

Although my husband where they are a night and subfreezing temperature. How they survive there, I don't have any idea.

Anyway, they came back in the morning. And this man told them that those people were there and they were searching for them. But it's a good thing that he found out not then and they were out.

And he told them he is afraid to take any children. They had to leave. And they left.

There was a other farmer who was a shoemaker who used to buy leather for us. He was a very rough man. But a good man was afraid to take children. I had a feeling, maybe, they're there. And I went there.

It was already dark. And I knocked on the window. And he asked me who is it. And I told him who I am.

And I said, are my parents with you? And she answered, his wife said, get away from here. If you will not get away, I'm going to take a hatchet and split your head in half.

And then he said, yes, they are here. But come back later. It's still not very dark. Come back later and I will let them in where they are. And I left.

I left. And I went back to this fearless man who had a son-in-law. And I told him that I can't find him. I don't have any idea where they are to take off the suspicious [INAUDIBLE]. I don't know where they are. But I'm going to still look around. And I left.

So you went back to the first hiding place, just to make sure?

Sure, yeah.

Because you have to cover your tracks.

Yeah.

To make sure that he--

And I went back to this farmer. When I came back, this farmer, he lived on a higher surface. And I couldn't remember where he lives. I couldn't recognize the place. I was so-- I was--

Confused?

--confused. My mind was so blank. I couldn't remember where his house is.

And I was wrapped up in this big, heavy shawl. And I was so big. And I was thinking. I couldn't remember where he lives.

And suddenly I saw two girls, farmer girls going. And I said to them, I was familiar with leather goods, everything.

And I said to them, I was in Wislica, and Mr. Grenda met me there and he ordered some leather from me. And I'm having the leather to deliver to him, but could you tell me where he lives?

And they said leather? Oh, we need leather. We going to buy it from you.

So I said, no. I don't have the soft leather. I have the hard one. They was making like this, where you make the top. But I told them, because I was so familiar, I knew what to answer.

I said, I don't have the soft leather. I have the hard, but it's sole. Oh, we don't care for hard leather. And they told me Grenda, he lives there. And I said thank you.

And they pointed to where he lives?

Pointed to where he lives. And I went there. I came there. I knocked on the window.

And he opened the door. And he let me in there where there was a hole on the place where the cow was. He had two cows. And from that place where the cow was, there was a cover with-- you know, the cover with there. But it was a wooden cover.

It was in a barn?

The barn, yes. And he opened the cover. And there was a long, like, corridor, like a hall to go down. And there was a big hole in the ground. And they were there, my mother, my father, my husband, and my brother.

Well, what can I say? There was this reunion, was something we can't describe. And my mother told me then, how could you do that? You risk your life and you risk our lives.

I said, Mother, I couldn't live not knowing where you are, if you are alive. I couldn't live. And she said darling, you have to understand what's going on. And if my mother said this, you didn't know my mother.

She said if we will try to stick together, we all will be going. We all will die. Everybody had to do the best he can to save his own life. In this way, maybe some of us will survive. But if we will try to be together, there is no way none of us will survive.

So you went back there just to make sure they were OK?

I went back to see if they are alive.

But not to stay there?

No, I couldn't stay there. I couldn't. There was no way I could stay there.

And your mother was upset that you even went to check to see that they were alive?

Because she knew we were still alive. Oh, wait a minute, not only this. I was living on a Polish papers, so I was safe. And I went back.

I went back to this farm where my parents were first. And I told them and I cried. I spent there a night. And I cried.

Because the man made a wagon was there, too. He remained there. And I cried. And I did all I can to make sure that they don't have an idea that I spoke with my parents. We spent the night there.

This was after you had already seen your parents?

Yes. We spent the night there. And the following morning--

But when you were there, how long were you with your parents, then?

I was about, I would say 15, 20 minutes. And when I went up there were-- when you went up, there was a big-- like, a corridor to go down to this hiding place. And there were those wooden sticks knocked in. So you put your foot on the wooden stick. And this way you went down. And this way you went up.

Because you couldn't possibly get out from there without those-- to have some support for your steps. Yeah. There were wooden sticks in the ground. And when I was walking, when I had my foot on the stick, my mother grabbed my foot and kissed it when I left.

[CRYING]

And I came home. I came home safe. And I was in touch with them. And this farmer had some clothes what my parents brought with them when they left this other place, some clothes.

My parents had some money with them, American money, which was very valuable. But this farmer couldn't know about it. Because if he would, he would kill them and take the money from them. So he couldn't know about it.

In the meantime, Marie, when I was living there with Marie on this apartment, we needed something like a bed, a cover for the table, make it livable. So when a neighbor would come in, it won't be right away the suspicion that Jews living here. They need something.

So she gave me a letter to a man who had a mill, a flour mill in Chmielnik, the town where she came was. Her parents gave everything from their home to that owner from the mill. And she gave me a letter in her father's name, not then she write it, her father write it, and ask them for some sheets, pillowcase, something you need, this very necessity to make it look like apartment.

And she also wrote, like he wrote, her father, that this is Mrs. Wojcik. And she's a good friend of mine. You can trust her the same way as you trust me. Anything you want to tell her, like you would tell to me. Knowing she was building up his trust in me, you understand?

This man wasn't Jewish?

No, no, of course he wasn't Jewish. And I went there on the train on Polish papers and I gave him this letter.

You mean from the farmer? What mean, from the farmer?

