

I'm Judie Wayman. Today we are interviewing Olga Lebovitz, a Holocaust survivor. The project is sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section. This is the second reel.

Olga, we were, at the end of the last reel, we were beginning to come into the beginning of World War Two. And you said you were aware of what was going on in some of the other countries at that time.

Right.

What did you know was happening?

Well, firsthand-- happening firsthand, we heard, of course, everything through the radio and what went on. And the non-Jewish community somehow sympathized with the Hitler policy. So we knew it. But the very first-- very first personal experience was when one of my employer's wife, who was also a lawyer, a small woman-- I correspond with her. She is alive in Prague. She is not well at all, but she's there.

She went to an SOS call to Austria to see her uncle because the uncle wanted her to visit her. So from Czechoslovakia, she went over in '36 or '37, I think, to Austria. And she came back. She said, oh, what a heaven we live in here in Czechoslovakia. What a good feeling is to be secure because Austria and Germany is a big jail, and the Jews are trapped in it.

And she told us stories that how everything is taken away from the Jews, how they have limitations and restrictions. And they live like in a big jail. And all those stories-- I was still very young, in my late teens I think, that it frightened me for a lifetime. I said, oh, I just hope that Czechoslovakia will stay forever and ever because I was holding on to it. I was really a Democrat.

And besides that what I knew that Hungary is a sympathizer of the Hitler policy, I always was for the democratic country, for the-- everything was beautiful, in my opinion, about the way Czechoslovakia was. And that's when I got real frightened, when Eleanor came back from Austria and told us the stories that what are happening, what she saw firsthand-- no Jews inside, no Jews and dogs. And she brought back pictures.

What year was this?

Pardon?

What year was this?

I think in '37. I joined them in '36. And this was in '37. In the end of '38 already, we were in the same boat. It was '37, and I saw it coming. I was so scared because I saw it coming.

It was already spreading. And the atmosphere was bad. And--

OK, this is the first then you knew about the war?

That was when, when I was really started to be scared of what's going on in the world. Yes.

OK. You had mentioned that there were some changes in the way the non-Jews started acting to you, towards the Jews, at that point. Were there more open acts of antisemitism as the war continued?

Once we became Hungarians again? Oh, definitely. Definitely. They started to avoid us as much-- first of all, all these offices, which were taken away from the Jews, and all the stores, were taken over by Gentiles. And they attacked the schools, the museums, every good place where we were once. We were out, and they came in. Of course, it was-- the power went into their hands. And the more power they got, the more Nazi they became.

After all, Hitler gave back this part to the Hungarians, promised and gave them back. And all the rules came with that, the restrictions, 20% Jews everywhere, and then 6%. Numerus clausus we call that in schools. No more than 6% could stay-- very, very hard in '39. And later I don't think that anybody graduated from gymnasium, from high school anymore, any Jewish children.

Of course it was very obvious. Yes. And we, ourselves, kept in the back. Every day Jews were arrested for this or that, false pre-- and beaten up and disappeared. We didn't know that there are concentration camps. They said that there is a jail for Jews-- I don't know-- in the motherland, close to Budapest. We weren't the motherland. We were just joined.

So of course, it was very obvious. From the very first day already, we were scared and made to scared. And I started to really be-- once I knew that we have to close the office, we got only six months to liquidate. And we were restricted, every intelligent job.

And the Jews started to take trades. Whereas, before they were mostly professionals. They started to learn to be a schneider, to be a tailor, or-- all kinds of trades because they were thrown out from the positions. It was a very, very scary, very sudden and very, very scary. And it went one, two, three, progressed worse and worse.

The Jewish men were taken already for forced labor in '39, in the very beginning of '39. So my two oldest brothers, who were the first and second child in my family-- I helped Emery, my brother, to escape to Czechoslovakia in, already, December of 1938, to a part which wasn't yet Hungarian, which became in next March, in '39.

How did you help him escape?

Well, my-- there was a rumor that they will detach a town to Czechoslovakia-- from Hungary, they will give back one town to Czechoslovakia, which was, by mistake, taken, close to Mukachevo, Munkacs. So my employer had some state bonds for 7,000 Czechoslovakian crown worth of bond. He said, how about if one of your brothers would take this over to my relatives, to Czechoslovakia because there it is 7,000 crown, and here it is worthless by Hungarians.

