

Good evening. My name is Toby Ticktin Back, and I am the director of the Holocaust Resource Center in Buffalo. It is Monday, September 16, 1991. We are at Channel 4, and our guest this evening is Anna Post who was born in Poland in a small town near Krakow in 1923. Anna, will you tell us about your childhood in Bronocice?

Yes. I was born in a little village, and my parents had a flour mill. We were three girls and three boys, six children. And it was a very lovely, very happy bursting home always, with a lot of noise, singing, fighting, et cetera, et cetera. My parents were very religious, observant. And they really lived their life very Jewishly.

And it was we, the children, usually tried to do a little bit less. But our parents always prompted us to do accordingly to the Torah and to the Halakha, which is observances of Jewish law. My childhood, since I was the youngest, so I really had a free rein at home, whatever the oldest child they were disciplined, when it came to me I was really spoiled by my brothers, and by my sisters, same by my parents.

So I felt really, I always felt that everything is so wonderful. Wherever I go, everybody is friendly. Whatever I do at home, it's approved. So I had a very, very happy childhood. And by nature, I think that I was very optimistic too. And life was good. Vacation was great, we're fooling around, swimming, playing, organizing all kind of dramatic plays, and it was wonderful.

Family was coming. Because we were living in a little village, family was coming from different cities, from large cities. And it went by like nothing. And life was really good. Till--

Right, until-- before you get to the till, we have some pictures before the till, of your brothers and your friends.

Yes.

Maybe you'll tell us.

Here's one on the screen now.

This is my brother, Zev. And he was an unusual charming person. I may say that not only I loved him like a brother, all my life I was in love with him. Because he was just so wonderful in every aspect.

In 1932, he served in the army.

The Polish army?

Polish army. For 2 and 1/2 years. And he was simply a delightful person. Just if one can wish a brother, or a son, or a husband, he was the ideal. It isn't just that I loved him, but the whole city, the whole school. Every time he came home from school and my sisters looked in his pockets, there were always letters from girls, gifts, and handkerchiefs, and things. He was simply an unusual human being in his regard to the way he cherished our parents and the way he honored them. It was almost unusual, when I think what a young person he was and how mature.

Was he your oldest brother?

He was the second, second from the oldest. This one is taken probably in 1937. We went with my friends to some kind of fields, like in a little cities, they are surrounded by fields, meadows. And we laid down, telling stories, singing songs. I can't remember who snapped this picture. But in 1947, one of my friends, they are both alive. They live in Israel. And one of them sent this picture to me.

And you obviously are on the right.

Yes. And I remember it was just so much fun, a summer day, completely sheer happiness and delight.

And we have another picture of your brothers.

Yeah, those are my two brothers. The first one standing, the taller one, is Kalman. And he is my oldest brother. He loved to do everything, what was connected with agriculture or gardening. He loved nature most. And I was just thinking that in those times, they wanted him to learn something else. And he always was coming back to the same thing. A wonderful son and a wonderful brother.

And the other brother is the one we had before.

And the other one that you had before, the charmer, Zev. I had a third. Oh yeah. This is Zev when he got married.

Well, we'll hold back with that picture, until we get to 1942. Why don't you tell us what happened in 1939, when the Nazis attacked Poland?

During the last months, like July and August, in the press and in the radio we heard news that maybe there will be a war. But the Polish radio was really brushing it off, that they had such a strong army, and we can defend ourselves. And there's going to be no way, no war.

Of course, this was vacation, and children don't perceive what a war means. They can read the word, but they don't know what it means. And we were kidding around, and laughing, and maybe school would not start in September. And maybe we'll not go back to school. Maybe we'll just go in October or in a month, or maybe even two. Who knows? So none of us was worried.

We're just good cheer, and we're happy that maybe we'll lose a month of school. And in the meantime, September 1, as I remember vividly, the Germans came in, into our little city. They were mostly riding motorcycles. I still remember the roar of the motorcycles, the Jeeps, the heavy boots. They were marching, and the terror. Everybody was really terrorized because we saw it's really, really happening. It was something outrageous.

But the first day, it was only we saw an army occupying our city, Poland. But we didn't know yet what it means in reality.

Even in your small town?

Even in the small town, we didn't know yet what it was in reality. In the meantime, there are hundreds and hundreds, and a thousand people, refugees, were pouring in from larger cities. Because what happened when the Germans came into a larger city, they were already creating ghettos immediately. And people didn't want to go ghettos. So as a result, they were streaming in the little cities or in the countries, and et cetera.

