

Idle time. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, up.

OK. Now, Mr. Robicsek, you indicated that it was approximately May of 1940 that the ghetto had been instituted in your town.

1944.

1944. What I'd like for you to do is to tell us how it occurred, what happened, the day that it happened, how you were moved, who you were with. Try and recollect for us in as much detail as you can what happened that day.

We got-- we knew that the next day, they will come and take us to the ghetto. The ghetto was cutted off right the other side of the street where we were living.

Remember the name of the street?

The name of the street, it was Tompa Mihai. It was named after a famous Hungarian poet. That was the name of the city-- of the street.

Out of curiosity, have you had opportunity either from before or since your experience during the war to have read that poet's works?

Oh, I read. I knew from his work, yeah. He was a nationalistic, but never antisemite. Because in his time, they weren't-- I don't know if they were antisemites, but I never read anything which was antisemite poet.

So we knew that they will pick us up next morning, early morning. We were allow to take one sack of goods, only the absolutely necessary clothings, nothing else. At that time, they told us to take all our jewelry, and all our money, everything with us.

So in early in the morning, two gendarmes-- csendo, that was in Hungarian the name. Those were very famous, even in old times, that they were-- they would kill their mother if they would be ordered. They were raised specially for this type of work.

They were keeping the peasants under their control before, in 10, 20, 50, 100 years before. And so these people were specially-trained people, very mean and very militaristic, who would do anything, which we found out later, to go after the order what they got. So two of them came. And they took us with a truck. And they put it out in our city-- our street every Jew who was there.

I want to ask you to freeze in your memory just for a moment the picture of those two gendarmes when they came to your home. Do you recollect what they looked like? Do you recollect how they appeared to you at the time? Tell us about the moment, the inevitable moment.

The moment was one of the worst time in my life. We had a very happy little family. And that's-- perhaps that's when we realized that we never will be so peaceful again, how we were before that there. It was terrible. It was terrible to see those-- it's like a verdict. These two very strong and armed people coming in and destroying our home.

Fancy uniforms?

They had a hat, a special hat. And they had a feather, a rooster feather, long rooster feather like that.

They come knock on your door?

Oh, they hit the door, not knocking. They hit the door. But we knew that they were coming.

I understand that. And they knock at your door. Do you recall who opened the door for them?

My mother.

Do you see the scene that vividly today?

Yeah.

What happened next?

They throw up-- they took our sacks. We had-- we were four people at home. My brother was at the forced labor.

When did that take place?

And everybody had one sack, every person can-- had one sackful with. And they throw them on the truck. And because the ghetto was very close, the other side of the street, we had to walk there. They jammed us in in one house, where there were at least 10 families. We were having a part of a room, where many other people were. We were sleeping on the floor.

You indicated that your brother had already gone to forced labor. When did that take place?

He was-- he is four years older than me. So when the Hungarians came in, they didn't Institute right away the Jewish law-- the anti-Jewish law that a Jew can't serve in the army with the Christians, with the Hungarian. So he was in that age that he had to go to the army.

So he was in the army when this anti-Jewish laws came out that they take all the Jews from the army out. And they will make a forced labor. They took all the arms from them. They got shovels and the tools with which they can dig trenches and things like that. And they were living a military life only-- and they took away all the uniforms. We had to send civil clothes to my brother.

Where is it that he was interned or kept?

He was in Nagybány. Now is Baia Mare. It was a city where they were all the forced labor Jews. It was the headquarters of the military.

Did you keep in contact with your brother, have a chance to visit with him?

Well, he was here three times already.

No, no, I'm talking in those days when he was in the camp.

Oh, in those days only through letters.

So it had been a period of time then since you or any member of your family had seen him.

Oh, yes, oh, yes.

Now, you indicated that you're moved across the street. You're now in the ghetto. And there are some 10 or so families-- at least it appeared that way-- all living in the same type of house. Was this an apartment-type house? Or was it a--

No, there weren't there any-- in that area, in the ghetto, there were houses with many floors, many. In that city, many floors is four or five. Five was the highest. But this was like a ranch-type home. It was a home for one of the citizens there. It was confiscated. He was Jewish anyway. So even he couldn't live in his home. And they put it so many families per square meter. And that's it.