I'll give him so much money. And yet, the city this weekend will become again Czechoslovakia. So let him stay there. He's a young, strong man. And he will stay there and automatically become again Czechoslovakian. It will be very easy for him to deliver this to my relatives.

So I ran home from the office. It was Friday night, November. I think it still was November or early December. Because in November they came in, November '38. So this was just a few weeks later, when they were debating this town was rightfully or not rightfully given to the Hungarians. So I came home with these papers, with these bonds. And we were still in the shop because my father's policy was, with the boys, whoever wants to study can go to school, and who doesn't want has to go to the shop to work.

So Emery wasn't for studying, and he was in the shop. He came in. And my mother was ready to light the candles. And I said, OK, let's get a gathering, the family gathering, because in a hurry we have to make a decision. We just heard the rumors in the office that this will happen, if you would be willing to do it.

Oh, he said, you know, I am scared to death. I don't want to stay here. I would do anything to go. This is the best opportunity. So I had this money, which my employer offered. And so my mother packed him what, so it wouldn't be suspicious, in a briefcase-- a couple of underwear, I don't know, what maybe a pants, a couple of socks. And that was the way, when the first child of the house was forced out, went out.

This is the first break. It happened. My mother said, this is the last time I see you. So I said, Mom, if you feel that way, then don't let him go, if you feel that you never will see him again. You love him so much. I said, OK, it is not-- I don't worry about my employer's 7,000 crown. It is not a fortune. It is not important.

My brother said, no. This is my opportunity to get away, and we will see each other. And one escape-- one life is one life. This is not good. Already this friend of ours, a Mundel Erno, was beaten almost to death with such tricky way. They-- just for the fun, for the saddest, saddest reason. This very close friend of ours, my oldest brother's friend, was

[INAUDIBLE] I will be. I don't feel comfortable. I am afraid to go out.

Mom, please. She said, no. I want you to go. But I am just saying that I will never see you again, my son. And I wanted you to know I love you and God be with you. And you will make it.

So he went over to the city, Mukachevo, with the bus, with a less bus because on Saturday it was a Jewish owner for the but or whatever it was. And it was very early, just about a month-- it had to be December-- just about a month after the takeover of the country. And we didn't hear from him for a long time.

The city never became Czech again where he went. So we didn't know if they caught him or he was arrested or what happened. Everybody was very jerky. And the bond was never delivered where it's supposed to be. They corresponded in a secret way. So everybody was-- my mother said, no, he made it. He is there. Even though it's so.

A few months later, after that part became also Hungarian. The Czechoslovakian part, where he's supposed to run away to, in next March, 1939, it became also Hungarian. The whole Podkarpatska Rus became Hungarian. Then we heard from him. He was in the upper Czechoslovakia.

He wrote back that when he reached the city, they said it is a rumor only. It will never happen. On the contrary, not to give back anything to Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia will cease to exist, which it did in '39, March. And he said, no. I'm not going backward. I'm going front.

And there were a few people really, for the rumor sake, there was-- who is willing with to escape with me to the other side of Czechoslovakia? It is night, Friday night. I am going. It was very windy and snowy.

And one boy said, I'm going with you. You have this confidence. I'm going with you. And they went through the border without being caught. And at the other side, they didn't have any papers. So they were hiding here, they were hiding there. And they said, oh, we are not safe here.

We are not safe here at all because they have an agreement, if they catch someone who escaped and without papers. So they started to sneak up toward Czechoslovakia. And it took him until March or April, for three months, hiding in the wintertime, and with the little money he had, buying here and there some food with that other boy. And they went up to Brno, which was already in the middle of Czechoslovakia. It's beautiful, a beautiful city. It was.

And that became Nazi when the Nazi era came in there by that time. And they organized a Zionist-- his Zionist organization organized this escape, this exodus with the ships to go to Israel. And he said, well, I don't have money, but I have these papers. If you think that it is any value, this is what I can give. I have-- you know, it costs a certain amount, the minimum.

They said, OK, we will take it from you. And let's see if we can do something with that, or whatever. If this is what you have, we will take it. And by August, he reached Israel with the ship, which was so much talked about. They thought that this ship sank because it was a very little ship. And I think from Greece it left, from Greece to Israel. And was watched.

