Was enough.

Q: Okay. And your mother, did she come from a financially well-off family?

A: No. She – her father committed suicide when he was 46 years old, and so the family was so poor, he also – she also had four siblings, that she couldn't finish the school. And she was accompanying handicapped girl of a lawyer, in **Forst**, and this guy took her into her office, and made her a secretary.

Q: I see. So she had to go earn her living very early on.

A: Yes. And she started also, when she was learning secretary, she started to deal with Jews. She took in commission first, and sold them for more money to other people.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: And this she did until 1933. My m – father must have been so upset, because every member of the Nazi party had to sign a paper, I don't have anything to do with Jews. I don't deal with them. And –

Q: And your mother did.

A: – and wife has a lot of furs of Jewish **[indecipherable]** in the flat they are living in.

Q: She must have liked these furs.

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A: Yes, she was very – she liked it, but she also made very good dealings with the furs.

Q: I see, so it was a financial thing.

A: She was very good.

Q: Okay.

A: She was very good in fo – financial things.

Q: Okay.

A: Because she were poor when she was young.

Q: Okay. Was your – did you have a sense, and I'm talking directly, you know, directly you, in those first years of your life, what kind of a person your father was, what kind of a personality he had, whether he was warm and affectionate, whether he was more distant and cold? Do you have any sense of that?

A: My sense is he was – concerning with relationship to me, he was more kind of distant.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And your mother? How wa – how was she towards you in those early years?

A: We learned our mother to know, after the war. Because she was always off. She had the – her own **[indecipherable]** her own chauffeur. She liked all the luxury

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very much, and so we all depended on **Hilde(ph)**. Everything what is human with me, comes from **Hilde(ph)**, not from my – from my parents.

Q: Well that, you know, I was circling around these questions, around this, you know, every child has an early influence, and who was your early influence, and you answered my question.

A: It's **Hilde(ph)** for sure.

Q: Tell –

A: I am very thankful to her.

Q: Tell me, what kind of a person was **Hilde(ph)**?

A: She had a lot of love affairs, therefore we went to a lot of awful camps. We also visited the outskirts, or – I don't know the English word. Not –

Q: You can say it in German.

A: – as ein – **Ein ausenlager(ph)**.

Q: So, a camp outside of –

A: Outside of a concentration camp. But there were Jews in it.

Q: Okay.

A: They had to labor, and so she was in love with one of the officers. Only, that's my interpretation, because why should a nanny go with children to a camp with – full of prisoners?

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Q: Did you remember seeing those prisoners?

A: Yes. Yes, but it was a very funny afternoon.

Q: Tell me about that afternoon.

A: We had – they had – was it a wild donkey, or was – was it infuriated by some claps? The officer told the prisoners and two German guards that they should sit on this donkey.

Q: There's a donkey, and – and – and the prisoners are ordered to sit on it.

A: There was donkey, and yes – and fall down immediately, because the donkey jumped. And they were very skinny people, that I have in mind. But I found it hilarious, always falling down, grownup people.

Q: So it was a game, it was a –

A: It was a – no, to a – to a – it was for – my brother was with me, yes.

Q: **Norman**, or **Michael**?

A: No, no, **Michael. Norman** was much too old, he was 11 years older than me. So, we found it a very funny afternoon.

Q: So, by game, I meant it was something that the guards were doing to the prisoners, as sport.

A: Yes, it was something like a play to – to – for the – for the youngsters of the governor general, just to – to – to let them enjoy the afternoon. Horrible.

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Q: Of course. Of course. And it was cause **Hilde**(ph) had a reason to be there.

A: It's – it's my – my interpretation. When I wrote my book against my father, I visited her. She was full of cancer then. And I told her all this short remembrances I had, and I also told her this, I-I have in mind that there was a donkey, and people fell down, and they were put again on this donkey, and – and she explained it. It was in **ausenlager**(ph).

Q: Do you remember the name of it?

A: No. She also didn't know it.

Q: I see.

A: She also didn't know it. It must have been near **Kraków**, on – or near **Kressendorf**.

Q: Okay.

A: Because that was –

Q: Okay.

A: And she told me – she filled in, because she was a grownup, and she had a good memory. Not for this name, for instance, but she knew everything.

Q: Well – but when I asked you what – what kind of a person she was, in the sense of how did she influence you, your answer was that she had many lovers. And I

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want to know, what did she do – give to a child? What was it in her presence in your life, that made the difference?

A: She – she was a very humorous, can you say it? Very funny person.

Q: Mm-hm. She had a sense of humor.

A: She – yeah, a lot. And we had a lot of – we laughed all the day. She was really with us, and she was not pretending to learn us anything, and she never dealt with us like we are princes of the governor general, or something like this. We were really typically children in her eyes, and she go – went swimming with us, and doing everything. She was really – she – she loved us, I would say.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: And when my mother came back from one of her tours with – she told me, she said, **Hilde**(ph), take a day off. Now I am back, I will have all my children around me. And **Hilde**(ph) was very happy, and dressed herself, and 20 minutes later she got a call inside the house, **Hilde**(ph), you have to stay. I am too nervous. Those children are – make me so nervous, I have to – you have to keep them. And she was off again.

Q: So much for her day off.

A: Yes.

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Q: Yeah. Did she have any – this sounds so – I mean, even as I say it, to me it sounds so silly, but did she have any political leanings? Did she have any –

A: **Hilde**(ph)?

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't think so.

Q: Okay.

A: I never heard anything like – I also have to admit, I never heard anything in my family about political things, because I was too young.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Maybe they have talked about it, but I don't remember.

Q: Okay. How much involvement – I mean, you mentioned this a little bit in passing, but you were with your brother **Michael** when you were in this **ausenlager**(ph), were y – were you two more often together, than not?

A: Yes.

Q: It was him and you?

A: He was only two years older than me, and we were – really, we stick together.

Q: Okay. So you spent your childhood with him, as well?

A: Yes.

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Q: What about your older siblings? Your two sisters and your brother, where were they, in your first years, during these war years?

A: They both were at **Kraków** and **Kressendorf** and Lake **Schliersee**.

Q: So they were at home?

A: But they were at school

Q: Okay.

A: And later they were at the German Deutsche **Oberschule**, German high school, or I don't know the American translation, in **Kraków**, both of them. And the next – **Brigitte**, called **Gitty**(ph), she was very quiet, very talented in drawing, she always was – **Michael** and – and I, we couldn't live with her. She wa –

Q: Why not?

A: She was stupid. But no, she was a very poor girl. She committed suicide when – she never wanted to become older than our father, and she committed suicide when she became 46 years old.

Q: Which was his age.

A: Was his age when he was hanged.

Q: We'll come to that, but I'd like to get a sense of the personalities. When she was young, you say she was talented, and she used to draw, yes? And she was quiet.

Why did you think she was stupid, as a little boy?

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A: Oh, it is just – I never thought that she was hi – we couldn't deal with her. She was out of our range, or something. It was by the way she was a girl.

Q: Well, I know that.

A: What could you do with girls when you are five, six, seven years old?

Q: Oh, they're useless. They're useless, you know. But what about the –

A: Thank God it changed.

Q: Yeah. What about the older siblings? **Norman**, or –

A: **Norman** was very funny with us.

Q: Did he play with you?

A: Yes, she played with us. She made a lot of bloody things with us.

Q: Such as?

A: I will never forget. I got a big chocolate, yes? And he – this guy, wanted to get – have this chocolate, instead of me. So she – he put the – a blanket around his shoulders. I was sitting with my chocolate.

Q: Defending it.

A: And he was kneeling before, pretending to be a beggar, saying to me, **Niki(ph)**, ets – I am called **Niki(ph)**, I am such a poor guy, I am so hungry. I need this chocolate. I start crying, and I handed it over.

Q: Oh, that's mean.

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A: But on the other end, he made – he filled with our – a lot of snow then, in upper **Bavaria** during winter, he built big castles, and attacking us. We were sitting inside the ice and snow castle, and he attacking us with big mines, he called them, and boom, and it was really funny. Was really a very funny guy.

Q: That's a lot of fun, yeah. So he was somebody who was engaged with the younger ones. He was somebody he di – it wasn't like you were young and –

A: I w – I won't say it's engagement. When he had time, and we were around him, we – maybe we have begged him that he should play with us, and he did it. And it was very funny.

Q: And what about **Sigrid**?

A: **Sigrid** wasn't so funny.

Q: She wasn't?

A: And she was also, she was a girl.

Q: Yeah. Enough said. Enough said.

A: So she was far off, she was far away from us, also from age, and she had quite other interests.

Q: Well, she was 12 years older than you were.

A: Yeah.

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Q: And so she – I guess what I'm trying to do is get a sense of how your – the siblings in your early years interacted with each other. How involved were you –

A: I th – I – I would say, we were a happy family. We didn't know how bad the marriage was between our parents, first. It started in '42, when the marriage broke – nearly broke. But before, and also where the children were together, it was always a big laughter.

Q: Okay.

A: Always. We were fond of each other.

Q: That is what I wanted to get a sense of.

A: That's for sure. And we also played with **Gitty**(ph), with our next older girl, but it wasn't the same –

Q: Okay.

A: – as **Mike** and me. And we had a lot of adventures, and – everywhere.

Q: Such as? What kind of adventures would little –

A: Stealing, lying, fishing, which was not allowed, and hurting other people, and when the grand – our grandmother, the mother of my father was living with us in **Poland**, in the castle of **Kressendorf**, **Sigrid** told that – told us she is a witch. So we – we did a lot of awful things like putting dirt in front of her door, where her apartment was [**indecipherable**] we had a really adventurous life.

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Q: When you say these things, though, stealing and lying can be serious, or they can be the sorts of things all children do, that is candies, or –

A: I – I – I won't say that other children are doing this.

Q: Okay, so these –

A: I think I have – I have thought about myself a lot of it. For instance, we got a lot of toys. Every visitor to my father, brought a lot of toys for the children, especially for **Mikey** and me.

Q: Okay.

A: And we got – we got the toys, and we went to our rooms, and we immediately destroyed the toys. We also, for instance with our trains, and we had lorries, which we're driving, some sort. We always were building accidents. We were never interested in the normal playing that the train is rolling through a room. Was boring. But if you build up accidents, where you demolish all these – these new toys, we were happy. And I would say one of the reasons is that our parents, and all the other grownups, knew exactly that they don't have to do nothing in **Poland**, and they saw all the hanged people, Polish ones, they saw the Jews with the stars, they saw the hungry faces, they knew exactly what – that they committed every day the most horrible crimes, and they all were involved, and this bad conscious they had – it's

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my interpretation – went down in a certain way, to the children. And therefore, we are destroying everything which we got as gift. My interpretation.

Q: Okay. But it would have been a silent kind of transmittal. That is, nobody told you, of the grownups.

A: No, no, never.

Q: Of course not.

A: No, never.

Q: Were you, in the German word, **verwöhnt**? Spoiled?

A: Yes. My – my father and my mother wasn't interested to – to educated us, and to – something like typical German people. It was all **Hilde**(ph). She decided what we have to eat, and where. It was not special, and we – nobody told us that we are princes of the governor general, something like this. So we were – in this way, we were quite normal, but we knew, as I told you with my little car, we knew that we have some important guy in the background.

Q: Yes, but did **Hilde**(ph) ever discipline you? That is, if you –

A: No.

Q: – did something wrong –

A: No, I – I don't remember that she ever – she never clapped me, or –

Q: Or talked to you and say, this is not something that you should be doing?

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A: I don't remember. She must have, for sure. She must have.

Q: Okay.

A: But in a good way.

Q: Yeah. Because in every child's life, the sense of what is right, and what is wrong, has to be introduced by somebody.

A: That was **Hilde**(ph). That was **Hilde**(ph).

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: But in a informal way. She never gave us lessons. Today we speak about not stealing.

Q: Of course, of course. But it's – you know, if your parents weren't involved, if they were, you know, distracted, or doing other things, somebody had to.

A: Yeah, that was **Hilde**(ph).

Q: That was her. Tell me a little bit about your mother. And what do you remember of her during those years. Like I said with your father.

A: Just – I really – it was after the war that I really started to get some knowledge of who my mother was.

Q: Okay, are there episodes? Like we ask – you know, you remember your father with the shaving cream, and in the **Bellevue** and –

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A: Oh yeah, that's – that's one scene, the castle of **Kressendorf** was a little bit like **Versailles**, but very smaller. But from one room to the – on the other side, you have to go about a hundred meters. So, our children rooms were on this side, and the apartment of my mother was right on the other side. And **Mikey** told me, now let's be funny. You run to our mother, telling her that **Mikey** is dead. And he lay down. I was, oh, that's a very good idea. And run along this – in the first floor, this long corridor. And my mother was sitting naked in the bath [**indecipherable**]. And I said to her, **Mutte(ph), Mutte(ph), der Micky ist tot**. Mother, Mother, **Michael** is dead.

Q: **Michael** is dead.

A: And she jumped, naked as she was, jumped out, took a towel, and run behind me to the room where –

Q: Through this long corridor.

A: – this long corridor, wet, every – and entered really, and mi – **Mikey** was lying dead. And she knelt down, and then **Mikey** started to laugh. And I got the clap into my face of my mother, she was so horrified. But this also is a scene which shows to me, children knew there's something wrong. Where we are living, what we are doing, and so, I think it.

Q: What kind of a person was **Michael**? I asked about all the others, but about him, what kind of a –

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A: **Michael** was –

Q: – as your first play – playmate?

A: Yeah. **Michael** was really funny. He looks, compared with me, a beautiful looking guy, young guy, really great **lockiges haar**, I don't know the English word.

Q: Mm-hm, curly hair.

A: Curly hairs. Very funny, full of wit. And he was so **sportiv**, he could kill parrots with stones. I admired him a lot.

Q: Well, he's your older brother.

A: Yes, but he was really, really great guy. And he loved especially, his father.

Q: He loved your father.

A: Oh, very much.

Q: How did this show itself?

A: Ah, he always was looking for him, I would say. It's my remembrance. I – I could put it on – on really on scenes, but you – you know what your brother is like, that he loved your father more than me.

Q: Even when you were a little boy?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: When you compare it that way?

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A: Yeah, you have to remember the scene, when I was very young, and from this point when I was running around the round table, there was a really, healthy distance between my father and me.

Q: When he called you a stranger.

A: Yeah. And don't let me get into his arms. And this was – it was my s – it saved me. It saved me, because later **Mikey** defended, like three others, our father, the innocent victim. I never did. So I had an – I had an advance. But he loved – back to **Mikey**, he loved him very much, and he was very sad when he was hanged. And –

Q: What did – what – what did he do when – when he learned of that? When you say sad.

A: He started to cry. He cried a lot, and ah, he was really – we had to comfort him.

Q: Oh. He was distraught.

A: Yes, he was distraught.

Q: Okay.

A: And later, when he was 22, 23 years old, still very slim, and very **sportiv**, he started suddenly to drink milk, til – til 13 liters a day.

Q: Thirteen liters a day?

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A: And he married, and his wife didn't know where to hide the milk for the babies, because **Mikey** was searching all the house, to find all the last milk for the babies, and drank it.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: And became, as you can imagine, fatter and fatter and fatter. And I think it was because he couldn't get around with his father.

Q: Okay.

A: It was – the oldest brother, **Norman**, became an alcoholic. The second – the eldest daughter, **Sigrid** emigrated with her second husband to **South Africa**, because they liked very much the apartheid. **Michael** drank a lot of milk, til he was dying. **Brigitte** committed suicide because she didn't want to become older than our father. And who is still alive, and very happy? **Niklas**.

Q: And you put it down to the favor, from the very beginning, that your father did you when he wouldn't take you in his arms.

A: I – I would say so. I would say so. I may – maybe at – and I'm very, very happy that he was hanged. I am completely against death penalty, but in this case, he had earned it. And imagine he would have survived? He would have poisoned my brain, when you are young. That's not easy, to live with a guy who was so well educated as my father was.

