

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,370  
An interview for the US  
Holocaust Memorial Museum

2  
00:00:05,370 --> 00:00:07,427  
with Robert Kertesz.

3  
00:00:07,427 --> 00:00:08,760  
Esther Finder's the interviewer.

4  
00:00:08,760 --> 00:00:11,560  
Today is Wednesday,  
August 7th, 1996.

5  
00:00:11,560 --> 00:00:15,815  
This is tape 1, Side A. I  
want to thank you for doing

6  
00:00:15,815 --> 00:00:18,130  
the interview with us today.

7  
00:00:18,130 --> 00:00:20,560  
Can you tell me, what  
was your name at birth?

8  
00:00:20,560 --> 00:00:21,290  
Kertesz, Robert.

9  
00:00:21,290 --> 00:00:23,850

10  
00:00:23,850 --> 00:00:25,540  
When were you born?

11  
00:00:25,540 --> 00:00:29,910  
I was born on June 9th, 1933.

12  
00:00:29,910 --> 00:00:30,900  
Where were you born?

13

00:00:30,900 --> 00:00:33,270  
In Budapest, Hungary.

14  
00:00:33,270 --> 00:00:35,310  
Is that where you grew up?

15  
00:00:35,310 --> 00:00:42,800  
Yes, until we  
immigrated to Germany,

16  
00:00:42,800 --> 00:00:45,145  
into a displaced person camp.

17  
00:00:45,145 --> 00:00:46,020  
That's where we were.

18  
00:00:46,020 --> 00:00:48,845

19  
00:00:48,845 --> 00:00:50,470  
Can you tell me a  
little bit about what

20  
00:00:50,470 --> 00:00:53,470  
it was like to grow up there?

21  
00:00:53,470 --> 00:00:55,450  
Well, I only remember--

22  
00:00:55,450 --> 00:00:59,350  
not only, but I mean, I  
remember a very happy childhood

23  
00:00:59,350 --> 00:01:05,030  
prior to the war, or what  
I remember as the war,

24  
00:01:05,030 --> 00:01:12,070  
because I'm sure there were  
problems already back even

25  
00:01:12,070 --> 00:01:18,670

when I was born in '33,  
'34, '35 with anti-Semitism

26  
00:01:18,670 --> 00:01:19,300  
and everything.

27  
00:01:19,300 --> 00:01:24,910  
But my parents and I,  
and later on my brother,

28  
00:01:24,910 --> 00:01:29,080  
we were very happy family,  
and I had a normal childhood.

29  
00:01:29,080 --> 00:01:32,680  
My father was a barber  
and a beautician.

30  
00:01:32,680 --> 00:01:35,530  
He owned his own shop.

31  
00:01:35,530 --> 00:01:38,920  
My mother was a seamstress.

32  
00:01:38,920 --> 00:01:41,560

33  
00:01:41,560 --> 00:01:44,120  
Actually, in Hungary,  
she did not work.

34  
00:01:44,120 --> 00:01:47,200  
She only worked after we  
came to the United States

35  
00:01:47,200 --> 00:01:51,970  
because my father was  
earning a decent living.

36  
00:01:51,970 --> 00:01:56,765  
As far as I know, we  
were always comfortable.

37

00:01:56,765 --> 00:01:58,640

Did you live in a Jewish  
area before the war?

38

00:01:58,640 --> 00:02:01,580

39

00:02:01,580 --> 00:02:05,390

Not in the beginning.

40

00:02:05,390 --> 00:02:12,920

Actually, the Jewish  
area in Budapest--

41

00:02:12,920 --> 00:02:16,660

I remember later on because  
it became the actual ghetto

42

00:02:16,660 --> 00:02:17,500

in Budapest--

43

00:02:17,500 --> 00:02:20,550

44

00:02:20,550 --> 00:02:24,390

was quite a distance  
from where we lived.

45

00:02:24,390 --> 00:02:31,850

We lived not in the suburbs, but  
we lived in a very, very nice,

46

00:02:31,850 --> 00:02:36,880

I would think, a  
multi-racial area.

47

00:02:36,880 --> 00:02:42,980

And if I remember  
correctly, and I do,

48

00:02:42,980 --> 00:02:46,730

there was anti-Semitism

right there in our building.

49

00:02:46,730 --> 00:02:50,630

We lived in a four-story  
building on, I never forget,

50

00:02:50,630 --> 00:02:54,430

[NON-ENGLISH] ut 21.

51

00:02:54,430 --> 00:02:56,780

[NON-ENGLISH] was the name  
of the street, and "ut"

52

00:02:56,780 --> 00:02:59,010

means street in Hungarian.

53

00:02:59,010 --> 00:03:04,370

And we lived on the fourth  
floor in apartment 12

54

00:03:04,370 --> 00:03:09,800

B, because 13 was an unlucky  
number, and I guess it was.

55

00:03:09,800 --> 00:03:14,660

But neighbors next  
door to us, they

56

00:03:14,660 --> 00:03:19,070

tolerated us, but they were--

57

00:03:19,070 --> 00:03:23,515

I won't say Christian faith, but  
I mean, they were not Jewish.

58

00:03:23,515 --> 00:03:30,200

And we were friends, but I  
didn't have any real close

59

00:03:30,200 --> 00:03:31,805

Jewish friends myself.

60

00:03:31,805 --> 00:03:36,210

61

00:03:36,210 --> 00:03:38,310

Did you go to public school?

62

00:03:38,310 --> 00:03:39,390

Yes, I did.

63

00:03:39,390 --> 00:03:42,270

I went to public school,  
elementary school,

64

00:03:42,270 --> 00:03:48,250

and started the junior  
high-- no, actually,

65

00:03:48,250 --> 00:03:53,260

just elementary school,  
because when the whole business

66

00:03:53,260 --> 00:03:57,220

started, I was too young  
to go to middle school

67

00:03:57,220 --> 00:04:00,241

or to high school in Hungary.

68

00:04:00,241 --> 00:04:02,780

Do you have any  
brothers or sisters?

69

00:04:02,780 --> 00:04:03,280

Yes, I do.

70

00:04:03,280 --> 00:04:05,050

I have one brother.

71

00:04:05,050 --> 00:04:06,090

His name is George.

72

00:04:06,090 --> 00:04:09,160

He is six years  
younger than I am,

73  
00:04:09,160 --> 00:04:13,900  
and he is now  
residing in Florida.

74  
00:04:13,900 --> 00:04:19,149

75  
00:04:19,149 --> 00:04:21,070  
Was your family  
observant at all?

76  
00:04:21,070 --> 00:04:24,370

77  
00:04:24,370 --> 00:04:32,290  
My mother kept high holidays,  
Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur,

78  
00:04:32,290 --> 00:04:36,160  
but it wasn't that  
we davened every day,

79  
00:04:36,160 --> 00:04:37,540  
or anything like that.

80  
00:04:37,540 --> 00:04:49,530  
We my father really didn't  
speak either Yiddish or Hebrew,

81  
00:04:49,530 --> 00:04:50,670  
or anything like that.

82  
00:04:50,670 --> 00:04:55,890  
I'm sure that he did not have  
a real Jewish upbringing.

83  
00:04:55,890 --> 00:04:59,700  
I think he was a Jew  
strictly by birth.

84

00:04:59,700 --> 00:05:02,880

My mother, I think, had  
a little bit more of that

85

00:05:02,880 --> 00:05:07,980

because my grandmother  
lived with us

86

00:05:07,980 --> 00:05:10,865

towards the end of the war.

87

00:05:10,865 --> 00:05:12,240

Yeah, towards the  
end of the war.

88

00:05:12,240 --> 00:05:15,330

And she was quite religious.

89

00:05:15,330 --> 00:05:21,940

I mean, she read  
the Old Testament.

90

00:05:21,940 --> 00:05:26,470

But I don't remember  
going to Hebrew school

91

00:05:26,470 --> 00:05:32,215

or to the synagogue  
on a weekly basis.

92

00:05:32,215 --> 00:05:35,740

But we did observe  
the high holidays

93

00:05:35,740 --> 00:05:38,440

and we did know we were Jewish.

94

00:05:38,440 --> 00:05:40,990

95

00:05:40,990 --> 00:05:43,570

In what ways can you tell me



that you knew you were Jewish,

96

00:05:43,570 --> 00:05:46,780

or that you knew there  
were differences?

97

00:05:46,780 --> 00:05:48,520

I think a lot of  
people reminded me

98

00:05:48,520 --> 00:05:55,730

that I was Jewish, simply  
because, as I said,

99

00:05:55,730 --> 00:06:03,420

I think the people that lived  
around us were non-Jewish,

100

00:06:03,420 --> 00:06:07,850

and we observed holidays at  
different times than they did.

101

00:06:07,850 --> 00:06:11,640

And I wanted to know, why  
didn't we have Christmas?

102

00:06:11,640 --> 00:06:16,360

Why didn't we have certain  
holidays that they had?

103

00:06:16,360 --> 00:06:19,110

And I asked those questions.

104

00:06:19,110 --> 00:06:24,120

But I was told that we  
were of a different faith

105

00:06:24,120 --> 00:06:27,050

and that was not our holiday.

106

00:06:27,050 --> 00:06:31,180

In fact, I don't  
think before the war,

107  
00:06:31,180 --> 00:06:42,090  
my parents were very  
upset about Gentiles

108  
00:06:42,090 --> 00:06:45,420  
so much, until after  
the war, because they

109  
00:06:45,420 --> 00:06:48,420  
felt that they were the  
crux of the whole problems

110  
00:06:48,420 --> 00:06:49,410  
that they went through.

111  
00:06:49,410 --> 00:06:58,700

112  
00:06:58,700 --> 00:07:04,530  
I remember my mother and my  
grandmother, who, by the way,

113  
00:07:04,530 --> 00:07:05,570  
was born in Germany.

114  
00:07:05,570 --> 00:07:08,450  
My mother was born in  
Germany in Pforzheim,

115  
00:07:08,450 --> 00:07:13,070  
and we spoke German  
and Hungarian at home.

116  
00:07:13,070 --> 00:07:15,830  
And my grandmother  
living with us,

117  
00:07:15,830 --> 00:07:20,630  
they sometimes would  
have certain sayings

118

00:07:20,630 --> 00:07:26,300  
because they didn't agree with  
some of the Gentile friends

119  
00:07:26,300 --> 00:07:30,640  
that they became  
in contact with.

120  
00:07:30,640 --> 00:07:35,000

121  
00:07:35,000 --> 00:07:39,140  
Do you remember any  
scenes where perhaps you

122  
00:07:39,140 --> 00:07:41,212  
observed anti-Semitism  
toward other Jews

123  
00:07:41,212 --> 00:07:42,170  
when you're growing up?