The British didn't let them come in. And they sank a few ships. But it wasn't his. Instead, they picked up everybody who survived. They picked up the other survivors. And without food, without water, but the young-- and my brother was in his 20s. The young survived and reached Palestine, Israel. He was among them.

When we heard these stories, my father wanted to sit shiva, that this is the ship that-- because he wrote to us that they accepted these papers from him, and he's leaving for Israel. As soon as they get arrangements with a ship, with the next one he's going.

And we heard about that this ship was sunk and that. And my mother said, oh, no. Your son is alive. Our son is alive. And I feel it. And when he heard the news-- in August it came from him-- that he is in Israel, it was rejoice.

Then my oldest brother, who was already a lawyer then, he was very unhappy at home. But he had connections because he worked in law offices ever since, I think, 1928. And everybody knew him, all the officials. He made an arrangement with a city Gentile official that he gives him so much money, that when they ask him-- that when they send him for forced labor, in writing it came, to let him know not to deliver it because you had to sign it. If he lets him know a day before--

He was the deliverer for these callings because they kept on calling in the young boys to a certain age. And he fell into this age category, that they will-- then he gives him this amount of money. These amounts of monies really came already hard because almost stopped-- besides me, nobody earned money. And nobody built.

My father was one of the very, very limited-- because he was in the Hungarian Army or what reason-- pure luck-- he got his license back to practice the trade. But Gentiles didn't come to him for a job, and Jews didn't build. So there wasn't really any work. He let his helpers go. And whatever job he had, he did it alone with the two younger boys now because Emery already wasn't there.

So my brother, Ernest, did this deal with this man. And one evening he came to our house and showed the invitation, that it has to be delivered tomorrow. And he wants this amount. And then he has to do whatever he has to do tonight because tomorrow morning he has to deliver it. He just got them.

So my brother was in the movie. He had a girlfriend who he is supposed to marry, a beautiful, darling young lady. Her name was Muncie, Margaret. And they were in the movies. So I ran up to the town and into the movies. And I kept on calling him, Erno, Erno, Erno. And he jumped up, and they came out.

I said, it came, the invitation for you tomorrow to be delivered. So they came to the house with his girlfriend. And the same thing happened. His attache case was again filled with whatever it contained, with the two extra shirts and two pair of socks and whatever. And away he went. I gave him all my saved money, which was about 80 pengo. And he went away.

Oh, yes. During that summer we got passports because I had a chance to go-- I had girlfriends who left for England as maids. They invited Jewish girls to become housemaids. And two of my friends from my hometown went away. One was Schwartz Irma. And she wrote back that this maid business is really very beautiful. We have our own rooms. And in the afternoon we have two hours, and we play tennis. Oh, it was beautiful.

So I got a Hungarian passport for myself. And my brother said, OK, help me also to get a passport. In case that I am being called in, I have to get out from the country. And there is no escaping anymore without official passport. And I had the connections because I was still working in the law office.

I already knew the new management. And I was young. And you know, I made friends with them, and I got a passport for him. And he said, Olga, we have to decide who is going. One of us have to stay to take care of the family. Times are not going to be easy, and always you were the one or I was the one who took care of official things. One of us have to stay. And I think that I have to go, my brother said.

He was the first born, probably a little bit more selfish. And he was right because the boys were in danger. They went to forced labor, and they all had terrible stories to tell. And Emery already, the younger one, was already Israel. He said, I am going to aim to Israel to be. Let me go. Please, let me go.

I said, all right. I was really yearning, first of all, to get out from this trap. And I was very, very unhappy. I saw-- and then I decided really I have the one to be-- to stay at home because with my mother being so unhappy, saying goodbye for the second-- and he went.

With the passport he went up to Budapest, which was very easy. The same night, with the last train, up he went. And there was the same crying. And my mother said, well, it is obvious that it is getting worse and worse. And we knew my mother, that when some decision had to be made or she had problems, she did a certain way.

She said, what is there to do? There is no escape. There is nothing. I can do nothing about it. And we watched her as she packed my brother's things in the room. We watched her through the window. We said, well, mother is desperate. Probably she knows what we don't know.

And she said, OK, my son. You will make it, but we won't see each other anymore. It is sad. It is prophetic, but it is very obvious. You see what is happening with the German Jews. By that time they were running everywhere, to America, to wherever they could, to Australia, to South America. They wouldn't run if there wouldn't be a danger. It is like with the animals. When the fire is burning in the woods, the animals are running.

