

OK. Running at speed.

Look at the time.

OK, stand by.

Come up.

OK. I think that you were speaking last about your luggage, what you were allowed to take.

Yes, just only the personal belongings, like clothes, that's all-- no money, no valuable. And I think I-- what I tell about how you-- the exchange deputies brought them from different town. The authorities, they fear the local police deputies and the so-called sheriff deputies may be friendly with the Jews.

So brought in four absolutely strange deputies, who was-- came with the rifles and the bayonets. It was-- the whole thing is handled very cruel way. But 3,200 Jews has been compressed in the temple's courtyard and inside the temple. I mean, it's very difficult to be describe to-- it is maybe half a size of the football field. And you get compressed for 3,200 people. I mean, it's very difficult to be comprehend if you've not experienced that, how you get.

I took my daughter there last April. I went back for this temple courtyard for several time. I took a picture. I have it with me. There's nothing else is showing, just a cobblestone. Someday, when I feel, I will probably turn it over to either the archive, the Jewish archive or a Holocaust--

Center.

--center. But it's absolutely-- this picture is no meaning to anybody. There's not telling you anything. There's nothing else, the cobblestone. But for me, is a meaningful picture. And if it's-- and my own children, if-- my own family, if you see it, they-- I don't think they know exactly till I don't took them there what is it. I mean, it's absolutely impossible to comprehend.

So we have been herded together and compressed this place. And two transport has been taken. The first transport has been taken as at 30 of-- I'm sorry, 28 of April, 1944. And the second transport has been taken 30. And I was arriving in Auschwitz in 1944, May 2.

You went with your family? You were still together with your family?

Yes, I still together with family. We went through with the train, apparently, the train where-- the village where I born, where I went to elementary school. And I thrown out some handwritten--

Notes.

--notes, where the road is crossing a railroad. And it was simple paper and pencil handwriting, telling the villagers how much I liked them, I loved them. And we going someplace, I don't know where. And hopefully, I will see them again.

I have to be truthful and honest. That was a Wednesday, longest I live, never forget, around 2:30, 3 o'clock in the afternoon. When I came back, I has been told, the girl who was two years older than me, I went to school also with her, she found that note. And the following Sunday, they called the litany.

In the church?

The church, they read my note, and the whole village is cried. So I have a very deep feeling about these people. They don't know. They're small village people-- not primitive, but not sophisticated. And I don't think they knew or ever thought is-- what happened is going to be happen.

My grandfather, who was very well-traveled. We-- before left the country, we stopped called the city Szombathely-- S-Z-O-M-B-E-T-H-E-L-Y. This also the closest to the Austrian border, but is a large railroad centrum. And we are debating where we going, what's going to be happen.

When you are uncertain in life, you imagining things. You-- is not philosophy. You thinking, you describing, you don't know what's bring the next minute, that we have different idea. Some people said, we're going to be brought in-- bring to the factories.

The one version is going to be well, we're going to be taken to big, large German city. They let them know, the Allies, this is large population, Jewish population, not to bomb. And the different version of thought, I remember in the cattle wagon, we talk about it. There's nobody thought what really happened or nobody think about it. Everybody has absolute different idea.

So when the train is took off, my grandfather says, I want you be tell me in about the next 40 to 45 minutes, if you don't see that sign, Sarvar-- S-A-R-V-A-R. That means we going out of the country. He knows very well for railroad. If you see, we probably going in the country some other part of the northeast. Well, I never saw that sign. The next sign I saw from the train, the late evening, called Wiener Neustadt. Then we are already Austria.

We has been-- 50% has been packed in for the one cattle wagon. I think is a-- what I learn, has been taught, the shame and privacy, it's so fast is diminished. You have two buckets for you-- the one for water, one for necessity. We felt getting more and more animalistic.

And all of a sudden, we saw the river Oder. My grandfather recognized. So he knew that we are heading east and north. And Saturday morning, around 11 o'clock, beautiful sunny day, we are arrived called Birkenau, what is-- actually is a second camp outside of Auschwitz.

We don't know at that time is a Birkenau. I don't want to mislead you or anyone. We just saw two or three rail and a barbed fence. And we see the balloons with the helium up on the air. I was a naive not exactly 15-years-old child that has been told, this is-- if is a plane enemy or Allied plane want to come in this balloon is get on the propeller. So probably, some military description for in English what I not exactly-- wherever, there was a proper name of it.