So immediately, we saw thousands of refugees. And we started, I remember, working in a kitchen, in a soup kitchen to cook food, and to provide for other people, and also in our house, a lot of people came. They were like distant relatives. And my parents said, this is no time.

We will just triple up. We'll sleep on the floor and whatever else. So probably our household, because at this time two of my brothers and one of my sisters was already married, so we were already parents and three children at home. We became 20 from the five people, we became 20. And a few days later, we had to give up our rooms. So finally, we stayed in a kitchen and in another room. This is all with 20 people.

As the time went on, you had to give up all your possessions. Every day there was another edict, another law. You cannot have any jewelry. You had to deliver anything what you have. So people were going and giving, and sometimes they tried to save a ring or something, because after all, nobody was working anymore. And you have to live from something.

Pretty soon, it was implemented forced labor. And everybody was going to forced labor. But when you worked for forced labor, you're not being paid. And you had to live from something. So what we did, everybody delivered all their

jewelry. But maybe somebody kept a ring or an earring or something. But the Germans wouldn't give up. They were coming and turning out the whole household, in and out, to look. And if they did find a piece of jewelry, or a watch, or something, usually the head of the household was killed or shot, for nothing, for what?

And as the days went on, there were already till 6 o'clock we could be out. After 6 o'clock, we had to be in already. We had to go to work and come back, and we really didn't have from what to live. So what was happening as a result, when we went to forced labor, we would take a tablecloth or something, and try to sell it in the country. If we were lucky we did it, and as a result, we could bring some potatoes back, or some bread, or something like this.

But those times were the good times, because we were yet together. And here and there, maybe some people were killed. But as a community as such, what is intact. But then in 1942, they started deporting everybody.

Were you wearing bands, arm bands at that time?

Yes, we were wearing arm bands during already from 1941 we were wearing arm bands with a Jewish star, and the armband you have to wear it on you coat. And if you didn't wear a coat, you have to wear it, let's say, on the blouse even with a short sleeve. You have to wear it everywhere.

Since I decided that I am never going to go to any ghetto, or to any camp, or nothing, then quite often I was taking off the band and I was just practicing how I'm going to walk without the band. And sometimes Germans went past me, and they didn't notice it I didn't have a band. And I became quite confident that I can do it.

Were you blonde and blue eyes, then?

I was blonde and blue eyes, and I had braids. And so finally this gave me a lot of confidence. And I started to really try to bring food for our family, because not that somebody told me to do that, but I just felt so very confident that nothing bad can happen to me. I was just maybe young, and foolish, and confident.

Anna, would you tell us what kind of forced labor you did?

We were going every day in the morning out to a nearby village, and we were digging trenches. I don't for what really. This was completely unnecessary work.

Busy work.

Busy work, just to tire us out, and they didn't pay us. But what was happening in the meantime that when I went to work, I would sneak away and go to some villagers and ask them if they would trade, let's say a blouse for potatoes, or a blouse for some tomatoes, or something like else.

So I got into a habit every time I came back from work, to bring something to the house. And this is the sustenance-- this was a poor sustenance of that time. But later on, I could really realize that those were yet the good times.

I have to mention to you that during those times, I traveled a few times to Warsaw. Warsaw was already a ghetto surrounded by wires. And we had family there. And as I mentioned before, I didn't travel. I didn't wear a band. I was traveling on the train as an Aryan. And I didn't have any special documents without nothing. I just traveled like that.

And no one ever questioned you?

No one ever questioned me. I was able to get in, because when I went to the ghetto by the gates, and they were sending Germans and other police, I usually said, oh you know, I have to go in because I need to make some money, and let me just do that. And usually, I was lucky. I was with another girl. She was on the picture with me. We were three there. And usually we were traveling, the two of us.

She has family and I had family. And this is what we did many times. The last time somebody denounced us.

Oh.

And the Gestapo took us, and they said we should dig our graves, and they're going to shoot us.

I don't remember how we got out of it. Either the community paid them some money for it, because this wasn't in our city that we were living. It was like when we traveled to Warsaw, you had to take another train. Like after 40 miles, you had to take another train, and go on. And on the way back, somebody denounced us. And we stayed there in jail a whole night, and I was crying.

