

And then we'll go through the beginning part of the name, address, et cetera.

OK.

OK? I'm Judy Weightman here with Gerda Samuel in Honolulu, Hawaii in Gerda's apartment. It's June 2, 1988. And Gerda, I'm just going to ask you a few questions. Your present address right now?

Yes, it's 1545 Liona Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96814.

And where were you born and when?

I was born in Hamburg, Germany, 16 of June, 1921.

OK. And could you tell me a little bit about your mother, and your father, and your grandparents, or any family you remember?

My father was a printer in Germany. We had a big business. And we had a printing press. And my father's name was Richard Samuel. And my mother's name was Liebermann-- L-I-E-B-E-R-M-A-N-N. She was related to a painter called Max Liebermann.

Oh, wow.

And we had a comfortable life. And I was a young girl. I was five or six. And we had a maid. And my mother's sister used to live with us. She never married. She adored my mother, though. She always wanted to live with my mother. So when I was living in Germany, my father had this big printing place. And it was 1930, '31, about that time.

The moment I went to school, we had Jewish schools for girls only. There was a school for girls. And there was a school for boys. And I learned Hebrew before I learned German-- and all Jewish teachers. And we say 19-- Hitler came to power in 1933. 1934, one day, the uniform SS came, took my father by the neck, dragged him out, closed the shop, and we never saw him again.

You never saw your father?

No, never saw him again.

This was in 1934?

I don't exact date-- could have been 1935, '30-- I don't remember the exact date. So here was my mother, had no idea of business. My aunt had no idea of business. They closed the shop, took everything they could possibly get, took us, and put us in a-- I would say ghetto today.

The abbreviation of ghetto is different than it was-- then my mother, myself, and my aunt into a compound, like the apartment. And there were about, oh, I don't know how many families living. And there was an iron gate. So if you're not home by 10 o'clock in the evening, they closed the gate. Winter, summer, snow, rain, you don't get back. That was the early time.

We say '35, '36. And it was the most horrible place in the world. There was no bathroom. I mean, where you-- there was a bathroom go to toilet. But there was no shower. Shower, we never heard of. We had a kitchen with a iron stove. And on that you had to cook. And there was a bedroom. And there was a living room.

And we were put into there. And we had-- all our money is gone. We didn't have anything. The Germans took-- the business my father had was closed. So we didn't have any money. So today, we would say, it's welfare we got. There was a Jewish committee and the Quakers, who did give us clothes and food. So you had to go every week and get either

secondhand clothes or you get your food.

And every single day, on the streets of Germany, there was a man called Julius Streicher. I don't know if you know him. He wrote the *Stürmer*. This is-- the *Stürmer* means storm. And he had caricatures of the Jews with the long noses. And he said, they were non-Aryan. And they had bad blood. And they-- you were not allowed to mix with them.

And I was young. And I didn't understand, in Germany, when you were a girl, you were not-- you don't know anything about politics. You didn't know anything about politics-- no women either drank or was interested in politics at that time. So we lived in this ghetto right in the middle of town in Germany. It was the most horrible place.

And every single day, somebody got arrested. We heard, between the Jews kept together, and they had what they call now soup kitchens. But it was a little better than soup kitchen. They had those. And the Jews met there. And they used to whisper and say, oh, gosh, who got arrested today? Who didn't get arrested? What's happening to this big business?

You see, like Liberty House here, they used to-- Jews used to own all these very big stores. So they used to try to get the money from those stores for themselves and get rid of the Jews. As Julius Streicher said in his papers, don't-- you're not allowed to mix with them. So every day, he came out with different rules and regulation what the Jews can do and what the Jews can't do. So now, I go to school. And every other day, one of the teachers is missing.

You were still in the Jewish school?

Yes. There was the other one that I wouldn't be able to go. And they were missing. So so far I know, they were arrested. And some of them also left. I have to say one thing-- the people with a lot of money either went to America-- we say the Rockefellers or Rothschild-- and England, who had relatives there.

And the poor Jew who didn't have any money had to stay behind and take all the abuse. The abuse was done in a very, very small way. It was done daily by this newspaper called *The Stürmer*.

