

Good, rolling. [INAUDIBLE] recording, too, just in case. Thank you. We're rolling any time you're ready.

Are we already rolling?

We are. So this is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Ingeborg Mayer Protentis on August 8, 2016 in Brockton, Massachusetts. Thank you very, very much, Mrs. Protentis for agreeing to speak with us today, for agreeing to share your story, let us know a little bit about the experiences that you had, the family history that you have, and how that all was part of that huge catastrophe which ended up being the Holocaust.

I'm going to start with the most basic questions, and we'll go from there. So my very first question is, could you tell me the date of your birth?

I was born February 17, 1932.

What was your name at birth?

Ingeborg Mayer.

And where were you born?

I was born in Würzburg, Germany, which is in Bavaria.

What is the closest large city or town near Würzburg so we'd have an idea of geographically?

Munich.

Oh, so you're really close to Munich?

Yes.

That is the heart of Bavaria. Can you tell me your parents' names?

My mother's name was Rosa. Her maiden name was Riechenberg.

Riechenberg?

Riechenberg. My father was Max Mayer.

Were you an only child?

No, I was the youngest of four, but there was a large gap between my siblings and I, and my oldest brother, Emile, was 20 when I was born. My sister, Betty, was 18, and the other brother was 15.

What was his name?

I'd rather not talk about him.

And so Emile and Ingeborg are very German names. Was your family very assimilated into German society?

Very much so, so much, in fact, that my mother, who was very much a part of a business that my father was in, said, let's put the-- they owned a bakery and a cafeteria. Let's put the ovens on a ship and go to Israel, and my father said, I am a German first and a Jew second.

And he didn't want to go?

And he didn't go, and that was a catastrophic thing because he ended up in Dachau and Buchenwald.

Wow. We'll get there. Right now we'll talk about pre-war life, but yes, decisions like that were often so fundamental. And they made the difference in the destiny of an entire family, whether to stay or to go. Let's talk a little bit about your family. Did your father and mother come from Würzburg, or were they from other places?

My father came from, I think, [? Meribel, ?] and my mother's parents' names are very French. They were Babette and Raphael, so I think there may have been some French ancestry there. But I'm not quite sure where she was born.

Did your mother come from-- did she have siblings? Was she the only child, or did she have siblings?

No, she had two brothers.

And what are their names if you remember?

Yes, Ludwig and Solomon.

And did they live around you? Did you--

I don't recall. Ludwig came to the United States. I don't know what year, but I know that he lived in Manhattan, and he became a baker. Solomon-- I don't know when he came to the United States, but he did.

So this is all before World War II?

Yeah. No. Yes. I had to think, yeah.

So you think there was a French influence on your grandparents on your mother's side because they--

Possibly.

--because they had French names, Babette and Raphael, I think you said.

Yeah, Raphael and Babette.

What was their name again?

Riechenberg.

Riechenberg, OK. But when you were born, did they live in Würzburg, your grandparents?

I only had one grandparent, and that was Raphael. My father-- now, this is things that were told to me--

I understand.

--since I was the youngest. My father was orphaned at a young age, about 13, and so I had no paternal grandparents. My maternal grandmother had passed, so I just had my maternal grandfather, Raphael.

Do you have memories of him?

Definitely.

What kind of a person was he?

He was Mr. Clean personified.

Really?

He would get dressed up in a suit, watch fob, walked with a cane that had a silver head. And after his walk, he'd come home, wash the bottom of his shoes, the bottom of his cane. And we only had one bathroom in this apartment in Manhattan, and I used to desperately say, oh, Pop, please come out. I have to go.

So you're talking when you already lived in the United States?

Right.

He was with you?

He walked me to school every day and picked me up from school every day.

Was he a person that you could get close to?

He was in a German way. I think Germans are not as affectionate as Mediterraneans, so yes, he loved me a great deal.

You felt that?

Yes.

That's the important thing is that a child feels this, yeah. So do you remember him from Würzburg when you lived there?

Not at all.

And let me see. Let me see if I can ask another question about-- you mentioned that your father had a bakery. What was it called?

Mayer's.

Mayer's Bäckerei?

Mayer's Bäckerei. We also had a restaurant. Now if you guys are-- since you're all Massachusetts or had been, the size of Pier 4 in Boston-- that was the size of the restaurant.

Like Anthony's Pier 4?

Anthony's Pier 4.

That was a large restaurant.

Yeah, and my father-- since my parents were 44 when I was born, he used to show me around the restaurant before he was in the concentration camp. And I'll get two very important antidote in this about this restaurant, if I may.

Sure. You mean an anecdote, right?

Anecdote, yeah.

Sure. Please tell us now.

The restaurant was basically across the street from the University of Würzburg, so a lot of students, mostly men, would come in to eat. And now, this was told to me. You have to understand, I was very young. And sometimes my father-- if one or two of these students couldn't pay their whole bill, he would say, when you

become a famous lawyer, or a doctor, or architect, you'll pay me back. And it did-- may I go into that?

Of course, go ahead.

Because it's a very important part of this story. We had a very large house, and after my father was put in the concentration camp and the servants had quit because they were not allowed to work for Jews, I had a nanny who quit. So we moved into three little rooms, but other Jewish families that were basically evacuated from their homes came to the door. And since we had the room, my mother would tell them to go upstairs and just take some rooms. Well, they were like shadows to me, basically.

Are you talking when you still had the large house?

Yes.

Before you yourselves were evacuated from your home, you would take in other Jewish families?

Yeah, we were not evacuated from our home.

Oh, I see.

We left willingly. Well, anyway, Kristallnacht came in November of 1938.

That's right.

And I slept in the same bed with my mother, and all of a sudden I heard all this noise and noise against-- we had-- almost they were many castle doors, and I heard pounding against them and then men shouting. And then we had marble steps going up, and I could hear-- to this day, I can hear the boots on the marble steps. Excuse me.

And I would hear children crying, women screaming. I would hear a lot of yelling. My mother took a dresser and pushed it against the door, and she held me. And she said, Inge, which is Inge in German, tonight we're going to die. I didn't know what dying was, but she was crying, and I cried. And we heard glass breaking and so much going on.

And then the sun came up, and we lived in what was-- which you now would call almost a cul-de-sac. There were just three big urban mansions in this area. And there was a knock on the door and said, Frau Mayer, Frau Mayer. And it was a man from across the cul-de-sac, and he said, they're gone.

