

You were talking about Auschwitz.

Yeah. No, it is still Auschwitz. So they brought us on the place. After they had enough, many people was beaten and hit, blood.

What was your feeling about the Jewish kapos?

What kind of feeling can be? They said to us, you are [NON-ENGLISH]. Everything was in Polish. You are a number. Here was a number. And around, there was so many lice. Hard to talk about.

So they brought us on the place. We went. They give to each two persons a bridge to lay down. It was a sack with straw. And two people should lay on this. So I picked out my friend together to be. This was before. It wasn't just [INAUDIBLE] with the bread [INAUDIBLE].

You said there was a number on your uniform?

Here was a number.

Did you get a number?

57-- no, when we went to Auschwitz, it was such in hurry. They had so many transports, they couldn't do this. So they left without a number. But here was a number. No, the left side was the number.

Do you remember your number?

57. I remember some 57, and from there I forgot. When it was over the war, this came the lucky moment, I had it in the hand. A [NON-ENGLISH], was it. [INAUDIBLE] a hill from those millions of flies in there, I took my [NON-ENGLISH], was it. Stripes. And I held it in my hand, maybe to take it home or clean it up. But again picked up. I did not. But if I ever take it, people having it. A cousin has this and cleaned it up. And sits in a nice in a little, under glass.

So they put us-- we went to sleep. At least we are on a place. Next morning came another murders, two or three. They taking us to bring another place again. They made it out such like a carousel. They can do everything. What they gave, we had to take. And we stood there and the upper platz. It was the counting. The count. The count how many heads he has in there.

So when the night was over, we slept over. In the morning, they wake us up which was very nice words. They had language. Bringing it out to the upper place. Upper place is like Hanna said. Over there, they count. Hitting and beating was all over. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

So we're on the upper place. Comes out the kapo. And he say, who is here was in the ghetto? Kapos or something like this, [GERMAN]. [INAUDIBLE] maybe we are [INAUDIBLE] 70. He was more than this. And the boy said they know him from Galicia. Galicia, Poland. He's from [INAUDIBLE] also. So he gave himself once and the other side some. [SPEAKING GERMAN]. So it was ordered for him because he then lived like a king in this time.

So they counted again and again. Then he started to ask who is-- how they said, I remember. The [GERMAN]. [SPEAKING GERMAN]? It was [INAUDIBLE] one. And the other one was [GERMAN]. And in this trouble, I took my mind a while to think about it. I talked with my friend quiet. Look, [GERMAN] is very hard work, looks to be. Were guns fixed, something like this. And [GERMAN] I meant, is-- [INAUDIBLE] bike. Bikes. It will be much easier. And it was this way. But this was not [INAUDIBLE], but it was in a big factory, very big like a few trucks could be going back and forth over there. Such big. And was working so many nations. So many nations was working over there.

We went to the work over there. They wake us up very early, must be about 3 o'clock. Nobody knew the time exactly. We start walking. We had wooden shoes. It was a walk for a hour, an hour and a half to work.

But one thing, I was lucky with this. I worked behind a roof. It was a very big hole. We had a corner. We stood with our machines. Five or six people was on this work. And they had-- first time I saw it-- a oven to heat. Hot air came out. It was lucky they didn't kill us. All went down to thing. He shut off the heat. And we was cold all the time. He put on again, and it was running, like a funny play. He shut off and we put in. But he didn't kill the [INAUDIBLE] somehow. Somehow.

So we start working. He gave me a Frenchman. I didn't know what he wants from me. If he wants to take a He stood a half an hour, and I have to be working only. After the half hour, and everything wasn't over. We worked. Something was the airplanes a piece with [NON-ENGLISH] was the name. We put the aluminum [INAUDIBLE]. At this time, I put in my fingers and then it was nothing to help heat it.

And the work was a little better because I was under a roof, warm place. At 12 o'clock, 12:00 to 1:00 was lunchtime. It was our lunch. It was something to see. And at this time, I don't know how this has happened. Each one received by 12 o'clock-- before 12:00 a few minutes, the kapo give to each one a [NON-ENGLISH], like a quarter, something like this. And with this, we went up to there, far, far away in the room, and they gave you the soup.

All of a sudden, I keeping this to give him in the hand, and he didn't took it. I don't know why. He didn't took it. He didn't took it to give me the soup. I ran fast so I was eating very slowly to have it a little more good feeling. So I eat it up very fast, and I running back to him for a soup. And I don't know how the hell he recognized-- I don't know. At this time, I was the first time. By the end he gave me a [NON-ENGLISH]. I heard it later on television. They hitting some in Jamaica. At first it's something [NON-ENGLISH] also.