Somewhere down the line, you had to ask, I wonder what happened to the fellow that owned this house.

He was in another house.

And you saw him?

He was-- oh, yes. Oh, yes.

Would he ask about his home?

He was asking-- he came there to see his home and what situation is.

Where was he living? He was living in another home two streets from there, jammed in with other people.

Tell us about your day-to-day experiences as you survived the ghetto. It was a very-- because the ghetto was very short, we found out later that the Hungarians were such good allies of Hitler that they sent the Jews, the Hungarian Jews, six months earlier than how they had the understanding with Hitler, with the Nazis. And that caused that Auschwitz and the other Vernichtungslagers, the other lager-- concentration camps, who were built for destroying the people--

Extermination camps.

--extermination camps, they didn't have enough capacity. They worked over capacity. And perhaps, they were sending many more Jews to different working camps if weren't of sent in one-- six months earlier. So they overdid the plan. And that caused much more destroying the people, much more.

But in terms of your day-to-day experiences, how did you folks carry on? How was food provided? How were basic necessities provided?

That happened--

What would you do for entertainment? And how would you feed all of the people?

It was very interesting. Even in the biggest misery of the human being, there is thing which is resembling to the regular life of the people, the regular happy life of the people. now what is the biggest thing what I remember, my mother, when he tasted first the treyfler, she got a piece of bacon.

Because we didn't have-- they didn't allow us to take in food. So we got what the Hungarians sent in. And we didn't have too much food. And they sent the bacon in. And we made our mother to taste the bacon. And she couldn't swallow him. She spit him out. And she never wanted to go close to that, like an enemy.

And also, the life is-- I was taken out the first week from there. So I was really-- the daytime, I was only for a week in the ghetto. They took us out because I was in that age that I was almost close to be taken to the forced labor. They took us--

You were how old at that time?

I was 18 years old. And they took us out to a cadet-- caserne, where the cadets, the army cadets were trained. We maintained the lawn there and clean the places. They took us out in the morning. And they took us back in the ghetto at night.

Armed escort?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes, very heavily armed escort to cannot go again.

What kind of soldiers, local people?

Only these genders, only these very mean people were around us.

You had to ask yourself, why is it that these gendarmes, who were the most feared and most ferocious of soldiers, why they weren't on the front line instead of in your ghetto?

These were kept-- these people never went to the front. These were kept to make order in the country. So these were only to keep the order.

You indicated that you were in the ghetto but for a short period of time. How long?

We were taken to Auschwitz on June 4, 1944.

So approximately?

Approximately a month.

30 days or less. And during that period of time, did you think, at that moment, that there was some opportunity, some hope for your escape, for your survival?

Not without my parents and my sister. I never separated myself, even for escaping.

Did you hear any episodes of individuals who escaped?

Oh, yes. First of all, the first thing, before-- when they sended out the acknowledgment that this and this day, you will be picked up, the Jews of the city, many suicides were-- couple. We knew people who committed suicide. And that was the first shock-- not so much shock that we have to go across the street, but that these people committed suicide. So it must be something that these people are knowing.

When you use the expression going across the street, what do you mean, leaving the ghetto?

No, going to the ghetto. Because we were living before in the same street. But the other side was closed. It started the fence there. So we knew people who committed suicide. And we knew people who defected, who went across the border and went to Romania.

Did that thought enter your mind?

Oh, many times. We were talking in the family. We were talking to my father and--

What did he say?

He said, what happens with the rest of the Jews will happen with us. And that was his only reaction when we were raising this question.

At that time, were you in favor of making an effort to defect?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

But it was clear you would not leave without your parents.

Not without my parents, no way.

I take it, by that time, you were willing to accept your fate, whatever that might be.

Yes.