I wasn't crying that I'd be killed. I was crying because my mother always begged me, please, don't go. You went one time. You were lucky. Don't go. And I was just crying what this is going to do to my mother. I really probably I didn't realize that they're going really to kill me or shoot me. So I wasn't scared. And I wasn't afraid. And I didn't cry because of me. I was crying because of my mother. I was sorry for her, because she really begged me not to.

After that, we didn't travel anymore.

But how did you get out of this predicament?

I think that the community--

Oh, they paid a ransom.

They paid a ransom for us, and they let us go home. And when we came home, and then it was already late. It was already like 1941, 1942. But what I wanted to mention, that even though we were in such confinement and we didn't have what to eat, children were learning. Little children were learning. And my sister was a teacher. There was one--

We have a picture. Perhaps we could see the picture of your brothers first in 1942. Do you want to tell us about this picture?

Yes. My brother was married in '39, and it was a wonderful, wonderful wedding. It was celebrating the whole week. A whole week, we celebrated this marriage. And during the war, we had to wear the bands. And this is what they are wearing, the bands.

Did this couple survive the war?

No, they did not survive. And they were in hiding, and my sister-in-law had a baby in hiding. And my brother took that baby, and he went out and he put it on the steps of a church. And he thought maybe somebody will take the baby and raise it.

And did they? No?

We never knew what happened to the baby. Later, somebody denounced them, where they were hiding, and they committed suicide.

Oh, dear.

And now we have a picture of your other brother. This is my other brother, Kalman, with his wife, Hela. They also got married in '39. And obviously, for this picture, they took off their band. They wanted to feel free. And so there is no arm band. What they did before they complete deportation, they went into hiding. They wanted to take me with them. But I said, no. I'll not be in hiding. Believe me. I'll go free through the war.

I had this confidence in me that I shouldn't go into any hiding or to any camp or nothing. I'll manage.

Did they survive?

No. They did not survive. They were denounced too. I don't know by whom, and I don't know the circumstances either.

Now, we have--

Then it was--

We have another picture. I think we have a picture of your husband's family.

Yeah. This is my husband, Jacob's brother, with his wife and little girl. She must be three years old, and a beautiful, happy family. And of course, they were also deported and killed. They were killed at once, because they didn't want to separate from the baby. She was three years old.

I think we have a picture of that little baby.

Yeah, we have probably. Yes.

Is that the little girl?

This is the little girl, yes. Yes, here she is.

With your little dolly, so innocent.

Yes.

Now, I think we have the picture that you were referring to your sister.

No, this is my brother. This is still my brother's-- my husband's brother. And this is forced labor and you can see everybody is in a good mood, because they think those times will pass. The Allies will come. We'll win the war, and everything will be fine. Of course, nothing like this happened.

What I wanted to mention is that little children were coming to our house, my sister was a schoolteacher. And she was teaching Hebrew. And she had children from all ages starting from four and five, eight till 10, maybe 12 and 15. And this was really very dangerous. You were not allowed to teach anybody or to study things like that. She was doing it almost to the last day before the deportation.

There is a picture of her.

Yes, we have a picture with your sister.

Yes, my sister--

Who is the other-- who is the little child?

This is my older sister's child. Her name is Felucia, like Felicia.

Felicia, happiness.

And here she is, the little one.

And this school was in your house?

It was in our-- yes. We had two rooms. And during the day, all those children were coming secretly. And my sister was

teaching them. And then they were sneaking out one by one. Believe me, those children didn't have what to eat. And this is it.

I have to mention that my sister was teaching them. And other, bigger children, 15 and 16, they were still learning and studying. They wanted to graduate. They wanted to graduate from junior high. They wanted to graduate from high school. And nobody would believe that you are really worrying about the Nazis, what's going to happen to you.

You can see children studying day from day, learning a poem, singing a song. Nobody was being bothered what's going to happen to us. You were living for the day, just a day. We heard one day, I really wouldn't even mention that when I was in Warsaw many times, one day-- not one day. It was winter and it was Hanukkah time. My cousins took me to an evening, which was dedicated to Hanukkah. There were recitations, and dances, and there was a play about the Maccabees. I will never forget that.

People were starving, and people were dying malnutrition. Corpses were in the streets of Warsaw. I was watching without a band. I saw all this they were walking corpses. And here, there were study groups. There were concerts. People were reading poetry. And this was all together, it was a community of people which were dying, but still didn't give up.

They were still resisting.

