

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Judge Guido Calabresi on July 27, 2017 in New Haven, Connecticut. Thank you very, very much, Judge Calabresi, for agreeing to meet with us today, and to share your story, and to let us have a little window into the experiences that you and your family had during those terrible and turbulent years of World War II and pre-World War II. I'll start with the most basic questions. And the very first one is, can you tell me the date of your birth.

I was born on October 18, 1932.

And where were you born?

I was born in Milan. I was born in an apartment my parents-- my father had just gone there to teach. We soon after moved to a house which my family owned in Milan and Via Canova. And such is a world-- Via Canova is in the center, near the castle and so on-- such is the world that now that house, which was our house, is the Turkish Consulate.

No kidding. That leads me to a question that usually would be way towards the end of the interview, but I'll ask it now so I don't forget. If it was your house and you left it, was it that it was confiscated from you or your family sold it?

No. We sold it after the war. It was damaged. We sold it for almost nothing. It was damaged because some bombs had hit nearby. How we managed somehow to keep properties is part of the story.

Yes.

It is.

Yeah. OK, and then another question that seems self-evident, but it's part of our format is can you tell me what was your name at birth?

My name is Guido Calabresi.

As it is today.

As it is today.

OK, no changes.

No changes.

Tell me a little bit about both your mother and your father, starting with their names.

My mother's name was Bianca Maria Finzi-Contini and married to Calabresi. She was born actually in Milan, because her father, who was an early neurologist-- he studied with Charcot, the teacher of Freud, about the same time. He decided and much of it was bunk.

He inherited some money and kept up. He said someday, it will all be fine. And it's kind of nice because his great-grandchildren, one, my daughter is a psychiatrist, my brother's son is a neurologist professor at Johns Hopkins. So it's come round.

But he was in Milan at the time. But they were from Bologna. And the Finzi-Contini originally all came from Ferrara, but the family had transferred to Bologna quite early, and was a family that was responsible for much of the urban development of Bologna. They owned a good deal of the center of Bologna.

The kind of key figure in all this was a man named Leon Vita Finzi-Contini, who was born in 1776, and whose grave is in the Jewish cemetery in Bologna. He had many children by his first wife, who went in all different directions. Some

are very actively practicing Jews in Israel.

One, who is a relative in some other ways, a good friend, is a Professor of Economics in Turin. And some married Catholic nobles and became immensely rich. One of the great art collections in Italy is the Contini Bonacossi collection in Florence. And they are all descendants. They didn't always behave well, so that the family-- they--

In what way?

They had dealings with the Nazis and so on. And so the family sort of ignored them, but that was-- he then married a second wife. And we descend from his second wife. And-- but part of that is the reason why the name Finzi-Contini is one that gets used.

Well, that was-- of course, that's one of the questions that I was going to ask later, but I'll ask it now, is, of course, the movie that was ever so very popular, "In the Garden of the Finzi-Continis."

So let me first say something about my father.

Yes.

Well, one other thing about my mother's family-- her mother is of a family that claims to have been brought by Titus in his triumph in 70 Common Era. Cecil Roth says it's so. The Jewish Encyclopedia of 1900 says it's so.

When the Romans conquered a place, they tended to bring princes, kings, and so on in their triumphs. When they conquered Palestine, they brought judges, priests, and elders. We were the elders, Zekenim.

I'll tell you, I have-- I'm sorry to interrupt-- I have never met somebody who could trace his family back more than 200 years, never mind 2,000.

So they came as in the triumph. I must say, I haven't seen anybody. I went to the Arch of Titus. Nobody looks like my great uncle carrying a menorah, but there it is.

Anyway, they came as slaves originally, became tutors to the emperors, followed the emperors to Ravenna when the Western Empire went there, and when the empire fell around 500, moved nearby to a town of Lugo, where he set up shop as bankers, money lenders, and as rabbis of the Italian rite. Because we are Italian. We are not Sephardic. We're not Ashkenazi.

We are people who were here before the diaspora. And in Italy and in Israel-- there is a synagogue in Israel, which is the Italian one-- of this rite. And that was what our tradition was on both sides.

And so these people, who had all sorts of ups and downs, ultimately lent enough money to the Pope so that he gave them permission to practice their trade in Bologna. And I think the Pope's men by trade-- banking, money lending-- these people said, but we are teachers of law, because they were rabbis of the Italian rite. And so I don't know if it's true, but somehow, the legend is that the way we go into law teaching was because of this. Anyway--

So how did you learn of this?

Oh, this is all family tales and stories that have been-- and I just enjoy them. So anyway, that line is one which was very self-important, for obvious reasons. And my grandmother married my grandfather, who was of this very good family, with high intellectual traditions, and so on, and going back hundreds of years in itself, in Ferrara.

But that gave that name a certain connotation of elegance or something. I said to my mother-- my mother said, "aristocracy." I said, "Decadence." She said it's the same thing. And there it is. OK, now--

A child would say that to his mother.

Let me, then, take my father's family, because that deals with this book. My father's family, the Calabresi were, according to their tradition-- which isn't as proven as the other-- were traders in Rome in Republican time. That is even earlier.

Now, it is a fact that the largest number of people in Rome who were not Romans at the time of the Roman Republic, before Julius Caesar, before the Empire, and so on, were Jews, who were traders. There were about 15, 25-- different figures, but a significant number of people who were Jews trading. And the story in that side of the family is that they stayed there, and settled somewhere south of Rome-- where, we don't know.

In 1496, everything from Rome south was Spanish territory. And Jews were expelled in 1492 from Spain, 1496 from Spanish territory, Portugal and Spanish territory. Two people went from somewhere south of Rome to Ferrara.

And there is a document which says two people came from the Calabria. Today, Calabria is just the toe. But in Ferrara at the time, they called everything from Rome south "the Calabria." And said that two people came, bought lands, because Ferrara was very open to Jews. I'll show you some pictures [INAUDIBLE].

And because they came from the Calabria, there were two of them, we called them Calabresi, which means, "people from Calabria. Calabrese with an e, meaning "person," is quite a common name itself. Calabresi with an I is unusual. It isn't always just descendants of these two, but a lot are descendants of these two. And with an I, it often is Jewish. With an E-- not always, but often is-- with an E almost never.

The other line had many children and so on. We were down to none until my father was born. He was the only male of his generation. So my grandfather tried to see if these two were related. Then my father was born, and he lost interest.

Anyway, they came to Ferrara, joined the Italian Synagogue. There were in Ferrara a German, a Spanish, and an Italian, and they joined the Italian. But it wasn't because they were angry with the Spanish.

If you look at the ruins of the Spanish synagogue, you see signs of donations by Calabresi because they treated us so well when we were in their territory, so that they were Italian who had to be Sephardic when this was Spanish territory, got to Ferrara, found an Italian synagogue, and joined up in it, which gives some evidence that maybe the story that they went back is true. They married into another very, very old and very wealthy family of Ferrara, Minerbi, who are also-- and the family is all over. One of them, Sergio Minerbi, is in Israel and was the Ambassador of Israel to Europe and at one point, to the Vatican, which he didn't much like.

But anyway, this family is a major, major family, and had, and members of the family still do, had houses-- and I'll show you a map of Ferrara afterwards-- which go back to the 13th century. My father's first cousin and best friend was the patron of Bassani, the man who wrote the book from which the movie was taken. He helped him financially, and Bassani wrote the book-- that book and others-- he dedicated one to my cousin, but he wrote that book and others in that family house, in the library of that house. And he--

In the Minerbi family house?

In the Minerbi family house. And he told my father's cousin in the courtyards of this house, I'm writing a book, and I'm going to call it, "The Garden of the Finzi-Contini." Why did he pick my mother's name in my father's family's house? Nobody knows this, but I do.

Tell me.

And the story, I'm sure, is this-- his patron's younger sister, my father's first cousin--

And his father's first cousin's name was--

Giuseppe Minerbi, Beppe Minerbi. And as I say, he dedicated another book, The Heron to him and there are any

number of things about it. Beppe had a younger sister who married my mother's brother. They met at my parents' wedding, married.

So that it was not surprising that he would think, in this guy's house, of a younger, nearer his age, not his age, person named Finzi-Contini. And then the fact that Finzi-Contini connoted all sorts of things pleased him. Now--

Did he have to get permission?

The story-- well, the story is-- the story in the movie and so on-- isn't about us. I can tell you almost everything that happened, whom it happened to. And something happened to one, some happened to another, and so on. But it wasn't our story, with one possible interesting exception, but certainly not the Finzi-Contini.

Did he have to get permission? We thought that he had not. And my mother was kind of annoyed at that.

In the papers of my double cousin-- that is, this son of my mother's brother and my father's cousin, who died a couple of years ago, and who was my age, and very close-- we found a letter that he had not particularly seen, because he never talked about it, and he would have-- we've talked about the thing-- to his father, my uncle.

From Bassani?

From Bassani, saying, I'm writing a book, and I want to call it "The garden of the Finzi-Contini." I thought of you because of that. So that I am quite sure of a story-- nobody knows this, but it is so. And he sort of asked for permission. And that's how that came--

Did your mother-- did you find the-- were you able to tell your mother this?

No, my mother was long since dead. I just learned this two years ago when my cousin died. My mother made peace with Bassani. It was an interest-- it's another story, but it's really to the side, but--

Well, let's come-- I do want to discuss "The Garden of the Finzi-Continis" as a movie, as a work of art, as something that is--

And is also, as you know, because there are interesting questions about that Bassani himself didn't like the movie for certain reasons.

Oh, did he?

No. He pulled himself away. And then it's a reason, all which have to do with the treatment of Jews during that time. And so--

I'd like to talk about that, but let's leave that for later so that we make a distinction between what is truly your family's story.

That's right.

And then the taking of that story and sometimes twisting or changing.

Yes.

I must say I am awed to learn of such a history that goes back so many centuries, and that it would be known. I mean, there are many things that come to my mind as you're telling. Number one, that there would be enough factual knowledge to be able to support some of the stories that you hear. I mean, that is unusual in itself.

Yes.

And number two, that there is no assimilation, and yet--

No, there is no--

--no assimilation. We have two millennia.

Well, that is interesting, too, because at any number of times in the history of this Zekenim, Del Vecchio- [Di Lugo ?] family, you have first names that sound Catholic. And at other times, you have names that are nondescript, like Alexander, Cyrus, names that Jews who were assimilating had. And at other times, you have names which are clearly Jewish-- Isacco, Solomone, Abramo and so on.

So that I think it is clearly the case that at many times in the history of these families, some married Catholics, some assimilated, some came back. At times, it was done because it was useful. At times, it was done because people did.

But then there always was a pull back. And that's kind of interesting, because my-- another story, but my mother became Catholic and I was brought up Catholic. My wife is an old Yankee. My daughter, Bianca Finzi-Contini, reconverted.

To Judaism.

What?

To Judaism.

Yeah. And her daughter, Ginevra Finzi-Contini Gilmore is going to have her bat mitzvah this coming June. And the same is true of some branches in Italy. It's just a very complicated tale.

It is. And it is very different from both the history of Jews in other countries and their lives in these other countries.

Yes.

And their identities in these other countries.

Yes, which has something to do with what happened to us when we came here. But that's another--

Yeah, we'll come to it. So tell me, are we at noontime yet?

We're fine. No. OK, we have--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--they're going to tell us.

OK, so tell me a little bit about this. Let's start with some factual things. Your mother, did she have siblings?

She had three siblings. She was the eldest.

Bianca.

Then the second, Bruno Finzi-Contini was the one who married the Minerbi. The third, Marcella, married a man named Guido Tedeschi, who was of a very, very wealthy, old, very Jewish family of Bologna. And they ended up going to Brazil, and their story's another interesting story with why they went to Brazil, and it's part of our story of coming. And then a younger brother, Renato, who married a woman of a Sephardic family, but who also was in some other way a cousin, because there were many inter-cousins marriage. And their son is still alive and lives in Milan, and is a very

close friend.

OK, there was Bianca--

And my father's family instead were three. My father was the youngest. He had an older sister, Renata, who was one of the founders of clinical psychology. She fled to America, too.

Then Cecilia who-- neither were married. She stayed in Italy and looked after my grandmother, and did some quite courageous and remarkable things during the war. And after the war, she came and joined us. But both are buried in the Jewish cemetery in Ferrara.

And your father's name is--

Massimo.

Massimo. So he was the youngest of three.

Yeah.

And he had two elder sisters.

Yeah.

And your mother was the oldest of four.

Four. She had two younger brothers and one younger sister.

OK. Why is it that your mother-- was it herself or her parents who converted to Catholicism?

She converted. That's actually a very interesting story. She converted, and my father, who did not and who is interesting because I don't think practically ever set foot in a synagogue. He was not a believer in any way, but he wanted-- and we'll talk about that-- to be buried in the Jewish cemetery in Ferrara. And it's a complicated business.

But he would, I think, have been extremely upset if my mother had done what many, many people in her family and in all sorts of other families did, was to convert because of the racial laws, because he would have fought. He thought that was cowardly-- or done for financial reasons, which it was done. I'm not one to judge. Many people did that and so on.

My mother converted, I am quite sure, for a very odd reason. She was a highly intellectual woman-- PhD in Italy, PhD here, in some ways, a feminist-- not in a modern way, but a woman who-- and at some point, she decided she believed in God. And the problem was that all these ancient Italian Jewish families, pretty much all of them, were non practicing, nonbelievers.

I mean, we were Jewish because that was the great tradition. It was almost a snobbery. It was something we were very, very keen on and are still very, very keen on. But it was not a religious matter at all.

The people in Italy who were religious were all orthodox. Now, for a woman who thought herself liberated to be orthodox at that time-- we're talking 1920s and so on, '30s. That didn't fit. And so it's a little ironical today that she became Catholic because this was a way to practice. Because she didn't feel you could just be religious and not--

And not associated with something.

That's right.

And my father respected that in a way that he would not have respected-- he didn't like it, but he respected it. And the

interesting thing about her, as she became older and older, she said, as I get older, I become ever more Catholic and ever more Jewish.

Well, the foundations are the same. At the end of the day, this is the foundation of Western civilization.

That's right. And it's sort of interesting to me, that feeling. Now as I say, she had a Catholic grandmother whom she never knew, that is her father Finzi-Contini's mother, was a noble Catholic who died in childbirth with my grandfather. My great-grandfather remarried somebody who was Jewish. And my grandfather was brought up in this--

Jewish.