Now, you're doing work in the area where the cadets were. And you do this for a period of 30 days or less.

Yes, less than 30.

And then comes that fateful day that you have to go to the camps. Remember it very vividly today?

Oh, yes. That can't be forget it.

Did you know in advance that that day would, in fact, be the day that you would be taken?

Yes, yes.

How far along, how much advance notice were you given?

Oh, approximately a week before. They started in transports, different days, different transports. So we knew, before us went other transports also. So we knew what time-- we were notified. In every street, it was a responsible who was a part of the Jewish committee of the ghetto, who were in touch with the SS-- because the SS took over-- who were in touch with the SS, who gave all the orders through these street responsables.

And these are individuals who headed the committee?

Yes. Were they respected individuals in the Jewish community?

They were respected individuals, all very good people. At least we knew that way.

Did you at all anticipate or suspect-- or did people ever call to your attention that, perhaps, these respected individuals might well be collaborators?

No.

Never entered your mind?

No, never. Never, because they had a whole lifetime there for generations in the same city. And they were-- and I believe that they weren't collaborators. Because they went in the same place where I went.

Did they give you reason to hope?

We always hoped.

Did they give you reason to hope?

Yes. Yes.

Can you think of any incident or any statement that might have been made by any of these committee men which gave you that relief?

When there were these block meetings, there were people who raised the question. And then they had to answer them. And many times, they could say only one thing. Look, we know only this what we are told.

Did you go to block meetings?

Oh, yes, oh, yes.

How often were they held?

Approximately every week. Every week, yes. Because it was spoken about the whole organization-- the food, getting the food, and getting to the mikvah, to the bath, and things like that. It was organization meetings.

At that time, were there any members of the Zionist movement who, at that time, had stated for any of these meetings--

Yes, yes.

--and perhaps escape, or revolt, or resistance is the route that the people should take?

Not-- they didn't talk about revolt because you never knew who is there. So the people were afraid of. Because we felt that we are under surveillance always. But raised questions that why-- why are we here? What will happen with us?

I guess my question, really, is were those the individuals who would ask these very questions?

They were, yes.

OK. And these were people-- so I would be clear-- who were readily identified as being members of the Zionist movement?

That's right. That's right.

And when they asked these questions why, what kind of answers do you recall them being given?

We were told, that's all what it was told. Because we didn't know anything concrete, anything to know about it.

Well, at that time, what did you expect would happen? If you knew that there was going to be a resettlement, what did you expect?

You see, I think so what I-- I was thinking about this many times. But I think-- and you know, you are a Jew, that the family is the strongest thing in our life. Now, that's the place where you can get a Jew to collaborate with you-- not to collaborate, but to do what you want him to do.

And that's what the Nazis found out. If they promised that they won't hurt the family, the family will be together. This was the greatest thing. If we would have know that we will be stripped apart right away, soon as we are stepping down from that train, I am sure we would have go to death, if that's the only help. But the family will be together. And this was the biggest thing what they did to hold us together.

So your greatest strength was your greatest weakness?

That's right. That's right. Definitely.

40 years later, have you ever reconciled that?

I am still saying the same thing, that my family is the greatest thing in my life. But I would think now differently, if it could happen, because I know a lot more than what I knew then.

Now, the time comes for you and your family to board that transport, board that train. You indicated previously in our interview that that moment, that's when you knew that any chance of hope, escape, survival probably was lost when the doors were closed. Right?

Yes.

How long did it take you to get to Auschwitz?

Four days.

How far away was it?

I don't know how many kilometers. But it was four days and four nights. So they stopped the train many times outside of different stations, the train stations, terminals. But they took us on the 4th of June, we arrived.

Many people in your particular car?

We were approximately 80 people in the same car.

And how was it that you were transported? Were you able to sit or must you stand? Tell us about that experience.

That was the first-- I spoke since then many times with people, with a new generation. And they put it, the question, why didn't revolted? Which I put to myself also.