So when people are running, nobody likes to leave at home, accustomed to, where they were brought up, unless there is a fire, there is danger. And we went with my brother to the railroad station. And his girlfriend and my mother stayed at home. But I went.

My sister already was married. My sister got married in 1936. She was married in another town and lived in another town. So I think there wasn't-- and the boys weren't-- the younger boys weren't happy to go out in the evening. So they stayed at home. And it was really a very, very tragic evening.

So my brother got off to Budapest, where my mother had an uncle who had sons, very, very successful sons. And one was in Belgrade, an attache. And one was a secretary. My first cousin, all boys, very, very talented boys was a secretary to-- I wouldn't remember-- to a count of-- who had to escape to France. And he had to because he was involved in politics.

So he went to my uncle. He said, what can you do for me. I would like to go to Bela, to Belgrade because Belgrade is closer to, already, to the Black Sea, I think, where they went through-- what, the Mediterranean? Geography--

Your geography is like my geography.

Yes, that's my very poor subject-- I have to get there. And my uncle said, well, it is very easy. Let us call him on the phone. So he stayed at my uncle's house for four or five days in Budapest. And they called Belgrade, to my-- because they were very secure. They felt very secure in Budapest because this was my mother's oldest brother, much older, about 20 years older, that his children were my mother's age. And they all were in World War Two in high positions. And they felt very secure that the Jewish law will never touch them, that they will be among the 6%.

And they really survived that way in Budapest. Not one was taken away. So it was a great help that my uncle called his son that your cousin is going to come. He has a legitimate passport. And I will try to help to get him a visa to you, and you will guide him from there.

And really, in fair comfort, he arrived to Belgrade. And our cousin greeted him very gladly. He was-- they never met because we were so much younger and we never traveled that part of the world. And he arranged for him-- or he took him with his car, I think, because he was an attache. He was in a official position, a Hungarian attache-- took him all the way to the port and put him on a ship and, I think, paid the fee, which was important. My brother was a interesting man in a profession. So they understood each other.

And so he arrived to Israel with less trouble that my first brother. And he had my brother's address in Tel Aviv. And they shared a room together with my brother.

The people you've mentioned so far have been people-- who have helped-- have been people you work for and relatives in that area. Were there any non-Jews that helped at all?

Never. Not in our part of the world, not in our part. The Hungarians were, I think, wanted to outdo the Germans and everybody else. The Slovaks were very, very antisemite. But the Hungarians wanted to outdo. And I have a very terrible example for that, how cruel they were, how terrible the Hungarians.

My friends, who I grew up with, the friends that I worked with, who I knew-- I don't know if we want to go into that

part or not.

No, go ahead.

Which it was my sister, whose husband was killed in 1940. He wanted to escape to Russia, and he was killed. And so my sister had to back up where she lived And move back home with her little girl. And that is my biggest pain from the whole war, from the whole experience.

So your sister came back to live with your family at that point.

Right, in 1940.

So at that point, in 1940, there were the five children living at home.

In 1940--

Your two brothers had already gone.

In 1940 already, the twins were taken away also, the next two boys.

They were taken?

Yes. They were still in-- they were in Hungarian uniforms, soldier uniforms, but on forced labor. But they were in the official age of being recruited. So two beautiful, healthy, gorgeous boys, they were taken separately, in separate-- was they never served together in the army, never, never served together, separately. They were, before, unpartable. They couldn't part the two boys. They were so close and loving and belonging to the same Zionist organization until it was allowed. And this time they were separated.

Did you find that the people you knew through your work at the courthouse, the law office, and you knew all these people who had been in the law up until the time that the law changed, was that a help or was that a hindrance? Did that make things worse, knowing that people-- did it help, or did it make no difference whatsoever?

Which people?

You said you knew all the judges and the lawyers and everyone.

Yes. Yes.

But then did that-- later on when you needed the help?

Well, when I needed the help, it was already 1944. But between-- I was now still in 1939, and then in 1940, my sister came back and the two boys were taken away. And occasionally they came to visit, and I went to visit, especially one of them, Micky who lives here in Cleveland. And the other one disappeared. We never know what happened to him.

Until a few years ago, I was sure that he's alive somewhere, maybe in Russian camp. Everybody was against us-- the Russians, the socialists, the communists. I think that he probably was in a Russian prison. As a forced laborer with the Hungarians, he was sent, in 1942-- both boys were sent to Russia in 1942 already.