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Q: Okay. We'll come to that. We'll come to that.

A: So –

Q: I'm still – I'm still in the early years –

A: Conversations are always round.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Don't be a German interviewer, one card after the other.

Q: Although I've read some of the articles that were written, some of them are very, very good, very detailed. Very, very good –

A: Oh yeah. I had to rewrite them.

Q: You said when you were little, and he didn't take you in his arms and – in this **Schloss Bellevue**, were – you were stunned. Is that right? How come he doesn't do it, I'm being rejected? And that's the feeling you had of distance? Is this what I'm trying to understand?

A: I – I would say I don't have the same sentence had – in my brain.

Q: Yeah.

A: You – you notice it.

Q: You feel it, yeah.

A: You feel it, and you – you have only two possibilities. You endure it, or you are broken. And with me I was happy that I could endure it. Maybe because of **Mikey**,

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because I was very happy with **Mikey**. Maybe because of **Hilde(ph)**, because I was very happy also with **Hilde**. Maybe because of all the others around being so experienced, because of my little car, because of all what I experienced. Because of – because of killing fishes, and killing birds around the lake of **Schliersee**. A lot of other things were good for me.

Q: Okay.

A: But it was a distant which survived everything. Also, you asked for my mother.

Q: Yeah.

A: When my father was hanged, my mother – that was the 16th of October in 1946.

We were in the **kinderheim**.

Q: You were in – uh-huh –

A: And – at this time. And my mother visited us, **Gitty(ph)**, **Mike(ph)** and me, and she had spring clothes, full of color, and like it was spring, but it was late of autumn.

Q: Yeah, it's October.

A: And she took us to a walk, and told us that now our father is dead, and he is in heaven. And for me it was just information, I was – I knew it already, because we – when we visited him last time, I knew that he will be hanged. So for me it was quite a confirmation.

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Q: You knew because someone told you?

A: No, no. And so – and **Mikey** was starting to cry, and also **Gitty(ph)** – **Brigitte** was starting to cry. And my mother said to them, why do you cry? Your father is happy in heaven now, and look at **Niki(ph)**, he also don't cry, and then he pressed my hand and said, why are you not crying? And so, just as I – the distant. I don't have a personal – I had no personal feeling, like. And by the way, I always was very pragmatic in my life. Now I knew the next time we will see our mother, she will tell us that our father is dead.

Q: You knew it, but no adult had told you that this would be.

A: Well, in the summer of '46, his lawyer, Dr. **Zeidel(ph)** came to our family and said, Mrs. **Frank**, there is no chance. He will get the death penalty, for sure. The proofs against him are so magnificent, are so unbelievable, and he couldn't do any –

Q: You were – you were in earshot of this?

A: It was also – it was – I knew it then. I know it was connecting with the visit of Mr. **Zeidel(ph)**. And everybody else, also my brother **Norman**, and so – so we talked to each other about it. I don't know exactly the conversations any more. But I knew that when the invitation co – came in September, we had to go – September '46, we have to go to the prison to visit our father. It was the first time after he was

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arrested, on the fourth of May in 1945. I knew that will be my last visit to see my father alive.

Q: So it's actually the first and the last visit –

A: Yes.

Q: – for you, and it was you and all of his children, and your mother.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And it was – and it's because Mr. **Zeidel**(ph) had come to your home, and the children talked about it with one another, that you were already aware.

A: Yes, also from my mother.

Q: Okay, so she had told you about this?

A: No, it's – then I was six – six and seven years old.

Q: Yeah.

A: I can't repeat you conversations.

Q: Of course, of course.

A: I know only that I knew he will get the death penalty, and it will be over. So that was – I – I can't repeat anything. But I know then from **Norman** also, which I talked to him a lot during our life, that it was **Zeidel's**(ph) visit who ended all our hopes – or their hopes, not my hope – that he will survive. And by the way, whenever I was already in school, and I came to school in the autumn of '45. And

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the **Nuremberg** trial was broadcasted. Every evening there was one hour they talked about the day. And everybody, because we knew each other, everybody in the family of the other children, the parents of them, they're talking about it. Also **Hans Frank** was in the prison in **Nuremberg**, and that's this big trial. And the children in my school sometimes said to me, one of them, that, hi **Niki**(ph), you know now your father will be hanged. And I said yes. So, it was some – it wasn't cruel. They knew it.

Q: It was common knowledge.

A: It was common knowledge, yes.

Q: Okay. I want to – I'll jump ahead, and then I'll move back.

A: Like me.

Q: But I remember in your book, you – you say afterwards, that your Aunt **Margo**(ph) had se –

A: **Margot**(ph).

Q: – had séances where she would communi –

A: No, no, this is my **Tante Marta**(ph).

Q: **Tante Marta**(ph) would have sans – séances –

A: Don't mix my aunts.[laughter]

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Q: My – my sincere apologies. My sincere apologies. How could I? How could I? Okay. So **Tante Marta**(ph) knew how to speak to the dead, yeah? And she would have séances, and in those first months afterwards, your mother participated in them. And lo and behold there were – there was communication with your father, yes? In these séances. And then your uncle passed away, and then that stopped.

A: He committed suicide.

Q: Yeah.

A: He threw himself under a train.

Q: And why did he do that, by the way?

A: Because of his wife. I don't know. I don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: She was a little bit – he was crazy.

Q: Okay.

A: He was out of his brain, he also was running along the main street in **Munich, Kaufingerstrasse**, and throwing stones into the windows. And my Aunt **Marta**(ph) was running by, and to – to stop him as well. He was –

Q: So maybe he was mentally ill?

A: Yes, he was, for sure.

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Q: Okay. But what I wanted to say with this, is that there is a section where you write, that when the communications with your father ceased – that is, you kept – you know, in the séance, they kept wanting to bring his spirit up, you yourself tried to do so. I think it was, you know, if Uncle **Julius** was a butterfly, then you were seeing, was your father here, was your father there. And it ended up with a little dog, that you thought maybe his spirit had rested in the little dog?

A: Yes, but was – was more on the funny side, in the – in this book. This, with the – with the butterfly is correct. It wasn't me, but it was **Tante Marta**(ph) –

Q: That's right.

A: – she was sitting in the English garden, and suddenly Uncle **Julius** came along as a butterfly.

Q: The butterfly.

A: And the dog also as well, yes.

Q: The reason why I bring it up is that when I read that passage, yes, I know it was supposed to be humorous, but it also gave me a sense of a child who is missing his father, who wonders whether his father is here, his father is there, his father is someplace else.

A: Maybe.

Q: Did you miss him?

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A: I didn't know him. Hm. I'm not sure. I – I would say, more I would say because as a normal child, you are missing your father, it could be, for sure. But it's not something which haunts me.

Q: Yeah.

A: Or has haunted me. Could be. The good thing was in this time, that a lot of families, they lost their father due to the war. They all were killed in the **Wehrmacht**. So, it was comparable to other families who – where the children also grew up without a father. The special thing on the **Frank** family and this, it was like an honor. You were special because your father got a year long trial, and afterwards, he wasn't shot by a Russian in the war, or by a French, or an English, but he was hanged, so that was special. So –

Q: Prestigious, in a way?

A: In a way, prestigious. We were something special. And, don't forget, my father was sitting in the first row of the defendants, not in the second one.

Q: Even more special.

A: My mother liked it, my mother, it's even more special.

Q: I want to go back to the descriptions of the other two places. You gave us a description of **Schoberhof**. First, a question: why did you have the **Wawel** and

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Kressendorf as places to live? Why was it two for the family? Or were there different functions of each place?

A: In the **Wawel** were a lot of – also the – the government, his prime minister and all this kind of stuff was always there.

Q: So it was like a – a government building? It was a castle, but it was a government building?

A: Yes, yes, yes, well, a lot of government in it, and that was our weekend castle. We enjoyed it very much.

Q: The **Wawel**?

A: No, no, the weekend castle was **Kressendorf**.

Q: I see.

A: So you – mostly was there. Then he – his official castle was the **Wawel**.

Q: Okay.

A: Where he did all his work during the day. But on weekends, and also during the weekend, he could decide when he was – wants to work or not. So he was very often at **Kressendorf**.

Q: So describe to me both places. What did they look like, and what were they?

A: **Wawel** is – for me it was, as a child, a lot of very long, empty aisles.

Q: Mm-hm. Corridors?

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A: Corridors, corridors, yes, corridors. And beautiful rooms, beautiful rooms full of **gobelins**.

Q: Tapestries, yeah.

A: And – tapestries, yes. Was really good to live in, but my memory, I have no memories that I slept there, but I must have slept there, because in the morning when my father was shaving himself – I don't have any memory.

Q: Okay.

A: More memories, I exactly knew – to know this, **Kressendorf** is now a ruin. I know exactly where my room was, where I slept in with **Mikey** together. So I was more in **Kressendorf**, I would say, in all those years.

Q: These –

A: And I remember, especially from the **Wawel**, the big festivities my father gave –

Q: Okay.

A: – to the German big shots.

Q: So what kind of festivities were these?

A: They were really with big candelabras, and really everybody in wonderful clothes, and we had to give everybody our hand, and hand kisses to the women.

This I have in – in – til in my head, because **Mikey** and me, we must always laugh,

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and we mixed it up, we then kissed the hands of the guys, and then made our [bows] to the ladies, and so on. Was funny.

Q: So tell us, so that now is not from the eyes of a child, but so that people will know, these are not just any old places in buildings, in Polish history. Can you tell us what was the **Wawel**, what was **Kressendorf**, what was **Bellevue**?

A: **Wawel** was – **Wawel** was the old capital of the Polish empire, let's say it this way, and a lot of Polish kings are buried inside the cathedral on the **Wawel**. And the special thing is, unbelievable me til nowadays, **Mikey** and I, we played seek-hide?

Q: Hide and seek.

A: Hide and seek, inside this cathedral. So we – we hid behind wonderful graves, and holy people, and – and lying – not down in the catacomb where the – where all the **Pilsudski** is – had his grave. But somebody was, that they allowed us to play there, hide and seek.

Q: So this is sort of like the central place of Polish kings?

A: It was the central place for the Polish people. And immediately, my father forbade, when he took over [indecipherable] immediately shut it down, no Polish person could enter the cathedral, which was one of the most holy ones in – in **Poland**, besides **Częstochowa**.

Q: **Częstochowa**, yeah. And **Kressendorf**? Did that belo –

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A: **Kressendorf** was really funny, because it was lot of – of small lake, and a lot of very funny **SS** guys who played with us, and we – mostly we were keen to eat with them, and not upstairs with the kitchen of ours, so we liked the soldiers, as all the children. And they were very nice to us.

Q: Were they? And they we – these were **SS**, rather than another branch, or not – not the police, or **Wehrmacht**, or anything like that?

A: No, it was the **SS** who was guarding it.

Q: So you had – you had these guards at your family place, so you would be safe, in other words.

A: Yes. Also around the **Wawel**.

Q: Okay.

A: But on the other hand, which is really strange, **Norman**, visiting the German school in **Kraków**, left with a cycle every morning, rode through a park, along streets, and nobody ever hunted him down or killed him. And that was really strange.

Q: Today no one would do that.

A: No.

Q: No. What about **Sigrid**? Was she going to school there too?

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A: She was also going to school, so she must also have gone the same way. She was elder, the one class ahead, one year ahead of him. And both were very happy there.

Q: And **Bellevue**? Why was your father in **Bellevue**?

A: That – there must be – this must have happened when we visited **Warsaw**.

Q: Okay. And what was **Bellevue** as a – as a place?

A: [**indecipherable**] the Polish president is living in. I made – when I was a journalist, I made an interview with **Lech Walesa**. In the same room where the table was staying, where I was running around, and I said to myself, oh, what a coincidence, and I am back here.

Q: And did you tell **Lech Walesa**?

A: No, no, I would – never would have done this. [**indecipherable**] of my book. Also, if – he wouldn't have known. That would be really very [**indecipherable**] that I am telling him this. I alwa – **Frank** is a normal name, like **Miller**, or **Becker**, or something. So I was always protected by my name? He was a funny guy.

Q: **Walesa**?

A: Mm-hm. I interviewed him first in **Danzig**.

Q: Did you?

A: He was very slim, and then he was the president, he was fat, and my first question was, you put on some weight, Mr. President. And he was very funny, he

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said, what can I do? All these gala dinners I have to attend, so I have to eat. Oh, very nice. Nice guy.

Q: My goodness, my goodness. But it does illustrate for us the – the rooms, the place, the structures of your childhood, were not – I'm talking physical structures, were out of the ordinary. Very much out of the ordinary. That's why I wanted to highlight it, you know. The central **[indecipherable]** in **Poland** –

A: No, we had our – our salon car, and the – and the long one –

Q: Okay.

A: – who was put to normal trains.

Q: Okay.

A: We had a special car, as all the top Nazis – and this I liked very much. There are other – some more moments of my father.

Q: Okay, tell us.

A: Sitting there, playing chess, having fun, yes, yes, I remember. And we always wearing, from **Schliersee [indecipherable]** by ourselves **[indecipherable]** **Austria** into to the governor general.

Q: So you went by train, you would travel by train for –

A: Yes. Not always, also by car, and – and mostly by the salon car, who was full of **[indecipherable]** was really special. Really wonderful. Yeah, that was

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extraordinary, for sure. And also the big **Mercedes** I was driving in parade cars.

And this really – I liked it very much.

Q: And in –

A: And then once we saw –

Q: Okay.

A: – passing by with our **Mercedes** in **Poland**, a burning tank, a **Tiger** tank, which I know, by chance, because the driver said, this is a **Tiger**, was – was the biggest German tank, and one of the last inventions in – in the war, it was built up. So it must have been very late. This was – til nowadays, this burning tank on the side of a street, so it must be – the Russian must be very near, then.

Q: So were –

A: Last time we were – have been in autumn '44, in **Kraków**.

Q: Thank you, that was one of my questions, was the last – when was the last –

A: I know all your questions.

Q: You do, you really do. And even some I haven't thought of yet. So, you spend your childhood back and forth –

A: Yeah.

Q: – between the three places. And the last time is August '44, when you are in –

A: Autumn.

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Q: Autumn. Excuse me, autumn '44. You mentioned earlier that your parents' marriage broke down in '42. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

A: Yes. My father was very much in love with a little girl called **Lilly**.

Q: What was her last name?

A: **Wydot**(ph) was her maiden name, **Lilly Wydot**(ph). He met her first in this little village, **Fahl**, in upper **Bavaria**, near **Lenggries**, near Lake **Tegernsee**. And when he was young, he – he was 12 years, or something like this, he has described it in the private – some private pages he left us, he wrote in the prison. In a white shirt, suddenly, this little girl came and he fell in love with her, as a child. He must have been either 10 or 12 years old. Very young. And she was the daughter of a very rich banker – I don't know the English word.

Q: Banker.

A: Banker?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: In **Munich**, and then they were never together, I would say, really. They met each other in every summer vacations, because the **Wydots**(ph) came out to their house, and my father was staying with the aunt, a sister of her mother. And in 1942 – she, in the meantime, had married a man called **Grau**, like gray, and had one child, and he was missed at the eastern front. And he remembered his – her friend,

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Hans Frank, and wrote him a letter, and they met, and my father immediately fell in love again.

Q: So she wanted to find out what was happen – what happened to her missing child

–

A: Yes, yes.

Q: – to her son, I presume.

A: Yes. He was in the army, in the meantime.

Q: Okay.

A: And –

Q: Did she ever find out?

A: No. He never showed up. He was killed – missed – never – there was also no grave of him in **Russia**. So they fell in love, and my father wanted a divorce. And my mother said this wonderful sentence, I prefer to the widow, instead of a divorced wife of a **Reichsminister**. Which I really loved this sentence. I always was on the side of my mother, by the way.

Q: Yeah.

