

ISRAEL IPSON

Israel Ipsen was born in 1911, in Eydtkuhnen, Lithuania. Israel was raised in Kovno, Lithuania, and graduated from law school in 1933. Because of anti-Jewish discrimination, he was barred from practicing law in 1935. The Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, and occupied Lithuania. Israel claimed he was a mechanic and escaped several massacres in Kovno. He was forced to work on the construction of a wooden airport runway. He escaped and went into hiding. With his wife and son, he hid in a potato pit for nine months, and was liberated by Soviet forces in 1944.

TRANSCRIPT OF ISRAEL IPSON TAPE 1, 2 AND 3

TOPIC	TAPE	LOCATION	LENGTH
BACKGROUND	1	00:00:18	

Q. Give us your full name

A. Israel Ipson

Q. How do you want me to refer to you? Do you have a nickname?

A. Izzy. I-Z-Z-Y. It was given to me right here in Richmond.

Q. First question. I want you to tell me where you were born and what you remember about your town, family life and things like that while you were growing up?

A. See, I was born March 15, 1911 in Lithuania. I lived all my life in Cowness(?) or in Lithuania in _____. We call it _____ and really in the suburbs of Cowness(?) but it was Slebutkey(?). Slebutkey was the suburb. It was Slebutkey of the famous Rabbinical Seminary - the Slebutkey Yeshiva. It was in Slebutkey. Then, I was raised in _____. Then, I went to public school in 1922. I went in high school. We had a private high school _____ - Hebrew High School. Then, Lithuania for the Jews was not as free as we expected. The high school had to be a private, self-supported. The Gorman(?) high school was for Jews not allowed - was only for the Lithuanians. We had a Gorman(?) high school named _____. It was for the Lithuanians. For the Jews, we had two high schools. _____ and the other was a Hebrew High School in the name of Swagie(?). They used to call it _____. I graduated high school in 1928 and register myself in the Loas(?) School from the University of Lithuania. From the Loas(?) school, I graduated in 1933. In 1934 when I got my diploma as a _____ and I joined the bar in 1933. And only until 1935 could I practice law. In 1935, already in Lithuania was blowing the Naziveens. All the influence from the Nazis had already influenced the Lithuanians. The first lull the clear out that all young lawyers who don't have any five years of practice got to go back in court. We worked in court for two years and then pass again another examination. Then, after we pass examination they can be accepted as lawyers. The Justice Minister, here we call it Attorney General, there was Justice Minister, the man's name was Selinger(?). We were around 500 young Jewish lawyers. _____ out in the street. We couldn't get a place in the court to work because Lithuania was a small country. They had maybe 50 civil courts in all the little villages. One Supreme Court and two District Courts but how many people could be accepted in those 55-60 courts. For the first ones, they took Lithuanians. For the Jews was no place. When you send in application in the court I want to go there to work for two years. By the law, the answer you usually get was "Sorry, no vacancies." Then, we knew it was just plain _____ that the Jews wouldn't be able to practice law anymore but the Lithuanians had the free right. Then, you had to think of something else for to do. To go in business

wasn't so easy either. They already had started the anti-semitism in Lithuania but they call it _____ it means business people. They are organizing an organization named _____ only accepting only Lithuanians. Jews were not allowed in _____. And what they done, when you joined as a member of the _____ you already with a permit that you can do business. Then, it was plain the Lithuanians took over gradually the business. Then, we start having slogans already a bad time in 1935-36. Lithuania for Lithuanians. That means buy your merchandise you need by Lithuania. They didn't say plain like in Germany. But they didn't want it yet don't buy by Jews but they make it in a nicer way. They called it Lithuania for Lithuanians.

Well, I had to make a living, I was married already. Jay, my son was already born. Then, I decide to become an accountant. I went on passed as a CPA but I find out that it was that business people been in trouble so many and the accountant business was a little dead too. Then, one day, but in one company I still worked, and the owner of the company asked me one day to do him a favor. To take his deposit to the Cowness(?) Bank in Cowness(?) as well as _____. And I took it over, his deposit, and I used to ride an old beat-up motorcycle. The reason I had to buy a motorcycle. From my place where I was living to the University, where I was going twice a day, sometimes in the evenings too, was around five miles one way and I had to go 10 miles each day. Then, I finally got a hold from someone a broken up motorcycle. I fixed it up and wired it up so it would run. And I used to ride the motorcycle back and forth. I was working for _____ fish for the fish company and I took the money in the bank. Across the street from the bank was the _____ department. The Gorman(?) department and there was a friend of mine - a Lithuanian - with whom I went to school together in college. Seen me through his office window when I drove to the bank. He came out and was waiting for me. When I come out of the bank he come up to me and say I have good news for you. He felt sorry for me without a job and after all, I'm the same person like him. He say, Lithuanians going to _____ the Jews a duty - the import duty for cars and motorcycles. Since you drive such a motorcycle, you got a good opportunity now to write letters to the manufacturers in America and England and Germany to get an agency because nobody know yet - you the only one. It will be announced in November by the end of the year. He told me May. It is a good opportunity. I'm just giving it to you. I'm not allowed to say, but I'm doing it.

I was started writing letters to manufacturers. I didn't have any money - nothing - but I wrote letters. Since I had an _____ The motorcycle I had been riding was an _____ from Belgium. I wrote to them a letter saying; well, I will need parts. I'll buy parts for my motorcycle and they were interested. There was a Belgian man from _____ They make _____, cars, elevators and they send me letter they would like me to be their general agent. What I became a general agent without nothing. Then, the first thing they say that I order from them is motorcycle - only one because I didn't have any money for one. I borrowed money from a friend of mine for my motorcycle to ride around. Well, it took on and I start selling all right. I made very good in 1937. They asked me, as I took in 1937, January 1 when the new law came in with the Jews

dropped from \$4 or 4 leath(?) - like a dollar - to .50 a pound. It was very cheap. Then, the factory ask me I should come to them in Belgium. I come to Belgium and they tell me all their conditions and I gave them an order and I came back for three motorcycles. I come back to Lithuania with a friend. He went with me to the bank - give them a guarantee for 10,000 leath and this way I could get the merchandise. In 1938, they asked me to come again. When I came in 1938, I had family in Berlin. My mother's aunt and her cousins had all been living in Berlin and my mother asked me, since you going back to Berlin and there is a hunger. They didn't have any butter, and meat - why don't you take a goose - a smoked goose - and a few pounds of butter and cheese and take it all for her aunt. Since she was an older woman and she would like to help her out. I took it all in 1938 but not knowing, I think it was September, 1938, and the men were very, very upset. They say, they told me why I came now, in this time of year. It is dangerous to drive through night and we will have troubles in Berlin. I wish you wouldn't come. I say, what kind of troubles. They say, I don't know. It looks like we have a riot. They start beating up Jews because it was the _____. The _____ what he killed the _____ was the Ambassador in France, in Paris. A _____ by the name of _____ came in and killed them and because of all the Nazis and anti-semitism, the reason they threw out. His father was living in Germany and they tell him to get out. Chased them out from Germany to Poland. For events they came and killed him, this was the start then of the riot. It was when they broke up all the glass. And it was Kristalnacht that night. They knew already that they going to have some problems. And I didn't know it. I stayed home with my aunt's daughter and all the men left in the middle of the night not in the _____ Jews hid. I didn't say nothing. I am nothing. I kept quiet and I was shaken. I was scared to death right there. Who are you? I say I am Lithuanian. Something that you know right when it starts - something gives me power in me works all the time - ahead of time. In Lithuania, old-time Lithuania, I had my passport, you see I came with a sound passport. They looked. Yeah, Lithuanian but you are a Lithuanian, a German? Jew? You see, I am a Jew but not a German Lithuanian because you see, my first name is Israel and all the Jews they named, when Hitler came to power, named all the Jews, Israel, and all the women, the men Israel, the women they named Sarah and since my name is Israel, they say well . . . One say maybe we should lock him up. I spoke German very well and the German language fluently. The other one say No. There's no use to lock him up. He's Lithuanian. He has nothing to do with Berlin rules. I was lucky. Right there, I would have been locked up. And, I see fire. Flames around and that's where they been burning the books, and breaking up homes. I stayed up all night. I was scared. I was trying to get away from there. In the morning, I come out and walked around and I seen broken glass and the broken glass from the synagogue around the corner that was there. And there, it was the . . . there was a Jewish store, like Thalhimers here, was Israel was _____ Israel. A big department store. Teets(?) was a big one. I was a Tuesday - it was robbed, destroyed. All law was for Jew - _____ forbidden, you cannot walk no where. They took away the cars and it was miserable.

Topic	Tape	Location	Length
	1	00:15:11	

Q. Can I ask you something? You actually walked out to the synagogue they burned there? One of them?

A. Yeah, I walked up.

Topic	Tape	Location	Length
	1	00:15:18	

Q. What do you remember seeing when you walked through there?

A. That's all I seen. Was all burned up books was laying in front of the synagogue and all broken out windows. Was all a mess. Like right after a fire. It was all in the morning. All ready, for night, the fire department was trying. It tried to stop the fire in the synagogue because it was afraid it was German homes close by and it would burn the homes up. It was all by accident. I didn't know that I would run into Kristalnacht and next morning, right away, I still had a couple days to be in Berlin. I say I didn't want it, I better go into _____. I had to go to Benson(?) and on the way back, I didn't even stop no more. I was scared to stop in Berlin. You see the way I sent by train from Cowness(?) to Brussels I had to come to Liege(?). Really, the factory was in Liege(?). There was the factory. But all the meetings we have was in Brussels. Then from Brussels I went to _____ then direct home. And it was the last time I went to Berlin because the Wall had started in September 1, 1939.

Topic	Tape	Location	Length
	1	00:16:40	

Q. I want to talk a little bit more about Kristalnacht if you don't mind. When you're walking through that scene, the next day, what's going through your mind?

A. I only be thinking how can I save myself. I was afraid to stick my nose. But well, the only way I was lucky, I didn't look like a Jew; I look like German. I was blond and you see, nobody bothered me but I was afraid. You see, I didn't want to stay home I want to get out but I had to, to even to get a cab I had really a problem. I had to that building where I was, was as the Jewish building. Other Jews lived there. But they all, that night of Kristalnacht, nobody was there they all run away. They went to hide. Between in German homes, they got good friends because not every German was a Nazi in that time. Then, I walked - I didn't walk too much - I was a fraid to be too much in the street and you see Berlin is a big city. You can't, unless you go by street car, and I wasn't too familiar with Berlin. I didn't want in such mess and to be myself in the street. I tried to stay out but it's enough what I see.

