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Good evening. My name is Toby Ticktin Back, and I'm the director of the Holocaust Resource Center in Buffalo. It is November 13, 1989. And we are at Channel 4, and our guest today is Judy Hellner Schatz.

Judy, will you tell us your story, please?

Yes, I would like to tell you about my story, but my story is also the story of my family. So let me start with my family. My parents, my father was David Hellner, and my mother was Dina Mellner later Hellner. That's a funny story around, [? Hellner-Milner. ?]

And they were both born in a small shtetl in Austria-Hungary, which became after World War I Poland. And so my parents later became Polish subjects, even so at that time they lived in Berlin, but they were now Polish.

And my father met my mother already. And when she was a little girl, he was 11 years old. He met her in Trembowla. And then later, he met her again in Vienna where she studied at-- she studied typewriting and bookkeeping and so on.

And then they both came to Berlin and married in 1916. 1918, I was born. And my sister, who is five years younger, was born 1923. My father became a businessman. He really should have been a college professor because he was very smart, and very capable to express himself.

But of course economics were there, that he was told he should run this particular business, and he became the-- we had a wine store, wine and liquor store. And we were quite comfortable.

We lived in a good part of Berlin. And my sister and I both went to a Jewish school which was called-- these are my parents. This is my mother, Dina Mellner Hellner. And this is my father, who-- and this is their wedding picture in 1916.

Now, we have the next picture is a picture of the family business.

Here you will see our store-- my father, my mother, my sister Ruth, and the lady who helped in the store. And this is me, and I presume my sister was two years old, so I had to be seven years old.

It's a large store, is it not? It looks quite large.

Yeah, it was a very big-- matter of fact, you're not aware, it was a very deep store. I would say maybe 35 feet deep, very big. And and we had help, and my parents felt comfortable.

And they sent us to the Jewish-- it was first called JÃ¼dische Volksschule from Berlin. And later it changed names and became the Theodor-Herzl-Schule in Berlin.

We have a picture of you and then a picture of the school.

Oh, this is when I, think, five or six years old. I was blonde and blue-eyed and--

And very pretty.

And that's how I looked.

And now we have a picture of this school.

Oh, this is my whole school. This was the whole school with a few teachers, several classes, as you can see. This school was in the Fasanenstrasse. And if you can see, very clearly in the back there are pillars. And these are the only pillars which are standing from the school. And it has become now a federation-- Jewish Federation building in Berlin.

And this is my father when he was 50 years old. I went with him to the photographer. He was rather a vain man, but he

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was wonderful. He just sparkled. He was highly intelligent, and was not only intelligent but a wonderful, good, sincere person.

So this picture is taken in Berlin.

This is taken in Berlin.

Right. So please continue with your story.

All right. So I went to the Jewish school, and I was telling Toby of my school. My school had to expand, and we were asked-- the principal talked to the student body and said, we need a lot of money. We do not have money, so try to go and see, talk to your parents and their friends and see that you get money.

At that time, I presume I was 12 or 13 years old. And it was still pre-Hitler. And I went to Erich Maria Remarque who had became world famous having written a Nichts Neues im Westen, or Nothing New--

All Quiet on the Western Front.

All Quiet on the Western Front. And also went-- I heard there was a very wealthy Jewish man living in the same street I lived in. And he was a great philanthropist. And I went to him, and I told him the plight of my school, and he gave a big check to my school.

And also Yehudi Menuhin as a little young boy played for my school. I don't think he played free. He gave a free concert, but he really raised a lot of money when he played.

1934 and '35, you could already feel that something was brewing. And I remember it became very sad. It's a beautiful city I loved. I absolutely loved Berlin. It was an exquisite city. It was a clean city. It was a lovely city.

And suddenly it became very sad. You could feel it. You weren't free anymore.

How did that affect you and your family and your school?

Very badly. I remember 1933, then in all of the stores, Jewish stores, the Nazi SS men stood there and forbid anybody to enter the store. And I remember a cousin from Berlin-- who was from America who had gone to Cornell, and was on his sabbatical in Berlin, and stayed with us for six weeks.

He came on that day when the SS men forbid him to go to the store. And then he came to our house. And I had studied already English. Of course, my English was very-- I hardly could speak. A strictly school English.

And I think it was my first year of English, and I said, when you go to America, please tell the people what is going on. And it became worse and worse for my father.

We were really quite comfortable. We lived very lovely. We had a lovely home, an elegant home. And we had several maids, and then the maids were not allowed to work for us anymore because they were young, and they were not allowed to live in Jewish homes.

And then our business was really destroyed because 90% of our customers, or maybe 95% of our customers, were not Jewish, and they were afraid to come to us.

And I remember just on the very end, when it was just terrible. You were actually afraid for your life. And people who knew you, they are afraid to recognize you. Not that they disliked you, but maybe they absolutely had a fear to speak to a Jew.