So he didn't gave me. Then is the gong. The bell is ringing. I have to go back to work. I going back to work. I staying there and start the machine working. And a few minutes later comes a murder -- I wish I would kill him on the place when I see it. He was also from Å Å³dÅ¼. So he start knocking me back and forth, back and forth. And I was full with blood. And they gave us special rags, white, pieces to wipe the machine, to clean. Here sits different incarnations, Germans, and French, and different. They know what's going on here. But what can I do? I wipe up the blood, and I get back to work. So it's over. And I think myself, what? I steal? I didn't steal! He didn't took the [NON-ENGLISH] from me, the [NON-ENGLISH].

But this was not the end of it. Maybe half an hour later or an hour, he send again. He has such a helper by himself in this room. The kapo calls you. I meant, what's going to be now? I come in there. I remember it was a father and son, an elderly man. He tell them, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] in Polish. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

He begged him mercy for me. No. And he gave me a sentence, five whips. And such and such a murderer he gave me-- he had two wooden, a thick one, a hole inside, rubber pipes. And the other one are full inside. I didn't tell them. Was I going to say this and this? [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. He gave me five whips. He said, five. It must be five.

I went back to work. And I meant, come sometimes an end of it or not?

You wanted to add some more.

Auschwitz also. Because these are important things. I had, like I said, I never risked to steal something, or what, a piece of pillow-- from they take it a lot The pillows. The pills. So when we went in the room to take a shower, he said, all glasses, raiments, and shoes you can keep. But if somebody had nice shoes they took them away right away. And I had a good pair of shoes. I spared my piece of bread from the ghetto to buy the shoes, a bread and a half, I think.

But I made it in [INAUDIBLE], each time a piece. So when I went in the room to the shower, I knew how it is. I had a piece of bread from the way which they gave us up to Auschwitz. I put the piece of bread in the shoe, and a picture I had from the whole family, the room, even the furnitures was-- I was liberated after the military. I made a [NON-ENGLISH]. How you say it?

Party,

Party. It was a picture with everybody. Was only one brother that wasn't on this picture. He lived somewhere else, not in Å Å³dÅ¼. So I put it in the shoe. And when I came to him, he got a little place. And here was a bench. He put right away the hand in the shoe like somebody would tell him. The bread he left me. He didn't say nothing. But he pulled out the picture. He said nothing but throw it. It's this [NON-ENGLISH]. He's such a big-- they ate like horses. They had a good life. So I couldn't hit [INAUDIBLE]. Strong. So he throw it away. Now I have nothing from my whole family. I went, who can figure? It's so far how it still go, the troubles.

So we start working. We get used to the work. It also was very complicated. There was a foreman, a German. He said, [SPEAKING GERMAN]. If something happened, the work was like a sabotage. Sabotage, he shall us hanging. But we worked good, me and the other friends. It was five or six people in this work.

So the work was like we are going. Day after day, day after day. The days was long. Very long. Each day for himself was like weeks. You go and come. Once they said they will give soup in the evening. Have your dish ready. You're coming back from work, you're going to have a soup. They was such fresh, and such go on our nerves in our life. It's noodles. Noodles with water, so. And he worked this way not to catch a noodle. I had some water. I say, what kind of soup is this? The water not clean. That's all.

Later on, somehow I went by. I didn't control them. They would kill me on the place if I were to say a word. They opened up the can. And the can was such high, funny with this milk. [INAUDIBLE] maybe. But I'll keep this. I saw a full can of noodles. I said, oh, my god, this was [NON-ENGLISH] in this noodles? How is this happen? I didn't saw even a centimeter from a [NON-ENGLISH], nothing. No, that's good.

After those days, I was sick. They give [NON-ENGLISH]. If they sent somebody to [NON-ENGLISH], it means not to work for eight or 10 days. I don't know. I had this number. I put it in cellophane paper. But this one went up. And so many years went by. Malka said it's up. The whole-- nothing to see. Only a pipe [INAUDIBLE]. They was sitting in there. We was such hungry. It's no word for it. And they cooked. They had a German boy from-- I don't remember. He had faith. It was after all. They killed him or not, some Jews. If they killed him, God bless them.

He drive a horse with a buggy in the street. Free, alone. Nobody watched him. When we went back from work, he came back to the-- how you call it? The hearth. He brought in a sack and opened up the window. He didn't know to watch this. He throw in a sack of potatoes, maybe 100 kilo so, for sure. If this is not enough, the next day he brought cow legs. And we're locked in there. We was sitting. Everything was working in there like wild. God, how this can be. People-- this is Jews!

