

My name is Fran Gutterman. Today is Thursday, August 21, 1980. I am once again at the home of my mother, Mrs. Dora Gutterman in Norfolk, Virginia. And we are continuing to tape Mrs. Gutterman's experiences during the Holocaust.

Before we continue with where you left off, I wanted to ask you if there was anything before taping the session right now, you listened over to the four hours of taping that you had done last January. And having listened to them, I wanted to ask you if there was anything that you would now like to add or to clarify regarding what you said during our first session.

Yes, I would like to clarify one fact. You asked me if I had any friends. This was on page 1 I think. You asked me--

In side one, you mean. Side one. you asked me then how was the condition between Jews and Poles, then if I had any Polish friends. And I said, no. But when I think back, I remember I had one Polish girl, a good friend. We were in the school from almost from the first grade. And we in a way need each other, because at that time the school was open on Saturday.

Wait, wait, wait a second now. You had mentioned that-- So when I asked you if you had any friends that were Poles, you at the time had said, no. But now you remember about one girl, a Polish girl that you had become very good friends with?

Yes, I do. And in the beginning, we helped each other.

How did you meet her?

In school. We were in the same class. And I needed her for the reason the schools were closed on Saturday, and the Jewish children, of course, didn't go on Saturday. And also, this was a very small school with maybe four or five teachers. And we had two terms during the day. The first term was I think from 8:00 to 1:00, and then it was from 1:00 to 6:00. And I was in the class from 1:00 to 6:00. And in the winter, the Friday, the days are very short. I had to be home a half an hour before lighting the candles.

And sometimes on those short days, I have to leave an hour or two before school was finished. And this girl helped me with giving me what the teachers gave for homework, for the time what I missed Friday evening and also for Saturday. I went to her every Saturday night, and she gave me all the homework what was given at that time. And she needed me, because she was slow in arithmetic, and maybe some other subjects. And I helped her very much in that.

So in the beginning, we helped each other. But then we began to know each other better, we became very close friends. And it happens, not often, but sometimes where I spent the night over her home, and she spent the night on my home. This was literally her room, because she came from a farm. Her parents live in a very small village.

And once in a while, when we were late in our walk, sometimes she spent the night over my home. And I spent the night over at her home. She was living with her grandparents, because our parents were living in a small farm and she was staying with her grandparents.

So you all became good friends?

So, we became very good friends because we together graduated from school, and we became very close friends. And we graduated from school in 1928. And then, of course, she left her home to her parents. And we didn't see each other until this was in 1940. The war broke out in 1939, September the 1st. And this was sometimes the beginning of 1940. It happened to be on the street. And she was walking about a block away. And I thought this is Selena.

Her name was Selena, the way she walked, and her size. I thought it's Selena. And I began to call Selena, Selena! And when she heard her name, she turned around her head. And I began to run to her because I thought I was friends we would embrace each other, and tell them how we are doing and everything. But it didn't happen like this. Because when

she saw me she told me, [NON-ENGLISH] which in English means-- it's hard to say an English. But I will try to find the word.

Like, get lost. It means get lost, you dirty Jewess. And she just shows, when she grew older how she was.

So what happened when she said that? You just walked away? I just stood there. I couldn't believe it. She said this, and she began to walk. She walked past on her way. And I just stood there for a few minutes. I couldn't believe I heard this. Because I knew her. She was a very lovely and very gentle girl. And this just shows how much this poison she got, she got in her during those years when she was not in school.

And this, when I came home, it was just to me such a slap in my face that it was just hard for me to accept it, despite the fact knowing how the Poles hate the Jews, how antisemitism is big. But knowing how I was with her, it was very hard for me to accept the fact that she changed like that.

And when I came home, I told my mother the story and I began to cry. Because I said to her, mom, you don't know how serious the situation is. If the girl could change like that we are in very, very much trouble. Because I can see how terrible the situation is. This is what I wanted to mention, put in about that girl.

What did your mother say to you when you said that?

My mother told me not to pay attention, not to be upset.

The typical things that mothers say.

Yeah, not to be upset. Everything, that we will be all right, and that and that.

OK.

OK. Before we continue then, is there anything else that you would like to add?

Well, if I want to tell you what happened every day during five years, I would have to sit here for several months. I just want to tell you the main important things, because the small everyday things is impossible to say everything. But I don't think I have anything to add as far as very important.

OK. All right, well so, let's see. We left off as you were in Kielce at the time that the-- just to review for a little bit. That the farmer had turned you in. This was in around May or June of 1943.

It was about the end of May or the beginning of June.

Right. The farmer had turned you in suspecting for being--

It wasn't a farmer. It was a man who had a wagon. And he made a living from it. It was several people, several Poles. They had a wagon with a horse. And they were going back and forth from Kielce to [NON-ENGLISH], back and forth and taking people back and forth.

OK. So was that man who was supposed to take you, and he turned you in instead.

Yeah.

And we left off last time, the police, German Gestapo had come to take you out. And you thought that he was--

Going to shot me.

Going to shoot you, but instead he took you back to your apartment. To my room, yes. And when we came in, he

searched all the closets. I don't know what he was looking for, if I have some guns or whatever. He searched everything to make sure nothing is there. And then he sat down, and he began to tell me that he likes me. He would like to become my friend. And I said, sure. I would love this very much too. You're very nice young man too. And I like you very much too.

He was in the beginning, he was speaking in German, but I pretend I don't understand. Because the German knew the Jewish people understand Jewish. I would like to add also that I really don't know what happened then. If he would call, if he called [NON-ENGLISH], then as far as this, I was a--

You mean if he called [NON-ENGLISH] to check out your papers.