So then my father had a brother who had an affair with the German girl. And she herself went and told the Nazis. She was not punished. And my uncle was hanged in Berlin. They hanged him for that. That was my father's brother. And my father's sister married a non-Jew in a small town. And she was OK. I mean, you know--

Why was she OK?

She was OK--

Camera is rolling.

OK.

Got about five minutes left on this tape.

OK. So Gerda, maybe we should go back to talking about what happened, if I can take you back a little bit to 1933, '34, when you were in school. And if you can-- do you remember anything about those early days with your neighborhood?

Yes. Well, when I went to school, I went to only for girls. They call it the high school for girls. And every day, there was somebody missing. So they most probably arrested one by one. I don't say every day, maybe every week. And we didn't learn much because everybody was very scared of Hitler. Everybody was scared of Hitler. But nobody ever, for a million years, would have thought what happened.

Anyway, the Jewish people were very German. The German Jew is more German than Jewish-- not all of them, but that's it. You cook German, you speak German, you live there, the culture. And that's it. So they never for a minute thought what was going on later that that would happen.

So I went to school. And so our teacher wasn't there, I didn't have any lessons. I was very happy. I didn't have to learn anything. That's the point. Then anyway, when we were moved into this so-called ghetto in the middle of Germany in Hamburg, it was the most horrible place. And it was like no money, hardly any food from-- we say from 1935 till 1937, I was living there under the most horrible circumstances. It was dirty. And we survived. I mean--

Did you try to find your father during that period of time?

No. There was no way. We were not allowed to do this. And on a movie-- they started to go and put on the movies, [GERMAN]. That means, Jews are not allowed. You could not go into a movie.

You could not go into a coffeehouse. Because the woman used to go and have coffee and cake in the afternoon. And the music was playing. This is the European way. They said, Jews not allowed. And when you wanted to get food, you could get food, but you had to stand in the line.

So they did it very-- if you killed somebody, you do it very slowly. So from '35, '36, '37, there were Communist Party who was fighting against Hitler. But they were very small. The Jewish population was very small. They could not fight for themselves. They didn't have a chance. And with this newspaper coming out, this *StÄ¼rmer*, people became more and more anti-Jewish.

If I wasn't Jewish, I would believe what they would have said too. He said, we were non-Aryan, meaning we were different blood. That's what I said before. And intermarriage was completely out. Were not supposed to mix, have any friends, or go to the movies. You just waited for the next order to come out, more or less. And I was young. I didn't know anything about politics. I didn't know anything about Hitler. I had no idea what was going on.

Did your mother talk to you at all about what happened?

My mother was dead scared. They were all scared. They were all scared because these Germans who were in those uniform, big, strong, blue-eyed, blonde, they-- you don't say anything to them. You were dead afraid of them. So we were-- was here third-class citizen. I think it was worse than third-class citizens, really.

Did you have any non-Jewish friends?

Not that I remember because-- and I think then the Jews had, in Germany, more or less kept to themselves. They went to synagogue. And they went to the places we could eat. We could eat only certain places. And then they-- Quakers started a Jewish Culture Club, where the Jews could not be any more active. They could not be any more movies there.

So they all got together. And they made a club. And in that club, was also a restaurant. You could eat in there. And then they had their own performances, which was nice at the time. And that must have been 1936, 1937.

And then people were going all over the world to leave Germany. As I said, the people with money went where they could go. The poor people, they left behind. So we were living in this ghetto in the middle of town. And we were on welfare. I would say it was welfare. And I laughed at everything. I thought everything was funny.

OK.

OK. And you laughed at everything.

Well, I was a happy person. I have a good disposition. And therefore, my mother was scared of them. So there was no cars. Nobody had a car. We never heard of it. And having a bicycle-- I did have a bicycle. And sometimes, I used to go on a bicycle.

And my mother used to say, please, be careful. Because they did have demonstration against the Nazis, honestly, in the earlier days. The Communist Party did. But they were hitting them with sticks and all kinds of stuff. It was just a horrible youth, a horrible youth.