A: And so he immediately went to **Himmler**, and went to Mrs. **Goebbels**, because her husband also had a love affairs with a Czech actor – actress. And – and he wrote a letter, together with a picture showing her and the five children sitting on the

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Wawel, telling **Hitler** it's unbelievable that a man could leave a family looking so beautiful, and being so important, and –

Q: So your mother did this?

A: My mother did this, and **Hitler** took the time within the war, stopped all the slaughter and discussed this and forbade my father to divorce til the end of the war. And my father, this bloody coward, said, yes, my **Führer**, then I will postpone the divorce. But the marriage was broken. But til we visited, til we visited. And my – my father was like a **pendel**(ph).

Q: Pendulum, back and forth?

A: Yes, back and forth. Suddenly he sa – slept again with each – with each other, and he wanted to – **Brigitte**, come over to the governor general, I need you, and then he promised to the **Lilly** that he will now get the divorce, whatever **Hitler** was saying, and you are my future, and then he – it always between **Lilly** and **Brigitte**. And my – the – the priest who accompanied my father to the gallows was – baptized my father in the Catholic cha – church, when he was in prison. He told me when I visited him near **New York**, in **Albany**, and he said to me, **Niklas**, your father was still afraid of your mother also when he was in the prison. And a nephew of **Lilly Grau** told me that he remembered my father sitting in their family, together with **Lilly**, and **Lilly** was so dominant that my father was afraid of her. But what

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kind of a selection he had between two wives who were really much more s – much stronger than him.

Q: And yet, he is the governor general of **Poland**.

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me about – tell me more about your mother. You said you were on her side, during this divorce proceeding – or this divorce scenario.

A: No. No, no, it had nothing to do with the divorce, I don't know about the divorce then.

Q: Uh-huh, okay.

A: This always was later. That was –

Q: Did you feel this –

A: That always gives a – always was after the war.

Q: Okay.

A: That I found all – out, how many sexual affairs my mother had, and I al – always I found a new one, I was so happy for my mother. It was always a little bit against my father now.

Q: Did the older children know about what was going on?

A: Yes. Especially – only a meh – only **Norman** and **Sigrid**, they knew exactly, and my mother forced **Norman** and **Sigrid** to write letters to their father, saying you

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can't leave us, you can't leave me, and so – yeah, my mother fought with all kinds of tricks to get him.

Q: And why did she want to hold on so much?

A: Luxury.

Q: So it wasn't love.

A: No. No, no. My father later wrote in a – in a – in prison he wrote a letter to his mother, saying it was – with **Brigitte** it was only a sexual, one-night stand.

Something like this. A little bit polite, more polite, he wrote it. And I regretted it all my lifetime.

Q: Very bitter.

A: Yeah.

Q: Very bitter for both, you know, but very bitter. In this world that I've asked you to paint for me, you've mentioned a few times when the reality hit. You're in this **ausenlager**(ph) with – with your nanny, **Hilde**(ph), and you see these very thin people being made to jump up and down on the donkey – that is, they're on the donkey, and then they're thrown down. Did – did you ever see anything, as a child? Did anybody say anything as a child, of the outer world, of any of the camps, or of any – anything of what was happening to the Jews, to the Poles?

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A: No. There must have been another love affair of **Hilde**(ph), because I visited once the prison, and a guard took me and let me see through a small hole in this – of a cell, and I saw a young lady sitting there, not looking at us, but she was really sad, sitting [**indecipherable**]. And I started to cry. And he comforted me, the guy, and that – that’s a very, very – she is a witch, but you don’t have to cry, because she is dead very soon.

Q: Oh dear.

A: But I couldn’t ask them, what do you mean? What – what’s the reason this? You – you – you –

Q: You’re a child.

A: – don’t do when I –

Q: Yeah.

A: – when you are four or five years old. And so this was – and the other thing was my visiting the – in the ghetto of **Kraków**, but I never asked [**indecipherable**] I asked only Mother, what are they doing there? Those sad looking guys around here, and also I saw children of my age looking very sad, because we always were looking very happy. And my mother refused to answer. And I wouldn’t have understood it, I have to say, those are Jews, and we don’t like the Jews, and the

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Jews are no human beings, and so – so we have to round them up in small parts of the city and they – she would never have said this to me.

Q: You – yeah, you –

A: And I was not any more interested because as a child, the next sensation is coming around the corner.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Okay. So that also sort of answers my question of was there any mention of people like the Poles, or the Jews, in conversation.

A: No. As-As far – we must have heard, the children, conversations like this.

Q: Okay.

A: But I have no memory of this.

Q: Okay.

A: I only wi – one of the things is wha – what – what I – when my book against my father came out, it was immediately translated off to – of Polish couple, who speak fluent German, and was printed in a – in a weekly illustrated paper. And then were a lot of interviews.

Q: In **Poland**?

A: In **Poland**, yes. It was 1987, and one of these guy was telling, he was saved by **Niklas**. **Niklas** has saved his life.

Q: You?

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A: I was very keen. And he was – it was – he has told it to a journalist, that he has printed it. And then suddenly, I had this memory. The thing was following. This guy was a servant at the **Kressendorf**, and he was responsible for the ovens, for –

Q: Yeah, sure. I mean, for heating, you mean.

A: For heating.

Q: For heating, mm-hm.

A: For heating. And he had to clean up one of these heating things, and there is – I don't know the –

Q: Was it coal heating?

A: Coal – coal, or – it must have been coal. And so there was a bed nearby, and **russ**, I don't know the English word for **russ**.

Q: **Russ**?

A: What – when – when it's burnt down, the coals.

Q: Ashes.

A: The ash.

Q: Ashes.

A: Thank you. And some of the ashes were – through his cleaning, was blown to the bed, to the white shirt of the bed. And my mother came in and screamed at him, and said, now you – you go to the concentration camp, that's over with you, you can't

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make my bed dirty – it wasn't hers, was somebody else's, maybe from **Norman** or **Sigrid**. And then I show – should have showed up, and this sadly – and I started to cry when I heard my mother screaming at this guy, which I liked. He was a nice guy, I was accompanying him [**indecipherable**] it was completely out of my brain, til this article I read.

Q: Isn't that interesting?

A: That is interesting. And he said, and when this little guy started to cry so heavily, my mother became more silent, comforted me, and let it go. He wasn't put into a concentration camp. I saved him.

Q: Well, he thought so, and that's the important part, you know. And it's also – so, okay, so now I get it – a picture. The – **Kressendorf** was heated by coal ovens.

A: Not – not everywhere.

Q: Okay, but in certain rooms. And, of course, a room ha – the coal is in the actual bedroom, and you – there was – a-and there was sheets, you know, white sheets –

A: Yes, yes.

Q: – and the – some of the ash went on that, and for that he was going to be sent away. Did you meet him after the book came out, or not?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

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A: I meet one of the guys who made this liberation act, who placed some explosive under the railway of my father.

Q: We have to tell the whole story then, of what – this was an assassination attempt?

A: Assassination attempt.

Q: Tell us – tell us what that was. Now in a – as a grownup voice, rather than as a child. What happened in this instance?

A: About 20 Polish guys wanted to kill my father, and placed a bomb under the railway in the woods, on the way from **Kraków** to **Lemberg**, as far as I know. But the bomb exploded a little bit too early, so only the locomotive – I don't know the word –

Q: The locomotive, mm-hm.

A: – the locomotive was out of order then, and not much more was – happened. But if you drive today to these woods, you can't believe it. They made a monument for those 20 brave Polish gentlemen. And you are 50 meters away, what do you see in golden letters? Government general **Hans Frank**, and very small, the 20 names of the 20 fighters. I couldn't believe it, but I have seen it myself. Unbelievable.

Q: So, were the 20 caught? Were they caught?

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A: I don't know exactly. They – I think most of them have survived. Because then, this one gentleman, he said he would have loved that also **Niklas** been sitting in this train, and the explosion would have been successful. So, both my father and me. I think he meant with **Niklas**, all the family. And some Polish people were upset about it, and I said immediately, that's okay. That's okay. He is – man was right. We have killed so many innocent children. Why should he be on the other way, because only that I am young, that he don't want to have killed me. I was on his side, and we shook hands and I embraced him and it was very good. And shortly afterwards, he was dead. I met him nearly 15 years later, after he has told this sentence to a newspaper, as **Niklas**.

Q: So, you know, one of my questions, which I had anticipated would be later on, but because we're on **Poland**, I wanted to find out what kind of reaction your book had had in **Poland** when you came out with it, and you wrote it. How did – how – it was still before solidarity had happened, but it still was not yet an independent **Poland**, and –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that might have had some influence.

A: If – I was a journalist with – with “**Time**” magazine.

Q: Yeah.

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A: And at that time I was responsible – responsible for the printing in advance of – of very good books.

Q: Okay.

A: So, we printed “**Schlindler’s List**,” in **Germany** first, before it came out as a book.

Q: Oh.

A: And I was responsible, and everybody was responsible for reprinting this book, only parts of it, for sure, has to write big article. So it was my first visit in **Poland** again then. And my interpreter was a man called **Jarzyc(ph) Plezniavovitch(ph)**. And **Jarzyc(ph)** was a teacher also in the University of **Kraków** for German. And he wanted be – we became friends. We are still nowadays. And he wanted to teach the Polish students German with my book, “**Mój Ojciec**.” In ja – in – in Polish, “**The Father**,” or The Father. And the Polish students, of whom I’m sure, in every family my father has killed some members, yes, they refused to learn German with such an ugly book.

Q: Oh.

A: Because of this foul language against the father. You can’t, as I have said to **Jarzyc(ph)**, we don’t want to learn German through a guy who hates his father, and who is accusing his father in such a way. Isn’t it wonderful?

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Q: I mean, it's irony upon irony.

A: My father won, even in **Poland**. Yeah.

Q: So that was –

A: And the second thing –

Q: Yeah.

A: – when came – the book came out in Polish then, and it was immediately bought, the whole circulation, from the Catholic church. They also didn't want that their sheep should read such a book.

Q: Really?

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And what year did it come out, '88 then, '89? After the '87 [**indecipherable**]

A: No, not '87, ar-around, I think '89 or then '91, or something.

Q2: Ninety-one.

A: Ninety-one, thank you.

Q: In English. But in Polish –

Q2: In English, right.

Q: But in Polish?

A: Polish was earlier.

Q: Yeah.

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A: I think Polish was earlier.

Q: Yeah. So the Catholic church bought up all the copies.

A: I know, by chance, a German Polish journalist, which was a friend of mine, and he saw it on the **Wawel [indecipherable]** there is, nearby is a big building on the **Wawel**, where – where – for the priests. And there was on the corridor, all the “**Mój Ojciec**” laying, and not as distribution that the Catholic church will hand it over to the priests of the church. They took it away from the market.

Q: So did it ever hit the market? Did the book ever hit –

A: Parts of it. Parts of it. I would say about 1,000 or 2,000 copies, or something like this. They didn't know it from the beginning. Then they found out some priest must have read it, and is also strong against it, and were some parts against the Catholic church, so they said we can't do this.

Q: Okay.

A: We have to protect the Polish people against this **Niklas Frank**.

Q: And that's so ironic. It-It's just so ironic, because you write in the book of the German priest who complains about the Polish clergy.

A: Well –

Q: As well as, you know, the – the post-war –

A: You really read my book.

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Q: Pardon?

A: You have really read my book.

Q: Yes, I have. We're going to take a quick break now.

A: Ah, cigarette. **[break]**

Q: Action. Okay, before the break, we were talking an awful lot about your childhood, your early years, which coincided with the war years, when you were having your very first impressions, your very first memories, and your father was the director – the governor general of **Poland**. I'd like to bri – you know, take that up now, with the end of the war. You say that one of your most stark memories is when he's back at your home, near **Schliersee**, and you break his glasses. Do you have any memories of the war ending? Do you have ever any memories of your life changing, before the actual end of the war?

A: We saw all those American and British bombers starting from **Italy**, flying over the light – lake of **Schliersee**, to **Munich**, to have another bombardment of the city, and also to **Nuremberg**, and so, those big cities. And then we are looking forward that the Americans came.

Q: You were looking forward to this?

A: Yes. Also, my mother, and also my father, the stupid guy, was looking forward that the American came. There was a – some brave young Germans, who seized the

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Bavarian broadcasting radio, and delivered some new program, and my father was standing there listening to the radio, and saying that's it, that's what I always wanted to have. That now is coming. And he thought that this will be a new – maybe as – thought maybe it's a new career for me. And – and then the Americans came, the lake of **Schliersee** is on – was right inside. If you look to the north, there's a street, and the last **SS** soldiers put out something like **sperre**, I don't know the English word.

Q: Barricades.

A: Barricades. These big trees. But the Americans sent in front a Caterpillar and he threw away very easily. And we could see it through – from the **[indecipherable]**. And then they came – but then, it's a day when the Americans came. My father was in his official office.

Q: And where was that?

A: Was about one kilometer – one and a half kilometers away from the **Schoberhof**, in **[indecipherable]** which also belongs to **[indecipherable]** **Schliersee**. And my mother was the last – actual, she did, as a Queen of **Poland**, she forced the other women to bring white shirts to hang them out of the windows as a sign of capitulation, and no fighting.

Q: When you say as the Queen of **Poland**, what do you mean by that?

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A: My father there, when he became – the call from **Hitler**, he drove immediately to his train, who was based then in **Silesia** after the first two weeks of the war.

Q: So that's thir – 1939.

A: Yes, 1939. **Hitler** ordered him to become the chief of the civil administration of the government general. He came back to my mother, knelt down again and said, **Brigitte**, you became the Queen of **Poland**.

Q: And she took it seriously?

A: She took it seriously, yes, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: So she enjoyed it very much. And she behaved like this, as if she was a queen. But then they arrested my father when – when we are not – when we are not together.

Q: That is when he is in his office?

A: Yes.

Q: And was it right away? That is, the army comes, the **U.S.** Army comes to **Neuhaus**, and is it an immediate thing, or is it that they're there for some days?

A: There's a – there – there was a Lieutenant **Stein**, a German Jew, who was lucky enough to flee **Germany** before he was brought to the concentration camp, or to **Auschwitz**, and he came back with the American army, as an American lieutenant,

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or something like this. And because he was absolutely fluent in German, he was in the Special Branch for arresting all the top guys. And he came from the [indecipherable] along the mountains, from the lake of **Tegernsee**. And then he arrested **Hans Frank**.

Q: So he was looking for him.

A: Yes.

Q: He was –

A: It was special task for him –

Q: Okay.

A: – to find **Hans Frank**.

Q: Yeah. It wasn't something that was – they fell upon him, and they – they realize, or – or that the army is there for a number of days, and only then somebody comes.

It was a –

A: No, no. No, no.

Q: It was immediate.

A: It was completely different. He was arrested on the fourth of May, 1945, in his office. And Lieutenant **Stein** entered the room, he was sitting with his last love affair, his secretary, **Helena**(ph) **Krafcik**(ph), his cook, his adjutant, Mr.

Pffafelroad(ph), and two other, a lady, another lady, and another man. And

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Lieutenant **Stein** entered the room and said, who of you is **Hans Frank**? That was – my father really have disappointed.

Q: Insulting him.

A: Because he insulted, because he was very proud. The “**New York Times**” published a list of the most wanted war criminals, and number one was **Hans Frank**. He was very proud about this. And so he had –

Q: You knew about it in **Schliersee**?

A: You – you don’t have – it was earlier, when he was still in the government general, as the governor general.

Q: Okay.

A: And then the “**New York Times**” published it. But the thing is that one month ago, I got an email from a lady from **America**. **Monica** was the first name.

Q: This is this year, 2016?