Well, Jewish without any practicing, but very conscious of his Jewish. So there was this Catholic, but that was not unusual, and for the reasons I said. There were always intermarriages and things.

You know, there are ironies that are abounding, because there is some assimilation. There is intermarriage. And yet there's still a distinct diversity that goes on for centuries.

That's exactly.

And it's sort of like you can't say the people are assimilated and you can't say they're not.

They are-- we have always thought of ourselves as being Italian, and we have always thought of ourselves as being Jewish. And we have never thought, even during times of persecution, that there was any fundamental conflict.

Your mother, then, had she converted before your birth?

No, after my birth.

After your birth. And do you know about when this was?

No, I don't exactly, 1930s, early '30s.

Before the racial laws.

Yes, definitely before the racial laws. And you say you were brought up Catholic? I was brought up Catholic, yeah.

And--

Well, I was not baptized until the racial laws.

So when you were six years old. That would be very unusual.

Yeah, five, six.

Years old, yeah, did you go to Communion? Did you go to catechism? Was this practicing?

Well, I am now a practicing Catholic-- and I am also very Jewish. But that didn't happen until college. As I was growing up, I was baptized. I never went to Communion, because my father-- no. So the two just kept saying, "Keep thinking about it."

My question is more did you-- what's the word? It's so basic. By "practicing," did you go every Sunday to mass?

I go every Sunday to mass.

When you were younger.

No, no.

No, so this is now?

Never, never, never, never, not until this happened when I was studying in England, a completely different [? everything. ?] But I was brought up with a mother who was religious, Catholic, very liberal.

There is a strain within Catholicism.

And very strongly conscious of her Jewish heritage. My father, non-practicing anything, but very conscious of his Jewish heritage, and very definitely not-- I insisted when I put my name in for the freshman, Guido Calabresi, son of Massimo Calabresi and Bianca Finzi-Contini because the name-- if it wasn't [? Faubourg ?] or the thing then-- but the name Finzi is a classic Italian Jewish name. So if anybody who knows anybody sees "Finzi," says Jewish, so I was conscious enough of that while being--

When you say when you put your name in--

In the yearbook, in the freshman yearbook, where you say who you are and what your parents. I could have put Massimo and Bianca Calabresi. But instead, I put--

And this would have been in the United States already.

In 1949. Yeah.

OK. Did you have brothers and sisters?

I had an older brother.

OK, his name?

His name is Paolo. In the United States, he used the name Paul, which is the English of it. I almost never-- when I was in high school, I sometimes used the name Guy, which is the English for Guido, but basically I never used it. My brother-- again has more to do with what happened when we first came-- in that sense, became slightly more conformist, and he was known as Paul. He became Chief of Medicine at Brown and was one of the founders of cancer chemotherapy.

Let's go back now to-- I mean, I may have more questions.

Yes, of course.

And you have more stories about family history, because it's just-- it truly, I'm not saying this-- it's fascinating.

Well, it is unusual, which is, yeah.

But let's go back to your early years. You say that you were born in Milan and that it was in an-- you were born at home, not in a hospital?

I was born at home. We were very wealthy and our house was a very elegant apartment. And then our house, as I say, is--

Now the Turkish--

Townhouse that-- and we had a great deal of help. My brother and I never thought of ourselves as being rich. You don't, children don't. And we had a wonderful nanny who came back to look after my children when we went on sabbatical for the first time.

And we lived what seemed to be a very ordinary life. Underneath, there was a tremendous struggle because my father, from the earliest days of fascism, had been an active antifascist. He was first beaten and jailed in 1924 when he was a student in Florence.

Studying what?

They were in Florence because my grandparents had moved from Ferrara to Florence. They had moved from Ferrara to Florence because my grandfather Calabresi, who was an industrialist, was a very powerful man. His wife, Minerbi, was probably the wealthiest family in Ferrara, certainly the wealthiest Jewish family in Ferrara, great landowners. They owned huge amounts of land.

To the fascists in a small town like Ferrara, having this pair who were fiercely antifascist was too dangerous. And so they said, out of here. You can go anywhere in Italy you want, but not in Ferrara. And if you come back to Ferrara, we jail you.

So my grandparents moved to Florence. And there is, my oral historian found, a letter from the fascist prefect in Ferrara to the fascist prefect in Florence. "You have gotten yourself a real headache, because Ettore Calabresi," my grandfather's name, "likes to talk, causes trouble, has the means to support his trouble, and he's going to cause you"-- my grandfather went away.

My father became actively antifascist and part of a small group of democrats, with a small D, who were antifascists. They didn't belong to any ism. He helped distribute the first underground newspaper, "non Mollare", don't give up, was called justice and liberty, "Giustizia e liberta." And on his grave, it says in Italian, "Faithful to justice and liberty," which is a pun, both--

He was, as I say, was very, very active. When it came clear that Mussolini wouldn't fall, that they couldn't bring them down, in the late '20s, early '30s, my father wanted to leave.

Italy.

Yeah. My grandfather was a patriot of the old school, and said, "One doesn't leave one's country. One stays and fights." And so we stayed.

In the fall of 1937, my grandfather died of natural causes. That same summer, slightly before, the two brothers who had become heads of this small group of antifascists-- they were named Roselli, and everywhere in Italy, you'll find a square or a boulevard named Fratelli Roselli, Roselli Brothers-- were murdered by the fascists. And they were my father's closest friends, and my aunt, the one who came with us-- very close friends.

My father said, it's getting too close. And with his father dying, he didn't feel an obligation to stay. So in 1937, before the racial laws, my father decided that we would leave. But that was not easy because you couldn't leave.

Let's get to that in a minute. You say he was beaten up in the early '20s.

Yes. Do the circumstances?

Oh, I know the circumstances very well. I've told it in some commencement talks. One of my commencement talks at Connecticut College many years ago is listed in the best 10 commencement talks, it's published somewhere, because it was choices. And one of the stories is how my father chose to become an active antifascist.

And I asked him, and he said, "Everybody talks about the banality of evil. No one talks about the banality of good. It is

equally."

Now, here's how it happened-- "I was a student at the University of Florence because we had moved to Florence. And the fascists had kicked out the president of the university, because he was very strong and tough."

And you're talking now in your father's voice. Massimo was saying, "I was in--

That's right. This is 1924, '23, '24, something like that, '24. And they kicked out the president, and my father said, "And they put in his place one of our teachers, Professor of Anatomy and Physiology or something. Was a nice man, we liked, and wasn't particularly fashionable, but was weak. He was installed and he was our teacher, so we went to the installation.

And he gave a speech. And fine, and we applauded. And then the fascist Minister of Education got up and gave a horrible speech, saying, "You'll do this, you'll do that, you'll do the other, just horrible." You can imagine.

And he stopped in the, middle as politicians will do for applause, and my father said, "I didn't applaud," and said, "a couple of us didn't applaud. We didn't hiss or boo. We were much too well brought up to do anything like that, but we just didn't applaud. Then somebody behind me said, the next time he stops you'd better applaud, because there are some goons at the back who are taking the names of those who are not applauding."

My father said, "I was 21 years old. If somebody had told me that if I went and didn't applaud, I'd get into trouble, I probably would have stayed home, or I might even have gone and applauded. But here, I didn't applaud and now somebody told me I had to applaud. I couldn't do it.

So I didn't applaud the next time and when we left. We got picked up and beaten up." And I said, "What happened then?"

He said, "We went to wash." And I said, "Why?" He said, "We didn't want to go home-- people lived at home when they were going to the university-- and show ourselves bloody to scare our parents. They would've been frightened."

And I said, "Where did you wash?" "Well, there was a fountain right there and so we washed there." And so I said, "Did you wash there to show you had been beaten up?" And he said, "I don't think so, no."

He became a little-- "but we washed there, and the fascists thought that we did. And so they picked us up again, and beat us up again, and tossed us into jail. And so at that point, I was an active antifascist. That was it."

And he then did other things. On the anniversary he and my aunts-- and this has been written up recently-- on the anniversary of the murder of the leader of the antifascist Matteotti and the first anniversary, they went and put a big crown of flowers on Garibaldi's memorial. A thing of the fascists picked him up again, and tossed him in jail. And that's how that happened.

So in some ways, they made him an antifascist.

Yes.

He had the inclination.

He said, there were many people who were antifascist, but the difference was between those who became actively-- and that became that. Now, again, in terms of choices and non-choices, which is what I say in that, fast forward to 1963 and the March on Washington with Martin Luther King. I had been planning to go.

And then I got frightened because now, everybody thinks of it as a Sunday School picnic. But at the time, there were bombings in Alabama, Congress fled town, and everybody was scared. And I had a one-year-old child, Bianca, Jonathan's wife. And I thought gee, the march will take place. It doesn't really need me.

And so during the week before the March, I'm talking to my father on to phone, and he said in passing, "Oh, I'm going to Washington this weekend." And I said, "Why?" And he said, "I'm going to the March."

And I thought of him as being very old. He was maybe 20 years younger than I am now, but you know how kids are. And I said, "But it may be dangerous." And he said, "I'm going." And I said, "Well, then, I'll go with you." And he said, "I thought you would."

And of course, we went together, and it was a tremendous experience for me to be there as part of that wonderful event, not so much for speeches no one talks of, but just walking with thousands of people holding hands and so on. And it made a big difference for me. And I know that my father was creating a non-choice for me as he had done.

Wow. Wonderful topic for young college students, graduates, because it's the same age that they are.

Yup.

It is in essence, a small step, and what that small step of non-applauding--

That's right.

--truly meant.

It could be a small step, which then leads. And if you then are true to yourself-- so as I say, we were living in Milan, well, but there was this. And we were trying to get out.

And the story is-- and I don't know it. This is more hearsay that what happened was that it was illegal to leave Italy permanently. Fascist, dictatorial countries don't want people to leave.

But you could get out if you had a fellowship for a year, or a term, or something of that sort. And that a man in Turin who was a professor of I think physiology or something, but much older than my father, named [? Palm ?] Ginzburg, Natalia Ginzburg's father, the father of the author.

Natalia Ginzburg from the Soviet Union Ginzburg?

No, no, Natalia Ginzburg, who is the author of some books called *Lexico Familiar*. Very--

Different Italian.

Yeah. He was quite a well-known professor and had friends in the United States. And he got a foundation, the Dazian Foundation connected with Beth Israel, with the head of the Beth Israel, to give some money to Yale to invite my father to come for a fellowship.

Now, we hadn't asked you yet, when you were born, what was your father doing? What was your father's profession?

My father was a cardiologist and he had studied in Florence and then had moved to Milan where the head of medicine was a man named [PERSONAL NAME] Bianchi, who was actually very Catholic, very friend of the Pope Pius the 11th, and very antifascist, and had gathered a group of people around him who were antifascist. And my father was his right hand and an Associate Professor of Cardiology there.

The story of the Pope is that the Pope died the day before he would have issued an encyclical. There's a book about that-- an encyclical with burning sorrow, excommunicating Mussolini and declaring that Hitler was a pagan because of the racial laws. And he died the night before.

Wow, is that encyclical still written? Available?

It never got out. Probably Oliver La Farge here had something-- a great deal to do with it. He was a man who did much interracial things. The new pope, of course, was Pius the XII, who issued the encyclical under the same name, but did nothing.

My father actually was called-- the Pope was from Milan and was friends of this guy in Milan. And months before he died, he didn't trust his Roman doctors, and he had my father, actually, go. He wanted this guy who was my father's chief, who was his friend, but he had heart trouble. And so my father was the one who went down.

The New York Times reported a week or two later that he had been seen by this great Milanese cardiologist, and then gave the name of my father's chief. Because in the interim, the racial laws had been passed, and so my father became a non-being. But it was my father who saw him, and said he was very ill, but then he lived some more time.

And how he died, you know, who knows.

Oh, my.

So.

Your mother was also involved in antifascist activities. Is that so?

My mother was-- she was very much with my father in these things and very much agreed with him in it. Many members of the family were quieter.

Can we stop for a second?

It's noon.

It's noon time. OK, so before the break, we were talking about those early--

Antifascist times.

Your father, in particular-- his desire to leave Italy, his active antifascist activity, your mother joining him in those activities. And as things are building, to be able to leave his own father's death and so-- at this point, I want to kind of turn this story to a very personal perspective and that is you as a little boy.

Yes.

And growing up in Milan, what some of your earliest memories are. And I'll ask more questions from there.

Yeah, so my memories of growing up in Milan are memories of a quiet childhood, going to school there, going on vacation often. Vacation was a kind of complicated thing for families like ours. In July, one went to the seashore for a month. In August, one went to the mountains. And in September, when I went to, in this case, my mother's parents' villa outside Bologna.

And a father of a family would join you on weekends. And on the month that he took vacation, my father, being a mountain climber, would join us in August, when we usually would go in the Dolomites, sometimes the [? Valdo, ?] but usually the Dolomites. And almost always the whole family would manage to go-- cousins aunts, uncles-- to the same place.

And arranging where you went-- you would rent houses in some place on the shore and everybody would go there. And one year, you'd be in the Adriatic, another in the Turinian and that would be that. And I have many, many memories of these times, both in the mountains, and photographs of us in the mountains and in the seashore, and all of those things with my cousins.

And we were all very calm because my parents, though actively antifascist, did not make a point of saying this to us, especially because my father was determined to leave, and he thought there would be time enough to talk about those things. But anything of that sort that was told to us might make it, in fact, even more difficult. So we grew up and went to school-- public school, because in Italy, everybody went to public school unless you were you either very stupid or totally bigoted. But you just didn't go to any other kind of school.

There was an event which says something about the underlying life. Sometime during my first grade, which would be 1938, I guess, there was a large funeral of some fascist bigwig. And the fascists wanted everybody, all the children in schools, to march in the funeral parade in uniform, because we were all supposed to march in uniform and do all things in uniform and things.

And my older brother, who was in third grade, at an age when they already marched with rifles, with guns.

Really, like 8 and 9-year-old boys.

Yes, which may say something about my attitude about guns-- and said, we're not going to march. This is ridiculous. Children with guns shouldn't march. This is all so-- where he got that, I do not know.

He told his teachers?

He told me that we were not going to march. I said fine, because he was my older brother. I always did what he wanted. And I said, how are we going to get out of it?

He said, we're going to say that our uniforms are being washed and we can't afford to have two sets. Of course, it was ridiculous. But we didn't know that.

And we insisted. And we did not march, with the result that I got that term the only failing grade I have ever gotten. I failed fascist behavior-- comportamento fascista, and it's right there on my report card.