Well, she wasn't sure, so she didn't move the dresser. But then he convinced her, and we opened the door. And there were dolls, and shoes, and clothes, and glass strewn all over.

All over the house?

All over the house, and we couldn't understand why we were left. It was just my mother and I left. And I don't know the time span because, again, I was six. But my mother found out that one of the students who my father said, you'll pay me back, found out where my mother and I were, and he stood in front of the door and told them to pass by. So he paid back.

Wow, wow. So that day, who was taken? That night, who was taken from the home?

Everyone who was there.

All the people who had been--

All the people who my mother gave shelter to.

And your father? Was he--

My father was it Dachau.

Already?

Yes.

And your siblings?

Were in the United States and Palestine.

So it was only you alone with your mother at that point?

OK, that is a very important anecdote, a very important story with a very pivotal arc to it. Because your father was so generous, it saved you and your mother.

He just thought, as a joke. He knew they wouldn't come back to pay money, that they'd forget their years in college, that whoever this was-- and we never found out the actual person, but we knew he was a Gestapo officer. And that's what we know.

And you knew that he came to the restaurant and had not been able to pay for his--

We were told by other people because the restaurant was closed, naturally. My mother had no workers, and the bakery was closed. And--

I'm sorry.

That's OK. We can cut.

I feel I've earned the title survivor, and--

Let's step back a little bit.

Why don't you ask me the questions.

Yeah, let's step back a little bit. Before all of these things happened, I want to get a sense of what was this world like. And I know that you were only six years old when Kristallnacht happened, and you're the youngest of the family. So a lot of what you can tell me is what other people told you. But I'd like to get a sense of who was your family. From what you are telling me, your father went from being orphaned to being somebody who's quite well-to-do? How did that happen?

Well, again, I was told he hadn't lived in that area, and he sold him a house. I had his diploma from-- he was a master baker, and I have his diploma hanging up on the wall upstairs. And he saved his money, and at the age of 22, he bought the house, the picture that you saw.

I see. And we'll show that picture later and film that, but is that the house that had the marble stairs as well? And you said that during the war it was bombed by the British at some point?

Yes.

And then rebuilt?

How I found that was, in 1978, one of our sons was on an exchange year in Switzerland at the University of Fribourg, and we went to see him. And I said to my husband, no matter what you do, don't go on the Autobahn. And then I said, we should go on the Autobahn. It's faster. And all of a sudden he stopped, and I had fallen asleep. Then he said, Inge, look at this sign, and it says Würzburg.

So from Switzerland into Germany?

So I said, let's go. I said, maybe I can bury some ghosts. And we went to Würzburg, and I kept asking-- I speak German, not very well anymore. It's been a long time. And I kept saying in German, [SPEAKING GERMAN]. And they gave me a street, and it wasn't the street. And one young German woman said, maybe you mean [SPEAKING GERMAN], which meant cul-de-sac.

And we went there, and an old man was walking with a cane. And I said to him, did you know a Jewish family named Mayer. And he pointed to the house, and he said, right there. They lived there. The British bombed it, but it was rebuilt to specification and was now an apartment house.

So it was rebuilt in the style that it had been before?

Oh, yes. They rebuilt-- the whole city was devastated mostly by-- some American planes, but mostly by the British. And we saw pictures when we went to the city in 2013. It was just rubble, just rubble, but the German mentality is you put everything back where it is. And in a way, it's good. In a way, it's good. And the people we met then who were younger, who weren't even born, were absolutely wonderful.

And somebody asked me, wow, you must be getting a lot of money from that. And I was notified several years ago, many years ago, that the state claimed the property for back taxes because my father was in the concentration camp, and nobody paid the taxes.

Oh my goodness.

So I got in touch with a firm in New York called Claims Against the Holocaust, and-- I'm going to use language-- the man down there said to me, Mrs. Protentis, you were screwed. That property-- Now, this was in about 1980-something. In 1980-something, he said, the value of the property is about a million and 3/4.

But you know, it's not important. It's not important. I had my life. I live in a country that is absolutely beautiful. I have a wonderful husband, four wonderful sons, fourteen of the best grandchildren. And I will always be grateful to this country for giving me asylum.

Wow. Thank you for sharing that and for taking me forward to a place where I would have asked questions later, but it's one of the questions that we have is, did you ever go back, how did you respond to when you went back, what did you find there? You answered all of those kinds of questions and the one about restitution, did you ever get any restitution?

And if I had been eligible-- if I had been eligible-- I had gone to the consulate in Boston.

The German consulate?

Yeah, it's a German consulate. I had two little cousins, a girl my age and our brother who was maybe 3, 2, 3. I would never have taken the money. I could see these little hands coming out of the Earth saying, Inge, you're alive. You're married. You have children. We have no life. We are gone. We can't leave any memories. Even though your are bad, you have memories in your life. I would never have taken the money. To me, it would have been blood money.

Tell me about this branch of the family, these cousins. Were they children from your mother's brother?

I don't know. I don't know.

Did you know them personally?

Yes, yeah.

So what were their names?

I don't remember.

Whose children were they?

I don't know.

But you know they were your cousins?

Yes.

And you knew that they-- do you know how they perished?

In a concentration camp because after the war, my father came to this country, and after the war, he went to the Red Cross to find out about relatives. Well, it seems the whole extended family ended up in the concentration camps and--

Now, when you talk about the extended family, did your father have siblings even though he was an orphan?

He had a sister who was a teacher, and she also perished in a concentration camp.

Did you remember her? Was she in Würzburg?

Yeah, she looked like a typical teacher.

Did she really?

She had a bun, and she dressed with these high neck dresses, little white collars. And she always said to me, now, when I tell you this, remember it, Inge.

Very teacher-like.

Teacher-like. And we didn't see her often, but we did see her.

Did she live in the same city?

I don't know.

What was her name?

Rosa.

Rosa? Like your mother?

Yes. It seemed to be a very popular name. It's like Mary.

Well, in the 20s-- well, they would have been born earlier, but it was a very popular name here in the States in the 20s, Rosa. Let's go then to-- do you know whether these cousins were from your mother's or your father's side of the family?

I have no idea.

Let's talk about your mother a little bit. I'd like to get a sense of what kind of a person was she. You say that she had you pretty late, when she was 44. Was she the same age as your father?

Yes.

So tell me a little bit about her. What was her personality like, your mom's?

Very ahead of her time, very driven. Now, since my parents were very wealthy, she had a lot of jewelry. She had a tiara with stones in it and bracelets, and I remember when they had dances my nanny would let me sit on the steps. And I could watch the women, and they had all these beautiful things with green stones, and white stones, and red stones, which I later found out were diamonds, rubies, and emeralds.

