

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,990

2
00:00:05,990 --> 00:00:08,210
End of [INAUDIBLE] room tone.

3
00:00:08,210 --> 00:00:11,060

4
00:00:11,060 --> 00:00:11,560
OK.

5
00:00:11,560 --> 00:00:12,820
Roll four take four.

6
00:00:12,820 --> 00:00:13,740
[BEEP]

7
00:00:13,740 --> 00:00:17,890

8
00:00:17,890 --> 00:00:24,420
So my sister went to the
camp and it was horrible.

9
00:00:24,420 --> 00:00:26,890
I felt so guilty.

10
00:00:26,890 --> 00:00:29,510
My parents were very upset.

11
00:00:29,510 --> 00:00:31,810
She was a child.

12
00:00:31,810 --> 00:00:36,480
She wrote a postcard
about a month

13
00:00:36,480 --> 00:00:39,510
after she was taken in which

she said that she's fine,

14
00:00:39,510 --> 00:00:42,950
not to worry about her.

15
00:00:42,950 --> 00:00:47,450
And one of the most amazing
thing that happened I still

16
00:00:47,450 --> 00:00:51,070
to this day I don't
know how it happened,

17
00:00:51,070 --> 00:00:53,980
she came back to our
ghetto three months

18
00:00:53,980 --> 00:00:56,260
after she was taken.

19
00:00:56,260 --> 00:00:59,470
When she came home she
told us that as soon

20
00:00:59,470 --> 00:01:01,540
as she got to the camp
she told everybody

21
00:01:01,540 --> 00:01:02,770
that she didn't belong there.

22
00:01:02,770 --> 00:01:05,480
She was 13 years old.

23
00:01:05,480 --> 00:01:08,180
I don't know how
she convinced them

24
00:01:08,180 --> 00:01:11,210
to send her back to the ghetto.

25
00:01:11,210 --> 00:01:13,610

Auschwitz was operating.

26

00:01:13,610 --> 00:01:16,865

I know because I was
later in camps myself.

27

00:01:16,865 --> 00:01:23,820

And if you got sick in the camp,
you were sent to Auschwitz.

28

00:01:23,820 --> 00:01:27,180

It would have been the
logical thing for the Germans

29

00:01:27,180 --> 00:01:29,750

to send her to Auschwitz.

30

00:01:29,750 --> 00:01:32,640

Maybe that's the
German bureaucracy.

31

00:01:32,640 --> 00:01:33,540

I don't know.

32

00:01:33,540 --> 00:01:37,590

She came back to our ghetto.

33

00:01:37,590 --> 00:01:46,260

We had a Jewish community
council if you will

34

00:01:46,260 --> 00:01:49,140

or whatever you call
it, a Jewish government.

35

00:01:49,140 --> 00:01:52,230

The head of the
government was notified

36

00:01:52,230 --> 00:01:57,950

that she was coming back, and
lo and behold, she came home.

37

00:01:57,950 --> 00:02:00,230

This must have been May or June.

38

00:02:00,230 --> 00:02:03,550

I remember the summer
of '42 because it

39

00:02:03,550 --> 00:02:06,880

was a difficult summer.

40

00:02:06,880 --> 00:02:10,750

But it was such a joy, of
course, to have her home.

41

00:02:10,750 --> 00:02:15,200

And all the people
in the ghetto--

42

00:02:15,200 --> 00:02:16,970

she became a bit
of a-- you know,

43

00:02:16,970 --> 00:02:20,170

she was so well known because
it was an amazing thing.

44

00:02:20,170 --> 00:02:23,490

45

00:02:23,490 --> 00:02:26,540

And in August of that year--

46

00:02:26,540 --> 00:02:29,580

in the meantime things
were getting really--

47

00:02:29,580 --> 00:02:31,380

things were getting bad.

48

00:02:31,380 --> 00:02:34,950

49

00:02:34,950 --> 00:02:41,300

People were, again,
being taken to camps.

50

00:02:41,300 --> 00:02:46,760

But what happened in August,
and now I understand it,

51

00:02:46,760 --> 00:02:52,940

there were orders posted all
over the ghetto that on a given

52

00:02:52,940 --> 00:02:56,030

day-- and it was in August,
I don't remember when,

53

00:02:56,030 --> 00:03:00,530

I remember it was a very
hot day, we were all told--

54

00:03:00,530 --> 00:03:02,240

all the Jewish
people in the ghetto

55

00:03:02,240 --> 00:03:05,340

were supposed to come
to a big stadium.

56

00:03:05,340 --> 00:03:06,650

There was a big--

57

00:03:06,650 --> 00:03:11,840

must have been like a field
where sports would be--

58

00:03:11,840 --> 00:03:13,860

they would have some
sport activities,

59

00:03:13,860 --> 00:03:15,830

but it was a big place.

60

00:03:15,830 --> 00:03:18,590
And we were all told to come.

61
00:03:18,590 --> 00:03:21,380
And of course, the signs
were very specific.

62
00:03:21,380 --> 00:03:25,460
Anybody not showing up
would be killed instantly.

63
00:03:25,460 --> 00:03:28,460
I don't know whether
some people didn't go,

64
00:03:28,460 --> 00:03:30,770
whether some people
went into hiding.

65
00:03:30,770 --> 00:03:34,980
I know that my parents
talked about it

66
00:03:34,980 --> 00:03:39,330
and decided that we have to go.

67
00:03:39,330 --> 00:03:42,380
And I remember-- and we
were told to dress well.

68
00:03:42,380 --> 00:03:48,440
And I remember we were
walking in this street,

69
00:03:48,440 --> 00:03:53,300
through the city, towards the
stadium, all the people, all

70
00:03:53,300 --> 00:03:56,770
the Jewish people in the ghetto.

71
00:03:56,770 --> 00:03:58,210
And I do remember--

72
00:03:58,210 --> 00:04:01,490

73
00:04:01,490 --> 00:04:08,270
I remember the Poles were
standing on the sidewalks.

74
00:04:08,270 --> 00:04:12,360
And I don't hate all the Poles.

75
00:04:12,360 --> 00:04:17,310
I always-- I make sure that
I say that because there were

76
00:04:17,310 --> 00:04:21,170
some decent people among them.

