

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:02,660

2  
00:00:02,660 --> 00:00:07,010  
What were you aware of about  
the general Jewish situation

3  
00:00:07,010 --> 00:00:10,340  
in Budapest?

4  
00:00:10,340 --> 00:00:13,340  
I'm guessing that about  
September, October, November,

5  
00:00:13,340 --> 00:00:21,860  
we found out about the  
availability of Schutzpasses

6  
00:00:21,860 --> 00:00:28,580  
issued by the Portuguese,  
the Vatican, the Swiss,

7  
00:00:28,580 --> 00:00:30,290  
the Swedish government.

8  
00:00:30,290 --> 00:00:35,203

9  
00:00:35,203 --> 00:00:37,370  
You had not heard of Raoul  
Wallenberg at that point.

10  
00:00:37,370 --> 00:00:40,460  
At that time, I had not  
heard of Wallenberg at all.

11  
00:00:40,460 --> 00:00:43,580

12  
00:00:43,580 --> 00:00:49,100  
We were fairly well

isolated, and, therefore,

13  
00:00:49,100 --> 00:00:58,200  
it's very difficult to have  
had news of that type coming

14  
00:00:58,200 --> 00:00:59,360  
into the house.

15  
00:00:59,360 --> 00:01:02,150  
If you had no one  
that was visiting you,

16  
00:01:02,150 --> 00:01:06,080  
you didn't find out very much.

17  
00:01:06,080 --> 00:01:09,350  
We were aware of that  
one of our neighbors

18  
00:01:09,350 --> 00:01:16,680  
had the access to  
the Swiss Schutzpass.

19  
00:01:16,680 --> 00:01:23,320  
He was selling it to those  
who were able to pay for it.

20  
00:01:23,320 --> 00:01:25,060  
Did your mother try to get one?

21  
00:01:25,060 --> 00:01:29,060  
We didn't have the money,  
so we could not get it.

22  
00:01:29,060 --> 00:01:32,710  
And at the same time,  
in the same time period,

23  
00:01:32,710 --> 00:01:46,000  
the Germans allowed, I believe,  
1,200 Zionists to pay their way

24  
00:01:46,000 --> 00:01:49,510  
out of Hungary.

25  
00:01:49,510 --> 00:01:53,890  
The-- I don't remember--

26  
00:01:53,890 --> 00:01:54,820  
I thought it was--

27  
00:01:54,820 --> 00:01:57,640  
it was either 1,200 people  
or it was \$1,200 per person

28  
00:01:57,640 --> 00:01:59,230  
that they let go.

29  
00:01:59,230 --> 00:02:03,450  
But one family that  
did go was my uncle

30  
00:02:03,450 --> 00:02:05,020  
with his wife and two children.

31  
00:02:05,020 --> 00:02:09,220

32  
00:02:09,220 --> 00:02:13,840  
Did you come in contact  
with any Jewish refugees

33  
00:02:13,840 --> 00:02:16,060  
from other countries  
who fled to Hungary?

34  
00:02:16,060 --> 00:02:20,860  
We heard of people coming in  
from Poland but not Romania.

35  
00:02:20,860 --> 00:02:22,350  
I have not met any of them or--

36

00:02:22,350 --> 00:02:23,350  
You, yourself, did not--

37  
00:02:23,350 --> 00:02:24,250  
-- I don't remember-- no.

38  
00:02:24,250 --> 00:02:24,630  
--talk to them.

39  
00:02:24,630 --> 00:02:25,130  
No.

40  
00:02:25,130 --> 00:02:27,790  
But we-- evidently, we heard  
that there was other countries

41  
00:02:27,790 --> 00:02:29,590  
that--

42  
00:02:29,590 --> 00:02:32,890  
and this was, I think, in  
early '44 they were coming

43  
00:02:32,890 --> 00:02:33,680  
in continually--

44  
00:02:33,680 --> 00:02:34,390  
Right.

45  
00:02:34,390 --> 00:02:36,520  
--even before the  
Germans actually came in.

46  
00:02:36,520 --> 00:02:38,985  
So we're talking  
about '40 to '43.

47  
00:02:38,985 --> 00:02:39,780  
Right.

48  
00:02:39,780 --> 00:02:41,136  
But you yourself did

not come into contact

49

00:02:41,136 --> 00:02:41,969  
with these refugees.

50

00:02:41,969 --> 00:02:48,000  
But we did not, no, primarily  
because we were Hungarians.

51

00:02:48,000 --> 00:02:52,000  
We go back to the assimilation,  
and they were foreigners

52

00:02:52,000 --> 00:02:57,618  
and were as prejudiced as  
they were toward us later on.

53

00:02:57,618 --> 00:02:58,160  
Even though--

54

00:02:58,160 --> 00:02:59,305  
--which I experienced.

55

00:02:59,305 --> 00:03:00,680  
Even though you  
both were Jewish?

56

00:03:00,680 --> 00:03:01,600  
Yes.

57

00:03:01,600 --> 00:03:06,650  
But we're not-- we had the  
Jewish religion and not

58

00:03:06,650 --> 00:03:09,310  
the Jewish--

59

00:03:09,310 --> 00:03:12,430  
we had the faith but not the--

60

00:03:12,430 --> 00:03:16,030  
I guess the ethnic

grouping, which

61  
00:03:16,030 --> 00:03:19,060  
is fairly typical of the  
German and Hungarian Jews,

62  
00:03:19,060 --> 00:03:20,280  
the middle class.

63  
00:03:20,280 --> 00:03:22,570  
Weren't very proud  
of it, actually,

64  
00:03:22,570 --> 00:03:26,270  
but it was that  
way nevertheless.

65  
00:03:26,270 --> 00:03:29,350  
Well, now it's December 1944.

66  
00:03:29,350 --> 00:03:36,490  
My uncle left, which I resented.

67  
00:03:36,490 --> 00:03:38,800  
I resented bitterly  
that we had to buy

68  
00:03:38,800 --> 00:03:44,830  
our way into a Swiss Schutzpass,  
because by that time,

69  
00:03:44,830 --> 00:03:46,380  
I knew we should have--

70  
00:03:46,380 --> 00:03:49,900  
that things are going  
to get real bad.

71  
00:03:49,900 --> 00:03:56,550  
And it came the time,  
specifically December 13th--

72

00:03:56,550 --> 00:03:59,410

73

00:03:59,410 --> 00:04:00,780

let me go back.

74

00:04:00,780 --> 00:04:02,470

In this September,  
October, November

75

00:04:02,470 --> 00:04:07,060

period, my uncle  
from Transylvania,

76

00:04:07,060 --> 00:04:09,040

my father's brother--

77

00:04:09,040 --> 00:04:09,980

His name?

78

00:04:09,980 --> 00:04:13,022

His name was Leslie [? Lutzy ?].

79

00:04:13,022 --> 00:04:16,120

80

00:04:16,120 --> 00:04:18,820

We found out that  
he was not deported,

81

00:04:18,820 --> 00:04:21,160

or he was-- he  
did not disappear.

82

00:04:21,160 --> 00:04:26,620

He was in the labor  
brigades, he was in Russia.

83

00:04:26,620 --> 00:04:27,850

They took him to Russia.

84

00:04:27,850 --> 00:04:31,030

He was digging his  
way back into Hungary

85  
00:04:31,030 --> 00:04:35,290  
and ended up on a  
freight train, not

86  
00:04:35,290 --> 00:04:37,450  
like the deportations,  
an open freight train.

87  
00:04:37,450 --> 00:04:41,890  
That's where they were being  
transported and lived in.

88  
00:04:41,890 --> 00:04:44,020  
They were pulled in into--

89  
00:04:44,020 --> 00:04:48,490  
across the street from our  
house in the Western railroad

90  
00:04:48,490 --> 00:04:49,960  
station.

91  
00:04:49,960 --> 00:04:51,460  
And he got in touch with us.

92  
00:04:51,460 --> 00:04:53,200  
He sent us a message.

93  
00:04:53,200 --> 00:04:55,300  
And during the  
curfew, I was taking

94  
00:04:55,300 --> 00:05:01,420  
over food to the people and soup  
and such that my mother made.

95  
00:05:01,420 --> 00:05:06,040  
And they were there  
for several weeks



96

00:05:06,040 --> 00:05:10,240

and were pulled  
out at some point.

97

00:05:10,240 --> 00:05:11,740

We didn't know when  
they were going.

98

00:05:11,740 --> 00:05:13,100

They just disappeared.

99

00:05:13,100 --> 00:05:15,540

They just left.

100

00:05:15,540 --> 00:05:21,830

So that was a relative  
out of nowhere showing up.

101

00:05:21,830 --> 00:05:24,560

Relatives, my uncle, going to--

102

00:05:24,560 --> 00:05:28,160

supposedly to-- I guess  
the Germans were promising

103

00:05:28,160 --> 00:05:30,740

to take him to Switzerland.

104

00:05:30,740 --> 00:05:33,460

We have found out after  
the war that they ended up

105

00:05:33,460 --> 00:05:36,980

in Bergen-Belsen  
in a transit lager

106

00:05:36,980 --> 00:05:45,255

about the same time I guess  
that the Dutch girl was there,

107

00:05:45,255 --> 00:05:46,000

Anne Frank.

108  
00:05:46,000 --> 00:05:46,500  
Mm-hmm.

109  
00:05:46,500 --> 00:05:50,000

110  
00:05:50,000 --> 00:05:54,920  
Subsequent to their  
stay in Bergen-Belsen,

111  
00:05:54,920 --> 00:05:58,925  
the Germans indeed took  
them out and they did end up

112  
00:05:58,925 --> 00:06:01,430  
in Switzerland.

113  
00:06:01,430 --> 00:06:03,410  
But they had a, it was  
a fairly close call.

114  
00:06:03,410 --> 00:06:06,140

115  
00:06:06,140 --> 00:06:10,090  
Going to December  
13 in the morning,

116  
00:06:10,090 --> 00:06:12,680  
we got a phone  
call from my father

117  
00:06:12,680 --> 00:06:14,720  
from nowhere, from all  
of a sudden that he

118  
00:06:14,720 --> 00:06:17,360  
is in a railroad  
station, another railroad

119  
00:06:17,360 --> 00:06:22,220

station in Budapest, and  
asking us to bring him food.

120  
00:06:22,220 --> 00:06:28,340  
I talked to him, and he asked us  
to bring him food and clothing

121  
00:06:28,340 --> 00:06:30,890  
and told us where  
he's going to meet us.

122  
00:06:30,890 --> 00:06:31,865  
This was December 13.

123  
00:06:31,865 --> 00:06:36,200

124  
00:06:36,200 --> 00:06:39,620  
We went to see him  
and couldn't find him.

125  
00:06:39,620 --> 00:06:43,520  
So we brought the food  
and the clothing back,

126  
00:06:43,520 --> 00:06:47,600  
and we made it back  
before the curfew when

127  
00:06:47,600 --> 00:06:54,930  
the gendarmes came into the  
house and wanted all Jews.

128  
00:06:54,930 --> 00:06:58,320  
And there were only  
men, women, and children

129  
00:06:58,320 --> 00:07:02,600  
to come downstairs  
and be taken out.

130  
00:07:02,600 --> 00:07:03,740  
These are the Hungarian--

131  
00:07:03,740 --> 00:07:04,540  
These were the Hungarian.