A: This year. And she wrote me that her father arrested my father. And I wrote back to her that that’s strange, because I knew exactly it was Lieutenant **Stein**, but there was another soldier, and a driver, in this open **Jeep**. And she said, maybe it was the other guy was my father. He’s already dead. And then I urged her, please tell me, what – what was happening, what was the remembrance of your – the memory of your father? And he said that when they entered this room in this – this office room,

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my father was standing with a pistol at his head, pretending that he's now killing himself. And **Monica's** father went to this guy, to **Hans Frank**, said, no, no. We will take care of it. Took away the pistol, and arrested him. So I don't know, I don't have another proof, but – but that's brand new for me, and I told it the other family of mine, and two of them, two nephews, sons of my brother **Mikey**, they thought as far as they know, it could be possible. Because my father had a golden pistol, which was made from the Jews in **Kraków**, by force. And – but I interviewed for my book, this **Helena**(ph), the last love of my father.

Q: The secretary.

A: The secretary. And she told me about this golden pistol. And I asked her, Mrs. **Winter** – she was married then [**indecipherable**] name, family name **Winter**. Mrs. **Winter**, why didn't he commit suicide? And she smiled at me and said, **Niklas**, therefore he was too much of a coward. And so I think that the new story of **Monica's** father might not fit in, in that wa –

Q: Okay.

A: Because I think **Helena** would have told me.

Q: Now where was **Lilly**? Was she out of the picture?

A: No, she was still there. She was living in **Pateiving**(ph), which about 50 kilometers away, and my father very often was with her.

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Q: Okay.

A: When he was – when he has lost his government general. And he must have seen on the fourth of May in the morning, that a Bavarian farmer, an old guy with a white flag, rode on his horse in front of my father's office, to the Americans, and also that it's –

Q: We're surrendering.

A: The [indecipherable] is surrendering.

Q: Do you remember the – you didn't see your father any more after – after [indecipherable]

A: No, but in the morning, **Brigitte**, **Norman** and **Sigrid** visited him by cycle. And he said to them, maybe I'm the last **Reichsminister** in freedom who can ever – can offer you some cake and something to drink. And then he urged them to go, because he was expecting someone.

Q: Ah.

A: Somebody.

Q: Okay. Okay. So he was prepared.

A: Yes. He han – he handed over to Lieutenant **Stein** voluntarily, 42 volumes of his so-called **Dienstag buch**, diary of duty, from the first to the last day of the governor general.

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Q: That's a huge tru –

A: Printed edition, and he saw it, because of his fight against **Himmler**, who was a really powerful guy in the government general, he wanted – he was sure that the Americans would acknowledge his fight, and [indecipherable]

Q: Te-Tell us a little bit about this struggle. You mention it in your book, that **Himmler** had a – a representative in the government general, a kru –

A: Mr. **Kruger**(ph).

Q: Mr. **Kruger**(ph). Tell me a little bit about how your father's duties were delineated, and how the **SS** under **Himmler** was delineated, and what were they supposed to be doing, and what actually they were doing.

A: As a –

Q: As their duties.

A: Originally, my father was the chief of the civil administration.

Q: Okay.

A: But the civil administration also was everything, was also the police. But on the other hand, as every dictator does it, **impera**(ph) **partint**(ph) **impera**(ph). He divided the responsibilities, and he gave the responsibility for the police, and for the **SS** camps and for the extermination camps to **Himmler**.

Q: So you're talking **Hitler** divided, yes.

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A: **Hitler** divide. He was a dictator. And my father wanted always that **Himmler** – that he was in state as a first position, as a deputy of **Hitler**. And also Mr. **Kruger**(ph) should be his servant. And he was always keen to prove that he is in power of everything, also of the **SS**, which was – thinking in his brain was a big mistake, you know. Later on, during the trial, he always said it was **Himmler**, it was only **Himmler**. But was rubbish. Because without the civil administration, **Hitler** – him – **Himmler** couldn't have run the extermination camps. It was always with the help of the civil administration. To get the Jews all together in the – in the ghettos, and all this kind of stuff, it was always together with the civil administration.

Q: Okay, okay. So your father kept this diary, what – is it **diensbuch**(ph), which is sort of like –

A: **Dienstag buch**.

Q: **Dienstag buch**. Was this something that he would have submitted to him – to **Hitler**, or to **Berlin** for them to see, or was this just his notes to himself?

A: It wasn't his notes, he had two stenographers, who always had to write down all his speeches, every session of his government, everything. Where he is, what he is delivering on speeches. They were always around him.

Q: Okay.

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A: And it was printed in this 42 volumes.

Q: So it's not his handwriting, it's actually –

A: No, no, it's –

Q: It's printed.

A: Always was – no, he never had any handwriting in this.

Q: Now in your book you mention that the – in the last days, he was doing some falsification.

A: He tried, together with **Helena(ph) Winter**, because the last one wasn't printed, so they could change some pages.

Q: So it wasn't much that he was able to change.

A: No. The other were really printed volumes.

Q: So in other words, this is – this is proof of what he did during the time he –

A: Exactly.

Q: And he hands this over when he's arrested.

A: Yes, voluntarily. And he told one of the psychiatrists who had access to the prisoners in **Nuremberg**, and – all my relatives, everybody urged me to destroy this diary, but I wanted to show the world what I was fighting for, and so I voluntarily handed it over to the Americans. And one of the – how di – attorneys – attorneys at

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Nuremberg said to his secretary, there is this bloody stupid guy **Hans Frank**, who handed over all the proofs against him. And he really was right.

Q: Did you ever read any part of those diaries?

A: Oh, yes. Some parts I can know by heart. For instance, when he was traveling, after we invaded **Soviet Union – Galicia** was the capital of **Lemberg**, or **Lviv**, or **Lwow**, was ki – came to the governor general, and one year after this invasion he came to the city of **Lemberg**, addressing about 300 German administration people, and they had – I just came through this old Jewish nest, by the way. I didn't see anybody of those flat footed Indians. What have you done with them? Had you ever – had you ever done something evil to them? And the protocol is writing great hilarity. That was –

Q: Can you say this to German to – in German to me? How he said it in German, if you remember it?

A: He said in German: **[speaks German]**

Q: Okay.

A: So everybody knew what was going on with the Jews.

Q: Okay. So he was being funny. Are there other parts of these diaries that remain in your memory?

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A: Yes. Whatever happens after the war, maybe you can make mincemeat out of the Polish or Ukrainians, or whatever is running around here. Well-educated man my father was, playing wonderfully piano, knowing **Shakespeare** by heart, and our German most important poet, **Goethe**. And he was saying sentences like this.

Q: Is it through these pages that you got to know him?

A: No, I knew him before, through all the documents I had. But the diary always was with me.

Q: And what other kinds of documents did you have, in order to –

A: A lot of letters he wrote. Because my mother always kept them. Also, very nice letters in early times of their marriage, and then very ugly ones. And the most ugly ones is that he wanted – he really terribly wanted the divorce. And knowing what was going on in his country, the mass murdering of Jews, he wrote to my mother, I will go into the dark. I see mountains of corpses. Don't follow me. Please give me free, and stay out of it, and give me the divorce, and [**indecipherable**] not written down, said I can marry **Lilly**. So he took the Holocaust as a trick to get the divorce. Nice guy. He gave a shit about the Jews and all the others. Like my mother. My mother has a lot of f-friends in the – with the Jewish agents, it's called **Jüdische Agenten**, who had all these dealings with furs, and –

Q: You're talking before the war.

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A: Yes, but yeah, but she met them again, and when she was entering the – the ghetto, the **Kraków** ghetto, and the **Warsaw** ghetto, and looking for furs and other precious things, she must have seen some of them again. And there's a scene which I wrote in my other book against my mother. There was a – a Jewish agent of hers, which – whom she had really very good business.

Q: So this is a prewar relationship. It started in prewar?

A: Yes, yes. And – but then it was before **America** entered the war, all the German Jews tried to get the visa out for the **United States**, and other countries. And he was standing in this row, and suddenly he saw my mother walking by with two girlfriends of her, and he went to her and saying, I am your old agent, Mrs.

Reichsminister. I am **Flombom**(ph). I terribly need a visa, could you please help me? And my mother answered to him, that's strange. My husband told me there are no difficulties. You will get your visa, I am sure of. I also got my passport for diplomats. So I would say, 70 to 30, you will get your visa. See, I know of one of the girlfriends who accompanied her. He didn't show up after the war, though. They must have killed him, the Germans, my father. But after the war, the **Schoberhof** was plundered.

Q: Tell us about that. How did that happen?

A: It was as a – in **Germany** you call it **Zwangsarbeiter**.

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Q: Forced laborers.

A: Forced laborers from the **Ukraine** and from **Russia** and from **Poland**, especially from **Poland**. And now they were – suddenly they were free, and suddenly they were the masters. So they entered the **Schoberhof** and plundered it. And my mother took the three smallest children, **Brigitte**, **Micky** and me, to a neighbor of hers, Mrs. **Von Langsdorf**(ph), and told her we have to – can you hide us? Because I am fear for the life of my children. And by the way, here is this big handbag, please could you hide it as well, and I will get it back in two or three weeks, whenever time goes by. And we slept on the – up there, under the roof.

Q: Mm-hm, in the attic.

A: And then, three weeks later, my mother ordered Mrs. **Von Langsdorf**(ph) to bring her bags back. And fortunately she was curious enough and had a look in it, and it was full of jewelry, and **halskette**, and armband –

Q: Necklaces, and bracelets and –

A: – and all this – necklace, all this kind of stuff. And – but she gave it, and then my mother, there was no **Mercedes** left, just her cycle, and there was a camp for displaced persons. The Jewish people who had survived were in certain areas, to wait for the visas. And she took two or three of this **presious** – precious things and drove to this camp. And two of the Jews recognized her again. She – they knew her

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from her visits in the **Kraków** ghetto. And how's the Jewish humor? They addressed her still Frau Minister. And my mother said to them, I have this, you can get it. But I need flour, butter, meat, to nourish my children. And during the night there come an old car with all this stuff. And they made a fortune, and we don't have to starve any more. That was my mother.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: My mother, on the other hand, was, I think the only person I met in my life, who was living strictly to reality. When the Third Reich and her luxury was over, she acknowledged it immediately. It's over now. It's over. She never glorified in front of me, the Third Reich, the powerful living she had. All these servants, all this kind of stuff. She never glorified it. Now, she was poor again, like in the beginning of her life, and now she had to nourish five stupid children. And she did it. She did it. So she died worn out in the age of 62.

Q: What year?

A: Fifty-nine, on my birthday. We had another interview and – this morning, where I answered this question for you.

Q: That's right, you did.

A: It mustn't have been you.

Q: That was the one before, rather than – we'll talk about that later.

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A: Okay.

Q: But I want to go back to things that you just mentioned right now, about her being in the ghettos and doing dealings. I don't think we talked about that in the morning.

A: I don't know much more about it. I know my – my own **[indecipherable]** and I knew by the friends, for instance by **Tante Margot**(ph), and all the other, said that very often was in the ghettos.

Q: Okay.

A: Always on – and you have to imagine, the Jewish people were the last **[indecipherable]** and the last precious things. And if the wife of the governor general shows up, they had the desperate hope that if they sell her, for a cheap price, maybe she will do something that they can survive. My mother didn't do nothing about it.

Q: So she just took advantage of her ability to –

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Now, was the **Schoberhof** filled with all of these types of items, of paintings, of goods –

A: No, that was – the painting which my father stole when he left **Kraków**, for instance **Leonardo da Vinci**, and two **Rembrandts**, and one **Raphael**, and a lot of

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tapestry and jewelry from the Polish kings, and other paintings, a lot of paintings, and that was in his little house where also his office was.

Q: So all of that was there?

A: Yes. It was one of the most precious museums at that time, if you look around **Europe**. And – but this where all the wa – always – all of this was handed over to the Americans. And only the **Raphael** is missing still nowadays. I assume that this **Raphael** is hanging in a farmer's kitchen.

Q: In **Germany**?

A: Yes, in **Bavaria**. Because my mother – I think my mother stole it. Because it was not big, this size. And got some bread and butter and something, some chickens.

Q: So when the – when the **Schoberhof** was plundered, it was – and, by the forced laborers, it wasn't stuff like this that they were finding.

A: No.

Q: What were they actually taking, when they were doing their plundering?

A: There were other precious things, truly also for my mother, and this kind of stuff.

Q: Okay.

A: It was a – they found a lot of –

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Q: Okay. Okay. So your father is arrested on May 4th, '45, and do you remember the end of the war, actually –

A: Well, first, as every German can tell you, youngster, then we saw the first Negroes. Now it's a black African American.

Q: Americans.

A: But – and I thought all the Americans are millionaires, and they throw down to us children a lot of chocolate, you know. Very nice guys, really nice guys. Very friendly, very friendly. And after the plundering of the **Schoberhof**, the Americans also put some guards around the **Schoberhof**.

Q: Oh, did they?

A: But they also drank all the wine my father has in the cellar.

Q: Now, at that point, your sister, your oldest sister is 18 years old, **Norman** is 17 years old, they're already in their upper teens. What were they doing? Were they still at home, were they off someplace else? Were you all together?

A: **Sigrid** was working in a Red Cross hospital in **Silesia** at the time, but then she was back home. But before, she wrote a very interesting letter to my mother, in a very normal tone. That's correct?

Q: Okay. Yeah.

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A: Telling her, I am treating here all the wounded German soldiers, and they are all very much afraid if **Germany** is losing the war. That was in the spring of 1945.

Q: Oh my.

A: Because, they say to my sister **Sigrid**, what we have done to the Jews, they will never forgive us. So far that the Germans are telling you, nobody knew anything.

When it was – **Sigrid** wrote it in a kind of, we know this. So it was like – and imagine, dear Mother, I couldn't have believed it. they say this. No. Quite normal.

What we have done to the Jews, so they will kill us now.

Q: When we talked before, about your father being arrested, about him being brought to trial, that he's in the first row, why is it that you visited him only once, in September of '46?

A: It was prohibited that – you ti – can't visit the defendants.

Q: Okay.

A: And it was a time when the trial was finished, before they handed out the verdicts, there was suddenly the permission, that the family of the defendants, not knowing what the result of the trial will be for them, they could visit for once, their fathers.

Q: Okay. What can you tell me about that visit?

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A: That visit was the last disappointment concerning my father. I was sitting on the lap of my mother. He was sitting behind the window, with a small **gitter**, that we could understand each other. And I was sitting there, and my father laughed –

Q: Screen, mm-hm.

A: – and said to me, hi **Niki**(ph), nice to see you. Soon we will celebrate a happy Christmas in **Schoberhof**. And I said to myself, why is he lying? Why is he lying? He knows that he is going to be hanged. Because I knew that.

Q: Yeah, you told us earlier that there was di – it was, by then, common knowledge.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you're seven years old, and you re – and you think this to yourself.

A: Yeah, it was really disappointing.

Q: Did he have any other words to any of the other children?

A: The strange thing is that my brother **Michael** never told anybody what our father told him. Also, not to his children. That's really strange. Now he's dead, a long time ago. And to **Norman**, he was alone, without our mother, because he was grownup, nearly. And to **Norman** he said, I'm – I can't leave you anything but the manuscript which I wrote in the prison. And remember always, I am a man of law, I'm not a poet, so maybe it's not all – and then I will give you one advice. Please build up here something. [**speaks German**]

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Q: Bil – build up a defense.

A: A defense here.

Q: Yeah.

A: And made this [**hand across throat motion**]. And this – well, I struggled with my brother about this command, is that wise for a life?

Q: What does it mean?

A: Don't talk too much. Don't talk too much. Because he was sentenced to death because of what he was talking in the first-hand. And I always say, that was an advice of my father to be a coward. And my brother **Norman** said no, it was just to be silent. And I was silent, and I said, so you was a coward, huh? As your father said to you you should be.

Q: So that was – that was a point of contention between you and bra – and your brother **Norman**.