And I remember one story when I was a young girl, 13, 14 years old. No, must have been older, 14 years old. There was

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a Jewish pediatrician living very close to us who had five children. He was a young-- wonderful, young man. You know children have a certain feeling to someone who is very nice.

And one day, while doing his practice, the Nazis came and made him leave his office and took him away. And several days later, he was brought a urn to his-- they brought an urn to his wife and said here. Here you have your husband.

Oh!

So when you heard stories like this, you were afraid. My father was supposed to have said to an SS man that Hitler ruined the country. I'm sure my father thought it, but he would never say it to an SS man in uniform. And he was asked to leave Germany within, I think, 48 hours.

But in order to leave Germany, you have to have a visa for a country where you're supposed to go. And this-- in 48 hours, it's very hard to obtain a visa. But a very dear friend-- I will mention him over and over again-- Samuel Lifschitz, who worked for the Hilfsverein der Juden in Berlin, the Hilfsverein worked in association with the HIAS organization, which is the Jewish Immigration Service, who brought people from all-- helped people from all over the world to leave their country where they were--

Deported?

Pardon?

Where they were deported, from where they--

Not just deported-- where pogroms happened and so on. This was an organization to help Jews to immigrate and emigrate out of a country and immigrate into another country. So this man knew the Italian consul in Berlin, and he obtained a visa for my father.

And my father left with 10 marks for Milano, Italy, and my mother and I were supposed to follow.

What year is this?

That was 19-- my father left in December 1937. And we were supposed to leave very shortly after we had given up our place and so on. In the meantime, there happened to-- we happened to run in terribly difficulties.

I'm born in Berlin, but in Germany, you are what your parents are. And I suddenly was a Polish subject. And the Polish government did not accept me as Polish. And the Germans considered me a Polish, but I had to have a passport to leave the country.

So finally it took five months till I got a passport. And it was issued for one year, and they said they would never renew it. So in the meantime, this Mr. Lifschitz had also-- this man took 1,000 people. I think they-- do we have that picture?

Yes, we have the picture.

I will talk about it later. This man who helped my father to go to Italy also helped my sister to go with the children transport to America. And my sister left. She was 14 years old. I will later show you a picture of her.

And she left for America, and my mother and I followed my father to Italy. But on my last day in Berlin-- I want to tell you a story which I always will remember. I-- we had left our apartment, and we were living with another Jewish family. And on the very last day, it was a beautiful, sunny day in May.

I thought I wanted to say goodbye to Berlin because I really had loved the city. And I walked out, and I had a little park which I loved. And I wanted just to sit in that park. And it was in May, and the flowers were blooming. And it was so lovely.

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You could smell it. The fragrance was overwhelming. And there was only one bench which was allowed, where Jews could sit. The others-- every bench had a sign, "fÃ¼r Juden verboten." "forbidden for Jews." And one bench said "for Jews only."

First, I was tempted. I was-- it was early in the morning, and I was tempted to sit on the bench, another bench, but I said no. It's the last day--

Did you wear an insignia?

No, at that time, that was 1938. I did not wear anything. So I sat on the bench "nur fÃ¼r Juden," "only for Jews." And I sat there, and I closed my eyes just-- just to think about my life. And suddenly I felt something creeping up at me, and soft, and cuddly.

And I picked it up, and it was a sweet little girl with rosy cheeks. And she looked like a lovely little angel, blonde hair, and blue eyes, and rosy cheeks. And I picked her up, and she sat on my lap.

And then suddenly a voice-- this lovely happening, a voice, a screechy voice said, get off of her! Get off of her, Heidi. She is a Jew, and the Jews are the traitors of our country. And she is a traitor.

And suddenly, several people, nurse maids with little children were there. And she pointed at me, and she says, look at her. She is a traitor. She is horrible. Get off, and remember, children, never get close to that bench, because these are horrible people.

And she took that little girl away. And I walked away. And my knees almost trembled, but I walked very straightaway to say goodbye to the places I loved. And I came home. And that evening, my cousin Ernst took us to the station.

And we came to the platform of the station. There were several people there. And the closer we came, I realized these were all people to say goodbye to my mother and myself. There was my cousin Tusi and her husband, Ferenc, and their two little children, six and eight years old, Freddie and Ruth.

And she came over to my mother, and she had her flowers. And she says, Aunt Dina, I love you. And she held her hand. And she says, look at my pretty dress. My mommy let me wear it. It's really for my birthday, but I wear it just for you to say goodbye.

And we hugged, and there was my mother's cousin, and they had big things for us. And our friends, there was Uncle [? Neisser, ?] a bachelor who had no children, of course. And he loved us, and we just had such a wonderful friendship.

And he was a silversmith, and he made silver candles. And I have them in my living rooms. They are handmade by him. And he hugged me, and he said wanted to say goodbye, but he started to cry. And we never said goodbye.

And there was that elegant Miss [PERSONAL NAME] a friend of my parents. And she came, and she took my hand. And then she started to cry. And she, too, didn't say goodbye to us.