If there is a badge of honor, there it is.

There it is. So this is by way of saying that there was this funny, underlying kind of a thing-- that we may have known more, or at least my brother who was just 8, 9-- he was two and a half years older than I, 8 at that time-- that we kind of were there. And now, you asked, and we were talking about Ferrara and the house there, I have no recollection of going to that house.

The house that belonged to your--

To my father's first cousin. At that time, it belonged to his uncle, my grandmother's brother. And I was thinking about that because I remember very well being at my mother's parents' villa outside of Bologna. I remember very well Florence, where we would always go in the spring for Pasqua, Easter.

Pesach-- I don't know. I mean, we didn't celebrate either. I mean, my grandparents didn't celebrate either. But it was that time of year and it's interesting that the world for Easter in Italian is Pasqua, which is both Pesach and Easter and that.

And we would always go over, and Florence was in flower by then, while Milan was likely to be foggy. So my memories of going to my grandparents in Florence, and they had a wonderful garden, and the gardeners were marvelous people, and played with us, and so on. So these are wonderful memories of the house, the story during the war how it survived and didn't, and so on-- all of that.

But I have no memory of going to the house in Ferrara or to seeing that. And I was thinking about that just now, and the answer is quite obvious-- my grandparents were prohibited from going there by the fascists. So of course, I didn't go. They didn't go back to Ferrara

Because they had been kicked out.

Because they had been kicked out and so of course, we didn't either. Now, maybe my father went to see his cousin and so on, but this was not a place, even though it was this family site. And my father's family-- my mother's family was in Bologna, but we didn't go there, I'm quite sure, because my grandfather couldn't go there.

And I do know that once he went, because there was a funeral of a friend and he thought he snuck in, and they arrested him. We were rich enough so that none of that mattered. You could always buy your way out and that. But I think the answer about why I didn't really focus on Ferrara until after the war is because my branch had been exiled from there.

But there was other branches of the family that could say--

Of course, because they--

They weren't as wealthy.

They were wealthy, they were there, and they were, of course, mildly antifascist. They were antifascist, but they were not in trouble in the way my father and my grandfather were. The story is told that this cousin, who came to own these lands with a cousin in whose house, then, "The Garden" was written, the son of the then proprietor, but who already had studied agriculture because he was managing all these lands, which were--

Let's remind us of his name.

Beppe Minerbi. The story is told, my father told me, that in the 1930s there was a prize given by the fascists for the greatest increase in-- I think it was wheat production. He had studied agriculture and wanted to put in modern methods and so on, and was able to convince his farmers to go along with doing these-- they wanted to do things in traditional ways and he wanted to do that-- by promising them that if they won the prize, he would give it to them.

They won the prize. And at that point, the fascists said you are to give the prize to the Fascist Party as a sign of solidarity. He had always been philosophically antifascist, but hadn't done-- he had always argued with my father my father shouldn't have gotten into trouble.

He, stubborn, says, look-- I promised the prize to my farmers. I'm giving the prize to my farmers. I'm perfectly happy to give you some money, but the prize goes to the farmers.

The fascists said, no, the prize you have to give to the Fascist Party as a symbol of that. At that point, he refused, and at that point, they beat him up. That was just an isolated incident, but it shows both how most people were kind of going along, even if they were antifascist, in a mild way.

And so that's what the people who were in Ferrara did. They were antifascist, but they weren't going to get into trouble. On the other hand, at that point he got into trouble-- not permanent trouble, but because of that.

But I also want to point at the point where your father had said, "I am not going to applaud." Your uncle, he would have been your great uncle, Beppe.

Beppe was his cousin.

It was his cousin, so he would have been your--

He's a cousin, first cousin.

He's cousin for you.

He was the son of my great uncle and he was in Ferrara. He was studying in Ferrara.

But for him, too, it's a point of, in some ways, of honor-- that he had made a promise and he wanted to keep that promise.

Right. And that happened many, many years later. But it would have been, had that happened earlier, something which could have led him to be like my father. As it happened, this was in the '30s.

And then the next thing that happens is, as we are desperately trying to get out, and I'm told that we had this offer of this fellowship from Yale, but the fascists were not anxious to have people who were so articulate as my parents-- both were-- come and tell people here what things were like. Because Mussolini was saying he made the trains run on time-- all nonsense, all nonsense because for instance, he came and opened the great new hospital that my father's chief had gotten money for. It was all antifascists, but Mussolini came and opened it and all the newspapers said that.

So they didn't want people here to say what it was really like. And so the story is that when our application for a temporary visa to go for a term, which should have been granted, somebody was told, "Every time it comes to the top of a pile, put it at the bottom." Fortunately, bureaucrats don't rip up paper. So it got put at the bottom.

This being Italy, we also had somebody in that office who was told, "Every time it goes to the bottom, move it near the top." Neither of these people-- this person didn't have the stamp. Finally, one day, the guy who was supposed to put it at the bottom wasn't there. And the guy, our guy, had put it near the top, and the guy who was stamping was just stamping.

So we got permission, but by this time it was into late 1938 and everything had changed, because the racial laws had been passed. So at that point, we really didn't even need that because we could be kicked out. But the importance of the fellowship is that it gave us a way of coming into the United States, because United States wasn't accepting people.

Now, did your parents ever tell you about any experiences they might have had with the US officials in Italy, to be able to come to the US?

We were never told that. I do know that with this invitation to go, my father went and gave a lecture in Brussels, and got, at the American consulate there, immigration papers. Because we had this invitation of a fellowship and we had gotten somebody who had had business dealings with one of my grandparents to sign an affidavit.

There's a story about that, because that person thought that we would never need money because we were very wealthy. And they expected that we had money abroad. But both my grandparents were, as I said, patriots of the old school and they had no money abroad.

Everything was in Italy.

Everything was in Italy because that was the law and they abided by it, even though they were antifascist. But these persons-- and it's interesting, there's a long-term story about that about when we arrived-- had signed the affidavit. So with that, since the Italian quota was not being met, because you couldn't leave Italy unless you were Jewish or being kicked out. So it was relatively easy for us, with this invitation and with these, to get permission from the Americans. So we left Italy as if we were going for a term and came to America, when we landed as if we were with regular immigration papers.

OK, I'm going to step back a little bit. If I understood you correctly, you were saying according to, let's say, the Italian bureaucracy, you were leaving temporarily for just a term. According to the American bureaucracy, you were immigrating to the country.

Because we had both kinds of papers.

Now somewhere, I read that your leaving Italy was not such a straightforward thing, either, that it was one ship and then another ship.

Yes. What happened was that my mother's parents were very much against our leaving. They thought even though the racial laws had been passed, they thought that everything would be OK. And in some ways, things were difficult, especially if you weren't wealthy. If you were really wealthy, nothing very much happened until 1943, when Italy surrendered and the Germans came in.

I'm going to interrupt here. I'm sorry to do that. But before we proceed with the story, there are going to be people who don't know what the racial laws were and what year they were passed.

In 1938, at the end of 1938, Mussolini, who had previously not been particularly with Hitler-- at one point, he had sent troops to the Austrian border to keep Hitler from moving into Austria-- but had decided to side with Hitler. And there had been people around him who were anti-Semitic. But anyway, not so much from his point of view-- he was a nasty man, but going along with Hitler, passed laws restricting Jews in any number of dramatic ways.

On the face of them, they were absolutely catastrophic and some things hit directly. For instance, you couldn't teach in universities or anyplace else. And so my father and my aunt were immediately kicked out of their positions as professors.

This is your aunt who taught psychology?

This is my aunt who taught psychology, and so in that, you also were not allowed, supposedly, to have help of anybody who was Catholic. But of course, some of the help you'd always had would stay on. And you also got help of somebody-- we had a French governess who was a Protestant. We didn't realize what that meant, but there it was, if you were wealthy enough.

You supposedly could not hold properties of certain sorts, and more than a certain amount. And I'll have more to say about that, how that was avoided. And you also were not supposed to go to school, to the public schools.

So these were draconic laws and they had an effect on any number of people and created anti-Semitism, which by and large in Italy, had not been. There had been some church anti-Semitism and some church philo-Semitism. There were people in the Catholic church who were very pro Jews and all the complications.

But these laws were passed and at that point, any number of things happened. As to schools, the Catholic schools, Jesuit schools, were open. They were private schools. So that many of my cousins went to a Jesuit school, because they weren't the public schools.

What about you and your brother?

That year, we were still in public schools. So in 1938, we were still in public school. The matter is more complicated because-- and this is something I hadn't really realized, but it explained some things that my oral historian found-- that in the Italian racial laws, who was not considered Jewish for certain purposes, including owning of property, was a very complicated matter, unlike Germany where if you had Jewish blood-- end of it.

If you were the product of a mixed marriage and were Christian, you were considered Christian for purposes of owning property. And you could continue owning property. Now, there might be difficulties in some, but you could. My mother's father was born of a Catholic mother who died when he was born.

In childbirth.

At that point, he converted to Catholicism with the help of a Dominican who was very antifascist.

So as a grown man, he converted.

As a grown man in 1938, with the help of a man who was a very important Dominican, fiercely antifascist, fought with

the partisans later. His name was Padre Casati. I knew him. I met him after a war. He was a great man.

My grandfather converted and told everybody in his family, all the Finzi-Contini and their relatives, to convert because if he converted, he was a Christian for purposes of racial laws. He then married in this ancient, ancient Jewish family, but that was a mixed marriage. So their children, if they were Catholic, were also Christian in terms of being able to own property. So all of these people in my mother's family were able to own property.

Did they all convert after he did?

They all converted. Some converted and it took and they remained Catholic. Some converted and they didn't, because they were just converting for the purposes. My grandfather actually, because of this memory of his mother, whom he never knew, I think actually converted. He died in 1941.

Of natural causes?

Of natural causes, of cancer. But that meant that the properties remained in our names in that side of the family. On my father's side of the family, the Calabresi, there was my father and my two aunts, none of whom, my two aunts were not married. My father was married to my mother.

And it's at that point, only at that point, that my brother and I are baptized. And if I think about it, we were baptized because my mother thought it was a good idea at that point. And my father couldn't [INAUDIBLE], but partly because my grandfather was saying, this way they will be able to own property. Because again, half, half, half, half, but it continues to go all the way through.

On the Minerbi side, it happened that my great uncle had two sons and two daughters.

So Beppe?

Beppe, his older brother Giulio, oldest daughter Ginevra, and youngest daughter Fernanda-- Beppe and Giulio each had married Catholic women. Fernanda, the youngest, had married my mother's brother, who through this series of tricks was also Catholic. Their granddaughter, two of them have converted back to Judaism and so it's all--

It gets confusing.

It gets confusing. Ginevra had no children. Great uncle, who owned all these lands and properties, gives them all to his grandchildren. Why to his grandchildren? Because they nominally could be Christian for purposes of this.

Now in fact, there were any number of pressures and things. And of course, none of this matters after 1943 when the Germans come in. But it was a situation in which it looked as though if you wanted to, and were rich enough, you could survive despite these horrible racial laws.

Survive and still keep some of your assets.

Keep your assets, be able to study. My father couldn't-- and his sister, who even if they converted would do no good, because of course racially, they didn't have a Catholic ancestor, but anyway, they wouldn't because they didn't want to-- couldn't teach. So there were all sorts of restrictions and they were horrible.

On the other hand, my mother's parents thought we'd be able-- who knows how long this will last? Administrations come and go. And in the meantime, we're able to continue to hold our properties and do these things. So they didn't want us to leave.

It lends logic to their point of view.

Of course, completely logical. This is our country. We live well. You want to go someplace where you go without a

penny, because it was against the law-- I have always said, "Under penalty of death." It wasn't penalty of death. It was just people who were caught get killed-- but go some strange place like that.

So my mother and father agree that my father will come to America and to Yale, and see if one can really live in this country. And we will follow after he's been here two or three months and seen whether it is possible. My grandparents, they had no choice in the matter [INAUDIBLE]. But that was my mother, kind of.

What happens is that by now, it is August of 1939. That much time has passed between finally getting permission, getting things, getting the American things, everything else. My father supposedly is sailing from Genoa, on the ship called the Conte di Savoia, which was the second of the great Italian ocean liners. My mother is seeing him off.

In Genoa.

In Genoa. My brother and I are at Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Dolomites. It's a great resort there, near the Austrian border, with my mother's parents.

I've gone to bed and I actually said a prayer, having just been baptized, just [INAUDIBLE]

Do you remember your baptism?

I remember, yeah, I remember. It was Don Angelo. It was a country priest near my mother's family's villa outside of Bologna. And this was arranged by this great Padre Casati, but it was just a local priest who talked to my brother and me a little bit and we were baptised. We didn't quite know what that meant, but enough.

And so for my father, who was sailing off, the telephone rings and it's my mother, who says, "The ship didn't sail. They say it's engine trouble and it might sail tomorrow. Somebody in Rome has told us that war is breaking out. If the ship sails and war is breaking out, we can't afford to be separated so bring the children. If the ship sails we, leave tomorrow all together.

So your mother gets this phone call from Rome.

The ship didn't sail. She called somebody in Rome or my father called somebody in Rome, found out what was going on, told her parents, bring the children. We may sail tomorrow.

Wow.

My mother goes back to Milan that day, tells the maids, "Put everything that is in the wardrobe rooms in trunks because we're leaving." My father, since you couldn't bring money out, had shirts and things-- clothes-- made that would last him. He didn't buy a shirt for 15 years. You couldn't bring money out, but at least-- so he wouldn't-- so he had all his clothes.

Our clothes, no, everything in wardrobe rooms gets dumped into trunks. And what was in wardrobe rooms wasn't what you would use every day. So we found our diapers there, which were made into sheets for examining beds for my father here, because you couldn't--

Anyway, and my grandparents are told to bring Paul and me to Genoa. I remember the trip perfectly because we couldn't get a sleeper.

You were going by train, yes.

We took the train. I mean, my grandfather had a chauffeur, but he wouldn't have had him up in the mountains. He had a chauffeur at his villa and there.

So we with our nanny, this same nanny who had been with us, and so we are all in this first-class carriage. And I

thought that was wonderful, because families like ours, parents went first class, the nanny and the children went second class-- not third class, but so that they wouldn't bother people in first class. This was the way it was done-- polite, children, [INAUDIBLE].

