United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Guido Calabresi
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PREFACE

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GUIDO CALABRESI
July 27, 2017

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Judge **Guido Calabresi**, on July 27th, 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?

Answer: I was born in October 18, 1932.

Q: And where were you born?

A: 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 with my family owned in **Milan**, on **Via Canova**. And such is the 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.

Q: No kidding. Well that – 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 you so – your family sold it?

A: No, 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 – is part of the story –

Q: Yeah.

A: – that is – yeah.

Q: Yeah. Okay. 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?

A: My name was **Guido Calabresi**, no –

Q: As it is today.

A: As it is today.

Q: Okay, no changes.

A: No changes.

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

A: My mother's name was **Bianca Maria Finzi-Contini**, and married to **Calabresi**. She was born actually in **Milan**, because her father, who was a – an early neurologist, he studied with **Charcot**, the teacher of **Freud**. About the same time, he decided that much of it was bunk, he inherited some money, and kept up. He said, someday it will all be fine. That's kind of nice, because his great-

grandchildren, one my gran – my daughter, is a psychiatrist. My brother's son is a neurologist professor at **Johns Hopkins**. So it's come round.

Q: Yeah.

A: But he was in **Milan** at the time. But they were from **Bologna**.

Q: Okay.

A: And **Finzi-Contini** originally all came from **Ferrara**, but the family had transferred to **Bologna** quite early and – 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**.

Q: Wow.

A: The kind of key figure in all this was a man named **Leon Vita Finzi-Contini**, who was born in 1776, and who – 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 is a – was a relative in some other way, is a good friend, is a professor of economics in – in – 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 it – the family, they – I mean –

Q: In what way?

A: They – they had dealings with the – 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 – and – but part of that is the reason why the name **Finzi-Contini** is one that gets used.

Q: Well, that was – I mean, of course, that's one of the questions that I was going to ask later, but I'll ask it now, is – is of course the movie, that was ever –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you know, so very popular, "**The Garden of the Finzi-Continis**."

A: So let me first say something about my father.

Q: Yes.

A: 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. **Caesar Roff**(ph) says it's so. The Jewish Encyclopedia of 1900 says it's so. There were – when the Romans conquered a place, they tended to bring princes, kings and so on in their trials. When the conquered **Palestine**, they brought judges, priests and elders. We were the elders. **Zekanym**(ph).

Q: I'll tell you, I have – I'm sorry to interrupt. I have never met somebody who could trace his family back –

A: Well –

Q: – more than 200 years.

A: Yeah.

Q: Never mind 2,000.

A: Well, so they came as, in the tribe – I – I must say, I haven't seen anybody – I went to the Arch of **Titus**, nobody looks like my great-uncle, carrying the menorah, but there it is. Anyway, they came as – 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 they set up shop as bankers, moneylenders, and as rabbis of the Italian rite. Because we are Italkim; we are not Sephardic, we are not Ashkenazim, we are people who were there before the diaspora, and in **Italy**, and in **Israel –** there's a synagogue in **Israel** which is the Italian one. Obvious 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 popes meant 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 – but the – the legend is that the way we got into law teaching was because of this. Anyway, so –

Q: How did you learn of this?

A: Oh, this is all family tales and stories that ha – have been, and I just enjoy them. Well, anyway, that line is one which was very self-important, for obvious reasons.

Q: Yeah.

A: And my grandmother married my grandfather, this – 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. My – I said to my mother – my mother said aristocracy, I said decadence, she said it's the same thing, **Guido**. And there it is. Okay. Now.

Q: A child would say that to his mother.

A: Let me then take my father's family, and – 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 – 2500. 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 when – 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 **Le Calabria**. Today **Calabria** is just the toe. But in **Ferrara**, at the time, they called everything from **Rome** south, **Le Calabria**. And said where two people came, bought lands – because **Ferrara** was very open to Jews. I'll show you some pictures **[indecipherable]**. And because they came from **Le Calabria** and there were two of them, we called them **Calabrese**, which means people from **Calabria**. **Calabrese** with an **e**, meaning person, is quite a common name in the south. **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 and **e** – not always, but often is – with an **e**, almost never.

Q: Never.

A: We – 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 it – they were Italkim, 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 – again, the family is all over. One of them, **Sergio Minerbi** is in **Israel** and was the ambassador of **Israel** to the unite – to **Europe**, and – and at one point to the Vatican, which he didn't much like. But he – anyway, this family is a major, major family, and had – and members of the family still do – had houses – and I'll show you on the map of **Ferrara** afterwards, where – 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 –

Q: **Minerbi**? In the **Minerbi** family house?

A: 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 –

Q: Yeah.

A: – in my father's family's house? Nobody knows this, but I do.

Q: Tell me.

A: And the story, I'm sure, is this. His patron's younger sister, my mother's – my father's first cousin –

Q: And his father's first cousin's name was?

A: **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 our – my parents' wedding, married. So that it was not surprising that he would think, in this guy's house, of a younger – near his age, not his age, person named **Finzi-Contini**. And then, the fact that **Finzi-Contini** connoted all sorts of things, pleased him. Now –

Q: Did he have to get permission?

A: – the story – well, there's the – the story is – bu – 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 some happened to one, some happened to another, and – 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 –

Q: **Minerbi** –

A: – who died a couple of years ago.

Q: Okay.

A: And who was my age, and very close. We found a letter that he had not particularly seen, because he – he never talked about – and he would have, we've talked about the thing, to his father, my uncle.

Q: From **Barani**(ph)?

A: From **Bassani**.

Q: **Bassani**, excuse me.

A: 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 the story – nobody knows this, but it's so – and I'm – that he sort of asked for permission. And that's how that came to.

Q: Did your mother fa – did you find tha – were you able to tell your mother this?

A: No, my mother was long since dead.

Q: It went pa – okay.

A: I just learned this two years ago, when my cousin died.

Q: Okay.

A: My mother made peace with **Bassani**. It was an intere – that's another story, that is really to decide, but –

Q: Well, let's come – I mean, I do want to discuss the –

A: Yeah.

Q: – "**The Garden of the Finzi-Continis**," as a movie, as a work of art, as something that is –

A: And as – also as – yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because where it – there are interesting questions about that. **Bassani** himself didn't like the movie for certain reasons.

Q: Oh, did he? Okay.

A: 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 on. So –

Q: So let's – 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 –

A: That's right.

Q: – and then –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you know, the – the taking of that story –

A: Yeah, it –

Q: – and sometimes twisting or changing.

A: That's right. Yeah.

Q: I am – 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.

A: Yes.

Q: I mean, that is unusual in itself

A: Yes.

Q: And number two, that there is no assimilation. And yet –

A: No, there's no –

Q: No assimilation. We have two millennia.

A: Well, that is interesting too, because at – at any number of times, in the history of this **Zekanym**(ph), **Delvecchio**(ph), **DeLugo**(ph) 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, **Ekakoh**(ph), **Solomone**(ph),

Abramo(ph), and so on. So that I think – and 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 no – my – it's 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.

Q: To Judaism?

A: What?

Q: To Judaism?

A: Yeah. And her daughter, **Ginevra**(ph) **Finzi-Contini Gilmore** is going to have her Bat Mitzvah this coming June. So – and the same is true of some branches in **Italy**. It's just a very complicated tale.

Q: It is. It is, and it is very different from – from both the history of Jews in other countries, and their lives –

A: Yes, yes.

Q: – in these other countries, and their identities in these other countries.

A: Yes.

Q: Because as a –

A: Which has something to do with what happened to us when we came here, but that's another – yeah.

Q: Yeah, we'll – we'll – we'll come there. So, tell me a – are we at noontime yet?

A: We're fine, no.

Q: Okay, we have a bit of time.

A: They're going to tell us.

Q: Okay. So tell me a little bit about this, about – well, let's start with some factual things. Your mother, did she have siblings?

A: She had three siblings. She was the eldest.

Q: Okay, **Bianca**.

A: Then her – the second, **Bruna**(ph) **Finzi-Contini** was the one who married the **Minerbi**.

Q: Okay.

A: The third, **Marcella**(ph), married a man named **Guido Tedeschi**, who was of a very, very wealthy old, very Jewish family of **Bologna**.

Q: Okay.

A: And their story, they ended up going to **Brazil**, and their story is another interesting story, why they went to **Brazil**, and it's part of our story of coming. And then a younger brother, **Renato**(ph), 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.

Q: Okay, so to it – so there was bianc – yeah.

A: And my father's family, instead, were free. My father was the youngest, he had an older sister **Renata**, who was one of the founders of clinical psychology. She fled to **America** –

Q: Okay.

A: – too. Then **Cecilia**(ph), who – neither were married. She stayed in **Italy**, and looked after my grandmother, and did some quite courageous and remarkable things during the war.

Q: Okay.

A: And after the war, she came and joined us, but both are buried in the Jewish cemetery in **Ferrara**.

Q: And your father's name is?

A: **Massimo**.

Q: **Massimo**. So, he was the youngest of three.

A: Yeah.

Q: And he had two elder sisters.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And your mother ha – was the oldest of four.

A: Four.

Q: And how –

A: She had two younger brothers and one younger sister.

Q: Sister, okay. Why is it that your mother eith – was it herself, or her parents who converted to Catholicism?