Was there any way to identify you as Jewish when you would be out on the bike at that time?

No. I just don't go out-- I suppose, your address, wherever you lived, they knew. They knew where the Jews were by the name. My name is Samuel. Who would not know that you're Jewish? And all the people in Germany had all Jewish names. I would say that they did it that way. They seemed to know where all the Jewish people lived. And in the beginning, I don't think that they had all intention of killing as many as they did. I have no idea.

But your father was taken very early?

He was taken, yes. But we didn't know where he went. There was no way. We had no rights. There were no rights. We didn't have any rights at all.

Did your mother go down to the police station or anything?

No, they didn't listen to you. We had no rights. And that's why I still have an inferiority complex. Because you were inferior to everyone who was German. And they spat on the street. That couldn't-- that didn't-- that was it. I mean, Jews-- and they used to annoy you and all that kind of thing. Because we lived in this compound. They used to stand and spit at you. That was the Germans.

And I don't care what anybody said. There were 25% of the Germans who were not Nazis. And I think 75% were Nazis because they got housing. Hitler was very good in that. He took care of a lot of things for the Germans. And so why not join the party? I mean, if you can, why not?

And he was hard on the non-Jews and the Catholics also. He was not just Jewish. And my mother-- we were terrified. We were afraid. We lived in-- and then one day, they were looking for my father in that compound we lived in. And they had already taken him. They didn't keep any records. But later on, I found that they did keep records.

Do you know where he was taken?

No, not my father. My mother, yes. But I did get some money then a long time ago, very long time. I-- after the war was over, the Red Cross tried to get the records of all the Jews which they had killed. And they did have a record of my mother and my aunt. And that's it.

So your mother and your aunt were both living with you at the compound. You had mentioned that your aunt, another aunt, had married?

Yeah, my father's sister married a non-Jew. And he was in the German Army, fighting in the German Army, but was very anti-Hitler. He had to go in. And he kept his wife-- his family disowned him immediately. Nobody in his family spoke to him. And he didn't care. He was very anti-Nazi. And he died a normal death.

He was never-- anyway, he used to be in where you get the food. And he used to send us packages of food and all that. He was a wonderful guy. He was German. But he was one of the very few. He was a wonderful guy. And they had one child who is still alive today in Germany. And he is a Protestant. And he lives a completely different life.

I can never go back to Germany. I got once so sick going back to Germany that I never go again. Everything came back. On a plane, I got sick. It came-- for some reason, I don't want to go back ever. I just-- I speak German. I cook German. I like German food. I talk to anybody who is. But going back, no, never.

So you've never-- you haven't been back?

I have been back when I first worked for the airlines. I used to visit my aunt, my father's sister. And she was never in a concentration camp because he paid plenty of money not for her to have to go in there. He paid people off. And my cousin was in a labor camp. And he still has something wrong with his lungs. He was interned in a labor camp. That was

all the time I wasn't there. I don't know what happened, really.

And most of the people who are half-Jewish in Germany today don't want to say that they're Jewish. They don't want to say. And they don't want to say they got Jewish relatives, so far I see it.

My cousin is not too happy if I go there because my name is Samuel. So I don't think in a small town, they-- to me, they're still antisemitic. I don't care. I still feel that. Lots and lots of Germans are still antisemitic. I don't say all of them, especially not the ones who live here. But we have it here too. We have it here too. So that's it.

You were in the compound until about 1937, you were saying?

I would say yes. I would say 1937. 1938, the Jewish and the Quakers got together. And they gathered 500 children. And they said, we have to send the children out first because the children have a life to live. And they have a future.

We don't know what we're going to do with the rest of people who-- women and children. Most of the men had gone by that time. Nobody knew there were any concentration camp. And so they said-- I was on the last transportation. There were three transportation of 500 children-- mixed marriages, and Jews, and Catholics-- very few Catholics.

And we were sent to Harwich in England, which was a summer camp. And it was winter. And we were staying in one room. And there was a little thing like a sink where you could wash yourself. And you could hear the water drip. It was ice. It was only two beds in it.