And so I loved these very thick, red velvet cushions and things, and all excited because we were going to America. We didn't know what that was, but my brother and I, we were going to America. My mother's parents are sitting there with their hands on their canes, looking like death, because their daughter was leaving and they didn't know if they would ever see her again.

In fact, my grandfather died-- it was an interesting story about that-- and she never saw him when we left again. My grandmother survived. And so we get to Genoa with our nanny trying to keep us going, and the ship didn't sail.

The second ship.

The same ship that was supposed to ship, sail, it didn't [INAUDIBLE] It wasn't engine trouble at all. So what do you do then?

You don't go back to Cortina, which is on the Austrian now German border. Don't go back to Milan, because if war actually comes, it's likely to be bombed. And in fact, when war did finally come, all our furniture was in a warehouse and magnificent furniture was all hit by a bomb. End of that. And our house was damaged and other things like that.

Where do you go? Well, you go to a country villa outside of Bologna, my mother's parents'. So my mother's parents, my mother, and I, my brother, all go to this place outside Bologna.

And about what kind of distance between that and Genoa would it have been?

Between Boston and Philadelphia, or something like that.

OK, good, four, five hours,

Something like that.

Yeah, long time. So we go there. My father goes back to Milan to see if there's some other way of getting out. And there are many kinds of--

And all of this is August 1939.

This is August '39, end of August '39, and all sorts of backs and forth. We get a call. The American ship, the President Monroe, is coming to pick up American nationals, as happens when war is about to break out. They are so crowded that they need an extra ship's doctor. "I volunteered and they've taken me on with my family."

That's your father saying that.

Yeah. "Get ready to go." Next call, they found a doctor who doesn't have a family. So it's not me. At one point-- by now, it's early September, I think, or very end of August, I don't know the exact date.

September 1st.

I'm listening on an earphone phone radio, and I hear that the Rex, R-E-X, King, the ship that appears in the movie *Amarcord* in the distance, this great ship of the Italian lines that had won the blue ribbon for going across fastest, is sailing on September 8. The reason is that war has broken out, but Italy has decided not to join. Italy has decided not to go into the war. They don't go into war until June of 1940, when they attack France. "The hand," Roosevelt says, "that has held the dagger has plunged it into the back of its friend."

So Italy is not joining. The ship is sailing. I turn to say this to my mother in this wonderful villa, which-- my grandfather was old-fashioned-- had all things lit by lamps, kerosene lamps, all these lights flashing. I turn to say to her [INAUDIBLE] scene totally in mind, and the phone rings before I can say.

It's my father calling from Milan saying that he has tickets on that ship. He had heard before and had already gotten it. That day, the trunks arrive--

With the diapers.

With the diapers and everything else. So we turned right around, unopened, go to Genoa. And on the 8th of September, leave, all four of us on the ship.

But what a nerve-wracking month it must have been.

My grandparents, my mother's parents, remained there and we go off. We land eight days later-- one day to Naples, and then across-- on September 16, 1939, a Saturday, having had a wonderful trip because--

I want to hear about it.

Well, the trip was this fancy ship and we were doing all sorts of fun things. And my brother, who is more of a packrat, kept all the things from the captain so that on anniversaries, he'd bring them out from the captain's table, and all the stuff, and how much we did one day, and everything else, and all of which was wonderful, and land in New York. One problem-- because we didn't think we were going to get out, my father cables Yale and says, I'm coming second semester. So we arrive without a fellowship.

So this is September '39, first semester.

Yeah, was when he was planning to go and see if you could live, and then we would join him.

Didn't happen.

It didn't happen. The fellowship doesn't begin till January. And Yale is not interested at all in being helpful. I'll have more to say about that. So that we arrive on a Saturday in New York without a penny.

Oh, my.

And the fellowship not to begin.

I want to interrupt at this point and specifically at this point, because there's a lot to say about the American part of the story.

Yeah.

Before we do that, though, I'd like to go back to Italy and talk about the relatives who stayed and then what happened to them.

Yes. So let's go back and notice that almost everybody stayed.

Yes.

Not everybody-- my mother's sister left before we did. Why? She was married to a man named Guido Tedeschi. There are any number of people named Guido Tedeschi, but this Guido Tedeschi was of a family that was even-- well in Bologna, which was a bigger city, and they were very, very fancy. They were among the wealthiest people there.

Their family owned the palace that had belonged to the great Enlightenment Pope from Bologna-- they still own it, I think-- Benedict the 13th, 14th, some Benedict. And they had been admirals, and diplomats, and all sorts of things like that.

My aunt's husband's father, as a young diplomat, had been Consul General of Italy in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the head where all the Italian community and finances were-- wonderful position for a young man. And so my uncle, my aunt's husband, grew up in Brazil with this diplomatic family.

Can you tell me, Tedeschi, is that a Jewish family or not?

Jewish, Jewish.

OK. So he could join the diplomatic [INTERPOSING VOICES]

Yes, all this-- I mean, at that time, before this, Jews in Italy-- after the unification of Italy, Jews were totally everywhere. If you go to Lake Como and you see the founding of the great yacht club, the first name is this great noble family. The second name is a name that is [? Levy ?] somebody [INAUDIBLE] who is clearly Jewish.

The first mayor of Rome after the unification of Italy is somebody named Nathan, actually related to the Roselli brothers whom I talked about before. The Chief Justice of Italy, of the Court of Cassation in the early days of fascism, is a man named Mortara, who is Jewish, who tries to use what in America would be judicial review to strike down fascist decrees, but there is no tradition of it. And so it fails.

And Jews, if they were of great families, were all over. And this one was a particularly old and very, very fancy. Tedeschi, by the way, suggests Ashkenazi, because Tedeschi means German, means Deutsch. It's the name Ashkenazi, so if you see somebody, the name Tedeschi often is Jewish in Italy, and it meant Deutsch Ashkenazi. His mother's family, instead, was Italian, and very fancy.

Anyway, he grows up in Brazil. His father dies young while there, so they return to Italy. They return to Italy. He meets my mother's sister-- perfect marriage, right kind of families and so on, and they get married.

He's a chemist. And she is mildly actively antifascist. He is not. He is of this family that was too conservative and so. Come the racial laws, he's insulted.

He's simply insulted by this. And he says, why should I stay here? I have all my friends in Brazil whom I grew up with, when his father was, in effect, the head of a community there, of the whole Italian financial community in Sao Paulo, which is the center of Italian business. And so he and his wife, my aunt, and two sons go off to Brazil.

And this would be in early '39?

'38.

Still '38?

Almost immediately, '38, maybe beginning of '39, but almost immediately. For him, it's not an issue of anything else. The moment there are racial laws, he has all these friends there, any number of ways. Goes, and that family has lived in Brazil ever since.

So that's mama's one sister.

One sister.

What about--

Her brothers, of course, stay. There's no reason for them to leave. The only other person to leave is a cousin on the side of my mother's mother, this ancient, ancient line whose uncle, double first cousin of my grandmother-- two brothers had married two sisters-- was the great law professor in Italy, professor, dean, president of Rome University, the greatest law library in the world, a fascist-- the only fascist in the family. He actually was Minister of Education for a short time. The family ostracizes him.

What is his name?

His name is Giorgio Del Vecchio, Del Vecchio meaning Zekanim. And he was this great figure, still is. His books are all over Catholic universities, and so on. Roscoe Pound, the great Dean of Harvard, adored him because he was a functionalist.

He made the law do what was needed now. Why? Because he was a fascist. All the antifascists were formalist, using the law can't be changed to block this.

So Roscoe Pound makes him a member of the American Academy and so on. This guy, by the way, come 1943 is so famous that he just walks into the Vatican and is fine. That's how he is saved. But he was this great figure.

His nephew, a brilliant young professor, already a full professor, says, we have lived off this snobbery for 2,000 years. It has come home to roost. He's in opposition to his uncle. I am going to Palestine.

And he does?

And he does. And he goes there, and he becomes a founder in 1948 of the Hebrew University Law school and the teacher of everybody there-- Aharon Barak, Yitzhak Englard, and so on.

What was his name?

Also, strangely enough, Guido Tedeschi-- God Tedeschi, because his father was Ashkenazim and his mother was Del Vecchio. And the story of how he lived there is interesting because he had to discover-- there was no university for him to teach-- he had to discover some Sephardic ancestor. Because there was a fellowship given to Sephardics. And he finds one on his mother's side, Eva Zamorani, and whose family started the first newspaper in Italy, my relatives, too.

And anyway, I have it very much in mind because just two weeks ago, I was in Italy. And one of the things that was going on in Italy was a great celebration of this man, the 110 anniversary of his birth, with all the people from Israel, Englard, all these people coming who are his students, and all the people in Italy celebrating this great scholar who had gone. So he left.

But he was a cousin, a double second cousin, but cousin. My aunt left and went to Brazil. And we went to America, mainly because we were antifascist. Everybody else stayed.

What happened to them?

Everybody survived.

How?

That is a series of stories, which is the book that I am writing. And the stories are wonderful. And they are interesting in themselves.

But the most interesting part of them are the motives of the people who save them, in many instances risking their lives to save them. And the people who save them ranged from the poorest peasants, who didn't even know them, to in some instances, to the wealthiest grandees, everything in between. People did things in Italy, which they did nowhere else.

Now, I don't mean to say there weren't some people who were terrible and did other things. I'm just telling the story of my family. And every single blood relative of mine was saved.

The family of Montini who became Pope Paul VI saved one branch. They did it-- why? And that's the interesting thing of this book-- what were the motives?

Sometimes it was sheer humanity. Sometimes it was friendship, because we were friends. Sometimes it was gratitude, because we had done things for them. Sometimes it was fame, respect for fame, sometimes motives unknown.

But every one them-- I told you of the fascist, great scholar, and so on, who walks into the Vatican-- which was not open to saving Jews. But he walks in, perfectly fine, continues his studies there. His double first cousin, my great uncle, who had been president of the Bocconi University of Milan, economist Gustavo Del Vecchio great economist, kicked out by the fascists because he was antifascist. And he, with his sister who had a house on Lake Como, gets in a boat and goes to Switzerland.

Switzerland is not open any more than the Vatican is. He gets off. The Swiss guard's ready to send him back he takes out a letter from Einaudi, who later becomes President of Italy and was his great pal, who is teaching at Zurich, inviting him to teach at Zurich.

The Swiss guards salute, send for a limousine, and he gets taken there-- exactly the same thing as the other one, as his double cousin. This guy's antifascist. After the war, he comes back, becomes a cabinet minister in a post-war government. When one is up, the other's down. Analogous thing of how they were saved-- funny.

Others just-- and I'll tell you just one story-- there are others that are more dramatic, but long. My great grandmother, my mother's mother's mother, a remarkable woman whom I remember well because she was old but alive before we left, and who may have been the only one in the family who in some way had some element of practicing Judaism. She would not convert when everybody else converted.

Neither did her son, who is this great uncle who went to Switzerland, but because he would do what his mother wanted. She was told to convert. She said, [SPEAKING ITALIAN]. I'm an Israelite-- enough. She taught me a prayer, which must have been a Jewish prayer.

Do you remember it?

I don't remember it, but I know she taught me a prayer. She sends her son and his sister away from her villa, and to go off to Switzerland. She is too old to survive, to go with them. She is in her high 80s. And so she stays in this villa.

And she says to her son-- look, if you stay, they'll come and get us both, especially because you're famous. So they'll find you here. Me, they may not pay any attention. In any case, I'm not [INAUDIBLE]. She locked the house doors after, so that he had to go. Off he goes.

When the villa is liberated, she writes a 15-page letter to my mother telling her how she survived. She writes it to my mother because she is her eldest grandchild, brilliant, and this remarkable woman. She was widowed at 23 with three children, looked after everything-- an amazing person-- and wants the story to be told.

And she tells the story that she was there, and this is after 1943. And an American plane that had been bombing Bologna had somehow failed to drop all its bombs, and is trying to get up over the Appenines to go back home, and finds that a bomb it has left, still has, makes it difficult for it to get its height, and so opens the bomb thing. The bomb falls on the village next to the villa.

It was during the day. Everybody was out working, so there weren't any real casualties, but the village is destroyed. My grandmother says, "I did what any decent person would do-- I invited the village into the villa."

And she said every family got a room, and we set it all up. And I taught all the women to work. She did wonderful

needlepoint. And I taught the men to play poker.

She was of a generation before bridge. It was what card-playing people would do. We had a wonderful time, she said. Then she describes this wonderful thing, with the whole village living in the villa, all together, this almost 90-year-old, tiny, little person, just teaching. She was always a teacher and doing these other things.

And then, she said, the Germans arrived. They had heard that there was an old Jewish lady there. So they came to get me. And the village men came out with pitchforks, hatchets, and said to the German captain, "Over our dead bodies." They'd been taken in.

And the German captain looks at it, and realizes that of course, he could mow them down, but he'd probably lose some men. And it would be-- and thinks here's an almost 90-year-old person. She's going to die anyway. It isn't worth it, and goes away.

Amazing.

And that's how she survived. And that's one of the stories. The stories of the others are all different, all wonderful, and are part of the thing.

I'll just say two other things about that. One, Beppe's father, the person whose great house it was, refused to hide.

This is in Ferrara.

In Ferrara, and no one knows why he refused to hide. Some people say that he thought that if he was there and was taken, they might leave his children alone which, of course, would not have happened. No one knows. There is reason to believe that he was the prototype for the old professor in "The Garden of the Finzi-Contini," who wouldn't hide because it was beneath him.

So this is the Finzi-Contini family head [INAUDIBLE].

The book is being written under the patronage of this guy's son. And somebody, some people have written Sergio Minerbi, the guy who's written in Israel, has written a family history. And he says it's true. I don't know how he knows, but it's plausible that the model for that not hiding because in the garden, it was because it was beneath him. We don't know why this guy.

He actually gets taken and would have been sent off, taken by the fascists, would have been turned over to the Germans, and would have been sent off. The story of how he is rescued by his chauffeur is another wonderful story, one version of which was written up in a book called "Alberto M's Longest Day."

I saw that on the internet. I wondered what that was.

That book was written by my cousin, by double cousin, the one I was telling you about before, who was a Professor of Geophysics but was also a poet and an author. And he wrote this, which that story is partly fiction. How that happened is partly fiction, was meant to be--

The longest journey, yeah, that was--

The longest journey, but it's how this guy, who didn't try to hide, was nonetheless rescued by his chauffeur who was a Figaro type, who could do anything, and did. So that's another, but anyway, these stories are something that when my book comes out, will all be there, all of them. What I did want to say was what happened to my mother's father, because it has some interesting things for my job as a judge, actually.