A: 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 a not a believer in any way, though he wanted, and we'll talk about that, to be buried in the Jewish cemetery in **Ferrara**, and he – 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 thought – 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'm quite sure, for a very odd reason. She was a highly intellectual woman, **PhD** in **Italy**, **PhD** here. In some ways, a feminist. And 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, non-believers. I mean, you know, 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. But 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 –

Q: She didn't have choices.

A: – it's a little ironical today.

Q: Yeah.

A: She became Catholic because this was a way to practice, because she didn't feel you could just be religious, and not.

Q: And not associated with something.

A: That's right. And – and my father respected that in a way that he would not have respected – he didn't like it.

Q: Yeah.

A: 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.

Q: Well –

A: That is

Q: – there are fou – the foundations are the same –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you know? In the end of the day, this is the foundation of western civilization.

A: That's right. And it's – it's sort of interesting to me, that feeling. Now, as I say, now, she had a – 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 –

Q: The Jewish –

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

Q: You know, it is so – there are ironies that are abounding, because there's – there is some assimilation, there is intermarriage, and yet there's still a distinct identity –

A: That's right.

Q: – that goes on for centuries.

A: That's exactly.

Q: And there – they're sort of like you – you can't say there are sim – people are assimilated, and you can't say they're not. You know, you – it's –

A: Yeah, it – they are – we – 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 –

Q: Anything else.

A: – fundamental conflict.

Q: Yeah. Your mother then, had she converted before your birth?

A: No, after my birth.

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

A: No, I don't exactly.

Q: Okay.

A: 1930s, early 30s –

Q: Before the racial laws?

A: Yes, definitely before the racial laws.

Q: And you say you were brought up Catholic?

A: I was brought up Catholic, yeah.

Q: And – and –

A: Well, I was not – I was not baptized –

Q: Okay.

A: – until the racial laws.

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

A: Yeah, five, six, yeah

Q: Years old, yeah. Did you go to communion, did you go to catechism, did you – you know, was this practicing?

A: Well, until – I am now a practicing Catholic, but that – and I am also very Jewish, and – but that didn't happen until – until college. And this was obvious growing up, I was – you know, I was baptized. I never went to communion, because my father – you know, that – so the two just kept say – keep thinking about it.

Q: Okay. My question is more, did you – did you go – did you – what's the word, it's so – it's so basic – by practicing, does it – did you go every Sunday to mass, did you –

A: I – I go every Sunday to mass.

Q: Yeah. When you were younger.

A: No. No, no, no.

Q: No, no.

A: Never.

Q: So this is now.

A: Never, never, never, never.

Q: Okay.

A: Not until this happened, when I was studying in **England**.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: A completely different thing.

Q: Okay.

A: But I was brought up with a mother who was religious, Catholic, very liberal, for – I think that –

Q: There is that strain, within Catholicism.

A: Yeah, yeah. 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 – I insisted, when I put my name in for a freshman at – you know, **Guido Calabresi**, son of **Massimo Calabresi** and **Bianca Finzi-Contini**, because the name, it wasn't the book or the thing then, but the name **Finzi** is a classic Italian Jewish name. So that anybody who knows anybody sees **Finzi**, says Jewish. So it – I was conscious enough of that, while being –

Q: When you say when you put your name in a – a –

A: Oh well, i-in the yearbook, in the freshman yearbook, where you have – you say who you are, and what your parents, I could have put **Massimo** and **Bianca Calabresi**. But instead, I put –

Q: And this would have been in the **United States** already?

A: In 1949.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah

Q: Okay. Did – did you have brothers and sisters?

A: I had an older brother.

Q: Okay. His name?

A: Who – his name is **Paolo**. He – 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, it had more to do with what happened when we first came. In that sense became more – slightly more conformist, and he was known as **Paul**. He became chief of medicine at **Brown**, and was one of the fen – founders of cancer chemotherapy.

Q: Wow. Wow. Let's go back now –

A: Yeah.

Q: – to – I mean, I may have more questions –

A: Yes, of course.

Q: – and more stories about family history, cause it's just fascin – truly. I'm not saying this –

A: Well, it is unusual.

Q: It is fascinating.

A: Which is –

Q: It's fascinating.

A: Yeah, yeah.

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

A: I was born at home.

Q: Okay, in a –

A: We were very wealthy. And our house was a very fan – you know, it's a very elegant apartment, and – and then our house, as I say, is the to –

Q: Now the Turkish embassy.

A: – townhouse that – and we had a great deal of help. I – my brother and I never thought of ourselves as being rich. You know, 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 anti-fascist. He was first beaten and jailed in 1924, when he was a student in **Florence**.

Q: Studying what?

A: 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 a – probably the wealthiest family in **Ferrara**, certainly the wealthiest Jewish family in **Ferrara**, of great landowners. They owned huge amounts of land. To the fascists, in a small town like **Ferrara**, having this pair, who were fiercely anti-fascist, 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'll jail you. So my par – 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've gotten yourself a real headache, because **Ettare**(ph) **Calabresi** – my grandfather's name – likes to talk, causes trouble, has re – millions to support his trouble, and he is going to cause you – my grandfather went away. My father became actively anti-fascist, and part of a small group of democrats with a small **d**,

who were anti-fascist. 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 libertà**." And on his grave it says, in Italian, faithful to justice and liberty, which is a pun, both – he was, as I say, va – was very, very active. When it c-came clear that **Mussolini** wouldn't fall, that they couldn't bring him down, in the late 20s, early 30s, my father wanted to leave.

Q: **Italy**?

A: 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 anti-fascists – they were named **Rosselli**, and everywhere in **Italy** you'll find a square or a boulevard named **Fratelli Rosselli**, **Roselli** brothers, were murdered by the fascists. So my f – and they were my father's closest friends. And my aunt, the one who came, were just very close friends. So 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.

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

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know the circumstances of that?

A: 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 best commencement talks, as published somewhere, because it was choices.

Q: Yeah.

A: And one of the stories is how my father chose to become an active anti-fascist. And I asked him, and he said, everybody talks about the banality of evil, no one talks about the banality of good, and it is equally – well, 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 –

Q: And you're talking now in your father's voice.

A: Yes.

Q: **Massimo** is saying I was in a –

A: Yeah, that's right. This is 1924 – '23, '24, something like that, '24. And he – they kicked out the president, and my father said – and they put in his place, one of our teachers, professor, I don't know, of anatomy of physiology or something. Was

a nice man, we liked. And wasn't particularly fascist, but was weak. So but – ah, 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. Well, him just 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 some – 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, and they **[indecipherable]** the university, and show ourselves bloody, to scare our – our parents would have 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 bit – 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 anti-fascist. I mean, that was it. And he then did other things. On the anniversary, he and my aunts – and this been written up recently – on the anniversary of the murder of the leader of the anti-fascists, **Matteotti**, on the first anniversary they went to put a big crown of flowers at **Garibaldi's** memori – thing, and the fascists picked them up again and tossed them in jail, and that's how that happened.

Q: So in some ways they made him an anti-fascist.

A: Yes

Q: He had the inclination –

A: He said – you know, there were many people who were anti-fascist, but the difference was between those who became actively, and that became that. Now, you know, again, in terms of choices and non-choices, which is what I say in that, fast-forward to 1963, and the march on **Washington** –

Q: Oh yeah.

A: – 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, everybody was scared. And I had a one year old child, **Bianca**, **Jonathan's** wife, and I thought gee, you know, 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 the phone, and he said, oh, I'm going to **Washington** this weekend. And I said, why? And he said, I'm going to the march. And I – 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. 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 the speeches now one talks of, but just walking with thousands of people, holding hands, and so on. And it made a big difference to me, and I know that my father was creating a non-choice for me, as he had done.

Q: Wow. I am it – wonderful tok – topic for young college students, graduates, because –

A: Yes.

Q: – it's the same age that they are.

A: Yeah.

Q: You know? It is, in essence a small step, and what that small step of non-applauding –

A: That's right, that's right.

Q: – truly meant.

A: It just – it could be a – a small step which then leads, and if you then are true to yourself.

Q: Yeah.

A: So – 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, you know, this is more hearsay, that what happened was that it was illegal to leave **Italy** permanently. Fascist, you know, dictatorial countries don't want people to leave. But you could get out if you had a fellowship for a year, you know, 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 gins – **Pahm**(ph) **Ginzburg**, **Natalia Ginzburg's** father, the father of the author.

Q: **Natalya**(ph) **Ginsberg**(ph) from the **Soviet Union Ginsberg**(ph)?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: **Natalia Ginzburg**, the – who is the author of the – of some books called "**Lessico Famigliare**," a very **[indecipherable]** Italian.

Q: Okay, a different **Natalia**.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: He was quite a well-known professor, and had friends in the **United States**, and he got a foundation, the **Dazien**(ph) foundation, connected with the **Beth Israel**, with the head of the **Beth Israel**, to give some money to **Yale**, to invite my father to come for a fellowship.

Q: Now we hadn't asked you yet, what was your fa – when you were born, what was your father doing? What was his profession?

A: My father was a – was a cardiologist.

Q: Okay.