When did you go there? Was this connected with having gone to see your parents in the village?

No, no, this was after I came back from my parents.

OK.

I went there. And I gave him this letter. He gave me something what I need and I came back.

When was this? Do you remember?

This was maybe in March or April. It was all in beginning. I also wanted to tell you a fact. When I left this place from my parents, my brother went with me, Menasha, he wouldn't let me go alone.

At night, when you see a tree, you think it's a person. And every time when I saw, and it happened to be a light, but it was the moon was outside and it wasn't dark. And I begin to shake.

And he said to me, don't shake, please. We are in God's hand. He saved us until now. He will save us. Don't shake. Just have faith.

So your brother went how far back with you? He went with me until almost to the farm.

And then he returned.

Because he was afraid I will not be able to find the place.

And then he went back to the hiding place?

Then he went back to the hiding place, yes. And so I installed communication with this mill, with this owner from the mill. Then my parents needed money. This farmer wanted money.

So somehow whenever the farmer came to me, they send them a letter to me, not written in Polish, in Yiddish. And he explained it to me, the situation. That they have money. They have American dollars. But they cannot show it to the farmer.

So when he comes to me, ask him to bring me a suit, a jacket, a dress, a skirt. Because this farmer had to know-- he came to me while I was living on Polish papers. And I told him I'm going to the church. I was living there with Marie in this bakery place.

And he brought it to me. And when they sent us this jacket, they sent a letter. And they wrote me exactly where this money is sewed in.

I don't understand. If the farmer brought you-- I mean, the mill, the guy who owned the mill.

No, no, no, the farm where my parents were, what I went to visit. You understand? He brought me-- I told him I had to go to church.

I have to be dressed decently. I don't have anything. I have there a suit. Bring me the jacket.

So the farmer where your parents were hiding?

Yeah. So the next time when he came--

To the village that you were in?

I was living there, yeah, in Lisokowska on Polish papers.

But did he think-- wait a second, did he think you were Polish? He knew--

No, the family weren't Jewish, of course.

All right. So you told him you needed-- OK.

I needed to go to the church. You know, I'm living on Polish papers. And I have to go there.

So he brought me this jacket, whatever I want. And my parents wrote in it. And told me exactly where they sewed in a \$10 bill, a \$20 bill, or \$5 bill. A \$5 bill was an fortune.

And I took this \$5 bill and I went to this mill owner. And I didn't have an idea what the value of that is. I told him 100,000 zloty, 50, whatever I told him, he said, OK.

What did I do? I made, let's say, like, five tickets, 10 tickets, two duplicates. One I took with me, one I left to him. I made one, let's say, 10,000 zloty March the 1st, 10,000 zloty April the 1st, 10,000--

You mean checks, like?

No, the tickets, the little paper. Wrote out Sofia Wojcik, \$10,000 March the 15th. And I said, whoever will bring you that ticket will match that ticket. Don't ask any questions. Just give him the money what's written there. Give him 10,000

zloty.

And when the farmer where my parents were came to me, I gave him the ticket. I told him a story that my husband was from a mill. I told him the story that this mill from Ozerov sends money to this mill for my husband. You understand?

Right.

And to take this ticket and go there to this mill owner, not to the other [INAUDIBLE]. Just give him this piece of paper and. He will give you 10,000 zloty.

For you? For him?

For my parents, the money for me I took with me.

Right, but the farmer would get the money for the parents?

For my parents, yeah. This way I paid for my parents the farmer knowing that this money come from the mill. He didn't have any idea that they send me--

And your parents would give the money to the farmer?

He didn't want to give me. He took the money, keep it to himself.

Right. I see.

You know, not-- you understand?

I see. So it was like a code. Even though you said give it to your parents, you knew that he was going to keep the money.

No, I told him. This is your pay. This is your money.

OK.

I didn't ask him to give it to my parents.

OK. I see.

This is your money. And he gave them food, whatever it is.

Right.

This-- you go and that's you. You do what you do. This is all, everything yours. And this way I helped my parents to pay money. They were so secure. It was usually every Jew was in a hidden place had to go out to get somewhere money to pay this man. Because the farmer wouldn't keep him for nothing.

My parents didn't have to go out, you understand? They were supplied money from outside. They didn't have to go out at all. And their place was much more secure than mine, than many other places. And this was going on, like, for a month or two or three. And one time--

And meanwhile, you were living with Marie?

Yes. One time he came to me-- no, wait a minute. This was I keep on forgetting. When I found out about my brother was before I established this communication. My brother went one time out to try to get some money.

Which brother, Menasha. Was the only one there. Chaim was in Slomniki. Uncle Pinchas was in Auschwitz.

Right.

And I know now who did it.

Do you know when it was around?

Pardon?

When did this happen, that Menasha went out, around when?

This happened before I established this communication with the millner. This happened around February.

1943?

But it happened not long after I went to see them. He went out. And he was killed then. He was murdered then. A policeman [INAUDIBLE] run after him and killed him.

Menasha went out of the hiding place to try to get some money. And how did it happen, exactly?

Well, he came to my hometown. And he went into the house. I spoke with Menasha. But I can only speculate what happened. And I'm sure this way it happened.

He went into my house. And there we had hidden a lot of those goods, what he had bought for my brother for the wedding. He came in and they had also hidden there in one place American money. He told to this man who lived there I will show you where we have hidden a lot of goods. It's worth a fortune.