124  
00:07:42,170 --> 00:07:45,070

125  
00:07:45,070 --> 00:07:48,280  
No, not really, except  
just verbal abuse

126  
00:07:48,280 --> 00:07:54,810  
by cursing at someone, you dirty  
Jew, or something like that.

127  
00:07:54,810 --> 00:07:58,000

128  
00:07:58,000 --> 00:08:01,200  
I've never seen anybody  
before the war being beaten,

129  
00:08:01,200 --> 00:08:03,190  
or anything like that.

130

00:08:03,190 --> 00:08:09,190

I have seen where they would  
draw a Magen David or something

131

00:08:09,190 --> 00:08:14,500

on a building or on  
a business, and I

132

00:08:14,500 --> 00:08:20,830

believe that was one of  
the reasons my father,

133

00:08:20,830 --> 00:08:22,330

even though he  
was doing well, he

134

00:08:22,330 --> 00:08:24,100

had a rough time  
staying in business,

135

00:08:24,100 --> 00:08:27,910

because of the growing  
anti-Semitism in Hungary.

136

00:08:27,910 --> 00:08:33,440

137

00:08:33,440 --> 00:08:36,710

Did you have any  
idea of what was

138

00:08:36,710 --> 00:08:40,065

going on outside of  
your immediate area,

139

00:08:40,065 --> 00:08:42,440

with respect to the way Jews  
were being treated elsewhere

140

00:08:42,440 --> 00:08:44,059

in Europe?

141

00:08:44,059 --> 00:08:45,450  
Not as a child.

142  
00:08:45,450 --> 00:08:48,230  
Not at that time,  
not prior to the war.

143  
00:08:48,230 --> 00:08:51,850

144  
00:08:51,850 --> 00:08:55,090  
When did you begin to realize  
that things were not right?

145  
00:08:55,090 --> 00:08:58,580

146  
00:08:58,580 --> 00:09:00,680  
I think the first  
time it really hit

147  
00:09:00,680 --> 00:09:05,210  
home, as far as I was concerned,  
was when my father started

148  
00:09:05,210 --> 00:09:08,030  
talking about  
selling his business

149  
00:09:08,030 --> 00:09:11,930  
and leaving the country,  
leaving Hungary, and trying

150  
00:09:11,930 --> 00:09:15,830  
to go somewhere else where  
it would be safer for us.

151  
00:09:15,830 --> 00:09:17,390  
I don't know if  
I understood what

152  
00:09:17,390 --> 00:09:22,010  
safer meant because, personally,

I was not really mistreated

153  
00:09:22,010 --> 00:09:22,580  
in any way.

154  
00:09:22,580 --> 00:09:28,550  
But I could see on my parents  
that they had growing concerns,

155  
00:09:28,550 --> 00:09:31,760  
and that's the first  
time that I ever

156  
00:09:31,760 --> 00:09:33,560  
thought that it  
might have something

157  
00:09:33,560 --> 00:09:35,075  
to do with us being Jewish.

158  
00:09:35,075 --> 00:09:39,790

159  
00:09:39,790 --> 00:09:43,180  
What kinds of discussions did  
your father have with you?

160  
00:09:43,180 --> 00:09:45,430  
Or what did you overhear  
your parents saying, anything

161  
00:09:45,430 --> 00:09:45,930  
specific?

162  
00:09:45,930 --> 00:09:49,910

163  
00:09:49,910 --> 00:09:53,420  
I think it was basically  
generalizations,

164  
00:09:53,420 --> 00:09:59,250

like we have to leave  
before we cannot leave.

165  
00:09:59,250 --> 00:10:01,460  
In other words, we should  
leave before everything

166  
00:10:01,460 --> 00:10:04,640  
gets closed down and we  
won't be able to get out.

167  
00:10:04,640 --> 00:10:07,190

168  
00:10:07,190 --> 00:10:10,940  
I remember them saying,  
have you heard about what

169  
00:10:10,940 --> 00:10:14,930  
happened to somebody else?

170  
00:10:14,930 --> 00:10:19,580  
Not in mainly the  
neighborhood, but in Budapest,

171  
00:10:19,580 --> 00:10:24,100  
in other words, some of the  
areas that they have known.

172  
00:10:24,100 --> 00:10:25,850  
Maybe they read in the paper.

173  
00:10:25,850 --> 00:10:27,350  
Of course, I didn't.

174  
00:10:27,350 --> 00:10:31,310  
But I heard them  
discuss, have you

175  
00:10:31,310 --> 00:10:35,510  
heard that such and such  
a person, or some incident

176

00:10:35,510 --> 00:10:38,480

happened someplace and it  
involved other Jewish people?

177

00:10:38,480 --> 00:10:40,520

And I think that's  
when my father started

178

00:10:40,520 --> 00:10:42,950

to think that he  
would have to leave,

179

00:10:42,950 --> 00:10:45,170

and that's the first  
time that I realized

180

00:10:45,170 --> 00:10:48,470

that maybe something was wrong.

181

00:10:48,470 --> 00:10:52,910

But I was still a  
child, so I didn't

182

00:10:52,910 --> 00:10:58,010

formulate any conclusions  
to my thoughts at that time.

183

00:10:58,010 --> 00:11:03,500

What steps did your  
father take to get out?

184

00:11:03,500 --> 00:11:06,980

Well, first of all, my  
father sold his business.

185

00:11:06,980 --> 00:11:15,500

And really, from  
what I understand,

186

00:11:15,500 --> 00:11:17,330

it was almost like  
a distress sale.



187

00:11:17,330 --> 00:11:18,740

He just wanted to get rid of it.

188

00:11:18,740 --> 00:11:21,950

He had a beautiful  
barber and beauty shop.

189

00:11:21,950 --> 00:11:24,650

And I remember it  
vividly because it

190

00:11:24,650 --> 00:11:28,760

was on the same street where  
we lived, except a little bit

191

00:11:28,760 --> 00:11:31,640

further down in a very,  
very beautiful area.

192

00:11:31,640 --> 00:11:34,970

193

00:11:34,970 --> 00:11:37,710

He sold his business.

194

00:11:37,710 --> 00:11:42,980

And I remember him talking  
that we will probably

195

00:11:42,980 --> 00:11:49,790

go to South America, where we  
already had some relatives.

196

00:11:49,790 --> 00:11:56,060

197

00:11:56,060 --> 00:12:01,910

It was my mother's brother  
who lived in South America.

198

00:12:01,910 --> 00:12:04,670

199

00:12:04,670 --> 00:12:09,620

They invited us to come there,  
that it was a safe place to be.

200

00:12:09,620 --> 00:12:13,820

201

00:12:13,820 --> 00:12:20,180

As I remember, my parents  
did buy passage for the ship,

202

00:12:20,180 --> 00:12:22,160

to get out.

203

00:12:22,160 --> 00:12:26,840

But before we had a chance  
to actually leave Hungary,

204

00:12:26,840 --> 00:12:29,000

with all the passports  
and paperwork,

205

00:12:29,000 --> 00:12:31,790

I guess, that it  
took to get out,

206

00:12:31,790 --> 00:12:33,290

things really tightened down.

207

00:12:33,290 --> 00:12:39,710

And Italy entered the war,  
became part of the Axis

208

00:12:39,710 --> 00:12:46,850

with Germany, and they would not  
allow ships that carried Jews

209

00:12:46,850 --> 00:12:49,808

through their  
waters, and that was

210

00:12:49,808 --> 00:12:52,100  
one of the reasons why we  
never did get out of Hungary.

211  
00:12:52,100 --> 00:12:55,280

212  
00:12:55,280 --> 00:12:59,450  
Believe me, I don't actually  
remember what year that was,

213  
00:12:59,450 --> 00:13:07,450  
but it must have been '41,  
'42, somewhere around there.

214  
00:13:07,450 --> 00:13:15,330

215  
00:13:15,330 --> 00:13:18,120  
Were things beginning to  
change for the Jews in the area

216  
00:13:18,120 --> 00:13:20,210  
that you can remember  
specifically?

217  
00:13:20,210 --> 00:13:27,094

218  
00:13:27,094 --> 00:13:29,845  
Not really that I can remember.

219  
00:13:29,845 --> 00:13:32,350  
I mean, I don't want to  
fabricate any stories here,

220  
00:13:32,350 --> 00:13:35,740  
but I do not remember  
anything really changing,

221  
00:13:35,740 --> 00:13:40,960  
except that my parents  
were getting more and more

222

00:13:40,960 --> 00:13:45,160  
concerned, since we  
couldn't get out of there,

223

00:13:45,160 --> 00:13:49,510  
what was going to happen to us.

224

00:13:49,510 --> 00:13:52,290  
That's the one thing  
that I do remember,

225

00:13:52,290 --> 00:13:54,475  
is the concern of my folks.

226

00:13:54,475 --> 00:13:57,308

227

00:13:57,308 --> 00:13:58,600  
So what did your folks do next?

228

00:13:58,600 --> 00:13:59,490  
They couldn't leave.

229

00:13:59,490 --> 00:13:59,990  
Then what?

230

00:13:59,990 --> 00:14:01,800  
Did they try to do  
something else, maybe

231

00:14:01,800 --> 00:14:04,820  
another escape route?

232

00:14:04,820 --> 00:14:06,940  
I don't believe.

233

00:14:06,940 --> 00:14:13,680  
Actually, by that time, it  
was a little bit too late.

234

00:14:13,680 --> 00:14:19,350  
My father was inducted  
into the Hungarian army,

235  
00:14:19,350 --> 00:14:23,520  
and that stopped us  
completely from leaving,

236  
00:14:23,520 --> 00:14:27,700  
because, of course, my mother  
wouldn't have left without him.

237  
00:14:27,700 --> 00:14:32,520  
And at that time,  
he was actually

238  
00:14:32,520 --> 00:14:39,750  
a soldier in the Hungarian army,  
and not till later on did he

239  
00:14:39,750 --> 00:14:42,150  
get pulled out into  
special forces,

240  
00:14:42,150 --> 00:14:47,520  
where they used the Jews to  
do some really dirty work.

241  
00:14:47,520 --> 00:14:52,350  
Like they had to go  
ahead and dig trenches--

242  
00:14:52,350 --> 00:14:54,600  
this is what my father told me--

243  
00:14:54,600 --> 00:14:57,120  
dig trenches or clean up.

244  
00:14:57,120 --> 00:15:02,820  
They actually became almost like  
slaves of the Hungarian army.

245  
00:15:02,820 --> 00:15:06,600

They had to wear  
the Star of David,

246  
00:15:06,600 --> 00:15:08,570  
but they were  
slaves by that time.

247  
00:15:08,570 --> 00:15:10,967

248  
00:15:10,967 --> 00:15:12,800  
Do you remember when  
your father was drafted

249  
00:15:12,800 --> 00:15:14,910  
to having go off in uniform?