And my cousins and my friends, and we said, we shall meet sometimes again in some exotic country. And then there was a young fellow, and he said, I'm going to America. Maybe you will see me in America.

And I said, oh, what a wonderful dream, but I don't think that will happen. And then the train left, and we waved. My mother sobbed and cried. And I kept waving. I kept waving I don't know how long. I had gone for a long time. I had left the station.

And all these people who came to the station, there's only one person who is alive. Someone, some relatives of ours were taken to a concentration camp. And he later came to America. And the man weighed something like 70 pounds. He couldn't talk. He couldn't walk. And it took seven years to put him back into the human society.

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But everybody else was lost?

Everybody but one person. My cousin went to Theresienstadt, the infamous concentration camp, and his wife was killed in front of him. The other people we never heard again.

And the only person who is still alive who saw me at that train station visited me just two months ago. Nobody is alive. And so we went to Italy.

Before you go to Italy, let us show the picture of your sister on the last day and Mr. Lifschitz.

This is my sister Ruth who went with the children's transport. She didn't need-- in order to come to America, you have to have affidavits. We all had affidavits to come to America, but we all went under different quota numbers.

My sister went under the children's quota, so she could come earlier to America. We had our papers approximately since 1937, but it took me till '41 to come to America.

So she left in 1938, and how old was she then?

She left in '38, and here she was 14 years old.

And where did she go?

She went to Detroit to a foster home, where she stayed. And later she went-- some other people were very fond of her, who took her to Bay City. That was a loving family, but since there were hardly any Jewish children and she wanted to have some contact, she went back to Detroit where she stayed with another foster family till she got married.

She still lives in the outskirts of Detroit with her husband and her two children.

So how many years were you separated from your sister?

Oh, my sister Ruthie and I went to see us here in Berlin. My sister Ruthie couldn't speak one word of English. I could. We saw each other again in 1941. And I will later tell you the story of what happened.

And now we have a picture of Mr. Lifschitz, the man who helped you so.

This is Mr. Lifschitz, who played a great important part in our life. He was a wonderful humanitarian. And here he is talking to 1,000 Jewish people on a boat on the way to South Africa. He saw to it.

He helped thousands and thousands of people to get into other countries. Some people went to South America, Montevideo, to Uruguay, to Brazil, to Argentina, to little, little towns, just to save their lives.

This man also helped later my mother and myself join my father in Italy. He helped me later to go to Scotland. But in order to go to Scotland, he was already in America, and I begged him to help me. And he wrote to London to a committee who saw to it that I got a job and went to Scotland. And he saw to it that we got affidavits. And he was our savior in a way.

Is he still alive?

He is not alive anymore.

No. And now we have the picture of you during the last week.

This is my cousin Ernst.

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Oh, we'll come to that.

And his wife. My cousin Ernst lived-- was born in Hungary and came to Berlin to study medicine. He stayed in our house. And later, of course, when he had his degree, he was not allowed to practice. I left with my parents for Italy.

He was still in Berlin. And later in Berlin, he met his wife, and he married her. He and his wife were taken to Theresienstadt, the infamous-- one of the most infamous concentration camps, and his wife was killed in front of him.

Did he survive to come--

He survived, and I saw him in Austria. He survived. He is dead now.

And he told you the story of how his wife was killed in--

Yes, he wrote the most beautiful poetry. I have his poetry in German, but it's very difficult to translate poetry for me. I have done it, but I can't do it justice.

And I believe the next picture is--

The next picture, this is my last Sunday in Berlin. This my cousin Ernst, who was in Theresienstadt, took me to a concert in Berlin. And I was-- unbeknownst to myself, it was the command performance in front of Adolf Hitler, Goering, and Goebbels. And I didn't know it.

And when we got there, I think we were the only two Jewish people in the audience. And later, everybody stood up and had to say Heil Hitler. And I refused to do it. But it was a sea of outstretched arms. If someone would have seen me, I'm sure I would have been taken to a concentration camp.

But would you tell us before you leave Germany the story that you told me before about meeting Einstein?

Albert Einstein? Yes, that is a lovely story. When I was a little girl, a friend of my father's-- his wife's son, his wife had been married before-- her son married Albert Einstein's stepdaughter. And he was visiting Albert Einstein, and he asked us to accompany him.

And my father told me when I was going to arrive-- on the way to Albert Einstein's house, he lived in an apartment maybe 15 minutes from us. And he said, now, when you come to Albert Einstein, you have to realize he is a man out-- he is beyond our century. And you have-- you are going to be in the presence of a great human being. And you must never forget it. And you must remember it all your life.

And when I came to him, he was a humble, gentle man. And I shall never forget him.

What an experience. Now you're on your way to Italy.

Now, I'm on my way to Italy. When we came to Italy-- well, my father and my mother were advised-- my mother had golden hands. She could cook and bake like I have never eaten any baking and cooking like my mother.