And we were this huge camp, which was OK for the summer. It was not OK for the-- but you were 14-15 years old, it was OK by that time. And from there, you got adopted to various places-- England, Scotland, Ireland, anywhere they wanted you. And I was adopted to go to Belfast in Northern Ireland.

Let's go back a little bit to when you found out you were leaving.

Yes.

Do you remember that?

Yes. My mother said, you better leave. And I'll be coming. I will come after that. So all I had is one suitcase. And I remember the suit I was wearing. I got it from the welfare. And it was nice. And we went on a train in Germany in Hamburg. From there, we took a boat-- only children.

From-- with your mother?

No.

When did your mother leave you? At what point was that?

At this station in Germany. And that's it. No.

Do you remember anything about that at all?

Yeah, I remember saying goodbye, like if you're going on vacation, and never saw her again-- and my aunt also.

Your aunt was there with you at the station?

My aunt liked me a lot. My aunt took very good care of me. And that's when I left-- 1938 or '39 in December, Germany. And it was the last time I saw my parent-- my mother and her sister on the station in Hamburg in Germany. And from there, I got on a train. And we went to England.

Did you know when you left, did your mother think at all that she would not be able to follow?

No. But there were so many rumors going around. People were trying so hard not to believe what was going on. They were dead afraid. And there was no money. You don't know for one day if somebody knocks on the door, you'll be taken. That's it. We didn't know if we were taken. And I was happy to leave. I was very happy to leave.

Did you worry-- how did you feel going off by yourself without any family?

I thought it was very exciting. I thought it was very exciting because I had never been anywhere. And I was poor. I didn't have anything. For me to go to England, that was wonderful. And I was a young girl. And there were all the other girls. And we had a lot of-- we even had lots of fun, even though it was a terrible time. We had lots of fun.

And I never realized, of course, that I'll never see my mother again. And of course, who would think of such a thing? We never thought of it. And even in the camp, we had entertainment and everything in that camp. We had enough food. And we were out of Germany. That was very important.

And I was happy. And I thought, this is it. This is-- my whole world is opening up. I can get away from these Nazis. Because those-- I'm still today see those Nazis in front of me. They were unbelievable. They would spit at you if they know you're Jewish.

So as I say, I'm not look that Jewish. But if they know you're Jewish, you haven't got a chance. They'll go to any government agency. Nobody would help. If you had any problems, they didn't care. They didn't care. They didn't give you a chance.

When-- were there any Nazis on the train with you when you were leaving?

No. No.

The Quakers and?

Quaker, yeah. I must say, the Quakers, they most probably gave the money to it. I don't remember. I mean, I don't know what they did. I was a child. And no. And we got to England in one piece.

Were you able to--

The last one. No, we were not allowed to write. No. That was 1939. We didn't write. I don't know. The letters never got to wherever we sent them to. We never did.

So you didn't hear from your mother at all either?

No. No, until after the war, I found out, never before. And the people I was adopted with, they thought that they could eventually get my mother and her sister over. But of course, it never came. Never came.

Do you want to talk about your Belfast? And then we can go back to what you heard? Or do you-- whatever you feel.

Well, we were in this camp in Harwich. It was a training center-- a holding center for refugees. And I had one suitcase. And one-- whatever I had on. And there were some Jewish people in Belfast who had adopted out of 515 people.

And I went to Belfast, Northern Ireland. Here, I get to Belfast, Northern Ireland, the Catholics and the Protestant fighting between each other, which I could not believe. But the people who adopted me were very nice. They were actually very nice, except the son. I didn't like him.

Why was that?

Well, I think he liked me. And I was 18. And he tried to make love to me. And I didn't-- I couldn't speak one word of English. So he just did whatever he wanted to do. And I couldn't say anything. I had nowhere to go. I had no money. And I didn't say a word. And he used to creep up at night at my little room in the attic and did whatever you can think of.

And I was afraid to say anything. I was already so afraid of everything. And I couldn't speak a word of English. And that's when I joined, 1941, the British Army. Because I wanted to get out of there just because of this boy.