I remember I begged a boy. He was a little nothing. He was a little bit-- maybe he had somebody know him or what. He was sweeping the floor. I said, look, when you pulling out the water from the potatoes, give me a little in my dish. He didn't answer. He didn't give. This was the life.

When it's come we was liberated, I can't go so exactly line by line. After three days, three days I didn't came out. We was a few of them. It was not like going to [INAUDIBLE]. They worry such. And they worry. People went in the stores. They grabbed who was healthy. I could hardly walk. I don't know. If I would be another few weeks, I wouldn't be able to go.

We went out on the street. Went a kapo. They went to work. So I went to them. What, I'm going to be ashamed with so much troubles I had? They pulled out a [NON-ENGLISH] they called it, a sandwich. So thick with eggs inside. Nice thing, but I told them danke schoen. Then came this kapo.

He gave me the whips. Hey, [SPEAKING GERMAN]! What you doing here? Go ahead! And started pushing me. At this moment, my nerves took me. I said, go to hell! You think I'm ripping out the-- you are lucky I have no [NON-ENGLISH] and not ripping got a stone from the brook and I give you over the head. It's not a little earlier, then he even he gave me the whips. Now you finished. The [NON-ENGLISH] is finished. But this was the life.

And than, after a longer time, start coming-- we called him the sachim. This is why I said about Mengele. But he was-- I

don't know. Maybe he was also, I will say. [SPEAKING GERMAN]. We were bare. Naked. And I looked around who there was liked or not. This side or this side. By myself. They took my friend away. He said also, when you're lying, you're saying you are doing this or this and you can't do it, it shall right away hanging. So they took him away. I was such-- I don't know. It's no good to be such that [INAUDIBLE]. And later on, he act this way with the piece of bread. He went I ate up his bread.

So after 15 minutes or so, they pushed us back to the barracks. Oh, god, when we came into the barracks, myself I couldn't see. But I saw the other people, how they looked. Like dead people walking around. What can you do? And they locked up right away the door from this barrack. But I looked a way, where to come out here, where to look for the-- he brought away some 300 people they picked out for different works. And how I made up my mind not to steal a piece of this or this.

The door opened up, I right away was outside. I couldn't walk fast either, but I did it. And I start asking. It was like a [NON-ENGLISH]. Auschwitz was it. I met a Polish kapo. He was the kapo from the barrack. If you know in Polish everything went, if you know, ask him where the people, the 300, was called. Yeah, he say. Work. Stayed back. And here, I don't know, it's not such a good thing to walk back. They can catch me. They can kill me.

But the nerves was pushing me to do it. I start running. This was in the end. This was in the other end, where they went in in our barrack. Hurriedly, I came there. I see, from before, the entrance stays a few people looking in, looking out. And somehow-- I don't know how it was-- I mixed in between, and I shove in the barrack. So I'm in the barrack again with the friend.

I went over there, and this time he was going to help me. Or me, him, or the opposite. I told to him, look, I came in here. How to do now? You know how the take names or so. And he said, yes I will tell you. Here was two boys, brothers or red hairs I remember they sneaked out from here. Oh, if somebody sneaked out, maybe it will be a place for me. And sit there. OK.

We slept over the night there. And the next day, they're making ready the people, to send them away of different works. Now I don't know what to do. I asking him. He said, yes, he made a list by name. And this would be very bad. But something, a feeling pushed me. Stay, stay. And the [INAUDIBLE] second. I was standing and seeing what will be the end here. So he say he has to have 300 people. And he has 302. Oh, it's no good. I must be one of them.

I asking him-- and I has to be very careful, because the friend was ready to leave here, and I keeping him up because they're looking for specials. I said, look, I go for the list. But remember, if it will be something like this, we will have something. And he [INAUDIBLE]. A few of them were standing outside the barrack. And one leans out of the house, starts hitting him over the head, very [INAUDIBLE], from both side. And he's still waiting for another one. And I think, what should I do here? I will learn now this. This one I wouldn't be able to stand it. Somehow ran out another one. Also when and when the beating was, I catch my breath. And so, he has exactly the 300.

Comes a little time. They start bringing us for different-- this was summer. It was a little easier than the wintertime. This was already in May, I think. Sometimes like this. And they brought us to a place where we should start working. I took a job, and he took a job. At this time I was friendly with him. So we got together, slept together in one bridge.

But how was further? Sometimes I forget it. It was lots of things of there.

Thank you for telling us what you have remembered. This concludes the interview of Nathan Kalman. It was conducted on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum by Gail Schwartz.