But I have a little bit money there. Let me take out the money. You take everything there. And he went by all right.

And then he went to a shoemaker. This was his mistake. Next to the shoemaker was a policeman.

Why did he go to the shoemaker?

Because he want to find out a way to-- he couldn't give the farmer-- he wanted to find out a way if he would change him from this dollar to Polish zloty. And this shoemaker happened to be a big antisemite. And next to him was living a policeman with two sons.

They were the biggest murderer. They killed many, many Jews. And when he came in, apparently this shoemaker sent his daughter, his wife. [INAUDIBLE] told him he is here. Go after him.

And of course, he wouldn't do anything, this shoemaker. And my brother left. And this son from the policeman run after him. And he was beginning to run.

And I had there a woman who lives now in Israel told me that she was there hiding there after the bridge. She was hiding there in a place where he keep the wheat, barley, [INAUDIBLE]. I know exactly what she meant. She was there.

And she could see through, between the boards. There were open space she could see through. She could see a man run. And she would hear Shema Yisrael [INAUDIBLE].

You mean that your brother was saying the Shema?

My brother was saying Shema Yisrael [INAUDIBLE]. And the following day, the man told her that--

The policeman had killed--

She didn't know who. But I can only speculate it was him.

What was the policeman's name, do you remember?

Huns.

That was his last name, Huns?

Huns, yes. I think about that he-- after they took--

Was he a Pole?

He was a Pole, sure. After when they took out the Jews from Vayslitz, it was there this man and a woman [PERSONAL NAME], where he had a big shoe store, very fine, wonderful people, their idea was to hide behind a closet. And they did it. They didn't go with the transport.

And those Huns sons, both of them, searched the Jewish homes. And they came in there and they found them behind the wall and took him out on the market and they called Gestapo and they shoot him, or maybe they shoot him by themselves, both of them. [INAUDIBLE].

So Menasha was killed? When did you find out about Menasha?

This I want to tell you. I didn't know. But one time this farmer, his name was Grenda, the farmer where my parents were hiding, the last farmer where I came to see them, he came to me. And I told him, again, bring me something, a coat, because it's winter. It's cold.

And he said, well, how am I going to get it? I don't have any more. I said, well, tell Menasha to go to [NON-ENGLISH]. Tell him to go to [NON-ENGLISH]. We have there a lot of goods. He could hang there.

He said, what do you mean, Menasha? Don't you know what happened? My parents didn't tell me.

Now when you found out Menasha died?

Then when I found out Menasha died.

When you found out?

About a couple of weeks after I went for them, maybe a month after then. But he told me that this was my first shock. I began to cry. And I stripped my face completely with my nails. It was-- blood was running here.

And she said, Marie said, OK, she said, I could understand if you would know if he will die, your brother will become alive. I could not understand.

But will it help your brother if you will die? If you will behave like this, somebody will come in. They will see this condition. What do you think they're going to think?

So what are you-- I realized that she is right. That I cannot cry. And I cannot have water spots on my face. There's no way.

And she was pleading with me. There's no other choice. You have to behave humor. You have to have a smiling face when somebody comes in. There's no other way.

And I washed out my face. And I was two days in the house, not to go out until this will healed up. And--

Sheila was living with you then?

Sheila was living with me, yes. And one time, I went out to the outdoor toilet. We didn't have toilets in the house.

There was about three, four toilets in the backyard, one next to the other one. Every two, three tenants had one toilet. And I went out to the toilet. And I locked myself inside.

And sitting there, I forgot complete where I am. I just forgot. I just was so deep in my thoughts I forgot complete what's going on.

And I was thinking about it, Menasha. And I said oy vey. When I said this oy vey, I woke up. And I said, what did I do?

You suddenly realized that you said out a Yiddish expression?

I said a Yiddish expression. If the next toilet happened to be a neighbor who was non-Jewish, also in this house, this bakery, this was the ghetto before the Jews were taken out. And in this ghetto, they put in those peoples who were knocked out from Poznan. Poznan was a section next to the German border which had belonged, before the First World War, belonged to Germany.

And after the First World War, was taken into Poland. And the Poles put all their peoples there. And when Germany, in the Second World War, when Germany took over Poland, they took it back to them and they knocked out-- they had to leave all those Poles.

And this were the biggest antisemites. They called it the Poznaniakis They were more than Gestapo. Because they had to prove themselves that they are really Germans. And they were worse than Gestapo.

So these were the people that were your neighbors?

These were people were my neighbors. But like I said, I was complete 100% Polish in my look. I spoke a good Polish. I went every Saturday, Sunday to the church. Every night when Sheila and I went to sleep, I spoke with her very high the prayer, the Polish prayer. So Sheila thought that she was Polish.

Oh, yeah. She didn't have [INAUDIBLE], nothing whatsoever. But I did this for the neighbors. And every Sunday after the church, when it got warm in April or May or whatever it was, everybody came out in the backyard and sit around. And I came out in the backyard and I sit around.

And where is Marie? I think Marie went out for a date. Marie [INAUDIBLE] she had a date. She never come out because she couldn't speak the Polish language.

So then I begin to act normal.

But when you said the oy vey and you went out--

I went out. And the toilet was open. And I went into my room.

So you thought-- and I took and looked through the curtain. And there came out this man who lived right on other side of the wall from me. He had to get up. Well, he lived next room but wasn't a door. And I knew exactly who this is.