A: Yeah. And then he wrote in his last letter to my brother **Norman**, this is [**indecipherable**] we have to die, in this war. We will follow millions of our soldiers, of our brave soldiers, who were – already has been killed in this war. And what true ar – should I do with the rest of my life, for instance? Should I be dealt in revenge from immigrants, traitors? So I prefer to be dead. So the immigrants were – were these really, those guys like **Willy Brandt**, our chancellor then, who said, we

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can't fight this dictatorship, but we don't want to do anything with it, and so they emigrate. So they wa – they were the brave ones, and the – the really good ones. So he – he hadn't got any idea, and he never acknowledged, after a year of trial, where the Americans, the English and the French, and the Russian have shown them a lot of documents, even a movie about **Auschwitz**. What kind of horrible crimes this bunch of criminals has committed? And then he is writing something like this. And he wrote to his lawyer, Mr. **Zeidel**(ph), and also to our mother, please make sure that the future will see the true **Frank**. I was never a criminal. And my mother la – something is like – he never acknowledged anything.

Q: And do you remember how your mother reacted to it?

A: No. [**indecipherable**] But there was this 18th of April in 1946, he was on the stand, trial. And he was asked by Mr. **Zeidel**(ph), his defendant – his lawyer –

Q: Lawyer.

A: – and asked him, have you ever had something to do with the extinguishing of Jews – extermination of Jews? And my father, after a short silence, he said yes. I never ordered to build up a concentration camp, but if I now look back what we have done, and my own diary is a witness against me. What we have said, what we have done, I only have to acknowledge this guilt. A thousand years will pass without taking away this guilt from the German people.

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Q: Your father said this?

A: Yes. Now I ask you, when I am asked from my lawyer, have you personally something to do with the extermination camps, why I suddenly distribute my guilt on 80 million other German shoulders? And I just have finished a book from a German defense lawyer, and all the defense lawyers were sitting there, as he remembered, and saying, what is this **Frank** doing? At first he admitted his personal guilt, and suddenly it's vanished about 80 million shoulders. So this was also, the lead for the German people, how to react. We never acknowledged our guilt. We have built a lot of monuments, and we are a beautiful example for the other world, what we have done with our past, and how – how great we were in acknowledge – it's just the surface. The German people, still I am very much afraid of.

Q: Why?

A: They never acknowledged our crimes, never. It was just a – we have to do this because the world is looking for that the Germans have to do something. So we built some monuments, and the German historians did a very good job. There is no German crime which was not thoroughly researched and written down. Everybody can read it, but also, if you read it as a normal German, you will never acknowledge this, really.

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Q: Why?

A: Because the Germans have a lock – a lack – a lack of empathy. The Germans can't put themselves in the soul, or in the situation, let's say, of a Jewish mother who has two children, who is forced by German soldiers or German [indecipherable] police, into a cattle car, is driven through days and nights without any food or water, embracing the little children, and then thrown out of the cattle car, to the ramp of **Auschwitz**, for instance, and then they took away the two children. They can't do this. And I am reading in schools or somewhere, I always said, have you ever tried to do this? Every German knows what really had happened, what we have done. Have you ever put yourself in the situation like this? And they all went no. They don't do that, they can't do it. That's the special thing about the Germans.

Q: But in this, I – this takes our story away from your life, and the postwar development of it, but we're talking now about German society. And this is a very dim view of Germans, as a people. And it doesn't sound – how shall I say it? I'd need – I need –

A: Honestly.

Q: – to have more proof. I need to have more sense of how do you – how can you make such an overall, arching statement that Germans have no empathy?

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A: No, I – I live in – within my German people, I know them. Also, for instance, was our chancellor, Mrs. **Merkel** did this open up for the refugees [indecipherable]

Q: Okay.

A: Around the world they applauded her. So that, that's a great thing. And I also was suddenly proud. But now, we do have about 600 – was last year about 600 different burning downs of homes for refugees. We have beaten up people, we have even killings. So, you have to see the German people like a dark, a dark ball. And on this ball, let's say we are 80 millions are this ball. Out of this 80 millions, and I make it very positively, let's say are 10 million Germans who are on this dark ball. They are running around. They are really, true democrats. They are really looking that we stay a democracy. But this ball is still very, very ignorant, and very, very against everything was – what is hurting them in their – yeah, in their bad conscious, I would say.

Q: Do you feel this inside yourself?

A: No, I am one – I am one of the 10 millions who are – around.

Q: Let's turn back. When your father said these different things to your siblings, and said to **Norman** that all I leave is maybe this manuscript, and his piece of advice. Was there anything else that he said to any of the girls?

A: No, I don't know.

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Q: You don't know.

A: They didn't talk about it.

Q: All right. After you visited him, was there any discussion at home, about the visit?

A: I don't remember, but there must have been.

Q: Okay.

A: I asked my brother **Norman**, but – decades later, and he said, we still had hope. Because the visit was before the verdict came out.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Which I found out very late, because in my first book I write that it was after the verdict came out. So you can say it's – it's – it's a mistake, which makes the truth even stronger. I was so sure that he will be hanged, I didn't need the verdict, yes? It was before the – the judge handed out the verdict. I always thought it was afterwards, and then I found out no.

Q: It was before.

A: Now I know exactly the date it wa – we were on the 17th of September where we visited him. And the verdicts came out on the first of October. The guilty and non-guilty was set on the 30th of September.

Q: So was – it was after your visit.

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A: But then was a death penalty, or 20 years, or life imprisonment, came on the first of October.

Q: Did you ever shed any tears about your father?

A: No.

Q: Did you ever shed any tears –

A: But the strange thing was when I was sitting together with **Philippe Sands**, international lawyer who made a film also about me. I was sitting in a cell, like the same in which **Hans Frank** was – was sitting during the trial in **Nuremberg**. Not exactly the same measurement. But when my – when Colonel **Andrews** come – came with the – with the guards, to get him to the gallows. And the night was the 16th of October, 1946, they opened the door and my father was kneeling. And they had to – Father **O'Connor** accompanied **Andrews** and the guards. Said to him, Father, my mother used to give me the cross on my forehead before I went to school every morning. Please do this, as well. And when I was telling this **Philippe** inside the cell, I suddenly was very near to my father, and the first time I think I really had some pity for him. Suddenly I understand that's the action of a ham actor. And suddenly, in this cell, I got the idea maybe it wasn't an ham actors ar – kind of thing. But he has this terrible, terrible urging wish to be young again, to have not

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committed any crimes, and to be a innocent human being again. And at this moment, I felt something of emotion for him, I would say.

Q: And that's so many decades later.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: That's just very recently.

A: Yeah, because you have always pictured of his victims, in the brain.

Q: Tell me how life progressed for your family after that. What happened with your mother, how did she –

A: My mother published the book of my father, it was at first published by a publishing company, but it was a total flop. And then she took over, founded her own publishing company, **Eine Falak**(ph), **Brigitte Frank**. And at first she addressed every Catholic priest. She printed the book – I will never forget it, for 4 mark, 50 **fennig**, and sold it for about 19 marks, 50 **fennig**, and she never paid a penny of taxes. So, she made quite a fortune, I would say. About 200 – 250,000 deutschmark, or German marks.

Q: That's a lot of money then.

A: So she la – she – she suddenly had again, a fur, and was sitting in her beloved **Hotel Carlton** in **Munich**, having tea in the afternoon. After the Catholic priests, there came the Protestant pastors.

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Q: Why –

A: Then there come the industries. She always addressed them personally, and always was telling them we were – in the meantime we were grownups, but in the – she wa – or nearly grownups, **Mikey** and me were about 15 - 16 years old. And she wrote, my little children, they are starving and so on. Please buy this copy, and you will prolong our life. And so she did it, and the director of [**indecipherable**] for instance, he immediately sent, as a gift, one car to us. So my mother immediately made up a company for renting a car.

Q: No, really?

A: Yes. She was really brilliant. And I – I really, as you can see, how I tell you this, I have a different approach to my mother, and I found out, which I've never written, because my books were finished, I found a letter which I didn't really see before. In this letter to a friend, she wrote, when I remember the times gone by, we really were merciless. And that is, at least, a very honest acknowledgment also, what she has done.

Q: It sounds like you were looking, throughout your whole life, for some kind of self-reflection of that kind.

A: Yes, because they knew everything, but you have to imagine that this **Wawel**, this government general, and especially the **Wawel**, was like a king's yacht.

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Everybody knows each other. The **SS** was completely integrated. Also this Mr. **Kruger** was also sitting on the **Wawel**. So there were a lot of friendships in between, and sexual relationship with all the secretaries and so on. So everybody knows everything about the extermination of the Jews, how it works in the **Kraków** ghetto, how it works then, in the concentration camp of **Plaszów** –

Q: Mm-hm, **Plaszów**.

A: – and all this kind was quite – also, my mother knew everything exactly.

Q: And this letter, which you found after you published your book, which was in 2005, is the first time you see any kind of acknowledgement, reflection from her.

A: Yes, written down, written down.

Q: Written down.

A: Maybe, I don't know to whom, maybe she has told it to some – **Tante Margot**(ph), **Tante Marta**(ph), or her other friends. Really, she had a lot of – of good girlfriends.

Q: You do mention that she herself was arrested. Why was that?

A: It was Minister **Lauretz**(ph) of **Bavaria** government in 1947. He was an ardent fighter against National [**indecipherable**]. And so he thought also the wives are responsible. So, everybody who was living on – in the **Bavaria** state, was

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imprisoned, in **Augsburg**. Also my mother, also Mrs. **Goering**, and Mrs. **Fink**(ph), and Mrs. **Foch**(ph), I think.

Q: And did she talk about what her situation was like that?

A: She was great. I visited her. She was laughing, she was smoking, she was brown by sun, brown faced. And when she came back she said it was the most wonderful holiday I had. She was very pragmatic. And she loved it there, without the stupid children. But there was no **Hilde**(ph) around any more. She had to deal with us after the war.

Q: So, what happened to **Hilde**(ph)? She couldn't –

A: She was – she – she married and had one son. Her husband committed suicide, and after – and when – but then also, she has died, also, her son committed suicide. All that had nothing to do with the Nazi time.

Q: No, no. When did you start really investigating, and reading?

A: It was always, by the way, when I was 22 – when I met my wife first, I was 22 years old, and at first, if you, after the first kisses, you are telling your biography. So I was telling her th – mine, and telling her, once upon a time, I will write about my father. I forgot about it, that I have said this. And I was nearly 50, when I did it, really. I wanted, first subconscious and then full – in full conscious, I said, I don't want that my parents ruin my life. That's my life, by God's plan, or by coincidence,

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I was born into this family, so I will have my own life as **Niklas Frank**, and not as the son of – of those two.

Q: Your discussions with your siblings, did they take place over a course of many years?

A: Yes. Well, always we were together. Immediately we were in discussion about our parents. It was always the same.

Q: And can you tell us about what was discussed?

A: It was always discussed, the main topic was, was he innocent, or was he guilty? I had the documents, they had nothing. They had just her love – their love. I had no love, but I had the documents.

Q: And they didn't have any desire to read any of those documents?

A: They have read it. I know from the children of **Michael**, for instance, who was an ardent defender of the innocence of our father, he read this – two German scientists gave out the shortcut of the '42 volumes of this **Dienstag buch**. It was that size. And he read it and – during the holiday. And his sons have seen him sitting all days long, very, very sad, at the beach, reading this. But he never opened up to say what I have just said. It's so unbelievable. He must have read the same thing that I quoted before. They are in there. But he was always defending him.

Q: So –

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A: And we are told that they knew more about different situations in the family. They were telling them, laughing about it, and I was very interested in – to hear all this, what I don't know because I was the youngest one. It was always very funny when we were together. Always – also when we are struggling against each other, we never lost our – all right, we'll say we never lost our love.

Q: Well, that was my question, is what kind of relations you had with each other afterwards?

A: Great. Very good, very good. And when my book came out, my brother **Michael** attacked me in public, heavily, that I am a liar and nothing is true what I have written, and all this kind of stuff. But we decided, you can do this, I'll do – go my way, and we have nice children, so we don't let destroy our personal relationship. And that was a good idea.

Q: And what about –

A: And it worked.

Q: And what about – you said **Brigitte**, your sister, **Gitty(ph)**, what ha –

A: **Gitty(ph)**, ah, **Gitty(ph)**, she always was very funny when we were together. She was a – was a funny [**indecipherable**]

Q: But you said –

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A: But then she – you don't have to forget, we all had a profession, so we were not every weekend together. It was two or three times in a year.

Q: But she took her own life.

A: She took her own life, yes.

Q: And why?

A: She had cancer, but as the doctors told me is she could have survived about five, six, seven years. But she has written in her diary when she was 16 years old, I don't want to become older than **Fatti**(ph) – our father. And this was a self-fulfilling promise.

Q: Prophecy.

A: Which she did.

Q: Did she have children?

A: And she did it in an awful, very awful manner. She had from different – two different husbands, two sons. And with – from the second husband, her son, he was eight years old when she committed suicide, and she did it the following way. She took this eight year old boy into her bed in the evening. Told him, now it's nice day, let's sleep together. So he slept during the night, and when he woke up, his mother was lying beside him, dead. Because she committed with lot of tablets and alcohol,

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and what – what a gruesome, what – unbelievable for this poor child. I don't understand.

Q: Did – did this burden, was it visited on your children, the other generation, the children of your siblings?

A: I don't know the word burden.

Q: All right.

A: If you acknowledge something, you – you – mostly you are like me. When I think of my father, when I think of the victims, and when I think of what he could have done to – to leave his job –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and to go into the inner immigration, that's for – I'm always furious about him. Still furious. Why has he done it? But it's not a burden.

Q: Then maybe I'm choosing the wrong word, but nevertheless, it's an influence.

A: For sure it's an influence.

Q: It's – it was an influence, and it was something that became part of your life.

A: I never – I never had a father who was a carpenter, or the engineer, or a teacher.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was always this bloody **Hans Frank**.

Q: And so my question still stays. Was the third generation affected by who he was?

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A: For sure. The best way I did for my daughter, which she told in an interview – I was really surprised – she said that my father build around me, a wall, because of what he has written, and what he has done. But he doesn't mean it the way he build up a wall that I don't know anything. On the other hand, that I can live secured. I know everything, what my father found out about my grandfather, so I – I can lead my own life, my happy life.

Q: That's a huge thing.

A: I was very satisfied when I heard this.

Q: Yeah.

A: She never said it to me.

Q: Yeah. But it's a huge thing for a child to feel that.

A: Well, she said it when she was grown up.

Q: Yeah.

A: Not as a child.

Q: Can we cut just for a second [**break**]

A: Action!

Q: Action. So, with your other – with your other siblings, did you have any – once your ol – eldest sister left for **South Africa**, did you have contact with her?

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A: I visit her once when I worked in **South Africa**. She was living in **Johannesburg**, and she knew my book, it was published in the meantime. She also had read it, but she said only something like, so you have something written, haven't you? Not more.

Q: So she didn't comment on it.

A: But – but I – I know that she was very furious about it, like my brother **Norman**, by the way, he also was very furious about the book.

Q: Why?

A: Because of this advice of our father –

Q: To stay silent.

A: – he never wanted to be a – a – in public. And so he also wanted never to be in public, a discussion about what his father has done. That was the main reason.

Q: And this was quite public. This was quite public.

A: It was, yes.

Q: And di –

A: And it was the first book in **Germany**, and like, was also – it – it sounds a little bit vain, but it was the only book in German literature of – no, not literature, in **Germany** from an heir of some top Nazi, who attacked his father. And with very foul language. That was a significant thing.

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Q: Was that something [**indecipherable**] that is, did you think about it consciously when you were writing it, that I want this style, or was this –

A: It was about 12 weeks for my – so, as holidays. So – and I wrote it down within 12 weeks.

Q: And – and this had been after you had been looking at the documents, and reading about this –

A: I had nearly everything together, but it never will end, I – in the meantime, I have a lot of more documents.

Q: Around the same time, **Peter Sichrovsky** wrote a book, called “**Schuldig geboren: Kinder aus Nazifamilien.**” Do you know any of the children who he interviewed for that book?

A: **Peter Sichrovsky** was a friend of mine, and I asked him, and it’s all invented.

Q: Really?