A: And he had studied in mila – in **Florence**, and then had moved to **Milan**, where the head of card – of medicine was a man named **Cesa-Bianchi**, who was actually very Catholic, very friend of the Pope **Pius** the 11th, and very anti-fascist, and had gathered a group of people around him, who were anti-fascist. And my father was his right hand, and – and – 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.

Q: Is that encyclical still written, available?

A: It was th – it never got out.

Q: No.

A: Probably **Oliver La Farge** here, had something – a – a great deal to do with it. He was a man who did much interracial things. The new pope, of course, was **Pius** the 12th, and he wou – issued an encyclical under the same name, that did nothing. My father – actually, it was called – the pope was from **Milan** and was friends with 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 it – 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.

Q: Oh my.

A: But it was my father who saw him.

Q: Oh my.

A: And said he was very ill.

Q: Yeah.

A: But then he lived some more time, and how he died, don't know. Who knows?

Q: Oh. Oh my.

A: So.

Q: You – your mother was also involved in fa – anti-fascist activities, is that so?

A: My mother was – she was very much with my father –

Q: Okay.

A: – in these things, and very much agreed with him in it. Many members of the family were quieter.

Q: Can we stop for a second?

A: It's noon.

Q: It's noontime, okay. **[break]** So, before the break, we were talking about those early attacks –

A: Anti-fascist times of my –

Q: The – you know your part – your father in particular, his desire to leave **Italy**, his active anti-fascist 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 the story to a very personal perspective, and that is you as a little boy.

A: Yes.

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

A: Yeah. So, my memories of growing up in **Milan** are memories of a quiet childhood, going to school there, going on vacation –

Q: Public school?

A: – often. Vacation was a kind of complicated thing for families like ours. In June, one – I'm sorry, in July, one went to the seashore for a month. In August one went to the mountains, and in September, one went to, in this case my mother's parents' villa outside **Bologna**. And the father of the family would join you for a m – on weekends, and the month that he took vacation. And my father, being a mountain climber, would join us in August, when we usually would go in the **Dolomites**, sometimes in **Va-Val d'Aoste**, but usually the **Dolomites**, and almost always, the whole family would manage to go, cousins, aunts, uncles, to the same place. I mean, arranging where you went, you would rent houses in someplace on the shore, and everybody would go there. And one year you'd be in the **Adriatic**, another the **Mediterranean**, 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 anti-fascist, did not make a point of saying this to us, especially because my father was determined to leave, and he thought there will 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 were at school, public school, because in **Italy** everybody went to public school, unless you were 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 where they already marched with rifles, with guns.

Q: Really? And eight and nine year old boys?

A: Yes, yes, which may say something about my attitude about guns. And said, we're not gonna march. This is ridiculous, children with guns shouldn't march, this is all so – where he got that, I do not know.

Q: He told his teachers?

A: 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 gonna 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. It was, I failed fascist behavior, **comportomento fascista**, and it's right there on my report card, for –

Q: I mean, if there's a badge of honor, there it is.

A: Yeah, there it is. So, this is by way of saying that there was this funny, underlying kind of a thing of – that we may have known more, or at least my brother, who was just eight, nine – he was two and a half years older than – than I, eight at that time. We – that we kind of were there, and you know. Now, you asked in ab – ab – we were talking about **Ferrara**, and the house there –

Q: Yes, I wanted to find about **Ferrara** and – yeah.

A: I have no recollection of going to that house.

Q: The house that belonged to your –

A: To my father's first cousin. At that time, it belonged to his uncle –

Q: Right.

A: – 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**.

Q: Passover?

A: Easter. **Pesach**. I don't know, I mean, we didn't celebrate either, and my grandparents didn't celebrate either, but it was that time of year, and it's interesting that the word for Easter in Italian is **Pasqua**, which is both **Pesach** and Easter, and that we would always go, wherein **Florence** was in flower by then, while **Milan** was likely to be foggy, so it – 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 and so forth. These are wonderful memories of that – the house, as storied 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**.

Q: Because they had been kicked out.

A: And – 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 on my father's family – my mother's family was in **Bologna** – but we didn't go there, I'm quite sure, because my father – my grandfather couldn't go there. And I know that once he went, because there was a funeral of a friend, and he thought he snuck in, and they arrested him. He – we were rich enough so that none of that mattered.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, 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 –

Q: Cause of that.

A: – my branch had been exiled from there.

Q: But there was other branches of the family that could stay –

A: Of course, because they –

Q: They weren't as wealthy.

A: They were wealthy, they were there, and they were, of course, mildly anti-fascist, or anti-fascist, 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, was a cousin who – in whose house, when the garden was written, the son of the then proprietor, but who was already – he had studied agriculture because he was managing all these lands, which were bef –

Q: Let's remind us of his name, this –

A: **Beppe Minerbi**.

Q: **Pepe**(ph) **Minerbi**, mm-hm.

A: The story is told –

Q: Yeah.

A: – by my – my father told me, that in the 1930s, he was a – 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, you know, philosophically anti-fascist, but hadn't done – he had always argued with my father, my father shouldn't have gotten into trouble. He, stubborn, but is – 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 –

Q: Goes to the farmers.

A: – 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. He didn't – you know, that was just an isolated –

Q: Right.

A: – incident, but it shows both – how most people were kind of going along, even if they were anti-fascist in a mild way. And so that's what the people who were in **Ferrara** did. They were not – they were anti-fascist, 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.

Q: But also on a point, you know, at the point where your father had said, I am not going to applaud, your uncle – he would have been your great-uncle, **Pepe**(ph)?

A: **Beppe** was his cousin.

Q: Was his cousin, so he would have been your –

A: He was – well, he's a cousin, first cousin.

Q: He's cousin for you.

A: He was the son of my great-uncle.

Q: Okay.

A: And he was in **Ferrara**, he was studying in **Ferrara**, the –

Q: 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.

A: That's right. And that happened many, many years later. But it was – it would have been, had that happened earlier, something which could have led him to be like my father.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: 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**.

Q: Right.

A: 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.

Q: Right.

A: All nonsense, you know, 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 anti-fascist, 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 –

Q: Bring it to the –

A: – move it near the top. He – neither of these people – this – this person didn't have the stamp. Finally, 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 ni – 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 were being – we could be kicked out. But the importance of a fellowship is that it gave us a way of coming into the **United States**. Because **United States** wasn't accepting people.

Q: Now, do you – did your parents ever tell you about any experiences they might have had with the **U**.**S**. officials in **Italy**, to be able to come to the **U**.**S**.?

A: We were never told that. I do know that with this invitation to go, my father went and gave a lecture in **Brussels**.

Q: Okay.

A: And there 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.

Q: Everything was in **Italy**.

A: Everything was in **Italy**, because that was the law, and they abided by it, even though they were anti-fascist. But these persons, and interesting was a long term story about that, about when we arrived, had signed their affidavit. So with that, since the Italian quota was not being met, because you couldn't leave **Italy** if you were – unless you were Jewish and being kicked out. So it was relatively easy for us, with this invitation, and with these, to get permission –

Q: From the Americans.

A: – from the Americans. So we left **Italy** with – as if we were going for a term –

Q: Let's stop –

A: – and came to **America**, when we landed, as if we were with regular immigration papers.

Q: Okay. 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 –

A: Yes.

Q: – for just a term. According to the American bureaucracy, you were immigrating to the compa – country.

A: Because we had both kinds of papers.

Q: Papers. Now, somewhere I read that your leaving **Italy** was not such a straightforward thing, either.

A: Well –

Q: That it was one ship, and then another ship.

A: Yeah. 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 okay. And in some ways, well, 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.

Q: 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 –

A: Okay.

Q: – and what year they were passed.

A: 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, whether from – not so much from his point of view, he was a nasty man, but that – 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 at that time.

Q: This is your aunt who taught psychology?

A: This is my aunt who taught psychology. And so they – you know, 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. Now, 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 you know, all that 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 Jesuit schools, because they weren't the public schools.

Q: What about you and your brother?

A: We were still, that year, we were still in public schools. So at 1938, we were still in public school. The matter is more complicated because – and this is something I hadn't real – realized, but it explains 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.

Q: Okay.

A: And you could continue owning property. Now, there might be difficulties and so on, but you could. My mother's father was born of a Catholic mother, who died when he was born.

Q: Right, in childbirth.

A: At that point, he converted to Catholicism, with the help of a Dominican who was very anti-fascist –

Q: So as an o – as a grown man, he converted.

A: As a grown man in 1938.

Q: Okay.

A: With the help of a man who was a very important Dominican, fiercely anti-fascist, fought with the partisans later. His name was **Patrick Azatti**(ph), I knew him, I met him after the war, he was a great man. He cou – 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 the 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.

Q: Did they all convert after he did?

A: They all converted. Some converted and it took, and they remained Catholic. Some converted and it didn't, because they were just converting for v – purposes.

Q: Right.

A: My grandfather actually, because of this memory of his mother whom he never knew, I think actually converted. He died in 1941, and –

Q: Mm-hm. Of natural causes?

A: Of natural causes, of cancer, and – and so, you know, it was in – but that meant that the properties remained in our names.

Q: Mother's – yeah.

A: In that side of the family. In my father's side of the family, the **Calabresi**, there was my father and my two aunts. My mother – or, 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 be, but partly because my grandfather was saying, this way they will be able to own property. Because again, half, half, half, half –

Q: Yeah.

