

OK, let's just start again. And do that whole thing again.

With?

The seamstress. Tell me about she-- what her work was, what she did, how she had the baby.

She came into the camp with her husband. He was a good tailor, and she was an excellent seamstress. And the Nazis didn't wear underwear just from plain material. Everything had to be made from silk, the shirts, the underwear. So she was excellent. They brought a lot of silk from the parachutes. And she used to be able-- if you told her out of this piece has to come out three shirts and three under-- it came out. I don't know how she did it. But it came out.

And then after she had the baby, and we all pitched in to help. I mean first of all was a baby, second of all, again, to do something against the Nazis, maybe we'll be able. It was a challenge at the same time. And so she kept it for two weeks. And once Wagner walked in unannounced, unexpected, and he heard the baby. And he gave her a choice. He gave her choice, just because they needed her. Otherwise they wouldn't have. And which mother would give up a baby?

And she just spit in his face right then and there. And they shot them both. But they was such murderers that he had to shoot the baby first, so the mother should die with more pain. And so I mean I cannot explain what went on in the mind of those people, of those SS people. I mean a human being was nothing. This we know.

But they took such a joy in seeing blood, in hurting. They weren't people, they were animals, hound dogs. I always said, they bark like dogs and they act like wild dogs. It's very difficult. And we were very hurt at that time. When you see things like that, and especially when they took one of us. We were a small group. And you felt like they tear out a piece of you. That here she was, and the baby was here. And you know, there was a little life in the seamstress room. And they tore it out completely.

And you just-- you have to put up a face. But inside, everything is boiling, and boiling, and boiling, and boiling. And it wasn't easy. It was very, very hard. Not once we said to ourselves, we wish they would finish us. But then one encouraged the others, especially when Leon came. You'll see. We're get out, and we'll get out, then we'll get out. And one looked at the other, and figured the other one is crazy, thinking even about it.

And that's how every day passed by with the hope of revenge.

Tell me about escapes and punishments for escapes, successful or not.

First, they escaped, two people. They were [NON-ENGLISH] they were plasterers. And at that time there were no mines that came. So they dug a hole underneath the first fence, and they escaped. When they escaped, they always explained why they're doing things to us. They assembled us, and they said every 10th. And they took out every 10th, and they shot them in front of us. And if somebody escapes, that's what's going to happen. And those two [NON-ENGLISH] didn't make it. They didn't make it.

Then we had-- they used to take two people to the woods, because as Sobibor was announced the best, most efficient death camp, so they had to expand, and they had to build, and they had to do, and always kept busy. The Nazis didn't want to go to the Russian front. So they built, and they expand, and they said they need this, and they took out more people in order to escape from the Russian front. And they took out some people to the woods, to cut wood, and they used to make their own logs. Everything was done on the premises.

And two escaped. They lived a while and they are not alive anymore. They went with the guard for water, and they hid them, and they escaped. They survived the war even. And when they escaped, that day I worked in the weaponry. They were low on ammunition, so they brought some bullets which they got from the Russians. And they were rusty. So few girls, we sat there, and we sanded them down, and filled the belts with the ammunition.

And all of a sudden, the guy who watched us, the watchman, he was a Ukrainian. But he was a nice guy. But we didn't

trust him. He said to us, you'll see what I'm going to do. One will get killed because of me. And it was true. But you don't know who to trust. And he came around again, and he said, I have to lock you up. Something is going on. And there's not enough time for you to go back to your compound. And we saw those people walking in from the main gate, on their knees with their hands like this. They were beaten up. You couldn't tell their faces anymore.

And then all of a sudden as they walked by the weaponry, we heard the whistle. And he came, and he opened the door. And we had to run to the camp. And assembling right away, and as we assembled, [NON-ENGLISH] was such a dog, such a miserable character, I went to his trial too. He followed orders too. And they marched us off to camp 3. Camp 3 was with the gas chambers.

And they told us to assemble in a half moon. And all those poor guys were standing there. You couldn't tell who was who. That's how they were beaten up. And they told them to pick out another 45 from us, and they're going to be shot with them. First they had a long speech that some guys of ours killed one watchman, one Ukrainian. And for, this we have to pay.

On the way to camp 3, they told us that we all are going to be shot. But as we came there, they probably changed their mind. I don't know why. And they told them to pick out. And I can imagine how hard it was on those guys to go over and choose that you have to be killed. I mean in the morning, he was my friend, and now I have to-- it was a difficult time. If not, they said they're going to take 50.