She was a most talented woman with her hands. And they were advised that they should open a Jewish restaurant in Milano. So we rented an apartment, which was much beyond our-- what we possibly could afford. But we rented it because it had a tremendous, large veranda.

And we thought if we have a restaurant, we would have tables on this veranda, and that's why we rented that very lovely apartment in a beautiful area of Milano. And just then, while my parents was looking around for-- we are looking around for furniture for the restaurant, which would be in our apartment, a law was decreed-- that was in 1938-- that Jews, foreign Jews, wouldn't get any license for any kind of business.

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So we had that apartment, and it was, of course, very difficult to manage. And I realized I had some talent. I used to draw, and I had gone-- I had studied for a while fashion design in Berlin. And I wanted somehow to work at it.

And we found an artist from Germany who was willing to teach me freely work in his studio. He did mostly advertising, and he said, you can work in my office in my studio, and I will also teach you how to draw and to paint and so on.

So I worked there, and then I realized I couldn't go on. My parents had no income, and this little money they had was dwindling. And I heard that Great Britain was opening the doors for people who would work as domestic helpers.

And again, I wrote to this Mr. Lifschitz, whom you saw who took 1,000 people to South Africa. And at that time, he was in America. And I wrote to him, and I said, can you help me? Can you write to some people in London and see that I can go to Britain?

He immediately did, and this agency in London obtained a work permit for me to go to Great Britain and do housework.

How long did that all take, that procedure?

It was very fast because we wrote by air mail. It took maybe a couple of months. Also I had my wonderful work permit. I went to the British Council in Milano. And of course my English, I could speak poorly, but I could explain what I wanted.

And I went to him. I could communicate, but not speak very well. And I talked to him, and I said-- he interviewed me, and I was dressed as I normally dress. And he looked at my hands, and he said, look, you don't look like you ever done any housework in your--

He says, you just want to go to Great Britain to get into the country, and you will never do any housework. And I left. and he refused to give me my visa. And I came back, and I told it to my mother.

And unfortunately my mother was one of these old fashioned ladies. I was 20 years old. I had never made my own bed. I had never done anything in the house because she thought her children don't have to do housework, which of course, is the most horrible thing she did to me, but it happened.

And my mother said, yes, you didn't do any housework but you go back to him, and you tell him truly you didn't do it, but when you come to Britain, you are very sincere that they are giving you a chance to go to Great Britain, and you will work, and will show that you can do it.

And I did it. And I went back, and he gave me my permit. I came home, and I was in heaven. And now it was nothing. I thought it was just the simplest thing. I needed a transit visa to go through France.

So I had to go to the French consul and ask for a transit visa. I had also learned French at school, and I could communicate in French. I didn't speak it well, but I could say what I wanted.

Judy, had you finished high school?

No, I finished as far as I could. My school-- later, my school couldn't go on anymore. It was a Jewish private school. And we were-- I was 16 years old. I could not finish because I wasn't allowed to finish. The Germans didn't allow it. They interrupted my education, so I couldn't.

So I went to him, but I could speak. I had studied Hebrew, French, and English. So I spoke actually several languages, only one really fluently and the other ones-- I learned Hebrew as a speaking language. I spoke it. I learned Sephardic.

So, anyway I went to the French consul to ask for a transit visa to go to London. And the French consul said you are Jewess. We don't give transit visas to Jews. I said, sir, I don't want to go to France. It's strictly a transit visa. Here. I have

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a work permit for Great Britain. I want to go to London, and all what I need is to go from Milano to probably the train will take me to Le Havre, and I will go across the channel, and I don't want to go to France.

And he said he wouldn't give it to me. So I had no transit visa, but I had another problem. My passport was expiring on the 18th of May. And it was May already.

And then I went to the Dutch consul, and I said, could I please get a transit visa, because I thought I could go via Holland and enter Great Britain, England that way. And he says, I would give you gladly a transit visa, but you are a young Jewish woman. And if you go through Holland, you have to go through Germany, and that means I'm giving you your death certificate.

He said, I will write a letter to the French consul and ask him to do me a favor and give you a transit visa.

What a kind man.

So he did that. And I went back to the French consul, and he did-- he was very mad. He says, why did you go to the Dutch consul? And he said, I told you-- he didn't even let me sit down. He said, I told you I'm not giving you a visa, and he ushered me out.

Oh.

Now, my father, I told you we didn't have much money anymore, but he decided he would give me some money to fly to London. But the plane would land in Swiss-- in ZÃ¼rich to fuel up to go on to London. And I didn't have a Swiss visa.

Oh.

And the Swiss refused to give me a visa, too. In the meantime, my passport was almost expiring. And finally we found out there was a boat from India, which was going from India to Holland. And it was stopping in Genoa, Italy. And I got on this port, instead traveling 16 hours or 14 hours by train, I traveled eight days.

Oh.