77
00:04:21,170 --> 00:04:25,870
But unfortunately, the
majority were not decent.

78
00:04:25,870 --> 00:04:28,570
They were very antisemitic.

79
00:04:28,570 --> 00:04:31,300
And there we were
walking in the middle

80
00:04:31,300 --> 00:04:34,750
of the street like
cattle and they

81
00:04:34,750 --> 00:04:38,650
were standing on the sidewalks
and they were jeering

82
00:04:38,650 --> 00:04:43,630
and they were calling
us dirty names.

83
00:04:43,630 --> 00:04:46,610

There were some who were
standing and who were crying.

84
00:04:46,610 --> 00:04:52,280
I remember that too, and it
makes me feel good always.

85
00:04:52,280 --> 00:04:54,450
And we went to this big place.

86
00:04:54,450 --> 00:04:57,860
And I remember it was hot
and it was a long day.

87
00:04:57,860 --> 00:05:01,490
There was no water,
no food, not that you

88
00:05:01,490 --> 00:05:03,000
can't stand it for a day.

89
00:05:03,000 --> 00:05:08,150
But I remember my brother
was still a child.

90
00:05:08,150 --> 00:05:08,810
He was crying.

91
00:05:08,810 --> 00:05:11,760

92
00:05:11,760 --> 00:05:15,570
And I don't remember how-- it
was such a long day and it was

93
00:05:15,570 --> 00:05:23,120
about 2:00 or 3:00 in the
morning when we finally came

94
00:05:23,120 --> 00:05:27,980
to what must have been some kind
of a table with some people--

95

00:05:27,980 --> 00:05:33,710

officials standing where
they were looking at our IDs.

96

00:05:33,710 --> 00:05:38,390

And my father was working,
so was my mother, so

97

00:05:38,390 --> 00:05:40,880

was I. We were all-- at
this point I was working

98

00:05:40,880 --> 00:05:44,390

and my mother was working
and my father was working.

99

00:05:44,390 --> 00:05:49,680

But apparently his work was
considered important enough

100

00:05:49,680 --> 00:05:52,470

that he was told to go to
one side and the five of us

101

00:05:52,470 --> 00:05:54,860

were told to go to another side.

102

00:05:54,860 --> 00:05:58,580

And after that we
didn't see our father.

103

00:05:58,580 --> 00:06:02,150

And towards the morning,
we were-- again,

104

00:06:02,150 --> 00:06:06,950

those of us who were sent to
the other side were marched down

105

00:06:06,950 --> 00:06:10,190

again the street
towards two big--

106

00:06:10,190 --> 00:06:13,400
apparently in the meantime they
had emptied two big apartment

107

00:06:13,400 --> 00:06:18,530
houses and that became
apparently a transit camp.

108

00:06:18,530 --> 00:06:24,680
And we were all shoved into
this camp, this apartment house.

109

00:06:24,680 --> 00:06:31,730
I now know that this was
the first big evacuation,

110

00:06:31,730 --> 00:06:36,530
a euphemism of course for
a transport to Auschwitz.

111

00:06:36,530 --> 00:06:37,640
I didn't know it then.

112

00:06:37,640 --> 00:06:39,570
We didn't know.

113

00:06:39,570 --> 00:06:42,810
But we sensed that it
was something terrible

114

00:06:42,810 --> 00:06:46,980
because the treatment
of the people was ugly.

115

00:06:46,980 --> 00:06:50,940
The soldiers were
pushing us and beating.

116

00:06:50,940 --> 00:06:55,950
And I remember one thing
that I'll never forget.

117

00:06:55,950 --> 00:06:59,248

There was a woman holding
a little baby, a child,

118

00:06:59,248 --> 00:06:59,790

I don't know.

119

00:06:59,790 --> 00:07:00,880

Maybe was a year old.

120

00:07:00,880 --> 00:07:01,920

I don't remember.

121

00:07:01,920 --> 00:07:04,510

And the child was crying.

122

00:07:04,510 --> 00:07:08,800

And the soldier took the
child and took the child out

123

00:07:08,800 --> 00:07:14,650

of mother's hands and hit
the child against the wall.

124

00:07:14,650 --> 00:07:24,150

And I still remember the
blood and probably the brain.

125

00:07:24,150 --> 00:07:25,860

I don't know.

126

00:07:25,860 --> 00:07:31,880

The whole skull kind of exploded
and the woman was shrieking

127

00:07:31,880 --> 00:07:35,310

and he was beating her.

128

00:07:35,310 --> 00:07:36,860

And my mother pulled us away.

129

00:07:36,860 --> 00:07:41,340

She didn't want us to look
at it and I was crying.

130
00:07:41,340 --> 00:07:43,520
We were all very, very upset.

131
00:07:43,520 --> 00:07:49,090
We knew that something
horrible was happening.

132
00:07:49,090 --> 00:07:52,510

133
00:07:52,510 --> 00:07:54,520
That was during
the day because we

134
00:07:54,520 --> 00:07:57,920
had come in early in the
morning from that stadium.

135
00:07:57,920 --> 00:08:00,610
So during the day
I don't know how

136
00:08:00,610 --> 00:08:06,880
my mother was able to do it,
how her mind was working,

137
00:08:06,880 --> 00:08:10,750
but she was probably
trying to do something.

138
00:08:10,750 --> 00:08:17,710
And she convinced my brother
who was a cute-looking kid-- he

139
00:08:17,710 --> 00:08:21,220
had dark blond hair
and big green eyes

140
00:08:21,220 --> 00:08:23,050
and I suppose the

Germans would say that he

141
00:08:23,050 --> 00:08:25,750
didn't look very Jewish.

142
00:08:25,750 --> 00:08:29,700
And so she told him-- and
he spoke a good German

143
00:08:29,700 --> 00:08:31,240
and a good Polish.

144
00:08:31,240 --> 00:08:35,520
So she told him to go
over to the guard who

145
00:08:35,520 --> 00:08:41,520
was standing at the gate, at the
entrance to the apartment house

146
00:08:41,520 --> 00:08:43,950
and pretend that
he's all alone here

147
00:08:43,950 --> 00:08:48,970
and that he wants
to go to his father.