132  
00:07:04,540 --> 00:07:05,990  
The Hungarian  
gendarmes, actually,

133  
00:07:05,990 --> 00:07:10,790  
were worse than the Germans  
by far, to us, anyway.

134  
00:07:10,790 --> 00:07:15,470  
Because they were the ones who  
were in charge of rounding up--

135  
00:07:15,470 --> 00:07:17,780  
they rounded them up--  
they rounded the Jews up

136  
00:07:17,780 --> 00:07:18,740  
in the provinces.

137  
00:07:18,740 --> 00:07:20,470  
Because these were  
the provincial--

138  
00:07:20,470 --> 00:07:23,450  
it's like the state  
police, if you will,

139  
00:07:23,450 --> 00:07:26,750  
but it was really  
federal police.

140  
00:07:26,750 --> 00:07:31,310  
It was the government employees  
that oversaw the provinces,

141  
00:07:31,310 --> 00:07:35,060  
and they were doing  
the deportations

142

00:07:35,060 --> 00:07:36,050  
from the provinces.

143

00:07:36,050 --> 00:07:41,780  
And then in October, November  
when the Jews of Budapest

144

00:07:41,780 --> 00:07:43,400  
were being rounded  
up, they bring--

145

00:07:43,400 --> 00:07:45,500  
they brought all of  
them back into Budapest,

146

00:07:45,500 --> 00:07:50,340  
and they were the ones who  
guarded us and who took us in.

147

00:07:50,340 --> 00:07:56,600  
But in this-- when the  
gendarmes came into the house

148

00:07:56,600 --> 00:08:08,430  
and my mother suggested that,  
remember the man who jumped off

149

00:08:08,430 --> 00:08:10,530  
from the sixth floor, whether--

150

00:08:10,530 --> 00:08:14,110  
do I want to commit  
suicide with her or not?

151

00:08:14,110 --> 00:08:18,300  
And, again, I made  
a decision, which

152

00:08:18,300 --> 00:08:24,910  
was no, because things could  
be better, maybe better.

153

00:08:24,910 --> 00:08:31,740  
And so we went downstairs and  
joined a group of, I think,

154  
00:08:31,740 --> 00:08:34,400  
no more than seven  
or eight people.

155  
00:08:34,400 --> 00:08:37,590  
I was the only  
child in that group.

156  
00:08:37,590 --> 00:08:41,159  
Some of them hid and  
got away with it,

157  
00:08:41,159 --> 00:08:44,735  
because it was so  
late in the game.

158  
00:08:44,735 --> 00:08:49,530  
Even the Holocaust museum  
in one of their publications

159  
00:08:49,530 --> 00:08:53,520  
mentions the fact that  
the last death march

160  
00:08:53,520 --> 00:08:58,960  
transport left November  
17, which is not correct.

161  
00:08:58,960 --> 00:09:03,090  
There were some  
groups even after us,

162  
00:09:03,090 --> 00:09:07,680  
but I was certain we were  
taken away December 13

163  
00:09:07,680 --> 00:09:10,890  
and ended up in a brick  
factory that night,

164

00:09:10,890 --> 00:09:13,780  
the brickyard in old Buda.

165

00:09:13,780 --> 00:09:16,260  
You're down in the courtyard  
with the other people.

166

00:09:16,260 --> 00:09:16,830  
OK.

167

00:09:16,830 --> 00:09:23,390  
It's raining, miserably  
cold, middle European winter.

168

00:09:23,390 --> 00:09:26,220  
We had some food with  
us because I took it--

169

00:09:26,220 --> 00:09:27,910  
we took it to our father--

170

00:09:27,910 --> 00:09:28,855  
to my father.

171

00:09:28,855 --> 00:09:29,730  
What are you wearing?

172

00:09:29,730 --> 00:09:32,560

173

00:09:32,560 --> 00:09:40,650  
I was wearing a pair  
of boots, knickers,

174

00:09:40,650 --> 00:09:47,460  
which are my first grown up  
pants that I got that year.

175

00:09:47,460 --> 00:09:52,620  
I wore a coat with  
a fur on it, which

176

00:09:52,620 --> 00:09:57,070  
is the one that looked so very  
Hungarian, typically Hungarian,

177

00:09:57,070 --> 00:09:58,800  
which later on helped.

178

00:09:58,800 --> 00:10:09,390  
Then I had a short, waterproof  
jacket with a hood over it

179

00:10:09,390 --> 00:10:11,460  
because it was raining.

180

00:10:11,460 --> 00:10:13,005  
We also had blankets.

181

00:10:13,005 --> 00:10:15,550

182

00:10:15,550 --> 00:10:18,660  
We were told to take blankets  
with us, if I remember.

183

00:10:18,660 --> 00:10:22,580  
Did you take anything personal  
to you, anything special?

184

00:10:22,580 --> 00:10:30,510  
Oh, my father left us  
a silver Omega pocket

185

00:10:30,510 --> 00:10:36,240  
watch, which I think he  
got from his grandfather.

186

00:10:36,240 --> 00:10:41,413  
And my mother took that,  
took her wedding ring.

187

00:10:41,413 --> 00:10:43,080  
And you yourself, did



you take anything?

188  
00:10:43,080 --> 00:10:44,080  
I took nothing.

189  
00:10:44,080 --> 00:10:47,410

190  
00:10:47,410 --> 00:10:48,730  
I took nothing with me.

191  
00:10:48,730 --> 00:10:51,672

192  
00:10:51,672 --> 00:10:53,880  
What was it like to stand  
there with the other people

193  
00:10:53,880 --> 00:10:54,690  
in the courtyard?

194  
00:10:54,690 --> 00:10:58,950  
Well, by that time, it  
was becoming very scary.

195  
00:10:58,950 --> 00:11:01,890  
We didn't believe that  
we're going to get killed,

196  
00:11:01,890 --> 00:11:04,270  
but we did not know  
what was going on

197  
00:11:04,270 --> 00:11:06,040  
or what is going  
to happen to us.

198  
00:11:06,040 --> 00:11:08,100  
So there was kind of  
a fatalistic attitude

199  
00:11:08,100 --> 00:11:10,130

set in at that point.

200  
00:11:10,130 --> 00:11:14,820  
It felt rather powerless,  
and, in fact, you were.

201  
00:11:14,820 --> 00:11:17,130  
Were people calm?

202  
00:11:17,130 --> 00:11:21,150  
Yes, they were unnaturally calm.

203  
00:11:21,150 --> 00:11:25,990  
And we were walked  
through the street

204  
00:11:25,990 --> 00:11:33,760  
under guard, taken to across  
the Danube on a pontoon bridge,

205  
00:11:33,760 --> 00:11:38,100  
because the main bridge  
was accidentally blown

206  
00:11:38,100 --> 00:11:40,930  
by the Germans, supposedly.

207  
00:11:40,930 --> 00:11:44,400  
The Hungarians claimed that  
they blew it with people on it,

208  
00:11:44,400 --> 00:11:47,240  
including German buses and--

209  
00:11:47,240 --> 00:11:48,240  
in a summer.

210  
00:11:48,240 --> 00:11:52,470  
So the army put a pontoon  
bridge across to an island,

211  
00:11:52,470 --> 00:11:55,500

and from the island, we walked  
across the remaining part

212  
00:11:55,500 --> 00:12:00,810  
of the bridge to  
the old part of Buda

213  
00:12:00,810 --> 00:12:09,980  
into the brick yards, which was  
the first stop on the calvary

214  
00:12:09,980 --> 00:12:12,410  
that we went through.

215  
00:12:12,410 --> 00:12:19,110  
The brickyard was a  
pretty horrible place.

216  
00:12:19,110 --> 00:12:23,650  
It was open on three sides.

217  
00:12:23,650 --> 00:12:25,340  
It had a roof over it.

218  
00:12:25,340 --> 00:12:27,700  
We got there-- it  
was fairly dark.

219  
00:12:27,700 --> 00:12:29,900  
There was no lights.

220  
00:12:29,900 --> 00:12:36,520  
It was raining, and we  
were jammed in there

221  
00:12:36,520 --> 00:12:39,430  
so that nobody  
really had any room

222  
00:12:39,430 --> 00:12:42,670  
to even lie down in the mud.

223

00:12:42,670 --> 00:12:46,750  
And one of the  
recurring things that

224  
00:12:46,750 --> 00:12:49,000  
still haunt after 50 years--

225  
00:12:49,000 --> 00:12:50,560  
there are a lot of  
things that came

226  
00:12:50,560 --> 00:12:58,450  
out later on where some of my  
fears and concerns came from.

227  
00:12:58,450 --> 00:13:03,070  
But I remember  
even today, my wife

228  
00:13:03,070 --> 00:13:05,830  
is a very independent person.

229  
00:13:05,830 --> 00:13:12,380  
And when we go to a museum, for  
instance, she will disappear.

230  
00:13:12,380 --> 00:13:14,230  
She will go ahead  
of me or behind me,

231  
00:13:14,230 --> 00:13:19,540  
and I get terribly  
anxious and very angry.

232  
00:13:19,540 --> 00:13:24,535  
Well, of late, I decided  
that the reason for that

233  
00:13:24,535 --> 00:13:27,370  
is the first night  
in a brickyard.

234  
00:13:27,370 --> 00:13:30,850

Because I had to go to  
the bathroom real bad,

235  
00:13:30,850 --> 00:13:33,640  
and, of course, there  
were no latrines.

236  
00:13:33,640 --> 00:13:36,880  
There were some open areas where  
everybody squatted and did what

237  
00:13:36,880 --> 00:13:40,840  
they have to do, but then  
you had to find your way back

238  
00:13:40,840 --> 00:13:43,200  
in the pitch black.

239  
00:13:43,200 --> 00:13:45,760  
And I believe my mother  
had a flashlight.

240  
00:13:45,760 --> 00:13:48,270  
And so eventually I  
remember getting--

241  
00:13:48,270 --> 00:13:50,950  
well, I caught up with her.

242  
00:13:50,950 --> 00:13:54,970  
I found where she was,  
but I remember the anxiety

243  
00:13:54,970 --> 00:13:59,380  
of being in a pitch  
dark with hundreds

244  
00:13:59,380 --> 00:14:03,250  
and if not thousands of  
people milling about.

245  
00:14:03,250 --> 00:14:04,960  
And by that time,

people were crying.

246

00:14:04,960 --> 00:14:08,710

They were-- certainly  
knew that something--

247

00:14:08,710 --> 00:14:13,390

that things are going  
to get real dicey.

248

00:14:13,390 --> 00:14:18,130

And there was no food,  
no water, and that

249

00:14:18,130 --> 00:14:21,730

was the beginning  
of the death marches

250

00:14:21,730 --> 00:14:25,997

where we were driven on  
day after day on the roads.

251

00:14:25,997 --> 00:14:27,080

When you [INAUDIBLE]-- OK.

252

00:14:27,080 --> 00:14:29,770

You were in this  
brickyard for how long?

253

00:14:29,770 --> 00:14:30,580

I think overnight.

254

00:14:30,580 --> 00:14:31,690

You stayed overnight?

255

00:14:31,690 --> 00:14:36,940

Stayed overnight and every  
day you moved on foot.

256

00:14:36,940 --> 00:14:45,160

These were groups of 1,000,  
maybe more people, strung out,

257

00:14:45,160 --> 00:14:50,470  
moving from one of the stations  
of the cross, of my cross,

258

00:14:50,470 --> 00:14:51,390  
if you will--

259

00:14:51,390 --> 00:14:52,270  
On foot.