And the parents were very nice. And the daughter was very nice. They did everything for me. They had a dressmaking salon. I got all my clothes. And they fed me well. And I learned, supposedly, dressmaking which I never did because I didn't like it. But I did try. And I joined, 1941, the British Army.

And then what happened?

Well, the British--

Well, how did you learn English, first of all?

I learned it in Belfast. I had to speak English. They didn't speak German. So I just learned it by listening. That time, we didn't have TV, so far I remember. I just learned it. In languages, I'm quick. I could pick it up. I never learned-- I never went to school. I just picked it up. If you have to and you have to learn a language to get food or get clothes, you learn it. That's the way I feel about it. You have to.

And then in the British Army, we were all foreign girls. We were all different nationalities, different ages-- well, I mean, more or less the same age. And we were all Jewish. So the British would not let us do any real work. And we had to be orderly, so cooks. That's all. So I was an orderly. I washed dishes three times a day in the men's training center. And they give you \$10 a week.

But I was happy. I wanted to fight the Germans. That's what I was thinking of. And we were a nice group of girls. So I didn't mind the army at all. It gave me something which I thought I was doing the right thing. I hated-- actually, I became to hate the Germans, to hate them, really. And for me to do this, five years of hard work, I paid my dues. That's what I think, anyhow.

So when I was in the army, I never learned anything, except-- now, they promoted me to be a waitress in the officer's mess. That wasn't too bad. But washing dishes in a machine was hard. But then you were young, you didn't care. That's what I did. And I learned my English. And I had my exercise. And I had good food. And I was quite happy.

Did you know what was going on in Germany?

Yes. We-- in the army, we had-- every day, we had lessons what was going on, but not about the Jews, just about how far the German-- and the British Army was fighting the Germans, and what was going on. We did have that every day. It's like you talk about politics, that's what we did every day.

And when did you first hear about the concentration camps, did you?

We didn't. We didn't hear about the concentration camp till after the war. I didn't hear anything about it. Because we were trying to get-- to see what happened to my relatives, or my mother, or my cousin in Germany still. After the war, you found out that they were killed. And it took-- oh, I don't know, months, and months, and months to find out if they were really killed.

How did you find out?

The Red Cross-- the Red Cross checked it out. And I got a letter one day and said, they were killed that and that date. And that's so bad.

Where-- did they get--

I think it was Belsen. I'm not sure now.

Both of them were together?

Yeah. But my aunt in Germany, that one who was married to a non-Jew, was still alive. And my cousin was still alive. And they became Protestant. And they have a German name. So it wasn't too bad.

Do you have any other family at all?

No. I was the only child. I was the only child. So anyway, I came out of the army. I had no profession. My English was not very good, I mean, grammatically or having any real good English. No, I never had time to go to school. I had to earn my living. So being five years in the army, you got the money they saved for you. And you got out.

And I got to London. And I was a waitress in London. And I did good. I made good money. And I lived with a girl who, later on, gave me an affidavit to the United States. I met this girl-- I knew her from Belfast. I went dancing one day in the Ladies' Room in London. And we met in the Ladies' Room. And she said, oh, my god, I'm looking for a roommate. So why don't we go and stay together.

So we stayed together in London. I was working as a waitress. And I don't remember-- oh, she was a dressmaker also. And she went later on to the United States. And she gave me an affidavit of support to come to the United States. And she changed her Jewish name, which was that long Polish, to Kelly.

Kelly?

Kelly, yes. From the Belfast, yeah?

Very religion-- no, she was a very religious Jew with the name of Kelly. They couldn't pronounce the Polish name. They changed it to Kelly. That was-- I think it's funny. So I came. No, you have to-- that's not true. You have to go back.

Back, that's what I thought.

We have to go back. And I got confused.

Before that, when you went to--

I went to England to be a waitress. While I was a waitress, I met this man in the place I was working. And he was the chief of police of Singapore. And I became engaged to be married 1948. And he made me come to Singapore. He paid my fare. And we were engaged to be married.

And I got to Singapore, had one suitcase again. And he said, Gerda, you're a very nice girl. But I don't want to marry you. And he-- I stuck in Singapore, didn't know a soul, had no money. And I cried to everybody. I was going to commit suicide, all this, and that, and that.