A: It’s all invented. I would say so. It’s all invented. It’s too – too perfect, and never anybody of those people showed up, never. And there’s also another proof that everything was invented. I know him. Later on he wa – he became very right-winged, in **Austria** with the **FPÖ**; that’s the very right wing party, he was sitting in the [**indecipherable**] parliament, European parliament.

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Q: Well, beca – they were given anonymous names, or they weren't named, that's true.

A: Everything was invented. I – I told him personally, I was like, **Peter**, come on. I will never publish it. [**indecipherable**] invented it. But – but he didn't say no, I remember, he didn't say no. Just laughed it away.

Q: Mm-hm. So this is – so, in other words, this is your supposition, rather than having actual proof, that he did –

A: Yes, yes, no, no, you would never admit –

Q: Yeah.

A: It was a bestseller, and it also was transcript into a – for theater, and so, but I am right, I know this.

Q: Did other children of other Nazis get in touch with you after your book was published?

A: Yes. In a negative way. The son of **Hess**, for instance, we were invited to a talk session for the Bavarian Broadcasting System, and when he – and – and he said, okay, I will come. And then he heard that I – also I will show up, and he immediately canceled his appearance. And there was American author, **Gerry Posner**, who also, by the way, files closed about the killing of **Kennedy**. And he wrote a book also, about the descendants of the bigshot Nazis, and he was standing

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at my office at “**Stern**” magazine, handing me over the telephone number of the daughter of **Hermann Göring, Edda Göring**. And they said to me, **Niklas**, it’s better if you call her first. I terribly need an interview with her for my book, it would be great, you know. And I said okay, give me the number, and I dialed, and said – somebody got to the phone saying **Göring**. And I said hello, Mrs. **Göring**. My name is **Niklas Frank**. Besides me is standing **Gerry** – and then she interrupted me, said, one moment, one moment. Are you the one who was – has written this unbelievable ugly book about his father? And I said yes, and bang.

Q: There went the telephone.

A: Was a – was [**indecipherable**] that. And the son of **Bormann**, who was a priest, but later he wrote all the book about his father, is not a priest any more. And ye – wo – has also written a book, and another journalist, Mr. **Liebert**(ph) interviewed him, and in this interview for his book, he said he would like to – to – to get together – to come together with **Niklas Frank**. And “**Stern**” magazine, the chief editor told me [**indecipherable**] that’s a good story, let’s do it, and you talk to each other, and so – and then they arranged it. But in the meantime, Mr. **Bormann** junior, whose first name also is **Martin**, Mr. **Bormann** has read “**The Father**,” and didn’t want to have to do anything with me.

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Q: Was there – why do you think that's the case? Because you were so vociferous, so unrelenting about your father? Were there – and what – were there reasons that were ever given to you?

A: **Marty Bormann**, for instance, yes, he – had a lot of lessons in schools, yes? And he always used to have a picture with him, of his father. And he said to the auditorium, I know my father was a criminal, but I also know that he was a most wonderful father. And if you say this in **Germany**, immediately, the site of the crimes which your father has committed, is gone, and in the German brains, is still alive, a wonderful father. What about those bloody crimes, they are gone. But the wonderful father. This **Peter Sichrovsky** you mentioned before, he is Jewish. He was personally saved by an **SS** officer, out of a cattle car, as far as I know, yes. He was blue eyed and blonde hair, yes? And I told it, in a big auditorium, only once, that there also was an **SS** man who, for instance, saved a Jewish boy, was looking like an Aryan boy, blue eyes, blonde hair. And you can see it, as well, about 300 people in this, they all leaned back, very happy suddenly. We haven't done anything bad, we have saved the little boy. So the complete crimes, were gone. So I will – I've never done this again.

Q: But this is what **Norman** also says. I mean, in the book that you write about your brother, on the title of it is that I know he's a criminal, I'm – I'm paraphrasing –

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A: I'm still love him.

Q: – but I loved him. That sounds to me like a very genuine perspective.

A: Yeah, but it's – it's the same logic, like I just told you about this –

Q: Yeah.

A: – **Peter Sichrovsky**, and about the –

Q: **Bormann**.

A: Pardon?

Q: About **Martin Bormann**, explaining this in – in classrooms.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: But also **Peter Sichrovsky** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – that I'm telling about his being saved by an **SS** man. This love is, immediately, whatever my father has said or done, it's gone. It's still the love. Therefore, he became an alcoholic, and my brother was drinking milk. If you don't acknowledge the truth – I tell you how my mother was. When the death – when the sentences were delivered from the judges, it was broadcasted lively, yes? My mother has written down with her pencil, all the names, **Göring, Ribbentrop, Funk, Keitel, Seyss-Inquart, Howe**, all the names. We're sitting in front of the radio with a

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pencil, and who was sentenced to death, she made a cross. By 20 years, 20 years; life, **L**, and so on. And when it came to her husband, **Hans Frank**, getting the death penalty, she made, in all coolness, a cross. Great. That's acknowledged. That's acknowledgement of what is reality. Therefore, I love my mother. She was not pretending that, oh, this innocent guy. She knew exactly that he has deserved it.

Q: So, how come her children didn't? I mean, a mother can influence a –

A: It's a – it's a big taboo around the world. You should honor your parents, and love them, whatever they have done.

Q: So, you mean, the 10 commandments.

A: I acknowledge this taboo. Yes, something like this. But I can't do it. It's for sure and – they – they didn't – they didn't run around the table, and – and bury it there. So it was my advantage, and they had the advantage that they have very lovely memories of our father. So you have – they have the bigger – the bigger struggle, if they would have succeeded. Their struggling would have been much stronger than mine. I couldn't stand this guy, but they really have loved him. He was very funny, my father, he was very funny. He was very Bavarian style, and if he was at home, and he was in good mood. So they had a heavy task, and my brother **Norman**, he – he tried it lifelong. But he was open, at least, to my documents. And we were sitting together, there was a lot of speeches of my father still recorded. You can hear him,

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yes? And we were sitting and hearing them, my brother was so furious like I was.

H-He – he couldn't stand this crap what my father was speaking.

Q: So all – of all of the children, he was with you on that. He was somebody who could say yes, this isn't –

A: Yes, yes.

Q: – this is no good, this is – but you've done something else, is that you've made it all public. That is, your relationship to him, your relationship to your mother, you relation –

A: No, it was so – I don't know. I didn't mention my first book because bi –

Gitty(ph) was dead already. All the other were still alive.

Q: Okay.

A: I never mentioned a sibling of mine. Never. Because they are not the address. So as ever – I never mention it. I wrote it as if I was only child of them. That's – it's an etiquette thing. You can't do this without permission of this guy. So, when I wrote my mother, only **Norman** was still alive. And I – when I wrote **Norman, Norman** was already dead. Before, I would never have done it.

Q: Okay. Let me rephrase it then.

A: In the good English.

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Q: I'll try. Nevertheless, you explore, you put to the public, your – in German it's **[speaks German]** but your thoughts, your questions, your accusations, your critique, your –

A: No, that was –

Q: – whatever it is, you put that through the, you know, in your relationship with your father first, then with your mother, and then with **Norman**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And one – in one of the reviews it's sort of like you – you say that, okay, I've undressed us for the world to see. Someth – that's a paraphrase, but that's something of what it's like.

A: Yes, because what always disturbed me very much, that is the silence in **Germany**. This not acknowledging what we have done. We shouldn't go around with a doggish eyes, always feeling ashamed. Life is much too strong, live your life. But acknowledge it like **[indecipherable]** football. Acknowledge what we have done. We are not personally responsible, but by chance, we are Germans. So you have to – and if you acknowledge this, then will happen the second thing. You become very, very infuriated whenever you hear again something about the crimes we have committed, yes? Like I told you before, looking at children – faces of Jewish children who were forced to go to stay, th-there's a – every German, because

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of our sc-school system, they learn a lot about the Holocaust, so every German has pictures in his mind. So that's the second thing, you don't – will be ashamed, but – and that would be also, wrong way, but bef – become furious, and get a little bit more civil courage. The more you know about the cowardice of your parents and grandparents, the more you will find out what I found out, a thousand times with myself. Ah, **Niki**(ph), now you are becoming a coward. Don't do this like your father. Be strong. And it's not committing a crime, it's just a day in the "**Stern**" magazine, and all this kind of stuff. You can get yourself more – yeah, more civil courage, and staying as a – as a democrat.

Q: What do you – what do you hope, or what do you think the contribution of making your life and your relation to mother, to father, to – to **Norman**, public in the books, what do you hope that it gives to the audiences, to the public?

A: To do it themselves, in their own family. That's – that's the only reason why I did it. We have to talk about it. We have to talk inside the families. I always recommend it when I am finished with my – I always read out of the books, and then we have always a very lively discussion. And then I am always telling them, look at your home, look at – ask your grandparents, and – if they are still alive, ask them, what's really – what have you experienced, what were you – and – and if they are strong, they will say to you, my dear grandchild, I was such a coward. I knew

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exactly that mine Jewish neighbors were thrown away, and I have to confess, I took a big, big wonderful painting out of this Jewish family. If this is, that would be great. And I have to acknowledge, I have a lot of letters, mails, personal calls, which say, the first time I started to look in the history of my family.

Q: That was my next question, yeah.

A: And I found out is that – is for me, really satisfying. Last time was – my wife, she is not very keen to have telephone calls. And there was a man who was 65 years old. And I – he asked me three months before, gave me a call. **Niklas Frank** is a very rare name, he-he found me in the telephone book, and told me, I am so desperate. I know my father was this and that, but I can't find anything. He was re – really a simple man, I have to admit. And I told him what he has to do, writing to this archive, and this archive, always giving the exact dates of his father, and so on. And then he did it, and unfortunately my wife was on the phone, I was abroad, and he was so crazy to thank me, and that it was so wonderful. It's the first time I found out what this guy had done. It wasn't so – so really famous. But, he was so happy. That was a – if I get this, it's really good.

Q: So to me it sounds like that's – you have gotten support.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: You have gotten people who have said, thank you for doing it.

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A: But never forget this ball, that's always there – up there – they are – there's one who's asking, oh **Niklas** is not bad, that's all.

Q: But one could say that about almost any people. One could say that about almost any –

A: Now, I think I will finish this interview, because you can win everything, if you compare it with the world.

Q: Okay.

A: No, be serious.

Q: Okay.

A: If you compare it with the world, you have nothing in the end. You can just say, every human being has an ugly face in it. It is saying nothing. If you are talking about my life –

Q: Yes.

A: – and about the jailed Germans, then I am the biggest chauvinist you can imagine. It's only the German crimes, because we have done the worst thing in the world, and we should know better. If you don't have civil courage, we will do it again. And if you look now to **Germany**, with the refugee problems, we are only a good [**indecipherable**] democracy. We have never proved since '45, after we lost the war, that we are really a democracy, that we have really a civil courage. That is

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– I don't want to hear nothing, not even about **Austria**, or **France**, or **Greece**, or **Poland**, or – or here, the republicans and the democrats, or the thousand mer – thousand American dictatorships. It doesn't interest me. I am a German, and I want to make sure that the Germans, we are like the Jews, we are a chosen people. Not through God, through our crimes. And we should know exactly how – how far it can lead if you don't have civil courage. It leads my father to the gallows, and it leads a million of innocent people into the death. So never mention this again, that other people also have done this. Bad.

Q: I think you're right. I think this – I think this is the conclusion of our interview.

A: Thank you. See ya.

Q: And I – wait, no, no, please. We still have to do it officially. But thank you very much for that. And thank you very much for the rest of the interview, and sharing your thoughts with us, and sharing much more.

A: Thank you.

Q: Do you have any other things you would like to say?

A: Oh, I – a lot of questions which weren't asked.

Q: Oh boy.

A: No, no, [indecipherable] you were really great.

Q: But truly, is there any final word?

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A: No, no.

Q: Okay.

A: That was a final word. It makes me always crazy. Sorry for my –

Q: That's okay.

A: – attacking you, but – but this I –

Q: That's okay.

A: – always – it's always – it's – it's two questions, I s –

Q: Okay.

A: – if I have a public discussion.

Q: Presentation, yeah, mm-hm.

A: Presentation, discussion. The first is always, they are asking me, now you have written three books about your family, do you feel free now? All this stupid thing, and I always say, are you a German? You are a German. How did you deal with your parents, your grandparents? There may be love, big **[indecipherable]**. But what have they done? Have you ever looked at it? How do you feel? You have the pictures and – in your brain with – with the killed people. How do you react? Why I am example for you? Everybody has to do this. That would be good.

Q: And the second is is this sort of evening out, by saying everybody, yeah.

A: Yeah, yeah.

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Q: Yeah.

A: Haven't you seen that in **Greece**? And haven't you seen the Americans in – in – in **[indecipherable]**, the crimes. And then the atom bombs of –

Q: **Nagasaki, Hiroshima**, yeah.

A: **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki**. And the Russians with the gulags. And the German guilt –

Q: It floats away.

A: – diminishing, diminishing, diminishing.

Q: It – that was not necessarily my sense in – in – in making a comparison, as much as saying, isn't this part of our human condition?

A: I don't be interested in the human condition.

Q: Ah. Okay.

A: If I – if I go on this platform, we can talk three more days, and it's just rubbish.

Q: Okay.

A: Because you don't have really something.

Q: Okay.

A: I know my German people. In the end of my presentation, I used to say, I love **Germany**, I really love **Germany**, but I don't trust you, the Germans. And they would say **[intakes breath]**

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Q: So, thank you.

A: Again, I ruined your microphone.

Q: No, no. But what I will do now is officially end –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and say, thank you Mr. **Frank** –

A: You're welcome.

Q: – thank you Mr. **Niklas Frank**.

A: You're welcome.

Q: And with this, this concludes the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with – wi – with Mr. **Niklas Frank**, on June 6th, 2016, in **Washington, D.C.** Fin and done.

End of Part One

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Beginning Part Two

Q: This is **Leslie Swift**, recording a segment of an interview with **Niklas Frank**, on June 6th, 2016, and we will be focusing right now on – mostly on **Niklas's** book, and what he talks about, his father and his family, in the book. So **Niklas**, wa – we spend a lot of time studying here at the museum, what leads people to other-ise Jews and – and other – other people, and – to the point where they are no longer human, and thus disposable. Can you trace for us, to the best of your understanding, this person – the personal journey that led your father from being someone who was trained in the law, and presumably respected it, to the acceptance, and even enthusiastic participation in mass murder?

A: I think – I know my father wasn't an anti-Semitic. And he wanted to have a career. And if **Hitler** would have chosen not the Jews, but let's say the Italians, or the Gypsies, or – Gypsies had had already chosen – or let's say the Swedish people, he would have said the same sentences against them. It was just that he wanted to be near to **Hitler**, and he wanted to have a good career.

Q: So he didn't have this underlying anti-Jewish feeling that some of the other true believers did.

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A: No. I have his youth diary. He wrote it – it's not very thick – he wrote it in the time when he was 17 til the 20th year of his life. And there was not a single remark against the Jews. And it was already after the first World War. So when **Germany** really was on the button, and big inflation and took away some parts of **Germany**, and all this kind of stuff, he only complained about the French, and not about the Jews.

Q: About the occupation of the **[indecipherable]**

A: Yes, not – not only the occupation, I think something like they took away our girls, the French.

Q: And, at several points in the book, you insert brackets that serve as pleas to your father to choose another course, one that would have him stand up to **Hitler**, and prevent him from becoming the man that he eventually became. Do you think that he – why do you think he didn't take this path? Was it cowardice, or a combination of things? What – what about **Hitler** was so attractive to him?