And I traveled via Africa. It stopped in Algiers and went around Spain. And at the time when we went near Gibraltar, we had to keep 10 kilometers away because it was then '39, 1939. We went all around Spain and Portugal and France and then into England.

And the very same day I arrived in Great Britain, my passport expired.

Oh, my goodness. And you didn't know anyone on the boat. You were all alone.

All by myself, a young girl. There were very nice people who somehow watched out for a young girl. I had some exciting happenings in Algiers, but I think it would be a too long story, so I won't tell you that.

So when I came to London, I stayed a little while in London. And then the job, which was found for me was in Scotland, in Glasgow. And I went to Glasgow. And when I had-- in London, I had some friends from Milano who saw me off. And I saw some friends from-- I met some friends from Berlin, and then I was going to Glasgow.

And the people for whom I was going to work were supposed to meet me at the station in Glasgow. And when I arrived, they had written me a lovely letter, and they said-- the woman said I have a little baby, and I can't meet you at the station, but my husband will come. And he will wear a Mackintosh, and he will wear a bowler hat and carry a black umbrella. Just look out for him, and he will take you to Lenzie.

And when I arrived, there was no man with a bowler hat or a black umbrella who was waiting for anybody. I was sitting
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at the station. But before I left London, I asked the Jewish organization to give me some addresses from a Jewish organization in Glasgow if I need someone that I could refer to them, that they maybe could help me because I was a complete stranger.

And even so, I spoke English. In Glasgow it's a dialect.

It's a difficult dialect.

It's rather very different. But anyway, I had that little paper in my purse. I arrived there, and nobody was there. And I had loads of suitcases. And I remember I moved one suitcase and one suitcase till I came to the ladies waiting room. They had ladies waiting room.

And the woman who took care of the ladies waiting room saw me sitting there maybe for half an hour. And I said, did you see a man waiting in a Mackintosh and a bowler hat and a black umbrella who was supposed to meet me? And she said no. And she said, oh, do come in into the waiting room.

And then nobody showed up. Then I said to her, I have here a couple of telephone numbers. Would you please dial for me the number? And I called up a person. I thought I was calling the Federation building, and this woman answers the telephone, and she says, no, I'm not the Federation. I am one of the volunteers of the Federation.

And I told her my story. And she says, oh, I'm sorry I can't come. My husband is a physician, and he's making house calls. At that time, they still made house calls. And she said, but let me call a friend of mine. Maybe they can pick you up.

And yes, she has a telephone, and give me your telephone number and she'll call you back. And she called me-- a friend whom she called up called back and said, I'm Mrs. Shapiro, and I shall be there, and tell me how you look. And I wore a black suit, and I will pick you up. And I told her I wear a brown suit, and I'm there with lots of suitcases. I have blonde hair. At that time, I had blonde hair, and I have blue eyes, and I'm tall and slim. And she said, I will be there shortly.

And she came with her son, who was a grown man. And she looked at my suitcases, and she says, oh, that wouldn't do. So she called a porter, and she took me to a tremendous large car. And it's a car was chauffeur driven. And the chauffeur was in his livery, and he put all my suitcases in the car.

And they took me to the job where I was going to work. And the chauffeur took all my suitcases and carried them behind me. And that's how the maid arrived in Scotland.

What an entrance.

These were wonderful people I worked for. But soon-- that was in May 1939. And three months later, war was-- World War II broke out. And by the way, these people who were the next day on my day off I went with a flower bouquet to thank them for that they had been so nice. It was almost all the money I had, by the way.

And I went to them, and they befriended me. And later, they helped. I had papers for my parents to send to Italy to come to Scotland. And I had the papers ready the same day World War II was declared.

Oh.

So that was finished. But in the meantime, I couldn't keep working for these people because their husband went into the army, and I worked for other people. In the meantime, my passport, I told you, was expired. And in the meantime, my number had come through to come to America. But I had no passport.

Oh.

And I knew it was, of course, there was war. And during the war, I got a permission to go to London. And it was the

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Blitz in London. And it was quite bad. And I begged the Polish government to extend the passport, and they refused. And so I missed boat after boat.

Oh.

And finally the British government gave me a stateless paper. And I went to the American consul, and I was examined. And I got-- I went on the boat which was the very last boat which left Great Britain during the duration of World War II.

When exactly was that?

That was in Glasgow.

And what date? What exact--

That date was January 18, 1941. And I want to tell you something, rather my passage read "arriving somewhere in North America within six weeks." But it didn't tell me where. And I got on the boat, and I went-- I had my--

Oh, it was a very extreme examination before I went on the boat. Because now to Great Britain I was born in Germany, and I was suddenly a German. The passport didn't mean anything that I had been Polish. I was born in Berlin, and I was German. I was an enemy alien.

And I was-- I remember I had to undress completely nude. And they went into my hair. They examined me between my fingers and my toes and my body, and everything was taken out, inside out, and all my luggage. And finally, I got a pass to get on the boat.