They were resisting. They were resisting in the best way that they could. Of course, there was resistance. But about the resistance, I did not know about the resistance.

Did you know about camps?

Now, what was happening that a lot of people were being deported. And since we never heard from them, there was a saying, they are going to a place there is no return. And so we could imagine what a place with no return is.

Those were the places like Belzec and Stalowa Wola, where my father, this was his last place. And just all those places were camps like that. Auschwitz, we really never even heard about Auschwitz.

After '42, when the whole little city was deported, I still was freelancing. I was going without a band.

Without your band.

Yes, I said, I'll get a job here. I'll land a job there. And completely, I was--

You were not afraid of being denounced?

Since by that time I had already papers.

Oh.

What happened when the whole city was deported, I was at forced labor. And I think I mentioned it to you, we were going. And we didn't know where we are going. It was dark, and the Germans were shooting machine guns, and they were shooting because the whole city was in a disarray. And then I decided with another girl, we'll go to another group and maybe we can hide ourselves.

But a group of two men met us and they said, where are you going? I said, I'm going to visit my aunt. And of course, they said we'll go with you. Finally, they said, look. We want to help you. Tell me what's your name. I gave them my real name. And as a result, they wanted to hide me, because they said they know my father. The name, the family name was known to them. They experienced some favor from us. And they wanted to help me.

We were going a whole night and they wanted to hide me. And no sister of this young man, or the other, or parents

would agree to take me into the house. They were afraid of anything else. So as a result, finally, as an act of desperation, those two men put me into a heap of hay. It was summer. A lot of hay was, a big heap. And they put me up on the top, and covered me up with this hay. And I stayed there a whole week.

At night, they were bringing me some milk and bread. And every night till finally the farmer, I felt that a farmer is going already to-- because they had those, it wasn't by machine taken. They usually, some sharp objects, they were taking the hay down. And I felt it's going to be after the bundle of hay, it's going to be me. So after that, I went down and I tried, and obtained other papers. It wasn't--

How did you get those papers?

Now those two men that finally hid me in this hay, they said, maybe we can make you some papers. And they brought some papers with another name. However, the print of my finger didn't come out good. And I was always afraid that it's going to be-- the Germans will recognize this as counterfeit papers. Anyway, after that, I couldn't be hiding anymore. And after that, I went to Krakow.

And there, I thought I'll get a job, because not everybody will know me. Because I was going to school in Krakow. But all the people that I was going to [INAUDIBLE] since I was going to junior high school, they're all Jewish girls and boys. So I thought, they will not recognize me. Nobody else knows me.

And as a result, I was really trying to walk here and tried to get a job and do all the other things. Then one day, they were blocking off streets, the Germans. And I was arrested, and taken to the Gestapo. And as we were walking to the Gestapo, I tore up my ID paper because I was very afraid that they will see it's counterfeited. And being at the Gestapo, and they hit you, you never know how strong you are and how you will react.

So during this walk, I got rid of my ID. But as we came to the Gestapo, I really didn't have an ID. And they were suspicious that I'm Jewish. That's why I ended up later at the prison in the ghetto. I stayed in the prison for a few days. But I never admitted being Jewish. So they really didn't know what to do with me. There was a transport to Auschwitz.

And they included me into this transport.

And you had no papers?

No papers, no name, no nothing. When we arrived, at home, I have a picture. It says Arbeit macht frei.

Work makes you free.

Work will keep you free. So we were traveling probably from Krakow to Auschwitz. It was, I don't know, it was more than 80 miles. But since those were cattle cars, and they were so packed with people, you couldn't turn. You couldn't sit.

All the windows-- there were no doors, only one door, and the door was locked from outside. And young girls, or women, or men decided to jump through the windows. Those 80 miles from Krakow to Auschwitz, we probably went three days and three nights.

With food?

With these cattle trains, and no food, and no water. And so people were jumping. People were fainting. Older people, if anybody had any sickness, they could not make it. After three days, we arrived in Auschwitz. I didn't know at this time if I have anybody from my family, if anybody survived. I just felt I'm the only Jewish person in the whole world.

And when we arrived in Auschwitz, it was January. It was night, freezing cold. And the only thing that we could see is SS man with guns, shouting, screaming, and the dogs. The dogs were just like wolves, barking, no end. And it was really a feeling, not just of being scared or frightened. It was a feeling of hell. You thought that you landed up in hell, and I really-- I had to pinch myself. Is it hell already, or is it before?