A: – 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.

Q: So **Pepe**(ph) –

A: My – **Beppe**, his older brother **Julio**, oldest daughter **Ginevra**, and youngest daughter **Fernanda**. **Beppe** and **Julio** each had married Catholic women. **Fernanda**, the youngest, had married my mother's brother, who through this series of tricks, was also Catholic. Now, their granddaughter, one of them – two of them have converted back to Judaism, and so – so it – it's all –

Q: It gets confusing.

A: It gets confusing.

Q: Yeah.

A: **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 a-and of course, none of this matters after 1943.

Q: Yeah.

A: 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.

Q: Survive and still keep some of your assets.

A: Keep your assets, be able to study. My father couldn't, and his sister, who would, even if they converted would do no good, because of course, racially, they didn't have a Catholic ancestors, but anyway, they wouldn't, because they didn't want to.

Q: Yeah.

A: Couldn't teach. Couldn't be – so it – there were all sorts of restrictions, and they were horrible. On the other hand, my mother's parents thought we'd be able – what a – 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.

Q: It lends logic to their point of view.

A: Of course. Of course, completely logical, completely logical.

Q: Yeah.

A: 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 we go some strange place like that. So, my mother and father agree that my father will come to **America** and see – and to **Yale**, and see 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, well, they had no choice in the matter – my mother's – but that was my mother, kind of. What happens is that by now, it is August of 1939.

Q: Oh my.

A: It is – 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 a great Italian ocean liners. My mother is seeing him off.

Q: In **Genoa**.

A: In **Genoa**. My brother and I are at **Cortina d'Ampezzo** in the **Dolomites**, it's a great resort there, on that – near –

Q: August, it's when – it's – yeah.

A: – near the Austrian border –

Q: Okay.

A: – with my mother's parents. I've gone to bed, and I actually said a prayer – I mean, I've just been baptized, I just **[indecipherable]**

Q: Do you remember your baptism?

A: I – I remember, yeah, I remember that it was **Don Angelo**, it was a country priest at – near my mother's family's villa outside **Bologna**, and this was arranged

by this great **Patrick Azatti**(ph), but it was just a local priest who talked to my brother and me a little bit, and we da – we were baptized. We didn't quite know what **[indecipherable]** but, you know. 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 that it might sail tomorrow. Somebody in **Rome** has told us if it – war is breaking out. If a 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.

Q: So your mother ha – gets this phone call from **Rome**.

A: Got it – I mean, the ship didn't sail, she called somebody in **Rome**, or my father called somebody in **Rome**.

Q: Yeah, right.

A: Found out –

Q: The circumst –

A: – what was going on. Told her parents, bring the children, we may sail tomorrow.

Q: Wow.

A: 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.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: You couldn't bring money out, but at least –

Q: He had clothes.

A: – so he wouldn't co – so he was – had all his clothes. Our clothes, no. I mean, everything in wardrobe rooms gets dumped into trunks, and what was in wardrobe rooms wasn't what you would use every day. So – but we found our diapers there, which were made into sheets for examining beds for my father here, because you couldn't affo – anyway, and my grandparents are told to bring **Paul** and me to **Genoa**. I remember the trip perfectly –

Q: Tell me.

A: – because we couldn't get a sleeper –

Q: You were going by train, yes.

A: – that late. We took the train. My grandfather had a chauffeur, but he wouldn't have had him up in the mountains, he had a chauffeur at the – at – at his villa, an- and there – so we – with our nanny, the 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 th-the way it was done, polite, children **[indecipherable]**. 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 announced we were going to **America**. My mother's parents are sitting there with their hands on their canes, looking like death.

Q: Oh.

A: 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 – okay, so we get to **Genoa**, with our nanny trying to keep us going, and the ship didn't sail.

Q: The second ship.

A: The same ship –

Q: The same ship, but it does si –

A: – that was supposed to shi – sail –

Q: It doesn't sail.

A: – it didn't sh – be – the engine – it wasn't engine trouble at all, so – 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 ca – 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 were – so my mother's parents, my mother and I, my brother, all go to this place outside **Bologna**.

Q: And about how – what kind of distance between that **Genoa** would it have been?

A: Between **Boston** and pen – **Philadelphia**, something like that.

Q: Okay, good four, five hours.

A: Yeah.

Q: Something like that.

A: Mean it's long –

Q: Yeah.

A: – longish 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 kind of –

Q: And all of this is August 1939?

A: This is August '39, end of August '39. And all sorts of backs and forths. 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.

Q: That's your father saying that.

A: 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 –

Q: Or the war has started.

A: – very end of August.

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't know the exact date.

Q: September first.

A: I'm listening on a earphone radio, and I hear that the **Rex**, **r-e-x King**, the ship that appears in the movie "**Amarcord**," in the distance, with great –

Q: **Fellini**?

A: – th-the – the great ship of the Italian lines, that it won the blue ribbon for going across fastest **[indecipherable]** is sailing on a – on September eighth. 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 the war until June of 1940, when they attacked **France**. The hand, **Roosevelt** says, that has held the dagger, has plunged it into the back of its friend. So – so **Italy** is not joining, the ship is sailing. I turned to say this

to my mother, in this wonderful villa, which my grandfather, who was old ha – fashioned, had all things lit by lamp, kerosene lamps, you know, things – all these lights, I think flashing **[indecipherable]**. I turned to say to her – there makes a 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.

Q: With the diapers.

A: With the diapers and everything else.

Q: Okay.

A: So we turned right around, unopened, go to **Genoa**, and on the eighth of September, leave.

Q: Wow.

A: All four of us.

Q: Wow.

A: On the ship.

Q: But what a nerve-wracking month that must have been.

A: The – 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 16th, 1939, a Saturday, having had a wonderful trip, because you –

Q: I want to hear about it.

A: Well, you know, a 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.

Q: So this is September '39, first semester.

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

Q: Didn't happen.

A: It didn't happen. The fellowship doesn't begin til January.

Q: Okay, at this point – excuse me.

A: And that is – 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.

Q: Oh my.

A: And the fellowship not to begin.

Q: 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.

A: Yeah.

Q: I want to – before we do that, though, I'd like to go back to **Italy** and talk about the relatives who stayed.

A: Yes.

Q: And then, what happened to them.

A: Yes. So, let's go back –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and notice that almost everybody stayed.

Q: Yes.

A: Not everybody. My mother's sister –

Q: Okay.

A: – left before we did. Why?

Q: Yeah, why?

A: 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 13, 14, something. 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 Paolo**, **Brazil**.

Q: **Brazil**.

A: The head where all the Italian community and finances were, wonderful position for a young –

Q: Yeah.

A: – diplomat. And so my uncle, my aunt's husband, grew up in **Brazil**, with this diplomatic family.

Q: Can you ask me – can you tell me, **Tedeschi**, is that a Jewish family, or not?

A: Jewish, Jewish.

Q: Jewish, okay.

A: Jewish.

Q: So he could join the diplomatic service?

A: Oh yes, all this, you know, I mean, you know, **Italy**, 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 **[indecipherable]**

somebody or other, who is clearly Jewish. The fir – first mayor of **Rome**, after the unification of **Italy** is somebody named **Nathan**, actually related to the **Rosselli** brothers, whom I talked about before.

Q: Right.

A: The chief justice of **Italy**, of the Court of **Cassation**, in the early days of fascism is a man named **Mortada**(ph), who is Jewish, who tries to use, what in **America** would be judicial review to strike down fascist decrees, but there's no tradition of it, and so it fails. And Jews are – 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 Ashkenazim, because **Tedeschi** means German, it means deutsche, it's the name Ashkenazi. So if you see somebody, the name **Tedeschi** often is Jewish in **Italy**, and it meant –

Q: German.

A: – deutsche. Ashkenazi.

Q: Mm-hm, deutsche.

A: But his mother's family, instead was Italkim and very fancy.

Q: Okay.

A: 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,

you know, right kind of families, and so on, and they get married. He is a ch- chemist, and they are – she is mildly actively anti-fascist, he is not. He is of this family that was too conservative, and so on. Come the racial laws, he's insulted. You know, 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 fact, the head of a community there, of a whole Italian financial community in **Sao Paolo**, which is the center of Italian business in – so he and his wife, my aunt, and two sons, go off to **Brazil**.

Q: And this would be in 30 – early '39?

A: Thirty-s – '38.

Q: Still '38?

A: They almost immedi – '38, maybe beginning of '39, but you know, almost immediately for him it's not an issue of anything else. From the moment there are racial laws, he has all these friends there –

Q: Sure.

A: – any number of ways, goes, and they've – that family has lived in **Brazil** ever since.

Q: So that's Mama's one sister.

A: One sister.

Q: What about –

A: 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 the – my fa – 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.

Q: What is his name?

A: His name was **Giorgio Del Vecchio**, **Del Vecchio** meaning **Zekanym**(ph), 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 the – was needed now. Why? Because he was a fascist. All the anti-fascists were formalists, 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 with 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**.

Q: And he does?

A: And he does. And he goes there, and he becomes the founder, in 1948, of the Hebrew University Law School, and the teacher of everybody there; **Aram Barak**(ph), **Yitzhak Englard**, and so on.

Q: What was his name?