And we saw with the striped uniform and the SS. And we saw the first one with the man with a stick. He got a black band on it. It says kapo-- C-A-P-O. And he's beating some other man with a striped uniform. But we still remained in the cattle wagon.

And by the evening, everybody was just about quiet down. We were very thirsty and hungry. But most likely thirsty because we still get some food with us. I never forget, a man, 26 years old-- for me as a 15-years-old is a 20-- he was a man to me-- standing next to me-- big, tall, husky fellow, is looking out in that barbed cattle wagon window.

And we saw the square chimneys and the flames shooting out, that sorry smoke. He says-- I ask him, what is it? He says, well, in Germany is a ritual thing for-- well, let me try to translate to English-- the flame, the burning flame what is never stop. Is like in Olympic flame, just is not called Olympics, some ritual burning flame, is never stopping burning flame. He's older, more educated. I believed him.

Did he know or did he believe that?

No. He believed it. He don't know that. We still don't know what's happening.

Didn't know in Hungary.

No slightest idea. Was about 4:30 in the morning. We get-- when the train was-- has been sealed in Hungary, has been opened, and the SS guards came in. And they start screaming and yelling, heraus, heraus, schnell. It means get out fast, move. And they said, antreten, antreten. This means line up. And they told us that the mens and the womens get

separated. There's really no time--

To think.

--to say to anything to anybody. I walked about maybe 25, 30 feet. My father is in front of me, my grandfather and grandmother are more ahead of me, and my mother is next to me.

And I says, I left a whole bread in the wagon. I want to get it. And I said to my mother, I'll be back in a second. And she says, it's OK. I went back, pick up the bread. I never saw her again. This was my last word to her. I never saw my grandparents, never saw my father.

And all of a sudden, I found myself moving with the line because it's fast-moving line that doctors is-- well, that time, I don't know it. I know it about few hours later, Dr. Mengele is staying there. And he don't said-- with his deputy SS, he don't say one word to anyone. He just looked.

And with his white gloves on his hand, on his right hand, he's motioned left and right. Well, depend on who went left or right, with anybody knowing it, especially me, what it means left and right, absolutely no knowledge of it.

Well, you remember, one time beginning, I said, as the local villagers said, if they throw me into the flame, I still come out of it. And I never forget that one man had asked me how old I am. I said, I'm 18. And has been sent left.

And I walked about a good 10 yard. And I don't know nothing. I don't think anything. But even today, again, I says, I do things voluntarily. But force, I don't like. And I looked back, without have any knowledge. Says, why this man-- why he has to be right I go to this way? I'm going the other way.

And I just crossed that way, and I went the right way, not knowing anything, not feel anything, and marched in with the group of that city local people who has been selected to go right. Except two, all of them was older. And we walked through the gate, is a brass band with a striped uniform is playing.

No, I don't want to-- the specific and dishonest, I want to just remain about the truth. I don't know exactly what they played, but some classic. Little children is playing in a swing and a sand box. And a man, I never forget his name, his name is Dr. Vass-- V-A-S-S-- he says, you see, the Germans has made a Jewish state before the Jews had made himself. You see? Look at the childrens is playing here. What a precisely organized life.

Well, doesn't takes too long, we found that out, sure, we went on a big, large hall. They told us to take off the clothes. And we did. I never forget our rabbi, who I maintain to saying it, I'm not proud, but I'm not going to be dishonest to myself.

I've never been religious, but I respect that he's a religious leader, Dr. Winkler, Ernest Winkler. He's a poor man, he tried to be-- put in one corner his tallis, and a Bible, and a tefillin. So the one SS man sending the kapo over there with the-- was like a pitchfork and just shove it in the corner.

The man silently go there, and he putting his tallis and his clothes. He was under the impression we going to be take shower and he going to be see his clothes again. I don't know the different, and so does he. And all of a sudden, the young SS men come with a short-- is like a cowboy using with a whip. The only one thing, some leads-- beats on it. And just like this, and left this guy on his face. And the blood came out of his face.

It's probably hurt me more in hurt Rabbi Winkler. I was frightened, scared seeing his blood. And I knew that since that, I'm not exactly the most perfect place, or near to the right place. I ran through.

The shower-- hair has been removed. And we walked out of the shower, they called disinfection-- is some disinfect-- they put in some kind of lime or some liquid on your head. If you have a lice or something, they don't spread it. And we have to be round. And they gave this striped pants, and striped jacket, and striped shirt, and a woolen clog--

Shoes.