There was shouting and screaming, and it was no end. Finally, we crossed that gate. And we came inside. Inside, they started-- they wanted to know our names, tattoo us, and all those things. It was waiting and waiting, no end. And it was screaming, and I saw people, and I saw there are corpses. Because they didn't look any more like people. They had no hair, and some of them were just so very skinny. And I thought they are corpses. We're in a cemetery. I just couldn't figure out where I am.

Because the wildest imagination could not make up a thing like that. This was all reality.

Is it at that time that you were tattooed?

Yes. After hours of standing and standing and standing, what happened, that since I had Aryan papers, that means I didn't have papers, I was only saying that I had. And my name, I gave them another name, not my real name.

But you didn't have papers.

No, I didn't have any papers. And most of the Jewish girls were not included. And they were not tattooed. And they were not being photographed either. There is a picture of me--

We have a picture of you here. Tell us what--

This is it. We're waiting there a lot of hours. I can't really remember, being screamed, and shouted, and hit. And finally, they told us to get completely undressed, completely. And when we stopped already, we said not anymore. We can't. So they were beating us. Finally, we took off our underwear, bra, this was the end of it.

And they shaved us. I just can't say they shaved me. Because everybody who was standing behind me or in front of me, you felt this brotherhood, this sisterhood, you were one.

They shaved me. I can't even remember. It must be scissors. Because when I took a look at me later, I didn't recognize myself at all. The next thing was a photograph, and I have to mention also that the Jewish girls were not photographed, because already the final solution was already in action. So they knew who is Jewish is going to live here a few months, and later either finish off because of being killed or either in the crematorium.

And since I was on the Aryan papers, so this is what happened.

But Anna, you did have papers then when you came?

I didn't. I didn't have any.

So how did they know that you were--

I was saying, I'm Aryan. I'm Polish. I'm Christian. My name is so-and-so, which was Czaplinska. And--

What was your first name in that world?

Salomea

Salomea

Can you imagine?

And you spoke Polish, I presume.

And of course I spoke Polish.



And they believed you.

And they believed me, and so they tattooed me. And after shaving my hair, and then they tattooed me. And this is the number here.

What is your number?

32,127. They tattooed me. And when they were doing it really, the feeling of it, I was just thinking so from now on, I don't have any more a name, not the Aryan name which I was lying, not my name, not Anna, not anymore. From now on I'm a number. It means I'm a no one. How is anybody going to refer to a number without any feelings, without any dignity, without any respect?

And then they gave us those uniforms that you saw on the picture. This was a dress, and a jacket, and wooden shoes, and this was the hat. This you wear during the winter time. It looked like that.

Kept you warm at least in the head part.

It didn't keep you, because it was so very freezing. It was so very cold. And this was so rough, this material, touch it. You wear it on your body, it was itching all over.

And no underwear?

And nothing, no nothing, and wooden shoes. And your feet were bleeding. Anyway, this was the uniform. And when I passed my block, and I looked, and I saw a piece of glass and I looked. I definitely did not recognize myself. And the Germans really they succeeded in reducing a person into a nobody, into a no one. And even with an optimistic nature that you will do, you're invincible, you're not afraid, somehow you will win-- they did master that. They took away everything from us-- hope, and respect, and dignity, and feelings.

And later on, when I saw the other people walking like this, I was just thinking, how did they look in their normal lives. Who were they? We all were looking like robots. Later on, we're looking like skeletons.

The first days when I was in camp, we were marching every day in the morning. The whistle was blowing around 3 o'clock or 4:30 to get up. I have to mention to you that we were sleeping 10 people in bunks, wooden bunks. Those bunks were really in the beginning for horses. They were for horses. Later, they divided them into three, a lower bunk, a middle, and a higher one. And so 30 people could sleep, let's say, on a place like that.

If one turned, the second had to turn. And the bunks were from wood. And we had to sleep on it. I don't know. We had two blankets. And so during the January and February, the winter, it was unusual. It was freezing. You could get frostbite just-- anyway the little sleep that we had, you had to get up in the morning and go out, and start going with your group out, or you were standing in fives, marching till they blew, till the whistle blew again. And they start to count us.

Since my numbers were 32,127, you can imagine how many thousands of people were standing there on this Appell, and how long the counting.

The roll call.

