

Camera roll six. Sync take nine is up.

Mrs. Page, I want you to tell me again about roll call and your legs getting weak, and I want you to say I was on a roll call in Birkenau, it was cold. OK.

OK, during one of the roll calls in Birkenau-- we always had to stand on roll call early in the morning and in the evening. And I was standing. Weather was freezing, November in Poland. And we were standing by fives, and I had the feeling that something is wrong with me. My legs started to-- my knees bent under me, my back started to hurt terribly, and I felt I will fall.

And falling down meant being taken out of the group and put in a separate barrack supposedly unfit for work or unfit to live or whatever. So two of my friends, one who was standing in front of me, one who was standing in the back of me, were supporting me. And somehow-- sometimes we had to rouge our cheeks. We took the beets from our soup and we rouged the cheeks a little bit not to look very pale.

We really helped one another in little ways trying to be human beings, not getting angry, even though everybody was very nervous, at the edge of their rope, so to say. And I remember in Bruennlitz, my husband prepared some gifts for me. He gave me a toothbrush, which was made, I think, from horse's hair or something like this, and that toothbrush I shared with my bunk mate because, of course, we had no toothbrush.

Later in Schindler's camp we had some kind of a soap which was like not soap like a soda, you know what I mean? This is the powder. And of course cold water, but we didn't have lice because we were deloused when we came. Not right away, but later because of the lousing chamber was built after we came.

How do you see goodness of humanity being resistance?

I'm sorry?

How do you see that goodness being a form of resistance? You talked about--

Well, we unfortunately had no opportunity to resist in any other way because what happened to us, first of all, was unprecedented in history. We were very gradually-- you know, the Germans did it gradually. Like in my city they took away, you know, our right walking on the streets, then the children could not go to school, the doctors could not practice and so on slowly. And we hoped-- everybody said the war will be over in two, three months, you know? We believed in that wholeheartedly.

And then slowly they tightened the screws and deported to one place, deported to the next. This was absolutely a plan very designed for annihilation of people, of the whole people. So any means of trying to survive, even being good to one another, especially being good to one another, meant some form of resistance. Not giving up. It was very easy to give up, you know? Many people did.

You told something about a child who saved a potato for his father. Can you tell me that?

Yes, this was-- that happened when we were leaving Birkenau, as I told you, our train was standing on some side station. And all of a sudden, a very dear friend of mine who lives now in New York heard a whistle, familiar whistle, which she realized was her husband. And she thought, my god, what is-- and it came from a direction of the camp.

There was a fence near that side station. And on the other side of that fence there was a group of people standing in striped uniforms, and she realized that one of them was her husband. She couldn't understand what happened. He's supposed to be in Bruennlitz. How come he's not in Bruennlitz? He's in Birkenau.

And they started-- she asked for permission to step down the train just in front of it and they started to shout to one another, and she found out that Leopold made her husband-- he didn't want children so her husband and her little boy,

who at the time-- when the war was over he was about 13 so he could have been maybe eight. No, no, this was 1944. Maybe 12, maybe 11. Something like that.

So her little boy and her husband came to Birkenau. And somehow they found out, you know, through the grapevine-- in camp the grapevine goes all the time. They found out that the transport of woman is leaving and they went to that particular point and they realized that the transport the woman were the familiar woman, you know? He realized it's his wife. So they started to talk to one another, shout rather. And her little boy said, Mommy-

Wait, let's cut. This motor is too much.

[BEEP]

OK, so they're yelling through the fence.

They're yelling through the fence. And the little boy-- his name is Alexander, Olek diminutive-- says Mommy, Mommy, I am taking care of daddy. I saved a potato for him, you know? And there was another lady who was the mother apropos of the little boy that my husband told you about, Richard Horowitz, the photographer. And she saw her little boy with his father over there when she expected them to be in Bruennlitz.

Of course these women were terribly, terribly devastated, you know? They thought they would be reunited with their family, and it didn't happen. So that little boy who later was liberated in Auschwitz was Richard Horowitz. He was also on the other side of the fence. They were cousin Al Rozner and Richard Horowitz. They are cousins.

OK, is that noise all right? Yeah, it's all right. I want you to tell me again-- I'm sorry to ask you to do this again--

That's OK.

--but I want to tell me again the Germans coming and knocking on the door to take your mother away because there was so much noise before.