Topic	Tape	Location	Length
	1	00:18:06	

- Q. How about the night of it? Try to remember some things that you saw or even heard that you can remember.
- A. Well, what I heard. I heard all the noise. I heard all - at night I seen the flames what was burning. What they were doing was burning the synagogue and bookstore, Jewish bookstores. There were a lot of Jewish bookstores. And then the books. The way you see on television piled up outside and put on fire and burned up. And, you know in 1938, and 1937, I was in Berlin and there was already signs at that time _____ was forbidden because there was a famous restaurant, _____, in Berlin. It was a beautiful restaurant. I went there but it was closed. Because I got to see it at Kristalnacht - my cousin took me and I went with him in the restaurant. It was already a sign - Entre forbidden - Jews _____ - which means for Jews entrance prohibited. And then, he tell me, let's go to outside to another place. I was trying to go to see the zoo. The animals in Berlin was a beautiful section the zoo and I there was walking with my cousin in 1937 and run in to Gehring. Gehring was walking with his uniform the whole speel. I walk face-to-face to him. And, also that day I was there Hitler was speaking at a _____ but I stayed away. I don't know. I felt sorry I stopped in Berlin anyhow. I done it because my mother and her sister, my aunt. You see my mother was sick and her sister, they used to go to Berlin. You see we were often . . . for Lithuania, in Berlin we often had to go for water. After World War I and it was announced in the Lithuanian paper after the War that they need help. Then my family were poor people they went to Berlin to work. then my mother used to go - she had problems with gallstone and she stayed with her aunt and she felt kinda obligated to help out her aunt. She begged me to take the package food, in Lithuania is an agricultural country. We had so much. For \$2.00 you could buy a goose. Not for \$2.00 - 2 leaths(?) for \$1.00 you get 10 leaths. Then for .50 a goose. Butter was plentiful and cheese. I took it over; a nice size package and that the reason I was. But the experience was terrible.

Topic	Tape	Location	Length
	1	00:21:28	

- Q. You said something that was really interesting earlier. You said you were actually in Berlin - Hitler and Gehring were both there - you saw them.
- A. That's right. I saw Gehring. He came in front of me. You see he was walking. It was a beautiful section the Zoo. A beautiful section of Berlin. They call it a Zoo. You know a Zoo.
- Tape (L(21:56))
- Q. Tell me, at that time did you know who he was?
- A. Yes. Sure I knew him. I used to listen . . .
- 22:05
- Q. Let me ask you a question. What did he represent to you at that point? When you saw him, what was going through your mind?
- A. Through my mind I seen a over _____ a big heavy set. I didn't

22:43

23:55

$$24:46$$

24:55

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

with him and give him the connections and introduce him to the people he want to buy the plant. I say all right. And he tells me that he going to even give a good job. You see I already couldn't practice law in that time and I was very happy. I say all right and we discussed it that in two weeks--he give me the date-- that we will go to Belgian. To talk to the people. Well, that's how it was on this holiday. He calls me up and I say come on this holiday after lunch he want to talk with me because he would like to go Sunday, the next day, we should go to Brussels. I had a passport with me and it was nothing . . . you see he would pay the ticket and all that for to go by train. [So, after lunch, I go from Slebutkey(?) going over the bridge, going to Cowness(?). I come into Cowness and there was the main street,

_____ called the street. It's a beautiful street with trees, green and all the Jewish people. It was a sunny day. It was in August. And, all the Jewish people be walking in the street; the youngsters, the students and . . . You see there were 40,000 living in Cowness(?) and on Saturday everybody was in the street. And it was so happiness. The people by discussing boys and girls and all the people . . . and . . . you felt like it would be a holiday. All of a sudden. . . extra, extra, telegrams. Extra, extra, telegrams. I bought me a telegram and everybody was . . . the boys were running out with the telegrams. I took a telegram - Hitler invaded Austria. Oh, terrible. Everybody was standing in groups talking and upset. It was like in a second . . . everything changed. The happiness that was in the people . . . it didn't took a second. Like it would be a cloud came down and like a thunder came down.] I still proceed. I say well, the man is waiting. I'll go to him. I come up to his house and ring the bell. He looked at me. He say, you know it, you seen it. You know what's going on. Yeah, I say, I know what's going on. I already bought the factory and I already sold it. I say I am so sorry. Just forget it he said. Tomorrow me and my wife, you know where we'll be? On the way to London. We leaving Lithuaian. He just tell me. He say I don't want that Hitler will come here you see. And I am moving. I . . . He was a weathly man you know. I got my passport all the time and my wife . . he didn't have any children you see. He say I am sorry what you had to come in here. Anything I owe you I will pay you. I say, Oh, no. And he left the next day. It was the end of the factory.

30:12

- Q. So, for you, it really hit you the hardest the day the war came around?
- A. I tell you how terrible . . . you see, anything I started I couldn't finish it. Here I was trying to be an accountant, trying to look for jobs. I couldn't do it. I tried to go in business with a man. I couldn't do it. Then, I start going with the motorcycles. I was an agent for the motorcycles. But I made good money. But then the war started and it stopped. The same with the Lithuanian government. They been building the University for engineering and medicine on top of a mountain. It's mostly, I don't know, Lithuanian was beautiful and Cowness(?) was beautiful with nature place. Was a valley _____. In the valley you could see in the mountains and they decide to build there the Universities. But, they had steps, and I remember like today, it was close to 300 steps to walk up. The college youth and professors was already tired before they even start their

lecture to walk in the steps alone. Then the government decided to put elevators. The elevators to go up in the mountain. They dug a tunnel and when up and they decided to buy from FM(?) from _____ . And I had all the papers to handle. Go to the government. To show them the picture how it looks and FM(?) installed it. And I made money. I got my commission. And I was very good off for awhile. Until the communist came in and they took all everything away. All the money what I had in the bank. Took everything away. You see because after the _____ and Stalin _____ the Lithuaian fall in the hands from the communist. Russia, Stalin took over Lithuanian.

32:24

Q. In 1933, do you remember - history books call it a boycott. It was a very state sanctioned boycott against Jewish business and some other things you've been talking about - but there was a day, April 1, 1933 where it was first put into effect. Do you remember that?

A. Why sure I remember.

32:46

Q. Where were you when that happened?

~~32:47~~

A. I was in Cowness(?).

32:50

Q. Tell me about that day.

A. Well, I can't remember the day. It was in the papers and then there was Lithuanian for Lithuanians and the _____ come with the young lawyers and it took the . . . Lithuanians was . . . you see, we had a presence with _____ and we didn't felt it would be so bad. _____ was a good friends from the Jews the President. So he see to it there shouldn't be any harm done to the Jews as long as he was. He was killed the last minute. Until August 15, 1940, that's when the Russians came in with _____. He got into his car with his family, his wife and son and daughter. And then into America coming here. And we had a _____ meeting and he live in Cleveland. And we didn't know until the war broke out. The war broke out September 1 in Poland. And that's when we find out and everything start. It was still happy with business for a while until the communists came in. The communists came in and then took everything away. Nationalized everything. But, before everybody . . . until the communists came in Lithuanian, we didn't know from . . . we didn't felt it. The only thing we felt that all Jewish refugees, in the thousands came to Lithuaian. You see. Because we still were free. The Nazis wasn't there. The Nazis wasn't even in Warsaw. All the Jews was looking a place where to run. And the only place they had an opening was Lithuania and became a Lithuanian. It was . . . I got involved to help them to emigrate. Because they been going. . . there was only one place where the Jewish could go when the war started and that was Japan.

In Japan. And the Japan Consul in the beginning was in Cownes(?). His office was there. Then, we used to go there to fill out papers and I used to go with the people and help them to get their papers filled out to go to Japan. Then, he moved. They told him he got to be moved to _____. was _____ and when he moved to _____ we lost the contact with the Consul. But, I helped also . . . I still

had a lot of friends when a lot of Polish Jews was trying to get Lithuanian passports. That they are Lithuanian citizens. But it was, you see, a lot of cities in Lithuania was on the border line between Poland and Lithuania. Between Germany and Lithuania. Then, the people from those corners they have . . . you didn't know . . . we tried he was a Lithuanian but he's not. Then, I used to find out from my friends that you say Main Street was the Lithuanian side. The night he was born on the Main Street. If he was born on the Main Street then he was a Lithuanian. Then he got a passport book and became a Lithuanian citizen but that only lasted one year. Because August 15, 1940 was the end of it. The communists came in and occupied Lithuania. It was the . . . pact what started that Hitler made by time. _____ was the Foreign Secretary of State and _____ was the one from Stalin's.

37:16
Q. Now I want to ask two more questions. Obviously we've talked about things that are pre-Holocaust although we're obviously seeing signs that something is going on. I want to ask you one more question. We talked . . . going back to Kristalnacht . . . You described some things you saw that were buildings destroyed, shops destroyed. What about the people you saw?

A. Well, the people were the same like . . . wounded animals. They didn't know what to do. They had cafes where the Jewish people used to gather. They all run in there to find out what to do . . . what's going on. A lot of them be locked up. I see in a group of 15 . . . 12 Jews, I seen the police go and carrying them away. Walking with them. Where they took them I didn't know. I find out that some are already put in camps. But some of them were still trying to find a way where to move to get out from Berlin. And it was in the newspapers articles but the Germans in that time asking for Jews . . . Jews, get out. They tell them right now to get out but where should they go? They didn't have a place to go. A lot of Germans in 1938 when they say Jews get out - they went. But the _____ is why a lot of them here came. A lot of them had to have a reason to come to the States. They couldn't come to the States, they were looking for other place to go. They went to Japan a lot of them and from Japan they came in here. But . . . they had money. What do the poor man done? That poor man didn't have like I had family there. The poor people they went to _____. They went to _____. They went all into the camps. They didn't have any money to travel. Because even to get anywhere it cost you a lot of money. And the poor man . . . the end for him was in the concentration camp. I had a good friend, my cousin Willie (?), Willie Fleischer. A lovely person - a terrific guy. He was like a brother. And he been crying What should I do? What should I do? He got one daughter and his wife. Three of them. He doesn't have any money - nothing. How can you help us. I say you can come to Lithuania and I go help you there. You can live with me. But _____ Hitler come to Lithuania which is at the border. It's only a step. He say that is not saving his life.