Yeah, and checked about me, then I was a kosher Catholic.

Because you were a registered in [NON-ENGLISH].

Because I was there registered legal. But if he called Krakow, then he'd know I was Jewish. Because the papers were complete false. And I understood that he wanted to make me his mistress. So I don't know if he knew I am a Catholic, and he anyway want me as a mistress, or he know I'm Jewish. And he want to save my life in order to become his mistress.

So he sit down and I told him that I like him very much too. And I would like to get to know him closer too. So I was living then on the first floor, not far from the gate where you go out to the front of the street. And I had every window in that building had shutters for the night. When it gets dark, I always close the shutters. But during the day, I always had them open. So he pointed out to me to go out and close the shutters.

I told him I can't do that now, because I've been living here for quite a while. And I'm good friends with the tenants and I'm a respectable woman here, and I can't do that because they will see what I'm doing. I say at night, when it gets dark. I do close every night the shutters. Why don't you come then? And the shutters will be closed, and nobody will suspect anything.

And he said, you're right. I'm going to come when it gets dark. And I will bring some wine. I will bring some whiskey. And I will bring some food. And you will have a good time. I said, wonderful. I can't wait a minute to see you here again. And he left.

As soon as he left, I waited for about 10, 15 minutes to make sure he was away. And I closed up the room, and I went back to this garage where those wagons were. And I went to [NON-ENGLISH]. I came to [NON-ENGLISH], and I went into this hidden place. And I told them that I would like to stay there.

Now, wait-- I don't really remember. Have you already told us about how you got hold of this hidden place?

I told you about how I found out, how Rubinek wrote me a letter to check where his brother is.

Yes.

Because the night when they took out the Jews the second time, the older one with other Jews happened to go to the hidden place. The younger one-- and the older's names was Yisroel, The younger's one was I think Benjamin. I don't remember exactly. So Yisroel was in the hidden place with two brothers of [PERSONAL NAME]. One man, his name was Mawel. And one name was Goodman. But the younger Rubinek, Benjamin, decided to spend the night in the barrack at home.

And at that night, that happened they took out the Jews. And they took him to Skarzysko. I remember Skarzysko was in Poland, was an ammunition factory, where the Germans made ammunition for them. And they took him there. And he wrote me a letter. I told the whole story. I'm sure you will find it out. And this woman came, and I checked and I wrote him he wouldn't send me a letter at all. But he knew his brother had two places. He was prepared two hidden places.

And not being sure in each one he went, he couldn't risk to go just for maybe he's there, maybe he's there. He had to be positive way, so he can go in. So I checked. And then both places told me that he's not there. But the way I suspect, the way this man in this hidden place who was not far from the place where I was living in this bakery, the way he talked, the way he behaved, I had a feeling that they are there. And I wrote him that. That I have a feeling, despite the fact they both said not there. I have a feeling that he is, by Garlick. His name was Garlick.

But of course, I didn't know if he came, or when he left, if he wasn't shot on the way. Because a lot of people started to kill us Jews, and they were shot on the way. So I didn't have no way knowing where he is if he came. But one time, one occasion, a few weeks later, I was going. It was like an alley.

Where?

In Jdrzejow. Wait a minute. I will go back to. When I came in to ask for him, this man, Garlick was suspicious that somebody discovered that are there, and I'm a really Polish woman, and they are all in danger. I just came to check out. And he told him the story. And they were all very shaky. And they were talking over there about just what to do, where to go. Because [NON-ENGLISH] was a really Polish woman, and something's going to happen. The Gestapo was going to come and going to take him out.

But on one occasion, I went for some reason to Liskow, to the farmer. I don't remember what, and when I was going back home, it was the way between this Liskow and I had to go by his home, this was to go to my home. And he saw me then. And he went down to the hidden place, and he told the people this Polish woman went just back from my home. And I saw, and Rubinek knew where I lived. And he asked him, where did she went in? And he said, there, onto the bakery.

He said, is she a short woman? Yes. He said, this is Wojcik. She's not a Polish, she's a Jewish woman. When you see her, and he had a son whose name was-- I don't remember. And tell your son--

[AUDIO OUT]

I remember now Garlick's son's name was Jurek. So Rubinek told him, tell you what. When he will see next time Mrs. Wojcik, he told him, don't be afraid. She is Jewish. She lives on Polish papers. I know her very well. Tell Jurek to call her, and tell her want to talk to her. And then she will come to you, and I to talk to her, too.

So one time I was walking in a small alley. And I heard somebody calls Mrs. Wojcik, Pani Wojcik. And I turned around. And I saw this boy. Because when I came to find out if they're there, the was there too, this boy. And he came to me, he said, Pani Wojcik, my father would like to speak to you. Come anytime to your convenience. I said, I'll be there this afternoon. And I came by, and he called Rubinek.

Was Rubinek the guy that you knew there?

Yeah.

But he wasn't there yet?

Yeah. No. Wait a minute. There were two brothers.

Yeah, but was Rubinek the one that was in the house that-- I remember at the very beginning of the story, there was a Rubinek.

Yeah, this was. Yeah, he was there in the hidden place.

He was.

And the younger one is the one who was in Skarzysko and wanted to contact to.

OK.