250  
00:15:14,910 --> 00:15:18,480  
Oh, yes, I do remember.

251  
00:15:18,480 --> 00:15:22,950  
At that time, I thought  
it was really great

252  
00:15:22,950 --> 00:15:24,510  
that he was a soldier.

253  
00:15:24,510 --> 00:15:29,290  
And I remember in  
the wintertime,

254  
00:15:29,290 --> 00:15:32,340  
he had this heavy  
woolen overcoat

255  
00:15:32,340 --> 00:15:33,870  
that was part of his issue.

256  
00:15:33,870 --> 00:15:37,060  
And two pleats--

257  
00:15:37,060 --> 00:15:38,730

I'll never forget  
this-- two pleats

258  
00:15:38,730 --> 00:15:42,450  
had to fall on either  
side on his back.

259  
00:15:42,450 --> 00:15:47,280  
And I would make these  
pleats with my hands,

260  
00:15:47,280 --> 00:15:50,310  
and he would put his big,  
wide belt around him.

261  
00:15:50,310 --> 00:15:53,460  
And those pleats had to be held  
so that when you looked at it,

262  
00:15:53,460 --> 00:15:55,290  
it looked nice and neat.

263  
00:15:55,290 --> 00:15:59,423  
And I thought that was  
great that he was a soldier.

264  
00:15:59,423 --> 00:16:00,090  
What did I know?

265  
00:16:00,090 --> 00:16:03,720

266  
00:16:03,720 --> 00:16:08,060  
After he was drafted, what  
happened to you, your mom,

267  
00:16:08,060 --> 00:16:09,600  
and your brother?

268  
00:16:09,600 --> 00:16:15,570  
Well, prior to that, of  
course, we lived on our own.

269

00:16:15,570 --> 00:16:18,380

And after my father  
sold his business,

270

00:16:18,380 --> 00:16:21,850

we also gave up our  
apartment where we lived.

271

00:16:21,850 --> 00:16:24,370

272

00:16:24,370 --> 00:16:31,320

Then we moved in with my  
grandmother and my aunt--

273

00:16:31,320 --> 00:16:32,430

my aunt never married--

274

00:16:32,430 --> 00:16:35,850

275

00:16:35,850 --> 00:16:42,390

and my uncle, who  
had an apartment.

276

00:16:42,390 --> 00:16:45,690

And this is the apartment  
I was telling you about

277

00:16:45,690 --> 00:16:47,940

on [NON-ENGLISH]  
that we moved into.

278

00:16:47,940 --> 00:16:53,580

And we lived there altogether,  
almost like a commune,

279

00:16:53,580 --> 00:16:55,080

but I mean, it wasn't.

280

00:16:55,080 --> 00:16:57,520

It was just a nice



big apartment.

281  
00:16:57,520 --> 00:17:00,300  
And when I said big,  
actually, come to think of it,

282  
00:17:00,300 --> 00:17:01,740  
it wasn't that big.

283  
00:17:01,740 --> 00:17:03,990  
We were pretty crowded.

284  
00:17:03,990 --> 00:17:09,348  
But we lived there while  
my father was gone,

285  
00:17:09,348 --> 00:17:10,890  
when he was in the  
army, because that

286  
00:17:10,890 --> 00:17:16,650  
was the only protection we had,  
was living with the family.

287  
00:17:16,650 --> 00:17:21,869  
I don't think my mother could  
have done anything on her own.

288  
00:17:21,869 --> 00:17:25,770  
And I think maybe at  
that time, my father

289  
00:17:25,770 --> 00:17:29,670  
would be sending her  
money until he actually

290  
00:17:29,670 --> 00:17:34,020  
got taken into this work  
force that I mentioned to you.

291  
00:17:34,020 --> 00:17:40,470  
And we would be living a  
very, very, I wouldn't say,

292  
00:17:40,470 --> 00:17:43,200  
poor life, but I mean,  
certainly, the economics

293  
00:17:43,200 --> 00:17:44,490  
for us changed quite a bit.

294  
00:17:44,490 --> 00:17:51,950

295  
00:17:51,950 --> 00:17:55,730  
How did things start to  
change in the immediate area,

296  
00:17:55,730 --> 00:18:00,130  
the Jewish community,  
for you after that point?

297  
00:18:00,130 --> 00:18:04,885  
Well, it changed by--

298  
00:18:04,885 --> 00:18:07,720

299  
00:18:07,720 --> 00:18:15,160  
I remember, Hungary had their  
own Nazi party, so to say,

300  
00:18:15,160 --> 00:18:22,270  
and their insignia  
was two arrows.

301  
00:18:22,270 --> 00:18:24,790  
They used to call  
them Arrow Cross.

302  
00:18:24,790 --> 00:18:27,520  
In Hungarian it's  
called [NON-ENGLISH]..

303  
00:18:27,520 --> 00:18:33,130

And the Arrow Cross, on each  
end of it, had an arrow on it,

304  
00:18:33,130 --> 00:18:34,420  
and that was their insignia.

305  
00:18:34,420 --> 00:18:36,265  
And they were really just thugs.

306  
00:18:36,265 --> 00:18:41,650

307  
00:18:41,650 --> 00:18:45,250  
Well, as I remember it,  
they were really worse,

308  
00:18:45,250 --> 00:18:49,110  
even after the Germans  
came in to Hungary.

309  
00:18:49,110 --> 00:18:53,560  
The Arrow Cross was really  
worse than the Germans

310  
00:18:53,560 --> 00:18:57,900  
were because they  
were Hungarians who--

311  
00:18:57,900 --> 00:19:03,010  
I would equate them  
with the Ku Klux Klan,

312  
00:19:03,010 --> 00:19:06,970  
maybe, during the  
Civil War over here.

313  
00:19:06,970 --> 00:19:09,010  
They hated Jews.

314  
00:19:09,010 --> 00:19:12,898  
They hated non-Aryans.

315

00:19:12,898 --> 00:19:14,440  
Well, they weren't  
Aryans themselves,

316  
00:19:14,440 --> 00:19:18,310  
but they hated Jews mainly.

317  
00:19:18,310 --> 00:19:22,300  
That's when we started  
hearing more and more.

318  
00:19:22,300 --> 00:19:25,330  
When this party started  
getting stronger and stronger,

319  
00:19:25,330 --> 00:19:31,990  
we heard more of beatings and  
of killings and of desecration

320  
00:19:31,990 --> 00:19:33,360  
of synagogues.

321  
00:19:33,360 --> 00:19:36,010

322  
00:19:36,010 --> 00:19:38,800  
I think that's when things  
really started to change.

323  
00:19:38,800 --> 00:19:41,560  
That's when we really  
started to get afraid

324  
00:19:41,560 --> 00:19:46,540  
and didn't really  
know what to do.

325  
00:19:46,540 --> 00:19:51,150  
We were-- when I say we, we were  
just kids, my brother and I.

326  
00:19:51,150 --> 00:19:55,740  
But my mother, I remember,

was very, very concerned,

327  
00:19:55,740 --> 00:20:00,570  
especially since my  
father was somewhere.

328  
00:20:00,570 --> 00:20:03,330  
To be honest with you, I  
don't even know where he was,

329  
00:20:03,330 --> 00:20:08,760  
whether he was on the front or  
where he was doing his duty.

330  
00:20:08,760 --> 00:20:11,190  
But my mother was  
completely reliant

331  
00:20:11,190 --> 00:20:14,370  
on the family, the  
immediate family,

332  
00:20:14,370 --> 00:20:18,460  
because we had no one else  
that we could turn to,

333  
00:20:18,460 --> 00:20:22,350  
and she was quite scared.

334  
00:20:22,350 --> 00:20:28,590  
My father's family lived in a  
small village in Hungary called

335  
00:20:28,590 --> 00:20:29,450  
[NON-ENGLISH].

336  
00:20:29,450 --> 00:20:32,850

337  
00:20:32,850 --> 00:20:37,720  
But they were folks,  
country folks.

338

00:20:37,720 --> 00:20:40,620

They had a little  
like a farm, I guess,

339

00:20:40,620 --> 00:20:42,210

and they lived off the land.

340

00:20:42,210 --> 00:20:44,470

So if nothing else,  
they had plenty to eat.

341

00:20:44,470 --> 00:20:47,160

342

00:20:47,160 --> 00:20:49,800

I think they were  
even more persecuted

343

00:20:49,800 --> 00:20:55,990

than we were in the big  
city because things really

344

00:20:55,990 --> 00:21:05,140

started to turn real bad  
for the Jews at that time,

345

00:21:05,140 --> 00:21:07,390

whereas in Budapest,  
there was a ghetto,

346

00:21:07,390 --> 00:21:12,790

and there Jews  
could get together

347

00:21:12,790 --> 00:21:15,670

and talk things  
over, or at least

348

00:21:15,670 --> 00:21:17,440

have a little bit of unity.

349

00:21:17,440 --> 00:21:22,150

Out in a country,  
Jews were a rarity

350  
00:21:22,150 --> 00:21:27,610  
and they did not have the  
commune or the togetherness

351  
00:21:27,610 --> 00:21:32,440  
or the support of other Jews.

352  
00:21:32,440 --> 00:21:35,440  
Unfortunately, they all  
perished in concentration camps,

353  
00:21:35,440 --> 00:21:36,670  
every one of them.

354  
00:21:36,670 --> 00:21:40,180  
But there's only some--

355  
00:21:40,180 --> 00:21:42,760  
I believe I have some nieces  
and nephews still left,

356  
00:21:42,760 --> 00:21:44,530  
but I really don't know.

357  
00:21:44,530 --> 00:21:48,333

358  
00:21:48,333 --> 00:21:49,750  
Did your mother  
try to do anything

359  
00:21:49,750 --> 00:21:53,060  
to protect you and your brother?

360  
00:21:53,060 --> 00:21:53,560  
Yes.

361  
00:21:53,560 --> 00:21:59,170

362  
00:21:59,170 --> 00:22:06,340  
This was not until  
about 1943, I believe.

363  
00:22:06,340 --> 00:22:11,050  
When she saw how things  
were really deteriorating

364  
00:22:11,050 --> 00:22:17,260  
for the Jews, they  
actually already started

365  
00:22:17,260 --> 00:22:22,420  
to hurt Jewish people  
into the ghetto

366  
00:22:22,420 --> 00:22:26,770  
and started to  
confiscate their homes

367  
00:22:26,770 --> 00:22:29,800  
and confiscate their  
apartments, and what have you.

368  
00:22:29,800 --> 00:22:32,956

369  
00:22:32,956 --> 00:22:38,680  
They would relocate older Jews  
into this one Jewish area,

370  
00:22:38,680 --> 00:22:42,070  
that I mentioned before, that  
eventually became together.