And I went. They gave me my cabin number. I went to my cabin. I was then 20-- I have to think. 21 years old. I went to my cabin. Or 22, I think.

I went to my cabin, and there was a man in my cabin. I say I'm sorry, sir, this is my cabin. He says, no, this is my cabin. And we compared, and it was our cabin. He says, I don't mind. You can share the room with me.

A stranger.

I said no. I say, no, thanks. That's impossible. So I went back, and finally they found a cabin for me, which I had to share with three Scottish ladies who were going for the duration to Canada. And they were very upset that the fourth one had to come in because it was a terrible cabin. And when my luggage came in, they were very upset.

And when I started talking, one absolutely pretty girl said, you speak funny. From where do you come? I said, I come-- I'm born in Berlin, but I'm Jewish, and I had to leave Germany.

And she says, oh, you are a bloody Jew. Oh, you're a bloody German. And then she said, and you are Jewish? She says, I never met a Jew. She says, you don't look like a Jew. I said, how do Jews look?

She says Jews are supposed to be short, fat, ugly, and dark haired.

What a stereotype.

So I said-- so I told her, look, my father is tall, and has blond hair and blue eyes. And my mother is short and has brown hair and dark eyes. And my sister's blonde, and I'm tall and blonde, too. I said, Jews come in all sizes, just like you.

And this little girl became-- was absolutely adorable. She was a sweetheart. Now, later I found out there were another 11 Jews on that boat who were going to America. And there was a very nice man who thought that we would be together because arrangements were made wherever we are going to arrive, he had-- if it were ever in either Canada or America, he had certain addresses where we would get in contact because all our tickets were paid to New York City,

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but we didn't know where we will arrive.

And we met together on the boat. And we told each other that we should be together, and then we found out that, oh, no. I have to tell that later. Then I thought it would be very good we-- every morning on the boat, the captain would tell us we were in a convoy of hundreds of British boats.

And of course, a very important person was on board ship, but we never knew who it was.

On your ship? On your ship?

On this boat, which I told you was the very last passenger boat leaving Great Britain for the duration of World War II. And of course, the boat went very slowly because it was a tremendous convoy. Far away, we saw all these battleships. And the captain, we had to walk around with our gas masks and our life-saving belt.

And we were-- every morning we were told we have to be brave before breakfast. We never know if we would see tomorrow.

Hmm.

So that we heard every day. So-- and as I told you, my passage read "somewheres arriving in North America within six weeks." Anyway, we arrived. We landed. And of course, I didn't know where we landed.

Later, I was told it was in Saint John, Nova Scotia in January. And I thought this is how-- that's how America looks? It looked if I was on the moon-- desolate and cold and absolutely not real. It looked eerie.

And then we heard-- we found out the important person was the ambassador of Great Britain to America. It was Lord Halifax.

Oh, my.

And then I was standing-- am I speaking too long?

No, go ahead.

And then I suddenly, far away, I saw lights in the window. I saw a house. And I hadn't seen lights for two years in a window. Because I lived in absolutely blackout. In Europe, everything was dark outside. Inside, you could have lights, but you had black curtains, and it was blackout.

And then I saw a light. That was a friendly omen. I felt welcome, and I stamped my feet on the ground, and it was solid. It was terra firma. And I had-- was somewheres where I had stopped going. And then we are told we are going to Montreal. The 12 people, these 12 Jewish people, they're going to Montreal.

And there they had gotten in touch with the Federation. We would be met at the station, and they would see us off on to New York. And when we-- I thought these 12 people should get together and talk about their lives.

So we got together, and each person talked about their background. One was a lawyer who became a gardener. One was an accountant who became a chauffeur. The women who-- there was an artist on it. She became a housemaid.

I mean, we had to do all domestic work. So we came from all different backgrounds. We just knew a little bit about us, while we were together. And when we arrived in Montreal, a committee of four people met us. And they introduced us, and they said, we are volunteers. And we are here, and we are going to make it-- we take you now to our club, and we feed you, and we will see you off to New York.

And they took us to the club, and they gave us a lovely dinner. And then they said, collect phone numbers and addresses

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of the people. Each one is allowed-- not phone numbers, addresses. Each one is allowed to send five telegrams that you have arrived, that you can come to the train station to New York to meet you.

And another Jewish man and I, we asked to make the phone calls after we had dinner. And we sent telegrams. And I sent telegrams to my father's brother whom I never had met because he was in America, in Buffalo with his family. And I sent a cousin a telegram, and my sister a telegram, and the person who sent an affidavit for me.

And I told them that I was going to arrive in New York at Grand Central Station at that and that time. And of course to the Lifschitzes, who's the savior of my family. He was now in New York with his family, and his son worked now for the HIAS. He had a big job for the HIAS.

And I felt they would be all there. I imagined them being there. And finally we came to New York City, and everybody was picked up, but only one woman who had to go to California. And nobody came for me.