He was the one who came to our home. So yeah, it was my husband, he was the one. And he called Rubinek. I didn't go there at that time to their hidden place. He called him out to the room. And he spoke to him about two hours. And at that time, he told me that Chaim was shot there. That day, he told me somebody who ran away, somehow survived. I think he told me that he dreamed about or somebody told him. I don't remember, that when that day when I came by, when I met this policeman, the Gestapo on the street, that day they took out the second time Slomniki.

They took out all the small towns the second time, cleaned out complete all together-- [NON-ENGLISH] Slomniki and other towns, all the towns where the Jews happened to come back, and formed a community, they cleaned them out a second time.

And he told me, Rubinek told me that he knows that at that day, when they took out the second time the Jews, Paula, my brother's wife, decided to run. And she ran. It was a decision for the second. And nobody doesn't know if the right side is good or the left side are good. She decided to run away. And she was shot while running.

Chaim decided to hide with several other Jews, some kind of hiding place there, and they were caught. And they taken me out and shot by the Germans.

Well, you told me the story of your other brother's death. Who was that? That wasn't Chaim's death? That was Ephraim Menasha's death?

That was Menasha. Who did you tell me he was? Did you tell me it was Chaim?

No, no. I told you Menasha, when I went to see when my parents are.

Yeah.

This was Menasha.

Chaim was already dead then, but I didn't know about that. You understand? Rubinek told me.

He was in Slomniki?

He was in Slomniki. I didn't know--

That all happened that day that you went into Slomniki too, right?

That's right. That's right. They shot there a lot of Jews at that day.

Do you know was your brother found that day in hiding, or did it happen later?

He told me that it was the same day, that they found him the very same day. Apparently, they didn't had a good hiding place, whatever. I don't know. But this is what he told me. And this way, I found out that Rubinek came back, you understand? That he is there, because he told me then, because you wrote him the letter and told him that you have a suspicious he's here. He understood you're right. And because this was a better place anyway, a better hide-out, a bigger hiding place.

Wasn't he there with you in the room?

Who?

Rubinek. Not the younger, the older one. Not the younger one.

The younger one hadn't arrived yet?

Yeah, he was there. But he was in the hidden place.

Well, I thought you came to the hidden place.

I came to the hidden place. When I walked there the first time, when I ran away from the bakery, I went to the hidden place to ask him to give me a place for my baby. But this was after Rubinek came back. And when they finally got together and realized, Rubinek told them that I'm not a Polish woman. I told him I'm a Jewish woman living on Polish papers.

I understand that.

But the meeting you were at now, when you were talking, were both Rubineks there at that meeting?

When I came, when his son told me to come down?

Yeah.

No, because I didn't went down to the hidden place.

And Rubinek come up to the room.

Both Rubineks?

No, the one, only the older one. Because I know better the older one, because the older one used to come to us. And I knew him better.

OK, that's what I was trying to understand.

Yeah, no this was the older one.

This way I found out that because despite the fact how much I suspected they're there, I couldn't be 100% sure. And I couldn't go there if I wasn't 100% sure. But because this, I knew that they are there and I knew there. And when I came back from Chmielnik, I went there to them.

From Kielce, you mean?

From Kielce, yes. Well, I went from Kielce to Chmielnik. From Chmielnik, I came with a train, you understand?

Oh, I see what you mean. Wait one, second. OK, go on.

I told him then that I would like to stay there for a few days. I want to write a letter to my parents. I want to go to be together with my parents. But I cannot go there. I know what village they are. And I know the name of the farmer. But I don't know where the farmer lives. I don't remember. And to go there, and also other thing, I couldn't-- I had to go the whole village through look for this house. And I could make a mistake. And I can't take this chance.

So I went write a letter to my parents. Tell them for this man, for this farmer to come to me. And I will go together with the farmer at night when it's dark, you're going to go to there. And I will come to their hiding place. And I wrote them a letter like this. And a few days later, I got an answer from them. They said, if I don't have a place to be, they will send the farm immediately. But if I have a place to be, They would be more secure because if I will come there, the farmer will know. There's nobody outside who knows about that. You understand?

And for this reason, it sometimes happen he will not be happy, he will kill us all. But when he knows somebody in outside knows about him, he will be more careful, and they will be more secure, if I do have a place to be. But if I don't, they will send him immediately. So I told them, yes. And they told me you can stay here. And I told them, yes. What can you expect? We were hidden then in a chimney. What can you expect? It was very difficult. It was very, very hard.

How many people were there?

Six.

Not counting you?

No, with me. There were five men, and I was the only one woman. And I said, I have a very good place. It's a very nice place. It's very comfortable. And I'm going to stay here. And this way I remained here for that. Did you have to pay the man for staying there?

Sure, I had to pay. For them was a rescue, for them it was the biggest help, because most of those people had given people's clothes, different things, different valuable things. And they give me a letter, and addresses where to go to pick up stuff for them. And I also went. I know them that the millner in Chmielnik, I went out for them. And then I went--

But wait a second now. Even though you were in hiding, you still had false papers, so that you did go out once in a while?

Once a month, not once in a while. Every month, I went out. I was out there for two days. And every time when I came out, when I went out, I risked my life because in Jedrzejow everybody--

So this was in June of 1943? This was I came to this hidden place I would say about the middle or the end of June of 1943. And I was there until the 15th of January 1945. I was liberated from the Russian army.

So you were there for a year and a half?

For 18 months, yes. And during that time, what's the name of the town?

Jedrzejow.

Jedrzejow, you were in Jedrzejow. You would go out once a month for two or three days to run errands.

Yeah, the first six months I had several occasions where I came in for them to pick up goods. It was one time I came in the morning to a man. And they gave me a letters. And I gave him a letter. This was [NON-ENGLISH]. I gave him a letter and he told me, if you will not get out from here, you stinking Jew, you're going to have right away the Gestapo here.