--shoes, the canvas in the top, but the wood bottom. And about five minutes, they give us-- we are in some kind of backyard of there, where he came out of a shower. This not exactly given by size. You have to run and you have to grab it. So we try to be exchange among ourself is who I have probably got a big pants, and I exchange it with someone who has a smaller one. They exchange those striped.

And the guard and some kapo, we going in a-- between the two barbed wire fence. I have to be tell you, this episode even today, still frighten me. I don't know the lady. I never saw her. I never met her. The young woman can't be more than 20-30 years old. She's with a baby on her arm. I can't tell the age of the baby because we're moving. I can't tell-- I saw it.

The only thing I saw, because is swarmed area, she jumped in but she has been dragged out. And there's a SS is yelling and telling her, you will die our way, not your way. And I only saw-- only thing is a picture remain after 41 years, her long hair. And as the water is dripping out, and some SS officer with a bamboo stick is going through her hair.

But we moved. Was a frightening experience. And we get into the barrack. And all of a sudden, it get cloudy, the rain. In our block was this Blockalteste, or the-- mean the block-- the barrack's first man.

Head of the barrack.

He's in charge for the barrack operation. We luckily was-- he wasn't a criminal, he's happened to be a Swiss newspaper correspondent. For some reason, he get stuck in Auschwitz and throw in a concentration camp. Well, we surrendered him. And we ask, what happened rest of the people? Where are they? What is happening? And who we are, who they are, what is it?

And he ask, how long ago came off the train? So we told him, about around 45 minutes, about an hour. And he walked out of the barrack, he sticks his head up, and he's raise his head, and sniffed in the air, and he says, I think just about arrived. And not quite-- I personally, I not quite understand what he meant. But this is the time we found out that everlasting flame is-- means the crematorium.

He wasn't too kind, was he?

Well, thinking back for so many years, how are you going to be tell someone? You tell them-- which way you could tell? Your parents, and your brothers, and sisters has been gassed, and they just thrown in an open flame crematorium burn? I mean, it's a very difficult to be tell kind way for this situation, personally. I have a great respect for the man. I will tell you later why.

And we found it out what happened. And the whole barracks just cried. I think I was one of the youngest in the barracks. The barrack is like a-- it's not a bed, it's like boxes. We got-- four person get one blanket-- no straw, nothing, just a point blank. I have a picture here. If you wish to see it, I will show it to you. But this, I don't think, is necessary. I looked out in a window. And this Swiss Blockalteste come to me. And he says, and will be a sunshine.

There will?

There will be a sunshine-- was a gloomy day. And I don't remember. I don't think I really, honestly, I pay too much attention. But he was-- I think it was a Gentile told me. The reason I'm mentioning this one, the same Blockalteste is followed us-- he came with Mauthausen, Melk, Ebensee, where I get liberated. And the day when I get liberated, I was 59 pound. And he came to me. He says, I don't know you remember, but I told you, will be a sunshine.

Well, a little late in coming.

Pardon me?

A little late in coming.

Well, I'm not so sure it was a sunshine or not.

Yeah, really. OK. What did you end up doing? Were you assigned to a job in the concentration camp?

Well, let me explain one more episode that I experienced in Auschwitz because I only stayed there for three weeks. My music teacher father, who was a civil engineer in this bigger city, he was also a First World War decorated hero, an army officer. When we're standing in for that black so-called coffee, or [NON-ENGLISH], what is the beet-- the sugar beets leaves, vegetable with water, is a very short SS officer.

He took the ladle out of the inmate's hand. And he accused him, he's not putting his plate edge to the barrel straight. And he hit him across the face. And this huge man, about 235-240 pound in the front of me, I could see his veins get stiff and his muscles get tight. And he just turned around and walked away.

And we get inside the barracks. And he says, I could kill this rat with my two bare hands. But I have to be thinking what could happen rest of you. And that big, huge man break down and cried. The same man, the same night, ran out of the barrack, and ran into the barbed wire, and killed himself.

The irony-- the first day when I went back to that-- my hometown, who I bump into? His daughter, who was my music teacher, asking me, you ever saw my father? I can't tell you the feeling what I have. I still shivering. And I kept silent.

And she says to me, doesn't matter, just I want you tell me if you saw him or you don't. And I have no heart to tell her almost a year what I know about him. Was a very frightening place. Is how frightening that Auschwitz, I went back. I went back last April.

You went back already.

I went back, took my daughter. I showed her the place. I'm not saying it by exactly inches and foot, but it's the selection is happened, where is this train. I capable to take picture just about everything, except one place, the main gate with the tower. Even today, I was so frightened, I can't take a picture of it, even today.