What happened with us from the civil life, from a happy civil life, so fast it changed, that you were degraded to the animal level, from a civilized human individual, you were degraded from one day to another, even in the ghetto. We could control our thoughts. We were living a fairly normal life-- not compared with the life before. But we could talk.

Even I fell in love with a young girl, who was killed in that place. I had my wife, who is my wife today. She was there also. And we knew each other before when we-- she was my girlfriend from childhood, really. And she was there. And we went at night out. And you even kiss, which was a big thing in that time, a young Jewish girl, an innocent Jewish girl.

And we were talking about-- not about the ghetto and not about what will happen with us, what was before. So we were living a fairly normal life. We were teenagers.

But from one moment to another, when we stepped in front of that car, that train, and the door was open, and it was a garbage can near the door, and it was this gender, it was there. And we had to give all-- if we had some more jewelry with us, we had to drop in in that garbage can. It was like a barrel.

And also, our-- we had our individual identification card with our photography on it, like everybody had in that time under-- even the Christian Hungarians. And they took them, and they tear them apart, and they drop them into the garbage can. That's when we felt that we never come back here anymore.

And then they pushed you in in that place. You had only bucket with water and one bucket for toilet. And the olders, people with wheelchair were pushed in there, small little kids, babies, mothers, mothers with-- pregnant mothers, pregnant women, even they got birth in the way going there, people with mental illness.

We had two cases when they got mad. So we had to-- us, which were younger people, to jump on him or her and make-- tie them together because it was-- you can't-- from the normal life, with the closing of that door, you got in in the hell. It was-- to see your father and your mother who was a saint going to that bucket, you can't describe it what was there.

People were dying, the sick people. And you didn't know what to do with them. And believe me, the Hungarian-- perhaps this will find-- sound very surprisingly. But OK, the Germans killed us.

But they behaved-- perhaps this was a part of their psychiatry. They behaved more civilized, soon as they took over at the Poland's border from Hungarians, than the Hungarians. The Hungarians didn't give us water. The Hungarians didn't

help us with anything what we were begging to give us.

Within the confines of the particular car that you were riding, recognizing that there were 80 individuals, or approximately that number, in the car with you, do you recall if there were any individuals who, shall we say, took charge, people who you could ask?

Yes.

Was this by pre-assignment? Or did it just happen that way?

Not pre-assignment because there wasn't any more pre-assignment soon as-- they didn't choose who is going to this train, or boxcar, or the other one.

So it would be strictly by chance?

Strictly by chance.

Do you recall the--

My father took charge. He was a butcher. And he was a strong, very strong man.

What did he tell the people?

We have to survive. What can we do? She went from one place to another to help. And we went with him. He asked everybody who was a healthy man to help because we needed a lot of help there.

And your father was the individual who would give orders to the rest of you?

Yes.

And you somehow managed those four days and four nights. Were you able to find place to sleep and so forth? What about stopping the train, getting some fresh air, allowing yourself to compose yourself somewhat, any opportunity given?

Only they opened the door after we were in German hands. But you couldn't get out.

So if I understand, from the time that you left the train station in your hometown to when you made it to the German border-- yeah, would be the Polish border.

The Polish border.

How long did that take, approximately?

That took approximately two days and two nights.

In the two days and two nights, all they would do would be to open the door? Or they didn't even do that?

They even didn't open the door, not the Hungarians.

So the first 48 hours.

No, only through the window, it was a window with wires to cannot even get out, only to get a little bit of air. That was the whole thing on the top here, a small little window.



That was it for all 80 of you.

And it was June. It was hot.

The feeling of terror that must have gone through not just your mind, but all of those with you--

All, everybody.

--had to be totally remarkable.

You can't imagine what was there.

By this time though, the anger that you must have felt was overwhelming.

Especially, I was worried about my parents.

I know that wouldn't have been the first time, but it was one of many times that you had to ask, why me?

That's-- oh, yes, even today. Why us?

What answers did you give yourself then?

I never will answer this question to myself because I don't know the answer. I was even going back to think all my-- many times, where my parents, and my sister, and all my relatives? Where were they?