Q: You have to remember the situation in **Germany**. Before the first World War, **Germany** was really a leading nation, in industrialization. We got the most **Nobel** prizes. The American students, for instance, came, studying medicine, to **Germany**. We really was a brilliant country. And suddenly, everything was gone, everything was gone. And it was, for sure, the Treaty of **Versailles** after the war, which made

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Hitler possible. My father wrote in his youngster's diary, **Germany** needs his honor back. We need a strong person, who can fulfill this task. Maybe it's me. But then it was **Hitler**. So, the middle class in **Germany**, and I would say most of the people, were really looking for becoming a nation again, full of honor. This was the one side. And the other side was really the economical situation, which was very bad. And there was about 10 million unemployed people, growing, and we had the inflation. And then suddenly there were the people in the brown dress, marching in good rows [**indecipherable**] in German, the word, yes. And they had the special program, not looking to the right, and to the left, just we have our program, and hitting everybody who was against it. For instance, the communists, yes. So this was it – something which a lot of people attracted, in **Germany**. And **Hitler** was a brilliant speaker. He was really very good. He wouldn't have succeeded if at this time was already **TV**, for instance. It was his personal appearance, and this very, very strong speeches he delivered everywhere. And when he came to power, he really managed that the unemployment was nearly gone. And there was a big, big improvement in **Germany**. There's a very famous German-Jewish historian, **Sebastian Haffner**, he is dead since many years. He wrote a book about **Hitler**, and he wrote in it, if **Hitler** would have died through a traffic accident in 1938, he would be remembered as a great, great statesman, because he brought back **Austria**,

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and it was a – a – now really in a good employment sitting. People, German people, were satisfied. And on the other hand was this really, I would say tilt to homosexuality, this relation from my father to **Hitler**. It was really, really, really personal.

Q: And so, you mentioned before that y – you don't think your father was a true anti-Semite, the way that many of the – the original Nazis were, and it was more a case of expediency than anything else. And – and I just wondered, does that – does that make him better, or worse, in your eyes? That – that he didn't have a belief, but just sort of went along with the tide?

A: It didn't change anything. If you are an ardent believer, an ardent anti-Semite, you also have your 10 commandments in your head. You don't have to kill innocent people. And if you are – if you are only somebody who wants to make a career, it's the same. For – for me it wouldn't have changed anything.

Q: Okay. And in the book I noticed that God comes up a lot. And what – what usefulness do you believe God served for your father? Do you think he was a true believer in any sense, even at the end? And do you have any personal memories of him speaking about God, before 1945?

A: No, I don't have personal memories, but if you count how often all the speeches of top Nazis, starting with **Hitler**, going down til – til my father, how oft them

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mention God. You would say that was the most religious part you ever worked in **Germany**. It's always the same old trick. What you are doing, you have to – always have to go out in your sentences. No.

Q: Yeah. And – and so, from what I've read on the subject, God and Nazism, the concept of God and Nazism was really cynical and prac – and sort of a cynical in a practical purpose. But God was not allowed to really supersede **Hitler**. And I'm just wondering what are – what are your own conceptions of God, if you feel okay talking about that. I mean, do you – are you a believer? Do you have any notion of that, or – you know, it – unless that's too personal.

A: Starting with my father, when my father was in prison, he used to write a lot of letters back home. They always were read aloud from my mother, and I really was full of contempt for those letters, because there was so much – so often mentioned God. And as a child especially, you immediately feel that's all a lie, that's not really true. And my brother **Norman** said, when **Hitler** was dead, he was looking for another guide, and he found it in God. And myself, I was brought up very – in a very Catholic way, because **Schliersee**, especially upper **Bavaria** was, at this time, very Catholic. And I had my big struggle with God, because as a Catholic, you always have those confessions, and when it came to the sixth commandment, it was really horrible for everybody, I would say. Especially for boys. And I loved – I

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never really believed in God. I never really. And in the meantime, it's – it's – there is a – a very offending word in German. It's **Kasperlediada**(ph), I don't know the American version. Yeah **Kasperle**(ph) is – is funny figure in – on the strings, puppet on the strings, for children.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. And **Kasperle**(ph) was a name of a little, with a big nose, who was always very funny. And this **Kasperlediada**(ph) is something like a **[indecipherable]** for this kind of stuff. I don't believe in – in – in any religions. For me it's an – it's inventions. Maybe human beings have always this – they wanted to have a connection to the other world. I don't believe in another world. Til – to the **[indecipherable]** of my soul.

Q: Well, I'm right there with you, so – just a little editorializing. So, when your book came out, **Ina** got into a little bit about th-th – the reception of it, and the – what people – some people were shocked, and – and that kind of thing. Were you surprised by the – by the reaction, and did you lose any friends, or did – did – did your relations with – with other people that you knew change when the book came out?

A: I was very much surprised. I was especially surprised about my fellow journalists, because I thought everybody of the journalist know exactly why I have

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written this book, because it was against [**indecipherable**] in **Germany**. But, they also only part of the German people, so they accused me the same. The friendships didn't change. No, they didn't change. But, what never came out up til now, there's nobody is really in private, asking me questions about this. Never. Til nowadays. They know it's something like – there is something ugly with **Niklas**. Don't touch it. It's more this way.

Q: You mean, asking you questions about th-the details, or –

A: The book, about the book, about the details about comparing themselves and their parents, and so it never came out also with my friends.

Q: And was that an ex – so you – that was an explicit motivation for you to write the book, was it because –

A: No, not against my friends, and so. It was the silence.

Q: No, but to – the silence in **Germany**, that – that – that –

A: It was the only reason.

Q: – you – you wanted to – you wanted to break that, and break it in very shocking way, in a very –

A: Not shocking. I didn't know that's really shocking. I was very honest when I wrote this. So, if you are furious, your language isn't the best one. So I kept it. The publishing company tried to change it.

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Q: Did they? Mm-hm.

A: And I said, no, not a word. If you don't want to print it, maybe I find another publisher, but I will change nothing. And they – they didn't change it, in the end.

Q: Okay. And was it a bestseller?

A: In the whole, I would say there's two pocket editions, and about 55,000.

Q: Did you – did you receive any correspondence or fan mail that was – was really thankful, for you to have done this?

A: Yes. There was – but was only rare in comparison to the accusation I got from the people.

Q: So, one of the things I really liked about the book was your use of black humor.

A: Thank you.

Q: I – I – I really – I – I – I – I myself have a very difficult relationship with my family, and that's one way I get through it is to – to be funny about it, you know.

But one of my favorite things that you said was that you referred to ha – **Hans Frank** as **Rosemary's** baby, which I thought was – was great. But, can you just speak a little bit about that, about how that helps you cope, how being able to be funny, while at the same time talking about this really horrible subject matter.

What's – what's your thinking behind that?

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A: I-I only can repeat, I wanted to be really honest, and I don't – didn't want to make any how **[indecipherable]** compromise. I didn't want to make any compromise. But – but if you look at our history, you can't come up with any compromise. So, this I wanted to write, that we have to acknowledge what our people have done.

Q: And I ha – I have to say that on – one thing that struck me also, about that use of black humor was it – that because we work at the Holocaust Museum, and we deal with this material every day, this horrible material, we also use that as a coping mechanism, so I sort of recognize that in the book as well. But it – here comes a non sequitur – so I was reading, and – and your father at one point early on, worked for the film workers' union?

A: Yes.

Q: And what – what – what exactly was that?

A: There was a union, it was very short. I found it in one of the document. I couldn't find any more about this profession.

Q: But – but, like –

A: I think it was just to – to get mo – more money.

Q: Working for – for people who work for **ufa**(ph) or something.

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A: Yes, everybody wor –he was based in **Munich**, we had [**indecipherable**] it was all the big movie city, besides **Berlin**.

Q: Okay.

A: And maybe – but it was very short time.

Q: And then – and while you were talking to **Ina**, you – you mentioned that your – your father's mother lived in **Poland** some of the time, is that right? She lived with you?

A: Yes. He wasn't quite a happy guy, my father, when he was young. His mother left him, went with his little sister, to a new lover, to **Prague**. So he lived with his father alone. And when my father became famous and rich, his mother suddenly showed up again.

Q: And did she, that you recall, have any opinions, feelings about th-the situation in **Poland**, either ger – you know, sort of writ large **Germany's** actions in **Poland**, or specifics of what was happening to the Polish people, and – and to the Jew? Was – was there any kind of sense of that?

A: No. I don't know anything special, but I know that she – a lot of letters I have of hers to his son in – in prison, and he alw – she always defended him, as innocent.

Q: Okay.

A: And he – by the way, he hated my mother, and he was full on the side of **Lilly**.

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Q: Oh, okay. Okay. And then at one point you said you – when you were talking to **Ina**, you said that your mother was very practical and pragmatic. She sort of really saw things the way they were. But then, in the book, you say – it's just sort of one line where you say, your mother thought that unconditional surrender was wrong, when it came right down to it, she – I guess she – did she think that there was some way of preserving **Germany** in – in some way, or –

A: Not in a political way.

Q: Okay.

A: My mother never was a member of the party, and when the power of the **Frank** family was at the highest point, she said to my father, and the other siblings were around, and she said, I know exactly. I will – it will come the time where I will nourish my children with my typewriter machine again. So she – and on the other hand it's clear, if you were – had a luxury life, and suddenly you would like to have to go it – let it go on now. So she tried, but was never – she was politically not interested. She hated the screaming speeches of my father, and she didn't like soldiers, all this kind of uniforms, no, she didn't like.

Q: Mm. Okay. And – so that – at one point you also write you mother has a handwriting analysis done for your father?

A: Yeah.

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Q: And – and do you know why she did that?

A: The family of **Franks**, and – no, not **Franks**, it was more **Herbst**, as she born into the family of **Herbst**. And they were always having this kind of séances, and with the cards.

Q: Okay, so it was kind of a mystical –

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: We grew up with it.

Q: Okay.

A: I loved it very much, was very good.

Q: Okay. And so now, to get to the film that you're donating. You've probably seen it many times by now.

A: No. I refused [**indecipherable**] always

Q: You refuse –

A: But I've – twice I must have seen it.

Q: You – twice you've seen it, okay.

A: I can't stand myself.

Q: Okay, yeah. And so – so **Erika(ph) Noble(ph)** sent – sent this footage to you –

A: Ah, this film.

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Q: That film, that film.

A: I thought you – you were – oh, sorry, no.

Q: Yeah.

A: **Erika**(ph) always answers to me, yes. Sorry.

Q: Yeah, so – so I'll just go over quickly, the – the history of that, so that we have that on the record. We found out about this from **Erika**(ph) **Noble**(ph), whose uncle was friendly with your father at **Nuremberg**, right? Was he an interpreter, or –

A: No.

Q: What – what was the story on that?

A: It was Lieutenant **Stein**. He was a – who arrested –

Q: It – okay, th-the gu – the man you were talking about, right? So s – so, do you know how – how it ended up with him? Did he take it from – from your father?

A: My mother was very clever. She immediately became friends with Lieutenant **Stein**(ph). So my mother gave him the diary, the used diary of my father. The original has vanished, and on every page of the reprint is printed, copyright Lieutenant **Stein**, **Walter Stein**, which not is so really honest, I would say. He also took away the leather coat of my father, which I bought back from an aunt of **Erika**(ph) **Noble**(ph) for 500 dollars.

Q: Okay.

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A: And it's now [indecipherable] at the lake, which we have at our house.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: And I am enjoying it every day when I look at the coat of my father hanging as a [indecipherable] Five hundred dollars, the most expensive [indecipherable] you can imagine.

Q: Yes.

A: And so they met, Lieutenant **Stein**, he arrested him and sent – he must have been very often together with my mother.

Q: Okay. So he got it from your mother.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And he wasn't the interpreter.

Q: Okay. Was there any suggestion of any romantic –

A: No, no, no, he was – no, no, no.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: No, no.

Q: And so – so the way we found out about it was we got an email – I got an email out of the blue, from **Erika**(ph) saying I have this footage, maybe you're interested, and we jumped all over it, because it was just amazing. And then, by the time we

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sort of were trying to make arrangements for her to send it to us, she had sent it to you, because she felt – and that – this makes sense –

A: Correct.

Q: – that it belonged to you, because you were the – the heir, you know. And then we were so upset, because we wanted it, and – but understood, you know, where she was coming from. And then, you know, many years later now, we're – we're making this happen. But – but I st – I d – I hadn't quite gotten the story of – of how it got from here to there to here, you know, so – so it's good to have it on record, I think. And then, to continue though, to talk about the film, which we'll watch tomorrow, so we can talk about it together, but the d – do you th – ha – did the film – has the film when you've seen it, has it awakened any sympathy, or – or more anger, or any other kinds of emotions, or in any way changed your viewpoint on your – about your family, seeing them in these intimate situations?

A: No, it hasn't changed anything.

Q: Okay.

A: I was very glad to see my brother **Norman** with his carriage with the horses, that's nice. And the other pictures when they're sitting in front of **Kressendorf**, and so they are always thinking they – **Norman** didn't know exactly, but the grownups,

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they – everybody knew what’s – really what’s going on, and they are sitting there in the sun. That always gave me – well, it infuriates me.

Q: Infuri – so it actually made – made it worse, in a way, to see this.

A: As in – in the beginning of this film, there is this – my father is sitting in the **Wawel**, and the adjutant is kem – coming to him, he’s – he’s ah, he’s pretending to be a rocking – hard looking and signing something. Ooh, terrible.

Q: Yeah, yeah. And do you think that the book would have been any different, if you had had the film to refer to? Do you think you would have added details from the – from the film, or anything like that? No. Let’s see. So I – I find the film personally, especially interesting for a lot of reasons, not least because I’ve now spent a lot of time studying the concept of amateur film, home movies, and things like that, and what it can tell us, especially how it can contradict, and complement the official records, such as, you know, newsreels, propaganda pieces, **Nuremberg** footage; all of these places where your father appears in official capacities. And yet here he is in this amateur film – not that he’s more authentic there, but that it’s a different view.

A: Yeah.

Q: And so you can put those two pieces together, and get a bigger picture. And, di-di – I already asked you this question, an-and the answer is no, but – but to see these

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two pieces together, does that complicate your – your view of your family life at all?

A: No.

Q: Yeah.

A: No. I found it really interesting, this material, that I have the – especially the scenes with the Jews.

Q: Mm-hm, that is – that's incredible.

A: And there is one scene where –

Q: We have nothing like that. Do you remember any – were you on that trip, do you remember that at all? No, no. So, let's see ... I think some of these questions have already been asked. So I – o-okay, so were there specific turning points for you, that you can remember, as your opinion of your father developed over time, or – and was the process, in coming to terms with your mother and your brother and your other siblings, a – a different process, bec – per-perhaps because they were still alive, and he was dead?

A: Well, we start becoming older, we started to talk about it a lot. Whenever we met, we talked about our father, and all the – more about our father, and also about our mother. It – it was a – what it meant, which I would say it led to – to nothing. We repeated each other. I have more and more new documents, but – but we were

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still friendly, and we were really in a good mood. And I never accused them, saying you have to change if you – and come on, and –

Q: You weren't trying to convince them.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. It seems that –

A: And for me it's not they have to – my siblings I have to compare with the normal surroundings I had with other people.

Q: Yeah.

A: Nobody is really – really talking about it, and really saying something, the same as my siblings.

Q: Right, right. And so some of the scenes in the book could be considered – I mean, obscene is a word that's – that has judgment attached to it, which I don't mean to imply, but there are scenes that are – that could be called obscene, and I'm just wondering what are – what are you trying to say to your father with that, with – with those scenes? Are – are you trying to vent anger at him, are you trying to say –

A: Not trying, I really was angry.

Q: Right.

A: And if you are angry about one, you are losing your – your education.

Q: Right, right.

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A: And I was – I will never forget it, when I wrote this, I was really happy that I really can fight him, that I really can excuse – accuse him, and that I really can counter him with very bad words.

Q: And in terms of the – and I hope you don't mind me asking this, but in terms of the se – scene of the masturbation, in the –

A: It's cut out in the American edition.

Q: I don't think so.

A: Oh, for sure.

Q: Really?

A: Oh!

Q: How do I know about it then? Do I read – I didn't read about it in the German version.

A: In the American version is – everything cut out is famous, notorious masturbation scene. It's –

Q: Really?

A: The only sentence is, I even got physical pleasure. That's the only thing which was left.