Anyway, somebody took me and said, look, don't worry about it. I get you a job. Now, Singapore at that time was Malaya. And it was ruled by the British. And I had a British passport coming out of the army. And they don't give white women any jobs because they wanted their own people to work, which is understandable, because it's very hard.

Anyhow, I met this-- he was a director of KLM. He was the director. He had an office in Singapore. He was Dutch. And when I did go to his office, he said, look, don't tell me your life story. I don't want to hear it. I've heard it already. I give you a job, two weeks' notice, and you see what you can do.

And it was a headquarters of the Japanese. The Japanese had occupied Singapore in 1947, I think. And this was the headquarters of the Japanese. He bought this house on the sideline, like a side job, an extra job for him. And he made it a night stop for the pilots from Amsterdam, Singapore, Australia.

So that was a one-night stop. They stayed overnight. And it was my job to see that they get out on time, get to the airport on time, and get their meals on time. So I had a two weeks' notice. I was there five years. He didn't know me from Adams. He just took me on my face value. And my English by that time was very good.

I'm sure.

I'm sure about that. Yeah. And then 1952, couldn't stand the tropical heat. It was too much. And I then went to New York, 1952.

With your friend's affidavit from--

Yeah, we kept in contact, that girlfriend I had in London I lived with. And she didn't like my fiance in the first place. But anyhow, she gave me affidavit of support. I went to New York. And I worked also as a waitress in New York.

And then I had a letter of recommendation from Mr. Perkins from Singapore. And I went to KLM. And I gave my name. I didn't have to pass any test, nothing at that time. And six months later, I got a job. And I was there 32 years. I learned computer. I learned to speak English. I learned to write in English. I did everything and really, basically, had no really foundation.

And I wanted to take you back a little bit to get back to the London period when you were in the army.

Yeah.

And did you talk to anyone during that period about what your experiences had been in Germany?

All of us had the same experience. All the girls who were with me, we were all refugees. We were all leaving our parents behind. So I wasn't just the only one-- which was good in one way. You don't feel sorry for yourself because everybody was in the same boat.

And well, we all went our own ways. I-- in the army, we didn't have that much time. They make you work. And then you have your exercise. And then you have to do this. The army years were an education for me. And I learned, really, English well.

And it was interesting. We wanted to win the war. We wanted to win the war. We wanted to get those Nazis out. And that was our main interest. And we really-- I don't know, maybe because we were younger, so we didn't really want to talk politics. We didn't want to think. We wanted to get the war over with and see if we ever going to get our parents back.

--less than anybody else. I've always had that. That's the way they spit at me in Germany. And they make you really suffer. Luckily, I was young. But can you imagine my mother, who was in her 40s? She had me very late, how she suffered much more than I did, really.

Is it ready?

Are we on?

OK. Go ahead and start.

OK. Did you ever talk to your mother about the changes in her life and what was happening?

All I was always told-- don't talk on the street. We were always afraid. And I have to say that some of the people overhear a conversation, they will go to the Nazis. And they get money for it if they say, we didn't like this and we didn't like this. The next thing is you go in a concentration-- you were taken. I mean, we didn't know where. They had taken over completely. They had taken over completely.

Did you have any non-Jewish friends at all in Germany?

Not that I remember. The Jews did keep to themselves in Germany in Hamburg. Because-- I didn't agree with that, but that's the way I was brought up. And I was not religious, but I was Jewish. And as you say, on holidays, we did go to synagogue. And my aunt in Germany, who was my father's sister, she also went to synagogue. Though she was married to a non-Jew, but she did go.

And I wanted to ask you again, getting back-- we'll go back to London right now-- when you were in the war-- in the military, did you have any non-Jewish friends at that time in the military?

Yeah. I mean, there were some girls who were not brought up Jewish, but had a Jewish father or a Jewish mother. For instance, my girlfriend who I still see-- we've been friends for 60 years-- she and I went to the same school in Germany. Her father was a non-Jew. But her second father was Jewish. So her mother got killed. And her second father got killed. And her--

Got killed?