The roll call, and how long it was called an Appell, and how long this it. It took unusually long. Sometimes you were standing for two or three hours without any moving. And you were freezing. It was just impossible. They couldn't get the right count because during the night people died. And they didn't know where they are yet. And even during this standing, people were fainting and falling down.

Finally, maybe 7:30, the whistle was blowing, if they did have the right number. We had to go to work. I would go to

work. We marched again. I don't know how many miles. And there we started to work. And work consisted of carrying all kinds of, let's say, trees, sometimes stones, from one point to another. You know that this was no constructive work, just to wear you out, and took away all your hope.

When it was winter, it was snowing. It was unusually cold. It was terrible. Then once spring came, it was the rain was pouring. And you feel when you were working, just could feel everything like steam was coming out from you, from the back of other people's backs. It was something unusually.

After a few months, I became sick. I contracted typhoid. And as a result, there was no hospital there, except I knew somebody that was working in this. It wasn't a hospital. Also it was a block, different except that the one that we were living, it was another, and like an infirmary that people were coming in and they were saying, I have some fevers. Do you have something for it? Of course, nobody had nothing for it.

The day that I arrived there, I probably had 105 or 106 temperature. So I was sitting there, probably a whole day till finally they put me into one of the bunks with another girl. I don't recall too much because, I was unconscious during that time. I only know that when I waked up, the other girl wasn't there anymore. She died. And then when I was a little conscious already, I remember that there was a selection even there. And whoever did have a number like that they left them.

The girls which were Jewish had a triangle. They had a triangle and a number. And whoever had a triangle was already then there was a selection. And they were taken to the crematorias.

So you were saved because you had non--

I was saved because I didn't have a triangle.

A Jewish number?

Yes. Also the Jewish numbers also had an A, a series A front of this number, in the opposition to these numbers, because they started another number. It was simply unbearable. It was life was unbearable. I myself was yet in a better position, because I was not exposed to selections. When I left the infirmary, because you cannot call it a hospital, so the infirmary, my legs were swollen, but completely swollen. And I just couldn't walk.

Now, I was lucky that I had a friend. She was working in the kitchen. And she saw that if I start marching every day out, and carrying those stones, and everything else, I'm not going to make two days, I wouldn't last. And they needed someone in the kitchen. And so I was given a job in the kitchen.

And this was--

This person in the kitchen was not Jewish?

No, nobody was Jewish.

Nobody.

Nobody was Jewish this was a life saver. This was completely. Like in the beginning, I was peeling potatoes, and turnips, and others. And I had a good fortune there to meet a woman, an Italian woman. She was a lawyer before. She wasn't Jewish either. And as we were sitting and I didn't know Italian and she didn't know any Polish. So she said, do you know English? And I said, yes, I do. Because I studied in school English. And we started to speak English, and became great friends.

And she said, you know what? Since we peeled those potatoes, how about if we do something constructive. I'll teach you Italian. And every day she was teaching me quite a lot of Italian. And after a few months, we were conversing in Italian. When Sunday came, and the girls could write letters home, and the letters have to be written in German. She

said, you sit down and write.

So the Italian girls were coming to me. They told me in Italian what. And I write. I was writing it in German. And she was a wonderful friend, not only she was telling-- she was teaching me about art. And something really to hang on, a wonderful, wonderful person in a desert like that, where you think you're going to be killed the next day. Suddenly, you find a person like that.

Did she survive?

After a few months-- no, she got sick. And I never heard of her. Never heard. Either she died a natural death. I don't know what happened to her.

I was working in the kitchen. I still stayed in the kitchen. And what we could do, help our fellow prisoners, is steal some food out from the kitchen. And of course, every time you did it, you thought this is your last minute, your last hour. You packed it behind your dress, behind, maybe in a pocket. And if somebody would get it on the spot, you were shot.

But this was the only way that you could sustain another person, a few other persons, on a block. And we knew, and so this was a day, this was at least the way when I worked in the kitchen, I wasn't hungry. And I was able to help others to smuggle out food, and sustain them.

One day, when I was standing on the roll call, I noticed my aunt across from me.

Oh, my.

She came in. She was in a hiding, and somebody denounced them. After the roll call, I was able to get over to her. And she told me what happened. She told me that everybody is already dead. She was hiding and she was denounced, and her husband was in Auschwitz with the men. And she was here, and she told me what happened.