371  
00:22:42,070 --> 00:22:48,160  
And at first, they  
just had checkpoints,

372  
00:22:48,160 --> 00:22:53,650  
where they had a guard.



373

00:22:53,650 --> 00:22:58,180

Going in or out was, of course, checked by the guard.

374

00:22:58,180 --> 00:23:01,480

Jews were, of course, not allowed out once they were in.

375

00:23:01,480 --> 00:23:05,710

And they were systematically taking different sections

376

00:23:05,710 --> 00:23:09,160

of the city and picking up Jewish people

377

00:23:09,160 --> 00:23:12,670

and putting them into this one, I

378

00:23:12,670 --> 00:23:14,860

don't know, maybe 15, 20 block area,

379

00:23:14,860 --> 00:23:16,390

or whatever it was, that eventually

380

00:23:16,390 --> 00:23:20,380

became the Jewish ghetto area.

381

00:23:20,380 --> 00:23:25,220

The main focal point there was on a street called

382

00:23:25,220 --> 00:23:26,240

[NON-ENGLISH].

383

00:23:26,240 --> 00:23:30,020

So there was a big Jewish synagogue.

384

00:23:30,020 --> 00:23:33,710

385

00:23:33,710 --> 00:23:39,830

My uncle, who lived  
in [NON-ENGLISH],,

386

00:23:39,830 --> 00:23:43,670

lived almost across the  
street from the synagogue.

387

00:23:43,670 --> 00:23:47,710

And I think that's where we  
became more and more aware

388

00:23:47,710 --> 00:23:53,120

that we were really  
Jewish, because now you had

389

00:23:53,120 --> 00:23:56,360

nobody but Jews all around you.

390

00:23:56,360 --> 00:24:01,370

At the same time, by moving  
Jews into the ghetto,

391

00:24:01,370 --> 00:24:04,820

they were also taking all the  
non-Jews out of the ghetto,

392

00:24:04,820 --> 00:24:06,320

who lived in a  
ghetto, and they were

393

00:24:06,320 --> 00:24:10,020

moving them to relocate  
them outside of the ghetto

394

00:24:10,020 --> 00:24:13,730

so they could completely  
seal off the ghetto just

395

00:24:13,730 --> 00:24:16,460

for the Jews.

396  
00:24:16,460 --> 00:24:19,040  
So what did your mother  
try to do for you?

397  
00:24:19,040 --> 00:24:21,950

398  
00:24:21,950 --> 00:24:26,420  
That's right, I'm  
digressing here.

399  
00:24:26,420 --> 00:24:30,650  
When she saw that things  
were going that bad,

400  
00:24:30,650 --> 00:24:46,450  
there were some houses that  
were supposedly safe houses

401  
00:24:46,450 --> 00:24:47,290  
by the Red Cross.

402  
00:24:47,290 --> 00:24:50,980

403  
00:24:50,980 --> 00:24:52,510  
I don't know what she paid.

404  
00:24:52,510 --> 00:24:54,250  
I'm sure it cost money.

405  
00:24:54,250 --> 00:25:03,660  
But I believe somewhere  
in the fall of 1943--

406  
00:25:03,660 --> 00:25:09,450  
early fall, or late summer,  
early fall in 1943--

407  
00:25:09,450 --> 00:25:12,030

she took my brother  
and I and put us

408  
00:25:12,030 --> 00:25:14,340  
into this house  
that was supposed

409  
00:25:14,340 --> 00:25:19,560  
to have been under the  
protection of the Red Cross.

410  
00:25:19,560 --> 00:25:25,980  
And my brother and I moved  
into this apartment house,

411  
00:25:25,980 --> 00:25:30,345  
where every apartment  
was full of mainly kids.

412  
00:25:30,345 --> 00:25:33,570

413  
00:25:33,570 --> 00:25:39,090  
We lived in a small room with  
maybe 15, 20 kids in a room,

414  
00:25:39,090 --> 00:25:42,510  
just enough room to  
lie down and sleep.

415  
00:25:42,510 --> 00:25:46,150

416  
00:25:46,150 --> 00:25:47,720  
We had food.

417  
00:25:47,720 --> 00:25:49,750  
I mean, we got food  
there and everything,

418  
00:25:49,750 --> 00:25:53,030  
but that didn't last very long.

419

00:25:53,030 --> 00:25:57,850

It only lasted  
less than a month.

420

00:25:57,850 --> 00:26:05,290

And then Arrow Cross came in  
one night, middle of the night,

421

00:26:05,290 --> 00:26:16,650

and practically beat us  
out of the apartments, down

422

00:26:16,650 --> 00:26:32,440

into the street, and  
forcefully marched us

423

00:26:32,440 --> 00:26:39,590

into the ghetto, where we  
had to fend for ourselves.

424

00:26:39,590 --> 00:26:42,220

There was no direction  
where to go or what to do.

425

00:26:42,220 --> 00:26:49,440

As long as we were  
behind the ghetto area,

426

00:26:49,440 --> 00:26:51,340

they didn't care what happened.

427

00:26:51,340 --> 00:26:54,300

So we just wandered  
around aimlessly

428

00:26:54,300 --> 00:27:02,330

until we found some family  
that we could move in with,

429

00:27:02,330 --> 00:27:07,410

and they gave us a place to  
stay, gave us a place to live.

430

00:27:07,410 --> 00:27:10,440

When you were in the safe house, the Red Cross safe house,

431

00:27:10,440 --> 00:27:14,250

how frequently we were able to see your mother?

432

00:27:14,250 --> 00:27:18,960

I think we only saw her maybe once or twice,

433

00:27:18,960 --> 00:27:28,040

because I believe not very much after that, she was picked up

434

00:27:28,040 --> 00:27:32,720

and she was taken away.

435

00:27:32,720 --> 00:27:36,600

436

00:27:36,600 --> 00:27:41,050

I know that she spent time both in Mauthausen

437

00:27:41,050 --> 00:27:45,250

and in Günskirchen, which were two of the concentration camps,

438

00:27:45,250 --> 00:27:47,830

but I don't know which one she went to first.

439

00:27:47,830 --> 00:27:55,250

But we only saw her a couple of times,

440

00:27:55,250 --> 00:27:56,650

and after that, we did not.

441

00:27:56,650 --> 00:28:01,110

442

00:28:01,110 --> 00:28:05,380

It was not until after the war that we saw her again.

443

00:28:05,380 --> 00:28:09,990

444

00:28:09,990 --> 00:28:12,990

So when you were taken out of the safe house

445

00:28:12,990 --> 00:28:16,800

and brought to the ghetto, you were without your mother

446

00:28:16,800 --> 00:28:19,790

and without your father at this point?

447

00:28:19,790 --> 00:28:20,850

Yes.

448

00:28:20,850 --> 00:28:23,950

How long did it take you to--

449

00:28:23,950 --> 00:28:26,920

well, I was going to ask you how long it took you to connect

450

00:28:26,920 --> 00:28:29,770

with relatives, but how did you manage to survive until you

451

00:28:29,770 --> 00:28:32,620

caught up with relatives?

452

00:28:32,620 --> 00:28:43,930

Well, I was always a survivor, I think.

453

00:28:43,930 --> 00:28:50,790  
And my brother and  
I would scrounge

454  
00:28:50,790 --> 00:28:55,770  
food, if we didn't have  
it right then and there

455  
00:28:55,770 --> 00:28:59,160  
from the family that put us up.

456  
00:28:59,160 --> 00:29:06,510  
But we also would go out and  
look for other places to be.

457  
00:29:06,510 --> 00:29:09,660  
We didn't just  
stay in one place.

458  
00:29:09,660 --> 00:29:12,930  
We kept on looking  
for somebody that we

459  
00:29:12,930 --> 00:29:16,930  
knew that we could connect to.

460  
00:29:16,930 --> 00:29:26,220  
And by this time, the  
walls were still not

461  
00:29:26,220 --> 00:29:28,080  
put up around the ghetto.

462  
00:29:28,080 --> 00:29:30,720

463  
00:29:30,720 --> 00:29:32,880  
There was still  
ingress and egress

464  
00:29:32,880 --> 00:29:35,250  
from the ghetto for non-Jews.



465

00:29:35,250 --> 00:29:42,090

466

00:29:42,090 --> 00:29:45,400

We had to, of course,  
wear the Star of David,

467

00:29:45,400 --> 00:29:48,040

and I just did not like it.

468

00:29:48,040 --> 00:29:50,980

Even as a 10,  
11-year-old kid, I just

469

00:29:50,980 --> 00:29:53,650

didn't like the idea of  
being confined and being

470

00:29:53,650 --> 00:29:56,050

away from anybody that I knew.

471

00:29:56,050 --> 00:29:58,660

And I'm sure I was  
scared, and I had

472

00:29:58,660 --> 00:30:01,750

my brother has to  
take care of, who was

473

00:30:01,750 --> 00:30:04,060

just four or five years old.

474

00:30:04,060 --> 00:30:09,730

475

00:30:09,730 --> 00:30:15,340

I know this sounds unbelievable,  
but we attached ourselves

476

00:30:15,340 --> 00:30:21,130

to a large family that were  
going out from the ghetto.

477  
00:30:21,130 --> 00:30:26,350

478  
00:30:26,350 --> 00:30:28,910  
I took off his Magen  
David, the yellow star,

479  
00:30:28,910 --> 00:30:30,700  
and I took mine off.

480  
00:30:30,700 --> 00:30:34,840  
And we actually escaped  
by attaching ourselves

481  
00:30:34,840 --> 00:30:37,840  
to this family, and we  
walked through the gates.

482  
00:30:37,840 --> 00:30:38,980  
They didn't question us.

483  
00:30:38,980 --> 00:30:42,520  
I mean, there was just so  
much movement going on,

484  
00:30:42,520 --> 00:30:45,310  
back and forth, that  
it just happened.

485  
00:30:45,310 --> 00:30:48,940  
We just walked right through  
and we escaped from the ghetto

486  
00:30:48,940 --> 00:30:51,820  
at one time.

487  
00:30:51,820 --> 00:30:59,890  
I have an aunt, who was  
a Christian woman, who

488  
00:30:59,890 --> 00:31:03,310

was going to marry  
my uncle, whom

489  
00:31:03,310 --> 00:31:05,913  
I mentioned to you used to  
live with us in the apartment.

490  
00:31:05,913 --> 00:31:09,070

491  
00:31:09,070 --> 00:31:12,370  
I knew where she lived.

492  
00:31:12,370 --> 00:31:17,320  
And we started  
towards her house,

493  
00:31:17,320 --> 00:31:23,350  
and there was an air raid.

494  
00:31:23,350 --> 00:31:27,310  
And we ducked into  
an air raid shelter

495  
00:31:27,310 --> 00:31:34,387  
to get out from the  
street, because we

496  
00:31:34,387 --> 00:31:35,470  
had to be off the streets.