Because no matter how much I didn't look like a Jew, if I brought a letter from a Jew--

What was a letter for?

For clothes, for suits.

So he had clothes there. And--

He sent--

[CROSS TALK] had clothes there?

Yeah. I brought back the clothes. And Garlick sold it, and this way they paid him. So I helped them to pay. You understand?

But this time he told you to get out.

Many times I risked my life. I didn't have any choice. Because in order to stay there, the men had to be paid. And this is the only way they could get their money. So what could I do?

Well, what did they do up until then?

I don't know. Maybe they had some money. I don't know. I never asked them. Anyway, they went in into this hidden place. It was the end of February. It was only in March, April, and May, so it was only two or three months.

All of them survived the hidden place, didn't they?

No, one died. This older Rubinek died about a month before the liberation.

How did he die?

A natural death. He couldn't take the circumstances.

How old was he?

He was about at that time I don't know, 26, 27 years old.

He died at 27 years old?

He was a young man.

But you mean he got an illness or something?

I don't know what it was. He died. You couldn't get a doctor. I think he had some lung problem. His lungs were not in very good condition.

Was this the one who made those--

Both made those girdles. But this is the older one. This is the older one who died.

The one that was engaged to--

Yes, yes. Yes, he died and we buried him there in the-- there was a big empty room. We buried him there.

And he told you about your brother Chaim's death?

Yes, he told me about his death.

And what was your reaction?

What was my reaction? What was my reaction? I began to cry what was my reaction.

Did you up until that point believe that everyone else was alive?

I knew Menasha wasn't alive.

But I knew you knew that Menasha wasn't.

I didn't know what to believe. I was hoping and praying that they are alive.

You knew that Uncle Pinchas was-- did you know that he was in Auschwitz at the time?

I knew he was in Auschwitz, yes. Because I had sent him a letter. Anyway, let me continue, this what happened during the time when I was in the hidden place. Like I said, I went out every month. I had there a woman. Her name was Balachowska. Who lived across the street from Goldberg Paula's parents. At that time I didn't know her. But the man who was together with me in the hidden place, Mawel, was very good friends with that Balachowska.

Her brother was taking care of Mawel's wife. He took her to Warsaw and made her Polish paper.

Who's brother?

Balachowska's brother. I think he was some kind dentist. He was a very highly educated man, very intelligent man. And they were very good friends. And now his wife looked like a Polish woman too. And he made a-- the Mawel also had a little girl the same age was Sheila.

So where was the wife and the child then during the war?

Well, I'm trying to tell you. This Balachowska's brother took care of her. He made her Polish papers. And he went with her to Warsaw, and he found for her apartment, and she lived there as a Polish woman with her little girl. And the Balachowska with Mawel were very close friends, very good friends. And one time, Mawel gave me a letter to her about things. And this way, I got to know her.

And she wasn't a woman. She was an angel. Because

She was Polish, German?

She was Polish. Whenever I went out, there were very few women like this in the whole Poland. Whenever I went out once a month, I usually went out when it got dark. And I went to her. As soon as I came to her, she made for me, of course, I wasn't clean, because we never had any water. I want to tell you how much water we had. If it was-- no, just let me tell you the condition of the hidden place.

Why don't you finish the story first about what it was she'd go.

When I came out once a month, I went to her. And I wasn't clean, because we didn't never washed up. Never had even water to make wet at the tip of our fingers. So she took me in the other room. She got a big container, filled it up with water, and said take a bath. Wash up yourself. She gave me her nightgown. She put on a table, a full of container of butter and bread and milk. I don't want to give you any meat because it's not good for you. You will not digest meat.

Meat, cheese meat whatever you can say, she say, eat. Eat as much as you can. You eat only once a month. I know you don't eat there too much. Then she told me to sleep with her in bed, because she didn't have any other place. I can't do that. Because in spite of the fact I washed myself and I had a clean shirt, my hair was not clean. I had lice in my hair, and I did. She said, I don't care. You're going to sleep with me.

And she wouldn't let me go. I had to sleep with her. And when I left the following morning to the train, she gave me again breakfast and whatever money for the road. She made me a sandwich. And I left to Chmielnik. In Chmielnik, I stopped by that mill man. And I gave him whatever I had, \$5 or \$10, and I made those cards, what I told you. And I took some money with me. And I finished-- and no wait a minute. No, I didn't do like that.

When I left for Chmielnik, I left to Kielce to see Sheila once a month. This was for six months. After six months, I will tell you why I didn't go anymore. I went to Sheila. I was with her a few hours. And every time when I came, she cried.

And she told me like this. First, she spoke only Polish. She said, mamusiu.

How old was Sheila at the time?

She was then how old? It was 1943, three years old. She said, mamusiu, mommy, I love you, and I want to be with you. Is this much to ask? I said, no. She said, well, I'm here. Why don't you stay with me? I said, I can't. I have to go make some money and work, and be able to support myself, and to pay here for you for being here in the home.

She said, OK, if you cannot stay here, then take me with you. I want to be with you. What could I tell her?

Well, the thing I don't understand is that you had told when you left Sheila there to begin with, you told the woman that you'd be back soon.

Yes.

So how did you convince her to keep her there?

Well, I came back. And I told her that my family-- I told her then this is my husband's family. My husband's family is very mean. They don't want to accept Sheila. They don't want her. And I was crying very hard. And I take this little girl, we walk on--

[AUDIO OUT]

How many children did you say were in the children's home?