40:09
Q. This is interesting. Twice now you've mentioned the term concentration camp. Tell me about the first time you heard that term. I wasn't aware that you, as a Jew, were even aware those existed at that point, or were you?

A. What?

40:32

Q. That the concentration camps were . . .

A. No. The only thing I heard was on the radio already. On the shortwave radio. That's what you could hear. You could hear England. It's only . . . England was telling you what's going on. We didn't know nothing. The only time I hear the concentration camp really when I was already in ghetto. When Hitler already came in and after 1945. But, in there we only heard about concentration camp I heard about Dachau. I heard also the radio used to say Hitler is trying to make a 1,000 year reich. And . . . he is building a Dachau camp, not a concentration camp. That's all I heard on the radio. That's the way I heard it. Usually, their good friends, the Lithuianians . . . one time when I was going and coming back from Brussels, home by train, a fight on the train. Germans and Lithuianians. There was Lithuianians and the Germans call the Lithuianians "The Barbers". _____ for Lithuianians. And the Lithuian jumped him. I say but you are the Coons(?). Coon was a sex . . . animals that terrible murders. And they say the Germans originated from the Coons. And then they call Coons and the other say Barbers and they start fighting in the train. They had to stop the train But

42:22

Q. You mentioned the ghetto.

A. Yes

42:26

Q. Now, I want to make this easy for you. I know that that's . . .

A. This is a well. . . this all I can tell you what happened with me in the ghetto. . .

42:34

Q. Yeah. I want to know first how you were forced to the ghetto and maybe that would be a story unto itself. Maybe we should talk about that right now.

A. Okay

42:44

Q. Tell me about . . . I guess it would be . . when the Nazis first came and took you away from home.

A. You see in 1945, June the 22nd, we didn't know from nothing. 6:00 in the morning I hear a blast. A bomb. The airport was not far from Lithuania. From Slebutkey(?) you could see it. And the Germans came in and dropped a bomb on the airport. The Lithuanian airport. Lithuanian got only three little planes - that's all they had but they dropped it on the airport. Why they drop in on the airport, I don't know. I can't understand. The other bomb they drop was only the railroad bridge. One the railroad stockyard and they drop a bomb there. You know, it woke me up. I like didn't know what's going on. And I had a little car - a Volvo. And coming in right away the police - hollering around - saying you got to give the car away. You not allowed to have any more cars and everybody running. They didn't know what's happening. Like in a circle. Everybody like confused and don't know what to do. A lot of them saying . . hid their neighbor. He with is wife is running to the railroad station. He say he wants to get away

because it's a war started. And here they turn on the radio and they announced there is a war. Hitler declared war with Russia and we knew about it. Because Churchill used to tell Hitler . . I mean, Stalin. Stalin be aware; we see that the Germans concentrating their military on your border - on the Lithuanian border. And the head of the Russian army. He say you better do something about it. Bring reinforcements - do something. And Churchill be laying him out. But who knows . . . but Churchill already knew and Stalin did do nothing. He already seen the Red Army start running back already - by the border and Stalin got back to the border through Cowness(?) through anywhere. they could go. The shortest way to run back on foot, on bicycles, and cars and trucks and they asked the people to give away their cars and motorcycles.

We had motorcycles that cars couldn't get a certain place. They took - the police right away took away from me the car. And then, they told me the motorcycle was nobody to ride. It wouldn't start. Ask me I should go . . . a Captain came in - he said go with him to the motorcycle. My wife starts screaming, crying and all that and he run away. He didn't have time to argue with me. And I sound that the motorcycle doesn't start and all that and he say no good. Then, I was walking at that time for the _____.

_____ was a corporation for transport. You see Stalin right away when he came in Lithuania before Nazis stole the businesses - even the men who had horse and buggy - he made them join the corporation the _____. Then I was the bookkeeper for that _____ and they were . . . they had a stable with horses, with wagons in Slebutkey(?). I went there - maybe they will have transportation to run to. But then I was thinking was so simply. You know you get confused. You don't know what to do and I took my wife and Jay and I had a little girl. Got them in a wagon with a horse I took from the corporation because they come in the _____ was there. Everybody grabs a horse with a wagon and go. Where you going? I say I am going to Moscow. They way what the heck, are you crazy? How can you go to Moscow. Even to the Russian border you can go with the horse and wagon? It's a long ways. Well, we got to run away from here because the bombs . . . will kill us. People didn't know. And I took a horse and wagon and went . . . And I never seen . . . we went on the way to Russian border. It was from Slebutkey(?) to the Russian border . . . 50 . . . 100 miles. But its good 100 miles with a car or with motorcycle but to go 100 miles to go with a horse and wagon it will take you days. But the thing what happens . . . after I see the whole Cowness(?), the whole city, the Jews, everybody, out from the city. Everybody is running going back to the way to the Russian border to get away from the Nazis. And planes over our heads and they started shooting at the people and he and I had to run out and put them in the _____. . . on side of the street . . on side of the highway I shouldn't be hit. And we made it into the _____ it was maybe 30 miles and the Germans already dropped the 50 _____ they call it. And it was _____ five. They dropped by Paris _____ they already stopped because they couldn't go any further because the Germans already in front of us. We had to turn around and go back. And everybody go back. And that when it starts _____. To go back was two ways. It was a way you go back through Cowness(?), back in Cowness(?) or, you could go through Yanaway(?). Yanaway was a little village. It was a country road. Or you can go through the country road. There are two ways to choose. The

people who went through the country road, and I was one of them, made it all right. The people who went through Cowness(?) . . . back in Cowness(?) was the Lithuanians staying with rifles and taking everyone one in Fortress 6 and wouldn't let them go back home. They took them all in the Fortress and were right there killing them. See them shooting every one of them. Made them to dig their graves and kill everyone. My uncles and friends and a lot of ones who went home to Cowness(?). But I went because Slebutkey(?) was closer anyhow. It's not because I know. Because its the way for me was better to go on the way. Because a way to on the right and way to go on the left and there was nothing. It was poor section. Mostly farms. But there on the way to Cowness (?) there was plants and factories and was a asphalt road. And they say with a horse and wagon it would be better to go there than go with the second road.

50:04

- Q. So, you had a choice at that point to go one of two ways. Could you briefly say what you just said again? What I want to get is you had a choice of one way . . . two ways to go and if you went one way you were killed really.

50:22

A. Right. That's it. Now it starts up my way . . . why I survived. Because I am asking all the time . . . I don't know what's happening. Here, by making the right decision to go the right, through the country road, I came and survived. And, when I came home, my father on my . . . my father-in-law heard that we came back. They were so happy. They ran out to meet us and I took the horse and wagon. I gave it away to a Lithuanian what's been hanging around the stables. His name was Ukie(?). I say, "Yeah, Ukie, take that wagon and horse away from me and put it back in the stables." Yeah, I'm glad . . . I'll do it. And he took it away. But then my father-in-law tells me . . . and I didn't recognize him. You see, his hair was black, like your hair, and I come back and he is all white. Overnight. I say what's happened. He say _____ terrible problem. I say they killed all the Jews on Ubacka(?) Street. Ubacka(?) was a long street what goes on the way to Uback(?). Uback was a city. That's why we called it Ubacka(?) Street. Of course, _____ and it was a street . . . oh maybe 10 blocks. And they went from door to door, the Lithuanians, from door to door and killed everyone. They got in the house and the Rabbi, they cut his head off and put is head on his dresser. They went in to the newspaper man that was _____. A man by the name _____. And his wife was a dentist. They got in and killed him and his wife and little boy. There was another house was a plumber. His name was Freedman, a healthy, healthy man and he been putting up a fight with him. They cut him up. He was in pieces. And then, my father-in-law heard already that there's a _____. He hid up in the attic. Thinking maybe there he could be able to save himself. The attic was a little square opening and he looked opening and the next door from him was a blacksmith was living there with his sister and his wife and son. And they took him out right in the backyard and killed sudden. And next day, they took him daytime--this was at night--_____

It was _____.

You see the Germans even got _____ but the Lithuanian was the civil control. The civil police. They got around it. _____ in their hand. Like now you can see

what it was with Romania now --- it's the way it was there. And they took few people to go and bury them at the cemetery and they dug the grave and buried maybe . . . they buried everybody in one grave and after they finished, they shot those people and put them in the same grave. They killed the people who been burying them.

53:50

Q. Tell me about the rest of your family during this period. What was happening to them.

A. Well, my family in a way . . . you see, in our house was a whiskey store. Same like at here. The Whiskey store belongs to the _____. And we rented out. We had a lease to rent the house with the store. Because our house . . . it was one house . . . the building was in the front and the other one was in the back. We lived in the back and the front was empty. We rented it out for the whiskey store. And hid from all the Lithuanians who was making out all the _____ and all that was a boyfriend of the woman running the whiskey store. He knew us and well, there was his girlfriend right in that house. Skipped our place. They went around our house. Why? Because to her. She's living . . . he told his assistants they shouldn't dare to go in there. He'll punish them for that. Then nobody walked in our house and there was my father and mother; my sister, her little boy - her son was only 1 and her husband, her husband's father and mother and they were staying home. They didn't move. And the woman in the whiskey store used to bring in bread, groceries through this woman. And they didn't move nowhere. And anyway, they survived until they got into the ghetto. But, one day the same woman came to me, this is already after I come back, she say, you know, they arrested a Jewish woman today in Greece. I say, Jewish woman, for what? She had a bag full with hand grenades. I knew what kind of people I put up. And, I say, you know that the Jewish people don't do that. And I say to the woman - I don't know what your talking about - why you letting out rumors. I say well, I tell you another thing. You know, you say my brother goes in school - in our high school, he was a Lithuanian - and there come a German and asked anybody who wants to volunteer to do some jobs. He got to do job. It just be terrible. The job will be a good paying job but it will be a miserable job. And they asked who wants to volunteer. And 50 volunteers they got. And it was the youngsters who will be picking out the Jews to the selections. Taken out from their homes. And see, when they came in --- the Germans came in there and locked us in in the ghetto. . . you see, they came in in May 28 . . the Germans came in already in Cowness(?). But in June 28-22, see nobody was there. . . was only Lithuanians. They been just killing and robbing the Jews. It was . . they took a group of Jewish people and brought them in in . . there was a service station that had a fence around it. Took them in the service station, closed the fence with the chain and dropped the _____ and put the whole place on fire. And burned alive 100 Jewish people right there in Cowness(?) at this service station. And then, they gave us a holder that we can not hope no more. The sidewalks . . they got only to walk in the street and to have the David Star worn in the front and one in the rear. And you know, it's one thing . . a Rabbi came to me. Tells me. . . Look you speak good German and he was a famous rabbi . . I want you to do one thing. What you want me to do? He say, . . Jordan was the German in charge of the big Gestapo over Cowness(?) and

right away men _____ . . . his name was Jordan. And he would start giving out all kinds of actives. I say, you know, he heard the story of Esther. You know the story. You heard about we have in the Bible story of Esther. That Hamen was trying to kill the Jews and then came Esther and got to . . .