A: Also, strangely enough, **Guido Tedeschi**. **Guy Tedeschi**, because his father was Ashkenazi, his mother was **Del Vecchio**. 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, **Ava Dzemorani**(ph), and – who, his family started the first newspaper in **Italy**, my relatives, too. And anyway, we just – 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, on the 110th anniversary of his birth, with all the people from **Israel**; **Englard**, **Arak**(ph), all these people coming, and who were his students, and all other people in **Italy** celebrating this great scholar, who had gone. So he left. But he was a cousin, I mean –

Q: Sure, yeah.

A: – is a double second cousin, but cousin. My aunt left and went to **Brazil**, and we went to **America**, mainly because we were anti-fascist. Everybody else stayed.

Q: What happened to them?

A: Everybody survived.

Q: How?

A: That is a series of stories which is the book that I am writing. And the stories are wonderful, and they are – they're interesting in themselves. But the most interesting part of them are the motives of the people who saved them, in many instances risking their lives to save them. And the people who saved 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 pop – Pope **Paul** the sixth, 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 of – I told you of the fascist, great scholar and so on, who walks into the Vatican, and – which was not open to **[indecipherable]** Jews. But he walks in, perfectly fine, continues his studies there. His double first cousin, my great-uncle, who had been president of a **Bocconi** University of **Milan**, economist **Gustavo Del Vecchio**, great economist, kicked out by the fascists, because he was anti-fascist. 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 is ready to send him back, he takes out a letter from **Einaudi**, who later becomes president of **Italy**, and who was his great pal, who was 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, anti-fascist, after the war he comes back, becomes a cabinet minister in a postwar government. When one is up, the other is down. Analogous thing of how they were saved. Funny.

Q: What does this – yeah.

A: O-Others just – a-and I'll tell you just one story, it's not –

Q: Oh please.

A: – there are others that are more dramatic, but longer. My great-grandmother; my mother's mother's mother –

Q: Okay.

A: – a remarkable woman, whom I remember well, because she was old, but alive in – 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 was this great-uncle who went to **Switzerland**, but – because he – he would do what his mother wanted. She was told to convert, she said, **sono un**'**Israelita**, **basta**. I'm an Israelite, enough. She taught me a prayer.

Q: What was it?

A: Which must have been a Jewish prayer.

Q: Do you remember it?

A: I don't remember it.

Q: Aw.

A: 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. And in any case, I'm not let – I'm – she locked the house doors. I – so, but 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 **Apennines** to go back home, and finds that a bomb it has let – 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, so 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, and 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, you know, and said to the German captain, over our dead bodies. They had been taken in. And the German captain looks at it, and realizes that, of course, he could mow them down, but he's probably lose some men, and it would be – and thinks, here's an almost 90 year old person, she's gonna die anyway. It isn't worth it. And goes away.

Q: Amazing.

A: And that's how she survived.

Q: Amazing.

A: 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 tell – just say two other things about that. One, **Beppe's** father, the person whose great house it was, refused to hide.

Q: This is in **Ferrara**?

A: In **Ferrara**.

Q: Yeah.

A: And no one knows why he refused to hide. Some people say that he thought that if he was there and was taken, his children – 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 them.

Q: So this is the **Finzi-Contini** family head

A: This is – the book is being written –

Q: That's right.

A: – under the patronage of this guy's son, and somebody – some people have written – **Sergio Minerbi**, the guy –

Q: That's right.

A: – who has 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 –

Q: Is the –

A: – not hiding, because it – because – in the garden it was because it was beneath them. We don't know –

Q: Okay.

A: – 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 Ms Longest Day**."

Q: I saw that on the internet, I wondered what that was.

A: Yeah. That book was written by my cousin, my double cousin –

Q: Okay.

A: – the one I was telling you about before –

Q: Yeah.

A: – who was a professor of geophysics, but was also a poet and an author. And he wrote this, which is pa – that story's partly fiction. That – how that happened is partly fiction, it was meant to be –

Q: The longest journey, yeah, that longest –

A: – a fiction, at the longest journey.

Q: – journey, yeah.

A: But it's how this guy, who didn't try to hide, was none the less rescued by his chauffeur, who was a **Figaro** type, who could do anything, and did it. So – so that's another. But anyway, these stories are something that when my book comes out, will all be there, all of it. 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** joins the war, my mother's father develops cancer, and he was, as I say, a neurologist, way back. Turns out not to be operable, though probably – don't know why, but it was cancer, but 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.

Q: Wow.

A: My mother first hears that he is sick in a telegram from the family saying that he is dying, in early 1941, before **America** is in the war. **Italy** is in the war now.

Q: Yeah.

A: And saying that he is dying. And so in – actually, she first hears from a telegram of condolences over fa – 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 a panel with me, the other two judges, were ready to say obviously that's so. And I said no, it's not obviously so. Of course it's relevant if the person goes back, and you want to find out why. But I can tell you that 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 can't, you have to look to see why they went back –

Q: The circumstance, yeah.

A: – and so on. So those are a couple of stories. The others survived, as I say, in wonderful, mixed ways, and I –

Q: You know, when you're – this kind of outcome, there are lots of questions, and I understand you've got a book that is in the – in the working, and I, you know, 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.

A: 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 some c-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 a 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 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 that gave the signal, and everybody else went hid, afterwards. So it 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. I mean, sometimes, just humanity. Sometimes – and you know, sometimes the churches hid people. The cardinal archbishop of **Florence** was maybe the only man to vote against **Pius** the 12th **[indecipherable]**. He was much loved by people, and they tell the story, which I repeat in the book, but it isn't my story, but – but 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 – and young men and young nuns, and inevitably people started making love, and the Mother Superior is said, according to the story, that is 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.

Q: It's a lovely story.

A: Which is a lovely story, I mean –

Q: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

A: – you know, this is a story that is told there, and there are squares named after this guy, and so on. So, yeah, you know, sometimes, as I say, it was just humanity. And there are people who – Italian peasants who hid Jews, partisans, anti-fascists, 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. **E tutti figli de mama**, they were all some mother's child. We struggled for them.

Q: Simple, but very profound.

A: And it's a – you know, 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.

Q: You anticipated my next question.

A: 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** has – and by the way, if you said – you know, somebody could say 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 – but there are some figures that give the lie to that, because it's said that about 10,000 Jews from **Croatia**, from the –

Q: Right.

A: Who had been protected when it was Italian territory, and was a whole thing of Germans trying to find out whether these people were really Italians, or from someplace else, or something, but who were not at all Italian, they were – when **Italy** surrendered, fled into **Italy** from **Croatia**. And it's said that of these 10,000 people who fled, who were completely unassimilated, only eight people were taken. So it – people were hidden. And it's – it's something about – and who knows? I mean, you know, 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.

Q: 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 – I've interviewed people who are Jewish survivors from **Germany**, for example, that you just mentioned, or from **Poland**. But I want to speak – stick with **Germany**,

whose families might have been in **Germany**, for two, three hundred 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, you know, 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.

A: Yeah.

Q: Very, very hard to answer, because there was such a profound rejection.

A: Yeah.

Q: 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.

A: Yeah.

Q: And as you're speaking, you know, to ask you what part of you is Italian –

A: A hundred percent. I mean, you know, my – I'm a hundred percent Italian, I am Jewish. I'm a hundred percent 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 on a program, and a kid from **Pakistan** who had grown up in – in **Denmark**, actually, said, you know, that's all very well, but which are

you? And I said, I'm both. And then he said something kind of fun, he said, okay, but whom do your root for when there's a World Cup in soccer? And I –

Q: When the rubber meets the road.

A: Yeah. My answer was automatic. Of course I root for **Italy**. But if it were a world cup in baseball, I'd root for reuta – **United States**. And it's not that the **United States** is better in one than in the other. In the last World Cup, **United States** was 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 **America**, and so of course, I'm a Yankee fan, of baseball. And that's the way that is. And I am in that sense, 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.

Q: He who wanted to leave.

A: He who wanted to leave, but you know, 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 is having a career here, but yeah, you know. 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** at the time. But she thinks if she goes back, people will not take her career seriously, because she is too much this elegant lady, you know, and that – but they're uncertain. So the thing falls, in many ways, on 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, things were not looked after, properties had to be put in other names **[indecipherable]** the **Calabresi** things to survive, because they didn't fit to that category, and so on. So we were not as rich, by any means, as we were before, but we're still. But to go back and be wealthy, was something that we were too American, too egalitarian to conceive of doing.

Q: It made you that, yeah.

A: We had become outsiders, coming to **America**, and to be insiders, as we would have been there, was something that 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 was still there. He drives me around to see the family lands.

Q: This is in the early 50s?

A: 1951. I should have gone in ’50, didn’t go because of the 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, you know, 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, and – little tiny church – and the chauffeur says yes, you own it. Well, 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.

Q: Amazing.

A: We stay. Because they were undecided, I mean, 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** vs Board of Education. All the inequalities of the **United States** are kind of hidden to kids just growing up in a university town. In the meantime –

Q: But it's just over the horizon.

A: Just over the horizon. In the meantime, in **Italy**, 1950, partly due to my great-uncle going to the cabinet and becoming Minister of the Treasury **[indecipherable]** the great Italian miracle of the 50s and 60s, which changes **Italy** into an almost totally middle class society. Today, all these land 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 the right one or not –

Q: Or whether it was, in the end, what eventually happened –

A: That's right.