And Saturday, it was Saturday, I went to get the--

Do you think that he had heard you?

Yeah. Oh, definitely. I went outside to get the meat for the whole week because I had a ration. And the ration for all three of us was, like, I don't know, about four ounces meat the whole week. So I came back with this ration.

And there were two policemen there. And I came in. And I begin to smile. And I said, oh, Marie, we have company. What can I do for you gentlemen?

And I was happy and smiling. And I don't know. I was a beautiful actress. And I can't understand how I did it. But I did it.

And they said Mrs. Wojcik, Pani Wojcik, we had an anonym letter.

An anonymous--

--anonymous letter that you are Jewish.

So in other words, you think that man heard you and he reported you?

He said write you a letter, oh, no doubt. But we came in, you saw all those crosses on the wall, with Jesus, with Mary, with all those pictures. With me looking-- and Marie didn't said much, but she looked Polish. And they said we know it's not true, because you couldn't possibly be Jewish.

And i said, me, Jewish? Who can possible even think about-- who ever thought like that? And I spoke in this perfect Polish. And he said, we know it's a lie. But as policemen, we have to check it out. And we would like to have your identification card.

The letter was on my name. Nobody didn't even know what Marie's name. You know Marie, but if they know about it, I didn't know.

But me, I know Sofia Boychick. And the letter came on Sofia Boychick. And we got to have your identification card. And we will bring it back--

When was this, do you remember?

This was 1943.

It was in about April, May?

April, May, around this time. No, wait a minute. It was Easter. This was Saturday. And the following day, Sunday, Monday was Easter.

Must have been April.

April. Was Easter. So I said, OK, sure, pleasure. I give him the identification card. And they left. They left.

I didn't have-- without the identification card, I couldn't go out on the outside of that. Was no way. And I said to Marie, I was completed. I didn't know what's going on in my mind.

I said to Marie, get away. Run away. You have the identification card. I don't have any choice.

What are you going to do? I don't know. I don't know.

I have to hope for a miracle. I don't know what I'm going to do. But you run.

And she said to me, Zosiu, with you, I will live and with you, I will die. I'm not going to leave you. She wouldn't go. She stood there.

Passed about 15 minutes. The man, the owner of this home came into me. And I knew, Rubinek told me about he was a pharmacist.

He was living with his wife in Warsaw. When the war broke out, this was his wife's mother-- his wife's property. He came back to live with his mother-in-law. And he had a little girl.

And he came in. And he said to me, Mrs. Wojcik, I want to have-- the policeman came in to me. They told me they have anonymous letter that you're Jewish.

But I know I can tell him, because Rubinek told me I can tell him. But we better don't tell him. But he [INAUDIBLE] Gestapo going down his house [INAUDIBLE]. It better he doesn't know. But he will know, he will not tell you because he's a nice man.

And they asked me to give, to bring to them, the permission what you got from the City Hall for the apartment. And I fell down to his feet. And I said save me. Do something for me, for me and my little girl, please.

And he said, what can I do? And a few weeks earlier, he was arrested-- he was a pharmacist-- with many others. And they send many other away. And he came back. They send him back home with his wife and little girl.

So he was Jewish?

No, he was Polish.

Why was he arrested?

I told you that the German took those educated men and sent them away--

Oh, right. I see.

And he was a pharmacist. So he tells me, you know, a few weeks ago, by a miracle, I escaped their knife. You know that. What can I do for you? What can I do to help you?

And I said, if you could get me only back my identification, I won't sleep. I will run away right now. And without the identification, then I cannot go out outside the house.

He said, I will do all I can. But I can't promise anything. I can only promise I will do all I can. And he left.

I gave him this permission what I had and he left. And didn't pass 10 minutes. He came back with identification.

He came back with the identification?

And I said, how did you do it? He was a very smart man. He said he came back. He showed them the identification, which was legal.

They asked him how I live. He told them I go to Warsaw, I buy goods.

Which I did, because I went to this-- to this man, the mill. And I brought back [NON-ENGLISH], different things. And I even told him there was one woman in the same yard. And I even sold it to them. I told her I bought it from Warsaw, you understand?

I had to make something where it will click.

So it would look like you had a living.

So the police asked him how I make a living. He said I know I go to Warsaw, I travel, I bring back goods, and I sell it, which a lot of women were doing this then, which was all right.

And we talk about this. And then I gave him this permission. And they all right. And they shook hands. And they left.

And they already were almost ready to close the door. I said, oh, excuse me. I forgot. Mrs. Wojcik is a very religious woman. She goes every Sunday to the church. Tomorrow we have [NON-ENGLISH]. How you call this-- Easter.

And I know she wants to go to the church. Without the identification, you know, she cannot go out from the house. Why don't you take a piece of paper, write down all the numbers and everything, and you can call up Monday or Tuesday and give her back identification. She'll be able to go to church.

They were going to check with Krakow? Is that it?

Yeah, sure. I don't ever take the number and the address, everything, you can write it down and give her back the identification, she can go back she can go to church. And they said you're right.

And they came back. And they write down the identification, everything, and they gave him back the Kennkarte. And they gave him back the Kennkarte. Can you understand this?

Mhm.

And he gave me back the Kennkarte. And the same night I run away. Where? To the farm where I was started the first to Liskow, to the farmer. I came up with Marie.

--that I know I want to go and find a place. I want them there for a couple days. And he said OK.