Did they not receive your telegrams?

I will tell you, nobody came for me. I sat there, and I couldn't understand it. I envisioned them already, how I thought maybe my uncle from Buffalo wouldn't;t show up, but some-- my sister maybe didn't have some money, but the Lifschitzes had to be there. And the uncle who lived in New York, he had to be there.

Nobody was here. And suddenly everybody left, and I was sitting there. And there was a woman from the committee to take the woman from California-- who was going to California to a hotel. And I begged her to wait a little bit longer, and then she said, look, I can't wait any longer.

It was Sunday. She says, I'm going to put you in the hotel room with this woman. And Monday, you will come to my office, and we will see how we can help you. We went up to the room-- to the hotel, and I just was heartbroken.

I just couldn't accept it that nobody would come for me. And besides, all what I could take out of Great Britain was 50 shillings, which is probably at that time $20. That's all what I had to my life.

And I thought, how could I stay in this hotel? How can I pay the bill? And I just couldn't understand it. So I decided. I went down to the desk, and I asked how I would go to the Bronx.

And this man who had registered me, and the woman from the committee had told him that I just had arrived in America, says, look, you just arrived in America. You are a young woman, and you can't just go to the Bronx by yourself late. Not today. I might tell you another time.

And he refused to tell me how to go to the Bronx. So I told the other woman I shared the room. I said, I'm sorry. First of all, we walked along in New York. We had lunch in New York, and it was like deja vu, because I had seen movies. I knew Times Square and the Empire State Building and Rockefeller Center. I felt I had been there before.

And then I went to the Bronx. I took the subway to the Bronx.

By yourself? You took the subway?

By myself. And I asked people, how do I-- where should I get off? I have to go to the Grand Concourse. And somebody told me, and I got off. Of course, it wasn't difficult. You know, I mean London and Berlin and Glasgow had subways. It was nothing new.

And I went to this house where the Lifschitz are supposed to live. And I came there, and the superintendent said there are no Lifschitzes living there. I said, that's impossible. I have a letter. Three months ago, they wrote to me, and they have to live here.

She says, look here. I'm here for two months, and they don't live here, and there are no Lifschitzes. I say, but you have

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to help me. Is there anything you possibly can think who can know these people?

She says, go up to the Greenbergs. Maybe they know Lifschitz. And I knocked at the door, and I said, do you know a family by the name of Lifschitz? They said yes. And then they asked me to come in, and I called the Lifschitzes.

Oh!

And they came and picked me up. And I called them up first. And I said, do you know to whom you're speaking? And they said, no, of course they had never heard me speak English. The last time they had seen me in Berlin, that was in 1937 when they left.

And I said didn't you receive my telegrams? They said what telegrams?

Oh, dear.

And telegrams are not forwarded. Everybody I sent telegrams had moved. And my Uncle [? Niessen, ?] I sent-- I had the business address. On Sundays, he didn't go to his store, so nobody knows that I was coming.

Oh.

And that was--

And your sister neither.

Pardon?

And your sister also.

My sister had moved in the meantime, so nobody had my telegram. So then he called-- I talk to him. He says, you stay there. I pick you up. He went to the hotel with me. He picked up my luggage.

And when I finally came to his house, when he put the key into the lock, from the inside his wife heard the door opening, and there she stood. And I started to cry. I hardly could talk. And I said, I'm so glad that I found you.

It was coming home.

And that's how I found people in America. Now I came to Buffalo. I-- actually, my sister came to New York to pick me up to take with her to Detroit. And on the way to Detroit, we were going to stop off in Buffalo to meet my Buffalo family.

And when we visited in Buffalo my father's brother, his wife who was a wonderful woman and my three cousins, they just didn't let me go. They said you had been without-- too long without family, and you stay here. And I stayed with them till I married my husband, Harold.

Oh, that's a nice, happy ending.

And it was wonderful. And they were very good to me. And then we married in May-- on May 23, 1943. My daughter almost was born on our first anniversary. I went into the hospital.

Before your daughter, what happened to your parents?

Oh, comes later. I absolutely had lost contact with my parents. I didn't know if my parents were alive. And my parents didn't know I was alive. When war broke out two months later, our correspondence stopped, and I didn't know anything about my parents.

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And then I married, we met. And I felt very guilty when I married. I felt very guilty on my wedding day that my parents couldn't be on my side. And I felt without them, it was a traumatic, happy experience.

Yes.

It was a very ambivalent feeling. I was very happy to marry my husband and very sad. And I became quite sick. After my daughter was born, I had a very difficult-- I had difficult nine months till my daughter was born. And then I had a wonderful, healthy child. It was fantastic.

But then my daughter was-- in August-- my daughter was born in May '44. In August '44, again that wonderful Mr. Lifschitz called me up and said, Judy, your parents just arrived in America.

Oh.