So some stepped, out and they picked blindly and they shot them all in front of us, in their faces. They wouldn't let them. And friends went over, whoever maybe, budged or something, another bullet. And these things were so hard on us, harder than the transport. Because here we're like a family. We planned together. We suffered together. We do together, and we hoped together. And if you take out such a part from us, it's like tearing out your own heart. But you had to go away and pretend again that you didn't see it, or maybe what happened, happened. It wasn't easy. It wasn't easy.

I always said to myself, if they would kill me, it would be easier for me then to watch somebody that I knew and maybe ate together, and stayed together, and suffered together, and planned together. It was very difficult. It was very difficult.

We're almost-- we only have one minute left. Why don't you just describe for me Wagner or Frenzel.

I think Wagner, he was caught in 1979 in Brazil. Wagner was illiterate. That's what they said. But he was such a devoted Nazi. And there were days when he needed blood, like a dog needs blood. He needed it.

When he used to walk in with his thumbs in his pocket, we knew that somebody is going to go, otherwise he won't ask, besides what he did for the transport. And we knew also, but at the same time, as illiterate as he was, he was so shrewd that he knew what you think, not what you say.

Why don't we just-- why don't we do the escape now, the planning and then how it happened?

We planned all the time. And we talked about it, and we had the plan ready. It was just a matter of time, because we had to plan when Wagner is on vacation. Because we knew-- on furlough-- if he'll be in the camp, he'll smell it out. There's no two ways about it. So we waited.

In the meanwhile, we knew the schedule with furloughs, by being there, we knew everything. And before Wagner had to go, 28 days before, they brought in a Russian unit from POWs. At first, we couldn't understand why. But then we found out they were all Jews. They were POWs. And we got in touch with one of the leaders. Every group had a leader. And we told them our plan and we asked him, because we didn't know what's going on outside, how far the front is, and what's going on in general. And he told us approximately what's going on and how far.

And we needed that encouragement. And they gave us. And they said, your plan is good, and it's going to work. And it has to work, and we have to try. We don't have a lot to lose. And we decided the date. When Wagner left, and the date was original the 13th of October. And that day, we all got the ready. Ready? We put on two sweaters and my boots I put

on for the first time again. And I get dressed with the coat and with the kerchief. And you didn't take no luggage with you. You didn't know where you're going anyway, if you'll make it.

And then some units from military Gestapo came to the camp, never used to come on that day, and we thought somebody maybe slipped out. But they left. And the next day exactly the plan was at 4 o'clock should start everybody has to kill his SS man, and his guard at his place of work. And it started working, and I was like a messenger girl. Going here, four I killed and five I killed, just throwing signals, not talking.

But we couldn't find Frenzel. And we thought the electric line was cut, telephone wire was cut. We were afraid that somehow he got out on the outside and went for help. And this was before decided. In case anything goes wrong, everybody on his own. And where everyone can run, or everyone can jump, should go, maybe one will survive. And will be able to tell the world.

And we assembled like in a normal day, and then Sasha and Leon, the organizers went up on the table and they said, we can't find Frenzel. Everybody on his own. But a lot of people were panicky right away. A lot of people didn't want to go. They gave up. And those who felt they want to try just ran in all directions. I saw that somebody put the stepladder behind a carpenter shop, and that people are climbing out. No one explained. This was all split seconds. And I just jumped up that step ladder.

And as I was on top, I noticed a lot of bodies already under mine. Some people went before me. I got a bullet shot from the tower right here. And I fell down. As I fell down, I was so much aware, and the will to live so great there's no measurements to it, that I started hopping on dead bodies. And soon I reached the woods. We were in the woods. It was - I felt I did it. I made it. For all those, I just looked back to the fire. The fire was still burning, and to the people in the back. And I figured, I did it for you. We took revenge. What's going to happen from now on? It's a different story. Because the war was still on. And I had to survive another nine months.

How-- when you say everyone had to kill his SS man, what was the plan for that, and how did it happen?

If he came in, let's say they called him in, they said his suit is ready to try on, his uniform. So when he came in, they put it down. Everybody had sand in his pockets and a knife. This we all had, because we felt if you throw sand in the face, then it's easy to stick in the knife. Because the person gets blinded. So that's what they did. The minute he came in, they threw sand, they stuck a knife in, and they hit him, and that's how we did it. We didn't have no weapons.