58:38
Q. Can I stop you one second?

~~58:40~~
A. Yeah
58:40

Q. You ready to change over? I'm sorry to stop you in the middle of your story. We've got to change tapes over.

A. You see its coming up Purim now, next Sunday. The story of Esther You've got to hear this . . .

00:00
Q. Yes, keep it fresh in your mind. If you want a sip of water now it would be a good time to do it. How you doing, you doing okay?

~~00:00~~
A. Yeah. I am alright. I . . . maybe my language isn't well . . . you know
00:20

Q. No, I can understand you.

A. Yeah?

Q. Rob's gonna bring you something to drink, you want water or tea?

00:10
A. Next Sunday is Purim. We call it a holiday - a Jewish holiday. Purim is giving presents to children and it is a . . . reading the story of Esther and then what is also in the face of Esther. And, because of Esther the Jewish people survived. You know the story what they tells of Hamen was trying to kill all the Jews and they went _____ but was _____ and then they next _____ fell in love with Esther and she was a beautiful Jewish girl and she talked him into _____ that he should save the Jewish life. That is the story. It is a big story. Next Saturday night and Sunday morning is Purim. Well, when Jordan came around, the Gestapo, in 1945 and let out all the Jews will have to go in the ghetto and all that. And, he was a rabbi, his father was the Assistant Rabbi for a famous rabbinical _____ rabbi. A _____ everybody asked him in the States about _____. They know we got a lot of Rabbinical Seminaries in the name of _____. He was a rabbi of Cowness(?). We was very, very famous between Rabbis. . . everybody know about _____. And, that rabbi's father was _____ an Assistant Rabbi. You see, a lot of times when you come to Jewish law in the court, the Jewish court is two rabbis and two assistants when it comes to the Jewish law something you got to have a seperation. And, he came to me and his name was _____ was the rabbi's name was Luke. I came to you know to ask for the Jewish people. What you mean Jewish people? What do you mean? He say Look, I got something, a preposition but you got to go . . . You got take it to Jordan - to the Gestapo. I say do you know what you are talking about? Me to go in the Gestapo? I never can stay away from them - now, you want to put me in the lion's

mouth. He say no. But let me tell you what I got. I say what you have? He tells me there is a young woman in the same apartment building where he lives. He says a beauty. He say you can't find a nicer one. She is married and her husband is willing and she wants to go to stay with Jordan to be mistress to be with him.

To see maybe to convince him he shouldn't kill the Jews. I say she is willing to come? I say, look, first, I am scared to do it . . . to go and talk and second, I would never with you telling me is not enough only. I got to hear her and then I got to hear her husband. And he brought her with her husband. And both of them willing to sacrifice themselves for the Jews. Then he say to me . . . he say you see they are sacrificing themselves and you are afraid to sacrifice yourself for the Jewish people right here . . . 40,000 people with rabbis right here. Because the seminary was right there - a big seminary. Well, I say, all right I will take it. Then, I was scared. First thing I had to go about 4 miles to the headquarters of the Gestapo and I had to walk in the street with my David Star. Then I would go on the sidewalk with the rest of them well, I walk nobody knows me. They think everybody knows you and asks where are you going? Anybody could take and kill me like they kill _____.

Well, I was going and praying and going and crying . . . walking . . . Then, I came in right there at the door stands a guard with a swastika on. The guard say what do you want? I say I want to see Mr. Jordan. You?

A Jew want to see Jordan? Do you know what you talking about? He will never let you in. I say do me a favor, go in and ask him.

He goes in and comes out. Jew, you kraus(?) You see "kraus" means get out . . . Jew, get out. He start hollering at me and I just run as fast as I can. I was afraid he would grab his pistol and I went in sidestreets. I was born and raised there and I know how to go up. I didn't want to the city by streets - the city streets. I went to _____ and to safe to come back and I come back. I just made it and come back.

05:54 Q. Just another time . . .

A. I seen . . . by running in the sidestreets . . . I used to go over fences and seen they way they getting Jews together with _____ riding them back to the 6th fortress to killing them. I seen the Germans, the Gestapo putting them in jail . . . the Nazis. This is one, now we got into the ghetto.

Jordan gave an order that by August 20 all the Jews got to be in the ghetto. And the ghetto was Slebutkey . . . the place where I live - right there. This actually sound like the poor section and they way they do it - they had to swap with the Lithuanians who lived in this part. Out in Cowness(?) where the Jews come in and back. And we got in by the 20th of August 1945. The ghetto was done. And they had to have . . . there wasn't enough room for all the 40,000 because in Slebutkey also was living 15,000 Jews and 40,000 was 55,000. They didn't have enough room. Then they took . . . made a large ghetto and a small ghetto. And from one to another you used to go over a bridge. We build a bridge from one that the other walk over a steet. One side to the other side to go in there by bridge. And by the 20th it was done and they put guards. There was two gates to come in and out to go to work and by September 2, I think or the 1st, an order came that they need 500 young Jews to go to work in archives. The Russian left a lot of books and lot of paper and they want to check it over and

they don't know the Russian language and they want the Jews to go work and straighten it up. This was the mayor from Cowness(?) gave the order. And, the mayor of Cowness(?) was a Lithuanian. I think they call him . . . they suing him for that now too. Tomorrow morning, 7 o'clock in the morning

right in front of my house. There they should be all at the center point and from there they'll take them to work and bring the same day back. I seen through the window all the boys getting together and I am going out and talk to them. And they say, come on . . . Where you going? Stay here and you'll go with us to work and you'll come back. They telling me they leave me. What you going to do home all day with the women? They will run you crazy? Right now to be in the ghetto by yourself. This way 500 there was. You see, they had a lot of young lawyers who went to college together whom I know. There was a bunch. And, a lot of them came into my home to get a drink of water. They was thirsty. They say give me a drink of water. And all of them tells me. And, I told my wife, I say, Edna, I am leaving. She say, where are you going? I say, I am going somewhere but I not say its as _____ place to play. Something tells me it is not kosher. I just feel I got to get away. And I took and I walked away. When they got together, they didn't have enough in the beginning. They went up to the police and they went and grabbed more and they go 534 young men. All from the age from 18 to 50. The best from Lithuanian. It was terrific from Cowness. Young educated doctors and engineers and lawyers and accountants . . . all the best and they took them to the 6th fort and killed every one of them. Two hours after they took away from there they killed everyone of them. I was stopped also by a policeman. He was trying to grab me. I should go over to the fort before they shot the people. You see but at that time I was 29. I was strong like ~~a man~~ ^{a man} and I tore the policeman in pieces. I beat him up and threw him away and he say all right, all right go ahead . . . he was afraid for me. And I survived again. Because next day the fathers with children . . . the old people were going and trying to find out what's happened to them. They didn't come that night. They didn't come next day. They didn't come a week. Start going and looking and finding out. Finally to the Lithuanians to find out.

11:06 Q. How did they find out eventually?

A. The Lithuanians seen the . . . the Lithuanians thought it too. You know the Lithuanians now were trying to get out their independence. You see, they killed every one of them. The Germans were there too. They were there by themselves. And it was the famous 534 killed.

11:29 Q. Now, this is the type of thing that started happening more and more.

A. Right.

11:58 Q. Ready for the tape? Are we rolling now? Okay. Framed up okay?

12:00 Q. Now, you were talking about Nazis coming in and basically rounding people up. And you just told us about the 534. Let's move ahead and let's go to where they started taking larger groups.

24

A. Right, that's what I want to tell you. As I mentioned awhile ago. You see they had two ghettos because it was 55,000 Jews who couldn't put it in one place and they build a bridge and make a small ghetto. It was a large ghetto and a small ghetto. From one ghetto to the other was a wooden bridge. What the Germans built. Now, they decide one day they want to have all the people who live in the small ghetto should have a working sign. A document that they are working. And they give everyone who worked in the brigade. They call it brigade - brigade was a section like in the airport and the chocolate factory . . . _____ plant or the junk places where they got groups of people. They used to give a band on their arm with a number. No more names but only number. And, everybody got to have this from the small ghetto. And it was then everybody trying to get a life sign. The sign that they could survive. Got it done and it was only a trick. A trick they want to take them all to walk that they shouldn't wore it. Then, in a week later, they call all those people in the small ghetto what was 15,000 . . . no, it wasn't 15,000 it about 10,000 people should come to the democratic place. We had a place called the democratic place. It was a market. Was a lot of fields . . . was a lot of space. They should come up there and from there they gonna divide them in working place . . . where they will have to go to work. My sister was living in the small ghetto. And my mother start crying and begging to bring my sister with her in the big ghetto. My wife went over the bridge - a half hour before they closed it up the bridge. They have to get them all to work and brought her over . . . in the last second they brought her on this side - in the big ghetto. And there they took all over the place to take to democratic place. But you see, they take and cleaned out all the small ghetto to the 9th fortress. You see, Cowness(?) was surrounded in War World II by two fortresses. In equal lie what is was the Russian Czar when he was trying to win World War I - he build in Cowness(?) a fortress to protect himself from the Germans because he started fighting the Germans and he made in two big mountains. He made the 6th Fort, the 7th and the 8th. Three fortresses. And they too these people was closest to the 9th fortress. They took all the 12,000 - really I don't know how many it was but not less than 10,000 and killed them right there. Took them right away out . . . the people, the sick people with children . . . women with young people . . . anybody was there. They cleaned it out and lock the bridge and surround. The Gestapo come around with the machine guns and they took them all out right there. I wasn't in that selection. That was the small ghetto where we lost about 10,000 Jews.

16:20 Q. So they killed everyboy in the small ghetto?

A. Everybody. No body survived. No body. Took it out right there. And there was digged out graves. And who been digging the graves. Russian prisoners. There was also the Russians who were prisoners of war. They took them also and keep them right there in jail and they dig the graves and then the Jews

16:43 Q. You said your sister was in the small ghetto . . .