Micky, who is here, he escaped from the Hungarian, from the Hungarians. He was a very-- he is a very, still, an interesting individual. He felt the danger if he stays with the Hungarians. So he escaped to the Russian part. And there he survived. He was a carpenter because every boy knew about carpentry. And he had a lot of common sense, always-- how to shift.

But Leslie, he was more innocent. He was a beautiful boy. He was good and gorgeous and was innocent. But it could be

that-- and he let us know that he is-- he sent home a letter the last time, 1940-- end of '42-- with someone, with a Gentile person who asked us a certain amount, that he has a letter from my younger brother. And in this he said that unbelievable things are happening. They are throwing the Jews-- remember, in 1941-- maybe already '41 and '42 he was taken in Russia because he already saw that the troops, which were sent to Poland in 1941, the Jews, who the Hungarians claimed that they are not real Hungarians because they were born somewhere else, just about five miles away, and those were shipped in these freight trains to Poland.

And he wrote pages of letters. And this non-Jewish person brought the letter home for a certain amount to release it. Nothing was for love, nothing for humanity. Everything just was for money. And at that time, it was still not all for free. But like later in '44, they didn't have to ask us for money for anything or bribe us because it was theirs already.

And he wrote that they are throwing children and the people in open graves, which they have to dig. And they are shooting them into the lakes. And it is big danger. It is terrible. The world is coming to an end. And he wrote us things, which we didn't know because we were still in our own home.

Did you share that information with other families?

Yes, with my aunts.

What about other families in the town to whom you were not related?

Yes.

It was discussed [CROSS TALK].

Oh, sure. I read them, and the more I knew about it, what's going on. And there was this constant fear. In 1941, for example, a neighbor reported us, that we are hiding-- they saw it that we are hiding 50 kilogram flour because we were already portioned. The Jews were portioned about a fifth of what the non-Jewish people, with food and flour. We never bought 50 kilo of flour. But report was enough. And I was in the office.

What happened, in 1939, November, we had to liquidate that office with the Dr. Engers. And I was taken over with other cases, with a converted Jewish man, Dr. Mahesh. And he wanted me very much to work in his office. He moved back home. He was converted, and he moved back home because he had a license to open an office, an only son of the head engineer, as I said, at the City Hall.

So I went with him. And he fought for me because they wanted him, after a year or so, to fire me and to take so many Gentile girls. So he hired the Gentile girls, but he still wanted to keep me. And he fought all the way through until Hitler came to keep me.

So I went to this office. And very interestingly, about, I think, three or four-- no, just two of us, two of us Jewish girls remained in offices, working [INAUDIBLE]. And I did real well. I got papers for Jews, for other Jews, to prove this and to prove that. And I was really-- the same, the success followed me. It happened with a few people, who said, OK, Olga, your reign is over. This is not Czechoslovakia anymore.

But so I went on the side to get-- after all I was a young man-- a young woman, and they were young men. And in their eyes, probably I wasn't a Jewish girl. I was just a young woman. And they saw that I knew what was I talking about. And once, for example, in '43 came a prosecutor, a new prosecutor. And they said that he is a Jew eater. Everybody was scared of him, everybody.

And we had a client who was hiding because there was a warrant out for him. Everywhere the pictures of pictures of him to catch him because he was selling on black market those things which tied up the vine, the vine in the vineyards. For that black marketing, he was chased. And finally he couldn't go anywhere because you had to report. Wherever you were, you had to report at the police station that you are here and there.

It was a count from every person. You went into a hotel for a vacation-- you asked if we went on vacation. Yes, in 1942, I went into the motherland for a vacation. You had to report in that who you are, everything. And they knew where you were.

So one morning he showed up in our office. He said, I can't run anymore. He was from Munkacs. You have to do something. We have to stop. I can't run. I have a family. I have a wife and children. I can't do it.

So my lawyer said-- he was a very spoiled only man, and he relied with everything on me. He said, Olga, there is nothing else. You have to meet this new prosecutor and get a release for our client.

So I went. It was lunchtime already, 12:30. And I knocked on the door. Who is that? I opened a little bit, the door. And I said, I would like to talk to you. I said, it is lunchtime between 12:00 and 2:00. He said, I know. I have lunchtime also. But I sacrifice for something this little time. And I pulled in more closer and closer. He was a very handsome man.