So I said to her, I'm working in the kitchen. It'll be OK we could-- it was just a few weeks. The last time when I came to her block, she was gone. So it was a selection. And she was gone. So it was just life unbearable. Because every time after the roll call, the physician which was in charge of this camp, it was Mengele, then famous Mengele, I would recognize him any place that I would see him.

But unfortunately, he vanished, and we don't know what happened to him. So in the name of medicine, he was selecting people. Sometimes he would select twins. And most of all, he would select people that didn't look so good that day, had a cold, had a rash, or had something. And really they weren't even sick. He would take them out to a block 25. And it was a slow death.

Because since they didn't want to use Zyklon in the crematoria for a few people, they kept these people on the block at 25 for days, no food and no water. And till now, it rings in my ears. Water, water. They didn't even scream for food, just water.

Till finally this block, they had enough people, they transported them to the crematoria, and this was the end. Sometimes when we're standing at the roll call, and we saw the smoke, and the smoke, the taste was so sweet in your mouth. And you were thinking, you would say to the next person who is it in this smoke? Is it your mother? Is it your father? Is it maybe if there were standing an older woman, an older woman could be 30 years old. Maybe this is your child. Maybe this is your baby. Maybe those are our grandparents.

And then we were just thinking, but why don't the Allies come and bomb this forsaken place? Why do trains arrive? Where is the whole world? Why does no one doesn't do nothing? So we start assuming that people don't know, because if they would, they definitely would come, they would bomb it.

One day what happened that one of the girls, she was a messenger from Czechoslovakia. She escaped with another man. They were in love, supposedly. And we thought this is going to be the big day. Because they will tell the world what

happened. And we really were so happy that they escaped, and even we knew there is going to be retribution, and how many people will be killed because of them. But we thought, this doesn't matter.

After a few weeks, they brought them back. Somebody denounced them. They had numbers. And somebody denounced them at this point. They came back. We all had to witness the execution. They hanged her.

He was on the camp where the men. She was with the women. And we had all to watch what. But at the last minute, she spit at them German pigs. And she said, we will live anyway. The world will live without you. This was maybe 1943.

In 1944, it's getting awful crowded because there was an uprising in the Warsaw ghetto. And from the Warsaw ghetto, they were coming thousands and thousands and thousands, not so many Jews. But they were coming from the uprising, Poles. And they were telling us what's happening. And it looked completely hopeless. They told us that Warsaw is destroyed. The Warsaw ghetto is destroyed, and completely destruction.

I felt at this point that there are no more Jews in the world. And what am I going to do? Why do I want to survive? And I was thinking so maybe I'll survive to tell what happened. And if they will believe me what happened, maybe this is what's going to happen.

After '44, Auschwitz was being bombed more often, and then there were a few times an uprising in the crematorias. The people that worked in the crematorias, they decided, because if they worked in the crematoria, after a few months they were executed anyway, so at two times there were uprisings. But they were not successful. They were not successful. And all the members of the Sonderkommando which worked in the crematoria, they were all shot.

It was the end of '44. And then in January '45, January 16, '45, the death march started. The death march means that they all lined us up. It was January 16, freezing cold. And we had to march. They didn't load us on trains or nothing. We were marching in five, surrounded by Nazis, by Germans, by automatic weapons, and dogs. And every few steps somebody was dropping, because they're being shot. People couldn't follow.

And we came at night time, and they let us sit in a barn. In the morning it was unbelievable. They put back the shoes. So I learned my lesson. Never take off those shoes. They can be wet or whatever, because you will never put them back. A lot of people escaped. A lot of people were dead. This death march was something, it was something unbelievable.

The whole snow was could see like a Golgotha, all over blood, and blood, and blood every very few steps. We were marching in fives. And the people that I was marching, we were saying, we'll do it. We will survive. We will make it. We will do it, and so on, and so on.

When we-- I have to mention to you that after a few days of marching, I don't know how many people were left. But then they put us into trains, cattle trains. And maybe one day, maybe one time in 24 hours, they opened us, and they gave you some water to drink. After four days, we ended up in Germany in Ravensbruck. Ravensbruck was another concentration camp.

And there, we stayed really outdoors. There was the camp, there was not a tent, there was nothing. It was something terrible. It was something really-- after a few days in Ravensbruck, we were shipped to another place, Neustadt-Glewe. And there, there were plants with planes and other things. And we were directed to paint those planes and to work there. I remember vividly I was so hungry that we were eating bark from trees, grass. A lot of grasses were poisonous things. We didn't know which one, yes and no.