And I don't consider myself-- or I should consider myself-- I'm not afraid of anything or anybody. I'm not even afraid to be a dead. That's the last worry I have to be a dead. Because when I'm dead, I don't know nothing. But some reason, that scene is so frighten me, the main gate in Birkenau-- or Auschwitz is the same.

Is that the Arbeit Macht Frei gate?

There is not a sign is made me, where is the train is coming through that arch. And there's a tower there and a siren. That was made me very, very frightening.

What kind of kept you going, Andrew? Was a person, or was it a will, or was it some thought that you held on to?

Well, even so many years myself is tried to be search, I think we have-- all of us have this animalistic instinct. If our parents is dry, normal condition, we are loved, we have time to sorrow and such. When this has been told us, just about arrived, when this Blockalteste maybe in a hour later, we was so occupied to-- how to save ourself. You can't even think about what happened.

Yes, we did think. I think everybody did. But you also-- if you're not concentrated on your next step-- you can't be smarter. The education, logic don't mean anything place like this. Whoever said he outsmarted them, he's not telling you the truth or he is not honest to himself. There's no logic and no education or skill. I don't know exactly.

I think, I express myself to the same question few months ago on the Green Road Synagogue, when I said, I don't think that to be a dead is frighten me. I think, give me the extra strength subconsciously. Without a control, without knowing

it, I think was my main goal on my mind. I don't mind to be a dead, just not their way.

This was-- I think this was subconsciously was the biggest drive for me is to beat the system. I'm willing to die, but not your turn. Naturally, I have no control over their term. But every day, there's some reason. More I think about it, more come to the conclusion that was the biggest drive on my mind.

Where did-- you said you were in other camps after Auschwitz.

Yes, Mauthausen. This was the largest camp in-- after Auschwitz, the oldest one beside Dachau and Buchenwald, is erected in 1938 August, after Hitler is-- had the Anschluss in 1938 March in Austria. And the camp has been erected in 1938 August. 105 prisoners died. Basically, is-- Hitler get there his political enemies there first.

Right. It was a political camp.

The labor union leaders, social democrat, communist, socialist, anti-fascist-- is anyone whoever--

Opposed him.

--opposed him or raised a voice against him.

What jobs were you assigned to, both in Auschwitz and in Mauthausen?

I have no jobs and no-- I don't work in Auschwitz, and I don't work in Mauthausen.

Just stayed in the bunk?

Just stayed in the barracks. And about after staying one week in Mauthausen, I has been with the transport taken to Melk, what is about approximately 94 kilometer from Vienna.

Spell it, will you?

Melk-- M-E-L-K. If I permitted to say, when was President Carter met with, I think, Brezhnev in Vienna, and Rosalynn Carter went to visit, there's a 400-years-old monastery in Melk, what I saw every day. When I read it in the paper, I have no hard feeling.

But it was a big write-up in the local paper, in the Plain Dealer, for Rosalynn Carter, went to visit Melk monastery, 400 years old, the largest religious library in the world. And I just went through my mind, I saw that monastery every day nine months. And Rosalynn Carter has no idea.

And the other side-- on the same side, not even a quarter mile was a camp when every month, between 1,500 and 1,800 prisoners died-- not even a quarter mile. I'm not expected Rosalynn Carter go to visit this camp. But is different values and different times.

I don't felt hurt, I don't felt insulted, or anything. But just I said to myself, is 50 years from now, nobody even knew or remember what happened this place. And 500 years from now, if this world is still exists, everybody knows the monastery in Melk.

I took my children there. I took pictures. I went back to visit. At one time in my life, I went back the very first time. It was a railroad there, has been taken every day to work, about seven kilometers, approximately four miles. They called Loosdorf-- L-O-S-D-O-R-F-- is a called-- is a tunnel.

The quartz was the name of the project. It's a underground factory. But we did a-- on a mountain, we did a mining, take the stones out. And I only see one side of the railroad.

In 1973, I went back with my wife. And I said to her, I want you to be clocked how long this takes from this side of the railroad to walk for me in a normal walking the other side of the railroad. Is a double rails. And she says to me, 23 seconds.

When I was there, every day, going back and forth, we walked from the camp to the railroad, and we taken by the train. Was an unreachable, out of the sight. The dimension was so huge, so far. I went back for curiosity, just measure the time. I want to see it, how far I away from freedom. And I found it out. 1972, I was 23 seconds away from freedom. But I can't touch it. I even myself searching things like this. I have no answer for everything. So you ask me, what is give me strength?