There were about 100, 125 children. It was a very small place. So you would-- so you visited Sheila--

Once a month. And--

[AUDIO OUT]

OK, so when Sheila told you, take me with you, and you just--

I explained that it's impossible that her father isn't a Germany war prisoner, and I have to work to make some money to support myself.

Did she think she was Polish or German?

Oh, yeah. She knows she's a Polish girl. She didn't have any idea about Judaism. Because we were prepared for it. Somehow when she was born, my father, my mother, my husband said not to speak to this child Yiddish, to talk to her Polish. And to say not to mention anything about Zhyd because maybe in the future she shouldn't know that.

Sheila was born in 1940.

Yes.

And the war broke out like five months later.

The war started in 1939.

'39, sorry. So it like six months earlier.

Yeah. Yeah, so I tell her that it's impossible. I have to go. I have to go. But I will visit her once a month. And I will bring you something. And then her father will come back. We will be again together. And from there I went to back to

Chmielnik, to stop by this millner to get some money from him, and to make sure I-- I didn't bring money every month. Whenever. I was out, I bought money, and make sure I those tickets from my parents. But the millner, I spent again a night.

And who was this man?

In Chmielnik, whom I gave American money, and he gave me Polish zloty. And but then I spent again a night. And the following morning, I left. I went to the train from Chmielnik to Jedrzejow. And usually, I came back it was about dark, and I went in into the hidden place. This was going on like for about six months.

No one ever saw you go in and out of the house?

I always went in-- I forgot about it, what you remind me. One time when I came out from Garlick, going out, and this house was like going, it was a highway. It was like out of town, because between the house I lived and the bakery, there was a little bridge. And on this side of the bridge was like all out of town. It was like a highway, a wide way. And this house was like to go down from the highway. So when I came out from the house, I couldn't see who was on the highway.

So when I came up and it was already dark, when I came out up to the highway, there was a girl walking who lived in the same house where I lived in the bakery. They were from Poznan, the biggest anti-Semites. And I was always when I brought some things back from the flour mill, when Marie was still home, and I didn't need it. I sold it to her. I told her I was in Warsaw. And I brought it from Warsaw, and I sold it to her. To pretend for her that I'm really dealing, I'm really working for making a living.

She had about three or four daughters. Her oldest daughter was there going on that highway, and I came to her like face to face. She looked at me. And I looked at her. And I kept on going. And she kept on going. After I was liberated, this lady who owned the house, the wife of this pharmacist told me that she happened to be in their home. When she came home and she said to her mother that she saw the Wojcik and she said, what did you do? Did you take her to the Gestapo? She said, no, I let us go. When discovers her mother, her mother wanted to kill her.

Why didn't you took her? She knows she's a Jew. Why didn't you took her to Gestapo? And this woman told me then, you risked your life so badly. And this her mother would be there, you would be dead, because there's no way she would let you go. You look worse.

Well, if she would have tried to turn you in, couldn't you have just-- I mean it was a woman against a woman. What were you going to do? You could just fight to get away from her?

How can I fight? If I fight to get away from her, she puts out a scream. Other Poles would come out. You think I could escape? No way I could escape. But running was not easy. Other towns where the Gestapo didn't know me, it wasn't bad. I could go like I wasn't kept in the Gestapo. And I escape them. But here, the Gestapo looked after me, you understand? If he would find me there, it would be no way I could escape. Anyway, I just wanted to mention this.

When did that happen about?

This happened about several months after I was in the hidden place. I don't remember exactly. But it happened maybe three, four, or five months after I went there. This happened on one occasion, on time.

OK. Let's just review a little bit, OK, before you continue. That were in hiding with five other men.

Yes.

Could you tell me the names of these men.

There was two men, [NON-ENGLISH] in Melbourne, in Australia.

What were their names?

I don't know if I remember the names. The oldest man's name was I don't remember. The younger I don't remember.

Well, there were two brothers that were named Kloske.

Yeah, that was in Jedrzejow. There were two brothers Rubinek, Yisroel who died, and I think his name was Benjamin, who lives also in Melbourne. There was this man, a Goodman, who lives now in Israel, and Mawel, who got his wife remained and his little girl. And he got together with her, and they live now in Israel, too.

So there were actually six men and you so there were seven?

No there were--

Two Kloskes.

There are six men and me one, yeah.

That's seven. Seven altogether.

Yes.

OK.

And the situation in where we were hidden was, this was like in a chimney. It was built, the chimney was built was small above the roof. And was getting wider and wider to the bottom. It was built to the bottom. And to the bottom was a place, I would say like that much. I would say 4 or 5 foot by 4 or 5 foot. And there were seven peoples.

And then there was also like a ceiling. There was a ceiling. There was a floor. And on the ceiling, there were sleeping about four men upstairs, and here on the floor, we had a bench and both sides of the walls. And we had put on this bench a brick, on this bench a brick. And we took together those wooden boards where we slept on, and make it like a bench. And we put it on the bricks. And we sit on those benches against the wall. And here was like a table.

We put all one board on the other one. You understand? And there we were spending during the day. And at night, we put off the light. And I slept in one corner. And two men in the other corner, and above that was the four men.

Was it difficult being in such close quarters with six other men?

It was very difficult. Sure, it was difficult.

Did you wish there had been another woman there in hiding or anything?

Yeah, I would feel more relaxed. But it wasn't any problem. Because in a situation like this--

Well, I didn't mean--

No, no, no, no, no. Wait a minute.