148
00:08:48,970 --> 00:08:53,580
And I remember that she kind
of told him what to say.

149
00:08:53,580 --> 00:08:56,400
And he went and I
kind of followed him

150
00:08:56,400 --> 00:08:59,040
but I was standing away.

151
00:08:59,040 --> 00:09:02,460
I didn't hear him,
but I could see him.

152

00:09:02,460 --> 00:09:05,460

And then I-- so he
must have told him

153

00:09:05,460 --> 00:09:08,260

that he wants to go home,
that his father is home.

154

00:09:08,260 --> 00:09:12,030

And I remember that that
German soldier looked at him,

155

00:09:12,030 --> 00:09:15,600

he looked down at him, and
maybe he was a nice human being,

156

00:09:15,600 --> 00:09:19,290

maybe he believed him, maybe
he took pity on the kid,

157

00:09:19,290 --> 00:09:21,930

but he opened the gate
and he said to him run.

158

00:09:21,930 --> 00:09:24,210

Run home.

159

00:09:24,210 --> 00:09:28,380

And my brother ran out.

160

00:09:28,380 --> 00:09:33,240

And that evening at night, it
must have been late at night,

161

00:09:33,240 --> 00:09:36,720

a militiamen came
and took my sister.

162

00:09:36,720 --> 00:09:40,770

He just came in, found
us, and he said--

163

00:09:40,770 --> 00:09:45,300
he just came in and
he said to my mum

164
00:09:45,300 --> 00:09:48,360
that she's such a brave kid.

165
00:09:48,360 --> 00:09:54,510
Let me take her home to your
husband, and he just took her.

166
00:09:54,510 --> 00:09:57,240
In the meantime, my father
must have been doing something,

167
00:09:57,240 --> 00:09:59,960
trying to get us out.

168
00:09:59,960 --> 00:10:01,520
And he managed.

169
00:10:01,520 --> 00:10:04,700
This was the one time
he managed to do it.

170
00:10:04,700 --> 00:10:08,990
And we were-- it
wasn't that night.

171
00:10:08,990 --> 00:10:10,370
It must have been
a night later--

172
00:10:10,370 --> 00:10:14,910
day later because I remember
being there another day.

173
00:10:14,910 --> 00:10:16,440
It was a difficult time.

174
00:10:16,440 --> 00:10:19,260
But at night, somebody came.

175

00:10:19,260 --> 00:10:21,960

Somebody must have
risked his life

176

00:10:21,960 --> 00:10:25,140

for money or for whatever--

177

00:10:25,140 --> 00:10:29,680

my father must have given
him whatever he had.

178

00:10:29,680 --> 00:10:32,730

And they took us.

179

00:10:32,730 --> 00:10:36,180

And it was very-- it was
nothing heroic for us.

180

00:10:36,180 --> 00:10:37,730

It was just tricky.

181

00:10:37,730 --> 00:10:43,080

We went upstairs to the
roof and through the attic.

182

00:10:43,080 --> 00:10:46,410

No, we went up through
the chimney on the roof.

183

00:10:46,410 --> 00:10:49,230

And then that
house was connected

184

00:10:49,230 --> 00:10:51,480

to another house where
there was a bakery,

185

00:10:51,480 --> 00:10:53,580

and the houses were
connected so you didn't

186

00:10:53,580 --> 00:10:56,040

have to be an acrobat or jump.

187

00:10:56,040 --> 00:10:59,790

All we had to do is
just quietly get up

188

00:10:59,790 --> 00:11:03,510

the chimney on the roof
into the other chimney

189

00:11:03,510 --> 00:11:04,950

and then down to the bakery.

190

00:11:04,950 --> 00:11:07,920

I do remember coming down and
we were all covered with flour

191

00:11:07,920 --> 00:11:09,750

from the dust.

192

00:11:09,750 --> 00:11:13,680

And I think it was at
night and they kept us

193

00:11:13,680 --> 00:11:15,450

because there was a curfew.

194

00:11:15,450 --> 00:11:18,150

They kept us till
the next morning.

195

00:11:18,150 --> 00:11:21,827

And that morning
they dusted us up.

196

00:11:21,827 --> 00:11:22,660

We've got to reload.

197

00:11:22,660 --> 00:11:26,144

OK

198

00:11:26,144 --> 00:11:27,142

[BEEP]

199

00:11:27,142 --> 00:11:31,340

200

00:11:31,340 --> 00:11:36,620

I do remember that my mom
sent my younger sister first

201

00:11:36,620 --> 00:11:39,690

and then I went home.

202

00:11:39,690 --> 00:11:42,120

You had to make sure that
you are not conspicuous.

203

00:11:42,120 --> 00:11:45,820

We probably looked
a little bit ragged.

204

00:11:45,820 --> 00:11:47,680

And then my mom came home.

205

00:11:47,680 --> 00:11:50,000

And it's funny.

206

00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:51,580

We were already
covered with lice.

207

00:11:51,580 --> 00:11:53,410

The place was already dirty.

208

00:11:53,410 --> 00:11:54,910

We washed.

209

00:11:54,910 --> 00:11:58,760

But it was so good because
we were still together,

210

00:11:58,760 --> 00:12:02,760

a family, six of us.

211
00:12:02,760 --> 00:12:07,570
But by that time there
were rumors in the ghetto

212
00:12:07,570 --> 00:12:13,190
and things were
getting really bad.

213
00:12:13,190 --> 00:12:14,120
Something happened.

214
00:12:14,120 --> 00:12:16,190
I want to tell you
about my father

215
00:12:16,190 --> 00:12:21,470
because I always
remember that my father--

216
00:12:21,470 --> 00:12:23,030
I loved my father very much.

217
00:12:23,030 --> 00:12:28,220
My father was really
a decent human being.

218
00:12:28,220 --> 00:12:31,340
The man who was the head of the
ghetto had worked for my father

219
00:12:31,340 --> 00:12:35,750
before the war for a short
time and he was very fond

220
00:12:35,750 --> 00:12:37,900
of my father.