A. My sister was in the small ghetto before they took them out to the democratic place. Before they locked up the gate. Two hours time for all the people of _____ who wants to go to work should come to the small ghetto. After two hours there be no

more. You don't be able because the bridge would be destroyed. It will be locked, not destroyed, it will be locked. And, my sister was there and my wife brought her over with us with her little girl to the big. . . to be all together. . . we shouldn't be separated. Because we didn't know what's going to happen later.

17:24 Q. So, it was very close. She came with hours . . .

A. Right. And this was very close. Within a half hour. Saved her life. It was the selection was September 10, 1941 for the small ghetto. Now, October 28, 1941. The big ghetto. Big selection. They decided now the same thing to do with the big ghetto. The day also with all kinds of tricks. They took out everyone in the place and told them the same thing and then they figure it out. The Germans maybe a rebellion will start. Because, the big ghetto was already was 28,000. . . . no 27,000 Jews. And it was too many for them and then they don't been say they don't want in there they afraid maybe one German will get killed. And. . . they kept us there on the place . . early in the morning we had to come up - 5 o'clock in the morning. Everybody should be at the big . . . farm - it was farm-like and kept us for two hours. All of a sudden - back home. Back in the places and they let us go back home. And I never forget. Right there. The orthodox Jews - you know they were praying and they say you see it is a miracle from God. God has answered our prayer and saved our life. Because, they knew they going to be killed. Well, in a week later, again the same thing. They gathered all the ghetto. Out. Everybody. No body should remain home and anybody they'll find anybody at home that didn't fulfill the order - they will be killed. Even the sick persons should be brought out. Healthy ones should take the sick one. When they in bed to take him with the bed but everybody should be right there in that place. I will never forget that picture. The day I see it. Carrying them in chairs. Carrying them in beds. It is sick. Children crying/and it was miserable. In October it was already snow and it was cold and people was going almost naked. The misery . . . it was terrible. . . I couldn't I don't know, sometimes I dream at night I am getting up so confused . . . It was a terrible picture. And we call came in the same place. Everybody stood up in groups. What was in groups. Everybody had to be the families. All together in one group. For example, with me or my father could be the oldest was the spokesman or I was the spokesman. In that time since I spoke German, I say well, a Lithuanian, I better be the spokesman. And with me was myself, my father, my mother, both sisters and their child, my wife's father and mother, her grandmother, who was also a woman around 70-75 and her sisters. We was group around 20 people. Some of them was 50 in a family and be all together. And they go and asking everyone of them at a long, long table and there was the Gestapo people. And they be asking questions. And everybody is to answer. They ask the name and occupation and all that and one will say go to the right and some of them they say go to left. Groups when they say. They talk to the first one and tell them to go to the right - the whole group goes to the right. To the right was back to the ghetto and to the left was to the small ghetto. It was an opening to the small ghetto that you didn't _____ and run. Now, my turns is coming and the man is Roka. Roka was the head from the Gestapo. I got . . . they caught him two years in Canada

and _____ the _____ police. He was carrying on with his little stick. And I coming up and he ask me my occupation. And, my mind works a mile a minute. What should I say? Should I say I am a lawyer. Or, should I say I am an automobile mechanic? Big choice. Right there, in a second. I got to decide one way or the other. And the power in me tells me do not say you are a lawyer. Say you automobile mechanic. And what I got the knowledge about a mechanic about a motorcycle I been piddling around with . . . that's all I knew about mechanic. I knew a wrench from a 5/8 to a 3/4. But that all I know. The rest I didn't know nothing. And I didn't answer him so fast. He start screaming . . . angry. And I told him automobile mechanic. And he tells me Right. He made with his stick - right. That means the whole group. Everybody goes to the right. And there I was to find another _____ Jews who going on the way to the ghetto back from where we came - back home. And then, in front of me, the man say he is a teacher. And he also a large group. . . they tell him to the left. And to the left I see is going . . . there was the way where there was the Gestapo waiting to come in the small ghetto back to what they destroyed a week ago. And here I see a lot of friends. I seen that . . . my principal from school and I see the President from Temple . . . going to the left. He stays in front of my eyes - the President from Temple - was a tall Jew. Was 6'4" - a tall slender. . . a nice looking man . . and he was going with the black coat with his black hat going in the _____ and they carry him around and look back at us and then disappeared. And they took everyone that night . . . it was day not night . . . 11,500 Jews and killed them. All. Everyone of them was killed.

24:30 Q. When did you . . . I mean obviously you knew something was going on. When did you really know they had killed all those people?

- A. Well, the Lithuanians told us. And then not only that two escaped. Two Jews escaped from there. How they escaped - they escaped on Christmas Eve. The Germans was drinking and having a ball and they dug a tunnel together with the Russian soliders. The tunnel they been digging for a month. And they been carrying out and going out in the morning to work. You see, these two Jews weren't from the ghetto. But they were two Jews what was with the Russian soliders. Two Russian soliders - Jews. And, when they got under the tunnel and escaped, they come in . . . the Russian went in the woods and the two Jews come in the ghetto and they told us about it. And everyone . . . and after that, you know they had around Jewish police in ghetto. Because everything what the Germans wants to do they telling the Labor Department and Labor Department telling the Jewish Police because of Hitler's orders. In cases like that they steal and kill German. They took all the police and killed them in a week later too. And then on there way to destroy the _____ then a _____ happened. And this I survived by last near the season. Next day after I got in the ghetto a motorcycle came a german looking for a automobile mechanic and had my number. And the Jewish police come to me and say look, somebody wants you to go to be an automobile mechanic. They got a job for you as automobile mechanic. Well, I didn't have no choice. I had to go. I got in and they took me to the place in the garage and what I know? I was scared to death. I came in with a lot of Germans and Lithuanians and I one Jew. And, truck standing there. And they

come up and at that moment drove up a German with a 3/4 ton pick-up. And he talks to the foreman. I don't know what they talk. The foreman calls me in German to come up and say take a look and see what's there - the problem the man got. Well, I asked the German what his trouble. He describes me something is banging under the bottom. He don't know what it is. He say he took it to the German shop and they couldn't find it and they didn't bother anymore with him. I say, I tell you what I'll do. I go lay down on the ground and you drive slow over me and I go . . . be between the wheels. And I'll see what's going on, all right? I lay down. He drives very slow and I seen a pipe. What . . . the drive shaft. I didn't know what the drive shaft did but I seen a pipe is turning. And there I hear a click. I tell him back up a little and I hear again the click. Then I ask him. Is that a click what you hear? And he say yeah. I say wait awhile. Took my hand and moved the pipe and I see the universal joint is loose. You know what a universal joint is?

28:16 Q. Yeah

A. Well, I got out and I told the German - alright, I know what it is, I'll fix it. He say when you going to have it ready? I say, tomorrow. See, I don't know what to do first. I'll have to figure it out. How to get shaft out by tomorrow. He say look, when you can do it today, and it was around 2 o'clock, I give you half a loaf of bread. For me, half a loaf of bread was like I give you \$10,000 but it doesn't mean to me as much as a half a loaf bread right then. I say I'll do my best. Now, what should I do? I go to the stockroom and asked the man who got the tools, I say give me a screwdriver and a pipe wrench. I don't know. I was thinking it should come in two. A screwdriver and a pipe wrench that's all I would need. I was thinking maybe I'll have to turn out the pipe wrench the pipe. That's the way I was thinking. Nothing. And I was so scared for life right now - right there. But tell me the Gestapo - and to tell a lie on top of it - they would take me to the Gestapo and kill me. But with the two fingers, I turn the four little bolts that was in the universal joint. I don't know . . . the power that was with me before . . . with two fingers I turn four little bolts loose from the universal joint. And I got up with the universal joint and come to the stockroom and ask him - give me another universal joint. And he looked at me. I say what's the matter I ask him. How could you take a universal joint with a pipe wrench and screwdriver, he ask me. He couldn't believe it. I say look, I didn't have to take it out. . . I had the answer right there . . . because it was already loose. That the reason he came because it was knocking . . . it broke loose and the bolts got loose. I turned it with my fingers. I didn't need the screwdrive and the pipewrench. Bring me back the screwdrive and pipe wrench. Brough them back and he gives me 3/8 wrench and he gives me 5/16, give me universal joint and four bolts. And I was watching when I took it out. I was watching close what I am doing. I say . . . I got to put it back. And, I put it back and it was maybe. . . the German solider was still talking to the forman and I already had it done. I come up to him. I told him I got it done. Really. Really. Let me try it. He drives off. Perfect. And he tells my foreman. The best mechanic you have. I been all over to have the truck fixed and no shops that I been over no body can fix it and he already fix it in two hours. You got to make him for the foreman and he made me

floor foreman.

31:10 Q. That's amazing. You know, you said something really interesting. You said that one point there he would have given you . . . he was gonna make a deal with you to give you a loaf . . . half a loaf . . .

A. Yeah, he gave me . . he gave me. . .

31:19 Q. You said that was more important to you at that point than \$10,000

A. Right.

31:22 Q. Why is that?

A. Hunger. We didn't have nothing to eat. We didn't have no food to eat. You know it was miserable the ration what we used to get. We used to get water with maybe three slices of bread of the whole family. <Who was important -- Jay or me?> We didn't have enough food. And, later on already the women been inventing food from leaves. What they used to do is unbelievable. You know, when you don't have nothing to eat . . . they used to get in the potato chips, making bread - making cookies from tomatoes - tomatoe shells - they are like french fries - they be making in ghetto. They be making acid. You know sometimes you want to have grass to make a salad. And all times inventing things. The women were imventors too.

32:03 Q. When you lived in the ghetto, tell me what your living conditions were like. Like your whole family was together in one building or, you and several other families . . .

A. In one building it was my father-in-law's building . . house, there we had in two rooms in the kitchen. In the two rooms we had eight people. In one room nine people. We made partions - you know divide them from the second floor in the room. And, there was my family and my wife's family was in one room. In the other room was my father and mother, my sister with her husband was there in two rooms we lived. We were happy. We had a place where to sleep. And then in the kitchen . . . the women made it up. It was four families in the kitchen.