260

00:14:52,270 --> 00:14:58,210  
--on the onward to what turned  
out to be the Austrian border.

261

00:14:58,210 --> 00:14:59,160  
The--

262

00:14:59,160 --> 00:15:02,645  
Do you remember the kind  
of places you stayed at?

263

00:15:02,645 --> 00:15:03,520  
You stopped at night.

264

00:15:03,520 --> 00:15:08,660  
We stopped at night, which  
also had an effect on me

265

00:15:08,660 --> 00:15:11,770  
for all my life.

266

00:15:11,770 --> 00:15:17,230  
If you were in ahead  
of the group leaving,

267

00:15:17,230 --> 00:15:22,750  
you were the first one to  
get to a marketplace, where

268

00:15:22,750 --> 00:15:25,300  
animals were sold  
in the daytime,

269

00:15:25,300 --> 00:15:27,620

or a marketplace where  
the food was sold.

270

00:15:27,620 --> 00:15:30,690

So these were open  
areas with the junk

271

00:15:30,690 --> 00:15:35,380

and with the animal droppings  
where you could pick

272

00:15:35,380 --> 00:15:38,410

a spot where you can sleep.

273

00:15:38,410 --> 00:15:43,420

These were all open, and we're  
talking about mid-December

274

00:15:43,420 --> 00:15:48,130

in Europe, which  
is pretty harsh.

275

00:15:48,130 --> 00:15:49,053

Food was minimal.

276

00:15:49,053 --> 00:15:50,970

Once in a while, we got  
a piece of bread rind.

277

00:15:50,970 --> 00:15:54,010

I remember one bit of soup.

278

00:15:54,010 --> 00:15:57,370

And on one of these--

279

00:15:57,370 --> 00:16:01,210

before stopping for  
the night, my mother

280

00:16:01,210 --> 00:16:08,620



gave that silver Omega watch  
away to get a loaf of bread.

281  
00:16:08,620 --> 00:16:10,570  
And we had no money.

282  
00:16:10,570 --> 00:16:13,030  
We had nothing left after that.

283  
00:16:13,030 --> 00:16:15,576

284  
00:16:15,576 --> 00:16:21,970  
The march itself  
was pretty hairy.

285  
00:16:21,970 --> 00:16:24,550  
The idea was, of  
course, to drive us

286  
00:16:24,550 --> 00:16:29,860  
as fast as we can move so those  
who can't move can be shot.

287  
00:16:29,860 --> 00:16:33,880  
And those who were  
old and couldn't move,

288  
00:16:33,880 --> 00:16:35,350  
they committed  
suicide, and there

289  
00:16:35,350 --> 00:16:39,910  
were people hanging  
from the trees

290  
00:16:39,910 --> 00:16:41,760  
and went on and on and on.

291  
00:16:41,760 --> 00:16:42,800  
And you saw this--

292

00:16:42,800 --> 00:16:43,390  
And-- yes.

293  
00:16:43,390 --> 00:16:44,390  
--as a teenager?

294  
00:16:44,390 --> 00:16:44,890  
Yes.

295  
00:16:44,890 --> 00:16:49,190

296  
00:16:49,190 --> 00:16:53,750  
That particular period  
is important for me,

297  
00:16:53,750 --> 00:17:01,190  
because it became the  
catharsis maybe 30 years later,

298  
00:17:01,190 --> 00:17:07,220  
seeing the depiction of  
that march in a mini-series

299  
00:17:07,220 --> 00:17:09,890  
Wallenberg--

300  
00:17:09,890 --> 00:17:14,715  
on Wallenberg that Chamberlain  
did for television.

301  
00:17:14,715 --> 00:17:17,030  
it was a two part  
series, and was

302  
00:17:17,030 --> 00:17:22,069  
the first one that depicted  
this particular death march.

303  
00:17:22,069 --> 00:17:28,310  
And until that point,  
I was in total denial.

304

00:17:28,310 --> 00:17:31,760

Memories where I could  
see pictures of Auschwitz

305

00:17:31,760 --> 00:17:33,110

didn't mean anything to me.

306

00:17:33,110 --> 00:17:35,070

There was no emotion whatsoever.

307

00:17:35,070 --> 00:17:41,690

And my sons and my wife, we  
watched in a bedroom on a bed,

308

00:17:41,690 --> 00:17:43,640

and I broke up for  
the first time.

309

00:17:43,640 --> 00:17:45,770

And I broke down and  
it was the first time I

310

00:17:45,770 --> 00:17:53,030

cried since Christmas of 1944.

311

00:17:53,030 --> 00:17:56,750

There were never any tears,  
no matter what happened.

312

00:17:56,750 --> 00:18:02,570

So that march was really  
cataclysmic for me

313

00:18:02,570 --> 00:18:05,480

in terms of memories.

314

00:18:05,480 --> 00:18:09,440

Memory in a group  
that we went with--

315

00:18:09,440 --> 00:18:15,080

let me just say again,

importance of being first

316  
00:18:15,080 --> 00:18:20,420  
was because you  
could sleep longer.

317  
00:18:20,420 --> 00:18:22,460  
You could pick your spot.

318  
00:18:22,460 --> 00:18:27,000  
If there was food, the  
stragglers would get nothing,

319  
00:18:27,000 --> 00:18:27,500  
was--

320  
00:18:27,500 --> 00:18:29,490  
were not able to.

321  
00:18:29,490 --> 00:18:37,280  
So all my life I have to be  
at the airports hours early.

322  
00:18:37,280 --> 00:18:40,038  
I have to know exactly  
where I'm going,

323  
00:18:40,038 --> 00:18:42,080  
when I'm going to be there,  
and I'm always early.

324  
00:18:42,080 --> 00:18:46,800

325  
00:18:46,800 --> 00:18:49,680  
Those are just one of  
the few things that

326  
00:18:49,680 --> 00:18:53,700  
affected the rest of my life.

327  
00:18:53,700 --> 00:18:56,590

Where you and your mother  
able to get to the front--

328  
00:18:56,590 --> 00:18:57,090  
No.

329  
00:18:57,090 --> 00:18:57,673  
--of the line?

330  
00:18:57,673 --> 00:18:58,260  
No.

331  
00:18:58,260 --> 00:19:03,240  
She had a hard time keeping  
up, but we walked together

332  
00:19:03,240 --> 00:19:05,280  
all the way.

333  
00:19:05,280 --> 00:19:12,300  
We were strafed by Russian  
aircraft on one occasion

334  
00:19:12,300 --> 00:19:21,870  
because we had fire engines and  
soldiers in between the Jews

335  
00:19:21,870 --> 00:19:23,280  
being taken.

336  
00:19:23,280 --> 00:19:27,060  
And so the Russians saw the  
fire engines and the soldiers,

337  
00:19:27,060 --> 00:19:28,110  
and they came strafing.

338  
00:19:28,110 --> 00:19:29,970  
But they did it--

339  
00:19:29,970 --> 00:19:32,340  
the line was going on the road.

340  
00:19:32,340 --> 00:19:34,890  
They came across  
so when they shot

341  
00:19:34,890 --> 00:19:38,520  
at the engines and  
the soldiers, they

342  
00:19:38,520 --> 00:19:43,260  
were not strafing down the road  
so they didn't kill anybody.

343  
00:19:43,260 --> 00:19:47,430  
They did not kill, except people  
who were around those engines.

344  
00:19:47,430 --> 00:19:51,090  
And they were some  
of us, of course.

345  
00:19:51,090 --> 00:19:54,450  
But I remember  
carrying the blanket

346  
00:19:54,450 --> 00:19:56,970  
and putting it over our  
heads, because I think

347  
00:19:56,970 --> 00:20:01,930  
it was a pink blanket  
and clearly to show the--

348  
00:20:01,930 --> 00:20:05,460  
if the pilots even saw it  
or cared that these were not

349  
00:20:05,460 --> 00:20:06,930  
soldiers that were going.

350  
00:20:06,930 --> 00:20:10,390

351

00:20:10,390 --> 00:20:20,100  
In one case, we ended up in the  
hold of a ship on the Danube

352

00:20:20,100 --> 00:20:23,670  
where people were  
supposed to have

353

00:20:23,670 --> 00:20:26,790  
been pushed into the water,  
those who couldn't walk.

354

00:20:26,790 --> 00:20:29,780  
We saw some dead bodies.

355

00:20:29,780 --> 00:20:32,790  
But we were in a  
ship that was damp,

356

00:20:32,790 --> 00:20:37,266  
and the clanging noise  
I remember still.

357

00:20:37,266 --> 00:20:43,980  
It was just one of the six  
or seven stopover places

358

00:20:43,980 --> 00:20:49,860  
before we got to the border.

359

00:20:49,860 --> 00:21:00,360  
It was roughly six or seven  
days, six or seven stops

360

00:21:00,360 --> 00:21:06,450  
before we got to the  
border town of Hegyeshalom

361

00:21:06,450 --> 00:21:08,730  
to the railroad station.

362

00:21:08,730 --> 00:21:10,590

Were-- did either  
you or your mother

363  
00:21:10,590 --> 00:21:13,560  
have the strength to talk to  
each other during this time?

364  
00:21:13,560 --> 00:21:15,060  
I think we have talked some.

365  
00:21:15,060 --> 00:21:17,910  
I remember-- although  
not talking to her,

366  
00:21:17,910 --> 00:21:22,950  
but I remember that  
German troops--

367  
00:21:22,950 --> 00:21:28,500  
like newsreels people  
took newsreels of us.

368  
00:21:28,500 --> 00:21:33,510  
And I told my mother to look  
into the camera at least,

369  
00:21:33,510 --> 00:21:36,480  
went with my mother  
and I pushed my hood

370  
00:21:36,480 --> 00:21:40,380  
back so if people  
see the movie, they

371  
00:21:40,380 --> 00:21:44,580  
would see that my mother  
and I have been taken away.

372  
00:21:44,580 --> 00:21:46,200  
And I was-- I guess,  
I was basically

373  
00:21:46,200 --> 00:21:50,730



targeting that if  
relatives or friends would

374  
00:21:50,730 --> 00:21:53,490  
know what happened to us,  
because nobody would know.

375  
00:21:53,490 --> 00:21:56,640  
We just-- contact was dropped.

376  
00:21:56,640 --> 00:21:58,260  
Nobody would know  
what happened to us.

377  
00:21:58,260 --> 00:22:00,927  
Were there other people on  
the March that you knew?

378  
00:22:00,927 --> 00:22:03,135  
Did you stay with the people  
in your apartment house?

379  
00:22:03,135 --> 00:22:03,780  
No.

380  
00:22:03,780 --> 00:22:04,280  
No.

381  
00:22:04,280 --> 00:22:05,850  
They were all strangers?

382  
00:22:05,850 --> 00:22:07,680  
It was all strangers,  
and I don't

383  
00:22:07,680 --> 00:22:09,554  
know what happened to the--

384  
00:22:09,554 --> 00:22:13,710  
clearly, there were  
so many thousands

385

00:22:13,710 --> 00:22:17,610  
moving on that the people  
that we left the house with,

386  
00:22:17,610 --> 00:22:22,350  
they disappeared as soon  
as we got to the brickyard,

387  
00:22:22,350 --> 00:22:25,110  
the first stop, really.

388  
00:22:25,110 --> 00:22:27,467  
What were some of the other  
places that you stopped at?