Q: – in reality or not. You know, it was –

A: Yeah, just say it, yeah.

Q: – the – one of the leitmotifs through your story is irony, and contradiction.

A: That's right, that's right.

Q: You know, this is true, but this also is true.

A: And here is – and here is another contradiction.

Q: Okay.

A: 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 the first governor of the first – 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 if – our bridal 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**.

Q: Oh, oh.

A: Again, the ironies –

Q: Irony.

A: – and contradictions of –

Q: Yeah. 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. You –

A: And as outsiders.

Q: Yes, and as outsiders.

A: Because that's another important point of our coming to **America**, and what that meant.

Q: The – your first days, and first experiences in the **United States**, were not that auspicious.

A: No.

Q: So I would like to learn about that.

A: Yeah. 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.

Q: Okay.

A: 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.

Q: Ah.

A: If you came –

Q: On this fancy ship.

A: – on this fancy ship in fancy things –

Q: Right.

A: – you did not. We land in **New York** –

Q: Okay.

A: – on September 16, a Saturday. And by the way, I was sworn in as a judge on the 55th anniversary, to the day.

Q: Oh, wow.

A: 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, cause we were on **Rhodes** Scholarship selection committee before anybody knew who he was, who swore me in. This old, **New Hampshire** Yankee was in tears. So, we land, and what do you do? Well, from the ship, my father had – 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**.

Q: Now, was he a fascist, too?

A: 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.

Q: What was his name?

A: **Paolo Contini**.

Q: Of the **Finzi-Continis**.

A: He was a distant **Finzi-Contini** relative, but a somewhat closer **Minerbi** relative.

Q: I see.

A: In some –

Q: Okay.

A: – complicated – his **– Finzi-Contini** said that from the first wife of **Leon Vita**, his grandmoth – his mother and my grandmother **Minerbi** were first cousins, so that that was the connection. And he was studying law at **Berkeley**. Having been sent there, he wasn't about to come back.

Q: Well, that's on the other coast.

A: And he stayed, and ultimately became deputy general counsel of the **U**.**N**., and did other things. Ultimately died in a mountain climbing accident. A remarkable man. His daughter is a professor at **UVA**, and –

Q: Who – who wrote you the affidavit that your –

A: This come – I'll come back to that.

Q: Okay.

A: So we send a ni – a – a telegram to him, to say, you're a student; find out from students a cheap, really cheap hotel.

Q: Your parents have nothing.

A: You were right, we have no money.

Q: All you had is trunks with the clothes.

A: Yeah, yeah. And so he sends back a name, the Hotel **Raleigh**, somewhere on the West Side.

Q: **New York City**.

A: 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 dollars.

Q: Ten dollars a month?

A: Ten dollars a month. Four people, with food. Not a nice place, but there we were.

Q: **[indecipherable]** included?

A: Food supposedly included.

Q: Okay.

A: I say supposedly because the food was awful, I found it almost impossible to eat, because I'd always eaten very **[indecipherable]**. I 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? The fellowship doesn't begin til 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 –

Q: Was it as difficult in those days for a doctor, certified by another country?

A: You had to – I mean, you could, with the qualifications he had, take the exams, and if you passed the exams, you would be okay. 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 lang – 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. Have you any autumn apples? When she came, it was how she spoke. But he found the language exam funnily 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 was the examiner in surgery, was one of the first people to do color – 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.

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

A: Not bad. Now, how did we survive –

Q: Yeah, how did you survive?

A: – in these months. It's kind of any number of things. First, and I'll come back to it, my brother and I get put in school on Monday.

Q: You arrive Saturday, on Monday in your school.

A: What do you do with children?

Q: Yeah, that's true.

A: And story of that is another story in itself. The people at the consulate, Italian consulate hear of it – my father, who is just already quite well-known person is there. And a – there's some count or somebody there, who has heart trouble, and asks my father if he will look after him. My father says, I cannot do it for pay, because I'm not licensed. You know, I can give you some advice. And there arrived, 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 –

Q: That he wouldn't have –

A: – that we could be –

Q: Yeah.

A: – without a penny. How do we survive at all?

Q: Yeah.

A: The people who had signed our affidavit, were a man who worked at **Morgan's** bank.

Q: Were they in any way related?

A: What?

Q: Were they –

A: No, no, no, no. He had had business dealings with one of my grandparents, I don't know who.

Q: Okay.

A: And I think his name was **Pereira**(ph). And his wife had been – who I think was Jewish, I don't know, was **Morgan's** – he probably – could not very well have been, at that time. But he – 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 anything. So, my mother goes to call on this lady, and she had jewelry, because we'd 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 – she said, I put on more jewelry than a lady should, and went to have tea, for – 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 dollars, something like that, and that money had not yet arrived. So it had my – this woman says, of course, and writes a check. I do not know the precise amount. The

story sort of is, and I had an impression that it was for 25,000 dollars. This is 1939. She's thinking of people living in the way we lived in **Italy**. So of course. What do you do with a check for 25,000 dollars at a time when you think the banks are still failing? You know, it's true now we look back, the depression was over, but –

Q: Yeah.

A: – 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 émigrés, some Jewish, some not, who were there in **New York**, that 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 –

Q: Nervous.

A: – tight with it as could be. Among these people, by the way, was a woman named **Kalabi**(ph), who became, after the war, the head of the Italian Jewish community in **Italy**. A great, great lady. A-And she was our first babysitter. She came and – one time when my parents actually went to a movie, it was the only time, and she was with us. 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 a thousand dollars a year, which is the equivalent of about 20,000 dollars now.

Q: Okay.

A: You know. Not –

Q: Okay.

A: Perfectly decent.

Q: Okay.

A: A full professor was earning 10,000 dollars, sterling professor 12,500 at the time. So you know, it's about – and we sent the check back, with a note saying, oh, terribly sorry, we found the money arrived, we didn't need to use it, but things happened, so we didn't send – here it is. Fine. End of story? Irony of ironies, no. Fast-forward to 1961.

Q: Wow.

A: **Anne** and I are on our wedding trip. We start in the south, to have a month, which 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 haven't been able to come to our wedding, and so on. And then a month in the mountain, to write. Okay. We arrive in **Rome**, go to a nice hotel, and before we go call on this

great-uncle, who is now – so on, and sister, great-aunt, **Anne** goes to the hairdresser, nearest 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**? 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 her 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.

Q: Of the 25,000 dollar check.

A: Yeah, yeah. Which this woman didn't know. I mean, she didn't know that this money, she thought –

Q: Right.

A: – you know. And so we have tea together, and she learns –

Q: The real circumstance.

A: – what the real circumstance of that, again, irony on ironies.

Q: Amazing.

A: So, Monday we go to school

Q: Right.

A: And there's a public school somewhere there.

Q: You're talking about **New Haven** now, or –

A: No, no.

Q: – still **New York**?

A: Monday.

Q: **New York City**.

A: September 18th, day after – two days after we landed.

Q: Okay.

A: My brother, who is much more on top of things, he is nine years old. I'm six, almost seven.

Q: Young, yeah.

A: I turned seven October 18, and he was born on April fifth, so he had turned nine on April fifth, and who knew 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 ter – the other side, I'm in **America**, jumping back and forth. **[indecipherable] Italy**, **America**.

Q: **Italy**, **America**, **Italy**, **America**.

A: 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, we 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 his – no one could say he was not born here. I, instead, am 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 the 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 **[indecipherable]**. So yes, no and briefcase.

Q: Briefcase.

A: So I get back, but in kindergarten. And –

Q: It's apropos for a lawyer, you know?

A: Not bad.

Q: Yeah.

A: I was doing, in **Italy**, math at a fifth grade level, already. What these children are doing in kindergarten are just tying – 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, or day, or whatever. I come back the hotel and I say to my mother in Italian, **cosa vuol dire**, what does it mean, pull tighter?

Q: Pull tighter.

A: So I believe that I was teased mercilessly.

Q: Oh.

A: I say that – 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 durable, 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 are 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 down to something else, 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, you know, 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 –

Q: Frills.

A: – **[indecipherable]** 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 we – I – I am there, and – and then, how do I – what do I eat? Fortunately, when we have enough money so that we don't have to rely just on the food of this –

Q: Ten dollar a month place.

A: – 10 dollar a month thing, we discover the automats. Which were these wonderful 1930 things, all chrome and shiny and things and you put in 10 cents, and you got something. And this was fun for kids. And I discover 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, are – understand, you know, 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, so you know, nicely, wonderfully elegant. My brother comes home and says, I cannot wear this. My mother said – no one is wearing it, just, I cannot wear anything like this. My mother says, okay. With no money that we have, she understands that this child is – and so we go to some five and dime someplace, to look for something. And she looks at all sorts of parka and things, she said, they're all wearing parkas. And the – whatever, and we look, which fairly costly, and good looking. And he said no, no, no, no. And he then sees something which is a quite ugly, black and green kind of pressed something or other thing, which is very cheap, and he says, that's what everybody's wearing. And my mother says, okay, and buys it for him. Turns to me and says, do you want one? And I said, not on your life. I mean, I'm not fitting in –

Q: Yeah.