Where did I had my mind to go? I know where Rubinek both brothers are. I know from the [INAUDIBLE] place. How did I know that? I didn't have any idea they are there.

They was about three homes farther where I live on the Polish papers. How did I know that?

How did you know what?

How did I know were they hidden there.

Who, Rubinek?

Rubinek and Maly and two Klocki. There were there six men.

By that time, they were in hiding?

Yeah. But how did I know? I didn't have any idea. How did I find that out?

When I was living there in this bakery, one time a woman came in. When they took out the people the second time from this barrack, Rubinek, the fiancée from Polish sister was in the hidden place. His brother happened to be there at home. And he went with the transport, you understand?

Mhm.

He went to this transport. And they send him, this transport they send to a camp. And I forgot the name. There was the

ammunition [INAUDIBLE] not far from there. I forgot the name of the town, was in Poland.

And they sent the whole Jewish-- they took him out and they sent them there. And this Rubinek, this brother who was sent away, knew where his brother is. But he didn't know exactly where. They had also an order. They had made already two places, two hidden places.

And he didn't know exactly each place they happened to be that night. So he apparently befriended there a woman, a Polish woman. And he asked apparently, paid, I don't know. He sent a letter to me. He knew where I live.

And he sent a letter to me telling me how they're living there. He want to escape. He want to take the risk to escape.

But in order to escape, he has to know where his brother is. And since they had two hidden place-- they had only made one, he wouldn't have no doubt. But since they had ready two hidden places, and this brother, when he decided to go for that night to the hidden place and didn't tell him each one he's going, so he doesn't know where this is.

And he gave me the address from both hidden places to go to find out where his brother is. So I went first to this place to this-- close to my home, because it was closer. I came in there. He wasn't there.

His name was Galek. His daughter was there. I told her that I received a letter from Rubinek. And Rubinek told me that his brother is here. He would like to come to share with him the hidden place.

And she called her father. And he said no, they're not there yet. He even showed me a place where they were supposed to be hidden, but the place was empty. And they're not there. I don't know where they are.

And then I went to the other place which was a house next to this house where I was by the woman when I ran away, when I came to Jedrzejow. And I went there to this man and I told him the same thing. And he said no, they're not here.

Both places said they're not there. But the way they spoke to me, the way they behaved, I had a feeling that they are there by this [PLACE NAME].

By the first place?

By the first place. I wasn't sure, but I had a feeling, the way he behaved. And I wrote a letter back to this Rubinek, what I did, what I said. And I told him my opinion. I think they're there, but I can't promise that. But I have a feeling they are there.

And just so happened the Rubinek was on the way. And he came there and he joined them. This way I know where they are. If not this incident, I wouldn't have any idea where they are.

So when this happened I took Marie with the baby to this farmer. And I told him I'm going to go somewhere to try to find a place, just for a couple of days. And I went to this hidden place.

And I asked them, asked them to have mercy on me, to give me a place for Sheila so I can put him in a home. And I will come here to be with them. I will write a letter to my parents and go to my parents. I told them I got to go to my parents.

But to do this, I have to have a place for Sheila. They said no.

There wasn't no sentiments then. All those people had lost their families, their children, their mothers. What business they had with me to save me and my baby? They couldn't care less.

They don't have anybody. They don't know anybody. There's nothing they can do for me.

But Rubinek told me then that to go to Szczawnica. Szczawnica was a resort place in the mountains, in the Carpathian in Poland. This was about May, June when this happened.

1943?

1943. And he said, there, look, we know very well that the war-- by the fall, the war will be over. There's no doubt. You know what? No doubt in nobody's mind.

So during the summer, they come there peoples to this place for the whole world. And during the summer, you will be there. And when you will have to leave and everything will close up, the war will be over. And this way you will be saved.

So this what I did. I went in Jedrzejow to the train station. And I went by train to Szczawnica. To go there, I had to go to Krakow. In Krakow, I had to change trains.

I came to Krakow was about at night. I don't know what time. It was 8, 9, 10, 11 o'clock at night. And the train left tomorrow morning about 9 o'clock.

And my identification card was from Krakow. And if a policeman would come to me, he would tell me why did you spend the night? You live here. And you couldn't go out like from 9:00 at night until 6:00 in the morning.

But there was plenty of time for me to come for the train, stay home, and come back. Why did you spend the night here? It was terrible risky to spend the night there.

But what choice did I have? I didn't have any choice. I had to be there.

I lie down on a bench. I turn around. And I pretend I'm sleeping. And I spend the whole night on that train and went by all right. Nobody asked me anything. I caught a train to this place.

Sheila was with you?

No, no. Sheila wasn't. Marie by this farmer. I told you I take him out there. Sheila, how could I take her with me?

I had this train there. And on the way, when I was on the train, I was sitting by the window. And I could see there was sitting a woman about 4 or 5 places away on the other side. And there was this conductor, the man who checked the

Pass, visa, or the ticket.

The tickets, yeah. And I could see she was sitting not in the same line, the other line, about four or five seats away from me. And I could see when this conductor, when this man come to her, she talked to him, pointed at me.

And he said I don't care. Apparently she told him that she think I'm Jewish. And would happen to be antisemite, sure he would take advantage on it. But he made it like it's not of his business. And he left me alone, didn't do anything.

I came to Stravnitz. And there was not a living soul there. All those motels, hotels, those big villas, was a very beautiful resort place, they are all, the windows were covered with wooden boards. There was nothing there. There was not a living soul there.