389  
00:22:27,467 --> 00:22:28,050  
[BOTH TALKING]

390  
00:22:28,050 --> 00:22:31,330  
Mostly marketplaces  
in the day time.

391  
00:22:31,330 --> 00:22:35,510  
The bottom of this freight boat.

392  
00:22:35,510 --> 00:22:36,010  
Boat.

393  
00:22:36,010 --> 00:22:37,890  
Mm-hmm.

394  
00:22:37,890 --> 00:22:39,080  
It's not a tugboat.

395  
00:22:39,080 --> 00:22:44,690  
It's not a-- it's one of those  
that ply the Danube till today.

396  
00:22:44,690 --> 00:22:47,161  
It's essentially freighters.

397  
00:22:47,161 --> 00:22:50,390

398

00:22:50,390 --> 00:22:53,160

What did they-- what did  
the soldiers say to you?

399

00:22:53,160 --> 00:22:54,480

Did they talk to you?

400

00:22:54,480 --> 00:22:56,940

They did not talk to us.

401

00:22:56,940 --> 00:23:00,840

They were beating some  
of the stragglers.

402

00:23:00,840 --> 00:23:05,370

I heard shots, knew  
what that was about.

403

00:23:05,370 --> 00:23:09,685

So-- and during the  
strafing, they disappeared

404

00:23:09,685 --> 00:23:10,560

and we still went on.

405

00:23:10,560 --> 00:23:13,160

406

00:23:13,160 --> 00:23:16,980

Understand the circumstances  
that these were the old

407

00:23:16,980 --> 00:23:19,870

and the young, the women.

408

00:23:19,870 --> 00:23:22,605

I don't think there  
were men in there.

409

00:23:22,605 --> 00:23:24,600

There had been.

410  
00:23:24,600 --> 00:23:29,504  
I have seen  
[INAUDIBLE] suicides.

411  
00:23:29,504 --> 00:23:32,400  
They were men.

412  
00:23:32,400 --> 00:23:34,340  
But mostly women and  
children, because the men

413  
00:23:34,340 --> 00:23:35,480  
had been taken away.

414  
00:23:35,480 --> 00:23:38,940  
All the old ones really  
didn't make it too far

415  
00:23:38,940 --> 00:23:41,390  
and they were killed.

416  
00:23:41,390 --> 00:23:44,870  
The idea was that there was  
no longer any rolling stock

417  
00:23:44,870 --> 00:23:48,050  
to deport the Jews of Budapest.

418  
00:23:48,050 --> 00:23:50,870  
Eichmann wanted  
to finish the job,

419  
00:23:50,870 --> 00:23:54,620  
so this was a way of  
getting only the strong ones

420  
00:23:54,620 --> 00:23:59,570  
to the Ger- the Austrian border  
and getting rid of the rest.

421

00:23:59,570 --> 00:24:01,190  
What about young children?

422  
00:24:01,190 --> 00:24:04,190  
Young children, but  
I don't remember

423  
00:24:04,190 --> 00:24:07,100  
that I've seen too  
many much younger

424  
00:24:07,100 --> 00:24:11,570  
than I was, which was 15, 14.

425  
00:24:11,570 --> 00:24:13,565  
I don't know what happened  
to the younger ones.

426  
00:24:13,565 --> 00:24:16,460

427  
00:24:16,460 --> 00:24:19,250  
Whether they were left  
behind or just what happened,

428  
00:24:19,250 --> 00:24:21,500  
I don't know.

429  
00:24:21,500 --> 00:24:30,410  
But we were going on, and it was  
hard to trace where we've been.

430  
00:24:30,410 --> 00:24:31,710  
I remember the brickyard.

431  
00:24:31,710 --> 00:24:35,480  
I went back many  
years later to Hungary

432  
00:24:35,480 --> 00:24:39,110  
and tried to identify  
some of the places

433

00:24:39,110 --> 00:24:43,370  
and had a hard time doing it.

434

00:24:43,370 --> 00:24:45,950  
I took my sons back  
to Budapest with me.

435

00:24:45,950 --> 00:24:48,800

436

00:24:48,800 --> 00:24:53,340  
The younger one wanted to walk  
with me, the route that I took,

437

00:24:53,340 --> 00:24:55,250  
which was very interesting.

438

00:24:55,250 --> 00:24:58,040  
And we were looking  
for and driving

439

00:24:58,040 --> 00:25:01,430  
around trying to find the  
brickyard, because that was--

440

00:25:01,430 --> 00:25:03,930  
probably, that was more  
significant than anything else.

441

00:25:03,930 --> 00:25:05,030  
It was the first stop.

442

00:25:05,030 --> 00:25:10,650  
It was also, I think,  
unusually cruel, being

443

00:25:10,650 --> 00:25:12,350  
there with so many thousands.

444

00:25:12,350 --> 00:25:18,150  
And it was razed and apartment  
houses stood in its place,

445  
00:25:18,150 --> 00:25:19,910  
so that was kind of  
a disappointment.

446  
00:25:19,910 --> 00:25:21,837  
I really wanted to  
show that to them.

447  
00:25:21,837 --> 00:25:24,170  
It would have given them a  
little bit more of a feeling.

448  
00:25:24,170 --> 00:25:31,820  
But the trip of the  
six or seven days

449  
00:25:31,820 --> 00:25:39,410  
ended at Hegyeshalom,  
where the children under 16

450  
00:25:39,410 --> 00:25:46,190  
were separated from the adults.

451  
00:25:46,190 --> 00:25:50,575  
My mother gave me  
her wedding ring.

452  
00:25:50,575 --> 00:25:58,020  
We kissed goodbye and I never  
saw her again, never found out

453  
00:25:58,020 --> 00:25:59,120  
what happened to her.

454  
00:25:59,120 --> 00:26:01,830

455  
00:26:01,830 --> 00:26:04,770  
I guess one of the  
people came back

456

00:26:04,770 --> 00:26:13,280  
from the group that was taken  
away from the from the house,

457  
00:26:13,280 --> 00:26:16,430  
and she ended up  
in Bergen-Belsen,

458  
00:26:16,430 --> 00:26:19,190  
but didn't know anything  
what happened to my mother.

459  
00:26:19,190 --> 00:26:21,790  
My mother disappeared  
into thin air, gone.

460  
00:26:21,790 --> 00:26:25,430

461  
00:26:25,430 --> 00:26:30,890  
We were put into a barn with  
perhaps 10, maybe a dozen

462  
00:26:30,890 --> 00:26:34,760  
children, about the same age  
or a little younger than I was.

463  
00:26:34,760 --> 00:26:35,630  
Boys and girls?

464  
00:26:35,630 --> 00:26:36,530  
Boys and girls.

465  
00:26:36,530 --> 00:26:39,050

466  
00:26:39,050 --> 00:26:47,040  
And we stayed there  
hours overnight.

467  
00:26:47,040 --> 00:26:57,050  
And one day-- and this is what  
I told Per Anger last night,



468  
00:26:57,050 --> 00:27:05,120  
that a German  
officer came, skinny,

469  
00:27:05,120 --> 00:27:09,660  
well-dressed, spit and  
polished German officer came

470  
00:27:09,660 --> 00:27:15,060  
into the barn and told us  
children, come with me.

471  
00:27:15,060 --> 00:27:16,800  
We have a train going  
back to Budapest.

472  
00:27:16,800 --> 00:27:19,740

473  
00:27:19,740 --> 00:27:25,610  
And shortly after that, a  
civilian in a black coat

474  
00:27:25,610 --> 00:27:30,890  
and hat came in and said,  
don't believe the German.

475  
00:27:30,890 --> 00:27:34,900  
Stay here for a  
little while longer,

476  
00:27:34,900 --> 00:27:40,130  
and I guarantee to take  
you back to Budapest.

477  
00:27:40,130 --> 00:27:43,550  
Now Per Anger was there.

478  
00:27:43,550 --> 00:27:47,270  
Wallenberg was there  
and Eichmann was there.

479

00:27:47,270 --> 00:27:53,780  
We'll never know which one, but  
it's certainly the black coat

480

00:27:53,780 --> 00:27:57,770  
and a hat Wallenberg  
wore, certainly,

481

00:27:57,770 --> 00:28:03,230  
the spiffy German uniform  
that Eichmann wore.

482

00:28:03,230 --> 00:28:07,670  
But at any rate, some of us--

483

00:28:07,670 --> 00:28:10,190

484

00:28:10,190 --> 00:28:14,710  
and I think it happened that I  
decided that the civilian makes

485

00:28:14,710 --> 00:28:20,500  
more sense, and some of  
the kids remained with me.

486

00:28:20,500 --> 00:28:23,350  
The others went with the German.

487

00:28:23,350 --> 00:28:29,020  
I believe there was a classmate  
that went with the German,

488

00:28:29,020 --> 00:28:33,430  
and I have never heard from  
him, which doesn't necessarily

489

00:28:33,430 --> 00:28:34,810  
mean that--

490

00:28:34,810 --> 00:28:37,340  
in my mind, it meant

that he was dead.

491  
00:28:37,340 --> 00:28:41,380  
And the likelihood was very  
good that they were killed off

492  
00:28:41,380 --> 00:28:44,020  
shortly after that.

493  
00:28:44,020 --> 00:28:45,640  
The effect was--

494  
00:28:45,640 --> 00:28:47,870  
How many stayed with you?

495  
00:28:47,870 --> 00:28:51,040  
I remember five or six,  
perhaps, a small group.

496  
00:28:51,040 --> 00:28:53,290  
So about half went  
with one and half--

497  
00:28:53,290 --> 00:28:55,780  
I think so.

498  
00:28:55,780 --> 00:28:58,840  
It would be interesting  
to meet some of them that

499  
00:28:58,840 --> 00:29:01,810  
stayed with me, whether we  
recall the same things or not.

500  
00:29:01,810 --> 00:29:07,570  
But the effect was such  
that for many years

501  
00:29:07,570 --> 00:29:10,480  
after that when  
somebody asked me

502

00:29:10,480 --> 00:29:14,500  
for an advice of anything,  
what to eat, what to wear,

503  
00:29:14,500 --> 00:29:20,680  
what to do, and I gave it  
and they did not follow it,

504  
00:29:20,680 --> 00:29:25,310  
I was unreasonably furious.

505  
00:29:25,310 --> 00:29:29,680  
And through therapy it came  
out that probably the reason

506  
00:29:29,680 --> 00:29:32,950  
was that if you don't listen  
to me, then you will die.

507  
00:29:32,950 --> 00:29:35,650  
And when I was bringing  
up my children, who

508  
00:29:35,650 --> 00:29:37,660  
knew nothing of  
this, my reaction

509  
00:29:37,660 --> 00:29:40,540  
to some of these things  
were rather vociferous.

510  
00:29:40,540 --> 00:29:43,150

511  
00:29:43,150 --> 00:29:50,815  
But we were packed  
into open cattle cars.

512  
00:29:50,815 --> 00:29:51,565  
Not really packed.

513  
00:29:51,565 --> 00:29:55,150  
It wasn't the usual 80

or 100 people in there,

514  
00:29:55,150 --> 00:30:00,060  
but our doors were open.

515  
00:30:00,060 --> 00:30:03,560  
Because I remember I had  
to go to the bathroom.

516  
00:30:03,560 --> 00:30:05,750  
The train was moving  
and I had to go,

517  
00:30:05,750 --> 00:30:11,100  
and so they were holding  
me up, and I went.