A lot of bling.

Yeah, a lot of bling. And when this prosperous era ended and we were alone, she would wake me up in the middle of the night and take me to the roof, bring the blanket and a pillow. And she had a barrel, and she carried it. In it she had some tools, and the support beams in the attic were made of wood. And she would dig out holes in the wood, catch the sawdust in the buckets, and put in jewelry.

And she'd come over, wake me up. Inge, you got to remember these numbers, one, three, seven. In other words, the support post one, three, seven. If anything happens to me, you come here. I made them low. You can reach them, and you don't tell anybody where you get them. And you go to-- she have me the name of two families. And you tell them you're going to give them this, and they should take you in and protect you.

And then she would take-- she would be there for a long time, and I was cold. And then she'd take the sawdust and flush it down the toilet, and at times we went to Gestapo headquarters. And she took one of the jewels and put it in her hand and inquired about her husband, my father, and afterwards she would shake the hand of the Gestapo office, and the jewel would be gone.

Do you know if she'd got any information?

She never told me, but my father survived and was released. So something must have worked.

Now, you mentioned that during Kristallnacht--

Excuse me.

You mentioned that during Kristallnacht that the rest of the family had already left. They weren't there, or your father was arrested. So was it just you and your mother in the house?

Yes.

So the Stormtroopers or these Hitler-Jugend thugs or so-- they were aware that there was just a woman and a small child in the home?

I have no idea. The Gestapo man who obviously stood in front of our door must have known. It's hard to say because there were other incidents. My father had a huge library with a ladder we used to go around, and on the bottom he used to have a shelf for my books. And one day-- it was during the day-- the Hitler Youth came in. They took all of the books, including mine, put them in a pile in the middle of the cul-de-sac, and burned them.

And my mother said to me, those are the ideas of men that they want to destroy. And I watched the flames, and I could see heads of men coming out of the flames, and then I saw my books being burned. And there were animals coming out of those books.

You mean there were stories about animals and you saw it in your mind's eye?

Yes. And so I became-- when I came to this country, I became an avid reader and very interested in a lot of these things.

A lot was taken away from you when you were such a baby still, a little toddler, a little girl at an age where

children are so open to the world, and they're vulnerable. They don't have defenses up.

Now, I don't know how far I'll get with this part of the story. My mother and I, for some reason, were put in a camp. Now, it wasn't a camp. It was more like a house, and they had bunks in there. And it was all women and little girls. And one day some Gestapo officers came in with some Gestapo women, and they picked out some little girls, including me. And I was either four or five, and they took us outside. And I was so happy to be outside. I thought we were going to go play. And they took us to this big house, which was full of Nazi soldiers. I'm sorry.

--sex toys.

Little girls?

Yes. And my mother said to me-- when they took, she said, keep yourself clean. Keep yourself pretty. Don't scream. Don't cry. I think she knew what was going to happen.

Oh my goodness.

And after a few-- I don't know the time span.

Of course not. Of course not.

They came, and they said, the Mayer girl is not supposed to be here. And they took me, and they brought me back to my mother. And she never asked a question. She just wrapped me in a blanket and held me.

Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness.

And a lot of little girls who screamed and cried disappeared. But I was going to make it out of there. I was going to get out there. Even if I had to crawl through the door, I was going to get out of there. But they came and brought me back to my mother. And I kept washing myself, and I kept washing myself. And I had this compulsion to stay clean and-- I was obsessive-compulsive as I grew up about cleanliness, even in my house. I'm better now with personal cleanliness.

Were these young men or older men?

Young men.

Young men.

And actually, one of them came to our house after we were released from this, whatever it was, asking for me and asked my mother where Ingeborg was. And I heard his voice, and I hid in the closet. And I don't know what my mother said to him. I'm sorry.

Oh, please, no. Do not be sorry.

--even as a little girl that I was not willing to let this ruin my life, that I was going to be the best student in school. And since we came over two weeks before my seventh birthday and my parents didn't put me into school until the fall-- we came over in February-- I was a year and a half behind, but I skipped half the second grade, half the seventh grade, and half of a high school grade, and I actually graduated before I was eighteen.

Did you have any idea-- you were such a little girl. Did you ever have any idea of what this was all about, what-- because children don't know at that age.

No, none whatsoever, none whatsoever. And actually, I was told afterwards, too, that they arrested my father not for being a Jew, but he would-- in the cafe and when he went to the-- no, they didn't call it a put. They call it the haus. No.

A Kneipe? Like a little pub?

Hofbrauhaus, hofbrauhaus. He would say that Hitler is going to ruin Germany, so he was arrested as a political prisoner.

I see.

Were your parents religious?

To a degree, to a degree. They kept a kosher house, but my father didn't go to synagogue that often. When he came to the United States, he went more often and would ask me to come because he wanted to show me off, that he was older and had a little girl.

Did he ever find out what happened to you?

I never told him.

You never told your mother or your father?

I never told them. I never told them. When I was 16, I told the doctor, and he wanted to tell my parents. And I begged him not to. I said, I don't want them to know.

That's a huge burden to carry.

And after I met Sam, who's not Jewish--

Your husband, yes.

He's very Greek. Did you ever see the movie My Big Fat Greek Wedding? Well, I was what the male was in that movie. But they were so lively and so loving, and Sam said, Inge, I don't want to know what happened. Our life began when we met. But he encouraged me to go into therapy, which I did, and I was in therapy for years and told everything there. Well, not everything, but a lot. There's some things I just get to a point where I think I'm opening the door, and I can't go on. And I don't know what it is.

I know I remember one part when somebody put me in a box, and covered me with blankets, and put the cupboard down, and that's all I remember. And I can't go any further, but I'm claustrophobic.

Did you ever tell your children?

My children know all about it. Well, know as much as I want to tell them.

You have four sons, and that must be-- sons are protective of their mothers, and--

My sons are most incredible human beings next to their father. They are very protective. They just love. They love. And they're big guys. Two of them are 6' 3". They're all college graduates. I made sure of that. And my grandchildren are even more protective of me.

Five of them have-- as matter of fact, the fifth one is coming home Wednesday. They've been to Israel on the Birthright program, and Nicholas, Lauren, Alisha, Rachel, and Justin are the last ones so far. And they're very proud of their Jewish heritage, yet none of my sons married a Jewish woman. And I have the most fantastic daughters-in-law. Two of them called me and wanted to know whether they should come over here and hold my hand today.