I just meant for companionship.

Yeah, well the men needed me, you understand, very much. Without me, I will tell you later. They helped me with Sheila. Because I will tell you later What happened. And without me, they couldn't survive because the men wouldn't keep them without money. He couldn't keep them. The reason why the man kept them is because the man was a very

sick man. He had some kind of lung disease. He had to eat very good, very rich food. But he couldn't work. He needed a lot of money.

So he took him those shoes. And they gave him money. And he had all the money he needed to get food. At the same time, he didn't have to work. Understand? So he always, he came down to us maybe once a month, depends on the situation. If the political situation was good, he came down more often.

Was he sympathetic at all? Could you tell that you didn't have to be afraid, or you really didn't--

Well, no. No. He wasn't sympathetic. Our good luck was that he couldn't kill. He couldn't see blood. If he could kill, we would be killed a long time ago. His wife was a murderess. And she caught a chicken, and she took the chicken, turned around the head, and this way she killed the chicken.

And he told us many times if I would listen to my wife, you would be dead a long time ago. He told us very openly. Your good luck is that I cannot. I'm not a murderer. I cannot stand blood, and I cannot kill you. If I could kill you, you would be dead a long time ago.

He also needed your money.

But then he somehow his wife began to go to Warsaw and get money. It was very dangerous.

So there were Poles that you were hidden by?

Yeah. They were Poles.

And OK, so what did you do about food, and clothing, and all that?

He gave brought me clothing. I had a dress, which when I was liberated, I didn't know each one is the old-- was one patch and the other one.

But when I went out, I had a put boots, what Marie left me. And I had-- I don't remember maybe this lady gave me there. I don't know. A [? pelt ?] with a short coat, which was made like a brown suede, with fur trimmed around. And I had a skirt.

And when I went out once a month, I put on this outfit. And I had a lot of powder, because I was very pale, being on the sun, not being daylight, I was very pale and very thin. And I put on a lot of powder, and rouge and makeup to look all right. But when I came back, I put on this dress.

How old were you at this time?

This was in 1943. I was born in 1914. I was--

29.

29 years old, yes. And this way was, yeah, the man gave us every day he gave us every evening, he opened there was here was the chimney, and here was a room like a hall. And here was another big room where nobody used. And he lived here. He had here this place.

So here, he had put a big hole down in the ground. And then you went underneath. And you came up to the chimney. And here was covered with a wooden cover. And he put up those boards, and nobody think there was anything there. So once a day when it got dark, he opened that cover. He had there a bucket everybody went out, one went out then the other one, single men, single by we used as a toilet.

And he gave us there water.

So you had could only go to the bathroom once a day?

Once a day.

And what if you had to go before then?

That was too bad. You had to wait.

You can't--

You could hold it in?

Well we had there in this place where we went down, there was a little pot. But we used this only in extreme emergency. Because if not, it would run over, and we couldn't let it happen. And he gave us a bucket of water. If the situation was good he gave us a little bit more, he gave us maybe 3/4 of the bucket. If the situation was bad, he gave us a half bucket of water.

He gave us once a month, he gave us a big loaf of bread, and a big bag of oatmeal. This kept us alive, because this is very nourishing. So this he gave us once a month. So we had to cut this bread in 31 pieces, to last us for a whole month. And this every piece, from those 30 pieces, we ate once a day.

And the morning, we had a hot plate. And we had a big pot. In the morning we took this pot put in this water. If he gave us 3/4 pot of water you could save a little bit for everybody a few drops of water, there were seven glasses. And it was divided in equal amount. In case you want to make wet his fingers. If it was a bad situation, we even didn't have enough to put it in this pot. And we put in, I don't know how much it was the ration. 1 cup or 2 cups of this oatmeal.

And as soon as we got up in the morning, we put-- it was a very small plate. And it was a big pot. We put on this plate and this was cooking until the night. Was like a bunch of dirty water. It wasn't much. And every night around, let's say 6:00, 7 o'clock. We took out. We had the seven bowls. We took out this piece of bread and we cut it in seven thin slices. And during the months, if it was wet there, it got rotten.

It was through and through like this yellow rotten, but it was better than chocolate cake now. And we divided this bowl of you call it soup and seven bowls. And every bowl we put a slice of bread. And make sure that one didn't get a drop more than the other one. One turned around, one person, he said, whose is this? This is for [NON-ENGLISH]. Whose bowl is this? He called out the name. Because it was like a [NON-ENGLISH].

I see.

You understand?

I see.

And this way, nobody-- also in the beginning, we begin to fight, one man said, put another cup of water, another man say, we you won't have enough. So we made-- I really give the idea. I said, look, we can't fight here, because when we fight or something, you can make a higher voice, and we can be shot for that. I said, we have to continue that. What is the solution?

Everyone will have a [NON-ENGLISH]. He can do whatever he wants. He can put 1 cup, a half a cup, 10 cups. Whatever, he will put in 10 cups, he will not do it because he know if he will do it, he will starve all the rest of the month. So he can't do it. Because he is here too. We shared together the [INAUDIBLE], and he will not do it. So this way will be the man who has the [NON-ENGLISH], whatever he does, you can't say one word.

What's [NON-ENGLISH]?

[NON-ENGLISH] means responsibility.

OK.

Obligation, to put the water, to put the oatmeal, to divide the seven bowls. He did everything. You understand? And this person who is in charge this week, nobody can tell him one vote. Whatever he does, everybody has to accept, and then when those fighting stopped.

So no one ever bathed or anything?

Huh?