518  
00:30:11,100 --> 00:30:15,420  
And it took us about  
three days, I think--

519  
00:30:15,420 --> 00:30:18,660  
that's a recollection--  
to get back to Budapest.

520  
00:30:18,660 --> 00:30:21,170  
Who were the other people in  
the car besides your six--

521  
00:30:21,170 --> 00:30:23,800  
People-- there were some adults.

522  
00:30:23,800 --> 00:30:27,060  
I am now assuming that they were  
people that Wallenberg saved

523  
00:30:27,060 --> 00:30:29,805  
from the trains, the children.

524  
00:30:29,805 --> 00:30:37,460

525

00:30:37,460 --> 00:30:40,170  
And we were not locked in.

526  
00:30:40,170 --> 00:30:42,410  
I think that the doors  
were closed at night,

527  
00:30:42,410 --> 00:30:45,810  
but we closed it and  
then we opened it again.

528  
00:30:45,810 --> 00:30:47,240  
So it was not--

529  
00:30:47,240 --> 00:30:58,550  
it was clearly under the Swedish  
people that were organizing it

530  
00:30:58,550 --> 00:31:00,255  
and essentially  
manned the trains.

531  
00:31:00,255 --> 00:31:08,610

532  
00:31:08,610 --> 00:31:11,270  
And you're on the-- you're  
on the train [INAUDIBLE]..

533  
00:31:11,270 --> 00:31:14,970  
And at night we could  
see the muzzle flashes

534  
00:31:14,970 --> 00:31:19,470  
of the Russian artillery  
that was encircling Budapest.

535  
00:31:19,470 --> 00:31:24,030  
And we made it back  
to Budapest on a train

536  
00:31:24,030 --> 00:31:31,480  
without getting bombed,

arriving, I believe,

537

00:31:31,480 --> 00:31:32,410

Christmas Eve.

538

00:31:32,410 --> 00:31:37,100

539

00:31:37,100 --> 00:31:43,610

We arrived at the railroad  
station not close to my house,

540

00:31:43,610 --> 00:31:44,180

but--

541

00:31:44,180 --> 00:31:47,230

and I looked at it  
just last November--

542

00:31:47,230 --> 00:31:50,900

to the Eastern station.

543

00:31:50,900 --> 00:31:58,910

And we walked off and were  
taken to the Swedish houses.

544

00:31:58,910 --> 00:32:00,950

Now did I know  
that we were going

545

00:32:00,950 --> 00:32:02,960

to be taken to Swedish houses?

546

00:32:02,960 --> 00:32:04,190

I am not sure.

547

00:32:04,190 --> 00:32:06,050

How much information  
did you have?

548

00:32:06,050 --> 00:32:07,460

Very little.

549  
00:32:07,460 --> 00:32:10,250  
Very little information,  
which surprises me

550  
00:32:10,250 --> 00:32:11,900  
unless I'm blocking it.

551  
00:32:11,900 --> 00:32:14,450  
But I remember some--  
walking by a fruit store

552  
00:32:14,450 --> 00:32:16,710  
and somebody gave me an apple.

553  
00:32:16,710 --> 00:32:18,230  
I remember that.

554  
00:32:18,230 --> 00:32:22,460  
I also remember  
scribbling a message

555  
00:32:22,460 --> 00:32:26,540  
to the little Christian  
girl that was my friend.

556  
00:32:26,540 --> 00:32:29,420  
Her family, by that time,  
moved from the house

557  
00:32:29,420 --> 00:32:33,920  
because only Jews  
were remaining behind

558  
00:32:33,920 --> 00:32:38,510  
into a new apartment house.

559  
00:32:38,510 --> 00:32:44,680  
And I am guessing that--

560  
00:32:44,680 --> 00:32:50,040  
because it would make sense



and you're recreating history

561

00:32:50,040 --> 00:32:53,610

as to what's logical, so  
I'm not sure it's true.

562

00:32:53,610 --> 00:32:57,240

But I was able to send a message  
to them, because I knew where

563

00:32:57,240 --> 00:33:02,670

they were, where they lived,  
and must have indicated to them

564

00:33:02,670 --> 00:33:05,910

where I'm going to be going,  
where I'm going to be taken.

565

00:33:05,910 --> 00:33:08,160

That's the reason  
I'm guessing that we

566

00:33:08,160 --> 00:33:10,080

must have known something.

567

00:33:10,080 --> 00:33:12,630

When you were on that train,  
were other people talking

568

00:33:12,630 --> 00:33:13,927

about what was going to happen?

569

00:33:13,927 --> 00:33:14,635

I don't remember.

570

00:33:14,635 --> 00:33:15,427

You don't remember.

571

00:33:15,427 --> 00:33:18,750

The only thing that I can  
recall on that train trip

572

00:33:18,750 --> 00:33:27,205  
that I had a piece of bread,  
which I hoarded and ate.

573  
00:33:27,205 --> 00:33:29,580  
And that was about the only  
thing that I remember eating.

574  
00:33:29,580 --> 00:33:33,090  
But I remember that I  
cried on that train,

575  
00:33:33,090 --> 00:33:36,990  
because I realized  
that I'm alone.

576  
00:33:36,990 --> 00:33:40,350

577  
00:33:40,350 --> 00:33:44,570  
I had no one to go to.

578  
00:33:44,570 --> 00:33:51,485  
I cried, and I did not  
cry again until my family

579  
00:33:51,485 --> 00:33:54,380  
and I saw the Wallenberg movie.

580  
00:33:54,380 --> 00:33:59,460

581  
00:33:59,460 --> 00:34:01,550  
Did the older  
people on the train

582  
00:34:01,550 --> 00:34:03,410  
comfort the younger people?

583  
00:34:03,410 --> 00:34:05,240  
I don't remember that.

584

00:34:05,240 --> 00:34:08,330

I am guessing no.

585

00:34:08,330 --> 00:34:14,350

By that time, and even  
on the death march,

586

00:34:14,350 --> 00:34:19,320

there was really no  
connection with anybody.

587

00:34:19,320 --> 00:34:21,980

We were all foreign  
to one another.

588

00:34:21,980 --> 00:34:25,520

We're all strangers,  
and we're all kind

589

00:34:25,520 --> 00:34:28,580

of in our own microcosm.

590

00:34:28,580 --> 00:34:32,270

There was no heroism  
between people.

591

00:34:32,270 --> 00:34:34,850

There was no-- that I remember.

592

00:34:34,850 --> 00:34:36,770

There was no help being given.

593

00:34:36,770 --> 00:34:39,380

Because if you're  
helping somebody,

594

00:34:39,380 --> 00:34:40,610

you both could be shot.

595

00:34:40,610 --> 00:34:44,400

596

00:34:44,400 --> 00:34:49,230  
And so the isolation,  
I believe, which

597  
00:34:49,230 --> 00:34:54,480  
is what made me break down  
and cry that I was really,

598  
00:34:54,480 --> 00:34:55,170  
totally alone.

599  
00:34:55,170 --> 00:35:00,190

600  
00:35:00,190 --> 00:35:05,600  
But having sent off that message  
after getting off the train,

601  
00:35:05,600 --> 00:35:09,490  
we were taken in to one of the  
Swedish houses on the Danube.

602  
00:35:09,490 --> 00:35:13,140

603  
00:35:13,140 --> 00:35:17,520  
And we were fed something,  
can't remember what.

604  
00:35:17,520 --> 00:35:20,070  
There were thousands of people  
at these-- hundreds of people

605  
00:35:20,070 --> 00:35:27,340  
in the apartment house, and I  
had to find a place to sleep,

606  
00:35:27,340 --> 00:35:28,170  
which I did.

607  
00:35:28,170 --> 00:35:31,330

608

00:35:31,330 --> 00:35:38,455

We were upstairs, probably  
fifth or sixth floor.

609

00:35:38,455 --> 00:35:43,760

610

00:35:43,760 --> 00:35:48,570

And, well, we did not  
go down to the cellar.

611

00:35:48,570 --> 00:35:52,640

There was too many people in the  
house for that, so we never--

612

00:35:52,640 --> 00:35:55,700

raids or really the  
artillery shells

613

00:35:55,700 --> 00:35:56,930

were coming in by that time.

614

00:35:56,930 --> 00:35:59,540

615

00:35:59,540 --> 00:36:03,170

Matter of fact, the first  
artillery shell that I saw

616

00:36:03,170 --> 00:36:05,840

was Christmas day.

617

00:36:05,840 --> 00:36:12,290

Jumping ahead, sent a message  
to this little friend's family.

618

00:36:12,290 --> 00:36:15,680

Next day, which I believe  
was Christmas day--

619

00:36:15,680 --> 00:36:17,480

it was a holiday--

620  
00:36:17,480 --> 00:36:22,820  
and there was a banging on  
the apartment house's door.

621  
00:36:22,820 --> 00:36:26,720  
A Hungarian soldier was  
banging with his rifle,

622  
00:36:26,720 --> 00:36:35,150  
demanding to see and  
to take Becker Ivan.

623  
00:36:35,150 --> 00:36:41,690  
And people told me  
that he's down there,

624  
00:36:41,690 --> 00:36:48,060  
and I went out-- went  
through the gate, the door,

625  
00:36:48,060 --> 00:36:53,600  
and here was the soldier  
pointing a gun at me

626  
00:36:53,600 --> 00:36:58,310  
and said that he was  
sent to take me away.

627  
00:36:58,310 --> 00:37:03,440  
After we went a few steps,  
he said, don't worry.

628  
00:37:03,440 --> 00:37:10,870  
You're-- I'm a friend  
of your acquaintances,

629  
00:37:10,870 --> 00:37:18,730  
and they have asked to fetch  
you and bring you to their home.

630  
00:37:18,730 --> 00:37:24,010  
And so with a pointed gun, he

marched me to their apartment

631  
00:37:24,010 --> 00:37:28,930  
house and I met them.

632  
00:37:28,930 --> 00:37:31,030  
Of course, this was  
the father, the mother,

633  
00:37:31,030 --> 00:37:33,700  
and two daughters,  
the young one, which

634  
00:37:33,700 --> 00:37:36,340  
was my friend, a 12-year-old.

635  
00:37:36,340 --> 00:37:40,900  
She was, by the way, the first  
girl that I went to the theater

636  
00:37:40,900 --> 00:37:42,160  
with.

637  
00:37:42,160 --> 00:37:44,770  
My parents took  
us to the theater,

638  
00:37:44,770 --> 00:37:47,560  
so we're dropping  
back a few years,

639  
00:37:47,560 --> 00:37:52,720  
but just because she is going  
to surface for several years

640  
00:37:52,720 --> 00:37:54,660  
after that.

641  
00:37:54,660 --> 00:37:57,070  
But-- and the first  
theater piece we saw

642

00:37:57,070 --> 00:38:02,140  
was Our Town in  
Hungarian in a balcony.

643  
00:38:02,140 --> 00:38:07,830  
At any rate,  
Christmastime, her sister,

644  
00:38:07,830 --> 00:38:12,350  
who was what four or five  
years older than we were

645  
00:38:12,350 --> 00:38:16,790  
or that she was, so  
she had to be about 16.

646  
00:38:16,790 --> 00:38:18,750  
And they fed me.

647  
00:38:18,750 --> 00:38:21,180  
We had dinner together.