221
00:12:37,900 --> 00:12:41,020
My father didn't have
any dealings with him

222

00:12:41,020 --> 00:12:42,490
during the whole time.

223
00:12:42,490 --> 00:12:44,050
Very little.

224
00:12:44,050 --> 00:12:47,150
And if he did, I
didn't know about it.

225
00:12:47,150 --> 00:12:51,970
But this particular
time, apparently the head

226
00:12:51,970 --> 00:12:54,730
of the ghetto, his name
was [? Monic, ?] would be

227
00:12:54,730 --> 00:13:02,200
[? Moshe ?] maybe today or
Moses, Merin, M-E-R-I-N. Yeah,

228
00:13:02,200 --> 00:13:10,637
sure there's some
documents on him.

229
00:13:10,637 --> 00:13:12,220
He was the head of
our ghetto and then

230
00:13:12,220 --> 00:13:18,220
I think he was killed by the
SS men in [PLACE NAME] in '43.

231
00:13:18,220 --> 00:13:22,690
Anyway, he had a lot of
contact with the SS men.

232
00:13:22,690 --> 00:13:27,190
He probably knew about many
things that were happening.

233
00:13:27,190 --> 00:13:31,660

And he either met my
father or called him in

234
00:13:31,660 --> 00:13:36,150
and offered him a
job of a militiaman.

235
00:13:36,150 --> 00:13:44,780
And my father was a traditional
Jew, a believing man.

236
00:13:44,780 --> 00:13:50,240
And my father looked at him
and he said to him, how can you

237
00:13:50,240 --> 00:13:56,130
how can you ask me to
take that kind of a job?

238
00:13:56,130 --> 00:14:07,370
And [? Monic ?] said to him,
look, Aaron, you have a family.

239
00:14:07,370 --> 00:14:12,860
If you work as a militiaman,
you can keep your family

240
00:14:12,860 --> 00:14:16,690
a little longer in the ghetto.

241
00:14:16,690 --> 00:14:18,710
And there is a war going on.

242
00:14:18,710 --> 00:14:23,760
And the war may end in a
month, in three months.

243
00:14:23,760 --> 00:14:27,930
And the longer you can
keep your family together,

244
00:14:27,930 --> 00:14:32,150
the better your chances

for staying together

245

00:14:32,150 --> 00:14:36,180
as a family for surviving.

246

00:14:36,180 --> 00:14:39,960
I don't know what [? Monic ?]
knew, what this Merin knew,

247

00:14:39,960 --> 00:14:42,365
but he knew probably
more than many people.

248

00:14:42,365 --> 00:14:43,740
And as I said,
there were already

249

00:14:43,740 --> 00:14:44,970
by that time many rumors.

250

00:14:44,970 --> 00:14:50,690

251

00:14:50,690 --> 00:14:55,940
And my father said to him,
but I couldn't do that.

252

00:14:55,940 --> 00:14:57,230
I could not--

253

00:14:57,230 --> 00:14:58,440
I would not do that.

254

00:14:58,440 --> 00:15:00,530
I wouldn't go to
other people's houses

255

00:15:00,530 --> 00:15:05,780
and take people for transport,
to work, or whatever.

256

00:15:05,780 --> 00:15:10,810

And the guy got very
impatient with my father

257
00:15:10,810 --> 00:15:14,140
and he said, look, he said,
I'm trying to help you.

258
00:15:14,140 --> 00:15:16,600
I am trying to help you.

259
00:15:16,600 --> 00:15:19,740
And anyway, look, it's your God.

260
00:15:19,740 --> 00:15:23,560
My father said to him,
look, I'm a believing man.

261
00:15:23,560 --> 00:15:26,830
It's against my principles,
against everything

262
00:15:26,830 --> 00:15:28,270
I believe in.

263
00:15:28,270 --> 00:15:31,870
And he said, but it's
your God who's doing it,

264
00:15:31,870 --> 00:15:34,600
who is looking down
at all our misery

265
00:15:34,600 --> 00:15:38,320
and he's not lifting a finger.

266
00:15:38,320 --> 00:15:43,360
And my father said to him,
I don't know who's doing it,

267
00:15:43,360 --> 00:15:47,740
but even if it's God,
I'm not going to be his--

268

00:15:47,740 --> 00:15:50,980

he used the Hebrew
word [SPEAKING HEBREW]

269

00:15:50,980 --> 00:15:56,110

I'm not going to be
his angel of death.

270

00:15:56,110 --> 00:15:59,950

And I know about it
because my father came home

271

00:15:59,950 --> 00:16:01,920

and he told us.

272

00:16:01,920 --> 00:16:07,180

He felt he wanted us to
know that he had this chance

273

00:16:07,180 --> 00:16:13,080

and he didn't take it, and he
wanted us to understand why.

274

00:16:13,080 --> 00:16:16,230

And he didn't do it.

275

00:16:16,230 --> 00:16:20,020

276

00:16:20,020 --> 00:16:22,450

And I think he was
right, of course.

277

00:16:22,450 --> 00:16:25,490

278

00:16:25,490 --> 00:16:30,170

And things got bad.

279

00:16:30,170 --> 00:16:34,730

After that we were sent
to a closed ghetto.

280
00:16:34,730 --> 00:16:39,360
That was in the end of 1942.

281
00:16:39,360 --> 00:16:43,800
We were told to move.

282
00:16:43,800 --> 00:16:47,730
People had to leave their place
of wherever they were living.

283
00:16:47,730 --> 00:16:51,030
There was a special area
assigned for the ghetto.

284
00:16:51,030 --> 00:16:52,800
It was called Srodula.

285
00:16:52,800 --> 00:16:58,250
It was a little village
next to our city.

286
00:16:58,250 --> 00:17:01,010
And I remember that
we were able to take

287
00:17:01,010 --> 00:17:03,770
all our belongings on one cart.

288
00:17:03,770 --> 00:17:05,450
I don't remember
how we got there,

289
00:17:05,450 --> 00:17:08,690
whether was a horse
and buggy or whatever.

290
00:17:08,690 --> 00:17:10,579
But we took all of our things.

291
00:17:10,579 --> 00:17:14,660
By that time there

wasn't much to take.