497  
00:31:35,470 --> 00:31:38,200

498  
00:31:38,200 --> 00:31:40,600  
As soon as the air raid  
was over, we went to her--

499  
00:31:40,600 --> 00:31:48,860

500  
00:31:48,860 --> 00:31:51,240

We are doing an interview  
with Robert Kertesz.

501  
00:31:51,240 --> 00:31:54,960  
This is Tape 1, side B.  
When we left last time,

502  
00:31:54,960 --> 00:31:56,700  
you were telling me  
about an air raid.

503  
00:31:56,700 --> 00:31:58,660  
Can you continue, please?

504  
00:31:58,660 --> 00:31:59,160  
Yes.

505  
00:31:59,160 --> 00:32:01,680

506  
00:32:01,680 --> 00:32:07,170  
After the air raid, we went  
to my aunt's house, who

507  
00:32:07,170 --> 00:32:11,850  
was a Gentile lady, and  
she lived not very far

508  
00:32:11,850 --> 00:32:15,600  
from the shelter were  
where we took refuge in.

509  
00:32:15,600 --> 00:32:19,840

510  
00:32:19,840 --> 00:32:21,715  
We went to her house, and she--

511  
00:32:21,715 --> 00:32:24,250

512  
00:32:24,250 --> 00:32:26,890

after some manipulation  
or whatever,

513  
00:32:26,890 --> 00:32:31,180  
I don't know what she did, she  
had some relatives in a country

514  
00:32:31,180 --> 00:32:33,160  
and also in the city.

515  
00:32:33,160 --> 00:32:39,630  
And what she did,  
she split us up.

516  
00:32:39,630 --> 00:32:46,320  
She took my brother, because  
he was very young and small.

517  
00:32:46,320 --> 00:32:49,520

518  
00:32:49,520 --> 00:32:55,370  
He went with one of  
her part of the family,

519  
00:32:55,370 --> 00:33:00,380  
somewhere in  
Budapest, as a nephew

520  
00:33:00,380 --> 00:33:03,230  
or as somebody of that family.

521  
00:33:03,230 --> 00:33:07,640  
In other words, that's how he  
was presented to everybody.

522  
00:33:07,640 --> 00:33:12,410  
And that gave him  
protection, so he was not

523  
00:33:12,410 --> 00:33:15,920  
in the mainstream of all this  
persecution and everything.

524  
00:33:15,920 --> 00:33:20,670  
And I, because I was  
older, they wanted

525  
00:33:20,670 --> 00:33:23,030  
for me to get out of the city.

526  
00:33:23,030 --> 00:33:27,290  
And she had family  
in a country, and I

527  
00:33:27,290 --> 00:33:33,830  
went to stay with some of  
her people in the country,

528  
00:33:33,830 --> 00:33:37,030  
again, on a farm.

529  
00:33:37,030 --> 00:33:39,110  
I was, more or  
less, hidden there,

530  
00:33:39,110 --> 00:33:41,090  
because there would  
have been questions,

531  
00:33:41,090 --> 00:33:44,000  
where did I come from?

532  
00:33:44,000 --> 00:33:45,930  
At this time, she  
was still not--

533  
00:33:45,930 --> 00:33:48,500  
when I say she was my  
aunt, she is my aunt now,

534  
00:33:48,500 --> 00:33:53,420  
but at that time she was  
the fianc e of my uncle.

535

00:33:53,420 --> 00:33:58,010  
And she did the same  
thing for my uncle.

536  
00:33:58,010 --> 00:34:02,000  
She got him hidden  
someplace in the country

537  
00:34:02,000 --> 00:34:03,905  
somewhere with one  
of her families.

538  
00:34:03,905 --> 00:34:07,880

539  
00:34:07,880 --> 00:34:12,710  
He actually stayed the  
whole war, stayed completely

540  
00:34:12,710 --> 00:34:17,570  
out of the city and out of  
ghettos and concentration

541  
00:34:17,570 --> 00:34:21,380  
camps, or anything, because  
he was well hidden and well

542  
00:34:21,380 --> 00:34:22,940  
taken care of.

543  
00:34:22,940 --> 00:34:27,900  
And only after the war  
I heard about many,

544  
00:34:27,900 --> 00:34:32,030  
many non-Christians who really--

545  
00:34:32,030 --> 00:34:36,560  
I mean Christians who took  
care of a lot of Jewish people

546  
00:34:36,560 --> 00:34:39,650  
and hid them and

took care of them

547

00:34:39,650 --> 00:34:43,648  
so that they would not have to  
go through the horrible ordeals

548

00:34:43,648 --> 00:34:44,690  
that a lot of people did.

549

00:34:44,690 --> 00:34:47,270

550

00:34:47,270 --> 00:34:49,520  
You said that you had to  
pretty much stay out of sight

551

00:34:49,520 --> 00:34:51,853  
because it would be easier  
to just keep you out of sight

552

00:34:51,853 --> 00:34:54,228  
than to explain  
where you came from.

553

00:34:54,228 --> 00:34:55,520  
What did you do during the day?

554

00:34:55,520 --> 00:34:56,420  
Where did you stay?

555

00:34:56,420 --> 00:34:57,920  
How did you stay out of sight?

556

00:34:57,920 --> 00:35:05,390  
Well, being on a farm,  
I fed the chickens.

557

00:35:05,390 --> 00:35:09,660  
For me, I mean, I  
was still a kid,

558

00:35:09,660 --> 00:35:13,860



so it was kind of fun  
being in the country

559  
00:35:13,860 --> 00:35:19,530  
and being among horses,  
and things like that.

560  
00:35:19,530 --> 00:35:24,840  
I think as kids, we  
recover much quicker

561  
00:35:24,840 --> 00:35:29,670  
from calamities than people  
who have much more thought

562  
00:35:29,670 --> 00:35:31,060  
put into it.

563  
00:35:31,060 --> 00:35:34,080  
And I guess it  
must have been fun

564  
00:35:34,080 --> 00:35:37,980  
for me to be out in the  
country and to enjoy just

565  
00:35:37,980 --> 00:35:41,100  
being free and not  
worrying about air raids,

566  
00:35:41,100 --> 00:35:43,980  
because out in the country,  
they certainly didn't

567  
00:35:43,980 --> 00:35:47,480  
come to bomb the countryside.

568  
00:35:47,480 --> 00:35:49,740  
They came to bomb Budapest.

569  
00:35:49,740 --> 00:35:53,750  
So I guess I was happy.

570

00:35:53,750 --> 00:35:56,258

571

00:35:56,258 --> 00:35:57,800

Were you given any  
instructions that,

572

00:35:57,800 --> 00:36:02,210

should somebody come, that you  
should go get out of sight?

573

00:36:02,210 --> 00:36:05,480

I really don't remember.

574

00:36:05,480 --> 00:36:11,510

I would imagine that they did  
tell me, because by the time

575

00:36:11,510 --> 00:36:16,030

I was, as I said 10, 11 years  
old, I did have comprehension

576

00:36:16,030 --> 00:36:20,090

of directions and orders.

577

00:36:20,090 --> 00:36:23,240

and I'm sure I realized  
that everything

578

00:36:23,240 --> 00:36:27,410

wasn't normal the way  
it was before the war.

579

00:36:27,410 --> 00:36:30,430

580

00:36:30,430 --> 00:36:33,670

I'm sure I was given  
certain directions to do,

581

00:36:33,670 --> 00:36:34,870

but I can't really remember.

582  
00:36:34,870 --> 00:36:37,420

583  
00:36:37,420 --> 00:36:39,930  
Did you have contact with  
anybody from your family,

584  
00:36:39,930 --> 00:36:42,730  
or your brother  
or aunts, uncles?

585  
00:36:42,730 --> 00:36:43,720  
Not at all.

586  
00:36:43,720 --> 00:36:45,040  
No.

587  
00:36:45,040 --> 00:36:47,470  
I think that must have been  
one of the stipulations,

588  
00:36:47,470 --> 00:36:51,040  
that we should not  
try to contact--

589  
00:36:51,040 --> 00:36:53,150  
of the family that  
took care of me--

590  
00:36:53,150 --> 00:36:54,730  
not try to contact anybody.

591  
00:36:54,730 --> 00:36:58,360  
Maybe they did on their own  
when they talked to each other.

592  
00:36:58,360 --> 00:37:03,610  
When my and talked to her  
relatives or something,

593  
00:37:03,610 --> 00:37:05,050

I'm sure she asked questions.

594

00:37:05,050 --> 00:37:08,800

But I personally did not  
have any contact with anybody

595

00:37:08,800 --> 00:37:09,610

from my family.

596

00:37:09,610 --> 00:37:12,502

597

00:37:12,502 --> 00:37:14,430

Do you remember  
having any feelings

598

00:37:14,430 --> 00:37:18,490

about being out of  
touch with your family?

599

00:37:18,490 --> 00:37:21,080

Well, as I said before,  
I'm sure I was sad.

600

00:37:21,080 --> 00:37:23,845

I'm sure I was missing  
my mother and my father.

601

00:37:23,845 --> 00:37:29,680

602

00:37:29,680 --> 00:37:32,255

I guess there was  
nothing that I could do.

603

00:37:32,255 --> 00:37:35,320

604

00:37:35,320 --> 00:37:41,380

So I just lived  
day to day, waiting

605

00:37:41,380 --> 00:37:47,910  
for, eventually, something to  
happen, which it finally did.

606  
00:37:47,910 --> 00:37:52,540  
Apparently, it was  
getting a little bit

607  
00:37:52,540 --> 00:37:53,710  
sticky for these people.

608  
00:37:53,710 --> 00:37:55,530  
Maybe word did get  
around that there

609  
00:37:55,530 --> 00:37:58,180  
is a stranger living here.

610  
00:37:58,180 --> 00:38:03,940  
As I said, the Arrow  
Crosses and the sympathizers

611  
00:38:03,940 --> 00:38:06,640  
of these people were,  
of course, all over.

612  
00:38:06,640 --> 00:38:09,580

613  
00:38:09,580 --> 00:38:12,520  
by that time, everybody  
was looking for Jews,

614  
00:38:12,520 --> 00:38:15,460  
as I'm sure you know.

615  
00:38:15,460 --> 00:38:18,730  
They wanted to get all  
the Jews out of Budapest

616  
00:38:18,730 --> 00:38:22,750  
and ship them to the  
concentration camp.

617  
00:38:22,750 --> 00:38:25,750  
Of course at that time, I didn't  
know about that Wallenberg,

618  
00:38:25,750 --> 00:38:27,350  
but I know now.

619  
00:38:27,350 --> 00:38:32,530  
In fact, later on, we did  
stay in another house that

620  
00:38:32,530 --> 00:38:38,740  
was like protection of the  
Swedish council, or something,

621  
00:38:38,740 --> 00:38:40,150  
that Wallenberg set up.