33:23 Q. At that point, what made all of you feel any hope if you had any hope that . . . *that you would some day get out?*

A. We didn't have any hope. And you know, it was start looking the way it was going on in the ghetto and the life and the work--then you say. . .better to die than to live. Life was worthless. Because you just got disgusted. And here's what happened with my wife's family. Here, all of a sudden, they have to have . . . they decide a few thousand what is left in Cowness(?) to break it up. Then they come up, the Gestapo, to say they got to have 2,000 Jews to go in Reiger(?), Latvia, to work. And will come to get from Culna, in ghetto, the people to send to Reiger, to Latvia. Well, and who they going to take? The larger families. Would be easier for them than to take singles or two people. They would take families from four and up. My wife's family was her father and mother, a sister and two brothers - they were five. They was right there in _____ number one. And they come up, the

Gestapo, one day, they help, the Lithuanian help. Come to my house looking for the _____. The family _____.

My father-in-law spoke up - Let's go. Where are the rest of them. Oh, he say . . . this is my family. All the family out, in the street. I come up and I see what's going on and I ask the German what you doing - what's going on - what you want? He say - don't worry about it, you gonna be there too. I say what you mean I gonna be there too? And my mother-in-law come to me want to give shake hand . . . goodbye . . . I'll see you and he comes with the rifle butt and knocks away her hand and won't let me shake her hand. You just seen it. And, my wife, I don't know I say what's happened to her. She doesn't react and they took them away. And that was the end. And she then almost run crazy. How come I let my parents out so easy. My wife said to herself. She got hysterical. She don't want to leave. She want to die. And, you know, its enough when you have without it. And, how come she say she didn't react. When she would reacted, she would beg the German or do something, or anything not to let the family get away so easy. And they left. Well, she had, my wife, had an uncle. He was a farmer before the war. And, he had a nice size farm and he was very in good with the rest of the farmers. Because he was a wealthy man, he had in the family a horse. And they call him Isker. They come to Isker - I lost my horse. Can you do something. Can you lend me a horse. He say go and pick out yourself a horse and when you go have money you go pay me. That's the way he used to do with them. Or, they had to have for the potatoes or corn run out. He used to go and he used to help them out. He be with them all the time. Between there come out an order from the Gestapo, from the Germans, that all the Jews got to go in ghettos, he didn't go. He wanted to go but he had to go to a certain place called Zesna. But the farmers tell him - Isker - don't go. Why you go? We keep you here. We don't let you go. He say look, what trouble I'm in . . . my family. He had his wife, two boys, two sisters and a boy and a mother-in-law. And he is now still living. He is 94 years of age - he is in Israel. And they didn't . . . we'll protect you. Don't worry. And he stay with them. He didn't got in in the ghetto. He was already _____ ghetto sleep _____.

In the ghetto where he had to be, Zesna was no more. They all been killed. My job, a mechanic, was at the airport. And then one day, I commit a crime. What was the crime? I went out to buy something to eat around a neighborhood. I knew Lithuanian. I knew Cowness(?) very good. I jumped into a neighbor maybe got something to trade him for a pair of shoes or for a wristwatch. He'll have bread, butter or something. I had to trade it in for potatoes and I had a slice of bread and I had 1/4 pound of butter. And, I kept it by my place where I worked - where I been the foreman. And the Control came - the Inspector. He came and start looking around how maybe . . its clean of all that mess. And I didn't pay attention and he comes and my package was laying on the side and he kicked with his foot. He opens up the package and finds butter, finds bread . . . Whose is it, he asked? I say, I look and say Oh-Oh, I am in troubles. Didn't have no choice. I say, Mine. You, saboteer, you want we should lose the war. You eating up all the food. You . . .so on. . . and he starts getting hot and angry and was grabbing for his pistol. I start running. And I run between tanks. All tanks were standing there in the backyard. And he starts shooting at me and I hear . . . Psst, Psst, there went a bullet by my ear been whistling by. And I duck

before the tanks and I escaped and I run away and come back in ghetto. And I called the Labor Department. Look, you don't send me no more there I can't go there. I am in troubles. They gonna kill me because I run away. Well, they end up the same send me in another place to go to work at the airport. The airport, the Lithuanian airport, was a field. In summertime, when it was dry, the weather was good - was good you can land it with a plane. But in winter time, the field was moored. You couldn't get in landing with the plane but the Germans decide they gonna make a runway. What they gonna do? They took wood, 36" cut it in three - in 12" and put 12" in the ground. Then on top, gravel. Then in the planes it looks like it would be a runway. And that's what they done. And they put me and there was hard to get a walk. People didn't know that the worstest place was at the airport to work. First thing is a field. You didn't have nobody surrounded and it is hard, hard walking with Germans chasing you. That's why I lost the two fingers. You see, my job was to take the 36" wood, cut it in three pieces. Was a saw . . . electric saw . . . but they run on gasoline . . . you know like a jigsaw. And I was staying and cutting in three pieces in wood and threw it on the ground and there was woman taking it away . . . moving it away where I leave it. And, when I stand and cutting the wood, somebody hit me right over here. It was with a rifle butt. It so strong. And I looked around like this to see what's happened, who hit me? And that time I move my hand and the finger got under the saw and cut me. It cut fingers off. It was the German, the guard was staying and guarding us. Well, a woman say take a piece of wire, stop your blood because you gonna lose . . . you gonna be dead in a minute. Then they find me a piece of wire to tie it up around my wrist as tight as I can to stop the blood to go through. And I had to stay like that working with one hand until 7 o'clock at night. Then I got in the ghetto and got a doctor. And he start curing me.

42:26 Q. Tell me about when you got out of the ghetto and how did you get out?

A. That's what I starts . . . it comes to it now.

42:34 Q. Okay.

A. One day I go in there - they send me to unload after I had enough wood to unload. The gravelers - the farmers - used to come in with the wagons in to bring gravel. They were obligated to bring gravel - the farmers. The farmers had to have some many cubic feet of gravel. And I start talking to the farmers. And I talk to one farmer and I say, tell me you got maybe something to trade for bread. He say he don't have nothing. I say where you from. He told me _____. I say from where? _____ was my uncle - you know, my wife's uncle lived right there. That's where his farm was. Sure, I know _____. And I ask him do you know Iska _____. - I ask him. The farmer - Sure, I know him. I seen him three days ago. It seem like he told me maybe a lie. He say he is with his wife and children - he is in hiding he tells me. He is in hiding and we supporting him - the farmer tells me. I couldn't believe it. I say, look can you take a little card to him. And I took a piece of paper and pencil and wrote a few words. And I tell him that he

lost is sister with the family the only is Edna survived. That is my wife - with me and my son, Jay. He give it to Iska. You gonna be here back? He say yeah, I'll have to be here in two weeks. I say, I'll look out for you in the two weeks. And in two weeks, he come back and brought me a letter from him. And we read what in the letter he say I see I lost everybody it's all I got left is you, the niece from my sister, how's about can . . . I'll try to arrange to see that you should . . . that I should come to him that he gonna pick me up some way from the ghetto. And, next time he brought me one more letter and the letter write he gonna send a man by the name Mulchis. And Mulchis will be at the gate . . by the ghetto and I see from there to get out. And the way I had arranged at night, 11 o'clock at night. I didn't go to the gate, I go to the fence and I had _____ pliers. I cut a hole in the fence. And in winter time- it was October 26, 1943. And winter when the German guard been going they got in their soles nails. You know you could hear when they walking. You could hear his walking farther and farther away - then that's the time to get out because it nobody here. Then I come to the gate. Took out Jay first in the little ghetto. I was in the small ghetto in the little ghetto right there and it was like in a cemetery - by himself. I am surprised. He was scared to death. But he didn't . . . he knew that he is in trouble and gots to keep quiet. And he kept quiet - he was about that time seven or eight. And then I tell goodbye to my mother. This was terrible. Tears run all over her face. She knew she not gonna see me no more. She was the only one came to my escaping to the ghetto to go to the fence. And there I already find out that Mulchis - he was a smart young man - he was expecting us around 10. Put Jay in the wagon and I put on his coat, the farmer coat, and we came. . . escaped. It was 50 miles to walk. It wasn't so simple. And daytime I was scared to death. I seen a car coming I thinking maybe it Gestapo. But here I'll tell you something but is very worthwhile coming up right now. And he brought us into his house. And he tell me that Iska, my uncle, comes to his house once a week. He brought us in it was on a Tuesday. He say he is coming Monday. It would be next week. In between time, he say you gonna sleep over my oven. You know farmer they got big oven from brick and on top is almost like . . . from here. . . the stage. He called me and my wife and Jay to sleep right there. And we were laying like quiet. A farmer come into visit him - a neighbor - and he comes in and he sniffs, sniffs, and he smells. He say, Look, what is that funny smell I am smelling? He asked the farmer. The farmer, Mulchis, what picked us up - he ask what am I smelling - he say funny smell. Looks like city smell. Farmer tells him city smells. Isn't that something. Mulchis was smart. He told him, he say, you know I was in Zesna, in the market and I bought a coat and the coat must be come from the city. And I hung up the coat right there hanging. He say that's what you smell. Oh, that must be. And he smelt, he went to the oven - he's going to that smell. When he left, Mulchis say we're in trouble. We got to get you moved from here. He can't keep you here too long. I see already . . you see how fast he smelled that something wrong in here. Somebody's here in hiding. And I had to go from there. He took me to his sister but it was 5-6 blocks away and inside the house. The attic at her house laying there and here Iska comes and he say you know I'll have to find you a place by a farmer not _____ . See because I see it is dangerous in here to be - your too much in the open. Well, then he starts looking for a

place and between time Gestapo came. Gestapo been told that something smelled. That smell brought it out and then they starts looking. Mulchis come running to his sister and told us - he told his sister we got to see to get rid of them. They in his house, the Gestapo, searching us, looking for us - and they'll come to in here. And his sister's husband was so scared. He took Jay and threw him off - from the attic to the ground and throw him out. Took my wife and pushed her off. I run down and grabbed her. And we had to go. And Mulchis say, you know, there is only one solution - we'll have to go in the woods. But I'll hear - and it was cold. He laid down on the ground and listen with his ear and hears the steps. Are the steps going there? Then you know somebody's there and then you hear on farm the dogs also barking. There was strangers out there. They barking around there because that's the dogs. After been scared and comes closer we got to find out which way they going. They going this direction or they going the other direction? I don't know - you lay down then on the ground and you could hear. The soliders - the nails in the snow (noise) - they make the noise and I knew how to handle. And we went to a third place . . . too much to tell.

51:13 Q. I tell you what, it is a lot to tell and I would like to go ahead to where . . . tell me about where you end up hiding Jay?