A: – anyway, and so on. And –

Q: But he was.

A: What?

Q: But he was.

A: He was.

Q: Yeah.

A: He was. And – and that made him, in some ways, more American. He remained very – he was – you know, he was my idol. He was a wonderful person. He – he just made my life. But he did fit in more. I – I didn't, and I learned English there and at home from my mother, which is why I had the slight accent.

Q: Autumn apples?

A: But, I do have a slight accent. Somehow, you know, we survive, and come January, we go to **New Haven**.

Q: I wanted to ask this question before I forgot. How old were your parents in 1939, when you arrived?

A: My father was born in 1903, he was 36.

Q: So he was relatively young.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And your mother?

A: And my mother was a year older.

Q: Okay.

A: Thirty-seven.

Q: Okay.

A: And my father, by the way, had – 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 ki – electroca-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, 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 will never make it. Will – do 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 be – was a tenured, full professor.

Q: Would that have made a difference?

A: 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, you know, 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**, well 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 in a year or two later, very, very young still, but it was part of, again –

Q: Well, it was – it was part of –

A: – of the history.

Q: Yeah, of the history.

A: 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 a medical school found the letter from the head of the internal medicine, to my father, telling him his fellowship was there, and he could come on such and such a time, and what it was. And sent me this letter. A copy of this letter.

Q: When you say recently, in the past few years or so?

A: What?

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

A: Yeah, about three, four years ago.

Q: Okay.

A: Well, now maybe – you know, could now be 10. But was at some point a dean found it in the files and sent it to me, but just –

Q: Decades after the event.

A: – decades – decades after. It's the most insulting letter you can imagine.

Q: What did it say?

A: It said, somebody has given us money to give you a fellowship, and so we're doing it. Try to get them 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, we've been given the money, but essentially said, we don't really like people like you.

Q: So the welcome mat was really put out.

A: Yeah. Understand that this was a **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 full professor – 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 this was **Yale** college. The law school was different, and had been different forever –

Q: At **Yale**.

A: – to its glory. At **Yale**. It had a Jewish full professors, 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, you know. 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 – but at least it was mildly open, but – 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.

Q: Is this where your father was attached?

A: 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**. You know, it was the way people thought at that time. So I say, the law school was different, we had nothing to do with the medical school, was slightly different, and so on. That's where my father, because a fellowship had – money had been given to them, and maybe the **Dazien**(ph) 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**.

Q: There's a new ethnicity, it's called **Yale**?

A: It wasn't ethnic, 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 found 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

the 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 **[indecipherable]** they said, you know, this is what you are. Now imagine we arrive 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.

Q: Well, you know, one of the –

A: 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, that my father, particularly the – he took, when he would see them, the medical school and so on, as patients, to speaking to them in German, because then they thought, oh then maybe this person sp – speaks an odd dialect of Yiddish. To convince them that actually – you know, because – and the Italian community, almost all southern; very, very poor.

Q: Southern **Italy**.

A: Southern **Italy**. A-Again, very little to do with this. Now, with one odd exception. There were a few left wing anti-fascists 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 anti-fascism, were so thrilled at having somebody who was a –

Q: Kindred spirit.

A: – and 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 **Malefronte**(ph). I – I remember, I just met somebody who was the granddaughter of this barber's partner, and said, you know, I think that – so it – and my parents got very much involved in the 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 **Cerco l'Italiano**, which was a group of elderly Yankee women who read **Dante** and other things. But they'd never had an Italian having – for friend, that they should.

Q: I want to make a comment here, is that –

A: I'm sorry?

Q: I want to make a comment, because that was – it – 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 –

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: – who came from **Titus**, you know? And y – when you say your name in **Italy**, people have a sense of who is this person.

A: Immediately. Immediately.

Q: And you come to this world –

A: Even – even before the garden, or before anything. I mean, they all know who we are.

Q: Yeah.

A: We are who we are. We arrive here and we are outsiders, unknown, and –

Q: Without any mooring, in some ways.

A: – without any mooring, and –

Q: How does this affect your family? How does it affect your – the older – your parents, and then you and your –

A: In – in an odd way, we – 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.

Q: You know you don't belong.

A: 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.

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

A: We would belonging. We'd immediately fit in. When I studied in **England**, the end of two years, they offered me a fellowship, which would have been the end of a career, having a fellowship at **Magdalen** College, that's it, in economics, perfect. I didn't want to take that, problems with economics, but partly because I would immediately fit in a category of society, and – there, and I said, if I wanted to fit somewhere, I'd go back to **Italy**, you know? There, the moment I'm there, **Anne** says I melt into the woodwork when I go over.

Q: Really?

A: 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 you know, it – it's that kind of a country. Well here, we were nothing.

Q: Well, this is an experie –

A: And one –

Q: Okay, I'm sorry I'm interrupting, but I want to make another point with this. Is this is often the experience of the exile. You know, sort of like the 20th century phenomena, the 20th century experience –

A: That's right.

Q: – of someone who was somebody.

A: And now –

Q: They're nobody.

A: Yeah. And – and there's some funny things about this. When my brother married **Celia**, who as I say, was my classmate in elementary school, because I won a fellow – 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, I am so – my parents are so glad. And I said, why would they care? I mean, what they – and he said, because people ask them who your roommate is at **Yale**, and – we had three roommates – and I – and I tell them, somebody named **Guido Calabresi**, and my parents' 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 –

Q: So now you're somebody.

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

Q: Here, in – in **Connecticut**.

A: – somewhere here, in **Woodbridge**, yeah. And – and it's a beautiful place. We got it for almost nothing when we were first married, but it was – it's a huge number – 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 was 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**. But it's, in a way it's rebuilding my grandparents' villa outside there. So there is some side of people like me, who must rebuild and reestablish, so that now, you know, I'm an outsider in some ways, and yet, people know me and our children and – and –

Q: Do you still feel an outsider?

A: 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 – some ways in his legal career and so on. And – and says that every once in a while I do things which puzzle this guy.

Q: He says that to you?

A: No, I mean **Anne**, my wife –

Q: Oh, your **Anne**, yeah.

A: – says that, and 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 who – 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 – it is there, and I think it is one of the things that has made me both useful and successful and open.

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

A: Yes, it's a much deeper thing.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: 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. I got – we went to the public

school that was right there, and it was a public school which then, as now, primarily have broader things, but have many, many children of young **Yale**, because of where it was. And – and the local Boy Scout troop is the same way, you know, all these things were this –

Q: Right.

A: – little kind of **Yale WASP** centered thing. At some point, the **Foote** school, which was a wonderful private school, made really wonderful by the fact – 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 on. You know, 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 better level of education and so on. Why did I get that fellowship – 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 –

Q: Yeah.

A: – of that. 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 –

Q: Right.

A: – 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, you know, very close friends. This was the whole entourage there, and lawyers, great lawyers, and so on. My wife was two years behind me in school. And so, what happens? In those days, when you get to high school, the mothers of daughters would have dances at Christmastime, at vacation time, to which proper, eligible people – boys – would be invited. It was just the way it was, you know, you – a-and they'd have dances in their homes, and things. It's kind of interesting, some invited me, and some did not. As it happened, my wife's family invited me, because they were people who were not bigots, and they were friends of 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 – you know, they knew, 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.

Q: Your own in turn –

A: My family.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, I mean, you know, we thought, we were who we were when you people were painting yourselves blue.

Q: Well, you know, there's some truth to that.

A: Yeah.

Q: And – and there's also –

A: And – and so but, in a way, we were – an-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 again.

Q: I want to dwell on this a little bit before it's – sort of like psychology. In some ways also, I – I – I take your point where you're saying that, you know, we thought

we were a little bit better than others. You have a certainly illustrious family history, that can be very convincing to – to feed that. At the same time, when you're in the position of an exile and a refugee –

A: And you feel both –

Q: – too many other people didn't have those reserves and suffered enormously, internally –

A: Yes.

Q: – because they didn't have – they felt like they no longer mattered in the world.

A: But it – it – and you know, the odd thing is, if you are that way, you – it really doesn't matter. I mean, we had a – 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 **Hanna Gray**, who became president – provost at **Yale**, president of **Chicago**. Was a couple of years ahead of me, at this 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 on. When **Hanna** was provost, and we were friends, because of – they were at dinner – lunch at our house once, and I said – 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** was paid for by the **Rockefeller**, had been given by the **Rockefeller** in 1930s. Because his wife was Jewish, they decided to leave, and **Rockefeller** found – whether it was the **Rockefellers** or a foundation, said to American universities, whichever one of you wants **[indecipherable] Hajo Holborn** was his name, we will give the chair – move the chair there. And he wasn't Jewish, so **Yale** was perfectly willing to have him an-and it was a great, great story, and so the chair was here, and the – and so I said to **Hanna**, I expect your experience was very different from ours, because you came, and your father was a full professor already, with his chair and that, so on, and – 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 that just this sense of there you were somebody, here you are nobody. And this is – it's odd. **Bob Dahl**, the great political scientist, 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 these in good political scientist terms **[indecipherable]**. Financial elite, anybody who is on the board of directors of any one of different companies.