Do they all know these parts of your story? That's also pretty incredible. Many people who go through such traumatic things keep that so bottled up inside, and their families are never given the chance, then, to try and wrap their arms around them and be protective of them. Doctors say that when a person has been that

abused and traumatized, that's a very common reaction is to just close completely, and it takes a huge step to share that as much as you want to share that and as much as you can share that.

They know because I try to tell them that the people in Germany now are not the people that committed these atrocities. They're dead. They're gone. That not to have hard feelings against the people there now, but they're not quite into thinking that way.

I also want to thank you because in telling me, you are also making this public to a wider audience, and I'm I know what a huge step that is. And I'm very grateful for it. And I know other people will be grateful for it. It's not just to share a horrible event. It is to bare a part of one's soul, and there is a cost involved to such things. And thank you for taking this step because through this, people will be able to see what happened to a little girl, a little girl who was born in a family that loved her and could not protect her. Thank you for that.

But I learned to protect myself. I learned to protect myself. I'm very [INAUDIBLE], and I'm very-- but I also know there are situations that should be avoided. I know we've traveled a great deal, and I see that there are things going on in good countries that are not healthy but again, I say am grateful for this country. And no matter what is said politically, America is great. It doesn't have to be remade great. It is great. And it should welcome people who want to come and make a life for themselves here.

I think my coming to this country, and meeting my husband, and having our sons-- and we always told them since they were little, you weren't born just to take. You were born to give back. And our oldest son is with the FBI. Our next son started a program for underprivileged children in high school and even started a STEP program so that they could go to college. The third son is a micro biologist and, as a matter of fact, this weekend did the Pan-Mass ride for cancer. My youngest son is a psychotherapist for the mentally retarded.

They've done you proud.

Yes, and they are giving back, so I think that was the reason for my surviving and meeting the wonderful man I call my husband.

Let's go back a little bit to the history if we can. You said that your other siblings had left. What propelled them to leave? When you were born, were they already gone, or when did they leave?

My mother sent my brother, Emile-- he couldn't get a visa to the United States, so she sent him to Palestine, what was then Palestine. She sent my sister to her brother in New York, who was a baker, because they were using the Jewish girls for sex objects.

Your sister's name, again, tell me.

It was Betty.

Betty, Emile and Betty. And about what year did she send her away?

I'm trying to think. If we came over in '39, maybe '37, '38 because we came over in '39.

And the sibling who you don't like to talk about--

I still don't want to talk about him.

OK, fine. I just wondered where he went, but that's OK. So we're back at your home. When is your father arrested?

I was three.

You were three? So you wouldn't have a memory of it?

I did--

You did?

--for this reason. We had a German shepherd-- surprise, surprise-- and I was playing outside in the cul-de-sac with him. And a black car pulled up, and I don't know what it was. Two or three men in black coats with black hats came over to me and asked me what my name was, and I told them. And they asked me where my father was, and I said, I don't know. I think he's in his office.

And then they came out with my father, who was handcuffed, and they said-- and my mother was running after them, and she said, where are you taking him? And they said, don't worry. He'll be home in a few days. Well, it was three and a half years, and he was in Dachau and Buchenwald. And that's why I remember because I was sort of involved.

Did you feel guilty about that?

Pardon me?

Did you feel guilty that if you hadn't told them he wouldn't have been taken?

No.

OK, so you didn't-- you didn't feel that, good.

No, I didn't because I was a three-year-old child.

Yeah, but children sometimes assume a responsibility that isn't theirs.

No.

There was one-- OK. Did you see him again in Germany?

Yes, once. My mother said, they're moving Papa from Dachau to Buchenwald, and I found out that the train is going to stop in Würzburg in the middle of the night. So she woke me up, and we went to the train station. And you could see the prisoners through the windows of the train, and there came my father. And he put his hand out, and my mother lifted me up. And I kissed him through the glass. That was the only time I saw him.

So when did you leave? How did you leave Germany?

We left Germany in January of 1939.

So that's a couple of months after Kristallnacht. And from all of the thing-- your father obviously must have lost the business several years before. Was there anything else that you were able to take with you?

Yes. I still have-- no, they moved it. Pewter. There was pewter here and some pewter downstairs. That vase that the flowers are in-- I was told by an antique dealer it was a soup terrine that belonged to the King of Prussia. My parents had this furniture, which was-- I hated it because sometimes I had it dusted, and it had all these curves. This was in the United States then.

Yeah, but they brought the furniture?

Yes. So about a room and a half of-- they're called Biedermeier and Baroque furniture, and my mother took me down to the pier where they were packing these big crates. And we walked in, and they said, oh, Frau Mayer. My parents obviously went up, and they said, is this your things? Yes.

And they talked for a few minutes, and they said whatever the other guy's name, Fritz, Hans. We haven't eaten yet, and we take a long time to eat, about four or five hours. So we'll see you later, which was telling

her, if there's other things you want to get within four to five hours-- so she hailed a cab, and we went back to the house, got some things-- I don't remember what-- and brought them back.

Was this in Würzburg? Was it near a river?

I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. These are things that puzzled me. Where did these things happen? But I was too young.

Of course, of course. The servants and the nanny-- were you attached to the nanny that you had?

No, no. I was actually glad she was gone.

Was she cruel, or was she harsh?

She was weird. She was not to my liking. She didn't teach me things. Here's one example. It's probably ridiculous. But had this little table with two chairs. One day, she puts this orange thing on the table and said, here, here's an orange. I've never seen an orange before. I tried bouncing it. It didn't bounce. I tried rolling it. I figured it'd make noise. It didn't make noise.

What a weird toy.

So then I said, there must be a reason that she gave it to me. So I dug my thumb in, and I saw something come off. And juice came out. I go, it's a drink. And I started peeling it, and then I got the juice all over myself, all over the table. But I discovered how to peel an orange.

And she never told?

She never told me. It was self-exploration.

And it was also, to her mind, self-explanatory. How would you not know that this is an orange?

I did not know, no. I had orange, but it's already here. But this was the first time I was given an orange. So no, she was weird.

She was weird. Do you remember anything about the bakery or the business, how it looked?

Yes. One of the reasons that I think I've always tended to sweets, cook and stuff like that, was every time I fell, they'd say, here, darling, have some whipped cream on a cookie.

Cholesterol City.