A. What?

51:22 Q. Where Jay ended up hiding?

A. Jay, ended up. We all ended up hiding in the potato pit. You know what a potato pit. You see in winter time the farmers keeping their potatoes in a large pit - they shouldn't freeze. Because they gonna keep it in the open and they'll freeze and they'll ruin. And they been keeping the potatoes from the summer-time . . . put in for them to eat - for the cattle to feed and also for the spring to have it. And the farmer had two pits. He had one and he another one. One was a big one and one was a small pit. The big one they put in a bigger amount and there was little one for every day. And then I came and he was a very poor farmer. Run out of potatoes early. He didn't have any potatoes. He was a poor man. And my uncle, Iska, my wife's uncle, give us the connection and he went with us there to his house and he kept us in his house was together. One room for the animals was there, the cow and the horse and the pigs and the sheep and the chicken . . . animals on one side and he with his wife with his boy on the other side and was an oven without a stove . . . without a chimney. They didn't have no chimney. There was the oven. And he had the pits. His name was Poscosky. I say Poscosky, sell me the two pits you got there. He say what you gonna do? I say gonna make me a place to hide. He say how you gonna do it? I say don't worry I gonna do it. And here comes very important story. I told the children in school - they almost eat me up for that and then it is true. I say . . . I don't know, I say, Look I give you . . . and he was looking . . . he liked my suit what I was wearing and I had another suit. And I say, I'll give you this suit - give me the pits. He say it's a deal - a deal. I say not only this I say next time I beg bread, I'll give you a slice of bread and I'll give you a couple of bones. He say all right. But myself I went out at night . . . I used go out 12 o'clock at night. It was quiet - everybody asleep. Been digging the pits -

making bigger. Making a living quarter and it was a soft. The ground was soft - was sand - it was not gravel or mud - but it was easy to dig. And I digged up one already. I made it bigger and I didn't to have my wife help me. And then I start digging the other one and then all of a sudden the pit collapsed and covered me up up to hear. At one o'clock in the morning, by myself. The house from the pit is maybe 500 feet away. What to do now? And it is a terrible feeling. When you all like . . . like water you be with a chain but you all covered up and you feel you're losing your breath. You want to move. And at that time, regular you nothing, but right now you want to move - you want to get up. But the farmer had a german shepard, a dog. What is hound dog. And I was with the dog - buddy, buddy. We became friends because he had a dog life and I had worser life than he had. Then we understood each other. And really that dog . . . you know I could talk to the dog. He used to bring - the farmer used to bring bones to me . . . I been paying him for that and the bones that was left over, I used to give the dog. And the dog used to stay along the pit and eating. I was in the bottom eating my bones and he was eating there on top. And we were very friendly. I used to tell him I say go and call Poscosky. He used to go . . . he knew who I meant and go and bark and bring the men here if I need it. And here, the dog come up. Oh, I say, you know, you save my life. You got to help me. And I see he come he understood - he start licking my face - that dog. And he start with his tail wiggling and going around and running around and again. I say, Don't run around get me help. Go on - bring me Poscosky. He disappeared. But Poscosky had the door locked. He tried to get in. He scratch. He didn't answer and he know that is there I can't stay there long. He come back and bark a couple of times. I didn't know what he meant. Then Poscosky had a son, _____ . A young boy, the boy was around 17. He used to play the violin with _____. He _____ was going with the violin they call it _____ in Lithuanian. It is a party. The girls in the country, the farmers with the boys getting together - a dancing party - he used to play with the violin. And coming back now from a coming back home around 4 o'clock in the morning - he come back. He was coming back home with the violin under his arm and that do was right . . . he seen him coming. He jumped to him and start grabbing him for his coattail he say what you want and was kicking him I say he don't let him loose and run back in my direction to the pit . . . come back to him and grabs him and pulls down to the pit. . . . and he got me out. Unbelievable. I . . . then I find out the power made me good friend to the dog. And you see I been speaking at Godwin High School and I told the kids about the dog. Oh did that they can not when I leave here - I should come maybe got another story to tell him like this with the dog.

57:48 Q. Great.

A. Yeah right - it happened.

57:51 Q. Okay.

A. Then, there I was with Jay.

7:55 Q. Could you hold on one second. You want to put another one in

because I have like two more questions. We can stop for a second while they change tapes.

A. All right.

58:04 Q. That's a great story. So the dog really did get you out of there. That's amazing.

End of Tape 1

00:50 Q. You had mentioned that it was the three of you that made it to the farm - your wife, and Jay and yourself. Did you lose somebody along the way?

A. No. Later on I had my cousin come up. But I didn't lost nobody. Well, Jay, my wife and myself. The rest of my family was already. . . and here is coming what I was trying to tell you.

01:10 Q. Okay. Well, do you want to tell me about that and then talk about living in the pit?

A. Either way. You want to find out about me - ask me what you want to know.

01:17 Q. Whatever is more . . .

A. Don't make no difference to me. You ask me the questions.

01:20 Q. Okay. We were talking about the pit. I want to hear about that. Tell me what it was like to live.

A. Well, it was miserable. But in the pit was 16 people by the end in the pit. Because the pit saved a lot of life. You see it come a time you couldn't no more on top of the ground - you got to be under the ground. Because you see the Germans start going back - the Russians been chasing them already back already back and coming there they running in two. You running in the Nazis and you running in the communists. And you are in between. You had to be hiding that nobody . . . until the liberation . . . that nobody should find you. Maybe the last minute you got to get liberated you can get killed. See I had to go to the pit. It was to save us because you see here . . . here is a man came in and start smelling the city smell and start confusing. Another one let out rumors that a lawyer is here with a group of partisans and trying to kill us all. Rumors like that got out and they start seaching for me. And that's when the Gestapo come looking for me. I had to disappear. I had two places to . . . in my mind. Go these two pits or I would go dig me a grave in the cemetary. It was the safest place because nobody goes to a cemetary. You know, only when its a funeral. Then I had in mind to go there and dig me a grave or the two pits. I like better the two pits because I had the dog with me and I had the farmer and I had somebody so they know somebody is living there. You be in grave - no body there - only at night. And then at night you have to go out and get something to eat. Find some food. For you had to go and get it. And many times I used to go into a well. You know in the country the farmers have a well in the summertime. They didn't have no refrigerator or ice boxes where to keep their food in. They let them in a well very deep. It was maybe 10 feet deep in the ground and there was already water and keeping in the water with the bucket there their food. Part of their cheese, their

meat the would keep there. And there would be a rope tied up to the top. I used to come up and pull it out and take a slice put a little ticket and say I am sorry, I am hungry. I had to take it. Maybe one these days I'll give you back and I let it back. I didn't take all. I take a slice. That's the way we used to feed ourself. Or going and trading in a pair of shoes for 100 pounds of potatoes. Take the potatoes and bring it right there and give it to the farmer and the farmer's wife used to cook it - make a meal out of it.

04:23 Q. What was the longest amount of time you spent down in the pit?

A. Nine months.

04:29 Q. In other words, you spent nine months down there without coming out?

A. No. At night I used to come out. I couldn't live without coming out. I needed some air. The air what we had to breath was a five inch pipe I stuck in there. A tin pipe and that was all the air and then from the other pit the air which was coming in. Down there we also had . . . you know you're human and with woman. You had a place where to go - had a bucket there. We used to go in the bucket and at night we used to take it out, clean out the bucket and put it back. My uncle was a religious man and he learned by the pipe with Jay and with his two boys learning the Bible by heart. And learning the alphabet . . their ABC's on a piece of paper by the pipe on this little . . . maybe two, three rays from the sun used to go in there And then you be laying over in the dark. And lice. You know what it is. . . . covered us up with lice. Oy! Oy! This was the worstest thing that we had to . . . Oy! You know you couldn't . . . when you wash in the shirt was worse. The shirt when it was already dirty and no good, they stayed away. It's funny because in a clean shirt they cover up with lice. They eat you up alive.

06:18 Q. We were getting ready to talk before. . . we had two things we were going to talk about. One was the potato pit and you were getting ready to talk about something you were getting ready to say. You said it didn't matter which order we talked in. I think you were going to talk about your family. Now, you've left the ghetto. You're in hiding. During this time, what are they doing?

06:45 A. All right. In that time it come out that the Germans, Gestapo, decided the ghetto in Cowness come together to cut it in half. And to open up another ghetto - a smaller ghetto. It's easier for them to destroy the Jews in small groups than to have them in a big group. And open up another ghetto they call the Sunsalaga. A laga they call it not like a ghetto its a working place what is on the outside of Cowness at the other end of Cowness is the Sunsalaga. And they took . . . they had to have a head to carry on with the Jews and who they got? My brother-in-law. He was looking at himself all the time to push himself to be a General. Try all the time to be a big shot. And he took the job that he'll head up Sunsalaga. By him heading up the Sunsalaga, he got my sister, my mother and father and his little boy. That what got left over. Because my wife's family was already destroyed. And he brought them over one day because he went and they went with him in Sunsalaga. Because they want to have many to look out for

them. My father was old and sick and I wasn't there already. Then they tried to survive to hang on to him and he got them into Sunsalaga. When they got in, it was a week before the Lage was open. They had old people and children selection. They been taken out from the group of people what come into Sunsalaga. Took the children away and the old people. My sister was at work. My mother was home with my father and her little boy. They come and took my father and my little boy. And my mother . . . when they come with the truck. . . . drove up to the place where they were, my mother they didn't took her. My mother seen that they took the boy and got in with the boy in the truck. She didn't want the little boy go - my sister's son. They got in back, took him away from her, the boy threw him in the truck with my father and took my mother and threw her out from the truck. And they drove off. It was a _____ to my sister, Edna. Boy gone - father gone and she now only with my mother. And I had another sister who remained in other ghetto in Cowness - she didn't go. It was so miserable. It was terrible. And then another women got in and my brother-in-law find a mistress in that place and then he didn't pay no more attention to my sister and to my mother . . . because well, the boy is already gone and the relation with the lot of work they finally had permission to come back to the ghetto in Cowness - my mother and sister. I find out about if from one of my cousins. I have three cousins in the ghetto. One of my cousins come to me in my hiding place. How he find - I don't know - he got a hold of the _____. I don't know how he find out. He was a very, very, very slinky and he find out about my hiding place. Because I didn't tell nobody and I was afraid to tell somebody where. Because it was really dangerous. He came up and he tell me what's happen to my family. And he came to ask me a favor. I say what you want. He say I got by myself here - he's very lonesome - he got is brother. There were three brothers. Would I take his brother into my hiding place to be with me? Because of the place that I had it was hard to find and you see it was not easy to find hiding places then. I tell him I'll take him under one condition. He say what is it? When you can bring my mother and sister, you can bring your brother. He say all right. I say, Okay. He goes back on a bicycle - he pedalled up 50 miles. Pedal away back. Brings his brother. Ask him where is my mother and sister. They weren't ready. I say what do you mean they weren't ready - then why you brought your brother. You didn't have no business to bring your brother. It's a deal we made. Well, it's too late. He say Look I go bring your mother and sister but let me bring my brother's girlfriend. And in that kind of condition it was terrible. For me more important I want my mother and sister - at least somebody. And he begged me. I say look , you know what you're doing to me but I agree so that you bring me my mother and sister. He didn't brought - he brought the girl and didn't brought my mother and sister. He tell me my mother and sister were trying to go through the fence and they be locked up. They been caught going through the fence. And they put them in jail. That what he said - I don't know. I had to believe him. Go and bring them now. He brought another brother with his wife. And still didn't brought my mother and sister. And they already been out. I say they been out from jail? He say yeah, they out from jail, I go bring them now. And he went away and brings his mother, who is my aunt - my mother's sister. And I was so upset and I tell to Mesukes - I say why you brought them to me? Why you bringing me . . . you a good friend of mine - I don't