In 1940, before America joined the war, my mother's father developed cancer. And he was, as I say, an urologist way back. Turns out not to be operable or probably. Don't know why, but it was cancer. Sometimes it's curable, but it wasn't.

He forbids anybody from telling my mother. This is a man, remember, who didn't want my mother to leave, but he forbids anybody from telling my mother that he is sick because he knows that if my mother knows that, she'll get on the first ship and go back, and probably end up separated from her family. My mother first hears that he is sick in the telegram from the family saying that he is dying in early 1941, before America is in the war. Italy is in the war now, and saying that he is dying.

And so actually, she first hears from a telegram of condolences over first from my father's sister who is in Italy. And the thing is interesting to me as a judge because I've seen cases, I've sat on cases, where the Board of Immigration Appeals and immigration judges said somebody who said they were persecuted and has sought asylum went back to their country, and then came back, so it cannot be that they were being persecuted.

And we had a case and people on the panel with me, the other two judges, who were ready to say obviously, that's so. And I said, no, it's not obviously so. Of course, it's relevant that the person goes back and you want to find out why, but I can tell you that isn't necessarily so, and here is this story.

And so my panel held that you cannot make it as a matter of law that somebody who goes back. You have to look to see why they went back. So those are a couple of stories. The others survived, as I say, in wonderful mixed ways, and--

When you're this kind of outcome, there are lots of questions. And I understand you've got a book that is in the works. And it's whetting my appetite for it, but the stories that you are saying and the summary that you are giving spell a kind of experience that too many other people did not have in other countries.

That is true. And one of the reasons I want to write this is because what happened in Italy-- and again, now some people, including a cousin of mine, are writing about the people in Italy who did betray, who did behave badly. But more people were saved in Italy than in any other country, with the possible exception of Denmark.

And in Denmark, it was the official policy of the king and people just followed it wonderfully. And people were saved. In Italy, what was interesting about it was that it was against the policy of the government, and yet people behaved in ways which saved people.

Now, a fair number of people were taken. About 10,000 people were taken in Rome right after Italy surrendered because the Roman-Jewish community was-- there was an old community around the old Italian temple of people who were relatively poor, and still living there as against all of these assimilated people all over. They, too, didn't think that anything was going to happen.

And the Germans moved in and took any number of them a few days, right after. And it's that gave the signal, and everybody else then hid afterwards. So immediately, a fair number-- so if you look, a fair number of people were taken. After that, very, very few people were taken because Italians hid people. Why? That's part of the story of this book. Sometimes just humanity.

And sometimes, the churches hid people. The Cardinal Archbishop of Florence was maybe the only man to vote against Pius the XII. [INAUDIBLE] He was much loved by people. And they tell the story, which I repeat in the book, but it isn't my story, that he told all the monasteries and nunneries to hide people, and that some people were being hidden in a nunnery which had been a closed nunnery, and there were men who were being hidden, and young men, and young nuns, and inevitably, people started making love.

And the Mother Superior, it's said, according to the story, but it's very popular with Florentines, goes to the Cardinal and says, terrible sins are being committed here. We cannot have this going on. And the Cardinal says, Mother, what do you think is worse-- what is happening there or to turn people out to be killed? Don't worry about it. It's on me.

It's a lovely story.

Which is a lovely story. This is a story that is told there, and there are squares named after this guy, and so on. So

sometimes, as I say, it was just humanity.

And there are people who are Italian peasants who hid Jews, partisans, antifascists. And then, when the war turned around and Germans were running away, hid them. They were all people in trouble, one said to me, when they came here. [SPEAKING ITALIAN] They were all some mother's child.

Simple but very profound.

And it's a very-- there was something about that culture, and I don't mean there weren't people who didn't, but there was something about that culture that caused people to save people. And by the way, it is the reason why almost all Italian Jews who fled went back.

You anticipated my next question.

We did not and a few others did not, but most people did go back to Italy, in a way that people did not go back to Germany, for sure, or Poland, or other countries, because the feeling that after all, that Italy-- and by the way, somebody could say, that's because there were so few Jews in Italy and they were so assimilated, and so on. That was true in many other countries as well, but there are some figures that give the lie to that, because it said that about 10,000 Jews from Croatia, who had been protected when it was Italian territory-- and there's a whole thing of Germans trying to find out whether these people were really Italians or from someplace else or not, but who were not at all Italian-- when Italy surrendered, fled into Italy from Croatia.

And it said that of these 10,000 people fled, who were completely unassimilated, only eight people were taken. So people were hidden. And it's something about-- and who knows?

That's one of the reasons I'm writing this book, because each of us in our lives faces situations where we may be called on to do things. And there are always excuses. And these people were risking their lives.

I was thinking of this question as you were speaking. Or shall I put it-- this is half a question, half a comment. I've interviewed people who are Jewish survivors from Germany, for example, that you just mentioned, or from Poland, but I want to stick with Germany, whose families might have been in Germany for 200, 300 years, maybe more, but they can trace back that much.

And sometimes when I've met them, they speak English with a German accent. Some of them still speak very good German. It's their first language.

And I will sometimes ask the question, "So what part of you is German?" And it's very hard to answer, very, very hard to answer because there was such a profound rejection. And the rejection was not just state edicts. It went through society. But it also prevented someone who was the target of these edicts and laws and discrimination from taking that which had been part of them, and being able to incorporate it, and keep it.

Yeah.

And as you were speaking, to ask you what part of you is Italian--

100%, I mean, I'm 100% Italian. I am Jewish. I'm 100% American, because I have become American. And I have stories about that.

When I was talking to some students from foreign countries who were here in a program, and a kid from Pakistan who had grown up in Denmark, actually, said, now, that's all very well, but which are? And I said, both? And then he said something fun. He said, OK, but whom do you root for when there is a World Cup in soccer?

Where the rubber meets the road.

My answer was automatic. Of course I root for Italy, but if there were a World Cup in baseball, I'd root for the United States. And it's not that the United States is better in one than in the other. In the last World Cup, the United States is good and Italy was terrible.

It's just that I associate one with Italy, and so then I'm Italian. And I associate the other one with American. So of course, I'm a Yankee fan in baseball. And that's the way that is. And I am in that sense.

So why didn't we go back? And that's an interesting story in itself, which has to do in a way with what's happened later. But think of it this way-- comes late '40s, '50s, my parents go back and see and are undecided. My father probably is leaning towards going back.

He who wanted to leave.

He who wanted to leave, but fine. My mother may be more likely to want to stay here-- oddly, because my father had been able-- his family, his sister, and his mother after the war had joined us here or were going to join us if we-- but he thinks in terms of going back, maybe. He's having a career here but not--

My mother, oddly in some ways, because it is easier for a woman, strangely, to have a career in Italy than here. She couldn't get appointed to the Yale faculty, though they tried, because women were not teaching at Yale. But she thinks if she goes back, people will not take her career seriously because she's too much of this elegant lady.

But they're uncertain, so the thing falls in many ways and my brother and me. And my brother and I separately-- first, he goes back because he's older. Then a couple of years later, I go back.

And we both have the same reaction-- that it would be horrible to go back to Italy and be poor, because this is after the war and everything is still-- but to go back to Italy and be who we were, with all the losses-- because buildings were hit, and things were not looked after, properties had to be put in other names of the Calabresi for us to survive because they didn't fit into that category, and so on. So that we were not as rich by any means as we were before, but were still.

But to go back and be wealthy was something that we were too American, too egalitarian, to conceive of doing. We had become outsiders coming to America. And to be insiders, as we would have been there, was something with my brother and I both instinctively could not take.

I will tell you my own experience in that. I go with the chauffeur who saved Alberto M, who is still there. He drives me around to see the family lands.

This is in the early '50s.

1951. I should have gone in '50, didn't go because of a breakout of the Korean War. Drive around in the ancient family Lancia, which still exists. He's driving. I'm sitting in what would be the driver's seat, because snobbery among Italians-- you have the driver on the English side to copy English cars, although you're driving-- so madness.

So I'm there, thinking I'm driving as we go sweeping down. A little religious procession comes along, and they see the family Lancia. They all pull to one side and bow. I'm a teenager. Who are these people bowing to me?

We go by a church, and I say, that's a very beautiful church, little, tiny church. And the chauffeur says, "Yes, you own it. Your cousin owns it. And the bell is even more beautiful, and of course, it's in Ferrara, because it's too beautiful to leave out here. I can't take that.

So we say to my parents, we want to stay. And that's what makes the decision-- we stay. Because they were undecided. And they really, essentially, left it up to us.

The irony of this, of course, is that we did not see the great inequalities in the United States. Remember, blacks were not visible. It's before 1953, before Brown versus Board of Education. All of the inequalities of United States are kind of

hidden to kids just growing up in a university town.

But it's just over the horizon.

Just over for the horizon. In the meantime, in Italy, 1950, partly due to my great uncle going to the cabinet and becoming Minister of the Treasury with Einaudi, the great Italian miracle of the '50s and '60s, which changes Italy into an almost totally middle-class society. Today, all these lands are owned by farmers. The church is a little museum owned by there. The bell is back there.

We own nothing of that. We're still well-off, but not the kind of feudal thing. In many ways, by 1970, Italy is a much more egalitarian society than is the United States-- in some ways not, less mobility, but in many ways. So that the irony of our decision was that we were moved by very good things, whether it was the right one or not.

Or whether it was in the end what eventually happened in reality or not. One of the leitmotifs through your story is irony and contradiction.

That's right.

This is true, but this also is true.

And here is another contradiction-- that the result of that is that my brother marries a woman who was a classmate of mine in elementary school of an old, old, old New Haven family. I marry Anne, whose ancestors were both first governor and Eli Yale's grandmother, the founders of New Haven, and are wonderful, wonderful people, whom we would not have married if we'd gone back. And at our bridal, at a rehearsal luncheon that my parents gave, my father gets up and shocks everybody by giving a toast to Benito Mussolini, because if it were not for him and all his evil, Paul would not have married Celia and Guido would not be marrying Anne.

Again, the ironies and contradictions of--

Well, let's go back to what ends up being yet another one. Now that you have said you and your brother decided separately that you would rather be here, the egalitarian ethos had caught you.

And as outsiders.

Yes, and as outsiders.

It's another important point of our coming to America and what that meant.

Your first days and first experiences in the United States were not that auspicious.

No.

So I would like to learn about that.

First, let me just say one thing because I want it on the record. Yet again I do this-- somebody said that we came through Ellis Island. I don't know where they got that idea. They made it up.

They assumed it, and it sounds nice. I wish I'd come through Ellis Island. It was there. We did not come through Ellis Island. You went to Ellis Island if you came steerage. If you came on this fancy ship in fancy things, you did not.

We land in New York on September 16, a Saturday. And by the way, I was sworn in as a judge on the 55th anniversary to the day. I picked the day because I wanted to say something about what America had done for me, and what it hadn't done for others, and those who had helped us, and those who had not, and to dedicate myself to do things for those whom America had not helped.

And David Souter, who is an old, old friend because we were on a Rhodes Scholarship selection committee before anybody knew who he was, who swore me in, was an old New Hampshire Yankee, was in tears. So we land, and what do you do? Well, from the ship my father and mother had sent a telegram to a distant cousin who was the only relative that we had here, who had been sent by the fascists to study law at Berkeley.

Now, was he a fascist, too?

No, he was just a kid. The reason he had been sent there was that the fascists had sent a variety of people who were tall and good looking, because they didn't want Americans to think of Italians as being short, squat Southerners. So they sent this very elegant. And as he said, shortly after he got here, they decided I wasn't Italian because I was Jewish.

What was his name?

Paolo Contini.

Of the Finzi-Continis.

He was a distant Finzi-Contini relative but a somewhat closer Minerbi relative, in some complicated-- because Finzi-Contini descended from the first wife of Leon Vita. His mother and my grandmother Minerbi were first cousins. But that was the connection.

And he was studying law at Berkeley. Having been sent there, he wasn't about to come back.

And that's on the other coast.

And he stayed and ultimately became Deputy General Counsel of the UN and did other things, ultimately died in a mountain climbing accident, a remarkable man. His daughter is a Professor at UVA. And--

Who wrote you the affidavit?

I'll come back to that. So we sent a telegram to him to say, you're a student. Find out from students a cheap, really cheap hotel.

Your parents had nothing.

We have no money.

All you had was trunks with the clothes.

Yeah, and so he sends back a name of the Hotel Raleigh, somewhere on the West Side.

New York City.

In New York City. We land on a Saturday, go there. How cheap was it? My father, who is not a pack rat, kept the bill for four people and supposed food for each of two months, kept it for two months because he had two sons. Obviously, he was doing it for a purpose-- \$10.

\$10 a month?

\$10 a month, four people with food, not a nice place, but there we were.

[? Bugs ?] included?

Food supposedly included-- I say "supposedly," because the food was awful. I found it almost impossible to eat because I'd always eat [INAUDIBLE]. That was difficult-- not difficult, but you know, I was used to being--

Why do we stay in New York rather than come to New Haven immediately? Fellowship doesn't begin till January, and my father correctly thinks the licensure exams for medicine in New York have more reciprocity than those of Connecticut. If you pass Connecticut, yeah, Connecticut will recognize it but almost none-- almost every state recognizes a New York medical license. If we're going to starve, we might as well starve in New York, as in--

Was it as difficult in those days for a doctor certified by another country--

You could, with the qualifications he had, take the exams. And if you passed the exams, you would be OK. Increasingly, they made it difficult. Increasingly, they made it difficult.

And interestingly, the exams in New York were already making it difficult for people primarily who came from Germany. And they did that by having the language have all sorts of words which were Latinate words, which of course, my father, who spoke German perfectly and spoke English with a huge accent-- German was his first second language. French was his third language.

English he learned and knew well, but spoke like a cultivated Italian would if you thought it should sound like German, which was not good. My mother, instead, spoke English with an English accent. French was her second language, English her third language, because she had had an English governess. (IN ENGLISH ACCENT) Have you any autumn apples? When she came, that was how she spoke.

But he found the language exam thoroughly easy because of that. The other exams, what he worried about most, was surgery. He had been an academic, so that most other things to do with medicine, even if they weren't his field, he would know.

And as he said, he turned lucky in that, because the guy who is the examiner in surgery was one of the first people to do cardiovascular surgery, to think about that. And he had read some articles of my father's as a cardiologist, and so knew who he was. And he said to him, "I must give you a real surgical question." It was an appendectomy, which even my father could handle.