For the whole year and a half--

No, no. No, you can't imagine how they felt, the smell. What can you do?

After a while, did you get used to the smell?

We had to. There wasn't any choice. I took a bath once a month when I came out to Balachowska. But the men never.

And they never got sick?

No. Wait a minute. Well, Rubinek died. All the other things, when the day when I went out, he gave me then extra water. Get an extra bucket of water and a big bowl, so I can wash up my hands.

Why was he so stingy with the water? Was water so expensive?

No, it wasn't expensive. But I don't know. He wanted to keep us short. I don't know. He was anti-Semite. He didn't want to. He didn't--

And could he have given you more food?

He didn't. He said it's dangerous to buy. People still ask him why he needs so much food. Maybe he didn't. His wife was. He wasn't so bad. But his wife--

And the oatmeal, so you had oatmeal once a day?

Once a day we had this soup, this oatmeal soup, and a slice of rotten bread. And that was. And when I come to the end, the last two or three months before the liberation, we got so unused to eat, I hardly didn't have any more food.

When I was liberated, it was January 15, 1945, I had my hands, only the hands and the legs until here, they are covered with blisters and pus from malnutrition.

I was liberated in January.

How much did you weigh? Do you remember?

I weighed, I don't know how much I weighed, about 40 or 50 pounds. I was like a skeleton. And when it came about, I went to [NON-ENGLISH]. I went to a doctor to help me to get clean up.

You want to explain to me before you go into that, explain to me exactly for the first six months, you went to see Sheila, and then you stopped.

And I stopped. Why did I stop?

And this was in January 1944 that you stopped.

Yes, around January. I came there one time to see her. And as soon as I came in, the children-- the children knew me and they said, Oh, Mrs. Wojcik, the elder sister want to see you. And right away my heart began to sink. I know it's something wrong. Because she never wanted to see me. Why would she want to see me? And I said, OK. I will wait here.

She came out, and she began to talk to me. She said, look Sheila looked like a Jewish child. She said, look a lot mothers came here in this home. And everybody tells me that Selena looks like a Jewish child. I don't even have your address. I don't know where to write you. She said, I can be no more responsible for your daughter. You better take your out, because it's very dangerous. If this will spread, and the mothers will go to the Gestapo, what will I do? I don't want to see her killed. You better take her out.

And I begin to think, what some women [NON-ENGLISH] say that my child a Jewish child. I'm sure they have their husbands home, and they live very comfortable. If my husband will be home, I wouldn't have to have my child here. My husband happens to be in German prison. He fought for our country, and for this he's in German prison. And send women to come in. I began to cry, and to how terrible upset I am that somebody had the [NON-ENGLISH] to say on my child that she is Jewish. How a terrible thing this to say on anybody.

And I said, OK, I will take you out. If they say like this, I don't care. I'm going to take her out. And this farmer's while was in Liskow, the first farmer he had a daughter in Kielce. And I knew her. And I went to her. And I was there for several hours crying, and thinking what to do, what to do to get out from the situation. I made up my mind that I'm going to go back. I couldn't leave without going back and talk with the sister. I went back and I gave her an address. It was a Krzrymowski. He was selling those pig meat, all meat, all different salami, everything from pigs. He was a very rich man.

And him, I knew through Rubinek, because Rubinek has a lot of stuff by him. And I knew him. And I told her I lived there. And whenever you want to ask me something, you write there, and I'm going to get the letter. And this is what happened. What did I do? When I came back, I went to him. And I told him that. And he knew I'm a Jew. He knew everything. I said, you will get a letter, keep it for me. When I will come out, I pick it up.

When I picked up the letter, I wrote an answer with the address from [NON-ENGLISH]. So they were sure later I was living there. I gave her the address. I said, no problem, I forgot to give you the address. I'm sorry. But here you got the address. I live there. And it was a Polish address. This made her easier. I said, well now, I cannot take my child now. I'm going to go back to Krakow, and speak with my [NON-ENGLISH], and I'm going to make him to take her. I don't want anybody to tell my child that she is Jewish. I am almost sure that I'm going to convince him to take her now. Just give me a few days.

What was my plan? My plan was I know that those people can help me. And I know they need me, the people in the hidden place. I know when I will come back and tell them that my child is in danger, will be like talk to the wall, because there wasn't any-- they couldn't care less. But I know the only way I can make him to help me is to tell him I'm leaving. This is what I said. I have to leave. I came back to say goodbye I have to leave because Sheila is in danger. I have to go out. I have to find a place. I can't be here anymore.

Well if it's leaving, then their hearts opened. Rubinek told me that several years before the war, a guy-- he told me he was his cousin, a girl, it doesn't make any difference married, converted and married a Polish boy, and left with him, left Jedrzejow with him, married him and left.

He was very good friend with a preacher from the church there. This was a Catholic preacher, a Catholic Church. And he knew him very well. Because he was making for him those [NON-ENGLISH]. He told me he's going to write him a letter, and tell him that I am that woman who ran away then, who married a Polish guy, and left Jedrzejow. My husband is a German prisoner of war. And I don't have any money. And I gave my daughter to a children's home in Kielce in

order to work and support myself.

But now he didn't say that it was [NON-ENGLISH], because he would be afraid to go. He said, since it's very crowded there and any child has a mother or father, they don't want to keep the child anymore. And since the child he said this woman have a daughter. She had a she had a daughter with her husband. And since the mother is alive, she has to take out her daughter. If she will take out her little girl, she won't have no way of supporting herself.