292

00:17:14,660 --> 00:17:19,810

And we were put into
this ghetto and we were

293

00:17:19,810 --> 00:17:24,200

given a hut that had one room.

294

00:17:24,200 --> 00:17:26,660

I don't think my sister
was there already.

295

00:17:26,660 --> 00:17:30,350

I think my sister was taken
just shortly before that again

296

00:17:30,350 --> 00:17:32,520

to a labor camp.

297

00:17:32,520 --> 00:17:34,680

Today I'm grateful
because I think

298

00:17:34,680 --> 00:17:36,780

that that's why she's alive.

299

00:17:36,780 --> 00:17:39,030

I lost my other
sister and my brother,

300

00:17:39,030 --> 00:17:46,390

but my sister Pina was
taken at the end of '42

301

00:17:46,390 --> 00:17:49,590

to another labor
camp in Germany.

302

00:17:49,590 --> 00:17:55,470

And in 1943 very early, must
have been January or February,

303

00:17:55,470 --> 00:18:00,440

January probably, I too
was taken to a labor camp.

304

00:18:00,440 --> 00:18:07,000

And of course, by that time,
nobody was trying to stop it.

305

00:18:07,000 --> 00:18:14,600

We knew that-- my father must
have understood that it's not--

306

00:18:14,600 --> 00:18:15,620

that it's OK.

307

00:18:15,620 --> 00:18:18,580

It's better this way.

308

00:18:18,580 --> 00:18:24,570

And I was sent to this labor
camp in Graeben near Striegel

309

00:18:24,570 --> 00:18:30,420

in Germany, which was in
lower or middle Silesia.

310

00:18:30,420 --> 00:18:32,160

I come from upper Silesia.

311

00:18:32,160 --> 00:18:34,080

That's how the
Germans called it.

312

00:18:34,080 --> 00:18:40,430

We, by the way, became part of
the German Reich immediately

313

00:18:40,430 --> 00:18:43,310

meaning the area where I lived.

314

00:18:43,310 --> 00:18:46,550

And I remember one

thing as we were

315

00:18:46,550 --> 00:18:49,010

going to the camp which
I thought was interesting

316

00:18:49,010 --> 00:18:52,820

because we were still
dressed in our clothing

317

00:18:52,820 --> 00:18:58,950

and we still look pretty
OK and we were picked

318

00:18:58,950 --> 00:19:03,290

for looks and healthy teeth.

319

00:19:03,290 --> 00:19:07,940

So among us there were some
really very pretty girls,

320

00:19:07,940 --> 00:19:09,280

really.

321

00:19:09,280 --> 00:19:11,350

And as we were walking
down the street

322

00:19:11,350 --> 00:19:14,380

in that little town of
Striegel towards the camp,

323

00:19:14,380 --> 00:19:17,980

I remember the Germans were
standing on the sidewalks

324

00:19:17,980 --> 00:19:19,132

and they were--

325

00:19:19,132 --> 00:19:20,590

I don't know whether
they never saw

326

00:19:20,590 --> 00:19:21,940

any-- this was a small town.

327

00:19:21,940 --> 00:19:24,040

Maybe they didn't know

any Jewish people.

328

00:19:24,040 --> 00:19:28,540

But they kept saying,

these are Jewish girls?

329

00:19:28,540 --> 00:19:30,430

These are Jewish women?

330

00:19:30,430 --> 00:19:32,080

They're so pretty.

331

00:19:32,080 --> 00:19:34,810

They look so nice.

332

00:19:34,810 --> 00:19:36,550

I don't know what they expected.

333

00:19:36,550 --> 00:19:39,460

Maybe they thought

we have horns.

334

00:19:39,460 --> 00:19:44,940

But they were so surprised to

see us look like normal people.

335

00:19:44,940 --> 00:19:49,970

336

00:19:49,970 --> 00:19:54,990

Graeben was a labor camp,

so it wasn't terrible.

337

00:19:54,990 --> 00:19:58,430

It wasn't terrific,

but it wasn't terrible.

338

00:19:58,430 --> 00:20:04,010

I worked in a flax
factory 12 hours a day,

339

00:20:04,010 --> 00:20:08,450

one week on a night shift,
one week on a day shift.

340

00:20:08,450 --> 00:20:12,860

The work was hard because
we did the work that men--

341

00:20:12,860 --> 00:20:16,085

German men did before they
were taken to the front.

342

00:20:16,085 --> 00:20:19,770

343

00:20:19,770 --> 00:20:22,470

We didn't get much food.

344

00:20:22,470 --> 00:20:25,860

For those who don't know
what a labor camp is,

345

00:20:25,860 --> 00:20:29,130

I'd like to describe a
little bit how we lived.

346

00:20:29,130 --> 00:20:33,120

We lived in a
barrack where there

347

00:20:33,120 --> 00:20:34,350

were bunks in the barracks.

348

00:20:34,350 --> 00:20:38,470

349

00:20:38,470 --> 00:20:40,750

The bunks were

small, narrow beds.

350

00:20:40,750 --> 00:20:45,900

There was a straw
mattress, a blanket.

351

00:20:45,900 --> 00:20:47,960

We had showers.

352

00:20:47,960 --> 00:20:50,300

Not always was the water warm.

353

00:20:50,300 --> 00:20:51,620

Often it was cold.

354

00:20:51,620 --> 00:20:56,510

But we washed because we knew
that we need to keep clean.

355

00:20:56,510 --> 00:21:00,030

We were given a loaf of bread--

356

00:21:00,030 --> 00:21:05,490

a pound of bread probably
a week, which those of us

357

00:21:05,490 --> 00:21:08,730

who had a lot of self
discipline cut into seven pieces

358

00:21:08,730 --> 00:21:12,320

and had a slice a day.

359

00:21:12,320 --> 00:21:16,040

Most of us actually didn't
last for seven days.

360

00:21:16,040 --> 00:21:20,930

The more disciplined ones
ate it up in five days.

361

00:21:20,930 --> 00:21:22,880

Those who didn't
have any discipline

362
00:21:22,880 --> 00:21:25,590
ate it probably in two days.

363
00:21:25,590 --> 00:21:28,370
I usually listed
about five days.