If I find one crooked man in the family, I would say, that crooked man, perhaps he was deserving what he got. Not what he got because nobody is deserving what we got-- nobody, even the criminal.

I couldn't find one man whom I can see that he was a crooked man or he was different than what the normal, honest life is asking from you in a society. Then can you answer the question? I can't.

Did you know that you were going to Auschwitz?

No. They told us we are going in Hungary on a farmland. And we will help there the peasants. The family will be together till it will get over the war. And then we will get back to the city, to our home.

At that time, had you ever heard of Auschwitz?

Not like Auschwitz. I heard about-- I told you that we had some bochers from Poland, two of them, who spoke about that they took people. They spoke about Treblinka in that time, that they took people. And they are talking about very, very ugly things is done with those people there. But we didn't believe them.

Did they speak from personal knowledge of Treblinka?

Jewish. No. No. They heard.

So they heard.

They never would have got out if they were.

I believe that would have been certainly no sooner than the summer of '42.

That's right. That's right.

But Auschwitz itself, you had no knowledge.

It was Oswiecim in Polish. And in German, they named them Auschwitz. We never knew. We arrived in Birkenau. And we never heard about it ever.

Describe your arrival, please.

When we got close to Birkenau, the first time I saw my mother crying. And I went to her. And I told her that don't cry, everything will be OK. Don't be afraid. It will be everything OK. She said, I am not worried about myself. I am worried about you and the rest of the people. She was a hero.

When you arrived and the door of the car opened, what did you see?

The first thing happened, and they came in, people with striped Haftling clothing, and a few SS. And they started to beat us to get down with sticks. And they came. That was the first thing. They opened the door. We even didn't know where we arrived.

They opened the door. The train stopped, they opened the door. And they jumped down on the train. And they started to beat the people to get down-- down, down, down.

They started to throw out what we took with us what we had-- almost nothing. So they throw them off. We wanted to hold them. And they were Jewish Haftlings. The Haftlings are the-- who was the concentration camp and the Sonderkommando, we found out later.

The name you're using-- Haftlings?

Haftling-- in German, it was the people who were in the concentration camp.

Yes. But I'm just-- I want to make sure that we accurately record the term.

Yeah, that's how they named us there. We were Haftlings later also. And the Sonderkommando was the Kommando who was doing the job of around the crematorium. Now, so these people, they were Jewish people. But they were the meanest-- some of them-- the meanest.

Later, we found out why these people are so mean, that these people were approximately six, seven years ago in the concentration camp. And these were a few survivors of millions of people, who kept themselves alive being mean because they lost everybody in front of their eye. The family was killed.

And these people knew that within a month or two months, they will be destroyed because that was the policy, what I found out later, not then, that the policy was that-- to not be any survivor to tell the story. They destroyed always. They kept always fresh people to do the job.

So these people there, I heard the first time when we hanged on the packages what we brought with us, that you don't need this anymore. You never will use them again. You won't get out alive from here.

So that was the first when we found out that where we came. Plus when we stepped down, they formed a column of human. We saw-- I told you before that because they sended the transport so fast, they didn't have the capacity enough in the crematoriums to kill and burn the people.

So what happened? The gas capacity was enough. But they couldn't burn them fast enough. So it was-- you could see. We arrived at the dawn. You could see at approximately, oh, 500 meters from there, far away, you could see the-- they were burning people. It was a ditch made, a long ditch, where they had burning-- I don't know it was because we never find out.

But you could see that with long steel bars, they were pushing cadavers in. And you smell that special smell, which we smelled for a year there. Because I was a year in the concentration camp there. You smelled that smell, which the burning flesh of the people. So we found out right away, even if we didn't want to believe it. It was in front of our eyes.

When you saw this, what effect did it have upon you and what you observed in others? Did you feel, at that time, that there's no sense in fighting? It's futile to make an effort to survive. You know what was going to happen to you. Get it over with quick.