622  
00:38:40,150 --> 00:38:43,060  
We stayed there  
for a while again.

623  
00:38:43,060 --> 00:38:50,310  
But what happened was it  
was getting too dangerous

624  
00:38:50,310 --> 00:38:55,830  
for my wards, who were  
taking care of us.

625  
00:38:55,830 --> 00:38:58,600

626  
00:38:58,600 --> 00:39:00,850  
They were afraid that they  
were going to get found out

627  
00:39:00,850 --> 00:39:02,860  
and that they would  
get in trouble.

628

00:39:02,860 --> 00:39:08,660  
So eventually, we did  
wind up back in Budapest.

629  
00:39:08,660 --> 00:39:13,430  
Both my brother and I  
wound up back in Budapest.

630  
00:39:13,430 --> 00:39:18,100  
And we went to one of these--

631  
00:39:18,100 --> 00:39:20,710  
well, we went back to the  
building where we stayed.

632  
00:39:20,710 --> 00:39:23,470

633  
00:39:23,470 --> 00:39:28,090  
Not in the ghetto, because  
only my brother and I were

634  
00:39:28,090 --> 00:39:30,250  
in a ghetto, taken  
from the house

635  
00:39:30,250 --> 00:39:33,760  
I told you was the  
Red Cross house.

636  
00:39:33,760 --> 00:39:40,040  
My aunt-- my other  
aunt, not the one

637  
00:39:40,040 --> 00:39:45,750  
I told you that helped us  
out, but my mother's sister

638  
00:39:45,750 --> 00:39:49,380  
and my grandmother were  
still somehow missed,

639  
00:39:49,380 --> 00:39:52,860

and they were still living  
in this one apartment, where

640  
00:39:52,860 --> 00:39:56,340  
they used to live, and  
we went back there.

641  
00:39:56,340 --> 00:40:04,920  
But then this aunt, who  
was my uncle's fiancée,

642  
00:40:04,920 --> 00:40:11,140  
put up some money and put  
us into one of these Swedish

643  
00:40:11,140 --> 00:40:13,360  
protected houses  
that, apparently,

644  
00:40:13,360 --> 00:40:16,600  
was one of Wallenberg's ideas.

645  
00:40:16,600 --> 00:40:18,160  
I found out about that later.

646  
00:40:18,160 --> 00:40:21,240  
I didn't know it then.

647  
00:40:21,240 --> 00:40:28,673  
And again, we lived in there  
for only maybe a month,

648  
00:40:28,673 --> 00:40:29,465  
a month and a half.

649  
00:40:29,465 --> 00:40:34,680

650  
00:40:34,680 --> 00:40:36,150  
When you were  
taken from the farm

651



00:40:36,150 --> 00:40:38,690  
and brought back to  
the city, did they

652  
00:40:38,690 --> 00:40:41,540  
give you an explanation?

653  
00:40:41,540 --> 00:40:43,243  
Did they tell you  
anything about it,

654  
00:40:43,243 --> 00:40:44,660  
or all of a sudden  
you were taken?

655  
00:40:44,660 --> 00:40:46,340  
And how did you get  
there, if you could

656  
00:40:46,340 --> 00:40:49,580  
clarify that a little bit.

657  
00:40:49,580 --> 00:40:53,300  
Well, I don't think I was given  
any explanation whatsoever.

658  
00:40:53,300 --> 00:40:55,220  
We were just-- not we.

659  
00:40:55,220 --> 00:40:58,400  
My brother, of course,  
was somewhere else.

660  
00:40:58,400 --> 00:41:03,070  
One day I was just told that  
I'm going back to the city

661  
00:41:03,070 --> 00:41:06,410  
and back with my  
grandmother and my aunt.

662  
00:41:06,410 --> 00:41:09,560  
And I was happy about

that because, of course,

663  
00:41:09,560 --> 00:41:11,240  
we were back with  
relatives again.

664  
00:41:11,240 --> 00:41:15,875

665  
00:41:15,875 --> 00:41:17,250  
I knew there was  
something wrong,

666  
00:41:17,250 --> 00:41:20,420  
but I guess I didn't realize  
the gravity of the situation

667  
00:41:20,420 --> 00:41:22,903  
as much as I should have.

668  
00:41:22,903 --> 00:41:24,570  
I was just looking  
forward to being back

669  
00:41:24,570 --> 00:41:27,442  
with my family, people that  
I knew and that I love,

670  
00:41:27,442 --> 00:41:29,400  
because after all, these  
people were strangers.

671  
00:41:29,400 --> 00:41:31,950  
They were nice, but  
they were strangers.

672  
00:41:31,950 --> 00:41:36,390

673  
00:41:36,390 --> 00:41:42,970  
So when we got into this other  
house, that only lasted, again,

674

00:41:42,970 --> 00:41:48,380

for only a few weeks,  
until one night,

675

00:41:48,380 --> 00:41:52,460

again, we got robbed in  
the middle of the night.

676

00:41:52,460 --> 00:41:54,800

Everybody out.

677

00:41:54,800 --> 00:42:01,060

Just take the immediate things.

678

00:42:01,060 --> 00:42:02,720

And that's when we  
were marched off

679

00:42:02,720 --> 00:42:08,120

to back into the ghetto,  
this time as a family.

680

00:42:08,120 --> 00:42:13,100

In other words, my  
aunt, my sisters,

681

00:42:13,100 --> 00:42:17,560

my mother's sister, my  
grandmother, myself,

682

00:42:17,560 --> 00:42:19,100

and my brother.

683

00:42:19,100 --> 00:42:22,060

And then we moved back together.

684

00:42:22,060 --> 00:42:24,740

685

00:42:24,740 --> 00:42:26,420

When did your brother  
come and join you?

686  
00:42:26,420 --> 00:42:28,040  
At what stage did he come?

687  
00:42:28,040 --> 00:42:33,630

688  
00:42:33,630 --> 00:42:36,310  
He must have come just about  
the same time I came back

689  
00:42:36,310 --> 00:42:40,070  
from the country, because  
we were both together

690  
00:42:40,070 --> 00:42:43,533  
in that house when  
we were raided.

691  
00:42:43,533 --> 00:42:44,200  
I remember that.

692  
00:42:44,200 --> 00:42:48,400

693  
00:42:48,400 --> 00:42:51,243  
When you got back to  
the ghetto, can you

694  
00:42:51,243 --> 00:42:52,660  
describe to me how  
conditions have

695  
00:42:52,660 --> 00:42:57,010  
changed since the last time  
you had seen the place?

696  
00:42:57,010 --> 00:43:06,200  
Well, by this time the  
streets were filthy.

697  
00:43:06,200 --> 00:43:10,340

The people had nothing to eat.

698

00:43:10,340 --> 00:43:11,650

We were completely cut off.

699

00:43:11,650 --> 00:43:20,630

700

00:43:20,630 --> 00:43:24,950

To me, it always seemed,  
after I reflect on it,

701

00:43:24,950 --> 00:43:27,680

it always seemed to me  
that the ghetto in Budapest

702

00:43:27,680 --> 00:43:30,420

was the same as being  
in a concentration camp

703

00:43:30,420 --> 00:43:32,630

without the ovens.

704

00:43:32,630 --> 00:43:36,310

That's the way I always  
felt. We were beaten.

705

00:43:36,310 --> 00:43:37,260

We were shot.

706

00:43:37,260 --> 00:43:39,960

707

00:43:39,960 --> 00:43:42,840

We had, of course, curfew.

708

00:43:42,840 --> 00:43:47,640

We lived most of our lives,  
by that time, in the cellars

709

00:43:47,640 --> 00:43:52,140

or in the air raid shelters.

710  
00:43:52,140 --> 00:43:54,820  
We didn't really have  
air raid shelters.

711  
00:43:54,820 --> 00:43:57,550  
We had basements and cellars.

712  
00:43:57,550 --> 00:44:01,060

713  
00:44:01,060 --> 00:44:04,570  
During the day, we  
would go out and go

714  
00:44:04,570 --> 00:44:08,620  
to what would be best described  
as like a soup kitchen,

715  
00:44:08,620 --> 00:44:12,700  
or something like that, where  
you could get a bowl of soup

716  
00:44:12,700 --> 00:44:16,750  
or get a slice of bread,  
or something like that.

717  
00:44:16,750 --> 00:44:17,800  
The people the hungry.

718  
00:44:17,800 --> 00:44:20,960  
People were starving.

719  
00:44:20,960 --> 00:44:25,310  
People were lying dead in  
the street from the bombings,

720  
00:44:25,310 --> 00:44:31,220  
because nobody had the strength  
or anything to clean them up,

721  
00:44:31,220 --> 00:44:34,670

although eventually  
it did get cleaned up.

722  
00:44:34,670 --> 00:44:39,890  
The cities started to become  
really bombed-out rubbles.

723  
00:44:39,890 --> 00:44:49,050  
By that time, Budapest was no  
longer the city that it was,

724  
00:44:49,050 --> 00:44:51,420  
especially the ghetto area.

725  
00:44:51,420 --> 00:44:54,270  
I also always believed  
that towards the end,

726  
00:44:54,270 --> 00:44:58,770  
the Germans themselves came  
back and bombed and everything

727  
00:44:58,770 --> 00:45:02,010  
just the ghetto area, just  
to get rid of the Jews.

728  
00:45:02,010 --> 00:45:03,870  
I'm sure that was just  
a fantasy of mine,

729  
00:45:03,870 --> 00:45:08,830  
but I know that the bombings are  
becoming more and more frequent

730  
00:45:08,830 --> 00:45:14,245  
and it was harder and  
harder to get food.

731  
00:45:14,245 --> 00:45:17,700

732  
00:45:17,700 --> 00:45:20,570  
It was just a

miserable way to live.

733

00:45:20,570 --> 00:45:25,010

734

00:45:25,010 --> 00:45:26,973

Where did you find  
yourselves housed when

735

00:45:26,973 --> 00:45:28,140

you came back to the ghetto?

736

00:45:28,140 --> 00:45:31,910

What were the conditions  
in that respect?

737

00:45:31,910 --> 00:45:35,870

Again, I don't remember if  
there was any particular house

738

00:45:35,870 --> 00:45:39,560

that we lived in.

739

00:45:39,560 --> 00:45:44,700

I remember the house that  
we finally went and lived,

740

00:45:44,700 --> 00:45:47,220

in the air raid shelter.

741

00:45:47,220 --> 00:45:52,970

The house next door got  
a direct hit from a bomb.

742

00:45:52,970 --> 00:45:56,690

And I remember spending most  
of my time in the shelter

743

00:45:56,690 --> 00:46:02,250

and really not even having  
any reason to go upstairs

744



00:46:02,250 --> 00:46:04,455  
because it was unsafe.