364
00:21:28,370 --> 00:21:29,450
I wasn't so big.

365
00:21:29,450 --> 00:21:31,710
Maybe it was easier.

366
00:21:31,710 --> 00:21:34,930
We were given a soup a day.

367
00:21:34,930 --> 00:21:39,730
In the beginning the
soups were not too watery.

368
00:21:39,730 --> 00:21:44,460
There was some kohlrabi, some
vegetables, sometimes piece

369
00:21:44,460 --> 00:21:46,530
of potato in it.

370
00:21:46,530 --> 00:21:54,210
Once a week we were given a
little jam, a little margarine.

371
00:21:54,210 --> 00:21:56,520
Once in a while in
the beginning we

372
00:21:56,520 --> 00:22:04,200
even got a small piece of horse
meat or some beef or something.

373

00:22:04,200 --> 00:22:06,660

Later on, of course, we didn't.

374

00:22:06,660 --> 00:22:15,420

And black Ersatz coffee, which
is like a substitute coffee.

375

00:22:15,420 --> 00:22:18,210

We were always
hungry, of course.

376

00:22:18,210 --> 00:22:23,760

I remember some girls literally
crying themselves to sleep.

377

00:22:23,760 --> 00:22:29,650

378

00:22:29,650 --> 00:22:31,650

We've got to reload.

379

00:22:31,650 --> 00:22:38,274

380

00:22:38,274 --> 00:22:42,230

We've got to reload.

381

00:22:42,230 --> 00:22:42,770

Six.

382

00:22:42,770 --> 00:22:43,770

[BEEP]

383

00:22:43,770 --> 00:22:47,270

384

00:22:47,270 --> 00:22:50,060

I was working in a
flax factory as I

385

00:22:50,060 --> 00:22:51,410

started to tell you before.

386
00:22:51,410 --> 00:22:56,360
And I worked in the first--

387
00:22:56,360 --> 00:22:58,360
it's hard to-- I don't
know what they call them.

388
00:22:58,360 --> 00:23:06,430
It was a fully automated factory
where the flax came in on big--

389
00:23:06,430 --> 00:23:07,750
by train.

390
00:23:07,750 --> 00:23:13,275
That was by-- is it like wagons.

391
00:23:13,275 --> 00:23:16,180

392
00:23:16,180 --> 00:23:18,220
What do you call the train?

393
00:23:18,220 --> 00:23:20,950
It's not a train where people--
not passenger train, but--

394
00:23:20,950 --> 00:23:21,840
Freight.

395
00:23:21,840 --> 00:23:22,340
What?

396
00:23:22,340 --> 00:23:22,965
Freight trains.

397
00:23:22,965 --> 00:23:24,310
Crate trains.

398
00:23:24,310 --> 00:23:28,630

And we would have to
unload the flax from there

399
00:23:28,630 --> 00:23:36,520
into the first department, if
you will, that had big combs.

400
00:23:36,520 --> 00:23:39,190
Like they had machines
that looked like combs

401
00:23:39,190 --> 00:23:41,170
because the flax had little--

402
00:23:41,170 --> 00:23:45,030

403
00:23:45,030 --> 00:23:49,590
there were seeds in
little balls on the flax,

404
00:23:49,590 --> 00:23:53,430
and they were trying to save
the seed because the seed was

405
00:23:53,430 --> 00:23:58,090
what they used to make oil
for cooking or whatever.

406
00:23:58,090 --> 00:24:00,360
So it was very
important to unload--

407
00:24:00,360 --> 00:24:04,680
our job-- our task
was to unload the flax

408
00:24:04,680 --> 00:24:09,360
and then send it through these
big machines that were combing

409
00:24:09,360 --> 00:24:13,830
off the seed and then it would

go to the next department

410
00:24:13,830 --> 00:24:15,300
where it was cooked.

411
00:24:15,300 --> 00:24:23,280
The final-- the last
department in that factory

412
00:24:23,280 --> 00:24:28,800
already produced a thread
that was put on spools.

413
00:24:28,800 --> 00:24:33,520
This is how it was done, and it
was a fully automated factory.

414
00:24:33,520 --> 00:24:40,380
And what that meant is that
they only needed to work us--

415
00:24:40,380 --> 00:24:44,430
to work the people who worked in
that first department which was

416
00:24:44,430 --> 00:24:47,130
called [NON-ENGLISH] I
don't know what that means

417
00:24:47,130 --> 00:24:49,140
in English.

418
00:24:49,140 --> 00:24:51,660
[NON-ENGLISH] must be department
and [NON-ENGLISH] must have

419
00:24:51,660 --> 00:24:55,540
been the name of
that first place.

420
00:24:55,540 --> 00:25:00,690
And as long as they rushed us,
the whole factory was working.

421
00:25:00,690 --> 00:25:04,620
So the SS men were forever
standing over our heads

422
00:25:04,620 --> 00:25:07,410
making us work.

423
00:25:07,410 --> 00:25:10,550
Because if we worked
fast, they did.

424
00:25:10,550 --> 00:25:16,490
And this is-- and I did both.

425
00:25:16,490 --> 00:25:18,090
Sometimes I unloaded the trains.

426
00:25:18,090 --> 00:25:21,690
Sometimes I was at the machine.

427
00:25:21,690 --> 00:25:25,080
In the evening-- at
night-- the night

428
00:25:25,080 --> 00:25:28,240
shifts were the hardest
because it was very cold.

429
00:25:28,240 --> 00:25:29,220
The place was open.

430
00:25:29,220 --> 00:25:30,750
It was winter.

431
00:25:30,750 --> 00:25:34,070
We were not that well dressed.

432
00:25:34,070 --> 00:25:38,120
And it was really a--

433

00:25:38,120 --> 00:25:41,690
it was a miserable place.

434
00:25:41,690 --> 00:25:43,400
It was hard.

435
00:25:43,400 --> 00:25:44,570
But there were some things.

436
00:25:44,570 --> 00:25:45,740
We had a Kapo.

437
00:25:45,740 --> 00:25:48,200
We had a girl who
was in charge of us,

438
00:25:48,200 --> 00:25:51,000
and she was not like some of
the Kapo that you read about.