know what you're doing. You keep them in hiding - let them hide. Well, my aunt heard it and she felt bad. How come . . . she didn't know . . . she say if she had knew that I made with him an agreement he could bring her sister, my mother, she wouldn't go. She say I am going now back, she say, with him and I go bring my sisters with your mother and your sister and then I will come. I say perfect. I'll go and dig my pit larger and make room for you. So I'll dig it out. The ground is plenty there. And he goes back with her. He came this time with a horse and wagon. And that farmer, Mesukes, goes with him also in with the horse and wagon in the back. And by going back, that horse of his lost a horseshoe. You know what it is. And they had to go by a blacksmith to put a horseshoe on. Then, the farmer, Mesukes says, give me your horse, take my horse and I'll go and I'll fix him up and I'll . . . put them on the horse and he'll be ready. And he comes to Zesma. Zesma was a marketplace. It was a market and a lot of farmers was there and he had to go to the little villages - the only way he can go to proceed. And he sees three Lithuanians - soliders - voluteers going with their rifles. He lost himself - he was thinking they coming to lock him up and he with his mother jumped out from that wagon. And there was pile of hay . . . you know the farmers had hay. . . and they go running in the pile of hay to hid themself. The three didn't maybe pay attention. I don't know. But when they see something is wrong, they run after them and start hollering and got them out from the hay and put them in jail. Him with his mother. And next day they took them out and shot them. Took them out in the woods and killed them. Him with his mother. And I feel . . until this day. . . I feel guilty. I feel so miserable that is terrible. We good friends. He lives in Montreal, my cousin, with his wife, with his girlfriend. And the other one lives in Toronto with this family. And they calling me and talking to me but . . . inviting me to their weddings, but I feel terrible. That was the end with my family. And my family . . it's a lot to talk. You see my mother and sister went also in a hiding place in the ghetto. It was in the basement. I don't know how they got to that man. The man's name was Mulga and he made himself a hiding place and he took them in - why, I don't know. And soon I been told that's where they were. When I got liberated the first thing I run is run in that place and I didn't find nothing. I don't know what every happened to my mother and sister and the other sister and my father - I don't know nothing.

16:46 Q. And to this day you don't?

A. Till this day. And I have influence. I was in a position in Munich and I was looking there. And I ask maybe ten thousands of people and nobody heard from them.

17:02 Q. By the way, we probably have time for one more question. Obviously what we're doing today is so people can learn what happened and hopefully so they'll understand how to keep it from happening again. If somebody had to remember it as one thing, about what happened over there, in your eyes what would that be? What's the one thing you think they should never forget?

The selection.

A. ✓ It is who should live and who should die? To the left and to the right. The left is died and the right is life. That's what they should remember. And to do that everybody got to be in awareness and to spread love between people not hatred between people.

Because all been created is equal. Every person is a person. He got the same right as the other one to live and nobody knows when to kill the other one. To stop that killing. Because life is . . . biggest school is life. And from life you learn a lot. People learning the wrong way and they got to be educated that people is going the wrong direction and put back on track. And that is very, very important. To educate people. I don't know . . . it's plenty of room for everybody.

18:56 Q. Okay. Izzy, thank you.

A. Your welcome. Well . . maybe later on . . .

19:03 Q. There is one more thing I'll ask you. Is there anything else, in brief, that we should know . . . obviously, we couldn't learn everything today. You could probably talk for weeks . . . but is there anything that really stands out in your mind that we didn't talk about that we should know? Your life, things that happened to you. I mean I know there is so many to chose from.

A. I don't know. I still think you need help, you cannot do it by yourself. You need all the time help. But what stands out in my . . . mind and it's painful . . . why it could be stopped. Whom a lot of . . . I felt . . . You know I used to listen to the short-wave radio. When I worked in the ghetto, in the airport, I went to work in _____ means between the ammunitions and repairing them . . . there was a captain and two Germans - the Gestapo people and he was listening to the shortwave radio and they used to go to eat his lunch, it take him two hours everyday - because it was a long ways from where we were into his place where he had to eat - I used to jump in with the rest of them, in a group where the Jews working, they be low diving . . . I mean guarding me . . . I used to jump in his office and listen to the radio. And I turn on the radio, the station. He used to listen to the same shortwave radio from Lumba - he want to hear. And I used to hear the Bishop from Canterbury. You know the Bishop from Canterbury used to talk to the Pope and beg the Pope, please speak up. See that the . . Hitler should stop massacring the Jews. He is killing all the Jews. A miserable man. Put him in the open. Nothing. And I used to hear all the time his complaining, the Bishop of Canterbury ask, give me your answer. No answer. Hitler is dangerous. A person in a postion like the Pope what he controls a lot of people - he had to be a spirtual leader the way he supposed to be. Love a person - to love each other and not to hate each other. Remember, he not speaking up - he hate the Jews. Well, why? Even when we start bringing up . . . I don't know. . . . how can talk peace and love? The Jews. . . what I know about what's happened with Jesus and another one? A person is a person. Well. . . that's it.

22:24 Q. I've got one more for your if you don't mind answering.

A. One more?

22:30 Q. One more question. So on a more positive note. Tell me about the day you were liberated. Start maybe with what time of day were you liberated?

A. It was middle of the day. I seen one solider.

2241 Q. Let's start that morning.

A. Way ahead I know it. ¹⁴⁵Two days ahead. You see, where I was in hiding was between Venice and Cowness. Between two big cities. They liberated . . the Red Army liberated Venice and then it was going on to Cowness. You could hear the catusa. You know what a catusa? At night rumbling. All the time rumble. The catusa closer and closer. I knew the front is coming up closer to us. Then one day . . . in a day or two later. . . Poscosky, the farmer, went there to buy something in the market in _____, in the city, the village, where the highway goes through. And he comes back and tells me you know I seen them take thousands of German soliders and running back and going back. And here, after he tell me, stick out my head, I see Russian soliders going. I say take a look, it is a Russian. It's because the uniform. You now with a star. You see they were going there and the Russian were trying to encircle them. That's when I see him. And I couldn't believe it. I say can I go out from the hole? Poscosky say, you can go out. Nobody will come now to bother you. The Russians coming out - three, five . . and one comes up and asks me a question in Russian. And I tell him, What you doing? He say he looking for his brigade. He lost his soliders. I say they're on the way this way. That's the only way you can go. And he went on and then I say, I am free. Can I breath air? I couldn't believe it. I just know I got to stay in the hole. Everybody then when I was going out. And then I see Russian planes going over top above us. And I just start kissing my wife and everybody. Finally, finally, we survive. Let's see what's happened to the rest of them. And the biggest problem was . . they came in . . . the Germans were smart . . they bring them in _____. Was place was 20 miles from Cowness. There was a . . . whiskey . . . they be making whiskey . . . a brewery for liquer. They been brewing liquer. And they knew the Russians like to drink - they big drunks. The soliders particular - after all the fighting was going on. They left the brewery full with liquer. They didn't bust it. And when they came in . . . it was this side of _____, they start drinking, the Russians, and the Germans they didn't drink and then they start giving them hell. And they killed in the thousands. They stopped there for a week. They was staying and couldn't move. When they wouldn't move that week, they liberated the ghetto from Cowness and everyone from Cowness, 10,000 Jews were alive. And right now from Cowness they went to _____ and its only survive 500 Jews. In New York we got this association and we got one in Israel for Lithuaniaian Jews. And we meet once a year and have memorial services for the dead. They put a monument up in Israel remembering all those places. And that was the liberation. I was running with the Russian soliders. Hide behind them and that was August 1, 1944. The war ended May 2, 1945. In 1944 August 1, I was free. I got into Cowness and it was a ghost city. This I couldn't forget. A big city from 400,000 people - empty. I could get anything I wanted - food, furniture and an apartment. I got into the apartment where the Prime Minister was living. I got in the apartment it was there the coffee still on the table and the cookies. They didn't finish eating breakfast. They run away. I was by myself in all the city. Nothing - one or two or three soliders . . . Russian. . . he got his own worries and there is nobody to talk - nothing to do. The first thing I run is run to

the ghetto. You see I knew all the places and look over everything. They didn't destroy the bridges. I went to the place right around the ghetto looking for my mother. Looking for the place maybe I go find somebody. I find burned bodies. You know they burned the ghetto. They left them. It's all wooden shacks and they put fire bombs. And I seen people whom I knew. I see a hand laying there - there arm was laying - the teeth and I see an old woman goes with her stick with a pick - a nail sticks in the ground looking. Maybe there somebody is there maybe got a gold or silver or something. That is a period. For years and years we didn't want to talk. That is why the survivors did spoke. You know for years you couldn't get them to organize. They didn't want to participate . . . it is painful. It is not so easy for me either to talk and tell you about it. To go and bring up all my life. But I'm want to forget. Now finally, now it true. People like you and the rest of them start doing for the future generation we're doing it. Our generation is already gone. We're doing it for children's children that it should be peace and happiness. And more to educate that is the main thing.

Okay.

29:13 Q. Izzy, thank you very much.

A. Your welcome.

Q. I appreciate it.