745  
00:46:04,455 --> 00:46:09,240

746  
00:46:09,240 --> 00:46:10,800  
The main thing that  
we worried about,

747  
00:46:10,800 --> 00:46:15,040  
because then I started  
hearing people saying,

748  
00:46:15,040 --> 00:46:18,960  
well, if the bombs are  
not going to get us,

749  
00:46:18,960 --> 00:46:22,657  
then the Germans will  
come pretty soon.

750  
00:46:22,657 --> 00:46:24,990  
They're probably going to  
take us out of here someplace.

751  
00:46:24,990 --> 00:46:30,520  
And by this time, I'm  
sure that the elders

752  
00:46:30,520 --> 00:46:32,890  
have heard about the  
concentration camp, and things

753  
00:46:32,890 --> 00:46:34,060  
like that.

754  
00:46:34,060 --> 00:46:37,420  
They knew that people were  
taken out of Budapest almost

755  
00:46:37,420 --> 00:46:40,800  
on a daily basis and they

never see them again.

756  
00:46:40,800 --> 00:46:43,990

757  
00:46:43,990 --> 00:46:47,770  
It seemed like they  
knew that the day will

758  
00:46:47,770 --> 00:46:52,300  
come when it will be their  
time, or everybody's time,

759  
00:46:52,300 --> 00:46:54,080  
that we'll be taken out of here.

760  
00:46:54,080 --> 00:46:56,410  
And we've seen evidence  
of that because we've

761  
00:46:56,410 --> 00:46:58,740  
seen people getting  
put on trucks

762  
00:46:58,740 --> 00:47:01,210  
and taken out from the ghetto.

763  
00:47:01,210 --> 00:47:07,260

764  
00:47:07,260 --> 00:47:14,130  
Myself, my family, I guess  
shall we call ourselves lucky?

765  
00:47:14,130 --> 00:47:17,370  
It just didn't get  
that far because

766  
00:47:17,370 --> 00:47:19,760  
by that time, of course,  
the Russians came in

767

00:47:19,760 --> 00:47:21,945  
and so-called  
liberated Budapest.

768  
00:47:21,945 --> 00:47:27,540

769  
00:47:27,540 --> 00:47:29,670  
You talked about being  
in a Swedish safe house.

770  
00:47:29,670 --> 00:47:32,260  
Can you elaborate a  
little bit about that?

771  
00:47:32,260 --> 00:47:35,025  
Yeah, I remember  
it was near a park.

772  
00:47:35,025 --> 00:47:37,730

773  
00:47:37,730 --> 00:47:40,670  
I think it was a nicer  
part of Budapest.

774  
00:47:40,670 --> 00:47:46,410

775  
00:47:46,410 --> 00:47:50,790  
It was an apartment house,  
and the whole apartment house,

776  
00:47:50,790 --> 00:47:52,620  
with every one of  
their apartments,

777  
00:47:52,620 --> 00:48:01,520  
was filled with Jews  
who, apparently,

778  
00:48:01,520 --> 00:48:08,070  
they were supposed to have had

visas to get out of Budapest.

779

00:48:08,070 --> 00:48:15,450

And this was like a midway point  
to wait until their turn came

780

00:48:15,450 --> 00:48:16,580

that they could get out.

781

00:48:16,580 --> 00:48:21,540

And this is why I know that it  
was the Wallenberg hand in it,

782

00:48:21,540 --> 00:48:24,960

because that's the way--

783

00:48:24,960 --> 00:48:26,910

and this I found out,  
of course, later on.

784

00:48:26,910 --> 00:48:31,350

But I remember that we  
had Swedish passports--

785

00:48:31,350 --> 00:48:34,080

786

00:48:34,080 --> 00:48:40,500

my brother, myself, my  
aunt, and my grandmother--

787

00:48:40,500 --> 00:48:44,260

and we were supposed to  
have gone to Switzerland.

788

00:48:44,260 --> 00:48:57,710

But whether that was just that  
somebody sold them something

789

00:48:57,710 --> 00:49:00,620

or whether it was the  
real thing, I do not know.

790

00:49:00,620 --> 00:49:03,950

I mean, I don't know if this  
was really a Wallenberg thing

791

00:49:03,950 --> 00:49:07,160

or whether somebody took  
advantage of the fact

792

00:49:07,160 --> 00:49:08,810

that these things  
were happening,

793

00:49:08,810 --> 00:49:11,420

and maybe they just  
set us up in this house

794

00:49:11,420 --> 00:49:12,950

with false passports.

795

00:49:12,950 --> 00:49:15,830

But eventually it  
didn't mean a thing

796

00:49:15,830 --> 00:49:21,470

because when they did come,  
they did not pay any attention

797

00:49:21,470 --> 00:49:23,840

to these passports.

798

00:49:23,840 --> 00:49:25,450

They said those were not valid.

799

00:49:25,450 --> 00:49:29,020

800

00:49:29,020 --> 00:49:31,545

Who came into the  
ghetto more often

801

00:49:31,545 --> 00:49:32,920

for the beatings

and the rounding

802  
00:49:32,920 --> 00:49:34,170  
up of the Jews and everything?

803  
00:49:34,170 --> 00:49:37,640  
Was it the Arrow Cross or  
was it the German and the SS?

804  
00:49:37,640 --> 00:49:42,040  
It was mainly the Arrow Cross.

805  
00:49:42,040 --> 00:49:46,330  
I think the SS came  
in just to get us out

806  
00:49:46,330 --> 00:49:50,480  
of there, to actually transport  
us, and so on and so forth.

807  
00:49:50,480 --> 00:49:54,550  
But I'm sure there were beatings  
at that time, or whatever.

808  
00:49:54,550 --> 00:50:04,150  
But the Arrow Cross were really,  
really mean and bad people.

809  
00:50:04,150 --> 00:50:08,729

810  
00:50:08,729 --> 00:50:15,750  
It was just, like I said,  
giving some thugs some authority

811  
00:50:15,750 --> 00:50:20,110  
and picking on a certain  
type or certain person

812  
00:50:20,110 --> 00:50:23,920  
or certain nationality,  
or something,

813

00:50:23,920 --> 00:50:29,950

no matter if it was a child  
or an older person or anybody

814

00:50:29,950 --> 00:50:30,670

else.

815

00:50:30,670 --> 00:50:36,490

Simply because we were  
Jewish, they hated us.

816

00:50:36,490 --> 00:50:39,010

They did not think anything  
about beating somebody

817

00:50:39,010 --> 00:50:39,530

to death.

818

00:50:39,530 --> 00:50:42,550

819

00:50:42,550 --> 00:50:47,020

And of course, coming into the  
ghetto by that time, of course

820

00:50:47,020 --> 00:50:49,450

all the walls were  
up on the ghetto.

821

00:50:49,450 --> 00:50:52,990

The second time we got back  
into the ghetto, my family--

822

00:50:52,990 --> 00:50:54,490

I mean my brother and I--

823

00:50:54,490 --> 00:50:56,890

by this time there  
were only a couple

824

00:50:56,890 --> 00:50:59,360

of checkpoints where

you could go in and out,

825  
00:50:59,360 --> 00:51:00,460  
whoever had business.

826  
00:51:00,460 --> 00:51:02,890  
I don't know what  
business, you know.

827  
00:51:02,890 --> 00:51:08,650  
But the actual  
ghetto was walled up

828  
00:51:08,650 --> 00:51:12,020  
and there were no escape  
routes whatsoever.

829  
00:51:12,020 --> 00:51:16,565  
Now, there might have been, but  
I certainly didn't try again.

830  
00:51:16,565 --> 00:51:17,440  
I had no place to go.

831  
00:51:17,440 --> 00:51:23,690

832  
00:51:23,690 --> 00:51:27,080  
When you think  
back about the time

833  
00:51:27,080 --> 00:51:29,000  
that you spent in  
the ghetto, is there

834  
00:51:29,000 --> 00:51:30,740  
any memory that sticks  
out in your mind

835  
00:51:30,740 --> 00:51:36,667  
more than anything else in the  
episode that comes back to you?



836

00:51:36,667 --> 00:51:47,155

837

00:51:47,155 --> 00:51:52,660

The main thing was  
really the dead people

838

00:51:52,660 --> 00:51:54,250

on the street that  
sticks in my mind

839

00:51:54,250 --> 00:52:00,010

more than anything, the  
corpses that nobody cleaned up.

840

00:52:00,010 --> 00:52:02,740

As a young kid, I  
don't know, but you

841

00:52:02,740 --> 00:52:05,410

can get immune to anything.

842

00:52:05,410 --> 00:52:09,010

That's what really kind of  
blows my mind right now is

843

00:52:09,010 --> 00:52:11,560

that I took it all in stride.

844

00:52:11,560 --> 00:52:21,640

It was an everyday thing to  
walk among corpses half-mangled

845

00:52:21,640 --> 00:52:23,770

people.

846

00:52:23,770 --> 00:52:26,180

It didn't mean anything.

847

00:52:26,180 --> 00:52:30,910

It was just survival of  
yourself that you were mainly

848  
00:52:30,910 --> 00:52:32,260  
interested in.

849  
00:52:32,260 --> 00:52:35,230  
And by this time, we knew that--

850  
00:52:35,230 --> 00:52:37,150  
when I say we, my  
brother and I--

851  
00:52:37,150 --> 00:52:40,510  
we knew that there were people  
who just wanted to keep us

852  
00:52:40,510 --> 00:52:42,940  
in the ghetto and who were  
mean enough to beat us,

853  
00:52:42,940 --> 00:52:45,310  
and things like that.

854  
00:52:45,310 --> 00:52:47,800  
It was definitely to  
save our own lives.

855  
00:52:47,800 --> 00:52:50,020  
It was the most important  
thing at that time,

856  
00:52:50,020 --> 00:52:52,900  
to save my brother's life,  
who, of course, didn't

857  
00:52:52,900 --> 00:52:53,770  
know anything.

858  
00:52:53,770 --> 00:52:59,770  
He was four or five years  
old followed me everywhere.

859  
00:52:59,770 --> 00:53:04,330

I had him to take care of,  
especially while we were just

860  
00:53:04,330 --> 00:53:08,620  
on our own during those few  
times that I mentioned to you.

861  
00:53:08,620 --> 00:53:11,400  
The rest of time, of course,  
my aunt and my grandmother

862  
00:53:11,400 --> 00:53:11,900  
were there.

863  
00:53:11,900 --> 00:53:19,450  
But my grandmother, by this  
time, was in her late 70s,

864  
00:53:19,450 --> 00:53:25,630  
early 80s, and  
she was quite ill.

865  
00:53:25,630 --> 00:53:31,120

866  
00:53:31,120 --> 00:53:32,470  
She starved to death she'd.