--first father-- well, got put in camp. Her first father died. So she married an American soldier in Belfast. We went to Belfast together. And she doesn't know anything about Judaism. She became Catholic. She married a Catholic. Her children are Catholic. And she also-- we both went to the same school, the same background, and it's completely different. She only was here recently.

But she's a wonderful person. We went through a hell of a lot. And she was adopted in Belfast. And the Jewish people were not that nice to her. They made her work eight hours or 10 hours a day in the shop, cutting coats or dresses, dressmaking. And then when she came home at night, she had to do the housework for five people-- and paid her hardly anything.

And she never found out anything about any other relatives that were in Germany either?

No. No.

What do you think is the general view that Americans have, American Jews have about the Holocaust? Have you thought about that at all?

I don't know what you mean by that.

Do you think the American Jews who have not been through it are aware?

American Jews would say there was a Holocaust. But you see, nobody ever-- I mean, I have never been in camp. I myself cannot imagine what happened there. I mean, you hear stories that were just unbelievable.

Well, you have an accident. And you lose your leg. You usually-- you are in pain. I feel for you, but I don't have pain, meaning that unless you yourself have been in a camp, it is very hard for anyone else to understand. I think that you cannot put yourself in there. It was just impossible. You could just not imagine it.

It's like, as some people say, there was no Holocaust. They cannot believe what happened. And if any German tells me, he didn't know there was-- after the war, that they didn't know about it, then I don't believe that. And today, there are lots of Nazis in Germany. There are lots of Nazis in the US.

Have you ever met any?

Oh, plenty. I went after-- when we were traveling in Vienna, the guy in Vienna-- I went with another girl from my office. When he heard I was Jewish, he got up and left. And that was, oh, 20 years after. Oh, he left. Oh, there are plenty of German and Austrians today who don't like Jews.

I heard it here too. I met a girl who said, the Jews didn't-- well, I don't want to mention the hospital I went to. She said, I don't-- you won't feel happy here because they don't like Jewish people. They are the 400, the higher national. And they didn't want the-- I wanted to go as a volunteer. She said, I just want to be truthful to you. You're Jewish, aren't you? I said, yes. And she said, I don't think you'll be happy here.

Where was that?

I don't want to mention.

I mean, in Hawaii?

Yeah. Oh, yes. I came up-- in my office in New York once, somebody said to me, I don't like Jews. And I know you're Jewish. And I said, that's OK. You're allowed to have your opinion. You're allowed to be able not to like the Jews. And I said, just give me a reason why. He said, they always whining and crying. That's what he told me. And I worked with him. And of course, how can you like somebody who said that? But he told me the truth. That's it.

And we used to have these Jewish people going to Israel with those payos. And it was hard to deal with them at the time. They were praying on the floor in the departure hall. They were lying on the floor. And I mean, the non-Jew look at this and say, what is going on here? Yeah. And you can talk to them till doomsday. They won't get up. You know what I'm saying? You've seen that. Yeah.

And that's what was today in Israel. I think that the whole situation is very bad. And now, we're coming to the thing. I would never want to go to Israel. I don't know what it is, but they-- Jews have always been persecuted. And I can't reason why. I'd like to know why.

Because even in-- between the Jews-- the Polish Jews don't like the German Jews, the Russian Jews don't like the Germans. The German Jew is very much disliked because he's more German, which is true. That's me. I can see myself doing very German in many ways and very Jewish in other ways.

And not liking those Germans who are still in Germany though?

No. No. I don't understand that ever. It could never be that bad for me to ever go back to Germany.

Do you talk about your experiences in Germany with anyone?

It's too long ago. People don't want to listen to that. Some people here don't even know what Jewish is. I told her-- she said, what is this? Are you Irish? I said, no, I'm Jewish. She said, what's Jewish? I mean, she never heard of it. It was in a government agency. Yeah. No, people don't want to talk about that now. It's too long past. They want to forget about it. And most of the Germans want to forget about it too.