648  
00:38:21,180 --> 00:38:21,680  
And--

649  
00:38:21,680 --> 00:38:24,740

650  
00:38:24,740 --> 00:38:27,618  
What were your feelings when  
you saw this German soldier,

651  
00:38:27,618 --> 00:38:28,160  
telling you--

652  
00:38:28,160 --> 00:38:29,038  
Hungarian soldier.

653  
00:38:29,038 --> 00:38:30,830  
Excuse me, Hungarian  
soldier, telling you--

654



00:38:30,830 --> 00:38:32,120  
Scared.

655  
00:38:32,120 --> 00:38:34,190  
Didn't know what was  
going on, of course,

656  
00:38:34,190 --> 00:38:39,340  
and didn't quite  
know what to do.

657  
00:38:39,340 --> 00:38:41,840  
I mean, clearly I couldn't  
run because it would've

658  
00:38:41,840 --> 00:38:43,430  
been too easy to shoot.

659  
00:38:43,430 --> 00:38:46,610  
And so I went with the flow.

660  
00:38:46,610 --> 00:38:49,510  
And, of course, finding  
out that he was a friend,

661  
00:38:49,510 --> 00:38:54,980  
that was quite a load off  
my mind at that point.

662  
00:38:54,980 --> 00:39:00,770  
The friends, their  
name is [? Cardar. ?]

663  
00:39:00,770 --> 00:39:05,660  
They had another person  
there, a woman there,

664  
00:39:05,660 --> 00:39:10,580  
and they have  
suggested, I believe--

665  
00:39:10,580 --> 00:39:13,250  
the daughter many

years later told me

666  
00:39:13,250 --> 00:39:16,430  
that they asked me  
to stay with them

667  
00:39:16,430 --> 00:39:18,365  
and that they will hide me.

668  
00:39:18,365 --> 00:39:20,615  
Because they have another  
woman that they were hiding.

669  
00:39:20,615 --> 00:39:23,180

670  
00:39:23,180 --> 00:39:24,650  
And I refused to do so.

671  
00:39:24,650 --> 00:39:28,086

672  
00:39:28,086 --> 00:39:28,586  
Why?

673  
00:39:28,586 --> 00:39:32,530

674  
00:39:32,530 --> 00:39:37,690  
I am not sure whether I was  
afraid that if they find me,

675  
00:39:37,690 --> 00:39:39,730  
they going to kill them as well.

676  
00:39:39,730 --> 00:39:41,620  
I think that would be  
very nice, but I'm not

677  
00:39:41,620 --> 00:39:43,930  
sure that was my driving point.

678

00:39:43,930 --> 00:39:47,290

679

00:39:47,290 --> 00:39:50,320

I think, perhaps, that  
the authorities said

680

00:39:50,320 --> 00:39:51,970

that I should be  
in another house,

681

00:39:51,970 --> 00:39:54,310

and that's where I  
should go back to.

682

00:39:54,310 --> 00:39:59,440

But-- and here it becomes fuzzy.

683

00:39:59,440 --> 00:40:03,160

I do go back to the Wallenberg  
house, the Swedish houses.

684

00:40:03,160 --> 00:40:06,200

685

00:40:06,200 --> 00:40:07,720

I remember that.

686

00:40:07,720 --> 00:40:12,310

I remember also that  
during a bombing raid,

687

00:40:12,310 --> 00:40:15,370

one of the impacts  
was fairly close.

688

00:40:15,370 --> 00:40:18,400

I was eating a plate  
of food, and the door

689

00:40:18,400 --> 00:40:24,130

came out and cracked me across

the face and my tooth chipped.

690  
00:40:24,130 --> 00:40:27,490  
And that is the  
only injury that I

691  
00:40:27,490 --> 00:40:33,710  
have from the war, other than  
psychological and physical

692  
00:40:33,710 --> 00:40:39,160  
just well-being, stomach  
problems, et cetera.

693  
00:40:39,160 --> 00:40:41,980  
But that was the only  
thing where I bled

694  
00:40:41,980 --> 00:40:45,140  
and my hearing got affected.

695  
00:40:45,140 --> 00:40:47,150  
But that was not an injury.

696  
00:40:47,150 --> 00:40:49,240  
It was an explosion.

697  
00:40:49,240 --> 00:40:53,260  
But nevertheless, in this  
period of time I was back

698  
00:40:53,260 --> 00:40:56,600  
in the Swedish houses, and this  
is between Christmas and New

699  
00:40:56,600 --> 00:40:57,100  
Year's.

700  
00:40:57,100 --> 00:41:00,690

701  
00:41:00,690 --> 00:41:04,850

And I'm assuming  
that our friends,

702  
00:41:04,850 --> 00:41:09,290  
the [? Cardars, ?]  
took me out once more.

703  
00:41:09,290 --> 00:41:14,720  
Because the rumors were  
heard that the Swedish houses

704  
00:41:14,720 --> 00:41:16,610  
will be evacuated.

705  
00:41:16,610 --> 00:41:24,910  
There were military,  
German military transports,

706  
00:41:24,910 --> 00:41:29,020  
horse drawn transports  
around the block where

707  
00:41:29,020 --> 00:41:32,470  
the Swedish houses were,  
full of ammunition.

708  
00:41:32,470 --> 00:41:35,230  
And it was on the  
Danube, and the Russians

709  
00:41:35,230 --> 00:41:36,370  
were coming closer.

710  
00:41:36,370 --> 00:41:38,720  
And the assumption was  
that they're going to--

711  
00:41:38,720 --> 00:41:41,650  
they need the fuel  
the fire and they

712  
00:41:41,650 --> 00:41:45,220  
going to evacuate the

Jews, whether they

713

00:41:45,220 --> 00:41:49,990  
were Swedish passports  
or not, taking them

714

00:41:49,990 --> 00:41:54,700  
into the ghetto that was  
already established in Budapest.

715

00:41:54,700 --> 00:41:56,480  
Did you have any new  
papers at this point?

716

00:41:56,480 --> 00:41:56,980  
No.

717

00:41:56,980 --> 00:41:57,970  
Nothing?

718

00:41:57,970 --> 00:42:02,300  
I did not get my  
Schutzpass until much later

719

00:42:02,300 --> 00:42:10,210  
and I went to the  
Swedish office,

720

00:42:10,210 --> 00:42:14,530  
not far from where the  
Swedish houses were to get it.

721

00:42:14,530 --> 00:42:16,630  
It was not handed  
to me, and I never

722

00:42:16,630 --> 00:42:22,570  
used it as a saving grace.

723

00:42:22,570 --> 00:42:24,700  
It was really used  
as establishing

724

00:42:24,700 --> 00:42:27,733

an identity more than anything  
else, because I had no papers.

725

00:42:27,733 --> 00:42:28,900

I have no birth certificate.

726

00:42:28,900 --> 00:42:29,850

I have no--

727

00:42:29,850 --> 00:42:32,350

I have my father's passport,  
and that's about the only thing

728

00:42:32,350 --> 00:42:32,940

that I have.

729

00:42:32,940 --> 00:42:35,760

730

00:42:35,760 --> 00:42:39,330

But in that period,  
being in a Swedish house

731

00:42:39,330 --> 00:42:43,880

and getting out, going  
back to the [? Cardars, ?]

732

00:42:43,880 --> 00:42:49,560

the constant bombings, the  
artillery shells coming in,

733

00:42:49,560 --> 00:42:53,250

I mean, we were at that  
time completely encircled.

734

00:42:53,250 --> 00:42:55,590

I think the Russians  
were already in Vienna.

735

00:42:55,590 --> 00:42:59,400

We were still

fighting in Budapest.

736  
00:42:59,400 --> 00:43:02,580  
And hearing rumors  
that the houses

737  
00:43:02,580 --> 00:43:07,230  
will be moved into the  
ghetto, I came out again

738  
00:43:07,230 --> 00:43:12,225  
and, without wearing the star.

739  
00:43:12,225 --> 00:43:17,070

740  
00:43:17,070 --> 00:43:19,470  
I went back to  
the [? Cardars, ?]

741  
00:43:19,470 --> 00:43:25,010  
and [? the Cardars, ?]  
heard, I believe,

742  
00:43:25,010 --> 00:43:29,355  
of a Red Cross  
shelter for children.

743  
00:43:29,355 --> 00:43:32,446

744  
00:43:32,446 --> 00:43:38,140  
And I would think it's  
just before New Year's, end

745  
00:43:38,140 --> 00:43:39,640  
of December,  
beginning of January,

746  
00:43:39,640 --> 00:43:42,280  
very beginning of January.

747



00:43:42,280 --> 00:43:51,850  
One late afternoon, I was going  
into that Red Cross shelter,

748  
00:43:51,850 --> 00:43:56,080  
and they sent their  
youngest daughter,

749  
00:43:56,080 --> 00:43:57,160  
who was 12 at that time--

750  
00:43:57,160 --> 00:43:59,560  
I was 15-- to go with me.

751  
00:43:59,560 --> 00:44:04,980

752  
00:44:04,980 --> 00:44:09,030  
So these two  
Gentile-looking children

753  
00:44:09,030 --> 00:44:16,800  
went across this dark,  
abandoned, bombed and shelled

754  
00:44:16,800 --> 00:44:25,900  
part of town, pitch  
dark, and we went hand

755  
00:44:25,900 --> 00:44:31,000  
in hand to the address  
where I was to go.

756  
00:44:31,000 --> 00:44:34,350

757  
00:44:34,350 --> 00:44:37,230  
We did not lose our  
way, but we're not sure

758  
00:44:37,230 --> 00:44:39,990  
where we were exactly.

759

00:44:39,990 --> 00:44:47,180

I saw a-- somebody in the  
dark, and I walked up--

760

00:44:47,180 --> 00:44:51,060

we walked up, actually, and I  
asked him where the Red Cross

761

00:44:51,060 --> 00:44:53,010

shelter was.

762

00:44:53,010 --> 00:44:58,710

And he flicked on his light and  
shined it down on our faces,

763

00:44:58,710 --> 00:45:04,980

and I saw that he was one  
of the Arrow Cross people.

764

00:45:04,980 --> 00:45:09,360

And, of course, I paled.

765

00:45:09,360 --> 00:45:20,840

And the girl didn't know  
what I was scared of.

766

00:45:20,840 --> 00:45:23,390

767

00:45:23,390 --> 00:45:27,890

And the guy looked at us and  
told us where the shelter was.

768

00:45:27,890 --> 00:45:31,110

Never asked us for papers.

769

00:45:31,110 --> 00:45:33,740

And she asked me  
why I was so scared,

770

00:45:33,740 --> 00:45:41,360

and I told her, very

reluctantly, she recalls later,

771

00:45:41,360 --> 00:45:43,360  
that I told her that I  
was afraid that they were

772

00:45:43,360 --> 00:45:44,550  
going to take my pants off.

773

00:45:44,550 --> 00:45:47,900

774

00:45:47,900 --> 00:45:50,880  
And I didn't tell her why, that  
circumcision was something,

775

00:45:50,880 --> 00:45:52,130  
and, of course, she was young.

776

00:45:52,130 --> 00:45:53,930  
She didn't know it.

777

00:45:53,930 --> 00:45:59,990  
But I would say 30  
years later, she told me

778

00:45:59,990 --> 00:46:05,960  
that she did not understand  
what I was worried about,

779

00:46:05,960 --> 00:46:09,660  
until she married her  
husband who was Jewish.