What I felt there, I felt that I was with my father. My sister and my mother was taken separated from us. We thought that this will be-- because the woman and the man is going in different way, in the different column. So I felt that sometimes, we will survive.

I didn't-- I was in a shock. That's-- if I think back, I was in a shock, which I remember only Dr. Mengele standing in the front. It was the column going toward him, the SS around us. And they were directing.

And he was a beautiful man, like how you look at him-- a German, a German-type German, a blond, blue eyes, beautiful man. And we hardly could see his eyes because he hardly look up. He looked down. He had a horse riding stick.

A rider's crop.

Yes, in his hand. And he was hitting his boots. And he was whistling. I never forget, he was whistling a Wiener Waltz. And he was only doing this movements. He hardly looked up. So these movements send my mother in the gas chamber and many, many other people.

You're at the area of Birkenau where the train has pulled in and come to a rest.

Yes, yes.

Was there a built train station?

It was a built train station. And it was many lines came in that area. So it looked like it was a-- from many, many way, they could come in.

They all funneled into there.

Yeah, that's right.

And then everyone was-- they were separated men from women.

Yeah, and then left and right.

Just so we have understanding-- the separation occurred as you left the train, as you were taken down from the train, your possessions were taken from you, you were then told to line up according to men and women.

Yes, in two columns.

And then everyone, ultimately, was funneled in--

That's right.

--to the camp entrance itself.

Yes, to Mengele.

To Mengele. Now, was this a routine at every day that you later came to find or just on this day?

Now, this day, this what happened. Now, in every one month or one month and a half after I got to Auschwitz, Mengele came out. And it was a selection of the people. And we-- it was at the bathhouse, which had two doors, one entrance and one out. And it was a long, long building with showers.

And there, we had to-- outside, we had to take off our clothing, completely nude, and put our clothing on our hand, and go one by one, a line on one in front of Mengele, who was still with that stick in his hand, and not many times looking up. And he was deciding.

He wanted to know how healthy we are for the work, if we have to be replaced. And those people-- I have the number from Auschwitz. So we were numbered. This was a working lager. This was approximately three kilometers from Birkenau.

OK. Let me again just ask a few more questions pertaining to your actual arrival, the moment of arrival. At the time, when you got off the train and so forth, did you see any evidence of wealth? Let me explain what I mean by that. Did you see money, jewelry, loot? Did you see that other than from what was brought by the members of your particular caravan or train? I'm talking about out in the open.

Out on the open, I didn't see. But I know that every train station where the train stopped from Oradea to Auschwitz till the Hungarians were there, every time they-- the Hungarians never opened the door, but they came to the window. And they said that if somebody has something-- gold or anything which is valuable-- to give it to them because if they come up to the train and they find them, it will be shot there the person-- the same thing the Germans did after they took over. So that was what the loot what I saw.

I'm suggesting that when your train arrived, perhaps loot from previous transports or previous trains that had been there.

Not there because they took them away, even from us, what they took. Because they took everything from us. As soon as they took us in in Birkenau.

Now, on that first day, you go through the line, you recall Mengele. What happens after you obviously had made the cut?

Tell us what happened. I stick to my father. So they chose us to live. So we went on the right side of Dr. Mengele.

Do you think today that it had to do with the fact that your father was such a big and powerful-looking man?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes, definitely. Definitely.

Because the sick-- my mother just got through a sickness. He had hemorrhage before-- I think so all the excitement on what she been through, she was very weak when we got down. My sister, how I found out later, because I couldn't see-- my sister was chosen to live. And she died three days before the liberation of Bergen-Belsen. But my mother was taken to there.

Now, you and your father were given the opportunity to survive by Dr. Mengele. Where did you go?

We were taken-- Birkenau was a faster horse race, or horse-- they had some big stall-- that's how you say-- for horses.

Stables.

Stables-- big, huge wooden constructions. In the center of the construction, it was the heating system, which was by wood. But it was like a square wall, which is approximately three-five foot high. And it ended up in a chimney in the center. So it went in the whole length of there. And it was built from wood completely.