And I closed in. I said, well, I really wanted to see you because there is talk about it that you are a Jew eater. And I wanted to see how you are going to eat me up because I am a Jewess. And I leaned against the desk, and he said, where did you get that figure of yours. And I thought, OK, you are-- you are my. You are in the trap.

So I said, well, I'm going to tell you why I am here. And I told him. This case, this is the man who is our client, and you are looking for him. He's not a murderer. He's just a Jew really, who had a business. And probably this was portioned, this part. Probably he's guilty, but there is a good chance that he isn't. But until he is chased after, he doesn't have a chance.

And this man is, right now, in our office. If you want to catch him, this is very easy. We are just across the street. Because just like this, our office was across on the square, across from the courthouse. Said, if you want to really catch him, it is so important for you, you can catch him. Here he is.

And I and Jewess sought him out to you because the way I look at you, you are a handsome man. You are a young man. Why would you be so bitter that a man who you don't know that if he is guilty yet, just a rumor, you want him in jail? And I must have been-- he said, even if I want to release him, it is a lunchtime. Nobody is home. Everybody went home.

I said, I can type. You know I can type. And he released him. I had a document with the numbers, our number. And he said, OK. He stopped. He is going to stop it for four weeks. In that four weeks, et cetera. But that was the main important thing.

What happened later, that [INAUDIBLE]. But once it went on trial, then it was legitimate already. And this is how it worked. I was very fortunate that I did very good with everybody, except one or two. There was a man, who was very against me. He was a real Hungarian during the Che era, so I avoided him. I avoided him whenever I could.

And he knew. Tyros, it was his name. And he was really a nothing. And the more nothing somebody was, the bigger antisemite he was, the bigger big shot he wanted to be. So we came to 1944. This is how we existed.

And when we were reported, I-- I didn't finish it. When we were deported that we are hiding 50 kilo of flour, they came out and made their house search.

I was working in the office. My sister ran up, said, Olga, they arrested Father. They took him to the courthouse because they were looking for the flour, and they found the radio because we had to turn in all the radios, I think, in 1940. But the radio belonged to my brother, my oldest brother. And it is true that we listened to it. It was tuned into Britain.

And they found on there the-- what is it? The wood things when the-- they work on wood, and there is that--

The shavings?

Pardon?



The shavings.

The shavings of-- it was big, high, and it was hidden there. And when we wanted, once a week, to listen to the shortwave-- it was a shortwave radio. I think it was a Phillips, or what was it? We went in all in darkness, and we listened to it, what's going on in the world. And when they found the radio, and it was tuned in to Britain.

Oh, you are traitors. And he is the head of the house. They handcuffed my father, and up to the courthouse. And she came shaking. And my employer was-- the former ones didn't have any power anymore. They lived in town. And matter of fact, when my employer was away because he was a tiny man, and a very small one, not very workable. So on hard cases, I asked my former employers to come and let's work together under his name. And many times I signed that. They asked in the courthouse, who signed it, your employer or you did? You know, because I knew already falsifying his name.

And he wasn't at home. And here I was helpless. I didn't know what to do. That was in 1942 somewhere. So I then really-- everywhere-- 10 o'clock in the evening, my employer came home. I said, we have to go up. We have to save him because we know that whoever is caught we never see them again. They were taken already then to Auschwitz, which we didn't know-- Budapest, and they disappeared, never heard again. But we didn't know, of course, about Auschwitz.

And so we started to go at 10 o'clock. I already worked on it, to whom and who is at home. So the captain, the Hungarian head of the police, the captain, was [INAUDIBLE]. And he said, well, this man was caught for having a radio. He had no idea about it. It belongs-- because we had a certificate. It was a state. We had to pay every month for that until we had it. And we had the paper to prove it, that this is my brothers, who we have no idea where he is, my oldest brother. And he hid it.

We had no idea. It was tuned in, but what we didn't know it. And the thing was pulled out because it was hidden. And this man is innocent. He doesn't know anything about pay. Everything what you know-- And, of course, and you know my-- Miss Berkowitz, you know her. And of course, so at 11 o'clock we-- almost midnight it was when we got out my father.