867  
00:53:32,470 --> 00:53:35,320

868  
00:53:35,320 --> 00:53:39,190  
We all slept in the same  
bed, and one morning

869  
00:53:39,190 --> 00:53:42,580  
she just didn't get up.

870  
00:53:42,580 --> 00:53:46,460  
I think she was about  
81, 82 when she died.

871

00:53:46,460 --> 00:53:49,110  
But that was the whole thing.

872  
00:53:49,110 --> 00:53:51,710

873  
00:53:51,710 --> 00:53:52,620  
It's funny.

874  
00:53:52,620 --> 00:53:54,710  
There was nothing to bring back.

875  
00:53:54,710 --> 00:53:57,830  
You would go out and scrounge  
around for food or something

876  
00:53:57,830 --> 00:54:00,350  
like that, but there  
was nobody to scrounge

877  
00:54:00,350 --> 00:54:03,440  
from because everybody  
was in the same situation

878  
00:54:03,440 --> 00:54:04,730  
as you were in.

879  
00:54:04,730 --> 00:54:08,450  
Everybody begged from  
each other or went

880  
00:54:08,450 --> 00:54:09,890  
through the same things.

881  
00:54:09,890 --> 00:54:11,693  
Everybody had the same idea.

882  
00:54:11,693 --> 00:54:12,860  
They just wanted to survive.

883  
00:54:12,860 --> 00:54:16,390

884  
00:54:16,390 --> 00:54:18,050  
You just mentioned  
that there were

885  
00:54:18,050 --> 00:54:20,090  
times when you and your  
brother were on your own

886  
00:54:20,090 --> 00:54:25,130  
and he followed you  
and you were the guide.

887  
00:54:25,130 --> 00:54:28,160  
I'd like to ask you to  
explain a little bit about how

888  
00:54:28,160 --> 00:54:30,950  
the two of you managed  
without any supervision.

889  
00:54:30,950 --> 00:54:33,800  
In the safe house, in  
the Red Cross house,

890  
00:54:33,800 --> 00:54:37,070  
when you were first  
separated from your mother,

891  
00:54:37,070 --> 00:54:39,830  
did anybody give the  
children any supervision

892  
00:54:39,830 --> 00:54:42,950  
or guidance or anything?

893  
00:54:42,950 --> 00:54:46,340  
Well, there were people  
there who, of course,

894  
00:54:46,340 --> 00:54:47,750  
watched us and monitored us.

895

00:54:47,750 --> 00:54:53,420

Like I told you before, we did  
get some food at that time.

896

00:54:53,420 --> 00:54:57,860

Our days were just trying  
to entertain ourselves.

897

00:54:57,860 --> 00:54:59,150

We couldn't go outside.

898

00:54:59,150 --> 00:55:02,990

I mean, there was no place to  
go because the safe house was

899

00:55:02,990 --> 00:55:05,120

exactly what it said it was.

900

00:55:05,120 --> 00:55:11,930

It supposedly had been safe from  
any beatings or anything else

901

00:55:11,930 --> 00:55:13,580

that could have happened to us.

902

00:55:13,580 --> 00:55:18,248

So we stayed we stayed  
right in the house.

903

00:55:18,248 --> 00:55:20,040

I don't know how we  
entertained each other.

904

00:55:20,040 --> 00:55:23,480

Maybe we played some  
funny, little games or we

905

00:55:23,480 --> 00:55:25,820

kicked the ball around.

906

00:55:25,820 --> 00:55:29,540

We used to make soccer

balls out of newspaper

907

00:55:29,540 --> 00:55:32,710  
and tie it with string and  
just kick it back and forth.

908

00:55:32,710 --> 00:55:35,860  
I mean, anything to  
entertain ourselves.

909

00:55:35,860 --> 00:55:41,190  
But there were some  
older kids and there

910

00:55:41,190 --> 00:55:45,660  
were some older people  
who actually, supposedly,

911

00:55:45,660 --> 00:55:50,970  
was supervising us, but we  
were pretty much on our own.

912

00:55:50,970 --> 00:55:53,190  
And it didn't really  
last that long.

913

00:55:53,190 --> 00:55:57,290

914

00:55:57,290 --> 00:56:02,390  
There was nothing, no trouble  
that we could really get into.

915

00:56:02,390 --> 00:56:04,445  
There were just too  
many people around.

916

00:56:04,445 --> 00:56:10,090  
So we just tried to  
 fend for ourselves.

917

00:56:10,090 --> 00:56:12,130  
We were, more or

less, unsupervised,

918

00:56:12,130 --> 00:56:15,610

but there were some people  
there who were watching over us

919

00:56:15,610 --> 00:56:18,940

so that we wouldn't go outside.

920

00:56:18,940 --> 00:56:23,350

But that was the  
life in that place.

921

00:56:23,350 --> 00:56:25,520

How about when you first  
came with your brother?

922

00:56:25,520 --> 00:56:29,620

The two of you were taken  
from the Red Cross safe house.

923

00:56:29,620 --> 00:56:31,630

How did you manage to  
fend for yourselves

924

00:56:31,630 --> 00:56:36,670

and how did you manage to  
keep your brother from harm?

925

00:56:36,670 --> 00:56:38,920

Well, my brother cried a lot.

926

00:56:38,920 --> 00:56:41,530

He was a scrawny, little thing.

927

00:56:41,530 --> 00:56:44,110

928

00:56:44,110 --> 00:56:45,880

He, of course, didn't know.

929

00:56:45,880 --> 00:56:49,750



He wanted his mother  
and he wanted love.

930  
00:56:49,750 --> 00:56:55,030  
And I guess maybe I  
wasn't always good.

931  
00:56:55,030 --> 00:56:56,590  
I must've lost my  
patience with him.

932  
00:56:56,590 --> 00:56:58,720  
But I always had  
him by the hand.

933  
00:56:58,720 --> 00:57:01,640

934  
00:57:01,640 --> 00:57:05,810  
I knew that without  
me, he would perish.

935  
00:57:05,810 --> 00:57:09,830  
I mean, there's no  
way I could let--

936  
00:57:09,830 --> 00:57:16,670  
because when my mother left me,  
or us, that's the last thing--

937  
00:57:16,670 --> 00:57:19,310  
I think that's one thing that  
she dropped into my head,

938  
00:57:19,310 --> 00:57:24,030  
is you are the one that is  
responsible for your brother.

939  
00:57:24,030 --> 00:57:25,710  
You don't let him go anywhere.

940  
00:57:25,710 --> 00:57:29,990  
You, you, you, you, you.

941  
00:57:29,990 --> 00:57:32,870  
I would, maybe  
sometimes forcefully,

942  
00:57:32,870 --> 00:57:35,810  
but I wouldn't allow  
him to do anything.

943  
00:57:35,810 --> 00:57:36,890  
I guess I was the boss.

944  
00:57:36,890 --> 00:57:40,280

945  
00:57:40,280 --> 00:57:42,112  
But we survived.

946  
00:57:42,112 --> 00:57:42,820  
We both survived.

947  
00:57:42,820 --> 00:57:47,200

948  
00:57:47,200 --> 00:57:49,120  
What does a four,  
five-year-old kid do?

949  
00:57:49,120 --> 00:57:51,100  
I mean, he can cry,  
but eventually I

950  
00:57:51,100 --> 00:57:53,820  
will be the one that  
will tell him what to do.

951  
00:57:53,820 --> 00:57:58,240  
And as long as we found a little  
bit of food, or what have you.

952  
00:57:58,240 --> 00:58:05,490

953

00:58:05,490 --> 00:58:11,480

Even right now, you  
write a book like this,

954

00:58:11,480 --> 00:58:14,720

maybe nobody would believe it  
because these extraordinary

955

00:58:14,720 --> 00:58:16,550

things just don't happen.

956

00:58:16,550 --> 00:58:24,050

And when they do happen and  
it comes to a good conclusion,

957

00:58:24,050 --> 00:58:26,790

you know somebody  
will say, well,

958

00:58:26,790 --> 00:58:30,080

that's just somebody's fantasy.

959

00:58:30,080 --> 00:58:32,090

There were so many  
extraordinary things

960

00:58:32,090 --> 00:58:34,280

that happened during the  
war to a lot of people.

961

00:58:34,280 --> 00:58:39,460

962

00:58:39,460 --> 00:58:41,690

I'm sure you're going to  
get to that eventually,

963

00:58:41,690 --> 00:58:47,330

but just the idea  
that my parents--

964

00:58:47,330 --> 00:58:53,670  
actually, even though my  
father was taken into the army,

965  
00:58:53,670 --> 00:58:57,620  
and from there into the  
work force, and from there,

966  
00:58:57,620 --> 00:59:01,610  
eventually, into the  
concentration camps,

967  
00:59:01,610 --> 00:59:06,700  
my mother was in a different  
concentration camp.

968  
00:59:06,700 --> 00:59:11,770  
And the two of them found  
out about each other somehow

969  
00:59:11,770 --> 00:59:15,310  
and they met in Mauthausen.

970  
00:59:15,310 --> 00:59:19,990  
They met in Mauthausen They came  
home together after the war.

971  
00:59:19,990 --> 00:59:24,170  
About four months after the  
war, they came home together.

972  
00:59:24,170 --> 00:59:26,590  
That's the only way  
they both survived.

973  
00:59:26,590 --> 00:59:30,490  
My father-- and he  
told me these stories--

974  
00:59:30,490 --> 00:59:34,660  
my father was, as I said,  
a barber and beautician.

975

00:59:34,660 --> 00:59:38,380

976

00:59:38,380 --> 00:59:46,630

He used to cut hair and  
shave some of the Germans

977

00:59:46,630 --> 00:59:50,800

who were in charge in  
a concentration camp.

978

00:59:50,800 --> 00:59:55,930

My mother was very, very sick,  
but he begged for her life

979

00:59:55,930 --> 01:00:00,870

and he actually saved  
her life by, I guess,

980

01:00:00,870 --> 01:00:04,800

being close to some of  
the hierarchy over there.

981

01:00:04,800 --> 01:00:06,210

But they came home together.

982

01:00:06,210 --> 01:00:07,875

Now, that's a miracle.

983

01:00:07,875 --> 01:00:10,640

984

01:00:10,640 --> 01:00:13,530

And they were taken  
two different times,

985

01:00:13,530 --> 01:00:17,070

two separate times, and  
they came home together.

986

01:00:17,070 --> 01:00:19,450

Now, if that's not a  
miracle, then nothing is.

987

01:00:19,450 --> 01:00:24,720

988

01:00:24,720 --> 01:00:30,310

That happened, I guess,  
about three or four months

989

01:00:30,310 --> 01:00:32,880

after the war ended.

990

01:00:32,880 --> 01:00:39,000