780

00:46:09,660 --> 00:46:12,850  
And then she realized  
what could have happened.

781

00:46:12,850 --> 00:46:19,680  
But she left me and walked  
back through that dark town

782

00:46:19,680 --> 00:46:21,570  
by herself.

783  
00:46:21,570 --> 00:46:24,240  
And, again, 30 years  
later, more than that,

784  
00:46:24,240 --> 00:46:28,410  
40 years later when I  
saw her in Switzerland,

785  
00:46:28,410 --> 00:46:34,350  
I asked her what made her  
do it, to walk with me,

786  
00:46:34,350 --> 00:46:40,410  
and what made her parents  
suggesting that she did?

787  
00:46:40,410 --> 00:46:44,880  
And her reaction was that  
she felt all her life

788  
00:46:44,880 --> 00:46:51,880  
that she was not as important to  
her parents as her sister was.

789  
00:46:51,880 --> 00:46:57,650  
And she and her sister had  
not talked since the war days,

790  
00:46:57,650 --> 00:47:03,320  
whether that's the reason they  
sent her and she just came

791  
00:47:03,320 --> 00:47:04,670  
with me because we're friends.

792  
00:47:04,670 --> 00:47:09,830

793  
00:47:09,830 --> 00:47:14,630  
But I ended up in this Red

Cross shelter for a few days.

794

00:47:14,630 --> 00:47:17,960

We were taking care of  
babies, young children.

795

00:47:17,960 --> 00:47:19,300

Do you know the address of it?

796

00:47:19,300 --> 00:47:19,800

I'm sorry?

797

00:47:19,800 --> 00:47:20,990

Do you know the address?

798

00:47:20,990 --> 00:47:21,830

No, I don't.

799

00:47:21,830 --> 00:47:24,140

Never could find the building.

800

00:47:24,140 --> 00:47:25,610

I remember the layout.

801

00:47:25,610 --> 00:47:27,860

I remember that we broke in to--

802

00:47:27,860 --> 00:47:30,590

because the houses  
were already--

803

00:47:30,590 --> 00:47:31,950

people were taken away.

804

00:47:31,950 --> 00:47:34,690

I think they were Jewish  
houses to begin with.

805

00:47:34,690 --> 00:47:38,940

And so the houses were empty  
or the people ran away.

806

00:47:38,940 --> 00:47:41,900

And we broke into houses,  
trying to find some leftover

807

00:47:41,900 --> 00:47:46,580

food to feed ourselves and to  
give it to the-- to children.

808

00:47:46,580 --> 00:47:49,070

Very hazy on that, but  
I remember very well

809

00:47:49,070 --> 00:47:55,310

that another guy, probably  
a little bit older than I,

810

00:47:55,310 --> 00:47:58,940

we were sleeping on cots.

811

00:47:58,940 --> 00:48:03,560

And he was singing,  
and I was singing.

812

00:48:03,560 --> 00:48:07,480

We were singing "It's a  
Long Way to Tipperary."

813

00:48:07,480 --> 00:48:10,490

From somewhere, who knows  
where the song came from,

814

00:48:10,490 --> 00:48:15,950

but the pronunciation  
was, it's a long "vay,"

815

00:48:15,950 --> 00:48:18,077

because we spoke  
no English, didn't

816

00:48:18,077 --> 00:48:19,160

know what we were singing.

817

00:48:19,160 --> 00:48:21,910  
But it was kind of  
a defiant thing.

818  
00:48:21,910 --> 00:48:23,570  
I mean, we could  
have [INAUDIBLE]..

819  
00:48:23,570 --> 00:48:29,590  
It was stupid to do it,  
but we did it nevertheless.

820  
00:48:29,590 --> 00:48:32,260  
You said you were taking care  
of babies at the Red Cross?

821  
00:48:32,260 --> 00:48:34,870  
Yes, and I don't  
remember any of them.

822  
00:48:34,870 --> 00:48:38,580  
I remember some little ones,  
some young ones walking about.

823  
00:48:38,580 --> 00:48:42,940  
But we were not the only  
ones taking care of them.

824  
00:48:42,940 --> 00:48:46,900  
There had to be  
some adults there.

825  
00:48:46,900 --> 00:48:51,640  
We were just foraging  
around for food.

826  
00:48:51,640 --> 00:48:54,850  
Didn't last long because  
we also heard a rumor

827  
00:48:54,850 --> 00:48:57,970  
that anybody over  
10 or 12 years old

828

00:48:57,970 --> 00:49:04,410

will be taken away by the  
gendarmes or the Arrow Cross.

829

00:49:04,410 --> 00:49:07,940

And so at that point, I went  
back to the Swedish house.

830

00:49:07,940 --> 00:49:11,510

831

00:49:11,510 --> 00:49:15,500

And shortly after  
that, the Swedish house

832

00:49:15,500 --> 00:49:20,877

was evacuated and  
taken into the ghetto.

833

00:49:20,877 --> 00:49:22,210

The people in the Swedish house?

834

00:49:22,210 --> 00:49:23,930

The people in the house.

835

00:49:23,930 --> 00:49:25,400

We were marched  
through Budapest.

836

00:49:25,400 --> 00:49:28,160

837

00:49:28,160 --> 00:49:33,290

I remember stepping over  
somebody who just got killed,

838

00:49:33,290 --> 00:49:35,530

taken into the ghetto.

839

00:49:35,530 --> 00:49:37,900

When you would see  
people who were killed



840  
00:49:37,900 --> 00:49:40,480  
or dead on the street, did you  
have any emotional reaction

841  
00:49:40,480 --> 00:49:40,980  
to them?

842  
00:49:40,980 --> 00:49:43,010  
No, not by that time.

843  
00:49:43,010 --> 00:49:45,680

844  
00:49:45,680 --> 00:49:47,480  
By that time, there  
was really no fear.

845  
00:49:47,480 --> 00:49:50,360

846  
00:49:50,360 --> 00:49:54,780  
It was not catatonic  
but certainly--

847  
00:49:54,780 --> 00:49:56,140  
Numbness?

848  
00:49:56,140 --> 00:50:00,750  
A total numbness of going  
with it now and making

849  
00:50:00,750 --> 00:50:03,960  
decisions that essentially--

850  
00:50:03,960 --> 00:50:06,240  
going right instead  
of going left.

851  
00:50:06,240 --> 00:50:08,520  
It was the right decision.

852

00:50:08,520 --> 00:50:10,425

Running away, it was  
the right decision.

853

00:50:10,425 --> 00:50:13,536

854

00:50:13,536 --> 00:50:18,090

Hiding, trying to  
make a go of it.

855

00:50:18,090 --> 00:50:20,370

It just happened.

856

00:50:20,370 --> 00:50:22,080

Probably not, but  
probably it was

857

00:50:22,080 --> 00:50:28,030

the kind of a primeval survival  
syndrome, the flight, fear

858

00:50:28,030 --> 00:50:30,540

and flight, survival.

859

00:50:30,540 --> 00:50:36,300

But we were taken  
into the ghetto.

860

00:50:36,300 --> 00:50:39,600

I remember being  
very upset about it.

861

00:50:39,600 --> 00:50:41,060

It didn't look good.

862

00:50:41,060 --> 00:50:45,360

It was tremendous numbers of  
people and went into a house

863

00:50:45,360 --> 00:50:47,940

with a courtyard.

864  
00:50:47,940 --> 00:50:52,320  
And I was essentially taken  
into one of the apartments

865  
00:50:52,320 --> 00:50:56,100  
and given a place to flop.

866  
00:50:56,100 --> 00:51:01,850  
I took a down blanket.

867  
00:51:01,850 --> 00:51:05,080  
Not blanket, but--  
what is this called?

868  
00:51:05,080 --> 00:51:05,580  
Comforter?

869  
00:51:05,580 --> 00:51:08,100  
Comforter from  
the Swedish house.

870  
00:51:08,100 --> 00:51:10,768  
I carried that with me, and  
it's the only thing that I had.

871  
00:51:10,768 --> 00:51:11,560  
Except what I wore.

872  
00:51:11,560 --> 00:51:13,700  
Did you still have that  
blanket of your family's,

873  
00:51:13,700 --> 00:51:15,000  
the pink blanket?

874  
00:51:15,000 --> 00:51:16,020  
No.

875  
00:51:16,020 --> 00:51:17,210  
No I don't.

876

00:51:17,210 --> 00:51:22,603

I really have no souvenirs  
that I brought along with me.

877

00:51:22,603 --> 00:51:24,270

You were still wearing  
the same clothes?

878

00:51:24,270 --> 00:51:28,590

Same clothing, I was full of  
lice but beautifully manicured.

879

00:51:28,590 --> 00:51:31,850

880

00:51:31,850 --> 00:51:36,320

Because that was one thing  
that I was fastidious about.

881

00:51:36,320 --> 00:51:41,940

Trim my toenails and my  
hand nails, because my--

882

00:51:41,940 --> 00:51:43,700

when I lived at  
home my mother used

883

00:51:43,700 --> 00:51:46,640

to have a manicurist  
coming in who

884

00:51:46,640 --> 00:51:51,440

manicured her and, just as a  
lark, did it for me as well.

885

00:51:51,440 --> 00:51:55,670

She was also a woman who brought  
us some milk and some fruit.

886

00:51:55,670 --> 00:52:04,900

Her husband was a German Nazi  
and had pictures of her--

887

00:52:04,900 --> 00:52:08,440

with her of him  
in a Nazi uniform.

888

00:52:08,440 --> 00:52:11,770

But she was a manicurist  
for a long time for us

889

00:52:11,770 --> 00:52:15,730

and so she was  
trying to help us.

890

00:52:15,730 --> 00:52:19,390

But when I was getting into--  
where I got into the ghetto,

891

00:52:19,390 --> 00:52:24,820

got the space in front of a  
huge, double French window.

892

00:52:24,820 --> 00:52:33,710

And one early  
morning, I don't know

893

00:52:33,710 --> 00:52:38,110

what made me pull the  
comforter over my head,

894

00:52:38,110 --> 00:52:43,880

but within a split second  
there was an explosion.

895

00:52:43,880 --> 00:52:46,580

It was an incoming shell.

896

00:52:46,580 --> 00:52:51,770

Blew the window out, all the  
glass came tumbling down on me,

897

00:52:51,770 --> 00:52:54,740

and essentially people had  
to get the glass off me

898

00:52:54,740 --> 00:52:56,540  
before I could get up.

899

00:52:56,540 --> 00:53:02,200  
But then I had to move  
into another house

900

00:53:02,200 --> 00:53:07,291  
with pregnant women  
and young babies.

901

00:53:07,291 --> 00:53:15,950  
And I always worked, did  
something, somewhere,

902

00:53:15,950 --> 00:53:20,930  
trying to pass the time really  
more than anything else.

903

00:53:20,930 --> 00:53:24,392  
Did you think about your mother  
and father a lot at that time?

904

00:53:24,392 --> 00:53:25,760  
[SIGHS]

905

00:53:25,760 --> 00:53:27,410  
No.

906

00:53:27,410 --> 00:53:29,120  
No, I did not.

907

00:53:29,120 --> 00:53:34,200

908

00:53:34,200 --> 00:53:38,610  
It was really trying to stay  
alive and dodging bullets.