And a lot of people died. In the last days of war I remember vividly, we didn't know it's May. But it was May, May the 2nd. They told us, close the windows and the doors, and no one should ever go out. Because if you do, you'll be shot on the spot. The next day in the morning, the United States Army was there. They opened the camp.

So you were liberated?

And it was liberation. It was liberation. After the liberation, we really went crazy. I didn't mention this that during all the

years, we never saw a blade of grass, grass or a bird, or a tree. And the first time we saw grass and a tree, we kissed it, and we hugged it, and we couldn't believe that we are free. That finally we are going to go back to being normal people. And it didn't dawn on us yet that we lost our families, that we will never, never be united with my mother and father, and my brothers and sister.

This freedom was such, it was simply, it was a potion that intoxicated. You didn't know what should you-- the only thing is you think the whole world had to goodness, and everybody is going to understand. And from now on, life will be different. The world will be different.

At this point, people were taking all those uniforms and they were tearing them off for shreds. And everybody was throwing them away. I also throw away my uniform. But I saved-- I saved this.

You saved the hat.

I saved the hat. And I saved it, because I thought something should be saved from this time. I didn't know that I'm going to have a picture, because what if people are not going to know or they're not going to believe. You have to show them. You have to show them there was an Auschwitz and Ravensbruck and the bestiality of the Nazis, and how low a human being can stoop, how low, and what they could do to so many people, not just to Jews, but to all Europe, to destroy a whole world.

So many feelings came to me at this point. I say this, but where are we going to go back? We were still in Germany at this. It was May. We're still a few days in Germany. We tried to go back to Poland. But there were no transportation. And I thought, not just me, but the whole group, that we see some German people, we're going to go over and tear them apart, and kill them. And it didn't happen, because we couldn't do it. We couldn't even hit them.

And for many years, I was really very unhappy with myself. And I thought even this promise you couldn't fulfill just for the memory of your parents and your family. But as the years went by, I realized that maybe they did not destroy our soul. They destroyed everything what we had. But we remained human beings.

You rose above it all. Didn't you? Did you not? You kept your dignity. So, how did you get back to your town?

How did I come back? What happened-- we saw some men. No. We saw some horses. And we took them. And then we met a man. And he was a farmer. And we told him, look, if you will take this buggy and the horses, and us to Poland, we will give you those horses. We don't need the horses. And we traveled. We traveled with a buggy, which was very dangerous because there were the Russian army, and it was very, very dangerous at this point.

But till we came to a city where they were trains, and then we came back. And then when I came back and I started to find out, and there was no one left. There was completely no one left, and we didn't know what to start, what to do with yourself. And I till now cannot comprehend how we turned to the art of living, since we didn't have any psychologist, or psychiatrist, or no one to guide us, and no one to give us comfort, or no one to give us any directions what to do.

So till now, I really can't comprehend that so many people which were so badly hurt had the courage to start over, to go to school, and try to live as ethically as possibly, raise a family, and go on into the world. And maybe have good luck to see that the world is improving, and nations are not going to turn one on another.

There's one point that I want to make is that if Israel would be existing at this point, there would be no Auschwitz. Because now Israel saved the Jews from Ethiopia, and others, and from Russia. And I still firmly believe if there would be a free Israel, we wouldn't perish in Auschwitz, or in all the other concentration camps. And that's why we really know what Israel means to the world, what Israel means to us.

And we should try really the best way we can, not just we, because I'm Jewish. But I'm talking now about the world. Try to support and give this country a chance to live freely.

I'm sorry, but we have to conclude. And there are still a few pictures that you can tell us about.

This is my youngest brother, Saul. He survived, but shortly after the war, after he was so hurt by the Germans, after he got a heart attack. He died shortly.

Oh, dear.

A very young guy.

Bitter sweet.

He was very young.

This is my husband, Jacob, and me, after we got married in '46. Also my husband and me. We feel that we made it. We are going to live happily ever after.

You certainly do look happy.

And now I'm going to see, oh yes.

This is your legacy.

And this, we are lucky, our family. It's my son, Louis, and Claire, his wife. My daughter, Margaret and Paul her husband. And our two adorable grandchildren, David and Michael. We love them dearly. We feel very rich for having you. And we hope that you continue the good to improve the world. The best way you can and live happily.

Thank you very much. Thank you.