The original plan was to assemble, to go to the weaponry, take out all the weapons, and march out through the main gate. But we didn't succeed. The plan didn't succeed, because we couldn't find Frenzel, and had to be everybody on his own. So we did the best we could with whatever we had.

When you got shot in the head, and you fell down, how did you manage to get up again?

You get up. When your life is at stake, you get up very fast. You don't think. The blood was streaming, and I was running. And I didn't get an infection, all those weeks that I was in the woods. And I didn't get sick without food, without water for two weeks, until I reached a farm where I wanted-- where I thought I'll find refuge.

Tell me about that. Tell me about the dream. Tell me about getting.

You see, in Sobibor, all the time that we planned, we knew. Actually the one thing that we want to accomplish is to kill a few Nazis, and get out, And maybe they'll close up Sobibor and all that for the end. And you didn't think where you're going to go, what you're going to do, especially when we had plans to go to the weaponry, take the ammunition, and go into the woods, and form a partisan group. If we have weapons, we can-- and we had the military people who knew how. We didn't know how.

But like the first day when it didn't come-- we couldn't run because of the visitors, then at night, we lay down. In Sobibor, I never cried. Nobody cried. You were so numb to everything that you saw around you that your feelings were dead. You just acted like a mechanical thing. You get up. You go to work. You listen, and that's it. And that evening, we

cried. We cried very, very much. And everybody said, goodbye. Because we figured in our wildest dreams, we didn't think one is going to survive. And as I cried, I cried myself to sleep. I dozed off, and I saw my mother coming into the camp through the main gate. The way I left, that's how she looked.

And I said, mom, you know that we're going to escape tomorrow. She says, yes. That's why I came. And she said to me, come with me. She took me by the hand, and she led me out through the main gate. And as we came out she took me into a barn, and she showed me the loft where the straw is on top. And she says go up here. And you'll survive. And that was the end of the dream.

In the morning when I got up, I recognized that barn. It was a friend of my parents, and they had a farm. They lived in the city, but they had a farm, like a gentleman's farm, in the suburbs. And I said you know what? If I'll survive and I'll escape, I'm going to go to that farm and see what's there. So they all said, you probably thought about your mother, so you dreamed about it. You know how they explain.

But as we escaped and they told us to go in groups, not all together, because we didn't have any weapons. We had a few. And if one group was going to get caught, the other one will maybe survive. And so I wound up with seven men and another girl from Czechoslovakian. Natural for the girls from other countries, it was very hard for the people, because of the language barrier. Then they were right away recognized.

So I walked from-- we escaped on Thursday, and it was already Sunday morning. And I just couldn't anymore. My wound started hurting me. It was brutally infected. And in Poland, it was so cold and rain and mud. And I being--

We need to reload.

OK.

OK. Let's go back to the getting out, and going, making your way to the barn.

Yes. So on Sunday, I was finished, no food since Thursday night, no water. In Poland there's a lot of mud in the fields, because of the rain. We used to squeeze in, just to have a drop of water. And on Sunday morning, I saw from far away, there's a little deserted house. And I said to them, I'm going in. Whatever will happen, it'll happen. I cannot take it any longer.

So one guy said, I'll go with you. And we started walking. And the others said, if he'll be able to buy some food, he'll bring it back. And as I approached that little house, a house a room, and another guy followed us. And I knocked on the door. And there was a little room, a Polish farmer without teeth. I don't know how old he was. The cow was there. The bed was. There the stove was there. Those were the conditions.

And he said, you must be from Sobibor. And I said, yes. He said, you did the right thing. And he said, what can I do for you? I said, I'm hungry. And I have that wound, and I need cleaning up. I had very long braids in Sobibor. And on the way when I took out the pins, one braid just fell off, because this side. And he said, listen. How many are you? And I said two. And then the third one crawled in, and I said that's it. And he took us into the barn. And he said, he has to go to church. And after-- because the people get suspicious. After he'll come back, he will feed us.

And that I was afraid he's going for the SS. We didn't trust nobody. And as he left and came back in a few hours, he brought us in food. I still have the taste in my mouth-- borscht, and meat, and milk, and bread, and cheese. And I said, my God. That's probably also our last meal. And then he said, when it will get real quiet in the village, you'll come down and I'll help you out.

And then when it got real quiet-- he lived there with his son. His son was in his 20s. He called us into the house. I'm telling it fast. And he had a big pot of water boiling. He said to me, you go behind the tub there and wash up a little bit, and wash up your wound. And I'll see what I can do for you. And I came back, and he put unsalted lard. He said, this helps. I don't know. It helped.