909

00:53:38,610 --> 00:53:42,210  
Although did some stupid things  
like watching people shooting

910  
00:53:42,210 --> 00:53:44,910  
at me, Russians, or  
Russian airplanes

911  
00:53:44,910 --> 00:53:51,620  
strafing me and bullets  
hitting the wall, missing me

912  
00:53:51,620 --> 00:53:54,490  
but pulling--

913  
00:53:54,490 --> 00:53:57,520  
the bullets were  
slamming into the--

914  
00:53:57,520 --> 00:54:00,800  
five feet above my  
head before I jumped.

915  
00:54:00,800 --> 00:54:06,670  
And in this particular  
Red Cross shelter,

916  
00:54:06,670 --> 00:54:11,280  
there was some  
food, very little.

917  
00:54:11,280 --> 00:54:16,530  
I remember that we were  
given some split peas

918  
00:54:16,530 --> 00:54:19,500  
that were originally, I  
understood, not for food

919  
00:54:19,500 --> 00:54:25,320  
but for sowing from the fields.

920  
00:54:25,320 --> 00:54:35,430  
And I remember at that time,  
my first real big, bad stomach

921

00:54:35,430 --> 00:54:43,950

pain, because we crushed  
it crushed those hard peas,

922

00:54:43,950 --> 00:54:46,500

made flour out of it, mixed  
it with a little water,

923

00:54:46,500 --> 00:54:50,790

and then tried to make kind  
of a pancakes out of it.

924

00:54:50,790 --> 00:54:55,170

And I had terrible  
heartburn, which

925

00:54:55,170 --> 00:54:57,060

was the beginning of  
all my stomach problems.

926

00:54:57,060 --> 00:55:00,880

927

00:55:00,880 --> 00:55:04,090

But in this Red Cross  
shelter for the women,

928

00:55:04,090 --> 00:55:09,670

I was helping getting some  
food, getting provisions.

929

00:55:09,670 --> 00:55:12,736

930

00:55:12,736 --> 00:55:14,230

Is this in the  
ghetto were talking?

931

00:55:14,230 --> 00:55:15,250

In the ghetto.

932

00:55:15,250 --> 00:55:17,110



There was some  
food, and they were

933  
00:55:17,110 --> 00:55:20,320  
trying to keep the women  
and children alive.

934  
00:55:20,320 --> 00:55:26,920  
And so I was asked to go and  
get some basket or bread.

935  
00:55:26,920 --> 00:55:30,100  
And in bringing it  
back, at that point

936  
00:55:30,100 --> 00:55:33,320  
I did not really have  
any food for days,

937  
00:55:33,320 --> 00:55:36,040  
if not weeks, at that point.

938  
00:55:36,040 --> 00:55:40,450  
I took some of the  
outside of the bread

939  
00:55:40,450 --> 00:55:42,760  
and I ate it on the way back.

940  
00:55:42,760 --> 00:55:49,360  
The resulting guilt trip lasted  
for 100 years after that.

941  
00:55:49,360 --> 00:55:54,190  
When my children were taking  
pennies out of my pocket--

942  
00:55:54,190 --> 00:55:56,356  
well, the younger one--

943  
00:55:56,356 --> 00:56:00,520  
I was terrible sad about  
stealing, and, again, traced it

944  
00:56:00,520 --> 00:56:05,360  
back to when I stole  
bread to survive.

945  
00:56:05,360 --> 00:56:07,570  
But the other aspect  
of that working

946  
00:56:07,570 --> 00:56:11,920  
there was that at  
least once, I had

947  
00:56:11,920 --> 00:56:20,440  
to make a trip to the  
morgue with, like, a laundry

948  
00:56:20,440 --> 00:56:27,730  
basket on my back, a woven  
basket, with dead babies.

949  
00:56:27,730 --> 00:56:31,090  
And I remembered a  
feeling of movement

950  
00:56:31,090 --> 00:56:35,080  
as I walked to the morgue.

951  
00:56:35,080 --> 00:56:37,470  
And they gave me  
a plate of beans,

952  
00:56:37,470 --> 00:56:42,100  
the first warm food in weeks.

953  
00:56:42,100 --> 00:56:43,270  
Then they gave me a--

954  
00:56:43,270 --> 00:56:47,670

955  
00:56:47,670 --> 00:56:48,520

what is it called?

956

00:56:48,520 --> 00:56:53,870

A stretcher,  
blood-soaked, frozen,

957

00:56:53,870 --> 00:56:56,900

blood-soaked stretcher  
to take back somewhere.

958

00:56:56,900 --> 00:57:01,040

959

00:57:01,040 --> 00:57:05,660

That-- those dead babies were--

960

00:57:05,660 --> 00:57:07,320

that stayed with me forever.

961

00:57:07,320 --> 00:57:11,330

When my children were  
young in their crib,

962

00:57:11,330 --> 00:57:13,865

I used to go in there at  
night to see whether they

963

00:57:13,865 --> 00:57:17,950

were breathing or not,  
because that part of it

964

00:57:17,950 --> 00:57:19,990

was extremely tough.

965

00:57:19,990 --> 00:57:23,800

And so I was not that blocked  
that I felt something,

966

00:57:23,800 --> 00:57:27,030

although I did not feel  
that when I did it.

967

00:57:27,030 --> 00:57:29,450  
I mean, I walked into the  
morgue, which I tried to find

968  
00:57:29,450 --> 00:57:32,820  
and couldn't, where--  
because it was so cold,

969  
00:57:32,820 --> 00:57:34,340  
the ground was frozen.

970  
00:57:34,340 --> 00:57:38,550  
The-- I think it was a mikveh.

971  
00:57:38,550 --> 00:57:46,140  
And the dead bodies  
were piled up like wood

972  
00:57:46,140 --> 00:57:52,590  
and hundreds of them would  
eventually, of course, were

973  
00:57:52,590 --> 00:57:57,510  
buried in a mass grave in the  
temple, the central temple

974  
00:57:57,510 --> 00:58:02,450  
garden, where, when  
I was in school,

975  
00:58:02,450 --> 00:58:05,345  
I used to sing  
during high holidays.

976  
00:58:05,345 --> 00:58:08,750

977  
00:58:08,750 --> 00:58:14,370  
And I stayed in that  
Red Cross shelter

978  
00:58:14,370 --> 00:58:18,040  
until liberation, which

was 50 years ago today,

979

00:58:18,040 --> 00:58:22,240

this morning at 8:30 roughly.

980

00:58:22,240 --> 00:58:31,250

And during the period of time

I was in the ghetto, again,

981

00:58:31,250 --> 00:58:35,810

I stayed upstairs, never

went down to the cellars,

982

00:58:35,810 --> 00:58:38,960

walked around with

bullets whizzing around.

983

00:58:38,960 --> 00:58:41,490

984

00:58:41,490 --> 00:58:43,290

I'm not sure I felt

that I could not

985

00:58:43,290 --> 00:58:47,100

be hit, because I went through

so much shit before where

986

00:58:47,100 --> 00:58:48,030

I was just--

987

00:58:48,030 --> 00:58:50,340

didn't want to go down

into the shelters,

988

00:58:50,340 --> 00:58:53,430

because I didn't want

to be buried, I think.

989

00:58:53,430 --> 00:58:56,370

Maybe that-- it could be that.

990

00:58:56,370 --> 00:58:59,400

I can't really guess at  
what the feeling was.

991

00:58:59,400 --> 00:59:04,470

But by that time, I really  
went through such hell

992

00:59:04,470 --> 00:59:11,130

that nothing seemed to touch me,  
that I felt that I could just

993

00:59:11,130 --> 00:59:16,170

stand up and watch the  
Russians taking potshots at me.

994

00:59:16,170 --> 00:59:17,590

Because it was the--

995

00:59:17,590 --> 00:59:23,760

that was the latter stages of  
the siege of Budapest, of Pest,

996

00:59:23,760 --> 00:59:27,230

and they were coming close to  
the ghetto and into the ghetto.

997

00:59:27,230 --> 00:59:30,990

And you could see them fighting  
[INAUDIBLE] house to house.

998

00:59:30,990 --> 00:59:34,040

999

00:59:34,040 --> 00:59:36,780

In the last day I went  
down into the shelter,

1000

00:59:36,780 --> 00:59:40,200

maybe the last couple of  
days, and a Russian soldier

1001

00:59:40,200 --> 00:59:43,640

came through the  
wall of the shelter.

1002  
00:59:43,640 --> 00:59:47,160  
In a shelter-- there  
was interconnecting

1003  
00:59:47,160 --> 00:59:52,290  
shelters between apartment  
houses for emergency purposes.

1004  
00:59:52,290 --> 00:59:57,590  
There was always a lightly  
bricked-over doorway,

1005  
00:59:57,590 --> 01:00:00,060  
and they just broke through  
and came right through,

1006  
01:00:00,060 --> 01:00:02,840  
laying telephone lines.

1007  
01:00:02,840 --> 01:00:04,560  
Was this your first--

1008  
01:00:04,560 --> 01:00:06,685  
That was the first Russian.

1009  
01:00:06,685 --> 01:00:07,185  
And--

1010  
01:00:07,185 --> 01:00:10,280

1011  
01:00:10,280 --> 01:00:14,410  
When you saw him,  
what did you feel?

1012  
01:00:14,410 --> 01:00:17,930  
I hugged him.

1013  
01:00:17,930 --> 01:00:18,860

I tried to hug him.

1014  
01:00:18,860 --> 01:00:21,320  
He didn't know where the hell  
he was or what was going on.

1015  
01:00:21,320 --> 01:00:27,290  
I mean, the Russian shock troops  
were absolutely illiterate

1016  
01:00:27,290 --> 01:00:31,605  
from the Far East, looking  
very much like Mongols.

1017  
01:00:31,605 --> 01:00:35,160

1018  
01:00:35,160 --> 01:00:38,850  
They were illiterate, and they  
didn't know where they were.

1019  
01:00:38,850 --> 01:00:39,350  
But you--

1020  
01:00:39,350 --> 01:00:40,610  
And they lived off the land.

1021  
01:00:40,610 --> 01:00:43,080  
And you realized  
what this meant?

1022  
01:00:43,080 --> 01:00:47,330  
I realized that it meant  
that the Germans were out.

1023  
01:00:47,330 --> 01:00:54,170  
I took my-- took the  
star off and was heading

1024  
01:00:54,170 --> 01:00:55,805  
for where I used to live.

1025



01:00:55,805 --> 01:00:58,310

1026

01:00:58,310 --> 01:01:02,330

And just before I got to the  
Western railroad station, which

1027

01:01:02,330 --> 01:01:06,210

was maybe a mile  
away from the ghetto,

1028

01:01:06,210 --> 01:01:13,490

there was a group of a  
long, long line of soldiers,

1029

01:01:13,490 --> 01:01:16,910

policemen, postman.

1030

01:01:16,910 --> 01:01:20,990

Anybody with uniform was  
rounded up by the Russians,

1031

01:01:20,990 --> 01:01:23,960

and they looked at me and  
they looked at my coat,

1032

01:01:23,960 --> 01:01:28,376

and they pushed me into  
the line of prisoners.

1033

01:01:28,376 --> 01:01:32,510

I tried to tell them  
that I was Jewish.

1034

01:01:32,510 --> 01:01:36,840

They couldn't understand  
me and couldn't care less

1035

01:01:36,840 --> 01:01:43,040

and went, well, several  
blocks with them.

1036

01:01:43,040 --> 01:01:44,000

Contact [reference@ushmm.org](mailto:reference@ushmm.org) for further information about this collection