I said, I don't believe it. And he said, your parents are here. And then in 1944-- in 1944, President Roosevelt gave the permission to bring 1,000 war prisoners from Italy to America. And Ruth Gruber was sent and held because who was then--

Secretary of the Interior. Right, yeah.

Saw to it that Ruth Gruber was sent to Italy to Ferramonti, to bring 1,000 refugees for temporary for the duration of the war time to America. And among those thousand were my parents.

They were taken to Fort Ontario, but it took quite a while till I could see them. There were certain things where there was certain--

Like quarantines.

Absolutely, there was the six-week quarantine. And the six weeks quarantine, but I was allowed to call. But I was told when I call them I should go very slowly because-- I should talk very slowly to them because they had gone through traumatic experiences. And I shouldn't just burst out who I was.

Finally, I spoke to my father. And I spoke to him in German. And I say to my father, Mr. Hellner, how are you? And he said, fine. I says, did you have a good trip? He said, yes, but thank goodness we are in America.

And I say, Mr. Hellner, can I talk to your wife? And my mother came to the telephone. And I said, how are you, Mrs. Hellner. And she said, thank you. I'm fine. I'm soon going to talk to my daughter in Detroit, but we wonder-- we are thinking our daughter in Scotland, we wonder about her. We wonder if she's well.

I said, don't worry, Mrs. Hellner. Your daughter is all right, and you're speaking to her.

Oh, what a surprise.

And that's-- then a few weeks later, Harold and I, my Uncle Nathan my Aunt Molly, and my cousin, we all went to Fort Ontario to visit them. And then in October, in October my sister got married, and we asked for permission that my parents could come to the wedding. But permission wasn't granted.

Oh, why's that?

I became very sick, and I had to go into the hospital. And we had to give Claudia-- I was for three months she had to be taken care of. And again, we asked for permission. And it was not granted.

In January 1946, at that time Roosevelt had died, and Truman gave the permission that these 1,000 people who came to

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America could now immigrate into America. And it was not temporary, and they could become American citizens.

And on a wintry cold day, 1,000 people went to Niagara Falls, Ontario, crossed the Rainbow Bridge and came to America. Among the thousands were two people who could not become citizen, and among the two was my father.

They found a spot on his lung. And any time-- at that time, anybody who had lung trouble could not become a citizen. He was allowed to come in. He went into the hospital. I begged to have him live with us in-- Erie County didn't allow it, since my husband was a schoolteacher and we had a child. And the law was that anybody who had-- they thought he had tuberculosis-- could not stay with us.

So he went to Perrysburg. And he died there in 1940--

He died where?

In Perrysburg, in a sanitarium.

Oh.

And it was very difficult, because at this time we didn't have a car. And Perrysburg is only 40 miles or so away from Buffalo, but it took a whole day with bus transportation to visit.

I saw my father every week. And I remember, and one day we came and visit him. My sister came, and she had a little girl. And we came with our daughter, and we visit him in Perrysburg. And he died. And--

Judy, excuse me. We have so little time, and we have three more pictures to show. So perhaps we ought to show that and then come back.

OK, fine.

So we have the picture of the last person who saw you.

Oh, my husband Harold. I'm in the middle, and the man who is standing next to me is the only living person who saw us off at the train station in Berlin.

The only one who survived.

Who survived, that last--

The only survivor. Thank you.

And now we have a picture that was taken recently.

Oh, this was taken recently. This is the apartment house where I lived for 18 years in Berlin. This of course, is a recent picture.

And the last picture is your pride and joy.

The last picture is my daughter and my son-in-law Gary-- my daughter Claudia and my son-in-law Gary. They are in front of an Indian Museum in Scottsdale.

Now, your father died. Did your mother come to live with you?

My mother-- my mother did either live-- my mother's home was my home or my sister's home. She never lived alone. She was a wonderful grandmother, and the children absolutely adored her. And--

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And when did she die?

My mother died in 1969, May 1, 1969.

So she had a good few years.

No, she was very troubled. She had terrible, horrible nightmares, and she could never rid herself of the experiences in her life. So she had-- in a way, she enjoyed her children and her grandchildren, her son-in-law, but she lived in the past most of her life.

She was troubled.

She could not help herself.

Judy, we have to conclude now very shortly. Would you like to say something in summaration-- in summation or conclusion?

Yes, I would like to conclude that I have told you my story. There are many, many sad moments you heard of my life. But I feel I have to talk about this, that you have to remember what happened. You have to remember the past in order to go on.

We must never forget what happened to us, to millions of people who died in life only because they were Jews. Just they were killed because they were Jews. We should remember that life must go on. But we must remember that it shouldn't make us bitter. I don't believe.

We have to be optimist. We have to think that we have to go forward. And maybe it's a fantastic wish, but we have to hope that mankind-- it will take maybe a long time-- will change, and we will all be better people in spite of what has happened to us.

From your mouth to God's ear. Thank you very much. Thank you.

You're welcome.

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