And then he said, "Now let's talk about interesting things, the future of cardiovascular surgery." So he passed that. And so he passed flying colors before the end of December, so that in January, when we came to New Haven, he had his New York license.

But for someone who comes in, who was wealthy and is now penniless, that's not bad for a couple of months in a new country.

Not bad. Now, how did we survive?

Yeah, how did you survive?

In these months-- it's any number of things. First, and I'll come back to it, my brother and I get put in school on Monday.

You arrive Saturday, on Monday and you're school.

What do you do with children?

Yeah, it's true.

And story of that is another story in itself. The people at the Italian Consulate here with my father, who was already quite well known, person is there. And there's some count or somebody there who has heart trouble and asked my father if he will look after him.

My father says, "I cannot do it for pay, because I'm not licensed. I can give you some advice." And there arrives at this scruffy hotel, every day, a huge thing of flowers. My mother, I remember her saying-- "He might have sent fruit."

But they didn't imagine that we could be without a penny. How do we survive at all? The people who had signed their affidavit were a man who worked at Morgan's Bank.

Were they in any way related?

What? No, no, no. He had had business dealings with one of my grandparents. I don't know who. And think his name was Pereira.

And his wife, who I think was Jewish, I don't know, was Morgan's-- he could not very well have been at that time. But she had signed affidavits for all sorts of people from Germany. And when, because of the connection between one of my grandparents and this guy, signed ours, saying, "I know you'll never need it."

So my mother goes to call on this lady, and she had jewelry, because we had hidden it in our things. And this was not jewelry we had bought. If so, they would have looked for it, but this was jewelry, so she said, "I put on more jewelry than a lady should and went to have tea with her, and said, our money has not yet arrived from Switzerland. Could you advance us something?"

This was technically true, because my father had given a lecture in Switzerland and had gotten, I don't know, \$50, something like that, and that money had not yet arrived. This woman says, "Of course," and writes a check. I do not know the precise amount. The story sort of is, and I have an impression that it was, for \$25,000.

This is 1939. She is thinking of people living in the way we lived in Italy. So of course, what do you do with a check for \$25,000, at a time when you think the banks are still failing?

It's true now, we look back, the Depression was over, but nobody really knew it. We had no bank account anyway. But how could you, something which we could never pay back, what do you do with it?

Well, what you do with it-- there were a few other Italian emigres, some Jewish, some not, who were there in New York. There was a small community of people. And some of them had a little bit of money because they had had money out of Italy.

And of course, everybody who had that was just as tight with it as could be. Among these people, by the way, was a woman named Calabi, who became, after the war, the head of the Italian-Jewish community in Italy, a great, great lady. And she was our first babysitter. She came and one time when my parents actually went to a movie, it was the only time that she was with them.

Well, my parents gave this check to some people who had money, and said give us a few hundred dollars. This check will be your security. And with these few hundred dollars, we had barely enough money to live.

Comes January, 1940, we moved to New haven. The fellowship begins. It's \$1,000 a year, which is the equivalent of about \$20,000 now. Perfectly decent. A full professor was earning \$10,000, Sterling Professor \$12,500 at the time. So it's about that.

And we send the check back with a note, saying, oh, terribly sorry. The money arrived. We didn't need to use it, but things happened, so we didn't-- here it is. Fine.

End of story? Irony of ironies, no. Fast forward to 1961. Anne and I are on our wedding trip. We start in the south to have a month.

This is an academic wedding trip. I have a whole summer, a month where we can be by ourselves because there are no

relatives. Then we plan a month from Rome to the mountains, wall to wall relatives, calling on those relatives who hadn't been able to come to our wedding, and then a month in the mountain to write.

We arrive in Rome, go to a nice hotel. And before we go call on this great uncle, who is now in, and so on, and sister, great aunt, Ann goes to the hairdresser near this good hotel. The hairdresser says to a woman underneath one of these machines, "There's a young American bride here."

The woman isn't terribly interested. And the hairdresser persists until finally, this woman, just to shut him up, turns to Anne, and says, "What is your name, my dear?" And Anne says proudly, "Anne Tyler Calabresi."

Woman almost goes through the machine and says, "Related to Dr. Massimo?" She said, "Yes, he's my father-in-law." She said, "I'm the person who signed his affidavit."

She was a patron of Spoleto, the festival and had promised her grandchildren if they learned the language, that she would bring them to that country. And so she was there bringing a granddaughter to Spoleto and so on, just by chance. And Anne, of course, says, "I know exactly who you are," and tells her the story because I had told Anne the story.

Of the \$25,000 check.

Which was woman didn't know. I mean, she didn't know that this money, she thought-- and so we have tea together. And she learns the real circumstances of that. Again, irony on irony. So Monday, we go to school. And there's a public school somewhere there.

You're talking about New Haven now? Or still New York?

No, no, Monday.

New York City.

September 18, two days after we landed. My brother, who is much more on top of things-- he's 9 years old, I'm 6, almost 7, turn 7 October 18, and he was born on April 5, so he had turned 9 on April 5, and who know enough about things so that when we get off the ship, he is on one side of a plank and says, I'm in Italy, because it's Italian, the other side I'm in America, jumping back and forth.

Italy, America, Italy, America.

He is lucky, because this rinky-dink school had a class for non-English speaking children. So he finds himself-- he's in fourth grade-- in a class with many German, some French, who knows why, Spanish, which of course, he can converse with, children. And so he is immediately at home in his proper grade.

And because of that, first learns English perfectly. The teacher is there to teach them American. He speaks good American, no accent of any sort, but just wonderful. And no one could say he was not born here.

I, instead, I'm too young to go into that class. I should be in second grade. I get put in kindergarten because I don't speak English. We spoke German and French. We'd had a German governess and a French governess, and so we both spoke German and French. We did not speak English.

On the ship, my mother tried to teach me and I didn't want to. I was having too much fun. Once she catches me, and it is a source of what is a true statement that I said-- when I came to America, I knew three words of English-- "yes," "no," and "briefcase."

"Briefcase" because she had this book that her governess had used to teach her English, and all these children were going to school carrying satchels. And I said, "What's that?" And she said, "Briefcase." I liked the sound of it, so I remembered. I didn't want [INAUDIBLE], so yes, no, and briefcase. So I get back, put in kindergarten.

It's apropos for a lawyer, you know.

Not bad. I was doing, in Italy, math at a fifth-grade level already. What these children are doing in kindergarten are just making necklaces and tying things. So I bring it up to the teacher, and she clearly is not pleased with it, so I do it again.

She's still not pleased with it. This goes on all morning, all day, whatever. I come back to the hotel, and I say to my mother in Italian, [SPEAKING ITALIAN] what does it mean, "pull tighter?" So I believe that I was teased mercilessly.

I blocked a good deal of that, but I say that because when we went to Italy on sabbatical, and our daughter Bianca was three years old, our ancient nanny had come back to look after the children, and took her to the park across the way from where we were. And our three-year-old, who was very verbal, runs up to some little children who were playing-- and I kind of follow in the back to see what's going on-- to two little girls who were playing and says something in English. And they don't understand and pick up their things and go away. And I don't know that Bianca was particularly upset. I mean, she moved on to something else and was just-- I raced back to the house, and realized how I was reliving a difficult kind of experience.

One introduction to America-- we get brought to this school and teachers in Italy, no matter how old or young, always wore black, very, very simple kind of thing. We arrive at this school and my kindergarten teacher is a big, blousy New Yorker, with all sorts of colored [INAUDIBLE]--

Frills.

--and things. And I later learned that my mother came back and said to my father, I don't really understand this country, but I'm afraid that Guido's teacher may be a prostitute. Culture is different.

So I am there. And then, what do I eat? Fortunately, when we have enough money so that we don't have to rely just on the food of this--

\$10 a month place.

\$10 a month thing, we discover the automats, which were these wonderful, 1930 things, all chrome and shiny and things. And you put in \$0.10 and you got something. And this was fun for kids.

And I discovered chicken pot pie, which I thought was edible. And I survive on chicken pot pie, and the nickel, and the wonderful thing of it. And my parents, bless them, understand the needs.

And I'll show you how much they did-- my brother comes home. We arrive wearing little, tweed coats, fur coats, winter things in Italy. And we thought of America that way-- nicely, wonderfully elegant.

My brother comes home and says, "I cannot wear this. No one is wearing it. Just I cannot wear anything like this." My mother says, OK. We have no money, but we have-- she understands that this child is-- and so we go to some five and dime some place to look for something.

And she looks at all sorts of parkas and things. She said they're all wearing parkas. And they look, which fairly costly and good looking. And he said, no, no, no, no.

And he then sees something which is quite ugly-- black and green, kind of pressed something or other thing, which is very cheap. And he said, "That's what everybody's wearing." And my mother says, OK, and buys it for him, turns to me, and says, "Do you want one?" And I said, "Not on your life." I'm not fitting in anyway, and so on.

But he was.

He was. And that made him, in some ways, more American. He remained very-- he was my idol. He was a wonderful

person and he just made my life. But he did fit in more. I didn't. And I learned English there, and at home from my mother, which is why I had the slight accent.

Autumn apples?

But I do have a slight accent. Somehow, we survived. And come January, we go to New Haven.

I wanted to ask this question before I forgot-- how old were your parents in 1939 when you arrived?

My father was born 1903. He was 36.

So he was relatively young.

Yes.

And your mother?

And my mother was a year older, 37. And my father, by the way-- and this became a problem-- he had been an associate professor. In 1936, very, very young for Italian, he had written a book on cardiology, one of the founding books on electric cardiographs and things, which had won the gold medal for the best scientific book of the year. And there was a competition for a full professorship.

His chief was part of the commission and had the other two votes-- the commissioners were five-- to put him in, but said, I'm going to be here next year as well with the same committee. And there's somebody senior to you. If I put you in this year, this other guy would never make it. Will you mind being put off for a year?

My father said, of course not. The next year, the fascists were strong enough so that they could block it. Whether it was that he wouldn't take a loyalty oath or something, I don't know, but the next year when he should have gone through, he didn't, with the result that we came before he was a tenured, full professor.

Would that have made a difference?

That would have made maybe some difference here. It certainly would have made a difference after the war in terms of Italy. But it certainly made life more difficult because he didn't have a title.

And when I was offered, extremely young, a full professorship at Chicago in my first year of teaching, and decided to turn it down because I wanted to stay at Yale, where they couldn't promote me immediately, I told the dean, "I know it's all right, but you must understand that psychologically, it's more difficult for me." And he did some wonderful things about comforting me in this. And then I became a full professor a year or two later-- very, very young still, but it was part of, again, the history. Yeah, part of that.

So in January, we come to New Haven to be for this fellowship. Now first, I didn't know it at the time, and my parents never told me, but recently, a dean of the Medical School found the letter from the head of the Internal Medicine to my father, telling him this fellowship was there and he could come, at such and such a [INAUDIBLE] and what it was, and sent me this letter, a copy of this letter.

When you say, "recently," in the past few years?

What?

When you say, "recently," do you mean in the past few years?

About three, four years ago, well, now, maybe it could now be 10. It was at some point a dean found it in the files and sent it to me, but just--

Decades after the event.

Decades after. It's the most insulting letter you can imagine.

What did it say?

It said, somebody has given us money to give you a fellowship and so we're doing it. Try to get him to give us more money. Don't think that you'll be able to stay more than this time, and don't think you can do this, this, this, or this. You've been given this fellowship, you've been given the money, but essentially said, we don't really like people like you.

So the welcome mat was really put out.

Yeah.

Understand that this was at Yale, that at this time had never had either a Catholic or a Jewish Full Professor in Yale College. It wasn't until 1946 that Yale had a Catholic or Jewish Full Professor in Yale College. Harvard wasn't much before that. It was when Conant became president, which is one of the reasons Harvard got so far ahead of Yale, because Conant became president before the war, and so all the refugees could go to Harvard.

Schumpeter, the great economist, wanted to come to Yale, but couldn't, had to go to Harvard. He had many friends among the economists at Yale, but it was Yale College. The law school was different and had been different forever to its [? to its glory ?] at Yale. It had Jewish Full Professor, Catholic professors, Catholic acting dean in the 19th century, admitted women. The law school was always the troublemaker, which is why I love it, and always different.

The medical school, slightly different-- the dean of the medical school, Winternitz, was Jewish, some said very anti-Semitic, but he was Jewish. There were some Jews on the faculty. Still an enormous quota-- I mean, the first person in the class was always Jewish, because to be Jewish, to be admitted to the medical school, you had to be-- but at least it was mildly open, but just barely in the medical school. And apart from the dean, I don't know that there were any full professors who were Jewish, but anyway--

Is this where your father was attached?

This was where my father was attached. The fellowship was to the medical school. The person he was working with, Arthur Geiger, who was in Cardiology, was Jewish, was not a Full Professor, was an Associate Professor, but so it's not surprising that this letter-- that a previous president of Yale, who had just left a few years before, James Rowland Angell was a fascist and worse.

I mean, he actually wrote a letter saying, if there could be something like what happened to the Armenians in New Haven and Bridgeport, we might be able to save our Nordic heritage. This was not uncommon with Lowell at Harvard and Butler at Columbia. It was the way people thought at that time.

As I say, the law school was different. We had nothing to do with the medical school. It was slightly different. And that's where my father, because of fellowship and money had been given to them, and maybe the Dazian Foundation was doing this because they wanted to open it. Who knows why they gave it here?

But so we arrive, and the real estate agent comes to try to find us a place to rent, a little house to rent, and immediately shows us places on Worcester Square, which was where the Italians lived, or in Westville where the Jews lived. And we get shown places there. And the people from the medical school kind of sweep in, and say, no. What they essentially said, "You are ethnically Yale."

There's a new ethnicity-- it's called "Yale."

It wasn't-- I mean, you live between Whitney Avenue and Orange Street, between the park and Edward Street, because that's where all the Fellows, Assistant Professors, young Yale faculty live. And so they find us a nice, little house, still there in that area-- an area by the way, which is still today full of Yale Fellows, Assistant Professors, and so on, now ethnically of every ethnicity, but still remains a place.

The Full Professors lived across the street in bigger houses or here or there. But that was the area where young faculty members lived, which is perfectly fine for them. They said, this is what you are.

Now imagine-- we arrived there. Everybody who is there is a WASP. We have in common with them that they are faculty and academic, but ethnically, culturally, extraordinarily little.