439
00:25:51,000 --> 00:25:53,370
She was really a
very nice person.

440
00:25:53,370 --> 00:25:55,070
She was older than we were.

441
00:25:55,070 --> 00:25:57,680
She was about 23 at that point.

442
00:25:57,680 --> 00:25:59,390
Very beautiful girl.

443
00:25:59,390 --> 00:26:01,250
And she was always
walking around trying

444
00:26:01,250 --> 00:26:04,320
to help everybody.

445
00:26:04,320 --> 00:26:06,840
In the evening

around 12 o'clock we

446

00:26:06,840 --> 00:26:09,480

used to get a break
when they would

447

00:26:09,480 --> 00:26:12,210

bring the soup from the
barracks because that's when

448

00:26:12,210 --> 00:26:15,080

we got our soup when we worked.

449

00:26:15,080 --> 00:26:21,550

And she would ladle out
the soup to everybody

450

00:26:21,550 --> 00:26:23,190

and we would huddle around her.

451

00:26:23,190 --> 00:26:24,440

We would sit around her.

452

00:26:24,440 --> 00:26:28,030

And sometimes we would
sit around and talk,

453

00:26:28,030 --> 00:26:29,860

and sometimes we would be quiet.

454

00:26:29,860 --> 00:26:35,080

And sometimes when it moved
her, [? Salka-- ?] her name was

455

00:26:35,080 --> 00:26:38,930

[? Salka ?]

[PERSONAL NAME] would sing.

456

00:26:38,930 --> 00:26:44,290

She had studied voice in
Italy, in Milano I think.

457

00:26:44,290 --> 00:26:46,950
And she had a very
beautiful soprano.

458
00:26:46,950 --> 00:26:50,100
And I remember, that night,
that particular night

459
00:26:50,100 --> 00:26:54,370
because something happened
that she started to sing to us

460
00:26:54,370 --> 00:26:57,610
and she was singing
Schubert's Serenade,

461
00:26:57,610 --> 00:27:00,030
and it was just so beautiful.

462
00:27:00,030 --> 00:27:03,100
She had a really
beautiful voice.

463
00:27:03,100 --> 00:27:06,340
And I remember that it
was such a good feeling

464
00:27:06,340 --> 00:27:07,240
to be sitting there.

465
00:27:07,240 --> 00:27:08,380
It felt so warm.

466
00:27:08,380 --> 00:27:13,150
For a few minutes I
forgot where I am.

467
00:27:13,150 --> 00:27:16,750
I felt-- I thought I was
somewhere where it's beautiful

468
00:27:16,750 --> 00:27:19,680
and where the sun is shining.

469
00:27:19,680 --> 00:27:27,290
And suddenly I noticed
that we were not alone.

470
00:27:27,290 --> 00:27:29,830
And I remember I turned
my head very slightly

471
00:27:29,830 --> 00:27:30,910
because I was afraid--

472
00:27:30,910 --> 00:27:32,080
scared.

473
00:27:32,080 --> 00:27:37,640
And I saw this SS man standing
and he was looking at her,

474
00:27:37,640 --> 00:27:43,220
at [? Salka. ?] And she wasn't
aware of it at that point.

475
00:27:43,220 --> 00:27:46,160
And I could see that he
was really enchanted.

476
00:27:46,160 --> 00:27:50,510
He was looking at
her with really--

477
00:27:50,510 --> 00:27:51,980
with rapture almost.

478
00:27:51,980 --> 00:27:54,830

479
00:27:54,830 --> 00:27:56,810
And suddenly she
must have noticed

480
00:27:56,810 --> 00:27:58,850

that he's looking at her
and she stopped singing

481
00:27:58,850 --> 00:28:01,440
and it got very quiet.

482
00:28:01,440 --> 00:28:04,520
And he suddenly started
walking towards her

483
00:28:04,520 --> 00:28:05,690
and he pushed us aside.

484
00:28:05,690 --> 00:28:07,110
We were sitting
down on the ground

485
00:28:07,110 --> 00:28:09,290
so he was kind of
pushing us aside.

486
00:28:09,290 --> 00:28:12,470
And he walked over to her
and she was sitting too

487
00:28:12,470 --> 00:28:17,510
and he picked her up and
he started beating her.

488
00:28:17,510 --> 00:28:19,440
He started hitting
her on the face.

489
00:28:19,440 --> 00:28:21,470
He was hitting her
and screaming at her

490
00:28:21,470 --> 00:28:26,890
and he was beating on her
really and screaming so loudly.

491
00:28:26,890 --> 00:28:30,020
He say, you have no right.

492
00:28:30,020 --> 00:28:31,820
You have no right
to sing like this.

493
00:28:31,820 --> 00:28:34,280
You have no right to look
like this, you dirty Jew.

494
00:28:34,280 --> 00:28:39,150

495
00:28:39,150 --> 00:28:40,580
And then he walked away.

496
00:28:40,580 --> 00:28:44,890

497
00:28:44,890 --> 00:28:49,270
With all of that I was
just thinking that I was--

498
00:28:49,270 --> 00:28:50,710
there was still a child in me.

499
00:28:50,710 --> 00:28:53,450
I was 16.

500
00:28:53,450 --> 00:28:57,470
We were allowed a
postcard a month.

501
00:28:57,470 --> 00:29:00,270
So I wrote to my
parents once a month

502
00:29:00,270 --> 00:29:03,480
and I think I received
a postcard a month.

503
00:29:03,480 --> 00:29:08,480
And we were allowed to get

a little package from home.

504

00:29:08,480 --> 00:29:10,760

I don't remember what
my parents send me.

505

00:29:10,760 --> 00:29:14,390

Maybe they send me something--
some food or something,

506

00:29:14,390 --> 00:29:15,470

whatever they could.

507

00:29:15,470 --> 00:29:18,840

I remember getting
one or two packages.

508

00:29:18,840 --> 00:29:23,030

But I do remember that because
I was working with this flax

509

00:29:23,030 --> 00:29:25,100

and I was wearing my coat--

510

00:29:25,100 --> 00:29:30,120

at that point we were not given
any of the prisoners uniforms.