And you'll be better. And yes, it was a very pretty bakery, my father was a master baker. And he decorated things that were like fairy tales. They were fairy tales, castles with moats around them and days and days of work, beautiful things. And they tasted good, too.

And he made me special things for special days, and I didn't even want to bite them because they were so pretty. But it's the café I remember more. He would have the nanny dress me, and he'd take me around the café and say, this is my daughter. Well, this was-- I was young.

You were little.

I was three. And he'd introduce me, especially to ladies, and all the ladies had hats on. And I remember that more, beautiful tablecloths, and silverware, and plates, and-- it's so pretty-- flowers in the middle.

Did your parents-- did your mother work with him, or did she have her hands full?

Yes, she was also the brain of the business.

Was she?

Yes. My father was tremendously innovative in business, but my mother was the director. And I think that's where I got my inspiration from.

Really?

Yes.

In what way was she inspiring?

Pardon me?

In what way was she inspiring?

She would give orders, and people would listen. And I was-- gee, they're listening to a woman. So when I got married and had four sons, I said to myself, well, since I'm the only female here, says, "Guys, before you start first grade, you're going to learn how to make your bed." Well, they did. It was a sloppy mess, but they made it.

They learned to cook basics. One would set the table. One would clear the table. One would sweep the floor. We'd put them on wash away. We were an equal opportunity house.

And it started with Mama, modeling after--

It started with Mama, and I actually trained very good husbands.

I'm sure your daughters-in-law are grateful.

And they were wonderful when they were little boys. Mother's Day, they'd bring me boxes of pansies, and they would pick dandelions and give them to me. And it was a good melding of mother and sons.

Did you ever become close to your older siblings, Emile and Betty? Did you ever-- because they left when you were so little.

No. Well, I married Sam when I was 19, and my sister was 18 years old. And she had a hard time having children. She just had one daughter who was born handicapped who just died last December, and there, again, my sons went down to New York to visit her. They took care of all her affairs, her papers. They made sure that she got the proper service before she died. They got hospice for her. She had pancreatic cancer.

This is for your niece?

For my niece, my sister's daughter. And they were very good to her, and I went down several times. But it was very difficult because she was like my little sister. My father opened a bakery in New York, and after school, I would go over there, pick up Evelyn-- that was her name-- and bring her home. And she had-- she was born premature, and she had several operations. So she had a body cast, and I used to bring her into the house and take care of her.

And so she was like my little sister, and it was hard when I lost her. And I called her a couple of times a week. When she was younger, she always just come up here for part of the summer, and she always came up for Thanksgiving. My sons would go and pick her up and bring her back, and even my youngest granddaughter, Joselyn, who's nine-- she remembers Evelyn would send her \$2 for her birthday and a card, so this year I sent her a card with \$2 in it.

And what about your sister herself? When did-- did she live a long time?

My sister died at the age of 69--

So it was rather young--

--from liver cancer. And so Evelyn lived alone for a long time.

I see.

As close as we could be because our lives were so different.

What did she do when she came to the United States? Your mother had sent her away to protect her?

Actually, she was a maid for wealthy Jewish families.

Did she stay in the New York area?

Manhattan, upper Manhattan.

Near Inwood or-- there's that area in Upper Manhattan. What is it, Washington Heights?

That's there. Excuse me.

And Emile-- what became of him?

Emile never came.

He stayed in Palestine?

He died in 1969, the same year as my mother. He was obese. For a while, he was in the Israeli army, the Hagana, but he-- let's put it this way. He was spoiled rotten. Like when a bunch of them would go to the Alps hiking, his idea of hiking was paying other guys to pull him up the mountain.

Well, it's inventive.

And I never knew him. I never met him. He left when I was three. However, my sister called me one day, and she said, I just received a call from someone who said they were with Emile's daughter in Manhattan, and she was visiting. I said, so what'd you do? She said she hung up. I figured it was just a joke. So I said, the next time they called, give them my telephone number.

So they called me, and I went down to New York and met them. And they came up here. So this was my brother's oldest daughter and her husband. And so we went to Israel three times, and we met a whole family to Israel. And now my five grandchildren, who have been to Israel, have stayed with my grandnephew, [? Nitson. ?] He built a house with one room just for our family.

The grandnephew?

Yeah.

How nice because a relationship that was fractured that never really was able to grow-- you never really met him after he left, and yet the other generations have been able to connect again.

Yeah, and he's so funny, and he's a riot. And we got so close. He's like our fifth son. And he's 44. He taught our oldest grandson, Nicholas, how to play soccer. He's been here a few times, and there's one story, very funny. They came here one year, he and his wife, and they said they were traveling with another Israeli couple. And I said, OK. So one night he said, Sam, we have to go to Boston and pick up our friends. And as they're walking out the door-- they were coming down from Canada. I said, where are they staying? He says, here. Surprise, surprise. So luckily at that time our oldest son, Russell, was living in Brockton, so I sent

Jeffery, who was home on winter break, and Scott to his house to sleep. Change the sheets.

Like you, command central. So it sounds like from this that you're the only one who went back to Germany ever of the family.

Yes.

Let's go back then to the question I asked earlier about leaving. You mentioned your mother bringing some extra items to where the Biedermeier and the Baroque furniture was being packed up. Do you remember anything from the journey itself?

Very much so. We came over in February from Germany. We left the Port of Bremen, and we had a cabin. My mother and I never left the beds because we were deathly seasick. One time we were feeling a little better, and we decided to go to the dining room. And we were watching the other patrons eat, and my mother says to me, look, they're eating food that we feed to the pigs. They were eating corn on the cob.

Yes, Europeans don't do that.

No. So we sat there for like 10 minutes, went back to our cabins and got sick.

Now, how is it that you're able to come to the United States? So many people had difficulties--

How have you opened another book?

Please. My mother kept saying we had cousins down South. When my sister died--

In 1969?

No, my sister died--

Oh, that was Emile who died in '69?

I'm trying to think what year she died. No, my brother died in '69, and my mother died in '69. My sister died-- wait. I have to figure my daughter-in-law's age. My daughter-in-law is 62. She died when she turned 30, so 32 years ago was when my sister died.

So that would have been '84, 1984.

So I went down with my son, Paul, and my niece asked me to go through her papers. And so Paul and I went through them, and I found a letter from a Janie Miller from Memphis, Tennessee.

A Janie Miller?

Janie Miller. And said, I do genealogy, and I believe-- this was addressed to my sister-- that you're related. And the letter was two years old.

So it was 1982 that it was written?