And I didn't know what to do. I couldn't go back. Because on the train to go to this place, you had to go on a wagon.

And what was the purpose of going there?

To live there, to rent a room and come back and take Sheila and Marie and go there. You understand? They were during the summer.

Right.

Live there during the summer because in the fall, the war will be over.

Right.

Live there during the summer. But there was no way. It wasn't open. Everything was closed up. There was no resort place whatsoever.

And I couldn't go back the same day because those wagons will go only once a day in the morning. So I had to spend a night somewhere. I didn't know, a complete strange place.

I was walking and walking. And suddenly I decided there was this house. I'm going to go in there.

And I went in. And there was this couple and a little girl. And I came in. I don't remember what I told them exactly.

But I told them some excuse that I came here for some reason. Maybe I told them the truth I came to rent a room because I'm sick and I didn't know everything is blocked up. It is nothing there.

I told them I would like to spend the night so I can go back tomorrow. I told him I lived in Kielce. [INAUDIBLE]. Said sure. They treat me very good. They gave me to eat and their little girl.

And I played with the little girl. And even put her to sleep. And I said the prayer with her. They didn't have any idea that I am Jewish.

OK.

So they asked me to stay there with them for as long as I want. And I would have a beautiful place. But how could I? I told them-- anyway, I left. I left the following morning.

And I came back to Jedrzejow. And when I came back to Jedrzejow, when I went down the train, I saw this policeman who came to me for the Kennkarte, stays there right in the door. And I know by then he knows perfectly well I'm Jewish. Because he checked. There was no doubt.

And when I saw him, I didn't know what to do. To go there, he sees me, he will take me out on the rail and he will shot me.

So I'm going back. I couldn't go back to-- I was going slow and hoping he will disappear. And he disappeared.

And I begin to run fast. And I came in. And I spent there a whole night because when I came I was already couldn't go out.

Where did you spend the whole night?

There on the station with many other people. And I was always hiding in the back, going to the wall so he will not see me. And not only this, there was there Gestapo. And they put all the peoples on one side. And they were checking the identification. And they check identification and put it in this side.

So I wasn't afraid the identification. My identification was all right. But I was afraid the policeman stood there and he will see me, he knows me, then.

So I was trying to be in the back, in the back. And when I disappear to go to the toilet. And I begin to run. I came close. And as long as he checked the identification, he told me to go. And I went back to the other side. And I was always standing in the side so he will not see me.

And the following morning was 6 o'clock, whatever, we could go out. I went first to this house where I lived. Because I want to ask-- I don't remember what I did. I went there to this people-- where I lived there on the bakery, I went to the owner. I think I went there to get something. I don't remember.

And when she saw me, she said run away. You don't know what here happen. The Gestapo came by Monday and they searched the whole house. Every attic, every basement, and they even hit my husband because they said he knew that you are Jewish. But he didn't give them an idea.

Run away! Because any neighbor who will spot you won't let you go. Because there were all those [NON-ENGLISH] were antisemite. Run away very quick.

And I begin to run. And I went to this farm, to this farmer. Then I decided what to do.

Yeah. Also this. I have to go back.

When I was living on this Polish paper in this bakery, I had to be prepared always. In case I have to run, I have a place where to run. So I went one time to Kielce.

And it's a long story how I rent it. I won't go into it. But I rented a room also where was the ghetto from the Jews. There were no Jews there in Kielce. Everything was goyim, not openly.

Wait, so you rented a room where?

I rented a room in a building which was in the ghetto.

The Jewish ghetto?

In the Jewish ghetto.

At that time there was a ghetto in Kielce for Jews?

At that time, the Jews were taken out. There were no more Jews. But it used to be the Jews, before they were taken out, used to live in this ghetto.

I see.

You understand?

I see.

And I, because at that time, when I tell you the story, when I was living on Polish paper, there were no more Jews openly.

I see.

There were no--

There had been transports in all cities by that time.

Everything was finished. They were only in the forest. They were in the camps. They were in hidden places. Openly, there was no Jew in Poland.

So you rented a place?

What was I talking about?

You rented a room in Kielce.

Yeah, I rented a room in Kielce. And this room was also the water was running down the walls. But what could I do?

And I rented from the janitor. There was a big building. Where you go in, you go in here through the gate, and here was, like, a big, big yard, and all [INAUDIBLE], buildings all around, five, six stories building. And I rent a room on downstairs right next to this you go out in the street, on the first floor. And this saved me, too.

So when I came back from Szczawnica, and I couldn't do nothing, I said Marie, there's no choice. We have to go to Kielce. I want to do all I can not to go there. Because Kielce was famous for a very big antisemitic town. And I want to do all I can not to have to go there.

But there was no choice. I had to go there. And we all went to the train and went to Kielce and moved in there in this room.

And when was this?

This was about, I would say, in May, or in the same time. Everything happened very, very close by.

Right.

We came in there. And all this building were living former Jewish maids, janitors, all those very low class people were living there in the Jewish ghetto.

Because after the Jews were transported, Poles came.

People moved in, yeah. Well, a respectable Pole who had a home didn't move there. All those, you know, low class people, those prostitutes, those strip cleaners, all those very low population moved into these Jewish homes.

So I lived there.

Why did you rent there? Was that the only place you could get?

I couldn't rent nowhere else. There's no way I could find anything. You think I want to rent there?