I worked in the tunnel nine months. You've probably seen here in the street men working with these air hammers. Well, that's the kind of hammers I worked. In 1945, April 9, the Russian Army is getting closer to. We have no way to knowing what's happening in the world.

There's only one thing we knew is we got approximately 1,500 or 2,000 additional people coming in every month. And in the morning, in the Appellplatz, or the evening, or an afternoon, when a Obersturmführer-- excuse me, the Lagerführer, Ludolph came in and told them how many people is in work, how many is dead, how many is in a Krankenhaus, how many is sleeping, we knew it. It's-- they came 1,000 people. The total population is not expanded. So that means just about approximately that much is also died.

I think I told you-- well, I'm not personally-- I told in a meeting. I told you on the telephone, I don't want to be talk about a physical. It's not-- it's so many things has been said. I took my daughter there. I took a picture with her and with myself in a sidewalk, coffee and milk. The picture, if I showed someone, this means nothing. Don't say anything, don't know nothing. Even my own daughter is ask, why you took this picture there?

I says, Patty, in 1944, July 18, the Allied is bomb this camp. They don't know this is a concentration camp. They thought is a engineering army battalion there that's making those prefabricated bridges and com-- pontoons-- yeah, the prefabricated bridges crossing rivers and such. And they bombed the camp. And a few people died. And a few tried to be escape and get caught.

And that Lagerführer came in. And two Russian has been caught. And we has to be standing in the Appellplatz. They ask, who is a-- is any rabbi or priest here? So the two rabbis stepped out. Well, the man-- the Lagerführer said, he wants to be this rabbis put a rope on those two Russian prisoners who want to escape. But I found that absolutely cruel, inhuman.

When I get liberated, I found it out in a shoe repair shop, a Dr. George Nybor, who was a gynecologist from Budapest, who was a number one-- was director of the number one female clinic in Budapest. But he discarded-- he told, when they ask what's his occupation, he said he is a shoe repairman. He don't want to-- some, he already knew it, he probably-- want to use him for experimenting on for a twins.

And he was basically, is a friendly term. I mean, they called it a friendly term in that, the SS Lagerführer. And he told me, says, this Lagerführer, he told him, when there was an air raid, he was sitting in a sidewalk coffee. And he told the name. And I-- some reason, I--

Remembered that.

--made it remember that name of the sidewalk coffee. And he says, in a evening, 8 o'clock, he has to be-- go to-- this has happened, hanging in 4 o'clock in the afternoon. And he has to finish up his hanging because he has a concert ticket in Salzburg, concert hall. Believe it or not, since I'm going to the Severance Hall, doesn't matter how much I don't want it, I always look around how many potential killer is here?

That man is afternoon executing two person, in the evening, go to the concert. Maybe you could call devious, maybe you could call me revenge. But I went back to the sidewalk coffee with my daughter as a revenge, to tell the world, I'm here. He's not any longer, he get executed in a Nuremberg trial. But I can't-- I don't went over there to tell anybody here,

no, you know that one time is a Lagerführer here in Melk who executed people? No, it just my own satisfaction.

OK.

It was very important for me--

To do that.

--to do it, to see that man who hanged people afternoon go to the concert.

Did the rabbi do it?

Yes. He has no choice.

No choice.

Now, the same man, the two Frenchmen 1944, Christmas, through-- escape through the sewer pipe. They crawled about good six kilometer. The sewer line from where we worked in that called the quartz project is lead into the main sewer going parallel between Linz and Vienna. And the SS waited for him. And they brought them back and put him on a two-wheeler.

And these two Frenchmen, I don't think more than 26-27 years old, they has to be holler-- [GERMAN]. That means, I'm here again. And Christmas Day, the so-called birth of the Jesus Christ, the Christian world, the name of the god, non-Jews, two Frenchmen has been executed the Christmas Day front of all inmates. Again, the same man, probably in the evening, he has a very nice Christmas dinner with his family.

Christmas party. Yeah, right.

Was Melk the last place that you went to?

No, Ebensee.

Ebensee--

E-B-N-S-E-E.

What was that? Was that a camp?

Yes.

It's already nearing the end of the war. So what was that a work camp?

Yes, but I wasn't working there because it was-- we has been evacuated from Melk to Ebensee.

I see, trying to get them ahead of the Russians front.

Yeah, because this was more farther west. Is called a Oberosterreich, Upper Austria.

I see. OK. I hope we can fit it.