Well, you know--

And if you look, then, to the Jewish community, we had almost nothing to do with people who were wonderful, mainly Ashkenazim, couldn't believe that we were Jewish. But my father particularly, he took-- when he would see them, the medical school and so on, his patients-- to speaking to them in German because then they thought, oh, then maybe this person would speak some odd dialect of Yiddish, to convince them that actually, because-- And the Italian community almost all southern, very, very poor--

Southern Italy.

Southern Italy, again, very little to do with this. Now, with one odd exception, there were a few left-wing antifascists who had been ostracized by the community because the fascists had played very much this you must be more fascist than the fascists if you're here, and so on. And these people, when they heard that my father had arrived, knowing about him and his antifascism, were so thrilled at having somebody who was a kindred spirit and cultivated that several of them made him executor of their wills, even though he was a doctor and knew nothing about law.

And there was a barber named Malafronte. I remember, I just met somebody who was the granddaughter of his barber's partner and said, I think-- and my parents got very much involved in doing things for the Italian community, but we were part of, in a way, nothing. My mother became the first Italian member ever of something called the [SPEAKING ITALIAN], which was a group of elderly Yankee women who read Dante and other things. But they never had an Italian. Heaven forbid that they should.

I want to make a comment here, is that--

I'm sorry.

I want to make a comment, because that was-- it's one of the changes, or you come from a family that has been integrated in Italy for two millennia. People know who you are. You know who you are, because you can trace it from the slaves who came from Titus. And when you say your name in Italy, people have a sense of who is this person.

Immediately, immediately.

And you come to this world--

Even before "The Garden" or anything. I mean, they all know who we are. We are who we are. We arrive here, and we are outsiders, unknown.

Without any mooring in some ways.

Without any mooring, and--

How does this affect your family? How does it affect your parents and then you.

In an odd way, we know we are outsiders, and that we are ourselves, and that we will take the best that there is, and give the best that we can to all of these. But we don't belong.

You know you don't belong.

We don't belong. And that's one of the things when I said why we don't go back-- somehow, my brother and I know we are outsiders and kind of relish it.

So in other words, when you would be going back to Italy, you would be belonging again.

We'd be belonging. We'd immediately fit in. When I studied in England, at the end of two years, they offered me a fellowship, which would have been the end of a career-- a fellowship at Morton College, [? let's say it was in ?] economics, perfect.

I didn't want to take that, from problems with economics, but partly because I would immediately fit in a category of society there. And I said, if I wanted to fit somewhere, I'd go back to Italy. There, the moment I'm there, Anne says I melt into the woodwork when I go over.

Really?

Yes. I mean, it just is. I am-- everybody knows who I am. In an odd kind of way, it's a small country. Everybody knows.

When we went to Rome on sabbatical, we went to Rome because there weren't many-- my great aunt and great uncle were there, but they were much older. And we wanted to make our own friends and so on. We made friends, and we found inevitably that the people we liked were people whose grandparents were on the same side of this fight or that with my grandparents. And it's that kind of a country. But here, we were nothing.

Well, this an experience-- OK, I'm sorry I'm interrupting, but I want to make another point with this, is this is often the experience of the exile, sort of the 20th century phenomenon, the 20th century experience of someone who was somebody--

And now--

They're nobody.

Yeah. And there are some funny things about this. When my brother married Celia-- who as I say, was my classmate in elementary school because I won a scholarship to a little, private school here, and she was in that class-- my then college roommate, who was from New Haven and so on, said, Oh, my parents are so glad.

And I said, why would they care? And he said, because people ask them who your roommate is at Yale. And we had three roommates. And I tell them somebody named Guido Calabresi.

And my parent's friends, business types, said, who are they? And now my parents can say, oh, he is married to these people. So to them, this was a way of saying there is now--

So now you're somebody.

He's somebody. And I don't know the extent to which both my brother and I, and maybe my parents, but my brother and I had wanted unconsciously to rebuild here what we had there. Somebody has seen the farm where I live, which is very beautiful, which we got--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Here, in Connecticut.

Woodbridge, yeah, and it's a beautiful place. We got it for almost nothing when we were first married, but it's a huge amount of land, and an 18th century house, and it's been made-- we've worked at it and it's really beautiful. And somebody who is studying at the law school, who is a writer, wrote a book in which he said, "This house which looks like a villa in Tuscany."

And I said to him, you're right and you're wrong. It's not in Tuscany and it's outside of Bologna. In a way, it's rebuilding my grandparents' villa outside there. So but there is some side of people like me who must rebuild and re-establish so that now, I'm an outsider in some ways, and yet people know me and our children. And--

Do you still feel an outsider?

Yes. And in some ways, I really still am. It's a funny business. I teach a course with a judge on our court, who is a good friend, who was Chief Judge.

He's younger than I am and I teach a seminar with him. His name is John Walker. He is H.W. Bush's first cousin.

And he is as much an insider as you can imagine, in that in some ways, in his legal career, and so on. And Anne says that every once in a while, I do things which puzzle this guy.

He says that to you.

No, I mean Anne, my wife, but it's clear that they puzzle him because they are not what a Yankee American would do. He's come to see us in Italy. And when he's come to see us, he now understands far more.

When he, every once in a while, he does act-- he's a nice man, a friend, but he does act as if, what is this guy doing? And at that point, my wife, who is even more old, old, old, old Yankee than he is, kind of looks at him to say, you keep your place, youngster. But it is there. And I think it is one of the things that has made me both useful, and successful, and open.

So the kind of outsider that you're mentioning-- it's far more subtle than discrimination. It is--

Yes, it's a much deeper thing. It's a much deeper thing. I mean, discrimination-- were there? Some, yes, of course, there were. And it's kind of interesting to see.

We went to the public school that was right there. And it was a public school which then, as now, primarily had broader things, but had many, many children of young Yale because of where it was. And the local Boy Scout troop was the same way. All these things were this little, kind of Yale WASP-centered thing.

At some point, the Foote School, which was a wonderful private school, made really wonderful by one fact of discrimination-- that Yale had no women teachers, so that many of the teachers in this little private school were the wives of professors and immensely learned and interesting. And so you had a level of teachers that was fantastic.

In seventh grade, I get a scholarship there. My parents are uncertain about private schools because in Italy, private schools were-- but the fact that it was an all day, and anyway, the headmistress, who was English and who was a wonderful lady, told them this really is a better level of education and so. Why did I get that scholarship?

Affirmative action-- but not because I was Jewish, not because I was Catholic, not because I was Italian, even though I probably was about the only person, maybe one or two others of that. It was because I was a boy. And in seventh grade, enough boys went off to prep school away that they needed boys. And so they looked to this public school. And here was this kid, because when I came to New Haven I went back to second grade. I was doing things back at the level and clearly they-- and so that's why I got the scholarship.

I was there in this school, which was all the really major professors. A classmate of mine was Sally Griswold, the

daughter of a guy who became president of Yale. And we became very close friends. This was the whole entourage there, and lawyers, great lawyers.

My wife was two years behind in school. And so what happens? In those days, when you get to high school, the mothers of daughters would have dances at Christmas time, at vacation time, to which proper eligible people, boys, would be invited.

It was just the way it was. And they'd have dances in their homes and things. It's kind of interesting-- some invited me in and some did not.

As it happens, my wife's family invited me because they were people who were not bigots, and they were friends with the guy who became president of Yale, and whose daughter was my friend, and of Gene Rostow, who became the first-- not the first Jewish dean, but a Jewish dean of the law school. And they knew, in a way, who we were. There were people who were very open and people who were less so. I can't say I really noticed or cared, because our attitude, in a way, was very snobbish.

Your own.

My family. I mean, we thought, "We were who we were when you people were painting yourselves blue."

There's some truth to that.

But in a way, we were-- and the fact that we didn't belong meant that we would be friends with everybody. But in some ways, we also thought that we were outsiders because we were better than everybody, which isn't nice, but it is part of, at the same time, a feeling that we had to achieve. Because if anything happened to my father and mother, there we were, at least until after the war, and not immediately after the war, but when things started getting put back together.

I want to dwell on this a little bit for its sort of like psychology. In some ways also, I take your point where you're saying that we thought we were a little bit better than others. You have a certainly illustrious family history that can be very convincing to defeat that. At the same time, when you're in the position of an exile and a refugee, and too many other people didn't have those reserves and suffered enormously internally, because they felt like they no longer mattered in the world.

And the odd thing is if you are that way, it really doesn't matter. I mean, my parents had a very, very hard time making it here. Ultimately, they did. Ultimately, my father became a full professor. Ultimately, they were recognized in their fields, but they had a very, very hard time.

And I sometimes thought we were outsiders and felt like this because they were having a hard time. I don't think that's true. And my example of that is Hannah Gray, who became Provost at Yale, President of Chicago, was a couple of years ahead of me at the same school.

Oh, by the way, this English headmistress was delighted that she had people who were Italian Jewish and so on, because she was somebody who wanted that and so. When Hannah was Provost, and we were friends, they were at lunch at our house once, and we were talking about the experience coming. And I said, "But of course, it was very different for you," because her mother was Jewish, her father was a great German historian, whose chair at Heidelberg had been given by the Rockefeller.

In 1930s, because his wife was Jewish, they decided to leave. And Rockefeller felt, whether it was the Rockefellers or a foundation, said to American universities, whichever one of you wants this man, Hajo Holborn was his name, we will give the chair there. And he wasn't Jewish, so Yale was perfectly happy to have him, and he was a great, great historian. And so the chair was here.

And so I said to Hannah, "I expect your experience was very different from ours because you came and your father was a full professor already with this chair," and so on. And she looked at me and she said, "You're absolutely wrong." And

she described her feelings and her family's feelings of being outsiders in exactly the same way.

Because it was just the sense of there, you were somebody, here you are nobody. And this is it's odd. Bob Dahl, the great political scientist who wrote a book called *Who Governs?* In which one of the things that he does is talk about who are the social elite, the political elite, the financial elite, the academic elite in a town.

And in New Haven, he defines in good political scientist terms, in terms of financial elite, anybody who is on the board of directors of any one of different companies, political elite, anybody who is [? here on ?] certain positions, selectman or whatever, or selectmen in towns, and things of that sort, social elite, anybody who goes to what used to be the debutante ball in New Haven, a big dance, and academic elite, anybody who's full professor. Finds only one person who is all four, me, the outsider. Nice irony.

Why all four? Well, academically easy, political elite-- at some point, the Town of Woodbridge wants to ask me to run for a selectman. Democrats don't win, but there is minority representation. You have to have a certain number of things.

I'm not particularly interested. I'm saying I'm in Europe on sabbatical, but if you put my name down, they need a name. There are Italian-Americans living in Woodbridge who always vote Republic because the Irish are Democratic. They know an Italian name, vote for it.

Why didn't the Democrats do that before? Because if you do that, all the Yale people and the Jewish psychiatrist and so on wouldn't vote for that one. For me, of course they all vote. So easy-- I somehow get elected and spend some years doing that.

Financial elite, they're looking for somebody. Two parts of a bank are fighting with each other. They've never had an Italian on the bank-- a compromise.

Let's not fight. Let's put somebody who's totally an outsider on the bank. So I end up being a bank director, because I was a Full Professor, young and Italian, and they're looking for that.

And socially elite, yeah. All the people who get asked by girls who are coming out to be their escorts then get asked to this dance. And since my friends in school were the ones who were-- and yet I'm an outsider in all of them.

And you still feel that. That's the key thing is that you still feel that.

Yes. And when my son, our children were growing up, at some point I was saying to Massimo, our youngest, how his older sisters who seemed to be so successful-- and this was this younger kid, and the first, the only guy with these two very powerful sisters. And so I said to him, you know that you have insecurities, but realize that your sisters each have insecurities. And I started talking about their insecurities.

And he understood. And then, being a bright, little boy, he turned to me, and he said, "What are your insecurities, daddy?" And I immediately said, "I'm a refugee. I'm a refugee. I'm an outsider."

And by the way, I say being a refugee is the most important part of my legal education because it shows me what it means to be an outsider, which is very important if you're going to be a lawyer. And I say, "I'm a refugee." And he immediately says, "Of course, of course, and so is Uncle Paul, only he deals with it in a different way from you.

What a smart boy.

Yeah, but he saw--

How old was he?

He must have been 13, 12, 13.

But truly a smart, very insightful.

But he saw when I said that that of course, there are all sorts of things that I still feel outside, and so did Paul, but that we dealt with it in different ways, in what--

Well, of all the things we've talked about, the identities-- born Jewish, baptized, and now a practicing Catholic, Italian, refugee, outsider-- which of them has predominance?

Different ones at different times. In an odd way, I have both felt being outsider because of each of these at different times, and also, I have used each of these-- for instance, when I was dean-- to reach out to different groups. Because I saw my parents, though they had nothing directly in common, reaching out to help people in the Jewish community, help people in the Italian community-- my mother was made a Knight of the Italian Republic after the war for all she had done for Italian-Americans here-- reaching out to the academic community, reaching out to all of these and giving to them of that.

So that you feel both apart and outside, but a duty to do something for those. It helped. When I was dean, there were all sorts of people who are Italian-Americans, who are Jews, who are this, who are that, who are the other, and they'd see a dean who was also that.

And so there's many Black girls now say--

Yeah.

And why Obama was so important to the Black community. If he can, so can I.

There's a man, Iacobucci, who became a Justice at the Canadian Supreme Court, Dean of the Law School at Toronto, and Acting President of University of Toronto. The first time I met him, he said to me, "Guido, you don't know how much you meant to me." And I said, what?

And he said, "I was a young kid at the University, at law school in Toronto. And I came home one day. I loved law, and I said to my parents, I want to be a law teacher. And they said, you can't. And I said, why?"

And he said his parents said because you're an Italian, and in Canada, in Toronto then-- Toronto is very different now-- it can't be. I took out of my pocket an article in The New York Times how Guido Calabresi had become the youngest full professor in the history of Yale Law School, and two or three youngest in the history of Yale. I said if that can happen to an Italian at Yale, it can happen here. So you are, if you know that all of these things can be of use to others, you then relish every one of these feelings of being--

Of this identity or that identity or-- what would you like us to understand about what it is to be a refugee? That is both historical a question, and I think very currently a question.