I had to have someplace, if something happened, I had to run somewhere. I didn't have any choice. I had to rent what I could get.

Just so happened that a janitor there from this building was a very fine man. I later realized that he knew I'm Jewish. And I'm going to come to this, too.

And one time, like I said, there were a lot of Jewish maids.

You mean people who worked for Jews?

For Jewish, yes. And somehow it didn't take him long to understand that if I would be a Pole, I wouldn't live in this room.

Right.

One day, we were living there for just a few days, two Polish policemen, not those uniform, those un-uniform, [NON-ENGLISH] secret police.

Plain clothes.

Plain clothes men came into me, came into the room. And I was home there and Marie was home. Sheila was there.

And they told me that they have an anonym letter--

Anonymous letter?

--that I'm Jewish. And I began to make the same things. But it didn't help at that time. One policeman took me out to the hall. And the other one with Marie in the house.

And they begin to ask me--

To interrogate you?

--they asked me if I know Marie's parents, How tall Marie's mother is, because we told we are cousins, if I ever was in Marie's home, how many rooms in her home was. And they asked the same questions Marie about me, if she ever came to my family, if she know my mother, how many-- and this of course couldn't fit.

When they came in to compare, so when I said yes. Marie said no. How could we? We didn't know. When they compared those statements, they saw it's complete difference.

And one policeman said well, we have to take them to the Gestapo. And then why don't you all give me some cigarettes? Buy me some cigarettes. Buy me some cigarettes, this was a sign to me that I can deal with them.

And I said to him, look, I'm not Jewish. My mother was Jewish. I was raised in a Catholic home and I'm 100% Catholic. But the Germans don't recognize that. The Germans, you have to be from the third generation. And if you will give me, take me to Gestapo, you know they're going to shot me.

But I am a Catholic. Do you want that? I know your salary is not very high. I know you have to make a living. I have some money. Let me live and I will help you to live, too.

I took out everything what I had and gave it to him. And he said, all right. But run away.

Don't stay here. Because you won't remain long here. Just run away as quick as you can.

How can I run away? Where do I go? I have to find a place for Sheila.

The following day, morning, I went out. And Marie was home with Sheila. I begin to go from one children home to other one, those children home. There are several. It was a big place. It was a big town.

And whenever I come in a big children's home, there were the secretary, I begin to say I would like to see the sister, the elder sister. They called her the [POLISH], which means the manager on this.

She said for what reason? Well, I had to tell her. I can only make appointment with the sister if you will tell me what you want for her. And I told her I want to place my little girl.

And the home, he had no-- we don't have-- no way. No need to talk. So there's no way. I went about five, six places. No way I could even get to talk to anybody.

Then finally I came into a place which was a small place. They didn't have any of those secretaries. And I came in and I say I would like to speak to the elder sister.

And she came in to me. And I begin to talk to her. I told her a story that my husband was in the war. And he is in the German-- he is a war prisoner in Germany. And I have family in Krakow.

And I'm here by myself with my little girl. And I don't have any money. I want to work to make a living.

But in order to do this, I have to have a place for my little girl. And I want to go to Krakow to place my little girl by my relatives. But I cannot take it with her because I don't know where I will have to the big family. I want first to find out which family will accept, then I will come back to have my daughter and take her there.

I said I want to leave her here only the most for a week, the most. And I will come back and take her, and take her with me.

Where was this at?

This was in Kielce.

Yeah.

And she told me, and this was true. She said, you know, I cannot take in a child without permission from the Gestapo. You know that. And I was crying very bitterly for my bad luck, if my husband wouldn't be in the German prison, I wouldn't have to go this through. I would have our home and I wouldn't have to work.

And she said to me we're taking your little girl in without permission. I'm risking my life. She said but you-- I don't know how to say it in English-- your tears took me so over, I cannot tell you no. I'm not strong enough to tell you no.

But be sure to come back in eight days. I said sure. That's no problem. There's nothing to worry about. And I left there.

And I left there. And I went out the following day and I bought a couple of dresses. And I took Sheila there to this place.

And when I came back, this took about two, three days before I find a place. The first day when I came back home without any result and I came in the house, there was nobody there. Marie wasn't there. Sheila wasn't there.

And I found out that they made a oblava, it mean, they saw near the section. And they took girls to send to Germany to work. This is what they did. They took Polish girls to send to Germany to work, unless somebody was married or had a baby or whatever.

Since Marie was with that baby, with Sheila, they couldn't send away Marie. Marie told it's not her girl. But her mother is not here. They took her to the police and they kept her there until I will come back.

So when I realized that, I went to the police. What choice did I have? I went to the police.

And I came in. I told them my name. And they gave me back Sheila. And they took Marie and sent her away to Germany.

And that was the end?

For the first-- I would say for the first half a year, I had letters from her. Because in the place where I was, in the hidden place, because she knew where I'm going to go, I told her this. If I cannot go to my parents' place, I will be here. And she sent me letters.

And I asked her. I wrote her letters, too. And of course, I didn't give my address, I gave other address. But I asked her if she needs some help. And she said, no, I don't need any financial help. I only need your letters.

The letters what I sent her was a proof to anybody that she had a Polish address. They understand that she is Polish. But

I don't know if she died because-- bombard was a lot of Germans died, when they put the bombs down. Or she died because she was discovered, I don't know.