OK, all right.

Tell it as though you haven't told me before.

OK, in November 1939, Poland, of course, was under German occupation and we had some restrictions in the city. We had to wear the yellow armbands, we couldn't go walk on certain streets, and so on. But we still lived in the city, not in the ghetto, in our pre-war apartment.

And one night in early November my mother went downstairs to attend to a sick patient in the same building, and I heard a strong knock on the door. When I opened the door I saw three Germans, one in the green uniform of the SS I think, it must have been SS, and two black uniforms of local Germans who already were part of the German Army and who before the war were traitors--

Let's just stop.

Oh. This plane--

[BEEP]

OK, let's just pick it up there.

I opened the door and I saw those three Germans, one in the green uniform of the German SS, and the two other ones in black uniforms of the so-called Volksdeutsche which were the local Germans who sympathized with Hitler before the war and they were traitors to Poland. And when Germans occupied Poland, they all joined the German army or

whatever unit they wanted.

And the German in the green uniforms said, you are arrested on political grounds. Put together some a few warm clothes and all the valuables, your jewelry, your money, put on the table. And as my mother-- in the meantime.

Let's stop. This plane is--

[BEEP]

So what did he say?

He said, you are arrested on political grounds. In the meantime, my mother came upstairs running. Somebody notified her that the Germans are in the apartment, which was bad by itself without knowing what's going to happen. And he said, you are arrested on political grounds. Put together some warm things, and put all your jewelry and all the valuables on the table, otherwise that will be a death penalty. You'll be shot.

And he also told my mother that I was not on the list if I want to stay. So I remember now, it dawned on me that my mother asked, can I stay in the apartment? He said, no. The apartment will be sealed. Anyway, I prefer to go with my mother. I didn't want to part with her.

And as we were putting our things together, my mother had her jewelry put in a little sack which she carried because those are very dangerous and one never knew what the next minute will bring. So she carried that with her and she handed it to me and she said, throw it in the toilet and flush the water. So I did.

Then they took us out, they sealed the apartment, and we went to a building which used to be my high school before the war from which I graduated. And there, to my great astonishment, I realized there were many, many people, many of whom I knew, some of my teachers, some of my friends.

We have to stop. Let's put one more roll on.

[BEEP]

OK, after they took us to a building, which was my pre-war high school building, and as we walked to the big tremendous gym hall, I realized that I see many, many people there because there was no precedent before as far as deportations. We didn't know about it. This was the first one that we heard accordingly to the list, especially by names. And I realized there were many people that I knew. There were doctors, there were my teachers and my friends.

And afterwards we found out this was a transport of about 1,000 people. It was a selected group Polish, Catholics, and Polish Jews selected, probably the elite of the city because the Germans always did that. They considered the intelligentsia, the leaders of the eventual resistance, and they tried to prevent that. So they transported-- they divided the transport. The one transport went to Czestochowa and the other one went to Krakow. I was taken to Krakow with my mother.

All right, let's cut and--

Also my husband because that happened when he-- in his barrack, you know, in Plaszow when the Germans came in and during the prayers or something--

All right, tell me about what you know.

Yeah, but I don't know that much about it, no.

Well, tell me about it--

Yeah, I tell you.

OK, go ahead.

Oh, OK. First of all, you know, I come from a very assimilated family. And before the war, I never, you know, had an occasion to meet very religious Jews. And I remember-- never forget-- when we were leaving our barrack in Birkenau, two of my-- we were always kept in fives, you know? And two of my friends were twins. They didn't look alike at all.

They were from a small town near Krakow, and I remember when we were leaving the barrack, one of them started to pray, you know, Shema Yisrael. At that time I didn't even know what it meant, you know? God is great, you know, and so on. They were very religious all the time. They always prayed.

And there were many Jews who, in those circumstances, kept their prayers and tried-- for instance, during Yom Kippur many of them wouldn't eat as hungry as they were, you see? Because you're supposed to fast that day. So that was-- many people showed a tremendous moral strength in the face of what was happening all around them.

Was it punishable, praying?

Oh yes, that was not allowed absolutely. This had to be done in a clandestine way, and that means that the Germans should not know. Always somebody stood outside and watched, you know, if they are approaching.

OK, let's cut. Now we should maybe get quiet room tone or room tone with sheet metal?