And the other things [INAUDIBLE], the Germans don't accept this. She came from Jews. Her parents were Jewish. But you know she's a Catholic now. And to you she's 100% Catholic. But the Germans don't want to accept this. So you go. It's your responsibility to go to Kielce and tell them that Selena, to ask them to keep her there. And you don't know what this mean that a Catholic priest come to our home and knows the sisters, and tell them I know Selena. Please keep her here. This was more than millions of dollars.

So that's what happened. That's what happened. He wrote a letter. You think it was so easy? He wrote a letter, and at night a lot of people know me and Sheila. I had to go through the town at night. I went there to a preacher. And when I came in. I know how to kneel down, I know how to kiss his hand. I know everything, [NON-ENGLISH], all those things what you have to do you come in a Catholic home, especially one for a preacher. And I gave him the letter from Rubinek.

He read this letter and he called in, usually I had a [NON-ENGLISH], means a housekeeper. She brought me food. And there were several maids, and cleaning, but she was like the housekeeper. She was in charge to see what to cook, what to buy. And I wasn't a [NON-ENGLISH]. But usually a misses like this was the mistress from the preacher.

And he called her. And he showed her that letter. And he said to her, and they both said, well, what can you do? He said, well, I think I'm going to go there. He took it, and he said, I'm going to go there maybe-- no, he told me the date when he's going to go there. And I kneeled down again, I kissed his hand, and I said again, [NON-ENGLISH]. And I left. He told me to come back in about eight days. He's going to tell me what the story is.

I came back in eight days. And he told me that I told him that I know Selena, and I know you, and a Jew with a kippah there. But he said to me, look, there's a very shortage of food there. And it's really overcrowded. Why don't you really try to take her out. What happened?

When he came by, he found out that the nurse told him that other mothers things that she's Jewish. You understand? And he didn't want-- but since he read the note, and I told him the kid, he's a highly respectable, a preacher, not like a preacher here. This is something you have to look up to. He couldn't take back his word, you understand?

So to make his mind easier, he told me to make sure to take out. But I knew that there she is like in a perfect place. Nothing will happen to her. Since this preacher said that he knows her and he said, keep her here, I know that this is more than the best thing in the whole world what could happen to me. And this way, Sheila remained there. But I couldn't go there anymore. Because I was afraid when I would come in, they're going to say, here, you have to keep her.

So I didn't go there anymore. But what did I do? I still went to Slomniki once a month. And I still went-- I went every time by this woman, by this Balachowska. And when I came by, I gave her I don't know how much to buy a piece of salami, a pound of butter, bake a cake, a few cookies, and then Sheila a package. Every month she send her package and I told her to put the address from Sofia Wojcik, the address from Krzrymowski, not from her, from Krzrymowski. So it will be I send her this, you understand?

And every time when I came to Krzrymowski, I had an answer that they received this and this. And they thanked me for it. And everything was wonderful. I told him the reason I'm not coming because I feel I am sick, and I don't have time. And instead of coming I prefer to send her those food packages there. And every time when I received a letter, was much more there then I give her money. She sent a letter from her home, you understand?

Oh really, this kind of woman she was. A lot of food she send. And when I came in next time, I want to pay her for it. No way she would take it. You understand?

When you would come back from hiding, would you bring food in for your people too?

No. No. No, he always checked. No.

Who would check? Garlick. I couldn't buy. He told me not to bring in anything.

Why not?

Because first of all, I didn't want to go buy. Every step what I make was risky. Going in a store was risky. One time they want me to buy cigarettes for them. I said, you expect me to go in a store and buy cigarettes, and somebody will be there who knows me? I will lose my life. No. I go out, risk my life to bring goods for you to keep you here. That's more than I should do. Buying cigarettes, no.

And one occasion happened. He thought that I took out letters from them, and I did. Every time when I went out, they gave me an letters, from Mawel to his wife. They had some-- they gave me a different letters, and I took out a letter to my parents too. Because sometimes I want write and say something I didn't want him to know. Not only this, he never knew where my parents are. I never wrote them a letter through him.

You understand? The letter came to me through the mail to him. But there was no address there. You understand? And every time when I went out, I sent a letter to my parents not with the real address but with a forged back address, and a wrong back address.

And I don't know. I don't know was a nurse, so many miracles happened to me that it's hard to believe in it. Usually, when I went out, I had hoses, and I had to keep my hose up. I did have a--

Garter.

A garter belt, yeah. I usually I put in the letter here behind the garter belt here.

In your hose? In the top part of your hose?

Yeah.

Yeah.

At this time somehow, I don't know why. I put it in here.

In the inside.

In the inside. Was several letters under the hose, nobody couldn't see. When I came out from that hidden place, there are two rooms. She said to me, [NON-ENGLISH] to go in with her. She wanted to check me if I could find a letter.

I said, oh sure, sure. With pleasure. She took me in the other room. She told me to enter the address complete. The only things I had on is my panties and my brassiere.

I said, do you want me to take off my panties and brassiere? She said, no. It's not necessary. And I stood-- I stood like this.

You stood with your legs close together.

Why should I stay like this? I stood like this. It's ladylike to stand with your legs together. She put her hand everywhere. She looked at my legs. I took it up like that. She never looked here.

She never looked in between your legs.

No.

So she never saw the letters.

She never saw the letters. So she just happened that one time you mean?

One time.

Why? Because she suspected that you were taking out letters?

She thought I take out letters, yeah. Because every letter who came, what came, he opened. The letter from my parents, he opened.

Why? This is the way he did. He wants to know what was going on. And the letters came back, apparently--