And with it was a genealogy tree. And I'm saying, ugh. But Paul pulled this stuff out of the trash basket and says, take it home. We'll look at it. And when we got home, Scott was home on winter break or spring break from college. He went to UMass Amherst. And he loves research, so I said, Scott, look at this, and see what you can come up with. And he looked at it, and he says, mom, the closest I can come is that there's a family name Kamien in Cleveland, Mississippi--

Kamien in Cleveland, Mississippi?

Kamien. --that are related to you. And I said, I bet you those are the cousins. Now, this man put up the

money for all of us to come over and sponsored us. At the time, I think you had to put up \$1,000 a person and leave it in the bank for five years so that the immigrants would not become a burden to this country. He never knew us. He never knew us.

So you never met him?

I never met him. Anyway, I pick up the phone, and I say, I'd like Kamien in Cleveland, Mississippi. And the operator said to me, there's a Kamien's Department Store. I said, put me in touch with them. So a woman answered, and she says, Kamien's. I said, this sounds weird, but I'm calling from the Boston area, and I think I'm related to the owner of this store. And she says, well, honey child, I'll put you in touch with the president of the company, I.A. Kamien.

And I spoke to him, and he said, oh, my aunt-- she has all the information. Her name is Rosebud Davis, not Rosa, Rosebud. And I called her, and it seems my maternal grandfather had eight brothers and sisters that came to the southern United States in the early 1900s. And I have relatives all over this country where I thought I had nobody.

Oh my goodness.

So we invited Rosebud and her husband up here, and we went down South and met them. And it was this Kamien that sponsored us and also said he had jobs for us, which was not true. He did, but he was also an amazing man. He hired the first black in Mississippi to work to manage his store, and it was a woman.

Oh my goodness.

And he gave land to both the Baptist and Methodist churches, and as a matter of fact, Sam's 90th birthday, which was June 4 of this year, Janie Miller came up here with her husband, and her brother came from Los Angeles.

Wow. So your grandfather, the dapper Mr--

Yeah, he cleaned the bottom of this cane and the sole of his shoes.

So it was one of his siblings?

No, it was my mother's. It was the Riechenberg family.

That's what I mean. Oh, I see, but I thought he was--

Oh, yes, yes. You're right. Yes, you're right.

So it was one of his siblings who sponsored--

It was eight of his siblings that came to the United States, the southern part.

And do you know how the Kamiens were related to him?

This Kamien who sponsored us was married to my grandfather's sister, so she was married to Riechenberg.

So when you came to the United States, was it just your mother and yourself, or did your grandfather come with you?

My grandfather came with my father after-- I can't remember how many months later, but it was just before Germany invaded Poland.

So it was the same year, but Germany invaded September 1, 1939, and you left the last days of January 1939. So it's sometime between early February and late August that your grandfather and father would have

come. So tell me, how was it that your father was released? Many people were not.

I had told my doctor that Lauren was doing this project on my family to the Holocaust Museum.

The interview we're having today?

Mm-hm. And we couldn't understand how my father, German Jewish man, was released from two of the worse concentration camps in Europe. So he said, when he was in college, he read this book, and it was titled *The Extermination of the European Jew*. Now, I started calling around different libraries, and none of them had it. But the Brockton, the main library, had one copy. And I went down, and I got it, and I read it, a very difficult book to read because it had so many notes and things.

But I found out that the Nazis decided that Jewish men who had fought in World War I and won a medal-- my father won the Iron Cross, which was like the Distinguished Service Cross. He would be given more liberties, and so I guess that's why he was released. It's the only thing I could think of.

So he had had military service during the First World War. Was the book written by Raul Hilberg?

By who?

Raul Hilberg. Is that the book, *The Destruction of European Jewry* Is that the book you're talking--

The Destruction of European Jewry?

Yeah.

I can't remember the-- I actually went online. I can use a computer.

As I told you, I'm impressed.

I went online, and I got two paperback copies, sent one to Lauren. And I have it upstairs.

We'll take a look later. We'll take a look which book it is. So you were calling around to find out, and this book is the only one that gave you a sense of--

--that gave me that information.

Yeah. Your father-- did he ever talk about his time in Buchenwald or Dachau.

No, never. He had a lot of scars on his back. I guess that was from beatings. He never talked about it, and to tell you the truth, I didn't want to hear it. I had a very horrific childhood. I had. And I didn't know I was such a pusher as a child, but I was. But I was determined to survive and to bring some good into this world.

When you say, I was a pusher--

A pusher to survive. And I wasn't going to let anybody destroy my will. And when I came to this country and saw this unbelievable freedom-- like we lived in our first apartment. We lived across street from the school, and there was a playground. And I saw these kids keep throwing a ball through a round thing. In the evening, I went across the street with a little ball, and I kept practicing throwing the ball through the hoop because I wanted to be like them. Well, I ended up being captain of the basketball team in high school.

Good for you. Good for you.

And I was in all the accelerated classes, but then when it was time, I got accepted by City College in New York. And my father wouldn't let me go. He said, women don't need an education. But I did go. I applied for a job-- that's where I met Sam-- and I went at night. I went from work to CCNY, then from the CCNY took the train to the Bronx, was up until 3:00, 4:00 studying, got up at 5:30, go to work. I had a breakdown. I

couldn't do it anymore.

It's a huge stress.

But I completed one semester. It was better than nothing.

Of course. So where were you working? When you were working, where were you working?

[INAUDIBLE] Johnson's. They were a shoe company, and I was secretary to the treasurer. And I learned a lot about the stock market, and Sam was training to be a road salesman. That's how we met.

I'd like to take a break right now.

I'd like to take a break, too.

OK, so let's do that and have some lunch.

Your father and your grandfather came over separately than you and your mother. Did your grandfather-- why did he stay behind?

I don't know. I don't know.

And the only time you had seen your father was when your mother lifted you up to press you against that pane of glass as he was being transferred from one concentration camp to another?

Right.

Do you remember the moment you saw him again after that?

Yes, but I was afraid of him. I didn't recognize him. He had turned gray. He was very thin, and I held back. And I couldn't hug him at the beginning because I thought he was another man who was a threat to me.

Did you see him as he got off the boat, or did he come to where you were living?

No, to the apartment, came to our apartment.

Can you paint a picture of how he looked to you at that moment when you saw him again?

Stranger, a stranger because when he left he wasn't fat, but he was a little over normal. My father had red hair, and a red mustache, and a goatee, and now this skinny person who's all gray-- I didn't know who he was.