And it had-- holded together the roof by these pillars, put it together like a wooden building. So they jammed us in there so tight that people were even climbing up on those wooden beams to have a little bit more room because we were jammed together. We couldn't-- when we were sleeping there-- I was there only two weeks.

When we were sleeping there, if one had to turn, the other had to turn also because it was jammed so together. And people started to die there also. One-- the first death, which happened right near me, tied to me, it was an engineer from my foster city, who had the sugar diabetes. And they took away the insulin, everything from him. So he died there, pressed together with me.

But I told you before that-- how they could keep us there. And this question, it comes every time when I'm talking, when I'm thinking about-- and many times, I'm thinking about. We proved in Israel that we are not a coward nation. We are not more coward than anybody else in this world. Why could they keep us there?

And you can't say that near every person, it was an SS. We were approximately 1,500 people in that one building. And perhaps they were 10 SS around there outside.

But the only answer is that because they changed our environment from a normal life to the animals level, that's how you can handle people. That's when you can handle mass. I think so.

The two weeks or so that you recall being in that particular building, which was the stable, what job assignment did you get? What orientation were you given?

We went to pick up the food. All day long, we were standing on Appell, in formation, where the SS was walking between the rows and beating people when they didn't like a face or something, or somebody moved. So that was the job. There, it wasn't any work. But they asked for volunteers to pick up the-- we didn't have any toilet there. It was a big wooden--

Trough.

--yes, something like that. And it was in a latrine. And you had to pick them out when it was full and take them, four people take them to a place where we-- so we volunteered, the strongest, the youngest people, to take this, to have some movement. And after that, if you volunteered to this, you were allowed to go and pick up the food for three times a day what they gave you.

So in order to be in a position to get food, you had to first be in a position to remove the waste at the latrines.

That's right. That's right.

That was one of many incidents of psychological.

Definitely. And also, one which is-- which was you didn't get any water. And the thirst were killing us. And that heat there-- and in that small little breathing place, to not get water, and you got a favor, you had to fight for-- to get to the latrine, to go out. They didn't let you out. The SS was standing there.

At night, to go to the latrine, it was a-- to get out from your place what you pressed for yourself, to get out from there, you were sure that you never will find that place again. And you never will find a place where to relax. So it was terrible. You can't imagine these small little things, which are normal in your normal life, everyday's life. What means then when you are not allowed to do it?

What was the purpose of their keeping you in this one particular building for that two-week period?

Oh, to break you down to the level of the animal because we were in the level of the animal.

So all they did was, then, to have repeated lineups and roll calls.

And beatings and anything what you can imagine or you can't imagine to break you down.

So they were looking for survivors of the survivors.

That's right.

Now, having survived that, having gone those two weeks, what next happens?

In the Appell, in the lineup, they were asking-- every day, they were asking different professions. They were looking for tailors. They were looking for different-- every day, some other. And they came up with the profession of Werkzeugschlosser-- and die-makers. And I told my father to get out together. We were standing in one line, my father, my uncle, his two sons, my cousins, and me.

And I told them, let's go. Because this many times happened that they were asking different professions. And anything they were asking, if people were thinking that it will be different than this one stepped out. And they took so many people. And if you were lucky, they took you.

And my poor father, perhaps he would be alive today. He pushed me out. He didn't-- he was so honest-- not because was my father, but he was the most honest man in my life. He didn't want to lie. Even to the SS, he didn't want to lie. So he didn't step out with me. He pushed me out. And I couldn't get back.

So that's how they took away from him. He stayed there. And I found out later, after the concentration camp, one guy came back to the foster city, who said that he was with my father, they took them to Melk, near Vienna.

And he died there. He died there. They were in a stone mine. They removed a big mountain there. And he gave his shoes to a person-- to this person because this person didn't have no shoe. And he had-- his feet was all bloody. And he gave his shoe to this man. And his foot got bloody. And he got a blood poisoning. And he died there.

This would be an opportune time. Let's take a couple of minute break.

OK.

Thanks.