They wanted to take him with the midnight train to Budapest. And when we opened the door, my employer, the captain, and every connection, everybody was there. And my father said, I told you all the time-- because they teased him. Which concentration camp do you want to go to? In this town or in that town-- they really-- they didn't beat him. They didn't touch him. There was an aura about him, you know, that an untouchable.

And he said, I always said that my daughter-- that's the first time I heard my father to say me "my daughter." I told you that my daughter will get me out of here before the train goes. But from then on, it was on. We had to prove this. We had to prove that we, in 1948, our ancestors paid taxes in Hungary because in '48, that part was Austria-Hungary.

And to get papers you needed other papers and other papers. You need other papers. It was a long, terrible-- so there was nothing else to do, that I made a pact with them, with somebody in that to hide my papers. When it comes back between Budapest and here, to hide it here. And that was a big, big job because he took all these papers, and it was registered, send to Budapest. And this, my father's papers, were registered in the book. They signed it. But that one paper stayed with him.

But I was in constant danger. Every month I owed him so much money. But by that time, I made a lot of money because there were no Jewish lawyers. And all the Jewish clients came to our office, not only my former, for my employers, but-- and as I said, he wasn't a very industrious man, my lawyer. So I really did a lot of things on my own. And I shared that.

He knew it. Half was his and half I shared with my old employers, with whom we did the [GERMAN]. So I had money. But this man kept on asking for many, many things-- material for his wife, for his children. So it was very hard until 1944, when, in March, the Germans took over. The Germans marched in.

And they started first. It was already a good system. By this time, they already had all the practice with the rest of Europe. They first brought in the Jews from the neighboring little towns and gathered them in the temple. So the temple was this desegregated. It was already a place for-- so the second day when this came, I started to make connections. I wasn't afraid for us. Of course, I was afraid for my parents. But I wasn't afraid for my sister and for myself.

And your youngest brother?

But my sister had a little-- pardon me?

Your youngest brother was also home.

My youngest brother already was taken also. He became in a legal age. The two boys, we never heard from them anymore. They were taken to Russia. In '44, my youngest brother was already in the so-called Hungarian Army, which was forced labor in another town. At home, just my parents, my sister with her baby, and myself.

Because the people were coming into your town then.

They gathered them in our town. And I knew that all. They started to make connections. But this is the biggest part, which I am so very, very wounded, because I contacted-- started to investigate in my mind that who would be good to take the baby because we knew that we are next to take us to the ghetto. And I didn't want the child to go into the ghetto. I thought we had a better chance to survive, and the child is very tender.

Would you show me the picture, please?

I have a picture of it just by coincidence because I just came back from Israel two weeks ago. And we sent this to my two brothers, who were already there.

Hold it on you knee. OK?

And this is with my sister and her baby, Katie, and myself in front of our house.

Your sister is on the--

My sister is-- this is my sister, on my right side.

And you're on the left.

And Katie is in the middle. And this is--

So you were looking for somebody to take the baby.

To take Katie, that whatever we had we would move easier and that she wouldn't go to the-- to the ghetto and from the ghetto wherever they were taking us because there were-- it was obvious that it is no good. When they take you out from your house, that's already a big, big danger.

Of course, I could have had Gentile papers for my sister and myself. But I wouldn't leave my parents alone.

What happened with the little girl?

So I went, and I asked, and I told them. I have a little niece. I'll give all my jewelry, my-- I didn't have much jewelry, but my sister had engagement ring, diamond ring, and money, and everything we have. Take the child. She's a beautiful, gorgeous, intelligent six-year-old little girl. Please, take her.

Keep her until this madness is over or whatever. I know that you are a Nazi. I know that you are a German, but you

know me for eight years. I'm working here [CROSS TALK]

And what happened with her? Did they take her?

And they didn't-- nobody-- I will talk it with my wife. Finally, one said, OK. I talked with my wife and she agreed to take my baby. So we took a horse and carriage, and we put all the baby's furniture.

OK, we only have about a minute to go on this one.

Well, I don't think that we can finish it in a minute. No, because I don't think that we can finish it. It doesn't--

OK. So when it comes back, then we'll finish with taking the child then.

All right.

OK.

Very good. So this is how it went. Yes. That's when I needed the help. And that's when I didn't get it. And it changed my whole attitude toward life, toward people.

Putting a note down, where we're going to start this.

Pardon?

Putting a note where we're going to be starting when we come back.