How did he behave?

Geez, it's hard to tell. All I know is he was here in this country for two days, and we lived in Manhattan then in the 80s, 87th Street, something like that. And he went into a bakery, and it was a German Jewish section. And he said, my name is Max Mayer. I'm a master baker, and I want a job. This was two days after. And he got it. And a very hard worker.

Was he someone that-- how long did it take or did it happen that you got used to him again and weren't afraid of him?

I can't really pin a time on it, but I was the apple of his eye. On the Jewish high holidays, he would have my mother buy me a new dress, new shoes, and he'd go to the synagogue and-- in New York at that time-- this is-- I hate to say it-- a long time ago-- children could walk the streets safely. So my father would go to the services early, and then I'd go about to 10:00, 11:00, all dressed up, walk to the synagogue. And he'd look back to see me, and he'd bring me and sit me next to him.

This was so wonderful because he was strutting. However, at the age of 11, I developed, and that year my mother bought me a white dress. And I did my usual. I went to the synagogue not thinking about anything, and my father looked back, saw me, escorted me, sat me next to him. All of a sudden, Jewish men-- you call what they do daven. They say their prayers out loud, and they're davening the crescendo rose because they saw now I was developed.

The rabbi comes down from what they call the bima or the platform, and he asks my father and me to come to the back of the synagogue. And he says, Max, your daughter has to sit with the women. She's a woman now. He says, my daughter is my equal, and she will sit next to me. And if you don't approve, I'm leaving this synagogue. And he took off his shawl, and he took me by my hand, and he walked out. He joined another synagogue.

So that made a big impression on me, that-- well, I always thought of myself as his equal. I was no I never felt different until I wanted to go to college. Then there was a conflict. But as I was growing up, we would have conversations about everything, and he respected my opinion, even at the age of 12, and 13, or 14. And I respected his.

Were you closer to him than to your mother eventually?

Yes, yeah. But I loved my mother more. But for this very reason I owe my life to her. Even as young as I was, I realized it. And with the jewelry, and the bribery, and going to Gestapo headquarters, my mother-- I usually had a hard-boiled egg and toast for breakfast. She would peel the egg, slice the toast in little bite-sized pieces. This is when I was 18. And it was a love-hate relationship. I don't know how I can explain it other than that. There were things I'd rather not go into about that.

But it sounds to me that you were also the apple of her eye. Who would cut the egg and the toast when you already have a teenager in the house? They do it themselves.

Yeah, and I would have conversations with both of them, but I never recall having a conversation with the three of us. It was always me and one of them.

Did they get on with one another?

I never saw much love. No, they didn't. It's not like Sam and I. We're always kissing, even at this stage of our life.

That's lovely.

No, I never saw much love between them.

But yes, they both adored me.

Did they ever speak of what had gone on in Germany in the 1930s when you were older?

Never.

Never?

Never, never. The only thing my mother ever said is America is the most beautiful country in the world. You can be anything you want. This is the land of opportunity. But they never spoke about what went on.

As a matter of fact, I didn't even know about the property. I didn't know anything. They never told me anything. I didn't know that my mother's father had eight brothers and sisters that came to the United States in the early 1900s. I knew nothing.

And people ask me, and it's so hard for me to understand. I also couldn't understand why she didn't bring

my brother over from Israel. And I'd ask questions, but if you know me for a little while, I ask a lot of questions. But I wasn't given any answer. I was given evasive answers. But you accept them, you know?

Your grandfather-- did he live on his own, or did he live with you?

He lived with us for a while. That's why-- he was so clean, I had to learn to control my bladder because he monopolized the bathroom.

The one bathroom.

And then for a little while he went into a nursing home, and I recall visiting him. And then when I was nine he died.

Oh, so he died very soon after arriving here.

Yes, yeah.

Had he had his own business when he was in Würzburg?

I don't know. I don't know. I tell this to my children. I want them to know as much as possible about me, and Sam tells them about him and his Spartan Greek heritage because I was left with so many blank spaces. I can't answer. I want to.

But you don't know.

But I don't know. And Ursula-- when we went to Germany on the survivors group-- she's the retired OB-GYN. She went to Munich and found out so much about my father that I didn't know.

For example?

I don't want to tell you. My brother, Emile, was born-- I can't remember exactly the year, but let's just say 1910. He was born in April of 1910, and they were married in February of 1910. I go, I wish I would have known this when they were alive. I've could have blackmailed them.

Yeah, exactly.

Don't put that.

Such information is worth something.

And there are so a blanks, and she was able to give me the city he was born in. There were only seven Jews there and when he left and went to Würzburg, how ambitious he was to buy this building at the age of 22, how well respected he was and obviously by the students at the university. And even the packers down at the pier that packed my mother's furniture-- they knew her on sight. So there are a lot of spaces in my life, and I have no information on them. I wish I did, but I don't.

Did your parents ever talk about-- if they didn't talk about the bad times, did they ever talk about their own childhoods?

No.

And your grandfather-- did he ever talk about when your mother was little?

No.

Or himself when he was little?

No. I had to figure everything out for myself. I learned to play basketball. I learned English. There was a teacher when I went to first grade, and I was old. I was seven and a half. And she indicated to me that she wanted me to stay after school every day-- I didn't understand her, but I figured it-- to teach me English. For a year, every day this Polish teacher taught me English, and I credit her with so much for-- and also in teaching me the language, making me aware of things in science, in the animal world. And she taught me well. Halloween, when she hid pennies, I always found the most of them.

Do you remember her name?

Yes, Mrs. [PERSONAL NAME].

[PERSONAL NAME]?

[PERSONAL NAME].

[PERSONAL NAME].

Yes.

And you went to school where? In what part of--

In Manhattan.

In the Upper West Side?

Yes.

Oh, no. Wait a minute. Let me think now. Yeah, I started school in Manhattan, but then we moved to the Bronx. But I can't remember what year. We moved to the Bronx maybe after two years, but by that time, I was really well-versed in the English language. As a matter of fact, I became my parents' interpreter.

Well, that was going to be my next question is, what language did you speak at home still?

German.

And they continued to speak German?

Yes, yeah. That's why I was on-- one of the committees that in here in Brockton was the linguistic-- the Immersion of Children from Foreign Countries into the Second Language class. And I said I didn't think it was necessary, that it was a waste of money, and the superintendent of the school and I were like this. So the woman who was in charge of the bilingual program said, oh, you cannot imagine how hard it is for a child who comes from a foreign country, doesn't know a word of English, and goes into a class where only English is spoken. And the superintendent of the school is sitting next to me there, smiling.