But after a few months, the letters stopped. And after liberation, I went there to her town. And I found out she didn't return. I'm sure she died there.

So the following day, they took Marie away and they sent her away to Germany. And I remained with Sheila. And the following morning, I took Sheila to this place and I left her there. And I went back home.

And I was told that the same night should be some kind of oblava, some kind of game, some kind looking for girls. And since I didn't had nobody with me, I was afraid that they're going to take me. I will tell them I have a child there?

Well, she's in the children home. She doesn't need you, you understand? So I was afraid to spend a night there in this home.

So I went to this place where there were those wagons, where they took people to Chmielnik. And from Chmielnik, I would go by train to Jedrzejow, to this hidden place. And I spent a night there. And this was a big home with several wagons, with all were spending a night there. And I spent a night there.

And apparently the wagon where I was lying on, the owner apparently, I don't know, he had a suspicious that I'm Jewish. Apparently, I looked terrible, you know, worn out. And in the morning, when we were ready to leave, he said no, we're not leaving. I'm taking you to the Gestapo.

I said what? You're doing what? You crazy? You lost your mind?

He said no. He said to me those words, if you are not Jewish, a hair will not taken from your head. If you are Jewish, I want them to kill you. What could I do? Run away?

There was no way. I had to go with him. There was no other choice. I had a Kennkarte.

He took me to Gestapo. He came in in the Gestapo. And he told them the story, what happened.

And the Gestapo, they asked him, do you know this woman, she's Jewish? He said, no, I don't know her from home. But I have a feeling. I think. I'm almost sure she's Jewish.

And when he said this, it was early in the morning. The other Gestapo came in even in his shirt. He wasn't dressed in uniform, came in from the other door. In the same room where I was, and the Pole the Gestapo.

And this Gestapo was sitting by the desk asked the other Gestapo, told him what happened. And he said to him, what do you think, Hans or whatever? Does this woman look Jewish? Do you think she's Jewish?

And he looked at me straight in my eyes. I didn't look at him. Because I pretend I don't know what he's talking-- I shouldn't know he told him to look at me. But I could see he looked at me.

And he said about a long time. And he said no, that's not a Jewish woman. That's a Polish woman. No, she's not Jewish.

And when he said this, he went to this Pole. And he gave him one side and the other side. And he said, you Polish swine. I mean, you Polish pig. And the Pole left.

Despite this, they wouldn't let me go. They took me to jail. They took away my identification card. And they put me to jail.

Why?

Because they had to check. They wanted to check. Because he said I'm not I'm not Polish. I'm not Jewish doesn't mean that they couldn't be-- his opinion could be I'm not Jewish. But I could be. They had to check my identification card.

They put me to jail. And I came into jail there were about seven, eight other women in this room. And when I came in and they asked me-- most of them were prostitutes. It's very low, very low class woman.

They asked me why I'm there. I told them-- I was afraid to tell them that I was a Jew. I told them that they caught me by stealing something and they put me to jail.

Well, just so happened that this policeman who took me to jail spoke with the warden from the jail. And he told him why I'm here. And the warden told this woman, this woman why I'm here. Now did they had any doubt that I'm Jewish?

Right. I understand.

They begin to torture me, not physical. They told me that there was there a Jewish woman like me before. And she said the same thing, that she is not Jewish. And they shipped pieces skin from her. They stripped the skin from her to say that she is Jewish. But she wouldn't say.

And they took her out. They took her out in a dying condition and killed her and shot her. And they told me they had mercy on me. Why should you suffer that much? Tell them you're Jewish and they will kill you. You will not suffer.

And I said I am not Jewish. And I can never admit something I am not. And when they say this prayer song at night, I kneel down, and I sang with them the prayers and good night. And when they get up, and they sing the prayer night and the molitva with their hands like this, and I sign with them, and I sat with them, everything.

But despite this, they were sure that I am Jewish. And they wouldn't let me sleep. They had also not a bed, like benches.

They wouldn't let me sleep with them. I had to sleep on the floor. They wouldn't touch a Jew, a dirty Jew. I had to sleep on the floor. They wouldn't let me sleep there.

Anyway, the following morning, I had with me a \$20 bill. And I went into the toilet. And I was afraid when the Gestapo would come in and search me, they would find a \$20 bill. This will be a moral ground that I am Jewish. So I went into the toilet and I almost dropped it in the bowl, in the toilet.

But then I said if for any chance I will survive, I will be lost without a penny. So I took my shoe and pushed away the sole a little bit and push it in between the sole. And I saved the \$20.

The following day the door opened and a Gestapo came in. Sofia Boychick, come with me. I was sure that he takes me out behind the wall and going to shot me. I didn't have no doubt.

But he didn't. He began to walk to me. [INAUDIBLE] with Kielce. Walk, walked, then when he came to the section where I live, I realized that he's going with me to my room. I didn't know what he want. I didn't know. I didn't had any idea whatsoever.

He came in to the room with me.

But didn't they tell you? Hadn't that woman told you not to go back to your room?

With this man? I didn't go--

Never mind. Never mind. I'm getting it confused. That's all right. Go on.

I didn't go there voluntarily.

Yeah, right. He came in. I unlocked the door. He came in to me.

And he looked. He searched the closet, everything he searched. Then he sat down. And he told to me, you're a very attractive woman. And I would like to become your friend.

I said wonderful. He talked to me, like, broken Polish. And I behaved like I don't know one word English. But he told--