The first thing is that every refugee is an outsider, and that's the fundamental thing. The second is that it has always been the case that there have been people who helped. And I can tell you when I was sworn in I named them by name-- Ziegler Sargent of the Sargent Lock Company who went out of his way to help these little Italian boys, became a very good friend of my parents as a result. And there are people who stand in your way, and that if you worry about the people who stand in your way, you hurt yourself. But if you instead are grateful for those who help, and then help others in your situation, that makes you something that makes this country better.

One of the things that you said about what your parents had done-- and I want to ask more questions about what some of their difficulties were-- was that they engaged. Very often, when a refugee will come to a foreign country, they feel so strange, and so much an outsider, and so--

Yes.

--different that they will close in on their own communities.

This is very important, and it's a great piece of luck-- because of this fellowship at Yale, and because we were able to hang on and stay here, we were not part of the Italian refugee community that was centered in New York. We knew them, or some in Boston, a few in different places, either of antifascists or of Jews. We knew them, we were part of them, we had been with them, we would see them from time to time.

So when I went to call, and the mother of the Roselli brothers, who was living in Larchmont, because that we did, but we were not part of it. And so we did not close in, in the way such a community does. Those people almost all went back, remained something to themselves because it was much easier than dealing with this strange American world. Because we were here and alone, we couldn't do that.

I've seen that in other ways. I have a law clerk who is now dean of the law faculty at Cornell, named Eduardo Penalver, whose family fled Cuba. His father did not want to stay either in Florida or in New Jersey, where the main Cuban-- went to Washington State, doctor, family.

These people are brilliant, wonderful, have done all sorts of things, are much more open because they had to deal with the rest of the world and weren't able to look in on themselves, and on their troubles, and on their grievances, which are real, as we could have had we been part of that little New York community. So that was something which I don't think my parents were especially aware. I think they understood afterwards that they were doing things which might be hard, but that they were much more interesting than had they been part of that community.

Tell me a little bit about how it was that your father was able to hang on after that unwelcome letter.

So first, you come to New Haven, we come to this little house on Willow Street, which is still there. It was the old farmhouse for that area, nice, little house, wooden, very simple.

Different than Milan.

What?

Different than Milan.

Slightly different. They still had an icebox in those days and the Hygienic Ice Company brought some A month or two after we are there, maybe just a month, even, the wife of a distinguished professor comes to call in my mother. Because in those days, Yale was small enough so that a new faculty member-- and fellows were considered faculty members-- gets called on by the wife, always the wife because a wife calls on the wife of a senior faculty member in some other department.

I'm home from school and I'm playing, by myself, cars or something. And my mother is giving this lady tea. And this lady asks her how she likes America, and my mother says, "Oh, it's very nice."

And then the person, looking to make conversation, says, "And what do you think of the plumbing?" I understand that she means isn't it wonderful to have indoor plumbing, because she thinks of Italians as people who don't. My mother doesn't understand. She just doesn't understand.

Then, she thinks she understands, and she, says, of course, it's very simple compared to a marble bath sort of thing, which was absolutely normal in the land, but after all, what should one expect? And I can tell that she's thinking, "At least you don't have Indians firing at us." She's just as provincial in her way as the other one is, in a way. And I, instead, already understand what each one of them was trying to say. Because I've been at school.

This is sort of like when you speak English, and you speak English, and you need a translator in between.

That's right, and I never tell my mother this because she would have been upset, because she didn't want to be say

something rude. But it was neither understood the other and it was perfectly fine. So that's how we are as insider/outsideers.

My father is at the medical school, and has this extraordinarily dreadful accent because of which it's very hard to understand him. He knows the language very well and he is hanging on by his fingernails. He is a great doctor as well as a scientist.

He never writes the kinds of things here and does the kind of research here that he was doing in Italy, which people said this was Nobel Prize type of stuff, but never does that here. But he comes to be loved by students because of what he does. But he is certainly not-- he's at the fringes and not appreciated in any way at all.

They decide that if we're going to stay here, it would be useful to have American degrees. So my father, because of a chairman of Public Health, wonderful man, C. O. A. Winslow, or something like that, liked him, saw that he was special. And public health was kind of a hobby.

Says to my father, look, take a few courses, and you write an article about something, and we'll work it out so you get a doctorate. And so my father gets a doctorate in Public Health with his left hand, thanks to this guy. It remains only a hobby.

My mother, instead, whose field in Italy was Philosophy of Art-- Ruskin her dissertation-- decides to go to graduate school at Yale. She starts out teaching at what is now Southern Connecticut-- it was Teachers College at the time-- to earn some money while we're here. She gets fired in 1941 when America goes into war, because suddenly, people realize that you're supposed to be a citizen to teach in a state college.

And everybody's desperate, but there's nothing to be done about it. But anyway, she goes and she teaches. And she decides that she's going to get a degree in French because a German-French Department, Henri Peyre, was a brilliant, interesting scholar and she'd always been interested in linguistics and literature.

So she gets a doctorate in French. And that becomes her field. The head of the French Department wants her appointed to the Yale College faculty.

It is said, and I can't prove it, that it goes all the way to the corporation, which says no. We have no women teachers, no women students in the college. How can we have women teachers? Logic on logic. So she goes and teaches at Connecticut College in New London, then Connecticut College for women.

Interesting story about marriage and things-- I say to my mother years later, when my mother says, I'd wanted to do two things in my life-- three things-- teach, write, and look after my family. Because I wasn't in a research university, I could only do two at a time. And she taught and looked after her family.

When she retired-- actually, after the war, Yale is still closed to her. She moves from Connecticut College to Albertus Magnus, a Catholic college here, because it's right nearby. And it's not as fancy. We don't need it as a backup anymore, but she continues to teach.

When she retires, she starts to write. And she writes a book that she wrote in French. We found a letter from the head of the Ecole de France when she died suddenly in Italy, saying, "From now on, a renowned scholarship begins with you." So she was able to do that.

But I asked her why they didn't both leave and go to a research university. And I said, "Is it because in those days, women followed men?" And papa was here and he wanted to stay here.

And she laughed, and she said, oh, no, what happened was that when this happened, your father was furious and wanted to leave.

When they didn't accept her at Yale.

At Yale-- wanted to leave and tried both to go to research university. And she said, but I wouldn't let him. And I said, why?

And she said, I wouldn't let him because here, he was hanging on by his fingernails. And despite his accent, people were beginning to appreciate him-- not as the scholar he was, but as a teacher, as a clinician, as a wonderful clinician. And here, I thought he would ultimately make it.

I thought if we went someplace else, he wouldn't. And I knew that I was the stronger and the more flexible and that I could deal with it. And she was a brilliant woman and could.

Her way of teaching is more like mine than my dad's, [? my mom, ?] it's complicated. And I said, well, but how did you keep him if it was a matter of principle? And she smiled, and she said, "I made a scene." And when my mother made a scene, it was a scene.

And she said, "I said to him, Massimo, you made me leave Italy on a matter of principle. And I left my family, my friends, and everybody. And you were right, but it was very costly.

Now, I'm beginning to make friends here-- she couldn't have cared less-- and you want us to leave again on a matter of principle. This one's on me. We stay." What could he do?

And then she looked at me quite fiercely, and she said, "But you must never tell him." OK, my mother dies suddenly in Italy. She was almost 80.

My father was giving some lectures. She'd gone there. She had tea with a friend, and her friend said, "You look happy." She said, "It is easy to be happy if you're fortunate in your daughters in law," has a heart attack, and dies.

My father is upset and doesn't want to talk about her for months. Then finally, one evening I'm having dinner with him-- he survives her by about five years, six years-- he says to me, you know your mother was a great lady. And I said, yes.

And he says, "No, I don't think you know." And I say, "Oh?" He said, you know, when she couldn't get an appointment at Yale, I wanted to leave." And I said, "Oh?"

And he said, "But she wouldn't let me." And I said, "Oh?" And he said, she said-- and this and that. And I said, "Oh?" And then he looked at me, and he said, "All nonsense. She knew she was the stronger one and she never told me." And--

How beautiful.

Well, and think about a marriage between two people who, in many ways, could not have been more different. I mean, he was totally antireligion, Jewish-- no, no, that was his background, but never set foot in the synagogue. She had become Catholic, which he didn't like. All sorts of different fields, different things, could argue about everything, and did. But ultimately--

There's also a lot of wisdom and depth for both to see these things about the other.

Yeah, absolutely. And that's all part of being this kind of outsider. Now, you were outsiders, and then there were occasional little things which were not when. My mother comes to pick me up the first day or so that I've gone to Worthington Hooker, this public school just a few blocks from where we were living, she arrives and she sees a whole group of kids around me, sort of singing something and saying something, and said, Oh, dear, they're teasing Guido again.

But when she gets nearer, she hears that what they're saying is, "Guido has a girlfriend, Guido has a girlfriend." So she says, he's OK. Who was this girl? Well, there was in my class-- I was back in second grade, in my proper class-- a little girl whose father was a philosopher.

They were Americans, but he had studied or taught, whatever, for many years in England. And they'd just come back from England and he was now on the faculty. And his daughter was a classmate of mine.

She struck me immediately as being civilized. She was the only European, and it was a different way of being. And we became very good friends.

And she then-- complicated life, ended up going back to England, actually, and became a great poet. Her name is Anne Stevenson. She's won all sorts of prizes.

She wrote a book about Sylvia Plath, which is controversial and so on. And we're in touch with each other. Her sister was in Anne's class because they ultimately went over to this other school as well. And we've remained friends.

So there were contacts that usually had to do with something not exactly Italian, but European something, or there were people-- there was a great, old classics professor who lived to be 100 named Hendrickson. When Anne and I were engaged, and all sorts of people in the Italian-American community here were so excited about the fact that this Italian was marrying into his great, great--

Yankee family.

Professor Hendrickson came to see my parents, who had become a good friend of because he was somebody who knew Italy before the great migrations and so on. And in finding Italians, he said to them, oh, I'm very glad because I want you to know that this is a good family. Telling. I was a friend of Anne's, he said, great grandfather, who was a professor in the law school and treasurer of the university, who died in 1906, but this guy knew him. That was a friend of his and they're really good people, so I'm glad. So again, this funny reverse of--

But also very touching.

Very touching.

Very, very touching and again, as you've been speaking about the Italian world and the Italian world, as I keep saying, for two millennia of your family and the history, one could make an assumption that some of the success of the people who were part of your family is built on those who came before.

Of course.

Connections, and this and that, and so how much talent do you really have to display? But when you come here you have none of that.

Yeah, who knows. And my parents did not put pressure on us. I think that both my brother and I knew very well that we had to do well. Because I think when somebody in school asked me, why do you work hard? You're so bright, you can do everything easily. Why do you work hard?

And I said, because I have to be able to be on my own if anything happens. And so that though my parents protected us enormously, I think both Paul and I knew that we had to rebuild because we had this-- we were OK, but immensely fragile. Because if anything had happened to them--

And we saw, also, other people who hadn't. But my father had been told by his father, "It's very nice you want to study medicine, but remember, you don't really need to work for a living." Fortunately, my father ignored that and studied medicine, so when we came, there was something that he could do. My mother was a learned person, so could do something.

There was another Italian-American/Jewish family that ended up in New Haven at the time that we were here-- oddly, because the younger sister of this man's wife had gotten a fellowship to study at Yale, just a much younger person. And

so these two ended up here. He was of a family that was extremely wealthy insurance people from Venice, and she was of good family, not great, and so on.

She hadn't studied as much as my mother, was not that. And he was an insurance man of a great business family. They came here. He worked in the factory.

She got picked up by this wonderful headmistress of elementary school to teach French so that we all learned French from Madame Orifice, who was this Italian woman, and so on. And that was better than-- but in a way, people like Paul and me saw how important it was if you were not in a world that knew you. And we didn't even know of a world that knew us any more. We didn't even know.

This was the world that we knew that we were in. And so that probably was something that drove us to-- my parents never said that-- the fact of getting good grades and so on was something that in my family was always-- that everybody always had, so that that was not an issue. That was not.

Another thought that I had as you've been certainly telling me of the past of the Italian branch of the family is, when did you learn these things? It must have been here because you were six years old when you left.

Oh, yes. I learned things here, some from my parents and when I went back. I happened to be a person who was always blessed with a great memory and a very broad interest. So that when I went and met relatives there, I would talk to them about their history. I would hear about them.

And all of these things sort of got learned, some here, some from my brother, who knew things in a somewhat different way than I did, but more, I think, just in talking to my parents and in being interested in things in which, to some extent, they were not. They were much less interested in their ancestors because to them, it had come as a matter of course. And somehow, you were-- they were people for whom this whole ancient history was kind of [SNORTS] a bother. For me, it was something that was kind of interesting, to know who I was in a place where I wasn't.

Interesting. Well put.

And so that that became. And so I listened, and I took these things in. And by the way, that's why I'm in a hurry. I've written a draft of this book. It's an ugly draft. It's not [INAUDIBLE], but I'm almost 85 and how long I'll last, I don't know. And I wanted to get it down on paper so that if I don't get it in shape, at least it's there, because I'm the last one who knows these stories.

They're important stories. They paint a world and they paint the individual destiny.

They paint a world of people who somehow thought that nothing could happen to them, found themselves in desperate danger, reacted to that in a variety of different ways, and then found that people, in a variety of different ways and of different means, saved them.

That's huge.

And that's remarkable. And that's remarkable, and it is different from different Holocaust tales of others.

Judge Calabresi, there is so much more that we could talk about.

But I think this is a good-- thank you.

Thank you.

And I hope this is useful to the museum, but I think part--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I've just loved meeting you two.

Thank you so much and it's been mutual. We could talk so much about your post-war career. I will just say now that amongst your students was one of our former presidents, President Bill Clinton.

Yes.

Who appointed you in Second Circuit Court Judge. Is that correct?

And Hillary, of course, and three people on the Supreme Court-- Clarence Thomas, Sonia Sotomayor, and Sam Alito. And I can tell you something about their school work.

But that's not a Holocaust story.

That's not a Holocaust story. But no, I've been extraordinarily lucky and have had-- and I've been extraordinarily lucky or blessed, and God knows why. And in the end, what I said when I was appointed a judge, that America did do for me and people here all sorts of very, very good things, and it didn't do it for others. And one of the things of being a refugee is seeing what was done for you and who did it, and trying to do that for others.

Thank you.

And in the end that's what's most important.

Thank you very, very much.

Thank you.

Now I have to stop for a second. And I will say that with this, this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Judge Guido Calabresi on July 27, 2017 in New Haven, Connecticut. Thanks again.

Thank you.