And I'm sure there are lots of Germans who are very nice. But-- and especially now, they are sorry. I met a woman in the club I belong to. And she said, every time I meet a Jewish person, I feel guilty. And I said, you don't have to feel guilty with me because I forgot about it.

I want to forget about it. I don't want to think about my childhood ever. I want to go ahead and not backwards. I do not like to think about it. It was the most horrible time of my life. It was. So that's why I'm happy I'm here.

Do you think, in looking back, that there was any way that things could have been different in Germany?

Hitler was so incredible with his politic and his advertising that if I was not Jewish, as I said it before, you were dragged into this. It's like something you believe. And there was nothing else. He was absolutely wonderful to a lot of people. Could have been different, I don't know. It was different before Hitler came there.

And before Hitler-- do you remember the time before Hitler at all?

Well, when I was a child--

You were a child.

I was very young and, well, not too rich-- not too rich. We didn't have many things. We didn't have a car. We didn't have a bathroom. We used to go once a week to a public bath and have a bath. That was like, oh, something terrific. And eating chicken, or strawberries, or steak, that was something out of this world.

That was the earlier days then. You see, they had a depression, I think, after 1914, '18. After that was a depression in Germany. I was never spoiled. We used to eat always bean soup and god knows what-- everything soup. They put everything in it, and that's what you eat. And then you eat a lot of fish. Where I came from, we eat a lot of herring. That's it.

But no, never spoiled. There was not such a thing. But I always thought, I'm going to be a movie star one of these days. I used to run to movies all the time when I was very young. I used to be fascinating with that. That's my aim, it was, but I never made it.

Well, you did today.

Oh, today, yes, now I'm a movie star. But still, at that time, I was young, and pretty, and full of life.

Were you able to save anything at all from the war or during the-- from Germany? Do you have anything left from your family?

I may have it, but I don't have it here. I have-- when I left New York, I took one suitcase and I came here because I didn't want to take anything. My girlfriend has a lot of-- I don't think. I'm not a saver. I throw everything out. I don't think so. I have a birth certificate of my father. I have a birth certificate of my mother, which I have here. That's it. I know where I came from. That's it.

And do you have any suggestions or any, I guess, maybe advice for those of us who did not live through that time, if there's anything we could ever do to prevent it from happening again?

I see it here. I don't say Honolulu. I would say what we have seen outside Boston-- was it Boston or Chicago, that one town where they had already lots of the Ku Klux Klan--

Skokie.

--and those-- there's nothing we can stop. This is a free country. They-- if you dislike a Jew, you dislike a Jew. There were lots of dislike about the Japanese in Singapore when I came. The Japanese were not allowed to go to Singapore for many years after the occupation. They did horrible things also. But you're entitled to your opinion. This is a free country. You're entitled.

No, I would say there's not a thing you can do because the more you're going to fight against it, the worse is going to be. The only thing, we don't want another Hitler. But we have quite a few of them in the United States. We have a lot of antisemitism. I am sure of it. I read about it, I hear about it, and I know about it. Well, how did the Ku Klux Klan gets ahead?

Fanatics-- this is the point. Fanatics in anything is no good to me because we all human. We are here on Earth. And what's the difference? If you're Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, Japanese, I can see absolutely no difference. To me, that's-- I can't stand racism. I can't stand discrimination. I just-- that I have learned. I cannot say, oh, because he's Japanese, I hate him.

Or he's Samoan, I hate him. I came here first and somebody said, don't you dare talk to a Samoan. They're very dangerous. Automatically, I hate that. I cannot stand that. It goes right through me. And same thing with the Blacks in New York. Someone say, oh, how do you go? I say, I don't care. I don't care because I've been discriminated when I was young. I know what it is. I could never do it.

OK. Thank you so much. Is there anything else, Gerda, that you would like to tell us?

I'm just happy I'm in Honolulu. I tell you, this is the happiest time of my life and the most money I ever had. When I say money-- even when I was working, I didn't have enough to spend. Now, I saved all these years. And it's not that I'm rich or anything, but I can go out. And I can do things which I could never do before. This is more or less a very happy time of my life. And I'm happy I'm here.

We are too.

Thank you.

Thank you so much.