511

00:29:30,120 --> 00:29:32,490

We were wearing
our own clothing.

512

00:29:32,490 --> 00:29:34,800

And it was tearing at my coat--

513

00:29:34,800 --> 00:29:36,950

tearing at my clothing.

514

00:29:36,950 --> 00:29:40,850

So I wrote to my mother
and I'm thinking today

515

00:29:40,850 --> 00:29:43,250
how could I do it, but
I wrote to my mother

516
00:29:43,250 --> 00:29:49,385
and I asked her to send me if
she could a pair of overalls.

517
00:29:49,385 --> 00:29:52,450

518
00:29:52,450 --> 00:29:57,020
And I suppose only
a mother does that.

519
00:29:57,020 --> 00:30:01,790
I don't know how she did it, but
I received-- the last package

520
00:30:01,790 --> 00:30:09,100
that came from home I received
a blue pair of overalls.

521
00:30:09,100 --> 00:30:10,480
And it was obvious--

522
00:30:10,480 --> 00:30:15,580
because she may have written me
but it was obvious that she--

523
00:30:15,580 --> 00:30:16,420
I know now.

524
00:30:16,420 --> 00:30:19,600
I have a cousin
who was with them

525
00:30:19,600 --> 00:30:23,710
and she survived Auschwitz and
she told me how my mom did it.

526
00:30:23,710 --> 00:30:27,370
She took a sheet, an old

sheet, a linen sheet.

527

00:30:27,370 --> 00:30:32,950

I don't know where she got some
dye in a kind of a royal blue.

528

00:30:32,950 --> 00:30:38,320

She dyed the sheet and she
made me a pair of overalls.

529

00:30:38,320 --> 00:30:39,850

And she sent it to me.

530

00:30:39,850 --> 00:30:44,276

It was her last gift to me
that she sent me her overalls.

531

00:30:44,276 --> 00:30:47,750

532

00:30:47,750 --> 00:30:55,750

And after that there
was no mail and we

533

00:30:55,750 --> 00:30:58,470

knew something was happening.

534

00:30:58,470 --> 00:31:00,660

We knew that something happened.

535

00:31:00,660 --> 00:31:03,660

There was no communication.

536

00:31:03,660 --> 00:31:08,370

Most of the girls in my
camp were from the same area

537

00:31:08,370 --> 00:31:11,730

and communication stopped
so we knew that something

538

00:31:11,730 --> 00:31:14,290

had happened to the ghetto.

539

00:31:14,290 --> 00:31:18,440

And about a couple
of months later,

540

00:31:18,440 --> 00:31:21,660

must have been
around Yom Kippur,

541

00:31:21,660 --> 00:31:27,300

a transport of women came
to our camp from Auschwitz.

542

00:31:27,300 --> 00:31:28,260

I don't know how many.

543

00:31:28,260 --> 00:31:32,420

Maybe 50, maybe 100.

544

00:31:32,420 --> 00:31:35,120

And among them were some--

545

00:31:35,120 --> 00:31:38,000

at least there was one
or two that I knew,

546

00:31:38,000 --> 00:31:40,410

may have lived on our street.

547

00:31:40,410 --> 00:31:42,860

And I remember we were
so anxious to find out

548

00:31:42,860 --> 00:31:43,520

what happened.

549

00:31:43,520 --> 00:31:48,430

And I remember walking over
to one of them when we could,

550

00:31:48,430 --> 00:31:50,860

and I said, what happened?

551

00:31:50,860 --> 00:31:52,713

What happened to the ghetto?

552

00:31:52,713 --> 00:31:53,880

What happened to my parents?

553

00:31:53,880 --> 00:31:56,390

Do you what happened?

554

00:31:56,390 --> 00:31:57,890

And they were so hardened.

555

00:31:57,890 --> 00:32:00,480

They had gone through Auschwitz.

556

00:32:00,480 --> 00:32:04,870

And I remember she said to
me, you mean you don't know?

557

00:32:04,870 --> 00:32:07,950

You don't know what happened?

558

00:32:07,950 --> 00:32:09,920

They were all cremated.

559

00:32:09,920 --> 00:32:11,610

They were all killed.

560

00:32:11,610 --> 00:32:13,903

They went they went
to gas chambers.

561

00:32:13,903 --> 00:32:15,570

You mean you don't
know about Auschwitz?

562

00:32:15,570 --> 00:32:17,237

You don't know what
they're doing to us?

563

00:32:17,237 --> 00:32:22,410

564

00:32:22,410 --> 00:32:23,700

It was really Yom Kippur.

565

00:32:23,700 --> 00:32:31,190

566

00:32:31,190 --> 00:32:31,880

I'm sorry.

567

00:32:31,880 --> 00:32:35,768

568

00:32:35,768 --> 00:32:38,110

OK, let's stop for a minute.

569

00:32:38,110 --> 00:32:39,800

[INAUDIBLE]

570

00:32:39,800 --> 00:32:41,060

Camera roll six.

571

00:32:41,060 --> 00:32:41,690

Tape 12.

572

00:32:41,690 --> 00:32:45,950

573

00:32:45,950 --> 00:32:46,970

OK.

574

00:32:46,970 --> 00:32:51,920

So what I just wanted to say is
that how I made peace with God.

575

00:32:51,920 --> 00:33:00,680

I think in that way that I
do believe that God was not

576

00:33:00,680 --> 00:33:03,410
in Auschwitz as I said.

577

00:33:03,410 --> 00:33:06,890
I agree with a
professor whose name

578

00:33:06,890 --> 00:33:11,700
is Fackenheim who said that
God was not in Auschwitz.

579

00:33:11,700 --> 00:33:14,790
And maybe I do remember
one thing that when I talk

580

00:33:14,790 --> 00:33:20,760
to a rabbi years later and I
told him about my disagreement,

581

00:33:20,760 --> 00:33:25,070
my [NON-ENGLISH] if
you will with God,

582

00:33:25,070 --> 00:33:27,860
which is kind of like having
a court case with him,

583

00:33:27,860 --> 00:33:32,060
and he said, Bella, you never
lost your faith because one

584

00:33:32,060 --> 00:33:36,580
doesn't have a
[NON-ENGLISH] with--