No infection or anything. And he gave us again to eat. And he said, what do you want to do now? I said I have to go to one place. And if that farmer won't take me in, I'll come back. But you have to tell me the village and your name. He was afraid. If they catch me-- which I understood. So he said, my son at midnight, he'll take you out, and he'll show you the road, where to go. I told him where I want to go. But I didn't tell him the village either. Because I was afraid to give away.

So he gave us a bottle of milk and a loaf of bread. And we had some money. And I took out and wanted to pay him. He said, no. There'll be people that won't give you without money. And the son took us to the woods. And he told us where to go. From there to the village, where I wanted to go was probably 15 kilometers, about 10 miles. I could make it easily in half a day. But we walked for two weeks. And then we didn't find the others. The others thought we went in, and we are not coming out. Maybe they killed us. So they ran away. Nobody from those survived, nobody.

And while walking in those two weeks, we just walked at night. In the daytime, we were afraid. We met a lot of partisan groups. And those two guys said, why don't we join them? I said, if you want to go to the partisans, you go. I'm going where I want to go. And we walked two weeks, three days we stayed near the highway just to cross. There was such a busy-- on the highway, because the Russians prepared the offensive against the Germans for the spring. And this was already in October.

And we crossed, and then I went up and I recognized the house in the dark. But I knew that his mother lives across the road. So I said, let me go into his mother. I know she's alone. But in his house, who knows who can be there? So I knocked in the window. And the guy came out and said, please. Don't shoot. Don't shoot. He told we are partisans. I said, I'm not shooting. I just want to know where that owner from this farm is.

He said, why do you want him? I said I have something to settle with him. I couldn't tell him I want him to take me in. So he said, he doesn't live here. In the other house lives his old mother, and he lives in the city. Which I knew that he lives in the city from before the war. So we went across, and we went into the barn. We climbed up, and we laid on that loft upstairs. But nobody came. We heard the babushka going out, feeding the chickens, feeding the cow, and nothing. We stayed there for three days. And we got hungry.

So we said, soon it will get dark. We'll go to the neighboring village. Maybe we'll organize some food, buy or maybe someone-- so we went, and we went a few kilometers. We got the bottle of milk again, and a loaf of bread, and some onions, and we started walking back. And we came back and we climbed up the loft. I'm making it very short, as you see. And the bottle of milk, the guy, one of the guys left it on the floor downstairs. And I said, where's the milk? He said, I left it.

It wasn't a bottle of milk. But we were afraid to leave any traces that people are here. So I told him, go down. And in the dark just try to find it. And as he went down and looked, and I said in Jewish to him, did you find it? And as I said did you find it, like a ghost jumped out from that loft dressed in white. He said, who are you? And then I said-- I recognized his voice. And I said Yidl, that was my brother's name. And then he said, you dead. You better sit down. And we'll wait. He took my hand, and we waited until daylight. We didn't talk to each other even.

In the morning, I told him from where I came. And he was there already 9 months or 10 months. And I told him about the dream that mother told me to go here, that I'll find-- she didn't say why. She just said, you'll survive there. And it took probably-- so my brother said, listen. He had, as the loft was probably like a floor high, solid, the straw the solid packed. You could climb down underneath the ground. That's how they made him a bunker underneath the ground through the cement floor, a hole. He said let's go in. And when he'll come, I'll tell them that you were sick and one of the men helped you. And the other one, we won't say nothing. If he'll take you in, whatever he'll give us to eat, we'll share it. Because three might be too many.

So after a few days, he came. And he had a certain whistle that my brother knew the coast was clear. My brother jumped out and he said partisans are looking for me. They want to kill me. I don't know if I'll be able to bring more food. Because he used to bring the food from the city, food, bread. And my brother said, it's not partisans. It's my sister. But she didn't want to say, so she said that. So he said, I should come out. When I came out, he just went like this.

And he said, if God put you all together, we're going to try to survive all together. And that's how I survived with the other two men. I was nine months there. Without a drop of warm water or cooked food, only bread. He used to bring in some onions, some garlic. He claimed that that helps your health. Now they come out with the same thing. Sometimes for the holidays a little jam, a little margarine. But he did the best he could. He did the best he could. And I'll never forget him. I mean he's not alive anymore.

Mom is not alive. I'm going almost every year back to Poland to visit the children. This is already a grandson of his, the one who drove me in. They all were in the United States. We helped them all out. They all have a good education. They're all nice people.