Q: Oh, okay, well I mean, maybe I read that as masturbation. But –

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A: That's a big scene with – a big scene, because it's – they had to cut out about four mentions of this.

Q: That's interesting. But anyway, my point was –

A: The – the guy in the – **Jonathan Segal**, American you – he was –

Q: Who?

A: – the publishing – **Knopf**, here in **New York**.

Q: Oh okay – okay.

A: And he was so rat faced when I told him, I want to have it.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And he said, well **Niklas**, I know the American markets, they won't buy it, I don't have to print it.

Q: Oh my God, we're such prudes, aren't we? But – but li – can I just tell you my reading of that scene, and you will tell me how wrong I am, or if I'm – you know, tell me a different story. My reading of that scene is that you are doing that, because you're – you're – you're – you're trying to reach the ultimate point of joy and pleasure at your fa – that your father is dead.

A: No.

Q: No. Okay, tell me.

A: Exactly the other way around.

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Q: Okay.

A: You have to imagine that the nearer the 16th of October came, yes, when I was a child, the more – not of my mother, but of my siblings, and the relatives, was the urge to celebrate. To celebrate a man and the **innocentness** of a man which I, even then, despised, yes, without really knowing what he has done, when I was young. Nine, eight, 10, 11 years old. And this is a big pleasure on a little soul like mine, when you are young. And it was just a relief, it was just a relief.

Q: A relief, okay, okay, okay, interesting. So, it seems that it's clear that your father constantly craved **Hitler's** approval, and was always disappointed because **Hitler** didn't really have much respect for him, if any at all. And – and that reads to me, at least, as a father-son relationship, the – the f – the father constantly disappointing the son. And I – I wonder if that is – is a theme in the book in the sense that, you know, this relationships between fathers and sons, is there a parallel there? Because you – you rid – you were rejected by your father, and then you rejected your father. But, your f – your – your father never rejected **Hitler** til the – til the end. And I-I'm just wondering if you see any parallel there, if you see any cause – cause the whole book seems to be about fathers and sons. Mostly about your relationship with your – with your father, but there's also – I kept thinking, there's this – there's some kind of filial relation between **Hitler** and – and **Hans Frank** that's not being fulfilled,

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the way **Hans Frank** wants it to be fulfilled. So that's not really a question, it's just sort of an observation, and a – and a – and – and a – I – I'm just wondering what you think about that – that theory. You can tell me it's bullshit, if you want.

Q: Can be – can – no, no, no, can be. Always the reader finds out something which the writer didn't know of, that you can read it in it. I remember writing those 12 weeks, where for me, as if my father was – would have **sitten** on the opposite side, like you now, and I could tell him everything, what made me furious. This was the situation. And whether it's in a transitional kind of art, that something is reflecting **Hitler** and my father, and me and my father, I really don't know. I – I hesitant – I had nothing in mind. When I was sitting down the first day, in the morning, I had 10 or 12 weeks holiday, so I could write it, from “**Stern**” magazine, and I didn't know exactly how to write it. I had a lot of files. And then it started with the first sentence, and then – then I knew I had to address him personally. To you. And that was it.

Q: That's – I think that's a very important point, because I think that – that really strengthens the book and – and makes it so much more personal, that you're – that you're actually addressing him. That was – that was my feeling when I was reading it. Let's see. Oh, one other – another thing that's sort of related, is – is it seems to me that you – you s – you take several opportunities to inflict posthumous pain on

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your father by – by sort of constantly pointing out how little he meant to **Hitler**.

You know, he – he – I – I mean, you do that in general, but – but there are several points where you're saying, you know, you didn't – you didn't mean anything to **Hitler**. **Hitler** didn't – rejected you in the following way. So I – I thought that was sort of an interesting device to – to – to use. Now I'm just sort of giving my own opinion, so I'm going to try and stop that.

A: I'm thankful that you're giving this opinion.

Q: Let's see. Oh, so okay, this is – this is interesting. What – what did or do you think about the sort of minor criminals who s – who escaped with their lives, and even went back to normal life? Did you ever pursue any kind of – legally, or as a – to cover them journalistically, or try to expose them?

A: No. I tried in all my articles to defend democracy, but I started as a cultural editor, so I wa – mostly together with the German writers, and actors, and so. And later on, when I was a war correspondent for “**Stern**” magazine, it was also quite another thing to deal with. And no, it – it's now – now I am doing it, with my last book on this earth, about denazification. I went into the – into the archives in **Germany**, too, and telling them, I don't give you names, but you hand me over files from **A** to Zed, just to get a clue what's a middle class, lower Nazis, th-the – the

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Fürher of villages and of some areas, what they have done, and how do they defend themselves? And it was really great.

Q: Great.

A: It's really great what you find out. You find really out that this is very strict way from there, to – to nowadays **Germany**. Because personally you can say, everybody who is accused can defend himself, yeah? That's for sure, that's – that's a human right, inside the democracy, for instance. But how they did it, it's so full of cowardice, again. It's so unbelievable. So I always said, before we had this cro – big problem now with refugees, I used to say to the people, when they asked me, do you think that this will happen again? And I always used to say yes. We only – if we have about five to six years really heavy economical problems, for instance, we will have another **Hitler**, and we will build up, not the gas chambers, because they are known – too well known, but we will get other things to invent, to make the guilty new ones dead.

Q: I-In **Germany**, or elsewhere?

A: In **Germany**. No, I don't think [indecipherable] elsewhere, just in **Germany**.

Q: Just in **Germany**.

A: Because now you can see, that I never thought about refugees, because it was a brand new problem, and you see it exactly how the silent majority of the Germans

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really think, how they really behave, what – and that – wow, that I'm very much afraid of.

Q: And – and what – have you followed at all the – the more current war crimes trials against the, very old at this point, Nazis –

A: Yes, I followed it in the newspapers.

Q: And do you think it's worthwhile to still be prosecuting these people?

A: For sure, for sure.

Q: Yeah. And why? What do you think is – is the benefit?

A: The benefit is that maybe a little bit more people who are reading the newspaper, or who are attending the trial, find out what we have really done, and maybe they'll think it over again, and acknowledge what we have done. But most of them are very old now, about 95 years old, and the – it's most – most of them are gone.

Q: Yeah, yeah. And so, turning back to your book, there's – I think this is a really – and this is the – the English translation, but I imagine it's similar in – in German. You say you already had a full tank of that poisonous bile, which for me, in my days of the Third Reich, was turned into chocolate and lollipops. Can you tell us what you meant by that? Does this – does this hint that you felt any guilt from benefitting from these spoils?

A: No. As a child – today I'm always **[speaks German] Ina?**

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Q2: I shake my head.

A: I shake my head, wondering what that I was living there, swimming on a lake of blood, the same like my parents did. It's just [**indecipherable**]. I enjoyed it very much to have a good chocolate, to have all the toys, to – to drive in big **Mercedes**, to – everybody was friendly to me, it was a very good life.

Q: And do you remember when you re – realized, or started to realize what the trade-off was there, that –

A: It was after the war –

Q: After the war.

A: – when the first now democratic papers came out, newspapers, in **Germany** called – the first one were from the American military [**indecipherable**] new newspaper. And there were pictures of killed Jews, also children of my age then, six to eight to 10 years old. And always was underlined **Poland**. And I thought they were – that **Poland** was ours. And suddenly my father, and the whole family was connected to these corpses. That was the first shock. The same, by the way, as **Norman** told me. When **Norman** saw these pictures, he said to my mother, there is no chance for Father – for our father. I think we know – now go into the dark. He was very pessimistic when he saw the pictures.

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Q: And do you think that that – that the experience that he had growing up, do you think that contributed to him becoming an alcoholic?

A: For sure. For sure.

Q: Because he was the oldest, and –

A: Not because he was the oldest son, but he never found out a way out of this trap, to love his father, and on the other hand acknowledging that he was a criminal. But he was the wittiest alcoholic I ever, ever came across.

Q: So, you also write in the book that, paraphrasing, that your father stated, or made some decree or something, that Jews were vectors of deceit, disease, and they were subhuman. Do you think he really **believed** that?

A: No.

Q: And – and it was more of a – a sort of an expedient policy –

A: No, it was –

Q: A directive?

A: – I hope that **Hitler** reads it.

Q: Oh.

A: I hope that somebody is telling **Hitler** what – that I have this **strongen** sentences. He was an educated man, he doesn't only say, we have to kill the Jews wherever we find them. He also has said this. But he tried to be, also, an educated

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man in these kind of sentences. He – he didn't say this one famous sentence also.

Somebody has told him that in – in **Czechoslovakia** they make a placard – placard.

Q: Mm-hm, placard, yeah.

Q2: A poster.

A: A poster telling about eight persons who has been killed as hostages, yes? And my father said, if I would print posters for every 50 Polish people I let shoot, the woods of **Poland** wouldn't be enough to get the paper. Now that is a well-educated sentence. It's not, I kill much more Polish people than you kill over there, **Czechoslovakish** people.

Q: Right.

A: Well that is his kind of thing, or the other example was the flat footed Indian.

Q: Right.

A: He wouldn't have done something ugly with them. That's great, that's

[indecipherable]

Q: And so he – he was also in – he was educated in a lot of ways. He was a piano player, you said. And there was something in the book, I believe, about him composing a song about – he – he composed a song – something to do with composing a song of – of occupying territory, or something like that? Does that –

A: Yes.

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Q: Am I misremembering this?

A: No, no, it's a poem of him.

Q: Oh, okay. Okay. And was it – was it set to music, or it was a poem?

A: No, no, it was not set in music.

Q: It was a poem, okay.

A: We got [indecipherable] wrote, and **Hans Fitzner**(ph), they wrote something

Q: Okay, okay. And so, I – I'm – I'm really fascinated by your mother's fascination with furs, and I have to, full disclosure say that part of it is because I'm a vegetarian, and I find it very interesting that someone would be so – just **meatful** – I mean, an addiction to furs, almost, it seemed like. And I – I – I just – I guess the connection that I'm making in my mind is – is that he – here's the fact that she's literally stealing the skin of an animal from another animal, that animal being a human, and it seems to have a very – a v – a very deep metaphorical meaning, somehow, to me.

A: For vegetarians.

Q: Well, for anybody, but yeah, especially for me, being a vegetarian. And – and again here, I'm just stating my – my sort of reading of it, but I just – I just wanted to say that, because I thought it was so interesting that she – I – an-and obviously, she worked in the fur trade before, so she was –

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A: No, no.

Q: Before the war?

A: No.

Q: Right? No?

A: She was a secretary, she was always –

Q: Oh, so what was the –

A: – since her youth time, she was interested in furs –

Q: Okay.

A: – and so she made business with Jewish agents –

Q: Oh, I see.

A: – who gave her furs, and she took them in commission, sold it with much money and got the difference.

Q: So, do you have any sense of why she was so into furs?

A: It's a good profession.

Q: No, but I mean, for herself, you know.

A: Furs were something that were the –

Q: Because it was a luxury item, or –

A: – in this – in those times – in those time it were furs were the most precious thing for – for women to wear.

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Q: Right, right.

A: But, by the way, when it came to the divorce, my mother and my father had a different lawyer for the divorce. Then the lawyer of my mother came to my father that he wanted to – to get a fee. And my father said, I won't pay you. My wife can sell some of her 100 furs.

Q: Did she have a favorite type of fur?

A: No.

Q: Oh.

A: I liked very much the **maulwürfe** fur, she called.

Q2: [indecipherable]

A: **Maulwürfe**?

Q2: Yeah, [indecipherable] the wolf, right?

A: The **würfe**. **Würfe**, you know? The – the small animals in the earth, in the garden, or [indecipherable] this little –

Q: Not a mink?

A: No, no, no, no, small, black, blind.

Q: Moles??

A: Moles, yes. And this is a wonderful fur, if you have –

Q: It was take about a million moles to make a fur.

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A: Yes. We are the government general, so we can have a million moles.

Q: Okay.

Q2: There was the decree prohibiting shooting of these animals, remember? You wrote about it.

A: In – in **Germany** they are also nowadays, are really protected.

Q: Well, they should be. Okay, so – I'm – I'm almost done. So – so –

A: I'm not in a hurry.

Q: I – okay. By – up to page 154, there is no, that I noticed, there's no talk of filial love, or worship. The normal feelings of a young boy for his father, from the very – from the young age, before you realize, before any – any child realizes that his parents are not perfect, and that they're flawed, and etcetera. And do you rem – do you remember having any of those feelings for your father, before you started realizing what was really going on?

A: No, just th – around the table –

Q: Just the chasing around the table.

A: – and – and the foam on my nose. That's –

Q: Mm-hm. That's it.

A: Why do I have this still in my head? So it's – I was longing for his love.

Q: Right, right, right. Let's see. Oh, what does minister without portfolio mean?

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A: Yeah, you have – for instance, you have the foreign minister, the defense minister, the economy minister and if you don't have something like this, we have no portfolio, you are just a **Reichsminister**.

Q: Okay. So that's before he became –

A: Governor general, yes.

Q: Okay. And is it a – it – so it's a lesser title, because you don't have a portfolio.

A: It's a – what is good money accompany with it, and when – '33, **Hitler** took over power. My father became the Bavarian minister for justice in **Bavaria**. He opened up, or didn't – did not forbid it, the concentration camp of **Dachau**, yes? And he was responsible for the unification of all the country laws into the **Reichs** law. And this was finished in November, December, 1934, one year later. And then, he was – he had – he had no work to do any more. So **Hitler** had him – let him be **Reichsminister**.

Q: Okay, okay. And, let's see. So – and at one point in the book, you say that your mother was disturbed by **Kristallnacht**, and you don't give much more information about that. Do you know why she would have been disturbed?

A: No, the – because of her Jews.

Q: Oh, her fur Jews.

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A: No, it was so – it was – th-that – that is very short, it's just from **Norman**.

Norman was –

Q: Okay. Oh, cause he was old enough to –

A: – my father came back from **Berlin** –

Q: – yeah, okay.

A: – in the salon car. My – my mother took it as **Norman** picked him up in **Munich**, and he – and she asked him, have you anything to do with this **Reichs** program – pogrom. Pogrom.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: And he said, no **Brigitte**, no. Well, this was just a lie, because he prepared it with all his speeches.

Q: Sure.

A: That something like this happened.

Q: Sure, sure. Okay, okay. And then – so – and – and then you also mention at one point that **Frank**, obviously before the general government, worked with **Roland Freisler**, and if there's any – any legal person that Americans know about during this period, and that's not much, that's for sure, it's **Freisler**, because of what happened 20th of July, and all that. So, in what capacity did he – did he work with

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Freisler, and did he ha – do you remember him having a personal opinion about him, or –

A: My – my father founded the Academy for German Right. It was also acknowledged by **Hitler**, and it was public – something like university. Not university [**indecipherable**]. So, therefore, he worked together with the most important lawyers and judges. Also, around the world, he always had some **tagungen**.

Q2: Conferences.

A: Conferences, thank you, conference where the international lawyers came together to **Munich**, where [**indecipherable**]. And he was personally good friend with **Freisler**. **Freisler** also visited us in **Kresnev**(ph), in **Poland**. That's not my memory, that's – and when **Norman** showed up, how well educated those two killers were. My father and **Freisler** immediately started to – to go on with the conversation in Latin. Can you imagine to speak fluent Latin?

Q: Because they didn't want **Norman** to understand?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Oh, my gosh. That is very interesting.

A: They were really good friends.

Q: Okay, okay, okay. Because, of course all – all the normal American –

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A: Yeah.

Q: – and as I say, is not much, but is the screaming, you know, at the – at the trial –

A: [**indecipherable**] terrible.

Q: – and the – just horrible, horrible stuff. Okay, I am – I think that's – do I have any more? I don't. I'm done. So, th-this is the end of part two of the interview, sorry, with **Niklas Frank**. It's been an absolute pleasure to speak with you, and it is, again, June 6th, 2016.

A: Midnight.

End of Part Two

Conclusion of Interview