He says, I'd like Inge Protentis to discuss this with you. I can't remember her name, but I knew she hated me after this. I said, I'm one of those children who came from Germany. I went into a classroom. I had no idea what the teacher would want. She pointed. I sat. She said, get up. I got up. She said it was time to go home. She showed me to put on her coat. I said, and I learned English, and I skipped three classes and graduated before I was 18, even though I was a year and a half behind.

So after that, that woman wouldn't talk to me. I mean I understand it's her job, and I understand that with some children it probably is very necessary, especially if they're older. But I still think immersion into a language totally-- you learn quickly.

Usually. Younger children, of course-- they're like sponges. They pick this up very easily. So it sounds like that was a difference in policy decision, and with policy decision comes money, so whether something is going to be funded or won't be funded and so on.

When you came to the United States on that ship where you were seasick and so on and saw corn that people were eating in that dining room-- and so do you remember when you first saw land? Do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

Yes, the ship stopped rocking from side to side for quite a while, and my mother said, Inge, get dressed in your best dress. We're going to go upstairs to the deck. And I did. We went upstairs, and it was crowded with people. But it was like, you could hear a pin drop. You would hear a woman sobbing every once in a while, and it was lined-- my mother pushed me to the front, and I couldn't understand what there was about this big stone lady that made people cry until I knew it was the Statue of Liberty.

As far as you know, were other people on that ship also Jewish refugees?

I don't know. I assume so, but there were also Americans on this ship. It was a huge ocean liner called the Bremen.

The Bremen?

Bremen, SS--

Was it a German ship?

Yes.

And so that meant German personnel on the ship?

Yes. And here's the amazing thing. Our room steward-- you usually give them something. At the end of the voyage that day when I saw the Statue of Liberty, he brought us a huge fruit basket.

Did he?

Yes. And we hadn't eaten anything in five days. Yeah, yeah. And I tell this-- when I've spoken at the schools, I've told the children, they cannot imagine the feeling that I had later on when I realized what that big stone lady meant. And of course, they all knew. They said, oh, it's the Statue of Liberty. And I said, yes, but it's more than just a statue. It has so much meaning. It means you have freedom. It means that no one is watching you, that no one is judging you on where you go to church or synagogue or what country you come from. It means that you are free, free American. And that moment will always stay with me.

Did someone meet you at the pier?

Yes, my uncle, my uncle who originally--

Ludwig? That uncle? Ludwig?

Ludwig, good memory. Ludwig met us at the pier, yes. And we were driving to his apartment through Times Square, and I said, what's wrong with these people? They're not pulling their shades down. They have all the lights on. Because in Germany, you had to pull the shades and keep it dark. And I said, I don't see anybody walking with the Star of David on their sleeve, and my uncle was trying to explain to me that they don't have to.

Did you stay with him?

We stayed with him for about a week, and then we got an apartment.

Your own apartment?

Our own apartment. Now, here's my mother. Most of her jewelry went to save my father, which was a very

good cause. But I saw her putting a couple of things into a cotton cloth which she put into a teapot, which-- she put the teapot into a big pot and the big pot into a bigger pot. We get to Manhattan, and there are the customs agents. She got it out of Germany.

She comes down. She says, let me help. She starts carrying linens up, pillows up, pots up, and the pot. And in the pot was-- there wasn't much left. If you have time at the end, I'll show you the pin.

I'd love to see it. Do you still have a piece of her jewelry?

Yes.

Oh, that's amazing. That's amazing. I would love to film it. So she brings up the pot, in which was--

The jewelry was. So she got it passed the Germans, got it passed the customs agent. That's why I said she was daring, and she was a brave. And she was smart.

Yeah. And so she had enough money to at least start, at least rent the apartment, at least be on her own rather than live in the corner of somebody else's place?

As far as I know because we lived on our own.

And so you got all of that furniture that you didn't like so much, the Baroque furniture with the curlicues that you'd have to dust later?

Well, [INAUDIBLE], but she had to buy beds, and kitchen set, and things like that. And I was amazed that we had just like five rooms. Where's the rest of the rooms? This is it.

Five rooms, upper Manhattan? Not so bad.

No, but--

But you're used to a whole house. When your father came and the second day he's here he finds a job as a master baker-- tell me a little bit about how things developed for him. Did he eventually strike out on his own? Did he stay there? Did he--

He opened a bakery. He opened a bakery in the West Bronx, and he was the baker. My mother worked at the counter, my sister and my brother-in-law. And as a matter of fact, our best friends, Charlie and Thelma [PERSONAL NAME]-- her sister-in-law lived in New York, and when I told the story, she goes, the Mayer bakery-- we used to stand in line every Sunday to get in there. I said, yeah, yeah.

Wow. So he repeated his success?

He did. But he was older now, and it was getting harder for him. And there were little family squabbles. Eventually they closed the-- it was a huge success, but my father made it a success, and not just was he a master baker. His breads and rolls were out of this world. They were light and fluffy, so it's not just cakes which were works of art. It was the whole thing.

Did you help him in the--

I did work there, yes.

What did you do? What was your job?

I was behind the counter. I sliced rye bread on the slicer, yeah. I weighed the stuff. I looked up on the chart how much it was.

And did you talk to the customers in German or in English?

English.

In English?

Oh, no, I spoke only English, yeah.

And when you started to grow up, you said that that's when your dad already-- it was harder for him to see an equal sign between a girl and a boy and have you-- how did this start, this discussion of you wanting to go to college and him saying no?

Well, my teachers told me-- at that time, the City College New York was very hard to get into. It was very selective. You had to have-- I can't remember if it was all As and maybe a couple of Bs, but I had them. I was an all-As student. I got a B once in something. I can remember, probably art because I'm a lousy artist.

And they encouraged me to go, and they asked me what I wanted to do. And I said I wanted to be a scientist like Madam Curie. I wanted to find a cure for something. So they helped me fill out the forms for City College. I got accepted. And like I said, it was competitive at the time. Right now all you need is a high school diploma to get in there.

But it cost money, just like a state school. And my father said, I don't have the money, and you're a woman. And women don't need an education. And I said, so why'd you let me go to school? We had big arguments. I said, why do we have all these discussions? You said you respected my opinion. But it didn't work. So anyway, I got the job. I met Sam, so it worked out.

Can we cut just for a second?

Of course.