Political elite, anybody who is **[indecipherable]** certain positions, selectman, or whatever, or selectmen in towns and – and things of that sort. Fine – 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, academic elite, easy. Political elite, at some point the town of **Woodbridge** wants to ask me to run as a – for 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 psychiatrists 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. 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, ever looking for a bank. And social 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 – so – and yet I'm an outsider in all of them.

Q: And you still feel that, that's the key thing –

A: Yes.

Q: – is that you still feel that.

A: 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 seem 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, they – 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, and what are your insecurities, Daddy? And I immediately said, I'm a refugee. I'm a refugee. I'm an outsider. And I – 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 gonna be a lawyer and a judge. 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.

Q: What a smart boy.

A: Yeah.

Q: How old was he?

A: But he's so – he must have been 13 – 12, 13.

Q: But truly a smart – you know, very insightful.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. 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 **[indecipherable]**

Q: Well, you know, 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?

A: Different ones at different times, you know? In an odd way, I have both felt being outsider because of each of these –

Q: Easily.

A: – at different times.

Q: Yeah.

A: 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 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 **[indecipherable]**. It helped, you know. 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.

Q: And so they – like many black girls now say.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And why **Obama** was so important to the black community. If he can, so can I.

A: There's a – there's a man, **Iacobucci**, who became a justice of the Canadian supreme court, dean of the law school at **Toronto**, and acting president of the University of **Toronto**. The first time I met him, he said to me, **Guido**, you don't know how much you meant to me. I said, why? And he said, I was a young kid at the univer – 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 **[indecipherable]**. And they said, you can't. And I said why? And he – his parent said, because you're an Italian and in **Canada** and **Toronto –** then. **Toronto** is very different now, but then, you know, that 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 of the history of a **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, you know. If you know that all of these things can be of use to others, you then relish every one of these feelings of being a –

Q: 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.

A: 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, and when I was sworn in, I n-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 – a very good friend of my parents, as a result. And there are people who stand in your way. And – but 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. You –

Q: One – mm-hm? 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 for – very often,

when a refugee will come to a foreign country, they feel so strange and so much and outsider, and so –

A: Yes.

Q: – different, that they will close in on their own communities.

A: Okay, 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 different places, either of anti-fascists, or of Jews. We knew them, we were a part of them, we had been with them. We would see them from time to time, so that I went to call on the mother of the **Rosselli** brothers, who had been – who was living –

Q: Sure.

A: – in **Larchmonts**(ph), because that, you know, we did, but – but we were not part of it, and so we did not close in, in the way such a community does. You s – 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 a law faculty at **Cornell**, named **Eduardo Peñalver**, 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 – that family – these people are brilliant, wonderful, have done all sorts of things. They're 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.

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

A: Yeah, so first, you know, you come to **New Haven**, you 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.

Q: Different than **Milan**.

A: What?

Q: Different than **Milan**.

A: Slightly different. They still had an icebox in those days, and a – the **Hygienic Ice Company** brought the – a month or two after we are there – maybe just a

month, even, the wife of a distinguished professor comes to call on my mother, because in those days **Yale** was small enough so that new faculty member – and fellows were considered faculty members – gets called on by the wife – always the wife, because it was – the wife calls on the wife, the senior faculty member in some other department. I'm home from school, and I'm playing – sort of 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 bathroom, the sort of thing which is absolutely normal in **Milan**, and thing. 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 don't – I, instead, already understand what each one of them is **[indecipherable]** say.

Q: Oh my God.

A: Because I've been in school, you know.

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

A: 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 outsiders. 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.

Q: Oh, poor man.

A: He is a great – he's a great doctor as well as scientist. He never writes the kinds of things here, and does the kind of research here that he was doing in **Italy**, which, you know, 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. My mother – oh, they decide that if you're going to – if we're going to stay here, it would be useful to have American degrees. So my father, because of the chairman of public health, a wonderful man, **c-a-o – 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, when 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's only – remains only a hobby. My mother instead, whose field in **Italy** was philosophy of art **[indecipherable]** is her dissertation, so decides to go to graduate school at **Yale**. She starts out teaching at what is now **Southern Connecticut**, it was **Teacher's College** at the time, to earn some money while we're here. She gets fired in 1941, when **America** goes in the war, because suddenly people decide – 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. And anyway, she goes and she teaches – she decides that she's gonna get a degree in French, because a French – 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 – 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, you know, 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, she – **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 any more, but she continues to teach. When she retires, she starts to write, and she writes – well, a book that she wrote in French. We found a letter from the head of the **École de France** when she died suddenly in **Italy**, saying from now on **Reynaud**(ph) 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.

Q: When they didn't accept her at **Yale**.

A: At **Yale**. Wanted to leave and tried both to go to research universities. 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 gets complicated, but you – and I said well, but how did you keep them, if – you know, as 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** in 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, okay – 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. Okay, my mother dies suddenly –

Q: What year?

A: – in **Italy**. She was almost 80. My father was giving some lectures, she had gone there, she had tea with a friend, and her friend said, you look happy. She said, it was 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 **[indecipherable]** 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 –

Q: Oh. Oh. How beautiful.

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

Q: There's also a lot of wisdom and depth, t – for both to see these things about the other.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, absolutely. And that's all part of being this kind of outsider. Now, you know, you were outsiders, and then there were occasional little things which were not. When my mother comes to pick me up the first few day – 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 near, she hears wh-what they're saying is **Guido** has a girlfriend, **Guido** has a girlfriend. So she says, he's okay. 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 – taught, whatever, for many years in **England**, and they'd just come back from **England**. And he was now the faculty, and he – 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.

Q: Rings a bell.

A: 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 a hundred, named **heners – 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 this great, great –

Q: Yankee family.

A: – family. Professor **Hendrickson** came to see my parents, and said – who we'd become a good friend of, because he was somebody who was – who knew **Italy** before the great migrations and so on, and in finding Italians, said to them, oh I'm very glad, because I want you to know, that this a good family. He, 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, as a friend of his, and they're really good people, so I'm glad – so again, this funny, reverse –

Q: But also very touching.

A: Very touching.

Q: Very, very touching, and – I mean, again, as you've been speaking about the Italian world, and the Italian world, as I keep saying for two millennia, you know, 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.

A: I suppose.

Q: You know, connections and this and that, and so how much talent do you really have to display?

A: I mean, who –

Q: But when you come here, you have none of that.

A: Yeah, who knows? And – and it – 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.

Q: Yeah.

A: Why do you work hard? And I s – I know I said, because I have to be able to be on my own if anything happens. And so that while my parents protected us enormously, I think both **Paul** and I knew that we had to rebuild because we had this – we were okay, but immensely fragile. Because if anything had happened to them, it ha – and we saw, you know, also, other people who hadn't be – 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 –

Q: Studied medicine.

A: – studied medicine. So when we came, there was something that he could do. My mother was a learned –

Q: Person.

A: – person, and so could do something. There was another Italian-American-Jewish family that ended up in **New Haven**, 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, she was not that. And he was an insurance man, of a great business family. They came here. He worked in a factory. She got picked up by this wonderful headmistress of an elementary school to teach French, so that we all learned French from Madame **[indecipherable]** who is this Italian woman, and so on. And that was better enough. 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. And so it – that probably was something that drove us to – well, my parents never – never said that – you know, the fact of getting good grades and so on, was

something that in my family was always – everybody always had, so that that was not an issue. That was not –

Q: It – another thought that I had as you've been certainly telling me 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.

A: Oh yes. I learned things here, some from my parents when – when I went back. I happen to be a person who was always blessed with a great memory, and a very, sort of 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.

Q: Of course.

A: And somehow you were, you know – they were people for whom this whole ancient history was kind of – you know, a bother. For me it was something that was kind of interesting to know who I was, in a place where I wasn't.

Q: Interesting way – well put, you know.

A: You know, and – and so that – that became, and so I'd 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 well, 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.

Q: They're important stories. They paint – they paint a world, you know.

A: Yes.

Q: And they paint the individual destiny.

A: 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 find that people, in a variety of different ways and of different means, saved them.

Q: That's huge.

A: And that's remarkable.

Q: Yeah, that's huge.

A: And that's remarkable. And – and it is different from different Holocaust tales of others.

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

A: But I think this is a – good.

Q: Yeah.

A: Thank you.

Q: Thank you.

A: And I hope this is useful to the museum, but I –

Q: I think

A: – a part – I just – you know, I've loved meeting you two.

Q: Thank you so much, and it's been mutual. I – we could talk so much about your postwar career. I will just say now that amongst your students was one of our former presidents, President **Bill Clinton**.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Who appointed you a second circuit court judge, is that correct?

A: Yes. And he – well, and **Hillary**, of course. And three people on the Supreme Court.

Q: **Summer – Sonia –**

A: **Clarence Thomas**, **Sonia Sotomayor**, and **Sam Alito**. And I can tell you something about their schoolwork.

Q: But that's not a Holocaust story.

A: That's not a Holocaust story.

Q: Okay.

A: But you know, I been – I been extraordinarily lucky, and have had – you know, 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.

Q: Thank you.

A: And in the end, that's most important.

Q: Thank you very, very much.

A: Thank you.

Q: Okay. Now we'll say – 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 27th, 2017, in **New Haven**, **Connecticut**. Thanks again.

A: Thank you.

Q: All right.

Conclusion of Interview